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**McLay, R. Timothy**

***The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research***

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In this monograph R. Timothy McLay addresses an important subject in the field of biblical studies, namely, the influence of the Greek Jewish Scriptures (commonly referred to as the Septuagint or the Old Greek version) on the New Testament. McLay's target audience includes both "scholars and students who might profit from" such a volume (4). At the outset he indicates that, although knowledge of the original biblical languages would be an asset for readers of this book, he has made concessions for students in particular by providing English translations of cited Greek and Hebrew texts and a glossary of terms (5).

As McLay quite rightly points out, "the study of the Septuagint continues to remain on the margins of New Testament research" (1). One does hope, however, with the recent surge of interest in this ancient version of the Bible (marked by an increasing rate of scholarly publication in the field and the ongoing production of a spate of modern translations of the Septuagint), that more New Testament scholars will recognize the importance of immersing themselves in this literary corpus in order to gain necessary perspective for their area of specialization.

McLay does a good job of orienting the reader to the issues that pertain to the investigation of the relationship between the Septuagint and the New Testament. In the

process he discusses matters of canon, the relationship between the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint, the use of sources by New Testament authors, translation technique, the pluriformity of biblical versions in antiquity and the nexus of relationships among them, and the dependence of the New Testament on the Septuagint as a reservoir for vocabulary, citations, and theological ideas.

What makes this volume particularly valuable is the detailed analysis of biblical passages that highlights the sorts of problems and issues that the researcher typically faces when dealing with the New Testament and its relationship with the Jewish Scriptures. Indeed, McLay adopts an inductive approach to his task inasmuch as he begins by comparing Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and New Testament texts and then on the basis of the resulting observations guides the reader through the maze of factors that need to be taken into account in developing an understanding of the connections between these two bodies of canonical literature.

Although there is much in McLay's book that is commendable, there are also points on which the author can be challenged and aspects of his analysis and writing that could be improved. I will highlight several kinds of critical observations in this regard.

First, some typographical and other mistakes have escaped detection. On page 2, in a description of the twenty-four books of the Hebrew canon, McLay numbers "five of the Law, nine Prophets (1 and 2 Samuel and Kings count as one; Twelve Minor Prophets count as one), and eleven Writings." Apart from the fact that this results in a total of twenty-five, there are two additional errors in his statistical breakdown: the Hebrew canon numbers eight Prophets, not nine, and the books of Samuel and Kings count as one each, not one in total. On page 81 note 12 the statement that "Hebrew has three numbers (dual)" should be corrected to include references to the singular and plural numbers in addition to the dual. On page 108 the Greek combination of rough breathing plus grave accent occurs in a column of numbers instead of "4"—presumably because the wrong font has been used. In the middle of page 112, the inverted sequence **שלם ולמשנאיו** appears because of a line break. On page 115 in the column of text under the rubric OG Isa 40:6–7, a period has mistakenly been introduced between the words "humanity" and "like." On page 176, *homoiarcton* and *homoiteleuton* should both be spelled *homoio-*.

Second, stylistic infelicities are sprinkled throughout the book. Among the improvements in this regard that could be suggested, I would include the following: "the implications of" for "the implications to" (9); "together with" for "together along with" and "cites" for "cites from" (31 n. 26); "infinitives absolute" for "infinitive absolutes" (87); "made love to" for "made love with" (92); "the issue of the authority of the Greek translation . . . compared to that of the Hebrew Scriptures became an even more contentious one" for

“the authority of the Greek translation . . . compared to the Hebrew Scriptures became even more contentious” (102–3); “The Hebrew word . . . was bound in a construct relationship with” for “The Hebrew word . . . was used in construct with” (108 n. 22); “Based solely on the content and style of the texts” for “Purely, from the contents and style of the texts” (109); “The citations in Mark . . . are different from those in Matthew” for “The citations in Mark . . . are different from Matthew” (153); “the usual Greek equivalent for Hebrew Sheol, Hades” for “the usual translation of Hebrew Sheol into Greek Hades” (160).

Third, in a number of cases, McLay’s translation of Hebrew and Greek texts is faulty. A recurring example of this is found on pages 107–12, where he repeatedly renders Greek third-person imperatives as though they were in the second person. Thus on page 108, for instance, he translates καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ (Deut 32:43) “and worship him, all sons of God” rather than “and let all sons of God worship him.” Furthermore, the retroversion into Hebrew of those first two Greek words would yield, not וְשָׁחוּ וְשָׁחוּ as he suggests on page 112, but וְשָׁחוּ וְשָׁחוּ. In addition, whereas McLay’s “these things” (19) is an appropriate rendering of ταῦτα in Acts 15:18 and OG Amos 9:12 (18), “this” would be a better equivalent for אֵלֶּה in MT Amos 9:12 (18) than McLay’s “these things” (19).

Fourth, at times in his exegesis of texts McLay’s reach appears to exceed his grasp. This can be illustrated in his discussion regarding the influence of LXX Jonah on the Gospel of Matthew. For example, he argues (159–61) that the statement that Jesus was ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς “in the heart of the earth” for three days and three nights (Matt 12:40) is derived from Jonah’s psalm— especially 2:4, 7— though the closest wording in the book of Jonah to what Matthew has is εἰς βάθη καρδίας θαλάσσης “into the depths of the heart of the sea” (2:4; cf. ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους “in the belly of the sea monster” [2:1]; ἐκ κοιλίας ᾗδου “from the belly of Hades” [2:3]). There is, to be sure, some evidence that the story of Jonah was on the mind of this New Testament author during the composition of at least certain sections of the Gospel. For example, Peter is described in Matt 16:17 as the son of Jonah (Βαριωνᾶ) rather than the son of John (ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου), as in John 1:42. However, McLay’s suggestion that the identification of Peter as Βαριωνᾶ “is illuminated in [Matt] 16:22–23, where Peter is described as a stumbling block to Jesus and the things of God, perhaps referring to his namesake Jonah, who initially refused to go to Nineveh” (162) seems tenuous. The same might be said about his attempt to link Matt 1:21 with 16:18 and on that basis to make a connection between Jesus and Moses:

Joseph is commanded to name the baby Jesus “because he will save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). The personal [*sic*; possessive?] pronoun

foreshadows the saying in 16:18 when Jesus says, “I will build my assembly/ people of God.” Matthew portrays Jesus as the new Moses, and, as such, he is building his new people. (166)

Despite the preceding criticisms, it should be reiterated that McLay has produced a very useful volume that can serve as a helpful resource for both student and scholar.