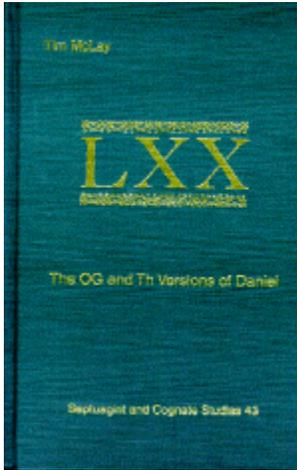


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McLay, Tim

The OG and Th Versions of Daniel

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McLay's monograph, a carefully revised version of his Durham dissertation, is primarily a volume aimed at LXX specialists and others with an especial interest in the book of Daniel. Nonetheless, the issues McLay raises go far beyond a single book of the Septuagint. For that reason this excellent study deserves a wide readership among those with interests in translation technique, textual criticism, and the interplay between ancient texts and modern interpreters.

As is well known, the Theodotonic version (Th.) of Daniel supplanted the Old Greek (OG) in all but a few witnesses. In his well-balanced analysis of these two texts, McLay concludes, contrary to prevailing opinion, that the version attributed to Theodotion is an independent translation of the Hebrew rather than a revision of the Old Greek. McLay depicts the OG as a dynamic translation, while Th. exhibits formal equivalence. These characterizations need to be kept in mind by scholars who utilize these two versions in the textual criticism of the MT. And indeed McLay both urges and facilitates just such a use of the two Greek texts.

McLay seeks to ground his study in modern linguistics and thus build a firm foundation for his understanding of translation technique that allows for the widest possible analysis of relevant data. In this way, he can avoid an all too common atomistic approach to the Septuagint (and other material), where researchers randomly pick and choose their examples, omitting or misrepresenting evidence that does not fit into their mold. Whether

or not readers agree with each one of McLay's conclusions, they will be impressed by the industry and integrity with which he examines the selected passages from Daniel.

The sixth column of Origen's Hexapla typically, but not always, contains Theodotion's version, which has over the past two decades frequently been identified with a revision, version, *Tendenz*, or text called "*kaige*" and dated to the first century BCE. McLay is among the younger generation of LXX scholars who decries what they term the modern creation of a uniform *kaige* recension that never "existed except as a scholarly construct" on the part of a now middle-aged group writing primarily in the 1970s. He is concerned that this group, in its eagerness to link one text with another through an (over)emphasis on shared characteristics, failed to pay sufficient attention to disagreements within these same texts. Beyond this, and even more damaging in McLay's view, many of these "characteristics" do not stand up to close scrutiny.

Even within a framework of general approbation for McLay's well-argued monograph, there is ample room for disagreement. After all, is that not what a "thought-provoking" work is (or should be) all about? First, it is not clear that McLay's analysis is as closely linked to modern linguistic research as he seems to think. References to structuralism, *langue, parole*, et al. serve only to mystify, not clarify, matters at least for some readers. McLay's use of terminology popularized by Euguene Nida, such as formal and dynamic (now functional) equivalence, likewise glosses over certain difficulties that we have when we characterize texts at a chronological distance of two thousand or so years and a cultural distance of incalculable scale.

More to the point, McLay's understanding of modern scholars and their scholarship seems flawed to this reviewer, who is hardly an unbiased observer (if such an individual actually exists). To speak of Th. as a revision of the OG is, as McLay shows, a mistake in the case of Daniel and would be an error in some other books (Job, for example) as well. Th.-Daniel, again joined by Th.-Job, has little in common with the version of Theodotion elsewhere identified with *kaige*. But LXX scholars of today are not nearly so entrenched in their respective positions as McLay imagines, and it is difficult to envision the level of resistance to such conclusions that McLay evidently anticipates.

Nor is it the case that scholarship was monolithic or monopolistic twenty-five or so years ago when initial exploration of "*kaige*" began. Undoubtedly, they (or, more precisely, we) overlooked a lot, but our work, which was then at the forefront of LXX research (or so we liked to think), stands up better on its own terms even today than McLay seems to imagine.

In a way, these last remarks raise the most interesting questions, even if they were unintended by McLay: Why and how did (and do) revisers work? How can we best or at least adequately analyze texts when so little is known of their contexts? What motivates

modern researchers and how much of *their* context do they reveal (almost always inadvertently) in their study of ancient documents?

The very fact that McLay has motivated at least one reader to formulate such questions—which lie, typically unexpressed and unexamined, at the heart of much of our enterprise—and to begin to devise answers to them is intended as high praise for the author of this important work. We learn a great deal from McLay about the workings of translators in antiquity and, of at least equal importance, the workings of scholars in the modern world.