

MORE THAN JUST NUMBERS

DEUTERONOMIC INFLUENCE IN HEBREWS 3:7–4:11

David Allen

Summary

That Hebrews 3:7–4:11 alludes to the events of Numbers 14 has become an apparently established and almost universal datum of scholarship. This paper, however, argues that Hebrews' rhetoric in the pericope and its exegesis of Psalm 95 is better explained by appealing to a Deuteronomic perspective, rather than that of Numbers. The bipartite structure of the psalm itself evinces a quasi-Deuteronomic choice that echoes the decision which Hebrews lays before its audience, and it utilises language that is quintessentially Deuteronomic. Four key words in 3:7-19 are subsequently discussed and it is demonstrated that their context and provenance is not Numbers 14, but rather the particular milieu of Deuteronomy. Whilst the contribution of Numbers 14 to the pericope is not to be dismissed, Hebrews' use of the psalm appears to be more orientated towards a Deuteronomic perspective.

1. Introduction

The association between Hebrews 3:7-19 and the narrative of Israel's wilderness disobedience in Numbers 14 has become a commonplace of scholarship.¹ YHWH's oath, sworn in response to Israel's rebellion at

¹ A review of the major commentaries confirms this: see *inter alia* F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Rev. edn; NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990): 98-102; David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle 'to the Hebrews'* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000): 142-48; Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989): 114, 120-21; Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 2001): 262-63. Radu Gheorgita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews* (WUNT 2/160; Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 2003): 108 views Num. 14 as 'the primary text alluded to in Heb. 3:12-19'.

Kadesh Barnea, that the wilderness generation would not enter the land (Num. 14:28-35), is generally regarded (with some validity) as the backdrop and parallel to Hebrews' impassioned warning about the dangers of apostasy from the new covenant (Heb. 3:16-4:2). Appeal is generally made to the lexical affinity between the oath in Numbers 14:30 (εἰ ὑμεῖς εἰσελεύσεσθε εἰς τὴν γῆν) and that of Psalm 95:11/Hebrews 3:11 (εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου).² Likewise, Hebrews 3:17 (τὰ κῶλα ἔπεσεν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ) appears to be an allusion to Numbers 14:29 or 32 (τὰ κῶλα ὑμῶν πεσεῖται ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ταύτῃ). Such similarities are hard to ignore and, indeed, Pfitzner argues that Psalm 95 itself is an 'application' of Numbers 14 and consequently Hebrews 3's use of the psalm necessitates an allusion to the Numbers text.³ Furthermore, in a detailed study of the use of Psalm 95 in Hebrews 3:7-4:11, Albert Vanhoye argues that, although the Masoretic psalm alludes to a general picture of wilderness faithlessness, the LXX version, with its particular translation of key phrases and place names (or indeed the absence of them), depicts a *specific* Israelite apostasy, namely that of the spies' rebellion at Kadesh Barnea in Numbers 14. He thus conceives of Hebrews 3-4/Psalm 95 as specifically positioning the audience at the threshold of the Promised Land, a direct contrast with Ernst Käsemann's prior, celebrated characterisation of them as a '*wanderende Gottesvolk*' ('wandering people of God').⁴

Whilst these allusions are hard to ignore, it remains to be seen whether, by itself, Numbers 14 accounts for, or exhausts, all of the ways in which the argument develops in Hebrews 3:7-19 (and subsequently 4:1-11). Numbers' narrative genre, for example, differs from Hebrews' hortatory tone in 3:7-4:11, and lacks the rhetorical, heuristic perspective that seeks to make the events of Kadesh Barnea exemplary for future (mis)conduct. To this end, we will propose that there is good reason to consider that the appeal to the wilderness exemplar derives not only from Numbers 14, but also from a perspective akin to that of

² Whilst Hebrews technically cites LXX Ps. 94, this paper addresses both the MT and LXX text of the psalm. To avoid confusion, and to stress that the same psalm is always in focus, we will refer to it solely as Ps. 95.

³ V. C. Pfitzner, *Hebrews* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997): 78.

⁴ Albert Vanhoye, 'Longue Marche ou Accès Tout Proche? Le Contexte Biblique de Hébreux 3:7-4:11', *Bib* 49 (1968): 9-26; E. Käsemann, *Das Wanderende Gottesvolk* (*FRLANT*, 37; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939): 5-8.

Deuteronomy: one that is ‘Deuteronomic’ in focus.⁵ Such a backdrop to the pericope is scarcely acknowledged among scholars, who instead almost universally advocate the Numbers 13–14 context.

The concept of a Deuteronomic perspective is in rhetorical harmony with Vanhoye’s assessment of a people at the threshold of entry into the land,⁶ but also shares Hebrews’ technique of making the wilderness generation’s disobedience at Kadesh Barnea paradigmatic for future obedience and faithfulness (cf. Deut. 1:19–46, where the rebellion is used in similar exemplary fashion).⁷ Whilst our intention is not entirely to rule out the role of Numbers 13–14 – the allusions cited above militate against that – we will focus upon two aspects of Hebrews 3:7–4:11 that suggest a Deuteronomic ethos underpins the argument being made: the character of Psalm 95 and the lexicography of Hebrews 3:7–19.

2. The Deuteronomic Character of Psalm 95

The use of Psalm 95 (LXX Psalm 94) in Hebrews 3:7–4:11 has attracted significant attention in recent scholarship, much of which has been helpful in shaping our understanding of the letter’s direction and theology.⁸ However, less attention has been paid as to why Psalm 95 in

⁵ For the purposes of this paper, the term ‘Deuteronomic’ pertains to the text and situation conveyed by the canonical text of Deuteronomy, especially its self-ascribed narrative status as a text preached at the threshold of entry into the land. Particular attention is paid to the frame of the book (1–11, 27–34), as this is where the primary exhortations to obedience and warnings against apostasy are found. No claim is made in regard to the Deuteronomic character (or otherwise) of the Former Prophets or to the Deuteronomistic History, discussion of which is outside the scope of the paper.

⁶ We concur with Isaacs’ astute observation that ‘like Deuteronomy, Hebrews addresses its readers as a generation standing on the brink of entry into the promised land’ – (Marie E. Isaacs, *Sacred Space: An Approach to the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (JSNTSS, 73; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992): 80).

⁷ Cf. Paul A. Barker, *The Triumph of Grace in Deuteronomy: Faithless Israel, Faithful Yahweh in Deuteronomy* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004): 24–28.

