

A COMPARISON OF THE TEXT OF GENESIS IN THREE TRADITIONS: MASORETIC TEXT, SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH, SEPTUAGINT

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Abstract: *One often encounters text critical discussions of the Old Testament text that fail to consider the tendencies in the various textual traditions for a particular book of the Scriptures. For Genesis, the three most important of these traditions are the Masoretic Text, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint. This study presents the results of a thorough collocation of all variants among these three traditions, noting the textual tendencies in each. Those tendencies are then used to examine the genealogies in Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 as a case study of the usefulness of understanding the nature of textual witnesses and applying this knowledge in text critical analysis.*

Key words: *Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, secondary readings, harmonization, Genesis 5, Genesis 11*

Unarguably, the three most important textual traditions for the book of Genesis are the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT), the Hebrew Samaritan Pentateuch (SP), and the Greek Septuagint (LXX). One can find general descriptions of the tendencies of each of these texts in Genesis, such as characterizing LXX as “harmonizing” and listing a few examples or alluding to MT as a superior text to that of SP and LXX.¹ However, that is of little help in evaluating the text of any of these witnesses in a particular case, because it is difficult to know to what extent LXX presents harmonized readings in Genesis or what the prevalence of other characteristics in MT, SP, or LXX is. Yet, it is of vital importance to understand accurately the characteristics of each tradition when attempting to make text critical judgments about specific variants. Jobs and Silva complain about the deleterious effect that this lack of awareness can have: “The unwillingness on the part of some scholars to take into account the general quality of textual witnesses may lead to atomistic, even

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¹ See, for instance, Ronald S. Hendel, “Harmonizing Tendencies in S and G,” in *The Text of Genesis 1–11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (New York: Oxford University, 1998), 81–92; Emanuel Tov, “The Harmonizing Character of the Septuagint of Genesis 1–11,” in *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint: Collected Essays, Volume 3*, VTSup 167 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 470–89. Tov’s article is quite good, but it covers only the first eleven chapters of Genesis. For the general superiority of MT, see Karen H. Jobs and Moises Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 153–54. They state, “Generally speaking, the MT can be shown to reflect a text that is superior to that of LXX’s parent text, meaning that in a majority of demonstrable cases, the readings of the LXX appear to be secondary.”

haphazard, decisions on individual cases.”² They elaborate further on those who argue that one cannot rely on general tendencies of the textual traditions in evaluating variant readings, stating,

Some scholars argue that, while statistics regarding textual witnesses may have some general validity, such information is not relevant for the evaluation of individual readings. But how can statistical information be valid if it cannot be used? If a doctor tells a patient that his or her chances of surviving a disease are 20 percent with medicine but 80 percent with surgery, should that information not influence the patient’s decision? The truth is that almost every decision we make every day of our lives—such as whether to hold a picnic in view of a 95 percent probability of rain—is (rightly) influenced by some sort of statistical information.³

Ignorance of the tendencies of these three traditions or simply lack of reference to them often marks discussions of the text of passages in Genesis. Perhaps the most problematic examples of this are the multiple studies attempting to explain the differences among the ages of the pre- and post-diluvian patriarchs in Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 as exhibited in MT, SP, and LXX. Most of these studies argue for views which conclude that a particular tradition (or theoretically reconstructed reading) reflects the oldest form of the text without ever considering the textual tendencies of the three prime witnesses.⁴

To bring clarity to the nature of the textual characteristics of these three traditions, a list containing every textual difference among them from Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 50:26 was compiled. The result was a catalog of 860 textual variants.⁵ The base texts used for the comparisons were as follows:

MT: *Biblical Hebraica Quinta* (= Leningrad Codex).⁶

² Jobs and Silva, *Invitation*, 153.

³ Jobs and Silva, 153, n. 16.

⁴ See, for instance, Donald V. Etz, “The Numbers of Genesis V 3–31: A Suggested Conversion and Its Implications,” *VT* 43 (1993): 171–89; Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Meaning of the Chronogenealogies of Genesis 5 and 11,” *Origins* 7 (1980): 53–70; Ralph W. Klein, “Archaic Chronologies and the Textual History of the Old Testament,” *HTR* 67 (1974): 255–63; Henry B. Smith Jr., “The Case for the Septuagint’s Chronology in Genesis 5 and 11,” in *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Creationism*, ed. J. H. Whitmore (Pittsburgh: Creation Science Fellowship, 2018), 117–32; Emanuel Tov, “Genesis 11,” in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings to Scripture*, ed. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: JPS, 2013), 34–37; Emanuel Tov, “The Genealogical Lists in Genesis 5 and 11 in Three Different Versions,” in *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint*, 221–38. To my knowledge, the only study of the Genesis 5 and 11 genealogies that attempts to view them in light of textual tendencies of MT and LXX (and largely excludes SP) is Gerhard Larsson, “The Chronology of the Pentateuch: A Comparison of the MT and LXX,” *JBL* 102 (1983): 401–9. Larsson, however, only accounts for LXX Pentateuch’s tendency to alter the text in several passages with chronological implications that ancient readers might have perceived as presenting logical difficulties.

⁵ The catalog is available online at https://www.academia.edu/43190830/A_Comparison_of_the_Text_of_Genesis_in_Three_Traditions_Masoretic_Text_Samaritan_Pentateuch_Septuagint.

⁶ Abraham Tal, ed., *Genesis: Biblia Hebraica quinta editio cum apparatu critico novis curis elaborato* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2016).

SP: The critical edition produced by A. F. von Gall, since a more current critical edition is not currently available.⁷

LXX: The Genesis volume in the Göttingen Septuagint.⁸

It is important also to note what kind of variants were not compiled for this catalogue: Purely orthographic variants between MT and SP are not listed. Most of these involve the *matres lectionis* (ה, ו, and י). In addition, translational variants of the LXX when compared to MT or SP were not included. These are words or phrases in the LXX text that are intended as translations of the Hebrew text but may appear to modern readers to be ill-suited or less-than-ideal translation choices. The best known of these is probably LXX's translation of the phrase כַּתְנַת פְּטִים, “tunic of palms of the hands” or “tunic of soles of the feet” which LXX renders as χιτῶνα ποικίλον, “variegated tunic” (Gen 37:3; cf. KJV: “coat of many colors”). Other such translations include:

