

# Changes: Literary and Theological Consideration of Two Variation Units in Hebrews 1:8b

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## Abstract

While the Epistle to the Hebrews has few hotly debated textual variants, issues surrounding variation within the author's citation of the scriptures of Israel in Greek remain thorny. This paper considers two variation units in Hebrews 1:8b and argues for the priority of certain readings primarily on the basis of internal evidence, namely the author's citation practices and Christological exegesis. This paper concludes that Hebrews 1:8b originally read *καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ*, and that this alteration to the Old Greek text of the Psalm cited is an intentional reference to the Davidic covenant and the Son's exalted, incarnate reign.

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## 1. Introduction

While the Epistle to the Hebrews has few hotly debated textual variants,<sup>1</sup> issues surrounding variation within the author's citation of the scriptures of Israel in Greek remain thorny. The situation is often summarised by saying

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1. The most significant is in Hebrews 2:9, where Jesus is described as tasting death for all either *ἁρίτι θεοῦ* or *χωρὶς θεοῦ*. Cf. S. P. Brock, 'Hebrews 2:9B in Syriac Tradition', *NovT* 27 (1983): 236–244, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853685X00346>; F. F. Bruce, 'Textual Problems in the Epistle to the Hebrews', in *Scribes and Scripture: New Testament Essays in Honour of J. Harold Greenlee*, ed. David Alan Black (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 28–29; Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2005), 144–146; Daniel Wallace, 'The Gospel According to Bart: A Review Article of *Misquoting Jesus* by Bart Ehrman', *JETS* 49 (2006): 337–340; Paul A. Hartog, 'The Text of Hebrews 2:9 in Its Patristic Reception', *BSac* 171 (2014): 52–71.

that the author to the Hebrews cites the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew tradition,<sup>2</sup> but this elides a somewhat complicated state of affairs: when a well-attested reading of Hebrews varies from the best recoverable reading, or any known reading, of the Greek Old Testament, is it because the author chose to do so, or that he had a different witness to the same passage, or that a scribe inserted the variation in error? Conversely, when a well-attested reading of Hebrews *agrees* with the best recoverable reading of the Greek Old Testament, is it possible that, within the copying process, one of the texts was harmonised to the other? How can one decide between harmonised and non-harmonised options? What other factors come into play? For composite citations, the problem only multiplies. Each variation unit must be addressed separately, and the combination of possible solutions is near endless.

In this paper, I argue for the originality of two readings within variation units in Hebrews 1:8b with emphasis on internal evidence. This passage is a citation of Psalm 45:6 (44:7 LXX), which, I argue, the author to the Hebrews intentionally modifies in two distinct ways, these modifications often being harmonised to the text of the Psalm within the manuscript tradition. At these two variation units, most modern editions print one of the author's alterations and retain the harmonisation for the other.

## 2. Presentation of the Variants

The two variation units in Hebrews 1:8 under consideration are the inclusion or non-inclusion of a *καί* between the first and second *stichoi* of the verse and the alteration between *σοῦ* and *αὐτοῦ* at the end of the verse. For comparison, the relevant text and apparatus from three modern editions is provided below.

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2. Radu Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews: An Investigation of its Influence with Special Consideration to the Use of Hab 2:3-4 in Heb 10:37-38*, WUNT 2 160 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Susan E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation*, WUNT 2 260 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 132–142, <https://doi.org/10.1628/978-3-16-151603-0>; Gert J. Steyn, *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666530999>.

NA28 <sup>3</sup>	πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν· ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, °καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου. <sup>4</sup>	° D <sup>2</sup> K L P Ψ 0278. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1881. 2464. ℓ 249 π̄ t vg <sup>cl</sup> sy   txt ℘ <sup>46</sup> ⳑ A B D* 0243. 33. 1739 it vg <sup>st,ww</sup> ς αυτου ℘ <sup>46</sup> ⳑ B   txt A D K L P Ψ 0243. 0278. 33. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1739. 1881. 2464. ℓ 249 π̄ latt sy co
SBLGNT <sup>5</sup>	πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν· Ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου.	<b>καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος</b> WH Treg NIV ] ῥάβδος εὐθύτητος ἡ RP <b>σου</b> Treg NIV RP ] αὐτοῦ WH
THGNT <sup>6</sup>	πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν· ὁ θρόνος σου, ὁ θεός, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος· καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου.	<b>καὶ</b> P46 ⳑ B D*; omit D <sup>2</sup> K L P Ψ 69 1424

From this synopsis, we can see that the only modern edition to reject the καί is Robinson and Pierpont's edition of the Byzantine text (RP),<sup>7</sup> which is unsurprising since very few minuscule manuscripts, such as 33 and 1739, feature it. On the other hand, among the editions cited here, none other than Westcott and Hort's 1881 edition (WH) printed αὐτοῦ at the end of Hebrews 1:8.<sup>8</sup> This could be a result of their oft-caricatured reliance on B, and in his separate commentary on Hebrews, Westcott does not comment on the choice.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, the THGNT does not even feature the variant αὐτοῦ in the apparatus, although in the forthcoming textual commentary and second edition this will be changed.<sup>10</sup>

3. *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Nestle-Aland), 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

4. In all editions here presented, the verse translates to: 'But to the Son, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of your kingdom."' (Translations of biblical texts are the author's own.)

5. *SBL Greek New Testament*, ed. Michael Holmes, <https://sblgnt.com> (2010).

6. *The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge*, ed. Dirk Jongkind (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017).

7. *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform 2005*, compiled and arranged by Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont (Southborough, MA: Chilton, 2005).

8. *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 1: *Text*; vol. 2: *Introduction* [and] *Appendix*, eds. Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1881).

9. Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1892), 26.

10. Private correspondence with Dirk Jongkind.

As far as external evidence is concerned, the support for *καί* and *αὐτοῦ* is substantially similar. The earliest witnesses, P46 **Σ** B, support both. These witnesses are not only early but are generally held as good. *καί* has additional support from D\* 0243. 33. 1739 it vg<sup>st.wv</sup>. While this is not meagre, neither is it exceedingly more decisive than P46 **Σ** B alone. Two factors join to support the adoption of *καί*. First, generally, editors prefer the reading that is not harmonised to the Old Testament passage cited.<sup>11</sup> Second, its inclusion does not create a nonsense reading.

