
BOOK REVIEWS / BOEKRESENSIES

Thiselton, Anthony C. *Hermeneutics. An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge U.K.: Eerdmans, 2009. xi + 409 pp. Price: US\$30.00 £20.00. Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0-8028-6410-9.

Anthony Thiselton, professor of Christian theology at the University of Nottingham, England, has been one of the most important and prolific European authors on hermeneutics in the past thirty years. Many have benefited from his detailed studies such as *The two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer and Wittgenstein* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1980), *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (London: HarperCollins, 1992) and *Thiselton on Hermeneutics: The Collected Works and New Essays of Anthony Thiselton*, Ashgate Contemporary Thinkers on Religion (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). Well informed, succinct and lucid as in his previous studies, Thiselton offers with the present volume an excellent textbook on hermeneutics for students and general readers.

The first two chapters address introductory issues. “The aims and scope of hermeneutics,” (1-16) discusses definitions of hermeneutics, the differences between philosophical hermeneutics and more traditional philosophical thought and their relation to explanation and understanding, as well as the relationship between preliminary and provisional understanding and the hermeneutical circle. Chapter two, “Hermeneutics in the contexts of philosophy, biblical studies, literary theory and the social self,” (17-34) covers further differences from more philosophical thought (community and tradition; wisdom or knowledge?); approaches in traditional biblical studies (the rootedness of texts located in time and place); the impact of literary theory on hermeneutics and biblical interpretation: the new criticism, the impact of literary theory: reader-response theories; and interest, social sciences, critical theory, historical reason and theology as wider dimensions of hermeneutics.

Chapter three uses the parables of Jesus as an example of hermeneutical methods (35-59). Chapters 4-12 offer a broad historical survey of hermeneutics: 4: “A legacy of perennial questions from the ancient world: Judaism and the ancient Greeks,” 5: “New Testament and second century” (76-99). The discussion in chapter 5 includes the Old Testament as a frame of reference or pre-understanding (Paul and the Gospels); Hebrews, 1 Peter and Revelation: the Old Testament as pre-understanding; the question of allegorical interpretation or typology in the New Testament; Paul’s references to the Old Testament in Hebrew or the LXX, Old Testament quotations in the Gospels, 1 Peter, and Hebrews; and finally, second century interpretation and hermeneutics. Chapter

6: "From the third to the thirteenth centuries," 7: "Reform, the Enlightenment and the rise of biblical criticism," 8: "Schleiermacher and Dilthey," 9: "Rudolf Bultmann and demythologising the New Testament," 10: "Some mid-twentieth-century approaches: Barth, the new hermeneutic, structuralism, post-structuralism and Barr's semantics," 11: "Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics: the second turning point," and 12: "The Hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur."

Three further chapters address a selection of contemporary approaches against the backdrop of these historical developments. Chapter 13 studies the hermeneutics of liberation theologies and postcolonial hermeneutics (255-78). Thiselton examines some definition, origins, development and biblical themes, Gustav Gutierrez and the birth of liberation theology, the second stage with the "base communities" and José. P. Miranda in the 1970s, the continuation of the second stage with Juan L. Segundo, J. Severino Croatto, Leonardo Boff and others, and postcolonial hermeneutics as the third stage from the 1980s to the present. Chapter 14 covers feminist and womanist hermeneutics (279-305). Chapter 15 is devoted to reader-response and reception theories (306-26). These chapters provide a helpful supplement to more traditionally oriented recent volumes on biblical interpretation such as Andrie du Toit (ed.), *Focus on the Message: New Testament: Hermeneutics, Exegesis and Methods*, Guide to the New Testament (Pretoria: Protea, 2009).

Chapter 16 addresses postmodernism and hermeneutics (327-48). Thiselton sets out by asking whether postmodernity is compatible with Christian faith, and then surveys European postmodernism (Derrida, the later Bartes, Lyotard and Baudrillard, Foucault) and American postmodernism (Richard Rorty, the later Stanley Fish).

