Godwin Mushayabasa’s book, *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Ezekiel 1-24: A Frame Semantics Approach*, investigates the Syriac translation of Ezekiel 1-24 through the lens of the cognitive linguistic approach of frame semantics. Unlike other translatological studies of this kind, which tend to focus on the comparative analysis of morphological differences, subtractions, and addenda, Mushayabasa’s work calls for a new approach in the study of the Peshitta, based on the interdisciplinary dialogue of traditional Biblical studies and cognitive linguistics, that may assess the translation by the accuracy with which the translator has reproduced the semantic frames of the source language in the target language. According to the author, this interdisciplinary dialogue can bring to light important dimensions of the translation technique, as an approach that evaluates the translator’s precision in the transfer of semantic frames can determine the degree of equivalence in the capacity of the translation to perform the meaning(s) of the source text on the lexical level. The book consists of an introduction, four dense central chapters, and a conclusive section.

The introduction (referred in the book as “chapter 1”) describes briefly the *status quaestionis* of the research on the translation technique of the Peshitta and demonstrates the need for a frame semantics approach. Chapter two expands on the need of a cognitive linguistics approach to the study of Syriac versions of the Bible, and provides a thorough, much needed explanation of the many technical terms that the author borrows from the field of frame semantics and that would be otherwise little known (if at all) to scholars of the ancient versions of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. Chapter three maps out the frames evoked by the Hebrew verb *natan* in Ezekiel 1-24 and describes twelve different frames instantiated in the Peshitta version: giving (which also represents the prototypical frame on which all other meanings depend), rite offering, handing over and hand over control, placing, cause motion, cause change and cause to suffer evil, appointing-assigning-using as, revenge, convicting, temporary giving, taking sides, commitment. The result of the analysis is that the translator reproduced with a fairly good degree of precision the family of meanings instantiated by the verb *natan* in the Syriac, thus showing to have a good understanding of the Hebrew source text as well as a good capacity to transfer meanings at the level of semantic frame. Chapter four follows the scheme of chapter three and goes on to map the semantic frames evoked by the Hebrew verb *bo’*. This time the range of frames instantiated in the Peshitta version entails ten different meaning: arriving at (prototypical frame), arriving into, arriving from, arriving to meet, time-event arriving, undesirable influence arriving, covenant arriving into, intimate relation arriving, remote goal arriving. The conclusion of the chapter is that the translator shows an overall consistency in the reproduction of the network of meanings instantiated by the Hebrew verb. At the same time, the analysis demonstrates how a number of cases show that the Syriac version of Ezekiel displays unfamiliar correspondences in the rendition of the Hebrew verb, and the author calls for a broader analysis to assess and confidently characterize this phenomenon. Chapter five maps the categories of the misdeeds frames. Unlike the other analyses carried on so far, this chapter deals with nominal categories rather than verbal: for this reason, the author explains, it is necessary to integrate the frame
semantics approach with a model that focuses primarily on idealized cognitive models (abbreviated in the text as ICMs), as the author demonstrates that nouns do not have the capacity to evoke scenes by themselves like verbs do. The result of this investigation is that the Syriac translator was probably unaware of the semantic nuances of the Hebrew text when it comes to specific nouns describing misdeeds. However, the author cautions to interpret this conclusion as demonstrating that nominal categories were poorly rendered by the translator (conclusion that would stand against the overall theory of the book, which holds that the translator produced a fairly accurate translation). Rather, the degree of difficulty in rendering the source text frames could depend on factors such as the presence or absence of polysemy with respect to the particular nominal category, the semantic distance between category in question and other categories of the same domain, or the freedoms with which metonymy is applied within the domain in which the category exists (Mushayabasa 2015, 257). The conclusion of the book is that the Syriac version of Ezekiel 1-24 was mainly translated at the level of frame semantics, and the result was a fairly accurate translation.

Although a certain dryness in technical works of this kind should be expected, Mushayabasa’s work appears particularly uneasy to read, and some sections are definitely indigestible. The continuous use of numerous abbreviations (just to mention the most used: LU, FE, TGr, ICM) disrupts significantly the flow of reading. Nonetheless, the contribution that this volume provides on the studies on the Peshitta and translation technique more broadly is unquestionable. The author’s capacity to “zoom out” from the traditional perspectives to look at the texts and to evaluate the translations in such an original way shall be highly praised, as it allows to bring to light new and so far neglected dimensions of translation technique. This work does not just shed new light on the character of the Syriac version of Ezekiel, but provides a new perspective on the studies on translation technique more broadly, a perspective that hopefully will be carried on in further studies on the Peshitta. This volume will be of interest not only to the specialists of the Syriac versions of the Hebrew Bible, but also those who are interested in methodology in translation studies and, more broadly, in the role of textual practices in the shaping of religious ideas in the Imperial Age and Late Antiquity.

Nicolò Sassi
Indiana University