

Revisiting Hab. 2:4 and its Place in the New Testament Eschatological Vision

James A.E. Mulroney
University of Edinburgh

I.

It is widely agreed that the Apostle Paul quoted Ambakoum¹ 2:4b in Rom 1:17b because it was a messianic text that supported the core thesis of his epistle: the righteous (one) shall live by faith, and not by works of the law. It has been argued that this central article—to live by faith—is then unpacked throughout the rest of the epistle as the author explains what this means in light of the coming of Christ. The apostle's citation is often handled as if it were a proof-text, being lifted out of Ambakoum to suit the purpose of the epistle. Support for the messianic background comes from studies by Dodd and Strobel, which have asserted that, in the former, Paul was working out of a messianic interpretative tradition of the passage,² and in the latter, the translator of Ambakoum introduced a messianic reference at Amb 2:3a.³

¹ Ambakoum is here given as the title of the Old Greek (OG) translation of the Hebrew book entitled Habakkuk by tradition. In this study, the abbreviation LXX refers to the OG translation of Torah, the Pentateuch, something about which Jerome was emphatic. The abbreviation of OG (Old Greek) refers to any of the earliest translations of the books of the Septuagint that are in relative continuity with the LXX, e.g. OG Isa would refer to the OG translation that occurred after the LXX in the second century. Critically speaking, this often refers to the eclectic texts from the *Septuaginta-Unternehmen* of Göttingen.

² Cf. C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Nisbet & Co, Ltd., 1953).

³ Strobel is quite clear that a comparison between Hab 2:3 and Amb 2:3 reveals a messianic reference, which he assumes on the basis of the later Qumranic tradition of interpretation, arising, he argues, from those expectations of the Maccabean struggle; he writes, “Sie scheint, soweit wir heute die Ursprünge der apokalyptischen Hoffnungen von Qumran festzulegen vermögen, veranlaßt und getragen von der Erwartung der Makkabaerkämpfe. In dieser Zeit verdichteten sich nationale Hoffnungen

In addition to the reference of a coming, unnamed individual in Amb 2:3a, modern studies also indicate the use of δ δίκαιος as an epithet for the messiah,⁴ and the syntagmatic movement of the personal pronoun in Amb 2:4b (noting the difference in MT).⁵ On

und religiöses Erwarten zur Schärfe der uns hinlänglich bekannten Messianologie der urchristlichen und tannaitischen Zeit...Alles spricht dafür, daß sie selbst schon ein – zunächst im weitesten Sinne verstanden – messianisches Verständnis der Stelle Hab 2,3 kannte und angestrebt hat.” Cf. A. Strobel, *Untersuchungen, Verzögerungsproblem* (NovTSupp 2; ed. W. C. van Unnik; Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1961), p. 47.

⁴ Studies abound on this within the faith of Christ debate. Cf. Douglas A. Campbell, “Romans 1:17 – A *Crux Interpretum* for the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate,” *JBL* 113/2 (1994): p. 282; Richard P. Carlson, “Whose Faith? Reexamining the Hab 2:4 Citation within the Communicative Act of Romans 1:1–17,” in *Raising Up a Faithful Exegete* (eds. K. L. Noll and Brooks Schramm; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2010), p. 315; A. T. Hanson, *Paul’s Technique and Theology* (London: SPCK Publishing, 1974), pp. 13–51; Richard B. Hays, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and the Pauline Christology. What Is at Stake?,” (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 719–20; Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, Mich. / Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), pp. 134–5; Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination* (Grand Rapids, Mich. / Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), pp. 119–42; Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ* (SNTSMS 84; ed. Margaret E. Thrall; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 81. Also Manson argues that the new subject of Amb 2:3 is marked titularly in Hebrews by addition of the article, δ ἐρχομένος, and theologically echoes Matt 11:3, cf. T. W. Manson, “The Argument from Prophecy,” *JTS* 46/183,184 (1945): p. 134. Also Marguerite Harl et al., eds., *Les Douze Prophètes* (BdA 23.4–9; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999), p. 275.

⁵ There are two important linguistic details of note. First, of the major uncials (G^{B,Q,S,V,W}), the possessive pronoun μου is in syntagmatic relationship with πίστις, whereas in G^A it is brought forward to δίκαιος, hence, δ δίκαιός μου ζήσεται ἐκ πίστεως (also \mathfrak{P}^{46}). Second, MT has a third person pronoun in the phrase אֱמוּנָתוֹ, whereas in OG this is first person, hence πίστεώς μου. The NT omits the pronoun altogether. I disagree with the idea that Paul introduced ambiguity in Rom 1:17b and Gal 3:11 so that the omission creates a harmonious theological ambiguity. The idea is that faith is a gift, therefore it is the Lord’s, and that the recipient exercises it, therefore it is the individual’s—both are true. But this actually seems even more unclear. It is far more likely that Paul omitted the pronoun of his text (assuming it was present in his *Vorlage*) because he was making the point clearer, not less. As Siefrid notes, “[t]o ‘live by *my* [i.e., the Lord’s]

account of these things, and because this righteous person will live “by faith”, it is argued that the OG text indicates the coming of a (the) messiah.⁶ Amb 2:3–4 is thus listed as part of the Second Temple milieu of messianic expectation,⁷ and is said to be confirmed by Paul’s appropriation of the text in Romans and Galatians.⁸

In this study I will explore this messianic claim more closely.⁹ First, I will discuss the method surrounding how one finds, or identifies, this theological feature (a messianic one) on the level of text-production in the Septuagint. Second, I will then make a literary and linguistic analysis of Amb 2:2–5. After that I will then show

faithfulness’ is to live by faith.” Studies on this point can be found in those mentioned in n. 4, and also cf. Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” in *NT Use of the OT* (eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007), pp. 608–11.

⁶ Bird notes that this was introduced by the translation, and Hays indicates this may have happened unintentionally, cf. Michael F. Bird, *Are You the One Who Is to Come?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2009), p. 45; Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 135.

⁷ Cf. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, p. 51; Strobel, *Untersuchungen, Verzögerungsproblem*, pp. 19–55; Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*; Bird, *Are You the One Who Is to Come?* See also refs. in n. 4. But this is not true of some of the weightiest contributions to this discussion, who do not list Hab 2:4 as a messianic reference, making no mention of it at all, cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer S. J., *The One Who Is to Come* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007); John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010); William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1998); Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (trans. G. W. Anderson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005).

⁸ Cf. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination*, pp. 136–42; Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 135–41.

⁹ When I say messianic I am considering how most scholars use the term today to refer to the messiah himself, or to a specific messianic figure(s), not to the notionally implied aspects of messianism, which are embedded intrinsically in the concept of eschatology. Scholars use the term messianic (messianism) differently in this way. Sometimes it is clear that it refers to a specific figure, a coming one, warrior, helper, etc., but at other times it appears related to his work and its effects, such as, for example, the nature of justification for one who believes in the messiah. So, stating that the NT is messianic can mean one thing or another depending on context.

how the thematic and semantic content of the OG passage could have given rise to its use in the NT, so that it became messianic, not that it was so when it was crafted.

II.

