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Jonah's Journey to Nineveh in Archaeological Context

IRON AGE SILOS
AND THE STORY OF
GIDEON

*WHO'S WHO
IN BIBLICAL
ARCHAEOLOGY*

THE
DANIEL 9
PROJECT

The Effects
of Technology
on Archaeological Research

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Setting the Record Straight on the Primeval Chronology of the Septuagint: A Response to Cosner and Carter

Editorial Note: This article only appears in an electronic version of the Fall 2018 issue of *Bible and Spade*, and not in print.

By Henry B. Smith Jr.

Introduction

In September of 2018, Lita Cosner and Dr. Robert Carter of *Creation Ministries International* wrote a critique of two articles I published under the auspices of the [Genesis 5 and 11 Research Project](#).¹ Their article, "[Is the Septuagint a superior text for the Genesis genealogies?](#)", can be found on the *CMI* website. I recommend that the reader simultaneously read my exposition and interaction below, along with their online posting.

I. Ephraem of Syria

In my article published in the *Answers Research Journal* in August 2017, "[Methuselah's Begetting Age in Genesis 5:25 and the Primeval Chronology of the Septuagint: A Closer Look at the Textual and Historical Evidence](#)," I cited numerous sources from antiquity and the Middle Ages which claimed that the Jewish rabbis deflated the original primeval chronology in the Hebrew proto-Masoretic text² shortly after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.³ For those in the ancient and medieval world who viewed the Septuagint's (LXX) longer primeval chronology as original, this was probably the most consistent explanation offered for the origin of the shorter chronology deposited in the Masoretic Text (MT). Among those sources, I included Ephraem of Syria, a 4th century AD Syriac theologian and prolific author. C&C critique my use of this reference, arguing that the evidence indicates Ephraem followed the MT's shorter chronology. I believe that C&C are correct on this specific point, and that the use of Ephraem as a reference is, in fact, an error on my part. For the sake of transparency, I would like to provide a full accounting of how the mistake transpired.

I found several sources that referenced Ephraem in this manner. I first discovered a citation in Jeremy Sexton's article, "Who was Born When Enosh was 90?," pointing to Martin Anstey's [The Romance of Biblical Chronology](#). Anstey was a staunch proponent of the MT's primeval chronology. He stated that Ephraem accused the Jews of deflating the Hebrew chronology and concluded, "In this, Ephraem was wrong..."⁴ I considered Anstey's reference to Ephraem to be that of a "hostile witness" as it were. After all, Anstey was not trying to advance the LXX, but the MT instead. However, this was not enough to substantiate the claim since Anstey provided no reference.

Then I came across an explicit quote from William Hales, which he attributed to Ephraem: "The Jews have subtracted 600 years [in Genesis 5] from the generations of Adam, Seth, etc., in order that their own books might not convict them concerning the coming of CHRIST..."⁵ It seemed that Anstey was either closely paraphrasing Hales' quotation, or Anstey was quoting Ephraem from the same source that Hales had used 83 years prior. At this stage, I still was collecting information and drew no conclusions.

Later, when doing research on the 2nd century BC Jewish historian Eupolemus, I came across an in-depth study by Ben Zion Wacholder,⁶ [an expert on ancient Judaism who wrote numerous articles on chronology and was a well respected scholar](#).⁷ Wacholder writes:

The significant divergence of 1,396 years between the Hebrew and Greek texts did not escape the notice of the ancients... Clement of Alexandria, Judas, Julius Africanus, Hippolytus, and Eusebius, accepted the Septuagint version as authentic. The problem of explaining the lower numbers of the Hebrew version moved the Syrian classical author Ephraem of Nisibis (c. 307–373) and the Monophysite Bishop of Edessa Jacob (died 708) to charge that the Jews had altered the Hebrew text to discredit the Christian belief in the imminent second coming of Jesus.⁸

Anstey and Hales were coming at the question of the primeval chronology in the context of conservative Christian debate, so there was the possibility that Anstey was following Hales instead of citing Ephraem directly. Even though Hales provides an explicit quote, there is no citation in his work. Wacholder provided a completely independent reference to Ephraem's claim, and an added resource from 250 years earlier: Joseph Assemani's *Bibliotheca Orientalis*.⁹ In particular, footnote 9 of Wacholder (p. 99) indicates that the citation could be found in "I, 65 f" of that work. Like Hales' quote, this could hardly be construed as a fabrication on the part of Wacholder. Because of Wacholder's independence from Hales and Anstey, his extensive knowledge of chronology/Judaism, and his reputation as a good scholar, I had no reason to doubt his citation.

At this point, I decided to cite the relevant sources and utilize the quote from Hales. Wacholder's reference and citation that Ephraem held this view gave me a reasonable comfort, although I still had not yet been able to drill all the way to the bottom of the matter. Nonetheless, with some hesitation, I made the decision to include the reference to Ephraem.

Shortly after the *ARJ* article went to press in August of 2017, Steve Rudd, staff member on the Shiloh Excavations, wrote to me and expressed his concerns that I may have made an error. He informed me that he had done a full search of Ephraem's works in *Logos*, and Hales' quote came up empty. He also advised me that Ephraem had equated Shem with Melchizedek, a scenario only compatible with the MT's post-Flood chronology, an important point also made by C&C. Ephraem used the MT's numbers in his commentary on Genesis, also correctly noted and cited by C&C. I had procured a copy through my local library, but inexplicably overlooked/missed Ephraem's discussion. This oversight was a major blunder on my part, and I am at a loss to explain it. Had I fully realized there was a conflict between sources, I would have pulled the Ephraem reference until I could sort it out.

Naturally I wondered how both Hales and Wacholder would both independently get this matter wrong. I concluded there were three possible explanations: 1. The quote from Hales and Wacholder's statement and citation of Assemani were cases of mistaken identity. Ephraem was a prolific author, and other works have been incorrectly attributed to him as well.¹⁰ 2. The citations referred to a work by Ephraem that had not yet been translated into English. 3. Ephraem changed his views on the subject over time, and the quote was legitimately his.

It turns out that that the statement taken from Assemani was a case of mistaken identity. I subsequently discovered that the reasons for this are quite complicated. *Bibliotheca Orientalis* is a [4000-page encyclopedia of early Syriac Christian literature](#). Joseph and his brother Stephen Assemani (or Assemanus) [also catalogued hundreds of Syriac manuscripts archived in the Vatican](#). Two Syriac manuscripts transcribed and translated into Latin by the Assemani brothers have a bearing on our discussion. Romeny explains:

Whoever wishes to study Ephrem's exegesis of Genesis is confronted with the fact that two different commentaries have been attributed to him: those of Vat. sir. 103 and 110. And these texts are not only different in style, they sometimes also say completely different things. As early as in the eighteenth century, Assemani remarked that Vat. sir. 110 identified Melchizedek with S[h]em, whereas 103 called him a Canaanite. It is clear that in recent research, the text of the sixth-century manuscript Vat. sir. 110 has been considered to have better credentials.¹¹

As it turns out, portions of manuscript 103 were written by the Syriac monk, Severus. He wrote a selective commentary (*ca.* AD 861), drawing on and quoting both Ephraem and another Syriac theologian, Jacob of Edessa. Jacob's complete *Commentary on the Octateuch* is included in the manuscript. However, when one looks at the top of pages 65 and 66 of *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, the heading reads: "S. Ephraem Syrus." Apparently both Hales and Wacholder incorrectly attributed sections of the Syriac text from Jacob's writings to Ephraem. As Romeny notes above, the superiority of MSS 110 has only been recently affirmed by scholars. Dirk Kruisheer discusses the complex problems in more detail, including other instances where other statements were incorrectly attributed to

Ephraem.¹² Thus, the relevant Syriac text and Latin translations on pages 65 and 66 of *Bibliotheca Orientalis* are the words of Jacob of Edessa, not Ephraem. (I will discuss Jacob further below, and we will see how my error turned out to be a blessing in disguise).

Obviously, I have not referenced Ephraem since the *ARJ* article. My goal was to write a "retraction" of the Ephraem reference in one of my online updates once I was able to get to the bottom of the problem. This article provides me an opportunity to do so now. So, that is the full story on my use of Ephraem, and I apologize to the present reader and to those following the [Genesis 5 and 11 Research Project](#) for my mistake.

With all of this being said, this particular error has no significant bearing on the overall argument I have made in multiple publications. The argument for the superiority of the LXX's numbers is based on a large matrix of evidence: textual, historical, external, and internal. The fact that numerous authors in the ancient and medieval world argued that the Jewish rabbis in Israel deflated the proto-MT's primeval chronology after the destruction of the Temple still stands.

II. Analysis and Discussion

1. The Rabbinic Deflation of the MT's Primeval Chronology

After their critique of my Ephraem citation, C&C write: "The situation doesn't get any better when we try to verify what Smith said in the second half of this *one* sentence." They then quote pages 169 and 171 from my *ARJ* article, where I document that Eusebius, Julian of Toledo, Jacob of Edessa, George Syncellus and Bar Hebraeus all claimed that the Jewish rabbis were responsible for the deflation of the primeval chronology reflected in the present-day Masoretic Text.

Eusebius (*ca.* AD 310) argued that the LXX should be followed (in part) because it "was translated from old and accurate Hebrew copies."¹³ Conversely, the MT's timeline was deflated, and Eusebius states: "[Therefore we suspect that this was something which the Jews did.](#)" C&C acknowledge Eusebius' claim, but then dismiss its evidential significance out of hand. Here, we have an ancient historian providing us with a very important piece of data, one which points to those who may be responsible for the origin of the shorter primeval chronology deposited in the MT.

This data can be evaluated in various ways. It can be weighed against other competing theories that attempt to explain the deliberate and systematic changes in the textual witnesses of Gen 5 and 11. A researcher can also search for corroboration from other ancient and medieval sources. In other words, do other authors in different times and different places report a similar explanation for the origin of the MT's timeline? And this data can be used (in part) to test and evaluate any theory that attempts to explain the deliberate text critical divergences between the three textual witnesses and reconstruct the original text. In other words, it does not stand

alone, but can be evaluated for its veracity when all of the relevant evidence is weighed and considered.

C&C dismiss Eusebius and other sources making similar statements by creating an arbitrary and illogical evidential standard. At the end of their article, they set forth the requirement that there must be “evidence of an early 2nd century AD Palestinian Jewish gathering that would have had sufficient authority to change the Hebrew manuscripts and had the power to disseminate them widely.”

Presumably, C&C are referring to the oft disputed Council of Jamnia, or a similar gathering. But even if we had solid evidence that Jamnia or another comparable council actually took place, would we really expect to find explicit evidence from that meeting(s) that the rabbis deflated the chronology? Of course not. Beyond the problems of such written evidence surviving over 1900+ years, the Pharisaic rabbis participating in such a meeting to perpetrate an outrageous fraud upon the sacred text would not leave behind written documentation of it. The whole point would have been to conceal what they were doing from both the ascending Jesus movement and their own religious community. To expect us to find direct, documented evidence from a formal meeting of this sort is illogical.

More importantly, a formal, documented meeting was not necessary for the rabbis to carry out their deflation scheme. There was a limited circle of rabbinic authority in Israel in the aftermath of the Temple’s destruction, one which eventually centered around Rabbi Akiba (*ca.* AD 50-132)¹⁴ and number of other prominent rabbis. They could have easily conspired together and have left behind no trace of their conspiracy proper and any meeting(s) associated with it.

Moreover, the rabbis did indeed have adequate authority and control over the limited number of Hebrew manuscripts that had survived the destruction of the Temple. They did not require a formal meeting to obtain or receive such authority since they already possessed it. The dominant Hebrew text that emerged from the aftermath of AD 70 (the proto-MT) was solely in the hands of the only sect that had survived, the Pharisaic rabbis. This is an indisputable historical fact:

...after 70 CE only [MT] was left in Jewish hands. [The old LXX] no longer exerted any influence in Jewish circles since it was now in Christian hands, [SP] was with the Samaritan community, and the Qumran scrolls were hidden in caves. Other scrolls may have been circulating in Palestine, the likes of those that were imported to Qumran. However, we do not hear about such scrolls, probably because there was no organized community left in Palestine that would use texts like 4QJerb,d or 4QJosh, which deviate greatly from [MT]...*the evidence after 70 CE is monolithically rabbinic.*¹⁵

Rabbi Akiba had the authority and power to order the removal of older biblical manuscripts (MSS) and institute the use of new ones, and he could deem Hebrew texts in the Temple Court to be unfit for public reading.¹⁶ Rabbinic sources indicate that the rabbis also had the authority to dispose of entire biblical books if they deemed them unfit or

inferior, and in fact, they did so on numerous occasions.¹⁷ Further, they also controlled the copying and dissemination of new Hebrew MSS.

