

## BOOK REVIEWS / BOEK RESENSIES

Yehoshua Gitay, 2011. *Methodology, Speech, Society: The Hebrew Bible*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press. 193 pages. Paperback. Price R195.00. ISBN 978-1-920338-45-9.

*Methodology, Speech, Society: The Hebrew Bible* is a fine, scholarly work, clearly on the cutting edge of rhetoric and literary criticism—be it applied to the Hebrew Bible or elsewhere.

Yet be warned: *Methodology, Speech, Society* is also a difficult book, one requiring several readings for those not initially familiar with its disciplines. However, the book provides rich insights not only on rhetorical criticism but also on its application to specific texts and books in the HB. The result is a book I wish I had had as a companion in my Hebrew Studies courses on the PhD level.

Here's an overview of the book. The chapters are a collection of Gitay's works while he was in South Africa as the Isidore and Theresa Cohen Chair of Hebrew Studies at the University of Cape Town and as an Extraordinary Professor at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University (p. 5). His chapters follow the book's title. Three studies are in Methodology, four are in Speech and three are in Society. The book concludes with a Bibliography spanning eight pages (pp. 181-188) and an Index (pp. 189-193).

His Bibliography (pp. 181-188) includes scholarly sources like C. Westermann and W. Brueggemann and African scholars like I. Okpewho, and G.O. West and M.W. Dube, Gitay also references 22 of his earlier works.

The margins give ample room for someone like me, who likes to make notes while I read, to interact and comment. The book's size (roughly 7 x 9 ½ inches) makes it easy to hold and read. The page weight is appropriate for a scholarly work; the print size is readable.

According to the web, Gitay, is now based at the Department of Communication at the University of Haifa.

Gitay thanks Prof. Hendrik Bosman, Chairperson of the Department of Old and New Testament, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, in particular "for his kindness and hospitality and for being so trustworthy" (p. 3). In a lovely gesture, Gitay notes that he and his wife Tzfira enjoyed spending time as well with Dalene, Bosman's wife, and that she "has shown us what a woman who is not only a teacher, but also a wife and mother, can achieve" (p. 3).

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His Introduction sets the tone for his book. Gitay asks two profound introductory questions. What is true scholarship? Is it a discipline or a science (p. 5)? Throughout his work, he investigates them.

He draws a distinction between lay reading and professional methodological study (p. 5). He states his goal is “to understand the principles of Biblical hermeneutics – to clarify the assumptions of our methodology” (p. 6).

While stating in general that “scholarship is shaped by specific paradigms that are considered sacred cows,” he also wonders if we are “not worshipping the cows rather than scholarship itself?” (p. 6).

Putting down this gauntlet for himself and others, so to speak, Gitay challenges old assumptions, paradigms, and traditional literary scholarship itself. “Are we not enslaved to the routine of the convenient?” (p. 6) he asks.

His sojourn in southern Africa clearly influenced his views. He asserts that the “African environment encourages us to look carefully at the tradition of oral presentation, the poetics of oral literature” (p. 6). He suggests that its influence on the poetry of oral literature “characterizes the Biblical discourse as well” (p. 6).

He applies his love of rhetoric, which he credits as “the essence of human activity” (p. 7), to the HB. He sees the HB as “a living book” that reflects disputes among people as well as ideologies that argue one against the other.

I found myself saying repeatedly as I read his essays, “I hadn’t seen the text in that way!” Take, for example, his study of Judah, one of Jacob’s sons. Gitay likens the power of speech with the rise and fall of leadership. He sees the rise of Judah as the leader of his brothers “based on his rhetorical skills” (p. 7). In looking at the text again, I see that the text offers support of this view and the view develops the character of Judah.

Gitay likens the conversations going on in South Africa regarding its history to ones earlier in Israel’s history. He notes that South Africa is reshaping its collective memory, and the period of “Restoration also witnessed the rewriting of the narrative of Israel” (p. 8).

Gitay issues a call for a paradigm shift away from that established by Western scholarship to African Oral Hermeneutics (p. 29ff). This may well reflect the shift globally from Western Christianity and Judaism to the continent of Africa which has many Christian converts.

“Africa, given its rich experience in oral performance, poetry and other modes of verbal expressions (such as storytelling and figuration) is more in

concert with the nature of Biblical discourse than the existing Western models” (pp. 38-39), Gitay asserts.

I believe his assertion bears further scholarly investigation.

Gitay acknowledges that the Western paradigm “is dominant and almost untouchable” (p. 41). However, he believes that a paradigm shift toward “oral hermeneutics is not a matter of abstract academic concern; it is the essence or research” and as such “could change concepts, existing perceptions, and scholarly positions, and affect strategies and techniques of teaching” (p. 41).

Gitay in his essay regarding Lamentations investigates why the poetry of Lamentations prevails in human memory over the narration account in 2 Kgs 25. Both discuss the fall of Jerusalem. Lamentations open with the metaphor of the lonely, weeping widow. Left in solitude, she receives no comfort from her former admirers, family, friends, and lovers (pp. 104-105). Gitay posits that the poetry of Lamentations possesses the ability “to perpetuate the trauma of the people not as a single event but as a universal phenomena which is presented in a moving, shocking manner” (p. 109).

My favourite part of the book was Gitay’s discussion of Job. In his essay “Rhetoric and its Limitations: Job the Dissident,” (pp. 139-158), Gitay cites rabbinic thought that states Job is a parable. “It is not that Job never was, but that he became a parable, a lesson. The difficult issues of Job are taken as a parable which is presented dramatically in order to draw a moral lesson regarding reality” (p. 140), Gitay explains.

We meet Job initially as replete with the rewards of righteousness: children, wealth, health, standing in the community, security. Within a short time he loses everything. The book’s structure investigates these losses via speech.

Gitay argues that the lesson of Job is that the dissident, Job, should speak out given the power of self conviction (p. 157). In a keen observation, Gitay continues that even though the dissident might be wrong, he receives a reply from God. Indeed, “God spoke to Job the dissident but not to friends who represent the voice of the majority,” he said. Again, Gitay’s views are supported by the biblical text. Gitay sees Job as one in conflict with the voice of the majority.

Furthermore, Gitay sees the book of Job as a debate between adversaries. The single dissenter, Job, argues for truth based on his experience while the other side, the erstwhile friends, opt for a view commonly held by a community for a long time (p. 157).

In some ways, Gitay casts himself in his essays in *Methodology, Speech, Society* as a lone voice, a dissident Job, if you will.

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James Alfred Loader. *Proverbs 1–9*. Historical Commentary on the Old Testament. Leuven: Peeters, 2014. XXVIII + 407 pages. Price 74 EURO. Paperback. ISBN 978-90-429-3144-2.

James Alfred Loader, associated with the Universities of Vienna and Pretoria, has contributed a substantial volume to the study of Prov 1-9. He has previously written on other areas of the OT, most notably Ecclesiastes. As a part of the Historical Commentary on the Old Testament series, the Proverbs commentary incorporates the reception history of the biblical text. For Proverbs, this limits mainly to medieval and post-medieval Rabbinic literature, along with Christian interpreters of the patristic and Reformation periods. In a 46 page introduction, Loader briefly addresses issues of date, structure, provenance, versions, and a summary of the message and theology of Proverbs. The bulk of the introduction includes four thematic essays on the social setting of wisdom, plus the concepts of order, revelation, and retribution.

Loader divides Prov 1-9 into ten lessons interspersed with speeches and poems. He approaches each of these with a fourfold method. He translates the text without annotations and instead includes text critical issues and grammatical justification within his expositional sections. In “Essentials and Perspectives,” he briefly mentions exegetical or structural debates, places the passage in its broader literary context, and notes its main elements. The first section of exposition (“Exposition I”) accounts for structure, genre, style, literary criticism, and themes. In the second expositional section (“Exposition II”) appears a detailed exegesis of the text, typically examining single verses yet sometimes dealing with sets of two or three.

Loader claims the commentary contributes to the academic discussion of Proverbs in two areas. First, it overcomes the bifurcation of historical and literary perspectives. In other words, it does not segregate diachronic and synchronic approaches to the text. As a distinctively exegetical commentary, he writes, “it strives to take the text seriously at the philological, structural and compositional levels” (IX). Second, the work accounts for the historical reception of the text, presumably to the extent that it is significant for interpretation. He notes that this goal stands apart from the fit of Proverbs within Israel’s salvation history, an issue often attended to in studies of the biblical wisdom literature.

The commentary successfully provides an exegetical resource as defined by Loader. He attends to the details of the text, its literary structure and style, and the poetic units within individual verses and stanzas. The second expositional section (“Exposition II”) constitutes the substance of the volume. Visual structures of the passages frequently appear, underscoring patterns with italics, indentations, and lines. These complement the finer points of grammar and philology. Loader also succeeds in accounting for reception history, noting the interpretation of a term or theme in later texts without distracting from the

exegesis of the biblical passage. His work on Prov 8 represents a contribution in its own right. The exposition of 43 pages nearly doubles the length of any other passage and also includes an eight page excursus on the chapter's reception. Loader regularly interacts with recent work on Proverbs, with a notable presence of German scholarship.