So, first things first. In the field of Septuagint studies the difference between what is called text-production and text-reception is of paramount importance.¹⁰ This is especially true for the study of Septuagintal theology. Text-production refers to the work of the translator within his *Sitz im Leben*. A discussion of text-production calls to mind the translator, his work and, quite importantly, what is known of his personal context(s), such as his linguistic ability, literary style, locale, political situation, etc. In the context of this study, what is true for the production of the Twelve is true for Am-bakoum.¹¹ He most likely worked in a group setting with other translators in some sort of scribal/language community. We know almost nothing of the warp and woof of synagogue life for this

¹⁰ Cf. my dissertation at the University of Edinburgh (2015), St. George's Square; also the essays by Al Pietersma in Cameron Boyd-Taylor, ed. *A Question of Methodology* (14; Leuven: Peeters, 2013). Do note, however, that Pietersma integrated the Interlinear Paradigm into the concept of text-production, which I disagree with in my earlier work.

¹¹ The Twelve is the title of the OG Minor Prophets (MP), and the abbr. LXX refers to the Pentateuch only. It is likely that the Twelve was translated by one hand in Alexandria, Egypt sometime in the early-mid second century. The translator was probably fluent in Greek (Classical and Koiné) and Aramaic, but for whom Hebrew was likely an academic language (Joosten/Brock). He would also have stood in a tradition of translational style that he received from the earlier work of the Pentateuch (LXX) (Aitken). See Jan Joosten, *Collected Studies on the Septuagint* (FAT 83; eds. Bernd Janowski, Mark S. Smith, and Hermann Spieckermann; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), p. 32; Jan Joosten, "A Syntactic Aramaism in the LXX: ἰδοὺ in temporal expressions," *JSCS* 45 (2012): p. 44; Sebastian P. Brock, "The Phenomenon of Biblical Translation in Antiquity," in *Studies in the Septuagint* (ed. Harry M. Orlinsky; New York: Ktav Publishing, 1974), p. 549; James K. Aitken, "The Language of the Septuagint and Jewish Greek Identity," in *The Jewish-Greek Tradition in Antiquity* (eds. James K. Aitken and James Carleton Paget; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 120.

time,¹² so to imagine that OG was designed for public reading to a lay audience, like in a modern church or synagogue, is probably unhelpful. As many scholars now assume, we have to think of a community of scribes, junior and senior, who worked to preserve the copying of their Hebrew text(s). Thackeray called them *les collaborateurs*.¹³ Then, for various reasons, late in the third-century, the Hebrew Torah was translated into this community's Greek vernacular according to certain translational principles. The initial production of the Septuagint would have been for a small audience of scribes that held to a certain reading of their Hebrew texts. This reading, or interpretation, was transformed into Greek in the translation process. The initial production of LXX was followed within about a generation by, among other works, the Twelve. More works emerged over the decades, and some parts of the Septuagint are suggested to have not been completed until the turn of the millennium, and in Palestine, not Alexandria.¹⁴ This sets some works very far apart indeed, meaning that later works might have been affected by the emergence of ideas that arose from within the context of reception.¹⁵ Hence to refer to "the Septuagint" can be misleading with respect to its linguistic or theological unity. This is why the text-production context is so important to distinguish from text-reception.

Text-reception refers to the life of a text within its recipient communities. While the very first recipients of OG would have been the aforementioned language community, what is to be borne in mind here is that in the subsequent communities—in different locations, i.e. Palestine—the interpretation of the text can, as often does, undergo change. This may also result in redactional alterations. In fact this is one reason why it is so important to distinguish

¹² As Lester Grabbe has pointed out, "evidence for institutions generally accepted as synagogues is known for the Diaspora as early as Ptolemaic times. But when we look at Palestine itself, evidence for the existence of synagogues is lacking before the first century BCE and perhaps even until the first CE." Cf. Lester L. Grabbe, "Synagogues in Pre-70 Palestine: A Re-Assessment," *JTS* 39 (1988): p. 410.

¹³ Henry St John Thackeray, "The Greek Translators of the Prophetic Books," *JTS* 4 (1903): p. 579.

¹⁴ Cf. Gilles Dorival, Marguerite Harl, and Olivier Munnich, *La Bible grecque des Septante* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1988), pp. 107–11.

¹⁵ The classic example is the καίγε recension, see Dominique Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila*. (10; Leiden: Brill, 1963).

between the text at the point of production and of reception(s). What the translator intended, or meant, by way of his translation may undergo change by the emergence of a new way of reading the text. The presence of Hebrew texts in circulation with Greek texts might also conflate the reasons and intentions behind later recensions and versions of OG.¹⁶ Now these things relate very much to the field of Septuagint studies and room is not permitted here to draw out more details.

A few years ago Bird also sought to break down or flatten this kind of methodological distinction. He no longer wants scholars to be concerned over whether or not OG/OT texts initially contained messianic references if they are used in that way in the NT. He gives four reasons why “messianic readings of Old Testament texts can be considered legitimate even if a messianic sense is not explicit in the original context.”¹⁷ Of these four, his second reason is that “reinterpretation of sacred traditions is already taking place within the development of the Old Testament corpus”,¹⁸ of which he briefly cites Amb 2:3. But as is shown in this study, the text of Ambakoum does not introduce a messianism in v. 3.¹⁹ The only

¹⁶ Cf. James K. Aitken, “The Origins of *καί γε*,” in *Biblical Greek in Context* (eds. James K. Aitken and T. V. Evans; Leuven: Peeters, 2015).

¹⁷ Bird, *Are You the One Who Is to Come?*, p. 44.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Moreover, as the Septuagint project spanned centuries (and likely different locations), with some books not appearing within its corpus until the turn of the millennium, it is a very tendentious enterprise to make intertextual links between books that span as much time as was needed for earlier books to be received with an alternate reading(s). The myth that the Septuagint was created by 70 (72) scribes at one point in time must be finally dispelled forever. We are looking at a very large body of work that came into existence from the late third century that did not finish “growing” until the first century. Questions of canon of course take us beyond this study.

¹⁹ Messianism in the Second Temple period could have quite different meanings, referring to a political warrior (e.g. 4QpIsa^a), maybe a dying servant (e.g. 4Q285), priestly figure (e.g. 1QS 9:11), “future eschatological teacher” (Wolters) (e.g. CD 7:18; 4Q174) or in some cases duumvirates (Bird). Most often the role of this figure is associated with any combination of royal, priestly or prophetic functions. In each respect there is the expectation of a future figure who will come and perform some kind of extraordinary act(s). This human agent was to bring a kind of deliverance. Evans sees this future anointed person as “part of a larger eschatological

reason modern scholars seem to think that it does is because of how the text was later interpreted. A reinterpretation should not round off the edges that distinguish between the original intention(s) in translation and the multi-varied life of a text by later language communities. So, while I am happy to agree that the text of Ambakoum reflects the interpretative tradition of its community, I think we give up too much if we allow our hermeneutics to become either anachronistic or monolithic.²⁰ I sympathise greatly with Bird's point that certain texts were open or free to be used by later communities, such as the authors of the NT, but without differen-

