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‘Somewhere Someone Testified’: The Hermeneutical Function of Indefinite Citation Formulae in the Epistle to the Hebrews

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Abstract

The author to the Hebrews makes the seemingly strange choice to introduce two quotations from the LXX with indefinite markers (Heb 2.6; 4.4). While some commentators do not consider these introductions, others have argued that they function either rhetorically to engage the audience or theologically to highlight the divine speaker. This article argues that a hermeneutical function better explains the author’s choices: the author uses the indefiniteness to guide his audience in how to interpret each quoted passage. The author uses the indefinite marker of place (του) to remove both Gen 2.2 and Ps 8.5–7 LXX from their salvation-historical context; this results in the rest of God (Heb 3–4) and the role of humanity within creation (Heb 2) applying equally to the present and the coming ages. He pairs this with the indefinite marker of person (τις) in his introduction to Ps 8 to indicate that the audience should not interpret it prosopologically as the speech of the Son to the Father; rather the Psalm testifies to the role of humanity within the present and the coming worlds, a role which the Son incarnate fulfils. This hermeneutical explanation aligns with other instances of indefinite citation markers in Second Temple Judaism, most notably in Philo. This argument, therefore, both adds depth to the characterisation of the author as a careful reader of Scripture and brings out the intended meaning and function of Ps 8 and Gen 2 in the discourse of Hebrews more clearly.

Keywords: Hebrews; hermeneutics; prosopological exegesis; intertextuality; salvation history

1. Introduction

The author to the Hebrews shows notable uniqueness in his approach to and use of his Scriptures. He tends to lead with a text and then explain it rather than use the text as support for an argument already made. More particularly, other New Testament authors tend to use verbs of either fulfilment or writing to introduce citations and often indicate the source of their citation. Our author, on the other hand, seldom identifies the human involved in the production of the Old Testament text (only David in 2.7 and Moses in 9.20; 12.21). He also typically construes the Old Testament in terms of speaking, in line with his opening assertion that πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας ποῖς πατέρας ἐν τοῖς προφήταις (Heb 1.1). Yet even among these particularities, two of his scriptural introductions stand out: διεμαρτύρατο δὲ πού τις λέγων (Heb 2.6) and εἶρηκεν γάρ σου περὶ τῆς ἐβδόμης οὕτως (4.4). In the citation formulae that introduce each of these texts, the author introduces an element of indefiniteness: in both instances, indefiniteness

of location (που); in the former text, he pairs this with indefiniteness of speaker (τις). These elements of indefiniteness suggest to many modern readers that the author has either forgotten the details of his text or else he does not care.

This essay contends, however, that these indefinite markers perform important hermeneutical functions: the author uses each indefinite marker to guide his readers in the way that they should interpret each ensuing citation. Specifically, the indefiniteness of location serves to indicate that the citation does not speak of a particular salvation-historical era, but rather applies across the eras from the beginning of creation. The indefiniteness of speaker directs the readers to understand Psalm 8 not as the words of the Son to the Father but rather as a true reflection of humanity in general.

In order to demonstrate this argument, I will first outline previous understandings of the indefinite citation formulae, along with an important recent argument on the use of the Old Testament in Hebrews more generally. Then in light of the outstanding questions from these considerations, I will examine the function of the two indefinite citation formulae in Hebrews within their contexts, starting with Heb 4.4 as the less complex of the two. Finally, I will cross-check the conclusions against other ancient uses of indefinite citation formulae.

2. Previous Explanations of the Indefinite Citation Formulae

Most ancient commentators do not consider the specifics of the introductions, focusing rather on the citation within the text. Two notable exceptions are Chrysostom and Calvin. The former states in his sermons on Hebrews that the author uses ‘someone’ in Heb 2.6 on the assumption that the readers were skilled in the Scriptures and would have found the reference familiar.¹ For Chrysostom, therefore, the formula functions *rhetorically* by highlighting the familiarity of the citation to draw the author and readers together in shared assumed knowledge. Calvin admits ignorance here, saying, ‘But why he suppressed the name of David does not appear to me.’² Yet he goes on to state, ‘Doubtless he says *one*, or someone, not in contempt, but for honour’s sake, designating him as one of the prophets or a renowned writer.’³ For Calvin then, the indefiniteness functions *theologically*, indicating the status of the speaker and therefore giving authority to the words of the citation. It is unclear, however, on what grounds he makes this claim concerning honour. Almost no ensuing commentator, moreover, has followed Calvin in arguing that the indefinite personal pronoun increases the honour of the human author.

Among older critical commentators, those who consider the indefinite formulae tend to connect the wording to the ways in which Philo introduces Scripture in his works.⁴ They draw out the significance of this in two ways. Some take it, like Chrysostom, as a marker of common knowledge, and hence it functions *rhetorically*.⁵ Others take it as a marker of common method: by using the same hermeneutical moves as Philo, the author relies on identical hermeneutical assumptions, particularly that the Scriptures (including

¹ Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews* 6 (NPNF¹14; Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1889) 382–3.

² John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews* (trans. John Owen; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1853) 58.

³ Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, 58.

⁴ E.g. Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays* (2nd ed.; London: Macmillan, 1892) 43.

