

Psalm 110:3 and Retrieval Theology

PETER J. GENTRY

Peter J. Gentry is Senior Professor of Old Testament at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Old Testament and Senior Research Fellow of the Text & Canon Institute at Phoenix Seminary as well as Director of the Hexapla Institute at Phoenix Seminary. He has served on the faculty of Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College and also taught at the University of Toronto, Heritage Theological Seminary, and Tyndale Seminary. Dr. Gentry is the author of many articles and book reviews, co-author of *Kingdom through Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Crossway, 2018) and *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants* (Crossway, 2015), and author of *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* (Crossway, 2017). He recently published a critical edition of *Ecclesiastes* for the Göttingen Septuagint (2019). Dr. Gentry and his wife Barb have two children: Stewart and Laura (Stephen) and three grandchildren: Joseph, Emma, and Sophie.

INTRODUCTION

In a recent treatment on the birth of the doctrine of the Trinity, Matthew Bates appeals to Jesus' treatment of Psalm 110 in Mark 12:35-37. He describes Jesus' interpretation as employing prosopological rhetorical technique. This is best presented in his own words:

The best explanation is that Jesus, as he is portrayed in Mark 12:35-37, is interpreting Psalm 109:1 LXX prosopologically, pointing out a conundrum in the text and then encouraging the audience to identify the speaker and the addressee correctly. More precisely, Jesus seems to believe that the Holy Spirit had inspired David to slip as an actor into what we might term "a theodramatic vision" and from within the visionary world to make a speech in the character (*prosōpon*)

of someone else. As such, the Spirit is really speaking the words through David (“David himself said while speaking *by means of the Holy Spirit*”—Mark 12:36), so the Spirit is supplying the script. For Jesus the role in the theodrama that David adopts here is God, and God’s theodramatic addressee is a person David himself calls “my Lord.” We might paraphrase Mark’s depiction of Jesus’ reading and the persons assigned to the words thus:

DAVID Himself (reporting the setting): The Lord [God] said to my Lord,

David in the prosopon of GOD (*spoken to MY LORD, THE CHRIST*): Sit at my right hand, O Christ, Lord of David, until I make your enemies a footstool for our feet. (Ps. 109:1 LXX)¹

Bates continues by explaining and paraphrasing verses 2 and 3 of the LXX as follows:

DAVID Himself (reporting the setting to “my Lord”): The Lord God will send forth your rod of power, O my Lord, from Zion. (Ps. 109:2 LXX)

David in the prosopon of GOD (*spoken to MY LORD, THE CHRIST*): Rule in the midst of your enemies! With you is the sovereign authority on the day of your power in the midst of the bright splendors of the holy ones; from the womb, *before the dawn-bearing morning star appeared, I begot you.* (Ps. 109:2-3 LXX)²

Among other things, Bates concludes that Jesus has construed himself as the Lord whom God addresses in the psalm. Moreover, verses 2-3 from the LXX also apply to Jesus and affirm that before creation Christ was begotten by God with the phrase “from the womb” hinting at being born of a virgin.³

One does not have to follow so-called prosopological exegesis to grasp that the coming king or messiah is being addressed in an oracle or prophetic message being *cited* or *quoted* by David.⁴ The bigger question pursued in this article is this: Should we follow the translation of the Septuagint (LXX) and understand v. 3 to speak of the Christ or Messiah being *begotten by God* before creation? Do we have good evidence that this is the way Jesus and the apostles understood Psalm 110:3? Were they following the rendering of the Septuagint in Psalm 110? In a footnote on the reading and translation of

verse 3 in the Septuagint, Bates claims, “my concern here is to give a plausible reconstruction regarding how this psalm was being read toward the end of the Second Temple era by Jesus and his contemporaries, not with the origin or compositional history of the psalm.”⁵

Bates has been followed by others in his approach to the text such as Fred Sanders⁶ and J. V. Fesko.⁷ It is appropriate to evaluate this interpretation and ask, “Is there evidence that Jesus and his contemporaries construed Psalm 110:3 this way?” And what do we make of the translation of the Septuagint? Should we regard it as based on a better text than what we currently have in the Masoretic Text? This is claimed by some scholars in dealing with the text of Psalm 110:3.

THE TEXT OF PSALM 110:3

The text of verse 3 of Psalm 110 is difficult and we begin by acknowledging this fact. As we shall see, our earliest sources and translations show that the verse was also difficult for interpreters already before the time of Jesus.

Recently, three detailed treatments have argued that the parent text behind the LXX is earlier and/or better, and that what we have in the Masoretic Text is a literary and theologically motivated attempt to revise and smooth over the earlier text as found in the LXX.⁸ It should be important for Christians who acknowledge the authority and inspiration of the text to ask: What is the original text in verse 3? What does this verse mean in the context of the psalm? And were Jesus and his contemporaries following the version of the LXX in their interpretation of Psalm 110? These questions are the focus of the present study.

All early sources attested for this verse are displayed in a chart at the end. Each text is cited from the best editions or manuscripts and translated into English. All major medieval Jewish commentators have been consulted as well.⁹

Following Barthélemy, we will divide verse 3 into seven problems in textual transmission where we need to decide which attested reading has the greatest probability of being the best and earliest form of the text and which readings represent corruptions or misunderstandings on the part of early translators.¹⁰ After dealing with problems caused by each word or phrase, we can consider the textual value of the different sources from a global perspective.

1. MT **עַמְּךָ** = your people. MT is supported by the second century Jewish translation of Symmachus, by Jerome's "Psalms According to the Hebrew" (PIH), by the Syriac Peshitta (second century AD) and the later Jewish Aramaic Targum. The Septuagint has "with you" which attests the same consonantal text but vocalized differently as **עִמָּךְ**. This is supported by the second century Jewish translation in Greek by Aquila, by another Jewish Greek version known from Origen's Hexapla as Quinta, and by early Jewish interpretation attested from Bereshit Rabbah 39:8 and Tanḥuma. Thus, both readings are well attested; perhaps the reading of the LXX is earlier. We can decide after considering the next word.