drama, whereby human activity on earth is appreciably altered." Of all the expectations, it seems that the prevailing one was restoration of the Davidic kingship. The coming of the messiah would inaugurate the end of days, an eschatological period. Hence messianism refers to a specific person, whereas eschatology refers to a period of "future hope" at the end of time (Mowinckel). Fitzmyer and Boda connect this idea with eschatological beliefs. The presence of the word משיח (or related words, i.e. מִשְׁחָה, מִשְׁחָה, מִשְׁחָה) is not necessary (Bird/Boda/Collins). The idea can be articulated through the use of other words. The idea of a person(s) who will come in the future has its roots in the HB, which some call proto-messianic, e.g. Gen 49:10–11; Num 24:17; and Isa 11:1–6. But whether such ideas are clearly identifiable in the Septuagint is very debatable for the earliest translations (Knibb). The development of Christian ideas of messianism, in light of the appearance of Christ, are certainly not unwarranted, but must be held in suspense, especially when dealing with the idea generated by a translator. Cf. Craig Evans, "Messianism," in *DNTB* (eds. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000), p. 698; Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, p. 17; Edward W. Glenny, *Finding Meaning in the Text* (VTSup 126; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), n. 120; Bird, *Are You the One Who Is to Come?*, pp. 31–62; Fitzmyer S. J., *The One Who Is to Come*, pp. 1–7; Mark Boda, "Figuring the Future: The Prophets and Messiah," in *The Messiah in the OT & NT* (MNTS Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 35–48, 73–74; Al Wolters, "The Messiah in the Qumran Documents," in *The Messiah in the OT & NT* (MNTS Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 76–79. Also cf. essays in Michael A. Knibb, ed. *Septuagint and Messianism* (BETL 195; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

²⁰ What I mean by the latter term is that the text in question was interpreted differently by different communities. To say Amb 2:3 was interpreted messianically means something different from group to group. It is not sufficient to simply say it was messianic as if it in some wobbly way ended up meaning it related to Jesus.

tiating between the two one can obfuscate an understanding of the original translator's work. There is a real risk of running roughshod over the original interpretation, which would have been located within that community's habit and tradition of reading the Hebrew Bible. It has its own voice. Interpretative developments should not be squashed. When one says "this" or "that" is in the Septuagint at the time of its composition and it was not, then we ought to be clear that we are, in fact, actually relying upon—rightly I hope—the NT interpretation of it. The text became messianic, which is fine. But it was not when it was translated. Moreover, much of NT scholarship relies upon the assumption that Amb 2:4b is a reference to a future messiah—Jesus—for the argument of a subjective reading of Rom 1:17b. Yet this is a case of reading a NT idea into an OG text.

Now, we know very little about the original translator of the Twelve. There are no notes, commentaries, marginalia, etc. What we can know of the translator's interpretation (or reading) of the Hebrew book of Habakkuk, we only get from an analysis of Ambakoum within its cultural (and therefore linguistic) setting.²¹ I am sure that the passage of Amb 2:2–5 is eschatologically charged (and explain in detail below),²² but the idea that this future individual refers to a messiah is highly tendentious. When Dodd claims that Paul "drew upon a tradition which already recognized the passage from Habakkuk as a *testimonium* of the coming of Christ", he, I take

²¹ From a text-critical standpoint we are on shaky grounds here too. Our earliest exemplars are from the 4th C., (provide list), and are all Christian, which is not inherently problematic, but even of these there is evidence of recensional activity in order to bring the OG reading into conformity with its use in the NT, i.e. Heb 10:37–38.

²² Eschatology is possibly today what a word like messiah was for Jews of the Second Temple period. While Christians all affirm that Jesus is the Christ—the Messiah—definitions of eschatology are diverse and vigorously debated. In this study, eschatology is, as the word indicates, a study of the end times. The arrival of the messiah is intrinsically tied to it. It refers to an age, epoch or time in which God acts to save his people through executing his divine judgement against their enemies, abolishing sin and wickedness. I take the position that the NT presents an already/non-yet dimension of God's actions, so that the present age is entirely eschatological; Christ has already died and risen. God has already judged sin at the Cross, yet the future final judgement, when all sin is put away forever and creation restored, has yet to occur.

it, is not referring to the interpretation of Ambakoum, but to a Jewish tradition that preceded Paul that used this text that way. Dodd makes this suggestion based on NT exegesis, not a thorough-going exegesis of Ambakoum. Moreover, it is not entirely necessary for Paul to lean upon such a tradition (we don't know if it even existed). The text of Amb 2:2–5 has an eschatological dimension from which Paul could have easily drawn in order to make his theological case. The eschatological context and contrastive emphases of Ambakoum would have been a sufficient contextual and theological trigger for Paul's use in, for example, Rom 1:17. Let us see how.

III.

A literary and linguistic analysis of Amb 2:2–5—the literary context of Amb 2:4—points to an eschatological period in which God will render judgement. There is a vision that is to reach an eschatological goal (marked in the source text [ST] by פּוֹר),²³ which means that it will occur at the end of the age. Within the framework of this vision an unnamed individual will arrive. Just as the vision will occur at the eschatological end of time, so also will this person appear. Then, the parallel sentence (paradigmatic) refers again to a person who will walk by faith. This individual will be tested, and if he succeeds the Lord will be pleased with him. Careful exegesis of this passage really does not have a “messianic tone”,²⁴ at least not at the level of text-production.

Furthermore, this so-called messianic claim is set within a literary “frame”.²⁵ Amb 2:2–5 exhibits a “paragraph cohesion”, to borrow Cranmer's phrase, which needs to be considered when assessing the eschatological character of the text. It is this structure that indicates that the OG translator had a paragraph level grasp of his ST. My intention is to study this passage as discourse in order to see how a non-atomistic approach yields up more detail than considering, for example, the placement or omission of a pronoun.²⁶

²³ Cf. n. 58.

²⁴ Hanson, *Paul's Technique and Theology*, p. 42.

²⁵ David J. Cranmer, “Translating for Paragraph Cohesion,” *BibT* 35/4 (1984): p. 432.

²⁶ In this context, by atomistic, I mean taking certain parts of a passage, e.g. a pronoun, certain nouns, and making reference to them only without consideration the linguistics (i.e. syntagmatic organisation, dis-

Each chapter of the book of Ambakoum is a coherent unit that builds upon the previous chapter,²⁷ just like the ST. In chapter one the prophet introduces his complaint about the wickedness and injustice in his midst. He asks the Lord why he has not answered his pleadings and cries (1:2–4). Yet the Lord answers by proclaiming that he is raising up the Chaldeans as a scourge for his people (1:5). This new enemy will be terrifying (1:7), and they will not only judge Judea but many nations (1:17). It is an international punishment against wickedness and idolatry (cf. 2:18–19). The second chapter addresses the situation after the invasion, but Ambakoum receives it in advance, having set himself up as a watchman of the Lord (2:1). He stands upon his parapet and looks for the Lord’s deliverance. His purview yields a verbal response from the Lord.

	Amb 2:2	Hab 2:2
aA	καὶ ἀπεκρίθη πρὸς με κύριος	וַיַּעֲנֵנִי יְהוָה
aB	καὶ εἶπεν γράψον ὄρασιν	וַיֹּאמֶר כְּתוּב חֲזוֹן
bA	καὶ σαφῶς ἐπὶ ποξίον	וּבְאֵר עַל-הַלְחֹזֹת
bB	ὅπως διώκη ὁ ἀναγινώσκων αὐτά	לְמַעַן יְרוֹץ קוֹרֵא בּוֹ

In verse two the Lord commands Ambakoum to write down a vision, which is to be made clear or plain for the recipient. Although the adverb σαφῶς is very common, the verbal it translates, באר, is not, being used only twice elsewhere of Moses (expounding the Law [Deut 1:5] or writing down clearly the law of God [Deut 27:8]). Like Moses, Ambakoum writes down his vision onto tablets. But unlike Habakkuk, who etches his vision onto tablets (לוחות), his namesake Ambakoum writes this onto a single tablet of box-wood. Although the Greek substantive ποξίον is by no means rare, it is

course boundaries, etc.) of the passage. Moreover, I am convinced that a non-atomistic reading would be closer to that of not only the NT authors, but also the OG translator(s).