For *αὐτοῦ*, the internal evidence can be read in various ways. Because of the change in person and potential implications for the grammar of Hebrews 1:8, *αὐτοῦ* is the more difficult reading. Further, it is easy to see how *σοῦ* could enter the text as a harmonisation to the Psalm and as a smoothing of the grammatical turbulence caused by *αὐτοῦ*. On the other hand, it is difficult to see how *αὐτοῦ* would arise if *σοῦ* were the more original reading, since nothing in the context suggests a transcriptional likelihood for it arising accidentally, and there is no clear later agenda – whether clarifying or theological – for its change by a scribe or scribes. However, the difficulty in sense presented by *αὐτοῦ* is often seen as determinative. Metzger’s comments are likely representative of subsequent editorial decisions when he says:

Although the reading *αὐτοῦ*, which has early and good support (P46 **Σ** B), may seem to be preferable because it differs from the reading of the Old Testament passage that is being quoted (Ps 45.7 [= LXX 44.7] σοῦ), to which, on this point of view, presumably the mass of New Testament witnesses have been assimilated, a majority of the Committee was more impressed (a) by the weight and variety of the external evidence supporting σοῦ, and (b) by the internal difficulty of construing *αὐτοῦ*. Thus, if one reads *αὐτοῦ* the words *ὁ θεός* must be taken, not as a vocative (an interpretation that is preferred by most exegetes), but as the subject (or predicate nominative), an interpretation that is generally regarded as highly improbable.<sup>12</sup>

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11. For discussions of scribal harmonisation, see Ernest Colwell, ‘Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits’, in *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, ed. Bruce Metzger (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 106–124, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004379275\\_009](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004379275_009); James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), esp. 95–96, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004161818.i-1055>; Cambry Pardee, *Scribal Harmonization in the Synoptic Gospels* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), esp. 1–43, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004391819>; Florenc Mene, ‘Scribal Harmonization in Codex Alexandrinus? The Pentateuchal Quotations in the Corpus Paulinum’, *TC* 25 (2020): 1–35.

12. Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 592–593. Metzger goes on to propose and

As conceived by Metzger and the committee at least, the *lectio difficilior* of αὐτοῦ is *too difficult*. It appears that most editions since then have followed this judgement. We will see if this reasoning holds.

The remainder of this article will argue that αὐτοῦ is not too difficult a reading, and that close attention to Hebrews' citation practices reveals αὐτοῦ to be an intentional composite citation which furthers the theological argument of Hebrews 1. Because the arguments against the priority of αὐτοῦ are primarily internal, the arguments for it within this paper will be internal as well. To make this case, we will first survey two tendencies within citation practices in Hebrews, then return to Hebrews 1:8.

### 3. Citation Practices in Hebrews

#### 3.1 Quote-Splitting

A feature of the use of the Old Testament in Hebrews is a tendency to split a passage from the Old Testament and use one portion to interpret, complement, or override the other. The relevant feature for our study is that the author takes what is continuous text in the Greek Old Testament, divides it, usually at a lexical cue, and interprets the two parts in somewhat different manners.

Sometimes, the author reproduces an entire quotation, then divides the quotation in an oppositional pair. In 10:5-7, the author cites Psalm 40:6-8 (39:7-9 LXX) at length, and then immediately restates a summarised version of the same passage in 10:8-9. In so doing, he<sup>13</sup> takes the words τότε εἶπον ('then I said') as a cue for the division, designating the words before it as τὸ πρῶτον ('the first') and those after as τὸ δεύτερον ('the second'). Instead of reproducing τότε εἶπον, however, the author instead alters the wording to make it a part of the citation formula rather than of the citation itself, writing τότε εἶρηκεν ('then he said') to introduce the quote (10:9). With this distinction, he can make the bold claim that ἀναίρει τὸ πρῶτον ἵνα τὸ δεύτερον στήσῃ ('He sets aside the first in order to establish the second'; 10:9).

Later in the same chapter, he reproduces the New Covenant passage of Jeremiah 31 (38 LXX) with similar explicit framing of a before and an after. The author introduces the quotation with the words μετὰ γὰρ τὸ εἶρηκέναι ('for after having said'; 10:15), but never provides a 'then he said', at least according to the most reliable manuscript tradition. As other streams of the manuscript

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discard a way in which the inclusion of καί could provide a solution and make αὐτοῦ sensible. We will revisit this later.

13. Because of the masculine participle used by the author in a self-description (11:32), I will refer to the unknown author as 'he'.

tradition indicate, however, it was not ambiguous where the second half of the quotation should fall: at the beginning of 10:17, after the declaration of the covenant and before the declaration of pardon.<sup>14</sup> Various transition terms are occasionally inserted at exactly this point, whether ὕστερον λέγει<sup>15</sup> ('he says afterwards') or τότε εἶρηκεν<sup>16</sup> ('then he said'), or their equivalents. The author, however, did no such thing. Rather, it seems that the author raised one word from the citation out of the quote and into the quotative frame. That is, at this point, the καί derived from the Jeremiah citation separates the second portion of the citation from the first. In turn, this latter citation is the focus of the section, demonstrating the claim of 10:14 and leading to the conclusion of 10:19.

With less impact on the argument of the Epistle, the author also cites the end of Isaiah 8:17 and the beginning of 8:18 (Hebrews 2:13), but reverses their order and inserts between them καὶ πάλιν, the typical device in Hebrews for stringing different quotes together.<sup>17</sup> The import of this division and alternation of order is uncertain, but the exegetical significance of this is beyond the scope of this paper. What matters for our purposes is the fact that the author separates what is continuous text in the Old Greek and inserts quotative καὶ πάλιν to present the portions as separate citations.

From the above examples, we can infer that the author of Hebrews sometimes 1) divides citations to make a point, 2) raises words from the citation to the introductory formula, and/or 3) inserts words to divide the citation. While sometimes this is unambiguous, such as τότε εἶρηκεν in 10:9, at other times it is purely contextually inferred, such as καὶ in 10:17. Further, from these examples and elsewhere in Hebrews, we can say that the author tends to prefer short phrases such as καὶ or καὶ πάλιν to separate quotes and parts of quotations.

