

Hebrews 1:6: Source and Significance

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Καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ in Heb 1:6 is a quotation from a Greek translation of the Hebrew text of Deut 32:43 represented by 4QDeut32. The current text of Deut 32:43 in the LXX is a conflation of two Greek translations. One of these was the translation of the 4QDeut32 text used by Hebrews. The other was a translation of a Hebrew text like the MT. Since there are more differences between the two Greek translations than between the underlying Hebrew texts, it is likely that conflation occurred after translation into Greek. The original translation of the 4QDeut32 text read οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ in Deut 32:43b rather than υἱοὶ θεοῦ. This translation is essential to the argument of Hebrews and is represented in our LXX by the Odes 2 version of Deut 32:43. Οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ is more in line with the way the LXX translates the underlying Hebrew אֱלֹהִים elsewhere. It makes much more sense as a translation of אֱלֹהִים within the context of the Hebrew text represented by 4QDeut32. The writer of Hebrews was aware of the context of Deut 32:43 in his discussion of the Son, the sons, and the angels in Heb 1:4-14, 2:5-18, and 12:3-11.

Key Words: Heb 1:6, Deut 32:43, 4QDeut32, sons of God, angels of God, Song of Moses

HEBREWS 1:6: SOURCE

In Heb 1:6 the author of Hebrews quotes the words καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ as a biblical citation with which his readers would be familiar. The closest parallel to this quotation in the MT is Ps 97:7, "all gods bow down before him" (RSV), which in the LXX reads, προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ, πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ (Ps 96:7 LXX). Two factors, however, demonstrate that the LXX of Deut 32:43b, a line that does not appear in the MT and is thus absent from the majority of translations, is the most likely source of this quotation:¹

1. William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8: Commentary on Hebrews* (ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker; WBC; Dallas: Word, 1991) 28; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Commentary on Hebrew* (ed. I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque; The New International Greek Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993) 119.

the author of Hebrews uses the third person plural of Deuteronomy rather than the second of the psalm; he has also reproduced the initial καί of the quotation. Since this καί is superfluous in the context of Hebrews, its presence would make no sense if the writer were adapting Ps 97:7 (96:7 LXX).²

Deut 32:43b comes from The Song of Moses, found in Deut 32:1-43. This Song occurs twice in the LXX: It appears in its normal place in the book of Deuteronomy; it appears again as the second Ode attached to the book of Psalms. This second Ode begins Ὁιδὴ Μωυσέως ἐν τῷ Δευτερονομίῳ. There are very few differences in the Greek wording of Deut 32:1-43 and Ode 2:1-43, and the versification is identical. Thus both bear witness to the same translation of the same underlying Hebrew text. The reappearance of this passage as the second Ode probably reflects its use in the liturgy of Temple, synagogue, and Church.³

One of the few differences between these two witnesses to the Song of Moses occurs in Deut 32:43b. The text in Deuteronomy reads, καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ, but in Ode 2 it reads, καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ. The writer of Hebrews omits the article οἱ but otherwise quotes the text in this latter form.⁴ It has been proposed that οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ may have been substituted for υἱοὶ θεοῦ under the influence of Ps 97:7 (LXX 96:7)⁵ or even that the whole of Deut 32:43b was inserted into the Hebrew text before translation under the influence of this psalm.⁶ Our argument below will suggest that neither of these hypotheses is the best explanation of the data at hand. In any case, the Greek text used by the author of Hebrews already read (οἱ) ἄγγελοι θεοῦ. This text is not only represented to us by the Odes, it was also known to others in the first century (Justin Dialogue 130),⁷ and the force of the author's argument depends both on this reading and on his hearers recognizing the text as scripture.

2. Herbert Braun, *An die Hebräer* (HNT 14; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984) 37; D. Eduard Rignbach, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (ed. Theodor Zahn; Kommentar zum Neuen Testament; Leipzig: Werner Scholl, 1922) 20. Pace Benetreau, who seems to think that Ps 97:7 (LXX 96:7) is the primary text, although he admits that Deut 32:43 has influenced the form and word order. Samuel Benetreau, *L'épître aux Hébreux* (Commentaire Évangélique de la Bible 1; Vaux-sur-seine: Édifac, 1989) 80-81.

3. Lane, *Hebrews* 1-8, 28.

4. *Ibid.*

5. See Hans-Friedrich Weiss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) 161.

6. Rignbach, *Hebräer*, 20; Henry Barclay Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (rev. Richard Rusden Ottley; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914) 243. Compare Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949) 50.

