

Plus or Minus?  
Origen, Epiphanius, Jerome, and Augustine on Critical Signs\*  
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*Abstract.* Origen adopted two critical signs from the philological tradition in Alexandria: the *obelos*, which denotes the elements found in the Septuagint (LXX) but not in the Hebrew Bible, and the *asteriskos*, which designates the elements found in the Hebrew text but not in the LXX. By examining how Origen and other Church Fathers (including Epiphanius, Jerome, and Augustine) understood the critical signs, this study raises the question of what their attitude toward the Bible was. Therefore, I analyze whether they regarded the obelized elements as an excess in the LXX or a lack in the Hebrew text, or whether they regarded the asterisked elements as an omission in the LXX or an addition in the Hebrew text. This form of analysis leads to the conclusion that Origen and Epiphanius are LXX-centered, Jerome is Hebrew-centered, and Augustine is both LXX-centered and Hebrew-centered.

*Keywords.* *obelos*; *asteriskos*; Origen; Epiphanius; Jerome; Augustine

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Critical signs (σημεῖα, *notae*) are the various forms of lines, dots, and letters used individually or in combination by the ancient grammarians to give readers some hints on the structure, contents, and characteristics of a text. The librarians of Alexandria originally invented the signs to edit Homer's epic poetry and other Greek literature, and later the Christian scholar Origen of Alexandria introduced them into the field of biblical scholarship. In other words, there are two basic usages of the critical signs<sup>1</sup>: one is the non-Christian usage, in which the

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signs indicate the variant readings among the manuscripts of Greek literature; the other is the Christian usage, in which the signs demonstrate the difference between certain passages of the Hebrew Bible and those of its Greek translation, called the Septuagint (LXX). The former usage allowed the grammarians to create many types of critical signs with various meanings, but in the latter Origen basically used just two signs: the *obelos* (–), denoting the elements that are extant in the LXX but not in the Hebrew text, and the *asteriskos* (※), indicating the elements that are found in the Hebrew text but not in the LXX.

Based on the careful study of the extant fragments of the *Hexapla*, the colophons of the major manuscripts, the marginal notes of the Septuagintal manuscripts, and the witnesses of the Church Fathers<sup>2</sup>, previous research on the Christian usage of the critical signs have treated mainly a topic concerning the locations where the signs would be marked. This topic derives from the questions based on a philological perspective, which purely focuses on the structure of the Greek Bible. In contrast, from an ideological perspective, which focuses more on the internal logic of Origen and other Church Fathers (including Epiphanius, Jerome, and Augustine), this study raises the questions of how they understood the critical signs and whether their understandings of the signs can determine the positions they took toward the Bible. I therefore investigate whether they regarded the obelized elements as an excess in the LXX or a lack in the Hebrew text, or whether they considered the asterisked elements as an omission in the LXX or an addition in the Hebrew text. (Obviously, in the analysis of individual passages, other aspects will also be taken into consideration.) I argue that this form of analysis enables us to deduce whether a given Church Father used the Hebrew text or the LXX as their point of departure, and whether their understanding of the Bible was LXX-centered, Hebrew-centered, or neutral.

## 2. ALEXANDRIAN GRAMMARIANS

Critical signs were originally an invention of the Alexandrian grammarians who flourished in the third and second centuries BCE<sup>3</sup>. Zenodotus of Ephesus, the first director of the library of

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<sup>1</sup> M. STEIN, *Kritische Zeichen*, in *RAC* 22, ed. G. SCHÖLLGEN, Anton Hiersemann, Stuttgart 2008, 133-163.

<sup>2</sup> O. MUNNICH, *Les Hexaples d'Origène à la lumière de la tradition manuscrite de la Bible grecque*, in *Orig. VI*, ed. G. DORIVAL – A. LE BOULLUEC, Peeters, Leuven 1995, 167-185.

<sup>3</sup> A. GUDEMAN, *Kritische Zeichen*, in *RECA* 11, ed. A. PAULY – G. WISSOWA *et al.*, J.B. Metzler, Stuttgart 1922, 1916-1927; R. PFEIFFER, *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*, Clarendon, Oxford 1968, 115, 178, 186; V. CAPELLI, *Segni diacritici ed eredità*

Alexandria, worked on revising and emending the texts as the first editor of Homeric and other poetry. When he prepared the editions, Zenodotus determined whether a particular line matched the style and substance of the great poet and, when he doubted its genuineness, he marked an *obelos* (–) next to the line rather than fully removing it<sup>4</sup>. In other words, the *obelos* was an invention that allowed, on the one hand, editors to disclose their judgments without modifying a text and, on the other hand, readers to examine the validity of the editors' judgments. This philological operation was called 'setting aside' (ἀθέτησις) by later grammarians.

Aristophanes of Byzantium improved Zenodotus' editorial device by creating other signs, including the *asteriskos* (※), the *sigma* (C), and the *antisigma* (O)<sup>5</sup>. The *asteriskos* is a sign for the line that is repeated elsewhere (in lyrics, the sign also indicates the end or the beginning of a poem, or the change of its meter). The *sigma* and the *antisigma* are used in combination to mark two consecutive lines having identical contents. Another very seldom-used and ambiguous sign is the *keration* (T), which is considered by modern scholars to designate Aristophanes' moral assessment of the characters and their actions<sup>6</sup>.

Aristarchus of Samothrace inherited and improved the system of critical signs introduced by his predecessors<sup>7</sup>. For instance, he used the *asteriskos* and the *obelos* together (※–) to indicate that the line does not belong to the present location but elsewhere. (Sometimes the signs occurred in the opposite order, but with the same meaning.) Aristarchus also placed the *antisigma periestigmenon* or the dotted *antisigma* (⊖ or ⊖·) next to the line that repeated something already said, and in doing so, he indicated the line to be tautologous. Moreover, Aristarchus invented the arrow-shaped sign called the *diple* (>) to mark lines on which he wanted to make comments concerning its language, content, myth, or style. The *diple periestigmenone* or the dotted *diple* (≻) represents lines that Zenodotus wanted to 'set aside', but that Aristarchus disagreed with this assessment.

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*filologica origeniana in Gerolamo*, Adamantius 13 (2007) 82-101; G. BIRD, *Critical Signs: Drawing Attention to 'Special' lines of Homer's Iliad in the Manuscript Venetus A*, in *Recapturing a Homeric Legacy: Images and Insights from the Venetus A Manuscript of the Iliad*, ed. C. DUÉ, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 2009, 89-115; L.D. REYNOLDS – N.G. WILSON, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 4th ed., Clarendon, Oxford 2013, 11; M. DUBISCHAR, *Typology of Philological Writings*, in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*, I, ed. F. MONTANARI – S. MATTHAIOS – A. RENGAKOS, Brill, Leiden 2015, 641-672. For Galen's understanding of the signs, see A. ROSELLI, *Galeno e la filologia del II secolo*, in *Vestigia notitiae: Scritti in memoria di Michelangelo Giusta*, ed. E. BONA – C. LÉVY, Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria 2012, 63-80.

<sup>4</sup> F. MONTANARI, *L'invenzione della filologia: il rivoluzionario ὀβελός*, in *Filosofia, filologia e scienza in età ellenistica*, ed. M. BERGAMO – R. TONDINI, Ledizioni, Milan 2022, 29-44.

<sup>5</sup> G. NOCCHI MACEDO, *Formes et fonctions de l'astérisque dans les papyrus littéraires grecs et latins*, *Segno e Testo* 9 (2011) 3-33; M.L. WEST, *Aristophanes of Byzantium's Text of Homer*, *CP* 112 (2017) 20-44.

<sup>6</sup> M. STEIN, *Kritische Zeichen*, cit., 139-140.

<sup>7</sup> F. SCHIRONI, *The Best of the Grammarians: Aristarchus of Samothrace on the Iliad*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 2018, 49-62.

Unlike Zenodotus and Aristophanes, Aristarchus wrote a philological commentary (ὕπόμνημα) for his edition (ἔκδοσις)<sup>8</sup>. The critical signs used by Zenodotus and Aristophanes were related only to their editorial decisions, and the meaning of the signs is so clear that they did not have to write a separate commentary. However, the signs invented by Aristarchus do not explain his intentions by themselves. The *diple*, for example, covers too wide a range of topics to understand its meaning in each case, without a commentary. Accordingly, Aristarchus established a combined system of the edition and the commentary, so that he could convey his ideas as clearly as possible. In other words, as Rudolf Pfeiffer claims, the critical signs functioned as a link between the edition and the commentary in the Aristarchian system<sup>9</sup>.

### 3. ORIGEN

From among the various critical signs, Origen adopted the *obelos* of Zenodotus and the *asteriskos* of Aristophanes through the practices of the late antique school. The topic concerning the locations where the signs would be placed has been conventionally discussed in the history of research on Origen's use of the critical signs. This convention has allowed scholars to philologically focus on the structure of the Greek Bible, rather than Origen's understanding of the critical signs.

Regarding Origen's placement of the signs, some scholars claim that the signs must have been placed in the fifth column of the *Hexapla*<sup>10</sup>. Others disagree and assert that they were not in the *Hexapla* itself but in the so-called Hexaplaric recension of the LXX, which

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<sup>8</sup> F. MONTANARI, *Ekdosis. A Product of the Ancient Scholarship*, in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*, II, cit., 641-672; F. SCHIRONI, *The Best of the Grammarians*, cit., 53-55.

<sup>9</sup> R. PFEIFFER, *History of Classical Scholarship*, cit., 218. Whether directly or indirectly, the critical signs that developed in Alexandria had an effect on Judaism. E. TOV, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*, Brill, Leiden 2004, 189-191, points out the similarity between the Qumran scribal practice and the Alexandrian *sigma* as well as the *antisigma*. See also S. LIEBERMAN, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 2nd ed., Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York 1962, 38-46; S.Z. LEIMAN, *The Inverted Nuns at Numbers 10:35-36 and the Book of Eldad and Medad*, JBL 93 (1974) 348-355.