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14. William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1991), 256–257; Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ABC (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 435. Some commentators, however, place the second half of the quotation at λέγει κύριος in 10:16b, e.g. Harold Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 278; Erich Gräßer, *An die Hebräer, Hebr 7,1–10,18*, EKK (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1993), 232.

15. 104. 323. 945. 1739. 1881 vg<sup>ms</sup> sy<sup>hmg</sup> sa.

16. 1505 sy<sup>h</sup>.

17. See also 1:5, 2:13 (before this instance), 4:5 (with ἐν τούτῳ), 10:30. The author also uses bare καὶ to introduce a quotation at least once (1:10).

### 3.2 Composite Citations

The explicit study of composite citations is both a fairly recent and particularly fruitful development. To date, two entire volumes of studies on composite citation practices in antiquity have been published,<sup>18</sup> as well as a host of smaller works. Within these works, Adams and Ehorn provide the following working definition, which will also be adopted in this section: 'A text may be considered a composite citation when literary borrowing occurs in a manner that includes two or more passages (from the same or different authors) fused together and conveyed as though they are only one.'<sup>19</sup>

In Susan Docherty's analysis of composite citations in Hebrews, she concludes 'Composite citation is not an exegetical practice widespread in Hebrews ... Only one probable (10:37-38) and two possible (8.5; 13.5) examples of conflated citation have been identified here, and no combined quotations are present.'<sup>20</sup> In her analysis of 10:37-38, Docherty is open to the possibility that the conflation of citations is not only for literary effect where it occurs, but is also an interpretive move that brings the various passages conflated together into a constructive relationship.<sup>21</sup> Docherty rightly rejects an overly specific contextual interpretation of this intertextual resonance, but opens up enquiry as to 'how these two texts function together in combination'.<sup>22</sup>

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18. Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn, eds., *Composite Citations in Antiquity, Volume 1: Jewish, Graeco-Roman, and Early Christian Uses* (London: T&T Clark, 2016); Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn, eds., *Composite Citations in Antiquity, Volume 2: New Testament Uses* (London: T&T Clark, 2018).

19. Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn, 'What is a Composite Citation? An Introduction', in Adams and Ehorn, eds., *Jewish, Graeco-Roman, and Early Christian Uses*, 4.

20. Susan Docherty, 'Composite Citations and Conflation of Scriptural Narratives in Hebrews', in Adams and Ehorn, eds., *New Testament Uses*, 190–208. With 'combined quotations' Docherty adopts the terminology of C. D. Stanley, who defines them as 'when two or more excerpts are joined back-to-back under a single citation formula or other explicit marker to form a verbal unit that an uninformed audience would take as coming from a single source' (204). It is worth noting that Docherty's general conviction is that the author of Hebrews *usually* did not change his quotations, and that variations from our edited Greek Old Testament are often likely the result of a variant present in the Author's *Vorlage* (Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews*, 140–142). However, to consider composite citations at all is to open the door to another cause for variation: composite citations. Further, not all are convinced that the author of Hebrews altered his citations so little; see for example Karen H. Jobes, 'Putting Words in His Mouth: The Son Speaks in Hebrews', in *So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue on the Atonement in Hebrews*, eds. Jon C. Laansma, George H. Guthrie, and Cynthia Long Westfall (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 83–87, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780567689108.0010>.

21. Docherty, 'Composite Citations', 195–196.

22. Docherty, 'Composite Citations', 196.

Further, in her discussion of 13:5, which she deems to be the more certain of the two possible conflated citations,<sup>23</sup> she argues that it would be a composite of Deuteronomy 31:6 and Genesis 28:15.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, she puts forward Deuteronomy 31:8, Joshua 1:5, and 1 Chronicles 28:20 as possible sources as well.<sup>25</sup> While we cannot be certain which passages influenced the author here, it is worth noting that the resultant composite citation possibly points to not merely two, but a constellation of texts. This is certainly true on the level of allusion, if not citation proper.

While I do not disagree with Docherty's overall conclusion – there are no combined quotes and the author is far more likely to string together separate quotes than to conflate<sup>26</sup> – composite citations may be slightly more common than she allows. If the author uses them at least once and possibly thrice by Docherty's count, there is a chance that he conflates elsewhere in passages not directly discussed in Docherty's article.

It has been long debated whether Hebrews 1:6, καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ,<sup>27</sup> is a citation of Deuteronomy 32:34, καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ,<sup>28</sup> or of Ps 97:6 (96:7 LXX), προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ, πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ.<sup>29</sup> While it is of course possible that the author had a different, unknown *Vorlage* for one of these passages,<sup>30</sup> or that the author made stylistic changes for his own purposes,<sup>31</sup> it is just as possible that the author conflated the two passages.<sup>32</sup> In this reconstruction, he preferred the syntax of Deuteronomy 32:34, perhaps because the third person imperative fitted his citation formula better, but wanted to avoid the language of υἱοὶ θεοῦ. So he reached for the language of Psalm 97:6 (96:7 LXX). In context it would be rhetorical self-destruction to refer to the angels as υἱοὶ θεοῦ, since the title

23. Docherty, 'Composite Citations', 200.

24. Docherty, 'Composite Citations', 199.

25. Docherty, 'Composite Citations', 198.

26. Docherty, 'Composite Citations', 206.

27. 'And all angels of God must worship him'.

28. 'And all sons of God must worship him'.

29. 'Worship him, all his angels'. Cf. Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 118–120; Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews*, 133.

30. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews*, 133–134; Steyn, *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage*, 72.

31. Such as in Steyn's general suggestion in his conclusion, 'The unknown Author of Hebrews himself, on the other hand, is creatively involved in some stylistic and theological changes to his quotations' (412).

32. A possibility raised, but not decided upon, by Steyn, *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage*, 68, 72.