Even prior to the destruction of the Temple there is already evidence of centralized control by the Jerusalem Temple authorities over Hebrew biblical manuscripts circulating in Israel. Scribes worked in the Temple Court and used master copies stored in the Temple archives to “correct” scrolls brought to Jerusalem by local leaders. This is recorded in the rabbinic literature,¹⁸ and is also evidenced by Hebrew texts found in the Judaean Desert which possess textual affinities and exhibit scribal habits very close to those seen in later forms of the MT.¹⁹ When the Temple was destroyed and other Jewish sects disappeared (such as the Essenes at Qumran),²⁰ the rabbis emerged with full control over the proto-MT text and the doctrines and writings of rabbinic Judaism. These writings became absolutely authoritative for Palestinian and Diaspora Jews.²¹ Akiba and other influential rabbis traveled and successfully exerted their authority in the Diaspora.²² In time, the rabbinic worldview became central to Jewish belief and practice all around the world.²³

In the mid-2nd century AD, *Seder Olam* became the official Jewish chronology. Rabbi Yose ben Halafta, its primary author/editor, was a disciple of Akiba.²⁴ *Seder Olam* supersedes the authority of the Hebrew text: “...our traditional chronology is based on *Seder Olam* because of the authority of its author.”²⁵ It is rabbinic authority, and not the authority of the sacred text, that is paramount. The rabbinic *Seder Olam* was successfully dispersed into Jewish communities as the authoritative chronology of world history, and is followed by some Jews even today.

Long before the 2nd century AD, the Jerusalem authorities had already abandoned fidelity to the authority of the scriptural text.²⁶ The Pharisaic propensity to exalt human tradition (those earlier man-made traditions which Jesus strongly opposed and eventually led to the rabbinic corpus of writings) over Scripture is well attested in the New Testament (Mk 7:8-12). The scribes, who maintained control over the Hebrew texts in the Jerusalem Temple, were also fierce enemies of Jesus, and on par with the Pharisees (Lk 11:53-54; 20:45-47; Mt 23:1-36; Mk 12:38-40).

During the post AD-70 era, the rabbis would also have easily been able to dispose of their older Hebrew MSS with the higher begetting ages. Then, new Hebrew MSS and Aquila’s new LXX recension (see below) would only reflect the shorter primeval chronology, consistent with the newly authoritative *Seder Olam*.²⁷ The proto-MT was then rigorously controlled and transmitted by the rabbis down to the time of the Masoretes. Under these circumstances, any Hebrew MSS which may have contained the higher begetting ages could have been easily destroyed without a trace. Hebrew texts outside rabbinic control containing the longer chronology which may have survived were eventually lost to the ravages of time.²⁸ And those who may have possessed differing Hebrew texts in either Israel or in the Diaspora had no long standing authority to challenge the ascendancy of the rabbinic corpus or the shorter chronology deposited in the (now) authoritative *Seder Olam*. All other competing Hebrew texts

which may have still existed were supplanted and replaced by the rabbinic controlled MT. Tov observes: “Had the LXX and SP not been preserved and the Qumran scrolls not been found, we would have known little about non-rabbinic copies of Hebrew Scripture.”²⁹

Additionally, Greek had become the *lingua franca* across the Mediterranean world. The LXX had been widely disseminated throughout the Diaspora³⁰ and “came to be regarded as sacred scripture” by the 2nd century BC.³¹ Such acceptance by the Jewish community at large necessarily included the longer primeval chronology, reflected in the works of the Jewish historians Demetrius (220 BC)³² and Eupolemus (160 BC).³³ The LXX was also used in Israel, as evidenced by Eupolemus in Jerusalem and LXX texts found at Qumran and in the Judaeen Desert.³⁴

After the advent of the Church, however, the “old” LXX/OG texts³⁵ were replaced over time by the MT-based LXX recension of Aquila. Aquila’s recension was completed around AD 140,³⁶ approximately the same time that the *Seder Olam* reached its near final form.³⁷ Aquila was discipled by Rabbi Akiba and he “...followed him in regarding every word and letter of the Hebrew Bible as having significance. This explains many traits of his recension, which is extremely literal in its fidelity to the MT.”³⁸ Aquila’s recension is known to us “almost exclusively through [Origen’s] Hexapla.”³⁹ As the 2nd century came and went, the old LXX/OG, including its longer primeval chronology, moved from a centuries old status of authoritative acceptance within Judaism to effectively being relegated to “golden calf” status (*Mesechet Sopherim* 1.7).

Other Jewish LXX recensions also amended the numbers from the old LXX in order to bring their new translations in line with the shorter primeval chronology. Lower begetting ages from Gen 5:3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 16, 20, and 22 are found in the margins of some LXX MSS. These are Hexaplaric readings which had been recorded by Origen and are documented in Wevers’ secondary LXX text critical apparatus of Genesis.⁴⁰ Eusebius of Emesa (AD 300–360) also documented deflations in Gen 5/11 from Symmachus’ Jewish LXX recension.⁴¹ These significant changes to the original, centuries old LXX demonstrate that the Jewish authorities/translators not only deliberately shortened the primeval chronology after the destruction of the Temple, they had the authority and ability to disseminate those changes via their new LXX recensions.

The plausibility of the rabbis deliberately changing the primeval chronology only strengthens as we examine the immense spiritual conflict that arose between Christians and Jews in the early years of the Church. The crisis in Judaism caused by the destruction of the Temple and the large-scale spread of the Gospel cannot be overstated. We have already noted that the scribes described in the NT who controlled the Hebrew texts in the Temple were enemies of Jesus and His Gospel. It would be no surprise to see subsequent scribes exhibit a willingness to change the text of Scripture in order to discredit Jesus as the Messiah. The Apostle Paul’s biography is a testimony to the lengths some unbelieving Jews would go

to oppose the Church. The Apostle Peter warns that people are capable of profound self-deceit, leading them to distort the sacred text for their own selfish purposes: “[they] twist [Paul’s letters] to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures” (II Pt 3:16). Indeed, Justin Martyr (100-165 AD) stated that certain Jewish opponents deliberately expunged, altered or distorted Messianic verses from their Scriptures (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 71–73), as did Irenaeus (*Against Heresies*, 3.21.1).⁴²

C&C claim that the Jews would not change the text of Scripture since doing so would “cut off their nose to spite their face.” I would suggest that this assertion erroneously contradicts the Scriptural portrayal of the Israelites by the biblical authors throughout the Old Testament era. A people who were willing to sacrifice and burn their own children in the fires of Molech would not be capable of altering the biblical text to discredit the Messiah their Pharisaic forebearers had conspired to murder? What of the “scribes and Pharisees” who ascribed Jesus’ miracles to Satan? Rejecting and crucifying “the Lord of Glory” (I Cor 1:8) entails the greatest self-deception of all, and is the quintessential example of “cutting off their nose to spite their face.” C&C’s assertion severely underestimates the sinful power of self-deception.

While Gen 5/11 are not messianic texts proper, they had profound messianic implications during Second Temple Judaism.⁴³ Beckwith explains:

There is strong evidence to show that the Essenes, the Pharisees and the Zealots all thought that they could date, at least approximately, the time when the Son of David would come, and that in each case their calculations were based upon Daniel’s prophecy of the 70 Weeks (Dan 9:24–27), understood as 70 weeks of years... In ancient Jewish literature, the interpretation of Daniel’s 70 Weeks is always linked to some kind of chronological scheme... They are alike in beginning from Creation, and in proceeding on the assumption that, for the earliest period of history, time can be computed by adding together the ages of patriarchs in Genesis 5.⁴⁴

Motive, means, opportunity, an ideological context rife with chrono-messianic fervor, an extreme religious and cultural crisis, and the advancement of the Gospel all converged in the post-AD 70 aftermath, leaving the rabbis with the ideal circumstances to alter the texts of Genesis 5 and 11.

Now, let us circle back to Eusebius’s claim that the Jewish leaders deflated the primeval chronology in their Hebrew texts. While Eusebius incorrectly believed that the rabbis wanted to encourage early marriages by lowering the begetting ages, other theologians and historians pointed to a much more viable motivation: discrediting Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ.

Julian of Toledo

Julian of Toledo (AD 642-690), bishop of Spain, wrote a work in AD 686 entitled, “The Demonstration of the Sixth Age of the World Against the Jews with a Prayer Letter to King Ervig.” Sergio Stancati explains:

Therefore, it is a reproposal of the traditional subject of the centuries-old biblical and theological controversy between Jews and Christians about the end of time and the coming of the Messiah. We can say, more specifically, the work was written by Julian for contesting the Jewish doctrine, based on interpretations of the Babylonian Talmud, about the era, far in the future, according to Jewish thought, in which the Messiah is to appear... Judaism maintained that the Messiah would have been born and appeared only after the sixth millennium after the creation of the world and humankind. Obviously, Jewish theologians believed this date to be far in the future. With this interpretation, they denied that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah...⁴⁵

C&C refer to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, which explicitly states that Julian accused the Jews of deflating their chronology: “[Julian] attempts to prove that Jesus was actually born in the sixth age, in which the Messiah was to come; ‘but,’ he adds, ‘this time should not be reckoned according to the Hebrew original, which has been falsified by the Jews, but according to the Septuagint, which is more trustworthy.’” I was fully aware of the direct quote in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (which provides older Latin academic references to support its quotation of Julian). However, I referred to Stancati’s book instead to provide a more recent source in English that would also more thoroughly explain Julian’s argument and perspective. A close reading of Stancati’s work on Julian illustrates agreement with the explicit quote found in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. The title of his work makes that crystal clear.⁴⁶

C&C also argue that Julian’s grounds for following the LXX were based on the *Letter of Aristeas*, and thus, his argument about the shorter chronology should be rejected. But I am not adopting and following Julian’s reason(s) for using the LXX,⁴⁷ I am documenting his claim that the Jewish authorities had deflated the original chronology and that they were promoting a false chronology reflected in the Babylonian Talmud. A person can believe something to be true that is in fact true (the LXX’s chronology reflects the original Hebrew text), but on improper grounds (*Aristeas*).

The viability of the LXX’s primeval chronology is not and should not be based on *Aristeas*. The story of the LXX’s origin in *Aristeas* is largely legendary, though it does contain some historical elements. Unfortunately, it was often accepted as accurate by many of the Church fathers, and its scope was expanded to include Greek translations outside the Pentateuch. Despite its shortcomings, its greatest value lies in the fact that *Aristeas* was effectively a Jewish apologetic for the LXX. Wright explains:

The LXX gradually lost its relationship with the Hebrew [text used by the translators], and those who read it began to regard it in the manner that we see reflected in *Aristeas*, as an independent free-standing replacement for the Hebrew... The LXX came to be regarded as sacred scripture. But somewhere along the road to the LXX becoming scripture someone had to offer a justification for accepting it as a

prestigious, central and sacred text... *Aristeas*... legitimizes what the LXX had become by the middle part of the second century BCE... an independent, scriptural authority.⁴⁸

In other words, *Aristeas* was not the reason Jews had embraced the LXX. No, *Aristeas* was written as an apologetic for the LXX, after it has already been widely embraced as genuine and authoritative by the Jewish community. This included its longer primeval chronology, as evidenced by all reliable external witnesses before ca. AD 100.

C&C also claim that Julian’s argument was geared towards events in salvation history, not calendar dates. To support this assertion, they pull a paragraph from Stancati out of context, and by doing so, they misrepresent Stancati’s descriptions of Julian’s work *in toto*. The particular quote from Stancati that C&C cite focuses not on biblical chronology, but “the whole of historical facts” pertaining to Jesus. However, the quote used by C&C pertains to only *one book* written by Julian. C&C leave the impression that Julian was not concerned with biblical chronology in his apologetic and that I have misrepresented his argument. *Quite the contrary*. Unfortunately, C&C have inaccurately represented Julian’s overall argument, Stancati’s assessment of his works, and my representation of both. Stancati’s own words summarize Julian’s multifaceted apologetic methodology:

The work of Julian, therefore, was on the one hand, finalized to contest the Jewish biblical hermeneutics and the diffusion of its conclusions. On the other hand, it was to attract Jews to the true messianic faith with an appropriate exegesis of the text and with a precise mathematical calculation of biblical chronology.⁴⁹

It is clear from a careful reading of Stancati that Julian used multiple, integrated methods in *three books* to appeal to the Jews that Jesus was the promised Messiah. This included the use of biblical chronology with a challenge to his Jewish audience that they were following a false chronology of history, ultimately derived from the deflated primeval chronology found in the MT.

George Syncellus

Byzantine Chronologist George Syncellus (d. AD 810) documented Eusebius’ statement that the Septuagint’s chronology came from an ancient and uncorrupted Hebrew copy of Genesis:

According to the most ancient Hebrew text, which is to this day still in fact preserved by the Samaritans, there is, then, clear agreement with the Septuagint that the patriarchs from the Flood up to Abraham procreated after the passing of one hundred years plus some additional period of time... On this issue, then, careful reflection suggests this conclusion: there is no choice but to acknowledge that, with the exception of Jared and two generations after him, the text of scripture used by the Jews has erred in its chronology from Adam to Abraham, whereas the Samaritan text is in error

only for the years from Adam to the Flood. For the years from the Flood up to Abraham are found to be in agreement with the record of years reported in the Septuagint. But it is abundantly clear that the Hebrew text used by the Jews is wrong... There is thus complete confirmation that the Septuagint translation was translated from, so it would seem, an ancient and a strictly accurate Hebrew text of scripture.⁵⁰

Now one might argue that Syncellus in this instance is not explicitly accusing the Jews of being in error on the primeval chronology. That would be a fair point, and I should have been more precise about this in my *ARJ* footnote. There are two reasons I cited Syncellus. First, he notoriously blasted Eusebius with *ad hominem*s for perceived mistakes. For example, Eusebius is Syncellus' regular object of derision because of his omission of Kainan in LXX Gen 11. Syncellus treats everyone else with equal contempt when he believes they have gone astray. By his silence and style, there is little doubt he agreed with Eusebius' assessment.