2. MT נָדְבַת = your freewill offerings. Construed with the previous word it could mean “your people are volunteers.” If נָדְבַת is a numerical plural, we would have “your people are freewill offerings.” If it is an abstract plural marking a characteristic condition, the phrase can mean “your people are voluntariness,” i.e., a collective נְדָבָה.¹¹ The LXX has ἡ ἀρχή which means “rule.” So, the translation would be “with you is rule.” Barthélemy proposes, as do others, that the LXX construed the same consonants with the vowels נָדְבַת but does not explain this word.¹² Presumably it would be an abstract noun from *nāḏab* that is otherwise unattested. The *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (DCH) emends to נְדָבַת which would be a feminine plural either from the adjective נָדִיב or from a proposed noun נְדִיבָה. This could be translated “with you is noble deeds” but does not adequately explain the translation of the LXX. MT Isaiah 32:5, “the fool will no more be called noble” is rendered by “no longer will they say to the fool to rule” in LXX. This is the only place where any form of the root *nāḏab* is connected with the *αρχ*- root in Greek in the LXX. If the proposal of DCH is correct, one would expect the word to be spelled with a *yodh*; if the proposal of Barthélemy is correct, one would expect the word to be spelled with a *waw*. Thus, the spelling we have in Hebrew does not accord well with the rendering in the LXX. One has the impression that LXX is struggling with a difficult text. Parallel is his treatment of difficult terms in the superscriptions.

The readings of MT and LXX are both syntactically possible. MT would have the support of Psalm 109:4 (וְאֲנִי תַפְלָה), Psalm 92:9 (וְאַתֶּם מְרוֹם), Psalm 120:7 (אֲנִי־שָׁלוֹם). As for the reading of LXX, it can be based on Psalm 130:4 (עֲמֹךְ הִסְלִיחָהּ), 7 (עַם־יְהוָה וְהִרְבָּה עִמּוֹ פְדוּת), Job 12:13 (עַמּוֹ), Job 12:16 (חֲכֵמָה וּגְבוּרָה), Job 25:2 (הַמֶּשֶׁל וּפָחַד עַמּוֹ).

The translator of the Greek Psalter certainly had a reading tradition, but given the spellings in Hebrew his rendering looks more like a contextual guess. Barthélemy argues that in this place in the Psalm, however, a consideration on the availability and the pugnacity of a group of combatants seems rather out of place. He argues “the Psalm has insisted (vs 1b) that it is the Lord himself who will make the enemies of his Messiah the footstool of his throne and he will again insist (vs 5b) that it will be the Lord who will smash kings in the day of his wrath.” This argument is not as strong as may seem.

The army of the king is eager and willing. They are ready to fight the battles of the Lord as we see in Judges 5:2 and 9: “my heart is with Israel’s princes, with the willing volunteers among the people” [NIV].¹³ Barbiero notes that although many argue that the Messiah is replaced by a messianic people in books 4-5 of the Psalter, Psalm 110 presents the two realities side-by-side, with the Davidic king and “your people,” the messianic priest and his people who are clothed in holy regalia both referenced.¹⁴ In a canonical exegesis of Psalm 110, Vaillancourt shows that victory results from an interplay by Yahweh, his anointed King, and the people of this King.¹⁵ Similarly in Revelation 19, the rider on the white horse is accompanied by the armies of heaven but apparently he achieves the victory largely on his own. In the Hebrew mentality, the victory is credited to God, whether he uses human instruments or not.

3. MT חֵיֶלֶךְ = your power. MT is supported by the LXX, by the Jewish revisers Aquila, Symmachus, and Quinta and by Jerome’s PIH. The Committee in CTAT suggests that the Syriac Peshitta and Aramaic Targum represent an abbreviated translation due to style but in fact, both support the same text as MT.¹⁶

The word חֵיֶלֶךְ means “force” or “power” and secondarily can mean “army” or “money” as both of these are *forces* to be reckoned with. In English, we also speak of our army as our forces. What is meant by “the day of your power”? Delitzsch interprets it to mean “the day you call your forces to war” (2 Chron 26:13).¹⁷ Barthélemy counters, “The expression ‘the day of your army’ to designate a day of mobilisation would have no parallel in biblical Hebrew. But we can understand: ‘the day when your valor unfolds’ by taking חֵיֶלֶךְ in the sense of גִּבּוֹר חֵיֶלֶךְ , just as we speak of the ‘day of wrath’ or ‘day of vengeance’ or ‘day of my distress’ (Gen 35,3), we can speak of the ‘day of your valor’, that is to say when you accomplished exploits which testify to it.”¹⁸ Here

Barthélemy is seeking to support an interpretation which eliminates any reference to “volunteers” who follow and support the king. The claim that this phrase cannot designate a day of mobilization is unsubstantiated. The phrase is comprehensible as “the day of your (military) power” and could imply a military leader who is followed by a huge army. Alternatively, “power” could be a metonymy of cause for effect, i.e., “power” is put for “victory.” DCH emends the word to הַיְלָלָה and renders “the day of your birth.”¹⁹ This is clearly a stretch because if the word is הַיְלָלָה it should mean “birth pains” and the “your” would refer to the birth pains of the mother. Nonetheless some suggest this because it matches the reading “I have begotten you” even though the emendation is entirely without any textual witness.