²⁷ The book of Habakkuk has been studied extensively in commentaries. The following is a brief synopsis for the purpose of this essay. I encourage the reader to consider the following works for a more extensive analysis on either MT or OG: Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk* (AB 25; New York; London: Anchor Bible/Doubleday, 2001); Robert D. Haak, *Habakkuk* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); Wilhelm Rudolph, *Haggai-Maleachi* (KAT 13,2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1976); Harl et al., eds., *Les Douze Prophètes*.

seldom used in the Septuagint. In fact, the Septuagintal translators choose different words for the common Hebrew nominal לוח (tablet), depending on the context with the most common being πλακάς. Among the prophets of Isaiah and Moses who write upon a πύξιον (Exod 24:12; Isa 30:8), Ambakoum is like them in writing down an important oracle that is to stand as a witness.

The purpose of the vision is so that he who reads *them* will run,²⁸ ὅπως coordinates the two verses. The neuter plural object of the final clause αὐτά does not have a near grammatical referent like in the Hebrew (the suffix pronoun on the phrase בו refers to חזון).²⁹ The only logical referent is the contents of the vision, which have been written down on the box-wood. The change is slight but apparent. If either δικαίωμα or κρίμα were implied (consider also μαρτύριον), all having grammatical concord, then there would be a lexical link to a Deuteronomic *leitmotif*.³⁰ The reader is being asked to comprehend the judgements or precepts of the Lord that are contained in the verbal expression of the vision.

This then naturally leads one to ask what the precise contents of the vision are. If these are judgements, then what kind are they and

²⁸ The English optative mood, which is common in English translations, lessens the clear sense of “will run”. At the reading of the tablets the individual will run, or flee. It is the only logical course of action; only a fool would stay to suffer the judgement of God. Cf. Haak, *Habakkuk*, p. 56.

²⁹ Whenever a verbal precedes a participial substantive that is then followed by the prepositional objective phrase, בו, it always has the spatial sense of “in it” (Neh 7:5; 13:1 Ps 127:1; Nah 1:7). Though the translators of the Psalter and Twelve, however, never read it this way, offering instead the accusative pronoun for the phrase. This use of *bét* is probably best thought here as to “express participation in something”, cf. Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (SB 27; Rev. English ed.; Roma: Pontificio istituto biblico, 2006), §133c., perhaps indicating that the tablets were to be setup somewhere where everyone could read them. Perhaps a public square (Andersen)? It might convey the idea that one would be without excuse. Cf. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, pp. 202-203.

³⁰ The word λόγος is masc., and the choice for ῥῆμα would be slightly unusual within the Twelve (stylistically uncharacteristic). Also, recourse to an idea of grammatical value derived from the SL phrase הלחות does not seem tenable, contra David Cleaver-Bartholomew, “An Analysis of the Old Greek Version of Habakkuk,” (PhD diss., The Claremont Graduate University, 1998), pp. 166–67, p. 175.

how do they relate to the vision of Ambakoum? Andersen thinks that these are the five woe oracles that make up the bulk of chapter two (vv. 6–20).³¹ In them the Lord denounces the Chaldean invader and those of Judah who colluded with them. The woes increase in intensity, culminating in a famous denunciation of the utter foolishness of idolatry. But Möller’s suggestion is more compelling.³² The content of the vision is 1:5–11 (and also vv. 13–17): the announcement and description of the Chaldean invasion. This is the unbelievable thing the Lord is doing. The reintroduction of this proclamation is also a marker for an eschatological context, also in part because the Chaldean invader has already just been described in this way (1:7, 9).³³ The coming Chaldean is awful and terrifying, and has the Lord’s warrant to destroy (Amb 1:7).³⁴ The Chaldean is

³¹ Andersen is also working from the Hebrew text, cf. n. 27. Also, Watson thinks that the vision is “the book [of Habakkuk] in its entirety”, cf. Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), pp. 142–43.

³² Möller’s general conclusion on this very subj. for MT, by analogy, corresponds to the question of the content of the vision in the Septuagint. The material from vv. 5–11, different from MT (to the scoffers and impious), also bears witness against the activities described in the coming woe oracles. The material from chapter three is a response to the situation(s) iterated in the previous chps., and therefore it is unlikely to be that hymn. However, it could include material from that chapter, especially that which corresponds to the victory of the invader, *pave* Cleaver-Bartholomew. Cf. Julie Clinefelter Möller, “The Vision in Habakkuk: Identifying Its Content in the Light of the Framework Set Forth in Hab. 1,” (PhD diss., University of Gloucestershire, 2004); Cleaver-Bartholomew, “An Analysis of the Old Greek Version of Habakkuk,” pp. 175–76.

³³ See James A. E. Mulroney, “A Stone Shall Cry Out from A Wall. Studies on the Translation Style of Old Greek Habakkuk,” (PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 2015), pp. 148–55.

³⁴ The subject throughout Amb 1:7 remains the Chaldean, and does not change to the LORD or his work. First, the immediate referent for the final pron. in v. 6, αὐτός, refers to τὸ ἔθνος. This is the Chaldean, the grammatical object raised up by the LORD in v. 5. Second, the change from pl. to sg. is normal in the prophecy of Amb, e.g. vv. 6–7, 8 and 10–11, within certain literary bounds. The logical antecedent in v. 7 is the subj. from the previous clause, irrespective of the semantic application of ἐπιφανής. The Chaldean is then the judgement of God, which is awesome and fearful, etc. There is nothing here to indicate confluence of referents,

the judgement of the Lord. It is this opening context in v. 2 that is seldom considered in studies that consider Amb 2:4 to contain a messianic reference. The eschatological context of this specific passage is *first* marked in v. 2.

While v. 3 opens with an expected coordinating conjunction, in this case διότι, conditionality is found in 3b and 4a, with additional contrast between vv. 4–5, also being coordinated by the repetition of δέ. The interjection (הנה) in Hab 4a is dropped and there emerges a kind of parallelism within OG that does not exist in MT:³⁵

§	Amb 2:3-5bB	Hab 2:3-5bB	§
3aA	διότι ἔτι ὄρασις εἰς καιρὸν	בְּ עוֹד חֲזוֹן לְמוֹעֵד	3aA
3aB	καὶ ἀνατελεῖ εἰς πέρας	וּיִפַּח לֶקֶץ	3aB
3aC	καὶ οὐκ εἰς κενόν	וְלֹא יִכּוֹב	3aC
3bA	ἐὰν ὑστερήσῃ	אִם יִתְמַהֲמָה	3bA
3bAα	ὑπόμεινον αὐτόν	חִכָּה לוֹ	3bAα
3bB	ὅτι ἐρχόμενος ἤξει	בְּ בֵּא יֵבֵא	3bB
3bC	καὶ οὐ μὴ χρονίση	לֹא יֵאָחַר	3bC
4aA	ἐὰν ὑποστείληται	הֲנֵה עֲפֹלָה	4aA
4aB	οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ	לֹא יִשְׂרָה נַפְשׁוֹ בּוֹ	4aB
4bA	ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται	וְצַדִּיק בְּאִמּוֹנָתוֹ	4bA

contra Cleaver-Bartholomew. Moreover, the Chaldean will render his own kind (τὸ κρίμα αὐτοῦ) of judgement, which will be measured out with a divine proclamation proceeding from him. The use of λήμμα in this context is unsettling as divine warrant is given to the gentile nation to sweep into the Land and render judgement. Then, after an extended metaphorical description in v. 8, verse nine introduces another eschatological reference through reference to the destruction of the impious by use of the keyword συντέλεια. Cf. Cleaver-Bartholomew, “An Analysis of the Old Greek Version of Habakkuk,” pp. 131, 136.