⁵ Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 96. See also more recently J. Harold Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Hebrews* (2nd ed.; Dallas: SIL International, 2008) 53–4; Neva F. Miller, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: An Analytical and Exegetical Handbook* (Dallas: SIL, 1988) 41.

the LXX) are the inspired words of God.⁶ On this view then, the indefinite formulae function at least partly *hermeneutically*, drawing on underlying assumptions to guide understanding. Williamson, however, put a large dent in the significance of these parallels when he concluded that the similarities between Philo's writings and Hebrews are more imagined than real at multiple levels.⁷ Yet such parallels in wording should not be overlooked, especially Philo's introduction of Gen 20.12 with the words εἶπε γὰρ ποῦ τις (Ebr. 59–61).⁸ Both Philo and Josephus, moreover, occasionally introduce citations with the indefinite marker of location. These authors, therefore, provide a potential counterpoint against which to check the function of the indefinite formulae in Hebrews.

Although a few recent commentators point out the connection to Philo,⁹ most do not account for this parallel. For those who do comment on the citation formulae, they tend to make two main observations, which map to the two indefinite markers in Heb 2.6. With respect to ποῦ, some commentators point out that the indefinite location does not mean that the author did not know the location of the text within his Scriptures.¹⁰ This is clear, especially from the second indefinite citation (Heb 4.4), which comes from Gen 2. Furthermore, the author's use of the Old Testament in the letter more generally – in both breadth and sophistication – indicates that he has spent a considerable amount of time in the study of these texts, which suggests his awareness of the location of each citation.¹¹ Although this explanation removes a potential misunderstanding for modern readers, it does not offer a positive alternative concerning why the author would choose on two particular occasions to make the location of the citation indefinite.

With respect to τις (Heb 2.6), commentators tend to use more overtly theological logic. Like the indefiniteness of place, they often stress that the indefinite pronoun does not denote that the author claims ignorance of the human author of the text.¹² Nor, they argue, does this imply that the author thought that the quotation from the Psalms should be heard with any less authority than other citations within the letter.¹³ Rather, if they consider the function of the pronoun, they almost unanimously argue that the pronoun functions as a marker that draws attention *away from* the human speaker and towards

⁶ James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924) 21–22. See also the series of quotations on this topic gathered in George B. Caird, 'The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews', *CJT* 5 (1959) 44–51, at 44.

⁷ Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (ALGHJ 4; Leiden: Brill, 1970) 576–9.

⁸ The Greek text of Philo is taken from the Loeb editions.

⁹ Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989) 70–1; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1993) 148; Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (7th ed.; KEK 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975) 137; Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic; Nottingham: Apollon, 2007) 143.

¹⁰ David Lewis Allen, *Hebrews* (NAC 35; Nashville: B&H, 2010) 203–4; George H. Guthrie, 'Hebrews', *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007) 944; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation; Nashville: B&H, 2015) 87–8; Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians*, 143. See also de Wet, who states that the 'vagueness of the expression could almost be sarcastic'. Chris L. De Wet, 'The Messianic Interpretation of Psalm 8:4–6 in Hebrews 2:6–9: Part II', *Psalms and Hebrews: Studies in Reception* (ed. Dirk J. Human and Gert J. Steyn; LHBOTS 527; New York: Bloomsbury, 2012) 115.

¹¹ Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 87.

¹² E.g. Allen, *Hebrews*, 203–4. Cf. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (3rd ed.; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919) 742.

¹³ Markus Barth, 'Old Testament in Hebrews: An Essay in Biblical Hermeneutics', *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation* (ed. William Klassen and Graydon F. Snyder; New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 59. Johnson raises the possibility that the Psalm is not spoken by God, although he deems it impossible to know whether this is the case. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (NLT; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006) 89.

the divine speaker of the Scriptures.¹⁴ This, it is argued, magnifies the power and authority of the divine author by downplaying the identity of the human author.¹⁵ The speaking of God in the Scriptures thus takes precedence over of the humans through whom God spoke, in line with other uses of the Old Testament in the letter. Yet if the author wanted to draw attention away from the human author and towards the divine one, why pronominalise the human speaker at all? Even more so, if the author wanted to focus on the divine speaking that occurs through the prophets to the forefathers (cf. Heb 1.1), why not explicitly identify the divine speaker, as he does repeatedly in the catena of quotations that proceeds Heb 2.6–8 (1.5–13), and as he regularly does throughout the epistle?

Madison Pierce, however, demurs from the current majority opinion on two counts. First, she argues that the Philonic parallels should be investigated, as they may provide important clues concerning the function of the indefinite citation formulae in Hebrews.¹⁶ Second, she states that ‘the choice of the anonymous speaker is...not an attempt to distance the text from the person involved in the production’.¹⁷ Yet to understand Pierce’s own arguments regarding the function(s) of the indefinite markers, we must first examine her broader argument regarding the ancient practice of prosopological exegesis. Prosopological exegesis refers to clarification of the speakers in an ancient text in order to interpret it.¹⁸ Although some places demonstrate a clear use of prosopological exegesis, such as Jesus’ reading of Ps 110.1 (Matt 22.41–5; Mark 12.35–7; Luke 20.41–4), Matthew Bates argues that the New Testament apostles, and especially Paul, use this kind of interpretation on a number of occasions.¹⁹ Bates identifies three preconditions that enable the possibility of prosopological exegesis: the identity of someone in a dialogue must not be self-evident to an ancient reader;²⁰ this ambiguity can be resolved by assigning a character within the dialogue; and the interpreter must hold that the text is inspired.²¹ Thus, in order to identify instances of prosopological exegesis within the New Testament (or any interpretation of a text), the original text must involve speech, the person(s) assigned by the interpreter must not be trivial, and the introduction to the citation may flag for the audience that the text is being read prosopologically.²² He also adds that if the text is read in a similar way elsewhere, this strengthens the likelihood of prosopological exegesis taking place in the citation in question.

