

## BOOK REVIEWS / BOEKRESENSIES

Jacobus A. Naudé, ed., *The Bible and its Translations: Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters with the Indigenous*. Acta Theologica Supplementum, 12. Bloemfontein: SUN MeDIA, 2009. ISSN: 1015-8758. Vi + 233 pp.

The thirteen essays in this volume – collected by Professor Jacobus A. Naudé formerly of the Department of Afroasiatic Studies, Sign Language and Language Practice and currently from the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein – go back to three conferences on Bible interpretation and translation in 2006-2008, besides offering some additional contributions on Bible translation and training of translators. Accordingly, rather than being a unified whole with a clear-cut problem and logical progression, it is collection of individual essays that only to some extent have a common thematic focus, i.e. that of past and present challenges facing the translation of the Bible.

Christo Lombaard (University of South Africa) opens the collection with an essay using the metaphor of an African fetish mask to describe and interpret power aspects of the translation process. The fetish – be it a mask or a biblical text – encapsulates power by pulling together into one form of expression what lies beyond human control, but it also endows power, as it exerts influence over those who are presented with it.

Then follow three essays related to the first Bible in Setswana, Robert Moffat's translation of 1857, the first in an African language in sub-Saharan Africa. J. Lubbe (University of the Free State) asks what made Moffat's translation so popular, and suggests that an answer might be found in the impression made by Mary and Robert Moffat's nearly fifty years of caring service in Kuruman; they lived out the texts, the voice of the unseen God. Gerald O. West (University of KwaZulu-Natal) focuses on power questions, noticing that the first encounters with the Bible in southern Africa did not take place under colonialism but under African territorial and political control. Three examples are used to illustrate this; one is the point that the Bible was encountered as an iconic object of power already prior to the translation, another that the focus on translation reflects a theological agenda, and a third is the observation that once the Bible is translated it slips out of the grasp of those in interpretive power, missionaries and translators. The late Steve de Gruchy (University of KwaZulu-Natal) argues that there is a hermeneutical circle between the Bible and mission; when the London Missionary Society (the sending society of the Moffats) in the 1970s was reorganized as Council for World Mission it reflects an interpretive development with regard to the Bible. It was a reading of the Bible (then a northern one) that a couple of centuries ago led the Moffats and others to go to southern Africa and translate the Bible into indigenous lan-

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guages. But then, eventually, it is also a reading of the Bible (now a southern one) that today leads to new understandings of the role of church and mission.

The next five essays analyze various contextual challenges. First, there are two case studies of colonial interference in southern African translation projects. From a Zulu context, M.R. Masubelele (University of South Africa) argues that the original concepts of the Supreme Being – Nkulunkulu – changed and were cast into a Christian mould. And from a Southern Sotho context, J. Makutoane and J. Naudé (University of the Free State) show examples of Afrikaans influence in the 1909 translation. Then, in the two only essays without explicit references to Africa, R. D. Toledo (Stony Brook University, New York) analyzes the role of the Bible in two Latin American liberation organisations (Mexico and Guatemala), whereas J.E. Wehrmeyer (University of South Africa) discusses why the term “bishop” seems to have disappeared from English Bible translations in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, being replaced by more general terms like “overseer” etc. Finally, J.C. Steyn (University of the Free State) addresses the challenges facing the translators of the first Bible in Afrikaans (1933) before the standardization of the language.

The last four essays address Bible translation and training of Bible translators. D.C. Chemorion (St. Paul’s University, Limuru, Kenya) emphasizes the role of participation in the translation process by the receptor community, proposing a model of “Participatory Approach to Bible Translation.” S. Lombaard and J.A. Naudé (University of the Free State) make a proposal for an indigenous Bible in South African Sign language for deaf persons. J.A. Naudé and G. Gelderbloem (University of the Free State) examines to what extent Bible study guides in English published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America are meeting the cultural and linguistic needs of the target groups when they are translated into Sesotho, isiXhosa, TshiVenda, isiZulu, and Afrikaans. And finally, J. Marais (University of the Free State) discusses the biblical concept of wisdom in relation to training of Bible translators.

As noticed above, the volume is not a unified whole; it is a collection of individual essays loosely put together around a common thematic focus. Nevertheless, the collection – and the individual essays – are welcome contributions into the fields of translation and reception historical studies of the Bible, offering illustrative glimpses into key hermeneutical topics of Bible translation and interpretation in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

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John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One. Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009. 192 pages. Price not mentioned. ISBN 978-0-8308-3704-5.