4. MT בְּהַדְרֵי־קֹדֶשׁ = in adornments of holiness. MT is supported by the LXX, by Theodotion, Aquila, Quinta, and Sexta, Jewish Revisers from the first and second centuries and by the Syriac Peshitta and Aramaic Targum. Another reading is בהררי קדש, “on the holy mountains.” Symmachus and Jerome’s PIH attest “mountains” from the second and fourth century respectively. Since Jerome was frequently influenced by Symmachus, it is doubtful that he represents an independent witness here. Some 30 Kennicott manuscripts and 41 De Rossi manuscripts plus the first hand of approximately a dozen others have “mountains.” These are later medieval manuscripts. The number of manuscripts reading “mountains” is small given the huge number (more than 1,000) collated by Kennicott and De Rossi. Finally, Bereshit Rabbah 39:8 follows this interpretation.

The confusion of *dalet* and *resh* is common in Hebrew manuscripts whether in the paleo script or the later square script. Barthélemy notes that the reading בהדרי, however, is protected here by List 7 of the *Okhla* of two hapax words which are distinguished only by the fact that one is written with *dalet* and the other with *resh*.²⁰ A marginal note (*masora parva*) in the Aleppo Codex specifies here the uniqueness of the sequence בְּהַדְרֵי־קֹדֶשׁ and of the sequence בְּהַרְרֵי־קֹדֶשׁ in Psalm 87:1. In Kennicott, one medieval manuscript each reads בהדדי and בהרדי respectively, showing other readings that entail confusion of *dalet* and *resh*.

Can we determine if it was easier for scribes to read “mountains” or “adornments”? The latter reading, בהדרי, seems to be more difficult. The form הַדְרִי is construct masculine plural of הִדָּר or הִדָּר. The former noun occurs only in Daniel 11:20 and the latter occurs elsewhere in twenty-nine instances, all

singular. Hossfeld-Zenger note “unusual, though not grammatically impossible, is the word combination בְּהִדְרֵי־קֹדֶשׁ “in holy array,” or “in the splendor of the sanctuary” in v. 3c, because we have here a plural construction with a masculine ending, although הִדְר “splendor, magnificence,” is feminine.²¹ This argument is flawed because the noun הִדְר is, in fact, masculine as Psalm 149:9 and Gesenius 18 make plain.²² Nonetheless, Hossfeld-Zenger are correct that the expression is unusual, though not impossible. And this makes it probable that scribes changed “adornments” to “mountains” (we have holy mountains already in Psalm 87:1) and not vice-versa. Moreover, it is hard to accept the claim of Barthélemy that seven of our earliest witnesses against just one or perhaps two represent the graphical error. After all, “mountains” is the easier reading. So “adornments” is the majority reading and the harder reading, just as we also find in the medieval manuscripts. It also makes sense in the context that the king’s people who represent “a collective voluntary offering” are in holy regalia.

5. MT מִשְׁחָר מִרְחֹם = from the womb of the dawn. All witnesses agree on the first word. The second word is attested by Aquila. The LXX, Theodotion, Symmachus, Quinta as well as the Secunda and the Syriac Peshitta have vocalized the same consonants as מִשְׁחָר, “from the dawn.” The Sexta and the Targum have vocalized the same consonants as מִשְׁחָר, “be early, seek eagerly.” Barthélemy lists Jerome’s PIH supporting MT, but *oriatur* no doubt interprets the consonants as מִשְׁחָר as well.

There is an obvious reason why the majority of witnesses construe the consonants as “from the womb:” a noun מִשְׁחָר is otherwise unattested in the Old Testament (OT). It is certainly the harder reading, but is it impossible? The analysis of Rendsburg is excellent:

The second word [מִשְׁחָר] should be understood quite simply: מִשְׁחָר is a byform of the more common word שָׁחַר meaning “dawn.” Note that words of this semantic field typically bear mem before the root—thus מִזְרוֹחַ “sunrise, east”, מוֹצֵא “sunrise, east”, מְבֹא “sunset, west”, and מְעַרֵב “sunset, west”—so it should not be surprising to encounter the word מִשְׁחָר “dawn” in the ancient Hebrew lexicon.²³

So here the majority of witnesses reveals difficulty speakers of post-biblical Hebrew had with the text rather than support for an alternative reading. Many

of the translations also resulted in two prepositional phrases in sequence that appears awkward and redundant semantically.

The variants in the textual transmission relating to $\text{לְךָ טַל יְלֻדְתִּיךָ}$ in MT are divided by Barthélemy into two, treating טַל לְךָ and יְלֻדְתִּיךָ separately. This is artificial and may prejudice analysis as the first word is marked in MT by *rebia* ‘*mugraš*’ and the second word by a *munah*, thus construing יְלֻדְתִּיךָ טַל as a bound noun phrase. We can list the witnesses for them separately, and then treat them together evaluating global considerations and perspectives on the problems in 110:3 as a whole.

6. MT טַל לְךָ = to you belongs the dew [of your youth]. Witnesses attesting the same text as MT are Aquila, Symmachus, Quinta, Sexta, Secunda, and Jerome’s PIH. The word טַל was understood by the Syriac Peshitta as Aramaic for “youth” and not “dew” but he had the same consonantal text. The Aramaic Targum represents a paraphrase, but is also based on the same text. These two words are not in the renderings of LXX and the Jewish Reviser Theodotion. After describing the variants on יְלֻדְתִּיךָ we can evaluate the witnesses.