<sup>10</sup> F. FIELD, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt ...*, 2 vols., Clarendon, Oxford 1875; H.B. SWETE, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1902, 70; S. BROCK, *Origen's Aims as a Textual Critic of the Old Testament*, StPatr 10 (1970) 215-218, esp. 215-216; P. NAUTIN, *Origène: sa vie et son oeuvre*, Beauchesne, Paris 1977, 456-457; B.M. METZGER, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1981, 38; B. NEUSCHÄFER, *Origenes als Philologe*, I, Reinhardt, Basel 1987, 96-98; E. ULRICH, *The Old Testament Text of Eusebius: The Heritage of Origen*, in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, ed. H.W. ATTRIDGE – G. HATA, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1992, 543-562, esp. 556; J. SCHAPER, *The Origin and Purpose of the Fifth Column of the Hexapla*, in *Origen's Hexapla and Fragments*, ed. A. SALVESEN, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 1998, 3-15, esp. 6-9; T.M. LAW, *Origenes Orientalis: The Preservation of Origen's Hexapla in the Syrohexapla of 3 Kingdoms*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2011, 6.

was prepared by Origen for the *Hexapla* but later published separately by Eusebius and Pamphilus<sup>11</sup>. According to the available evidence, the critical signs are certainly not included in the extant fragments of the *Hexapla* (e.g. the Cairo Genizah palimpsest and the Mercati palimpsest), but in the codices that represent the separate recension of the LXX (e.g. the Codex Marchalianus and the Codex Colberto-Sarravianus)<sup>12</sup>. Since the textual difference between the Hebrew text and the LXX is self-evident in the *Hexapla*, which contains both texts, there was no need to further annotate the fifth column with these signs. Accordingly, it is more reasonable to conclude that the signs were used only in the independent text of the Hexaplaric LXX.

However, by paying closer attention to Origen's thought, we can conduct an ideologically based analysis that highlights the internal logic of his understanding of the critical signs. For example, scholars have been discussing why Origen almost exclusively used the *obelos* and the *asteriskos*, even though there were many critical signs available in the philological scholarship in Alexandria<sup>13</sup>. Epiphanius attested that the additional signs (including the *metobelos*, the *lemniskos*, and the *hypolemniskos*) were used in the divine Scriptures, but Origen himself never mentioned these signs, none of which are derived from Zenodotus, Aristophanes, or Aristarchus<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, as mentioned above, Origen's usage of the *obelos* and the *asteriskos* deviated from the original usage in the Alexandrian tradition, because his target was not Homer's epic but the Bible. More precisely, he focused on the textual difference between the Hebrew text and the LXX. According to Francesca Schironi, Origen chose these two signs because they had an unequivocal meaning and could be easily understood, while other signs like the *diple* gave only a very generic piece of information that

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<sup>11</sup> R. DEVRESSE, *Introduction à l'étude des manuscrits grecs*, Klincksieck, Paris 1954, 113-116; P. KAHLE, *The Greek Bible Manuscripts Used by Origen*, JBL 79 (1960) 111-118, esp. 116; S. JELICOE, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, Clarendon, Oxford 1968, 123-124; E. TOV, *The Septuagint*, in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. M.J. MULDER – H. SYSLING, Fortress, Philadelphia 1988, 161-188, esp. 186; J.M. DINES, *The Septuagint*, T&T Clark, London 2004, 101; R.A. CLEMENTS, *Origen's Hexapla and Christian-Jewish Encounter in the Second and Third Centuries*, in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima*, ed. T.L. DONALDSON, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Waterloo 2000, 303-329, esp. 322 n. 62; A. GRAFTON – M. WILLIAMS, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 2006, 88, 108, 115-117; F. SCHIRONI, P.Grenf. 1.5, *Origen, and the Scriptorium of Caesarea*, Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists 52 (2015) 181-223, esp. 196.

<sup>12</sup> F. SCHIRONI, P.Grenf. 1.5, cit., 193-194.

<sup>13</sup> In addition to the *obelos* and the *asteriskos*, Origen used the *antisigma*, although rarely. See P.J. GENTRY, *Origen's Hexapla*, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, ed. A.G. SALVESEN – T.M. LAW, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2021, 553-571, esp. 564.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Epiph. *Mens.* 2; 8. Origen did not mention the *metobelos* but actually used it to mark the end of the phrase or word pre-marked by the *obelos* and the *asteriskos*. A. KHARANAULI, *Origen and Lucian in the Light of Ancient Editorial Techniques*, in *From Scribal Error to Rewriting: How Ancient Texts Could and Could Not be Changed*, ed. A. AEJELAEUS – D. LONGACRE – N. MIROTADZE, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2020, 15-52, esp. 47, considers that the three signs attested by Epiphanius were introduced by Origen's pupils.

could not be fully understood without a commentary<sup>15</sup>. In this respect, Origen is indebted more to Zenodotus and Aristophanes than to Aristarchus. Schironi considers this an improvement from the Aristarchian system because of its clear, economic, and unambiguous signs<sup>16</sup>. However, Natalio Fernández Marcos interprets Origen's approach more critically, arguing that these two signs are too simple to accurately transmit all the corrections that Origen inserted into the text<sup>17</sup>.

By following this ideological perspective on Origen's understanding of the critical signs, but also having a deeper perspective and examining the logic of Origen and other Church Fathers (including Epiphanius, Jerome, and Augustine), this study clarifies how they understood the critical signs and what position they took toward the Bible (LXX-centered, Hebrew-centered, or neutral?). Origen's explanations of the signs are found in his *Commentary on Matthew* and the *Letter to Africanus*<sup>18</sup>. In the former, he first introduces the argument regarding the differences between the Gospels, then goes on to explain why textual errors occur in manuscripts, and finally comments on his work of *Hexapla* as follows:

With God's will, we contrived to heal the discrepancy in the manuscripts of the Old Testament, using as a guiding principle the other editions. Judging what is in dispute in the Seventy because of the discrepancy of the manuscripts, we kept what the other editions agreed upon. And we marked with an *obelos* some lines because they were not present in the Hebrew (not daring to delete them altogether); other lines we marked with *asteriskoi*, so that it was clear that they were not present in the Seventy and we took them from the other editions which agree with the Hebrew<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> F. SCHIRONI, *The Ambiguity of Signs: Critical ΣΗΜΕΙΑ from Zenodotus to Origen*, in *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters*, ed. M.R. NIEHOFF, Brill, Leiden 2012, 87-112, esp. 103.

<sup>16</sup> F. SCHIRONI, *The Ambiguity of Signs*, cit., 107-109.

<sup>17</sup> N. FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (trans. W.G.E. WATSON), Scholars Press, Atlanta 2000, 210.

<sup>18</sup> Origen's motivation for composing the *Hexapla* has been traditionally interpreted from two different perspectives: one is the 'textual-critical' view based on *CMt* 15,14, in which he tried to show how to establish the original text of the LXX (H.B. SWETE, *An Introduction*, cit., 60; S. JELICOE, *The Septuagint*, cit., 101; B. NEUSCHÄFER, *Origenes*, I, cit., 87); the other is the 'apologetic' view according to *EpAfr* 7, where he attempted to supply the Christians a tool for defense in disputing with the Jews (S. BROCK, *Origen's Aims*, cit., 215-218). However, N.R.M. DE LANGE, *The Letter to Africanus: Origen's Recantation?* *StPatr* 16 (1985) 242-247, warns that the apologetic reason in *EpAfr* should not be taken as a true statement of Origen's aims. See also L. BOSSINA, *La traduzione come originale: Qualche considerazione sulla Bibbia dei Settanta e i Padri della Chiesa*, *Humanitas* 79 (2019) 1032-1062. Recent specialists propose a third option, namely the 'exegetical' view, according to which Origen wanted to obtain a compilation of biblical texts which could provide an exegetical resource for comparative analysis. See T.M. LAW, *Origen's Parallel Bible: Textual Criticism, Apologetics, or Exegesis?* *JThS* 59 (2008) 1-21. For a possible fourth option, see R.G. JENKINS, *Hexaplaric Marginalia and the Hexapla-Tetrapla Question*, in *Origen's Hexapla and Fragments*, cit., 73-87.

<sup>19</sup> Or. *CMt* 15,14 (*Origenes Matthäuserklärung*, I, ed. E. KLOSTERMANN [GCS 40], Hinrichs, Leipzig 1935, 388): τὴν μὲν οὖν ἐν τοῖς ἀντιγράφοις τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης διαφωνίαν θεοῦ διδόντος εὐρομεν ἰάσασθαι, κριτηρίῳ χρησάμενοι ταῖς λοιπαῖς ἐκδόσεσιν· τῶν γὰρ ἀμφιβαλλομένων παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα

Here Origen uses rather neutral expressions to expound the meaning of the critical signs. He explains his practice of marking with the *obelos* the lines «not present in the Hebrew» (ἐν τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ μὴ κείμενα), and as such, follows the Alexandrian tradition by «not daring to delete them altogether». On the other hand, he placed the *asteriskos* next to the lines that were «not present in the Seventy» (μὴ κείμενα παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα) and that he «took from the other editions which agree with the Hebrew». In other words, according to Origen, the *obelos* indicates a lack in the Hebrew text as seen from the LXX, whereas the *asteriskos* represents a lack in the LXX as seen from the Hebrew text.

Origen's 'point of departure' in using the *obelos* is undoubtedly the LXX, because what is lacking in the Hebrew text only becomes clear from the vantage point of a text for comparison, namely, the LXX<sup>20</sup>. The same is true with the *asteriskos*: since he sees the asterisked lines as a lack in the LXX, his point of departure is the Hebrew text in this case. Accordingly, we can define the term 'point of departure' as a text for comparison when discussing the pluses and minuses of a given text.

It is also noteworthy that Origen equates the Hebrew text with the 'other editions', such as the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, as he calls them as «the other editions which agree with the Hebrew». Since these editions are known to be much closer to the Hebrew text than the LXX and since Origen was not sufficiently familiar with Hebrew, he employed the editions as the criterion in judging the variants found in the LXX. In sum, in the *Commentary on Matthew* Origen neutrally maintains a viewpoint of minuses by switching his points of departure (see Appendix).