A final, brief chapter (349-55) addresses divine agency and the authority of Scripture ("How divine agency in the inspiration of the Bible relates to human reading and interpretation," 349), politeness theory as an advance in linguistics and pragmatics that might become influential for hermeneutics (politeness theory "emphasises the situational background of language but observes especially that language and its contexts often pose either a threat or a face-saving device to the speaker," 352), Brevard Childs and the "canonical approach," fuller meaning, typology and allegorical interpretation and an all too brief survey of Catholic biblical scholarship (less than one page; the important document *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* of 1993, cf. http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/PBC_Interp.htm, is briefly assessed).

Thiselton's book, modestly termed an "Introduction", makes an excellent textbook for undergraduate and postgraduate students. It is suitable for use in classroom discussions. One of its merits is the fine combination of philo-

sophical hermeneutics, historical developments and contemporary issues and approaches that is wanting in many other works on hermeneutics. It is to be welcomed that Thiselton addresses a number of the hermeneutical issues related to the church and Christian faith. A further chapter might have addressed what has been termed “theological interpretation”; for definitions and a survey see Kevin J. Vanhoozer (ed.), *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London: SPCK; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

In an African context the volume needs to be supplemented. Thiselton’s section on postcolonial hermeneutics (271-76) is a good point of departure but not sufficient. Treatment of the hermeneutics of liberation theologies focuses almost exclusively on Latin America (there is less than one page on liberation contributions in Southern Africa, p. 273). This needs to be supplemented by a broader survey of liberation approaches in African contexts. In addition, not all African readings of the Bible should be termed postcolonial or should be seen as the fruits of liberation. Next to the *Global Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004) the *Africa Bible Commentary*, edited by Tokunboh Adeyemo (Nairobi: Word Alive Publishers; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006) should also be mentioned; see my review in *Religion & Theology* 16, 2009, 299-304.

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Von Falck, Martin; Katja Lembke & Britta Rabe, *Das Leben am Nil und der Alltag im Alten Ägypten*. Hildesheim: Römer- und Pelizaeus-Museum; Darmstadt/Mainz: Ph. von Zabern, 2011. 136 pp. Cloth. ISBN-13: 978-3-8053-4285-8. 20 €

Pyramiden, Tempel und andere großartige Bauwerken Ägyptens werden oft abgebildet, beschrieben und analysiert. Im Gegensatz dazu bietet das vorliegende, reich bebilderte Bändchen einen hervorragenden Einblick in die sonst teilweise vernachlässigte ägyptische Alltagskultur. Es hat seinen Ursprung in der neu gestalteten Dauerausstellung *Ägypten – Das Leben am Nil*, des Römer- und Pelizaeus-Museum in Hildesheim, Deutschland. Die Ausstellung von über 600 Exponaten aus 3500 Jahren gehört mit Boston, Kairo und Wien zu den bedeutendsten Sammlungen weltweit (vgl. <http://www.rpmuseum.de>).

Einleitend erscheinen drei Überblicksartikel von den Herausgebern zur Alltagskultur: Martin von Falck, „Horus und Heiland: Die Religion im Alten

Ägypten,“ (8-19; eine Reise „durch mehr als drei Jahrtausende Religionsgeschichte von den vielfältigen und vielgestaltigen Gottheiten um den zentralen Reichsgott Amun über den ersten Monotheismus unter Pharao Echnaton bis hin zum frühen Christentum, das in Ägypten bis zum Jahr 641 n. Chr., also bis zur islamischen Periode florierte,“ 6); Britta Rabe, „Handel und Handwerk: Die Wirtschaft im Alten Ägypten,“ (20-35; der Nil als Lebensader Ägyptens, das Verhältnis von Stadt, Land und Fluss, Wüstenrouten und Wasserwege, Waren, Wert und Handel, Tauschhandel und lokales Münzgeld, Handwerker und Werkstätten, Handwerker bei der Arbeit, die hellenistische Bronzwerkstatt von Galjub sowie die Werkstätten von Memphis) und Martin von Falck „Haus und Hof: Das Wohnen im Alten Ägypten,“ (36-50). Von Falck behandelt ägyptische Wohnarchitektur, Wohnkomfort durch Möbel, Hygiene und Kosmetik, Wirtschaft und Versorgung sowie Hausgötter und Schmuck.

