

persons without having to challenge the structure of the society that produced them is worth taking into account. Maybe life in an agrarian society was less humane than we generally want to believe.

Bennett's work is a fine example of a social-scientific study of biblical law that nevertheless lacks the diachronic analysis required for such an enterprise. The insights into the interplay between the formulation of laws and the social-economic interests of elites will be worth discussing further, and his critical framework should be expanded to other parts of the legal material in Deuteronomy.

ANSELM C. HAGEDORN

DAVID-MARC D'HAMONVILLE, *La Bible d'Alexandrie, 17: Les Proverbes*, traduction du texte grec de la Septante, introduction et notes. Cerf, Paris, 2000. 357 pp. €37.00. ISBN 2-204-06486-6.

This sensitive and instructive commentary on the earliest Greek translation of Proverbs keeps to the usual arrangement of the *Bible d'Alexandrie*: a lengthy introduction (pp. 19–155) followed by a French translation with compact (but meaty) lexical, exegetical and historical notes (pp. 158–342). The notes on LXX Proverbs' reception history include other Hellenistic Jewish works, the New Testament and patristic writings, but not rabbinic references, for which the reader is referred to the 1993/1996 commentary by A. Lelièvre and A. Maillot. Much needs and deserves to be said about the detail of the translation and notes, but this review will confine itself—for reasons both of space and of intrinsic interest—to the Introduction, which could almost stand on its own as a monograph. Of particular interest and importance are the demonstrations of the thoroughly Jewish translator's verbal and poetic skills, his high level of education and the degree to which he has, apparently happily, absorbed and expressed Greek culture and ideas.

Concerning the text, d'Hamonville demonstrates that the freedom of the translation does not reflect a Hebrew source appreciably different from the later MT, except that he argues for the divergent order of 24:25–31:31 reflecting an existing pre-Masoretic Hebrew arrangement, rather than a deliberate reworking by the translator himself (pp. 35–36). The translator however has created a different, and more coherent, structure by organising the material through a series of 'distichs' and 'strophes' (these are tabulated). The many divergences, pluses, minuses and unusual lexical choices that make LXX Proverbs so distinctive a translation all contribute to a consistency not found in the Hebrew. This is effected especially through the *tour de force* whereby Solomon remains the subject while other characters are airbrushed out. Although emphasising the control exercised by the translator on the shaping of the Greek text, he claims originality in attributing at least five of the pluses (all doublets) to the work of a reviser (p. 49).

The translator is found to have a good command of Greek and to be so well-versed in Classical Greek literature that allusions and echoes (all listed) both literary and metrical occur with great frequency. Many examples are given (some of the scansion on p. 95 seems odd, but the discussion is well-balanced). What emerges is the picture of a work which, without compromising its Hebrew parentage, can stand on its own, not as midrash or as targum, but as a Hellenistic literary text. One of the most valuable contributions of the *Bible d'Alexandrie* is to insist on reading the LXX first and foremost as a Greek text, and it certainly pays dividends with Proverbs. D'Hamonville makes interesting connections with the proverb form, already a popular feature in Greek literature from Aeschylus onwards and especially in Aesop. His literary and

lexical analysis leads him to group LXX Proverbs especially with Ben Sira, Wisdom of Solomon, Esther and 2–4 Maccabees, rather than with Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and Tobit (pp. 78–79; the relationship with Job is discussed later).

On the moral, ethical and theological outlook of the translation, d'Hamonville concludes that the translator does not differ radically from his Hebrew source. What emerges, especially through the choice of key vocabulary, is what he calls the 'spiritualisation' of the Hebrew values of 'wisdom' (more intellectual and pedagogical and less pragmatic and worldly than in the Hebrew), 'justice', 'piety' and so on, which form unifying motifs. It is in this context that he deals with the possible influence on the translator of Greek philosophy. This is a sensible discussion. D'Hamonville shows how religio-philosophic ideas and values, especially Stoic ones, had become an all-pervading element in Greek culture, a kind of 'philosophical koine' (p. 119). LXX Proverbs appears as a work stamped by its translator's integration of compatible Jewish and Greek ideas and values in such a way that what is already implicit in much of Hebrew Proverbs is emphasised and given further development. D'Hamonville's perception thus differs from that of Cook. He agrees that it is the translator's Judaism which is the controlling factor, but does not find any signs of resistance or antagonism to 'hellenisation'.

This leads him to locate the translation in Alexandria (not Palestine, as Cook and Gammie have argued) in the early part of the second century BCE (before the Maccabean crisis; by contrast, Gerleman argued for the middle of the century; Thackeray, on lexical grounds, for the end). This period around 180–170 BCE is what, with Hengel, he perceives as the golden age of Egyptian Jewish influence and opportunity (a perception that may need some qualifying). He is attracted, again following the lead of Hengel, by the possibility that the translator was none other than the philosopher Aristobulus, though he recognises the danger, when so few names and writings are known, to make this kind of identification (p. 134). But the translator, if not Aristobulus, must have been someone of similar outlook, someone from that highly educated Jewish elite, to which also the author of *The Letter of Aristeas* belonged. There is an interesting analysis of what Aristobulus' (actually quite modest) role as *didaskalos* to the young Ptolemy VI Philometor would have involved, and its relevance to the teaching of maxims suitable to a king (p. 137). That a Jew should be royal tutor poses no problem at this stage (the odd comment that Demetrios of Phalerum, 'the librarian' (if he ever held this post) was also a Jew (the ex-tyrant of Athens a Jew?) suggests confusion with others of the same name). Whether or not one finds d'Hamonville's dating and identification convincing, it is illuminating to approach LXX Proverbs in the context of non-biblical Jewish works, fragmentary though they now are. It also gives a new focus to Proverbs as a book of instruction suitable for high-born Greeks as well as Jews, making sense of a number of the translational innovations and showing yet again what insights may emerge when a 'canonical' book is read in a 'non-canonical' perspective.

On whether the same translator was responsible for LXX Job, d'Hamonville is necessarily cautious, given the lack as yet of a Göttingen edition of Proverbs. He thinks, on the internal evidence, probably not, but that the two books have emerged from the same cultural milieu and time. He has perhaps slightly overemphasised the originality of LXX Proverbs, which he considers only in relation to LXX Job; he makes no comparison with LXX Isaiah or, in this connection, with LXX Daniel. But this is a small criticism. The presentation of LXX Proverbs as an innovative yet staunchly Jewish translation which can also be read as a work of Hellenistic Jewish literature is an important contribution to our understanding of how Jewishness could be at home in its Greek environment.