7. See C. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, vol. 2 (2d ed.; Paris: Gabalda, 1953) 18; Lane, *Hebrews* 1-8, 28.

Before going further in our discussion it is important to note one more difference between the Deuteronomic and Odes versions of Deut 32:43. While the Deuteronomic version of 43b reads υἱοὶ θεοῦ, in the parallel line 43d it reads ἄγγελοι θεοῦ; on the other hand, while the Odes version of 43b reads οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ, line 43d reads υἱοὶ θεοῦ.

Qumran Cave 4 has expanded the data available for the study of this text. 4QDeut32 provides a Hebrew text of Deut 32:43 that includes a line equivalent to the LXX of Deut 32:43b and that differs from the MT in other ways. The NRSV has followed this text as the most primitive.⁸

This study will give evidence that the writer to the Hebrews used a Greek text that was a translation of the Hebrew text found in 4QDeut32.⁹ Furthermore, it will be argued that οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ was the original and most accurate translation of this text and that the author had the context of this verse in mind when he quoted it. We will suggest ways in which his understanding of Deut 32:43 within its context might affect other issues in the interpretation of Heb 1:6.

Table 1 compares the various witnesses to the text of Deut 32:43. The LXX text is in the first column. The second column is Brenton's translation of the LXX. The third column is Deut 32:43 as it appears in 4QDeut32, accompanied by the NRSV translation.¹⁰ The fourth column is Deut 32:43 in the MT with the NASB translation. The lines of the LXX have been lettered (a) through (i). The lines of both Hebrew texts have been given letters to show with which of the lines of the LXX they correspond.

Deuteronomy 32:43: The LXX and 4QDeut32 Compared

As can be seen by studying Table 1, the LXX text is much fuller than the MT and diverges from it at many points. On the other hand, the LXX of v. 43abeghi is clearly a translation of the Hebrew represented by 4QDeut32. At every point of difference these lines agree with 4QDeut32 against the MT.

Let us note the ways in which the LXX of v. 43abeghi agrees with 4QDeut32 and differs from the MT. The οὐρανοί of line (a) is equivalent to אַרְבַּע, found in 4QDeut32, not to the אַרְבַּע, in the (rst line of the MT [line (c)]. ἅμα αὐτῶ at the end of line (a) is equivalent to אַחַד, the

8. For evidence in support of the primitiveness of the text represented by 4QDeut32, see Arie van der Kooij, "The Ending of the Song of Moses: On the Pre-Masoretic Version of Deut 32:43," in *Studies in Deuteronomy: In Honour of C. J. Labuschagne on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (ed. F. Garcia Martinez et al.; VTSup 53; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 93-100.

9. Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 119.

10. For the text of 4QDeut32, see Patrick W. Skehan, "A Fragment of the 'Song of Moses' (Deut 32) from Qumran," *BASOR* 136 (December 1954) 12-15.

TABLE 1. Deuteronomy 32:43

<i>LXX</i>	<i>Translation / Brenton</i>	<i>4QDeut32/NRSV</i>	<i>MT/NASB</i>
(a) εὐφράνθητε, ουρανοί, ἅμα αὐτῷ	Rejoice, ye heavens, with him	(a) הרנינו שמים עמו <i>Praise, O heavens, his people</i>	(c) הרנינו גוים עמו <i>Rejoice, O nations, with His people</i>
(b) καὶ προσκυν- ησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ (Odes: οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ)	and let all the angels of God/ sons of God worship him (<i>Brenton reads "angels of God" in this line</i>)	(b) והשתוו לו כל אלהים <i>worship him, all you gods (Heb. lacks you)</i>	(d) ????????
(c) εὐφάνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ	rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people		
(d) καὶ ἐνισχ- υσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ (Odes: υἱοὶ θεοῦ)	and let all the angels of God / sons of God strengthen themselves in him (<i>Brenton reads "sons of God" in this line</i>)		
(e) ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται	for he will avenge the blood of his sons	(e) כי דם בניו יקום <i>For He will avenge the blood of His children</i>	(e/f) בִּי דַם־עֲבָדָיו יִקּוּם <i>For He will avenge the blood of His servants</i>
(f) καὶ ἐκδικήσει	and he will render vengeance	(g) ונקם ישיב לצריו <i>and take vengeance on His adversaries</i>	(g) ונקם ישיב לצריו <i>And will render vengeance on His adversaries</i>
(g) καὶ ἀνταποδώσει δίκην τοῖς ἐχθροῖς	and recompense justice to his enemies		
(h) καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἀνταποδώσει	and will reward them that hate him	(h) ולמשנאיו ישלם <i>(and) he will repay those who hate him (NRSV omits and)</i>	(??)
(i) καὶ ἐκκαθαριεῖ κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.	and the Lord shall purge the land of his people.	(i) ויכפר אדמת עמו <i>and cleanse the land for his people.</i>	(i) וכפר אדמתו עמו <i>And will atone for His land and His people.</i>