³⁵ A similar observation is noted by Harl, et al, but is segmented and not comprehensive, disjoining the subjects between vv. 3–4 and 4–5, cf. Harl et al., eds., *Les Douze Prophètes*, pp. 275–76.

		יחיה	
5aA	ὁ δὲ κατοικνωμένος καὶ καταφρονητῆς ἀνὴρ ἀλάζων	ואף בני היין בוגד	5aA
		גבר יהיר	5aAα
5aB	οὐδὲν μὴ περάνη	ולא ינוה	5aB
5bA	ὅς ἐπλάτυνεν καθὼς ὁ ἄδης τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ	אשר הרחיב כשאול נפשו	5bA
5bB	καὶ οὗτος ὡς θάνατος οὐκ ἐμπιπλάμενος	והוא כמות ולא ישבע	5bB

First, like MT, the vision, ὄρασις, is the subject of the first three clauses of 3a. However, a number of scholars argue that the subject of the subsequent two clauses (3aB–C), and also of the first conditional sentence (3bA), is *καιρός*.³⁶ This is because the masculine pronoun in 3b, αὐτόν, cannot grammatically refer to the vision, and also what appears to be reticence to allow introduction of a new implied subject in the protasis of 3b. Therefore:

[καιρός] ἀνατελεῖ εἰς πέρας
καὶ [καιρός] οὐκ εἰς κενόν
ἐὰν [καιρός] ὑστερήσῃ
ὑπόμενον αὐτόν
ὅτι ἐρχόμενος ἦξει καὶ οὐ μὴ χρονίση...

This resolves the apparent incongruence. But I argue that the pronoun refers to the implied subject of the first protasis. This is disambiguated as the text is read, being grasped when the text is read as a whole. This can be understood in two ways. First, the subject must logically correspond to that which it is contrasted across the passage. Because 3b is logically connected to 4a–b through contrastive emphases, marked by δέ, the subject from 3b should have the same *kind* of qualities of that to which it is con-

³⁶ Strobel sees the key semantics here indicating an “eschatologischen Klang”, and that “Das umsomehr als die Wendungen εἰς καιρόν und εἰς πέρας die ‘eschatologische Stunde’ bezeichnen.” See Strobel, *Untersuchungen, Verzögerungsproblem*, p. 48.

trusted in 4b, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος. Clearly *someone* is in view not *something*.³⁷ From v. 3b to 5a, a certain kind of person is juxtaposed to another.

Second, there is a question of linguistics (grammar). As observed in the above chart, conditionality in v. 4a does not exist in MT. Instead we have two paradigmatic sentences in OG. In each case the protasis has to be resolved.³⁸ The choices here must be understood as being made with a high degree of intentionality. The translator had to choose ἐάν over εἰ, and in so doing, had to be aware (even unconsciously) that he would then be introducing the subjunctive mood, which will then limit and affect his choices for the apodosis. His choice of ἐάν in v. 4a instead of a Greek interjection, e.g. ὦ or οὐαί, shows a recurrent degree of intentionality, and also some Aramaic interference.³⁹ And reaching forward to v. 5a where כִּי אֵל is translated by δέ, we are given the broad overarching alternate structure for OG. The entire passage is styled through the use of conditionality and contrastive emphases. It is like MT in that two kinds of people are juxtaposed, but it is more emphatic via mood and choice of literary particles. One might say that a teaching of the Hebrew is drawn out and composed into Greek.

On this level of analysis there is no hint of messianism, simply a future vision and a coming individual. The semantic content marks the eschatological content for the reader, which still does not give us a future hope of a messiah.

In MT the interjection of v. 4 is clearly felt: Behold! The sense of the passage is interruptive: look for someone in light of what has been said about this visionary person. In the first clause of Hab 2:4 the same subject is read for both verbals. The subject is the soul of an individual, נַפְשׁוֹ, it is puffed up and not upright, which is contrasted to an individual that will live by his faith—faithfulness to the covenant. The normal sense of the preposition *bêt* is to be read here as the individual's soul in him.⁴⁰ In light of the previous verse, we are looking for an individual, though presently unnamed, who will live by his faith. The *wāw* of v. 4b is contrastive, based upon

³⁷ Harl, et al., also thinks that the subjects of the initial verbals of vv. 3–4 “suggests a parallelism”, see Harl et al., eds., *Les Douze Prophètes*, p. 275.

³⁸ See Dietrich-Alex Koch, “Der Text von Hab 2:4b in der Septuaginta und im Neuen Testament,” *ZNW* 76/1 (1985): p. 73.

³⁹ See n. 43.

⁴⁰ Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, §133c.

the reading of the passage. The righteous individual is being compared to one who is puffed up and proud.

But as explained, Amb 2:4 is a paradigmatic verse, another conditional sentence. So, having introduced the eschatological notion of divine judgement in v. 2, which is understood through the coming of an end-time vision (εἰς πέρας / לקץ),⁴¹ OG indicates that this will also be marked by the arrival of an individual. Now the immediate mental link is to a person who lives by faith—everyone is thinking of Amb 2:4b—but the text does not make that point yet. The parallel sentence flags up the possibility that this person may incur the displeasure of the Lord. The first clause of v. 4 is sufficiently different from MT, it reads:

MT	הנה עפלה לא ישרה נפשו בו
OG	ἐὰν ὑποστείληται οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ
En	If he recoils [draws back], my soul is not be pleased with him.

Scholars have argued that the first clause of 4a was simply read errantly,⁴² the rare verbal עפל was read perhaps אלה,⁴³ but it seems hard to imagine that the translator also misunderstood the follow-

⁴¹ Cf. Joachim Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* (WUNT 76; eds. Martin Hengel and Otfried Hofius; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995), n. 266; Harl et al., eds., *Les Douze Prophètes*, p. 274.

⁴² Cf. Koch, “Der Text von Hab 2:4b,” p. 73; William H. Brownlee, “The Placarded Revelation of Habakkuk,” *JBL* 82/83 (1963): p. 323.

⁴³ See Anthony Gelston, ed. *BHQ* (BHQ 13; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2010), p. 118; Brownlee, “The Placarded Revelation of Habakkuk,” p. 323. I take the position that the translator likely read הנה through his Aramaic lens and perhaps added in his mind the final ה to the front of the first verbal thus making a *hop'al* (הוּ הַעֲפִלָּה), which is a suggestion from Gelston (though he does not mention Aramaic). This is then another example of Aramaic interference in the translation that suited a certain interpretation of the text.