υἱός is reserved exclusively in the opening catena for the unique Son (Heb 1:2,5,8). It is precisely as Son that Jesus is superior to the angels (1:4),<sup>33</sup> and it is as Son that he is contrasted with the angels (1:5,8). All this provides motive for why Deuteronomy 32:34 would be conflated with another passage to best serve the theological argument of Hebrews. While it cannot be proven that Hebrews 1:6 is a composite citation, this evidence and the fact that in at least one other place the author uses a composite citation suggest that it is as reasonable to consider Hebrews 1:6 as a possible or probable composite citation as it is to propose an unknown *Vorlage* for the passage.

While he does not do so frequently, the author to the Hebrews can make recourse to composite citations. It is possible that he does so at places that have not yet been identified as such. When he does so, he is sensitive to the effect that the conflation will have both on the immediate context and on the interpretation of the two passages brought together in the citation. In several places (1:6; 8:5; 13:5), the conflation – if it is conflation – is subtle enough that it can be missed, resulting in proposals of alternate *Vorlagen*.

#### 4. Hebrews 1:8b Revisited

The previous section has cleared the ground to establish the full form of the thesis of this paper. At Hebrews 1:8, the author wrote καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ.<sup>34</sup> By inserting καί into his citation of Psalms 45:6 (44:7 LXX), he split the citation into halves, allowing the second portion of the quote to be understood somewhat differently from the first. By replacing σοῦ with αὐτοῦ, he created a composite citation which drew upon several passages on the theme of the Davidic covenant. This may at first seem overcomplicated, but as we will see, this is neither the first time that this καί has been seen as dividing the sense of the citation, nor that the καί is the key to understanding the place of αὐτοῦ. Rather, the contribution of this paper is to argue how the καί separates the sense of the *stichoi* and how the αὐτοῦ positively contributes to the sense and theological resonances of the citation.

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33. 'For the Word had the name "Son" from the beginning, but with his flesh he also had this name.' Ps.-Oecumenius, *Commentary on Hebrews*, PG 119:284, Comment on 1:5 (author's own translation). R. B. Jamieson, *The Paradox of Sonship: Christology in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021), 99–121. See particularly pp. 102–103 footnotes 5–9 for a bibliography of those who see the name inherited as 'Son', 'high priest', an unnamed honour, the tetragrammaton/κύριος, or a range of dignities, respectively.

34. I am not here commenting on the other textual variation unit within this *stichos*, the placement of the article before one ῥάβδος or the other.

#### 4.1 Recent Interpretive History of the Function of καί in Hebrews 1:8b

Particularly in the nineteenth century, interpreters attempted to find exegetical significance for the insertion of καί. Hofmann argues that the insertion served to divide an address to God from an address to a merely human king.<sup>35</sup> Delitzsch shows how Hofmann's proposal runs against 'the very point of the argument'<sup>36</sup> while entertaining, with some scepticism, that the purpose of the καί is to divide the passage into two citations.<sup>37</sup> Westcott speculates, 'The καί, which is not found in the LXX or the Hebr., is probably added by the apostle to mark the two thoughts of the divine eternity of Messiah's kingdom and of the essential uprightness with which it is administered.'<sup>38</sup>

Without reference to this discussion, Metzger briefly considered a similar role for the καί, though only in passing, saying 'Even if one assumes that καί, which is absent from the Hebrew and the Septuagint of the Psalm, was inserted by the Author with the set purpose of making two separate quotations, with ver. 8a in the second person and 8b in the third person, the strangeness of the shift in persons is only slightly reduced.'<sup>39</sup> More recently, Gräßler argues αὐτοῦ is a later 'dogmatic correction' that forces θεός in 1:5a to be read as nominative.<sup>40</sup> Ellingworth allows the possibility of καί serving as a citation formula, with a subsequent focus on the Son in 1:8b *qua* Son.<sup>41</sup> In particular, he proposes this as a possibility specifically if αὐτοῦ is the original reading,<sup>42</sup> translating the passage as follows: 'Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever'

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35. 'I assume that the καί after the words ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος is sufficiently attested, and does not belong to the passage cited. But, as later in similar cases in v.10 and also 2:13, like καὶ πάλιν, it should separate and add a second citation.' J. Chr. K. von Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis: ein theologischer Versuch*, vol. 1 (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1852), 148.

36. Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, trans. Thomas L. Kingsbury (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1884), 76.

37. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 75–76. In support of this reading he also puts forward Bleek and Lachmann in addition to Hofmann. While Delitzsch repeatedly in these two pages puts forward this possibility, in a footnote, he expresses his scepticism, stating 'If meant to divide the citation of Ps. xlv. into two halves, we should rather expect to find it placed (after the analogy καὶ πάλιν of ii. 13) before ἡγάπησας than before ῥάβδος' (75 n1).

38. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 26.

39. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 593.

40. Erich Gräßler, *An die Hebräer, Hebr 1–6*, EKK (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1990), 83–84. Reflecting the impulse that 'Only the father is "God", not a king and also not the Son' (84).

41. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 122–123.

42. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 122.

and ‘the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of his (the Son’s) kingdom’.<sup>43</sup> He even tacitly responds to Metzger’s objection about the awkwardness of shifting back to the second person in Hebrews 1:9 by remarking ‘A similar change from second to third person in speaking of Christ was noted between vv. 5a and 5b. Such changes are also common in the OT, being found in Ps. 45 itself at vv. 9 (LXX 44:10) and 15 (LXX 44:16).’<sup>44</sup> Yet he ultimately neither argues for this (or another) solution, nor why the author would do this if he did.

#### 4.2 Partitive Exegesis and Hebrews 1

The Epistle to the Hebrews is obviously concerned with both the human and divine natures of Jesus. It contains both some of the loftiest descriptions of his divine power and nature (1:1-4) and some of the lowliest depictions of his suffering humanity (5:7-8). This, along with various hermeneutical precommitments,<sup>45</sup> led many patristic interpreters not only to read the text of Hebrews through the lens of partitive exegesis,<sup>46</sup> but also to see the use of the Old Testament in Hebrews as, in part, a work of partitive exegesis.<sup>47</sup> Recent biblical scholars have taken up this interpretive framework as part of a larger

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43. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 123.

44. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 123.

45. John Behr, *The Nicene Faith: Part One; True God of True God*, *The Formation of Christian Theology 2* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004), 208–215. Behr even defines the exegetical difference between pro-Nicene and non-Nicene Authors as one of partitive v. univocal exegesis, respectively (14).