⁸ See Peter Enns, ‘Creation and Re-Creation: Psalm 95 and its Interpretation in Hebrews 3:1–4:13’, *WTJ* 55 (1993): 255–80; Randall C. Gleason, ‘The Old Testament Background of Rest in Hebrews 3:7–4:11’, *BSac* 157 (2000): 281–303; Scot McKnight, ‘The Warning Passages of Hebrews: A Formal Analysis and Theological Conclusions’, *TJ* 13 (1992): 21–59; Thomas Kem Oberholtzer, ‘The Warning Passages in Hebrews, Pt 2: The Kingdom Rest in Hebrews 3:1–4:13’, *BSac* 145 (1988): 185–96; David Flusser, ‘“Today If You Will Listen to This Voice”: Creative Exegesis in Hebrews 3–4’ in *Creative Biblical Exegesis: Christian and Jewish Hermeneutics through the Centuries*, eds Benjamin Uffenheimer and Henning Graf Reventlow (JSOTSS, 59; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988): 55–62; Hermut Löhr, ‘“Heute, Wenn Ihr Seine Stimme

particular, and not any other psalm or text, is the citation upon which Hebrews' develops its argument.⁹ It is certainly true that the psalm permits the writer to expound Sabbath *rest* as the heavenly goal of Christian pilgrimage (cf. Heb. 4:3-11); and, likewise, the psalm's post-Joshua dating opens the way for discussion vis-à-vis the true nature of the κατ'ἀπαυσις enjoyed by the conquest generation (4:6-8). It may then suffice to say that Hebrews merely seeks to exploit the rest motif and the psalm's chronology, without further recourse to any other rhetorical or contextual basis for its usage. Yet if the argument functions primarily to warn the audience of the dangers of missing out on the land/rest (cf. 3:12-4:2, 11), with the wilderness spy narrative purely a convenient historical paradigm, then why not simply refer the audience to the narrative or events of Numbers 14? This is not to negate that the spy narrative is invoked in Hebrews 3:7-19; the prominence of Numbers 14, especially 14:32, is hard to escape, both lexically and thematically. However, in and of itself, this still does not explain why Psalm 95 is required to broker the relationship.

The author's preference for Psalm 95 may be understood by a more detailed examination of the psalm itself. Whilst it raises issues familiar to Hebrews, such as divine kingship (95:3; cf. Heb. 1:8; 8:1; 12:2; 12:28) and the divine source of salvation (95:1; cf. Heb. 1:14; 2:3, 10; 5:9; 9:28), more significantly, the psalm exhibits a demonstrable paraenetic focus and blessing/curse dialectic akin to that which pervades the book of Deuteronomy. Frank-Lothar Hossfeld views Psalm 95:7-11 as a 'Deuteronomistic-Deuteronomistically influenced call to decide for obedience to YHWH'¹⁰ and this conception is echoed in other commentators' assessment of the psalm's overall perspective.¹¹ Such

Hört": Zur Kunst der Schriftenwendung im Hebräerbrief und in 1 Kor. 10' in *Schriftauslegung im Antiken Judentum und im Urchristentum* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1994): 226-48.

⁹ The closest effort is that of Enns, 'Creation': 255-80 which treats seriously the motifs of creation and re-creation in the Psalm, finding usage of such themes in Heb. 3-4.

¹⁰ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005): 461.

¹¹ Cf. W. S. Prinsloo, 'Psalm 95: If You Would Only Listen to His Voice!' in *The Bible in Human Society: Essays in Honour of John Rogerson*, ed. R. M. Daniel Carroll et al. (JSOTSS; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995): 393-410; William M. Schniedewind, "'Are We His People or Not?' Biblical Interpretation During Crisis", *Bib* 76 (1995): 540-50; W. Dennis Tucker, Jr., 'Psalm 95: Text, Context, and Intertext', *Bib* 81 (2000): 533-41; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, 'Psalm 95: Gattungsgeschichtliche, Kompositionskritische und Bibeltheologische Anfragen', in *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung: Für Walter Beyerlin*, eds Klaus Seybold and Erich Zenger

Deuteronomic character may be demonstrated in three ways: by attending to the theme of the *whole* of the psalm (broadly speaking, its *thematic unity*), its *rhetorical* positioning and the particular *language* that it utilises.

2.1 The Unity of Psalm 95

Traditional scholarship has been uncomfortable with the overall unity of the psalm, preferring to see it as either two separate portions crassly stuck together,¹² or as a general unity of two (perhaps three) relatively distinct portions.¹³ The current scholarly consensus opts for a sub-division into two sections,¹⁴ though differences persist on exactly where the break comes, whether at verse 6,¹⁵ or verse 7d¹⁶ (our preferred option). The psalm's first section (95:1-7c) celebrates the blessings for being the people of God and suggests the backdrop of a temple liturgy. Hossfeld parallels the temple-entry language of 95:1-6 with the entry into the divine rest (95:11), which correlates lexically with the Deuteronomic theme of entry into Canaan (εἰσέρχομαι – LXX Ps. 94:11; cf. Deut. 1:37-39; 4:1, 21; 6:18; 8:1; 9:1; 12:5; 16:20; 26:1, 3; 27:3; 31:7; 32:52; 34:4),¹⁷ where both the land (Deut. 12:9)

(Freiburg: Herder, 1994): 29-44; and, to a lesser extent, Jorg Jeremias, *Das Königtum Gottes in Den Psalmen: Israels Begegnung Mit dem Kanaanäischen Mythos in Den Jahwe-König-Psalmen* (FRLANT, 141; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987): 107-14. What follows is an extension and development of their work. Some Hebrews commentators also recognise the psalm's Deuteronomic character (cf. deSilva, *Perseverance*: 232; Robert Jewett, *Letters to Pilgrims: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York: Pilgrim, 1981): 55-56), but even then, do not see Heb. 3:7-4:11 as especially Deuteronomic.

¹² For example Bernhard Duhm, *Die Psalmen* (Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament; Freiburg, 1899): 231.

¹³ H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (4th edn; Göttinger Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926): 411-12. Gunkel christens the text a 'prophetische liturgie'.

¹⁴ For a review of the history of the psalm's interpretation, see Gwynne Henton Davies, 'Psalm 95', *ZAW* 85 (1973): 183-87.

¹⁵ Cf. Jeremias, *Königtum*: 108. This view, though the minority one, has the advantage of including vv. 6-7 in the admonition. The seriousness of the warning in vv. 6-11 is that Israel disobeys their creator YHWH.

¹⁶ Cf. among many, J. H. Eaton, *Psalms: Introduction and Commentary* (Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SCM, 1967): 231; A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms* (New Century Bible; London: Oliphants, 1972): 2.676-77; Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (The Old Testament Library; London: SCM, 1962): 625; Gunkel, *Psalmen*: 411.