7. יְלֻדְתִּיךָ = your youth. As Barthélemy notes, we must distinguish here between an issue of spelling and a problem of vocalization. Barthélemy’s treatment of the problem of spelling is cited in full:

Early editions hesitated on the spelling of this word. It is written יְלֻדוֹתֶיךָ in the *editio princeps* of the Psalter (with commentary by RADAQ) by EZECHIAS DE VENTURA, on August 29, 1477. Then, in the Naples edition of the Psalter (N1, again with RADAQ), on March 28 1487, JOSEPH BEN JACOB ASHKENAZI has יְלֻדוֹתֶיךָ , a reading that the same printer takes up in the *editio princeps* (N2) of the Ketubim, on September 26 of the same year. Then the *editio princeps* of the Bible (S), given by JOSHUA SHELOMO NATHAN, in Soncino, on February 13, 1488, has יְלֻדוֹתֶיךָ a spelling that the polyglot of Alcalá will take over and the edition that MÜNSTER will give in Basel in 1534. Then, the edition of the Bible that GERSHOM SONCINO gives in Brescia on May 24-31, 1494 has יְלֻדוֹתֶיךָ . JUSTINIANI, in the Polyglot Psalter which he published in Genoa in 1516 has יְלֻדוֹתֶיךָ . FELIX DE PRATO, in the *editio princeps* (B1) of the Rabbinic Bible which BOMBERG published in 1516-1517 in Venice, gives in his text יְלֻדוֹתֶיךָ , but this is the first Bible that has variants in the margin: יְלֻדְתִּיךָ . Finally, still at BOMBERG, in 1525, JACOB BEN HAYIM IBN ADONIYA, in the *editio princeps* (B2) of the Masoretic Bible, which will serve for a long time as a model for the

editions which will follow, writes ילדתך with the mp: ל' וכת' כן = “unique and so written.” The same spelling and same mp is in the Warsaw 1860-1866 edition of the *Miqraot Gedolot*. And it is naturally this spelling that BH2 [*Biblia Hebraica* 2nd Ed.] still transmits. However, whereas in 1720, in the Halle edition, J.H. MICHAELIS copied this spelling without mentioning any variant, the *Minḥat Shay* edition, in Mantua in 1744 wrote ילדתיך justifying this spelling with a precise note that SHELOMO NORZI had written in 1626 for his *Goder Pereš*: וא"ו בספבספים ילדתיך, במקצת מדוייקים מלא יו"ד בתבת תו"ו וחסחס בתבת דלת ויש חילופים = in part of the carefully written manuscripts, ‘yod’ plene after ‘taw’ and ‘waw’ defective after ‘dalet’. And there are variations in the manuscripts. That there are ‘variations’ in the manuscripts is shown by DE ROSSI who, taking as the basic text that of BEN ḤAYIM, quotes as attesting the spelling ילדתך 59 mss KENNICOTT and 33 mss of his collection, and further, the first hands of 4 mss and the second hands of 4 more. Note finally that the mss Aleppo, Leningrad, and Cambridge Add 1753 agree on the spelling ילדתיך on which the ms L places the mp ל' וכת' כן. This agreement of the three main witnesses of the classic Tiberian text allows us to conclude that this spelling is indeed the authentic spelling of this textual form. Let us add that this spelling is also that of the Babylonian ms Ec 22 (YEIVIN V 139) and, it seems (the photo being difficult to read) of the ms Ec 17 (id. 96).²⁴

Why such a detailed investigation is necessary will become clear when we consider how it was vocalized.

The consonantal text ילדתך has been vocalized in two ways. The LXX construed the form as ילדתיך, “I have begotten you.” The Syriac Peshitta supports the LXX here but it may be dependent on the LXX. The *Secunda* has *ἰελεδεθεχ* and represents a vocalization of the Hebrew current in Caesarea around 240 AD. Some uncertainty attends interpretation of the form in the *Secunda*. Yuditsky believes it represents a nominal form.²⁵ Benjamin Kantor, on the other hand, is producing a new critical edition of the *Secunda* and thinks it is a verbal form since the suffix is definitely a verbal suffix and explanation of changes in the vowels is at hand.²⁶

The form ילדתך has also been vocalized as ילדתיך which would be an abstract noun meaning “youth” with a pausal spelling. The following witnesses (in chronological order) support the vocalization of MT: Theodotion, Aquila, Symmachus, Quinta, Sexta, Jerome’s PIH and the Aramaic Targum.

Although the spelling יִלְדוּתִי seems unusual, the noun יִלְדוּת follows a normal noun pattern for an abstract noun and is found three times in MT. The other occurrences are Ecclesiastes 11:9 and 11:10 and both instances are instructive. First, the instance in Ecclesiastes 11:9 is pausal and is spelled with a *yod* exactly as we have in Psalm 110:3. Second, in Ecclesiastes 11:10 the word is paired with שְׁחֵרוֹת. Although this word is a hapax, it is almost certainly derived from the same root as the word for “dawn” and refers to youth as the dawn of life.²⁷

⁹ Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your **youth**. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

¹⁰ Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for **youth** and the dawn of life are vanity. (ESV)

Interpreting the last part of Psalm 110:3 in MT is difficult but not impossible. We can render it “from the womb of the dawn, to you belongs the dew of your youth.”

According to the accents in MT, verse 3 is divided into three cola or lines as follows:

עֵמָךְ נִדְבַת בְּיוֹם חַיִּילְךָ
בְּהַדְרֵי־קֹדֶשׁ מִרְחֹם מְשֻׁחָר
לְךָ טֵל יִלְדוּתִיךָ

This colometry or stichometry indicates that “the dew of your youth” is parallel to “the day of your power” according to an A-B-A’ pattern.²⁸ Delitzsch notes that גְּלוּת, a noun formed just like יִלְדוּת, can mean “exile” or “exiles,” so יִלְדוּת might mean “youth” or “young men.”²⁹ So the phrase “your youth” would refer to the followers of the king and not the youth of the king himself. Hossfeld-Zenger reject this interpretation but the parallelism favors it.

The noun טֵל meaning “dew” occurs thirty-one times in MT. In the land of Israel/Palestine, where spring and fall rains in precisely the right amounts and at precisely the right time are crucial to a good harvest, dew is essential to life.³⁰ When Isaac blesses Jacob, the best gift he can give is “the dew of heaven.” The dew is part of the “blessing of heaven above”

passed to Jacob's favorite son Joseph in his deathbed blessing and Moses makes this clear in his deathbed blessing for Joseph in Deuteronomy 33:13. Dew represents the greatest blessing of creation according to Psalm 133:3. In Isaiah 26:19, the generative power of dew symbolizes the gift of resurrection life.³¹ Just as dawn silently removes the secrecy of night, so dawn reveals dew in abundance and generative power.³² We can interpret "from the womb of the dawn to you belongs the dew of your youth" to speak of the multitude and vigor of the young men who freely volunteer for battle under the king.