46. This is the well-attested practice of reading various predications of Jesus as referring to his divinity, and others as referring to his humanity/incarnation. The patristic authors, however, did not use the language of ‘partitive exegesis’; it is a modern term (Lars Koen, ‘Partitive Exegesis in Cyril of Alexandria’s Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John’, *StPatr* 25 (1993), 115–121) used to describe the patristic practice of reading according to the ‘theology’ and according to the ‘economy (of flesh)’ when discussing Christ in light of his two natures. Cf. Jamieson, *The Paradox of Sonship*, 31–36 for a survey of statements of patristic authors delineating this method and Shawn J. Wilhite, “‘Was it Not the Only Begotten that was Speaking Long Ago’: Cyril of Alexandria’s Christological Exegesis in his Commentary on Hebrews (Heb. 1:1-2)”, *StPatr* 129 (2019): 39–50, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv27vt5v1.7> for an analysis of Cyril of Alexandria’s application of the practice in Heb 1. For varying applications of this method to Hebrews, see Frances M. Young, ‘Christological Ideas in the Greek Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews’, in *Christology, Hermeneutics, and Hebrews: Profiles from the History of Interpretation*, eds. John C. Laansma and Daniel J. Treier (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 33–47.

47. E.g. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Heb. 2* (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 14:370–375); Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Interpretation of Hebrews*, PG 82:688, cited in *Hebrews*, ACCS, eds. Erik M. Heen and Philip D. W. Krey (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 24.

*ressourcement* project and have largely accepted this understanding of Hebrews, particularly of Hebrews 1.<sup>48</sup>

Partitive exegesis is a reading strategy founded on the theological conviction that the one person of Jesus possesses both a divine nature and a human nature. As such, statements predicated of Jesus can be in reference to his divinity, his humanity and its actions, or his singular person. Interpreters who hold this theological conviction can then approach various scriptural statements about Jesus and ask *to which nature* does this statement refer or *with respect to which nature* did the one person of Jesus do this act? In the patristic tradition, this is referred to in a number of ways, such as θεολογία or οἰκονομία, or speaking κατὰ σάρκα and of things τῆς ἀξίας τοῦ Θεοῦ, or of things Jesus does ἀνθρωπίνως or θεϊκῶς.<sup>49</sup> Regardless of the terms used,<sup>50</sup> the patristic tradition regularly asked with respect to which nature was a given passage speaking, even as it emphasised the unity of the person of Jesus in his actions.

This interpretive method is increasingly being used by modern scholars to interpret Hebrews 1 in light of things predicated of the Son as divine and as exalted human.<sup>51</sup> I here apply the method to Hebrews 1:5, as does the patristic tradition, and later on will apply it to 1:8. Hebrews 1:5 contains two parallel

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48. E.g. Jamieson, *The Paradox of Sonship*. Also, within this *ressourcement* project, other patristic reading strategies, such as prosopological exegesis – the practice of assigning speakers, often persons within the Godhead, to biblical passages – have been profitably regained. Cf. Madison Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations of Scripture*, SNTSMS (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), esp. 3–22, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108849838>, for a statement of method. Amy Peeler, *You Are My Son: The Family of God in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 31–37 considers the method, but did not find it in Hebrews. For a groundbreaking application to Pauline studies, see Matthew Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012) and *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198729563.001.0001>.

49. Terms all taken from the survey of Theodoret, Chrysostom, and Cyril in Young, 'Christological Ideas', 34–35.

50. In a citation below, for example, Ps. Oecumenius distinguishes between predications καθὸ λόγος and καθὸ σὰρξ.

51. Jamieson, *The Paradox of Sonship*, 104–107 sees both citations in 1:5 as referring to Jesus's exalted Davidic sonship. While correct on the second quotation, his Davidic argument obscures the eternal nuances of σήμερον in 1:5a. Conversely, Amy Peeler, *You Are My Son*, 44–46 presents 1:5 in its entirety as a proclamation of the Son's status which he already held. Chrysostom, *Hom. Heb. 2* distinguishes the two citations as I do above.

statements of the Son's relationship to the Father separated by καὶ πάλιν with one key difference: the time framing of the verb. Hebrews 1:5a presents us with a present tense verb paralleled by a perfect verb coupled with the word for today, declaring in the words of Psalm 2:7 υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε ('You are my son, today I have begotten you'). On the other hand, Hebrews 1:5b presents us with a declaration of what will happen to the Son in the future, namely, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν ('And he will be my son). This difference in tense combined with the adverb σήμερον has historically been regarded as a shift from a discussion of the eternal, essential generation of the Son in Hebrews 1:5a<sup>52</sup> to a statement about the human Jesus's sonship in 1:5b.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps significantly for Hebrews 1:8b, this movement in quotations also features a shift from a statement to the Son in the second person (σε) to one about the son in the third person (αὐτός).

While it is possible to read both citations of 1:5 as solely a reference to the Son's divine sonship,<sup>54</sup> or solely as a reference to the Son's exalted Davidic sonship,<sup>55</sup> there are reasons to agree with the patristic tradition and view the halves of 1:5 as complementary descriptions of Christ in reference to his two

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52. Pierce, *Divine Discourse*, 42, citing in support Augustine, *Enarrat. Ps. 2:6*, with her own updated translation of *St. Augustine on the Psalms*, eds. Scholastica Hebgin and Felicitas Corrigan, vol. 1: Psalms 1–29 of ACW 29 (New York: Paulist Press, 1960), 27. Pierce makes this argument at greater length in 'Hebrews 1 and the Son Begotten "Today"', in *Retrieving Eternal Generation*, eds. Fred Sanders and Scott W. Swain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 117–131. Athanasius (*De Decretis* 13, *Discourse II against the Arians* xvi.23) also viewed Ps 2:7 as a statement of the Son's divine sonship, possibly under the influence of Hebrews. In *Discourse II*, the Psalm is cited to this effect in a comparison with the angels.