Second, and more concretely, the 19th century Egyptologist [Gustav Seyffarth](#) attributes a very pointed statement to Syncellus: "I concur entirely in the opinion, that this (the shortening of the lives of several of the patriarchs, in the Hebrew text) was a criminal act of the Jews."⁵¹ Seyffarth's footnote reads "Syncell. p. 84 Ed. Paris." After a thorough check, I did not find this exact quote in Adler and Tuffin's 725-page translation and analysis of Syncellus' Chronography. They do not provide their own text critical analysis, however, depending instead upon A.A. Mosshammer's text critical reconstruction of the extant manuscripts.

Seyffarth is referencing a manuscript of Syncellus that was being kept in Paris. Adler and Tuffin discuss Parisian manuscripts A (#1711) and B (#1764).⁵² [There are other known extant manuscripts of Syncellus as well.](#) It is possible that Mosshammer decided this statement documented by Seyffarth was an inferior textual variant. Adler and Tuffin do note that the early manuscript tradition of Syncellus was likely written in the form of two codices, leading to numerous textual divergences (p. lxxvii). Nonetheless, Seyffarth's quotation and citation directly from an 11th century AD Syncellus manuscript seems to show that Syncellus made more overt, direct claims beyond his implicit approval of Eusebius' argument. Further research will bear this out for sure. While the evidence for the inclusion of Syncellus is not as strong as the other references, I see no reason to exclude him from this current list unless new information requires it.

Bar Hebraeus

Bar Hebraeus was also included in my list (AD 1226–1286).⁵³ Though his statements are from a later period, they serve as another link in the chain of evidence. Bar Hebraeus was known by numerous names, including Abulpharag.⁵⁴ [He was a prolific author of the 13th century AD.](#)⁵⁵ whose work includes the [Chronicon Syriacum](#), in which he details a chronology of history from creation using the [longer primeval chronology](#). Additional resources written by Bar Hebraeus can be found online.⁵⁶

C&C dismiss Bar Hebraeus out of hand for two illegitimate reasons. First they state that "we can't find a statement in writing that the Jews intentionally altered the text." I provided a citation from Seyffarth in my *ARJ* article, who cites and quotes Abulpharag (=Bar Hebraeus). In 1663, Edward Pococke published a translation of Bar Hebraeus' *Historia Compendiosa Dynastiarum* from Syriac into Latin, which Seyffarth explicitly cites. [This work can be found online](#), where there is a facsimile of the Syriac text along with Pococke's Latin translation and analysis. Seyffarth reproduces the Latin text in a footnote, and provides an English translation of Bar Hebraeus' statement:

According to the Hebrew Testament there elapsed between the creation and Christ 1375 years less, than according to the Septuagint. This shortening of time is the work of the older Rabbis. For, as it had been foretold in the Law and the Prophets, that the Messiah would come into the world in the last days (or time) at the end of the sixth millennium, they shortened the lives of the Patriarchs for the purpose of rejecting Christ, and expecting another Messiah.⁵⁷

C&C then employ a *non-sequitur* to further justify dismissing Bar Hebraeus because he "says in the same work that Jesus was born on December 25, so he's clearly dealing with traditions outside the text proper. This is enough for us to discount this source entirely." Are we to understand that Bar Hebraeus' statement about the Jews deflating the primeval chronology should be dismissed because he is also engaging with extra-biblical material while trying to determine the date of Christ's birth on the Julian calendar? What do Bar Hebraeus' arguments about the date of Christ's birth have to do with his views on the primeval chronology? *Absolutely nothing.*⁵⁸

Muhammad ibn Ahmad Biruni

In *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, Muslim scholar Biruni (AD 973–1048) testifies that Christians of his era accused the Jews of deflating the chronology in Gen 5/11. Biruni's work was translated from Arabic into English by Eduard Sachau in 1879. Biruni writes:

The Jews and Christians differ widely on this subject; for, according to the doctrine of the Jews, the time between Adam and Alexander is 3,448 years, whilst, according to the Christian doctrine, it is 5,180 years. The Christians reproach the Jews with having diminished the number of years with the view of making the appearance of Jesus fall into the fourth millennium in the middle of the seven millennia, which are, according to their view, the time of the duration of the world, so as not to coincide with that time at which, as the prophets after Moses had prophesied, the birth of Jesus from a pure virgin at the end of time, was to take place.⁵⁹

An obvious opponent of both parties and living in Persia,⁶⁰ Biruni is an independent witness to the Christian claim that the

Jews had deliberately deflated the primeval chronology. Note also that Biruni is referring to Christians as a group, and not just to one particular individual, indicating that this was a commonly held view in Biruni's day.

Augustine of Hippo

We also have the testimony of Augustine in North Africa (*ca.* AD 420), who reports that unspecified Christians of his time argued that the Jewish scribes "made alterations in their texts as to undermine the authority of ours." He specifically deals with the numbers in Genesis 5 (*City of God* XV.10–11, 13), and attempts to refute the Christian claim that the Jews had deflated the antediluvian begetting ages in the Hebrew text (see my analysis of Augustine's arguments below in § II.4.1–10). Augustine thus serves as another ancient witness, a *hostile witness*, to this explanation for the origin of the MT's primeval timeline. Since Augustine felt that the argument was important enough to respond to, it logically follows that this viewpoint was a commonly held in the Church in the 5th century AD.

Jacob of Edessa

Lastly, we turn our attention to probably the most important witness of all: the Syriac theologian Jacob of Edessa (AD 640–708). In his *Commentary on the Octateuch*, Jacob claims that the Hebrew text of Gen 5/11 had been deliberately deflated by Jewish authorities to demonstrate that the Christ had not yet come.⁶¹

C&C say that Jacob "asserts this without any evidence to substantiate it." First, Jacob's statement in its geographical and historical context *is* the evidence. We can see here how C&C's arbitrary evidential standard (i.e. documentation of a conspiracy by the rabbis) allows them to discard Jacob's statements without any critical engagement. Second, and most significantly, Jacob testifies to evidence that backs up his claim.

Jacob was intimately familiar with the OT text, had knowledge of multiple languages, and was "one of the finest scholars of the Syrian Orthodox Church."⁶² In my *ARJ* and *ICC*⁶³ articles, I cited Bas ter Haar Romeny, a recognized expert on western Syriac Christianity who works directly with the Syriac text. [The reader can visit Romeny's academia page and judge for himself his knowledge of Jacob's writings in the original language.](#)

A careful reading of Romeny's article reveals two important facts: 1. Jacob produced his own Bible translation, one which was designed to improve upon the prevailing Syriac translation, the Peshitta. His work still survives in part in several MSS. 2. Jacob also wrote a *Commentary on the Octateuch*. In it, Jacob claims that "...the original Hebrew text was falsified 'by the same Hebrews' in order to show that Christ had not come yet. They subtracted... one hundred years from the age of Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, and Mahalalel."⁶⁴ Jacob's Bible translation also included the longer antediluvian chronology, and interestingly, a begetting age of 187 for Methuselah instead of the widespread and erroneous 167

reading found in many LXX manuscripts.⁶⁵

As I mentioned above (§ I), my incorrect citation of Ephraem turned out to be a blessing in disguise. While I was trying to get to the bottom of things, I discovered that Jacob's complete *Commentary on the Octateuch* is reproduced in Syriac and translated into Latin in Joseph Assemani's *Bibliotheca Orientalis*. The text is taken directly from manuscript Vat. sir. 103,⁶⁶ the same MSS examined and expounded by Romeny. On pages 65–66 (vol. I), Assemani reproduces Jacob's Syriac text, then translates it into Latin. Adler provides an English translation of Jacob's pertinent statement: "The Hebrews, wanting to pervert the computation of years, in order to show that Christ had not yet arrived, subtract 100 years from Adam before he fathered Seth."⁶⁷ While this statement specifically refers to Adam's begetting age, it is clear that Jacob believed the entire primeval chronology had been altered by the Jewish scribes. To discredit the time of Jesus' arrival, the entire timeline from Adam to Abraham was reduced. The longer chronology is also reflected in his Bible translation of Gen 5 and 11. This is confirmed above by Romeny, who paraphrased Jacob's statements.

Moreover, there was another significant statement made by Jacob. A couple of years ago, I came across this footnote written by William Hales: "*Jacobus Edessenus*, who flourished about A.D. 700, states, that he found in some sufficiently accurate *Hebrew histories*, that *Adam* begat *Seth* when he was 230 years old."⁶⁸ This, of course, grabbed my attention, but I had been unable to independently corroborate Hales' quotation of Jacob, so I did not use it... until now.

Discussing the numerical divergences in Gen 5/11, Adler turns to Jacob and quotes him (above). Adler then says this: "In this same notice, Jacob claims also that in his time there were certain Hebrew manuscripts that confirmed the Septuagint chronology."⁶⁹ After reading this, I went back to *Bibliotheca Orientalis* and was able to verify that Adler's assessment was correct. Four scholars (Assemani, Hales, Adler and Romeny) are all in agreement on this point.⁷⁰

Jacob went beyond the mere charge that the rabbis had deflated the original, longer chronology. No, Jacob knew of concrete evidence that supported his argument and vindicated his inclusion of the LXX's numbers in both his Bible translation and commentary. He did not merely appeal to Church tradition or to *Aristeas*: Jacob had knowledge of *copies of Hebrew manuscripts that existed in his day that confirmed the Septuagint's longer primeval chronology.*⁷¹

Summary

When we take these statements, arguments, and evidence in their totality, we have an explanation over a long period (*ca.* AD 310–1275) and in disparate geographical locales (Israel, North Africa, Spain, Syria [twice], Constantinople, and Persia) for the origin of the MT's shorter chronology. Jacob of Edessa's account of Hebrew manuscripts that contained the longer chronology is powerful evidence, and his witness needs to be taken very seriously. *The reader who dismisses Jacob's statements out of hand or resorts to impugning his*

credibility without evidence is simply not serious about getting to the truth.

As I have stated on numerous occasions, these sources serve as one component in an overall matrix of data. They do not prove the MT was deflated, rather, they provide a testable explanation for its divergences from the LXX. We can examine this explanation for the origin of the MT's primeval timeline by weighing the textual evidence, internal phenomena, and external witnesses.

This leads us to two important points. First, it was not practical to include all of these details in the respective articles I previously published. The underlying rationale and more detailed documentation will eventually appear in book form. I have included some of this information in this article to refute C&C's specious claim that my Ephraem mistake is indicative of a larger "pattern" of errors.

Second, C&C dismiss all of these important references out of hand and employ several fallacies while doing so. They also mispresent the arguments of Julian of Toledo, Stancati, and myself. In the cases of Syncellus⁷² and Bar Hebraeus, they have superficially interacted with the academic literature. Their arbitrarily imposed evidential standard gives them *carte blanche* to dismiss any evidence pointing to the Jewish rabbis as being responsible for the origin of the MT's primeval timeline.

2. Straw Men and Ad Hominems

1. In my *ICC* paper (p. 117), I state that "He [God] certainly does not promise to preserve the OT Scriptures in the Masoretic Text alone." C&C claim that this is a view of inspiration that "no one has ever held." First, mine is not a statement on the doctrine of inspiration, it is a very concise statement on the doctrine of *preservation*. Second, I explicitly cite and quote *Chronology of the Old Testament* written by Floyd Nolen Jones (p. 119), who in fact, holds to the very view I describe. C&C should be familiar with this work, as it well-known in the creation community and has exerted influence on many Christians who subscribe to a recent creation and have an interest in biblical chronology. Moreover, an online search will quickly bring up videos and other articles that echo Jones' basic position. In recent days, I received an email with a [link to this abrasive and dogmatic polemic](#), and a grossly uninformed video presentation featuring [Kent Hovind](#).⁷³ Again, both reflect the same fundamental perspective as Jones.

My goal in making this particular statement was to appeal to those who may be influenced by irrational and ill-informed biases against the LXX to reconsider their position. In my articles [online](#) and in [MT, SP, or LXX?](#), I cite other examples of the LXX's superiority over the MT (i.e. Gen 4:8; sections of I Samuel) in an attempt persuade those who subscribe to a theologically incorrect and over-exalted view of the MT to re-evaluate their perspective.

Thus, C&C's statement is not only a straw man, it reveals an unfamiliarity with a distorted but sometimes influential viewpoint within evangelicalism on the preservation of the original OT text.

2. C&C also state that I make "a number of demonstrably

untrue and apparently prejudicial statements in the [*ICC*] paper." They then quote me as follows:

Even though the Reformers had largely accepted the Gen 5/11 MT chronology as original, a number of subsequent Christian chronologists argued that the LXX fundamentally preserves the original figures and the MT's primeval chronology is the result of a deliberate post-AD 70 corruption (Goodenow 1896; Hales 1830; Hayes 1741; Jackson 1752; Russell 1865; Seyffarth 1859). Unfortunately, modern conservatives have not engaged with their arguments. (*ICC* p. 119).