I also wonder if the use in Num 14:44 would have been a help to the translator. The use of βιάζομαι there may likewise be interpretative, so that the idea of forcefulness is adapted to what it means in this context of Amb 2:2–4. Instead of being forceful, the wrong virtue is to recoil or draw back from the words of the covenant (*Deut*).

ing finite verb **יִשַׁר**.⁴⁴ The usual claim that the translator (perhaps the same person who had copied the Hebrew scroll) misread a *nāw* for a *yōd* also persists. The subject of the second OG clause is changed to the LORD's soul (ἡ ψυχὴ μου). The following prepositional phrase in 4b is also altered in a similar way, the righteous will live *by the LORD's faith* (ἐκ πίστεώς μου).⁴⁵ Emphasis is clearly placed on the LORD. This change cannot help but be understood as having theological denotations.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ It is found many times throughout the HB. Although **יִשַׁר** is used a small number of times in the MP (Hos 14:10; Mic 2:7; 3:9; 7:2, 4; Hab 2:4), it does, however, undergo some interpretative changes, i.e. Mic 7:2, 4. Moreover, Amb 2.4a is the only instance in the Twelve where it is translated by εὐδοκέω. Also, the interpretative choice for the latter was perhaps derived from LXX, where in Num 23:27 it is translated with the similar sense from ἀρέσκω. In both respects the interpretation is centred on how the upright please God by their life.

⁴⁵ Both pronominal suffixes are read in the third per. in 8HevXIIgr. But the first line is read as a nominal clause, with the initial verb (עפל) read as a metaphorical substantive (σκοτία), hence, ἰδοὺ σκοτία οὐκ εὐθεῖα ἢ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ [ἐν αὐτῷ]. Brownlee understands the sense for עפל II of “be covered, obscured, swoon”, to be the thought behind the change in the Palestinian recension. This means that the original translator read it through עפל I, and the recensor the second. In each respect a lack of faith is attributed to the individual, hence failure to persevere, or darkness clouding one's inner person. This interpretative point likely lies at the root of the sentence wide changes. It may be, in conjunction, that the translator intentionally read the consonants in a way that *helped* him to structure the meaning of the verse. Cf. Beate Ego et al., eds., *BQ* (vol. 3B; Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 132; Emanuel Tov, Robert A. Kraft, and P. J. Parsons, *DJD* 8 (8; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 52; William H. Brownlee, *The Text of Habakkuk* (JBL 11; Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, 1959), p. 43; DCH, “עפל”.

⁴⁶ Tg. may also point to an interpretative understanding of the passage in general, which interprets the first two clauses as, **הא רשיעיא בלביהון לית כל אלין** (*Behold, the wicked think in their hearts that these things are not so*). In light of all this evidence, every version of this text has undergone some significant change with the first two clauses of v. 4. Furthermore, the translator has no trouble translating **נפשו** in the following sentence (v. 5), τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ – what would have been a catastrophic mistake in misreading the *nāw* with the LORD as speaker (ὅς ἐπλάτυνεν καθὼς ὁ ἄδης). Cf. Kevin J. Cathcart and R. P. Gordon, eds., *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*

Ambakoum 2:4a resolves the protasis in the same line so that OG retains the contrast, $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$, as MT does between it and 4b. The initial line, however, indicates that the person who lives by faith demonstrates that he is not the person who withdraws, he obtains the delight of the Lord. With the use of this third class conditional structure the possibility of failure is slight.⁴⁷ It relates to the state of human affairs and does not mean that the individual will fail, but quite simply—as things are in life—one will have to see how it plays out.

This righteous individual is then contrasted to another kind of person, the kind that recoils and does not walk by faith. This is marked by the particle $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$, which translates the phrase כִּי הָא .⁴⁸ This

(eds. Kevin J. Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara; *The Aramaic Bible 14*; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), pp. 150–51.

⁴⁷ This is marked in the protasis by $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$ plus a verb in the subjunctive mood (any tense), which is the main grammatical feature, and also lack of $\acute{\alpha}\nu$ in the apodosis, with the verbal in any mood and tense. (Also some grammarians have argued that because the mood is the main grammatical marker one can also see this same semantic use with the syntax $\epsilon\grave{\iota}$ + subj., which was not uncommon in Homeric and Classical Greek, cf. Porter.) It is a fairly common Hellenistic literary device. Although this class can suggest a condition with a likelihood of occurrence, it does in fact “encompasses a broad range of potentialities in Koine Greek”, which may include a “mere hypothetical situation or one that will probably not be fulfilled” (Wallace). Boyer (referenced in Porter) statistically determined that in the majority of instances such probability is unlikely to be fulfilled. Cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, pp. 696–97; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar* (4th rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), p. 689; Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the NT* (1; ed. D. A. Carson; New York; Bern: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 307–11.

⁴⁸ The coordination of verse five by כִּי הָא can suggest the opening of new material, but both Andersen and Haak think not. As Andersen notes, “The initial ‘and’ shows that v5 continues something, but it need not be coordinated with the immediately preceding clause” (Andersen). The phrase is not entirely uncommon, sometimes with the *wāw*, sometimes without. It appears that the function of this use, along with כִּי , may double up as serving to both line “up the situation of its clause with that of the previous clause,” (Waltke & O’Connor) and emphasise the situation, the latter restricted more to the additional presence of כִּי . It is “asseverative”, (Andersen) connecting, “indeed”, (Andersen; Haak) or “furthermore”, (Smith) to the preceding material by noting more information. Cf. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, p. 217; Haak, *Habakkuk*, p. 59; Bruce K. Waltke and Mi-

contrast does not clearly exist in the ST.⁴⁹ In OG, the person who recoils is like one deceived by wine, who will never complete anything. He will come to no good end; he is like Sheol, never satisfied. The contrast is stark.⁵⁰

The coming, unnamed individual of Amb 2:3 arrives as part of the vision of judgement of Amb 2:2, which was first announced in Amb 1:5. This is a reference to the Chaldean, God's instrument of judgement.⁵¹ It has been marked as an eschatological event in Amb 1:7 and 9, having the strength and fear of the Lord—he raised them up for this purpose. The still-future interpretation of OG implies more than just the historical scenario that resulted in the Babylonian incursion and exile. Literarily speaking, *he who is coming* is, quite simply, the future eschatological Chaldean (often referred to in the singular, see n. 34)—not the historical one.⁵² The association of judgement remains, but it is heightened or elevated to a yet future time when another kind (final) of judgement is made. The ref-

chael Patrick O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §39.3.4d; Ralph L. Smith, *Mic-Mal* (WBC eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker; vol. 32; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1984), p. 105.

⁴⁹ See n. 48.

⁵⁰ Harl, et al., sees this final contrast as in relation to the Chaldean, reaching back to the previous chapter, although not making all the linguistic connections. Quite simply, the final subject of 2:4b is only contrasted to 2:5a. Cf. Harl et al., eds., *Les Douze Prophètes*, p. 276.

⁵¹ Perhaps because Harl, et al., does not make a discourse analysis of the text, the appearance of the Chaldean is first mentioned as the character of 2:5. But as shown here, the whole pericope indicates a development starting earlier in the text, though the eschatological use of words is noted for 2:3: “une visée eschatologique”. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 274–76.