53. Chrysostom (*Hom. Heb. 2.*): 'These things indeed are spoken with reference also to the flesh: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son" – while this, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," expresses nothing else than "from [the time] that God is.' Theophylact (*Epistolae Divi Pauli ad Hebraeos Expositio*): 'So then, the saying "Today I have begotten you" makes clear nothing other than that the Father was the Father from the beginning. For just as it is said that he *is*, in the present tense, for the passage certainly refers to him, so also does it say "today" ... And again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son." This clearly is said because of his flesh' (author's own translation; emphasis to mark lemma: PG 125:196–197). Admittedly, while Theophylact argues that 1:5a refers to the eternal generation and 1:5b to his incarnate sonship, he acknowledges others who see both 1:5a and b as about the incarnate Christ.

54. Peeler, *You Are My Son*, 44–46.

55. Thomas Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2015), 65; Jamieson, *The Paradox of Sonship*, 104.

natures.<sup>56</sup> First is the difference in verb tense between the two citations, as the patristic authors noted. The future tense of the citation of 2 Samuel 7:14 in Hebrews 1:5b is best understood as a reference to something that happened within time, that is, there was a time at which the event had not yet happened. The present tense and the present reference of the perfect tense of the Psalm 2:7 citation in Hebrews 1:5a, however, can lead us to look for another event or timeframe. This is not to say that the present tense demands a reference to eternal generation. Rather, describing the Son as Son with present and perfect and then shifting to describe the Son as becoming Son with the future can signal to us a shift in reference. This is made more likely in light of the argument in Hebrews 1:2-4, in which the Son who possesses divine attributes and glory also becomes greater than the angels. The pattern repeats. One could argue to the contrary by saying that the verb tenses are simply what the author found in his texts and are secondary to the language of sonship that was his aim. However, this does not account for the order in the text, nor the repetition of similar citations (more on this below). The movement from ‘you are my son’ to ‘he will be my son’, if a reference to the same type of incarnate sonship,<sup>57</sup> seems to move backwards from accomplishment to prospect. If the author wished to doubly describe the human sonship of Jesus, he could have reversed the order of his citations, moving from ‘he will be’ to ‘you are’, so achieving a note of accomplishment.<sup>58</sup> That he did not, as I argued above, invites the

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56. Ps.Oecumenius’ catena seems to preserve conflicting accounts over where the movement from eternal to human sonship occurs, which is a testimony to a broader agreement in unnamed and unpreserved sources that there was a reference to both types of sonship in Heb 1:5. First Ps.Oecumenius records, regarding σήμερον, τὸ δέ, Σήμερον, οὐ χρόνου δηλωτικόν ... Οἷον Ἄει, φησίν, οὕτως πρὸς σὲ διάκειμαι οὐχ ὡς παρελθούσης τῆς γεννήσεως, ἀλλ’ὡς ἐνεστηκυίας διαπαντός καὶ καθ’ ἐκάστην ἀρχήν, ἀλλ’οὐ τέλος λαμβανούσης. (‘Now, “Today” does not designate a time ... It is as if he says, “Always I am so related to you, not as with a begetting that passed, but as with one which is present always even as if it were ever beginning, and which does not come to an end.”’ Author’s own translation.) Then, regarding the full quotation of Ps 2:7, Ἄλλὰ τὸ μὲν, Ὑἱός μου εἶ, καθὸ λόγος, τὴν ἀΐδιον γὰρ διὰ τοῦ Εἵ γέννησιν σημαίνει τὸ δέ, Σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε, καθὸ σάρξ, τὴν γὰρ πρόσφατον γέννησιν ἐμφαίνει. (‘Now, “You are my Son” is spoken insofar as he is Word. For through the phrase “You are” it signifies the eternal generation. On the other hand, “Today, I have begotten you” is spoken insofar as he is flesh, for it indicates the recent generation.’ Author’s own translation.) PG 119:284–285 (minor corrections to Migne’s edition supplied by the author).

57. As Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 65; Jamieson, *The Paradox of Sonship*, 104.

58. Intriguingly, in 4Q174 (4QFlor), which features a discussion of a coming Davidic Messiah, 2 Sam 7:11-14 is cited before, though not immediately before, a citation of Ps 2:1-2.

question, ‘How can the one who is God’s Son become God’s Son?’<sup>59</sup> Similarly, if both citations refer to the Son’s divine sonship,<sup>60</sup> then the future tense of 1:5b must be ignored altogether.

Second is the presence of *σήμερον* within the citation of Psalm 2:7, which Hebrews elsewhere uses to theological effect by stressing the perennial nature of today (3:7–4:11), particularly by virtue of the presentness of divine speech,<sup>61</sup> and expressly tying it to the protological and eternal rest of God (4:4–7).<sup>62</sup> Bauckham argues the case for this timeless ‘today’ in 1:5a by connecting it to the Son’s divine quality of remaining ‘the same’ (5:12), and the threefold description of Jesus as ‘the same yesterday, today, and forever’ (13:8).<sup>63</sup> Grindheim, similarly, explores the web of Old Testament citations in Hebrews 1 as well as the characterisation of the Son in Hebrews 1:1–4 to come to the same conclusion.<sup>64</sup>

Third is that in chapter 1 the author joins citations for a complementary effect. If we set aside 1:5 for a moment, no two citations contain the same

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59. It is worth noting that scholars who do not read 1:5 as demanding this question by itself still interpret the whole of Hebrews 1 (indeed, the whole of Hebrews) as raising it. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 54–55, building on earlier scholars, sees the tension of conflicting sources or ideologies, though with the theology of 1:1–4 taking an overriding place. Rightly, Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 98 dispenses with divergent sources, arguing instead that Hebrews presents the Son as having an eternal sonship and an exalted sonship. Similarly, this question is the titular *Paradox of Sonship* of Jamieson’s 2021 work. This article simply argues the tension, which is resolved in the narrative of the pre-existent Son’s incarnation and exaltation, is found not only in 1:1–4 and chapter 1 generally, but that the same pattern also appears in 1:5a and b and 1:8a and b.