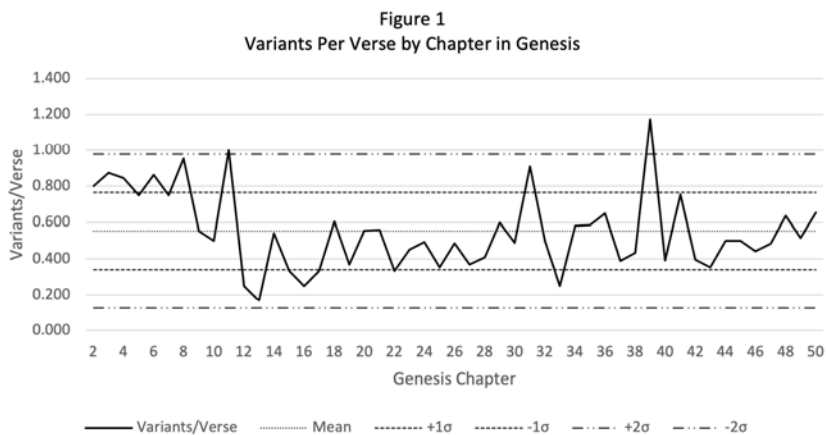
בֹּזֶאת תִּבְחָנוּ “this way you will be tested” // LXX: ἐν τούτῳ φανείσθε “this way you will be recognized” (Gen 42:15)

חַי פְּרֵעָה “by the life of Pharaoh” (an oath formula) // LXX: τῆν ὑγίειαν Φαραῶ “by the health of Pharaoh” (Gen 42:15)

כֹּנִים “honest” // LXX: εἰρηνικοί “peaceful” (Gen 42:11, 19, 31, 33)

גֹּשֶׁן “Goshen” // LXX: Γεσεμ Ἀραβίας “Gesem of Arabia” (Gen 45:10; 46:34)

As might be expected, the variants are not evenly distributed throughout Genesis (see Figure 1).



⁷ August Freiherrn von Gall, ed., *Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1918).

⁸ John William Wevers, ed., *Genesis*, vol. 1 of *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974).

Some chapters contain quite a few variants, which most likely indicates a keen interest in the content of those chapters in antiquity. Genesis 1–8 (creation through the flood), Genesis 11 (genealogy from Shem to Abram), Genesis 31 (Jacob flees Haran), and Genesis 39 (Joseph in Potiphar’s house) all exhibit a much higher than average number of variants. Conversely, Genesis 12–13 (call of Abram, Abram in Egypt, Abram and Lot), Genesis 16 (Hagar and Ishmael), and Genesis 33 (Jacob reconciled to Esau) contain relatively few variants.

The discussion in the balance of this study will present an analysis of the textual characteristics of MT, SP, and LXX as demonstrated by relationships among them. It will then examine the genealogies of Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 by considering the clear tendencies of each text’s tradition.

I. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG MT, SP, AND LXX

A global view of all the variants immediately shows the distinctive nature of LXX: Almost half of the 860 variants are unique to LXX—426 (49.5%). In these cases, MT and SP agree against the unique readings in LXX. MT, by comparison, contains only 158 unique variants (18.4%), and SP has only slightly fewer with 140 unique variants (16.3%). Throughout most of Genesis, however, LXX often closely follows its Hebrew base text, as can be seen by a comparison with MT and SP where all three agree.⁹ Moreover, an example from the Qumran scrolls demonstrates that when LXX’s base text departs from MT and SP, it most likely was following a Hebrew exemplar. At Genesis 41:7, MT and SP have the phrase **השבלים הדקות**, “the thin ears of grain.” In contrast, LXX has two descriptors for the ears: **οἱ λεπτοὶ καὶ ἀνεμόφθοροι**, “thin and wind-blasted” which agrees with Qumran scroll 4QGen^c (**הדקות והשדפות**). In addition, cases where SP and LXX agree in secondary readings against MT demonstrate that the LXX translator was not often innovating on his base text. Some examples are as follows:

Gen 1:14: Both SP and LXX harmonize the text to the following verse by adding a phrase that does not appear in MT. SP reads **להאיר על הארץ** “to give light on the earth” and LXX agrees with **εἰς φαῦσιον τῆς γῆς**.¹⁰

Gen 14:19: MT reads **ויברכהו**, “and he blessed *him*” which could lead to possible confusion about who was giving the blessing, Melchizedek or Abram (though by context it is clear that Melchizedek was blessing Abram). Both SP

⁹ While one can often match LXX to MT and/or SP on a word-for-word basis, that is not always the case. Tov notes, “On the other hand, Genesis displays a curious mixture of translation styles, often adhering to fixed equivalents, but also allowing for contextual renderings” (Emanuel Tov, “The Septuagint Translation of Genesis as the First Scripture Translation,” in *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Qumran, Septuagint, 506).

¹⁰ There are two reasons that this is a secondary reading and the MT ought to be considered original: There is no obvious trigger in the text for parablepsis to explain the absence of the phrase in MT. Also, LXX, as will be discussed below, is highly harmonistic. SP is less harmonistic than LXX but exhibits a tendency to harmonize language between similar passages.

and LXX agree in altering the text to **ויברך את אברם**/καὶ ἠὐλόγησεν τὸν Αβραμ, “and he blessed *Abram*.”¹¹

Gen 39:12, 13, 15, 16, 18: MT reads **בגדו**, “his garment.” However, SP and LXX consistently read **בגדיו/τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ**, “his garments.” The change heightens Joseph’s fleeing from his master’s wife naked as if he had not left behind only one garment but all his garments.¹²

All readings were classified as to whether they appear to be secondary readings (i.e., readings that were not originally part of the text of Genesis). For MT, 58 variants are secondary. In SP, 272 variants are secondary. LXX is characterized by the most secondary variants: 467. This might imply that SP stands about halfway between MT and LXX, but that conclusion would be somewhat misleading, since such characterization depends on which type of secondary reading one is considering.

II. TYPES OF SECONDARY READINGS IN MT, SP, AND LXX

Not every variant can be classified as arising from a particular type of inadvertent error or from conscious insertion into the text. Any scheme of such classifications is somewhat subjective. Nevertheless, a careful sorting of secondary readings into categories can be a useful heuristic tool.

1. *Inadvertent copyist errors.* This type of error in Genesis includes parablepsis (homoioarchon and homoioteleuton), haplography, dittography, and graphic confusion of similarly shaped letters, among others. Some examples are:

Gen 8:12: MT and LXX: **וספה/προσέθετο**, “add”; SP reads **ספפה**, an impossible reading that came about through dittography of the final ה.