In their response, C&C refer to Jerome, Augustine, and Bede as proponents of the MT's timeline. First, Augustine was not a proponent of the MT's entire primeval timeline. He followed the LXX in his explicit calculation and exposition of the post-Flood chronology (*City of God* XVI.10). Moreover, his theory on the origin of the LXX's chronology in Gen 5 is untenable (see § II.4.1-10 below).

Second, Bede's main arguments against the LXX's primeval chronology are found in *Letter to Plegwin* and in *The Reckoning of Time*, chapter 66.⁷⁴ In *Plegwin*, Bede parrots portions of Augustine's renegade scribe theory (§ II.4.1-10), appeals to Jerome on several occasions, inaccurately cites Josephus (*Plegwin*, p. 409), and quotes Jerome's erroneous argument from silence borrowed from Origen's Isaiah commentary. Bede also appeals to Jerome's discussion of problems in the chronology of LXX I and II Chronicles vs. the Hebrew text (*Plegwin*, p. 410). The text critical challenges in those books have nothing whatsoever to do with Gen 5/11 (see my discussion of this text critical fallacy in *ICC*, p. 119). I and II Chronicles were translated decades after the Pentateuch by different translators, from different Hebrew *Vorlagen*, and were likely completed in Israel, not Egypt (*ICC*, pp. 117-120). *Plegwin* is largely a rhetorical argument from authority, containing no substantive reasons why the MT's primeval chronology represents the original text.⁷⁵

Jerome is, of course, worthy of our serious consideration.⁷⁶ Despite his extensive contributions to the Church historic and his familiarity with Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts of the OT, Jerome merely asserts that the LXX in Gen 5/11 is wrong. He simply never offers a substantive argument as to why. He extrapolates the Methuselah problem across the entire primeval chronology of the LXX (as does Bede),⁷⁷ a methodological error still being employed today (*ARJ*, p. 171). He provides no viable explanation for the origin of the alleged inflations in the LXX, nor does he explain how the Hebrew text of the Samaritan Pentateuch came to match the LXX in Gen 11. Jerome's conclusion with respect to Gen 5/11 depends entirely on his all controlling *a priori*, the *Hebraica veritas*. Bede's dogmatic and slavish devotion to this principle is virtually identical to Jerome's.

Embedded in the *Hebraica veritas a priori* is the added assumption that the Hebrew text of Gen 5/11 extant in Israel in Jerome's day (the late 4th and early 5th centuries AD) had never been subjected to deliberate changes previously. It assumes the originality of the MT in Gen 5/11 from the outset and never

critically questions its veracity. This is purely circular reasoning, and it therefore explains nothing. Septuagint scholar Peter Gentry's statement bears repeating here (*ICC*, p. 120):

Differences, therefore, between the LXX and other witnesses to the text which are genuine textual variants should be evaluated on a case by case basis, and one should not prefer *a priori* either the LXX or the MT.

Third, Jerome, Augustine, and Bede are not relevant to what I was saying, anyway. I was referring to authors in the post-Reformation period who still held to the LXX's chronology when its influence had waned significantly, *and*, to "modern conservatives" (not ancient authors) who have not engaged with the arguments made by those authors I specifically listed. When one reads the conservative academic literature, one will discover that my statement is, in fact, true. Modern conservative scholars have *not* engaged with the specific arguments delineated by Goodenow, Hales, Hayes, Jackson, Russell and Seyffarth.

Part of my overall point should have been obvious: despite the change to the priority of the MT's primeval timeline during and after the Reformation, numerous Christian scholars still argued in favor of the LXX, and modern conservative scholars have all but ignored their particular arguments. By appealing to ancient authors instead, C&C have erected a straw-man they can subsequently tear down with uncharitable epithets.

3. C&C then claim the following statement is "also untrue":

Moreover, evangelicals tend to quickly dismiss LXX Gen 5/11 either because of the numerous (and often substantial) text critical divergences between the LXX and MT in other OT books, or because of unsubstantiated theological predispositions favoring the MT. (*ICC* p. 119).

After making this statement, I survey a number of conservative authors who have done exactly what I describe. C&C object, however, because they seem to believe I have misunderstood their previous article, "Textual Traditions and Biblical Chronology" (*TTBC*).

First, my statement included two general (not all) reasons why evangelicals tend to quickly dismiss the LXX's numbers in Gen 5/11. I describe and interact with said dismissals from the works of Williams, Ray, Merrill, Green, Whitcomb/Morris and Jones. C&C have not shown why my descriptions of their arguments are inaccurate. The two reasons do not include *TTBC*, which is clear from reading my actual critique of *TTBC* and my other statements about it.

Second, I briefly interact with their article, and in no place do I state that their article is dismissive of the LXX due to the two general reasons often framed by other conservatives. This is a strong *tendency* in the literature, but it does not apply to *all* conservative scholars. Instead, the fair minded reader should clearly be able to see that I state *TTBC* is "methodologically deficient."⁷⁸ In my brief critique, I specifically outline what I believe are the fatal deficiencies in C&C's methodology.

Third, I positively categorize their article (along with the work of Shaw, Young, and Sexton) as an "exception" (*ICC* p.

117; *ARJ*, p. 171) to the superficial approach employed by most conservative scholars since the publication of W.H. Green's "Primeval Chronology" in 1890. Both my critique and positive statements combine to clearly place *TTBC* in a different category.

Thus, my statements are not untrue. Instead, C&C have distorted them.

4. Referring to their *TTBC* article, C&C state that I say their "approach was biased from the start," and that I "systematically misinterpret(s) our main arguments." Here is what I wrote, in full:

Cosner and Carter attempt to approach the subject more objectively than most: "We did not come into the analysis with the agenda of proving MT superiority" (p. 105). While I certainly accept their intention as earnest, their method immediately moves into a pro-MT/anti-LXX stance. First, they quickly appeal to very brief pro-MT opinions from two conservative scholars. They do not adequately develop or defend the basis for these opinions. Second, they speculate that the LXX may have been inflated by the Alexandrian Jews to "agree with the Egyptian chronology of Manetho" (p. 99), a theory that has at least 8 fatal flaws (see below). No other viable motive for alleged LXX inflations is presented. Third, they utilize lifespans in SP Gen 11 as the foundation for reconstructing the post-Flood chronology. These numbers were added to the SP by uninspired scribes over 1000 years after Moses, and are not original (Hendel, p. 73). They cannot be used as a reliable foundation for textual reconstruction. Fourth, they provide no viable explanation for how/why the chronology in Gen 11 SP was (allegedly) inflated independently of the LXX. Fifth, they provide no analysis of external witnesses to Gen 5/11 from antiquity. This absence is striking and at odds with text-critical scholarship on the OT (Wevers 1974b; Hendel 1998; Kauhanen 2013). Sixth, there is no substantive interaction with LXX scholars who argue that the LXX translators treated the Genesis text very conservatively, and that the numbers came from the Hebrew *Vorlage*. In the end, Cosner and Carter deduce that the MT's chronology is original, a conclusion that was baked into the methodological cake from the outset. (Despite my criticisms of their methodology and conclusions, their article contributes positively to the subject).

A few observations from this:

- a. I accepted their personal motives/intentions as "earnest."
- b. I critiqued their methodology and made no mention of their personal/internal motivations, a courtesy they have not extended to me.
- c. I stated explicitly that "their article contributes positively to the subject" and also indicated earlier that *TTBC* was an "exception" to the superficial arguments often found in the conservative literature.
- d. I provided two main reasons (along with others) why their method and conclusions are fatally flawed: the immediate move in a pro-MT/anti-LXX direction at the very beginning of their article, and the use of the SP's uninspired lifespans to

reconstruct the post-Flood chronology. In private email correspondence with both authors independently, I pointed out some of these flaws and received either no reply or no substantial interaction from either author.

e. I argued that the *methodology* C&C used biased the conclusion in favor of the MT (especially in Genesis 11), but I did *not* accuse them of *deliberately employing* a biased methodology in order to reach a pre-determined outcome. A person can employ a method that biases the outcome of a study without setting out to do so. Let me be clear: I accept C&C's biased, pro-MT methodology as coming from a place of sincerity. Here, I will explain further why a pro-MT bias is imbedded into their reconstruction of Genesis 11.

The post-Flood reconstruction that C&C present in *TTBC* must depend on the assumption that the uninspired SP's lifespans are correct. However, the SP's lifespans have no corroborating and independent textual evidence as stand-alone figures since the MT and LXX do not preserve lifespans in Gen 11: lifespans were not originally included by Moses. They are unlike the original Genesis 5 lifespans, which appear in multiple textual witnesses and can be used for mathematical cross-checking (what C&C refer to as "check sums") due to their inspired, original, and accurate nature. Moreover, the SP's lifespans in Gen 11 appear in no external witnesses until Eusebius (*ca.* AD 310). They are extremely late additions to the SP text, appearing for the first time over 1,000 years after the time of Moses. Thus, they only represent the state of the SP text at the time that the unknown, uninspired scribe(s) amended it. Therefore, *and this is most significant*, we cannot and must not assume the SP lifespans represent the accurate sum of the original begetting ages and the original remaining years as they were given to Moses. To assume they are accurate is to bias the conclusion in a certain direction from the start, and this is exactly what C&C have done.

An impartial text-critical reconstruction of Genesis 11 must begin by using the matching MT/LXX remaining years after accounting for accidental scribal errors (See: *ICC*, pp. 127–28, 130–31; "[MT, SP or LXX?](#)," p. 26). By doing so, these dual textual witnesses eliminate any *a priori* assumptions about inflation or deflation in the begetting ages, and are not dependent on the spurious lifespan additions of an uninspired scribe. When this is done, it shows that the remaining years in the SP have all been deflated by 100 years each (sans Shem; 50 years for Nahor). Since the SP's remaining years are all wrong, the only way to conclude that its lifespans are correct is to *assume* that the SP's begetting ages have been inflated, which is exactly what C&C do in their methodology. This is a second pro-MT assumption embedded into their reconstruction.

Instead of necessarily assuming inflation, we must turn to the two-fold, matching and independent textual witness to the begetting ages in the SP/LXX. When the SP/LXX begetting ages (confirmed by 3 additional witnesses: Demetrius, Eupolemus and Josephus) are added to the SP's incorrect and deliberately deflated remaining years, we discover that *the SP lifespans are wrong*. Since the SP's lifespans are wrong, the MT's calculated lifespans are also

wrong, since they match the SP's. Since the MT's remaining years are correct (confirmed independently by the LXX and other external witnesses), we can only conclude that *the MT's begetting ages are also wrong*.

Let us use the example of Peleg as an illustration (Gn 11:18–19). His remaining years are 209 in the MT/LXX, and 109 in the SP. The remaining years for Peleg in the SP are therefore incorrect by 100 years. Peleg's begetting age is 130 in SP/LXX and 30 in the MT. Including external sources, the 130 appears in or is necessarily entailed in five witnesses before AD 100. Following the preponderance of evidence, Peleg's begetting age of 130 in SP/LXX should be added to his remaining years of 209 in MT/LXX to yield an original lifespan of 339 years. The SP's lifespan for Peleg incorrectly reads 239 years (130 + 109). The MT's calculated lifespan of 239 for Peleg is therefore also wrong (30 + 209). Thus, Peleg's begetting age of 30 in the MT is wrong.

This is the only valid way to text critically reconstruct the numbers in Genesis 11. By accepting the SP's lifespans as authentic up front, C&C's method immediately biases the conclusion against the matching SP/LXX begetting ages and in favor of the MT's. Inflation in the SP's begetting ages (and therefore the LXX's) is "baked into the methodological cake" from the outset. Moreover, *TTBC* omits relevant external evidence, which unanimously favors the SP/LXX prior to *ca.* AD 120–160. C&C also provide no coherent explanation for why the SP scribe would have changed the numbers to begin with. Nor do they explain how the allegedly inflated begetting ages appeared independently in both the LXX and SP. Lastly, they overlook the internal evidence in Gen 11 which exposes the MT's begetting ages as deliberate deflations ([Sexton and Smith, "Primeval Chronology Restored," pp. 48–49; ICC](#), pp. 122–23). For these reasons, their conclusions favoring the MT in Genesis 11 should be rejected. (See table on following page.)

5. To make the brief point that a majority of published Christian works dealing with matters of biblical chronology prior to the Reformation followed the LXX in Gen 5/11 instead of the MT, I cited a summary list of chronologies provided by Hales (pp. 211–14). This was done at the behest of an academic reviewer who suggested that I provide a citation for my statement. Hales' list includes many chronologies, both Christian and non-Christian. While Hales' objective was to point out the large variety of creation dates published over the centuries, anyone can easily pick out the Christian chronologists who followed the MT, and those who followed the LXX. My purpose was quite simple: I was merely illustrating the point that a majority of chronologists in church history prior to the Reformation accepted the LXX's chronology, so we ought to take that fact seriously today. Hales' summary list provided an easy way to document a fact that is beyond dispute.⁷⁹

C&C's reaction to the Hales citation is closely tethered to an egregious effort to impugn my motives. They write: "he dearly hopes that no one will look up what Hales actually wrote." C&C never wrote to me and asked me why I cited Hales in this manner, which would have been the charitable approach. I could have cleared up the matter in five minutes, as I just did above. Instead of doing their due diligence, C&C

Table 1: The main numerical divergences in Genesis 5 and 11 in the Masoretic Text (MT), Septuagint (LXX), and Samaritan Pentateuch (SP). Numbers in () are calculations derived from other texts. Brackets [] are proposed reconstructions for the original text of the MT. See Appendix in *ICC* (p. 130–32) for further details.