60. As Peeler, *You Are My Son*, 44–46.

61. Dominique Angers, *L’«Aujourd’hui» en Luc-Actes, chez Paul et en Hébreux: Itinéraires et associations d’un motif deutéronomique*, BZNW (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 363, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110409215>. Angers interprets *σήμερον* in Heb 1:5 as within time and not as referring to the eternal generation of the Son (374–376), but this is because he argues that Heb 1:1–4 sets up *all* divine speech as either belonging to the long-ago days or to these last days in the Son (372–375), and that the *σήμερον* of divine speech is ‘implicitelement «eschatologique»’ (375), citing Heb 1:2 as the grounds for the inference. While it is true that God’s speech to ‘us’ is eschatological, there is nothing in Heb 1:2 which demands that God’s speech to his Son be so.

62. Angers, *L’«Aujourd’hui» en Luc-Actes*, 432 connects this further to the ‘today of salvation’ of Deuteronomy.

63. Richard Bauckham, ‘The Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews’, in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, eds. Richard Bauckham, Daniel R. Driver, Trevor A. Hart, and Nathan MacDonald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 33–35.

64. Sigurd Grindheim, ‘Eternal Generation of the Son in Heb 1,5’, *Bib 102* (2021): 97–105.



information, but rather all work together to build the author's case: the angels must worship him (1:6); God speaks to angels of their mutability, but to the Son of his eternality and rule (1:7-9) and of his role as creator and re-creator of the cosmos (1:10-12); then it is established that no angel sits enthroned at the right hand of God as the Son does (1:13). While it is possible that the two citations in 1:5 are redundant for emphasis, it is no less possible that, following the pattern of all other citations in chapter 1, they complement one another and build the author's case. If they are indeed complementary, then it is likely that they build on the movement established in 1:2-4, that is, of the Son who by nature is the radiance of God, but who has become superior to the angels, that is, of the divine Son who became the exalted Son in the flesh.

I am here arguing that Hebrews 1:8 presents us with something similar. Hebrews 1:8a portrays the Son in his divine kingship, ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, while 1:8b and 1:9 portray the Son in his glorified human kingship: καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ. ἡγάπησας δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν· διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέν σε ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός σου ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου.<sup>65</sup> The καὶ serves the same function as καὶ πάλιν in 1:5.

Further, the shift to αὐτοῦ reinforces the tie to glorified human, that is Davidic/Messianic, kingship. While the phrase 'his kingdom' is fairly common (~60x) in the canonical books of the Greek Old Testament, it may be significant for our purposes that variations of the phrase βασιλεία αὐτοῦ occur with particular frequency in passages discussing the Davidic Covenant and in proximity to further resonances both to Psalm 45 (44 LXX) and other passages in Hebrews 1. The most relevant passages are:

2 Samuel 5:12

καὶ ἔγνω Δαυὶδ ὅτι ἠτοίμασεν αὐτὸν κύριος εἰς βασιλεία ἐπὶ Ἰσραηλ, καὶ ὅτι ἐπήρθη ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ διὰ τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ Ἰσραηλ. And David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that his kingdom was exalted because of his people Israel.

2 Samuel 7:12

καὶ ἔσται ἐὰν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ ἡμέραι σου καὶ κοιμηθῆσῃ μετὰ τῶν πατέρων σου, καὶ ἀναστήσῃ τὸ σπέρμα σου μετὰ σέ, ὃς ἔσται ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας σου, καὶ ἐτοιμάσω τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ. And it will be that when your days are full and you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, who will be from your innards, and I will establish his kingdom.

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65. This reading resolves the confusion raised by Lane, 'It is more difficult to see why the writer extended the quotation of Ps 45:6 to include v 7.' *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1991), 29.



2 Samuel 7:16

καὶ πιστωθήσεται ὁ οἶκος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ ἕως αἰῶνος ἐνώπιον ἐμοῦ, καὶ ὁ θρόνος αὐτοῦ ἔσται ἀνωρθωμένος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

And his house will be made secure, and his kingdom will be forever before me, and his throne will be set right forever.

1 Kings 2:12

καὶ Σαλωμων ἐκάθισεν ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου Δαυιδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ υἱὸς ἑτῶν δώδεκα, καὶ ἠτοιμάσθη ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ σφόδρα.

And Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father as a twelve-year-old, and his kingdom was strongly established.

1 Chronicles 14:2

καὶ ἔγνω Δαυιδ ὅτι ἠτοιμάσεν αὐτὸν κύριος ἐπὶ Ἰσραηλ, ὅτι ἠϋξήθη εἰς ὕψος ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ διὰ τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ Ἰσραηλ.

And David knew that the Lord had established him over Israel, because his kingdom had grown exalted because of his people Israel.

1 Chronicles 17:11

καὶ ἔσται ὅταν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ ἡμέραι σου καὶ κοιμηθήσῃ μετὰ τῶν πατέρων σου, καὶ ἀναστήσῃ τὸ σπέρμα σου μετὰ σέ, ὃς ἔσται ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας σου, καὶ ἐτοιμάσω τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ.

And it will be that when your days are full and you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, who will be from your innards, and I will establish his kingdom.

1 Chronicles 17:14

καὶ πιστώσω αὐτὸν ἐν οἴκῳ μου καὶ ἐν βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ ἕως αἰῶνος, καὶ ὁ θρόνος αὐτοῦ ἔσται ἀνωρθωμένος ἕως αἰῶνος.

And I will make him secure in my house and in his kingdom forever, and his throne will be set right forever.

1 Chronicles 22:10

οὗτος οἰκοδομήσει οἶκον τῷ ὀνόματί μου, καὶ οὗτος ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱὸν καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ ἀνορθώσω θρόνον βασιλείας αὐτοῦ ἐν Ἰσραηλ ἕως αἰῶνος.

He will build a house for my name, and he will be my son and I will be his father. And I will set right his throne in Israel forever.

Isaiah 9:6

μεγάλη ἡ ἀρχὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ τῆς εἰρήνης αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ὄριον ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον Δαυιδ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ κατορθῶσαι αὐτὴν καὶ ἀντιλαβέσθαι αὐτῆς ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ἐν κρίματι ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον· ὁ ζῆλος κυρίου σαβαωθ ποιήσει ταῦτα.

His rule is great, and there is no end of his peace. He is upon the throne of David to establish his kingdom and to lay hold of it in righteousness and in judgment from now and unto eternity. The zeal of the Lord Sabaoth will accomplish these things.