The motto of the publishers of this book is “Evangelically Rooted. Critically Engaged,” which seems to imply that this book is written for an Evangelical audience with the purpose of exposing them to critical thinking. In that case, the motto is not a bad description of the book as a whole. The book starts off well by arguing that the Bible was not written for its modern-day readers and that the two primary stumbling blocks that modern-day readers have to overcome are language and culture. The book attempts to make a contribution towards understanding the latter in particular, given the fact that Israel was an Ancient Near Eastern culture. Walton explains to his readers that Israel was not only influenced by the ancient world, but that “they were part of that world” (p. 14).

The book is structured around 18 propositions, of which the most important is probably proposition 2: “Ancient Cosmology Is Function Orientated” (p. 23). In the chapter about this proposition Walton argues that modern-day people have a different way of looking at the world from ancient people. We basically think of things in material terms. For us “a chair exists because it is material” (p.23). It is the physical qualities of a chair which makes it real. This means that when we talk about origins, we also tend to talk in material terms. Walton then argues that ancient ontology was different in the sense that the ancients understood existence in terms of functions. As he (p.26) puts it:

In this sort of functional ontology, the sun does not exist by virtue of its material properties, or even by its function as a burning ball of gas. Rather it exists by virtue of the role that it has in its sphere of existence

Walton then points to many texts from the Ancient Near East in which this kind of ontology is, according to him, fairly obvious. His next proposition is to claim that the Hebrew root for create (ברא) is also more concerned with function than material properties. In this chapter his arguments become rather foggy. For instance, he (pp. 42-43) provides a list of the 50 occurrences of this root in the Hebrew Bible, acknowledging that some of them are ambiguous, and then simply states that “a large percentage of the contexts require a functional understanding”. Yet he never discusses these contexts and the reader is left hanging.

Most of the first half of the book is devoted to this functional understanding of creation. His discussion of Genesis 1 (pp. 47-71) is more convincing. One could indeed describe what happens on days four to six as the installing of functionaries. And one could also mostly describe what happens on days one to three as the establishing of functions. Walton describes (p. 58)

the functions of day two as the “functions that serve as the basis for weather”, but one wonders whether “weather” is not a modern-day construct. Does this also mean that the birds and sea animals created on day five are functionaries of the weather?

Towards the end of the book one finds interesting discussions on Intelligent Design (pp. 125-131), on scientific explanations of origins (pp. 132-141) and even on what public science education should entail (pp. 152-161). These discussions would be valuable in evangelical contexts, as far as this reviewer can tell. This is probably where the greatest value of this book will lie.

Unfortunately the book does not really engage with contemporary biblical criticism and especially not with current Pentateuch research. The reader is never told that we have *two* creation narratives. His discussion on the creation of humanity (pp. 67-71) moves seamlessly to Adam and Eve in Genesis 2. One never reads about the Priestly source. This is especially strange in the light of the author’s argument in the middle of the book that the cosmos is a temple and Genesis 1 a kind of liturgy celebrating cosmic temple inauguration. If the author had been more familiar with current discussions on P, he might have found more material in favour of his arguments.

The book is thus aimed at an Evangelical audience and is probably successful in that regard. It is unfortunately not critical enough, since it does not engage with current Pentateuch research.

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Robin B. Salters, *Lamentations*. International Critical Commentary. London and New York: T & T Clark, 2010. xxxiv + 375 pages. Hardcover with dust jacket. £55.00. ISBN 978-0-567-57651-4.

This new commentary on Lamentations forms part of the newly commissioned International Critical Commentary (ICC) series. The stated goal of this commentary series is “to bring together all the relevant aids to exegesis, linguistic and textual no less than archaeological, historical, literary, and theological, to help the reader to understand the meaning of the books of the Old and New Testaments.” In this first-rate commentary on Lamentations, Robin Salters has done a sterling job of reaching this goal.

The commentary opens with an extensive bibliography which lists previous commentaries on Lamentations, articles and other studies, as well as the editions of Hebrew texts, ancient translations, the Talmud, works of Midrash (including *Lamentations Rabbah*) and medieval rabbinic commentaries that Salters cites in the commentary section. Although the bibliography is not

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exhaustive, its scope is wide-ranging enough to serve as a handy tool for further research.

