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978-0-521-07796-5 - Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in
the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature

Christopher D. Stanley

Excerpt

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PART I

The issues

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DEFINING THE ISSUES

1. Introduction

The practice of incorporating earlier materials into the body of a later composition is as old as literacy itself. Where the language of the earlier source text is used to advance the literary or rhetorical purposes of the later author, the technique is termed “quotation” or “citation.”¹ Quotations can be used to provide authoritative grounding for a questionable assertion, to illustrate a point made elsewhere in more prosaic form, to embellish the style of an independent composition, or simply to impress potential readers with an author’s literary knowledge. Western literature is replete with echoes of long-forgotten works whose language thus remains part of the living literary heritage of the culture.

As used in the present study, the term “citation technique” refers to a relatively narrow and technical aspect of this broader phenomenon of “quotation.” The word “technique” is employed here in the sense of the Greek τέχνη, designating the practical means by which a particular project is carried out.² The issue here is not how faithfully a given citation adheres to the sense of its original context, nor how the older language functions in its new rhetorical setting, but rather the mechanics of the citation process itself. Included under this heading are such practical matters as whether an author quotes from memory or from some sort of written text, what cues

¹ Though differences in meaning can be established under certain circumstances, the terms “quotation” and “citation” have become practically synonymous in normal English usage (see *Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd edn), and will be used interchangeably in the present study. The term “later author” refers to the person who reproduces the wording of an earlier source within a new composition.

² Cf. LSJ, s.v. τέχνη, III: “an art or craft, i.e. a set of rules, system or method of making or doing.” Socrates (according to Plato) used the term to deride the practical pursuits of the Sophists over against his own concern for pure knowledge (γνώσις).

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the author uses to signal the presence of a citation, how quotations are ordered within the primary composition, and how the author handles the wording of his source text.³ The latter question is especially important for the present study.

The term “citation” is also used in a more restricted sense here than in most other studies. The question of what constitutes a “citation” is one of the most controverted issues in the modern study of ancient quotations.⁴ For now it will suffice to note that the term “citation” is limited here to those places where the author’s appeal to an outside source is so blatant that any attentive reader would recognize the secondary character of the materials in question.⁵ An inquiry into an author’s “citation technique” will therefore focus on the mechanics by which the author attempts to integrate the language of his source text into an entirely new rhetorical and linguistic context, as seen in his explicit quotations.

2. A confusion of voices

Very little reading is required to discover what widely divergent explanations have been put forward by modern investigators to account for the seemingly cavalier way in which the apostle Paul handles the wording of his biblical quotations. This multiplication of theories can be traced in part to the vagaries of the materials themselves. While the bulk of Paul’s quotations are marked by some sort of formal introductory expression (“as it is written,” “Scripture says,” etc.), there remain numerous places where Paul reproduces the wording of the Jewish Scriptures with little or no sign to his readers that a quotation was ever intended.⁶ Investigators who take

³ The use of the masculine gender when referring to ancient authors here and elsewhere is both intentional and unavoidable, since it appears that all of the documents examined here were composed by males.

⁴ The whole issue will be examined more fully in chap. 2.

⁵ In practical terms, this means passages that (a) are introduced by an explicit citation formula (“as it is written,” etc.); (b) are accompanied by a clear interpretive gloss; or (c) stand in clear syntactical tension with their present linguistic environment. The justification for this narrow approach is set forth in chap. 2.

⁶ The question of which of these unmarked texts represent genuine “quotations” has divided students of Paul to this day (cf. the divergent lists in the studies by Ellis, Longenecker, Smith, and Koch listed in the bibliography). Even the Nestle and UBS editions of the Greek New Testament differ over the presence of citations in such places as Rom 2.6, 4.9, 4.23, 9.20, 11.2, 1 Cor 9.10, 14.25, 15.25, 2 Cor 3.16, 9.7, 9.10, and Gal 2.16. The Nestle text is typically the more “liberal” of the two in such cases, accepting the citation character of all but Rom 4.9 and Gal 2.16. The problem of identifying Pauline citations is discussed at length in chap. 2.