¹⁴ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New London Commentary on the New Testament; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1964) 34; Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) 127; H. J. B. Combrink, ‘Some Thoughts on the Old Testament Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews’, *Neot* 5 (1971) 22–36 at 22; Susan E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation* (WUNT 2/260; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 189; Guthrie, ‘Hebrews’, 944; Simon J. Kistemaker, *Psalms Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2010) 148; John W. Kleinig, *Hebrews* (ConcC; St. Louis: Concordia, 2017) 114; Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 36; New York: Doubleday, 2001) 214; Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 87–8; Michael Theobald, ‘Vom Text zum lebendigen Wort (Hebr 4,12): Beobachtungen zur Schrifthermeneutik des Hebräerbriefs’, *Jesus Christus als die Mitte der Schrift: Studien zur Hermeneutik des Evangeliums* (ed. Hans-Joachim Eckstein, Christof Landmesser and Hermann Lichtenberger; BZNW 86; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997) 758.

¹⁵ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8* (WBC 47A; Dallas: Word, 1991) 46; Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, 136–7.

¹⁶ Madison N. Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture* (SNTSMS 178; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) 96.

¹⁷ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 22.

¹⁸ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 4.

¹⁹ Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul’s Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012).

²⁰ Bates states that this ambiguity need not be a function of the original text itself, but may come from other places, such as the inclusion of the passage within a testimonia. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation*, 216–7.

²¹ Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation*, 216–7.

²² Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation*, 219–20.

Following on from Bates, Pierce investigates the use of prosopological exegesis in the Letter to the Hebrews. In order to identify instances of prosopological exegesis in the letter, she rearranges Bates’ two lists above into features that the ‘base text’ must present (the text must be speech, some of the participants in the speech must be ambiguous, and the text must be authoritative), and features in the interpretation that suggest prosopological exegesis (an ambiguous participant must be identified, the citation may be introduced with a formula that includes προσῶπον, and other places use of the same text in the same way).²³ Since the προσῶπον citation marker is not found in the New Testament and parallel uses are rare, she focuses only on the identification of ambiguous figures within the citations. On this basis, Pierce shows that the author repeatedly reads his cited Old Testament texts in a prosopological way, assigning various texts to the speaking of the Father (1.5–13; 5.5–6; 7.17, 21; 8.8–12; 10.37–8; 13.5), the Son (2.12–13; 10.5–7), and the Holy Spirit (3.7–11, 15; 4.3, 5; 10.15–7; 10.30).²⁴ For our purposes, while she argues that the author reads Gen 2.2 (Heb 4.7) as the words of the Spirit (to which I will return),²⁵ she suggests that the indefinite pronoun in the introduction of Ps 8 leaves the speaker anonymous, which both allows the Psalm to be spoken on behalf of humanity and also differentiates the Psalm from the ‘present or timeless discourse’ of intra-trinitarian dialogue.²⁶ She also concludes from her consideration of the function of πού in the same introductory formula that it functions to distance the quotation from its original context.²⁷

From this outline of the previous explanations of the indefinite citation criteria, three questions arise. First, with respect to Pierce, her explanation appears to leave the quotation in something of a tension: it is not part of the timeless intra-trinitarian dialogue, yet it is also not time-bound to its original context. Second, except for Pierce, commentators seldom consider whether their explanations have the same amount of explanatory power in other uses of the indefinite citation formulae, especially in Philo. Third, the common modern explanation that the indefinite personal marker glorifies God by drawing the readers’ attention away from the human author does not provide a sufficient explanation of the presence of the formulae within the context of the letter. Thus, questions remain concerning the function of these formulae within the argument of Hebrews.

3. Hebrews 4.4

The less complex use of an indefinite citation formula comes in the introduction to Gen 2.2: εἶρηκεν γὰρ πού περὶ τῆς ἐβδόμης οὕτως (Heb 4.4). Here, the author adduces the statement about God’s rest within his extended reflection on Ps 94.8–11 LXX (95.7b–11 MT). The author begins his explanation of the Psalm with the connective διό (3.7),²⁸ which signals that he is going to draw out the implications of the audience as the household of God.²⁹ In order to accomplish this, the author introduces Ps 94 LXX with the words καθὼς λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. This introduction denotes not only that the Holy

²³ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 20–1.

²⁴ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 202–9. See also the earlier delineation in Matthew R. Malcolm, ‘God Has Spoken: The Renegotiation of Scripture in Hebrews’, *All That the Prophets Have Declared: The Appropriation of Scripture in the Emergence of Christianity* (ed. Matthew R. Malcolm; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2015) 179–80.

²⁵ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 160–2.

²⁶ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 22.

²⁷ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 96.

²⁸ διό semantically encodes inference. BDAG s.v. ‘διό’.

