

Job or Isaiah?

What Does Paul Quote in Rom 11:35?

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Abstract: Romans 11:35 is almost unanimously treated as a quotation from Job 41:3. Although it differs significantly from preserved Greek and Hebrew readings of that verse, few have questioned this attribution. In this article, I will argue that Rom 11:35 has nothing to do with Job but is a verbatim quotation from Isaiah. Scholars have mostly ignored the fact that Rom 11:35 agrees word for word with a Greek textual variant, a remarkably well attested plus in Isa 40:14. In the previous verse in Romans, Paul quotes Isa 40:13. I will demonstrate that it is improbable that the New Testament has influenced the textual transmission of the Greek Isaiah. Instead, the plus was probably in the version of Isaiah known to Paul. Moreover, I will suggest that the plus represents the original translation, offer a completely new reconstruction of its textual history, and thereby call into question the text-critical decision that Joseph Ziegler made in his edition of Isaiah. The final part of the article offers some observations concerning the scholarly discussion on Rom 11:35 and its attribution to Job and seeks to answer the question of why the plus has not been considered in detail before.

Keywords: Septuagint, Isaiah, Job, Romans, quotations, Old Testament in the New Testament

1. Introduction

Occasionally scholarly assumptions are repeated from decade to decade without anyone questioning their validity.¹ This appears to be the case with the quotation in Rom 11:35, which is almost unanimously attributed to Job 41:3.² In the 28th edition of Nestle-Aland, the verse is in italics and Job 41:3 is presented as a self-evident source. That its wording deviates in striking ways from all known versions of Job 41:3 has then produced a series of creative solutions

¹ I would like to offer my warm thanks to the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies for its hospitality during my time as a visiting scholar when I worked on this article.

² Note the differences in Job's versification: in some English translations 40:11. Steve Moyise and Richard N. Longenecker, however, do not mention Job 41:3 at all but argue that Job 35:7 is probably the text closest to Paul's quotation: Steve Moyise, "Quotations," in *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley, SymS 50 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 16; Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 909.

concerning the version of Job known to Paul. Few scholars have devoted any attention to the curious fact that Paul's quotation corresponds verbatim to a well-attested variant reading in Isa 40:14 LXX. Those who have observed the textual variant have explained it as an example of the Letter to the Romans influencing the textual transmission of the Greek Isaiah.³

In this article, I will first examine the previous attempts to explain the origin of Paul's wording on the basis of Job 41:3. I will then propose a different solution to the problem: I will argue that the most probable explanation for Paul's curious wording is that, contrary to the scholarly consensus, it never had anything to do with Job in the first place. Paul quotes a textual variant of Isa 40:14 instead. In fact, I will argue that this variant probably represents the original translation and that the text-critical decision Joseph Ziegler made in his edition of Septuagint Isaiah may not be the most plausible one.⁴ I will then explore the origin and development of the plus in the textual transmission of Isaiah. Finally, I will discuss the implications of my findings and address the questions of why the assumed connection between Rom 11:35 and Job 41:3 has not been questioned before and why the variant reading in Isa 40:14 has mostly been ignored.

2. The Problem and Previous Solutions

Before analyzing the wording of Rom 11:35 and its relation to Job 41:3, it is useful to briefly examine its immediate context, which plays a role in the following argumentation.

2.1 The Context: Rom 11:33–36

Romans 11:35 is part of a hymn-like doxology in Rom 11:33–36 that concludes the discussion of Israel, the gentiles, and God's faithfulness in Rom 9–11. The rhetorical questions in the hymn express wonder and amazement in the face of the divine plan sketched by Paul in the previous argumentation. In the middle, the doxology contains two unmarked quotations (in italics).⁵

33 O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.

How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

34 *For who has known the mind of the Lord?*

Or who has been his counselor? (Isa 40:13)

35 *Or who has first given to him that he should be repaid?* (assumed Job 41:3)

³ Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, IX–XVI, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 591; Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus*, BHT 69 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986), 51; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 742 n. 19. Hofheinz briefly notes the possibility that the words could have been in Paul's text of Isaiah, yet he deems the evidence inconclusive (without further analysis) and goes no further with his observation (Walter Hofheinz, *An Analysis of the Usage and Influence of Isaiah Chapters 40–66 in The New Testament* [PhD diss., Columbia University, 1964], 42–43). Wilk attributes the quotation to Job but does not exclude the possibility voiced by Hofheinz: Florian Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus*, FRLANT 179 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 309–10 n. 41. In [a chart on the Septuagint Online webpage](#), Joel Kalvesmaki cites the textual variant in Isa 40:14 and presents Rom 11:35 as a quotation of this verse, not mentioning Job at all. Unfortunately, he offers no discussion of the case.

⁴ I made this argument already in Katja Kujanpää, *The Rhetorical Functions of Scriptural Quotations in Romans: Paul's Argumentation by Quotations*, NovTSup 172 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 255–60, yet the present article offers a much more comprehensive and detailed discussion of the case.

⁵ Since nothing signals to the audience of the letter that the middle of the hymn derives from the scriptures, verses 34 and 35 can be viewed as quotations only from Paul's perspective.