In the *Letter to Africanus*, on the other hand, Origen elucidates his usage of the critical signs:

Again, in Genesis, the words «God saw that it was good» (Gen 1,8) when the firmament was made, are not found in the Hebrews, and there is no small dispute among them about this<sup>21</sup>; and other instances are to be found in Genesis, which we marked, for the sake of distinction, with the sign the Greek calls the *obelos*, as on the other hand I marked with

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διὰ τὴν τῶν ἀντιγράφων διαφωνίαν τὴν κρίσιν ποιησάμενοι ἀπὸ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐκδόσεων τὸ συνᾶδον ἐκείναις ἐφυλάξαμεν, καὶ τινὰ μὲν ὠβελίσσαμεν <ὡς> ἐν τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ μὴ κείμενα (οὐ τολμήσαντες αὐτὰ πάντη περιελεῖν), τινὰ δὲ μετ' ἀστερίσκων προσεθήκαμεν, ἵνα δῆλον ᾖ ὅτι μὴ κείμενα παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα ἐκ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐκδόσεων συμφώνως τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ προσεθήκαμεν. English translations of Origen's texts follow, with some modifications, F. SCHIRONI, *The Ambiguity of the Signs*, cit., 101.

<sup>20</sup> I borrow the term 'point of departure' from E. TOV, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed., Fortress, Minneapolis 2012, 221, but use it from a different perspective. Tov claims that in quantitative comparison of the Masoretic text with other texts, we can take the Masoretic text as a 'point of departure'. (Incidentally, he does not use the term in the latest fourth edition.)

<sup>21</sup> LXX: καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ στερέωμα οὐρανόν. καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι καλόν. καὶ ἐγένετο ἑσπέρα καὶ ἐγένετο πρωί, ἡμέρα δευτέρα. MT: :וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְרִקיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי

the *asteriskos* those passages which are present in the Hebrew but are not found in our text<sup>22</sup>.

To explain the *obelos*, Origen takes exactly the same position as he did in the *Commentary on Matthew*, by describing it as a sign for the lines that «are not found in the Hebrews» (παρ' Ἑβραίοις οὐχ εὐρίσκεται), or a lack in the Hebrew text. Here his point of departure for comparison is the LXX, because changes in the Hebrew text become distinct when they are seen from the LXX.

Origen's explanation of the *asteriskos* is, on the other hand, somewhat different from that in the *Commentary on Matthew*. In the *Commentary on Matthew*, the *asteriskos* is considered a sign for elements that are «not present in the Seventy» (μὴ κείμενα παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα) or lacking in the LXX, whereas in the *Letter to Africanus*, it means the elements that «are present in the Hebrew but are not found in our text (= LXX)» (τοῖς κειμένοις μὲν ἐν τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ, παρ' ἡμῖν δὲ μὴ εὐρισκομένοις). In other words, his elucidation of the *asteriskos* in the *Letter to Africanus* is neutral, focusing not only on a lack in the LXX as seen from the Hebrew text, but also an excess in the Hebrew text as seen from the LXX (see Appendix).

Another notable point in the *Letter to Africanus* is that Origen defined the LXX as 'our text'. This indicates that his approach to the Bible is ultimately 'LXX-centered'<sup>23</sup>. Some scholars consider Origen to have placed the Greek and Hebrew texts on equal footing or, more radically, that he was Hebrew-centered. The former opinion, expressed by Dominique Barthélemy<sup>24</sup>, seems to be highly compatible with the fact that Origen in the *Letter to Africanus* explained the *asteriskos* by taking both the LXX and the Hebrew text as his points of departure. The latter, more radical opinion is explained by Pierre Nautin, who suggests that Origen composed the *Hexapla* to arrive at the original Hebrew text of the Bible<sup>25</sup>. However, neither Barthélemy's nor Nautin's view is dominant; Adam Kamesar refutes them, claiming that Origen's interest in the Hebrew text is in fact restrictive, both textually and exegetically<sup>26</sup>. From the textual viewpoint, it is true that Origen focused on the original Hebrew text to some

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<sup>22</sup> Or. *EpAfr* 7 (*La lettre à Africanus sur l'histoire de Suzanne*, ed. N. DE LANGE [SC 302], Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris 1983, 530-532): καὶ ἐν τῇ Γενέσει δὲ τό· «Εἶδεν ὁ Θεὸς ὅτι καλόν» ἐπὶ τῷ γενέσθαι στερέωμα παρ' Ἑβραίοις οὐχ εὐρίσκεται· καὶ πρόβλημά [δέ] ἐστὶ παρ' αὐτοῖς οὐ τὸ τυχόν τοῦτο· καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ἔστιν εὐρεῖν ἐν τῇ Γενέσει, οἷς ἡμεῖς [σημεῖα] παρεθήκαμεν τοὺς καλουμένους παρ' Ἑλλησιν ὀβελούς, ἵν' ἡμῖν γνῶριμον ᾗ τὸ τοιοῦτον· ὡς πάλιν ἀστερίσκους τοῖς κειμένοις μὲν ἐν τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ, παρ' ἡμῖν δὲ μὴ εὐρισκομένοις.

<sup>23</sup> On Origen's LXX-centered position, see A. KAMESAR, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible: A Study of the Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*, Clarendon, Oxford 1993, 7, 10, 19.

<sup>24</sup> D. BARTHÉLEMY, *La place de la Septante dans l'Église*, in *Aux grands carrefours de la révélation et de l'exégèse de l'Ancien Testament*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris 1967, 13-28 (= *Études d'histoire du texte de l'Ancien Testament*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1978, 111-126).

<sup>25</sup> P. NAUTIN, *Origène*, cit., 344-353, 359-361.

<sup>26</sup> A. KAMESAR, *Jerome*, cit., 8-10, 21-28.



extent, but with a condition added: as stated in the *Commentary on Matthew*, he emphasized the Hebrew text only where it was a vehicle to ‘heal’ (ἰάσασθαι) the textual errors in the LXX, such as misspellings of proper names or corruptions of word order, by reference to the Hebrew. Even in his exegetical writings, Origen’s position was far from Hebrew-centered. The Bible Origen relied on for exegesis was not a pure and original LXX but a quantitatively enlarged version with the additions from the Hebrew text marked with the *asteriskos*. (Needless to say, it was natural for Origen to maintain the passages marked with the *obelos*, and therefore, in the *Commentary on Matthew*, he states that he did not dare to delete them altogether.) By literally expanding the size of the Greek Bible, Origen attempted to broaden the possibilities for pursuing further meaning of the Bible. Kamesar calls this approach of Origen an ‘exegetical maximalism’<sup>27</sup>. In other words, whether textually or exegetically, «Origen makes use of the Hebrew text not for its own sake, but for the sake of the LXX»<sup>28</sup>. In this sense, Origen’s approach can be fundamentally explained as LXX-centered, and our discussion on his understanding of the critical signs endorses this explanation.

As seen above, Origen occasionally explained the two signs in a neutral way, as in the *Commentary on Matthew*, but other times he clearly favored the LXX, as in the *Letter to Africanus*. This is because his basic stance toward the Bible is LXX-centered. Our next questions are: how did Origen’s followers understand the critical signs and what position did they take toward the Bible? The available witnesses concerning these questions are of Epiphanius of Cyprus, Jerome of Stridon, and Augustine of Hippo<sup>29</sup>. Interestingly enough, Epiphanius and Jerome are in the exact opposite direction, while Augustine tries to be balanced.

#### 4. EPIPHANIUS

Epiphanius of Cyprus, Bishop of Constantia on Cyprus from 367 to 403, flourished as the author of a series of dogmatic treatises against various heresies including Origen. He considered Origen a heretic whose theological fallacies—an excessive use of allegorical interpretation, a frequent use of the Greek philosophy, a denial of the bodily resurrection, and

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<sup>27</sup> A. KAMESAR, *Jerome*, cit., 19; see also J. WRIGHT, *Origen in the Scholar’s Den: A Rationale for the Hexapla*, in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and his Legacy*, ed. Ch. KANNENGISSER – W.L. PETERSEN, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN 1988, 48-62, esp. 61.

<sup>28</sup> A. KAMESAR, *Jerome*, cit., 19-20.

<sup>29</sup> According to M. STEIN, *Kritische Zeichen*, cit., 152-159, the Christian usage of the critical signs are discussed also in the following works: the scholia to Proverbs of Evagrius Ponticus (tenth century), the *Exposition on the Psalms* by Cassiodorus (sixth century), and the scholia to the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus (sixth century). However, we will not treat them in this article, because they are relatively later compositions, compared to the writings by the four Church Fathers whom we study here.

a concept of preexistence of the soul—should be expelled from the Church<sup>30</sup>. In his *On Weights and Measures*, a compendium of ancient information on the Bible, Epiphanius gives a detailed explanation about Origen’s *Hexapla* and the critical signs used in it. This work survives in its entirety only in its Syriac translation (with selections of its Georgian and Armenian translations), but fortunately we can also refer to a considerable amount of the original Greek text including the parts in which the critical signs are explained<sup>31</sup>. In the treatise, Epiphanius describes the *asteriskos* as follows:

The *asteriskos* is this ✱; and wherever used, it indicates that the word used occurs in the Hebrew, and occurs in Aquila and Symmachus, and rarely also in Theodotion. But the Seventy-two translators passed it by and did not translate it, because such words were repetitious and superfluous to read<sup>32</sup>.

One might at first think that Epiphanius’ explanation of the *asteriskos* is neutral, as he states that the sign indicates the line that «occurs in the Hebrew» (ἐν τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ κεῖσθαι) and that «the Seventy-two translators passed it by and did not translate it» (οἱ δὲ Ἑβδομήκοντα δύο ἐρμηνευταὶ παρήκαν καὶ οὐχ ἡρμήνευσαν). If we take this statement literally, it follows that the *asteriskos* means a sign for an excess in the Hebrew text as seen from the LXX, and, at the same time, a lack in the LXX as seen from the Hebrew text.

What deserves special notice here, however, is the final comment in which he characterizes the asterisked words as «repetitious and superfluous to read» (ὡς δισσολογουμένων τῶν τοιούτων λογίων καὶ ὡς ἐκ περισσοῦ ἀναγινωσκομένων). In other words, he in fact puts more emphasis on the excess in the Hebrew text as seen from the LXX than that of a deficit in the LXX as seen from the Hebrew text. This view of the difference of the Hebrew text from the LXX as redundant demonstrates that he has ultimately adopted the

<sup>30</sup> On the Origenist Controversy and Epiphanius, see J. DECHOW, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen*, Mercer University Press, Macon, GA 1988; E.A. CLARK, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, 86-104; Y.R. KIM, *Epiphanius of Cyprus: Imagining an Orthodox World*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 2015, 204-236.