¹⁷ εἰσέρχομαι renders several Hebrew verbal roots within Deuteronomy: בּוֹא (x35), חִידָה (x1), עָבַד (x1).

and latterly the temple (Isa. 66:1) are identified with that rest. The second section (95:7d-11) – that quoted in Hebrews 3:7-11 – is the other side of the coin, the warning of the consequences of disobedience and faithlessness that precipitate denial of entry into the rest.

C. H. Dodd proposes that, when exegeting the NT's use of the psalms, the *whole* psalm should be considered and not just the cited portion.¹⁸ Although only 95:7-11 is cited and expounded in Hebrews 3:7–4:11, Dodd's proposal seems especially pertinent for Psalm 95, as the text of the psalm itself invites attention to the whole and rejects consideration of the second portion in isolation. To split the portions of the psalm from their whole is to do injustice to its overall combination of, and interplay between, celebration and warning; cultic joy accompanies the responsibility of being the people of God. The 'well known tensions, beginning with v. 7b, between this part and the preceding context are a deliberate part of the concept of Psalm 95'.¹⁹

Even allowing for two distinct sections, several thematic or lexical features still invite the psalm's fundamental unity: the metaphor of the rock (95:1) is played upon later in the psalm (cf. 95:8 – the rock of Meribah, where Israel's disobedience is demonstrated) and the notion of Israel's hearts going astray (הָלַצְוּ – 95:10) has allusions to the idea of the people as sheep (95:7: cf. Exod. 23:4, Isa. 53:6).²⁰ Conversely, the internal unity may be found by the sharp antithesis between elements in the respective sections: the wilderness backdrop of 95:8-10, for example, contrasts sharply with the lush pasture imagery seen in 95:7 (מִרְעִיתוֹ). Auffret appeals for unity in terms of the psalm's overall symmetrical pairs such as temple/wilderness and today/history; obedience is for today, whilst disobedience is confined to the past.²¹ Enns proposes that the motifs of creation and re-creation (where re-creation is viewed as a (new) exodus metaphor) unite the psalm, and that these creation themes are subsequently carried forward into the argument of Hebrews 4:3-11.²²

¹⁸ C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (Stone Lectures; 1950; London: Nisbet, 1952): 57-59.

¹⁹ Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 2: 459.

²⁰ Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965): 353.

²¹ Pierre Auffret, 'Essai sur la Structure Littéraire du Psaume 95', *BN* 22 (1983): 47-69.

²² Enns, 'Creation': 258-80.

The psalm's unity is best seen in terms of the situational activity envisaged by the whole text. The *sitz in leben* of the psalm appears to be a temple liturgy or litany with the invitation to come before YHWH (95:2) and bow before him (95:6),²³ to approach him in worship and with joy (95:1, 6). Whilst the LXX rendering of 95:1 and 95:6 as δεῦτε serves primarily a hortatory rather than motional functional, some movement is still anticipated in 95:2; as Davies notes, 'The clear implication of the sentence is that they are about to seek the presence of God, i.e. that they are not yet in his presence.'²⁴ The exhortations of 95:1-7 locate Israel on the threshold of the divine presence, about to come before YHWH and experience his rest, but warned regarding their access to it should they follow the pattern of wilderness disobedience (95:8-11). The parallels of this tension with the Deuteronomic situation of Israel, standing on the verge of entering into the land and its associated rest (Deut. 3:20; 12:9-10; 5:33(LXX)) but warned of the wilderness failure (1:19-46), are strong to say the least.²⁵ When considered as a unity, Psalm 95 sets out a quasi-Deuteronomic choice before assembled Israel. They are summoned to worship before YHWH (95:1-7c), but are warned of the consequences of abusing or disdaining that summons (95:7d-11).

Schneidewinde takes the argument for unity one stage further, averring that Psalm 95 is a later, inner-biblical development or response to Psalm 100's question: When is Israel the people of God?²⁶ Psalm 95's reply, he ventures, is that Israel's elect status is conditional: they are a people of God when they obey him, when they listen to his voice. In a time when YHWH is proclaimed as king over all the other gods (95:3), the rock of their salvation (95:1), the only danger to Israel comes not from outside – there is no external threat ultimately awaiting them –

²³ The rendering of נִכְרַךְ is a tantalising question if one is thinking Deuteronomically; the MT pointing proposes the qal of the root כִּרַךְ, 'to bow or kneel down', but the LXX rendering (αλαύσωμεν – i.e. reading הִכְכַּנּוּ) suggests some confusion in this area. What would happen if נִכְרַךְ were read as being from the root כִּרַךְ, 'to bless', a favourite word/theme of the Deuteronomist? This would draw an even closer link between YHWH's blessing and the motif of divine rest.

²⁴ Davies, 'Psalm 95': 190.

²⁵ That is not to say that Israel does not experience the presence of YHWH pre-conquest. However, there is a sense in which the presence becomes more acute and is heightened upon entry into the land (cf. Deut. 12:7, 18).

²⁶ Schneidewind, 'Are We?': 546-47. The parallel between Ps. 100:3 and Ps. 95:6-7 is strong, with both ascribing Israel's creation (עֲשֵׂנוּ) to YHWH and both invoking sheep/pasture language.

but rather from Israel itself, from their own disobedience, their own rejection of YHWH and refusal to listen to his voice.²⁷ With election comes responsibility: with the prospect of receiving divine rest comes the possibility of it being refused, if his people fail to listen to his voice and act accordingly.²⁸ The danger for Israel comes from their own disobedience, their own rejection of YHWH and disregard for his ways. This resonates with the Deuteronomic understanding of obedience as listening to the voice of YHWH (cf. Deut. 4:30; 13:18; 26:17): heeding the voice brings about blessing, forsaking it invites cursing (Deut. 11:27-28). The failure to enter Canaan the first time round is attributed to Israel's rebellion against the word (literally 'the mouth') of YHWH (Deut. 1:26) – precisely the warning levied by the psalmist.

2.2 The Context of Psalm 95

Psalm 95 sits within the grouping of psalms (93–99) which proclaim the kingship of YHWH and which were allegedly recited annually at his ritual enthronement by Israel.²⁹ An exact historical reconstruction of the usage of such kingship psalms³⁰ in Israelite worship is fraught with difficulty;³¹ likewise, any attempt to date Psalm 95 will be at best informed guesswork and a matter for debate.³² But the internal evidence of the kingship psalms, particularly the repeated royal imagery

²⁷ Jeremias, *Königtum*: 111. Significantly, Jeremias contextualises the Psalm as demonstrating a time of crisis in the faith (*Glaubens*) of Israel, a context that bears more than a passing resemblance to that mooted for Hebrews.