Hossfeld-Zenger categorically affirm that "youth" must refer to the king's own adolescence and not to his "young men."³³ In spite of this, he cites Schenker in support of a suitable interpretation where "(morning) dew" and "youth" present a metaphorical statement about the life force and effective power of the king Yahweh places on Zion:

Youth and dew from the womb of the morning are alike. Both stand at a beginning, the dew at the beginning of a new day and youth at the beginning of a life. Both are promises and both represent fertility, since dew brings the moisture the day needs and the king's youth brings the strength needed for a happy reign over the people.³⁴

Having proposed at least a reasonable interpretation of MT, we can now consider the problems in the text from a global perspective assessing again our textual witnesses and other interpretive proposals.³⁵

ASSESSING OTHER INTERPRETIVE PROPOSALS

Barthélemy in CTAT, Schenker, and Hossfeld-Zenger believe that the putative parent text of the LXX represents an earlier form of the text that was redacted by the editors of MT. Let us scrutinize this proposal.

Schenker argues that since the translation of the LXX is so literal everywhere else in Psalm 110, the translation of v. 3 is also literal and based upon a parent text that, for example, omitted the words לִךְ טָל.³⁶ This argument is flawed. What the translation of the LXX shows in v. 3, as does every early translation, is that verse 3 created problems for the translator. Since he vocalized לִךְ טָל as "I have begotten you," in conformity with Psalm 2:7, he

then did not know what to do with the words לך טל. They simply did not fit in as Barthélemy admits. He states:

One would be tempted to rely on מ to keep טל and on the ט to omit לך, but that would be a misuse of criticism. Better to admit either that לך is the introduction of an oracle and must be understood as אָמַרְתִּי לך in the sense of “I declared about you,” or that it is an imperative of הֵלֵך: “come out!”³⁷

No one appears to have followed the proposals of Barthélemy for לך and he has only demonstrated that once one reads the last word as a verb, the words לך טל do not fit.

It is worth noting that Theodotion revises the LXX ἐγέννησά σε “I have begotten you” to νεότητός σου “of your youth.” There is nothing in Theodotion corresponding to לך טל. This may mean it was not in his parent text or it may just mean he didn’t bother to revise LXX at this point. It is typical of Theodotion to revise some things and not others in LXX.³⁸ So we cannot prove whether or not these words were absent or extant in his Hebrew Text. Note that the text of the Secunda, which is the only other possible support for “I have begotten you” also clearly had the words לך טל.

Adrian Schenker argues that the form in MT represents a modification of the original text to avoid polytheistic traits (YHWH begets a ruler from a womb, from the morning light, i.e., from an astral greatness) and a parallel between the Son of the Dawn and the ruler in Psalm 110:3. He further posits on the basis of a parallel with the account of Gideon that the metaphor dew in MT was an editorial creation that follows the most natural of the previous metaphors “womb” and “morning light” and from the connection of dew and blessing.³⁹

We would want to affirm with Schenker that the text of v. 3 of both LXX and MT derives from a common original form.⁴⁰ But Schenker’s arguments that LXX is closer to the original text and that MT is a redaction of this are weak. Why would the tradents of MT be offended by Yahweh *begetting a ruler* when this idea is already in Psalm 2? Supposed parallels with Isaiah 14 on the one hand and the Gideon narrative in Judges 6:36-40 on the other, moreover, are forced and stretched. It is doubtful that the tradents of MT inserted the metaphor about dew when support for the text of לך טל is as old as Aquila (Second Century) and the witness of the LXX is not certainly, convincingly

or necessarily a support for their absence. The proto-Masoretic text has early support and Schenker's argument fails when he has to acknowledge that the supposed editorial redaction was so early.

While Barthélemy, Schenker, and Hossfeld-Zenger all argue that the text of MT is a later redaction and relecture (reinterpretation) of the original text motivated theologically, they disagree on how to reconstruct the prior stage of the text. Moreover, after accepting יְלִדְתִּי as original, Hossfeld-Zenger do not offer a clear path from the original to the redaction in MT. They simply show how the reading in MT suits the final Edition of the Hebrew Psalter and how other readings may or may not suit their putative original text without a principled solution according to the science of textual criticism. They devote four paragraphs to לִדְתִּי, לֶךְ, עַמֶּךָ, נִדְבַת, and בְּהַדְרֵי קֹדֶשׁ presenting only suggestions as to what might be in the "prior stage of the text" and not arguing as to why these proposals should be convincing or satisfying.⁴¹ At the same time, they present good arguments as to why the "redaction" or "reinterpretation" in MT does suit the final Edition of the Hebrew Psalter.⁴² Wouldn't it be a lot simpler to admit that the translator of the LXX was operating outside the circle of the Temple scribes and may not have had as reliable a reading tradition as the one passed down to us in MT? Nonetheless, he doubtless had the same Hebrew parent text.

Gary Rendsburg in reaction to the emendations of Brown reminds us that when we abandon the vocalization of MT there is no longer any fixed ground on which to stand and no solution has satisfied scholars so that further proposals and treatments are multiplied.⁴³ Over a dozen detailed recent treatments are referenced by Hossfeld-Zenger and interpretations are legion.⁴⁴

Text-critical analysis, then, shows that the vocalization behind the LXX, possibly supported by the Secunda (the Syriac Peshitta is likely not independent here), is likely based on a faulty reading tradition wrestling with a difficult verse while all our other early witnesses support MT (Theodotion, Aquila, Symmachus, Quinta, Sexta, Jerome's PIH and Aramaic Targum). Exegesis demonstrates the difficulties entailed in almost every proposed parent text, but also plausible interpretations of MT are at hand.

