



W. Edward Glenny, *Hosea: A Commentary based on Hosea in Codex Vaticanus* (Leiden: E.J. Brill), 2013. ISBN 978-90-0424-5563.

Following the Preface and the list of abbreviations Glenny's commentary introduces the 12 minor prophets in the Septuagint, introduces the commentary on Hosea, provides the Greek text and a translation of that text (the first 66+ pages of the volume are occupied with these matters) and then the Commentary proper launches (on p. 67). On page 187 Glenny has a bibliography, and on page 191 an index of references to ancient literature. The volume closes with an index of authors (pp. 204ff).

While the layout of the volume (which is very nicely bound, by the way) is straightforward enough the contents are a goldmine. The old saying 'you can't tell a book by its cover' is certainly verified here in this rather plain looking text. This volume, and the new series of which it is a part (the *Septuagint Commentary Series*), is much needed and a real boon to scholars of the Septuagint which has, frankly, languished for far too long in the shadow of the Masoretic text and scarcely ever been seen as little more than an aid to our understanding of the textual history of that edition of the Bible.

The Septuagint is an edition of the Bible in its own right and here it is treated with the grand respect it richly and rightly deserves. Glenny does a stellar job in allowing readers of LXX Hosea to hear the voice of the text itself without the Hebrew edition constantly whispering in the reader's ear.

In his introduction to the 12 minor prophets at the opening of the book G. points the way early on to where he is headed in his work:

The main way the emphasis in the LXX differs from the emphasis of the MT is in the LXX's focus on the northern kingdom of Israel at the beginning of the

collecting, using it as a model for Judah and Jerusalem; then the LXX moves to the nations and finally to a full focus on Judah and Jerusalem. In the MT the books concerned with the northern kingdom of Israel are scattered among the other books, which are more concerned with Judah, Jerusalem, and the nations. Since the books that focus on the northern kingdom also address to some degree Judah and Jerusalem and the reunification of the north and the south, the arrangement in the MT emphasizes more the future of Jerusalem throughout (p. 15).

Accordingly, throughout his comments, G. shows how the LXX focuses its attention on what, and why.

As to the volume's particular contribution to the subject, G. notes

This commentary is distinctive in at least two ways. First ... it is based on a single Greek manuscript;... Vaticanus (B). Second, this commentary is an attempt to study the Greek text of Hosea that is found in Vaticanus as an artifact in its own right and primarily for its own sake, not as a witness to the developing tradition of the Hebrew book of Hosea (p. 25).

Though generally I discovered no egregious errors in the volume and though G.'s work is generally just simply excellent, I was put off slightly by G.'s sometimes speculative approach to things. For example, at the very start he remarks, while discussing section divisions in the Greek of Hosea

Although there is no capital *alpha* at the beginning of the book to mark the first paragraph, one has been placed at the beginning of this commentary; it was probably understood in the manuscript (p. 26).

Certainly he could be correct, and frankly he probably is. But a better, and in my mind more satisfying methodology, would be simply to note at the appropriate juncture the lack of the initial alpha in a note with the explanation above included therein. Failing that, the seed of doubt is subtly planted in the reader's mind and throughout he or she may well wonder what else is 'probably understood' without evidence of its presence.

Glenny provides the Greek text and on the facing page his English translation, which it has to be said, is very, very good. I am exceedingly pleased that he followed, in his translation, the Greek rendition of proper names. So, for instance, the LXX of Hos 1:1 reads

Λόγος κυρίου ὃς ἐγενήθη πρὸς Ὡσηε τὸν τοῦ Βεηρι ἐν ἡμέραις Οὔζιου καὶ Ἰωαθαμ καὶ Ἀχαζ καὶ Εἰζεκίου βασιλέων Ἰουδα καὶ ἐν ἡμέραις Ἰεροβοαμ υἱοῦ Ἰωα βασιλέως Ἰσραηλ.<sup>1</sup>

And G. translates

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<sup>1</sup> . LXX - Vol. XIII: *Duodecim Prophetarum*. 1984 (J. Ziegler, Ed.). *Vetus Testamentum Graecum*. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum (147). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

The word of the Lord, which came to Hosee the son of Beerī in the days of Ozias and Ioatham and Achaz and Hezekias, kings of Iouda, and in the days of Ieroboam son of Ioas, king of Israel.

G's retention of LXX's orthography is right on the mark. And it matters because were the names 'Hebraized' the very soul of the LXX would have been lost right off.

The commentary proper too is nicely achieved. It is, of course, not very divergent from standard commentaries based on English or Hebrew editions of the Bible; but it is unique enough to make a substantive contribution to our understanding of Hosea even if we have very little formal familiarity with the book; or even if we do.

In sum, this is a finely wrought work, hammered on the anvil of research into a very useful tool for exegesis. Its edges are sharp and its reasoning is sublime. I recommend it highly with two thumbs up and five stars out of five.