²⁸ Ps. 95:7d (אִם-בְּקוֹלִי תִשְׁמָעוּ) may be understood either as an apodosis of v. 8 ('if you listen to his voice' – NASB, KJV, NIV, LXX) or as rendering an optative sense ('if you would only listen to his voice?' – NRSV, ASV). Either version is compatible with the quasi-Deuteronomic exhortation not to rebel against YHWH, but the conditional sense is perhaps preferable here since the sense of the psalm is that they can hear the word of YHWH (vv. 8-11) yet 'choose' not to obey him.

²⁹ Cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (The Biblical Seminar; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992): 156-59.

³⁰ The precise boundaries and content of the 'YHWH-malak' psalms is a scholarly moot point. Gerald Wilson, for example, finds only 93 and 96–99 to be true kingship Psalms, suggesting that Pss. 95 and 100 form a framework around the core of 96–99. See Gerald H. Wilson, 'Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms' in *Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, ed. J. Clinton McCann (*JSOTSS* 159; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993): 72-82. However, in view of the reference to מֶלֶךְ (95:3), one must surely attribute Ps. 95 to the grouping in some broad sense.

³¹ The Mishnah, for example, links the psalm with the New Year Festival and the recitation of *Malkuyoth* ('sovereignty sayings') – cf. *m. RS* 4:5a.

³² Suggestions vary from late pre-exilic to early post-exilic. If forced to choose, an early post-exilic date is the most attractive option, as it adds extra substance to the warning about missing out on the divine rest.

(93:1-2; 95:3; 97:1-2; 99:1, 4), does encourage us to draw some broad, if tentative, conclusions. Picking up on the covenantal language of verse 7 and the wilderness disobedience of verses 8-11, Sigmund Mowinckel argues that the psalm comprises an annual liturgy of YHWH's enthronement that was accompanied by a rehearsal of the Sinai covenant.³³ His suggestion has some mileage: the binary nature of the psalm gives it a covenantal tenor, whilst the wilderness appeal of 95:8-10 draws the hearers' thoughts towards the events of the Sinai desert. Levenson seems to broadly concur, concluding on the basis of Psalms 50 and 81 (both of which share with Psalm 95 the warnings against disobedience couched in covenantal terminology) that 'The renewal of the Sinaitic covenant has become a liturgy of the Temple of Jerusalem.'³⁴ If Mowinckel's proposal is embraced, however tentatively, Psalm 95 emerges as a text that is not just Deuteronomic in its outlook, but one that also evokes the Sinai moment. It replays the Horeb covenant and its implications before Israel as a reminder of the obedience that Sinai demanded from the people vis-à-vis YHWH, a characterization that would seem avowedly Deuteronomic.

2.3 The Content of Psalm 95

Aside from position and context however, perhaps the strongest argument for Deuteronomic thinking in the psalm is its content. The language utilised by the psalm, as we shall see below, is characteristically Deuteronomic and we will discuss in the next section Hebrews' usage of key terms 'rest' and 'today'. Davies contends that 'today' is any day on which the psalm is sung,³⁵ but the significance of the term is perhaps stronger than this. As the word is located at the outset of the phrase, probably for emphasis, the parallels with the Deuteronomic 'today' are stark and one prefers Hossfeld's suggestion of it embracing a call to immediate obedience,³⁶ or Jeremias' *Gehorsamentscheidung* ('decision for obedience').³⁷ It suffices to note here that in Psalm 95 'today' distinguishes between the 'now' and the 'then', to focus the present hearers' attention upon the importance of

³³ Mowinckel, *Psalms*: 156-59.

³⁴ Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985): 207.

³⁵ Davies, 'Psalm 95': 193.

³⁶ Hossfeld, 'Psalm 95': 36.

³⁷ Jeremias, *Königtum*: 111.

not replicating their forefathers' rebellious and quarrelsome actions. In both Psalm 95 and Deuteronomy, 'today' functions heuristically, as a means of bringing the lessons of the past into the present moment, challenging Israel afresh with the Deuteronomic choice to (dis)obey.

Several further parallels may be noted. In terms of the protagonists involved, the second portion of the psalm (95:7d-11) is ostensibly the words of God put in the human mouth, akin to the rhetorical use of Moses in Deuteronomy (1:3; 4:44; 26:18-19).³⁸ More significantly, perhaps, the sin of the wilderness generation is weighted towards a Deuteronomic perspective: although the psalm cites both the Massah and Meribah traditions (cf. Exod. 17:7, Deut. 33:8), only the actions of the former are actually recapitulated by the psalmist (נִסְיוֹנִי – 95:9). Likewise, when choosing one of the two traditions, the Deuteronomist shows a preference for Massah (Deut. 6:16; 9:22), whereas other Pentateuchal sources explicate Meribah (Num. 20:13, 24; 27:14; cf. Ps. 81:7; 106:32).³⁹ Davies helpfully notes that the Massah objection was a questioning of the presence of YHWH, to which approach into the presence of YHWH in the psalm is an appropriate parallel.⁴⁰

In sum, Psalm 95 functions as a contemporary paradigm for Israel, a lesson or exhortation for the present derived from the past, one that lays before the current generation the deeds of their wilderness forefathers, together with the consequences of such actions. It is quintessentially a Deuteronomic psalm and its usage at this point in the argument of Hebrews accords well with the quasi-Deuteronomic choice of chapters 3–4: Will the audience follow the way of faithfulness or will they pursue the path of apostasy? Further evidence of this Deuteronomic orientation may be found in Hebrews' choice of language in 3:7–4:11, much, but not all, of which derives from the psalm. There are four lexical reasons to suggest that Hebrews' use of Psalm 95 has its roots in Deuteronomy – not to the exclusion of Numbers 14, but certainly to a comparable level.

³⁸ Tucker, 'Psalm 95': 538.

³⁹ Tucker, 'Psalm 95': 540; Davies, 'Psalm 95': 194. Meribah Kadesh is mentioned in Deut. 32:51, but in the context of Moses' and Aaron's disobedience, not that of Israel generally.

⁴⁰ Davies, 'Psalm 95': 194.