We return to the claims of Matthew Bates, who states "the Masoretic vowel pointing is unlikely to reflect how this was being read in Jesus' era, as the other ancient manuscript traditions make clear."⁴⁵ Text-critical analysis has shown that his claim is not clear from "the other ancient manuscript traditions." Moreover, we know that Psalm 110 is one of the most alluded

to or cited texts from the OT in the New (Matt 22:44, 26:64, Mark 12:36, 14:62, Luke 20:42-43, 22:69, Acts 2:34-35, Rom 8:34, 1 Cor 15:25, Eph 1:20, Col 3:1, Heb 1:3, 13, 5:6, 10, 7:17, 21). Among these *many* allusions and citations, *no author cites verse 3 according to Psalm 110*. Moreover, in Hebrews 1:3 and 1:5 as well as in 5:5 and 5:6 the author combines citation of Psalm 2:7 with Psalm 110:1 or 4. This means that the author wanted to turn to Psalm 2 for the statement “I have begotten you” and connect this particular statement with Psalm 110 rather than cite Psalm 110:3 from the LXX for “I have begotten you” and connect this with verse 1 or 4 in Psalm 110. If Jesus and the apostles were engaging in prosopological exegesis, why didn’t they appeal to Psalm 110:3 LXX in the context of referring to Psalm 110? Instead, they appeal to Psalm 2 for the statement “I have begotten you.”

Were Jesus and his contemporaries engaging in prosopological exegesis? Earlier I published a preliminary assessment and answered in the negative.⁴⁶ Instead, Jesus and his apostles were reasoning from the metanarrative or storyline of Scripture.

Correct interpretation begins by noting that the final edition of the Psalter comes from the period of time after the prophets.

At this point we need to consider the contribution of the writing prophets. If we look at the prophetic literature, there are two separate streams of thought. One is that Yahweh alone saves and God himself will rule his people. Another line of thought is that God will act through the Davidic king. We see this clearly in Isaiah. The prophet announces a coming king. This is not bad king Ahaz and not even good king Hezekiah. The future king is described in three panels in Isaiah 7-11. He is Immanuel born of a virgin in Isaiah 7:14. He is given divine names in Isaiah 9. He is given the Spirit sevenfold in Isaiah 11 and 61 and his righteous rule issues in a new creation. There are also three panels in Isaiah 49-53 depicting the coming king as the servant of Yahweh. Here he accomplishes atonement for his people that results in the forgiveness of sins and while he bears their sins, he, in turn, gives them his victory over death.

Parallel to these themes is the claim that Yahweh is King. Yahweh is clearly king over the human king in Isaiah 6. The divine king is mentioned again in Isaiah 24:23 as reigning on Mt. Zion. He is confessed as king in 33:22: “Yahweh is our Judge, Yahweh is our Lawgiver, Yahweh is our King; it is he who will save us.” Yahweh identifies himself as Israel’s king in 41:21, 43:15, and 44:6, passages which emphasize his sovereign power and authority. Isaiah 66:1 loudly proclaims

Yahweh as King without using the word and this forms a bookend for Isaiah 6.⁴⁷

Moreover, not only is Yahweh proclaimed as Israel's Savior in 43:3 and 45:15, but 43:11 states that apart from Yahweh there is no Savior. So, when the former passages indicate that the coming human king will rule the world, will atone for sin, will inaugurate a new covenant that eventually brings the Spirit, the lines between Yahweh and the coming human king are becoming blurred. This is what we also see in Psalm 45.

The picture in Psalms 2 and 110 is built from 2 Samuel 7, but shares with the development in Psalm 45 relations between Yahweh, the future King, and his people. Although the future king will conquer the nations as empowered by Yahweh, Psalm 110:3 does include a place for the people of the king in the coming battle even though the victory belongs solidly to the king and God.⁴⁸

CONCLUSION

In thinking about the use of Psalm 110 by Jesus in Mark 12, the argument is better derived from the narrative storyline of the OT than by appealing to an analysis of characters as per the rhetorical techniques (prosopological exegesis) found in the later Roman Period and patristic scholarship. The appeal of Matthew Bates to this text to warrant his appeal to prospological exegesis is not warranted by our assessment of the text.

APPENDIX: TEXTUAL WITNESSES FOR PSALM 110:3

MT (Aleppo Codex, Codex Leningradensis)

עַמּוֹךְ נִדְבַת בָּיִם חֵילָךְ בַּהֲדָרִי־קֹדֶשׁ מִרְחֶם מִשְׁחָר לְךָ טַל יִלְדָּתִיךָ

Dead Sea Scrolls — Not Extant for Psalm 110:3

Medieval Hebrew MSS – De Rossi⁴⁹

[בהדרי 1, 73, 93, 118, 125, 131, 142, 148, 150, 166, 176, 180, 203, 206, 208, 214, 215, 250, 252, 253, 311, 328, 355, 377, 454, 477, 497, 509, 519, 591 [= 30 mss]; primo 130, 158, 358; forte 240, mei 1, 2, 3, 4, 31, 34, 36, 39, 204, 215, 231, 244, 263, 276, 319, 343, 368, 385, 446, 447, 478, 510, 517, 554, 564, 593, 595, 613, 632, 640, 677, 696, 732, 758, 759, 824, 864,

865, 867, 874, 910 [= 41 mss], primo 209, 270, 304, 350, 551, 553, 572, 596, 846, videtur 789, videntur primo 32, 196 [= 83 mss total]

