THE TEXTUAL FORM OF THE QUOTATION FROM ISAIAH 7:14 IN MATTHEW 1:23

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In Matt. 1:18-25, the evangelist tells his audience about Jesus’ origin both as Son of David and as begotten through the Holy Spirit (1:18-25). It is in this narrative that we meet the first fulfilment quotation in Matthew’s gospel. In 1:23, the evangelist quotes from Isa. 7:14:

ιδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν,
καὶ καλέσσοσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ᾖμμανουὴλ.

Behold, the virgin will be pregnant and will give birth to a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel.

There is a high degree of agreement between the quotation and the LXX, which reads here according to the editions of A. Rahlfs and J. Ziegler:

ιδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν,
καὶ καλέσσει τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ᾖμμανουὴλ.

Behold, the virgin will be pregnant and will give birth to a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel.

This translation differs in several respects from that of Aquila and Symmachus as given in Eusebius, Demonstratio evangelica 7.1.1, and reconstructed by Ziegler (as far as Theodotion’s translation is known, it agrees with those of Aquila and Symmachus):

ιδοὺ ἡ νεᾶνις συλλαμβανεὶ καὶ τίκτει υἱόν,
καὶ καλέσσεις ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ᾖμμανουὴλ.

Behold, the young woman conceives and gives birth to a son, and you will call his name Emmanuel.

The MT reads:

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Novum Testamentum XLIII, 2
In English translation:

Behold, the young woman is pregnant and will give birth to a son, and you will call1 his name God-with-us.

Many scholars assume that Matthew took the quotation from the LXX and changed καλέσεις into καλέσουσιν. They think that the aim of this change was to solve the tension between the command of the angel to call the child Jesus, a command executed by Joseph (vv. 21, 25), and the command in the quotation to call the child Emmanuel. In this view, the evangelist wrote καλέσουσιν because he considered Emmanuel not as a name but as a christological title: Matthew’s Christian community (often identified with the “people” of v. 21) confessed Jesus as “God with us”.2 There are, however, other views as

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1 For this translation, see section 2. below.