Der Rest des Bandes besteht aus dem Katalogteil (knapp vierzig Photographien und Beschreibungen gewählter Exponate oder Exponatgruppen). Zu den beeindruckenden Exponaten zur ägyptischen Alltagskultur gehören mehrere teilweise bis zu viertausend Jahre alte Modelle aus Landwirtschaft und Handwerk (etwa Pflugszene und Schlachthof, 87). Beeindruckend ist das (moderne) Modell des Hauses eines hochstehenden Ägypters unter Pharao Echnaton aus Tell el-Amarna aus der Zeit um 1350 v. Chr., das gute Einblicke in die Wohnarchitektur bietet. Es beinhaltet neben dem zentralen Wohnhaus einen großen Garten, Speicherhof und eine eigene Bäckerei (38). Dazu kommt das Modell eines Kornspeichers (45). Wer hier nicht an die Josefsgeschichte denken muss...! Ferner bietet das Museum eine große Sammlung von Gipsmodellen, aus denen Bronzegefäße und Terrakotten hergestellt wurden. Interessant ist ferner das Modell eines leichten Streitwagens, der nach Originalen des Neuen Reiches (vor allem Reliefs, die den Pharao in Kampfszenen zeigen, aber auch Originalfunde aus Piramesse, der Hauptstadt Ramses II, dort ausgegrabene Stallungen für über 400 Pferde), 19. Dynastie, 13. Jh. vor Chr. nachgebaut wurde (130; Länge 290 cm, Höhe 125 cm, Breite 201 cm).

Das 19,5 x 19,5 cm große Bändchen enthält 74, teilweise großformatige Farbphotographien in ausgezeichneter Qualität, die sowohl im Katalogteil als auch im einführenden Teil erscheinen. Bibliographische Angaben zu den Exponaten und allgemeine Literaturhinweise schließen den attraktiven Band ab.

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Young, Ian & Robert Rezetko, (with the assistance of Martin Ehrensverd) *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts, vol.1*. London/Oakville: Equinox, 2008. Price: \$35.00. x+360 pages. ISBN-13: 9781845530822

The book (vol.1) consists of fourteen chapters. Chapter 1 (1-9) introduces the objectives of the book and the research questions addressed throughout the book. It also gives a brief description of the Biblical Hebrew (BH) focusing on the periodisation of the Archaic pre-Biblical Hebrew (ABH), the Early Biblical Hebrew (EBH) and Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH). The author also emphasizes the dual nature of the book—it is simultaneously a review of past research on BH and an argument for new perspective.

Chapter 2 (10-44) evaluates the working principle and methodology of the works of Hurvitz, Bergey, Rooker, Polzin, Guenther, Hill, Rensburg, Wright and Polak. The author singles out the contributions of Hurvitz, for his works are widely cited and regarded authoritative, and his working principles and methodology are followed by many scholars of this research field. The working principles of Hurvitz reflect the linguistic complexity of the Biblical Hebrew. For Hurvitz, BH is a standard literary language, yet its diversity and variety accompanied by linguistic chronology necessitate an objective methodology to its analysis. His approach departs from the LBH in the synoptic texts (Sam-Kgs-Chron), trying to distinguish the neologisms (Aramaisms, Mishnaisms, Persianisms and Archaisms) from the EBH. The objectivity of his methodology that is manifested in the four criteria established in order to determine a particular linguistic feature is late: linguistic distribution, opposition, extra-biblical attestation, and accumulation. The work of Polak is also treated in detail, for Polak's socio-linguistic approach represents a unique methodology. He uses what he calls the "four independent parameters" to assess the dates of the biblical books: 1) the differences between rhythmic-verbal (=EBH) and complex-nominal(=LBH) styles, 2) the shifts in certain aspects of the lexical register from EBH to LBH, 3) the presence of the late grammatical and lexical features in LBH writings and 4) the correlations between his finds and extra-biblical sources.

