# The Language Environment of First Century Judaea

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# Contents

# Non-Septuagintal Hebraisms in the Third Gospel: An Inconvenient Truth

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Almost 70 years ago, working under the assumption of an essentially exclusive Aramaic model, H. F. D. Sparks published a short but influential article, "The Semitisms of St. Luke."[1] He began by observing that both in number and in character the Semitisms of Mark and Matthew are decidedly different from those of Luke:

> If we compare St. Luke with the other Synoptists, we are forced to admit that "subject matter" is very far from being a complete explanation; for not only do certain of the characteristic Semitic expressions, which all three share, occur with greater frequency in St. Luke, but there are in addition a whole host of peculiarly Lukan Semitisms, that is, constructions and phrases, sometimes complete sentences, which, awkward in Greek, are normal and idiomatic in Semitic.[2]

Even more perplexing for Sparks was the recognition that Matthew and Mark contain Semitisms that can be explained by either Aramaic or Hebrew, while Luke presents Semitisms that can be only Hebrew. Writing prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls[3] and other inscriptional evidence that demonstrates

1 H. F. D. Sparks, "The Semitisms of St. Luke's Gospel," *JJS* 44 (1943): 129–38.

2 Ibid., 129. Sparks gives a handful of examples that he describes as being distributed in all parts of the Gospel. See Luke 1:6: ἦσαν δὲ δίκαιοι ἀμφότεροι ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ, πορευόμενοι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐντολαῖς καὶ δικαιώμασιν τοῦ κυρίου ἄμεμπτοι; Luke 11:54: ἐνεδρεύοντες αὐτὸν θηρεῦσαί τι ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ; Luke 21:34–35: ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη ὡς παγίς· ἐπεισελεύσεται γὰρ ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ πρόσωπον πάσης τῆς γῆς; Luke 24:49: ὑμεῖς δὲ καθίσατε ἐν τῇ πόλει ἕως οὗ ἐνδύσησθε ἐξ ὕψους δύναμιν.

3 Abegg estimates that of the 700 non-biblical texts from the Qumran library, "120 are written in Aramaic and 28 in Greek . . . 550 scrolls were written in Hebrew." M. Abegg, "Hebrew Language," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (ed. C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 460; cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, "Languages," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam; 2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 473.

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the first-century use of Hebrew,[4] Sparks presumed that if the Evangelist had drawn from a Semitic source, it could only have been Aramaic. Therefore, since "hardly any of St. Luke's Semitisms are demonstrably derivable from Aramaic," he concluded the only explanation for the Hebraisms in the Third Gospel was the Evangelist's intentional biblicizing style.

Sparks' approach is still representative of the mainstream of New Testament scholars, who have not moved far from either his assumptions or conclusions during the ensuing seven decades. The charge of alleged Lukan Septuagintisms[5] is unhesitatingly repeated in the scholarly literature.[6] This line of reasoning is founded upon two *a priori* assumptions: first, Aramaic is the only language option available to explain the Semitisms in the Synoptic Gospels;[7] second, Luke's literary sources for his Gospel were primarily Mark and Q, which

4 See, for example, the inscriptional evidence for Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek on ancient Jewish ossuaries; see L. Y. Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries* (Jerusalem: IAA, Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), 13. G. Baltes concludes in a contribution to the present volume ("The Use of Hebrew and Aramaic in Epigraphic Sources of the New Testament Era," 35–36), "the assumption of the death of spoken Hebrew after the Babylonian exile can no longer be upheld in view of the epigraphic evidence. Hebrew was obviously a living language in the first century C.E. and continued to be so well into the second century."

5 A Septuagintism is a Hebraism occurring in a Greek text that is found in the Septuagint, while a non-Septuagintal Hebraism is a Hebraism occurring in a Greek text that is not found in the Septuagint.

6 J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1899), 162; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (AB 28; 2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1981–85), 114–16; I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 208, 405; F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [hereafter: BDF] (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), 3–4 (§4).

7 The presumption of Aramaic-only as the Semitic *Vorlage* of the Gospels is frequently reasoned. For example, R. Gundry rejected the suggestion that the familiar Hebrew word play upon קַיִץ ("summer[fruit = fig]") and קֵץ ("end," 2 Sam 16:1–2; Jer 40:10; Isa 16:9; *t. Ned.* 4.1–2) (Aramaic קיטּ, "summer/fruit," and Aramaic סוף, "end," does not work) might be represented in the logion preserved in the Synoptic Gospels, "Learn the lesson of the fig (συκῆ) . . . you know that the summer (θέρος) is here" (Luke 21:30; cf. Matt 24:32; Mark 13:28). His sole reason was that the wordplay, "is possible only in Hebrew, not in Aramaic . . . much less in Greek." See R. H Gundry, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 788. J. S. Kloppenborg likewise dismissed a word play between בן (i.e. υἱός = son) and אבן (i.e. λίθος = stone) in Mark 12:10 and parallels on the grounds that "this wordplay is impossible in Aramaic, presumably Jesus' language" *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 236. M. McNamara (*Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible* [2d ed; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 90–91) describes the general position of scholarship regarding the language environment in the first century and the New Testament: "It is agreed

possess Aramaisms but not the Hebraisms associated with the Third Gospel. Thus presumed, the prevalent independent Hebraisms in the Gospel of Luke have led to the characterization that the Evangelist was "an habitual, conscious, and deliberate Septuagintalizer."[8]

In the fresh light of the results of a century of archaeological investigation, it simply can no longer be maintained that Aramaic is the only viable Semitic *Vorlage* for the words of Jesus. A trilingual environment, which included Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, existed in the land of Israel during the first century. This acknowledgment must be central to any explanation for the development of the Synoptic Tradition, and the inevitable consequences of this reassessment are swift and profound. Once the possibility for the existence of living Hebrew is conceded, then, if one identifies Hebraisms in Luke's Greek, which also happen to appear in the Greek text of the Septuagint, one is not permitted simply to brush them aside as the product of the Evangelist's literary creativity. Instead, to discount them, one must demonstrate that these are *not* independently sourced Hebraisms, but that the Evangelist has relied upon the Greek Bible precisely at these points in the writing of his Gospel. The fact that Hebraisms appear both in Luke and the Septuagint proves merely a similar rendering of a Hebrew idiom into Greek, not Luke's conscious (or unconscious) use of the Septuagint.

As we noted, scholarship has struggled to reconcile its assumption regarding Luke's sources and the Hebraisms in the Third Gospel. If Luke relied upon Mark and Q for the vast majority of his Gospel, how are we to explain the fact that his report at many places is more Hebraic than these two sources? It is true that some of the Semitisms of Mark (γεύεσθαι θανάτου: "to taste death," Mark 9:1/Matt 16:28 = Luke 9:27)[9] and Q (φοβεῖσθαι ἀπό: "to be afraid from," Matt 10:28 = Luke 12:4)[10] find their way into the Third Gospel, but these do not explain Luke's Hebraisms that are not shared by his putative sources. Instead,

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that the chief centre of Jesus' ministry and of the Gospel proclamation was Galilee and that the language spoken in Galilee was principally Aramaic. It is also agreed that the chief language used by Jesus in his preaching and in teaching his disciples was Aramaic." As is too often the case, McNamara brings no inscriptional evidence to support his linguistic assumption, which is challenged in studies by both Baltes and Turnage in the present volume.

8 Sparks, "The Semitisms of St. Luke's Gospel," 134.

9 Cf. H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (6 vols.; Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1926) (hereafter: Billerbeck), 1:751–52; *4 Ezra* 6:26.

10 Cf. LXX Deut 1:29; 20:1; Josh 10:6; *T. Sim.* 2:3; BDF 83 (§149).

Luke is often accused of rephrasing Mark with intentional biblicisms, and it is precisely at this point that the argument breaks down.

For example, Sparks describes Luke's use of Mark to rewrite "The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen" (Mark 12:1–12 = Luke 20:9–19) in which "St. Luke has re-phrased [Mark] twice—'and he added to send another servant'; and then 'he added to send a third.' "[11] It is correct that Luke's καὶ προσέθετο πέμψαι is more Hebraic than Mark's καὶ πάλιν ἀπέστειλεν. However, Luke's phrase is not Septuagintal.[12] If Luke is intentionally Septuagintalizing the narrative he received from Mark, his insertion of ἕτερον between the two verbs makes no sense.

> It is schizophrenic to insert a blatant Hebraism but [then] to just as blatantly use a non-Hebrew, non-Septuagintal word order. This is part of the riddle that a source theory can handle much more naturally. It is relatively easy to edit a [non-canonical] preexisting Greek text, partially adapting items to Greek style but leaving much of the source's style intact.[13]

Additionally, the phrase "and added to send" does not even appear to be characteristically "Lukan." In the combined corpus of Luke–Acts, προσθεῖναι + infinitive occurs three times (Luke 20:11–12; Acts 12:3), but never in 2 Acts.[14] So, precisely in the portion of the Lukan corpus that is most often acknowledged

11 Sparks, "The Semitisms of St. Luke's Gospel," 130; cf. A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), 460; BDF 225 (§435a).