²⁹ Harold W. Attridge, ‘“Let Us Strive to Enter That Rest”: The Logic of Hebrews 4:1–11’, *HTR* 73 (1980) 279–88, at 280.

Spirit speaks generally throughout the Scriptures, but also that the author to the Hebrews reads these words as the Spirit speaking directly to the new covenant community. Although Pierce considers in part whether such a prosopological reading arises from the work of the Spirit recounted in the Psalm,³⁰ it seems probable that the author turns to Ps 94 LXX at least in part because of the citation's opening word, *σήμερον*. The only two places in the LXX of the Psalms where this word occurs are Ps 2.7, which leads the opening catena (Heb 1.5), and here in Ps 94.5 LXX. Thus, the author may view Ps 94.5 LXX as instructions on living in the 'today': not the eternal today that exists between past and future, but the salvation-historical today of the Son's enthronement.³¹ This leads the author to consider the negative example of unbelief and disobedience that the wilderness generation provides for the readers (3.12–9).

Yet the author does not end with this negative example. Because the vast majority of the wilderness generation missed out on the rest, the author asserts that God's promise of his people entering his rest still stands (4.1). This leads the author to draw a parallel between the reception of the Gospel by the wilderness generation and his audience, with the difference between the two coming only in the faith of the latter in the promises of God. Griffiths here argues that the rest remains open for the people on the basis of God's promise to give a land to the descendants of the patriarchs (Num 14.23), which fits with the allusions to Num 14 in the preceding context.³² Yet the author's reading of the Psalm itself provides a simpler explanation. With the re quoting of Ps 94.11 LXX (Heb 4.3), the author implicitly demonstrates that the Holy Spirit would not speak to those within the salvation-historical 'today' and warn them to avoid the fate of the wilderness generation unless the possibility remained open that those in the 'today' could succeed where the wilderness generation did not.

The parallel message to the two groups, moreover, implies that the goal of the promise must be the same in each case. The author, thus, considers the nature of 'my rest' with the help of Gen 2.2. Here, he employs the Jewish exegetical technique of *gezerah shawah* in connecting the noun *κατάπαυσις* (Ps 94.11 LXX) and the cognate verb *καταπαύω* (Gen 2.2) – a lexical connection present in the Septuagint but absent from the Masoretic Text.³³ While this may suggest why the author introduces the Genesis text, this exegetical technique cannot explain its function within the argument. Rather, Gen 2.2 demonstrates that God did not make a rest as a part of his works; if this were the case, then the rest would exist within the created realm. Rather his rest comes into existence through his own resting at the end of creation, and therefore exists in the heavenly realm. The connection of Ps 94 LXX and Gen 2.2, therefore, demonstrates that the rest of which the Holy Spirit speaks in the Psalm is something that God himself enjoys in the heavenly realm and something into which he invites others.³⁴

For the author, therefore, the wilderness generation and the readers represent two instances of the same reality, albeit salvation-historically displaced: people summoned by the Gospel into God's own presence to participate with him in the rest that he has had since the end of the first week of creation. The author goes on to underline this point in the verses that follow. Even the next generation, which did enter the promised land under Joshua, did not enter God's rest. For if they had, this would negate the need for the Holy Spirit through David, centuries later, to promise a 'today' when

³⁰ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 138–53.

³¹ Cf. Joshua W. Jipp, 'The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World: The Soteriological Necessity of the Scriptural Catena in Hebrews 1.5–14', *NTS* 56 (2010) 557–75, at 560–1.

³² Jonathan Griffiths, *Hebrews and Divine Speech* (LNTS 507; London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 70.

³³ Matthew Thiessen, 'Hebrews and the End of the Exodus', *NovT* 49 (2007) 353–69, at 359.

³⁴ Peter E. Enns, 'Creation and Re-Creation: Psalm 95 and Its Interpretation in Hebrews 3:1–4:13', *WTJ* 55 (1993): 255–80, at 278.

God's rest would still be available (4.7–8). The rest in Ps 94.11 LXX does not equate to the physical land of Israel but rather to dwelling with God; this is why God calls it 'my rest'.³⁵ It is this rest, the author to the Hebrews argues, from which God excluded the wilderness generation.³⁶

Having the function of Gen 2.2 within the author's argument now in place, two questions regarding the introductory formula may now be considered. First, since the author does not provide a nominative in the formula, who does the author think spoke these words? In the preceding context, the most immediate speaker is God the Father in the oath requoted in Heb 2.3. Most English translations imply this understanding, by translating it generically as 'he has spoken'. Yet compared to Gen 2.2 LXX, the author inserts ὁ θεός into the citation, and this suggests that he sees a distance between the speaker of Gen 2.2 and the one being spoken about in the passage.³⁷ If this is the case, then the author likely sees the Holy Spirit as the speaker of Gen 2, just as he sees the Spirit as the speaker of Ps 94 LXX. The same Spirit, therefore, testifies both from the beginning that God's rest exists in the heavenly realm and also exhorts those in the 'today' to endure in their pilgrimage towards that rest.