preposition ׀ע, "with," followed by the third singular pronominal suffix ׀, "him," meaning "with him." However, ׀עמ is the pointing of the MT [line (c)]--the noun, ׀ע, "people," followed by the third person singular pronominal suffix ׀ "his," meaning "his people." The text of 4QDeut32 has the same consonants but is, of course, unpointed.

Line (b) of the LXX is clearly a translation of the text represented by the second line of 4QDeut32. This is the line quoted in Heb 1:6, the line for which the MT has no equivalent. προσκυνέω is a common LXX translation for the *Hithpael* of ׀עפפ. αὐτῶ πάντες is clearly a translation of ׀ע כל. ׀על ׀ע is represented by either the υἱὸι θεοῦ of Deuteronomy or οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ of the Odes.

Line (e) reads τῶν υἱῶν, following the ׀עני of 4QDeut32 rather than the ׀עבדני of the MT. There is no difference between 4QDeut32 and the MT in the text behind line (g). Line (h) is a translation from 4QDeut32 for which MT has no equivalent.¹¹ In line (i) τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ, "the land of His people," translates the construct? ׀עמ of 4QDeut32 followed by ׀עמו. The MT adds a third singular pronominal suffix after ׀עמ, thus reading ׀עמ ׀עמו, "His land and His people" (NASB).

In light of these facts it is possible to affirm that Deut 32:43abeghi LXX and 4QDeut32 bear witness to a textual tradition that differs from the MT. As noted above, this study will argue that the writer of Hebrews used a Greek text that followed this tradition. We will also argue that οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ was the original and contextually most accurate translation of this disputed phrase in Deut 32:43b.

Deuteronomy 32:43cdf: An Interpolation

Before going further we must consider the three remaining lines of v. 43, lines (cd) and (f). It appears that line (c) is a duplicate of line (a); and line (d) is a duplicate of line (b).¹² As we have seen, line (a) translates

11. Skehan argues that lines (g) and (h) are dittography from v. 41. If so, 4QDeut32 bears witness that the dittography occurred in Hebrew before translation into Greek. However, the word order of line (g) differs from the parallel phrase in the Hebrew of v. 41. Patrick W. Skehan, "The Structure of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy (32:1-43)," in *A Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* (ed. Duane L. Christensen; Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 3; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1993) 160 n. 10.

12. Long ago Swete suggested that line (c) was a doublet of line (a); line (d) a doublet of line (b); and line (h) a doublet of line (g). Swete, *Introduction*, 243. The relationship between (h) and (g), however, is quite different from the relationship between (a) and (c) or (b) and (d). There is considerable difference in meaning between (a) and (c) and between (b) and (d). Each pair is divided by an intervening line. (H) and (g), on the other hand, are contiguous in location and virtually identical in meaning, thus forming an example of the synonymous parallelism so typical of Hebrew poetry. Also, 4QDeut32 contains only one of each of the first two pairs but both (h) and (g) of the third.

the first line of the text in 4QDeut32, and line (b) the second line. We are arguing that lines (c) and (d) translate the same two lines from a Hebrew text that differs from 4QDeut32.¹³

Note the similarities between lines (b) and (d). If we set aside for a moment the variation between υἱὸὶ θεοῦ and (οἱ) ἄγγελοι θεοῦ, the only difference between line (b) and line (d) is that line (d) reads ἐνισχυσάτωσαν, while line (b) reads προσκυνησάτωσαν.