12 In Gen 8:10 we witness וַיְשַׁלַּח, but the LXX's rendering of this phrase actually resembles more the wording of Mark than Luke: πάλιν ἐξαπέστειλεν (cf. Num 22:15; Judg 22:15). For הוסיף + infinitive compare Gen 4:12; 8:12; Exod 10:28; Deut 3:26; Isa 1:13; 24:20; Hos 9:15; Amos 5:2.

13 R. Buth and B. Kvasnica, "Temple Authorities and Tithe-Evasion: The Linguistic Background and Impact of the Parable of the Vineyard, the Tenants and the Son," in *Jesus' Last Week* (ed. R. Steven Notley, Marc Turnage and Brian Becker; Jerusalem Studies in the Synoptic Gospels 1; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 285.

14 Without prejudging the matter, for the purposes of this study we have adopted Torrey's terminology of 1 Acts (chs. 1–15) and 2 Acts (chs. 16–28) in recognition of the shift in the Evangelist's literary style within the composition. See C. C. Torrey, *The Composition and Date of Acts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1916), 5; cf. M. Wilcox, *The Semitisms of Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 6.

to reflect the Evangelist's own peculiar style (i.e. 2 Acts),[15] the Hebraism προσθεῖναι + infinitive is absent.[16]

Luke's use and non-use of Hebraisms in his corpus can prove to be diagnostic for distinguishing between "Lukanisms" and "sourcisms." To wit, the Hebraisms that occur prominently in Luke's Gospel and 1 Acts, but are entirely or mostly absent from 2 Acts, are likely not the product of the Evangelist's own idiosyncratic style, but have been borrowed by him from a [non-canonical] source. Indeed, if we look more closely at Luke 20:11–12, we find that the author's own style is not Hebraic at all, as demonstrated by his insertion of ἕτερον, which is markedly Greek in style. "The non-Lucan style of 'added + infinitive' coupled with the non-Hebraic word order lead us to the conclusion that this is not an imitation of the LXX. The word order suggests Lucan editing and the Hebrew idiom suggests [a non-canonical] Hebraic source . . ."[17]

On a separate occasion, Sparks again charges Luke with the "rephrasing of St. Mark's 'and they were all amazed' to read 'and amazement came upon them all' " (Mark 1:27; Luke 4:36).[18] However, he ignores that Luke does not use θάμβος outside of his Gospel and 1 Acts (Luke 5:9; Acts 3:10), evidence that it is possibly a sourcism rather than an invention of "Lukan rephrasing." Moreover, if Luke had intended to imitate the LXX, would he not also have joined the noun with the Greek biblical verb: for example, θάμβος + πίπτειν ἐπί?[19] On the other hand, the verb θάμβειν, in fact, may betray Mark's own pen (which Luke does not follow), since he employs it two additional times in his Gospel (Mark 10:24, 32). On those occasions Matthew is in agreement with Luke's non-use of the Markan θαμβεῖν (cf. Mark 10:24 = Matt 19:24/Luke 18:25; Mark 10:32 = Matt 20:17/Luke 18:31), strengthening our suggestion that it is Mark's editing we see in Mark 1:27, and not Luke's replacement of Mark's wording with θάμβος.

Returning to our earlier observation, insufficient attention is given to Luke's change in literary style in 2 Acts as a diagnostic measure whether or not Luke intentionally biblicized his Greek, or was influenced by Hebraized sources. For example, two other supposed Septuagintisms are routinely cited by scholars to be present in Luke's compositions, but almost no attention is paid to

15 F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 28–29; Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, 13–20.

16 R. Buth, "Evaluating Luke's Unnatural Greek: A Look at His Connectives," in *Discourse Studies and Biblical Interpretation: A Festschrift in Honor of Stephen H. Levinsohn* (ed. S. E. Runge; Logos Bible Software, 2011), 335–70.

17 Buth and Kvasnica, "Temple Authorities and Tithe-Evasion," 285–86.

18 Sparks, "The Semitisms of St. Luke's Gospel,"130 n. 4; cf. Plummer, *Luke*, 135.

19 E.g. 1 Sam 26:12: ὅτι θάμβος κυρίου ἐπέπεσεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτούς; cf. Luke 1:12; Acts 19:17; Rev 11:11.

their absence from Acts 16–28. Fitzmyer, lists Luke's use of ἐν τῷ + infinitive + accusative pronoun as a Lukan Septuagintism, no doubt because it occurs 362 times in the Septuagint.[20] It reflects the Hebrew construction with the preposition בְּ prefixed to an infinitive construct, often with the subject indicated by a pronominal suffix (e.g. Gen 11:2: בְּנָסְעָם, "when they traveled").[21] Yet, Fitzmyer fails to mention that while Luke uses the Greek construction 26 times in his Gospel and seven times in 1 Acts, he does not use it in 2 Acts.

An obvious explanation for this shift in style is that the Evangelist has been influenced by Hebraized sources in the composition of the Third Gospel and 1 Acts. His source for the phrase, ἐν τῷ + infinitive + accusative pronoun, cannot have been Mark, since the Hebraic idiom does not occur in the Second Gospel. Neither is Q of much assistance, since the construction only occurs twice in Matthew (Matt 13:4; 27:12). Finally, when writing in 2 Acts about events that the author himself witnessed, he does not incorporate this Hebraic style.[22]

The same explanation of an Hebraic source for Luke and 1 Acts (and its contrasting absence in 2 Acts) can be made for another alleged Lukan Septuagintism: the use of the noun ῥῆμα to mean "thing" rather than "word or saying," as it does routinely in Greek usage.[23] Luke's use of ῥῆμα for "thing" reflects influence from the Hebrew noun דָּבָר (e.g. Luke 1:37, 65; 2:15, 19, 51; Acts 5:32; 13:42).[24] Yet, there is silence among scholars concerning the fact that

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20 J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 119–20; cf. N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Vol. 3, *Syntax* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 47.

21 According to G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus Considered in the Light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), 33, the preposition with the dative of the articular infinitive is Hebraic and its equivalent is not to be found in Aramaic (cf. BDF 208 [§404]). Yet, T. Muraoka's *A Grammar of Qumran Aramaic* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 105, notes "in a small number of cases and under certain syntactic conditions we find an infinitive without the prefixed proposition ל…" Muraoka cites examples from the Qumran Targum of Job (11Q10) of the temporal use of the infinitive, במעבדי ארעא ("when I made the earth," [11Q10] XXX, 2 [MT במזהר בְּיַסְּדִי];) "when (they) shine" (ibid. 4 [MT במעבדה לרוחא בְּרָן];) ("when he made the wind," 11Q10 XIII, 6 [MT לַעֲשׂוֹת לָרוּחַ]). Nevertheless, while the construction may be possible in Aramaic, the relative frequency of its occurrence both in the Septuagint and Luke's Gospel indicates a Hebrew *Vorlage*.

22 Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, 32.

23 Sparks, "The Semitisms of St. Luke's Gospel," 133; Bruce, *Acts*, 144; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 352; cf. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon with a Revised Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 1569.

24 M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 272.

the meaning of "thing" for ῥῆμα does not occur in 2 Acts. When the term does occur in these chapters (26:25; 28:25), it retains its characteristic Greek sense: "word or saying." So, we see that careful attention to Luke's use and non-use of vocabulary in 1 Acts and 2 Acts can assist to distinguish Luke's own style from his use of Hebraized sources.

Such attention may also serve to answer another charge. Sparks raises the question whether Luke might have been influenced by a Semitic-Greek *patois* as a result of his contact with "Semitic speaking Christians in Palestine."[25] He observes, "If we are to maintain that St. Luke's Semitisms are due to the *patois*, we are bound to ask what evidence there is for distinctive Aramaic influence on his style."[26] Once again his presumption of an exclusive Aramaic environment has colored his reading of the evidence. The question of possible Lukan Aramaisms momentarily aside, he has overlooked the strongest evidence against Luke's influence from a Semitic-Greek *patois*. If Luke's own literary style was shaped by a Jewish-Christian *patois* rather than written sources, we would expect to see consistent evidence of this throughout his corpus. Yet, the comparative lack of Hebraisms in 2 Acts suggests Luke's style was determined not by a Jewish-Christian *patois* but by his use and non-use of external written sources.

In any event, Sparks is able to identify only two alleged Aramaisms in Luke's Gospel: "the collocation of the verb 'to be' with the participle in place of the finite verb, as in ἦσαν δὲ αὐτῷ ἐγγίζοντες [Luke 15:1]; and the phrase 'to begin to do something', as in the constantly recurring 'he began to say' [ἤρξατο δὲ λέγειν; e.g. Luke 4:21; 7:24]."[27] Even these two cases of theorized Lukan Aramaisms cannot be used to prove Aramaic sources (or a Semitic *patois*). The influence of Aramaic upon Hebrew in the Greco-Roman period is well documented.[28] Rabin has argued that beginning in the Hasmonean period and continuing into the first century C.E. in Judea there existed a Hebrew *diglossia* that consisted of a more formal [high] Hebrew (which can be identified with Late Biblical Hebrew and witnessed in much of the non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls) and

25 See N. Turner, "Jewish and Christian Influence on New Testament Vocabulary," *Novum Testamentum* 16 (1974): 149–60.

26 Sparks, "The Semitisms of St. Luke's Gospel," 131.

27 Ibid. See Buth and Kvasnica's discussion of the aspectal use of ἄρξασθαι + infinitive ("Temple Authorities and Tithe-Evasion," 261–68). The increase of the phrase and aspect in general was likely an influence of Indoeuropean (Persian) and Greek on both Aramaic and Hebrew.