The second question is central to this investigation: why does the author include the indefinite spatial marker in his formula at all? The first possibility is that its inclusion has no particular significance. This would imply that the quote from Genesis and its introduction would mean exactly the same thing had the indefinite πον been omitted. Yet the author does not customarily introduce Scripture in this way (from the limited sample size of the letter), and this indicates that the author chose to include it. This choice carries meaning with it.³⁸ The second possibility is that πον functions more like the English 'somewhere else'. In this case, the author uses the indefinite marker to indicate to his readers that he is going to draw from elsewhere in his Scriptures before returning to the main text under consideration. While this does introduce a level of redundancy into the text, this does not rule out such a possibility, especially if the text of Hebrews started out as an oral communication.³⁹ The third possibility is more explicitly hermeneutical: the author uses the indefinite location marker because, unlike the words of Ps 94 that speak to the 'today', the words of Gen 2.2 relate to matters that have been true since the beginning of creation and will continue from the 'yesterday' through the 'today' and into the 'forever'. In this sense, the time of which Gen 2.2 speaks transcends the divisions of salvation history that play a part in the interpretation of Ps 94 LXX. Either of these second or third options gives a plausible explanation to the function of the word, and further consideration must wait until its use in Heb 2.6 is examined below.

Overall, therefore, Gen 2.2 does not reshape the understanding of Ps 94 LXX.⁴⁰ Rather, the author argues that the Psalm was always spoken by the Holy Spirit to the community of God's people who live in the 'today'. He shows that implicitly within the warning concerning the wilderness generation lies the promise that the same rest remains open for another generation. This rest, as Gen 2.2 shows, was not found in the land of Canaan but rather in the heavenly presence of God himself as he rests from his works of creation.

³⁵ Enns, 'Creation and Re-Creation', 279.

³⁶ Bryan R. Dyer, "'In the Midst of the Assembly I Will Praise You": Hebrews 2.12 and Its Contribution to the Argument of the Epistle', *JSNT* 43 (2021) 523–38, at 526.

³⁷ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 160.

³⁸ On this linguistic principle more generally, see Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010) 5–7.

³⁹ Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, lxx.

⁴⁰ Contra Daniel J. Treier, 'Speech Acts, Hearing Hearts, and Other Senses: The Doctrine of Scripture Practiced in Hebrews', *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* (ed. Richard Bauckham et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 340.

The inclusion of *σου* in the citation formula that introduces Gen 2.2 fits within this argument, either as a marker of bringing a secondary text in to explain the primary text or as a marker that Gen 2.2 does not speak about a particular time in salvation history as Ps 94 LXX does.

4. Hebrews 2.6

Similar to the instance considered above, the author introduces his citation of Ps 8 with the words *διεμαρτύρατο δὲ ποῦ τις λέγων* (Heb 2.6). Yet unlike his use of Gen 2.2, the author gives an extended reflection on Ps 8, which appears to begin a new stage in the argument of the epistle rather than coming within an argument about another passage.⁴¹ In the preceding context, the author assembles a catena of seven quotations (Heb 1.5–13). Together these citations function to differentiate the Son from angels, particularly in the entrance of the former into the coming world to sit down at the Father's right hand until the final consummation.⁴² Importantly for the purposes of the current investigation, the author achieves this aim by consistently using prosopological exegesis – he takes all seven citations as words spoken by the Father, with one citation addressed to the angels (1.7) and the other six addressed to the Son (1.5–6, 8–13). The seventh and final citation brings the catena to a climax, showing that the Son now sits at the right of the Father while all his enemies are brought under his feet.⁴³ According to the author, this is the present state and location of the Son.

The author then uses these two facts as the dual basis for the urgent need to pay more careful attention to the words of the Son. After this first warning (2.1–4), the author supports his warning with a return to the nature of the Son and his relationship with those whom he saves.⁴⁴ Here he adds a third basis for the need for obedience to the Son's speaking: just as the Father has not spoken to the angels to enthrone them (1.5, 13), neither has he subjected the coming world to these same angels (2.5). This raises the question that drives the ensuing argument: to whom did God subject the coming world?⁴⁵ The answer to this question is not immediately obvious, however, since the context is finally balanced at this point. On the one hand, the climax of the catena shows the Son as the one who reigns over subjected things (1.13), and both 1.5–14 and 2.5–9 portray an antithetical relationship between the Son and angels.⁴⁶ Yet on the other hand, the more immediate context, and the one to which this statement is syntactically linked (*γάρ*), concerns the salvation of the people of God. God, moreover, has confirmed this salvation with works of the Spirit, including those that demonstrate authority over the created order.⁴⁷ This

⁴¹ Cynthia Long Westfall, *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews: The Relationship Between Form and Meaning* (LNTS 297; London: T & T Clark, 2005) 109–10.

⁴² Jipp, 'The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World', 574–5.

⁴³ Although structural schemes of the catena differ amongst commentators, most place the seventh citation as the solitary climax of the catena. See especially the analyses in Herbert W. Bateman, IV, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13: The Impact of Early Jewish Exegesis on the Interpretation of a Significant New Testament Passage* (AUSTR 193; New York: Lang, 1997) 232–3; George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (BSL; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) 77;

⁴⁴ This support is signalled with the connective *γάρ*. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 51–4.

⁴⁵ Because of the flow of the logic, few have taken up Fuhrmann's argument that *διαμαρτυρέομαι* should be rendered as 'to object' rather than 'to testify'. Sebastian Fuhrmann, 'The Son, the Angels, and the Odd: Psalm 8 in Hebrews 1 and 2', in *Psalms and Hebrews: Studies in Reception* (ed. Dirk J. Human and Gert J. Steyn; LHBOTS 527; New York: Bloomsbury, 2012) 89–90.

