This volume contains fifty-one essays from the fourteenth triennial congress of the IOSCS held in Helsinki, Finland. As expected from a volume of conference papers, there are a wide variety of topics represented (e.g., textual criticism, codices, Hexapla, linguistics, New Testament). This diversity of topics and number of essays naturally results in an eclectic volume. There are two themes, however, that are more fully discussed. First, the volume includes all eight papers on the books of Reigns, which provide a touchstone for current questions and research on this corpus. Second, three papers from the panel discussion on the origins of the Septuagint open the volume. In the interest of space, I will not comment on all the papers (there are helpful abstracts for each article); rather, I will comment on some of the essays that are the most interesting and deserving of scholarly attention/interaction. A full list of all the essays in the volume can be found at the bottom of this review.

The volume opens with a well-written piece by Anneli Aejmelaeus, “The Septuagint and Oral Tradition,” which investigates whether or not there was a translation tradition prior to the Urtext. Aejmelaeus argues that a number of interpretational puzzles are answered if one posits that, prior to the written version of the Torah, there was a primitive oral tradition that arose gradually and communally. This perspective provides a reasonable
answer to why certain details of the translation (e.g., translational equivalents) appear to have been predetermined. This is a sane and well-reasoned paper.

The second essay, “The Hebrew Text behind the Greek Text of the Pentateuch,” by Kristin De Troyer, provides warning over assumptions made by scholars regarding the relationship between the MT and the Hebrew Vorlage of OG Pentateuch. Using Leviticus as a test case, De Troyer demonstrates that the OG of Leviticus can provide insight into the differences between the Hebrew text of the translators and what we currently have in our MT.

The third paper of the panel discussion, by Arie van der Kooij, is titled “The Septuagint and Scribal Culture.” Here van der Kooij investigates which circles in Jewish society the translators belonged to and on whose authority the translation was made. Rightfully complicating the problem, van der Kooij argues that these two questions need to be asked for each book or group of books. Following this he looks at the issues of expertise, authority, and hierarchy for the Pentateuch translation and concludes that it was the high priest in Jerusalem who authorized the work.

One paper that provides a close reading of a text is “LXX Ruth: Translation, Interpretation, Characterization,” by Nathan LaMontagne. Here LaMontagne looks at specific differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts of Ruth in order to evaluate both the translation technique and the translator’s interpretation of Ruth. By evaluating small translational variation and differences in linguistic style, LaMontagne argues that the translator of Ruth reshaped the narrative’s characters in order to present characters who acted with greater intentionality than their Hebrew text counterparts.

Another intriguing piece is Rob Kugler’s “Uncovering Echoes of LXX Legal Norms in Hellenistic Egyptian Documentary Papyri.” Here Kugler evaluates nine documents from the Herakleopolitan Nome to determine which normative legal system they invoke. Kugler argues that in each of these petitions by Jews there are allusions to the LXX in addition to Greek and Egyptian legal terminology. Overall, Kugler concludes that, at least for the Nome in focus, Jews making formal petitions employed a mix of Jewish and local terminology, suggesting that they were invoking something of both legal systems in their claims.

As mentioned above, eight papers interact with the Reigns corpus. These essays provide a window into current issues in this field and cover the topics of miscellanies (Talshir, “The Miscellanies in 2 [sic] Reigns 2:35a–o, 46a–I”), recensions (Torijano Morales, “Different Distribution of Agreements between LXX L and Medieval Hebrew Variants in Kaige and Non-kaige Sections of III–IV Renorum”; Trebolle Barrera, “Agreements between LXXBL,
Medieval Hebrew Readings, and Variants of the Aramaic, Syriac and Vulgate Versions in Kaige and Non-kaige Sections of 3–4 Reigns”; Kreuzer, “'Lukian redivivus' or Barthelemy and Beyond?”), codicological discussions (Kim, “Vom hellenistischen Kleinrollensystem zum Kodex: Beobachtungen zur Textgestalt der griechischen Samuel- und Koenigebucher”), and translation issues (Meiser, “Der Tempelbaubericht 3 Kgdms 6:1–22: Vom Umgang der Ubersetzer mit einer schwierigen hebraischen Vorlage”; Fernández Marcos, “Translating the Historical Books”). Of these papers, the one by Natalio Fernández Marcos is particularly enjoyable, as it is well-written, provides a good introductory summary of issues, and identifies further areas of research. In addition, it provides the rationale for why the new Spanish translation of the LXX adopted the Antiochene text.

Another important essay is Staffan Olofsson’s “The Non-dependence of the Psalms Translator in Relation to the Translators of the Pentateuch.” Here Olofsson challenges the un-nuanced assumption of the ancient translators’ reliance on the LXX Pentateuch and seeks to develop criteria for evaluating different degrees of dependence/independence between the Pentateuch and other LXX books. Taking into account context, co-text, denotation, and conjugational forms, Olofsson provides nine points that scholars need to consider when broaching this topic.

Another group of papers introduces forthcoming projects and/or series. For instance, Jan Joosten provides a sample entry of his and co-editor E. Bons’s forthcoming Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint in his paper on εὐλογέω. Takamitsu Mauraoka in his “What after the Lexicon?” discusses future avenues of LXX research, identifying projects that would be of great value to the guild. Similarly, there are a few pieces that directly address the writing of commentaries and the establishment of commentary series (R. J. V. Hiebert and N. N. Dykstra, “Designing a New Septuagint Commentary: SBLCS and WATER”; D. Büchner, “Writing a Commentary on the Septuagint”).