28 See C. Rabin, "Hebrew and Aramaic in the First Century," in *The Jewish People in the First Century Volume Two* (ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), 1022.

a less formal [low] Hebrew that shows signs of Aramaic influence. This low Hebrew was primarily in oral use in the first century and should be identified later with the Hebrew of the Mishnah and Tannaitic literature. Evidence of both dialects can be seen in the Hebraisms of the New Testament.[29] Aramaic influences are comparatively more prevalent in low Hebrew. While the periphrastic participle construction occurs in the Hebrew Bible,[30] it does so much more frequently in Post-biblical Hebrew.[31] As one would expect, it is found in the high Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls[32] but increases significantly in the low Hebrew found in the Mishnah.[33]

Moreover, Greek translations of works that were originally composed in Hebrew witness the same construction (i.e. 1 Maccabees[34] and Ben Sira[35]). So, the presence of the periphrastic participle in Luke does not indicate that the Evangelist used Aramaic sources. Neither is the pleonastic use of ἄρξασθαι + infinitive in Luke 13:25–26 necessarily Aramaic[36] or even Lukan as Sparks contends:

> In Mark, ἄρξασθαι + infinitive is one of Mark's stylistic characteristics. However, comparison with 2nd Acts [i.e., where it only occurs three

29 D. N. Bivin, "Hebraisms in the New Testament," in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. Geoffrey Khan (4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 198–201.

30 E.g. Gen 37:2; 1 Sam 2:11; 2 Kgs 12:6, etc.

31 M. H. Segal, "Mishnaic Hebrew and its Relation to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic," *JQR* 20, no. 4 (1908): 698, states: "Like Aramaic, Mishnaic Hebrew regularly combines the participle with היה whenever it desires to express the iteration of an act in the past or in the future, or its continuity through a longer or shorter period, the combination thus taking the place of the frequentative and iterative uses of the old perfect consecutive and of the simple tenses. The construction in Mishnaic Hebrew is, however, of native origin and not borrowed from the Aramaic." For the purposes of the present study, we may leave aside Segal's contention whether or not the paraphrastic participle in Mishnaic Hebrew was "of native origin." What is important is that it was already an integral part of Mishnaic Hebrew by the first century C.E.

32 83 times; e.g. 4Q221 f5.6: היה מתאבל על אשתו.

33 800 times; e.g. הָיָה קוֹרֵא בַתּוֹרָה (*m. Ber.* 2.1); הָיָה עוֹמֵד בַּתְּפִילָּה (*m. Ber.* 3.5); הָיָה יוֹשֵׁב בַּסְּפִינָה (*m. Ber.* 4.6); הָיוּ יוֹשְׁבִים כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד (*m. Ber.* 6.6).

34 1 Macc 3:12; 5:27; 6:18, 43; 8:4; 9:5; 14:8; 15:2; 16:11, 14; cf. U. Rappaport, *The First Book of Maccabees: Introduction, Hebrew Translation and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2004 [Hebrew]), 9.

35 Sir 5:10; 7:25; 11:11, 18; 19:16, 25–26; 20:1, 5–6, 12, 21–22; 37:7, 20; 42:8; 43:8; cf. M. H. Segal, *Sefer Ben Sira ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1958 [Hebrew]), 18–19.

36 The construction החל + infinitive occurs 19 times in the Qumran library: e.g. 4Q27f 11.1; 4Q514 fii.7; 11Q19 21.10, etc.

> times: 18:26; 24:2; 27:35] . . . shows that ἄρξασθαι + infinitive is not typical as Luke's own style. In the gospel ἄρξασθαι is one of the characteristics of Luke's sources. Furthermore, quite unpredictably for a theory that Mark was Luke's source, only 3 of Luke's 27 examples are shared with Mark.[37]

Nevertheless, while Sparks is correct that few of Luke's Semitisms are derivable from Aramaic,[38] this does not mean that the only alternative explanation for his Semitisms is "Biblical Hebrew." For example, Sparks argues for his identification of Lukan biblicisms from the opening verse of "The Healing of the Leper": Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐν μιᾷ τῶν πόλεων καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ πλήρης λέπρας (Luke 5:12). He points to three elements in this phrase that betray Luke's Septuagintalizing style: the opening with καὶ ἐγένετο; the use of ἐν + articular infinitive + accusative subject; and the verbless clause καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ πλήρης λέπρας.[39]

Scholarship has discussed the significance of the phrase καὶ ἐγένετο (ἐγένετο δέ) "and it [indefinite subject] happened . . ." in the Synoptic Gospels (especially in the Lukan corpus).[40] Three distinctive constructions are recognized: (a) καὶ ἐγένετο (ἐγένετο δέ) + finite verb; (b) καὶ ἐγένετο (ἐγένετο δέ) + καί + finite verb; (c) ἐγένετο δέ (καὶ ἐγένετο) + infinitive main verb (i.e., a subject complement to ἐγένετο). Thackeray demonstrated that (a) and (b) are widely represented in the Septuagint.[41] Howard deems these Hebraisms and contrasts their use in 1 Maccabees (which was likely written originally in Hebrew[42]) with their absence from the free Greek of 2–*4 Maccabees*.[43] These Greek works lack the Hebraic constructions, and instead prefer συνέβη + infinitive main verb (2 Macc 4:30; 5:18; 9:7; 12:34; 13:7; *3 Macc* 1:3, 8).

Fitzmyer argues that (a) καὶ ἐγένετο (ἐγένετο δέ) + finite verb should be "recognized as a Septuagintism" created by Luke.[44] Doubtless, this is because of its

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37 Buth and Kvasnica, "Temple Authorities and Tithe-Evasion," 261.

38 Sparks, "The Semitisms of St. Luke's Gospel," 132.

39 BDF, 71 (§128): "Following the Semitic pattern a present or imperfect (also aorist or future) of εἶναι (παρεῖναι, [παρα-]γίνεσθαι) can be omitted following ἰδού = Hebr. הִנֵּה, Aram. הָא.

40 Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, 30; J. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Vol. 2, *Accidence and Word-Formation with an Appendix on Semitisms in the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 425–28; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 118–19; Plummer, *Luke*, 40.

41 H. St. J. Thackeray, *A Grammar of Old Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 50-52.

42 Rappaport, *Maccabees*, 9.

43 Moulton and Howard, *Grammar*, 426.

44 Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 119.

frequent occurrence in the Septuagint together with its 22 occasions in Luke's Gospel.[45] In addition, Luke cannot have borrowed it from Mark. "Though it is found twice in Mark (1:9; 4:4), this is scarcely the source of Luke's use of it, since in those instances, he changes what he borrows from the Markan source (Luke 3:21) or omits it (Luke 8:8)."[46] Since Fitzmyer and New Testament scholarship have assumed *a priori* that Luke's only sources in parallel material are Mark and Q, they are left with little alternative but to describe these Hebraisms as the product of the Evangelist's own hand.

However, the clearest indication that this Hebraism is not Luke's own biblicizing style is Fitzmyer's admission that Luke "never seems to use this form in Acts."[47] By contrast, Luke's characteristic style is on exhibit in 2 Acts with the Greek construction συνέβη + infinitive that we witnessed above in *2–4 Maccabees*: συνέβη βαστάζεσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν διὰ τὴν βίαν τοῦ ὄχλου (Acts 21:35). Once again close attention to the use and non-use of Hebraisms in Luke and Acts can serve as a diagnostic measure that these Hebraisms in the Third Gospel are derived from non-canonical sources that were marked by stark Hebraisms.

The form of καὶ ἐγένετο found in Luke 5:12 is (b) καὶ ἐγένετο (ἐγένετο δέ) [with an intervening time/circumstantial phrase] + καί + finite verb. It occurs 12 times in Luke's Gospel.[48] Fitzmyer is mistaken in his claim that it occurs twice in Acts (5:7; 9:19).[49] Hawkins and Howard both rightly bracketed Acts 5:7 with a question mark, because διάστημα is the explicit subject of the verb ἐγένετο ("There was an interval . . .").[50] This then is not an example of the Hebraic indefinite subject, "It happened that . . ." Likewise, the phrase in Acts 9:19 follows the description concerning Paul in Acts 9:18, "Then he rose and was baptized, and took food and was strengthened." So, the following sentence is not indefinite at all but presents a clear subject (i.e. Paul): Εγένετο δὲ μετὰ τῶν ἐν Δαμασκῷ μαθητῶν ἡμέρας τινὰ (i.e. "*He* was with the disciples for several days in Damascus").

So, Fitzmyer has erred, and the Hebraic construction does not in fact appear in Acts. Yet, since it is lacking also in Mark, he continues, "Luke's use of it is

45 Luke 1:8, 23, 41, 59; 2:1, 6, 15, 46; 7:11; 9:18, 29, 33, 37; 11:1, 14, 27; 17:14; 18:35; 19:29; 20:1; 24:30, 51.

46 Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 119.