Lines (a) and (c) begin with the same word, εὐφράνθητε, a second person plural imperative. As noted above, the second word of line (a), οὐρανοί, translates the ׀ׁמׁשׁ, of the first line of 4QDeut32. On the other hand, the second word of line (c), ἔθνη, translates the ׀ׁגׁ of the first line of the MT. It has also been noted that the ἄμα αὐτῶ at the end of line (a) reflects a pointing of ׀ׁמׁ that differs from the MT. μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ at the end of line (c), however, appears to be influenced by the MT pointing of ׀ׁמׁ as ׀ׁמׁ, "his people." Perhaps the ׀ׁ has been doubled, first as ׀ׁ, "with," and then as ׀ׁמׁ, "his people."¹⁴

These facts suggest that line (a) is a translation of the first line of Deut 32:43 in 4QDeut32 and that line (c) is a translation of this same line in the MT. We have argued above that line (b) translates the second line of 4QDeut32. We have also shown that line (d) is a variant of line (b). There is no equivalent to line (d), however, in the MT as we now have it.¹⁵ The second line of the MT is equivalent to the third line of 4QDeut32 and to line (e) in the LXX.

Thus it appears that v. 43cd is a translation of the first two lines of this verse from a Hebrew text that differs from the text of 4QDeut32. The first line of this variant text is found in the MT, but the second line represents a Hebrew original no longer extant.¹⁶

There is one further possible trace of interpolation in the LXX text. Line (f), καὶ ἐδικήσει, has no apparent basis in either Hebrew text. It appears to be a repetition in the future tense of the present-tense verb ἐδικάται found at the end of line (e). This verb is rather awkwardly joined to what precedes and what follows by two occurrences of καί. Both 4QDeut32 and the MT have equivalents for the lines before and after line (f), lines (e) and (g). The LXX follows the 4QDeut32 form of line (e). Perhaps line (f) is a remnant of a translation from the MT form of line (e). As noted above, 4QDeut32 reads בׁנׁי and the MT בׁנׁיׁ in this line.

13. Skehan, "Structure," 160.

14. John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* (SBLSCS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 534.

15. Skehan supports the idea that a line has dropped out of the MT after the opening line of v. 43. Skehan, "Structure," 159.

16. Wevers, *Notes*, 534.

This interpolation probably occurred after these texts were translated into Greek. There is greater difference between lines (a) and (c) in Greek translation than there is between the underlying consonantal Hebrew texts represented by the 4QDeut32 and the MT. It is more likely that interpolation would occur when these two lines were clearly distinct than when they were similar. If the LXX translator had an interpolated text before him, it is difficult to see why he would translate the עֲמֹר at the end of lines (a) and (c) in such different ways.

If line (b) were the only way in which 4QDeut32 differed from the MT, it would be more likely that this line was due to the influence of Ps 97:7 (LXX 96:7), as suggested by Swete.¹⁷ Since 4QDeut32 contains another line, line (h), that is not in the MT, and since it sometimes represents a different consonantal text even where it has a line equivalent to the MT, the influence of this psalm is not as likely.

Deuteronomy 32:43b: οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ or υἱοὶ θεοῦ

The above discussion has been foundational to the investigation of whether οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ or υἱοὶ θεοῦ was the original Greek translation of Deut 32:43b. This investigation is based upon the assumption that the LXX translation was originally made from the Hebrew text represented by 4QDeut32 and by Deut 32:43abeghi LXX. Thus οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ / υἱοὶ θεοῦ is a translation of אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם. Which of these terms is the more likely translation of this word in light of the way אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם is translated elsewhere in the LXX? Which is more likely within the context of the uninterpolated text, Deut 32:43abeghi, that the translator was using?

With the possible exception of the passage under consideration, υἱοὶ θεοῦ is never used to translate אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם. Nor is οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ a usual translation for this word. In Ps 8:5¹⁸ and Ps 138:1 (LXX 137:1) אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם is translated ἄγγελοι. In Ps 97:7 (LXX 96:7) it is translated ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ. This last citation is the closest equivalent to a translation of אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם as (οἱ) ἄγγελοι θεοῦ because the αὐτοῦ refers to God and has no equivalent in the Hebrew text. This very limited evidence from LXX usage tends to support οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ as the original translation of this term.

Which of these translations would make more sense in relationship to the Hebrew original of the uninterpolated text of Deut 32:43abeghi, the text represented by 4QDeut32? The first three lines of 4QDeut32 and of this uninterpolated Greek text are given in parallel columns in table 2.