⁵² This is precisely where Strobel is mistaken. He reads this through a particular NT lens, thinking that the coming reference is limited to three other possibilities. He explains: “Drei Möglichkeiten bieten sich zur Erklärung an: Der kommende Äon im engeren Sinn..., der erhoffte Messias, oder die letzte große Selbstoffenbarung Gottes.” He argues against the first option, but it is a straw man argument. The third option has real promise if placed within the context of Habakkuk's vision(s) of judgement, which is the literary context. This final *Selbstoffenbarung* saw God as both judge and judged, which thematically agrees in one sense with the context of Habakkuk, rather than “Hab 2,3 LXX erweist sich demnach als das älteste Zeugnis.” Cf. Strobel, *Untersuchungen, Verzögerungsproblem*, pp. 53–54, 56.

erence in 2:4b could either refer to this future judge, which would make sense when this motif is rightly grasped (Isa 45:1, 13 is a corollary),⁵³ or it could function as an interlude (a “parenthesis”) to the whole passage (vv. 2–5), which Watson, working from MT, nicely suggests.⁵⁴ The veracity of the judge is set on edge by the introduction of conditionality in Amb 2:4a.

Now, none of this indicates the coming of a messiah, someone sent or anointed of God, to restore the Davidic kingdom, or reinstitute the temple system, etc. The reference to Ambakoum stands out as quite possibly the oddest so-called messianic reference. It has no clear royal, prophetic or priestly dimension to it. Manson’s bold assertion that the text is “through and through Messianic”⁵⁵ rings hollow against the evidence. Dodd might have felt this lack of textual clarity, stopping short of making the claim that the individual of 2:4b refers to the messiah.⁵⁶ The only indication is that it refers to someone who “will come”,⁵⁷ which is contextually linked to the coming of a vision that will reach its goal.⁵⁸ This person is an end-time judge. Verse four could either indicate that the judge will walk by faith, and therefore his judgements are the result of the Lord’s administration (my faith), or it could indicate that the end-time period will be marked by him who does not recoil but lives by faith. The subtlety of a new subject in v. 3 could be true also of v. 4.

Having looked at Amb 2:2–5, let’s now examine whether this contextual, literary and linguistic reading of the historical artefact of

⁵³ In the end the historical Chaldean withdrew and is found wanting throughout the woe oracles, of which he is indeed a wine bibber, Amb 2:5. In the end he trusted in his gods and not the Lord who raised him up (2:18–19, cf. 1:11). It is the truly righteous one who will live by the faith of the Lord.

⁵⁴ Because of the structure of the passage in OG Watson’s point is harder to prove apart from MT, Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, p. 152.

⁵⁵ Manson, “Argument from Prophecy,” p. 134.

⁵⁶ Dodd, cf. Hanson and Hays However, cf. Hays, reference to Isaiah, which seems very close to Ziegler’s point.

⁵⁷ Also, simply because Hab 2:3 refers to someone who “will come” does not mean it is messianic, as Gathercole and Bird note with respect to the “have come” statements of Jesus, cf. Bird, *Are You the One Who Is to Come?*, pp. 113–14.

⁵⁸ Strobel, *Untersuchungen, Verzögerungsproblem*, pp. 49–53; Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter*, n. 266.

OG sheds further light on its use in the NT about two centuries later. Although Amb 2:3–4 was not translated from a messianic point of view, we shall now see that the eschatological context of the passage allowed it to be interpreted messianically, especially in light of the Christ event. But—and I emphasise—the *openness* of the text (to borrow from Eco),⁵⁹ was still controlled by the basic meaning of the passage, which was rooted in its exegesis.

IV.

As stated, it seems that we know this text was translated as a messianic reference based on how it was read by later communities, which again raises the spectre of proper methodology. The interpretations that are formed in the transformational process of translation (as, for example, the translation of the Septuagint) can be quite different from those that are formed by its recipients. The later traditions of interpretation in Second Temple Judaism, which all vary,⁶⁰ and that of the NT and its recipients (e.g. the early Church Fathers) indicate that a messianic interpretation for Amb 2:4b is by and large not confirmed.⁶¹ Nor—and this is key—do these later traditions prove a messianic interpretation by the *translator* of Ambakoum. Since the translator did not introduce a messianic point, we therefore cannot say that Amb 2:3–4 refers to the messiah; we can only say that a NT author(s) interprets the text this way. On this point Lust helpfully suggests that we should, then,

⁵⁹ I got this point from Bird who links this to other passages, see Bird, *Are You the One Who Is to Come?*, p. 44. This seems very similar to the term “meaning potential” from pragmatics (linguistics).

⁶⁰ Cf. n. 7; Seifrid, “Romans,” pp. 609–10; Thierry Legrand, “« Son interprétation concerne tous ceux qui pratiquent la Torah... » Relecture et interprétation d’Habacuc 2,4 dans le Peshet d’Habacuc (1QpHab VII–VIII) et le Targum d’Habacuc,” in « *Le juste vivra par sa foi* » (eds. Matthieu Arnold, Gilbert Dahan, and Noblesse-Rocher Annie; vol. 3; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2012), pp. 11–40.

⁶¹ On the Church Fathers, see Roy A. Harrisville III, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: Witness of the Fathers,” *NovT* 36/3 (1994): pp. 233–41; Martine Dulaey, “Habacuc 2, 1-4 dans les premiers siècle du christianisme,” in « *Le juste vivra par sa foi* » (eds. Matthieu Arnold, Gilbert Dahan, and Noblesse-Rocher Annie; vol. 3; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2012), pp. 41–73. And also Harl et al., eds., *Les Douze Prophètes*, pp. 274–76.

consider these things (which exist for other parts of the Septuagint, e.g. Num 24:7) as christological—interpretations in light of Christ.

The thrust of this article is, therefore, that Paul would have been aware of the eschatological character of his ST. His reading of Amb 2:4 would have been within the context of Amb 2:2–5. He would have seen the parallelism of 2:3 with 2:4,⁶² so that the vision is connected to “he who is coming”, and the one that lives by faith is in turn connected to him who is coming, viz. in response he must persevere, walk by faith. The NT authors’ interpretative adaptations of Amb 2:2–5 appear sensitive to the structure of OG and the eschatologically charged context.⁶³ The vision in which the coming one will come is of the final end-time judgement—something seldom considered within the OG literary context. The text looks forward to the final age, at least that’s how Paul and the author of Hebrews understood it *ex eventu* of the first coming.

It is because of this that the NT authors saw it as open to a messianic interpretation in light of Christ’s appearance. A messianic NT interpretation is, therefore, not unwarranted. The NT authors worked within a post-resurrection eschatological framework; Christ was understood to have mediated God’s judgement through his suffering on the Cross. This act of mercy meant that God’s people were entirely rescued from holy, divine wrath. So from within this general framework, the NT authors considered the text of Ambakoum that spoke of a vision of end-time judgement that would arrive with its judge. This eschatological Chaldean is sent by God to judge his people. In this sense Jesus takes on the mantle of the Chaldean, God’s judge, but controverts the point by taking on the judgement himself. The text was open to such a reading, but only after Jesus fulfilled the various facets of his ministry, both past and present. In another way, this is why pre-Christian interpretations do not follow the line of NT thinking, which harkens to the point made earlier on method.

The author of Hebrews picks up on this theme of judgement. Heb 10:30–39 indicates that the Lord will judge his people. The

⁶² Cf. n. 37.