47 Ibid.

48 Luke 5:1, 12, 17; 8:1, 22; 9:28, 51; 14:1; 17:11; 19:15; 24:4, 15.

49 Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 119.

50 Hawkins, 30; Moulton and Howard, *Grammar*, 426.

again to be understood as a Septuagintism."[51] He offers no explanation for Luke's sudden shift in style and the absence of the construction καὶ ἐγένετο (ἐγένετο δέ) + καί + finite verb in Acts. As we have argued above with construction (a), the absence of this phraseology in Acts should be understood to attest to Luke's use of Hebraic sources for his Gospel, especially in the light of Luke's willingness to use structure (c) in both Luke and Acts.[52]

Fitzmyer's assertion that both of these ("a" and "b") are the product of the Evangelist is based merely upon the observation that they happen also to occur in the Septuagint. We have witnessed, however, time and again that scholarship overlooks entirely the significance of Luke's use of Hebraisms in his Gospel (and sometimes also in 1 Acts) and their non-use in 2 Acts. In this instance, we have demonstrated that neither of these constructions occurs at all in Acts, which indicates that they are derived from Luke's sources for his Gospel and are not his own creation.

We have already discussed Luke's use and non-use of ἐν + articular infinitive + accusative subject, demonstrating that it is also not indicative of Lukan style but signals a non-canonical source. So, it should come as no surprise that his use of καὶ ἐγένετο + καί + finite verb with an intervening temporal phrase ἐν + articular infinitive + accusative subject, likewise only appears in the Third Gospel.[53] Since the construction occurs just 14 times in the Septuagint (and never more than three times in any work),[54] it is hardly demonstrative of Septuagintal style or the explanation for its 12 occasions in Luke's Gospel. If the Evangelist's pen is truly responsible for the artificial creation of these Hebraisms in an attempt to imitate the Septuagint, then scholarship needs to explain why Luke chose to omit the constructions from Acts entirely, especially those chapters (i.e. chs. 16–28) where his own hand is most profoundly felt, Instead,

51 Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 119.

52 Cf. Buth and Kvasnica, "Temple Authorities and Tithe-Evasion," 268–73. Buth and Kvasnica (p. 271) state: "If Luke were the one producing all of the structures (a + b + c) in his Gospel then he was probably unconscious of material distinction between them. However, this flexibility of (a + b + c) is turned off like a faucet when Luke crosses into Acts. Structure (c) continues, seemingly taking over (a + b) so that structures (a + b) disappear. There is even an excellent place to observe this incongruity. At Acts 22.2 Luke makes a point of stating that the Hebrew language had an effect on the crowd. However, in the two places in the speech where Luke uses an ἐγένετο structure (22.6, 17), we find structure (c) 'ἐγένετο + infinitive main verb'!"

53 Luke 5:12; 9:18, 29, 33; 11:1; 14:1; 17:14; 19:15; 24:4, 15, 30, 51.

54 Gen 4:8; 11:2; Josh 14:18; Judg 1:14; 14:11; 2 Sam 1:2; 4:4; 2 Kgs 2:9; 4:40; Neh 1:4; Ezek 9:8; 10:16; 11:13; Dan 8:15.

these are evidence of Luke's use of non-canonical Hebraized sources in the composition of his Gospel.

As for the verbless clause, it is true that Luke preserves this Hebraic ellipsis,[55] but his key terminology is markedly non-Septuagintal. Of the 12 times that we witness הַצָּרוּעַ or הַמְצֹרָע in the Hebrew Scriptures to designate a leprous individual, it is always rendered in the LXX with ὁ λεπρός. So, Luke can hardly be accused of Septuagintalizing his account when he abandons the Septuagint's consistent term to describe one afflicted with the disease and instead describes the man: ἀνὴρ πλήρης λέπρας.[56] In fact, it is Mark and Matthew who employ the Septuagintal word (λεπρός) to identify the afflicted man.

Finally, while it is not the focal point of our study, a brief comment is needed concerning the frequent claim by Sparks and others that Luke's quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures are only taken from the LXX. There seems little question that Luke was familiar with the Greek Bible, but it is less certain that his citations are always drawn from it. In another study, I have collaborated with Jeffrey P. García on the subject of Luke's use of the Hebrew Scriptures.[57] We have demonstrated that Luke portrays Jesus using the Bible in Hebrew. Jesus' hermeneutical method in his interpretation of Scripture at times can only be explained by his use of the Scriptures in Hebrew, and not in Aramaic or Greek.[58] A single brief illustration must suffice. Luke 4:18 presents Jesus combining Isa 61:1–2 and 58:6 in his reading in the synagogue of Nazareth. This otherwise arbitrary combination of two disparate passages signals Jesus' use of *gezerah shavah*, a hermeneutical technique associated with Hillel

55 See also Matt 3:17: καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν λέγουσα . . . (cf. Acts 10:15); Luke 5:18; 22:38; Acts 8:36; 13:11.

56 For the use of πλήρης, compare Acts 6:5: ἄνδρα πλήρης πίστεως ("a man full of faith"); cf. *m. Shabb.* 16.3: סַל מָלֵא כִכָּרוֹת ("a basket full of loaves of bread"); *m. Ma'as. Sh.* 4.11: חָבִית מְלֵיאָה פֵּירוֹת ("a box full of fruit"); *m. Tehar.* 8.2: תֵּיבָה מְלֵיאָה בְגָדִים ("a box full of clothes"); *m. Maksh.* 1.4: סַק מָלֵא פֵּירוֹת ("basket full of fruit").

57 R. S. Notley and J. P. García, "The Hebrew Scriptures in the Third Gospel," in *Searching the Scriptures: Studies in Context and Intertextuality* (ed. C. A. Evans and J. J. Johnston; Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 19; LNTS; London and New York: T&T Clark International, [forthcoming]); cf. R. S. Notley, "Jesus' Hermeneutical Method in the Nazareth Synagogue," in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality. Volume 2: Exegetical Studies* (ed. C. A. Evans and H. D. Zacharias; Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 15; LNTS; London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2009), 46–59.

58 This linguistic picture corresponds to historical reality. We have no report of a first-century Jewish sage in Judaea who exegetes the Bible in any other version than Hebrew.

the Elder.[59] What allows Jesus to join the verses is the collocation of the verbal link רָצוֹן לַיהוָה, which in the entirety of the Hebrew Scriptures only occurs in these two passages of Scripture. Recognition of Jesus' interpretative method is germane to the charge of Luke's habitual use of the Septuagint, because the vital, verbal linchpin disappears in both the Greek and Aramaic translations.[60] In other words, according to the Lukan report Jesus could only have created this ingenious scriptural complex in Hebrew, thus challenging the claim that Luke's narrative is dependent upon the Greek Bible.

Concluding his study, Sparks throws down the gauntlet, writing that if one is able to identify non-Septuagintal Semitisms in the text of Luke, then "there is evidence for a historically reliable source or sources independent of the Evangelist."[61] Writing under the *a priori* assumptions of his day, Sparks assumed that Post-biblical Hebrew was not an option, and so by non-Septuagintal Semitisms he meant Aramaisms. Nevertheless, we accept his challenge and present here ten examples of non-Septuagintal Hebraisms, which point towards a non-canonical Hebraized source for Luke's Gospel.

## 1 Luke 4:17: βιβλίον τοῦ προφήτου Ἡσαΐου

Luke's terminology reflects Post-biblical Hebrew idioms that he has not adopted from the Septuagint, the other Gospels or any other known Jewish Greek literature of the period. The problem is that scholarship is often looking for the obscure, enigmatic idiom when the examples are right in front of the reader. Their sense is so obvious and the reading so familiar that we simply overlook their Hebraic character. For example, Luke refers to the work of Isaiah as βιβλίον τοῦ προφήτου Ἡσαΐου (Luke 4:17). Yet, nowhere else in the corpus of Jewish Greek literature (i.e., Septuagint, Greek Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, Philo, etc.) in late antiquity is this prophetic work designated a βιβλίον (or βίβλος). It is likewise not designated by the Hebrew equivalent (סֵפֶר) in the Hebrew Scriptures. Yet, the work of Isaiah is called exactly that in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Indeed, at Qumran the Lukan phrase—the book of the prophet Isaiah—appears in its precise Hebrew equivalent on four occasions (ספר ישעיה הנביא: 4Q174 f1.2i.15; 4Q176 f1.2i.4; 4Q265 f1.3; 4Q285 f7.1).

59 *t. Sanh.* 7.11; *'Abot R. Nat.* A 37; H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (trans. and ed. M. Bockmuehl; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 17.