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be glory forever! Amen.⁶

The first one of these quotations is perfectly unproblematic. It is an almost verbatim quotation from Isa 40:13 according to the Septuagint.⁷

Rom 11:34	Isa 40:13 LXX
τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου;	τίς ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου,
ἢ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο;	καὶ ⁸ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο
	ὃς συμβιβᾶ αὐτόν;

For the second quotation, the question of the origin of the doxology in 11:33–36 is of some importance. It has been suggested that the hymn is of pre-Pauline origin, which would mean that the use of the unmarked quotations would go back to an anonymous composer of the hymn. I have argued elsewhere that the hypothesis of the pre-Pauline origin rests on problematic assumptions and has no convincing arguments to support it.⁹ Particularly important is the fact that Paul also quotes Isa 40:13 in an earlier letter, in 1 Cor 2:16, which demonstrates his familiarity with the passage.¹⁰ Since the Pauline origin of the doxology appears to be the most plausible solution by far,¹¹ I will in the following argumentation assume his authorship. The main thesis of this article, however, is not dependent on this position.¹²

⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, the translations of primary texts are my own.

⁷ For the sake of clarity, the tables in this article do not reproduce all text-critical details found in critical editions but only those that are directly relevant to the discussion. The text of the New Testament is cited according to Nestle-Aland, 28th ed., the Septuagint according to *Isaias: Vetus Testamentum Graecum: Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum*, ed. Joseph Ziegler (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1939).

⁸ The following witnesses read ἦ (like Paul): 26 V 51^c C'' 403 407 538, the Bohairic, the Syro-Palestine translation, Clement, and Jerome. The reading may be a pre-Pauline variant that harmonizes the question with other questions in the immediate context.

⁹ See Kujanpää, *Rhetorical Functions*, 254–55. Those who oppose the Pauline origin of the doxology argue that it contains no “explicit Christian elements,” it includes *hapax legomena* in Paul’s letters, its structure is sophisticated, and it has close parallels in other Second Temple texts. None of these arguments is convincing. Paul has undeniably some skill in composing intricate chiasmic structures, and the very general parallels with Jewish wisdom literature probably only reflect his familiarity with that genre. The argument of “explicit Christian elements” is absurd: what would one expect in four verses? As for the vocabulary, πλοῦτος or the cognate verb is used five times in Romans, showing that this theme at least is firmly rooted in the letter.

¹⁰ In Romans Paul leaves the end of the verse unquoted, whereas in 1 Cor 2:16 he quotes the first and the third line (cf. the table above): τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, ὃς συμβιβᾶσει αὐτόν; This demonstrates his familiarity with the entire verse.

¹¹ Likewise, Günther Bornkamm, “The Praise of God,” in *Early Christian Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 105; Cranfield, *Romans*, 589; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, WBC 38B (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 698; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 633; Moo, *Romans*, 740.

¹² If one assumes a pre-Pauline Jewish or Christian origin for the hymn, what I argue about Paul applies to the anonymous composer of the hymn.

2.2 Rom 11:35 and Job 41:3 in Comparison

At first glance, when one compares Rom 11:35 with the readings of the Septuagint and the Masoretic text, the assumption that it represents a quotation from Job 41:3 appears extraordinary. With the Septuagint, it shares only the words ἢ τίς and καί, and it is not a straightforward translation of the Hebrew preserved in the Masoretic text either.

Rom 11:35	Job 41:3 LXX ¹³	Job 41:3 MT
ἢ τίς	ἢ τίς	כִּי
προέδωκεν αὐτῷ,	ἀντιστήσεται μοι ¹⁴	הִקְדִּימֵנִי
καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ	καὶ ὑπομενεῖ	וְאֶשְׁלֶם
Or who	Or who	Who
has first given to him	will withstand me	has confronted me
that he should be repaid	and endure	that I should repay

In the Hebrew Bible, the only other occurrence of the root קָדַם in *hiphil* (in *piel* “to be in front, to precede, to meet, to confront, to go before, to hasten”) is Amos 9:10, where it means “to meet.”¹⁵ However, the Vulgate appears to be already closer to the beginning of Rom 11:35: “Quis ante dedit mihi, ut reddam ei?”¹⁶ It appears that in Aramaic and in Rabbinic Hebrew, the *hiphil* form could have the meaning “to give first,” and this understanding is also reflected by the Targum of Job: “Who has anticipated me in the works of creation, that I should repay (him)?”¹⁷ The targum is cited as an example of an interpretive tradition of Job 41:3 that already existed in Paul’s time.¹⁸ The similarity between the readings of the Vulgate, the targum, and Romans regarding the first verb has been explained in different ways. Several commentators assume that Paul translated the Hebrew of Job 41:3 himself,¹⁹ typically without offering any

¹³ The Septuagint reading is cited according to *Job: Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum: Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum*, ed. Joseph Ziegler (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982).

¹⁴ Omitted by manuscript 710.

¹⁵ “קָדַם,” *DCH* 7:185–6. The dictionary presents a number of interpretive possibilities for Job 41:3: in addition to the alternative meanings “to give beforehand” (for which the verse would be the only occurrence) and “to confront”, it discusses the emendation כִּי הוּא קָדַמוּ וְיִשְׁלֶם (= *piel*): “Who has attacked him and remains safe?”

¹⁶ In Rom 11:35 the Vulgate reads as follows: *Aut quis prior dedit illi, et retribuetur ei?*

¹⁷ “וְאֶשְׁלֶם מִן אֶקְדִּימֵנִי בְעוֹבְדֵי בְרֵאשִׁית”, quoted according to David M. Stec, *The Text of the Targum of Job: An Introduction and Critical Edition*, AGJU 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1994). The translation above is from Céline Mangan, *The Targum of Job*, ArBib 15 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 88. Neither of the fragments of the targumim of Job among the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q157 and 11Q10) contains Job 41:3. As for Rabbinic interpretation, *Pesiqta Rabbati* 75a is often mentioned in connection with Rom 11:35; cf. Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch III: Die Briefe des Neuen Testaments und die Offenbarung Johannis* (München: Oskar Beck, 1926), 295; Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 679.