⁴⁶ Jason Maston, 'The Son and Scripture in Hebrews 1–2', *JSNT* 44 (2022) 496–515, at 506.

⁴⁷ Craig L. Blomberg, "'But We See Jesus": The Relationship Between the Son of Man in Hebrews 2.6 and 2.9 and the Implications for English Translations', *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts* (ed. Richard Bauckham et al.; LNTS 387; London: T&T Clark, 2008) 92.

creates uncertainty in the expectation of the audience, and into this ambiguity, the author cites Ps 8:5–7 LXX using the exegetical technique of *gezerah shawah*.⁴⁸

Yet Ps 8 does not immediately appear to resolve this ambiguity. This can be seen in the most discussed aspect of the author’s use of the Psalm – the debate concerning whether the author interprets the Psalm anthropologically⁴⁹ or Christologically.⁵⁰ Much of this debate has centred around the meaning of *υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου*, and whether translating the phrase as ‘mortal’ loses something essential in the argument of the author. Commentators debate whether the author and the audience were likely to have known of Jesus’ sustained self-referential use of the title.⁵¹ Yet the connection of the Psalm to the argument does not concern *υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου* even though the language of Son and angels provides a degree of lexical cohesion with both the preceding and ensuing contexts.⁵² Instead, the connection comes from the statement that God subjects enemies to a third party. This link can be seen both in the use of the same idea already quoted in Ps 109:1 LXX (1.13) and the focus on subjugation on both sides of the citation (2.5, 8).

Yet the author does not resolve this ambiguity even in the immediately following exposition since the referent of *αὐτῶ* (2.8) is not clear: the present lack of subjugation of all things could apply equally to humanity in general or to Jesus in particular. It is only in Heb 2.9 that the author names Jesus – for the first time in the letter – and shows that he in his incarnation is the fulfilment of Ps 8. It is here that those who argue for a Christological reading gain their strongest support, especially in the arc that Jesus lives out, which mirrors the narrational shape of the citation as it stands in the LXX and as edited in the epistle.⁵³ Yet as the author continues his argument, Jesus fulfils this Psalm precisely because he became a human, becoming like his brothers and sisters in every way (2.17). The author chooses, moreover, to begin the citation with a line that explicitly places the focus on humanity. While this neither prohibits Jesus from fulfilling the Psalm nor entirely resolves the ambiguity in the context, it does draw the focus towards the nature of humanity. It is this nature that Jesus lives out, and therefore, the Son who sits at God’s right hand in Ps 109 LXX can only do so because he is at the same time the one who suffers as the exemplary human in Ps 8.⁵⁴ For this reason, although many scholars argue for a ‘both-and’ interpretation of the Psalm (rather than either anthropological or Christological),⁵⁵ it is likely better to understand that the

⁴⁸ David M. Moffitt, ‘The Interpretation of Scripture in the Epistle to the Hebrews’, *Reading the Epistle to the Hebrews: A Resource for Students* (ed. Eric F. Mason and Kevin B. McCrudden; RBS 66; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011) 88.

⁴⁹ E.g. David I. Starling, ‘“At Many Times and in Various Ways”: Hebrews and the Hermeneutics of Exposition’, *JTI* 15 (2021) 121–32, at 125.

⁵⁰ E.g. George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998) 100.

⁵¹ Thus, this argument proceeds on probabilities since much remains unknown concerning the occasion of the letter. For the affirmative, see Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 35; R. T. France, ‘The Writer of Hebrews as a Biblical Expositor’, *TynBul* 47 (1996) 245–76, at 262 n. 29; Kistemaker, *Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 83. For the negative, see Blomberg, ‘“But We See Jesus”’, 94; Matthew C. Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness of Jesus in Hebrews* (SNTSMS 160; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 41.

⁵² George H. Guthrie and Russell D. Quinn, ‘A Discourse Analysis of the Use of Psalm 8:4–6 in Hebrews 2:5–9’, *JETS* 49 (2006) 235–46, at 243; Westfall, *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews*, 101–2.

⁵³ Jason Maston, ‘“What Is Man?”: An Argument for the Christological Reading of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2’, *ZNW* 112 (2021) 89–104, at 103–4.

⁵⁴ Hence when the author returns to Ps 109 LXX in Heb 5, the earthly, human existence of Jesus becomes a central plank in the argument for the way that Jesus fulfils the promise of being a priest in the order of Melchizedek.

