

REACTIONS

Readers are invited to submit their reactions to the articles in our journal. Please address contributions to: ORIGINS, Geoscience Research Institute, 11060 Campus St., Loma Linda, California 92350 USA.

Re: Roth: The Disregard for Discards (ORIGINS 12:5-6)

I would just like to let you know that I am glad there are a *few* people left in the scientific society like you and your colleagues. I found the articles in Volume 12 #1 very interesting and well written. I especially enjoyed the editorial. If only more people could look at the whole picture without injecting their own bias against creation. Such is life on this planet, I suppose. Again, let me say that you should be congratulated on a well-done publication. Keep up the good work!

Kevan J. Evans
Vicksburg, Missouri

Re: Roth: The Disregard for Discards (ORIGINS 12:5-6)

Origins, Volume 12, Number 1, 1985 came in the mail yesterday, and I was intrigued by the editorial on “discards.” Since you invited comments on articles in the journal, I will respond.

In the first place, *discard* is the wrong word. To discard a concept requires that unbiased judgment must be given to it by a group of competent authorities. In my opinion, it has not yet been demonstrated that evolutionists are any more qualified to judge the validity of theories regarding the origin of the earth and its life than are creationists.

Evolutionists have not, and cannot, discard creationism. They may have rejected it, but that does not mean that it has been thrown out onto the scrap heap.

As I have watched the battle during the last few years over the teaching of creationism in the public schools, I have noted that the reason why evolutionists oppose it is that they misunderstand what creationism really is. They claim it is religion, therefore it must be rejected by scientists — it has no place in science at all.

Now it must be admitted that belief in creation may be a part of religious dogma, under certain circumstances. A person who accepts it because he reads in Genesis 1:1 that “in the beginning God created” makes the creation concept a part of his religious belief. But there may be an entirely different approach to the problem of the origin of the earth and its life.

Although any kind of creationism must accept the postulate that there may be a Supreme Being, a Creator, accepting the data of what is known as “scientific creationism” does not mean that one acknowledges the Creator as his God and worships Him as such.

For thousands of years the Jewish community accepted the words of Genesis as true, which, of course, meant faith in the Creator. Then Christianity followed for another 1800 years without seriously challenging the creation concept. Since men — many of them intellectual giants — followed this line of thought for so long, we are forced to admit the *possibility* of a Creator. If evolutionists would banish such a possibility,

they would be virtually declaring that atheistic evolution is the only possible truth about origins. I wonder if they understand what such an assumption means. Do they really wish to promote a purely atheistic intellectual world?

Creationism — the concept of an earth produced by the act of an Almighty God — may be accepted as scientific on the evidence from nature itself, for there are many aspects of the world and its life that purely random physical and chemical processes can never explain. While we must admit that evolutionists have much evidence on their side of the case, we still maintain that there are strong evidences for scientific creationism. To admit such a possibility does not involve religious faith.

Care must be taken at this point to correctly define religion. Simply recognizing the possibility of a Creator is not religion. The dictionary defines religion as acceptance of God as the Supreme Ruler of the universe, and giving to Him our allegiance and worship.

Another reason why many reject creationism is ignorance. They are blind, either willfully or unwittingly, to the evidence that is being brought out by careful investigation of nature, showing that many aspects of nature cannot be explained as due to pure chance, natural selection, or any other automatic processes.

Take, for instance, the evidence for design. In the late 18th century William Paley, an English clergyman, basing his *Natural Theology* largely on the work of John Ray's *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creationism* (1691), enjoyed great popularity until Darwin's work established the current views regarding evolution.

While Paley's work may have had some faults, due to the inadequacy of scientific knowledge in his day, many facts of modern science indicate that his philosophical views were along right lines.

We might cite one or two such lines of evidence; many could be given. Take, for example, the development of the bird's egg.

The bird has only a left ovary. At intervals yolks are released from this, each with a nucleus. Sperm traveling up the oviduct fertilizes the egg nucleus. As the fertilized egg begins its travel down the oviduct, layers of albumen are laid around it, forming the "white"; then, passing through the shell gland, it receives a coating of limy matter, forming the shell. Finally, another gland lays on the color pattern that is characteristic for the particular species.

Now I would challenge any scientist to show how natural selection could possibly develop all this elaborate mechanism.