¹⁸ Cf. Anthony T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SPCK, 1980), 85, 93; Seifrid, “Romans,” 679.

¹⁹ Edward Earle Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957), 144 n. 3; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 720. Naselli’s view is typical: “Thus, the most plausible explanation of Rom 11:35 is that Paul translates the MT and adapts it to his context, namely, by changing the first-person pronoun to the third” (Andrew David Naselli, “Paul’s Use of Isaiah 40:13 and Job 41:3a (Eng. 41:11a) in Romans 11:34–35” [PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2010], 141–42).

linguistic analysis of such a translation. The Vulgate (and the targum) would then reflect the same understanding of the Hebrew that Paul already had. Other scholars propose that Paul knew a Greek translation that was based on an interpretation of the Hebrew also shared by Jerome (and the targum).²⁰ This idea of a variant Greek text is the essence of Berndt Schaller's influential explanation that I will examine next.

2.3 B. Schaller: Hebraizing Revision of Job

In an article from 1980, Berndt Schaller offers a sophisticated explanation for the origin of Rom 11:35.²¹ This article has had a significant influence on the scholarly discussion about Paul's quotations from Job, and Joseph Ziegler refers to it twice in his Göttingen edition on Job (an honor that few publications receive in that edition). Schaller argues that Paul's wording represents Hebraizing revision of the inaccurate Greek translation. The phenomenon of early Jewish Hebraizing revision of the Septuagint, generally called *kaige* revision, is today well known and examples of it have been found in various books. The revision sought to bring the Greek translation closer to the Hebrew text that the revisers used.²² Schaller argues that both Rom 11:35 and 1 Cor 3:19 (quoting Job 5:13) represent this pre-Christian Hebraizing revision.²³

²⁰ Seifrid ("Romans," 679) suggests that there may have been "a septuagintal version that approximated the reading found in the Targum." Somewhat similarly Cranfield, *Romans*, 591. My anonymous reviewer suggested that the unknown Greek version might also have been accessible to Jerome and influenced his translation. I find this suggestion somewhat superfluous since Jerome's translation can be explained on the basis of Rabbinic Hebrew.

²¹ Berndt Schaller, "Zum Textcharakter der Hiobzitate im paulinischen Schrifttum," *ZNW* 71 (1980).

²² The main goal of *kaige* revision "was to create a word-for-word correspondence between the Greek and the Hebrew texts. This affected the word order as well as small details like articles, prepositions and grammatical forms. Lexical changes were made in order to achieve consistency in translating certain Hebrew words, especially in cases that were connected with each other in exegesis." Anneli Aejmelaeus, "Textual History of the Septuagint and the Principles of Critical Editing," in *The Text of the Hebrew Bible and Its Editions: Studies in Celebration of the Fifth Centennial of the Complutensian Polyglot*, ed. Andrés Piquer Otero and Pablo A. Torijano Morales (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 171. See further Anneli Aejmelaeus, "How to Reach the Old Greek in 1 Samuel and What to Do with It," in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010*, ed. Martti Nissinen, *VTSup* 148 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 193–95, as well as *The Origins of the Kaige Revision* (forthcoming); Tuukka Kauhanen, "Lucifer of Cagliari and the Kaige Revision," in *The Legacy of Barthélemy: 50 Years after Les Devanciers d'Aquila*, ed. Anneli Aejmelaeus and Tuukka Kauhanen, *DSU* 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 146–48; Folker Siegert, *Zwischen Hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament: Eine Einführung in die Septuaginta*, *Münsteraner Judaistische Studien* 9 (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2001), 84–87.

²³ The textual character of 1 Cor 3:19 (ὁ δρασσόμενος τοὺς σοφοὺς ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτῶν) is not, however, as clear as Schaller argues. In the case of αὐτῶν, Paul's wording follows the Hebrew preserved in the Masoretic text (לְכֹדֵר הַקְּמִים בְּעֵרְמָם) more closely than the Septuagint does (ὁ καταλαμβάνων σοφοὺς ἐν τῇ φρονήσει). The article τοὺς, in contrast, has no equivalent in the Hebrew, but since it could be Paul's own stylistic adjustment, too much weight should not be placed on it. The use of πανουργία to render the root ערם corresponds to the translation practice of Septuagint and could thus well represent Hebraizing revision (that preferred standard equivalents). The problem is the use of δράσσομαι to translate לְכֹדֵר. Such a translation has no precedent in the Septuagint, where δράσσομαι translates קָמַי thrice in the Pentateuch and is thus "reserved" for a different root. Joseph Reider and Nigel Turner, *An Index to Aquila: Greek-Hebrew, Hebrew-Greek, Latin-Hebrew with the Syriac and Armenian Evidence*, *VTSup* 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1966) reports no occurrences of the verb δράσσομαι in Aquila but the noun δράξ (a handful) translates קָמַי in Lev 2:2 and חֶפֶן in Exod 9:8. The Septuagint's translation of the root לְכֹדֵר with

Moreover, he also identifies traces of Hebraizing revision of the Greek Job in the Testament of Job and in the Greek papyrus fragment P11778.²⁴

The Greek translation of Job is free, “paraphrastic,” and “among the least literal” translations of the Septuagint,²⁵ although it is debated to what extent the differences may be explained by a different, significantly shorter Hebrew *Vorlage*.²⁶ In Job 41:3 the differences with the Hebrew are so remarkable that revision of the translation would have been completely justified. Unfortunately, according to the Göttingen edition, no readings from Aquila, Symmachus, or Theodotion in that verse have been preserved, which means that we do not have an ancient model for a more faithful Greek translation of the Hebrew.