<sup>31</sup> A.S. JACOBS, *Epiphanius of Cyprus: A Cultural Biography of Late Antiquity*, University of California Press, Oakland 2016, 22-23. The Greek text: MOUTSOULAS = E. MOUTSOULAS, *Τὸ Ἐπιφανίου τοῦ Σαλαμῖνος*, *Θεολογία* 44 (1973) 157-200; The Syriac translation: J.E. DEAN, *Epiphanius’ Treatise on Weights and Measures: The Syriac Version*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1935; The Armenian translation: M. STONE – R. ERVINE, *The Armenian Texts of Epiphanius of Salamis: De Mensuris et Ponderibus* (CSCO.Sub 583), Peeters, Leuven 2000; The Georgian translation: M. VAN ESBROECK, *Les versions géorgiennes d’Épiphanie de Chypre, Traité des poids et de mesures* (CSCO.I 460-61), Peeters, Leuven 1984.

<sup>32</sup> *Epiph. Mens.* 2 (MOUTSOULAS, 158): ὁ ἀστερίσκος οὗτος ✱, ἐνθα παράκειται, σημαίνει τὸ ἐμπερόμενον ῥήμα ἐν τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ κεῖσθαι καὶ ἐμφέρεσθαι παρὰ Ἀκύλα καὶ Συμμάχῳ, σπανίως δὲ καὶ παρὰ Θεοδοτίωνι· οἱ δὲ Ἑβδομήκοντα δύο ἐρμηνευταὶ παρήκαν καὶ οὐχ ἡρμήνευσαν, ὡς δισσολογουμένων τῶν τοιούτων λογίων καὶ ὡς ἐκ περισσοῦ ἀναγινωσκομένων. I have consulted the English translation of the Syriac text found in J.E. DEAN, *Epiphanius*, cit., 16.

LXX as his point of departure. Accordingly, it is safe to conclude that Epiphanius' position toward the Bible is basically LXX-centered, as much as in Origen's *Letter to Africanus* (see Appendix). In addition, Epiphanius and Origen are in agreement in identifying the Hebrew text with the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and occasionally Theodotion.

Epiphanius' LXX-centered position is also clear when he subsequently tries to justify a modification of the LXX in Gen 5,5 by claiming that the translators, as language experts who were familiar with both Greek and Hebrew, intentionally changed the wording of the translation to preserve the meaning of the original text<sup>33</sup>. After comparing the expressions of the 930 years of Adam's life in the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew (σαλωειμ σανᾶ οὐαθεσὰ μηὼθ σανᾶ [הנה ותשע מאות ושלשים]), the translation of Aquila (τριάκοντα ἔτος καὶ ἑνακόσια ἔτος), and the LXX (τριάκοντα καὶ ἑνακόσια ἔτη), Epiphanius points out that the first two texts agree with each other, because the singular 'year' appears twice («thirty year and nine hundred year»), while the LXX uses the plural 'years' just once («thirty and nine hundred years»)<sup>34</sup>. Nevertheless, this apparent difference in the LXX did not prevent Epiphanius from preferring the LXX to the Hebrew text (and the later translations), because he does not find the LXX guilty of omitting the word, but rather the Hebrew text of being «repetitious and superfluous».

As demonstrated, Epiphanius certainly sees the *asteriskos* focusing more on its function of highlighting an addition in the Hebrew text than an omission in the LXX. However, he briefly hypothesizes on the possibility of the latter:

Now this [*scil.* the alteration by the LXX] seems to some to be an omission made by the Seventy-two, while by Aquila and Symmachus and other translators it is translated without any omission. However, there has been no omission by the Seventy-two<sup>35</sup>.

According to Epiphanius, the asterisked words are never supposed to be considered as a deficit in the LXX, because «there has been no omission by the Seventy-two» (οὐδὲ παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα δύο ἐνέλιπεν). Even though the translators of the LXX sometimes omitted the words, they did not intend to change the meaning, but simply to give to the sentence 'smoothness' (λειότης) and 'clearness' (τρανότης), both of which are lacking in other

<sup>33</sup> Epiph. *Mens.* 2 (MOUTSOULAS, 158-159).

<sup>34</sup> Epiph. *Mens.* 2 (MOUTSOULAS, 158). As for the years in Gen 5,5, the modern editions of the Masoretic text and the LXX read הַנֶּשְׁבַּת הַשְּׁלִישִׁי הַנֶּשְׁבַּת תִּשְׁעֵי מֵאוֹת וְשָׁלֹשִׁים (BHS) and ἔτη ἑνακόσια τριάκοντα (Göttingen edition), respectively. Both texts are apparently different from Epiphanius' *Vorlage*, but some manuscripts of the LXX preserve the same reading as that of Epiphanius. See *Genesis*, ed. J.W. WEVERS (Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1974, 102.

<sup>35</sup> Epiph. *Mens.* 2 (MOUTSOULAS, 159): καὶ ἔδοξε τοῦτό τισι παρὰ μὲν τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα δύο ἐλλιπῶς κεῖσθαι, παρὰ δὲ Ἀκύλα καὶ Συμμάχῳ καὶ ἄλλαις ἐκδόσεσιν ἀνελλιπῶς ἡρμηνεῦσθαι, ὅπερ οὐδὲ παρὰ τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα δύο ἐνέλιπεν ...

translations<sup>36</sup>. Accordingly, Epiphanius concludes that real omission by the LXX never exists and that what is featured under the *asteriskos* is not an omission in the LXX, but an addition in the Hebrew text which is «repetitious and superfluous to read».

On the other hand, Epiphanius describes the *obelos* as follows:

The *obelos* is that which is made —, for it is written in the form of what is called the line. But according to Attic usage *obelos* means a spear, that is, a lance. And in the divine Scriptures it is placed by those words which are used by the Seventy-two translators but do not occur among the followers of Aquila or Symmachus. For the Seventy-two translators added these words of themselves, not uselessly but, rather, helpfully. For where they added words lacking in these [versions of Aquila and Symmachus], they gave clearness to the reading, so that we regard them as not disassociated from the Holy Spirit. For they omitted those that had no need of repetition; but where there was a word that was considered ambiguous when translated into the Greek language, there they made an addition<sup>37</sup>.

It seems that Epiphanius' approach toward the *obelos* is neutral, just like his approach toward the *asteriskos*. Since the meaning of the obelized elements is explained as the «words which are used by the Seventy-two translators but do not occur among the followers of Aquila or Symmachus» (ταῖς ... λέξεσι ταῖς παρὰ μὲν τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα δύο ἑρμηνευταῖς κειμέναις παρὰ δὲ τοῖς περὶ Ἀκύλαν καὶ Σύμμαχον μὴ ἐμφορομέναις), Epiphanius certainly considers the *obelos* as a sign that features an excess in the LXX and a lack in the translations of Aquila and Symmachus. Since he equates the translations of Aquila and Symmachus (and Theodotion) with the Hebrew text in describing the *asteriskos* («the word used occurs in the Hebrew, and occurs in Aquila and Symmachus, and rarely also in Theodotion»), it is safe to say that he takes the same approach in describing the *obelos*. However, he also admits that the

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<sup>36</sup> Epiph. *Mens.* 2 (MOUTSOULAS, 158-159). See E.L. GALLAGHER, *The Septuagint's Fidelity to Its Vorlage in Greek Patristic Thought*, in *XIV Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies: Helsinki, 2010*, ed. M.K.H. PETERS, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta 2012, 663-676, esp. 674. Contrary to Gallagher's opinion, some scholars conclude that Epiphanius thought that the LXX translators were inspired to change the content of the biblical texts. See, for example, H. KARPP, 'Prophet' oder 'Dolmetscher'? *Die Geltung der Septuaginta in der Alten Kirche*, in *Festschrift für Günther Dehn*, ed. W. SCHNEEMELCHER, Erziehungsvereins, Neukirchen 1957, 128-150, esp. 138; M. MÜLLER, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1996, 78.

<sup>37</sup> Epiph. *Mens.* 3 (MOUTSOULAS, 160): ὀβελὸς οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ παρακείμενος — παραπλησίως γὰρ γράφεται τῇ καλουμένῃ γραμμῇ. ὀβελὸς δὲ κέκληται κατὰ ἀττικὴν χρῆσιν, ἄλλοις δὲ καλεῖται δόρυ, ὃ ἐστὶ λόγῃ, παρετέθη δὲ ταῖς τῆς θείας γραφῆς λέξεσι ταῖς παρὰ μὲν τοῖς Ἑβδομήκοντα δύο ἑρμηνευταῖς κειμέναις παρὰ δὲ τοῖς περὶ Ἀκύλαν καὶ Σύμμαχον μὴ ἐμφορομέναις. ἀφ' ἐαυτῶν γὰρ οἱ Ἑβδομήκοντα δύο ἑρμηνευταὶ ταῦτα τὰς λέξεις προσέθηκαν, οὐκ εἰς μάτην, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς ὠφέλειαν. ταῖς γὰρ ἑλλπωδῶς ἐχούσαις λέξεσι προσθετικότες εἰς σαφήνειαν τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν παρήγαγον, ὥσθ' ὑπολαμβάνειν ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἀμοίρους αὐτοῦς γεγενῆσθαι πνεύματος ἁγίου. ὧν γὰρ οὐκ ἦν χρεία δισσολογεῖν παρήκαν· ὅπου δὲ χωλὸν ἐδόκει τὸ ῥῆμα εἶναι εἰς ἑλληνικὴν διάλεκτον μεταφερόμενον, ἐκεῖ τὴν προσθήκην ἐποιήσαντο.

Seventy-two translators made additions to or omissions from the translations of Aquila and Symmachus (which are equated with the Hebrew text), as necessary. In other words, Epiphanius here fixes his point of departure as the LXX, from which he understands the *obelos* as a sign denoting a lack in the Hebrew text and the *asteriskos* as a sign dedicated to an excess in the Hebrew text. This is essentially the LXX-centered position, which is the same as that of Origen in the *Letter to Africanus*, even though his way of describing the signs is slightly different (see Appendix).

In addition, it should be emphasized that Epiphanius always wants to defend the divine inspiration of the LXX. This theological stance of Epiphanius is clearly seen in his description of the *obelos*, in which he regards any differences between the LXX and the Hebrew text «as not disassociated from the Holy Spirit». (The same is true with the *asteriskos*.)