The last few months we have been viewing on TV some of the marvelous creatures of the earth. I was especially interested in the case of a certain tropical flower which provides a slippery slide leading down into a pool of sweetened water. An insect attempting to reach the sweet liquid slips down into the pool. The only way out is through a hole on one side just above the surface of the water. As he crowds through this hole, a little arm just above him clamps down and holds him fast, while another arm covers his head and back with pollen. Then he is released. As he alights and tries to dry out, others of his kind crowd around, attracted by his sweet covering. They are dusted with the pollen on his head and back, and, as they seek other flowers, carry this pollen to them.

Will anyone please explain how natural selection could ever develop such an elaborate mechanism?

These are only two illustrations among many that might be given, for which there is no other explanation than “design” — intelligent planning.

Creationism has not been discarded. If the scientific world would sit up and take notice, it would find almost endless examples that compel one to believe in a Creator who has planned complicated structures that no amount of random variation could possibly produce.

Harold W. Clark
Calistoga, California

Re: Ray: An Evaluation of the Numerical Variants of the Chronogenealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 (ORIGINS 12:26-37).

The data P. J. Ray presents do not support his contention that the LXX manuscripts exhibit “various forms of schematization” because of numerical variants in the Genesis chronogenealogies. Some variants are mere slips in transcription; the rest of his “variants” do not exist at all and are the result of misreading the critical apparatus. Just to take the first verse he quotes in his table (Gen 5:3), the variants “130” and “330” are credited to the LXX, but “130” is not a LXX variant, just the MT one. The siglum *oi l'* which he cites means *oi loipoi*, “the remaining” (sc. Greek versions), i.e., precisely not the LXX, and appears as an ancient marginal note in the Hexaplarian Syriac version, to alert the reader to the fact that the LXX differs at this point from other forms of the OT. That version is recorded as “Syh.” The same ancient note appears in a manuscript of the tenth century (424), but this also carries the reading “230” and not, as Ray states, “130.” The remaining witness to which he appeals (135), from the same century, reads also 230 but adds in a footnote the words “the Hebrew reads 130”, which is the equivalent of the previous note. In summary, there is no LXX manuscript whatsoever for the reading “130.” Similar mistakes are repeated throughout Ray’s tables. As for the reading “330” in two manuscripts (424 and 31, to which 59 should have been added), it does not represent any novel “form of schematization” because the same manuscripts read “700” as the number of years of Adam after begetting Seth (Gen 5:4) and then give the age of Adam at death as “930” (Gen 5:5). No schematizer would maintain that $330 + 700 = 930$, no matter how odd his scheme could be. All such variants are therefore unintentional.

In any case I am at a complete loss to see how the corruption of a text by late handwritten copies reflects bad on the value of the earlier text that we possess. For instance, in the case of the verse studied above, all the manuscripts that read “330” date from the XV century (i.e. are contemporary with the printing press). Now, if the reading “330” makes the reading “230” less reliable (even though such is the unanimous reading of all the remaining manuscripts, including several uncials dating back from the IV century) then we could turn any portion of the Scriptures we don’t like into something “unreliable” just by making altered copies of the Bible. In the old copies of the LXX, however, the chronogenealogies are anything but “inconsistent” as Ray wants. Whatever the value of the LXX figures (and this is still an open question) it cannot be ascertained by an examination of the critical apparatus. Dr. Hasel’s arguments, though still debatable, were much more cogent.

Aecio E. Cairus
Berrien Springs, Michigan

Ray replies:

I appreciate A. Cairus' concern that in some cases my data do not represent variants of the LXX. It will be noticed (cf. Sigla) that I included among the data a wide variety of texts (some including the Bo and Sa which are daughter translations of the LXX) as part of the overall evidence, since these are also included in the critical apparatus of the LXX. It would have been clearer on my part to have labeled my tables as "Variants of the LXX and the Versions" and "LXX Manuscripts and the Versions". This, however, was an organizational problem rather than one of accuracy. That the Hexaplaric evidence should not be included as part of the LXX variations is a matter of debate. Since the Syh is believed to be the rendering of Origen's fifth column of the Hexapla, which constitutes his recension (edition of an ancient text involving a revision of an earlier text) of the LXX in Syriac, both it, where extant, and the MSS which follow it or its Greek original, should be included in the overall evidence of the LXX. Therefore I maintain, contrary to Cairus, that there is, indeed, evidence for a variant "130".