It is unclear how the original Greek translator arrived at his translation. Dietrich-Alex Koch, who adopts Schaller’s explanation of the origin of Rom 11:35 and develops it further, argues that the translator was perplexed by the meaning of the Hebrew and translated it in the light of the preceding sentence.²⁷ In any case, according to Schaller, a Hebraizing reviser then changed both verbs to better equivalents according to his understanding of the Hebrew. Changing ὑπομενεῖ to ἀνταποδοθήσεται would be understandable, for ἀνταποδίδωμι (“to pay back”) is a common equivalent of שָׁלַם (*piel*) in the Septuagint as a whole.²⁸ Yet the first verb poses a more problematic case. According to Schaller, the reviser rendered the root קָרַם with προδίδωμι, which is, as already mentioned above, a valid translation in the light of Rabbinic Hebrew and Aramaic. However, προδίδωμι never translates this root elsewhere in the Septuagint. One of the distinctive characteristics of *kaige* revision is that one Hebrew root is always rendered with the same “standard” Greek equivalent. What Schaller suggests is therefore not what one would expect of a *kaige* reviser. As for the person of the second verb, both the Greek translator and the reviser probably had a *Vorlage* reading וַיִּשְׁלַם in the third (rather than the first) person singular.²⁹ The third column of the table shows Koch’s reconstruction of this Hebraizing wording available to Paul:³⁰

καταλαμβάνω, in contrast, is perfectly unproblematic and common in the Septuagint. Thus, it is questionable if 1 Cor 3:19 can be plausibly viewed as a case of Hebraizing revision. Paul’s allusion to Job 13:16 in Phil 1:19 has a five-word verbatim agreement with the Septuagint.

²⁴ Schaller, “Zum Textcharakter,” 24. P11778 (974 in Rahlfs’ numbering) is dated to the early third century CE; see Ziegler’s Job edition on p. 62–64 and John William Wevers, “Septuaginta-Forschungen,” *TRu* 22 (1954): 133–34. For the Testament of Job, see Berndt Schaller, “Das Testament Hiobs und die Septuaginta-Übersetzung des Buches Hiob,” *Bib* 61 (1980): 401–5.

²⁵ Claude E. Cox, “Iob,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint (Primary Texts)*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 667–96, 667. See further Natalio Fernández Marcos, “The Septuagint Reading of the Book of Job,” in *The Book of Job*, ed. W. A. M. Beuken, BETL 114 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 255–66.

²⁶ On this question see, for example, Fernández Marcos, “Septuagint Reading,” 254–55.

²⁷ Koch suggests that the translation of the hiphil form of קָרַם with ἀνθίστημι continues the logic of Job 41:2 (τίς γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ἐμοὶ ἀντιστάς; וַיִּמְיֵהוּ הוּא לְפָנַי יְהִי צָב) (Koch, *Die Schrift*, 72 n. 74). For other possibilities that might have led to this translation, see Schaller, “Zum Textcharakter,” 25 n. 21. The future tense (ἀντιστήσεται) in the Septuagint may have been a dynamic translation that took into account what follows (Koch, *Die Schrift*, 73 n. 75). The choice for the second verb followed from the decision made with the first verb: the translator selected ὑπομένω (to endure), which he had already used in Job 9:4 and 22:21 to render שָׁלַם and which accords well with “withstanding” (Koch, *Die Schrift*, 73 n. 74; see also Georg Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, KAT 16 [Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963], 198 under verse 9:4).

²⁸ This equivalent is also used in Job 21:19, 31, but these verses belong to the Hexaplaric additions in the book and cannot thus highlight the original translator’s practice.

²⁹ Schaller, “Zum Textcharakter,” 25 n. 21; Koch, *Die Schrift*, 73; Fohrer, *Hiob*, 527 considers this to be the original reading of the Hebrew.

³⁰ The reconstruction is based on Koch’s argumentation in *Die Schrift*, 72–73.

Rom 11:35	Job 41:3 LXX	Job 41:3 Revised (Koch's reconstruction)	Job 41:3 MT
ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ	ἢ τίς ἀντιστήσεται μοι καὶ ὑπομενεῖ	ἢ τίς προέδωκέν μοι καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται	מִי הִקְדִּימֵנִי וְאִשְׁלָם
Or who has first given to him that he should be repaid	Or who will withstand me and endure	Or who has first given to me that [he] should be repaid	Who has confronted me that I should repay

Finally, Koch argues that Paul changes the revised wording himself by substituting the original μοί (“to me”) with αὐτῷ (“to him”) in order to harmonize the quotation with the rest of the doxology in Romans that consistently uses the third person singular. Paul also adds a clarifying αὐτῷ after the second verb (it should be repaid *to him*).³¹

As has become clear, this theory requires numerous steps to work: it assumes a Hebraizing revision of Job (and even then every detail does not quite fit), a slightly different Hebrew *Vorlage*, and Paul's own editorial activity. However, this is not the main weakness of the theory. Rather, the problem is that Schaller's explanation necessitates a text-critical decision concerning Isa 40:14 that is not the most plausible one. In the following, I will offer a much simpler explanation for Paul's wording in Rom 11:35 that also makes better sense of his quotation and interpretive activity.