While the commentary does account for the historical perspective of Proverbs in its treatment of reception history, the ANE context is not always as palpable. Overall, the literary perspective is handled with more strength and consistency than the historical aspects of the text. Readers might wonder whether the Septuagint deserves more import within the rubric of reception history. It receives some attention on a philological level but rarely in its interpretive or historical significance. Loader presents the interpretive options of each passage with clarity and generosity. However, he seems to leave hermeneutical routes open as often as possible, presenting two possibilities without suggesting a choice or reconciliation. This occurs, for example, with the rhetorical and historical identities of the father in Prov 1:8-19 (71). While it demonstrates admirable intellectual prudence, readers may at times want more decision from Loader regarding interpretive options. The commentary offers little by way of the purpose and message of passages in Prov 1-9. Yet in spite of a dearth of synthesis and summary, it attends to detail concisely and precisely. While Loader does not propose or present the forest of Prov 1-9, he has certainly captured the trees. Any serious exegesis of the book should consult and will benefit from this work.

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Gregory Mobley. *Return of the Chaos Monsters – And Other Backstories of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012. 167 pages. Paperback. Price US\$ 16.00. ISBN 978-0-8028-3746-2.

Mobley approaches the Tanakh (OT) as a story:

Much of the Bible is story, and even those parts that did not begin that way have evolved into stories as they have been edited and interpreted. When the Judahite priests in the sixth century B.C.E. Babylonian exile wanted to preserve memory, . . . [t]hey inscribed their memories in stories about the wilderness tent from Exodus [and] Solomon's temple from 1 Kings (p. 4).

For Mobley, the biblical composers, editors, and interpreters made meaning through story (p. 5), and his chief aim is to make sense of biblical storytelling. He is particularly concerned with the way in which "the Bible makes meaning through narrative" (p. 7). He considers this use of narrative unique, as there are

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other ways of composing religious teachings, such as the Qur'an's use of a series of speeches and the Talmud's use of a series of conversations (p. 5).

Mobley is to be commended for his attempt to make sense of the unfolding of the biblical story. Mobley sees the Tanakh as unfolding from creation to the apocalyptic images of the "end" or the "last days." The unfolding of the story is to be viewed through the lens of what he refers to as the "backstory" ("an implied or yet-to-be-composed narrative that is the necessary prologue to an existing story") or the "metanarrative" ("an articulation of the global story that a series of local stories or discrete episodes tell and retell with different details, settings, and characters"; pp. 9, 10). He goes on to argue, "Each genre of biblical literature has its own governing metanarrative or subservient backstory. Each biblical literature has its own theodicy, its own style of wrestling with the chaos that threatens to make existence meaningless" (p. 14). The discrete episodes are somehow interrelated and they mutually enrich each other.

Mobley views the unfolding of the biblical story through seven backstories on the basis of content and form: 1) "The Return of the Chaos Monsters" (creation), 2) "It's Love that Makes the World Go 'Round" (Torah), 3) "Poetic Justice" (the Former Prophets), 4) "Anger Management" (the Latter Prophets), 5) "God Needs Us (Psalms), 6) "The Blueprint" (wisdom), and 7) "Conspiracy Theory" (apocalyptic). Below we zoom into each these backstories as Mobley dissects them.

## A THE BACKSTORY OF CREATION

For Mobley the backstory of creation is that "God has subdued chaos, just barely" (p. 16). He argues that the story of the "divine battle at the beginning of time between God and the dragon, between order and chaos, is the first part of the backstory to biblical creation narrative" (p. 17). While the creation stories in Gen 1 and 2 may be regarded as the "official" story of creation in Judaism and Christianity, for Mobley's purposes it is through these that the priestly authors attempted to silence the battle motif: the first part of the story of creation is that of creation through conflict, conflict specifically between the creator God and the force of chaos.

The motif of divine battle at the beginning of creation, as Mobley notes, is by and large found in biblical poetry (Pss 74:14, 16-17; 89:10-12; Isa 51:9). The motif of divine battle at creation is found in the Babylonian creation story, *Enuma Elish*, which "provides us with an explicit narration of matters that the biblical writers left implicit" (p. 17). Mobley follows Levenson by reading the Gen 1 creation narrative story as a story of "the confinement of chaos rather than its elimination" (p. 20). From this he argues that the plot line of Gen 1-8 is

human violence threatens cosmic order and health. God created a world that works by controlling chaos behind the firmament. But the chaos is ever ready to break free from its constraints, and human

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trespass erodes the stability of the dam behind which the waters mass (p. 22).

The second part of the creation story is that the chaos monster that was confined at creation can awaken. Mobley sees the key factor in awakening the chaos monster as “sin” (p. 22). If the creation monster is awakened, it poses a danger to creation, as creation is reversed or undone (p. 24). Mobley points to a number of texts in which chaos is unleashed and creation is undone (Gen 6-9; Jer 4:23-26; Hos 4:2-3; Isa 24:4-6, 18; 27:1). In other texts (Mic 6:11-15; Hos 4:9b-10; Amos 5:11; 9:14; Isa 65:17, 21, 23), the result is not complete reversal but “fundamental disruption . . . of causality itself” (p. 30), whereas in other texts it is “a full end” (see Jer 4:27; Isa 45:18; Ps 46:1-5).

## **B THE BACKSTORY OF TORAH**

The backstory of the Torah is that “God has given humans an instruction manual for life on planet earth so they can partner with God in the management of Chaos” (p. 34). It is the actualisation of the Torah that leads to the actualisation of the goodness of creation; Mobley views the main concern of the Torah as living in harmony with creation. He also views the Mosaic instruction as a covenant, particularly so in the book of Deuteronomy. For Mobley Deuteronomy in its final form is shaped as a covenant like other ancient treaties such as those of Assyria and Babylonia and it “thus represents a sacred declaration of independence from Mesopotamian superpowers” (p. 41). Again following Levenson, Mobley points to the correspondences between Gen 1-2 and Exod 39, arguing that “instructions are as foundational to the cosmos as the geological structures and biological arrangements of Genesis” (p. 49). The Torah is thus the priestly way of chaos management.

Mobley treats the Torah as though the book of Genesis does not belong in it. This gives the impression that the book of Genesis *in toto* is about creation, which is problematic. It also goes against the tradition in which the book of Genesis is viewed as part and parcel of the Pentateuch or the Torah or the Books of Moses.

## **C THE BACKSTORY OF THE FORMER PROPHETS**

For Mobley the prose narrative (Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings) displays “the principle of moral causality” that is “communicated through poetic justice” (p. 49). Mobley regards the Former Prophets as “Tanakh’s treasury of tales,” all of which “tell the same story, that the natural and social worlds are governed by causality. The dominant theological principle of the scrolls of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings is that God administers justice on the basis of moral cause and effect, rewarding virtue and punishing vice” (p. 49). He also highlights the importance of landscapes for the biblical story tellers:

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Before the emergence of widespread literacy, our ancestors did not read texts, they read landscapes. They read between the lines of the drama that played out before their eyes. They drew lines between events, tracing patterns, explaining accidents, telling stories (p. 51).

To illustrate his point of poetic justice, Mobley analyses the Rahab story among others, and clearly shows that she is portrayed as a hero who mediates between Israel and other Canaanite groups and between the divine and the terrestrial realms (p. 59). Furthermore, Rahab is to be viewed as the “virtuous wife” of Prov 31, as she also serves as a lens through which to view the “economic life of Iron Age women in Syro-Palestine” (p. 60-61). Mobley also highlights the fact that while divination was an important component of life for the biblical peoples—the dreams, omens, translation of visions, divinatory tokens such as Urim and Thummim—knowledge also came through story telling. However, in the case of the Former Prophets divination was “retrospective,” not forward looking: “Storytellers extracted divine communications from the chaotic flow of raw, mute experience, drew inferences from them, and translated them into the patterns of narrative” (p. 65).

Biblical prose narrative is a broad concept; it cannot be confined solely to Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Other biblical narratives can indeed also be analysed utilising the lens that Mobley lays out in dealing with the Former Prophets.

## **D THE BACKSTORY OF THE LATTER PROPHETS**

The backstory of the Latter Prophets is that the health of creation is dependent on the management of chaos between the two covenantal partners, God and Israel. The relationship between the two, as Mobley points out, is characterised at times by instability and turbulence, which require Yahweh to manage his anger. In this covenantal relationship, the Hebrew prophets particularly demand justice and righteousness, which requires the powers that be to be kept under check. Mobley emphasises that for the prophets, the divine personality is life giving (compassionate and merciful) on the one hand, but on the other hand, divine anger flares against the guilty (p. 73). In this relationship between the two covenantal partners, the prophets acted as mediators, as did Israel’s prophets *par excellence*, Abraham and Moses (p. 77).