⁶³ For the purposes of this study I am referring to the Apostle Paul and the author of Hebrews when I say, NT authors. This is a shorthand phrase, and I do not mean that they share the same theology on all things, but in this case there is some overlap in the use of the Ambakoum reference.

author offers a stern warning to those who drift away: It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Confidence is commended in light of the temporariness of present afflictions. A reward awaits those who press on. In verse thirty-seven the author seems to have “conflated”⁶⁴ the Ambakoum text as, ἔτι γὰρ μικρόν ὄσον ὄσον (see chart below).⁶⁵ What this probably means is that the entire section of Amb 2:3–3bAα amounts to this phrase. There is no need to repeat the conditionality of 3bA, Jesus has already come. The time of the vision has been revealed, and the identity of the coming individual has been made known. The author then does something unexpected with the text; a future judgement is *still* yet to come, being accompanied, once more by the same person who appeared in the time of the vision. This could not be any more eschatological! Jesus has come and will come again to render judgement.⁶⁶ This is further adduced by the definite article of the verbal adjective, ὁ ἐρχόμενος in v. 37.⁶⁷ The citation of Amb 2:4 is inverted so that it made sense in context:⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Joseph A. Fitzmyer S.J., “Habakkuk 2:3–4 and the New Testament,” in *De la Torah au Messie* (eds. M. Carrez and J. Doré; Paris: Desclée, 1981), p. 453.

⁶⁵ Numerous references within Daniel make use of ἔτι γὰρ in the context of a coming eschatological vision. The use of μικρόν ὄσον ὄσον may have been drawn from Isa 26:20 for similar reasons; Fitzmyer thinks that “the author of Hebrews has conflated the verses of Habakkuk with a phrase from Is 26,20 LXX”. Cf. *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ The event of the coming one is, however, once more set again in the future, but based upon the accomplished work of Christ’s Cross (Heb 10:1–22). The author obviously has identified the Messiah with Jesus of Nazareth, for “we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10). Yet at the same time he is coming again, and this is still part of the same vision of final judgement. This already/non-yet paradigm means that the believer is to have confidence in the finished work of Christ, where the punishment for the sins of worshippers was abolished, and also a fearful confidence to persevere in light of the future coming judgement mediated through Christ as sovereign.

⁶⁷ Cf. n. 4.

⁶⁸ I take a different approach to Manson who over-reads the text as being messianic, cf. Manson, “Argument from Prophecy,” pp. 133–35.

§	Amb 2:3–5bB	Heb 10:37–38	§
3aA	διότι ἔτι ὄρασις εἰς καιρὸν	ἔτι γὰρ μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον	37aA
3aB	καὶ ἀνατελεῖ εἰς πέρας		
3aC	καὶ οὐκ εἰς κενόν		
3bA	ἐὰν ὑστερήσῃ		
3bAα	ὑπόμεινον αὐτόν		
3bB	ὅτι ἐρχόμενος ἤξει	ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἤξει	37aB
3bC	καὶ οὐ μὴ χρονίση	καὶ οὐ χρονίσει	37aC
4aA	ἐὰν ὑποστείληται	ὁ δὲ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται	38aA
4aB	οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ	καὶ ἐὰν ὑποστείληται	38bA
4bA	ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται	οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ	38bB

Dogniez has pointed out that this inversion was most likely to avert any consideration that Jesus would have even possibly displeased God.⁶⁹ But the text of Amb 2:4 is applied not to Jesus, the person identified in the vision, but to a newly introduced subject: the believer. And it is only this new subject that has any grammatical conditionality associated with the practical outworking of his life.⁷⁰ The contrast from Amb 2:4 is removed. Now the contrast is between the future prospect of the Lord's return in judgement and how one lives in light of this. A christological interpretation of the eschatology of Ambakoum is here creatively handled.

With respect to Paul's use of Ambakoum, the point is not much different. The eschatological context of Paul's experience with the risen Christ meant a re-thinking (re-reading) of OT texts, a matter of searching the scriptures to understand wherein the Christ is.⁷¹ As Amb 2:3–4 did not originally make a messianic claim there is no

⁶⁹ Cf. Harl et al., eds., *Les Douze Prophètes*, p. 275.

⁷⁰ Hanson thinks that Jesus's test in Gethsemane is the fulfilment of this part of the text, hence Jesus obtains the pleasure of the Lord. There are numerous problems with this, most notably the Father already pronounced his pleasure with Jesus at his baptism (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22), and on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt 17:5; 2 Pet 1:17). Cf. Hanson, *Paul's Technique and Theology*, p. 45.

⁷¹ As Strobel explains, "Das messianische Zeitalter ist angebrochen und von hierher stehen alle Begriffe unseres Textes in einem neuen Licht", see p. 177

reason to think that the connection between 2:3 and 2:4b should be for Paul a messianic one. There is clear evidence here that one should read Hab 2:4 in reference to the believer or worshipper.

Both the Apostle Paul and the author of Hebrews have referenced Amb 2:4 within the context of end-time divine judgement, seeing the fulfilment of the prophecy in the kind of person that shall mark the final age. The idea that Jesus has met the lawful demands of holy justice is implied in the core thesis: the just shall live by faith and not by works of the law. The text of Amb 2:4 comes alive in the post-resurrection hermeneutic employed by the Apostle and author of Hebrews. It is the eschatological character of Amb 2:2–5 that gave it air under its wings in Pauline hermeneutics, for example, not because it was already considered explicitly messianic. The righteousness of God (Rom 1:17) then seems to be implicitly related to the announcement embedded in Amb 2:2–3.

In summary, it is only when *the righteous one* of Amb 2:4b is read intertextually with messianic texts, e.g. Ps 2; 110, that its integration with the larger discussion on messianism may apparently be understood: Jesus (the messiah) will shepherd his flock faithfully (ἐκ πίστεως), thus becoming a better king than David, etc. Much of this seems driven, however, by a subjective reading of Rom 1:17b on theological grounds—Amb 2:3–4 is a messianic reference *ipso facto* it refers to Jesus. But on this basis it can just as easily indicate the kind of people that would mark the eschatological era about which Ambakoum speaks. The case for messianism in Amb 2:3–4 quite simply rests upon a certain kind of NT scholarship: 1) a subjective reading of Rom 1:17b; 2) affirmation that the epithet ὁ δίκαιος refers to Jesus; which, when combined, fulfil the expectation and identity of the referent in Amb 2:3a, of a person who will come in the future.⁷²

In light of this study, it is then incorrect to use Amb 2:4b as a reference to Jesus (as fulfilment of it) in order to postulate a subjective genitive reading of Rom 1:17b. The particular character of the text's eschatology would have given the NT authors good reason for using it in the messianic context of their time. Although the text of Amb 2:2–5 became messianic, it only did so in part. Because of the transformation into Greek, the alternate target text's structure

⁷² Of course the many studies of the period do indicate that the idea of messianism and a sense of future hope existed. I am here only addressing the question of whether this was true for Ambakoum.

meant that the messiah could be adapted to v. 3 and his adherent to v. 4. My intention in this study was not to directly disprove the argument for a subjective reading of Rom 1:17b. But, in addition to the linguistic evidence for an objective genitive reading recently published by Porter and Pitts,⁷³ it seems to me that this brief discourse analysis further points away from using this text to prove such a claim. This was clearly not a messianic text, and only part of it became so.

⁷³ See Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, "πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier: Lexical, Semantic, and Syntactic Considerations in the πίστις Χριστοῦ Discussion," in *Faith of Jesus Christ* (eds. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle; Milton Keynes, Bucks.: Paternoster, 2009).