

Myrto Theocharous, *Lexical Dependence and Intertextual Allusion in the Septuagint of the Twelve Prophets: Studies in Hosea, Amos and Micah*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2012. Pp. 292. \$130.00, cloth.

The study of the translation technique of portions of the Septuagint (LXX) is a well-established field of research that rightly continues to receive attention. Most recently, scholars have begun to analyze sections of the LXX findings of modern linguistics to begin to characterize the translator's rendering of the Hebrew *Vorlage*. This enquiry connects with the broader field of biblical studies since translation technique must be considered if using the LXX as evidence in textual criticism of the HB. Knowing how "literally" the translator of a particular biblical book tried to render his *Vorlage* is a first step in judging whether a divergence between the LXX and the MT is due, for example, to translational style, linguistic limitations, scribal error, or a divergent *Vorlage*.

In her recent book, a publication of her dissertation, Dr. Myrto Theocharous approaches translation technique in the Twelve Prophets (TP) via lexical dependence and intertextual allusion, as her title suggests. The work is thorough, and for that reason limited to examples from three books in the TP (Hosea, Amos, Micah). Theocharous's research effectively demonstrates the necessity of evaluating not only narrow linguistic criteria in translational analysis, but also the broader, if less quantitative, influence of intertextual relationships upon the translator. For this and other reasons the book is worth attention from those working in the fields of LXX, OT textual criticism, and even hermeneutics.

What makes intertextuality fascinating—and complex—is that to the extent that it has influenced the translator of the TP, it has done so *through* the semiotic, cultural, and

scriptural matrices within which he resided. Thus, Theocharous is not merely looking for echoes in “scripture *qua* scripture,” (p. 2), but echoes of *interpreted* scripture that developed in the translator’s religious milieu, perhaps as a product of different reading traditions (thus yielding different pointing in the MT). Furthermore, following Emanuel Tov in assuming that there was a single translator for the TP, Theocharous states it is reasonable to assume that “he was exposed not only to *Jewish* writings and ideas, but also to the *Greek* literature available in his time, which formed part of his intertextual matrix” (p. 3, emphasis added).

Nonetheless, intertextually influenced translation may be evaluated by considering the way the translator “resignifies the text . . . especially in places where his *Vorlage* is obscure” (p. 4). In such cases the translator defaults to intertextual “codes,” so that when the translator apprehends an ungrammaticality in the source text, the tension is resolved by reference to another text in which the sign *is* grammatical. Thus significance is produced due to the sign’s double function, namely as “textually ungrammatical, [but] intertextually grammatical” (p. 5). The translator’s job, in essence, was to observe ungrammaticalities, obtain (his understanding of) the author’s intent, and make connections to the presumed intertexts to explicate that intent in his Greek version.

Theocharous employs criteria developed by Jennifer Dines in an unpublished paper (cf. p. 21) as she examines four main categories of intertextuality in the book: lexical sourcing, standard translations, catchword connections, and non-catchword allusions.

In chapter 2, the author evaluates “lexical sourcing” in the TP. Septuagint scholars, most recently Tov, have held that LXX translators drew from the earlier work on the LXX Pentateuch as a lexicon. Theocharous engages Tov’s thesis, investigates his proposed evidence, and suggests that the “vast majority” of Tov’s proposed words would likely have been “known and accessible to the Greek translator” *independent* of the LXX Pentateuch (p. 65). Though her survey does not *disprove* Tov’s thesis, it corroborates the conclusions of other lexical studies such as that of John A. L. Lee (1983) as well as Theocharous’s own concern for Hellenistic intertextual influence.

Chapter 3 focuses on Hosea, Amos, and Micah, evaluating so-called “standard translations,” which are “expressions which have become part of the religious jargon of the Greek translator” (p. 67), and which originated in texts *other* than the source being translated. Usually, two to three intertextual possibilities exist when identifying a standard translation, making it difficult to determine the *direction* of borrowing, especially given the strong influence of presumably oral sources on the translator. In sum, Theocharous’s analysis shows that the translator’s “freedom” to use standard translations suggests that he presumed thematic unity of oral and written “texts” familiar to him.

Chapter 4 examines “catchword connections,” which “function as a type of allusion by using/reusing significant words to refer to another text(s)” (p. 107). Theocharous explains how textual connections directed the mind of the translator in understanding difficult texts he was rendering. Other explanations for lexical association are possible, however, such as contextual exegesis, post-Biblical Hebrew/Aramaic, or divergent *Vorlagen*, as Theocharous notes.