Although Epiphanius was a harsh and unmerciful critic of Origen's theological scholarship, he allied himself with Origen when it comes to biblical scholarship, sharing the LXX-centered understanding of the Bible.

## 5. JEROME

Since the year 382 when Jerome accompanied Epiphanius to Rome as his Latin interpreter (*Ep.* 127,7), they remained good friends both personally and politically<sup>38</sup>. Accordingly, at the outbreak of the Origenist Controversy, Jerome immediately decided to support Epiphanius, either because he wanted to please his friend who marched at the head of the anti-Origenian campaign<sup>39</sup>, or simply because he was afraid of being kicked out from the churches as an admirer of Origen<sup>40</sup>. This abrupt change of his previously positive attitude toward Origen caused a serious breakup with his old friend Rufinus, who had been always loyal to Origen<sup>41</sup>.

Although forming with Epiphanius a united front against Origen's 'heretical' theology, Jerome's interpretation of the critical signs and his position toward the Bible present the exact opposite approach to that of Epiphanius. Out of the many prefaces of the Vulgate, in

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<sup>38</sup> For most of the prefaces of the Vulgate including the *Preface to the Gallican Psalter*, I follow WEBER – GRYSOON = *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. R. WEBER – R. GRYSOON, 5th ed., Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart 2007. Especially for the prefaces to the revisions according to the Hexaplaric LXX (Job, the Chronicles, the Books of Solomon), I follow BSLVV = *Biblia Sacra iuxta Latinam Vulgatam Versionem ad Codicum Fidem*, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Rome 1925-1995.

<sup>39</sup> J.N.D. KELLY, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies*, Duckworth, London 1975, 198.

<sup>40</sup> S. REBENICH, *Jerome*, Routledge, London 2002, 43-44.

<sup>41</sup> On the Origenist Controversy and Jerome, see P. LARDET, *Saint Jérôme: Apologie contre Rufin* (SC 303), Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris 1983, 1\*-75\*; E.A. CLARK, *The Origenist Controversy*, cit., 121-151; S. REBENICH, *Jerome*, cit., 43-51.

which Jerome refers to the critical signs many times<sup>42</sup>, the *Preface to the Chronicles (iuxta Hebraeos*, hereafter *IH*) is the best example:

And certainly, Origen not only composed the manuscripts of four editions, writing single words in a straight line, so that one person will be immediately shown disagreeing, while the others agree with each other, and what is of greater audacity, mixed the edition of Theodotion into the edition of the Seventy, marking those which were less by the *asteriskos*, and those which seems to be added superfluously by virgules<sup>43</sup>.

Jerome first clarifies the system of the so-called *Tetrapla*, a multi-columned Bible like the *Hexapla*, albeit without the Hebrew text and its Greek transliteration<sup>44</sup>. Then he moves on to the functions of the critical signs, which reflects his own understanding, not Origen's. According to Jerome, Origen marked with the *asteriskos* «those which were less» (*quae minus fuerint*) in the LXX and audaciously filled the deficiency with the translation of Theodotion, whereas he added «virgules» (that is, the *obelos*) to «those which seems to be added superfluously» (*quae ex superfluo videantur adposita*). Although Jerome does not specify what Origen compared with the LXX in using the critical signs, he undoubtedly considers it to be the Hebrew text. This is because Jerome is well aware of Origen's understanding of the critical signs, which was, as seen above, clearly based on the textual difference between the LXX and «the other editions which agree with the Hebrew». In other words, for Jerome, the *obelos* indicates an excess in the LXX and the *asteriskos* a lack in the LXX, both as seen from the Hebrew text as his point of departure. Jerome's understanding of the *asteriskos* is especially noteworthy, because he describes it as a sign of deficiency in the LXX («those which were less»), as opposed to Epiphanius, according to whom the very same sign illustrates a superfluity in the Hebrew («repetitious and superfluous to read») (see

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<sup>42</sup> For example, *Praef. Vulg. psalm. (iuxta LXX)*, *Praef. Vulg. Iob (iuxta LXX)*, *Praef. Vulg. par. (iuxta LXX)*, *Praef. Vulg. Salom. (iuxta LXX)*, *Praef. Vulg. Dan. (obelos only)*, *Praef. Vulg. Iob (IH) (asteriskos only)*, *Praef. Vulg. par. (IH)*, *Praef. Vulg. pent.*, and *Praef. Vulg. Ios*.

<sup>43</sup> Hier. *Praef. Vulg. par. (IH)* (WEBER – GRYSO, 546): *Et certe Origenes non solum exempla composuit quattuor editionum e regione singula verba describens, ut unus dissentiens statim ceteris inter se consentientibus arguatur, sed, quod maioris audaciae est, in editione Septuaginta Theodotionis editionem miscuit, asteriscis designans quae minus fuerint, et virgulis quae ex superfluo videantur adposita*. The English translations of Jerome's prefaces are my own. On this preface, see also A. FÜRST, *Hieronymus: Askese und Wissenschaft in der Spätantike*, 2nd ed., Herder, Freiburg 2016, 338-343; *Jérôme: Préfaces aux livres de la Bible*, ed. A. CANELLIS (SC 592), Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris 2017, 348-357.

<sup>44</sup> The *Tetrapla* has been identified in three ways: firstly, it is a pilot version composed prior to the *Hexapla* on a trial basis; secondly, it is a shortened version composed after the *Hexapla* for readers' convenience; and thirdly, it is just another name of the *Hexapla*. Since the discussion by Eusebius (*H.e.* VI 16,4), the second opinion has been conventionally supported, but scholars have not yet reached a consensus. See, for example, S. JELICOE, *The Septuagint*, cit., 113-118; N. FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS, *The Septuagint in Context*, cit., 206-208; J.M. DINES, *The Septuagint*, cit., 99; A. GRAFTON – M. WILLIAMS, *Christianity and the Transformation*, cit., 113; P.J. GENTRY, *Origen's Hexapla*, cit., 562.

Appendix).

Jerome defines the critical signs in a similar manner in the *Preface to the Pentateuch*:

He [*scil.* Origen] blended with the old edition the translation of Theodotion and used throughout the work as distinguishing marks the *asteriskos* and the *obelos*, that is a star and a lance, the first of which makes what had previously been defective to beam with light, while the other slaughters and transfixes all that was superfluous<sup>45</sup>.

Here Jerome uses more a rhetorical expression than in the *Preface to the Chronicles (IH)* to explain the function of the critical signs: the star which «makes what had previously been defective to beam with light» (*inlucescere facit quae minus ante fuerant*) is the *asteriskos*, while the lance which «slaughters and transfixes all that was superfluous» (*superflua quaeque iugulat et confodit*) obviously means the *obelos*. That is to say, according to Jerome, a lack in the LXX is highlighted by the *asteriskos* and an excess in the LXX by the *obelos*, based on the Hebrew text (see Appendix).

The two texts above show how Jerome understood Origen's editorial devices when he had already launched the project of the new translation of the Bible (390-406/7), with the idea that the source text of translation should be the Hebrew text, or the idea of *Hebraica veritas* ('Hebrew truth')<sup>46</sup>. The question now is: did Jerome consistently take the Hebrew-centered position toward the Bible from the beginning of his career? According to Adam Kamesar, it was at least during his stay in Rome (382-385) that Jerome seems to have evaluated the importance of the Hebrew text for biblical study and to have reached the stage of *Hebraica veritas*, although he did not employ the term at that time<sup>47</sup>. It has been conventionally believed that Jerome's 'conversion' to the Hebrew text occurred a little later, around 390 in Bethlehem<sup>48</sup>. However, Kamesar's argument is supported by the *Ep.* 20, which

<sup>45</sup> Hier. *Praef. Vulg. pent.* (WEBER – GRYSON, 3): *Quod ut auderem, Origenis me studium provocavit, qui editioni antiquae translationem Theodotionis miscuit, asterisco et obelo, id est stella et veru, opus omne distinguens, dum aut inlucescere facit quae minus ante fuerant aut superflua quaeque iugulat et confodit ...* On this preface, see S. REBENICH, *Jerome*, cit., 101-104; A. FÜRST, *Hieronymus*, cit., 342-349; *Jérôme*, ed. A. CANELLIS (SC 592), cit., 302-313.

<sup>46</sup> The expression *Hebraica veritas* is first attested in the preface to *Quaest. hebr. in Gen.*, written around 391 (see also *Quaest. hebr. in Gen.* 13,1-4; 19,14; 49,5-6). Later Jerome mentions the term in many places, including *Ep.* 57,7,6 and *Prol. gal.* and *Praef. Vulg. psalm. (IH)*. Jerome also referred to *Graeca veritas* (*Praef. evang.*) and even *Chaldaica veritas* (*Comm. in Dan.* 5,11). For recent studies on the concept of *Hebraica veritas*, see T. KATO, *Hebrews, Apostles, and Christ: Three Authorities of Jerome's Hebraica Veritas*, *VigChr* 73 (2019) 420-439.

<sup>47</sup> A. KAMESAR, *Jerome*, cit., 41-58.

<sup>48</sup> L. SCHADE, *Die Inspirationslehre des heiligen Hieronymus: eine biblisch-geschichtliche Studie*, Herder, Freiburg 1910, 142-144; E.F. SUTCLIFFE, *Jerome*, in *Cambridge History of the Bible*, II, ed. G.W.H. LAMPE, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1969, 80-101, esp. 92; H.F.D. SPARKS, *Jerome as Biblical Scholars*, in *Cambridge History of the Bible*, I, ed. P.R. ACKROYD – C.F. EVANS, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1970, 510-541, esp. 518-521; S. REBENICH, *Jerome*, cit., 54; D. BROWN, *Jerome and the Vulgate*, in *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, I, ed. A.J. HAUSER – D.F. WATSON,

was written during his Roman period (approximately in 383)<sup>49</sup>. In this letter, Jerome clearly states that some of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament agree with the Hebrew text but disagree with the LXX, and therefore recommended his friends refer to the Hebrew text whence the truth was to be expressed (The complete discussion of this matter is found in his *Ep. 57* or *On the Best Method of Translating*, written in 395)<sup>50</sup>.