Mobley identifies five stages in which prophets acted as intercessors. In stage 1, when the relationship between the covenantal partners is at “peace” (*shalom*), the prophet plays no special role; he is simply a member of the community. In stage 2, the community breaks the covenant and the prophet steps in to address the community, warning them to “turn” (*shuv*) and to return to a state of peace. In stage 3, God becomes angry because he is a jealous husband and hears the cries of the people. The prophet implores the divine to “turn” (*shuv*) from his anger. In stage 4, God expends his anger, and so the

prophet turns to the community warning them off the impending judgement or punishment that is coming to them. In stage 5, God's anger subsides and the divine equilibrium is regained. The prophet at this stage goes to the community with good news of comfort (pp. 84-85).

This section of the book provides a helpful perspective for analysing the prophetic books. Mobley's discussion of concepts such as *shuv*, *hesed*, *mishpat u-tzedeqah*, and *nĥm* and the examples of how these concepts are used in the prophetic books is illuminating.

## **E THE BACKSTORY OF THE PSALMS**

For Mobley, the backstory of the Psalms is that "through praise humans release energy that augments God's management of chaos; through lament humans report on the quality of God's management of chaos" (p. 97). The Psalms reflect both human's dependence upon God and God's need for human praise. It is on the latter that Mobley focuses.

The psalmists, as Mobley points out, often threatened God with the loss of praise, especially when faced with death (Pss 6:4-5, 30:9; 88:10-11). The implication of this is that without human praise, "God's sovereignty is diminished, imperilled, unrealized" (p. 101). In the psalter, God's need for humanity was, as in other ancient cultures, also reflected in humanity's performance of the royal function of preparing food for the gods (p. 101). The Psalter observes an evolution of Israelite religion from being focused on sacrifices to being focused on praise: "Gods require praise just like they require food" (p. 101). In the Psalter and elsewhere in the Bible sacrifices as food for God is both critiqued and affirmed: there are several instances where sacrifices are denied (Pss 50:9-13; 69:30-31; 50:15-17; Mic 6:6-8), and in other instances they are affirmed (Ps 51:18-19; Mal 1:7, 12; Exod 25:23-30; Lev 24:6; 1 Kgs 7:48; Ezek 40:39-43; Lev 3:11, 16; 21:6; Num 28:2, 24; Ezek 44:7; Gen 8:21). Mobley sees the evolution finally reaching its zenith

[w]ith the destruction of the Second Temple, [when] animal and cereal offerings came to an end in Judaism and daily prayers replaced daily sacrifices. The backstory of sacrifice as food for the gods is transformed into a more dynamic abstract but no less vital transaction: God is *hungry*, for relationship, and this is verbalized through praise song and lament (pp. 104-105).

It should also be added that from the Christian perspective, it was the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that eventually brought to an end the need of animal and cereal offerings. For Mobley, central in the Psalter is the idea that humanity serves as God's partner in the management of the chaos through their cultic actions of lament and praise by which they activate God's mastery over chaos.

## **F THE BACKSTORY OF WISDOM**

The backstory of biblical Wisdom books (Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes), according to Mobley, is that “here and there, humans catch the glimpses of the divine design for chaos management; living according to these insights is another expression of the partnership” (p. 110). Drawing on Richard Clifford, Mobley asserts that the core teaching of the Wisdom books is that “there is a cosmic order.” He also follows James Kugel’s idea of the “Great Plan,” which he also refers to as *hokma*, or *‘eša*, the “design” (p. 111-112). He notes that Prov 8 and Job 28 indicate that the “Great Plan” was “sewn into the fabric of reality ‘in the beginning,’ during the creation week” (p. 112). The biblical Wisdom books deal with the “Great Plan” in different ways: Proverbs is optimistic, displaying the sense that “humans are capable of observing details in the blueprint accurately” (p. 114). Ecclesiastes is pessimistic, displaying a sense that there is a Great Plan, but a mist of vanity obscures our ability to see it. In the book of Job—an adventure story which points to the fact that chaos is part of the Great Plan—“the divine blueprint of reality” also includes “space for chaos” (p. 125).

## **G THE BACKSTORY OF APOCALYPTIC**

The book of Daniel, as Mobley notes, brought something new into mix of biblical literature: it previews many of the aspects which “later communitarians, sectarians, and millennialists” thresh out (p. 128). The idea of heaven and hell, while not fully threshed out in Daniel, is alluded to through concepts such as the resurrection of the dead to eternal life (“forever life”) and others to damnation (“forever alienation”; Dan 12:2). Other apocalyptic includes aspects of the eschaton (the end of time, ultimate battles, hidden scrolls), and concern with the otherworldly (angels and demons; pp. 130-131). Mobley also notes that the one feature of apocalyptic stories that does not feature in Daniel is Satan or the Devil (p. 131). The personification of the chief opponent of God does feature prominently in other Second Temple visionaries under various names; however, “none of this material ever gets sorted out systematically; to this day, all these diabolic epithets remain in play among apocalypticists, fantasists, and occultists” (p. 131). This for Mobley points to the fact that “the final platform of hope is the simple and basic truth of creation, that there is something rather than nothing, that we did not will ourselves into being, and that the Creator of the universe chooses Life” (p. 137). The hope in the apocalyptic stories for the faithful, who are overwhelmed by chaos, is that God as in the beginning will subdue chaos.

Mobley’s approach of reading the Tanakh as story, with a central theme of the struggle with chaos running through the different parts of the corpus highlights the unity of Scripture as a whole. This approach, however, as does any other approach, is governed by its own circularity and does not provide solutions for all interpretative issues. It does read the Bible as one redemptive

story well; yet the benefit of Mobley's approach is that it highlights the varieties of biblical texts in form and content in addressing the central theme of the struggle with chaos. Furthermore, Mobley's approach recognizes the cumulative nature of the stories. The different corpuses of the Tanakh all highlight the development of the idea of struggle against chaos shaped by different circumstances.

While the focus of the book is the Tanakh, Mobley makes clear that he approaches it as a Christian. Therefore, in some of the backstories, the NT is also brought in to shed light; however, Mobley is not consistent in this, and in some of the backstories the NT does not feature at all.

Problematic in Mobley's treatment of the seven backstories is the ambiguous treatment of content and form. While he does follow the groupings of biblical books—Torah, Former Prophets, Latter Prophets, Wisdom Books and Psalms, Apocalyptic—he also follows the theme or motif of creation. This ambiguous distinction is indicative of Mobley's attempt to fit the unfolding of the biblical story into his own framework and not necessarily follow the biblical composers, editors, and interpreters, whom he regards as making meaning through narrative. Considering the final form and shape of the biblical corpus, to separate the creation aspect from the Torah and other biblical corpuses is to create a new religious text and not necessarily to simply make sense of the meaning that the biblical composers were making through narrative. The fact that the Torah story unfolds from creation to Israel at the verge of entering the Promised Land is significant and potentially signifies that the backstory of the Torah is the regaining of paradise lost. Notwithstanding the criticism, this is a fascinating book, which is written eloquently and contributes to the understanding of the storyline of the Tanakh. This book is a useful resource that not only introduces the reader to the different parts of the Tanakh, but more importantly it shows their interrelatedness.

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Andrew J. Schmutzer and David M. Howard Jr., eds. *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013. 228 pages. Paperback. Price US\$20.00. ISBN 978-0-8024-0962-1.

This collection of well-written essays, produced by a group of recognised evangelical scholars in the field,<sup>1</sup> derives largely from conference papers presented in the Psalms and Hebrew Poetry section of the Evangelical Theological Society (2009-2011). The book consists a listing of the contributors, a table of primary reference abbreviations, a brief introduction by the editors, nineteen individual studies divided into five major topical sections (“parts”), a select bibliography for psalms studies, a subject index, and a Scripture index. The book aims to review “the enormous impact” of the Psalter upon the Christian faith and scholarship by “weaving together some [of its] primary theological, literary, and canonical themes” (pp. 15-16; *all page references are to the volume under review*). Space limitations preclude a detailed description of contents, so in addition to the descriptive essay titles (with their authors) I will be able to contribute only a brief summary and/or a point of special interest, often in the words of the authors themselves. I will relegate my occasional critical comments to the footnotes.