Gen 9:6: MT and SP: **דם האדם באדם דמו**, “blood of humans, by humans his blood”; LXX reads **αἷμα ἀνθρώπου ἀντὶ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ**, “blood of humans, in return for his blood,” which came about by the omission of **באדם** in LXX’s Hebrew exemplar. This omission was caused by homoioteleuton when a scribe’s eye skipped from one **ם** to the next.

Gen 30:36 SP and LXX: **ביןם/ἀνὰ μέσον αὐτῶν**, “between them”; MT: **בינו**, “between himself.” The context calls for a third person plural pronoun, since the nearest antecedent is “his [Laban’s] sons,” not “Laban.”

The distribution of these secondary readings is evenly split among the three traditions: MT, 42; SP, 47; LXX, 43.

2. *Intentional changes to the text.* All three traditions show signs of intentional scribal changes that were made for various reasons. In the following discussion, I will treat these from the least intrusive changes to the most intrusive. MT has the

¹¹ Note that SP and LXX most certainly contain a secondary reading, since it would make little sense intentionally to alter the text to make less obvious to readers the direct object of the verb and, therefore, also the subject.

¹² See also Genesis 39:12a where MT reads **בבגדו**, “by his garment.” SP reads **בבגדיו**, “by his garments.” LXX has **τῶν ἱματίων**, “[by] the garments.”

least of these intentional changes (18), SP is approximately midway between MT and LXX (215), and LXX has the most (415).

3. *Adjustment in the text to avoid confusion (often involving anaphora)*. Often the text of Genesis can leave to the reader the task of understanding a referent. At times SP or LXX will adjust the text to alleviate any confusion. These are most certainly secondary readings, since a scribe would hardly change a text in order to increase the likelihood of misunderstanding by readers. Many of these seem pedantic and unnecessary to modern readers. In addition to Genesis 49:19, which was discussed above, examples include:

Gen 21:30: MT reads **וַיֹּאמֶר**, “and he said”; SP/LXX read **וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם** *καὶ εἶπεν Ἀβρααμ*, “and Abraham said.” Since the previous speaker was Abimelech, a scribe supplied the subject of the verb to clarify that this was Abraham’s response.

Gen 37:30: MT reads **וְהַמְדִּינִים מָכְרוּ אֹתוֹ**, “and the Midianites sold him.” SP and LXX have **וְהַמְדִּינִים מָכְרוּ אֶת יוֹסֵף** *οἱ δὲ Μαδιηναῖοι ἀπέδοντο τὸν Ἰωσήφ*, “and the Midianites sold Joseph.” Since the last person mentioned was Jacob (Gen 37:29), a scribe clarified the text to ensure that readers understood that Joseph, not Jacob, was sold into slavery.

These types of changes are never found in MT. SP contains sixteen such variants; LXX has fifty-two.

4. *Grammatical correction or adjustment to the text*. At times all three traditions contain changes to the text to correct for apparent grammatical problems. Some examples are:

Gen 30:42: MT and LXX read: **וְהָיָה הָעֲטוּפִים** *ἔγένετο δὲ τὰ ἄσημα*, “the feeble/unimportant ones were.” Since the verb is singular but the subject is plural, SP adjusts the verb to the plural form: **וְהָיוּ הָעֲטוּפִים**.

Gen 33:5: SP reads **וַיִּשָׂא עֵינָיו**, “and he lifted up his eyes.” MT corrects the grammar by adding the direct object marker: **וַיִּשָׂא אֶת עֵינָיו**. This type of correction is found frequently in SP. (LXX is of little consequence for this type of correction, since Greek cannot adequately reflect the presence or absence of the Hebrew direct object marker.) In this case LXX translates idiomatically: *καὶ ἀναβλέψας*, “and looking up.”

Gen 41:42: MT reads **רִבִּיד הַזֶּהב**, “the gold chain.” However, no gold chain had been previously mentioned in the context of Genesis 41. Therefore, SP and LXX emend the text to **זֶהב רִבִּיד** *ἄλκιον χρυσσῶν*, “a gold chain.”

These types of changes in the text are relatively rare in MT, which has only two. LXX also shows few such emendations: seventeen. However, in SP such variants are more common: forty-eight total.

5. *Differences in names for God.* At times there are differences between names used for God among the three traditions.¹³ This occurs twice where SP disagrees with MT and LXX:

Gen 20:18: אלהים, “God,” whereas MT and LXX agree by reading יהוה/κύριος, “Yahweh/Lord.”

Gen 14:22: אל עליון האלהים, “God, God Most High,” whereas MT reads יהוה אל עליון, “Yahweh, God Most High” and LXX has τὸν θεὸν τὸν ὑψιστον, “God Most High.”

Elsewhere, LXX at times has a different divine name where MT and SP agree. For instance, at Genesis 25:21 both MT and SP read יהוה, “Yahweh,” but LXX reads ὁ θεός, “God.” At Genesis 2:5, 7, 9 both MT and SP read יהוה אלהים, “Yahweh God,” but LXX simply has ὁ θεός, “God.” Curiously, this occasional LXX deviation in divine names begins at Genesis 2:5 and ends at 25:21. Deviations in the divine name occur thirty-five times in LXX. It is impossible to determine whether this difference in divine names was the work of the LXX translator or reflects the Hebrew text underlying his translation.

6. *Harmonization of phraseology between similar passages.* All three traditions exhibit tendencies to harmonize phraseology between passages that use similar wording or refer to past or future narratives. At times it appears to have been practiced simply to make language consistent within a narrative.¹⁴ Some examples are:

Gen 1:6: LXX alone adds the phrase καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως, “and it was so” at the end of God’s creative command to match similar phrases in all three traditions at Genesis 1:9, 11, 15, 24.

Gen 23:1: MT and SP add at the end of the verse שני חיי שרה, “[These are] the years of the life of Sarah.” The absence of this phrase in LXX at Genesis 23:1 was not caused by parablepsis, since no trigger for such an eye skip is present in the text. Thus, it is likely that MT and SP contain a purposeful harmonization of Sarah’s death notice to the language used for the death notices of Abraham (Gen 25:7) and Ishmael (Gen 25:17).