To verify the anteriority of Jerome's 'conversion', let us analyze how he defined the critical signs when he revised the existing Latin translation based on the Hexaplaric LXX from 386 to 391, namely, the period after he left Rome for Bethlehem and before he started a new translation based on the Hebrew text. In the process of revising the Book of Job, Psalms (*scil.* the so-called Gallican Psalter), the Chronicles, and the Books of Solomon (*scil.* Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs), Jerome marked the critical signs by himself, following Origen's instruction in the Hexaplaric LXX, and attached prefaces to each of the books, in which he explained their meanings<sup>51</sup>.

In the *Preface to Job (iuxta LXX)*, Jerome determines the critical signs from the LXX-centered viewpoint, which is similar to that of Epiphanius:

Whenever you find virgules preceding, you should know that following parts are not in the Hebrew texts. Then, where the image of a star shines, they are added in our language from the Hebrew<sup>52</sup>.

Here Jerome interprets the «virgules» (that is, the *obelos*) as a sign for an omission in the Hebrew text (*in Hebraeis voluminibus non haberi*) and the «image of a star» (or the *asteriskos*) for an addition in the Hebrew text (*ex Hebraeo in nostro sermone addita*). This is because his point of departure at this point is the LXX, based on which he understands the

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Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI 2003, 355-379, esp. 361.

<sup>49</sup> Hier. *Ep.* 20,2 (*Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, I, ed. I. Hilberg [CSEL 54], Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna 1996 [1910], 104-105): *Restat ergo, ut omissis opinionum rivulis ad ipsum fontem, unde ab evangelistis sumptum est, recurramus. Nam quomodo illud neque in Graecis neque in Latinis codicibus possumus invenire: ut completeretur id, quod dictum est per prophetas: «Quoniam Nazaraeus vocabitur» (Matt 2,23), et illud: «Ex Aegypto vocavi filium meum» (Matt 2,15), ita et nunc ex Hebraeis codicibus veritas exprimenda est.*

<sup>50</sup> T. KATO, *Jerome's Understanding of Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament*, *VigChr* 67 (2013) 289-315, esp. 295-296.

<sup>51</sup> In later years, Jerome stated that he had finished revising all the biblical books during this period, in addition to Job, the Gallican Psalter, the Chronicles, and the Books of Solomon (*Vir. ill.* 135; *Epp.* 71,5,3; 106,2; 112,20,5; *Adv. Rufin.* 2,24; 3,25), but this is doubtful. Rather, it seems that he dealt with only the four books, of which the prefaces are extant. See H.F.D. SPARKS, *The Latin Bible*, in *The Bible in its Ancient and English Versions*, ed. H.W. ROBINSON, Clarendon, Oxford 1940, 100-127, esp. 112-113; C.B. TKACZ, *Labor tam utilis: The Creation of the Vulgate*, *VigChr* 50 (1996) 42-72, esp. 49; S. REBENICH, *Jerome*, cit., 53-54.

<sup>52</sup> Hier. *Praef. Vulg. Iob (iuxta LXX)* (BSLVV 9, 75): *... rogo, ut ubicumque praecedentes virgulas videritis, sciatis ea quae subiecta sunt in Hebraeis voluminibus non haberi; porro ubi stellae imago fulserit, ex Hebraeo in nostro sermone addita.*



signs as an addition and a lack in the Hebrew text (see Appendix).

In the prefaces to the Gallican Psalter and the Chronicles (both *iuxta LXX*), Jerome takes a more neutral position. In the former he says:

Let everyone note the horizontal line and the radial sign, namely, the *obelos* and the *asteriskos*, and whenever one finds a virgule preceding, from it all the way to the two dots which we marked, let him know there is more in the Seventy translators, but whenever he perceived something similar to a star, let him know it is added from the Hebrew scrolls equally until the two dots ...<sup>53</sup>

The two-dot sign introduced here is called the *metobelos*, which shows how far the *obelos* and the *asteriskos* cover in the text. As Jerome states that «there is more in the Seventy translators» (*in Septuaginta translatoribus plus haberi*), it is clear that he understands the *obelos* as a sign for an addition in the LXX. On the other hand, the expression «it is added from the Hebrew scrolls» (*de Hebraeis voluminibus additum*) indicates that, for Jerome, the *asteriskos* means an excess in the Hebrew text. In other words, Jerome takes the Hebrew text as his point of departure to explain the *obelos*, on the one hand, but depends on the LXX to explain the *asteriskos*, on the other, so that he sees both signs from the perspective of pluses. This understanding of Jerome makes a good contrast with that of Origen in the *Commentary on Matthew* who illustrated both signs from the perspective of minuses. Origen and Jerome use different points of departure, and yet it is reasonable to say that their explanations of the signs are neutral (see Appendix).

In the *Preface to the Books of Solomon (iuxta LXX)*, however, Jerome is completely biased toward the Hebrew text:

I have rendered three books of Solomon, i.e., Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, according to the old authority of the Seventy translators. Sometimes I designated something superfluous by placing a line in front of it; at other times, by marking with a star sign, I inserted the words that are absent. You, O Paula and Eustochium, should know in a more absolute way what is absent in our books and what is redundant<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Hier. *Praef. Vulg. psalm. (iuxta LXX)* (WEBER – GRYSO, 767): *Notet sibi unusquisque vel iacentem lineam vel signa radiantia, id est vel obelos vel asteriscos, et ubicumque virgulam viderit praecedentem, ab ea usque ad duo puncta quae impressimus sciat in Septuaginta translatoribus plus haberi; ubi autem stellae similitudinem perspexerit, de Hebraeis voluminibus additum noverit, aequae usque ad duo puncta ...* See also Hier. *Praef. Vulg. par. (iuxta LXX)* (BSLVV 7, 9-10): *Ubicumque ergo asteriscos, id est stellas, radiare in hoc volumine videritis, ibi sciatis de Hebraeo additum quod in Latinis codicibus non habetur. Ubi vero obelus, transversa scilicet virga, praeposita est, illic significatur quid Septuaginta interpretes addiderint vel ob decoris gratiam vel ob Spiritus Sancti auctoritatem, et in Hebraeis voluminibus non legatur.*

<sup>54</sup> Hier. *Praef. Vulg. Salom. (iuxta LXX)* (BSLVV 11, 6): *Tres libros Salomonis, id est Proverbia*

Here Jerome explains the *obelos* as a sign for «something superfluous» (*superflua quaeque*), or an excess in the LXX, and the *asteriskos* as a sign for «the words that are absent» (*ea quae minus habebantur*), or a lack in the LXX. This way of understanding can be achieved only by adopting the Hebrew text as his point of departure, just like he did in the prefaces to his new translation of the Bible, such as the prefaces to the Chronicles (*IH*) and the Pentateuch, which we examined above (see Appendix). In other words, it is at the time Jerome was writing the *Preface to the Books of Solomon (iuxta LXX)* that he clearly showed his Hebrew-centered stance to explain the meaning of the critical signs.

There has been no consensus among scholars on the order of revision of the four books, with which Jerome dealt depending on the Hexaplaric LXX<sup>55</sup>. However, by carefully tracing the transition of his understanding of the critical signs, as above, it is logical to reconstruct the chronology of revision as follows: first, the Book of Job (LXX-centered); then the Gallican Psalter and the Chronicles (neutral); and finally, the Books of Solomon (Hebrew-centered).

The analysis of the *Preface to Job (iuxta LXX)* suggests that even after the Roman period, Jerome was seemingly still LXX-biased when he explained the critical signs. Is this result incompatible with Kamesar's theory of the anteriority of the *Hebraica veritas*? The answer is negative. As Kamesar suggests, Jerome's 'conversion' to the Hebrew occurred during the Roman period as is clearly seen from the writings in this period. Therefore, his position toward the Bible was always Hebrew-centered during the revision. Instead, this consistency shows the enormity of the continued influence of Origen (or Epiphanius) over Jerome. As demonstrated, even though Jerome had already found a positive value in the Hebrew text, he was so heavily influenced by Origen that he almost automatically followed in the footsteps of his predecessor to explain the meaning of the signs. Jerome's transition from the LXX-centered explanation of the signs to the Hebrew-centered explanation during his revision of the Bible, enables us to see him gradually escaping the influence of Origen.

## 6. AUGUSTINE

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*Ecclesiasten Canticum canticorum, veteri Septuaginta interpretum auctoritati reddidi, vel antepositis lineis superflua quaeque designans, vel stellis titulo praenotatis ea quae minus habebantur interserens, quo plenius, o Paula et Eustochium cognoscatis quid in libris nostris minus sit, quid redundet.*

<sup>55</sup> Many scholars do not discuss the order of revision simply because it is unknown, but L.H. COTTINEAU, *Chronologie des versions bibliques de Saint Jérôme*, in *Miscellanea Geronimiana: Scritti varii pubblicati nel XV centenario dalla morte di San Girolamo*, ed. V. VANNUTELLI, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Rome 1920, 43-68, esp. 51, gives the same order as that of my discussion, namely, Job, the Gallican Psalter as well as the Chronicles, and the Books of Solomon.

Around 394/395 when Jerome got involved in the Origenist Controversy and suffered from a nerve-racking experience, Augustine sent him the first letter of their famous correspondence, which would eventually run into hypothetically twenty-seven letters in total, out of which seventeen letters are extant<sup>56</sup>. Augustine, a young speculative philosopher, wanted to interrogate the positivist biblical scholar Jerome on the philological aspects of the Bible. However, it was unfortunate that they could not argue more directly, at least at the beginning of their correspondence, because sometimes Augustine's letter did not properly reach Jerome due to the death of the delivery person<sup>57</sup>. At other times Augustine's letter was circulated among many people without Jerome's permission before being delivered to Jerome in Bethlehem<sup>58</sup>. Due to these regrettable incidents, their relationship got worse, as Peter Brown points out that these unique documents in the Early Church record «two highly-civilized men conducting with studied courtesy, a singularly rancorous correspondence»<sup>59</sup>.