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|---|---|---|---|
| | Isa | 58:5 | 61:1 |
| | LXX | δεκτήν | ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτὸν |
| | Ps. Yon | דְּרַעֲוָא | שַׁנַת רַעֲוָא |

61 Sparks, "The Semitisms of St. Luke's Gospel," 135.

## 2 Luke 6:22: καὶ ἐκβάλωσιν τὸ ὄνομα ὑμῶν ὡς πονηρόν

Jesus warned his followers that they would be reviled. Luke's idiom for the anticipated slander ("and cast out your name as evil") is decidedly more Hebraic than its parallel in Matt 5:11: καὶ εἴπωσιν πᾶν πονηρὸν καθ' ὑμῶν ("and say all kinds of evil against you"). Luke's wording represents the Hebrew idiom heard in Deut 22:14: וְהוֹצִיא עָלֶיהָ שֵׁם רָע ("and bring an evil name upon [i.e. defame] her"). However, the form of the dominical saying is not Septuagintal, since ἐκβάλλειν more closely follows the sense of the Hebrew הוֹצִיא than the Greek translator's use of καταφέρειν in his rendering of the biblical verse: καὶ κατενέγκῃ αὐτῆς ὄνομα πονηρόν.

Scholarship's failure to recognize Luke's Hebrew idiom has even led to a misunderstanding of its individual components and to its overlooking the expression's simple meaning: "to slander."[62] For example, Fitzmyer has suggested that "the name" refers to the "Christian name" that the followers of Jesus now bear,[63] and he wonders whether Luke knew the Birkat ha-Minim, the Jewish malediction upon heretics.[64] However, there is nothing inherently Christian signaled by the phrase τὸ ὄνομα ὑμῶν. In fact, the Hebrew idiom is found in post-biblical texts with no reference to either Christianity or the Early Church.

11Q19 65.15:

כי הוציא שם רע על בתולת ישראל.[65]

For he slandered [lit., brought an evil name upon] a virgin of Israel.

*m. Sanh*. 1.1:

וְחֵכְמִ֫ים אוֹמְ֫רִים הַמּוֹצִיא שֵׁם רַע בְּעֶשְׂרִים וּשְׁלֹשָׁה שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ דִּינֵי נְפָשׁוֹת.[66]

But the Sages say: He that slandered [lit. brought an evil name] (must be judged) by three and twenty, for there may arise there from a capital case.

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62 E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (Greenwood, S.C.: Attic, 1974), 113.

63 Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 635: "This does not refer to the personal names of the disciples, but undoubtedly to the name of 'Christian,' which Luke otherwise knows (Acts 11:26; 26:28). Cf. 1 Pet 4:16."

64 Ibid.; Leaney, *Luke*, 136; cf. C. K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents* (London: SPCK, 1957), 167.

65 Cf. 11Q19 65.8; 4Q159 f2 4.8: כי יוצו איש שם רע על בתולת ישׂראל.

66 Cf. *m. Shev*. 10.2; *m. Sot*. 3.5; *m. Bek*. 8.7; *m. Arak*. 3.1.

Thus, there is no reason to read into "the name" anything other than an individual's reputation with no specified Christian connotation.[67] As for the Birkat ha-Minim, Flusser has convincingly demonstrated that the earliest form of this saying was not directed at Christians at all.[68] Its use as a malediction against Christians is a later development in Judaism with no relevance for our first-century saying.

## 3 Luke 8:44: τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ

All three Synoptic Gospels preserve the account of "Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with a Hemorrhage" (Matt 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43; Luke 8:40–56). Central to the account of Jesus' encounter with the woman is the description: προσελθοῦσα ὄπισθεν ἥψατο τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ (Matt 9:20; Luke 8:44). The agreement in detail between these two reports stands as a minor agreement against Mark, who omits mention of τὸ κράσπεδον.[69]

The description that Jesus wore "tassels" or "fringes" is remarkable but certainly not unique.[70] Already in the *Letter of Aristeas* (c. 130 B.C.E.), we hear "in our clothes he has given us a distinguishing mark as a reminder" (*Aris. Ex.* 158). There are also legal discussions between the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai found in the minor tractate *Zizith*[71] about the wearing of fringes (cf. *m. Eduy*. 4.10; *m. Moed Q.* 3.4; *m. Menah.* 3.7;[72] *m. Kel.* 16.4). The custom stems from the injunction in Num 15:37–41:

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67 F. Bovon, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50* (trans. C. M. Thomas; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 227. For the Christian expression, see 1 Tim 6:1: ἵνα μὴ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ διδασκαλία βλασφημῆται.

68 D. Flusser, "4QMMT and the Benediction Against the Minim," in *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*: *Qumran and Apocalypticism* (trans. A. Yadin; Jerusalem: Magnes and Jerusalem Perspective; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 70–118.

69 Neither Marshall (*Luke*, 344–45) nor Bovon (*Luke 1:1–9:50*, 333–34) see significance in the minor agreements, yet provide no suggestion how the Evangelists were able to preserve independently identical variants to Mark's report.

70 See J. Schneider, "κράσπεδον," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [hereafter *TDNT*] (ed. G. Kittel; 9 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 3:904. Note the fascinating similarity with the episode in *b. Taan.* 23b concerning the first-century sage, Hanan ha-Nehba, son-in-law of Honi the Circle-Drawer.

71 Cf. *Minor Tractates* (London: Soncino, 1984), 63a.

72 In *m. Men.* 3.7 we do witness the plural form: אַרְבַּע צִיצִיּוֹת מְעַכְּבוֹת זוֹ אֶת זוֹ (“the four fringes invalidate one another”). Note that even in an unvocalized Hebrew text, as also in spoken Hebrew, the singular is distinguishable from the plural.

> The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the people of Israel, and bid them to make tassels (צִיצִת) on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put upon the tassel (צִיצִת) of each corner a cord of blue; and it shall be to you a tassel (צִיצִת) to look upon and remember all the commandments of the Lord . . ."

What is important for our study is the Septuagint's rendering of the distinctive clothing in Num 15:38: καὶ ποιησάτωσαν ἑαυτοῖς κράσπεδα ἐπὶ τὰ πτερύγια τῶν ἱματίων αὐτῶν ("and let them make for themselves tassels [pl.] on the corners of their garments"). The Greek translators routinely render the singular Hebrew noun in the plural.[73] This may have influenced Matthew's account of Jesus' critique of the Pharisees: "They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their *tassels* (τὰ κράσπεδα) long" (Matt 23:5).[74] In any event, not only does the description of Jesus' clothing in our pericope serve as an important witness for his identification with the contemporary piety of the Jewish people, Luke's preservation of the key term τὸ κράσπεδον in the singular to represent צִיצִת in the story is non-Septuagintal.

## 4 Luke 9:44: θέσθε ὑμεῖς εἰς τὰ ὦτα ὑμῶν τοὺς λόγους τούτους

Scholars routinely dismiss the originality of the Hebraisms in Luke, deeming them Septuagintisms, even though in fact the expressions do not appear in the Septuagint. So we find with a Hebraism that occurs in one of the three passion predictions of Jesus.[75] Jeremias considered the second prediction to be the most primitive form of the saying.[76] According to the Lukan tradition of the second prediction (Luke 9:43–45), the premonition lacks the details of Jesus' betrayal or any mention of his resurrection. It is simple and without any indication of Christian editing. In addition, the words that describe Christ's passion are prefaced with an exhortation not found in the parallels of Matthew (17:22) or Mark (9:31): θέσθε ὑμεῖς εἰς τὰ ὦτα ὑμῶν τοὺς λόγους τούτους (Luke 9:44a).

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73 Targum Onkelos to Num 15:37–41 twice renders צִיצִת with the plural כְּרוּסְפְּדִין (from the Greek loan word κράσπεδα) and once with the singular כְּרוּסַפַּד.

74 See Billerbeck, 4.1.277–92; cf. W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 3:273.

75 Matt 16:21 = Mark 8:31 = Luke 9:22; Matt 17:22 = Mark 9:31 = Luke 9:44; Matt 20:18–19 = Mark 10:33–34 = Luke 18:31–33.

76 J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology I* (London: SCM, 1987), 281.

It is assumed that Luke's Hebraic wording is an attempt to imitate a biblical idiom,[77] although the phrase is not found in the Greek Bible. Marshall acknowledged, "It is not clear whether Luke is following a source which reflected a Hebrew phrase or whether he has produced a Septuagintal-sounding phrase."[78] The difficulty in assigning to Luke the responsibility for the "Septuagintal-sounding phrase" lies in the fact that his Greek saying is even more Hebraic than the Septuagint's translation of the verse upon which he allegedly relies, that is, Exod 17:14: וְשִׂים בְּאָזְנֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ ("and put in the ears of Joshua").[79]

Luke's use of τιθέναι ("put") to represent שִׂים ("put") is closer to the Hebrew verb than the Septuagint's διδόναι ("give"). If Luke's purpose was to produce a Septuagintalized Greek idiom "consciously [to write] in what he would call a 'Biblical' style,"[80] then scholarship needs to explain why Luke abandoned the Septuagint to preserve a phrase more Hebraic than the Greek Bible. Would his readers have appreciated his use of an "approximate Septuagintism"?[81] The more obvious explanation, which Marshall admits, is that this is not a Lukan Septuagintism at all. Instead, the Evangelist has drawn his words from a source which retained a high degree of Hebraic idiom.

Although it is not our primary concern for this study, the correlation between language and content should not be lost on the reader. Sparks' assertion that non-biblical Semitisms are "evidence for an historically reliable source or

77 Plummer, *Luke*, 256; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 813; A. R. C. Leaney, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: A. & C. Black, 1958), 170.