תַּתְּלִי תַּתְּלִי 2, 17, 30, 31, 36, 41, 89, 102, 121, 130, 171, 176, 180, 192, 203, 204, 207, 208, 209, 210, 213, 215, 219, 227, 239, 242, 251, 252, 319, 330, 399, 400, 402, 403, 404, 423, 425, 437, 444, 455, 456, 477, 495, 496, 497, 520, 539, 546, 559, 572, 587, 598, 601, 602, 606, 625, 638, 639, 646 [= 59 mss]; primo 3, 326; nunc 141, mei 3, 32, 33, 35, 36, 40, 196, 204, 209, 231, 234, 249, 263, 276, 287, 319, 328, 331, 385, 412, 596, 628, 632, 670, 681, 758, 775, 824, 828, 846, 873, 941, 942 [= 33 mss], primo 633, 789, nunc 270, 518, 782, [= 100 mss total]

LXX⁵⁰

μετὰ σοῦ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῆς δυνάμεώς σου
ἐν ταῖς λαμπρότησιν τῶν ἁγίων.
ἐκ γαστρὸς πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐξεγέννησά σε.⁵¹

With you is rule on a day of your power
among the splendors of the holy ones

From the womb, before Morning-star, I brought you forth [NETS]⁵²

Early Jewish Revisors of LXX⁵³

Secunda

μηρέμ μεσσαὰρ λακ τὰλ ιελεδέχεθ (ιελεδέθεχ)

Aquila (Epiphanius Pan. 65.4.5 [GCS], Eusebius [PG 23], Cat. 17 [1134])
μετὰ σοῦ ἐκουσιασμοὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐπορίας σου.
ἐν διαπρεπείας ἡγιασμέναις.

ἀπὸ μήτρας ἐξωρθρισμένης σοι δρόσος παιδιότητός σου.
ἐξωρθρισμένης] ἐξωρθρισμένου Cat. 17

With you are voluntary offerings on the day of your power
in consecrated splendors

from early offspring [early morning womb] to you belongs the dew of your youth

Symmachus (Epiphanius Pan. 65.4.5 [GCS], Eusebius [PG 23], Cat. 17 [1134])

ὁ λαός σου ἡγεμονικοὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἰσχύος σου
ἐν ὄρεσιν ἁγίοις

... ὡς κατ' ὄρθρον σοι δρόσος ἡ νεότης σου
 σοι δρόσος] δρόσου Epiphanius; δρόσος σου σ'θ' Cat 17
 Your people are leaders in the day of your strength
 on holy mountains
 ... like in the early morning your dew is your youth
 (Your youth is for you as early morning dew)

Theodotion (Epiphanius Pan. 65.4.5 [GCS], Cat. 17)
 ... ἐν εὐπρεπείᾳ ἁγίου [θ' ε' acc. to Cat 17] [ἐν ἁγίου εὐπρεπείᾳ Ἑτερος
 Chrys. PG 55,274]
 ἐκ μήτρας ἀπὸ πρωῒ νεότητός σου
 in holy appearance/decorum
 from the womb, from the early morning of your youth

Quinta (Epiphanius Pan. 65.4.5 [GCS], Eusebius [PG 23], Cat. 17,
 Chrysostom)
 μετὰ σοῦ ἐκουσιασμοὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ δυνάμεώς σου.
 ἐν δόξῃ τῶν ἁγίων [σ' acc. to Cat 17] [ἐν δόξῃ ἁγίων Ἄλλος Chrys. PG 55,274]]
 ἐκ μήτρας ἀπὸ ὀρθρου σοι δρόσος νεότητός σου
 νεότητός σου] ἐν νεότητί σου GCS; om σου Cat 17
 with you are freewill offerings in the day of your power
 in the glory of the holy ones
 from the womb from early morning to you belongs the dew of youth

Sexta (Epiphanius Pan. 65.4.5 [GCS], Cat. 17)
 ἐκ γαστρὸς ζητήσουσί σε, δρόσος νεανικότητός σου
 om δρόσος Cat 17; νεανισκοῦ Cat 17
 from the womb they will seek you early—the dew of your vigour

Vulgate⁵⁴
 Gallican Psalter (= LXX)
tecum principium in die virtutis tuae
in splendoribus sanctorum
ex utero ante luciferum genui te

Psalmi iuxta Hebraeos (PIH; Psalms according to the Hebrew)

*populi tui spontanei erunt in die fortitudinis tuae
in montibus sanctis quasi de vulva orietur tibi ros adolescentiae tuae*
Your people will be willing in the day of your strength
on holy mountains as from the womb will arise for you the dew of your youth

Aramaic Targum⁵⁵

עמך דבית ישראל דמתנדבין לאוריתא ביום אנחות קרבך תסתייע עמהון בשיבוהורי קודשא רחמן דאלהא יסתרהבון לך
היך נחתת סלא יתבין לרוחצן תולדתך:

As for your people, the house of Israel, who offer themselves voluntarily to the Law, on the day of the waging of your war you will join with them; in the splendor of holiness the compassion of God will hasten to you like the descent of the dew; your generations will dwell securely.⁵⁶

1. Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and the Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 49.
2. *Ibid.*, 53.
3. *Ibid.*, 53-54.
4. See G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 220-22.
5. *Ibid.*, 54, n. 25.
6. Fred Sanders, *The Triune God* (New Studies in Dogmatics; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 226-237.
7. J. V. Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption* (Mentor: Fearn, Ross-shire, 2016), 95-106.
8. See Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament. Tome 4. Psaumes. Rapport final du Comité pour l'analyse textuelle de l'Ancien Testament hébreu institué par l'Alliance Biblique Universelle, établi en collaboration avec Alexander R. Hulst, Norbert Lohfink, William D. McHardy, H. Peter Rüger, coéditeur, James A. Sanders, coéditeur. Stephen D. Ryan and Adrian Schenker eds. (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 50/4; Fribourg: Academic Press and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 736-748; Adrian Schenker, "Textkritik und Textgeschichte von Ps 110(109),3: Initiativen der Septuaginta und der protomasoretischen Edition," in *La Septante en Allemagne et en France: Septuaginta Deutsch und Bible d'Alexandrie*, Wolfgang Kraus and Olivier Munnich eds. (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 50/4; Fribourg: Academic Press and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 172-190; Frank Lothar Hossfeld and Eric Zenger, *Psalms 3*. Transl. Linda M. Maloney (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 140-154.*
9. All major Jewish interpreters from the medieval period are cited in Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, 4:738-744. Unfortunately, space does not permit me to reproduce translations of them.
10. The Old Latin is a translation of the LXX and so is the Gallican Psalter by Jerome. Therefore, these are not counted or listed as independent or separate witnesses.
11. See Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jacobus A. Naudé and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 213 and Ian J. Vaillancourt, *The Multifaceted Saviour of Psalms 110 and 118: A Canonical Exegesis* (Hebrew Bible Monographs, 86; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2019), 101-103.
12. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, 4:736.
13. So Clifford, *Psalms 73-150* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003.), 179 and Hossfeld-Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 149.
14. So Vaillancourt, *The Multifaceted Saviour of Psalms 110 and 118*, 102 citing Gianni Barbiero, "The Non-Violent