Patriarch	Genesis Verses	Masoretic Text			Septuagint			Samaritan Pentateuch		
		Begetting Age	Remaining Years	Lifespan	Begetting Age	Remaining Years	Lifespan	Begetting Age	Remaining Years	Lifespan
Adam	5:3-5	130	800	930	230	700	930	130	800	930
Seth	5:6-8	105	807	912	205	707	912	105	807	912
Enosh	5:9-11	90	815	905	190	715	905	90	815	905
Kenan	5:12-14	70	840	910	170	740	910	70	840	910
Mahalalel	5:15-17	65	830	895	165	730	895	65	830	895
Jared	5:18-20	162	800	962	162	800	962	62 ³	785 ³	847 ³
Enoch	5:21-23	65	300	365	165	200	365	65	300	365
Methuselah	5:25-27	187	782	969	187	782	969	67 ³	653 ³	720 ³
Lamech	5:28-31	182 ²	595 ²	777 ²	188 ²	565 ²	753 ²	53 ³	600 ³	653 ³
Noah	5:32; 7:11; 8:13-14; 9:28-29; 10:21; 11:10	500/(502)	After the Flood 350	950	500/(502)	After the Flood 350	950	500/(502)	After the Flood 350	950
Shem	5:32; 11:10 -11	100	500		100	500		100	500	600
Arpachshad	11:12-13	35	[430]/403 ⁵		135	430/330 ⁵		135	303 ⁴	438 ⁴
Kainan	11:13b-14b				130	330 ¹¹				
Shelah	11:14-15	30	403		130	403/330 ⁶		130	303 ⁴	433 ⁴
Eber	11:16-17	34	[370]/430 ⁷		134	370 ⁷		134	270 ⁴	404 ⁴
Peleg	11:18-19	30	209		130	209		130	109 ⁴	239 ⁴
Reu	11:20-21	32	207		132	207		132	107 ⁴	239 ⁴
Serug	11:22-23	30	200		130	200		130	100 ⁴	230 ⁴
Nahor	11:24-25	29	[129]/119 ⁸		79	129 ⁸		79	69 ⁴	148 ⁴
Terah	11:26, 32; 12:1-4 Acts 7:2-4	70/(130)	(75)	205	70/(130)	(75)	205	70	(75)	145 ⁹

leap to invalid conclusions and say that “[t]he only reason [they] can imagine” that I used Hales as a reference was because I was hoping that no one would ever check my source. *In other words, C&C insinuate that my intention was to mislead the reader.*

Since they conclude that I was “dearly” hoping that no one would ever check my sources, C&C must evidently be familiar with my research practices and the inner workings of my heart and mind.⁸⁰ The reader can judge for himself what place this kind of accusation has in Christian scholarship.

3. Liber Biblicarum Antiquitatum (*LAB*, or *Pseudo-Philo*)

When faced with evidence or careful scholarship that militates against their position, C&C repeatedly dismiss it out of hand. No place is this more evident than in their handling of *LAB*.

LAB is a pseudepigraphical work that selectively recapitulates biblical history from Adam to Saul. It consists of 65 chapters and is considered a “haggadic midrash.”⁸¹ Scholars who have examined *LAB* in detail argue that it was derived directly from Hebrew texts of the OT and was originally written in Hebrew in the 1st century AD in Israel. It was then translated into Greek and eventually into Latin. It is incumbent upon C&C to carefully demonstrate why these scholars are wrong. Instead, they dismiss all of their painstaking analysis and arguments as “conjecture.” C&C interact with *zero scholarship* on *LAB*’s original language and biblical base text and completely ignore the most significant and in-depth studies published by Harrington and Jacobson.⁸²

Beyond the carefully reasoned scholarship on *LAB*, there is additional evidence that the author was following a Hebrew exemplar of Genesis. *LAB* 4.9 omits Kainan from its recitation of Genesis 10:24, indicating he was using a Hebrew text and not the LXX. Moreover, as I emphasized in my *ICC* article (p. 124), Lamech’s numbers in *LAB* only appear in the MT. His begetting age of 182 and (textually reconstructed) remaining years of 595 (adding up to the MT’s lifespan of 777 years), are not found in any manuscripts of the LXX, nor in any external witnesses to the LXX from antiquity. A scribe who deliberately revised the 11 numbers in *LAB* to reflect the LXX’s would have recorded 188 for Lamech’s begetting age, not 182. Indeed, the figures for Lamech in *LAB* must therefore have come directly from a Hebrew text of Genesis, not the Septuagint.

C&C then sweep away all of *LAB*’s higher begetting ages in Genesis 5 by baldly asserting that a Greek scribe may have changed all of the numbers (11 in all)⁸³ to reflect the figures found in the LXX. C&C admit that theirs is a “just-so-story.”⁸⁴ And it certainly is. There is no manuscript evidence to support their argument,⁸⁵ nor is there evidence that the LXX exerted undue influence upon *LAB*’s text,⁸⁶ nor does the internal evidence in *LAB* itself support it.

Then, C&C turn to *LAB* 3:6, which provides a chronological summation figure for the antediluvian era, presently extant as 1652 years (Greek χιλίων εξακοσίων πεντακοντα δυο; Latin MDCLII). This obviously is at odds with the internal addition of the nine begetting ages found in *LAB* 1:1–22,

which should add up to 2256 instead (Greek δισχιλιων διακοσιων πεντακοντα εξ; Latin MMCCLVI).

In C&C’s “just-so-story”, the scribe who allegedly made the 11 changes to match *LAB* with the LXX somehow lacked the competence or wherewithal to add up the numbers required to easily change *LAB* 3:6 from 1652[6?] to 2256. Harrington notes that the 1652 figure could have arisen by means of an accidental scribal error from what would have been an original, internally cross-checked figure of 2256.⁸⁷ C&C dismiss Harrington’s explanation out of hand, arguing that deliberately changing the 11 other figures is as equally plausible as accidentally changing one. This assertion with no analysis or supporting manuscript evidence violates one of the most basic principles of textual criticism: the weighing of textual variants. Here, we have one possible pro–MT data point that can be explained by scribal error vs. 11 numbers reflecting the longer chronology in the extant manuscripts,⁸⁸ Lamech’s Hebrew based figures, the absence of Kainan in *LAB* 4:9, and the voluminous and detailed scholarship concluding that *LAB* was written in Hebrew and derived directly from a Hebrew text of the OT in the 1st century AD. The reader can decide for himself which is the “just-so-story.”

4. Augustine’s Renegade Scribe Theory

In my *ARJ* article, “Methuselah’s Begetting Age,” I believe that it has been amply demonstrated that the 167 begetting age reading in Gen 5:25 found in some LXX manuscripts originated as an accidental scribal error. This was followed by another scribe’s attempt to “correct” the numbers. In my concluding statements, I pointed back to Augustine, who had suggested centuries ago that the 167 reading was “...nothing more than a scribal error. It is certainly not unreasonable to suspect such an error with regard to the question of Methuselah’s life...” (*City of God* [=DCD] XV.13)⁸⁹ Part of Augustine’s rationale in drawing this conclusion was his knowledge of 5 manuscripts (3 Greek, 1 Latin, 1 Syriac) which placed Methuselah’s death 6 years before the Flood, necessarily entailing his correct begetting age of 187.⁹⁰ He also briefly notes that accidental scribal error explains the relatively minor differences in the numbers between the LXX and the Hebrew for Lamech (*DCD XV.13*).⁹¹

C&C assert that in order for me to accept Augustine’s testimony about the five manuscripts, I “should likewise regard him as reliable about other things pertaining to the state of the manuscripts.” This statement refers to Augustine’s claim that Hebrew manuscripts were spread over a large geographic area and therefore the Hebrew text of Gen 5 could not have been deflated by the Jewish rabbis.

One can readily accept Augustine’s testimony about his knowledge of the five manuscripts with Methuselah’s correct begetting age *without* accepting his conjectures about the dissemination of Hebrew manuscripts in antiquity (or his explanation for the alleged inflations in LXX Gen 5). As it specifically relates to the Methuselah variant, Augustine’s knowledge of the five manuscripts is consistent with Jerome’s personal knowledge of copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch which also contained the 187 reading (*ARJ* p. 175). Both

accounts are consistent with all of the other relevant evidence. There are no grounds to reject Augustine's claim about the five manuscripts.

Conversely, I provided an argument and evidence above (§ II.1) that disproves Augustine's claims about the Jewish dissemination of and control over Hebrew biblical texts after the destruction of the Temple. On this particular point Augustine was wrong, as all of the textual and historical evidence points decidedly in the opposite direction. Augustine's knowledge of the five manuscripts is in no way dependent upon his claims about the Jewish dispersion of and control over Hebrew texts in antiquity. It is fallacious to demand that accepting the first requires accepting the second.⁹² (C&C also employ a similar fallacy with Bar Hebraeus, § I.1).

Additionally, Augustine's explanation for the origin of the longer chronology in Genesis 5 of the LXX cannot withstand scrutiny. The translation of the Pentateuch into Greek was a great intellectual achievement. The extensive work involved with the translation took place in one of the world's supreme learning centers of antiquity.⁹³ Moreover, it was a thoroughly Jewish enterprise, where reverence for the sacred text was a major factor in the translation and subsequent copying work.

In that religious and cultural context, Augustine would have us believe that the Jewish leaders who supervised and translated the Law of Moses into Greek assigned the task of making the first (and necessarily on Augustine's view, only) copy of the original LXX to a renegade scribe who radically altered the chronology of Genesis 5 by inflating it by 600 years. This scribe, thinking that his Jewish audience would be unable to accept the long lifespans, utilized a division scheme that would have made the numbers more believable. Instead of simply reducing the numbers in the text to make them more palatable (such as reducing Adam's lifespan from 930 to 93), the scribe assumed that the reader would know that the numbers should really be divided by 10 to yield the "real" begetting ages and lifespans.⁹⁴ In order to make this scheme work, this scribe inflated the begetting ages and reduced the remaining years by 100 years each in the LXX.⁹⁵ So, in the case of Seth, his original begetting age of 105, divided by 10, would have equaled 10.5. Seth fathering Enosh at the age of 10.5 would be too low a figure for a reader to accept, so the scribe inflated the original from 105 (Hebrew) to 205 (LXX). The reader would then be expected to divide the age of 205 by a factor of 10. Seth's "real" begetting age would then be 20.5, a believable figure for the 3rd century BC reader.

What follows here is a survey of 10 reasons why Augustine's theory is illogical, self-contradictory, and not supported by the evidence.

1. How could anyone reading the LXX text in the 3rd century BC possibly know to divide the numbers in Gen 5 by a factor of 10 in order to ascertain the "real" ages of the antediluvians? Augustine properly counters such arguments from his own day (*DCD* XV.14), which come from "certain persons with no desire to weaken the credit of this sacred history" (*DCD* XV.12).⁹⁶ Presumably, these are professing Christians who wished to make the numbers in Genesis 5 more palatable to the unsaved mind (an unfortunate phenomenon still taking place in the church today). But those making such

arguments during Augustine's lifetime are living *seven centuries* after the LXX was originally translated. There is nothing in the text proper, nor in the works written during Second Temple Judaism that indicate Jewish readers would have known to divide the numbers by a factor of ten.

The evidence from this general period found in the writings of Demetrius (220 BC), *Jubilees* (160 BC),⁹⁷ Eupolemus (160 BC), *LAB* (1st century AD), Josephus (*ca.* AD 90), and the author of *DSS 4Q²⁵²* (*ca.* 50 BC)⁹⁸ indicates that Jewish exegetes and historians understood the numbers as actual ages. There was no reason for the scribe to create a convoluted division scheme, for there is no evidence that contemporary Jews reading the text would have had a problem with the antediluvian lifespans or begetting ages!⁹⁹ Thus, Augustine anachronistically imposed a contemporary, 5th century AD specious Christian attempt at apologetics seven centuries backward onto the mind of a 3rd century BC professional Jewish scribe.

2. If this renegade scribe was willing to make these extensive falsifications to the sacred text and risk God's wrath (*Dt.* 4:2), why not just reduce the numbers to more "believable" figures and remove any ambiguity? In other words, instead of using a veiled division scheme that Jewish readers would not have even been aware of, just reduce the actual numbers in the text by a factor of 10 and be done with it. Such changes to the sacred text would have been just as egregious as these alleged, veiled changes. The scribe was running the risk of being exposed anyway. If the believability of the lifespans and begetting ages was of such great apologetic importance to the scribe, why not make things crystal clear instead?

3. Augustine's view requires that the Jewish leaders in Alexandria, who surely would have hired a professional scribe (s) to make the very first copy of the original LXX, never bothered to check his work to be sure he had accurately copied the text (*cf.* *Dt.* 17:18). Apparently, no one ever again looked at the original LXX copy in the Library at Alexandria, either. For if just one person had, the renegade scribe's systematic alterations would have been exposed and then corrected in newer LXX copies. The Alexandrian leaders would not have let the fraud stand.