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these verses into account must then decide where to draw the line between genuine “quotations” and other less immediate forms of engagement with the biblical text such as “paraphrase,” “allusion,” and “reminiscence.” Estimates range from less than a hundred to several hundred “quotations” in Paul’s letters, depending on how the researcher resolves these matters of definition.⁷

Additional problems arise from the variety of situations in which the materials are employed. All of the passages in question appear in a series of letters addressed to Christian churches of diverse backgrounds and varying levels of maturity, each with its own special relation to the apostle and each facing a unique set of problems. In some instances a single verse is cited in isolation, while in other places the texts are arrayed in clusters or as part of a composite unit. The reasons behind Paul’s appeals to Scripture likewise vary, from offering authoritative grounding for a specific theological pronouncement, to illustrating a type of behavior that the readers are encouraged to imitate or avoid, to emphasizing a key element in a developing argument. Failure to take these differences into account has led many a researcher to oversimplify the issues at stake.

Complicating the task still further are various unresolved questions concerning the status of the underlying biblical texts (both Greek and Hebrew) in Paul’s day. Here, too, the complexities of the evidence have often been underestimated by students of Paul’s quotations. For those more familiar with the problems, on the other hand, the temptation has been to despair of all efforts to distinguish between a genuine authorial adaptation and the use of a deviant text in those places where the language of Paul’s quotations appears to diverge from the “standard” wording of his ancestral Scriptures.⁸

Nevertheless, the diversity of opinions that investigators have entertained concerning the way Paul handled the wording of his quotations cannot be attributed entirely to the irregularity of the

⁷ The most extensive lists appear in W. Dittmar, *Vetus Testamentum in Novo: Die alttestamentlichen Paralleles des Neuen Testaments im Wortlaut der Urtexte und der Septuaginta* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1903) and Eugen Hühn, *Die alttestamentlichen Citate und Reminiscenzen im Neuen Testamente*, 2 vols. (Freiburg: Mohr, 1899–1900).

⁸ The use of the word “standard” in this connection is of course highly anachronistic, since the texts of both the Greek and Hebrew Bibles remained relatively fluid throughout the period in question (see chap. 2). As used here (and throughout the present study), the word “standard” refers to those editions of the biblical text that eventually came to be regarded as normative within the Jewish synagogue and the Christian church respectively – the Masoretic Hebrew text and the Greek “Septuagint” as it appears in the great uncials (Σ, A, B) of the fourth and fifth centuries.

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materials. Deeper issues have in fact set the tone and agenda for the debate in this area until fairly recent days. Many of the earlier modern studies were carried out with the express intention of either disparaging or defending the overall veracity of the New Testament authors by examining how faithfully they adhered to the wording and sense of their biblical quotations. Against those who sought to impugn the apostle's integrity on this score, the orthodox defenders of Paul repeatedly affirmed the fundamental reliability of his citations with regard to both the sense and the language of the biblical text. Typical of these earlier studies were numerous attempts to reconcile the wording of Paul's Greek citations with that of their presumed Hebrew *Vorlage*.⁹ As further studies made it increasingly clear that Paul had drawn his quotations from the Greek "Septuagint" with little or no recourse to the Hebrew, the attention of the apologists turned to demonstrating the faithfulness of the Septuagint to the original sense of the Hebrew, at least in those passages cited by the apostle Paul.¹⁰ With this shift in strategy came the call to explain a whole series of instances where Paul's quotations appeared to diverge from the language of both the Greek and Hebrew texts of Scripture. Out of this new round of activity arose a number of judgments that soon came to be regarded as axiomatic in the field, e.g. that Paul normally quoted loosely from memory, though without straying from the basic sense of the (Hebrew) biblical text; that he sometimes "corrected" the wording of his Greek *Vorlage* to accord with his own reading of the Hebrew original; and that he drew at least some of his quotations from Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic biblical texts no longer extant.¹¹ Only in more recent times has it occurred to Paul's defenders to challenge the basic notion that the purposeful adaptation of a citation must

⁹ Though lambasted by conservatives in his own day, William Whiston's attempts (*An Essay Toward Restoring the True Text of the Old Testament* (London: J. Senex, 1722)) to show that the New Testament authors always quoted correctly from a reliable Hebrew text that had been corrupted by Jewish leaders in the second century C.E. (see further below) only carried the conservative argument to its logical conclusion.

