

Hayeon Kim, *Multiple Authorship of the Septuagint Pentateuch: The Original Translators of the Pentateuch, Supplements to the Textual History of the Bible 4*, Leiden: Brill, 2020. ISBN: 978-90-04-42051-9. Hardback, pp. xiii + 207. \$113.00/€94.00.

- [1] Hayeon Kim discusses the origin of the Septuagint Pentateuch in the published form of his doctoral dissertation completed at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem under Emanuel Tov. Kim examines the translational vocabulary of the complete Pentateuch and uses traditional and computerized tools to analyze his data. Using this method, Kim determines that each of the five books of the Pentateuch had an individual author with a distinct translation style.
- [2] In chapter 1, Kim begins by noting that the question of the number of translators of the Septuagint Pentateuch remains open, citing several scholars that believe there was a single translator, some that advocate for five translators, and others who suggest more than five translators. Kim gives an overview of previous attempts to answer this question, noting that several use a single criterion, and that “the suggestions were made on the basis of scanty evidence and no developed methodology, and without a clear picture of the complete Pentateuch” (8). To avoid the subjectivity of previous studies, Kim attempts “to include as many criteria/aspects as possible for distinguishing between translation units” (10). Kim includes a thorough discussion of his choice to base his research on the Göttingen LXX editions, demonstrating that the fourth- and fifth-century uncials are sufficient for studying Old Greek vocabulary and that the Göttingen editions are “a faithful reflection of the uncials” (13).
- [3] Before examining the differences in the vocabulary of each translator, Kim addresses their common vocabulary in chapter 2. Kim begins with a brief discussion of vocabulary that was shared due to natural equivalents between the Hebrew and Greek languages. Next, Kim addresses vocabulary that was shared because of the similar religious background of the translators. In this section, Kim notes several instances in which “the Greek word was apparently coined by the translators as a new entity in the Greek language” (21), thus demonstrating the shared background of the translators and the appearance of homogeneity in the Septuagint Pentateuch. Kim includes several discussions of the translation of religious words and names of religious festivals and uses charts to display their common translation. Comparing the translation of these words with post-Pentateuchal translations, Kim “realized that the later translations sometimes differ from the translation of the Pentateuch” (36), demonstrating that the homogeneity of the translation of the Septuagint Pentateuch is not shared with the translation of the rest of the Septuagint. Kim includes a lengthy excursus discussing the translation character of Exod 25–31 and 35–40. After citing past scholars who suggested that different translators worked on these sections, Kim demonstrates that a single person translated these sections, noting their consistency in rendering, the correspondence between the two sections, and their shared vocabulary. Kim concludes chapter 2 by comparing the Balaam story (Num 22–24) with the rest of Numbers, determining that the same translator translated the whole book of Numbers and that there must be an alternate explanation for the differences in translation present in the Balaam story.
- [4] In the third chapter, Kim identifies the differences between the translation units in the Septuagint Pentateuch. Here, Kim lists the criteria used for this study: “lexical choices of the translators, consistency in lexical rendering, the translators’ preference for certain Greek words, ideological and stylistic tendencies of the translators, and their attitude

to the Hebrew text” (58). Kim presents twenty-nine cases of synonymous renderings of individual words, two cases of synonymous renderings of syntactical units, two cases of renderings showing different perceptions, and three cases of differences in degree of literalism. In each case, Kim gives a thorough description of the data, a chart depicting the data, and a clear explanation of how this information points to a difference in translator. Kim concludes chapter 3 with a discussion of the differences between Exod 29 and Lev 8. He uses the same criteria as in the rest of the chapter, “not in individual renderings, but in the context of nearly identical running chapters” (154). Kim concludes that the different word choices and different preferences evident in these chapters indicate different translators for these chapters.

- [5] In the fourth and final chapter, Kim presents his conclusions based on the data in the previous chapters. He begins by briefly restating his conclusion from chapter 2 about the common background of the translators of the Septuagint Pentateuch. Kim then summarizes his data from chapter 3 in a series of charts that display the different features of each translator. Next, Kim addresses the possibility of clusters of books, which would imply cooperation between two or more translators, but concludes that “there seems to be no evidence for such an assumption” (167). In the next section, Kim examines the relations among the translations, noting that “the disparity between Genesis and the other books is the most prominent feature within the web of relations between the books” (167). Based on this observation, Kim proposes that the translation of Genesis was a pioneering work, with the translation of the other four books occurring soon after. Kim also discusses the possibility of multiple translators in each book, challenging previous scholarly claims about a bisection of Genesis and Exodus and determining that “the differences between the two parts of each of the books cannot be attributed to two separate translators” (170). Kim concludes by restating the traditional view of the origin of the Septuagint and stating the primary contribution of his work, “that from now onwards scholars can base themselves on philological data rather than on amorphous traditions about the beginning of the Greek Bible translations” (173).
- [6] Kim is very clear about the purpose of this book, addressing “the question of the number of translators (or translation groups) that produced the LXX Pentateuch” (159). To answer this question, Kim desired to produce criteria that were more objective than those produced in the past, and he certainly succeeded in doing so. While Kim’s criteria may be more objective than those of his predecessors, it is unclear whether his conclusions share their objectivity. The large amount of data and the thorough discussions that accompany the data leave little doubt about Kim’s conclusion of five different translators for the five books, but doubt does remain. It remains unclear how different is different enough to conclude that there are separate translators. How does one know that the differences in the five books cannot be explained in a similar manner to the differences between the Balaam story and the rest of Numbers or the differences between the first and second half of Genesis? While Kim’s study is full of statistics relating the differences between these five books, some measure of their statistical significance would be useful.
- [7] Despite this complaint, the contribution of this book for future scholarship is undeniable. Kim develops a clear and comprehensive set of criteria for the study of the authorship of the Septuagint Pentateuch and presents the tremendous amount of data that resulted from applying these criteria. The body of data in this book will serve as a valuable resource for future scholars that investigate this same question. The summaries of the traditional origin stories for the translation of the Septuagint and the detailed discussions of prior studies of this question make this book necessary reading for those interested in the ori-

gins of the Septuagint. Finally, though some doubt may remain, Kim makes a strong case for the multiple authorship of the Septuagint Pentateuch.

Zachary Skarka
University of Birmingham