Chapters 3-5 (45-142) give a critical review of the working principles and the methodology of Hurvitz and Polak. The author uses the linguistic variety of the Hebrew Bible and the co-existence of the EBH and LBH features in the history of BH to show the flaw of the principles of Hurvitz, and further proposes that EBH and LBH are two different authorial/editorial/scrival approaches to languages use—conservative and non-conservative; EBH and LBH are co-existing styles of Hebrew instead of successive chronological periods (ch. 3). The author compares the methodology of Hurvitz and that of Polak, and shows that the use of the LBH features is stylistic and is found in all chronological phases of BH (ch. 4). The author also gives a global review of

the lexical and grammatical features of LBH, and evaluates the rates of accumulation in numerous biblical and extra-biblical texts. The fluctuation in the accumulation of the late features also reflects the flaw of the methodology under discussion (ch. 5).

Chapters 6-11 (143-312) give a description of the multiple reasons for the linguistic variety/diversity and the relevant factors of the co-existence of the EBH and LBH features throughout most of the biblical period. The author shows that Hebrew inscriptions of the monarchic period reflect “official Hebrew” rather than “Literary Hebrew,” hence inscriptional Hebrew cannot be equated to BH. Although both LBH and EBH features can be identified in these ancient inscriptions, inscriptional Hebrew can only be seen as an independent corpus within ancient Hebrew or as an adjunct of EBH. The significance of these inscriptions in linguistic dating is their confirmation that LBH features already existed in pre-exilic Hebrew (ch. 6). The work of Rendsburg represents the non-diachronic approach to linguistic dating; his theory of diglossia and dialects testifies to the linguistic diversity in BH. The author evaluates the different opinions on the theory of Rendsburg, and shows that linguistic diversity of pre-exilic Hebrew is not limited to the divergence between spoken and literary languages; rather, linguistic variety is reflected by the regional dialects in ancient Hebrew. These dialects, testified to by the Samaria Ostrakon, Gezer calendar, and other Judahite inscriptions, constitute the two major languages of the Hebrew Bible: Israelian Hebrew (IH) and Judahite Hebrew (JH). Both diversity and variety of the languages have an impact on the linguistic dating. The author introduces the scholarly views on the IH and MH elements in the LBH, and points out that the complex of linguistic structure of the LBH shows the limitation of the linguistic dating method (ch. 7). The author explains the Aramaisms in biblical Hebrew and the strong Aramaic influence on biblical literature of all genres and dates, and the limitations of using Aramaisms as evidence of LBH or the absence of it as a criterion for early dating, and concludes that Aramaic evidence is irrelevant to the question of the word’s chronology within Hebrew (ch. 8). Mishnaic Hebrew, though existing as the vernacular language in the second temple period, is the literary manifestation of a northern dialect of Hebrew. The author evaluates the different opinions on the origin of the MH and the relationship between MH and BH, and shows that some MH forms that existed in the early biblical period are never attested to in the Hebrew Bible. However, some forms more typical of MH than BH are found in the books of Esther and Song of Songs. The author criticizes the use of MH as part of the criterion of external attestation of a late date, for the presence of MH elements in biblical texts is rather stylistic choice than chronological necessity (ch. 9). Many scholars have observed the closeness of Qumran Hebrew to LBH and the significance of QH in elucidating the character of LBH. The texts of 1QpHab, the Temple Scroll and Ben Sira show that QH is a late form of EBH rather than the continuation of the linguistic development of

LBH. The implication of this phenomenon is the unusual and atypical nature of the LBH. For this reason, LBH can no longer function as a measure of postexilic Hebrew (ch.10). Traditionally, the presence of Egyptian, Akkadian, Aramaic, Persian and Iranian loanwords is also considered relevant to the linguistic dating of the biblical texts. The author uses biblical references to show that the use of the linguistic elements of a certain loanword is a stylistic feature of BH texts and that it does not point to just one chronological period. The loanwords could also be added during the scribal transmission; therefore, they cannot indicate the original date of the text (ch. 11).