In the introduction to the commentary, Salters discusses the usual introductory matters such the book's title, place in the canon, authorship, date of composition and origin. Salters is of the opinion that Lamentations is a collection of poems that were composed over a period of time in connection with the commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 586 B.C.E.. Its purpose was therefore liturgical in nature. With regard to the genre of the book, Salters indicates that scholars are in agreement that the fifth chapter approximates the form of a communal lament and that the third chapter exhibits features of both the individual and the communal laments. However, opinions are divided on the genre of Lamentations 1, 2 and 4. According to Salters, these chapters are unique poetic creations in which motifs of dirges are combined with elements of laments. He notes that the unique form of these poems was prompted by the unprecedented and catastrophic event of Jerusalem's downfall. Concerning the links between Lamentations and Mesopotamian laments over the destruction of cities, Salters is unconvinced that there existed a city-lament genre in Israel and agrees with scholars such as McDaniel who denies that the biblical book is dependent on the Sumerian lament literature. Nevertheless, he concedes that the similarities between Lamentations and the Mesopotamian laments must be acknowledged. In addition to his discussion on the genres of the poems of Lamentations, Salters gives an overview of the book's poetry and the different views regarding the function of the alphabetic acrostics of Lam 1-4. He argues cogently that the acrostic form is simply an artistic device. Salters then summarises the characteristics of the Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Aramaic and Latin representatives of the text of Lamentations in terms of their text-critical worth. In the final part of the introduction to the commentary, Salters gives a brief but helpful synopsis of the book's theology.

The introduction is followed by a detailed commentary on each of the five chapters of Lamentations. The commentary consists of four sections: (1) an introductory section in which Salters deals with matters such as the structure, style, and characteristics of each chapter; (2) an English translation (which presupposes his decisions regarding textual and exegetical issues); (3) a section with notes on the MT and the other textual representatives of the book. In this section, Salters establishes the Hebrew text on which he will comment. This text-critical section boils down to an editing of the MT on the basis of the variant readings in the Qumran manuscripts of Lamentations and the proposed Hebrew *Vorlagen* of the ancient translations (the Septuagint and other Greek versions, the Peshitta, the Vulgate and the two recensions of the Targum of Lamentations). (4) The fourth section comprises of a verse by verse commentary on the Hebrew text of the chapter. Two aspects of this commentary stand out as features that set it apart from other recent commentaries written in (or translated into) English:

- Firstly, Salters provides valuable comments on the textual representatives of Lamentations, especially the exegetical decisions of the ancient translations. Scholars who study the Greek, Syriac and Latin versions of the book will benefit greatly from Salters's copious notes on the readings in these ancient translations. Although, in my opinion, some of the readings in the Qumran manuscripts merit more consideration than Salters allows for, his textual decisions are, on the whole, calculated and clear. It is noteworthy that, in the majority of cases, Salters prefers the MT reading over the extant variants in other textual representatives. Nevertheless, he does not attempt to uphold the MT at all costs and emends its wording in a few instances (cf. 1:7, 1:12, 1:14, 1:21, 2:9, 2:19, 2:22, 3:14, 3:22, 3:56, 3:58, 4:15, 4:18, 4:21, 5:5).
- Secondly, Salters opens a window on the interpretation history of Lamentations. In this regard, his citations of the medieval Jewish interpreters Rashi, Ibn Ezra and Joseph Kara form a valuable part of the commentary. At times, his discussions of passages create the impression of a dialogue where one can hear the opinions of the ancient translators and medieval Jewish exegetes alongside those of Calvin, Luther and modern day translations and scholars. The result is that, in many instances, Salters rarely rejects an interpretation out of hand and that he presents his own exegetical decisions in conjunction with other views.

These two features, together with the bibliography and introduction, make this commentary an invaluable resource for future research on the text and interpretation of Lamentations. Even though students might find the textual and philological elements of the commentary daunting and some readers might consider the brief treatment of the book's theology regrettable, Salters's erudite and lucid comments will surely be useful to many interpreters of Lamentations and not only specialists. As such, this work is a worthy addition to the august ICC series of commentaries.