3. The Plus in Isa 40:14

Whether one argues that Paul translated Job 41:3 himself or used a revised Greek wording, one should offer an explanation for the curious fact that the words of Rom 11:35 can be found verbatim in numerous important witnesses at the end of Isa 40:14. Most commentators fail to even mention this crucial detail.³²

Rom 11:34 τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου; ἢ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο;	Isa 40:13 τίς ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου καὶ τίς αὐτοῦ σύμβουλος ἐγένετο ὃς συμβιβᾷ αὐτόν	Isa 40:13 מִי־תֵכֵן אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה וְאִישׁ עֲצָתוֹ יוֹדִיעֵנִי
Rom 11:35 ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ;	Isa 40:14 ἢ πρὸς τίνα συνεβουλεύσατο καὶ συνεβίβασεν αὐτόν ἢ τίς ἔδειξεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ἢ ὁδὸν συνέσεως τίς ἔδειξεν αὐτῷ	Isa 40:14 אֶת־מִי נִשְׁעַן וַיִּבְיָנֵהוּ וַיִּלְמְדֵהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִשְׁפָּט וַיִּלְמְדֵהוּ דַעַת וַדְרֹךְ תְּבוּנֹת יוֹדִיעֵנִי
Rom 11:35 ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ;	Isa 40:14 (S* A' -26-86 90-36-46-233 C''- 566 198 239' 407 449' 534 538 Co Syp) ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ;	

³¹ Koch, *Die Schrift*, 72–73.

³² For example, Naselli, “Paul's Use,” does not discuss the textual variant in Isa 40:14 although his entire doctoral dissertation is about Rom 11:34–35. Of course, the variant is not in Isa 40:13 but 40:14, yet in Ziegler's edition the attestation is printed on the same page and just a couple of lines under the end of the variants for 40:13.

The witnesses including the plus are Codex Sinaiticus (S*), Codex Alexandrinus and three other Alexandrian manuscripts (26-86-106), a handful of Lucianic manuscripts (90-36-46-233), all Catena manuscripts (C''-566), several manuscripts that Ziegler classifies as mixed (198 239-306 407 449-770 534 538), the Coptic translations, and one Syriac version. The most important witnesses without the plus are Codex Marchalianus (Q), all Hexaplaric witnesses (including Codex Vaticanus and Codex Venetus, 88 109-736 and the Syro-Hexapla), most Lucianic witnesses (*L II* 130-311 93-96), and the rest of the mixed codices (403-613 410 544 613).³³

In his edition, Ziegler offers a concise explanation for the plus: “ex Rom 11:35.”³⁴ It is noteworthy that this is the necessary conclusion from all the explanations discussed above: If Rom 11:35 represents Paul’s own translation or revised Job, then the plus in Isa 40:14 can only be explained through the influence of Romans on the textual transmission of the Greek Isaiah. One could indeed imagine Christian scribes adding Paul’s quotation close to the source of the first quotation and at the end of a list of questions beginning with “or who?” One might ask, however, how the scribes came to the conclusion that Rom 11:35 is a quotation in the first place. Moreover, it is somewhat strange that they would have placed the words at the end of Isa 40:14 and not after 40:13 that Paul undeniably quotes, yet there is, of course, no way to tell what ancient scribes could or should have done. As such, the hypothesis of Christian scribes harmonizing a Septuagint manuscript in the light of Paul’s more “complete” text has parallels. The most famous example is the long plus in Ps 13:3 LXX, which probably derives from Rom 3:13–18.³⁵ That case suggests that an early addition could influence a significant number of witnesses.

What makes Ziegler’s explanation unsatisfactory, however, is not the hypothesis of the influence of the New Testament *in general* but its explanatory power in this particular case. Crucial here are the witnesses for the plus, most importantly Codex Sinaiticus and the Alexandrian witnesses. While there are important witnesses on both sides, the character of the witnesses does not support the hypothesis of Christian harmonization. First, Koch has shown that Paul’s quotations from Isaiah are generally closest to the readings of the Alexandrian witnesses. Yet here all Alexandrian witnesses except for Q contain the plus, which supports my suggestion that the plus was already in the version of Isa 40 known to Paul. Second, in the textual transmission of Isaiah, there are no parallels to such a large insertion from the New Testament that would affect Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus. Ziegler explicitly emphasizes the importance and good quality of the Alexandrian text in general, giving numerous examples of passages where it preserves the original reading against Hexaplaric witnesses.³⁶ Third, the shorter version of the verse is attested by exactly those strands of textual tradition that tend to pick up corrections from Origen’s Hexapla: the Hexaplaric and most Lucianic witnesses.³⁷ That they do not

³³ No Old Latin fragment preserves the passage. Jerome quotes the reading of the Septuagint in his commentary on Isaiah, without the plus; see *S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera: Pars I: Opera Exegetica 2: Commentariorum in Isaiam: Libri I–XI*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 73 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1963) (see under Isa 40:14, on p. 460).

³⁴ In his edition of Job (1982), Ziegler explicitly refers to Schaller’s article from 1980. Yet it is unclear what motivated his text-critical decision in the Isaiah edition that was published in 1939, for he does not comment on this verse in the introduction to his edition. Koch adopts Ziegler’s explanation without further reflection (Koch, *Die Schrift*, 51).

