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To: Dr. Scott B. Rae
ETS President-Elect and Program Chairman
Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

From: William A. Ross, ETS Member
Doctoral Candidate in Divinity
University of Cambridge
williamross27@gmail.com

Title: *There is No Spoon: Text-Critical Question Begging in the ‘Acrostic’ of Nahum 1*

The idea that Nahum 1 contains an acrostic poem has come to be a majority opinion, even while there is still contention as to the poem’s precise nature and extent. The view that vv. 2-8 in particular form an acrostic of the first half of the Hebrew *alep-bet* is so accepted that the editors of *BHS* have laid these verses out in acrostic format, even against the Masoretic punctuation. The difficulty of holding the view, however, hinges upon the partial nature of this supposed acrostic. The *dalet*, *zayin*, and *yôd* lines each begin with the “wrong” letter. Accordingly, a host of biblical scholars support emending the text in some way to “restore” the acrostic.

This paper will reinvestigate the supposed acrostic in Nahum 1:2-8, particularly in light of the Septuagint (LXX) as a text-critical witness. Often scholars who propose emendations cite the biblical versions, particularly the LXX, to give credence to their claims that the Masoretic Text (MT) is corrupted. While other scholars have pointed out versional evidence in support of the MT and therefore against emendation, none have examined the validity of citing the LXX as a text-critical witness in light of its translational character. LXX scholarship has long noted that the translation technique employed in a given unit, book, or corpus is essential to discerning properly whether and how Greek renderings function text-critically for the MT. In light of an analysis of the translation technique of Nahum 1:2-8, then, this paper outlines the manner in which arguments for textual emendation of the Hebrew on the basis of the LXX beg the question. Moreover, the character of the Greek version is such that it cannot reliably be used as a witness in support of textual emendation, and therefore significantly undermines the idea that an acrostic is present in the text at all.