3. The lexicography of Hebrews 3:7–4:11

3.1 Σήμερον

Within its exegesis of Psalm 95, Hebrews draws the audience's attention to the fact that the exhortation to enter into the divine rest is issued 'today'. Σήμερον is prominent both in the text of Psalm 95:7b (positioned as a pivot between the two sections of the psalm) and in Hebrews' quasi-midrashic play on the word (3:7, 13, 15; 4:7-8). It is also an emphatic term within Deuteronomy, particularly in Moses' rhetorical desire to draw his listeners' attention to the present moment. The Deuteronomic significance of σήμερον was noted initially by Von Rad,⁴¹ but has been given more detailed examination by Simon DeVries. He observed that the usage is rare in the law book itself, but features prominently in the surrounding paraenetic sections. The primary aspects of 'today' are temporal identification and characterisation, namely the Deuteronomist's desire to transfer his audience typologically back to the Mosaic era so that they might embrace that moment for themselves; the longer the distance from Moses, he ventured, the greater the need for 'today' to be emphasised. 'Today' also becomes the locus for exhortation and appeal, seeking Israel's obedient response (now) to YHWH's prior covenantal action.⁴² Thus DeVries surmises that the Deuteronomic today 'undertakes to simplify Israel's choice in a highly confused and complex situation, it draws diverse elements together, arranging them typologically according to the pattern of the renewed day of divine-human confrontation.'⁴³

'Today' thus solves the generation problem, bridging the gap between past and present eras. The Israel of Deuteronomy face a renewed moment of choice as they stand 'today' on the threshold of

⁴¹ Gerhard von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (Studies in Biblical Theology; London: SCM, 1953): 70-71.

⁴² Simon John DeVries, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Time and History in the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1975): 164-87, 261-63. He characterises the usage of 'today' under four categories: Time identification, Epitome, Appeal, and Identifying Characterisation.

⁴³ DeVries, *Yesterday*: 166. This assessment bears more than a passing similarity to John Dunnill's depiction of 'sacred time' in Deuteronomy and Hebrews. See John Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 135-41.

Canaan.⁴⁴ Their ‘future’ actions are laid before them in the present (Deut. 4:25-28; 30:15-20; 31:16-18, 26-29), such that the ‘future’ becomes effectively the ‘now’. Following this line of thought, DeVries notes that Deuteronomy’s use of ‘today’ is, in his words, ‘something analogous’ to what is happening in Hebrews 3:13.⁴⁵ The audience of Hebrews face a similar choice: addressed ‘today’, divisions of time are blurred. Their past, future and present are so intertwined that they should not act faithlessly ‘today’ lest they fail to enter the divine rest that lies before them. In both Hebrews and Deuteronomy, the audience’s primary temporal dimension is ‘today’.

Such usage of ‘σήμερον’ has chronological implications. In both Deuteronomy and Psalm 95 (and by extension Heb. 3), the consequences of wilderness apostasy are delineated and a choice is set before the audience whereby the addressees of the discourse rhetorically *become* the wilderness generation. In Deuteronomy, it is those here ‘today’ who have sinned and rebelled (Deut. 9:7-8; cf. 1:26, 1:43-46, 11:2-7), even though it is clearly stated that the entire wilderness generation have already been wiped out (Deut. 2:14-15). Likewise, the psalm: whilst the forefathers are clearly identified as testing and trying YHWH (95:9), the phrase is a relative clause to the primary exhortation not to harden *your* hearts as at Meribah/Massah. The NIV translation of 95:8 is avowedly (and perhaps overly) specific on this matter: ‘(D)o not harden your hearts as *you* did at Meribah, as *you* did that day at Massah.’⁴⁶ The application to the current generation is likewise acute in the LXX, where the absence of place names severs the link with the precise geographical location whilst retaining the significance of the transgression: a rhetorical transposition occurs which places the hearers back in the wilderness milieu. For the Psalmist and for Hebrews, just as with the Deuteronomist, the ‘new’ generation stands not just in continuity, but also ultimately in *de facto* unity, with the forefathers.

⁴⁴ Karel A. Deurloo, ‘The One God and All Israel in its Generations’ in *Studies in Deuteronomy in Honour of C.J.Labuschagne on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Florentino García Martínez (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum; Leiden: Brill, 1994): 46 remarks that Ps. 95:7 is the ‘Voice of Horeb’ that ‘can be heard through the book’ of Deuteronomy.

⁴⁵ DeVries, *Yesterday*: 166.

⁴⁶ Noth defends this translation on the grounds that ‘the very abruptness of the transition (i.e. to ‘fathers’ in 95:9) shows that those addressed were put in the situation of their ancestors.’ (Martin Noth, ‘The Re-Presentation of the Old Testament in Proclamation’, *Int* 15 (1961): 56n6).

3.2 Κατάπαυσις

The precise nature of the κατάπαυσις and its Septuagintal provenance has been an issue of great debate for NT scholars in recent years.⁴⁷ As its scope is extended to incorporate elements both of Sabbath (4:4-5, 9-10) and divine presence (4:10), mooted sources for its backdrop are diverse ranging from the physical land of Canaan⁴⁸ to the apocalyptic temple of *4 Ezra*⁴⁹ to Platonic metaphysics.⁵⁰ Whilst a broader discussion of Hebrews' conception of κατάπαυσις is beyond the scope of this paper, a strong case may be made that, in 3:7-19 at least, when citing Psalm 95, Hebrews is allying rest with the telic goal of the land of Canaan – the same *telos* intended by the Numbers 14 allusions. There is a direct parallel between the failure to enter the land and the failure to enter into the rest, a parallel whose efficacy is reduced if no correlation between land and rest exists.⁵¹

Assuming this basic correlation, however, if one turns to the incidences of κατάπαυσις within the LXX it quickly emerges that Numbers is interestingly bereft of such language, most notably in chapter 14. The only incidence of the noun is in Numbers 10:36, where the referent is the ark of the covenant; likewise, the verbal form καταπαύω only occurs once (Num. 25:11), where Phineas restrains or 'rests' the anger of God. Any association between κατάπαυσις and

⁴⁷ Jon Laansma, *I Will Give You Rest: The Rest Motif in the New Testament with Special Reference to Matthew 11 and Hebrews 3-4* (WUNT, 2/98; Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1997); Judith Hoch Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Truth: Early Christian Homiletics of Rest* (SBLDS, 166; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); Khiok-Khng Yeo, 'The Meaning and Usage of the Theology of 'Rest' (Katapausis and Sabbatismos) in Hebrews 3:7-4:13', *AJT* 5 (1991): 2-33; Andrew T. Lincoln, 'Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology in the New Testament' in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982): 198-220; H. A. Lombard, 'Katapausis in the Letter to the Hebrews', *Neot* (1971): 60-71; Otfried Hofius, *Katapausis: Die Vorstellung vom Endzeitlichen Ruheort im Hebräerbrief* (WUNT, 11; Tübingen: Mohr, 1970); Herold Weiss, 'Sabbatismos in the Epistle to the Hebrews', *CBQ* 58 (1996): 674-89.