PART 1: “*Psalms Studies in the Twenty-First Century*: Where we have been and where we are going” (p. 17), consists of three essays that provide a broad historical and interpretative orientation to the book. Bruce K. Waltke leads off with “a personal perspective” on “Biblical Theology of the Psalms Today.” He summarises some of the main influences that have impacted upon his lifetime of research and writing on the OT, the Psalter in particular, including the works of a number of influential scholars. As for the future, Waltke feels that “more reflection on the influence of Second Temple Judaism is needed” (p. 27). Willem A. VanGemeren focuses on “literary analysis” when “Entering the Textual World of the Psalms” (p. 29). He too surveys some of the principal contributors to the study of the Psalms (e.g., Kugel, Alter, Berlin) with particular attention being given to proponents and critics of a canonical critical approach (e.g., Childs versus Longman III).<sup>2</sup> VanGemeren devotes the final third of his study with an appeal for more “imagination in theological interpretation” (p. 43), namely, an “analogical imagination that invites hearers/readers of the biblical text to situate themselves within the world of the text” (p. 45) and a metaphoric perspective that seeks out new theological patterns, paradigms, and “ways of imagining the future” (p. 46). In “The Psalms and Faith/Tradition” (p. 49), C. Hassell Bullock, like Waltke, summarises

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<sup>1</sup> I found it rather strange to note that no women are included among the authors.

<sup>2</sup> It would seem topically more appropriate for the paragraph on Gerald H. Wilson and his influence (p. 40) to be juxtaposed to the “canonical critical” section on Brevard Childs (pp. 30-31).

“what I have especially learned about the Psalms” (p. 50),<sup>3</sup> with special reference to “how they teach us to pray” (p. 51) as well as the oft-neglected “tradition of private devotion” (p. 54). In conclusion, Bullock rightly highlights “the musical component” of the Psalter (p. 56) and, echoing VanGemerem, also its rich, albeit traditionally worded metaphorical dimension: “The poetry of the Psalms achieves a verbal level of iconography that more than compensates for the prescribed absence of images on the material level of ancient orthodox practice . . . through the word, icon is made metaphor” (p. 59, citing Wm. P. Brown).

PART 2 of this collection, “*Psalms of Praise: Expressing our joy*” (p. 61), includes three individual studies. Francis X. Kimmitt begins with “Psalm 46: Praise the Lord Our Help” (p. 63).<sup>4</sup> After a helpful structural and semantic study of this psalm, he makes a contemporary application by reflecting on the importance of “praise and the church” (p. 71). Next, Robert B. Chisholm Jr. surveys the topic “Suppressing Myth: Yahweh and the Sea in the Praise Psalms” (p. 75), first in relation to the two “lament” Pss 74 and 89 (p. 76, cf. 84),<sup>5</sup> and then a selection of “psalms of praise” (p. 78). Chisholm points out how the psalmists effectively “demythologized” (p. 79), “transformed” (p. 80), and “historicized the sea” (p. 81) in their religious poetry. In the third and final essay of Part 2, Andrew J. Schmutzer examines Ps 91 in relation to the subject of “Refuge, Protection and Their Use in the New Testament” (p. 85).<sup>6</sup> In what is perhaps the most scholarly study of this book, the author employs a “multiplex” approach to set forth the “literary context” of Ps 91 (p. 85); the “thematic sequence” of Pss 90—92 (p. 87); the “voice” of “Moses” (Ps 90) in relation to the Psalm 91’s assumed exilic setting (p. 88); the “didactic structure” of Ps 91 (p. 91); the “demon tradition” generated by vv. 5-6 of Ps 91 in the HB (p. 92), “some ancient versions” (p. 97), and the Dead Sea Scrolls (p. 98); the use of amulets in Judaism (p. 99); lastly, the “impact of Psalm 91 in the New Testa-

<sup>3</sup> The topical headings in this section are somewhat confusing, for example, the rather awkward general title “The Psalms’ Normative Nature for Prayer and Faith” is applied specifically in close succession to “The Imprecation” and “Their Timeless Nature” (p. 50).

<sup>4</sup> It might be argued that Ps 46 is more correctly classified as a “psalm of trust,” as Kimmitt himself seems to recognise: “Psalm 46 does not contain praise language typical of the hymns . . .” (p. 65). What difference does it make? Genre classification affects one’s interpretation of a psalm’s internal functional constituents, for example, “Hymns begin with a call to worship” (p. 68), which is not at all present in Ps 46.

<sup>5</sup> Consideration of these *lament* psalms calls the chapter’s major title into question, which specifies “*praise* psalms.”

<sup>6</sup> This title too is somewhat ambiguous; one first assumes that reference is being made to God as a “refuge” of his people, only to discover later that the subject is really the popular apotropaic use of certain psalm verses against demonic forces which they perceived as surrounding them in life.

ment” (p. 105), specifically Matt 4:4-6 and Luke 10:19. This was a most fascinating socio-religious investigation.

PART 3 is the largest portion of the book: “*Psalms of Lament: Expressing our sorrows and pain*” (p. 109).<sup>7</sup> In “Severe Delight: The Paradox of Praise in Confession of Sin,” Michael E. Travers employs two “penitential psalms” (51 and 32) to explore “the tensions between the sinner and his guilt on the one hand and the Lord and his forgiveness on the other” (p. 111). In Ps 51 the notion of confession dominates, while in Ps 32 it is praise that takes precedence. “The juxtaposition of penitence and praise constitutes the paradox of ‘severe delight’ in these penitential psalms” (p. 125). In “The Laments of Lamentations,” Walter C. Kaiser Jr. demonstrates a “shared pattern of communication” (or “genre”) that links the sorrowful texts of this book to psalmic laments, both individual (e.g., Ps 13) and corporate (e.g., Ps 80). Kaiser succinctly surveys the literary structure and poetic features of the book of Lamentations and concludes by noting the “theological significance of the lament” composition, in which “a prayer of petition makes a call to Yahweh for help a dominant theme of this genre” (p. 132). “The ‘Thou’ Sections of Laments” are the subject of Allen P. Ross as he studies “The Bold and Earnest Prayers of the Psalmist” (p. 135). Ross distinguishes four levels of increasingly challenging complaint over “God’s negligence,” as he is boldly accused of “hiding himself” from (p. 136), “forgetting” (p. 138), “forsaking” (p. 140), and worst, being “hostile” to the psalmist (p. 141). With regard to this last category, God may appear “angry because of our sin” (p. 141) or “not because of sin” (p. 145), and the psalmist may sound “urgent” or even more “boldly directive” in his appeal (p. 147). But one must always “hear” these earnest, faith-filled prayers with an ear attentive to their concern over “God’s reputation [which] was being tarnished” by the psalmist’s unresolved problem or predicament (p. 149). Daniel J. Estes offers an explanation for “The Transformation of Pain into Praise in the Individual Lament Psalms” (p. 151). This dramatic psychological change in mood is centered in the notion of “meditation,” which is investigated in terms of a number of key verbs (e.g., *h-g-h* “to groan, moan, meditate, muse”) coupled with some “explicit indicators” (e.g., mention of the psalmist’s “voice”) (p. 156). The typical lament psalm’s inclusion of a “confession of trust” (p. 157) is the key to a mental transformation whereby “praise” replaces “pain” as the psalmist contemplates different aspects of Yahweh’s “character, control, care, works, word, and presence” (p. 162). Randall X. Gauthier speculates on translation technique with reference to the Septuagint’s rendering of Ps 54 (55 in English), vv. 9 and 14-15, in relation to the theme: a God “Who Saves from Discouragement and Tempest” (p. 165). A comparative “dialectical approach” is adopted to suggest how “translational choices provide the interpretive building blocks and constraints for which the greater discourse provides context and meaning” (p. 166). Aspects of that “greater

<sup>7</sup> One might wonder perhaps why the editors chose to go against the general thematic progression of the Psalter itself in presenting their studies of the psalms of praise before those involving the lament psalms.

discourse” study include the underlying MT, a preliminary text-critical analysis, an intertextual comparison with Ps 82 (83):16, and some detailed “structural, literary, and theological observations” (p. 175). Gauthier concludes that “Psalm 54 [LXX] is both a translation and an autonomous text, and it is the interplay between these two dimensions that provides internal guidelines for interpretation” (p. 179).