³⁵ See Kujanpää, *Rhetorical Functions*, 38–53.

³⁶ See p. 22–25 in his edition. Apart from Isa 40:14, Ziegler reports three cases of individual words where Alexandrinus shows signs of New Testament influence (p. 27), but in my judgment one of these three cases (ἔγνωσαν in the place of οἶδασι in Isa 59:8/Rom 3:17) is very uncertain (see Kujanpää, *Rhetorical Functions*, 51).

³⁷ Note that in Isaiah Codex Vaticanus is Hexaplaric, which significantly diminishes its worth as a textual witness in this particular case. According to Ziegler, the Lucianic text frequently agrees

contain the plus does not imply that the plus was not available in the first century. It is perfectly plausible that these witnesses would omit the plus due to Hexaplaric influence: the plus had no equivalent in the proto-Masoretic text Origen used.

Therefore, the more plausible conclusion of the textual data is that the plus is in fact of pre-Christian origin and was accessible to Paul, and that the Hexaplaric and Lucianic manuscripts omitted it. In the following section I will turn to the question of the origin of the plus in the textual tradition of the Septuagint, but before that it is necessary to look at the two alternative contexts for the words of the plus, Isa 40 and Job 41.

The words of the plus (ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ;) would fit the context of Isa 40 much better than that of Job 41. Isaiah 40:12–14 (without the plus) forms a series of seven τίς questions that highlight the unsearchable decisions of the Lord and the sovereignty of his actions: no one has given him counsel, no one has knowledge or power to match his. The rhetorical questions immediately follow a promise of restoration and of the arrival of the Lord, highlighting his might and sovereignty (40:1–11). In 40:13–14 it is asked five times with different formulations whether anyone has given any advice to God. The major theme is the negation of indebtedness: God owes no gratitude to anyone for good counsel. In this context the words of the plus, “Or who has first given to him that he should be repaid?” would refer to giving advice or understanding. Although they do not contain vocabulary of knowledge or counsel, they seamlessly continue the theme of indebtedness, thus being a fitting conclusion to the series of questions.

Job 41:2–3 poses numerous interpretive challenges. The chapter describes the mighty Leviathan, but for a moment the attention appears to suddenly shift from the irresistible power of the great beast to that of God.³⁸ The Masoretic text reads “Who can stand before me?,” the Septuagint “For who is it that withstands me?” (41:2). After this language of confrontation in 41:2, the language of giving and recompense in the words ἢ τίς προέδωκεν μοι καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται would be unexpected. In this context, the focus is on the irresistibility of the divine power (even greater than the amazing power of the terrible beast), not on God owing something to someone.

It would be quite extraordinary if Paul had picked one question (that does not appear to fit the context particularly well) from the description of the Leviathan’s and God’s strength and combined it with a verse from Isaiah. After all, Isa 40:12–14 would have offered him a selection of more suitable questions. It appears much more plausible that he quotes only Isa 40:12–14. He picks up three of the eight rhetorical questions there (in bold).

Isa 40:12

1. Τίς ἐμέτρησε τῆ χειρὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν σπιθαμῆ καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν δρακί;
2. τίς ἔστησε τὰ ὄρη σταθμῶ καὶ τὰς νάπας ζυγῶ;

Isa 40:13

3. **τίς ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου**
4. **καὶ τίς αὐτοῦ σύμβουλος ἐγένετο** ὃς συμβιβᾶ αὐτόν

with the Hexaplaric witnesses regarding omissions, picking them from the Hexaplaric text (see p. 88 of the Isaiah edition’s introduction).

³⁸ In the Hebrew this depends on the reading one adopts in 41:2. The main text of the BHS reads לֹא־יִשְׁתָּאֵץ, which is the basis for the translation of the ESV: “No one is so fierce that he dares to stir him [=the Leviathan] up. Who then is he who can stand before me?” Numerous witnesses read וְיִשְׁתָּאֵץ instead, adopted by NRSV: “Who can stand before it [=the beast]?”

Isa 40:14

5. ἢ πρὸς τίνα συνεβουλευσατο καὶ συνεβίβασεν αὐτόν
6. ἢ τίς ἔδειξεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν
7. ἢ ὁδὸν συνέσεως τίς ἔδειξεν αὐτῷ
8. ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ;

Why he chose exactly these three has to do with the beginning of the doxology: “O the depth of the *riches* and *wisdom* and *knowledge* of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” (11:33). The three questions that Paul quotes match the three objects of praise in verse 33, but in reversed order: “Who has known?” corresponds to “knowledge,” “Who has been his counsellor?” to “wisdom,” and “Who has given him?” to “riches.”³⁹ That Paul does not quote the beginning of Isa 40:14 is not a convincing argument against my proposal. Paul quotes the fourth question “Or who has been his counselor?” and questions 5–7 merely continue the same theme of advising God. Quoting these questions would not have added anything to Paul’s doxology, whereas its threefold structure with three distinct items (knowledge, wisdom, and riches) is rhetorically effective. Moreover, omitting material from the middle of quotations is typical of Paul’s practice.⁴⁰ In contrast to Schaller’s explanation, Paul does not need to modify the person of the pronoun and the second verb but can quote the rhetorical question verbatim, for Isa 40 already speaks of God (whereas Job 41:3 represents divine speech).