¹⁰ Argued as early as 1650 by L. Capellus ("Quaestiones de locis parallelis Veteris et Novi Testamenti," in *Critica sacra* (Paris: S. et G. Cramoisy, 1650), 443–557), the idea that Paul quoted primarily from the Septuagint was finally established as one of the "assured results" of nineteenth-century biblical scholarship through the careful studies of G. Roepe (*De Veteris Testamenti locrum in apostolorum libris allegatione* (n.p., 1827) and especially Emil Kautzsch, *De Veteris Testamenti locis a Paulo Apostolo allegatis* (Leipzig: Metzger und Wittig, 1869).

¹¹ Each of these explanations is discussed further below.

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somehow reflect a measure of dishonesty or even moral turpitude on the part of the apostle.¹²

With these debates in the background, it becomes easier to understand how certain explanations of Paul's use of Scripture have come to be hallowed over the years through frequent repetition. But these earlier conflicts cannot begin to account for the differing judgments of more recent investigators for whom apologetic concerns have been removed (for the most part) to a decidedly secondary position. At this point one must begin to ask more fundamental questions about the way researchers have typically envisioned their task in this area. Although it has become common for broader treatments of Paul's use of Scripture to offer at least passing remarks on the subject of how Paul handled the wording of his quotations, it seems that no monograph has ever been published that deals exclusively with this issue.¹³ Equally hard to come by are any systematic examinations of how Paul's citation technique compares with the practices of other writers in the ancient world. What one sees instead is a series of theologically motivated studies whose focus

¹² An early exception was the German Johann Carpzov (*A Defense of the Hebrew Bible*, trans. Moses Marcus (London: Bernard Lintot, 1729)), whose forward-looking views deserve extended quotation: "Sometimes the Strength of the Argument, as taken rather from the Sense than from the Words, obliged them [the New Testament authors] to recede from the strict Tenor of the Words in the Original: Sometimes Brevity required it, when Things were to be summarily mentioned, just as much as would serve the Purpose: Sometimes a fuller Illustration that was to be added to the Words of the Old Testament by way of Explication, required it . . . Sometimes the Application of a Testimony to the present Purpose, which might be properly made by changing the Words of the Prophecy a little: Sometimes a synonymous Expression wanted to be unfolded and explain'd . . . Finally, at other times we need look no farther than the absolute Freedom and good Pleasure of the Holy Ghost, according to which he thought proper to substitute one Word in place of another; which ought so much the less to be wondered at or blamed, as it is a very common Thing in Quotations of this Kind, whether sacred or prophane [*sic*], sometimes only to give the Sense in different and fewer Words; sometimes to repeat the very same Words, but turn'd a little to our Design and Purpose, and accommodated to the Connexion, yet without incurring the Charge of Corruption . . ." (111–12).

¹³ The closest to a monograph treatment is probably Emil Kautzsch's 1869 Leipzig dissertation (see note 10), though Kautzsch's primary concern is to establish the nature of Paul's *Vorlage* and not to examine the way he handled the wording of his quotations. The roughly contemporary study by James Scott (*Principles of New Testament Quotation*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1877)) includes a number of useful comments on the citation technique of the New Testament authors as a whole, but none specifically on Paul. Joseph Bonsirven's *Exégèse rabbinique et exégèse paulinienne* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1939), though primarily a comparison of exegetical methods, includes a brief discussion of how Paul and the rabbis handled the wording of their quotations (327–45). The recent discussion by Dietrich-Alex Koch (*Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986), 102–98), while not a separate monograph, is by far the best treatment to date.

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remains fixed on such ideological questions as how Paul the Christian viewed his ancestral Scriptures and what broader principles guided his application of the biblical text to the concerns of his churches. Comparisons with contemporary literature abound at this level, including the usual remarks about how Paul's exegetical methods relate to the seven rules of Hillel, the "contemporizing" hermeneutic of Qumran, and the allegorical interpretations of Philo. Only rarely, however, does one find even a brief discussion of such technical questions as: what differentiates a "citation" from other levels of engagement with the biblical text; what sorts of evidence might indicate whether an author is quoting from memory or from some sort of written text; how an authorial adaptation might be distinguished from the use of a non-"standard" textual *Vorlage*; what types of adaptations occur more or less frequently in the writings of a given author; and what typically takes place in the construction of a combined or conflated citation. The present study has been designed to fill this gap.