In PART 4 we turn to “*The Psalter as a Book*” and “considering the canon” (p. 181). Robert L. Cole leads off, appropriately, with “Psalms 1-2: The Psalter’s Introduction” (p. 183). A detailed linguistic, structural, and thematic analysis, including cross-references to Ps 110 (p. 188) and Ps 3 (p. 192) suggests that Pss 1 and 2 form an “integrated, but independent” (p. 185) prologue to the Psalter,<sup>8</sup> a coherent juxtaposition that is evidenced elsewhere in the corpus, e.g., Pss 72-73 (p. 195). Next, David M. Howard Jr. considers the macro-theme of “Divine and Human Kingship as Organizing Motifs in the Psalter” (p. 197). After an overview of “the Psalter’s five ‘Books’” (p. 198), Howard, like Cole (see above), focuses on “Psalms 1-2 as the introduction to the Psalter” (p. 200), with their four major themes serving further as “keynotes for the Psalter” (p. 202). “A pattern of royal psalms” (p. 204) at key junctures creates the Psalter’s “macrostructure” (e.g., Pss 72, 89), while “the return of the k/King” is featured in Book V, which “ends with a climactic crescendo of praise that also acknowledges God’s kingship” (p. 206). “The Return of the King” is also the topic of Michael K. Snearly when contemplating “Book V as a Witness to Messianic Hope in the Psalter” (p. 209). After a sketch of the integrated “story line of the Psalter” (p. 211), Snearly identifies “the five key words of Book V” (p. 212), which support the major theme of kingship. Selected “evidence of Davidic hope” in the prophetic books (p. 214) and in Chronicles (p. 215) is referenced to show that even in postexilic times this messianic hope “was still alive” (p. 215) and “looked for the consummation of God’s kingship through his Anointed One” (p. 217). Tremper Longman III brings this book’s series of scholarly studies to a close by examining “Psalm 150 as the Conclusion to the Psalter” under the theme “From Weeping to Rejoicing” (p. 219). “Weeping” of course has reference to the lament psalms, which predominate in the first Books of the Psalter, and in fact normally include within themselves a “healthy turn toward praise” as part of their structure (p. 220). Psalm 150, “the most pure of all hymns” (p. 221) is examined closely with regard to “structure” (p. 222) and “canonical setting” (p. 224)—in fact, “the climax of a great Doxology” (p. 226, i.e., Pss 146-150). Although disagreeing with previous essayists regarding “the Psalter’s overall structure,” Longman believes that the collection’s “opening and closing psalms make sense if one thinks of the book as a whole as a literary sanctuary” (p. 224).

<sup>8</sup> Although Cole’s reasoning is sound, I was not quite convinced that the evidence that he marshals would necessarily disprove the view that Pss 1-2 are “two disparate psalms, one wisdom or perhaps Torah, and the other royal, that form a ‘dual’ introduction to the Psalter” (193).

Craig E. Morrison, *2 Samuel*. Berit Olam Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2013. xii = 331 pages. Hardcover with dust jacket. Price US\$ 39.95. ISBN 978-0-8146-5043-1. (eBook: Price US\$ 34.99. ISBN 978-0-8146-8291-3).

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In the opening chapter of his commentary on King David in 2 Samuel, Morrison's invitation to gently read and kindly judge the narrator's tale (p. 1), is a reflection of his own interaction with the David narrative. He suggests that the commentary on 2 Samuel should be viewed as a sequel to 1 Samuel since the narrator refers to events that pave the way to David's reign. Morrison intriguingly and skillfully manages to reveal a detailed portrait of David and his reign despite the restrictions of the narrator, whom he describes as "struggling to overcome the boundaries of language" (p. 316). Morrison manages to paint this portrait by highlighting and drawing out seemingly insignificant details from the David narratives such as the dreadful buildup to, depiction of, and aftermath of Tamar's rape (pp. 166-176). In this context, the inclusion of a copy of Giovanni Francesco Barbieri's oil painting of *Amnon and Tamar* 1649-1650 (p. 166) serves well to give embodiment to the narration of Tamar's distress and dread in view of her approaching predator.

Morrison divides the five chapters of his commentary into an Introduction and Acts 2-5. This approach brings the narrative experience Morrison wants to highlight in his interpretation of the biblical narrative, subtly to the fore. Following the Introduction (pp. 1-22) in which he outlines the characters of the David narrative and the plot, he continues with Act 2 that covers David's rule in Hebron (2 Sam 1:1-5:5) (pp. 23-69). Act 3 speaks to the establishment of David's reign in Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6-8:18) (pp. 71-117) while Act 4 captivantly draws the reader into the dramatic events surrounding the divine rescue for a beguiled king (2 Sam 9-20) (pp. 119-274). Act 5 (pp. 275-314) depicts the closure of David's public life (2 Sam 21-24) in a concentric three-tiered structure at the centre of which Morrison cleverly places the superscription to David's song (2 Sam 22:1-51) in order to bridge the *inserted* poem (= Ps 18) to its narrative setting (p. 287). A short Epilogue (pp. 315-316) concludes the commentary. Here, Morrison's lament is that there is not more sand in the hour-glass to linger with the many unsaid details (p. 315).

The usefulness of Morrison's commentary lies in his organised approach. Each chapter proceeds with a short introduction, which provides a

summative overview of the ensuing events. A structured layout is set forth for the different subdivisions of each Act and is respectively followed by a commentary.

Morrison's aim is to demonstrate the narrator's implicit *modus operandi*, to expose how life exists more fully in the small things. Throughout the study Morrison therefore focuses on David's private affairs as opposed to dealing with his public figure. Thereby he manages to open the reader's eye to catch glimpses of the secrets of David's heart and succeeds in manifesting the dynamic of David's character by concentrating on the small moments of his life. For example, when David receives his crown, the reader is alerted to watch for his reaction: "Will the fugitive king be relieved, delighted, distressed . . .?" (p. 25). Overall, Morrison discovers his own hidden consciousness from the depiction of the human being that the narrator brings to life and in doing so, he draws the modern reader into a similar discovery.

Under the heading FOR FURTHER READING a list of biblical commentaries and articles is supplied and supplemented by an index of sources focusing on biblical narrative (pp. 317-318). This addendum is a helpful resource for further research on similar topics. The alphabetical listing of cited authors (pp. 319-320) will be rather disappointing for uninformed readers since it only provides cursory information about the sources of citation. On the other hand, the comprehensive *Index of Biblical Citations* (pp. 321-331) is an asset. The style of Morrison's commentary does not exclude a more popular readership. The book provides impetus for thought for both scholarly and laity circles.

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Bill T. Arnold, Richard S. Hess (ed.). *Ancient Israel's History. An Introduction to Issues and Sources*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2014. 560 pages. Hardcover. US\$44.99. ISBN 978-0-8010-3930-0.

This book, edited by Bill T. Arnold (Asbury Theological Seminary) and Richard S. Hess (Denver Seminary), is initiated by the Institute for Biblical Research (IBR). It contains fifteen contributions, written by fifteen scholars, all of them specialists in the fields they deal with. Within the whole spectrum of research on ancient Israel's history, these scholars are rather conservative, which means that they "hold in common a respect for the biblical text as a legitimate source in the study of Israel's history" (p. 4), but within this consensus they represent a variety of different standpoints. The book is intended to serve as an introduction to ancient Israel's history. The first contribution lays the "Foundations for a History of Israel." It is followed by fourteen chapters that move forward "roughly according to the biblical story of Israel" (p. 21).

The introduction "Foundations for a History of Israel" is written by Richard S. Hess. After some general reflections on the purpose of the book, Hess gives a short overview on the history of archeological and historical studies on the topic, making the readers familiar with the most important scholars (e.g. Julius Wellhausen, Albrecht Alt, William F. Albright, etc.). It may be unavoidable that here and there the selection seems a bit random, but it is only Yigael Yadin whom I really miss. Subsequently, Hess presents different methodological approaches, from the so called "minimalists" with their "general skepticism toward any historical value to the contents of the Hebrew Bible" to more positive suggestions concerning the historical values of the biblical texts. Finally, Hess gives some general information on chronology, especially the distinction of relative and absolute chronology.

Bill T. Arnold is the author of the chapter on the "Genesis Narratives." He emphasises the difficulty of historical research on Genesis since there is simply not enough evidence to draw clear conclusions. Therefore, one has often to be content with mere possibilities. Arnold divides the treatment of Genesis in three parts, the "mytho-historical" or "pre-ancestral" accounts (Gen 1-11), the ancestral narratives (Gen 12-36) and the Joseph-narrative (Gen 37-50). While he seems to think quite positive about the historicity of these texts, he remains cautious with clear conclusions. Thus, he summarises the part on Gen 1-11 with the comment that many readers "will leave open the question of the historicity of these events, taking them as possible," while others will "admit the implausibility" of them (p. 34). With regard to the ancestral narratives, he points i.a. to the "Binu Yamina," mentioned in the Mari archives, which might be related to the tribe named Benjamin (pp. 38-39), or to the patriarchs' religious expressions according to the Genesis narratives, which suggest "that the Genesis traditions about the religion of Israel's ancestors are genuinely ancient and pre-Yahwistic" (p. 42). In sum, the extrabiblical evidence allows the historicity of the patriarchs according to Arnold. The same can be said concerning his short treatment of the Joseph-narratives. In my view, the whole chapter could have been a bit more elaborated. Much-debated

issues like the occurrence of camels in the ancestral narratives or the Egyptian name of Joseph (Zaphenath-paneah) are not even mentioned and also the different peoples and places mentioned in Genesis are either not or only scarcely discussed.