Chapter 12 (313-340) deals with the Archaic Biblical Hebrew and the relevance of the ABH to the linguistic dating of biblical texts. The author gives references to the Amarna letters and the Ugaritic texts, showing that the verbal system of these texts sheds light on the verbal system of Hebrew poetry, in particular the use of *yiqtol* as an archaic preterite. Moreover, the archaic verbal syntax in ABH is discussed with the focus on the challenge to the traditional identification of preterites in Hebrew poetry. Robertson's theory of the early dating of some of biblical poetry is also evaluated. The author criticizes the methodology of Robertson, especially with reference to the two archaisms Robertson identifies, i.e. the preterites without *waw* consecutive and the 3mpl suffix *-mw*, which are not necessarily ABH features in BH, for archaisms could be used for stylistic reasons (artificial archaism) or could be serious modifications during the scribal transmission. Due to the fact that archaisms also occur in late biblical texts, the author concludes that the language of ABH cannot prove the antiquity of the texts; and ABH should be seen as a style of biblical poetry rather than a chronological phase.

Chapter 13 (341-360) shows the relevance of textual criticism in the diachronic linguistic dating of biblical texts. The author warns of the danger of equating the language of the MT to the original language of the biblical books, for the linguistic characteristics could be due to textual or linguistic modifications during the preservation and transmission of the texts. The author shows that the textual fluidity and pluriformity of the Hebrew Bible in its pre-stabilization phase may have lasted through the 1st century. For this reason, the linguistic characteristics of the MT cannot be separated from the textual variations in the earliest translations. The author emphasizes the importance of taking into consideration of the textual-critical dimension in determining chronological layers in BH, for textual stability is the fundamental premise of linguistic dating.

Chapter 14 (361) is the conclusion of this volume. The author introduces the argument of the second volume and its connection with this volume. The author proposes that instead of seeing EBH and LBH as two successive chronological phases of BH, a better model sees LBH as one style of Hebrew in

the second temple period, and perhaps in the first temple period. Early linguistic features of EBH and late features of LBH represent co-existing styles of literary Hebrew throughout the biblical period, and they represent two tendencies of scribes: conservative and non-conservative.

This book gives a clear presentation of the controversy of linguistic dating. In addition to the systematic exposition of the existing theories, the author examines and compares the principles and the methodology of each theory, highlighting the weak points of them and the conflicting data between the theories. His research covers almost all the relevant aspects of linguistic analysis and linguistic dating. In a lucid style it gives an insightful presentation of the current trends of this particular research field with plenty of illustrations from both biblical and extra-biblical sources. Clarity and thoroughness are the two characteristics of this work.

The author's argument for the unusual, isolated and the atypical character of the LBH (278-279) challenges the common understanding of post-exilic Hebrew. However, his treatment of LBH as a linguistic style seems to be insufficient. Although four chapters (ch. 2—ch. 5) are titles with "early vs. late BH," the author does not directly deal with the ambiguity that the conventional understanding of LBH has generated. In other words, LBH as a language type is not clearly defined. The author introduces the conventional LBH perspective in contrast to that of EBH, and LBH is seen as one of the two principal chronological phases of BH. In his evaluation of the principles and methodology of Hurvitz, he defines transitional BH as the "mediating link between pre-exilic EBH and postexilic LBH." (51) Moreover, he understood transitional BH as typologically and chronologically between EBH and LBH because it has both early EBH and late LBH linguistic features, i.e. transitional BH has a mixture of EBH and LBH characteristics (51). It seems that LBH exists as a semantic counterpart of EBH, and probably has been incorrectly understood as an equivalent to postexilic Hebrew given the conventional periodisation of BH. He is right when he points out that LBH cannot function as a measure of postexilic Hebrew, but his proposition that LBH should be considered as "merely one style of Hebrew" in the second temple period and quite possibly first temple period also (361) does not clarify the ambiguous definition of the LBH.