The above are just a sampling of the diverse papers included in this volume. The pieces are generally of good quality and showcase current methodological approaches and important trends in the field. One major drawback to the volume is the lack of any index. Both the size of the volume and the diversity of its content make this book difficult to navigate, and a biblical citation index (at the least) would mitigate this difficulty and make this a much more useful tool. Though it would require substantial work (and very few enjoy making indices), it is my hope that future volumes would consider adopting this practice.

Overall, this is a highly technical work by leading scholars in the field that deserves to be in all research libraries and consulted by all who wish to do serious work on the LXX.
For convenience I have provided a list of all the papers found in this volume:

“Introduction by the Editor,” by Melvin K. H. Peters
“The Septuagint and Oral Translation,” by Anneli Aejmelaeus
“The Hebrew Text behind the Greek Text of the Pentateuch,” by Kristin De Troyer
“The Septuagint and Scribal Culture,” by Arie van der Kooij
“Schriftliche und mündliche Weitergabe in der griechischen Susanna-Erzählung,” by Edgar Kellenberger
“Beyond Genre and Style: Notes on the Greek Esther,” by Victoria Spottorno
“LXX Ruth: Translation, Interpretation, Characterization,” by Nathan LaMontagne
“The Provenance of the Old Greek Job,” by Johann Cook
“Concerning the Origin of the Addition Found in ProvLXX 1:7,” by Lorenzo Cuppi
“Onias III and the Legitimacy of Judas Maccabaeus,” by Dov Gera
“Between מֶשָׂעְבַּה and מֹשָׂעְבַּה: On the Status of Diaspora Jews in the Period of Redemption according to the Septuagint and Hellenistic Judaism,” by Noah Hacham
“Uncovering Echoes of LXX Legal Norms in Hellenistic Egyptian Documentary Papyri: The Case of the Second-Century Herakleopolite Nome,” by Rob Kugler
“Different Distribution of Agreements between LXXL and Medieval Hebrew Variants in Kaige and Non-kaige Sections of III–IV Regnorum,” by Pablo Torijano Morales
“Agreements between LXXBL, Medieval Hebrew Readings, and Variants of the Aramaic, Syriac and Vulgate Versions in Kaige and Non-kaige Sections of 3–4 Reigns,” by Julio Trebolle Barrera
“The Greek Framework of Kings: Indicators of Recension,” by Jonathan M. Robker
“Translating the Historical Books,” by Natalio Fernández Marcos
“Vom hellenistischen Kleinrollensystem zum Kodex: Beobachtungen zur Textgestalt der griechischen Samuel- und Königebücher,” by Jong-Hoon Kim
“‘Lukian redivivus’ or Barthélemy and Beyond?,” by Siegfried Kreuzer
“Greek Isaiah 25:6–8 and the Issue of Coherence,” by W. de Angelo Cunha

“Hapax Legomena, the Septuagint, and Hebrew Lexicography,” by Hans Ausloos

“The Usages of Δίδωμι in the Septuagint,” by Paul Danoe

“The Greek Rendering of Hebrew Hapax Legomena in the Book of Qoheleth,” by Hans Debel and Elke Verbeke

“'Biblical Greek' in the LXX? The Case of δωρεάν,” by Peter Spitaler

“The Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint: A Sample Entry—εὐλογέω,” by Jan Joosten

“A Note on Some Προσήλυτοι in P.Duk.inv. 727R,” by David M. Moffitt

“What after the Lexicon?” by Takamitsu Muraoka


“Le vocabulaire homilétique de Jr 1–20 comparé à 4 Rg 17,7–20,” by Christian-Bernard Amphoux and Arnaud Sérandour

“Was LXX Pentateuch a Style-Setter for LXX Minor Prophets?,” by Jennifer Dines

“Speech in the Book of Judith,” by Deborah Levine Gera

“Some Remarks on the Codex Ambrosianus,” by Mariachiara Fincati

“Greek Variants behind Coptic Readings in 1 Samuel 31?” by Elina Perttilä

“The Rendering of Toponyms in the LXX-Minor Prophets: An Indication of Alexandrian Provenance,” by Gunnar Magnus Eidsvåg


“Readings Attributed to “οἱ περὶ α’ and/or σ’” by Theodoret of Cyrrhus,” by Reinhart Ceulemans

“Θρησκεία, Terra Incognita, and Terra Devastata: Vocabulary and Theology of Symmachus,” by Michaël N. van der Meer

“Designing a New Septuagint Commentary: SBLCS and WATER,” by Robert J. V. Hiebert and Nathaniel N. Dykstra

“Writing a Commentary on the Septuagint,” by Dirk Büchner

“Some Peculiar Place Names in the LXX of Joshua,” by Seppo Sipilä
“ἀσάτε καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε καὶ ψάλατε (Ps 97:4): Présent vs aoriste dans les impératifs des Psaumes LXX,” by Philippe Le Moigne

“Die Rezeption der Septuaginta im entstehenden Christentum: Das Wuppertaler Forschungsprojekt,” by Martin Karrer


“A Comparison of the Septuagint Textual Form in the Torah Quotations Common to Philo of Alexandria and the Gospels of Mark and Matthew,” by Gert J. Steyn

“The Non-dependence of the Psalms Translator in Relation to the Translators of the Pentateuch,” by Staffan Olofsson

“Les Odes ajoutées au Psautier dans la Septante comme actes de langage,” by Cécile Dogniez

“The Septuagint’s Fidelity to Its Vorlage in Greek Patristic thought,” by Edmon L. Gallagher

“Using Patristic Evidence: A Question of Methodology in the Textual Criticism of the LXX,” by Tuukka Kauhanen

“Hebrew Bible(s) and Greek Witnesses? A First Look at the Makeup of 2 Kings for the Oxford Hebrew Bible,” by Andrés Piquer Otero

“Les mots התויהלכסנת dans 1 Rois 1,2,” by Jean Koulagna