Arnold's contribution is followed by the chapter on the exodus and the wilderness narratives, written by James K. Hoffmeier. It reads like an extract and update of his two former books "Israel in Egypt" (1997) and "Ancient Israel in Sinai" (2005). First, he argues that the presence of Asians in Egypt especially in the Second Intermediate period, as well as the oppression of such foreigners in the New Kingdom, fits well with the biblical picture. Furthermore, he discusses the geography of the exodus and the wilderness narratives, whereby he emphasises against Donald B. Redford, that the biblical data do not necessarily point to the sixth century, but rather correspond with what we know from the late second millennium B.C.E.. However, in most cases it remains unclear whether this early dating fits better than Redford's suggestion. The mention of Rameses in Exod 1:11 still seems to be the clearest indication for an earlier dating, since at the end of the second millennium this city was abandoned. The discussion on the route of the exodus clearly benefits from Hoffmeier's own excavations (e.g. at Tell el-Borg). Regarding the location of Mount Sinai, Hoffmeier convincingly argues for a southern location around Gebel Musa and Gebel Serbal. The chapter is finished by some suggestions about the tabernacle and its parallels from Egypt: "There is no good explanation for these Egyptian linguistic and technological elements in the book of Exodus if the narrative is 'a brilliant product of the human imagination.'"

The contribution of Samuel Greengus on "Covenant and Treaty in the Hebrew Bible and in the Ancient Near East" does in my view not completely fit into a history of ancient Israel. To be sure, the comparative material of the ANE does play an important role in the dating of Pentateuchal material in particular. Yet Greengus investigates the material in terms of concepts and parallels rather than in terms of dating questions. Regarding the hotly debated relationship between the Esarhaddon Succession Treaty and Deut 28, he concisely notes that the similarities "are traditional curse themes and were used in other formulations in treaties and royal monuments from earlier periods as well as appearing in Neo-Assyrian treaties" (p. 117). Thus, the "Implications for Historiography" on pp. 125–126) remain quite general.

Lawson G. Stone is the author of the informative article on "Early Israel and Its Appearance in Canaan." He shortly discusses the different theories on the origin of Israel, from conquest to peaceful infiltration or settlement. After weighing the biblical material and the extrabiblical evidence, he prefers a conquest model, dated somewhere in the 13th century. In fact, he is very close to Albright's synthesis. The main elements of his reconstruction is, first, that "Israel consisted of elements already resident within Canaan" (p. 155), second, that certain distinctive features nevertheless point "to an influence from outside the native Canaanite sphere" (p. 156), third, that the earliest Israelite settlements appear "in the eastern zones of the tribal area designated for Manasseh" (p. 158) and fourth, that "despite current scholarly prejudice against 'conquest' models, it is difficult to imagine any

people group establishing a claim over Canaan [. . .] without any acts of warfare against the urban centers that controlled Canaan on behalf of Egypt” (p. 158).

“The Judges and the Early Iron Age” is discussed by Robert D. Miller II. While it is impossible to prove or disprove the historicity of the events told in the book of Judges (p. 168), Miller investigates the archaeological evidence of the sites mentioned in Judges with a special attention on the areas around Shiloh and Shechem. He concludes that the book of Judges seems to reflect the “fact, that the real ‘Israel’ of IA1 was the northern hill country” (p. 173). The contribution is concluded by a synthesis of the archaeological and biblical evidence about the economics, lifestyles religion. The overall picture is that the book of Judges indeed might reflect an early Iron Age reality.

Daniel Bodi deals with “The Story of Samuel, Saul, and David.” On the first ten pages, he outlines the biblical accounts. Afterwards, he collects comparative material from the ANE, with a special focus on Mari. In the conflict between two Amorite clans (the Benjaminite Addu clan and the Bensim’alite Līm clan) he sees an analogy to the conflict between the house of Saul and the House of David. Furthermore, he points to analogies with the *‘apiru* and he suggests that “David may be perceived as an *‘apiru* warlord” (p. 217). The collection of comparative material is interesting, yet it remains a bit unclear what it contributes to a reconstruction of Ancient Israel’s history. Bodi concludes that with regard to the comparative materials, the narratives about Samuel, Saul, and David “seem to reflect authentic historical reminiscence of a stage when ancient Israelite seminomadic chieftains were slowly becoming sedentary, adopting urban mores and lifestyle” (p. 226).

The contribution of Steven M. Ortiz on the “United Monarchy” provides a good overview on the respective issues. After a short summary on the biblical evidence and some extrabiblical sources, he introduces to the state of discussion, mentioning William Albright’s and Yigael Yadin’s contributions to the archaeology of the united monarchy as well as Israel Finkelstein’s “Low Chronology,” noting that, ironically, “more biblical scholars than archaeologists have jumped on the Low Chronology bandwagon” (p. 238). According to Ortiz, today’s question is not whether David and Solomon existed but rather “What is the nature of the united monarchy” (p. 240). In the second half of the article, Ortiz gives a short introduction in several issues: geopolitical context, the relationship between Egypt and Israel, Israel’s settlement planning, Jerusalem as centralised capital, economics, military, temple, daily life, domestic houses, and literacy. He concludes convincingly that “the archaeology and literary sources provide enough data for the historian to reconstruct the nature of the united monarchy with a reasonable degree of accuracy” (p. 261).

The direct line from the united monarchy to the divided kingdoms is somewhat interrupted by the chapter of James K. Mead on “The Biblical Prophets in Historiography.” Mead gives an introduction to biblical prophecy, including the different terms used in the OT. Then he collects comparative material from Mari,

Neo-Assyrian material, and West Semitic texts. All in all, this is rather a comparative study than a contribution to historiography. The outcome for historiography remains quite general, namely that “the textual evidence from ancient Near Eastern prophecy witnesses to the antiquity of prophetic phenomena also seen in the Bible, suggesting that the canonical prophets are not the stuff of later literary invention” (p.284).

Kyle Greenwood discusses the “Late Tenth and Ninth-Century Issues.” He first gives an overview on the biblical accounts, then presents the relevant extrabiblical texts (Tel Dan Inscription, Mesha Stela, Zakkur Stela, Hazael Booty Inscriptions, Melqart Stela, Royal Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III and of Adad-nirari III), subsequently, he points to the tensions between the biblical and extrabiblical evidence and finally, he discusses these tensions and proposes some syntheses. The most important issues are well introduced in this contribution. However, the structure of this chapter is not very helpful, since the respective issues are split in four parts. The Moabite War of 2 Kgs 3, for example, is shortly mentioned on p. 294 without any hint to the Mesha Stela. Then, on p. 297, the Mesha Stela is introduced without any mention of 2 Kgs 3. Then, on pp. 306-307, the historical problems arising in a comparison of 2 Kgs 3 and the Mesha Stela are listed. Finally, on pp. 313-315 a (convincing) synthesis is proposed. This splitting makes it for the reader difficult to follow the different strands throughout the chapter. In the end, Greenwood concludes that from a purely historical perspective, “the biblical text does overplay Jehoshaphat and underplay Ahab” (p. 318). By the way, Greenwood accredits the stabels of Meggido, which are dated to the tenth century by Oritz (p. 257), to King Ahab (p. 303).

A more straightforward structure has the excellent contribution of Sandra Richter on “Eight-Century Issues.” She divides the century into two periods: “The first half (800-745 BCE) is characterised by the wealth and influence of Jeroboam II and Uzziah’s allied kingdoms. The second half (745-700 BCE) is dominated by the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the collapse of the northern kingdom, and Hezekiah’s reign in the south” (p. 321). The discussion of biblical and extrabiblical material is interwoven, what gives the biblical material the full weight of historical source material. The contribution contains two introductory excursus on Kuntillet ‘Ajrūd and the Siloam Tunnel inscription. A special attention is given to “Hezekiah, the ‘Poster Child’ of Biblical Archaeology” (pp. 342-349).

Brad E. Kelle follows the issues of “Judah in the Seventh Century” along the kings of this period. A first focus is on King Manasseh and the question, “how the kingdom functioned within the larger political and religious context of the Assyrian Empire [. . .] and whether the remainder of the first half of the seventh century witnessed any kind of significant domestic political, social, or economic recovery in Judah” (p. 357). A second focus is on King Josiah, his religious reform, and the status of Judah within Syria-Palestine in his time. The contribution concludes with a few pages on King Jehoiakim and his relationship with Egypt

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and Babylonia. In sum, Kelle provides a good introduction to the seventh century issues.

One of the main issues Peter van der Veen deals with in his contribution on “Sixt-Century Issues” is the population of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem. After discussing the archaeological evidence, he follows Oded Lipschits in suggesting that “there was a 69.3 percent decrease of settled area between the late monarchic and Persian periods” (p. 396). There is evidence of destruction in Jerusalem in almost every part of the city. Ramat Raḥel probably functioned as an administrative centre in the Babylonian and the Achaemenid periods. Then, van der Veen briefly discusses the world of the Babylonian deportees, the first returnees under Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar, and the rebuilding of the temple.