Gen 24:55: MT and LXX read או עשור ימים/ἡμέρας ὡσεὶ δέκα, “days or/like ten” (= about ten days). SP, in contrast, has מים או חדש, “days or a month.” This is a harmonization to Numbers 9:22 which contains the only other occurrence of this type of phrase in the Pentateuch.¹⁵

Gen 33:1: MT and SP read עשו בא, “Esau was coming,” whereas LXX reads Ησαυ ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ ἐρχόμενος, “Esau his brother was coming” to harmonize to Genesis 27:30. The harmonization injects a reference to the tense situation of Genesis 27 into the Genesis 33 account of Jacob’s meeting Esau upon his return to Canaan many years later.

¹³ Tov (“Harmonizing Character,” 479–89) discusses this phenomenon in Genesis 1–11.

¹⁴ Tov (“Harmonizing Character”) and Hendel (“Harmonizing Tendencies”) examine this phenomenon in LXX, where it is most frequent.

¹⁵ A similar phrase occurs at 1 Samuel 29:3.

This harmonizing tendency is most prominent in LXX, which contains 224 examples. At the other extreme, MT contains only a few: 13 in all. SP falls almost midway between the other two, containing 102 examples of harmonization. The large number of harmonized passages in LXX Genesis explains why it is often characterized as harmonistic. In fact, harmonization is by far the most common phenomenon that produced secondary readings found in LXX Genesis.

7. *Intentional changes to alleviate a perceived logical difficulty in the text.* A final major way in which the text of Genesis was altered was the introduction of changes that were intended to deal with a perception that there was a logical problem in the text. Like the previous category, this is also a harmonistic tendency, but one that harmonizes the logic of the text instead of its language. This type of change is rare in MT, occurring only three times.¹⁶ Such changes are evident in both SP and LXX where the text as exhibited in MT was altered to explain or avoid what might present a logical conundrum to readers. In each of these cases it would have made no sense for the MT to have been intentionally altered to produce a more difficult reading.¹⁷ Some examples are:

Gen 2:2: MT reads **ביום השביעי**, “on the seventh day.” SP and LXX have **ביום השישי/έν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ**, “on the sixth day.” Wevers observes, “Since v. 1 had clearly stated that the creation was completed on the sixth day (1:31), the difficulty with the first clause in MT that God completed his work on the seventh day is obvious, and Gen changed the prepositional phrase to ‘in the sixth day.’”¹⁸

Gen 2:24: MT reads **והיו לבשר אחד**, “and they will become one flesh.” SP and LXX read **אחד משניהם לבשר אחד/οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν**, “and the two [of them] will become one flesh.” Since the verse mentions four people (man, father, mother, wife), SP and LXX sought to avoid a misunderstanding that all four would become one flesh.

Gen 35:22: After learning that Reuben slept with Bilhah, MT and SP report no reaction by Jacob. This might seem strange to readers, especially in light of Jacob’s condemnation of Reuben at Genesis 49:4. To alleviate this problem, LXX adds **καὶ πονηρὸν ἐφάνη ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ**, “and it appeared evil to him” after “and Israel heard [about it].” Wevers comments, “The Hebrew almost demands some kind of reaction, and this is supplied by Gen. To Gen it was not enough that Jacob heard about it; it had also to appear evil before him.”¹⁹ Tov believes that because of the Hebraism of the LXX text here, the LXX translator’s He-

¹⁶ All three involve Lamech (Gen 5:28–31). See discussion below.

¹⁷ This was already noted in Larsson, “The Chronology of the Pentateuch.” However, Larsson does not note that this phenomenon reaches beyond passages that relate to chronology.

¹⁸ John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*, SBLSCS 35 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 20. Note that in this work the abbreviation “Gen” stands for LXX Genesis.

¹⁹ Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*, 586.

brew text must have contained this phrase, possibly drawing on similar phrases in other places such as Genesis 38:10.²⁰

Gen 41:57: LXX omits the end of the verse in MT/SP: **וַיִּחְזַק הָרָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם**, “for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.” This notice could appear redundant to readers considering that Genesis 41:57 begins with a similar statement and 41:58 ends with another statement about the severity of the famine.

Gen 44:4: LXX adds at the end of the verse: **ἵνα τί ἐκλέψατέ μου τὸ κόνδυ τὸ ἀργυροῦν**, “Why have you stolen my silver cup?” As Wevers notes, this question “is a necessary bridge for what follows in v. 5.”²¹ Without this question a reference by Joseph’s servant to a cup used for divination would have made little sense to Joseph’s brothers who at this point in the narrative would have had no knowledge of it.

Gen 46:27: MT and SP call Joseph’s sons **נַפְשׁ שְׁנַיִם**, “two lives.” LXX reads **ψυχὰὶ ἐννέα**, “nine lives.” The LXX is seeking to explain Jacob’s statement when he adopted Manasseh and Ephraim as his own sons. He told Joseph, “Children born to you after them will be yours” (Gen 48:6). It might seem to readers that Jacob was predicting that Joseph would have more children, and to accommodate this, LXX added seven sons to Joseph.

These intentional changes to avoid perceived logical difficulties in the text are probably the most intrusive scribal interventions into the text. MT contains three. LXX has eighty-seven such secondary readings. Once again SP stands about half-way between MT and LXX with forty-seven.

Nevertheless, not all these changes significantly alter the text. For instance, the insertion of *two* at Genesis 2:24 (SP and LXX) does not alter the meaning of that verse but clarifies what it was surely intended to convey concerning marriage. Thus, it is quoted with this additional word in the NT (Matt 19:5; Mark 10:8; 1 Cor 16:6; Eph 5:1). Similarly, LXX Genesis 41:57 merely omits a redundancy whose message is repeated twice more in the immediate context. There is no significant modification of the text’s message. On the other hand, certain of these adjustments of the text significantly change the text’s message. Joseph having nine children instead of two is not an easily overlooked difference (Gen 46:27).

²⁰ Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, JBS 3 (Jerusalem: Simor, 1981), 134.

²¹ Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*, 742.

III. CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE TENDENCIES OF THESE THREE TRADITIONS

The types of secondary readings found in all three traditions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Classification of Secondary Readings in Genesis

Type of Secondary Reading	MT	SP	LXX
Unintentional transcription errors	42	47	43
Adjustment to avoid anaphoric confusion	0	16	52
Grammatical correction or adjustment	2	48	17
Change in divine name	0	2	35
Harmonize: phraseology	13	102	224
Harmonize: ameliorate perceived logical difficulty	3	47	87
Total secondary readings ²²	58	272	467
Percentage of all variants	6.6%	31.6%	54.4%

It is obvious from this table that MT is the most reliable text, but that one cannot assume that it always contains the superior reading. At the other extreme, LXX is highly harmonistic with almost three-quarters of its secondary readings arising from scribal harmonization of the text (315 out of 468). Moreover, over half of the variants among the three traditions are secondary readings in LXX. Thus, while at times LXX can preserve the best reading, at places where it differs from MT or SP it is somewhat more likely to present a secondary text. In many cases, SP stands about halfway between MT and LXX, though it is much more likely to preserve grammatical corrections to the text.²³

Table 2 shows the relationship among all three traditions with respect to their secondary readings:

Table 2
Relationships among MT, SP, and LXX in Secondary Readings

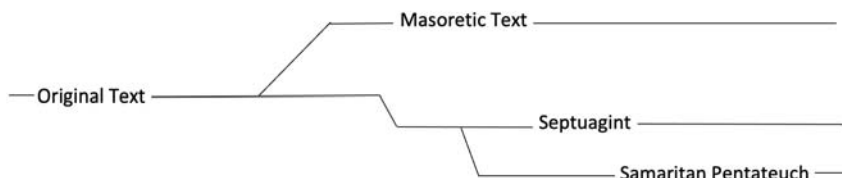
MT unique secondary readings	52
SP unique secondary readings	172
LXX unique secondary readings	369
Secondary readings shared by MT and SP	4
Secondary readings shared by MT and LXX	2
Secondary readings shared by SP and LXX	96

²² The totals for SP and LXX are more than the sum of the readings according to categories discussed above, since some variants do not fall into any of those categories.

²³ This statement needs to be tempered, however, by the fact that some grammatical corrections cannot be detected in LXX due to the inability of the Greek language to reflect every grammatical and semantic distinction in the Hebrew language.

The table shows significant relationship between SP and LXX in secondary readings. This suggests that these two traditions originated from an earlier text type and then diverged from each other. Thus, for the most part MT preserves an earlier form of the text than either SP or LXX, though all three contain variants that arose after the three traditions first diverged from one another. It is widely believed that LXX Genesis originated in Alexandria, Egypt, about 250 BC.²⁴ SP is a “relatively late branch, dating back no further than Hasmonean times.”²⁵ Thus, the historical development of these three traditions could be diagrammed as in Figure 2, with the three text types first diverging from each other sometime before the translation of LXX Genesis.

Figure 2
Development of MT, SP, LXX Texts of Genesis



When evaluating difficult-to-decide cases, the tendencies of each of these three textual traditions should be kept in mind. One ought to investigate first whether LXX Genesis’s text is harmonistic or contains some type of grammatical adjustment. To a lesser extent, one ought to look for these also in SP. Only after eliminating these ought one look for unintentional transcription errors or suspect that MT may contain an intentional alteration to the text.

IV. APPLYING THESE INSIGHTS TO THE DIFFERENCES IN GENESIS 5 AND 11

As observed earlier, two of the most discussed passages in Genesis with respect to the differences among MT, SP, and LXX are the pre-diluvian genealogy of Genesis 5 and the post-diluvian genealogy in Genesis 11. Some ancient readers and many modern evangelicals wish to use the data in Genesis to calculate the date of creation and of the flood in Noah’s day.²⁶ All such schemes, both ancient and

²⁴ Jobes and Silva, *Imitation to the Septuagint*, 29.

²⁵ Sidney Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1968; repr., Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993), 244. Some have attempted to develop a theory of local text types among the various witnesses to the Pentateuch, though Tov is surely correct that these local text theories are not viable. See Tov, *The Text Critical Use of the Septuagint*, 256–60.

²⁶ See the following websites: <https://answersingenesis.org/bible-timeline/timeline-for-the-flood/> and <https://creation.com/the-date-of-noahs-flood>. *Answers in Genesis* and *Creation.com* use the information in MT for this purpose. Since relying on MT yields a date for the flood that conflicts with Egyptian chronology, some rely on LXX’s text to date the flood and creation, which pushes the date of the

modern, assume that the genealogies present an unbroken chain of father-to-son notices from Adam to Abraham. That, however, is a questionable proposition.²⁷ Moreover, it is not necessary to hold that the same scribe made changes to both genealogies. The differences among MT, SP, and LXX demonstrate that scribes continued to alter the text after the three traditions separated. As the apparatuses in the Göttingen Septuagint and in *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* demonstrate, changes within both the Greek and Hebrew texts arose well into later centuries. Thus, it is conceivable that different scribes were responsible for the alterations in these two genealogies as the texts of MT, SP, and LXX changed over time.

1. *General observations on the two genealogies.* The pre-diluvian genealogy in Genesis 5 presents three numbers for each person in the genealogy except Noah: the age at which a man was responsible for generating (ῥῆγι/καὶ ἐγέννησεν) a descendant (X), the number of years he lived after generating a descendant (Y; not included for Noah), and the total years of his life (Z; not included for Noah, see Gen 9:28–29). In all traditions the sum of X and Y is equal to Z. The post-diluvian genealogy in Genesis 11 presents only two numbers—X and Y—in both MT and LXX for each person except Terah (no Y, but see Gen 11:32 for Z). SP also presents Z for each person, which is clearly a series of secondary readings designed to harmonize the Genesis 11 genealogy with the Genesis 5 genealogy.

Before proceeding to the examination of the two genealogies, there is one other important observation: the number given in X is not necessarily the year of the birth of the descendant. This can be seen by comparing Genesis 5:32 with 7:6 and 11:10, which agree in MT, SP, and LXX. In Genesis 5:32 we are told that Noah was 500 years old (year X for Noah) when he generated Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Genesis 11:10 states that the flood took place when Noah was 600 years old, so Shem should have been 100 years old at that time. Yet at Genesis 11:10 we read that Shem generated his son Arpachshad two years after the flood when he was 100 years old (year X for Shem), not 102 years old. This means that year X for any person in the genealogy is not the same as the year in which his descendant was born. The same can be seen in Genesis 11 with Terah's sons. Genesis 11:26 (MT, SP, and LXX) states that Terah was 70 years old when he "fathered" (ῥῆγι/καὶ ἐγέννησεν) Abram, Nahor, and Haran. He lived 205 years (Gen 11:32 MT, LXX). Thus, if Abram was born when Terah was 70, then he ought to have been 135 years old when Terah died. However, when Abram was called by God to go to Canaan after Terah's death, he was only 75 years old (Gen 12:4 MT, SP, LXX). Thus, Terah ought to have been only 145 years old when he died. This is exactly how SP reconciled the numbers, changing the text of Genesis 11:32 so that Terah died when he had lived 145 years. However, it is obvious that the better reading at Genesis 11:32

flood further back in time than allowed by MT. For an example see Smith, "The Case for the Septuagint's Chronology."