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Ephraim Stern *et aliter*, eds., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land. Supplementary volume 5*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society; Washington D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2008. Hard cover. xxiii + 599 Pages and 32 Colour plates. Price US\$150.00. ISBN 978-965-221-068-5

The supplementary fifth volume of *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (NEAEHL) (2008), eloquently informs its readers that much have happened in slightly more than a decade between the

publication of the initial four volumes in 1993 and 2005, when the contents of the supplementary volume was finalised. The number of “new” sites, first excavated after 1994 or not reported in the earlier volumes, is stunning.

In this volume only excavations conducted between 1994 and 2005 are discussed. There are 147 entries, dealing with the results of a site or an archaeological theme. The entries were preferably written by the director of excavations or someone directly involved with the excavations. In this respect the encyclopaedia represents the excavators’ views and an interested reader will need to consult subject journals to get to know alternative views and debates. However, this need is addressed by a short bibliography after each entry, guiding the reader to original reports, main publications, and studies relevant to each entry.

The text is richly illustrated with maps, black and white photographs. An appendix of 32 plates of colour photographs adds to the fine illustrations that characterise the book.

The sites discussed in the volume vary from single occupation sites, covering only few square meters, to extremely complex tels such as Tel Dor, Tel Bet Shean, Tel Hazor and the city of Jerusalem. At the latter sites the reports reflect ongoing excavations.

The initial four volumes of NEAEHL contained 366 entries, primarily dealing with archaeological sites, but there were also entries dealing with regional surveys (such as the Bekaa Valley, Galilee, Jordan valley Negev, Sinai and the Samaria Region), divergent themes (such as churches, dolmens, Judean Desert caves, monasteries, synagogues and marine archaeology) and prehistoric caves in the Carmel Massiv (such as Shkul, Tabun, Hayonim and Kebara).

In his foreword the editor, Ephraim Stern, retired professor of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and for 20 years the director of the Tel Dor excavations, emphasizes the constant urge for upgrading the encyclopaedia since it was first published in Hebrew in 1970 (p. ix). The driving force behind the publication is the IES (Israel Exploration Society, initially in collaboration with Carta and the academic reference division of Simon and Schuster). For the supplementary volume the IES collaborated with the Biblical Archaeology Society.

### **Formal features**

The supplementary volume is more than just an additional volume of sites previously missed in volumes 1-4. It is supplementary in the true sense: of 366 entries in volumes 1-4 68 are revisited and updated in volume 5, while 79 entries deal with new sites or themes. Moreover, a bibliography of thirty pages (pp. 2086-2115) presents bibliographic details of the sites not revisited in vol-

ume 5, while each of the entries in the supplementary volume concludes with a new bibliography.

Also added is a table of all sites discussed in the encyclopaedia (volumes 1-5) with map reference points, reflecting the Old Israel Grid as well as the New Israel Grid, and also all archaeological phases present at the sites (pp. 2117-2124). Fifteen periods are used in the table, viz. Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, Late Bronze, Iron, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Early Islamic, Crusader and Ayyubid, Late Islamic and the Ottoman periods. Remarkable in this respect is a site like Jericho, which is represented in every archaeological period from the Palaeolithic to the Early Islamic Period, and Jerusalem, which is represented in every period from the Chalcolithic to the Ottoman Periods. A separate table gives an overview of 91 sites in Jordan (pp. 2124-2125).

A further 15 chronological tables are included (pp. 2126-2130). They deal with prehistorical and historical archaeological periods, as well as lists of rulers in Egypt, Assyria, the Neo-Babylonian kingdom, Achaemenid Persia, Judah, Israel, Nabatean kings, the Hasmoneans, Herodians and Procurators, the Seleucids and Ptolemies, Roman Emperors and Byzantine Emperors.

These tables are concluded with a useful glossary (pp. 2131-2136) that will prove useful both to novices and seasoned archaeologists. An index to persons and another to places follow the glossary and the volume is concluded with a series of 32 colour plates.

A map of all the sites mentioned in the encyclopaedia is printed on the front and back inside covers. All sites are indicated with a circle, and those specifically dealt with in this volume, with a dot.

This overview of formal features indicates the grand scale on which the editorial team approached the supplementary volume.