⁵⁵ E.g. David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (NovTSup 141; Leiden: Brill, 2013) 128; Amy L. B. Peeler, *You Are My Son: The Family of God in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (LNTS 486; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015) 73–4.

author presents the Psalm anthropologically and then takes that anthropological thought up within a Christological framework in Jesus' fulfilment of the Psalm.⁵⁶

Given that the author shapes his discourse in this way, his use of an indefinite citational formula can now be examined. Although it is seldom done, each of the indefinite markers may be considered separately. As already demonstrated, *που* could denote that the author will introduce a secondary text to aid with his ongoing explanation of a primary text. Such a denotation is possible here with respect to Ps 109 LXX, although the extended consideration of Ps 94 LXX creates a significant textual distance between the uses of Ps 109 LXX (Heb 1.13; 5.6). More promising is the other explanation considered with respect to Gen 2.2: *που* signifies that the text does not speak of or into one particular era of salvation history. Whereas the author has just noted that he is speaking about the *τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν* (2.5), he now guides the reader to interpret the words of Ps 8 as things true from the creation of the world, and therefore, equally applicable in both the current world and the coming one. In this case, the author guides his audience to understand the quote as an accurate assessment of the nature of humanity at all times in creation, not just from the time of the incarnation onwards. The pronominalisation of an indefinite speaker in this introduction, moreover, also supports this explanation, since this 'someone' could have spoken these words at any point in time, and they would still be true for every point in the salvation history of both the present and the new worlds.

This much Pierce also argues in her work on prosopological exegesis.⁵⁷ Yet the indefinite *τις* likely plays another, more important role. The author uses prosopological exegesis in his reading of each of the seven citations of the catena in the preceding context (1.5–13), as well as the three quotes (2.12–3) that follow. The base text of Ps 8 LXX, moreover, contains all of the elements that both Bates and Pierce identify as precursors for a prosopological reading: the Psalm as a prayer necessarily contains a dialogical shape; both the author and the readers hold the text to be authoritative since they view it as Scripture; and most importantly, the self-reference of the speaker as the *υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου* presents a particularly inviting opportunity for the Christian community to read the words of Ps 8 prosopologically as the words of the incarnate Christ. Yet the use of the Psalm in the argument shows that the author does not interpret the Psalm in this way. The use of the indefinite pronoun of speaker then guards against seeing these words as the words of the Son: it is not the Son who speaks these words to the Father, but 'someone'.⁵⁸

The indefiniteness of *τις* in Heb 2.6 is, therefore, not intended to magnify the glory of the divine speaker by obscuring the identity of the human agent. Rather, the author draws attention to the human speaker, albeit indefinitely, in order to distinguish his interpretation of the text from the texts surrounding it that convey the intra-trinitarian conversation.⁵⁹ This is not to argue that the author would reject the understanding of Ps 8 as divine discourse any more than the current prevailing explanation would force the author to deny that the Psalm is also human discourse.⁶⁰ The point instead is *hermeneutical*: as a skilled communicator, the author guides his readers to the particular interpretation of the text. Hence, with the introductory formula *διεμαρτύρατο δέ πού τις λέγων*, the author signals two facts that the audience must keep in mind in their interpretation of Ps 8: it is a testimony that applies to every era of salvation history, and these are not the

⁵⁶ Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness of Jesus in Hebrews*, 36.

⁵⁷ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 179 n. 13.

⁵⁸ This hermeneutical function of *τις* also suggests that the author and the readers were likely aware of Jesus's self-referential use of this title.

⁵⁹ Although he argues that formula minimises the identity of the human speaker, Cockerill also states that the use of the formula 'shows that Psalm 8 is not spoken by the Father to the Son (1.5–14) or by the Son to the Father (2.10–13)'. Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 127 n.18.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Barth, 'Old Testament in Hebrews', 64.

words of the Son in response to the Father. The author thus uses the citation formula to guide his audience to hear Ps 8, a solemn and authoritative testimony from Scripture on the place of humanity within God’s created and recreated order. For the author, Jesus uniquely fulfils this place, along with his brothers and sisters for whom he acts as their pioneer and priest (2.10–1).

5. Indefinite Citation Formulae in Other Second Temple Works

As already noted, some contemporaneous authors also use indefinite citation formulae in their works, and the purpose of this section is to compare their uses to those of the author to the Hebrews discussed above. The closest parallel that has been identified comes when Philo introduces a citation from Gen 20.12 with the words εἶπε γὰρ ποῦ τις (*Ebr.* 61). In the context, Philo discusses the nature of folly, and as part of his argument, he allegorises women as a symbol of those who determine their lives solely by the needs of the body and the customs of the world rather than by reason (*Ebr.* 46–56). Yet he also finds promise in the example of Sarah, ‘for she is represented by the oracles as one who has ceased all feminine things’ (αὕτη γὰρ εἰσάγεται διὰ τῶν χρησιμῶν τὰ γυναικεῖα πάντ’ ἐκλιποῦσα *Ebr.* 60, citing Gen 18.11).⁶¹ As support for why Sarah could have left behind the things of women, Philo quotes from Gen 20.12, where Abraham testifies καὶ γὰρ ἀληθῶς ἀδελφὴ μου ἐστὶν ἐκ πατρός, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐκ μητρός (*Ebr.* 61).

In his interpretation of Abraham’s words, the absence of the possessive pronoun μου from the two final prepositional phrases allows Philo to connect Sarah to his broader discourse in an absolute sense: ‘[she is] from a father but not from a mother’.⁶² Pierce calls this a ‘legitimate, albeit creative, reading’ of the LXX tradition, and she argues that the indefinite citation formula facilitates this reading by abstracting the text from its context.⁶³ Unlike Heb 2.6, Philo does not use this formula to signal a shift in his exegetical technique since he immediately allegorises Gen 20.12 as a statement that Sarah is born only of the unchanging Cause of all things (*Ebr.* 61). Yet like Hebrews, Philo uses the formula to remove the citation both from the speech of either Abraham or the oracles (τις) and from the historical situation (ποῦ).

