Conspiracy, Lions, and Plaster: The Different Enemy Images of the Prophets in the MT and LXX of Ezekiel 22:23–31

This paper analyzes the enemy images of the prophets in the Masoretic text and Septuagint of Ezekiel 22:23–31. While the most significant description of the prophets as a threat occurs in Ezekiel 13, chapter 22 contains features that differ from the aforementioned section. Most notably, Ezekiel 22:23–31 condemns prophets alongside other groups such as princes, priests, and officials who were also understood responsible for the fall of Jerusalem. This means that it is necessary to assess how the characterization of the prophets differs from or overlaps with the imagery of the other groups of authority.

Additionally, Ezekiel 22:23–31 contains significant differences between the Masoretic text and Septuagint. The Greek text of Ezekiel 22 utilizes a metaphor of plastering to convey the inadequacy of the prophets in a manner that is similar to Ezekiel 13:10–15. Therefore, the characterization of prophets in the LXX corresponds well with the content of Ezekiel 13. However, the Masoretic text contains an additional accusation of the conspiracy of prophets, which is further conceptualized with a simile that utilizes imagery of lions. As the MT and LXX of Ezekiel 22:23–31 convey in certain respects different understandings about the threat of prophets, they provide an interesting case study of text critical issues affecting the study of biblical enemy images and their metaphorical construction.