- Messiah of Psalm 110,” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 58 (2014): 1-20, 16.
15. Vaillancourt, *The Multifaceted Saviour of Psalms 110 and 118*, 102-104. The same interplay between Yahweh and the coming king-priest can be seen in the relationship between vv. 4-6 and v. 7. See Vaillancourt, 114-116.
16. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, 4:736, 744-45.
17. Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 3:190.
18. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, 4:744-45.
19. David J. A. Clines, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 3:215.
20. F. Díaz Estéban, *Sefer Oklah we-Oklah* (Madrid, 1975), 25 and S. Frensdorff, *Das Buch Ochlal W'ochlah (Massora)* (Hannover, 1864), 15.
21. F. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 143.
22. Rudolf Meyer and Herbert Donner, et al. eds., *Wilhelm Gesenius Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 18th Edition (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2013), s.v. הָרָר.
23. Gary A. Rendsburg, “Psalm CX 3B,” *Vetus Testamentum* 49,4 (1999): 550.
24. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, 4:736, 746-47.
25. A. E. Yuditsky, דקדוק העברית של תעתיקי אורייגט (Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2017), 76-77, 199.
26. Benjamin Kantor, “Why are the Greek and Latin Transcription Traditions of Biblical Hebrew Relevant for Exegesis?: Gen 1:1, Isa 9:5, Ps 110:3.” Paper Presented at Oxford Hebrew Bible Seminar, Oxford, UK, January, 2020.
27. Cf. C. L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible 18C; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 350-51, whose analysis of שְׁחָרוּת is excellent.
28. Manuscript British Library Or 2373 has precisely this stichometry.
29. Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:191.
30. For the critical correlation of dew and rains to cycles of harvest in Israel, see especially Nogah Hareuveni, *Nature in Our Biblical Heritage* (Kiryat Ono, Israel: Neot Kedumim, 1980).
31. Part of the context of Isaiah 26:19 is 25:8 where Yahweh swallows death (unlike the Canaanite myths where Mot (i.e., death) swallows Baal). I acknowledge John D. Meade for drawing my attention to this.
32. Cf. also Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, Volume 3: (90-150) (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016), 352.
33. F. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 142.
34. A. Schenker, “Textkritik und Textgeschichte von Ps 110(109),3,” 180 cited by F. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 149.
35. Cf. also Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, Vol. 3: (90-150) (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016), 350-353.
36. A. Schenker, “Textkritik und Textgeschichte von Ps 110(109),3,” 172-176.
37. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, 4:746.
38. See Peter J. Gentry, *The Asterisked Materials in the Greek Job* (SBL SCS 38; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).
39. A. Schenker, “Textkritik und Textgeschichte von Ps 110(109), 3,” 182-190.
40. *Ibid.*, 186.
41. F. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 142-3.
42. *Ibid.*, 149.
43. Gary A. Rendsburg, “Psalm CX 3B,” *Vetus Testamentum* 49,4 (1999): 549, 551.
44. F. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 139-40.
45. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 25 n. 54.
46. Peter J. Gentry, “A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 23.2 (2019): 105-122.
47. See Richard Schultz, “The King in the Book of Isaiah,” in *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (ed., P. E. Satterthwaite, R. S. Hess, and G. J. Wenham; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 141-166.
48. See esp. Michael K. Snearly, *The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 624; London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 1 and Vaillancourt, *The Multifaceted Saviour of Psalms 110 and 118*, 178. Quoting Snearly on p. 178, Vaillancourt states, “the consistent trajectory of the entire Psalter's storyline is: ‘Yahweh is king; he has appointed an earthly vice-regent who represents his heavenly rule on earth; the earthly vice-regent and his people travail against the rebellious of the earth.”
49. J. B. de Rossi, *Variae Lectionis Veteris Testamenti*, 4 Vols. (Parma: 1784-88).
50. Alfred Rahlfs, ed. *Psalmi Cum Odis* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum, 10; 3rd ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931, 1967, 1979).

51. The common form of LXX cited by the Church Fathers is ἐγγύησα.
52. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds. *The New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
53. Texts of the Jewish Revisors are based on the following sources: Eusebius, *Commentarii in Psalmos* (Franz Xaver Risch, *Patristic Text Archive* 2020, Version: afb13896, committed on 2021-08-14, <https://pta.bbaw.de/text/urn:cts:pta:pta0003.pta020.pta-grcBibex3> and PG 23, Epiphanius, *Panarion* 65.4.5 (GCS), and Catena 17 from manuscript Ra 1134 = Paris, BN gr. 140. Generally speaking, Eusebius preserves the best text followed by Epiphanius and lastly the Catena. Attributions in the Catena are not always correct.
54. Robert Weber, et al. eds., *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatem Versionem* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969, 3rd ed., 1983).
55. David M. Stec, *The Targum of Psalms: Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes. The Aramaic Bible, Vol. 16* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 203.