Beyond this formula, Philo also occasionally uses the indefinite adverb of place ποῦ within various instances of his citation formulae. In some examples, he also nominalises a speaker, such as καθάπερ καὶ ὁ ὑμνωδὸς εἶπέ ποῦ (‘just as also the psalmist says somewhere’ *Deus* 74; see also *Plant.* 108) and even names οἱ ποιηταί (the poets) in some instances (*Agr.* 24; *Somn.* 2.52; *Prov* 2.13). On other occasions that parallel the formula in Heb 4.4, he leaves the speaker implicit, often with the formula εἶπε γὰρ ποῦ (*Plant.* 90; *Congr.* 176; *Fug.* 197; see also *Agr.* 51; *Conf.* 52; *Migr.* 182; *Praem.* 111). On most of these occasions, Philo uses the cited text as support (marked by the use of γὰρ) for a broader point that he is making from another passage. Yet given that he uses the prepositional phrase ἐν ἑτέροις to introduce a citation on several occasions (*Leg.* 1.51; 2.27, 35, 48; 3.4, 42, 65, 142, 186; *Sacr.* 67; *Det.* 103; *Post.* 26, 89, 142; *Gig.* 49; *Deus* 77; *Migr.* 131; *Her.* 117; *Fug.* 58; *Somn.* 1.74; 2:222; *Decal.* 38; *Spec.* 1.25, 104; 4:123; *Praem.* 113; *QG* 2.59; *QE* 2.10), it is less likely that ποῦ carries the meaning of ‘somewhere else’ in these formulae. Rather, as with the author to the Hebrews, the indefinite adverb of location appears to function as a device that deanchors a statement from its context and allows it to be read in an absolute way, although unlike

⁶¹ Cf. BDAG s.v. ‘ἐκλείπω’. This final participle is functioning as a complement in a subject-complement construction with the passive verb.

⁶² Philo does not see this as the absence of any mother in a physical sense, but rather the absence of kinship on her mother’s side (*Ebr.* 61).

⁶³ Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 96.

Hebrews the broader scriptural point may lie several lines, or pages, prior. In all these instances, therefore, Philo uses indefinite citation formulae for hermeneutical purposes.

Beyond these instances, most of the Second Temple uses of indefinite citation makers tend to be more idiomatic. Philo, for instance, occasionally speaks about the supposed derivation of a word using some combination of δηλώω and που, for example, ὡς καὶ αὐτό που δηλοῖ τοῦνομα (‘as also the same name declares somewhere’ *Deus* 103; cf. *Deus* 42; *Her.* 161; *Abr.* 230; *Spec.* 4.83; *Legat.* 112–3). In these instances, Philo most likely would not know the circumstances surrounding the development of the particular word in question. Yet for the purposes of his argument, these circumstances do not matter, and thus using που once again, allows him to remove the derivation from its context and use it in a more absolute sense. Perhaps the most stylised uses, however, come from Josephus, who references earlier material in his works with variations of πρότερόν που δεδηλώκαμεν (‘we have formerly made clear somewhere’ *J.W.* 7.7.4 §244; cf. *Ant.* 11.341; 12.390; 20.239). On two of these occasions, Josephus has not mentioned his topic at an earlier point, and thus the Loeb editors assume that Josephus has erred, mistaking a source as his own work or not remembering his earlier discourse.⁶⁴ Yet from what I have argued above, it is more likely that the indefinite marker does not signify a lack of precision of memory, but rather that the location of the writing – possibly in another non-extant work – does not matter for the point being made. Thus, even in these idiomatic uses of the indefinite adverb of place with verbs of speaking, the adverb functions in the same way as in the scriptural citational formulae of both the author to the Hebrews and Philo. The author to the Hebrews differs only in the context removed by που: not only the immediate literary context but also the salvation-historical context that he establishes at the beginning of his work (Heb 1.1–2).

6. Conclusions

The present study has argued that the author introduces two of his scriptural citations with indefinite formulae to guide his audience in the interpretation of the cited texts. While previous rhetorical and theological explanations have been given for these formulae, a hermeneutical explanation better accounts for the function of these markers within the author’s argument. The author uses the indefinite adverb of location, που, in both Heb 2.6 and 4.4 to remove the quotes from their contexts. While other Second Temple authors, most notably Philo, do likewise in introducing citations, our author uses the indefinite location to communicate that the statement made in the citation applies equally to each era within his salvation-historical framework. The author, moreover, twins this with the indefinite pronoun of person, τις, in Heb 2.6, to guide his audience away from understanding the words of Ps. 8 prosopologically – they are not to be read as the words of the Son to the Father. Instead, the indefinite citational formula indicates that the words are a true testimony concerning humanity that applies to both the present and the coming worlds, something ultimately fulfilled by the Son incarnate. This deepens the characterisation of the author to the Hebrews as both a skilled interpreter of his Scriptures and guides his readers in their understanding of these passages.

Competing interest. The author declares none.

⁶⁴ Ralph Marcus, trans. *Josephus VII: Jewish Antiquities XII–XIV* (LCL 365; Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1961) 203 n. g; H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus III: The Jewish War IV–VII* (LCL 210; London: Heinemann; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961) 574 n. a.

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