Among various topics dealt with in the correspondence, the discussions on the critical signs are found in Augustine's *Ep. 71* (*Ep. 104* in Jerome's edition) and Jerome's *Ep. 112* (*Ep. 75* in Augustine's edition)<sup>60</sup>. In the former letter, Augustine says:

... you had translated the book of Job from the Hebrew although we already have a translation into Latin of that prophet which you made from the Greek text; in the first version you used the *asteriskoi* to mark those passages which are found in the Hebrew text but are missing from the Greek, and the *obeloi* to indicate the passages to be found in the Greek text but not in the Hebrew; you have done this with such amazing thoroughness that in certain places each individual word is marked by an *asteriskos* informing the reader that these words are in the Hebrew text but not in the Greek. However, in this later version translated from the Hebrew, there is not the same precision in noting the words and it is somewhat confusing to the reader who wonders why the *asteriskoi* were inserted in the first version, great care being taken to mark even the smallest grammatical particles which were absent from the Greek text but present in the Hebrew; or why in this later version, made from the Hebrew texts, less care was taken in making sure that these same particles were to be found in their proper places<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> See D. DE BRUYNE, *La correspondance échangée entre Augustin et Jérôme*, ZNW 31 (1932) 233-248; C. WHITE, *The Correspondence (394-419) between Jerome and Augustine of Hippo*, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, NY 1990; R. HENNINGS, *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Augustinus und Hieronymus und ihr Streit um den Kanon des Alten Testaments und die Auslegung von Gal. 2, 11-14*, Brill, Leiden 1993; A. FÜRST, *Augustins Briefwechsel mit Hieronymus*, Aschendorff, Münster 1999.

<sup>57</sup> *Aug. Epp.* 40,8; 71,1,2.

<sup>58</sup> *Hier. Epp.* 102,1; 105,1.

<sup>59</sup> P. BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd ed., University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 1990, 271.

<sup>60</sup> On the problem between the Hebrew text and the LXX of the Book of Job, see C. WHITE, *The Correspondence*, cit., 35-42; A. FÜRST, *Augustins Briefwechsel*, cit., 139-145.

<sup>61</sup> *Aug. Ep.* 71,3 (*Augustinus – Hieronymus, Briefwechsel*, I, ed. A. FÜRST [Fontes Christiani 41],

Augustine's explanation of the critical signs is quite neutral. He interprets the *asteriskos* as a sign which marks the passages «found in the Hebrew» (*quae in Hebraeo sunt*) and, at the same time, «are missing from the Greek» (*quae ... in Graeco desunt*). Namely, the *asteriskos* means, according to Augustine, an excess in the Hebrew text as seen from the LXX and a lack in the LXX as seen from the Hebrew text. On the other hand, the *obelos*, which indicates «the passages to be found in the Greek but not in the Hebrew» (*quae in Graeco inveniuntur et in Hebraeo non sunt*), namely, an excess in the LXX and a lack in the Hebrew text. He thus takes both the LXX and the Hebrew text as his points of departure, respectively. In other words, to explain the meaning of the critical signs, Augustine fairly covers every possible combination of pluses and minuses (see Appendix).

In the subsequent part of the letter, however, Augustine clearly reveals his preference for the LXX, saying: «To be honest, I would prefer you to translate the canonical books of Scripture for us from the Greek text which is known as the Seventy»<sup>62</sup>. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that Augustine's position toward the Bible at this point is LXX-centered after all, even if his explanation of the critical signs seems to be neutral at a first glance. Indeed, in the same letter, Augustine is concerned that the regular reading of Jerome's Hebrew-based translation would cause the Latin churches to be out of step with their Greek counterparts<sup>63</sup>. Although actually taking a LXX-centered position toward the Bible, Augustine is thus able to give a quite neutral explanation of the critical signs (possibly due to his relative unfamiliarity with biblical philology) compared to Origen, Epiphanius, and Jerome, who have clearer biases based on their approach toward the Bible.

Augustine's ignorance of philology is demonstrable from his questions in the last

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Brepols, Turnhout 2002, 160-62): ... *Iob ex Hebraeo te interpretatum, cum iam quandam haberemus interpretationem tuam eiusdem prophetae ex Graeco eloquio versam in Latinum, ubi tamen asteriscis notasti quae in Hebraeo sunt et in Graeco desunt, obeliscis autem quae in Graeco inveniuntur et in Hebraeo non sunt, tam mirabili diligentia, ut quibusdam in locis ad verba singula stellas significantes videamus eadem verba esse in Hebraeo, in Graeco autem non esse. Porro in hac posteriore interpretatione, quae versa est ex Hebraeo, non eadem verborum fides occurrit nec parum turbat cogitantem, vel cur in illa prima tanta diligentia figantur asterisci, ut minimas etiam particulas orationis indicent deesse codicibus Graecis quae sunt in Hebraeis, vel cur in hac altera quae ex Hebraeis est negligentius hoc curatum sit, ut hae eadem particulae locis suis invenirentur.* English translation follows, with some modifications, C. White, *Correspondence*, cit., 91.

<sup>62</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 71,4 (Fontes Christiani 41, I, 162): *Ego sane mallem Graecas potius canonicas te nobis interpretari scripturas, quae Septuaginta interpretum perhibentur.* C. White, *Correspondence*, cit., 92.

<sup>63</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 71,4. There are at least two reasons of Augustine's preference for the LXX: firstly, the LXX was considered in the Church to be more authoritative than the Hebrew text, even though it is a translation (*Doctr. chr.* II 15,22); and secondly, Augustine tried to maintain the comparability between a source text and a target text, by making a source language of the Bible Greek, not Hebrew. This is because no one (or few people) in the Church could read Hebrew (*Ep.* 71,4). On Augustine's understanding of the LXX, see W. SCHWARZ, *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation: Some Reformation Controversies and their Background*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1955, 37-44; M. MÜLLER, *The First Bible*, cit., 89-94. Especially on the concept of the 'principle of comparison', which is related to the second reason, see T. KATO, *Greek or Hebrew? Augustine and Jerome on Biblical Translation*, *StPatr* 98 (2017) 109-119.

part of the above quote («Why were the *asteriskoi* inserted in the first version?» «Why in this later version, made from the Hebrew texts, was less care taken in making sure that these same particles were to be found in their proper places?»). Since these questions sound irrelevant to Jerome, he could not help replying: «With all respect, I must say that you do not appear to understand what you ask»<sup>64</sup>. For Jerome, the reason for the insertion of the critical signs to the revised Latin text based on the Hexaplaric LXX (= the ‘first version’) and for their omission in the new Latin translation based directly on the Hebrew text (= the ‘later version’) is perfectly obvious<sup>65</sup>. Since the critical signs indicate the LXX’s differences from the Hebrew, they are necessary for the ‘first version’ based on the LXX, but are unnecessary for the ‘later version’ based on the Hebrew text. Jerome, considering that Augustine perhaps mixed up these two versions, answered the questions very carefully as if teaching a beginner, and with a detailed explanation of the critical signs:

For the former translation is from the Seventy and wherever there are commas, like little daggers, it indicates that the Seventy expands on the Hebrew text, while where there are the *asteriskoi*, like little stars shining onto the following words, something has been added by Origen from the edition of Theodotion. The first translation was made from the Greek, while the second I made directly from the Hebrew and it translates the true meaning, as I understood it, without necessarily preserving the word order<sup>66</sup>.

According to Jerome, Origen used the *obelos* to indicate an excess in the LXX as seen from the Hebrew text (*Septuaginta plus dixerint quam habetur in Hebraeo*) and the *asteriskos* to indicate an addition in the version of Theodotion as seen from the LXX (*ex Theodotionis editione ab Origene additum est*) (see Appendix). Again, in this case, Origen equated the version of Theodotion with the Hebrew text, as we have seen in his *Commentary on Matthew*, and Jerome followed this equation. Furthermore, we should remember that Jerome’s prefaces to the Gallican Psalter and the Chronicles (*iuxta LXX*) share this neutral position, which maintains a viewpoint of pluses by switching the points of departure.

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<sup>64</sup> Hier. *Ep.* 112,19 (Fontes Christiani 41, I, 216): ... *pace tua dixerim, videris mihi non intellegere quod quaesisti.*

<sup>65</sup> Jerome revised and translated the Bible three times. At the first stage, in Rome in 383, he revised the Gospels and the Psalter of the Old Latin version. At the second stage, in Bethlehem from 389 to 392, Jerome revised Job, the Psalter, Chronicles, and the Books of Solomon (*scil.* Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs) of the Old Latin version with the aid of Origen’s Hexaplaric LXX. This revised version is what Augustine calls the ‘first version’. Finally, at the third stage, in Bethlehem from 392 to 406/7, Jerome made a Latin translation from the Hebrew text, which is the ‘later version’ for Augustine.

<sup>66</sup> Hier. *Ep.* 112,19 (Fontes Christiani 41, I, 216-18): *Illa enim interpretatio Septuaginta interpretum est; et ubicumque virgulae id est obeli sunt, significatur quod Septuaginta plus dixerint quam habetur in Hebraeo, ubi autem asterisci id est stellae praelucentes, ex Theodotionis editione ab Origene additum est; et ibi Graeca transtulimus, hic de ipso Hebraico quod intellegebamus expressimus, sensuum potius veritatem quam verborum interdum ordinem conservantes.* C. White, *Correspondence*, cit., 133.

On the other hand, there is a possibility that Augustine did not confuse the two versions at all. He might have regarded the relationship between the Hebrew text and the LXX not as hierarchical (with the translation subordinate to the original text), but as two equally authoritative texts. If this is the case, the meaning of the critical signs for Augustine is also slightly but decisively different: they are not supposed to function unidirectionally by marking only the translation when it differs from the original text, but bidirectionally by marking both the original text and the translation when they differ from each other. Accordingly, Augustine was possibly saying that Jerome should not just mark the ‘first version’ when the LXX differs from the Hebrew text, but also equally mark the ‘later version’ when the Hebrew text differs from the LXX.

Even so, however, Augustine’s understanding of the two versions still would have sounded problematic for Jerome. In Jerome’s opinion, admirers of the authority of the LXX would not greatly appreciate Origen’s Hexaplaric LXX and its Latin translation, because these versions would represent a corruption of the pure, original LXX. Accordingly, Jerome suggests that to be a true admirer of the LXX, Augustine should read the LXX in its original form as it was produced by the Seventy translators, by eliminating from his copy the asterisked parts (or the additional parts from Theodotion)<sup>67</sup>.