17. Swete, *Introduction*, 243. Riggenbach follows Swete. Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, 20.

18. Quoted in Heb 2:7.

TABLE 2. 4QDeut 32:43 and Deuteronomy 32:43abe (LXX)
The First Three Lines of
4QDeut 32:43

	Lines A, B, E Deut 32:43 / Odes 2:43 LXX
הַרְנִינוּ שָׁמַיִם עִמּוֹ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לוֹ כָּל אֱלֹהִים	(a) εὐφράνθητε, οὐρανοί, ἅμα αὐτῷ (b) καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ (Odes: οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ)
כִּי דַם בְּנֵי יִקּוּם	(e) ὅτε τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται

It is very unlikely that the LXX translator would identify the אֱלֹהִים of the second line of 4QDeut32:43 (LXX line b) with the בְּנֵי of the third line (LXX line e). He probably understood אֱלֹהִים as referring to supernatural beings. בְּנֵי, however, refers to human beings, for God will avenge their blood. They are probably to be identified with the עִמּוֹ, "God's people," in the last line of this verse. Since the LXX translates בְּנֵי as τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ, "His [God's] sons," it is not likely that it would have translated אֱלֹהִים as υἱοὶ θεοῦ. Thus אֱלֹהִים was probably translated οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ in contrast to בְּנֵי, translated τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ.

In summary, LXX usage favors of οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ over υἱοὶ θεοῦ as the translation of אֱלֹהִים in Deut 32:43b. The uninterpolated context of this verse also favors this translation.

The Origin of the Translation υἱοὶ θεοῦ

How, then, did the translation υἱοὶ θεοῦ arise? Perhaps it came from the translation of the Hebrew original now represented by 43d.

As demonstrated above, 43abghi translates a Hebrew text like the text of 4QDeut32. We would suggest the possibility of another Hebrew text represented by (cd) and the MT version of line (e). We have seen that (c) and (d) are an interpolation from the Greek translation of an alternate Hebrew text. Line (c) translates the first line of the MT. Line (d) takes the place of the second line of 4QDeut32, a line for which the present MT has no equivalent. Since line (c) is Masoretic, perhaps line (e) in this alternate text was also once a part of the text that became Masoretic. In that case, line (e) would read עֲבָדָיו, "His servants," instead of בְּנָיו, "His sons," and the contextual impediment for translating אֱלֹהִים as υἱοὶ θεοῦ would be removed.

The fact that the LXX never translates אֱלֹהִים as υἱοὶ θεοῦ still remains, but we do not know that the Hebrew original for line (d) read אֱלֹהִים.¹⁹ The translations (οἱ) ἄγγελοι θεοῦ and υἱοὶ θεοῦ both suggest

19. This line presents a number of difficulties. First, the Greek of this line is very awkward. The word ἐνισχυσάτωσαν is, of course, the word unique to line (d), corresponding to the προσκυνησάτωσαν of line (b). The only other place where this word is

an original **בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים**. Both of these translations allow the noun **אֱלֹהִים** to be used in its normal way as a reference to God.

בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים is translated ἄγγελοι θεοῦ in Gen 6:2a; Deut 32:8;²⁰ Job 1:6; 2:1; and simply ἄγγελοι in Job 38:7. The form **בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים** is translated οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ in the enigmatic Gen 6:2, 4. In Ps 29:1 (LXX 28:1) and 89:6 (LXX 88:7), the related term **בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים** is translated υἱοὶ θεοῦ, and in Hos 2:1 (1:10) **בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים** is translated υἱοὶ θεοῦ ζῶντος. The Aramaic **בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים** of Dan 3:25 (92) is variously translated υἱῶ θεοῦ or ἄγγελου θεοῦ. However, in Hos 2:1 (1:10) the beings referred to by this term are human—the reference is to God's people. Such a reference is also possible in the LXX version of Ps 29:1. Wis 2:18 and 5:5 use υἱὸς θεοῦ or υἱοὶ θεοῦ for righteous or holy people, without Hebrew original.

Thus **בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים** and related terms are translated by the LXX as ἄγγελοι / ἄγγελοι θεοῦ (Gen 6:2a; Deut 32:8; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; cf. Aramaic singular in Dan 3:25) or υἱοὶ θεοῦ (Ps 89:6 [LXX 88:7]; 29:1 [LXX 28:1]?; cf. Aramaic singular in Dan 3:25) when referring to supernatural beings, but also as υἱοὶ θεοῦ (Hos 1:10; Ps 29:1 [LXX 28:1]?; cf. Wis 2:28; 5:5) when referring to human beings.