The overall approach of his argumentation is to show that the development of language cannot be distinguished by exact chronology due to the linguistic diversity/variety of Hebrew language and the serious textual modifications during transmission. The book successfully demonstrates that both EBH features and LBH features can be identified in every stage of the BH, in the inscriptional Hebrew, in IH/JH, in Mishnaic Hebrew, Qumran Hebrew and ABH. To understand a certain linguistic feature as stylistic rather than chrono-

logically relevant is a safe presupposition, but stylistic features should not be over-emphasized, for linguistic characteristics are above all genre dependent (Cf. Matitiahu Tsevat, *A Study of the Language of Biblical Psalms*, SBL 1955), and they do reflect the writing conventions of certain periods of time. His remark that diachronic linguistic analysis is always based upon non-linguistic assumptions (68) points out the secondary status of linguistic dating in determining the date of a biblical text, and the importance of extra-biblical attestation and accumulation. Unfortunately, his insightful opinion that language is a weak criterion for dating biblical text (340) has undermined the significance of linguistic approach as a whole in biblical studies.

His critical remarks on the theory of Robertson also have some weak points. Firstly he criticizes the circularity of Robertson's definition of the early poetic Hebrew (330). It is true that Robertson uses the unusual forms that occur in the ABH poems in order to define early poetic Hebrew. In doing so he presupposes an early date of these poems. If one examines these unusual forms, one realises that they are exclusively and frequently found in poetry. Although it is more appropriate to use these forms to define poetic Hebrew, the early dates of some of these psalms can be proved by the absence of late features and by literary/theological considerations. The author himself admits that Robertson's argument, namely that some SBH psalms date to the early monarchy, is not unreasonable, and that the argument that the archaic features of these poems are "deliberate archaisms" is equally difficult and unconvincing.

Secondly the dates that Robertson give for these poems fall in the time span from 12th century to late 10th or early 9th century (332), and his dating is based on some "ifs" the author thinks is unstable. I agree with the author's suggestion that ABH is first of all a style of biblical poetry, not a chronological phase (334), but it is inappropriate that he uses this point to refute the early date of Exodus 15. His use of Ps 119 to argue that archaism is also found in later poems is also *inappropriate*. Rather, his point will be tenable if he can find late features in these poems, but this is not true in case of Exod 15 (cf. Tsevat, *A Study of the Language of Biblical Psalms*).

One of the author's critical remarks on the approach of Rendsburg is that MT has been changed linguistically more than normally suggested. The point is made in his discussion about the evidence of diglossia documented by Rendsburg. The author does not give details of the data, only the opinions of other scholars are evaluated. Moreover, when the author refers the reader to ch. 13 for the textual problems, he is apparently unaware of the fact that the data that Rendsburg documented concerns vocabulary and syntax issues rather than orthography and vocalization. Thus these data do not concern themselves with linguistic modification. I believe his remark at this point is not well substantiated, and somewhat misleading.

His remark on the irrelevance of the Aramaic evidence to the question of the word's chronology within Hebrew is also questionable. He uses the word *iggeret* [אגרת] as an example to show that this word has already attested to in Aramaic texts from the Neo-Assyrian period, and therefore, the evidence from Aramaic does not indicate this to be a word exclusively of the postexilic period. I agree with him that the presence of Aramaisms in a given text does not necessarily indicate the late date of the text, and the value of Aramaisms as a chronological marker is extremely dubious. However, his conclusion that the Aramaic evidence is thus "strictly irrelevant" to the question of chronology within Hebrew is not correct (220).