3. Proposed solutions

This does not mean, of course, that proposals are lacking to account for the evident discrepancies between the wording of Paul's quotations and the language of his presumed *Vorlage*. At least five different approaches can be identified in existing studies of Paul's use of Scripture.¹⁴

(1) *The problem does not exist.* The most radical and consistent proponent of this position was the Englishman William Whiston,

¹⁴ A number of good surveys of scholarship on the broad question of Paul's use of Scripture (and the related issue of "the use of the Old Testament in the New") can be found already in the literature, and need not be repeated here. See (in order of appearance) F. A. G. Tholuck, "The Old Testament in the New," trans. Charles A. Aiken, *BSac* 11 (1854), 569–76; C. H. Toy, *Quotations in the New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1884), xxxvii–xliii; August Clemen, *Der Gebrauch des Alten Testaments in den neutestamentlichen Schriften* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1895), 1–11; Hans Vollmer, *Die alttestamentlichen Citate bei Paulus* (Freiburg: Mohr, 1895), 6–9; Otto Michel, *Paulus und seine Bibel* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1929; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), 1–7; E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 2–5; Merrill Miller, "Targum, Midrash, and the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament," *JSJ* 2 (1971), 64–78; I. Howard Marshall, "An Assessment of Recent Developments," in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1–21; and Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1989), 5–14.

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who argued in 1722 that the disparities between the wording of the New Testament citations and present Greek and Hebrew biblical texts should be attributed, not to a supposed “loose” citation technique on the part of the apostolic writers, but rather to a willful corruption of the Hebrew Bible by Jewish leaders under the guidance of Rabbi Akiba in the second century C.E. This corrupted tradition was introduced into Christian circles by Origen and Jerome, both of whom received their Hebrew texts directly from Jewish rabbis.¹⁵ As Whiston sees it, the reliability of the New Testament quotations is confirmed by their overall closeness to the language of the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch (“the greatest treasure relating to those times now extant in the whole Christian world”),¹⁶ the absence of objections from either the apostles or their Jewish opponents (who of course would have checked their references), the unanimous testimony of the early church fathers, and the universal religious duty to offer accurate transcriptions of any sacred text.¹⁷ Minor adaptations and possibly even slips of memory may indeed have occurred on occasion,¹⁸ but the bulk of the passages adduced by the New Testament authors were rendered correctly in accordance with the common Greek and Hebrew texts of their day. Only through the painstaking process of textual criticism, for which the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Gallican Psalter of Jerome, and the New Testament quotations are especially valuable witnesses, can the present Greek and Hebrew texts be restored to their original purity.¹⁹

The provocative nature of Whiston’s proposal raised firestorms of controversy in the church of his day. Rebuttals were published almost immediately. On the one side, the esteemed Hebrew scholar Johann Carpzov decried Whiston’s reconstruction of history as

¹⁵ *Essay*, 99, 133, 149–62, 220–81 (on Jewish corruption of the text); 17–18, 112, 133, 253–4, 264–5 (on Origen and the LXX); 102, 284 (on Jerome, “the grand Introducer and Supporter of the present Hebrew among Christians” (102)).

¹⁶ Whiston regarded the Samaritan Pentateuch as (for the most part) a faithful and uncorrupt copy of the original Hebrew Pentateuch (164–9, 329), even going so far as to declare it “doubtful whether the Samaritans ever admitted any one voluntary Corruption into their whole Pentateuch” (168). Even the original designation of Mt. Gerizim as the proper place for sacrifice has been corrupted by the Jews, not the Samaritans (168–9).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3–17, 287–328.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 129–33, 300–17.

¹⁹ Whiston also allows for the use of the Syriac version, the Targumim, and the quotations of Josephus in reconstructing the Hebrew text and the Old Latin, the early Jewish revisions, and the quotations of Philo and the early church fathers for correcting the LXX (329–33).

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thoroughly implausible and argued for the primacy and integrity of the Hebrew text over against the Samaritan Pentateuch and the other versions.²⁰ At the same time, Anthony Collins pointed out that the bulk of the differences between the present Greek and Hebrew manuscripts and the New Testament citations show no anti-Christian bias, but rather reflect the kinds of errors that occur naturally in the course of transmission.²¹ More recently, the discovery at Qumran of Hebrew biblical manuscripts that date from before the Common Era has rendered Whiston's position not only untenable but actually obsolete for modern scholars. The continuing importance of Whiston's study lies not in its positive contributions to scholarship, but rather in its demonstration of the absurdities that inevitably result from any serious attempt to defend the verbal accuracy of the New Testament quotations.