Anyone who has worked at all with the critical apparatus of the LXX is aware of its complexities and that it is relatively easy to make mistakes. These, to the best of my present knowledge, have been corrected and are included in the World Wide Web version. Cairus is not without his own scribal error (cf. MS 424 for MS 344 in the Hexaplaric apparatus) and misreading of the critical apparatus (MS 59 should remain with variant "230").

In addition to the above, the main thrust of my study was not schematization. This was Dr. Hasel's argument. I only added a few further observations to this based on my own study. My main point, though I may not have laid enough emphasis on it, was that the LXX data (including the versions which reflect this to a certain extent in those that apply) is more complicated than just the evidence from the Codex Alexandrinus and those many MSS which follow it.

Now if I understand Cairus correctly, he assumes that older is better, that MSS are counted rather than weighed, and that variants are equivalent to errors (cf. his paragraph 1, second sentence and paragraph 2). Indeed, many times the oldest extant MS does reflect an original reading, and the evidence from a large number of MSS with the same reading *may* also point in that direction. However, this is not always the case, as I pointed out in my study, unfortunately without examples. I hope to remedy that here. Other areas of the Biblical text besides Genesis 5 and 11 have differences in the numerical data between the MT and LXX. A prime example is 1 Kings 6:1, where the MT reads "480", whereas the LXX (MSS ABMN d-hjm-qstv-a₂) read "440". However, LXX (MSS Zbic₂e₂) read "480" as with the MT. The earliest, as well as the majority of the LXX MSS, support the reading "440". Should this then be the preferred reading? The latest views on the history of the Biblical text in relation to the LXX suggest that for the books of Samuel - Kings, MSS boc₂e₂ (19 + 108 82 127 93 Göttingen) all 11th-15th century A.D. MSS actually reflect a proto-Lucianic recension (revision of the LXX) in about the second or first century B.C. (cf. Cross, F. M. 1966. The Contribution of the Qumran Discoveries to the Study of the Biblical Text. Israel Exploration Journal 16:84). Therefore, bc₂e₂, though late MSS, are seen to reflect an earlier form of the LXX than the earliest extant MSS (AB et al.). The preferred reading here on this basis should be "480", which also agrees with the MT. An appeal to those proto-Lucianic MSS should not always be seen as an easy solution; however, in that as can be observed, the

evidence is often divided (cf. MS o = 82 reads “440”) and sometimes conflicts with known historical data (cf. Thiele’s response to Shenkel in Thiele, E. R. 1974. *Coregencies and Overlapping Reigns among the Hebrew Kings*. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93:174-200).

Applying this to the Pentateuch, and more specifically Genesis, the proto-Lucianic MSS are gn, dpt (54, 75, 44 106 134 Göttingen cf. Cross 1966, p. 84). These again are 11th-15th century A.D. MSS. To take but one example, in chapter 11 verses 17 and 18, the d group (including both MSS 44 and 106), as well as MS 54, support readings other than that of MS A and the majority of the MSS (cf. Table 4). These *might* indicate earlier readings, although one must be careful since the remaining proto-Lucianic MSS support other readings for these same verses. Nevertheless, this type of evidence should be taken into account as being possibly earlier than the majority reading, which follows Codex A, even though coming from late MSS. This does not make the majority reading “unreliable,” “less reliable,” or of “lesser value.” I only meant to suggest that the evidence is more complicated than has thus far been dealt with in previous studies of the differences between the texts in these two chapters. In addition, schematization *may* also be a factor in the example cited, as well as in similar situations where variants based on these MSS exist. Thus, although scribal error may play a role in the overall variants in these two chapters, it can by no means account for all the variations as previously pointed out (cf. p. 35).