Finally, in his discussion about the accumulation in Qumran and Ben Sira, the author gives a table of the number of LBH features in Biblical and extra-biblical Hebrew texts. The author uses the number of LBH features to show that Ben Sira and Peshier Habakkuk do not represent the sort of accumulation of LBH features found in all core LBH books. And he uses these data to make the point that "it is mistaken to take the appearance of a few LBH features as a sign of a text's LBH status." (275) The data show clearly that Ben Sira and Peshier Habakkuk are more closely aligned with EBH and LBH, or in other words, Ben Sira and Peshier Habakkuk were written in a late form of the EBH. But I think the numbers he listed could also be interpreted in a different way and the author has missed an important implication of the data. In his comments on the same data in ch. 5 (136), the author notes that an "intermediate LBH" group with a range of 7-15 LBH features could be separated out, and he notes the problem of the view that Chronicles can be used as the primary exemplar of LBH and that LBH can be defined on the basis of synoptic passages. The author concludes from these data that the predictions of the chronological approach are off the mark (140). If we consider the biblical books in this intermediate LBH group, only the passages from Chronicles stand in conflict with the others (Qoh, 1 Kgs, Ezek). And if we consider the biblical books that have 6 LBH features (1 Sam 13:1-14:9; 2 Sam 6:1-20a; 7:1-12; 2 Sam 22:1-51; 1 Kgs 2:1-29; Joel 1:1-2:19; Ps 18:1-51; Job 1:1-2:11a), the tendency is that the books of the Deuteronomistic history display the similar accumulation of LBH with that of Ezekiel, Joel, Qohelet and Job. This seems to support the view of Hurvitz and Wright that the text of Ezekiel represents the transition between EBH and LBH. Moreover, the linguistic transition is in parallel with the Deuteronomistic redaction. The presence of Joel, Qohelet, Job and Ps 18 among this group suggests that poetic compositions perhaps should not be compared linguistically with narrative compositions. The group of the passages that have seven or more LBH features support the same point. It seems that his selection of the passages for analysis causes the problem for the conflicting data. The difficulty is doubled when different writing styles of the biblical books and the extra-biblical books are classified in the same group. My point is that if LBH and EBH are different styles of literary Hebrew throughout

the biblical period, as the author proposes, then, the accumulations of the LBH features in biblical books should reflect the chronological transition between the pre-exilic books and the post-exilic books of the same genres. And the data actually reflect quite well such a transition; it is the inappropriate classification of the books of different writing styles that have caused the problems to the interpretation of the data.

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Zymner, Rüdiger (ed.). *Handbuch Gattungstheorie*. Stuttgart, Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2010. vii + 368 pp. Cloth. Price €80.00 ISBN-13: 978-3-476-02343-8.

In der modernen Bibelwissenschaft haben der Begriff Gattung und verschiedene Gattungen eine bedeutende Rolle gespielt. Oft hat man von Gattungsbestimmungen (teils nach unklaren, teils nach genauen Kategorien) weitreichende Schlüsse für die Entstehung biblischer Texte und ihre Interpretation gezogen. Während sich viele Forscher dabei an den Gattungs-Debatten der allgemeinen Literaturwissenschaft orientiert haben, ist die Bibelwissenschaft aber auch eigene und gelegentlich veraltete Wege gegangen. Solchen teils fragwürdigen Sonderwegen kann das vorliegende Handbuch – aus der vor allem germanistischen Literaturwissenschaft, aber doch in einen größeren Zusammenhang eingebunden – abhelfen.

In der gelungenen Einführung (1-5) schreibt der Herausgeber: „Als literaturwissenschaftliche Gattungstheorie lassen sich alle systematischen, methodisch und theoretisch kontrollierten Versuche einer auf Prinzipienwissen ausgerichteten Reflexion über *literarische Gattungen* bestimmen, und zwar als Theorie bestimmter Einzelgattungen oder als Theorie der literarischen Gattungen überhaupt. Diese allgemeine Reflexion kann von Gewohnheiten im Umgang mit oder Reden über Gattungen ausgehen und diese in rationalen Rekonstruktionen überprüfen, korrigieren und präzisieren“ (3). Ferner macht Zymner deutlich, dass schon die Rede von literarischen Gattungen problematisch ist, weil damit ein normativer moderner Literaturbegriff impliziert wird, der für andere Kulturen der Dichtung als der abendländischen und für andere historische Kontexte als diejenigen moderner Gesellschaften nicht passt bzw. keine Rolle spielt (3). Zudem unterliegen Gattungszuschreibungen natürlichen und kulturellen Bedingungen des Kategorisierens. Sie sind kulturell relativ und historisch flexibel; sie beruhen auf der Wahrnehmung von besten Beispielen (Prototypen) und derjenigen von weniger trennscharfen eher als „verschwim-

menden“ Grenzen zu den besten Beispielen anderer Kategorien. Schon aus wahrnehmungspsychologischen Gründen haben Gattungen keine scharfe, sondern eine prinzipiell schwankende Gestalt (3).

