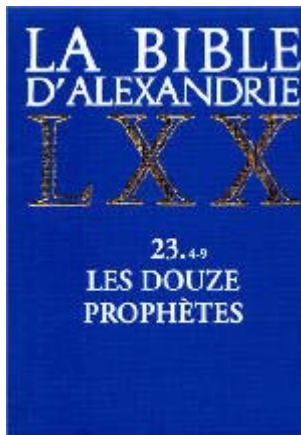


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**Harl, Marguerite, Cécile Dogniez, Laurence Brottier, Michel Casevitz, and Pierre Sandevour, eds.**

*La bible d'Alexandrie: Les douze prophètes 4-9, Joël, Abdiou, Jonas, Naoum, Ambakoum, Sophonie*

Paris: Cerf, 1999. Pp. 417, Cloth, No Price Available, ISBN 2204062650.

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Since 1986, a team of French scholars, superbly directed by Marguerite Harl and her team of colleagues in Paris, has been producing a series of volumes concerning the Bible in Greek, the Septuagint, under the rubric *La bible d'Alexandrie*. The current work is among the latest to appear in that series which aims to present in due course complete translations and notes for all the books of the Septuagint. The Pentateuch was published by 1994 and, since then, Joshua (1996), 1 Kingdoms (1997), and Judges (1999) along with the present volume have appeared. Multiple authorship for this single work echoes a long-standing problem surrounding the Greek *dodekapropheton*—whether to assign one or more authors/translators for these books. In this case, five editors (with three additional collaborators) together prepared the translation and notes for the six prophetic books included in this work, even though specific tasks were delegated among the main editors: Casevitz, philological and lexical comments; Sandevour, the verification of comparisons of Greek with Hebrew; Brottier, work on patristic commentaries; final editing of the introductions and notes Dogniez and Harl.

The books edited—Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, to use the English/Hebrew designations—constitute the middle six, that is, 4-9, in the Greek ordering of the Book of the Twelve, these being preceded (contra the Hebrew order) by Hosea, Amos, and Micah, and followed (as in Hebrew) by Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Three of the six names in the title of the present work (Joël, Jonas, and Sophonie) reflect traditional French orthography; the others being given transcriptions more faithful to the Greek. A separate general introduction to the entire collection of Twelve Prophets by a

most distinguished scholar will appear at the beginning of the forthcoming first book, Hosea, which itself is being prepared by three editors.

What strikes the reader on opening this volume is the density and richness of its documentation and notes. A general bibliography, subdivided by categories and followed by the expected list of sigla and abbreviations, opens the work. Each book, starting with Joel, begins with a detailed introduction containing (with variations) each of the following subheadings: the Hebrew of the book, the Greek of the book, comparisons of the Hebrew and Greek, special linguistic/structural features unique to that book, the utilization of the book in ancient Judaism and/or Christianity, bibliography peculiar to the book. Then follows the French translation with commentary/ notes. The translation appears in a clear type on the upper portion of evenly numbered pages, with copious notes, printed in a font too small for comfortable reading, on the lower portion and continuing on the facing page. In order to avoid repetition, the editors utilize small stars after a verse citation within the notes to direct the reader to the primary place where the issue in question is discussed. Three indexes facilitate effective utilization of the notes in the entire work: of Greek words, of scriptural citations, and of ancient Jewish and Christian texts.

A work of this magnitude cannot be fully evaluated, or done justice, by even the most thorough review or reviewer. It is filled with such rich insights that its true worth will only be appreciated in time. Such select portions that were read carefully and probed were incredibly impressive both for their attention to detail and the precision of the translation. One will find, especially in the introductions to individual books, summaries and syntheses of the most important interpretative questions surrounding the Greek versions of these books. This volume, indeed the entire series, should soon be translated into other modern languages. The authors and editors deserve highest praise. The volume and the series will go a long way to elevating the Septuagint to the distinctive place in biblical studies to which it properly belongs.