78 Marshall, *Luke*, 393.

79 LXX Exod 17:14: καὶ δὸς εἰς τὰ ὦτα Ἰησοῦ. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 813.

80 Sparks, "The Semitisms of St. Luke's Gospel," 132.

81 C. W. Jung, *The Original Language of the Lukan Infancy Narrative* (JSNTSup 267; London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), prefers to call them, "unsuccessful or failed Septuagintalisms." He assumes that Luke is relying on the LXX but fails to reproduce the Septuagintal idiom. Nevertheless, he concludes, "The so-called 'unsuccessful Septuagintalisms' or 'Septuagintal-type expressions', which seem to be cast in the mould of LXX style, can be included in Septuagintalisms" (p. 57). The failure here is not the Evangelist's but Jung's and scholars who pursue a similar line of reasoning. What they fail to recognize is that in most instances Luke's "unsuccessful Septuagintalisms" are not unsuccessful at all. They can only be deemed such, if it is assumed *a priori* that Luke is attempting to imitate the Septuagint. In reality, it is the Septuagintal translator who has failed—in the sense that all translations are an approximation—and given us an "approximate Hebraism." By comparison, Luke's Hebraism is not a random attempt by the Evangelist to mimic the LXX; instead, he has drawn from a Hebraized source that has preserved the Greek equivalent of a living Hebrew idiom that is more literal than that found in the LXX. Therein lies the difference between the idiom of the Gospel and the LXX, but in no way should it be deemed "an unsuccessful or failed Septuagintalism."

sources"[82] corresponds to Jeremias' observation that the most primitive form of the passion prediction is the second saying, where we have also identified Luke's non-biblical Hebraism.

## 5 Luke 11:20: ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ

In Luke's Gospel the construction ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ ("by the finger of God") betrays Semitic influence. Greek style prefers the articular noun ὁ δάκτυλος with the genitive τοῦ θεοῦ.[83] In Exod 31:18 and Deut 9:10 the Hebrew expression בְּאֶצְבַּע אֱלֹהִים occurs in connection with the inscription upon the stone tablets. As in Luke 11:20, there "finger" appears instrumentally, "by the finger of God." On account of its Hebrew construct state, the noun אֶצְבַּע has no article. Yet, in the Septuagint's Greek rendering of these words with ὁ δάκτυλος in the dative case, the noun is not anarthrous but occurs in good Greek style with the article: τῷ δακτύλῳ τοῦ θεοῦ.[84]

The Evangelist does not follow the Septuagintal construction. If the Semitism in Luke 11:20 were a result of Luke's imitation of the Septuagint's style, as many scholars assert,[85] then we need to explain Luke's phraseology without the article. In fact, he follows more closely the Hebrew construction than the Septuagint. An unprejudiced assessment concludes that Luke's δακτύλῳ τοῦ θεοῦ is not a Septuagintism at all, but in Blass and Debrunner's words, "a translation-Semitism" derived from a non-Septuagintal Hebraic source.

82 Sparks, "The Semitisms of St. Luke's Gospel," 135.

83 BDF 135 (§259): "In Hebrew the *nomen regens* would appear in the construct or with a suffix and hence would be anarthrous [without an article]. In the NT this Semitic construction makes its influence felt especially where a Semitic original lies behind the Greek (hence 'translation-Semitisms'), but occasionally also elsewhere in Semitizing formulae ('Septuagintisms')."

84 By contrast, the LXX in Exod 8:15, recounting the acknowledgment of Pharoah's magicians, does preserve the noun without the article: Δάκτυλος θεοῦ ἐστιν τοῦτο. However, this example is more remote from Luke than the other two examples previously cited, because here the noun appears in the nominative case.

85 C. F. Evans, "The Central Section of St. Luke's Gospel," in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (ed. D. E. Nineham; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), 44; cf. D. L. Tiede, *Luke* (Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 217; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 922; Plummer, *Luke*, 302.

## 6 Luke 14:16: ἄνθρωπός τις ἐποίει δεῖπνον μέγα

Luke's syntax frequently attests not only to a Hebraic source but also to his literary independence from Matthew and Mark. According to the Lukan Parable of "The Great Supper" (Luke 14:15–24 = Matt 22:1–14), Jesus opens his narrative parable, "a certain man[86] gave a *great meal*" (δεῖπνον μέγα). Of particular interest is the syntactical order of μέγας and the noun it modifies. Whereas Greek allows the adjective μέγας to precede or follow its noun, in Hebrew the equivalent adjective גָּדוֹל is always posterior. As a singular occurrence, the syntactical order in Luke 14:16 carries only incidental weight, but as part of a consistent stylistic pattern it may serve as corroboration for Luke's use of a non-canonical source that retained Semitic characteristics.

All three Evangelists place μέγας in a posterior position, a syntactical order that is permitted in Greek and Hebrew.[87] Yet, it is telling that of the three Gospels, Luke is the only Evangelist who does not place μέγας in the distinctly Greek order, that is, with μέγας before the noun it modifies.[88]

Luke's use of this Hebraic syntactical order is not necessarily Septuagintal. As Turner notes,[89] this distinctive Semitic syntax is not always maintained in the Septuagint, for example, in Exod 23:31; Josh 9:2; and 2 Kgs 5:13. Neither is the syntax the product of Luke's own predilections, because in 2 Acts, where scholarship suggests his style is most characteristic,[90] the Evangelist preserves good Greek word order with μέγας preceding its noun (Acts 16:28; 19:27; 19:35). Indeed, his own stylistic preferences may have influenced Luke's use of the Greek order in Acts 14:10: εἶπεν μεγάλῃ φωνῇ. Once again, we see that careful attention to shifts in Luke's language use in 2 Acts helps us to distinguish between Luke's own hand and the influence of (non-canonical) Semitic sources upon his composition.

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86 In the New Testament the phrase ἄνθρωπός τις is a uniquely Lukan term. It may represent the Hebrew אישׁ אחד (cf. Luke 10:30; 12:14, 16; 14:2, 16; 15:11; 16:1; 19:12; 20:9; Acts 9:33; *m. Qid.* 4.12; *m. B. Qam.* 3.11; *m. Menah.* 5.6, etc.). In any event, it can hardly be considered "Septuagintal," because it only occurs once in Job 1:1 to render the Hebrew אִישׁ הָיָה.

87 Matthew 13 times: 2:10; 4:16; 8:24, 26; 22:36; 24:21, 24, 31; 27:46, 50, 60; 28:2, 8; Mark 10 times: 1:26; 4:32, 37, 39, 41; 5:7, 42; 14:15; 15:34, 37; Luke 20 times: 1:42; 2:9, 10; 4:25, 33, 38; 5:29; 7:16; 8:28, 37; 14:16; 16:26; 17:15; 19:37; 21:11, 23; 22:12; 23:23, 46, 52.

88 In contrast to Matt 5:35; Mark 13:2.

89 Turner, *Grammar*, 349.

90 Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 80–89.

## 7 Luke 15:18, 21: ἥμαρτον εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν

The remorse of the prodigal son is expressed in a post-biblical Hebraism: "I have sinned against Heaven and before you" (i.e. his father).[91] Substitutes for mention of the Divine Name in Judaism are well known.[92] However, not until the Hellenistic period do we encounter the use of "heaven" as a circumlocution for God.[93]

> 1 Macc 4:55:
>
> καὶ ἔπεσεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἐπὶ πρόσωπον καὶ προσεκύνησαν καὶ εὐλόγησαν εἰς οὐρανὸν τὸν εὐοδώσαντα αὐτοῖς.
>
> All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them.

Pennington has recently questioned the extent of the use of "heaven" as a reverential circumlocution in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period.[94]

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91 Failure to recognize Luke's Hebraism has led to some dubious comments by scholars on the son's statement. Leaney (*Luke*, 218) states: "The Greek may better be 'up to heaven' as though his sins were piled up that high." However, Marshall (*Luke*, 609) rightly notes that the parallelism of "heaven" and "you" requires the former to mean God and not highest heaven (cf. Ezra 9:6).

92 E. E. Urbach, *The Sages: The Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1987), 124–34; H. Traub, "οὐρανός," in *TDNT*, 5:521–22.

93 Cf. Dan 4:26 (שְׁמַיָּא); 1 Macc 3:18, 50; 4:10, 24; 5:31; 9:46; 12:15; 16:3; 2 Macc, 7:11, etc.

94 J. T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* (ed. M. M. Mitchell and D. P. Moessner; NovTSup 126; Leiden: Brill, 2007); idem, "Circumventing Circumlocution: Did Jesus Really Use 'Heaven' as a Periphrasis for God?," unpublished paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, November 2003. In particular, he challenged the notion advanced by Dalman (*The Words of Jesus*, 233) and other New Testament scholars that Matthew's use of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν rather than ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ represented a reverential circumlocution for God. In the New Testament Matthew alone preserves the expression ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (64 times), while the alternate expression ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ appears in each of the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 10 times; Mark 28 times; Luke 64 times). Pennington argues that Matthew's use of "heaven" should be understood more broadly as metonymy to distinguish God's realm (heaven) and humanity's (earth). Likewise, he reads in Dan 4:23 [Eng. 4:26] (שַׁלְטָן שְׁמַיָּא) metonymy that is nuanced by the metaphoric language of the verse.