Das *Handbuch Gattungstheorie* spannt einen weiten Bogen. Es beschreibt zunächst „Aspekte der literaturwissenschaftlichen Gattungsbestimmung“ (7-46; methodische Aspekte und Bestimmungskriterien wie Faktualität/Fiktionalität, Figural und Form, Funktion/pragmatische Kontexte, Inhalt, Mündlichkeit/Schriftlichkeit, Prosa) und wendet sich dann umfassend den „Problemkonstellationen der Gattungstheorie“ zu (47-130). Dabei lassen sich texttheoretische (etwa Autorintention und Gattung, Interpretation und Gattung, Intertextualität und Gattung), normentheoretische, Vermittlungs- und institutionentheoretische Problemkonstellationen (etwa Lexikographie und Gattung, Textproduktion und Gattung, Textrezeption und Gattung) unterscheiden, sowie medientheoretische und literaturtheoretische Problemkonstellationen.

Weitere Teile des Handbuchs umfassen „Gattung und Gattungshistoriographie“ (131-58); „Richtungen und Ansätze der poetologischen Gattungstheorie“ (159-95; etwa formgeschichtliche Gattungstheorien, Gattungsästhetik, konstruktivistische Gattungstheorie, poststrukturalistische Gattungstheorien, rhetorische sowie sozial- und funktionsgeschichtliche Gattungstheorie) und die „Geschichte der poetologischen Gattungstheorie“ (197-219; in acht Artikeln von der Prääntike bis hin ins 21. Jh.). Im knappen Artikel „Prääntike Gattungstheorie“ (J. F. Quack, 197f) geht es um Texte aus Ägypten und Mesopotamien.

Weitere Teile behandeln „Bezugssysteme von Gattungstheorie und Gattungsforschung“ (221-51; hier werden von Literaturwissenschaftlern knapp deren Ansätze behandelt, die auch in die neuere Biblexegese Eingang gefunden haben), „Gattungsforschung disziplinär“ (253-309; u.a. mit einem eigenen Artikel zur „Theologischen Gattungsforschung“, 302-05, von R. Zimmermann, in dem das AT in nur zwanzig Zeilen vorkommt, man denke nur an die Diskussion um Gattungen in den Psalmen oder des Psalters!) und abschließend „Theorien generischer Gruppen und Schreibweisen“ (311-41; u.a. „Theorien des Narrativen“, 328-31). Umfangreiche Sach- und Namensregister beenden den anregenden Band.

Die Artikel dieses Bandes sind weitgehend schwere Kost für Exegeten. Dennoch lohnt sich die Lektüre. Sie präsentieren den aktuellen Stand der Forschung und zeigen die ganze Komplexität der Gattungstheorie und ihre Bedeutung in der gegenwärtigen Literaturwissenschaft. Zumindest sollten Exegeten mit deren Grundzügen vertraut sein, bevor mit Rekurs auf den – in unserer Disziplin teilweise schillernden – Gattungs begriff weitreichende Konsequenzen

für einzelne biblische Bücher oder ihre Interpretation gezogen werden. Zugleich zeigen sich mehrere frische Perspektiven, um die teilweise verfahrenende methodische Diskussion in der Bibelwissenschaft weiterzuführen. Zu Recht erinnert der Herausgeber:

Die Subjektgebundenheit, die Theorieabhängigkeit und der Konstruktcharakter von Gattungen und Gattungsbestimmungen – also: dass sie Gemachtes und nicht Gegebenes sind –: das ist ein grundlegender Sachverhalt, der nicht nur von Bedeutung ist für den sozusagen alltäglichen Umgang mit Gattungen, sondern auch für den wissenschaftlichen. Gleichwohl sind literarische und dichterische Gattungen keine bloßen Phantasmen, sondern es gibt sie in dem Sinn, als sie als *Normen der Kommunikation* jeweils auf bestimmte Probleme oder Bedürfnisse antworten, die in jenen kulturellen Kontexten virulent sind, in denen eben Gattungszuschreibungen und –differenzierungen vorgenommen werden (4).

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