²⁷ Andrew E. Steinmann, "Gaps in the Genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11?," *BSac* 174 (2017): 141–58, and "Genesis Genealogies and Messianic Promise," *BSac* 176 (2019): 343–59.

(205 years) implies that Genesis 11:26 does not mean that Abram was born when Terah was 70.²⁸

2. *Genesis 5:1–32*. The numbers preserved among the three traditions in the pre-diluvian genealogy are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Life Event Numbers in the Genesis 5 Genealogy

	Year X	Year Y	Year Z
	Age When Generated Descendant	Remaining Years of life	Lifespan
	MT/SP/LXX	MT/SP/LXX	MT/SP/LXX
Adam	130/130/230	800/800/700	930/930/930
Seth	105/105/205	807/807/707	912/912/912
Enosh	90/90/190	815/815/715	905/905/905
Kenan	70/70/170	840/840/740	910/910/910
Mehalalel	65/65/165	830/830/730	895/895/895
Jared	162/62/162	800/785/800	962/847/962
Enoch	65/65/165	300/300/200	365/365/365
Methuselah	187/67/167	782/653/802	969/720/969
Lamech	182/63/188	595/600/565	777/653/753
Noah	500/500/500		

When examining the pre-diluvian genealogy immediately a general pattern emerges that applies to most entries in the genealogy:

$$\text{Year } X^{\text{MT}} = \text{Year } X^{\text{SP}} \text{ and } \text{Year } X^{\text{MT/SP}} + 100 = \text{Year } X^{\text{LXX}}$$

$$\text{Year } Y^{\text{MT}} = \text{Year } Y^{\text{SP}} \text{ and } \text{Year } Y^{\text{MT/SP}} - 100 = \text{Year } Y^{\text{LXX}}$$

$$\text{Year } Z^{\text{MT}} = \text{Year } Z^{\text{SP}} = \text{Year } Z^{\text{LXX}}$$

To account for the deviations from this pattern and to explain LXX's increasing X and decreasing Y we must first keep in mind the general pattern of variants in the three traditions: LXX, and to a lesser degree SP, tend to be harmonistic in two ways—harmonizing language and harmonizing to eliminate perceived logical difficulties. In contrast, MT occasionally exhibits unconscious transmission errors and will contain a smaller and less systematically implemented intentional changes to the text. Therefore, it ought to be suspected that the changes in LXX and SP are to accommodate a perceived logical difficulty, but changes in MT will be less frequent and less systematically implemented.²⁹

²⁸ For other possibilities of what these notices could mean see especially the discussion in Steinmann, "Genesis Genealogies," 351–59.

²⁹ To my knowledge, this was first proposed by Larsson, "The Chronology of the Pentateuch," 402–4. Interestingly, Smith ("The Case for the Septuagint's Chronology," 177) rejects Larsson's work because Larsson operates "from the perspective of critical scholarship, often leading to conclusions incompatible with a high view of Scripture." However, Smith never engages Larsson's actual observa-

a. *LXX's pre-diluvian genealogy.* In looking first at LXX, it might be argued that LXX's numbers are modified to accommodate chronology related to the flood in Genesis 6–8. If one assumes that the genealogy presents an unbroken chain of father-to-son links from Adam to Noah, MT places Methuselah's death in the year of the flood. Thus, LXX's numbers might have been an attempt to keep Methuselah from dying in the flood. However, that theory does not fit well with the LXX's numbers for Methuselah, since LXX's genealogy would place Methuselah's death fourteen years after the flood—an impossibility.³⁰

Another possibility exists, however. Compared to the genealogy in MT, LXX's genealogy solves a conundrum that may have presented itself to readers: The X years for Enosh, Kenan, Mehalalel, and Enoch in MT appear to be much lower than the other six men listed.³¹ To overcome this strange anomaly, a correction to the Hebrew text underlying LXX was devised: add 100 years to X and subtract 100 from Y, thereby preserving the correct total for Z. This, however, would make the X years for Adam and Seth smaller than any of their descendants in the list. Therefore, to preserve their preeminence, their X and Y years were also modified according to the same scheme. (For another incongruity—the numbers for Lamech, see the discussion of the MT's pre-diluvian genealogy below.)

We can conclude that the scribal alterations found in LXX's Genesis 5 genealogy were not produced by assuming that the numbers could be used to calculate the date of the flood, since such calculations based on them would have Methuselah surviving the flood. It also follows that the scribal alterations in LXX do not

tions and line of reasoning. Whatever Larsson's general approach to the Scriptures is, that does not necessarily invalidate his work on a given issue. By refusing to consider Larsson's work on the Genesis genealogies, Smith substitutes ideological disagreement for a more proper consideration of Larsson's well-reasoned arguments and the facts that support them. (Smith also summarily rejects Hendel, "The Text of Genesis 1–11," and Klein, "Archaic Chronologies," for the same reason.)

³⁰ Some try to ameliorate this problem by noting that many LXX manuscripts have the following data for Methuselah: X = 187 years (as in MT); Y = 782 years (as in MT). This would then place Methuselah's death before the flood. For an example, see Smith, "The Case for the Septuagint's Chronology," 118, 125. Smith argues that Josephus used LXX for his base and notes that Josephus has X = 187 for Methuselah. The problem with this argument is that while Josephus's numbers mainly match LXX, in other instances they match MT instead of LXX. (See Josephus, *Ant.* 1:83–87/1.3.4.) Most significantly, not only do Josephus's numbers match MT for Methuselah, but also for the next man in the list, Lamech. Thus, one cannot argue for Josephus preserving an earlier and better LXX text here, since it appears that he follows LXX's numbers for Adam through Enoch, but he switches to MT's numbers for Methuselah and Lamech. In addition, one cannot rely on the numerous (mostly minuscule) LXX manuscripts that exhibit numbers for Methuselah that match MT's numbers, since many LXX manuscripts incorporate MT readings via the Hexapla from Origen's work in the mid-third century AD. Instead, the Göttingen Septuagint's apparatus (106) provides sufficient and convincing manuscript evidence that the numbers found in the best LXX manuscript tradition (including Codex Alexandrinus) are X = 167 years, Y = 802 years, and Z = 969 years.

