

# LEXICAL DEPENDENCE AND INTERTEXTUAL ALLUSION IN THE SEPTUAGINT OF THE TWELVE PROPHETS

STUDIES IN HOSEA, AMOS AND MICAH<sup>1</sup>

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As the Septuagint is becoming increasingly important in studies of Second Temple Judaism, the interest of scholars is shifting away from the mere use of the version as an adjunct to the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. The process of sifting secondary readings in order to arrive at the 'pure' form of the Hebrew text has been the main preoccupation of textual critics for centuries. LXX readings were commonly retroverted into Hebrew in order to offer more pristine readings than have survived in the MT. Other ways of explaining deviations (e.g. translational factors, influence of late Hebrew/Aramaic) were generally neglected and a different Hebrew *Vorlage* behind the LXX was commonly assumed.

The study of intertextuality is offering another angle of approach to the LXX version, attempting to explain deviations and peculiar renderings where other methods have been inadequate. The interests of an intertextual study are not directed towards restoring the Hebrew text. Instead, the translator, his literary competence and hermeneutical processes, conscious or unconscious, become the central foci. Consequently, through a better understanding of the translator and his intertextual matrix, some conclusions may be drawn regarding the interpretation of the biblical text in the circles inhabited by the LXX translator. This study examines a broad spectrum of intertextuality (i.e. various types of intertextuality) in the LXX Twelve Prophets (TP), with a special emphasis on the books of Hosea, Amos and Micah.

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<sup>1</sup> Myrto Theocharous, 'Lexical Dependence and Intertextual Allusion in the Septuagint of the Twelve Prophets: Studies in Hosea, Amos and Micah' (Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 2011), forthcoming as *Lexical Dependence and Intertextual Allusion in the Septuagint of the Twelve Prophets: Studies in Hosea, Amos and Micah* (LHBOT 570; London: T&T Clark, July 2012).

While most of the chapters have been limited to these three books, my findings may have some validity for the rest of the LXX TP, given that a single translator was probably responsible for all twelve books. At the same time, not every book of the TP necessarily triggered intertextual connections for the translator in the same way as the others. Only an examination of the rest of the LXX TP would reveal the extent of the intertextual element in each case.

The aim of chapter 2 was to ascertain whether LXX TP used the LXX Pentateuch as a kind of lexicon, since this has been argued by various scholars. It was shown that similarities between LXX Pentateuch and LXX TP could be explained otherwise, since the translators of both corpora had access to the same readily available Greek equivalents within their common Hellenistic milieu. Greek vocabulary peculiar to both corpora (e.g. neologisms, words with 'forced' meaning) had quite conceivably arisen in the Jewish community prior to the writing down of the LXX Pentateuch, and the translator of the TP probably adopted it not from written translations but from oral tradition. The intertextual matrix of the translator of the TP is thus very broad, and no clear and direct connections between texts could be demonstrated. However, this chapter does show the translator's familiarity with the language and literary conventions of the Hellenistic period.

Chapter 3 dealt with the use of standard translations, i.e. pre-existing, familiar, formulaic expressions which have become part of the religious jargon of the Greek translator and have their origin in a text other than the one being translated. This chapter, as well as subsequent ones, was limited to the books of Hosea, Amos and Micah in a search for cases where the translator deviates from his Hebrew *Vorlage* and translates by a Greek expression known from other biblical passages. The discussion shows that the translator's familiarity with certain expressions does not necessitate a direct 'borrowing' from the original text containing the expression. The translator may have 'quoted' from a secondary source or from common oral usage, since use of a familiar expression does not presuppose knowledge of the source from which it originated. Although exclusive dependence on particular texts was impossible to demonstrate, this type of intertextuality shows how the translator brings texts thematically related into closer, verbal correspondence. The fact that the translator feels free to incorporate these stock expressions in the text, instead of following the Hebrew

literally, suggests that he understands there to be some sort of thematic unity between texts sharing similar language.

Chapter 4 examines how the Greek translator, in the process of reading and translating his Hebrew *Vorlage*, identifies certain catchwords which activate a connection with other biblical texts where the same catchword occurs. This type of connection left its mark on the way the translator rendered some passages. Such a type of reading approximates to the rabbinic exegetical category of *gezerah shavah* for, as some scholars have observed, the recognition of catchwords and their significance in biblical exegesis predates the exegetical work of the rabbis. The recognition of catchwords by the translator and their importance in the process of translation presuppose that he views the text as unified, ‘synchronic’, and involving internal commentary on one text by another.

In chapter 4 I have also included cases involving peculiar Greek renderings that, although they display connections apparently generated by catchwords and have been attributed by commentators to the initiative of the Greek translator, may be explained differently, as further examination has shown. These renderings can be explained as arising from the employment of other tools such as contextual exegesis, appeal to post-biblical Hebrew/Aramaic nuances for classical Hebrew words, a different Hebrew *Vorlage*, or the use of imagery in accordance with Greek literary conventions.

Chapter 5 presents intertextuality in the form of allusions to specific biblical stories, events and characters. Unlike the cases discussed in the previous chapter, these allusions were not triggered by shared catchwords. The influence of the intertext is strong enough for the translator to ‘manipulate’ his Hebrew *Vorlage* in order to ‘import’ traces of the intertext into his translation. The cases included in this chapter give us a glimpse of stories and traditions which were of particular interest to the translator. Moreover, a couple of cases open up a window into the translator’s attitude to prophecy and to eschatological expectations current in his time.

The above summary of the chapters allows us to make further observations on the translator of LXX TP and his approach to the biblical text:

(a) It is impossible to evaluate the translator’s attitude to the biblical text simply from the methods that he employs in his translation. A *verbum de verbo* translation which represents every single element of

the text betrays the need felt by the translator to present everything from the source text to the target audience. Thus the importance of the text is expressed in faithful word order and inclusion of every Hebrew symbol in the target language, even at the expense of Greek style. However, in a similar way, pluses, paraphrases and textual 'manipulation' may also betray a high respect for the text, in that the intention of the translator is to communicate the full sense of the text accurately to the target audience, even at the expense of translational exactitude. However, the translator of LXX TP does not belong to either of these extremes. His normal practice lies somewhere in the middle, which is not to ignore the consonantal text or its word order, but nevertheless to maintain some freedom of manoeuvre. Often the translator's deviations are significant and display certain proto-midrashic or targumic tendencies on his part. The ingenuity observed at the points of deviation does not mean that the text is taken lightly by the translator. His licence to remove obscurities in the text is not proof that he thinks of his Hebrew text as inferior or problematic. Rather, deviations underline the translator's concern that the full sense of the text should be understood by his audience, the implicit be made explicit and the rendering be in line with the literary conventions of his time.

(b) Intertextuality in LXX Hosea, Amos and Micah, especially where catchwords have been recognised, reveals the translator's broad knowledge of the Hebrew text, even of words which rarely occur in biblical books. He demonstrates familiarity, not only with the Pentateuch, but also with the historical books and the prophets.

(c) As far as knowledge of other LXX books is concerned, it is obvious that on many occasions agreements between the translator's Greek renderings and other LXX books are more likely to have come from oral memory, and not from a copy of the Greek Torah functioning as a reference source consulted by the translator. The majority of new forms of intertextuality introduced by the translator can be explained solely on the basis of his familiarity with other Hebrew texts. This, however, does not mean that the translator was unaware of existing Greek versions of other books, only that clear influence from Greek versions is rarely detectable.