

Shorter Notices

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When God Spoke Greek: The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible. By Timothy Michael Law. New York: Oxford University, 2013. Pp. 216. \$24.95.

Reading Law's book is a bit like reading the biography of someone you once knew, but not well. It is full of information you never suspected was true.

For example, we take for granted that today's Hebrew Bible looks much as it did when first compiled, but the Septuagint shows that it looked rather different when it was first translated into Greek. One can even infer that in the ancient world there was no Bible as such, but only collections of sacred scrolls that varied from one Jewish community to another. The Septuagint itself probably came into existence in a somewhat piecemeal fashion, and not all at once, as the legend of 70 (or 72) inspired translators would have us believe.

Today's English translations of the OT are all based on the Hebrew text, but the Septuagint was the OT of early Christianity, and Church Fathers used quotations from the Greek to promote and prove doctrines that are not supported by the Hebrew. Indeed, NT authors cite the Greek and not the Hebrew to buttress claims about Christ and his fulfillment of prophecies. Some Fathers even considered the Septuagint to be the very words of God, whereas they regarded the Hebrew writings of the Jews to be less than inspired.

Jerome's translation of the OT from the Hebrew gave the West a Latin Bible that differed in important respects from the Greek Bible used in the East, and this exacerbated the mistrust that eventually led to the Great Schism. L.'s vivid re-creation of the Greco-Roman world into which the Septuagint was born and of the culture it helped shape is more than readable. It is fascinating.

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Charity: The Place of the Poor in the Biblical Tradition. By Gary A. Anderson. New Haven: Yale University, 2013. Pp. 222. \$30.

Following his provocative study of the "sin as debt" metaphor (*Sin: A History*, 2009), Anderson turns to the credit (*zekut*) side of the column. This volume thus functions