These passages demand some comment. Several are the declaration of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:12,16; 1 Chr 17:11,14).<sup>66</sup> Several proclaim the

66. Curiously, 2 Sam 7:16 in the Greek is in the third person, maintaining the reference to the Davidic heir, with correspondences to the citation in Hebrews, while the Hebrew is second person.

establishment of the kingdom of the Davidic heir in particular (2 Sam 7:12,16; 1 Chr 17:11,14; 22:10; Isa 9:6). Several have to do with the explicit establishment of an eternal throne (2 Sam 7:16; 1 Chr 17:14, 22:10; Isa 9:6). One is a messianic prophecy about the coming heir of David (Isa 9:6). All of these features are found in the quoted passage from Psalm 45 (44 LXX). One contains the declaration ‘He will be my son and I will be his father’ (1 Chr 22:10) and another comes after the exact passage to that effect quoted earlier in Hebrews (1 Chr 17:14; Heb 1:5). If, as Docherty argued regarding composite citations in Hebrews,<sup>67</sup> and as is argued generally in studies of composite citations,<sup>68</sup> a high amount of textual and thematic similarity between the contexts of the portions of a proposed composite citation make it more probable that the citation is indeed composite, then this constellation of similar passages with the particular wording found in the early *lectio difficilior* αὐτοῦ make it at least possible that Hebrews 1:8b is indeed a composite citation. While it is impossible to know which passage is the source of the conflation, if it is only one, the high degree of similarity suggests 2 Samuel 7:16 (an eternal kingdom and throne for the Davidic heir), 1 Chronicles 17:14, and 1 Chronicles 22:10 are the best candidates.<sup>69</sup> That either 2 Samuel 7:14 or 1 Chronicles 17:13 is cited in Hebrews 1:5 could give additional weight to 2 Samuel 7:16 or 1 Chronicles 17:14 as the chief candidate.<sup>70</sup>

If this passage is composite, the author is doing here what he does earlier in Hebrews 1:2-4 and 1:5. The Son is described first in respect to his divinity, and then in respect to his exalted humanity. The author speaks of the kingship of the Son, first addressing the essential kingship of the Son as God (1:8a), then turning to the Son’s exalted, messianic kingship as a thing earned and given (1:8b-9).<sup>71</sup> The author signals this turn through the insertion of καί and increases the resonances of the passage declaring the Son’s kingship with a composite citation drawing upon Davidic material and recapitulating the theme of the Son’s becoming God’s Davidic son introduced in 1:5b.

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67. Docherty, ‘Composite Citations’, 199–200.

68. Adams and Ehorn, eds., *Composite Citations*, vols. 1 and 2, *passim*.

69. ‘The motif of an eternal kingdom brings Ps 45 within the orbit of 2 Sam 7, where the establishment of an eternal throne is promised.’ William Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 29.

70. The relevant wording of the passages potentially cited in Heb 1:5b is identical, and arguments from the contexts of the citations can be used in support of either. Cf. Steyn, *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage*, 52.

71. Interestingly, while Hofmann’s distinction of persons addressed is certainly incorrect, the distinction he proposed between divine and human on either side of the καί obtains. It is simply that it is the respective divine and the human natures and kingship of the single Son that is addressed.

It remains to address the objection that the inclusion of *καί ... αὐτοῦ* forces *θεός* in Hebrews 1:8a to be read as nominative rather than vocative.<sup>72</sup> This would only be true if *καί* were a superfluous addition to the text. If, as proposed many times before as well as here,<sup>73</sup> *καί* divides a single citation into two quotations used to different purposes, the material after the *καί* cannot dictate how the grammar before it is read. *θεός* in 1:8a can remain vocative, as most interpreters rightly have it,<sup>74</sup> and remain a grand statement of the Son's divine kingship. After the *καί*, where we find a king anointed by God for his uprightness, we have a separate comment on the Son's exalted human kingship. There remains a shift in person from 1:8b and 1:9, yet this is no problem earlier in Hebrews 1, and should not be seen as such here.<sup>75</sup> The Son is referred to in the second person in 1:5a, in the third person in 1:5b and 1:6, then second person again in 1:8a, third in 1:8b (if this reading is taken), then second in 1:9-13.<sup>76</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

This article reaches two intertwined conclusions, one more modest than the other. The first is that Hebrews 1:8b initially read *καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ*. The internal evidence does not support overthrowing this well-attested early reading. The second is an interpretation of the theological and citational tendencies of the author to the Hebrews that supports the first conclusion, that is, the author inserted *καί* to split his citation of Psalm 45:6 (44:7 LXX) as part of his project of describing the Son both in regard to his divine attributes and roles and in regard to his human attributes

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72. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 593; Gräßer, *An die Hebräer, Hebr 1-6*, 84; Dana M. Harris, *Hebrews*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019), 28.

73. Hofmann, Bleek, Lachmann, Delitzsch, Westcott, Metzger, Ellingworth, although Delitzsch and Ellingworth do not commit to the proposal and Metzger dismisses it. The citations of Hofmann, Bleek, and Lachmann are from Delitzsch.

74. Herbert Braun, *An die Hebräer*, HZNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984), 38; Gräßer, *An die Hebräer, Hebr 1-6*; Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 21, 84; Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 122; Harold Attridge, 'The Psalms in Hebrews', in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, eds. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 202; Pierce, *Divine Discourse*, 55.

75. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 123.

76. In a more grammatically inconsistent work, Revelation, scholars have noted how some grammatical instabilities and unpredictable shifts are markers of intertextual relationships. Cf. Chee-Chiew Lee, 'Rest and Victory in Revelation 14.13', *JSNT* 41.3 (2019), 354, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X18821547>. Credit to Dirk Jongkind for bringing this reference to my attention.

and roles. As part of this project, the author altered the pronoun found in Psalm 45:6 (44:7 LXX) from σου to αὐτοῦ to form a composite citation with at least one of a constellation of passages dealing with the Davidic covenant, potentially 2 Samuel 7:16 or 1 Chronicles 17:14. These methods – splitting a quotation to use each half in a different manner, and conflation of one text with a potential constellation of other texts – are clearly demonstrated elsewhere within Hebrews, and their combination here best explains that and how this well-attested *lectio difficilior* is original to the text.

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