4. On Augustine's view, the Jewish leaders also never bothered to make another copy of the original text, allowing the falsely inflated antediluvian chronology to be disseminated into Jewish communities in Egypt, Israel, and beyond. Given the great importance of the LXX translation and its subsequent and widespread use throughout the Mediterranean Diaspora, it strains credulity beyond limits to believe that only one direct copy from the original LXX was ever made. Just one additional copy with the shorter chronology made by a more faithful scribe would have exposed the first scribe's inflation scheme to the light of day. The LXX manuscript tradition would then have revealed mixed evidence with both the higher and lower begetting ages appearing in different manuscripts of Genesis 5. Instead, only the higher numbers appear in the LXX manuscripts. Augustine himself admits that the Methuselah variant demonstrates that multiple copies of the original LXX were made.¹⁰⁰

5. Even though this falsely inflated chronology would have been at odds with every single known Hebrew manuscript of Gen 5, the Jewish community embraced and used the old LXX for about 350 years until the advent of the Church. Moreover, the original nature and acceptance of the higher Gen 5 begetting ages is affirmed in the Jewish chronologies of Demetrius (Egypt), Eupolemus (Jerusalem), *LAB* (Israel), and Josephus (Rome). Such reception of the longer chronology would have been impossible had the LXX's antediluvian chronology been off by 600 years when compared to a much shorter version deposited in Hebrew texts. Moreover, reception of the LXX with corrupted and inflated numbers in Genesis 5 would only have been possible with an authoritative endorsement from the Alexandrian leadership. These erroneous inflations would not and could not have been authorized by the Jewish authorities in Alexandria, since, on Augustine's view, the original LXX and its Hebrew *Vorlage* contained the lower Gen 5 begetting ages, and the scribe was acting on his own accord.

6. The scribe's division scheme that dubiously explains the LXX's numbers in Genesis 5 must also apply to Shem (Gn. 11:10–12). Surely his lifespan of 600 years would have been just as "implausible" as the antediluvian lifespans. If the numbers were of such paramount apologetic concern to the scribe, then Shem's begetting age should have been inflated to 200, resulting in a begetting age of 20 (200/10), remaining years of 40 (400/10), and a (calculated) lifespan of 60 (600/10).¹⁰¹ At present, Shem's 100 yields the absurd begetting age of 10 in the scribe's division scheme, undermining an indispensable element of his apologetic objective.

7. The same logic can be applied to the patriarchs from Arpachshad through Nahor (Gen. 11:12–25). None of the lifespans for these men would have been "believable" to the scribe's intended audience, with Methuselah being the oldest pre-Abrahamic patriarch, dying just short of the "real" age of 97 (969/10). Moreover, the LXX Gen 11 begetting ages range from 135 to 79. None of these would have been believable, either. Even worse, when they are divided by 10, they yield siring ages between 13.5 and 7.9. According to Augustine's own theory, the lower limit for procreation was 16 years of age.¹⁰² The LXX begetting ages should all be at least 30 years higher so that they could subsequently be divided by ten to yield plausible begetting ages. Nahor's begetting age should have been inflated by 80 years or more.¹⁰³ These problems are compounded even further by Augustine's own acceptance of LXX Gen 11 (see § II.4.10).

8. Even the lifespan of Abraham (175) would be deemed unacceptable. Why was it not also altered in the LXX of Genesis 25:8? Moreover, why would the reader *not* be expected to divide Abraham's begetting age of 86 when Ishmael was born (Gn 16:16), or Abraham's age of 100 at the birth of Isaac (Gn 21:5)? Abraham fathered Isaac three years later than Methuselah's "real" lifespan of 97 years? And why does the division scheme also not apply to the lifespans of Isaac (180) and Jacob (147)?¹⁰⁴ These questions further expose the illogic of Augustine's theory.

9. Augustine's theory is also refuted by:

a. The longer antediluvian chronology in *LAB*, derived from a Hebrew text of Genesis five.

b. The longer primeval chronology of Josephus, which was based on a Hebrew text of Genesis (*ICC*, pp. 125–27).

c. The longer primeval chronology presented by the Jewish historian and Jerusalem official Eupolemus, who used both the LXX and Hebrew texts in his work (*ICC*, p. 123).

10. Augustine refutes his own theory by advocating the LXX's timeline in Genesis 11: "Thus the years from the flood to Abraham come to a total of 1072..." (*DCD XVI.10*).¹⁰⁵ Augustine also accepts the authenticity of Kainan (*DCD XVI.10*), so his embrace of the LXX's numbers in Gen 11 as representing the original, inspired text is irrefutable. This necessarily means that the Alexandrian translators possessed a Hebrew text of Genesis 11 with the higher begetting ages. Even more significantly, it inevitably follows that the post-Flood timeline has been deliberately deflated by 650 years in all surviving Hebrew manuscripts of Genesis 11 (sans the Samaritan Pentateuch).

But according to Augustine's own theory, the Jewish nation was "scattered far and wide," making it impossible for the Hebrew manuscripts to be universally deflated in this manner. Indeed, he says "it would be absurd for any sensible person to believe... that the Jews, no matter how great their malice or perversity, could have accomplished such a thing in so many texts scattered over such a wide area..." (*DCD XV.13*).¹⁰⁶ By accepting the LXX and its corresponding Hebrew *Vorlage* as original for the post-Flood epoch, Augustine must posit that the lower Gen 11 begetting ages were universally deflated in all known Hebrew manuscripts. Otherwise, how can their exact matching nature be explained? If it was not possible for the Gen 5 figures in Hebrew texts to have been universally reduced by the Jewish authorities, then Augustine cannot logically accept the LXX Gen 11 readings as authentic, for this would require the exact same kind of ubiquitous reductions in all Hebrew manuscripts of Gen 11 containing the lower begetting ages.

Perhaps aware of this contradiction, Augustine vaguely offers no explanation for the origin of the deliberately deflated Hebrew chronology of Genesis 11: "...the total is far less in the Hebrew texts, and for this difference there is either no explanation at all or one that is virtually impenetrable" (*DCD XVI.10*). Presumably, the "virtually impenetrable" (or "not very credible")¹⁰⁷ argument Augustine refers to is the charge that the Jewish authorities had universally changed the Hebrew text. But again, if the LXX is correct in Gen 11, how did the shorter Hebrew chronology get deflated *universally*? Was someone else in control of the Hebrew textual tradition other than the Jewish rabbis? Surely not. Was the systematic reduction a phenomenon of pure accident? By Augustine's own admission, surely not (*DCD XV.13*). Who else could have deflated the post-Flood chronology in all known Hebrew manuscripts, and, who could have disseminated the new manuscripts with the new, shortened chronology into their religious community, universally? *The fatal result is that Augustine destroys his own theory.*

Augustine and anyone attempting to adopt his theory cannot have it both ways. And if one tries to accept his theory for Gen 5 but moves away from Augustine's acceptance of LXX Gen

11 by embracing the MT's post-Flood timeline, one is left without a coherent explanation for the alleged inflations in LXX Gen 11. The death knell to such a maneuver is the Hebrew text of the Samaritan Pentateuch of Genesis 11, where the begetting ages match the LXX (sans Kainan).

Like most Christians throughout history, I have the greatest admiration for Augustine's monumental contributions to the Church historic and to western civilization. His intellectual and spiritual heritage is enormous. But on this particular issue, Augustine's arguments cannot withstand the weight of scrutiny. The manuscript evidence, common sense, Jewish scribal practice, external witnesses, LXX Gen 11 and Augustine's acceptance of it, Gen 11 SP, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's lifespans, and the importance and 350-year use of the old LXX translation all converge to negate Augustine's theory.

5. The Anti-Conspiracy Stance

At the end of their article, C&C reject any theory of textual reconstruction that involves "conspiracy theorizing." Such an arbitrary position immediately limits the large scale changes to only an individual, renegade scribe who systematically revised the chronology in the textual witness he was handling. Moreover, all by himself and without the aid of others, he was able to bypass his particular religious community's authority structure and introduce the systematic changes without being detected. The preceding critical assessment of Augustine's argument provides one template for how a renegade scribe theory cannot explain the numerical divergences in Genesis 5 and 11, nor can it explain how those systematic changes were inculcated into any particular religious community.

Large scale and systematic revisions such as those found in Gen 5 and 11, and the dissemination of those changes into any community, requires agreement amongst multiple individuals (perhaps led by a religious/community leader endowed with great authority and charisma, such as Rabbi Akiba). Otherwise, such changes would be quickly exposed and rejected as fraudulent. Systematic changes also require viable and significant motivation(s), for they all fundamentally believed they were handling sacred texts.

No matter what textual tradition one tries to defend as original, in no instance could such systematic revisions in the opposing textual traditions be implemented without multiple persons agreeing to them. So, a defense of the MT requires viable, testable and independent explanations for systematic inflations in the both the LXX (by the Alexandrian Jewish translators) and SP Gen 11 (by the Samaritan priesthood). These inflations could not have been the work of a single, renegade scribe, but must have inevitably involved authority figures who controlled the manuscripts. A defense of the MT also requires an explanation of how the leaders in Alexandria would have been able to maintain subsequent control over the falsely inflated numbers in LXX manuscripts once the first copies left the Alexandrian library. This is in stark contrast with the highly controlled state of affairs in rabbinic Judaism and/or the limited scope of the Samaritan community and priesthood. Conversely, a defense of the SP or LXX requires similar explanations.¹⁰⁸

A conspiracy is therefore required to explain the large-scale changes to Gen 5 and 11. The anti-conspiracy stance taken by C&C is both arbitrary and fallacious.

III. Conclusions

One of my colleagues had suggested that I interact solely with the academic arguments and the evidence. After some reflection, I soon realized that the problems I have critiqued above are so inextricably interwoven into C&C's article that it is impossible to avoid having to deal with them directly. The only way to avoid these features was to not respond at all, which is a course of action I did consider for a brief time. I must admit to the reader that I had some difficulty writing this article, but I ultimately believed it was necessary to respond to the misrepresentations, dismissiveness, fallacies and *ad hominem*s that pervade C&C's article. I do hope they will abandon this kind of approach in the future. *Most of all, I respectfully request that Lita and Rob discontinue their repeated denigration of my motives.*

Moreover, C&C have presented little to no additional argumentation/evidence to advance their position that the MT preserves the original numbers in Genesis 5 and 11. I'll summarize here the manifold problems that remain for pro-MT advocates, problems that still remain unaddressed. Those who favor the MT's primeval chronology have not yet adequately accounted for:

- The fact that the unreliability and artificiality of *Jubilees* discredits all of the SP's and six of the MT's begetting ages and remaining years in Genesis 5. *Jubilees* is the only external witness to any element of the shorter primeval chronology before *ca.* AD 120–160, and the inauthenticity of its numbers is a devastating witness against the shorter chronology (see: [MT, SP or LXX?](#)).

- The fact that the MT's complete primeval timeline lacks any external witness before *ca.* AD 120–160. This is the period when the complete, shorter primeval timeline first officially appeared on the scene, although I would argue that its ideological genesis is rooted in earlier messianic and chronological speculations from Second Temple Judaism, and with certain artificial chronological elements originating in the *Book of Jubilees*. All of the following witnesses were entirely influenced by Pharisaic/rabbinic Judaism and/or closely follow the rabbinic controlled MT: *Seder Olam* (AD 140–160), the Jewish recensions of the LXX (AD 140–200), the Syriac Peshitta (mid to late 2nd century AD),¹⁰⁹ and perhaps Targum Onkelos (2nd century AD, with final redactions in the late 3rd century AD).¹¹⁰ All of this evidence is consistent with my argument that the rabbis deflated Gen 5 and 11 in their Hebrew texts shortly after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.

- The fact that the Genesis Hebrew text used for Josephus, *LAB*, and the LXX of Genesis 5/11 all contained the higher begetting ages in *ca.* 90 AD and earlier.

- Five independent witnesses confirm the higher begetting ages in Genesis 11: the LXX's Hebrew *Vorlage* (280 BC), the Samaritan Pentateuch (Hebrew, 2nd century BC, perhaps even earlier), Demetrius (Greek, 220 BC), Eupolemus

(Greek/Hebrew, 160 BC), and Josephus' text of Genesis (Hebrew, AD 90).

- When combined with the five pre-100 AD witnesses to the higher begetting ages, the matching remaining years in Genesis 11 from the MT/LXX confirm the originality of the longer post-Flood chronology (§ II.2.4e; ICC, pp. 127–28, 130–31; “[MT, SP or LXX?](#),” p. 26).

- MT advocates have provided no valid motive compatible with the complex matrix of evidence that can adequately explain why *and* how the LXX could have been deliberately inflated. Augustine's theory fails, and Jerome and Bede provide no viable solutions either. Other LXX inflation hypotheses are also insufficient (ICC pp. 120–21).

- Abraham's lifespan of 175 years and the description of his age at death given by Moses in Gen 25:8 cannot be internally reconciled with the MT's post-Flood chronology, “for it yields genuine and irreconcilable errors within the sacred text” (ICC p. 123). Genesis 25:8 is only compatible with the SP/LXX. While Genesis 5 is more complicated and somewhat thorny (see: “[MT, SP or LXX?](#)”), the problems for the MT are insurmountable in Genesis 11.