Nevertheless he was forced to acknowledge that 1 Maccabees is likely an exception: "[If] 1 Maccabees does provide evidence for heaven as a reverential circumlocution, then it is the noticeable exception, not the evidence for a widespread trend."[95] His acknowledgment concerning 1 Maccabees takes on added significance when combined with a similar concession regarding our verse: "There is one usage of heaven in the Gospels that could be understood in this way (i.e., as reverential circumlocution): Luke 15:18, 21."[96]

The highlighting of the rarity of the usage of "heaven" as a reverential circumlocution for God in literature from the Second Temple period makes the New Testament wording even more remarkable.[97] It militates against scholarship's characterization that Luke's wording is Septuagintal. Of the 6,828 occurrences of יְהוָה in the Hebrew Bible, on no occasion does the Septuagint render the Divine Name οὐρανός.[98] So, one wonders what is the basis for Fitzmyer's assessment that Luke's wording in the son's remorse is, "simply a paraphrase of an OT confession."[99]

Pennington further observes that avoidance of the tetragrammaton only has real relevance in a Hebrew language environment. In translation the concern becomes a moot point. Thus we see in the case of the Septuagint that the Greek translators exhibit little concern about the direct reference to God.[100] Still, Pennington does not seem to connect this observation regarding language with his earlier acknowledgment of the occurrences of οὐρανός in 1 Maccabees and Luke. Does the use of "heaven" as a reverential circumlocution in these works indicate a Hebrew *Vorlage*? Indeed, 1 Maccabees is widely held to have been written originally in Hebrew.[101] If his observation is correct, the same usage in Luke's parable suggests that the Evangelist has employed a non-canonical source that was originally penned in Hebrew. What we hear in

95 Pennington, "Circumventing," 7.

96 Ibid., 4 n. 11.

97 The rarity of the occurrence challenges Muraoka's suggestion that Luke's language in the parable is merely drawn from the Septuagint's wording of the story of Esau and the return of Jacob in Gen 33:3–4; see T. Muraoka, *Luke and the Septuagint*," *Novum Testamentum* 54 (2012): 13–15.

98 T. Muraoka, *Hebrew/Aramaic Index to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 60–61.

99 Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1089.

100 According to Dos Santos, in the LXX יְהוָה is rendered by κύριος 6814 times and by θεός 585 times. See E. C. Dos Santos, *An Expanded Hebrew Index for the Hatch-Redpath Concordance to the Septuagint* (Jerusalem: Dugith Publishers, 1973), 78.

101 See B. Bar-Kochva, *Judas Maccabeus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 66; J. A. Goldstein, *1 Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 41; New York: Doubleday, 1976), 14.

the confession of the prodigal son, then, is a non-Septuagintal, Post-biblical Hebrew expression that is heard earlier in 1 Maccabees and in time will express reverence towards the Divine Name in rabbinic literature.

## 8 Luke 16:22: τὸν κόλπον Ἀβραάμ

In the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man (Luke 16:19–31), the Evangelist employs an unusual metaphor for the eternal abode of the righteous: "the bosom of Abraham."[102] It has no parallel in the Hebrew Scriptures, New Testament or Second Temple Jewish literature. Scholars have suggested that the expression may represent either the idea of being a guest who is close to the host at a banquet[103] or reflects the notion in the Hebrew Bible of being gathered to one's fathers.[104]

The biblical idea of being gathered to one's fathers is continued into the Greco-Roman period and heard in the hope of the martyrs voiced in *4 Macc* 13:17: "For if we so die, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob will welcome us, and all the fathers will praise us." Nevertheless, the Lukan phrase ὁ κόλπος Ἀβραάμ is non-Septuagintal and is not heard outside of the New Testament until it appears in rabbinic literature. Acknowledging this, Fitzmyer offers the fanciful notion that the rabbinic authors may even have borrowed the term from Luke's Gospel![105]

In *Kiddushin* 72b we hear: דאגמה איכה בבבל אדא בר אהבה יש בה היום יושב בחיקו אברהם ("There is a Fort Agma in Babylon in which dwells Adda b. Ahabah, today he sits in the bosom of Abraham"). We cannot be sure whether the phrase in the Talmud is a euphemism indicating the sage had died. If so, then this is not the third-century Amora mentioned in the Talmuds (e.g. *y. Ta'an.* 3:13, 67a; *b. Ber*. 42b–43a). In any event, the phrase does connote the afterlife in two later midrashim within the context of Jewish suffering during the days of the Hadrianic persecutions. The setting closely parallels that recounted above in *4 Maccabees* to depict Jewish martyrdom. *4 Maccabees* describes persecution

102 See L. Ginzberg's brief discussion, *The Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1968), 5:268.

103 See *Sifre Deut.* 53; *Semah. R. Hiyya* 2.1; *Midr. Ps.* 25.9; Matt 22:1–14; Luke 14:15–24; cf. R. S. Notley and Z. Safrai, *Parables of the Sages: Jewish Wisdom from Jesus to Rav Ashi* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2011), 45; J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1955), 184; R. Meyer, "κόλπος," in *TDNT*, 3:824–26.

104 Gen 15:15; 1 Kgs 1:21; 2:10; 11:21; Billerbeck, 2:225–27.

105 Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1132.

at the hands of Antiochus IV, while the rabbinic stories record Jewish suffering in the days of the Roman emperor Hadrian. Both Maccabees and the midrashic legends present a mother whose seven sons[106] must choose death rather than transgress God's commandments. According to the midrashim, at last only the youngest son remains, and he is given the choice to bow to the idol or be martyred. He confers with his mother, who exhorts him, "Oh my son, do you wish that in the time to come *all your brothers be found in the bosom of Abraham* (שיהיו כל אחיך נתונים בחיקו של אברהם) while you are in the bosom of Esau?[107] I beg you, do not listen to Hadrian's men."[108] What is important for our present study is the repetition in the rabbinic texts and in Luke's Gospel of the phrase "the bosom of Abraham" to designate the eternal abode of the righteous.[109] Even though we do not know specifically the source for Luke's Hebraism, there is no question that it has not been derived from the Septuagint, and it indicates once again the Evangelist's access to primitive, Hebraic non-canonical sources.

## 9 Luke 19:33: οἱ κύριοι αὐτοῦ

The Lukan account of the retrieval of the colt[110] (Luke 19:29–35) presents a non-Septuagintal Hebraism to describe the owner of the animal: λυόντων δὲ αὐτῶν τὸν πῶλον εἶπαν οἱ κύριοι αὐτοῦ πρὸς αὐτούς (Luke 9:33). Fitzmyer ventured that the reference to multiple owners (οἱ κύριοι) means "its master and mistress."[111]

106 Compare 2 Macc 7:1–42. For a review of the literature on the tradition of the widow and her seven sons, see S. Shepkaru, "From after Death to After Life: Martyrdom and Its Recompense," *AJS Review* 24, no. 1 (1999): 1–44.

107 R. Ulmer has suggested that the "bosom of Esau" is a late medieval emendation. See *Pesiqta Rabbati: A Synoptic Edition of Pesiqta Rabbati Based Upon All Extant Manuscripts and the Editio Princeps* (3 vols.; Langham, Md.: University Press of America, 2008), 1:xxxvii.

108 *Pesiq. Rab. Piska* 43; W. G. Braude (trans.), *Pesikta Rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts, and Special Sabbaths* (2 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 2:761. Compare the encouragement of the mother according to *Lamentations Rabba* 1.16 §50: אצל אחיך אתה הולך ואתה ניתן בתוך חיקו של אברהם אבינו ("You are going with your brothers and you will be placed within the bosom of Abraham our father").

109 See also a medieval example cited by Shepkaru (21 n. 67) from A. Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot Ashkena ve-Zarfat* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1945 [Hebrew]), 47, 96: "He [God] will place him [R. Meshullam's son, Isaac] in the bosom of Abraham."

110 The foal of an ass: Gen 32:16; Judg 10:4; 12:14; Zech 9:9. See O. Michel, "πῶλος," in *TDNT*, 6:959–61.

111 Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1250. Plummer and Marshall interprets the plurality of "owners" in light of Mark 11:5: "the owner of the colt and those with him: τινες τῶν ἐκεῖ ἑστηκότων (Mk.)"; see Plummer, *Luke*, 446; Marshall, *Luke*, 713.

Yet, Buth has suggested that Luke intended only one owner, and instead we have an idiomatic expression best understood in light of Mishnaic Hebrew.[112]

Use of the plural בעלים to signify a single owner already appears in the Hebrew Bible:

> Exod 21:29:
>
> וְאִם שׁוֹר נַגָּח הוּא מִתְּמֹל שִׁלְשֹׁם וְהוּעַד בִּבְעָלָיו וְלֹא יִשְׁמְרֶנּוּ וְהֵמִית אִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה
> הַשּׁוֹר יִסָּקֵל וְגַם־בְּעָלָיו יוּמָת
>
> But if the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its *owner* (lit., "owners" pl.) has been warned (sg.) but has not kept (sg.) it in, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its *owner* (lit., "owners" pl.) also shall be put to death (sg.).