Interestingly, it appears that both Tertullian and Ambrosiaster attribute the entirety of Rom 11:34–35 to Isaiah.⁴¹ Both authors precede Jerome’s Vulgate and know Isaiah in a form based on the Septuagint, not the Hebrew. It is on the basis of Hebrew and particularly through the Vulgate that Job 41:3 appears to share similarities with Rom 11:35 (Rom 11:35: *Aut quis prior dedit illi, et retribuetur ei?* Job 41:3: *Quis ante dedit mihi, ut reddam ei?*).

4. The Origin of the Plus in Isa 40:14

I have argued that the plus in Isa 40:14 was in a version of Isaiah known to Paul and that the Hexaplaric and most Lucianic witnesses do not contain it because of Origen’s Hexapla. The logical explanation for the origin of the plus is then that it represents the original text, preserved by the Alexandrian witnesses, Codex Sinaiticus, and a number of other witnesses listed above. Otherwise it is difficult to imagine what could have produced such an early and well-attested plus.

While the translator of Isaiah is notorious for his dynamic translation technique, it appears somewhat improbable, although not entirely inconceivable, that he would have added one

³⁹ Theodoret already comments on this correspondence: *Τὰ τρία ταῦτα πρὸς τὰ τρία τέθεικε, τὸν πλοῦτον, καὶ τὴν σοφίαν, καὶ τὴν γνῶσιν· τὸ μὲν, Τίς ἔγνω νοῦν Κυρίου, πρὸς τὴν γνῶσιν· τὸ δὲ, Τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, πρὸς τὴν σοφίαν· τὸ δὲ, Τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ, πρὸς τὸν πλοῦτον.* Theodoret, *Interpretatio in XIV epistulas sancti Pauli* (PG 82, p. 184).

⁴⁰ For a close parallel, cf. the way he handles the wording of Isa 40:13 in 1 Cor 2:16 (see above n. 10). See further Rom 2:24; 3:10–12, 15; 11:3, 9; 13:9 as well as Koch, *Die Schrift*, 115–32.

⁴¹ “Id Esaiæ et sequentia de eiusdem prophetae instrumento: quis enim cognouit sensum domini, aut quis consiliarius [eius] fuit? Quis porrexit ei et retribuetur illi?” (Tertullian, *Marc* 5.14.10, cited according to *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani Opera I*, CCL 1 [Turnhout: Brepols, 1954]). In Ambrosiaster’s commentary on Romans, 11:35 is followed by the words “Hoc in Esaiâ scriptum habetur.” (*Ambrosiastri qui dicitur commentarius in epistulas paulinas*, ed. Henricus Josephus Vogels, CSEL 81.1 [Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1966]).

rhetorical question out of nowhere. Could the plus have been in the translator's Hebrew *Vorlage*? One possibility is that the relatively short question fell out of the Hebrew text because of homoioarchon, for example. The lost question would have been the last one of four questions beginning with **מִי**.⁴²

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QIsa^a is the only manuscript that preserves Isa 40:14. In that manuscript, verses 14b–16 were not written by the original scribe but were inserted later. In their DJD edition, Eugene Ulrich and Peter W. Flint argue that “the original scribe left two and one-half lines blank after **מִשְׁפַּט** before verse 17 (E+i **מ**¹), perhaps aware that other forms of the text knew a longer reading here. An early Herodian scribe subsequently inserted the text.”⁴³ While the insertion does not offer support for the plus in Isa 40:14 LXX, the decision made by the scribe would imply textual instability in Isa 40:14–16 as late as in the last quarter of the second century when the scroll was produced.⁴⁴ However, Drew Longacre makes a strong case for the original scribe's use of an exemplar with a damaged bottom edge in Isa 34–66. If this is correct, 1QIsa^a does not attest to a shorter text of Isa 40:14–16, nor to any textual instability.⁴⁵

With no other evidence than that of numerous Septuagint witnesses, the “lost” question in the Hebrew text is of course hypothetical. However, the scenario as such is plausible and not without parallels. The Hebrew *Vorlage* that the Greek translator used in the second century BCE could have been different from the Masoretic text and could have contained one more question. It is important here that I am not using a quotation in Romans to emend the Hebrew text of Isaiah. Paul's free quotation practice would make such an attempt highly problematic. Instead, I am trying to find a reason for the remarkable split in the textual tradition of Isa 40:14, and Paul's quotation can be seen as an additional witness for the early origin of the plus.

5. Conclusions

I hope to have shown that my suggestion that Paul quotes only Isa 40:13–14 is simpler and more plausible than the traditional view based on Job 41:3. It appears that most scholars have never even noticed the major flaw in the traditional view, namely, the plus in Isaiah. In future discussion, anyone arguing that Paul quotes Job 41:3 should offer an explanation for the textual variant in Isa 40:14 that takes seriously the weight of the witnesses supporting the plus.⁴⁶ The New Testament does indeed occasionally influence the textual transmission of the Septuagint, but that it would affect both Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus as well as a significant number of other important witnesses is a scenario that necessitates careful argumentation at the very least.

⁴² Or in the case of 40:14, **מִי אֶת־מִי**.

⁴³ *Qumran Cave 1, II: The Isaiah Scrolls. Part 2: Introduction, Commentary, and Textual Variants*, ed. Eugene Ulrich and Peter W. Flint, DJD XXXII (Oxford: Clarendon, 2010), 110. See further p. 65 in the same edition: “About a century after the original publication, one or possibly as many as three clear Herodian hands (c.30–1 BCE) added one short and three lengthy insertions which by then may have become customarily added when the text was recited” (40:14b–16 is one of these lengthy insertions).