⁴⁸ George Wesley Buchanan, *To the Hebrews: Translation, Comment and Conclusions* (Anchor Bible; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972): 64-75.

⁴⁹ Hofius, *Katapausis*: 60-63.

⁵⁰ James W. Thompson, *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews* (CBQMS, 13; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1982): 81-102.

⁵¹ As 4:3-10 – and especially 4:8 – explain, Hebrews' conception of κατάπαυσις goes well beyond the physical topography of Canaan. This, however, does not negate the point that, in the early stages of Hebrews' argument, κατάπαυσις is associated with the land (Heb. 3:16-19).

Landnahme ideology is noticeably absent. Deuteronomy, on the other hand, exhibits far stronger parallels, with either κατάπαυσις or καταπαύω⁵² occurring six times in the book (3:20; 5:33; 12:9-10; 25:19; 33:12). Not only is the καταπαύω root more prominent than Numbers in terms of occurrences, its semantic domain arguably correlates far more closely to that elucidated within Hebrews 3:7-19. Most notably, καταπαύω is directly associated with the land, four times explicitly (3:20; 5:33; 12:10; 25:19) and once by implication (12:9).

Deuteronomy 33:12 is perhaps an idiosyncratic use of καταπαύω,⁵³ but the other five occurrences all fit neatly into the land/possession matrix. Deuteronomy 3:20 is the climax of Moses' retelling of the wilderness wanderings occasioned by the spies' rebellion and relates the rest to the land that is the goal of their journey. The occurrence of καταπαύω in Deuteronomy 5:33 also refers to life in Canaan: it is preceded by a sober warning in 5:32 to keep to what YHWH had commanded them to do, thereby invoking the 'conditional' nature of the rest evidenced in Psalm 95:7-11. Deuteronomy 25:19 anticipates the rest from Israel's enemies within the land, but it is in Deuteronomy 12:9-10 that land imagery comes most to the fore. Most significantly perhaps, Deuteronomy 12:9 is the only instance (aside from Psalm 95 itself) where the noun form (κατάπαυσις) is used in association with the land.⁵⁴ This seems quite clearly to be the association drawn in Hebrews 3:7-19 and, most significantly, is the verse emphasised by Hofius in his analysis of the LXX backdrop to κατάπαυσις in Hebrews.⁵⁵ The connotations of divine presence which come forth in Hebrews 4 (cf. 4:10) can also be found in Deuteronomy 12:9-11: the very land in which rest is given to Israel (12:9) is the place in which his Name will dwell (12:11). Hence, in Deuteronomy 12:8-10 (rightly identified by Vanhoye as a source for MT Ps. 95) we have a fusion of both conceptions of rest elucidated by Hebrews - land and divine

⁵² To include verbal usage – rather than just the noun – in our analysis is legitimate, if only because Hebrews makes the same *gezera shawa* move in Heb. 4:3-4.

⁵³ Particularly as the root כָּנַח has already been rendered by a different verb κατασκηνώ – see John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* (SBL S+CS, 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995): 546. However, it exemplifies the close relationship between YHWH's rest and his dwelling-place, a relationship that echoes Hebrews' own emphasis upon the rest as that experienced by YHWH himself (4:3-11).

⁵⁴ Cf. the connection made in *Mid. Pss.* 95.3.

⁵⁵ Hofius, *Katapausis*: 27, 40-41.

presence. William Horbury concurs, noting how, in Deuteronomy 12:8-11, the first task for Israel in the land is to build a place for YHWH to dwell.⁵⁶ ‘My rest’ – that of YHWH – is inextricably linked with that of Israel.

This is not to say that Deuteronomy contains the only incidences in which the relationship between the land and rest is drawn, or in which God is described as giving rest to Israel (cf. Josh. 1:13, 15; 11:23; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1; 1 Kgs 8:56). In Joshua – unsurprisingly so in the context of the whole book of conquest – the references to κατάπαυσις presuppose successful entry into the land, such that the rest has already been given. This clearly is not absent from Hebrews’ mind – he is aware that Scripture did teach entry into the rest (Heb. 4:8; cf. Josh. 22:4); such verses, however, lack the Deuteronomic tension whereby entry into the land is predicated upon obedience to YHWH, with the direct challenge to follow him accordingly. Moreover, the situational parallel constructed by Hebrews emphasises the importance of faithfulness at the *threshold* of the land, not obedience within it, which is clearly more akin to the Deuteronomic than the Joshuanic posture.

One summarising comment might be made at this stage. Hebrews’ exegesis of Psalm 95 may be encapsulated as an exposition and elucidation of two words – ‘today’ (σήμερον – Heb. 3:7, 13, 15; 4:7-8) and ‘rest’ (κατάπαυσις – Heb. 3:11, 18-19; 4:1-11).⁵⁷ The author certainly grapples with the text as whole, but he is interested primarily in these two terms for explicating the relevance of the psalm for his audience. It has been argued above that both words are essentially Deuteronomic terms and the context and sense given to them by Hebrews equates to that given by the Deuteronomist. Even if we concede the fact that the events of Numbers 14 are in mind within Hebrews 3–4, the exegesis and application of the events is couched primarily – perhaps even exclusively – in Deuteronomic terms, and barely those of Numbers 14. It is ‘κατάπαυσις’ that is the primary motif in these chapters, and an LXX reader struggles to get from γῆ to κατάπαυσις with only Numbers 14 with which to work.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ William Horbury, ‘Land, Sanctuary and Worship’ in *Early Christian Thought in its Jewish Context*, eds John M. G. Barclay and J. P. M. Sweet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 209.

⁵⁷ R. T. France, ‘The Writer of Hebrews as a Biblical Expositor’, *TynBul* 47 (1996): 272.

⁵⁸ Wray observes: ‘The psalmist has made the leap to equate the land with God’s REST, a leap inconsistent with the text in Numbers, but not inconsistent with other

3.3 Παραπικραίνω

The priority of σήμερον and κατάπανσις notwithstanding, two further points of similarity may be observed. Hebrews 3:16 poses the question: *τίνες γὰρ ἀκούσαντες παρεπίκραναν?* The query is clearly prompted by the citation of Psalm 95:8 in Hebrews 3:15, and, as part of the task of applying the desert experience to his contemporary audience, Hebrews seeks to reiterate the identity of those who ‘heard’ but ‘rebelled’.