André Lemaire introduces the “Fifth- and Fourth-Century Issues.” For the fifth century, the Book of Nehemiah is the most important source. Due to the efforts of Nehemiah, Jerusalem became the capital of Yehud (superseding Mizpah). Furthermore, there is little epigraphic evidence from the late fifth century (Elephantine and Wadi Daliyeh). Regarding the Babylonian Diaspora, the al-Yahudu and Murashu archives provides some insights. Compared to the al-Yahudu texts, the (later dated) Murashu archive “suggests that the Jewish people are only a very small local minority” (p. 416). Lemaire prefers for Ezra a dating after Nehemiah, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II (p. 398). Then, Lemaire gives an overview on the coins, stamps, ostraca, papyri and bullae from the fourth century with some insights on political and economic issues. In sum, Lemaire describes the fifth-fourth centuries as a “time of revival.”

The last chapter, dealing with “The Hellenistic Period,” is written by David A. deSilva. He is outlining the Jewish history from Alexander to Pompey, when Judea becomes a Roman province. The most important sources he uses are 1-2 Maccabees, Josephus, and partly Dan 7-12. The contribution also contains a short overview on the archaeology of Hellenistic Palestine (pp. 446-449).

According to the preface, the book is “intended as an introductory volume” and its target audience are “students and researchers” alike. In sum, I think that this book indeed answers the claim of being an introductory volume. The state of research is outlined and the most important issues and controversies are at least introduced. Thus, the book is suitable as a first approach to Ancient Israel’s History. Whoever wants to go deeper into the subject matters finds the hints he needs for further readings.

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Matthias Henze (ed.). *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids, Mich., Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2012. 568 pages. Paperback. Price US\$50, 33 GBP ISBN 978-0-8028-0388-7.

The reception of the Bible in various contexts has become a storm-centre in recent scholarship. This field not only concerns biblical studies but a whole variety of disciplines. The present volume focuses on the reception of the OT and other writings in the period of the Second Temple. It aims at providing “a systematic introduction to biblical interpretation in the Jewish literature of antiquity” (p. ix). It covers a period of about five hundred years, from the third century B.C.E. through the second century C.E.:

. . . the chronological borders largely suggest themselves. Few will dispute that biblical interpretation begins within the Jewish Bible itself and continues in its versions, and that the emergence of rabbinic literature on the other end of the chronological spectrum marks a major turning point in the history of Jewish biblical Interpretation. The oldest text discussed in this volume, apart from the Hebrew Bible itself, is the Septuagint, and the last essay in the Companion looks forward and describes some lines of continuity, particularly in the field of legal exegesis, from Qumran to early rabbinic literature (p. ix).

The contributors to the Companion were requested to write on specific books of late Second Temple Judaism and to examine the extent to which the kind of biblical interpretation the reader finds in them is characteristic of exegetical techniques found elsewhere (p. 9-10). The contributions appear in six parts.

Part one consists of an excellent introductory essay by James L. Kugel on “The Beginnings of Biblical Interpretation” (pp. 3-23). Kugel places the beginning of biblical exegesis in the immediate post-exilic era, when various factors combined to make for the new importance of Scripture and its interpretation for the various groups of returnees:

Those who resolved to go back were thus a self-selected group; for the most part, they did what they did out of a desire to re-establish what had been, or at least to start afresh the Jewish polity on its native soil. But what exactly had existed in years gone by? And how should the returning community go about reorganising its collective existence? The body of ancient writings seemed to hold the answer to both questions. So it was that these texts were looked to now as a guide; they were concerned with events from the past, but what they said could be used as a model for the future. To be sure, the exiles were divided on many important questions. . . . Such questions were complex; there were good arguments on both sides. But precisely for that reason, exponents on either side sought to buttress their arguments with the ancient writings of prophets and sages and with examples from the people’s history before the exile. In short, a new approach to Israel’s ancient writings now emerged: They could tell you what to do

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now. This was a monumental change, and one that was to characterise the way Scripture was read for centuries and centuries to come (p. 5).

Kugel goes on to describe the importance of laws, as it was “incumbent on the Judeans who had returned to their ancient homeland to avoid repeating their ancestor’s misstep. This time they would scrupulously obey all of God’s commandments; this time, everyone would be an expert in the application of the divine law, so that there would be no mistakes” (p. 6). Kugel next traces the rise of biblical interpreters in this historic context and provides a succinct summary of the most important genres and texts for the study of ancient biblical interpretation (pp. 9-13). In order to understand the overall approach to the task of exegesis that flourished during this era and how, in practical terms, the interpreters proceeded, Kugel identifies a common attitude and approach to the biblical text that emerges despite the many differences between those texts (p. 13). There is a common set of four assumptions about how Scripture was to be read and interpreted:

- (i) The Bible is a fundamentally cryptic document. Often, when it seems to be saying X, what it really means is Y. Hence the necessity for careful interpretation: it was the interpreter’s job to find the hidden meaning of the text and make it plain to others.
- (ii) The Bible is a great book of lessons. Although most of its various parts talk about the distant past (a past that was distant even in the time of the ancient Interpreters), its words are actually aimed at people today. Thus, the words spoken by Israel’s prophets in the eighth or sixth century B.C.E. were interpreted so as to refer to events in the Roman-occupied Palestine of the interpreters’ own day; laws that were attributed to Moses were explicated in such a way as to refer to situations and a way of life that existed in the interpreters’ own time; the stories of heroes from the ancient past events were understood to contain lessons for proper conduct, the heroes themselves having been converted into moral exemplars through creative exegesis; and so forth.
- (iii) The Bible is perfectly consistent and free of error or internal contradiction. Although its various texts were written in different periods and vastly different circumstances, penned by different authors representing different strata and institutions within society, nevertheless its words came to be held to be perfectly in harmony.
- (iv) Every word of Scripture comes from God. Certainly, sentences that began “And the Lord said to Moses” or “Thus says the Lord . . . ” were two of Scripture’s most common ways of designating divine speech. But what of the parts that are not so designated? Eventually, interpreters came to hold that every part of Scripture had been divinely dictated or divinely inspired or otherwise granted by God – the stories of Genesis or the court history of David no less than the laws given to Moses or the prophecies of Isaiah or

Jeremiah. Even the psalms, whose words seemed to be directed to God, were nonetheless held to have come from God, indeed, to be a form of prophecy.

Kugel observes that the,

Ancient interpreters rarely spoke of these assumptions as such; indeed, for most Interpreters, they probably were unconscious assumptions (as assumptions usually are). Nevertheless, a careful reading will reveal that they underlie virtually everything that was written about Scripture during this crucial period and thus had a great deal to do with the “spin” that accompanied the Bible from antiquity through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and – to a great extent – even into our own day (p. 15).

This is followed by a case study in which Kugel traces how Gen 5:21-24 (the description of the life and death of Enoch) was interpreted in early Judaism (15-21). Kugel shows how the various understandings of Enoch embody the four assumptions listed above. In closing he notes that ancient biblical interpretation is by and large an interpretation of individual verses (“their comments are usually framed by a particular verse or even a phrase within a verse,” p. 21). These little explanations of phrases or verses are called exegetical motifs and tended to “travel” as they were passed on by word of mouth or from one text to another, sometimes being modified on the way” (p. 21). Kugel writes in closing:

There have been many Interpreters since these first generations. Later Jewish and Christian exegetes built on the interpretations they received from their forebears. Patristic exegetes, though they inherited the attitude to the text and a considerable body of interpretations from earlier times, created a highly developed set of typological and allegorical interpretations of their own; their writings ultimately led to the medieval doctrine of four levels of meaning in every biblical text. On the Jewish side, rabbinic interpretation further developed the same store of earlier exegetical motifs, and in the Middle Ages it too developed new forms of interpretation, philosophical, kabbalistic, and yet others. But all these later developments would not have been possible without the groundwork laid by the interpreters studied in the present volume – nor, despite the innovations of medieval times, were the four assumptions that shaped their approach seriously questioned until the modern period. Indeed, those assumptions, and many of the early Interpreters’ actual motifs, are to some extent still with us, having shaped the Bible’s career for more than two millennia (p. 22).

Part two, “The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” deals with “Inner-biblical Interpretation” (Yair Zakovitch, pp. 27–63); “Translators as Interpreters: Scriptural Interpretation in the Septuagint” (Martin Rösel, pp. 64–91) and “The Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in the Targums” (Edward M. Cook, pp. 92–117).

The genre commonly called the “Rewritten Bible” is the focus of three essays in part three: Jacques van Ruiten, “Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees: The Case of the Early Abram (*Jub.* 11:14-12:15)” (pp. 121-156); Moshe J. Bernstein, “The Genesis Apocryphon: Compositional and Interpretive Perspectives” (pp. 157-179) and Howard Jacobson, “Biblical Interpretation in Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*” (pp. 180-199).

Part four deals with representative texts of the Qumran literature: Shani Tzoref, “The Use of Scripture in the Community Rule” (pp. 203-234); George J. Brooke, “Prophetic Interpretation in the Pesharim” (pp. 235-254) and Sarah J. Tanzer on “Biblical Interpretation in the Hodayot” (pp. 255-275).