⁴⁴ Tov and Flint date the work of the original scribe to ca. 125–100 BCE; see DJD XXXII Part 2, p. 64.

⁴⁵ Drew Longacre, “Developmental Stage, Scribal Lapse, or Physical Defect? 1QIsa^a's Damaged Exemplar for Isaiah Chapters 34–66,” *DSD* 20 (2013). I would like to thank my anonymous reviewer for making me aware of this article.

⁴⁶ The plus needs to be accounted for also if one abandons the Job 41:3 assumption and argues that Paul quotes something else (or that he formulates the question in Rom 11:35 himself).

In addition to the textual problem posed by the plus, the language of giving and recompense in Rom 11:35 does not sit well in the context of Job 41:1–3. It is, moreover, rather strange that Paul would combine Isa 40:13 with an interjection in the middle of the description of the mighty Leviathan and then change the divine speech into a statement about God by modifying the wording. I am aware that scholarly imagination is able to provide all kinds of rationales for such an approach. After all, generations of commentators have successfully managed to find intertextual links between Isa 40 and Job 41 to explain Paul's quotation. It is almost a pity to suggest something that wrecks the basis for such creative interpretive activity.

My solution describes a straightforward and unproblematic flow of events: Codex Sinaiticus and the Alexandrian witnesses preserve the original reading of the Septuagint. In Origen's time, it had no Hebrew equivalent, and therefore the Hexaplaric witnesses and most Lucianic ones omit the phrase, which leads to the division among the Septuagint witnesses. Paul creates a doxology that resembles the tone of Isa 40 and quotes two passages from Isa 40:13–14 verbatim, simply omitting some material in the middle. The only part of this scenario that is more difficult to explain is the question of whether the plus in Isa 40:14 had an equivalent in the translator's Hebrew *Vorlage*. I have suggested that the Greek translator may have had a different *Vorlage* containing one additional question.

I would like to conclude with some reflections on scholarly discussion related to this case. First, this quotation demonstrates that it would be desirable that New Testament scholars paid more attention to the apparatus of the critical editions of the Septuagint. Scholars have explained Paul's quotation through the Hebrew and Latin wordings of Job rather than examining the entirety of the Greek textual tradition of Isa 40:13–14. Second, although Schaller's article from 1980 is only six pages long, it has had quite an impact on scholarship, not least because Ziegler quotes it in his Job edition under 41:3 and Koch adopts it and develops it further in his influential work *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums* (1986). His theory seeks to explain how Rom 11:35 could be based on a revised Greek translation of Job 41:3. Schaller, however, never discusses the starting point of this article, namely, the plus in Isa 40:14. From my point of view, Schaller offers a fine solution to a problem that does not in fact exist.

Third, I have argued against the text-critical decision Ziegler made in his critical edition of Isaiah. Ziegler explains the plus as a Christian harmonization with Romans, whereas I consider it more plausible that it represents the original translation. In the light of the textual witnesses on both sides, Ziegler's decision is somewhat perplexing. Is it not obvious that if the plus was available to Origen, he would have marked it in the Hexapla and the Hexaplaric witnesses would have had a clear reason for not including the phrase?⁴⁷ Unfortunately, Ziegler merely attributes the plus to the influence of Romans but does not discuss the attestation. It appears

⁴⁷ Alternatively, it is possible that the plus was already omitted before Origen's time due to Jewish Hebraizing revision. Since Ziegler's Isaiah edition is from 1939, that is, from the time before the phenomenon of early Jewish Hebraizing revision became well known, it is possible that some of the Septuagint witnesses that Ziegler classified as Hexaplaric may in fact represent early Jewish Hebraizing revision. Since both Jewish Hebraizing witnesses and Hexaplaric witnesses would follow the Hebrew closely, distinguishing between the two groups is difficult. Ziegler already observes that Codex Vaticanus occasionally contains additions and omissions that agree with the Masoretic text and that are not necessarily Hexaplaric (Ziegler, *Isaias*, 39–40). See further Paavo Huotari and Katja Kujanpää, "Hebraizing Revision in Isaiah Quotations in Paul and Matthew," in *Scriptures in the Making: Texts and Their Transmission in Late Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Raimo Hakola, Jessi Orpana and Paavo Huotari, CBET (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming). For my argument here, it is not important whether the plus in Isa 40:14 was already omitted in a text known to Origen (a text he would have preferred because of its proximity to the Hebrew) or whether he marked the plus himself.

that he also took for granted that Rom 11:35 must be a quotation from Job 41:3. If that is taken as an unassailable fact, then the influence of the New Testament is a logical way to explain how a quotation from Job 41:3 can agree verbatim with a plus in Isa 40:14. This leads to my fourth and final point.

While numerous scholars notice that Paul's wording does not correspond to Job 41:3 and show an awareness of the strangeness of the assumed quotation, they nevertheless do not question the consensus that Rom 11:35 is somehow based on Job 41:3. When the verse is once entered into lists of quotations (cf. Nestle-Aland), scholars appear to be surprisingly uncritical. Rather than questioning the validity of the attribution to Job, they use their intellectual power to find a reason for Paul quoting this verse.

In conclusion, the burden of proof is now on those who claim that Paul quotes Job 41:3 and that the New Testament influenced the textual transmission of Isa 40:14.