³¹ Klein ("Archaic Chronologies," 261–62) suggests that X for Jared, Methuselah, and Lamech have been increased by 100 years in both MT and LXX. However, besides being a complete conjecture without citing any surviving manuscript evidence, this suggestion seems to miss the point: LXX makes X fairly uniform by adding 100 years for seven men in the genealogy, whereas SP achieves uniformity by reducing X for Jared, Methuselah, and Lamech. It is the irregularity of the ages in MT that recommends it as original.

assume that the genealogy consists of a continuous chain of father-to-son links. However, the scribe sought to overcome perceived logical difficulties in the text when making his alterations in this genealogy. His alterations, therefore, are consonant with other such alterations found throughout LXX Genesis.

b. *SP's pre-diluvian genealogy.* SP's Genesis 5 genealogy generally uses the same numbers as MT except for three men: Jared, Methuselah, and Lamech. Since in general SP appears to share an early textual affinity with LXX, this argues that the numbers in LXX were a later scribal intervention after SP's Hebrew base text split from LXX's Hebrew base.

The cases of the differing numbers for Jared, Methuselah, and Lamech can be explained by assuming that a scribe reasoned that the genealogy was a list of father-to-son generations and that the numbers in this genealogy could be used to determine the date of the flood. These assumptions for MT would place Methuselah's death in the year of the flood. So, SP's alterations were designed to accomplish two things.

First, the lower X years for these three men makes their age when generating a descendant align more closely with the ages of Mehalalel and Enoch. Jared's X years were reduced by 100 in comparison to MT and LXX to yield 62. Then, to make him die in the flood instead of after it, his Y and Z numbers were adjusted to 785 and 847 respectively to place his death in the year of the flood. For Methuselah, his X years were reduced by 100 in comparison to LXX but 120 in comparison to MT. (This argues that LXX's X number for Methuselah [167] is more original than MT's [187].) Finally, Lamech's numbers now needed to be adjusted so that he did not die after the flood. His X years were changed to 63 to place him in line with the X numbers for Kenan through Methuselah (70, 65, 62, 65, 67). Then Y was adjusted to 600 to preserve Z as 653, exactly 100 years less than Lamech's lifespan in LXX. These alterations served to place his death in the year of the flood. Moreover, this follows a general pattern seen in the textual variants throughout Genesis—LXX and SP share a common textual descent, since it appears that the SP scribe was working from a text that was similar to LXX's Hebrew base text.

Second, these adjustments also solved another feature of the genealogy that may have troubled the scribes: The otherwise unremarkable man Methuselah is the oldest man in Genesis in MT and LXX. He outstrips both the original man Adam (first in the genealogy) and Noah, who alone among his contemporaries was favored by God (Gen 6:8) and who survived the flood (last man in the genealogy). In this way the perceived scandal of Methuselah, the oldest man in Genesis, dying in the flood is overcome by having him joined by his grandfather Jared and his son Lamech all of whom died in the flood year according to SP. Moreover, Methuselah is no longer the oldest man in SP Genesis: Now that Methuselah's lifespan has been reduced to 720 years, he is surpassed by the prototypical man Adam (930 years) and by the faithful Noah (950 years; Gen 9:29).

Like LXX, SP's text has been adjusted to avoid perceived logical difficulties. While SP's text shows less of a tendency to make such changes than does LXX, it is a characteristic shared by both traditions.

c. *MT's pre-diluvian genealogy.* While it appears that the Genesis 5 genealogy in both LXX and SP has been adjusted to avoid logical difficulties, there is no such indication of this in the MT's version. However, there are two places where MT appears to have suffered some type of corruption.

Methuselah's X years in MT are 187 as opposed to LXX's 167 and SP's 67. This suggests that MT's number is secondary and perhaps a simple copyist's error. The correct number is likely 167 as in LXX. However, both LXX and MT agree that Methuselah's lifespan (Z) was 969 years. This implies that in MT Methuselah's Y years were adjusted 20 years downward by a (later?) scribe who noticed that otherwise X plus Y would not be equal to Z.

Lamech's numbers in MT likewise appear to be a problem when compared to LXX and SP.³² Starting with Z, it ought to be noted that $Z^{SP} = Z^{LXX} - 100$ (see discussion above). It is likely that LXX preserves the better reading. So, what explains Z^{MT} ? The name *Lamech* appears in two separate genealogies in Genesis: There is a Lamech who is a descendant of Cain (Gen 4:17–24). That Lamech associated himself with the number 77 (Gen 4:24). The Lamech in Genesis 5 is the father of the godly Noah. If the murderous braggart Lamech of Genesis 4 is associated with 77, then the more noble Lamech of Genesis 5 should be associated with a greater number based on seven: 777. After making this ideological change for Lamech's Z years, corresponding adjustments to X and Y years were needed. One way would have been to increase Y by 24 years to 589 and allow X to remain 188 as in LXX. However, this would have produced a number that did not at all resemble the original Y (i.e., LXX's 565). To preserve both X and Y with numbers resembling their originals, the scribe increased Y by 30 to 595 and reduced X by 8, yielding 182.

d. *Summary comments.* None of the three textual traditions preserve an unaltered pre-diluvian genealogy. However, in keeping with the general characteristics of their traditions LXX and SP present systematically altered texts to ameliorate perceived logical difficulties. In contrast, the changes in MT are not systematic throughout the genealogy. Instead, changes concerning Methuselah appear to have arisen through a copyist's error, while changes for Lamech seem to be ideologically driven.

3. *Genesis 11:10–26.* The numbers preserved among the three traditions in the post-diluvian genealogy are presented in Table 4. The general relationship among the three traditions is:

$$X^{MT} + 100 = X^{SP} = X^{LXX}$$

$$Y^{MT} = Y^{LXX} \text{ and } Y^{MT/LXX} - 100 = Y^{SP}$$

This holds for all except Shem at the beginning of the list and Terah at the end of the list. For Nahor the increase in X from MT to SP and LXX is fifty instead of 100, and SP correspondingly reduces Y by fifty.

³² Klein's discussion of Lamech's entry in the genealogy ("Archaic Chronologies," 261–62) contains points in common with the discussion in this article.