### **Issues of content**

A feature of the contents of the supplementary volume, is a 50 page article on Jordan (pp. 1840-1891) by Fischer, Vieweger, Herr, Bienkowski, Peleg and Cytryn-Silverman. Curiously no Jordanian scholars contributed to the volume. This issue is aptly addressed by Stern in his foreword (p. ix). He states that: “[t]he more important sites in Jordan are not presented as individual entries in Volume 5, meaning that certain sites of lesser importance in Israel are given somewhat more thorough treatment than sites arguably of much greater importance in Jordan.”

It is remarkable how many authors who contributed to volumes 1-4, were still active at their sites and were, therefore, contributors to volume 5. On the other hand, many new names are also listed. They often seem to have been

officials of the Israel Department of Antiquities, who were responsible for rescue excavations where archaeological finds necessitated research before construction work or urban development could proceed.

For me some of the most interesting reading was found in the entries of sites that were revisited.

Tel Dan is once again described by Avraham Biran, Tel Dor by Ephraim Stern, Mt Gerizim by Yitzhaq Magen, Tel Hadar by Moshe Kochavi, Hayonim Cave (Paleolithic) by Ofer Bar-Yosef, Hazor by Amnon Ben-Tor (who previously was the co-author with Y. Yadin), Herodium by Ehud Netzer (who previously was co-author with G. Foerster), Tell Miqne (Ekron) by Trude Dothan and Seymour Gitin, Tel Nami by Michal Artzy, Masada by Ehud Netzer (who previously was the co-author with Y. Yadin, now with Stiebel, Arubas and Goldfluss). Sepphoris is described by Zeev Weiss, Sha'ar ha-Golan by Yosef Garfinkel.

In the case of Dor, I think it is a pity that co-directors Ilan Sharon and Ayelet Gilboa, who are both still involved with the “New Tel Dor-project” since 2002, were not involved in the entry on Dor in the supplementary volume. Ephraim Stern, the director until 2000, decided to reflect a monolithic presentation of the hotly debated issue and the interesting question on the Sikil at Dor. Even so, the richness of the Tel Dor excavations is well presented and a joy to read.

A similar weakness is visible in the entry on Tel Dan where only Biran reported on the site. However, in this case the story of the “David Stela” and subsequent developments are well presented. In the bibliography on Dan the opposing views on the Tel Dan inscription are very well represented. This is to be contrasted with the exclusion of the dissident views of Sharon and Gilboa in the bibliography on Tel Dor.

One of the remarkable sites in Israel is Jerusalem, and the entry on Jerusalem does not disappoint. Written by 18 scholars, it is remarkable that only Dan Bahat and Hillel Geva survived from the previous panel of eight who wrote the entry in Volume 2. The entry occupies 37 pages in the supplementary volume (supplementing an entry of 107 pages in Volume 2). The volume 5 entry entails three articles, viz. Excavations in the ancient City, The Necropolis of the Second Temple Period and Excavations in the vicinity of the Ancient City. The variety of excavation areas and material finds are overwhelming. They vary from Chalcolithic, Bronze and Iron Age artefacts in the City of David area and the Gihon spring to Roman and Byzantine remains in the same area and around the Temple Mount and the Eastern and Western Hills.

### **Critique**

After working through the volume and reading many of the articles in detail, one stands in awe at the width of vision of the editor and his team and the care taken by someone like the bibliographer Nira Naveh. But are there weaknesses?

I think the issue of illustrations is pertinent. The text is well illustrated with numerous black and white photographs, line drawings, maps and plans of excavated buildings or excavation areas. These illustrations all have captions and they contribute largely to the understanding of an excavation site that one is not directly informed about. However, the colour photographs on 32 plates at the end of the text are sadly just illustrations, albeit very nice illustrations. The reason is that very little information on the photographs is supplied, especially in the cases of specific finds. Moreover, I could find no references to the colour photographs in the texts of the various entries. What could have been an additional rich source of information is now a series of beautiful pictures of places and artefacts.

A site that was curiously left out of volume 3 was Jezreel. It was excavated by David Ussishkin and John Woodhead from 1990 to 1995, but that omission has been corrected, and a fine overview of the excavations of Jezreel was included in the supplementary volume (pp. 1837-1839).

In conclusion, this supplementary volume is a must have for any person who is in possession of the first four volumes, but it can also stand on its own. As a comprehensive overview, a true encyclopaedia, the NEAEHL is a very good source of information, both for an amateur archaeologist or archaeology interested person, and a professional interested in the intricacies of different sites in Israel.

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