I would like to add that I am grateful that C&C pointed out my error on Ephraem of Syria. Although I was already aware of it, this was obviously an appropriate critique. Let me apologize again to both C&C and the reader for my mistakes regarding Ephraem. In no way did I intend to deliberately mislead anyone. In God's providence, my Ephraem error led me to discover Jacob of Edessa's witness to Hebrew manuscripts that contained the longer chronology.

Lastly, I also appreciate the opportunity to further expand upon my present research and clarify important details. The article also prodded me to go back and look more carefully at Augustine's work, something I've wanted to do for quite some time. His arguments in *City of God* have only served to add further credence to my contention that the Septuagint preserves most of the original chronology deposited in Genesis 5 and 11. Until an alternative theory and textual reconstruction is presented with weighty and persuasive arguments, the preponderance of evidence points to the originality of the longer primeval chronology, especially in Genesis 11. *Let the reader decide for himself which argument is more compelling.*

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Endnotes

¹ Anyone who may be new to this research and debate should first carefully read [all of the previously published articles](#), and: Lita Cosner and Robert Carter, “[Textual Traditions and Biblical Chronology](#),” *Journal of Creation* 29, no. 2 (2015): 99–105.

² The proto-Masoretic text refers to the Hebrew text of the OT from antiquity that closely resembles the consonantal Masoretic Hebrew text from the later medieval period. For more, see: Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: Revised and Expanded*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 24–74.

³ Henry B. Smith Jr., “Methuselah's Begetting Age in Genesis 5:25 and the Primeval Chronology of the Septuagint: A Closer Look at the Textual and Historical Evidence,” *Answers Research Journal* 10 (August 2017): 169, n. 3. Most argued that the motive for the changes involved messianic chronology, and that by deflating the numbers, the rabbis sought to place Jesus outside of the “period of the Messiah.” Eusebius attributed the textual changes to the Jews as well, but his explanation for their motivation was obscure and inadequate. For more on the messianic chronology motivation, see: Jeremy Sexton, “[Who Was Born When Enosh Was 90?: A Semantic Reevaluation of William Henry Green's Chronological Gaps](#),” *The Westminster Theological Journal* 77, no. 2 (September 2015): 215–16; Jeremy Sexton and Henry B. Smith Jr., “[Primeval Chronology Restored: Revisiting the Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11](#),” *Bible and Spade* 29, no. 2–3 (Spring/Summer 2016): 47–48; Henry B. Smith Jr., “[MT, SP, or LXX? Deciphering a Chronological and Textual Conundrum in Genesis 5](#),” *Bible and Spade* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2018): 24–27, n. 49–51.

⁴ Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology* (London: Marshall Bros, 1913), 46.

⁵ William Hales, *A New Analysis of Chronology and Geography. History and Prophecy*, vol. 1: Chronology and Geography (London: C. J. G. and F. Rivington, 1830), 278.

⁶ Ben Zion Wacholder, *Eupolemus: A Study of Judaeo-Greek Literature* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974).

⁷ Ben Zion Wacholder, “Biblical Chronology in the Hellenistic World Chronicles,” *Harvard Theological Review* 61, no. 3 (July 1968): 451–81; Idem., “Chrono-Messianism: The Timing of Messianic Movements and the Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 46 (1975): 201–18; Idem., “The Date of the Eschaton in the Book of Jubilees: A Commentary on Jub. 49:22-50:5, CD 1:1-10, and 16:2-3,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 56 (1985): 87–101.

⁸ Wacholder, *Eupolemus*, 98–99.

⁹ Joseph Simonius Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino Vaticana* (Rome: Typic Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1719).

¹⁰ For example: Edward G. Mathews, *The Armenian Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Ephrem the Syrian*, trans. Edward G. Mathews, vol. 573 (Leuven: Peeters, 1998).

¹¹ Bas ter Haar Romeny, “Ephrem and Jacob of Edessa in the Commentary of the Monk Severus,” in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone. Studies in Honour of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. George Anton Kiraz (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008), 537. The reference to Melchizedek as a Canaanite instead of as Shem [can be easily found on page 66](#).

¹² *Ibid.*, 540–43. For more details, see: Dirk Kruisheer, “[Ephrem, Jacob of Edessa, and the Monk Severus. An Analysis of Ms. Vat. Syr. 103, ff. 1–72](#),” in *Symposium Syriacum VII*, ed. R. Lavenant, vol. Orientalia Christiana Analecta 256 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1998), 599–605.

¹³ [Chronicle 30](#); Karst's translation is as follows: “Es ist daher allenthalben wohl klar, daß die Siebenziger-Übersetzung aus alten und fehlerlosen

Vorlagen der Hebräer übersetzt worden ist" (It is therefore well known everywhere that the seventies' translation has been translated from ancient and faultless *Vorlagen* of the Hebrews). Josef Karst, *Eusebius Werke: Die Chronik*, vol. 5 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1911), 45. Cf. Edmon L. Gallagher, "The Septuagint's Fidelity to Its *Vorlage* in Greek Patristic Thought," in *XIV Congress of the IOSCS, Helsinki, 2010*, ed. Melvin H.K. Peters, *Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 59 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 667.

¹⁴ For a brief overview of Akiba's life, see: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1033-akiba-ben-joseph> Also: Louis Finkelstein, *Akiba: Scholar, Saint and Martyr* (New York, NY: Covici Friede Publishers, 1936).

¹⁵ Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: Revised and Expanded*, 179–80 (Emphasis mine).

¹⁶ Étienne Nodet, "Josephus and the Pentateuch," *JSJ* 28 (May 1997): 193–94.

¹⁷ Armin Lange, "'They Confirmed the Reading' (y. Ta'an. 4.68a)," in *From Qumran to Aleppo: A Discussion with Emanuel Tov about the Textual History of Jewish Scriptures in Honor of His 65th Birthday*, ed. József Zsengellér, Armin Lange, and Matthias Weigold (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 74–77; Nodet, "Josephus and the Pentateuch," 193, n. 55.

¹⁸ Lange, "'They Confirmed the Reading' (y. Ta'an. 4.68a)," 78–80.

¹⁹ Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: Revised and Expanded*, 28–29.

²⁰ The texts at Qumran exhibited more variation than the proto-MT. This should not be surprising given the Essene contempt for the Jerusalem priesthood. The texts in the Temple archive were likely never used to "correct" many of the biblical texts from Qumran, though quite a few of them closely resemble the MT as well. The evidence is complex.

²¹ Daniel Gruber, *Rabbi Akiba's Messiah: The Origins of Rabbinic Authority*, Revised Edition (Hanover, NH: Elijah Publishing, 2014).

²² Peter Schäfer, "[R. Aqiva and Bar Kokhba](#)," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, ed. William Scott Green, vol. 2 (Ann Arbor, MI: Scholars Press, 1980), 114–17.

²³ C&C cite a DNA study which argues that Jews were living in places such as Burma. While such a study can make genetic, ethnic connections, it cannot verify belief, practice, and language employed. And it certainly cannot verify what kind of biblical text Jews were using in Burma, or anywhere else for that matter. Besides, we have no ancient Hebrew biblical texts from Burma, we have the MT, which was controlled for many centuries by the Pharisees/rabbis.

²⁴ Heinrich W. Guggenheimer, ed., *Seder Olam: The Rabbinic View of Biblical Chronology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), x.

²⁵ Simon Schwab, "Comparative Jewish Chronology," in *Dr. Joseph Breuer Jubilee Volume* (NY: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch Publications Society, Philipp Felheim Inc., 1962), 186.

²⁶ In my article "[MT, SP or LXX?](#)," I discuss the influence of Second Temple Jewish literature on (messianic) chronology, and in particular, the negative influence of the artificial chronology found in the *Book of Jubilees*. In detail, I argue that the matching, lower begetting ages in the SP and MT of Genesis 5 originated not from a Hebrew text, but from the artificially constructed chronology of *Jubilees*. The alteration of the original numbers in Gen 5 and 11 had been occurring amongst certain sects in Judaism even before the turn of the millennium, setting the stage for the creation of the *Seder Olam* and the reduction of the primeval timeline in the proto-MT.

²⁷ Sexton, "Who Was Born?," 215–16; Sexton and Smith Jr., "Primeval Chronology Restored," 47–48.

²⁸ The Hebrew text of Genesis used by Josephus in Rome when he wrote earlier sections of *Antiquities* serves as an exception. It had escaped destruction by the Romans in AD 70 and did not fall into the hands of the rabbis. Nodet suggests from Josephus' own statements that his Hebrew OT

text was given to him by Titus, came from the Temple archives, and was likely several decades old ("Josephus and the Pentateuch," 193). Jacob of Edessa's Hebrew MSS containing the longer chronology are also an exception (see below).

²⁹ Emanuel Tov, "The Text of the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek Bible Used in the Ancient Synagogues," in *Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible and Qumran: Collected Essays* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 188.

³⁰ Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

³¹ Benjamin G. Wright III, "The *Letter of Aristeas* and the Reception History of the Septuagint," in *Praise Israel for Wisdom and Instruction: Essays on Ben Sira and Wisdom, the Letter of Aristeas and the Septuagint*, ed. John J. Collins, Florentino Garcia Martinez, and Hindy Najman, vol. 131, *Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 294.

³² Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors: Volume I: Historians*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, *Texts and Translations* 20 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 51–91.

³³ F. Fallon, "Eupolemus: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume 2*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 861–72; Holladay, *Fragments*, 93–156; Wacholder, *Eupolemus*.

³⁴ Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: Revised and Expanded*, 132.

³⁵ In this instance, the use of the term "LXX" refers only to the Pentateuchal translation done in Alexandria, while the term "OG" refers to the rest of the OT books, which were translated later. The Jewish authorities replaced these "old" Greek translations with Aquila's new recension.

³⁶ Tov, "The Text of the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek Bible Used in the Ancient Synagogues," 186–88. See 187, esp. n. 77. Also, Karen H. Jobs and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 26–28.

³⁷ Milikowsky notes that *Seder Olam* underwent additional edits after the time of Rabbi Yose, but the details are not altogether clear. Chaim Milikowsky, "Seder Olam: A Rabbinic Chronography (Volumes I and II)" (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1981), 17.

³⁸ Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica*, ed. Alexander Achilles Fischer, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 107.

³⁹ Natalio Fernandez Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 155.

⁴⁰ Some readings are attributed to unknown Jewish translators (John W. Wevers, ed., *Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum: Genesis*, vol. 1 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974], 59; 102–106).

⁴¹ Bas ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress: The Use of Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis*, *Traditio Exegetica Graeca* 6 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 248–250.

⁴² Gregory of Nyssa (AD 335–395) and Epiphanius of Salamis (AD 310–403) grappled with the differences between the Hebrew text of that time and the old LXX, proposed a variety of solutions to textual differences, and sometimes concluded that Jewish scribes/translators had corrupted Hebrew and/or Old Greek texts (Gallagher, "The Septuagint's Fidelity to Its *Vorlage* in Greek Patristic Thought," 665–76).

⁴³ Roger T. Beckwith, "Daniel 9 and the date of Messiah's coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and early Christian computation." *Revue de Qumran* 10, no. 4:521–42.

⁴⁴ From the 3rd century BC through the 2nd century AD, the Jewish writers tried to "...project the chronology into the future, so as to give a date to events

foretold in prophecy, such as the coming of the Messiah.” Roger T. Beckwith, *Calendar and Chronology, Jewish and Christian* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 217. I disagree with Beckwith’s categorization of Josephus’ chronology as “Hellenistic,” and a number of his other points. But the fundamental thrust of his study, and his documentation of sources, provides valuable insights into the “chrono-messianism” that influenced and came out of Second Temple Judaism.

⁴⁵ Sergio Tommaso Stancati, *Julian of Toledo: Prognosticum Futuri Saeculi*, vol. 63, *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation* (Mahwah, NJ: The Newman Press, 2010), 123-124.

⁴⁶ Julian’s Jewish opponents “... were basing their eschatological interpretation on the Babylonian Talmud.” The messianic chronology statements found in the Babylonian Talmud are dependent upon and derived from the MT of Gen 5/11 and *Seder Olam*. And these can be traced back to messianic chronological speculations which originated during Second Temple Judaism. These connections have been made in detail in Beckwith’s *Calendar and Chronology*, and in numerous other sources which I have cited previously (see footnote 3).

⁴⁷ Stancati states that Julian followed the LXX because he believed it was inspired (p. 127). This may or may not represent Julian’s entire rationale for using the Septuagint.

⁴⁸ “*The Letter of Aristeas and the Reception History of the Septuagint*,” 293–95.

⁴⁹ Stancati, *Julian of Toledo*, 124–25 (emphasis mine).

⁵⁰ George Synkellos, *The Chronography of George Synkellos*, trans. Paul Tuffin and William Adler, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 124–25.

⁵¹ G. Seyffarth, *Summary of Recent Discoveries in Biblical Chronology, Universal History and Egyptian Archaeology* (New York, NY: Henry Ludwig, 1859), 139.

⁵² Tuffin and Adler, lxxv–lxxvii. Both MSS can be seen online: A ([#1711](#)) and B ([#1764](#)), [along with others](#).

⁵³ In the *ARJ* article, I stated that Bar Hebraeus was Armenian, which is technically correct. However, it would be more precise to say that he was Armenian by birth, his father was Jewish, and his family migrated to Syria during his childhood.