Like its cognate noun παραπικρασμός (Heb. 3:8, 15), within the NT at least, παραπικραίνω appears uniquely in this chapter of Hebrews. In the LXX, however, whilst παραπικρασμός is a hapax legomenon, the verbal form is not uncommon, and it is particularly prominent in the Psalms,⁵⁹ though absent from the book of Numbers. Indeed, with respect to the narratives of the wilderness wanderings, παραπικραίνω occurs only once, in Deuteronomy 31:27, rendering the Hebrew root *מרר*.⁶⁰ Elsewhere in Deuteronomy, *מרר* is translated by ἀπειθέω (1:26, 9:7, 23-24) and παραβαίνω (1:43), but in this instance at least, the translator has employed παραπικραίνω. Whilst one should be wary of drawing too much significance from this single rendering, it remains nonetheless notable that Deuteronomy 31:27 furnishes the only Pentateuchal instance of Israel’s rebellion described in the terms of Psalm 95:8/Hebrews 3:16. The language of the Psalmist’s portrait of Israel’s bitter or rebellious mindset (παραπικρασμός) is found, not in Numbers 14, but rather in Deuteronomy 31:27 (παραπικραίνω).

Now, in and of itself, this may not be too persuasive but for the existence of several other interesting parallels between Deuteronomy 31:27 and Psalm 95:7b-11/Hebrews 3:7-19. First, ‘today’ (σήμερον) is once more present to demark the application of Moses’ words to the contemporary audience, and to compare present and future disobedience. In Deuteronomy 31:27, σήμερον precedes the use of παραπικραίνω to draw the contrast between Israel’s disobedience

texts in the Hebrew Scripture’ (*Rest*: 67). If Deuteronomy figures within the psalmist’s mindset, the leap becomes far more consistent.

⁵⁹ Cf. LXX Ps. 77, where it occurs four times (77:8, 17, 40, 56).

⁶⁰ The linguistic association of παραπικραίνω and *מרר* is complex – see Peter Walters, *The Text of the Septuagint: its Corruptions and Their Emendation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973): 150-53. However, we assume that Hebrews’ text of Deut. 31:27 is the same as in Rahlfs’ LXX, since, as Walters points out, Deut. 31:27 may be the ‘Greek Psalmist’s model’.

while Moses was alive (i.e. today), and their purported greater rebellion subsequent to his death. Second, Deuteronomy 31:27 alludes to Israel's nature as 'σκληρός' ('rebellious' or 'hard'). This adjectival form corresponds lexically with the warning to Israel in Psalm 95:8 and Hebrews 3:8, 13, 15 not to harden (σκληρύνετε) their hearts. Whilst the reference in 31:27 relates it to the hardness of the *neck* rather than the *heart*, the sense of the expression, one suggests, is broadly equivalent, since an incidence of Israel specifically hardening their *hearts*, as opposed to hardening their *necks*, is difficult to locate within the OT canon, particularly in the context of the events circumscribed by Psalm 95. Within the exodus narrative it is always *Pharaoh's* heart being hardened by YHWH (Exod. 7:3, 22; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 14:4), not the Israelites hardening their own hearts,⁶¹ and Psalm 95:8 thus seems noticeably unique in expressing corporate Israel's active hardening of their own hearts.⁶²

There is good reason to treat hard-heartedness and 'hard-neckedness' as in some way synonymous. 'Hardness' and 'neck', for example, are commonly juxtaposed when describing the failure or refusal to listen to a voice or commandment (cf. Neh. 9:16-17, 29; Jer. 7:26; 17:23; 19:15; Bar. 2:30), the very situation being outlined in Psalm 95:7b-8. The same scenario is depicted in Hebrews 3-4, where the hardening of the heart is equated with failing to listen to the divinely voiced exhortation (Heb. 3:7, 15; 4:2, 7 – cf. 4:12).⁶³ More significantly perhaps, in Deuteronomy 10:16, 'hard-heartedness' and 'hard-neckedness' are placed in coordinate phrases, creating an almost tautological sense to the verse.⁶⁴ Similar tautological parallels are

⁶¹ Likewise Heb. 3:13 warns against the hearts of the audience being hardened, with the agent of the hardening being the deceitfulness of sin (so B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1950): 85). However, a key contrast with Heb. 3:8 remains: in the latter, the action of hardening is active, yet in 3:13 it remains passive. It is the active hardening of the heart that is so rare within the OT canon.

⁶² Prov. 28:14 is probably the closest analogy, but it is detached from any particular historical context and pertains to an individual human being, rather than corporate Israel. None of the other OT references to the Meribah tradition mention hearts being hardened (Exod. 17:1-7; Num. 20:1-13, 24; 27:14; Deut. 32:51; 33:8; Ps. 106:32).

⁶³ In Deut. 1-4, there is a strong exhortation to listen to the voice of YHWH, coupled with a warning of the consequences of not listening to his word (cf. Deut. 1:43-45; 4:1-2, 10, 30, 33, 36).

⁶⁴ Hossfeld, 'Psalm 95': 36 suggests that Deut. 10:16 is actually 'the source of this idiom' for Ps. 95. Ceslas Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris: Gabalda, 1953): 2.90-91 proposes that 10:16 may also be the backdrop to τετραχηλισμένα (Heb. 4:13), setting

found in 2 Chronicles 36:13⁶⁵ and 1 Esdras 1:46, and it is thus feasible to suggest that the reference to τὸν τράχηλόν σου τὸν σκληρόν in Deuteronomy 31:27 is, at the very least, not far removed from, and perhaps even akin to, the action of σκληρύνετε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν envisaged in Psalm 95:8.

Third, within the broader context of Deuteronomy 31:27 (31:24-29), Moses warns Israel of their future, impending apostasy, a turning to worship other gods. Just as they have been rebellious in the past (with fatal consequences), a pessimistic future is anticipated for the generations subsequent to the one about to enter the land, with YHWH again provoked to anger (Deut. 31:29; cf. Ps. 95:10). Rhetorically speaking, one suggests that there are direct parallels here with what is happening in Hebrews 3–4: just as the (old) wilderness generation rebelled against the word of YHWH, so the (new) Israel is potentially in grave danger of repeating their fatal misdemeanour, of apostatising and thereby missing out on the divine rest (Heb. 3:13; 4:1, 11).⁶⁶ Not only does this *a fortiori* comparison resonate with Hebrews' own preference for *qal wahomer* arguments (2:2-3; 10:28-29; 12:25), this 'second' or 'subsequent' rebellion occurs during the ἔσχατον τῶν ἡμερῶν ('in the last days' – Deut. 31:29).⁶⁷ The same phrase is used in Hebrews 1:2 to describe the historical moment of the 'new' revelation: the divine speaking through the Son, the rejection of whose word is viewed as similarly sinful (Heb. 3:6; 4:14; cf. 3:13-14). As such, there is at least some correlation between the rebellion foreseen in Deuteronomy 31:27-29 and that warned against in Hebrews 3:7–4:11;⁶⁸ a situational parallel exists between both audiences, each charged with learning from the wilderness exemplar.

an image of a 'circumcised' heart, open to the word of God, in opposition to the uncircumcised 'hard-heartedness' of Heb. 3:8-15.

