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***Finding Meaning in the Text: Translation Technique
and Theology in the Septuagint of Amos***

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To be sure, this book offers a thorough analysis of the translation technique and theology of LXX-Amos that will prove valuable for those studying LXX-Amos and for those engaged in textual criticism in the Hebrew text of Amos. It seeks to analyze the literalness of the translation, the rendering of difficult and unknown words, and the rendering of visually ambiguous phenomena such as homonyms, homographs, and word divisions. The evidence gained from the text suggests the translator worked from a text very similar to the MT. His biases may be detected as he struggles with the difficult and obscure sections of his source text. In his rendering of the Hebrew text, he exhibits an anti-Syrian and anti-Samaritan bias as well as interest in Gentiles, eschatology, and messianism.

In his preface, Glenny draws the reader's attention to the fact that his work began with the writing of a three-hundred-page commentary on the LXX of Amos in which he compared the MT and the LXX of Amos and in which he studied the meaning of the LXX text. He further advises that the full commentary may never be published but that the present study would have been impossible without it. Having completed this commentary, he has used the practical results of that commentary to trace the translation technique of LXX-Amos and then to synthesize the translation technique and the theology of LXX-Amos.

In this study he has based his findings on the MT and on Ziegler's LXX text. He is further of the opinion that the *Vorlage* of LXX-Minor Prophets is very close to the consonantal MT text and in many cases is identical to it. In proof of this assertion he notes that the Murabba'at scroll (Mur 88) is evidence that a text very similar to the MT existed from the second half of the first century C.E. Thus, what Glenny is actually saying is that the LXX-Amos is of no use to the scholar who wishes to uncover a pre-MT of the book of Amos. Yet, having said this, Glenny is of the view that the reasons for differences between the LXX and the MT could be the result of a different *Vorlage*, a mistranslation or misreading of the Hebrew, exegesis, or the translator's translation technique. In this work he seeks to be objective in his consideration of these influences, so he takes the view that they all could have had an influence on the final product.

The study is presented in two subdivisions: "Translation Technique" and "Theology." It is a great help to the erstwhile reader that each chapter in these subdivisions is rounded off with an appropriate summary. Thus, in his second chapter (contained in the first subdivision), which is entitled "LXX-Amos: Literal or Free Translation?" Glenny first of all surveys the criteria or categories for literalism in ancient translations that have been proposed by Barr and Tov. He introduces two main approaches that have been used to determine literalism, namely, the statistical approach and the more syntactical approach of the so-called "Finnish" school. He then presents an overview of the application of Tov's criteria for literalism to the text of LXX-Amos. He thus finds that LXX-Amos is very close to its *Vorlage* in word order and concludes that the translator was very keen to follow the word order of his source, even when it was awkward in Greek. The second fact that Glenny observes through the application of this type of analysis is that the "quantitative representation" of the source text in the translation is fairly close, with few omissions and quite a few additions. He is further of the view that some of the additions are "double translations" that could be motivated by a lack of understanding of the source text or a desire to convey completely what is in the source text.

The third chapter is titled "The Translation of Difficult and Unknown Words." Having rigorously considered the text of LXX-Amos, Glenny is of the view that all six of the methods that Tov suggests the LXX translator employs to deal with words he does not know are evident in this text. He further believes that such "conjectural renderings" do not involve mistaken readings, that is, cases where the LXX translator rendered words that he did not know the meaning of at all and therefore had to guess at their meaning. Glenny is of the view that the translator of Amos was committed to try to give a rendering for every word that he could. Further, it is evident that the translator seldom used transliteration, reliance on parallelism, or the use of general words, although in a few instances he has relied on these methods. It would appear that the translator's favorite techniques when he encountered an unknown word was that of the contextual guess,

contextual manipulation, or etymological renderings. Although the translator used such techniques, it would seem unlikely that the translator made a conscious decision to use one or more of them when he encountered a word that he did not know. It is quite reassuring to Glenny that the results of his study under this heading are very similar to those of other scholars who have worked in this field. His findings are also consistent with that of Muraoka, who has studied the *hapax legomena* of the Minor Prophets.

In chapter 4, “Visually Ambiguous Phenomena,” Glenny seeks to study the visually ambiguous phenomena, by which he means the rendering of their *Vorlargo*, homonyms, homographs, and decisions about word order. His study of how the translator dealt with these phenomena leads him to the view that the variations of the LXX from the MT are not necessarily the result of a variant Hebrew *Vorlage*. Further, of the three possible causes for the translator misconstruing visually identical forms, the translator’s lack of understanding of meaning or syntax and other problems in the immediate context seem to be the main causes. Glenny notes that a close look at the context of variants from the MT in visually identical forms almost always suggests there is something other than the translator’s wide understanding that is the source of the variation.

Glenny also notes that there are some exceptions to this, and in a few examples the translator’s wider understanding seems to be the initial cause of variations, so that what happens normally is that the translator encounters a problem or obscurity in his *Vorlage* and has used visually ambiguous phenomena in the text to attempt to understand the text. This does not mean that the translator always understands that this is what he is doing and that he is intending to “manipulate” the ambiguity. Normally, he probably thinks that he is unraveling the meaning of the Hebrew text. Glenny also suggests that the wider understanding and beliefs of the translator find a means of expression in his sorting through the ambiguity in the text.

The picture that thus emerges of the translator is that he is a person who is serious about his task, who is trying to be literal. He would seem to have a general knowledge of Hebrew but is not accomplished enough in it to regularly recognize uncommon terms and constructions. Glenny further notes that the translator’s handling of visually ambiguous phenomena would seem to confirm that he was not working with an oral reading tradition in those passages. Glenny further believes that, where divergences in LXX-Amos tend to follow upon each other, especially where the MT is difficult or ambiguous, this in itself is strong evidence that vocalization of the text did not precede the translator’s perception of meaning; instead, his decisions concerning the meaning led to his choice of vocalization.

Once again, it is reassuring to Glenny that the findings of this current chapter are consistent with the translation techniques that other scholars have noted in their work on LXX-Minor Prophets.

In the second subdivision, "Theology," Glenny deals with such topics as "Anti-Syrian and Anti-Samaritan Bias in LXX-Amos" (ch. 5), "God in LXX-Amos" (ch. 6), "Gentiles, Eschatology, and Messianism in LXX-Amos" (ch. 7), and "The Translator of LXX-Amos" (ch. 8). Chapter 9 acts as the summary chapter, which in turn is followed by the select bibliography. The work is concluded with a general index, an index of names, and an index of textual references.

This is clearly a well thought out and researched work that every scholar who works in the area of translation technique in the LXX will need to consult. It comes with my highest recommendation and with the hope that it will provoke further study in this, especially in those books of the Old Testament that are at the moment untouched by scholarly research.

It is a pity that Glenny did not come to a firmer conclusion as to the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint translator, but perhaps this will be forthcoming in his further studies. The only aspect that could have improved this study and made it more accessible to other scholars would have been a translation of LXX-Amos in current standard English. This would have enabled a wider audience of readers to appreciate the strengths of his work.