In biblical parlance, we know that a single owner is meant by בעלים, because the plural subject occurs with a singular verb.[113] Of course, the word בעל has a wider range of meaning than "owner," for example, "husband," "god," and so on. Yet, the idiomatic use of בעל in the plural to mean a single person is used only to designate "ownership."[114]

The idiom was apparently understood by ancient translators of the Hebrew Bible. The Septuagint renders the plural בעלים in Exod 21:29 with the singular noun κύριος: καὶ διαμαρτύρωνται τῷ κυρίῳ αὐτοῦ . . . καὶ ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ προσαποθανεῖται. The Greek translator's rendering with the singular noun is also reflected in other ancient translations.[115]

Retaining Biblical Hebrew style in much of the composition of their non-biblical writings, there should be little surprise that the idiom recurs also in the Qumran library.[116]

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112 R. Buth, "Luke 19:31–34, Mishnaic Hebrew, and Bible Translation: Is κύριοι τοῦ πώλου Singular?," *JBL* 104 (1985): 680–85.

113 See also, for example, Exod 21:34, 36; 22:10; Isa 1:3; Job 31:39; Eccl 5:10, 12; etc.

114 Buth, "Luke 19:31–34," 681; L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (*Study Edition*) (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 143.

115 The plural subject with the singular verb is not used in Greek or Aramaic. Instead, the ancient translations rendered the plural noun with the singular noun. See Targum Onkelos of Gen 21:29: תּוֹרָא יִתְרְגִים וְאַף מָרֵיהּ יִתְקְטִיל ("the bull shall be stoned and its owner [sg.] killed").

116 See CD 9:10–16; 4Q158 fi0.12.12; 4Q251 f8.5–6.

CD 9.10–11:

וכל האובד ולא נודע מי גנבו ממאד המחנה אשר גנב בו ישביע בעליו . . .

Anything that is lost and it is not known which of the men of the camp stole it, its owner (lit., "owners" pl.) shall pronounce (sg.) a malediction . . .

However, Buth notes that a change in expression took place in Mishnaic Hebrew. The plural "owners" with a singular meaning begins to appear with the plural verb.[117] Only a careful reading of the context indicates that a singular subject is meant. This shift is reflected also in our reading of Luke 19:33. A colt would hardly have been in need of multiple owners.[118] Instead, what we witness in this episode is a Mishnaic Hebraism that has been retained in Luke's non-canonical Hebraized Greek source. So, while Mark's inflated description of those who objected[119] may be his attempt to clarify the enigmatic idiom, Luke's account preserves the Mishnaic Hebraism drawn from his non-canonical source.

## 10 Luke 23:31: ὅτι εἰ ἐν τῷ ὑγρῷ ξύλῳ ταῦτα ποιοῦσιν, ἐν τῷ ξηρῷ τί γένηται

Woven within the tragic scene of Jesus' final approach to Golgotha is his response to the lament by the women nearby: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children . . . For if they do these things in the green tree, what will happen in the dry?" (Luke 23:31).[120] The message seems clear, even if the metaphors are somewhat obscure. Jesus warns that if such things can happen to one who is innocent, what does it portend for those who are not. Several scholars have noted that Jesus' words are reminiscent of those uttered by R. Jose ben Joezer, himself on his way to be

117 See, e.g., *m. Ter.* 6.2; *m. Pesah.* 6.6; 7.9; *m. B. Qama* 7.6; *m. Zeb.* 12.2–3, etc.

118 It may also be that the singular sense of οἱ κύριοι is anticipated in Jesus' instruction to the two disciples found in all of the Gospels: καὶ ἐάν τις ὑμᾶς ἐρωτᾷ (Luke 19:31; cf. Matt 21:3; Mark 11:3).

119 Mark 11:5: "τινες τῶν ἐκεῖ ἑστηκότων ἔλεγον . . ."

120 D. Bivin, "Jesus and the Enigmatic 'Green Tree,'" 2 October 2009, Jerusalem Perspective Online, http://www.jerusalemperspective.com/4427 (13 November 2012); W. Nunnally, "From Ezekiel 17:24 and 21:3 to Luke 23:31: A Survey of the Connecting Jewish Tradition," 14 May 2009, Jerusalem Perspective Online, http://www.jerusalemperspective.com/4325 (13 November 2012).

crucified, in response to his nephew, Jakum of Serorot: "If it is thus with those who do His will, how much more with those who anger Him."[121]

Although the content of the dominical saying is of interest, at this juncture our attention concerns its language. The indefinite third person plural ποιοῦσιν reflects a Semitic style to express an indefinite subject, by which no specific person is intended.[122] Instead, Jesus' words should be read, "If *these things are done* in a green tree . . . ." Further, Marshall rightly sees a Semitism in the use of ἐν to mark the indirect object.[123] It does not designate time, as most modern versions read, that is, "For if they do these things *when* the wood . . ." (NRSV). Instead, the phrase ποιεῖν ἐν is used to convey action against (i.e. "For if these things are done *to* the green tree . . ."),[124] Compare a similar use of ἐν witnessed in Matt 17:12 where the violent death of the Baptist is described: ἐποίησαν ἐν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἠθέλησα ("*they did to him* whatsoever they wished").[125]

Even more important is Luke's use of ὑγρός and ξηρός. What do they signify, and are they meant to direct us to a specific passage in the Hebrew Scriptures? While we do have several references in the Septuagint to ξύλον ξηρόν (Isa 56:3; Ezek 17:24; 21:3 [Eng. 20:47]; Sir 6:3), there is no appearance of ξύλον ὑγρόν. Instead, the Greek Bible chooses twice to contrast ξύλον ξηρόν with ξύλον χλωρόν ("green tree," Ezek 17:24; 21:3 [Eng. 20:47]). On both of these occasions ξύλον χλωρόν renders the Hebrew עֵץ־לַח ("moist tree") which in fact more closely approximates Luke's ξύλον ὑγρόν ("moist tree"). The reason these verses from Ezekiel have not garnered more attention, as background for the dominical saying, seems in part because Luke's wording is not found in the Septuagint. Instead, Luke's phraseology is a non-Septuagintal Hebrew idiom, and his use of ὑγρός[126] is a more literal rendering of the Hebrew לַח[127] than the Septuagint's χλωρός.

The message of Ezek 17:24 has little in common with Luke 23:31. On the other hand, in spite of Leaney's claim[128] that the message of Ezek 21:3 [Eng. 20:47]

121 *Midrash Psalm* 11.7.

122 BDF 72 (§130).

123 Marshall, *Luke*, 865; BDF 86 (§157).

124 This may itself be a Semitism. See Josh 24:7; 2 Kgs 23:19; Jer 51:24; CD 1.12: ויודע לדורות אחרונים את אשר עשה בדור אחרון בעדת בוגדים ("And he taught the later generations what [God] did to the previous generation, a congregation of traitors").

125 See Gen 34:7; 2 Sam 18:13; CD 1.2; Davies and Allison, *Saint Matthew*, 2:715–16.

126 Liddell and Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 1843.

127 Koehler and Baumgartner, *Lexicon*, 525.

128 A. R. C. Leaney, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: A. & C. Black, 1958), 283.

has no relevance for the Lukan saying, an allusion to its content is acutely apt for the passion setting:

> Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree in you and every dry tree; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from south to north shall be scorched by it. (Ezek 21:3)

Similar to the warning by the Hebrew prophet, Jesus warns of impending judgment upon all, employing the contrasting metaphors of the "moist tree" and the "dry tree" to communicate the inclusive nature of judgment. When freed from the shackles of the requirement to suppose that Luke is parroting the Septuagintal idiom, we discover that Luke preserves a saying in Greek that is grounded in the Hebrew idiom of Ezek 21:3 (Eng. 20:47). Through it Jesus laments the future travail upon the Jewish nation at the hands of his Roman executioners.

The aim of this study has been a modest one: to demonstrate that in Luke's Gospel there are numerous non-Septuagintal Hebraisms that have been overlooked. Many more examples could be added. The reason non-Septuagintal Hebraisms have not received more notice seems clear. For the most part, New Testament scholarship still functions under the outdated nineteenth-century assumption of an Aramaic-only language environment for first-century Judea. Therefore, any Hebraism in the Third Gospel must *a priori* be explained as a Septuagintism—even though (as we have seen) many of these Hebraisms do not actually appear in the Greek Bible. Some are postbiblical, while others are an even more literal rendering of biblical Hebrew idioms than the Septuagint's Greek translation. We have demonstrated that the Septuagint cannot have been Luke's source for his Hebraic phraseology in many cases. Instead, the evidence suggests that Luke had access to non-canonical sources that were marked by a highly Hebraized Greek. In the light of a century of archaeological discovery, which has seen a sea change in scholarship's understanding of the languages of first-century Judea, the time has arrived for New Testament scholarship to rethink its working model for the linguistic environment of the Gospels. The inconvenient truth of Luke's non-Septuagintal Hebraisms presents fresh questions regarding the literary relationship of the Synoptic Gospels and the sources used by the Evangelist in his composition of the Third Gospel.