Finally, in chapter 5, the author considers the possibility of non-catchword allusions, in which “the intertext exerts a stronger pull than does the Hebrew text being

translated" (p. 196). It is in this category that the translator's hermeneutical concerns become most evident, especially as he perceives allusions to other biblical events, figures, or narratives in his source text. After all, "Israel's peaceful and undisturbed life in the land is a hope very much alive in the time of the translator" (p. 196).

Dr. Theocharous's conclusions are based upon impressive and exhaustive exegetical work. So detailed are her individual examinations that critical interaction with any one example would do a disservice to the nuance of her argument, and encumber a mere book review. Her treatment of primary and secondary sources is commendable and, along with her deft interaction with Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Latin, and Syriac, demonstrates her competence in the complex field of LXX studies.

Moreover, for the most part the book is written clearly and succinctly, particularly when the author is introducing issues or drawing conclusions. After working through each particular instance of intertextuality, Theocharous does a fine job of stating the significance of what she just demonstrated. At times, however, the work does feel like a dissertation. Some of the investigations of passages in Hosea, Amos, and Micah are difficult to follow, if only because they assume a great deal of background familiarity with the issues involved (which may reflect the limitations of this reviewer). Perhaps streamlining some of the comprehensiveness obligatory in a dissertation could have benefitted the work *qua* monograph, although it is no detriment to Theocharous's method or conclusions. Also, it might help readers to provide more translations and charts, space permitting.

The author is to be commended for her careful treating of the scriptural texts. When it comes to entering the world of translation technique, presumption and overconfidence often prevail. But for the most part, Dr. Theocharous remains modest in her use of overly conclusive language such as "obviously," "normally," "accurately," and so forth, when it comes to the translator's thoughts or linguistic decisions. Even though her native Greek tongue presumably puts the author more "at home" than most LXX scholars, she rightly favors well-supported and well-argued conclusions over presumption.

Notably, Theocharous seems to have chosen a number of TP texts with arresting content. Many of her passages deal with such matters as human excrement and vomit (Hos 5:11, pp. 84-87); brutal torture (Amos 1:3, pp. 116-22); rape (Amos 1:11, pp. 129-30); cannibalism (Amos 4:2, pp. 190-93); citywide massacre (Hos 6:9, pp. 203-5); and even the eschatological Gog (Amos 7:1, pp. 228-33 and Appendix). While such content might well capture the attention of many readers, one wonders if the intertextuality under consideration is justified or even operates by virtue of such disturbing and memorable matters. Is intertextual influence on the translator more likely when ungrammaticalities occur in scriptural content that is more "memorable" or "surprising" (or less "comfortable")?

It certainly seems that such content lends itself more readily to a more hermeneutical approach to translation (whether or not this is intentional), such as the eschatological tendencies observed in chapter 4 and the Appendix. If so, how ought one to evaluate *less* "memorable," or to use Theocharous's own language, *less* "obscure" (p. 4) instances of possible intertextuality? How would passages that deal with more ubiquitous and less disturbing subjects (e.g., offerings, kingship, idols) be treated? Perhaps we need further

criteria to help distinguish intertextuality in less hermeneutically pregnant texts, such as historical narrative.

One also wonders if intertextual impulses changed over the course of the centuries in which the LXX was translated, especially as new literature—including more Greek translations of the OT—became familiar to translators, and to what degree we might discern such changes. It seems that more information regarding the religious and socio-cultural milieu of the translators—which formed their intertextual matrix and which is so often difficult to establish—would be crucial to such endeavors.

Still, intertextual studies like that of Thecharous offer interesting and valid perspectives on translation technique, and hold a great deal of potential for other aspects of LXX studies, as she notes (pp. 5-7). It is this reviewer's hope that Thecharous continues her excellent work in beginning to address such important questions. Indeed, intertextual studies can provide answers in the realm of translation analysis where other approaches have not sufficed. As others have pointed out, to properly understand LXX translation techniques they must be described, and from as many angles as possible. Indeed, Thecharous's intertextual evaluation provides a refreshing break from "merely" linguistic approaches, and widens the door to a promising avenue of study.

WILLIAM A. ROSS

*Westminster Theological Seminary*