

Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. Pp. xxiii + 408. ISBN 978-0-8010-3649-1. Paperback. \$36.00.

- [1] Fifteen years after the release of the original edition, Karen Jobes and Moisés Silva have expanded and updated their primer to account for the multifarious changes in the field of LXX studies. Their balanced and fair manual services both beginning and advanced students alike.
- [2] Ezekiel 1:28–29 of Codex Marchalianus graces the book cover. The introduction explains the value of the Greek translations in relation to the HB and the Christian church. “No NT scholar can afford to ignore the Septuagint and other Greek versions” (7). The volume divides into three parts: “The History of the Septuagint,” “The Septuagint in Biblical Studies,” and “The Current State of Septuagint Studies.” The chapters commence with an abstract of the contents, and they conclude with an annotated list of recommended resources. Figures interspersed throughout provide pertinent visual aids, such as the sample pages from the Larger Cambridge Septuagint, Rahlfs’s Septuagint, and the Göttingen Septuagint, each with an explanatory key (148–55). Five appendixes and five indexes increase the volume’s usability.
- [3] The second edition responds to criticisms of the first edition. Primarily, James Barr deduced from the first edition that the authors deem the LXX unhelpful for determining the Hebrew text (xii n. 1). Such criticism rings hollow, the authors feel, because even the first edition illustrated the textual-critical process with Deut 31:1, accepting the LXX (“Moses finished speaking”) over the MT (“and Moses went and spoke,” xii n. 2; 167–69). Moreover, the text-critical approach that seeks to “‘retain the MT reading if at all possible’ ... cannot be easily defended, and it is likely to lead us astray” (165). To drive home the point, the new edition adds a list of eighteen scriptural readings that, according to the authors, probably or certainly prove more reliable in the LXX than the MT (163 n. 21).
- [4] The updated data extends to the bibliographic references. For example, the authors announce the publication of forthcoming tools such as Emanuel Tov’s *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (3rd ed., Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015—see the review by Jamin Hübner, *TC* 21 [2016] <http://www.jbtc.org/TC/v21/TC-2016-Rev-Tov-Hubner.pdf>) and the multivolume *Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint*, edited by Jan Joosten and Eberhard Bons (180, 356–57). They even provide URLs for online resources like Origen’s Hexapla (43 n. 19), the Cambridge Septuagint (68 n. 12), the *New English Translation of the Septuagint* or NETS (365), the Computer Assisted Tools for Septuagint Study or CATSS (360 n. 37), the Society of Biblical Literature’s Septuagint and Cognate Studies Monograph Series or SCS (368), and other resources (304 n. 49).
- [5] Significant observations and ideals guide the discussions concerning textual analysis. The primary goal of LXX textual criticism remains the reconstruction of the autographa (134). Only about five percent of the biblical manuscripts discovered in the Dead Sea region support the LXX (192). “Perhaps the weightiest problem in Septuagint scholarship” is how to explain the differences between the Greek and the Hebrew texts, whether by translation technique or textual variant (95). Furthermore, “no aspect of text-critical work is more important than the proper evaluation of transcriptional probability” (139). The

authors quote Ilmari Soisalon-Soininen's axiom concerning the relationship between syntactical analysis and translation technique: "No syntax of a translation without serious research on translation-technique; no research purely on translation-technique alone" (299).

- [6] Nine pages address Gen 4:1–8 (230–39). Verse 8 of the MT incorrectly omits "Let us go into the field" (LXX) according to Jobes and Silva (239). In verse 7, the LXX translator might convey the interpretation that God rejected Cain's offering, because he violated cultic protocol, and that sin desires to master him (238).
- [7] An analysis of Isa 52:13–53:12 consumes thirteen pages (239–52). This textual unit in the OG constitutes "a remarkable combination of creativity and confusion" (252). Concerning the Greek's addition of "light" in 53:11, the authors comment, "Of all emendations suggested by the OG renderings in Isa. 53, this is the most persuasive one" (252). In 52:15, they conclude that the MT's "sprinkle" surpasses the LXX's "startle" (242). The MT reading accords with the priestly role of the messiah in 1 Pet 1:2 ("to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood").
- [8] No better textbook exists today for introductory courses on LXX studies. The extensive updates ensure the volume's pertinence for years to come. Students in search of details beyond what Jobes and Silva offer can consult the classic and indispensable guidebook by Henry Barclay Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), or the excellent but dated introduction by Sidney Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968).

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