As to the question of whether or not the LXX was subjected to more “corruption” than the MT, the answer would seem to be a *qualified* yes. Hebrew MSS, of all three text-types (MT Sam. LXX), have shown up at Qumran (i.e., The Dead Sea Scrolls). The textual history is more complicated than this, but the MT grew out of a crisis faced in Judaism after the destruction of Jerusalem in the late first century A.D. One of the several Hebrew text-traditions then in existence was chosen as authoritative and the rest were systematically repressed (alluded to in footnote 2). Thus, the MT MSS of medieval times are relatively consistent (cf. Goshen-Gottstein, M. 1967. *Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts: Their History and Their Place in the HUBP Edition*. *Biblica* 48:243-290), as opposed to the LXX which was allowed to develop in various directions (Christian ones at that, since the LXX was renounced by Greek speaking Jews and replaced in their community by the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion) to a limited extent. Since we are aware of the different Hebrew text-traditions of the pre-Christian era at Qumran, from the MSS and fragments which carry them, it must be concluded that the Hebrew scriptures did *not* exist in only one authoritative form before ca. A.D. 100. Rather, the ancient Jews, unlike us moderns, were content to live with a multiplicity of forms (though these were *not drastically* different). Therefore, the pre-A.D. 100 Hebrew text history is analogous to that of the LXX before Origen’s Hexapla, and also the textual history leading up to the Samaritan recension. This may be traced to some degree where we have evidence from Qumran and related sources. So far, there is none for our two chapters. Thus, my conclusion that the MT would seem to preserve the figures closest to the original because the numerical data is consistent in all of the known MSS is an argument from silence and may be somewhat overstated. However, due to the repression, and thus absence, of contemporary conflicting text-traditions and at Qumran, the accidents of preservation, as well as the fact that we will never have all of the evidence, this is perhaps, after all, a fair estimate of the present situation.

Re: Ray: An Evaluation of the Numerical Variants of the Chronogenealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 (ORIGINS 12:26-37).

Correct and reasonably complete data are of paramount importance for the outcome in any type of research. I therefore limit my remarks mainly, but not exhaustively, to the aspect of primary data.

Using Wevers' Genesis edition of the Septuagint, Ray intends to "list all of the Septuagint manuscripts where these numerical data may be found." In reality Ray uses only about 70% of the manuscript data accessible from Wevers' edition. This means that if completeness is intended, Ray's enumeration is short of approximately 1100 data. Furthermore, the listings follow no perceivable organization and contain the inordinate amount of about 200 errors and shortcomings of various kinds. Even the sigla section has its share of wrong or confusing information. The bibliographical misspellings are embarrassing.

It is futile to merely list manuscript sigla without conveying to the reader their significance and implications. Appropriate characterization and categorization correlated with contextual linguistic features must be present. Without such an analysis, based on reliable data, discussions and conclusions are guesswork.

Variants from other ancient versions should not automatically be made part of the Septuagint complex. They need to be more complete and include intra- and inter-versional considerations prior to their being associated with it.

Quotations from, or reference to, these lists constitute a hazard. The work has to be started all over again, preferably not only with a rudimentary variant recognition ability, but with sufficient mastery of the methodology of textual criticism to avoid the pitfalls encountered here.

Johann E. Erbes

Ray replies:

I would like to thank Dr. Erbes for pointing out some problems with my study. As for the completeness of the data, I have listed the LXX MSS (and MS groups) which appear in the critical apparatus of Wevers. If Erbes' statistics are correct, this constitutes about 70% of the accessible data and reflects a representative amount of MSS. The other "30%" may be deducted by a comparison of those MSS and MS groups listed in the apparatus with those given in the MS line (i.e., the MSS and MS groups consulted in reconstructing the particular section of the text appearing on any given page). Thus, my tables reflect only the MSS cited in the apparatus, but not those which could have been deducted. This type of deduction was, to my recollection, only done in footnote 1. It was not done elsewhere in order to keep the table section of the paper at a reasonable length. This, however, was unfortunately not conveyed to the reader.

In regards to the "200 errors and shortcomings" (about 7.8% of the "70%"), if this is the case, then I agree that quotations and references should not be made to these tables as complete and correct. However, this study, along with additional observations made in the letter to Cairus, might still be used as a starting point for future work in this area. It is representative of the fact that the data of the LXX is much wider in scope than a simple comparison of the Codex Alexandrinus with the MT and the Samaritan

Pentateuch would indicate for these two chapters which, to my knowledge, is all that has previously been done.

Indeed, the type of study proposed by Erbes is much wider than the scope which I had intended, notwithstanding the organizational problems. It would involve, to start with, a similar but broader study of the LXX in these two chapters, and at least all of the daughter versions (a rather difficult undertaking at a time when many of these versions as yet do not have critical editions of their own). All these data would then need to be categorized and compared text-critically before making a thorough evaluation. Though this type of study has not been undertaken here, it nevertheless has pointed to a need to take into account the more extensive nature of the LXX data available for comparative studies in these two chapters.