Table 4
Life Event Numbers in the Genesis 11 Genealogy

	Year X	Year Y	Year Z
	Age When Generated Descendant	Remaining Years of Life	Lifespan
	MT/SP/LXX	MT/SP/LXX	SP
Shem	100/100/100	500/500/500	600
Arpachshad	35/135/135	403/303/430	438
Cainan ³³	---/---/130	---/---/330	---
Shelah	30/130/130	403/303/330	433
Eber	34/134/134	430/270/370	404
Peleg	30/130/130	209/109/209	239
Reu	32/132/132	207/107/207	239
Serug	30/130/130	200/100/200	230
Nahor	29/79/79	119/69/129	148
Terah	70/70/70		

a. *LXX's post-diluvian genealogy.* Once again, given the general tendencies exhibited in LXX, it ought to be expected that LXX's Genesis 11 genealogy has been systematically altered to avoid a perceived logical difficulty. That difficulty would have been fairly obvious to anyone who desired to make chronological calculations by assuming that the genealogy preserves a continuous series of father-to-son notices from Shem to Terah: The resulting calculations based on MT would lead one to conclude that all of Abram's post-flood ancestors from Noah to Terah were

³³ Cainan is no doubt a late addition to LXX in an attempt by Christian scribes to harmonize the text of Genesis to that of Luke 3:36, where it probably also was a secondary reading introduced via parablepsis. See Andrew E. Steinmann, "Challenging the Authenticity of Cainan," *JETS* 60 (2017): 697–711. For the alternate theory that Cainan was an insertion into LXX Genesis 11 from Genesis 5 to produce ten generations, as in the Genesis 5 genealogy; see Klein, "Archaic Chronologies," 258, and Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1–11*, 74. In either case, Steinmann, Klein, and Hendel agree that the ages given for Cainan were taken from Shelah and, therefore, demonstrate that this name is a later insertion into LXX Genesis. Moreover, it has long been noted that Cainan is missing in the parallel genealogy in 1 Chr 1:18 in MT, SP, and LXX, making it likely that Cainan was inserted into LXX Genesis 11 after LXX Chronicles was translated (i.e., after c. 130 BC). See August Dillmann, *Genesis*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Clark, 1897), 397; Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, 3rd ed., HKAT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 155; Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1–11*, 74; Jeremy Hughes, *Secrets of the Times: Myth and History in Biblical Chronology*, JSOTSup 66 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1999), 9; Steinmann, "Challenging," 705–6.

alive when he was born. Moreover, Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, and Serug would have been alive when Ishmael and Isaac were born. When Jacob was born, Shem and Eber would still have been alive. Clearly, that is ridiculous. Moreover, the presence of so many extremely old ancestors in Abram's day seems to fly in the face of Genesis 17:17. There Abraham doubted that a man 100 years old was vigorous enough to have a son. If Shem and Eber were still alive and well over 300 years old, why would Abraham thought that a man of 100 could not father a child?³⁴

To solve this problem the text was altered by adding 100 years to X for each person in the genealogy except Shem, Terah, and Nahor (whose age was increased only by fifty years). As a result, it would appear as if only Abram's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were alive when he was born.³⁵ Thus, LXX once again is the result of conscious intervention by a scribe who was attempting to overcome a perceived logical conundrum in the text. Since these alterations assume that the genealogy is a chain of father-to-son generations, whereas LXX's alterations in Genesis 5 do not make this assumption, it is likely that the two genealogies were altered by different scribes at different times.

Three other more minor anomalies are also present in LXX. The remaining years of life (Y) of Arpachshad are given as 430, whereas MT has 403 and SP has 303. SP also lists the lifespan (Z) of Arpachshad as 438, which is the total of X and Y in both MT and SP. The number in LXX is a mistake resulting from a copyist error that accidentally substituted שלשים שנה, "thirty years," for שלש שנים, "three years."³⁶ The same applies to Shelah with the additional accidental replacement of "four hundred" with "three hundred."³⁷ Finally, Nahor's remaining years of life (Y) are given as 129 instead of MT's 119. SP tends to increase X^{MT} and decrease Y^{MT} throughout the genealogy. Here both the increase and decrease are 50, so SP's 79 confirms that MT's reading is original and LXX's is a simple copyist error that changed עשרה, "nineteen" to תשע עשרים, "twenty-nine."³⁸

b. *SP's post-diluvian genealogy.* The changes on display in SP accomplish much the same as those in LXX, although to a greater extent, since only Terah would have been alive when Abram was born. In addition, SP harmonizes the structure of the Genesis 11 genealogy to the Genesis 5 genealogy by adding notice of the total years lived by each person, obtained by summing X and Y to produce Z.

c. *MT's post-diluvian genealogy.* MT appears to be an unaltered genealogy, since it would have made little sense to change the numbers in SP or LXX to produce the genealogy as it stands in MT. Yet there is one suspicious number, the remaining years of life (Y) for Eber (430 years). LXX reads 370 and, as expected, SP's 270 is 100 less. Thus, MT's 430 is a mistake. As Klein explains: "MT should be 370: its

³⁴ See also Steinmann, "Genesis Genealogies," 344–45.

³⁵ Klein ("Archaic Genealogies," 258) notes that Exodus 20:5 suggests that three or four generations might be alive at the same time.

³⁶ Klein, 258.

³⁷ Klein, 258.

³⁸ Klein, 258.

present reading results from a confusion with the age given for Eber at the birth of his first born *שנה וארבע ושלשים* and a subsequent metathesis:

[מאות שנה] שלשים וארבע.”³⁹

d. *Summary comments.* None of the three textual traditions preserve an unaltered post-diluvian genealogy. However, in keeping with the general characteristics of their traditions, LXX and SP present systematically altered texts to ameliorate perceived logical difficulties. LXX also contains three copyist’s errors. In contrast, the MT appears to retain the original form of the genealogy except for the Y years of Eber, which is a copyist’s error.

V. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

A thorough comparison of MT, SP, and LXX throughout Genesis reveals the textual nature of each of these traditions. MT is the most conservative, having only a few intentional changes introduced by scribes. SP and LXX show signs of much more active scribal alteration for purposes of grammatical correction and harmonization, with LXX exhibiting a pervasive tendency toward harmonization. In addition, the pattern in Genesis of agreement or disagreement in secondary readings reveals SP and LXX share affinities that mark them as originating in a single textual tradition that separated early from MT before they separated from each other. Subsequently, all three continued to have changes introduced.

An understanding of what is typical for secondary readings in each of these traditions is important for text-critical analysis, as the examination of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 above reveals. While this article deals only with Genesis, it demonstrates that for OT textual issues one must be thoroughly familiar with a book’s textual profile in the various surviving textual traditions before making confident assertions about which particular reading presents the best preserved text.

³⁹ Klein, 258.