Thus it would have been quite possible to translate an original **בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים** as υἱοὶ θεοῦ in Deut 32:43d. There would have been no contrast between this translation and the following line, as in the translation of 4QDeut32 above, for the following line in the MT reads **עֲבָדָיו**, "His servants," and not **בְּנָיו**, "His sons." Indeed, **עַמּוֹ** in the first line, **בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים** in the second, and **עֲבָדָיו** in the third might all have been understood as referring to God's people. We have seen that the LXX does translate the equivalent of **בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים** as υἱοὶ θεοῦ, both in reference to supernatural beings (Ps 89:6 [LXX 88:7]) and in reference to God's holy people (Hos 2:1 [1:10]). The state of the evidence will not permit a high degree of certainty in this matter, but this suggestion as to the origin of the reading υἱοὶ θεοῦ is a reasonable conjecture.

followed by αὐτῶ or an equivalent dative is Hos 10:11. In Hosea the subject of the verb is overcoming the person represented by the word in the dative. Such a meaning would not fit Deut 32:43, where God is the antecedent of αὐτῶ. This awkwardness is probably the cause of the variation in the manuscript tradition between αὐτῶ, αὐτόν, αὐτῶν, and αὐτοῦς (see Wevers, 359). Many manuscripts, including Alexandrinus, attempt to smooth the awkwardness by reading αὐτοῦς and thus making the pronoun the reflexive direct object of the verb ἐνισχυσάτωσαν.

A second problem is the difficulty of postulating an original Hebrew. The most likely Hebrew word behind ἐνισχυσάτωσαν would be the *Hithpael* of **חִזַּק**. **חִזַּק** does not fit very well, however, if we assume an original **לִ** behind αὐτῶ, as in line (b) above. The *Hithpael* of **חִזַּק** never occurs followed by the preposition **לִ**. In 1 Sam. 30:1 it does occur followed by **בִּ** with a meaning similar to the normally understood meaning of Deut 32:43d.

20. For **בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים** in Deut 32:8 instead of the MT **בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל**, see Skehan, "Structure," 159.

Why Lines C and D Were Interpolated between Lines B and E

If the above reconstruction has legitimacy, it is possible to speculate on why lines (c) and (d) of the LXX were interpolated after lines (a) and (b).

The interpolation gives a logical sequence of thought. First, the heavens are called on to rejoice with God (line a), and the angels are commanded to worship Him (line b). Then the nations are called to rejoice with God's people (line c), and His sons are told to strengthen themselves in Him (line d). The heavens and the angels precede the nations and His sons (people). The logic behind this sequence is even more convincing if the interpolator thought of the angels as the representatives of the nations.²¹ After the angels are commanded to worship in line (b), the nations they represent are enjoined to rejoice in line (c).

It is also possible to see how line (d) fits appropriately directly before line (e). According to our reconstruction, the Greek of both lines (d) and (e) refers to the "sons" of God. When conflated line (e) gives the reason for the imperative of line (d)--the sons of God are to strengthen themselves in God because He will avenge their blood.

Scribal oversight is probably responsible for the transposing of $\upsilon\iota\omicron\iota \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ to line (b) and $\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\iota \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ to line (d) in the form of the text that appears in Deuteronomy.

Thus the $\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\iota \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ of Heb 1:6 is based on but omits the article of the original reading of Deut 32:43b LXX. The change to $\upsilon\iota\omicron\iota \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ occurred after lines (c) and (d) had been interpolated into the text of Deut 32:43.

HEBREWS 1:6: SIGNIFICANCE

Our study of the source of the quotation in Heb 1:6 has laid the foundation for a consideration of the significance of this quotation in Hebrews. Was the author of Hebrews thinking of the OT context of this quotation? If so, how did it affect his thinking? How does his understanding of Deut 32:43 and its context affect other issues of interpretation in Heb 1:6?

Deuteronomy 32:43 in Its Old Testament Context and in Hebrews

Riggenbach describes the entire Song of Moses (Deut 32:1-43) as a description of God's final judgment which, after the punishment of the sins of Israel, would lead to redemption.²² The specific reference

21. Skehan argues that Deut 32:8-9 portrays the angels as the representatives of the nations. Skehan, "Structure," 158-59.

22. Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, 20.

in Deut 32:43d to God's vindication of His sons facilitates an eschatological interpretation and thereby a christological application of this passage.²³ The close identity that the writer sees between the Son and God enables him to apply the αὐτῶ of καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ to the Son.²⁴

The contrast between these "sons" who are vindicated and the angels may also have facilitated the use of Deut 32:43b in Heb 1:6. This contrast is apparent in the LXX text of Deut 32:43 as we now have it. It is much sharper, however, in the uninterpolated LXX text proposed above, Deut 32:43abeghi, the text that is a translation of 4QDeut32. In this text καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ (line b) is followed by ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται (line e) and then by καὶ ἀνταποδώσει δίκην τοῖς ἐχθροῖς (line g). The angels are to worship Him because He avenges the suffering of His sons, that is, His faithful people, and will justly punish His enemies, the unfaithful. The prominence of the Son(sons)/angels contrast in Heb 1:4-14 (cf. 2:10) and the discussion of the suffering of God's true sons in Heb 12:3-13 might suggest that the author of Hebrews was using this uninterpolated text.

The selection of OT quotations in Heb 1:5-14 exalts the Son (υἱὸς) by comparing Him with the angels (ἄγγελοι). However, Hebrews also refers to the faithful as "sons" (υἱοί) of God and "brothers" of Christ in 2:5-18. Indeed, Heb 1:14 describes the faithful as τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν, "those who are about to inherit salvation." Inheritance language is the language of sonship. In this verse those who are going to inherit salvation are compared with the angels who were to serve them.

23. Harold W Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Commentary on Hebrews* (ed. Helmut Koester; Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989) 57 n. 79.

24. The text reads, "let all the angels of God worship him" [God?] for he [God] will avenge the blood of his [God's] sons." It seems clear from Heb 1:6 that the author understood the first "him" as a reference to the Son: "let all the angels of God worship him [the Son]." Did he understand the next two pronominal references as referring to Jesus: "for he [the Son] will avenge the blood of his [the Son's] sons"? If so, we have the rather awkward idea of the Son's sons. It is true that in Heb 2:13 the Son calls the faithful His "children" (τὰ παῖδιά). Elsewhere, however, Hebrews refers to the faithful as God's "sons" (υἱοί, see 2:10; 12:3-11). Also, in Hebrews God is the One Who brings judgment (10:30, 31; 12:18-29). Thus the writer to the Hebrews probably understood the first "him" as referring to the Son and the next two as referring to God: "let all the angels of God worship him [the Son] for he [God] will avenge the blood of his [God's] sons." Ellingworth says: "the reference to God in the LXX is less than explicit . . . and rapid changes of person in the passage may have been understood by the author of Hebrews, not as a peculiarity of Hebrew poetic style, but as implying a dialogue of divine persons in which the Father presents the Son to the angels, to be worshipped by them." Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 120.

As we have noted, in Deut 32:43 God's "sons" have been suffering. In Heb 12:3-11 the writer addresses his faithful hearers as God's sons. He tells them that the suffering they have experienced for being faithful shows that they are true sons of God.²⁵

Furthermore, Deut 32:43e says that God will "avenge" (ἐκδικᾶται) His sons and 43g that He will "recompense justice to his enemies" (ἀνταποδώσει δίκην τοῖς ἐχθροῖς). Within the context of Deut 32:1-43, God's enemies are those of His people who are unfaithful and idolatrous. In Heb 10:30 the writer quotes Deut 32:35, 36 to describe God's judgment on the unfaithful: ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω²⁶ . . . κρινεῖ κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ. In both Deuteronomy and Hebrews this judgment is on the people of God who turn away in unfaithfulness.

Thus, Deut 32:43 and its context contrast the angels and God's sons and describe both the suffering of God's sons and God's judgment on those of his people who are unfaithful. It would appear that the writer to the Hebrews was very aware of the context of Deut 32:43b when he quoted it in Heb 1:6 and that this context has influenced what he has said about the Son, the sons of God, and the angels.

Deuteronomy 32:43 and the Interpretation of Hebrews 1:6

Commentators struggle with several other important questions in the interpretation of Heb 1:6: What is the significance of the term τὸν πρωτότοκον? To what does τὴν οἰκουμένην refer? When did/does God bring the πρωτότοκον, the "firstborn," into this οἰκουμένην? If οἰκουμένην means this present "world," then God's introduction of the "firstborn" refers either to the incarnation²⁷ or the Parousia.²⁸ If it means the heavenly "world" of salvation, then this introduction took place at the Son's exaltation to and enthronement at God's right hand.²⁹

25. Guthrie has laid out the hortatory passages of Hebrews from 3:1-12:2 in an elaborate chiasmus, in which 3:1-6 is parallel to 12:1-2; 3:7-19 to 11:1-40; 4:1-11 to 10:32-39; 4:12-13 to 10:26-31; 4:14-16 to 10:19-25; and 5:11-6:3 to 6:9-12. Heb 6:4-8 stands at the center of the chiasmus. George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (NovTSup 73; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 136. It is interesting to note that the passages just before and after this chiasmus, 2:5-18 and 12:3-13, are the passages that speak of the sonship of believers.

26. ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω comes from Deut 32:35, even though the wording in Hebrews appears to agree with the MT against the LXX text. In Rom. 12:19 Paul cites this text in the same form. Braun argues that Paul and Hebrews are using a common Greek source. Braun, *Hebräer*, 324. See references given in Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 542.

27. Spicq, *Hébreux*, 2:17; Hugh Montefiore, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Harper's New Testament Commentaries; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1964) 45-46; James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews: Commentary on Hebrews* (ICC; New York: Scribner's, 1924) 10-11.

28. Braun, *Hebräer*, 37; Riggenbach, *Hebräer*, 19-20; Michel, *Hebräer*, 51.

29. Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 117; Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 26-27; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 55-57; Weiss, *Hebräer*, 162.

It is not our purpose at this point to answer these questions but to suggest how our study of the writer's understanding of Deut 32:43 might reflect on them. If the author of Hebrews was conscious of the contrast between the angels and God's sons in Deut 32:43, he might have used the term τὸν πρωτότοκον, "the firstborn," to clearly distinguish the Son from the sons.

Furthermore, we have seen that Deut 32:43 connects the angels worshiping with God's vindication of the faithful and punishment of the unfaithful. This fact would seem to eliminate the incarnation as the time when God brings/brought "the firstborn into the world." Judgment goes most congenially with the second coming.³⁰ However, in Deut 32:43 the angels worship because of a judgment that seems to be yet future. Thus the exaltation is not ruled out as the time when God brought "the firstborn into the world." The focus of Hebrews is on the present exalted Christ (Heb 8:1), who is waiting for His "enemies" to become His "footstool" at the final judgment (1:14; cf. 2:8, 9).

It has been suggested that the phrase ὅταν . . . εἰσαγάγῃ, "when-ever he brings," used in Heb 1:6a to introduce this quotation from Deut 32:43, is intentionally reminiscent of language used in the LXX to refer to God's bringing Israel into the Promised Land. Note Deut 6:10, ὅταν εἰσαγάγῃ σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰς τὴν γῆν; Deut 11:29, ὅταν εἰσαγάγῃ; cf. Deut 31:20 and Exod 3:8. Neither ὅταν nor εἰσάγω is used elsewhere in Hebrews. ὅταν is often used in the OT to refer to the priest or high priests entering into the tabernacle to minister (Exod 28:26 [LXX 28:30]; 30:8, 20-21; 43:32 [LXX 38:27]). Hebrews uses both entrance into the Promised Land and into the Holy of Holies as images of God's people entering into the promised blessings of salvation now provided by Christ. Thus in Hebrews Christ is the ἀρχηγός (2:10) who brings His people to the true Promised Land and the ἀρχιερέυς (10:19-21) who brings them into the real Holy of Holies. Perhaps this introductory phrase is already meant to suggest that, just as God once brought His people into Canaan, now He has brought His firstborn Son into the true heavenly homeland and thus opened the way for his other sons to enter this homeland.³¹

If so, our thought is directed to the last phrase of Deut 32:43: καὶ ἑκκαθαριεῖ κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ. The LXX has added κύριος to this verse, thus facilitating its application to the Son. In the mind of the author of Hebrews, this phrase may have referred to the purifying work of the Son (1:3; 9:22-23) that enabled God's people to enter the heavenly homeland, but Hebrews can also refer to God as the One who brings His people "to glory" (2:10). The work of the Son is the work of God Himself.

30. Riegenbach, *Hebräer*, 19-20.

31. See Ellingworth (*Hebrews*, 116-18) for argumentation and further references. Note especially Weiss, *Hebräer*, 163.

We have argued that the ἄγγελοι θεοῦ of Heb 1:6 is based on the original reading of Deut 32:43b in the LXX. We have also suggested that the writer to the Hebrews was using a Greek text of Deut 32:43 that was a translation of the Hebrew text represented by 4QDeut32. He understood this verse within its OT context. His interpretation of this verse has influenced what he says about the Son, the sons, and the angels. The author's understanding of Deut 32:43 is an important consideration in deciding several other key issues in the interpretation of Heb 1:6.