More notable are the labors of a steady stream of investigators whose studies echo Whiston's concern, if not his method, for minimizing the apparent discrepancies between the language of the New Testament quotations and modern printed editions of the Greek and Hebrew Bibles. Common to these researchers is the notion that Paul remained faithful at all times to the original sense of the verses he cited, even if he did diverge on occasion (for whatever reasons) from their precise wording. Here it is not so much the presence of authorial adaptations that is being contested as their significance. Investigators who approach Paul's quotations from this perspective normally work from one of two convictions: (a) that Paul was fundamentally a creative biblical theologian whose appeals to Scripture can be understood (if not approved) by anyone sensitive enough to view the original context of his quotations through the eyes of a first-century Jewish-Christian interpreter, or (b) that free adaptation of the biblical text is in some way inconsistent with fundamental theological notions concerning the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. For writers in the first category (e.g. C. H. Dodd and A. T. Hanson),²² the primary concern seems to be to

²⁰ On Carpzov's views, see note 12.

²¹ *A Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* (London, n. p., 1724). The tone of the rebuttals was actually more heated than the summaries would indicate: Carpzov calls Whiston an "Enemy to the Scriptures" whose work displays a "mortal hatred to the Word of God" (ii), while Collins observes (correctly) that "the design of Mr. Whiston is to vindicate the citations made from the Old in the New Testament" (215).

²² C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Nisbet, 1952) and *The Old Testament in the New* (London: University of London Press, Athlone Press, 1952); A. T. Hanson, *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1965); *Studies in*

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defend the apostle against charges that he was typically “loose” and even arbitrary in the way he applied the language of Scripture to the needs of his congregations. For those in the second group, whose long lineage includes such authors as Thomas Randolph, F. A. G. Tholuck, David M. Turpie, Joseph Bonsirven, Roger Nicole, and Walter C. Kaiser,²³ it is the theological implications of these same accusations that arouses concern.

When it comes to the question of how Paul handled the wording of his quotations, however, both groups of authors stand in virtual agreement: any adaptation that might conceivably be traced back to Paul must be regarded as purely incidental to his purpose in adducing the passage. To think that Paul might have actively manipulated the language of Scripture to bring it into line with his own literary and/or rhetorical purposes is anathema to these investigators.²⁴ While most of the authors surveyed seem willing to accept a measure of Pauline intervention into the wording of the text, the whole issue is typically shunted to the side (if it is addressed at all) in favor of the more urgent task of defending Paul’s method of interpreting the biblical text. Attempts to explain why Paul handled the text in such

Paul’s Technique and Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974; London: SPCK, 1974); *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SPCK, 1980); *The Living Utterances of God* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1983).

²³ T. Randolph, *The Prophecies and Other Texts Cited in the New Testament* (Oxford: J. and J. Fletcher, 1782); F. A. G. Tholuck, *Das Alte Testament im Neuen Testament*, 6th edn (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1877) (see note 14); David M. Turpie, *The Old Testament in the New* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1868) and *The New Testament View of the Old* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1872); Joseph Bonsirven (see note 13); Roger Nicole, “The New Testament Use of the Old Testament,” in *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 137–51; Walter C. Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985). See also the introductory comments in Gleason L. Archer and G. C. Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey* (Chicago: Moody, 1983), ix–xxxii.

²⁴ A representative statement from each camp will demonstrate the common attitude. According to A. T. Hanson (*Studies*, 147), “Paul never consciously ‘moulded’ texts. When we do find him following this or that tradition of interpretation it usually proves to be an accepted tradition, not Paul’s own invention. If the present work has shown anything, it has shown that Paul often regarded his Scripture citations as proofs. Proof texts that have been arbitrarily tampered with are ineffective as proofs.” Walter C. Kaiser, while allowing for the possibility of paraphrastic renderings in the New Testament, insists that “the text cited [must] be totally authentic, according to the high views of Scripture fostered by the Reformers and their doctrinal heirs today ... where that word or limited word-set *on which the argument hinges* in those passages when the appeal to the OT is for the purpose of authoritatively supporting the doctrine, practice, or view being presented in the NT” (5; *italics his*). See further the article by Darrell L. Bock, “Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New,” *BSac* 142 (1985), 209–23, 306–19.