⁶⁵ The קשה root is applied to the neck rather than the heart, which has different verbal root.

⁶⁶ The more positive assessments of the status of Hebrews' audience (6:9-12; 10:39) suggest that apostasy remains only a distant possibility, but the mere presence of the warning in 3:7–4:11 indicates that concerns regarding them falling away are not entirely unwarranted. Stephen G. Wilson, *Leaving the Fold: Apostates and Defectors in Antiquity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004): 70-72 surmises that some defection had already occurred; the author is thus speculating on the 'possibility of recurrence'.

⁶⁷ The preposition ἐπ' / ἐπὶ is missing from the phrase (cf. Deut. 4:30; 8:16), but is found in several variants. So Wevers, *Notes*: 508.

⁶⁸ Noting the difference that in Deut. 31:27-29 the rebellion is viewed as inevitable (the use of infinitive absolute of שָׁחַת – 31:29), whereas in Heb. 3:7–4:11, it is seen as in some way avoidable (cf. 4:11).

These three aspects of Deuteronomy 31:27, as well as the particular use of παραπικραίνω, give good reason to associate that verse with the question of Hebrews 3:16. One may object that παραπικραίνω is only used in 3:16 because it is the natural response to ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ (3:15b); Hebrews is merely moving from the nominal to the verbal form and any link to Deuteronomy 31:27 (or any other LXX text) would be purely ‘accidental’. Yet such an objection merely moves the debate to the origins of Psalm 95:7b-11. Is it not equally possible that the author(s) of Psalm 95 had in mind precisely the text of Deuteronomy 31:24-29 when composing the ‘warning’ element of the Psalm, particularly as it has already been demonstrated above that the Psalm is, of itself, in some way ‘Deuteronomic’? If this is indeed the case, then it should be unsurprising that Hebrews, in exegeting Psalm 95, echoes the same Deuteronomic text to which the psalmist had earlier alluded.

3.4 Ἀπειθέω

A final parallel may be found in Hebrews’ use of the verb ἀπειθέω to describe the disobedience of the wilderness generation (Heb. 3:18). Unlike κατάπαυσις and παραπικραίνω, ἀπειθέω has no lexical origin in Psalm 95; instead, Hebrews derives the word from elsewhere, probably in relation to ἀπιστία (3:12, 19), which itself provides an inclusio for the pericope and emphasises faithfulness/faithlessness as the core issue under discussion. Whereas Hebrews 3:1-6 hold up Moses and Christ as the embodiment of πίστις, verses 7-19 articulate the paradigmatic ἀπιστία of the wilderness generation as the corresponding negative exemplar. Why though does Hebrews use ἀπειθέω when a potentially more appropriate verb (ἀπιστέω) might have been invoked? Its inclusion may merely reflect stylistic preferences, with any other parallels purely coincidental. However, since the answers to the previous two questions (Heb. 3:16-17) have found their roots solidly located within the LXX narrative, it would seem reasonable to see whether the roots of ἀπειθέω may likewise be found there. The verb does appear in Numbers 14, but only once (14:43), and pertains to the events *after* the rebellion, and not necessarily to the rebellion itself. In Deuteronomy however, ἀπειθέω is not just more common than in Numbers (Deut. 1:26; 9:7, 23-24; 32:51), but is also used of the very events at the heart of the narrative of Psalm 95 (Deut. 1:26; 9:23).

Three further observations might be made on these verses with ἀπειθέω. First, they emphasise the fact that Israel's rebellion is against the *word* of the LORD (Deut. 1:26; 9:23). This is commensurate with Hebrews 4:2: Israel had the word preached to them, yet they hardened their hearts against it and became apostate. Second, Deuteronomy 9:23 draws the same parallel between ἀπειθέω (disobedience) and the related (lack of) faith – ἡπειθήσατε/ἐπιστεύσατε – the very parallel that Hebrews itself draws (Heb. 3:18-19). Third, and most significant, 9:23 claims that Israel did not εἰσηκούσατε τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ, strongly paralleled in Psalm 95:7b (cf. Heb. 3:7, 15; 4:7). For both the Deuteronomist and Hebrews, obedience to YHWH is predicated upon listening to his voice (Deut. 4:30; 11:27-28; 13:4; 26:17; 28:13; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-4; 11:8).⁶⁹ Indeed, the undoubted links to Numbers 14:30 notwithstanding, if one were trying to find a proof text from which the second part of Psalm 95 is built, Deuteronomy 9:23 would provide a very strong candidate, for it combines three of the key verbal motifs of Psalm 95:7b-11 – hearing, trusting and rebelling. Deuteronomy 9:22 reinforces this view with Massah (τῷ Πειρασμῷ) mentioned as a location of invoking YHWH to wrath (Deut. 9:22; cf. Ps. 95:8; Heb. 3:8). Precedent for this focal usage of Deuteronomy 9:23 may be found in the Damascus Document, whose broad retelling of Israel's story uses Deuteronomy 9:23 as its lemma text, both to retell the events at Kadesh Barnea and consequently also to articulate a then/now exhortation to obedience akin to that made in Hebrews 3–4 (CD 3:7).

4. Conclusion

It is not the intention of this paper to negate the important role that Numbers 14 plays in the argument of Hebrews 3:7-19, as the textual basis for that relationship remains somewhat compelling. However, we have argued that a plausible case may equally be made that Deuteronomy also contributes to the overall matrix of Hebrews 3:7–4:11, a case that has been rarely proposed or endorsed by commentators. On

⁶⁹ See n. 63 above. Martin Karrer, 'The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Septuagint' in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures*, eds Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wooden (*SBL S+CS*, 53; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006): 341 remarks in terms of revelation in Hebrews: 'the major way is to hear'.

the one hand, the use of the Deuteronomic Psalm 95 clothes the argument in the Deuteronomic choice of obedience or apostasy, signalling the antithesis between the blessing of rest and the curse of death. On the other, Hebrews 3's use of characteristically Deuteronomic words such as 'today' and 'rest', along with motifs such as 'hard-heartedness', 'rebellion', and rare words like παραπικραίνω attest to a Deuteronomic agenda functioning within Hebrews' exposition of the psalm. Together, both strands ascribe a Deuteronomic flavour to the pericope that enhances the exhortation to faithfulness and the warning against apostasy, laying a fresh rhetorical choice before a new Israel standing at the threshold of their promised (heavenly) κατάπαυσις.