In his later work *The City of God* (completed by 426), Augustine himself discusses the functions of the critical signs again:

Some people considered that the Greek codices of the translation of the Seventy should be emended from Hebrew codices. However, they did not dare to remove that which the Hebrew codices do not have but the Seventy have. But they only added that which were found in Hebrew but not among the Seventy, and marked them at the beginning of the same verses by means of certain star-shaped signs called the *asteriskos*. However, they marked those which the Hebrew codices do not have but the Seventy have, similarly toward the beginning of the verses, by means of sticks that are lain, just like the uncias were marked<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> Hier. *Ep.* 112,19 (Fontes Christiani 41, I, 218): *Et miror quomodo Septuaginta interpretum libros legas non puros, ut ab eis editi sunt, sed ab Origene emendatos sive corruptos per obelos et asteriscos, et christiani hominis interpretatiunculam non sequaris, praesertim cum ea quae addita sunt ex hominis Iudaei atque blasphemi post passionem Christi editione transtulerit. Vis amator esse verus Septuaginta interpretum, non legas ea quae sub asteriscis sunt, immo rade de voluminibus, ut te veterum fautorem probes!*

<sup>68</sup> Aug. *Civ.* XVIII 43 (*De civitate Dei, Libri XI-XXII*, ed. B. DOMBART – A. KALB [CChr.SL 48], Brepols, Turnhout 1955, 639): *Nonnulli autem codices Graecos interpretationis Septuaginta ex Hebraeis codicibus emendandos putarunt; nec tamen ausi sunt detrahere, quod Hebraei non habebant et Septuaginta posuerunt; sed tantum modo addiderunt, quae in Hebraeis inventa apud Septuaginta non erant, eaque signis quibusdam in stellarum modum factis ad capita eorundem versuum notaverunt, quae signa asteriscos vocant. Illa vero, quae non habent Hebraei, habent autem Septuaginta, similiter ad capita versuum iacentibus virgulis, sicut scribuntur unciae, signaverunt.* English translation of the *City of God* is

Augustine, probably bearing Origen and his followers in mind, explains the methodology of revision of «some people». However, at the same time, he set out his own understanding of the critical signs, according to which the «star-shaped» sign (the *asteriskos*) indicates an excess in the Hebrew text and a lack in the LXX (*quae in Hebraeis inventa apud Septuaginta non errant*), whereas the «sticks that are lain» (the *obelos*) means a lack in the Hebrew text and an excess in the LXX (*quae non habent Hebraei, habent autem Septuaginta*). This reappraisal of the critical signs thus remains just as neutral as in *Ep. 71* (see Appendix).

Furthermore, in *The City of God*, Augustine's understanding of the Bible becomes more sophisticated, mature, and fair, as he clearly accepts not only the authority of the LXX but also that of the Hebrew text<sup>69</sup>. More than just being neutral, or neither LXX-centered nor Hebrew-centered, Augustine's position is, as it were, both LXX-centered and Hebrew-centered. This is clear from his following statement that the one same Spirit of God sometimes says things through the Seventy translators, at other times through the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, and at still other times through both. After his explanation of the critical signs, Augustine says:

If, as it is necessary, we observe nothing else in these writings, except that which the Spirit of God said through human, the Spirit of God was unwilling to say these things through the translators but through those prophets, whatever is in the Hebrew codices and not among the Seventy translators. Conversely, the same Spirit preferred to say these things through the translators than through the prophets, whatever is among the Seventy but not in the Hebrew codices, thus showing that they both were the prophets. For in this way the Spirit said, on the one hand, different things through Isaiah, through Jeremiah, and through different prophets, or, on the other hand, the same things through this prophet and that prophet in a different way, as it wanted. Furthermore, whatever found in both texts, one and the same Spirit wanted to say through both. But in such a way the prophets preceded in prophesizing, but the translators followed in interpreting them prophetically<sup>70</sup>.

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my own.

<sup>69</sup> On Augustine's mature thinking on the Hebrew Bible, see E.L. GALLAGHER, *Augustine on the Hebrew Bible*, *JThS* 67 (2016) 97-114, esp. 112-114. In contrast, a minimalist interpretation of Augustine's use of the Hebrew Bible is offered by J. LÖSSL, *A Shift in Patristic Exegesis: Hebrew Clarity and Historical Verity in Augustine, Jerome, Julian of Aeclanum and Theodore of Mopsuestia*, *AugSt* 32 (2001) 157-175, esp. 160.

<sup>70</sup> *Aug. Civ XVIII 43 (CChr.SL 48, 640): Si ergo, ut oportet, nihil aliud intueamur in scripturis illis, nisi quid per homines dixerit Dei Spiritus, quidquid est in Hebraeis codicibus et non est apud interpretes Septuaginta, noluit ea per istos, sed per illos prophetas Dei Spiritus dicere. Quidquid vero est apud Septuaginta, in Hebraeis autem codicibus non est, per istos ea maluit quam per illos idem Spiritus dicere, sic ostendens utrosque fuisse prophetas. Isto enim modo alia per Esaiam, alia per Hieremiam, alia per alium aliumque prophetam vel aliter eadem per hunc ac per illum dixit, ut voluit. Quidquid porro apud*

Here Augustine provides three cases concerning the pluses and minuses between the Hebrew text and the LXX: first, the elements indicating an excess in the Hebrew text and a lack in the LXX (*quidquid est in Hebraeis codicibus et non est apud interpretes Septuaginta*) are the asterisked elements that the Spirit of God says not through the translators but the prophets; second, the elements denoting an excess in the LXX and a lack in the Hebrew text (*quidquid vero est apud Septuaginta, in Hebraeis autem codicibus non est*) are the obelized elements that the same Spirit says through the translators but not the prophets; and third, the elements «found in both texts» (*apud utrosque invenitur*) indicate that the Spirit says the same thing in two different periods in two different ways<sup>71</sup>.

It is noteworthy that Augustine finds neither real omission nor real addition in the texts of the three cases above; rather, according to Augustine, the Hebrew text and the LXX say the same thing in different ways<sup>72</sup>. The words in the three cases above (an excess in the Hebrew text and a lack in the LXX; an excess in the LXX and a lack in the Hebrew text; and the words found in both the LXX and the Hebrew text) are equally authoritative, because all of them derive from the Spirit of God. In other words, Augustine considers that the Spirit of God appears both in the LXX and the Hebrew text as a double revelation<sup>73</sup>. Thus, Augustine was trying to solve the philological argument concerning the pluses and minuses between the Hebrew text and the LXX, which had begun with Origen and had been continued by Epiphanius and Jerome, and he has finally reached this theological but balanced conclusion.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The present study clarified four of the Church Fathers' understandings of the critical signs (including Origen, Epiphanius, Jerome, and Augustine), and their positions toward the Bible. Although Epiphanius and Jerome formed an alliance with each other in the Origenist Controversy, the former took a LXX-centered position toward the Bible like Origen, with whom the latter was diametrically opposed with his Hebrew-centered position. Origen and

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*utrosque invenitur, per utrosque dicere voluit unus atque idem Spiritus; sed ita ut illi praecederent prophetando, isti sequerentur propheticè illos interpretando.*

<sup>71</sup> Theoretically speaking, there could be another case for the elements lacking in both the LXX and the Hebrew text. However, needless to say, no particular discussion is needed (or possible) for this case.

<sup>72</sup> Aug. Civ. XVIII 43 (CChr.SL 48, 640): ... *non praetermissa vel addita, sed aliter dicta sunt* ...

<sup>73</sup> D. BARTHÉLEMY, *Origène et le texte de l'Ancien Testament*, in *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, Beauchesne, Paris 1972, 247-261, esp. 259 (= *Études d'histoire du texte de l'Ancien Testament*, cit., 203-216, esp. 215), considers that Origen favored the idea of this dualism in a manner similar to Augustine. However, as seen above, Origen's principle must be described as fundamentally 'LXX-centered', and therefore his motivation of using the Hebrew text is a part of 'exegetical maximalism'.



Epiphanius are certainly interested in the textual differences between the Hebrew text and the LXX, but they are ultimately LXX-centered as is clear from their explanation of the critical signs from the perspective of the LXX as their point of departure. Even in Jerome's earlier career, when he revised the existing Latin versions with the aid of the Hexaplaric LXX, he took the LXX-centered position to elucidate the critical signs, although he had already experienced a 'conversion' to the Hebrew text. This demonstrates the greatness of Origen's continued influence over Jerome. After that, however, Jerome gradually moved to a more neutral position and finally shed the influence of Origen for a completely Hebrew-centered position backed by the concept of the *Hebraica veritas*. This is reflected in the way that, as the transition proceeded, Jerome's explanation of the critical signs also became neutral and then Hebrew-centered, using the Hebrew text as his point of departure. Jerome's younger opponent, Augustine, at first took the LXX-centered position, although his understanding of the critical signs was neutral. However, the more his thought is deepened, the more neutral overall position he took with the idea that there are neither real additions nor real omissions between the Hebrew text and the LXX in terms of their meaning. This theological idea of a double revelation let Augustine become the one who finally settled the plus/minus discussion concerning the critical signs. We therefore conclude that Church Fathers' understanding of the signs based on the plus/minus argument is sufficiently useful to determine their positions toward the Bible, whether they are LXX-centered, Hebrew-centered, or neutral.

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## Appendix

		HT*	LXX	POD**	Position
Or. <i>CMt</i> 15,14	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>	–	–	LXX HT	neutral
Or. <i>EpAfr</i> 7	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>	– +	–	LXX HT/LXX	LXX- centered
Epiph. <i>Mens.</i> 2-3	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>	– +	[+] [–]	LXX LXX	LXX- centered
Hier. <i>Praef. Vulg. par. (IH)</i>	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>		+ –	HT HT	Hebrew- centered
Hier. <i>Praef. Vulg. pent.</i>	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>		+ –	HT HT	Hebrew- centered
Hier. <i>Praef. Vulg. Iob (LXX)</i>	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>	– +		LXX LXX	LXX- centered
Hier. <i>Praef. Vulg. psalm. (LXX)</i>	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>		+ +	HT LXX	neutral
Hier. <i>Praef. Vulg. Salom. (LXX)</i>	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>		+ –	HT HT	Hebrew- centered
Aug. <i>Ep.</i> 71,3	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>	– +	[+] [–]	LXX LXX	LXX- centered
Hier. <i>Ep.</i> 112,19	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>		+ +	HT LXX	neutral
Aug. <i>Civ.</i> XVIII 43	<i>obelos</i> <i>asteriskos</i>	– +	+ –	HT/LXX HT/LXX	LXX/ Hebrew

\* HT = Hebrew text    \*\* POD = point of departure