⁵⁴ https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Bar-Hebraeus

⁵⁵ E.A.W. Budge, *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj, The Son of Aaron, The Hebrew Physician Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus Being the First Part of His Political History of the World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932).

⁵⁶ <http://syri.ac/chronicles>

⁵⁷ Seyffarth, *Summary of Recent Discoveries in Biblical Chronology*, 144.

⁵⁸ C&C employ a similar fallacy to my use of Augustine’s statements on Methuselah’s begetting age in the LXX (see § II.4.1–10).

⁵⁹ Muhammad ibn Ahmad Biruni, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations: An English Version of the Arabic Text of the Athâr-ul-Bâkiya of Albîrûni, or “Vestiges of the Past*, trans. Eduard Sachau (London: W.H. Allen and Co., 1879), 18.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vii–xiv.

⁶¹ Bas ter Haar Romeny, “Jacob of Edessa on Genesis: His Quotations of the Peshitta and His Revision of the Text,” in *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 154.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 145.

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. John H. Whitmore (International Conference on Creationism,

Pittsburgh, PA: Creation Science Fellowship, 2018), 117–32.

⁶⁴ Romeny, “Jacob of Edessa on Genesis,” 154.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Romeny, “Ephrem and Jacob of Edessa in the Commentary of the Monk Severus,” 543; Kruisheer, “[Ephrem, Jacob of Edessa, and the Monk Severus. An Analysis of Ms. Vat. Syr. 103, ff. 1–72](#),” 599–605.

⁶⁷ William Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus* (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks Pub Service, 1989), 48. The Latin reads: “*Verum Hebraei computum annorum pervertere volentes, ut Christum nondum advenisse ostenderent, centum annos Adamo, antequam gigneret Seth, detraxerunt*” (Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 66).

⁶⁸ *A New Analysis of Chronology*, 280, italics original. The Latin text reads: “*In quibusdam, inquit, satis accuratis Hebraicis Historiis scriptum reperimus, Adam genuisse Seth, quum esset annorum ducentorum et triginta*” (Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 66).

⁶⁹ *Time Immemorial*, 48, n. 26.

⁷⁰ Dirk Kruisheer is presently working on a complete publication of Jacob’s *Commentary on the Octateuch*.

⁷¹ It is possible Jacob choice of the 187 reading for Methuselah in his translation was based its appearance in the Hebrew manuscripts containing the longer chronology.

⁷² C&C reduce Syncellus’ rationale for using the LXX to one internal argument he uses with respect to the begetting ages in the LXX’s post-Flood chronology. This is hardly a fair or careful assessment of Syncellus.

⁷³ I would generally describe this perspective as “Masoretic fundamentalism” or “MT onlyism,” which invariably sees the Septuagint as a lie, a forgery, or the like. One recent author, for example, [absurdly claims that Codex Sinaiticus was a forgery created in 1840!](#) Masoretic fundamentalism is often closely connected with “King James onlyism,” but not always. I should add that while every person deserves our respect because they are made in God’s image, every idea does not. Some ideas are atrocious ideas, and King James onlyism and MT onlyism fall into that category.

⁷⁴ Bede, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, trans. Faith Wallis, vol. 29, *Translated Texts for Historians* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 157–58, 239–40, 253–54, 353–59, 405–15; Calvin B. Kendall, *On Genesis: Bede*, trans. Calvin B. Kendall, vol. 48, *Translated Texts for Historians* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008).

⁷⁵ It is worth noting that Bede’s rhetoric is somewhat understandable since he was being labeled a “heretic” by the [chiliasmists of his day](#).

⁷⁶ Adam Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible: A Study of the Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); C. T. R. Hayward, *Saint Jerome’s Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, trans. C. T. R. Hayward (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁷⁸ I would also apply this description to [Young’s 2003 ICC article](#), as well as to various elements of [Benjamin Shaw’s 2004 doctoral dissertation](#), but both are valuable and exceptions to most superficial conservative treatments. I plan to interact with these works in future publication(s).

⁷⁹ C&C briefly appeal to the western church’s widespread use of the Latin Vulgate, translated by Jerome from proto-Masoretic, rabbinic texts in Israel during his lifetime. C&C move from saying “the Vulgate quickly became the predominant text in the Western church” to conclude, “[t]herefore, the MT became the ‘default’ chronological text over 1,000 years before Smith claimed it did (4th century vs. 16th century).” First, it is obvious from my statements in both *ARJ* and *ICC* that I am not making any claims about the usage of the Vulgate vs. the LXX overall. That is a different and much more complicated question than the one at hand, since it involves evaluating the usage of all

books of the OT and the entirety of Church writings during this period. In both articles, I refer to the specific issue of the primeval chronology and Christians who provided chronological calculations from creation. Second, we only have one way to gauge which chronology was more widely-accepted: look at the writings from this period from Christian authors who made statements about a date for creation, or those who constructed a detailed chronology from creation. In my *ICC* paper, I refer to these individuals broadly as “chronologists” (p. 117). Concluding that the predominant use of the Vulgate *in general* necessarily means that the MT’s chronology was accepted by a majority in the western Church over the LXX’s *in particular* is a *non-sequitur*.

⁸⁰ Another typical *ad hominem* is found in this statement: “...his bibliography does not look like he started out with an unbiased search for the truth.” C&C cannot know possibly know my internal intentions or inclinations from the start of my research, since they never asked me about them. My initial search for the truth regarding the interpretation of Genesis 5 and 11 and the numerical divergences extends back to the year 2001, fifteen years before I published any articles. Along the way, I have changed my views numerous times. Moreover, it is impossible for C&C to deduce my motivations from published bibliographical citations. My complete bibliographical archive presently exceeds 600 sources, including the works of many pro-MT advocates such as Bede and Jerome.

⁸¹ James H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research with a Supplement*, Septuagint and Cognate Studies 7S (Chico, CA: Scholar’s Press, 1981), 170.

⁸² Daniel J. Harrington, “The Original Language of Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*,” *Harvard Theological Review* 63, no. 4 (October 1970): 503–14; Idem., “The Biblical Text of Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (January 1971): 1–17; Idem., “Pseudo-Philo: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume 2*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 297–377; Idem., “Pseudo-Philo,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter Jr. (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2000), 864–68; Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum: With Latin Text and English Translation*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

⁸³ This would have included: the remaining years for Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, and Enoch; the begetting ages for Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, and Enoch.

⁸⁴ C&C equate their “just-so-story” with the careful arguments in the academic literature regarding the text critical reconstruction of *LAB*’s original numbers. I document these sources and briefly discuss them in my *ICC* paper (pp. 123, 131).

⁸⁵ For a list and detailed discussion of the 20 or so extant manuscripts, see: Guido Kisch, *Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, Publications in Mediaeval Studies 10 (Notre Dame, IN: The University of Notre Dame, 1949), 22–98; Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 257–73.

⁸⁶ Harrington, “The Biblical Text of Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*,” 3–6. He writes: “These are but a few of the better examples illustrating our hypothesis that no known Greek version of the OT has been inserted into the biblical sections of *LAB*,” (p. 5).

⁸⁷ In my view, this may have happened after *LAB* had been translated from the original Hebrew into Greek. Note the similarities in the Greek spellings.

⁸⁸ This is similar to the data and internal calculations found in manuscripts of Josephus (*ICC* pp. 125–27).

⁸⁹ Unless otherwise noted, quotes of Augustine in this article are found in: Boniface Ramsey, ed., *The City of God (De Civitate Dei)*, trans. William

Babcock, vol. 7: Books XI–XXII, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, Part I (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2013), 156.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 157. Augustine revisits the Methuselah question in: *Questions on the Heptateuch*: Question 2 on Genesis 5:25. Boniface Ramsey, ed., *Writings On The Old Testament: The Works of Saint Augustine*, trans. Joseph T. Lienhard and Sean Doyle (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2016), 16. And also in: *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin: Book II: Chapter 27 [XXIII.]—On Questions Outside the Faith—What They Are, and Instances of the Same*, (p. 727).

⁹¹ An older translation of *City of God* can be found online in: Philip Schaff, ed., *Fathers of the Second Century, vol. 2. Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2004). The reader can follow Augustine’s arguments there in full.

⁹² C&C state that my citation of Augustine on the particular issue of the Methuselah variant is “wildly incorrect.” They then provide an extensive quote from *City of God*. Augustine claims the numbers in Gen 5 of the LXX arose from the deliberate revisions of a single, renegade scribe. Augustine himself clearly distinguishes between accidental errors (Methuselah and Lamech’s numbers) and deliberate, large-scale changes which “suggests deliberate design rather than mere chance” and are “different from them” (*DCD* XV.13, 10; Babcock, *City of God*, 156, 152). C&C also acknowledge this distinction: “there are *two kinds of differences*... those which are most likely the result of scribal error, and there are those which must be intentional, because they are systematic” (emphasis original). I have repeatedly made this same distinction in all of my published articles and presentations at *ETS* and *ICC*, so I fail to see why my quotation of Augustine on the specific issue of the Methuselah variant is “wildly incorrect.” Perhaps this fallacious pejorative refers to the fact that I accept Augustine’s assessment that the Methuselah variant is the result of an accident, without accepting his arguments about deliberate revisions by a renegade scribe in Gen 5 LXX on the whole, or his claims about Hebrew manuscripts controlled by the Jewish authorities. Or, perhaps it refers to the fact that Augustine later speculates that the Methuselah variant (167) was possibly not accidental, but part of the renegade scribe’s plan (*DCD* XV.13). He leaves it up to the reader to decide if the speculation is viable (*it is not*). At the end, he appeals to the 5 manuscripts containing the 187 begetting age for Methuselah. He reiterates this point in *Questions on the Heptateuch—Question 2*: “But the faultiness of several codices has given rise to this question. Not only in the Hebrew, but also in the translation of the Septuagint (in fewer but more accurate codices) a different reading is found: Methuselah is found to have died six years before the flood” (Ramsey, *Writings On The Old Testament: The Works of Saint Augustine*, 16).

⁹³ Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, 18–19.

⁹⁴ Augustine’s explanation of the division scheme is found in *DCD* XV.13, followed by a more detailed discussion in XV.14.

⁹⁵ According to Augustine, the renegade scribe did not inflate the begetting ages for Jared (162), Methuselah (187) and Lamech (182). Each of their ages in the Hebrew text, divided by 10, would yield a “plausible” teen begetting age (16, 19, and 18).

⁹⁶ Schaff, *Fathers*, 665.

⁹⁷ While *Jubilees* radically alters the entire chronology of Genesis 5 and 11, its author clearly believed the lifespans were actual ages.

⁹⁸ The Qumran author’s exegesis of Noah’s age at the time of the Flood, and the integration of his life into the chronology of the Flood narrative, is literal. See: Jeremy D. Lyon, *Qumran Interpretation of the Genesis Flood* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 69–89.

⁹⁹ Philo of Alexandria applies his usual allegorical exegesis to the numbers for Enoch’s life, but he does not employ a veiled division scheme to yield more

“believable” numbers: *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, I.82–83, II.17 and II.78 (Philo Judaeus, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*, trans. C. D. Yonge [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993], 808, 821, 839).

¹⁰⁰ “...some such discrepancy might have occurred in one copy...” (Babcock, *City of God*, 156).

¹⁰¹ Although Genesis 11 did not include lifespans in the original text, anyone can add the begetting ages and remaining years to calculate the lifespans. However, the begetting ages and remaining years both need to be correct to get the actual, original lifespan.

¹⁰² According to Augustine, Jared’s begetting age of 162 was not inflated in the LXX because it would yield a “real” age of 16.2 in the scribe’s division scheme (*DCD XV.13*).

¹⁰³ In a self-refuting twist, Augustine turned to the Hebrew numbers in Genesis 5 to counter contemporary Christian arguments that the antediluvian lifespans should be divided by ten to get the “real” lifespans (*DCD XV.12*). Such division would yield absurd begetting ages such as 10.5 for Enosh and 7 for Kenan. By leaving Nahor’s begetting age at 79 in the LXX, the renegade scribe failed miserably at his scheme. Nahor was really 7.9 years of age when he fathered Terah!

¹⁰⁴ Gen 35:28; 47:28.

¹⁰⁵ Babcock, *City of God*, 198.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 155. Augustine reduces their ostensible motive for deflating the chronology to mere jealousy: “...simply because they resented having the authority of their Scriptures passed to others...” The evidence from this period and the NT indicates that Jewish attitudes towards the Church and the Gospel went far beyond mere jealousy. Augustine’s own use of the terms “malice and perversity” goes against his attempt to minimize their posture.

¹⁰⁷ Babcock, *City of God*, 199; Schaff, *Fathers*, 717.

¹⁰⁸ [I have provided an extensive argument with viable reasons for deflations in both the MT and the SP of Genesis 5](#), as well as evidence for the originality of SP/LXX Gen 11 (both in this article and in other published research). Conversely, C&C have still not put forth a theory that can even remotely explain alleged inflations in both the LXX Gen 5/11 (in Alexandria) and SP Gen 11 (in Shechem).

¹⁰⁹ *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version, Part I, Fasc. 1. (Preface, Genesis-Exodus)* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1977).

¹¹⁰ Moses Aberbach and Bernard Grossfeld, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis Together with an English Translation of the Text* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1982), 9.