Part five examines biblical interpretation in the apocalyptic literature and testaments and contains the following essays: Matthias Henze, “The Use of Scripture in the Book of Daniel” (pp. 279-307); Hindy Najman (with Itamar Manoff and Eva Mroczek), “How to Make Sense of Pseudonymous Attribution: The Cases of 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch” (pp. 308-336) and Robert Kugler, “The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Not-So-Ambiguous Witness to Early Jewish Interpretive Practices” (pp. 337-360).

Biblical interpretation in wisdom literature is addressed in part six by Benjamin G. Wright III (“Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Ben Sira,” pp. 363-388) and Peter Enns, “Pseudo-Solomon and His Scripture: Biblical Interpretation in the Wisdom of Solomon” (pp. 389-412). Part seven is devoted to two examples from Hellenistic Judaism: Gregory E. Sterling, “The Interpreter of Moses: Philo of Alexandria and the Biblical Text” (pp. 415-435) and Zuleika Rodgers, “Josephus’ Biblical Interpretation” (pp. 436-464). Aharort Shemesh’ essay, “Biblical Exegesis and Interpretations from Qumran to the Rabbis” (pp. 467-489), constitutes part eight entitled “Biblical Interpretation in Antiquity.” The list of contributors, a detailed bibliography (pp. 492-527) and indices of modern authors, subjects and of passages round off this helpful companion. It offers an excellent survey for students and specialists alike.

The essays of this volume survey the whole ranges of genres and approaches with which the OT was interpreted in early Judaism. This is not only an important period in the reception history of the Bible as it concerns the beginnings of biblical interpretation in which crucial foundations were laid that shaped biblical interpretation for centuries to come. This period also shaped and provided the context in which the authors of the NT and other early Christian writings used and interpreted the OT (and other early Jewish writings) as witness to God’s salvation in Christ and the subsequent events. This period and these writings constitute the backdrop against which the use and interpretation of the OT in the NT needs to be seen, understood and measured.

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Christine Abart. *Lebensfreude und Gottesjubiläum. Studien zu physisch erlebter Freude in den Psalmen*. (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 142). Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2015. XIII + 350 Seiten. Leinen. EUR 50. ISBN 978-3-7887-2888-5.

Bei der vorliegenden Monographie handelt es sich um eine überarbeitete Fassung einer von der Universität Salzburg angenommenen Dissertation (Dr. theol.). Die Autorin bringt langjährige Erfahrungen in seelsorglicher und bibelpastoraler Praxis mit sich. Dadurch angeregt widmet sie sich einem wichtigen, aber bisher wenig untersuchten Themenbereich der Psalmenforschung, der als Teil der alttestamentlichen Anthropologie zu fassen ist.

In ihrer Einführung stellt sie bisherige Arbeiten zur „Freude“ in den Psalmen vor und evaluiert den Bereich der „Emotionen“ in der Psychologie und der Emotionsforschung. Im Blick auf biblische Texte hält sie zu Beginn fest, dass der Mensch als „psychosomatische Einheit“ begriffen wurde. Dabei hat der Mensch nicht einen Leib, sondern *ist* Leib. Der Fokus der Studie liegt auf der Erarbeitung der Begrifflichkeit der „Freude“ in ihren jeweiligen Psalmkontexten. Angesichts der weiten Thematik beschränkt Vfn. sich auf diejenigen Texte, in denen Freude *physisch* ausgedrückt wird, die entsprechenden Begriffe also mit Ausdrücken für die leibliche Existenz von Menschen verbunden sind.

In der Durchführung ergibt dies sechs Hauptabschnitte, die der Reihe nach den Wortfeldern שמח („sich freuen“), רגן („jubeln“), גיל („jauchzen“), שוש („froh sein“), עלז („frohlocken“) und שעע („erquicken“) gewidmet sind. Die jeweiligen Kapitel begnügen sich dabei nicht mit der Begriffssemantik, sondern verbinden diese mit exegetischer Arbeit insofern, als die Ausdrucksweisen der Freude in ihren jeweiligen Psalmkontexten erarbeitet werden. Beim Hauptbegriff שמח (S. 21–133) sind es die Psalmen 4; 16; 19; 33; 86, 97; 104 und 109 (oder Ausschnitte daraus), darin eingelagert Exkurse zu den anthropologischen Begriffen „Herz“, „Leber“, „Kehle“ sowie „Freude an JHWHs Weisungen“. Den Abschluss machen Überlegungen zur Übersetzung in der LXX. Unter רגן finden sich Ausführungen zu Ps 32; 42; 47; 51; 63; 71; 84; 118; 126 mit Exkursen zu „Die Stimme des Jubels“, „Die Lippen als Sprechorgan“, „Lobpreis durch Leier und Standleier“, „JHWH Zebaoth“, „Der Körper“ und „Die jubelnde Stimme verkündet: JHWH hat Jakob erlöst“. Zu גיל werden die Psalmen 13; 16; 35; 51 behandelt und ein Exkurs über „Knochen/Glieder“ beigelegt. Bei den selteneren Lexemen finden sich zu שוש Erörterungen zu Ps 35 und 119, zu עלז solche zu Ps 28 und zu שעע solche zu Ps 94. In der Auswertung wird der Ertrag zu den sechs Wortfeldern zusammengetragen. Wie bereits gesagt, bietet die Studie nicht eine umfassende Listung aller „Freude“ ausdrückender Wortfelder, sondern konzentriert sich auf diejenigen Belege, die mit Leib-Begriffen kombiniert werden. In den überwiegenden Fällen wird die Freude dabei nicht nomi-

nal, sondern durch Verben zum Ausdruck gebracht. Bei שמח fällt auf, dass in sieben von acht Fällen die Wortwurzel mit לב „Herz“ kombiniert ist. Bei רגן wiederum geschieht die Verbindung überwiegend mit Organen der Lautbarmachung („Kehle“, „Zunge“, „Lippen“, „Stimme“). Vfn. hält zudem fest, dass bei שמח vornehmlich anhaltende, reflektierte Freude, bei רגן dagegen spontaner Jubel gemeint ist. Bei גיל ist je hälftig inneres und von aussen wahrnehmbares Jauchzen im Blick. Bedeutend ist, dass in allen Texten Gott Anlass bzw. Grund für die Freude ist. Wenn JHWH die Grundbedürfnisse (Nahrung, Sicherheit) stillt, reagieren die Betenden mit Freude. Dabei wechseln sich die Belege, die eine freudige Grundhaltung ausdrücken, mit solchen ab, die eine spontane Äusserung anzeigen. Leiblich äussert sich die Freude mit Abstand am meisten im Herzen (12mal), gefolgt von der Kehle (5mal). „Die physischen Ausdrucksformen verstärken den emotionalen Charakter der Aussagen und erleichtern es den Mitbetenden aller Zeiten, in die Freude über Gott einzustimmen“ (S. 332). Beschlossen wird die Monographie neben dem üblichen Literaturverzeichnis mit zwei tabellarischen Zusammenstellungen der Begriffe in den Psalmen und einem Abbildungsverzeichnis. Letzteres weist den reichen Gebrauch von ikonographischen Darstellungen aus dem Alten Orient (v. a. aus Keel, Bildsymbolik) aus, welche Vfn. in ihre exegetischen Ausführungen einbezogen hat.

Bei der Bewertung der Studie ist als Verdienst herauszustellen, dass eine eingehende Untersuchung zu einer bislang vernachlässigten, aber wichtigen Ausdrucksdimension in den Psalmen vorgelegt wurde (die Aspekte von Leiden, Zorn u. ä. sind diesbezüglich besser erforscht). Die Verschränkung von Begriffsssemantik mit exegetischer Arbeit ist zu begrüßen. Freilich sind die Ausführungen manchmal etwas repetitiv und assoziativ. Zudem wird manches einbezogen, das nicht nötig gewesen wäre. Kritik ist hinsichtlich Anlage und Methodik der Monographie anzubringen. Aus Gründen des Umfangs ist eine Eingrenzung der Thematik zwar verständlich, die vorgenommene aber unglücklich. Vfn. gesteht selbst ein, dass eine biblische Anthropologie ganzheitlich zu denken ist, die physische und psychisch-geistige Dimensionen also ineinander greifen. Zudem wird (zu) stark auf die Emotionalität abgestellt, obwohl Vfn. erwähnt, dass das „Herz“ auch Ort der Rationalität sei. Soll der Begriff „Herz“ überhaupt als Leib-Kategorie gelten oder nicht? Die Vfn. entscheidet sich dafür. Dies tut sie auch im Fall von נפש, indem sie den Begriff fragwürdigerweise *durchwegs* mit „Kehle“ übersetzt. Der Titel „Lebensfreude und Gottesjubel“ bringt zwar den Doppelaspekt gut zum Ausdruck, freilich ist das Gotteslob – ist es nicht auch Ausdruck von Freude? – nur beschränkt im Blick. Wurzeln wie ידה, הלל und ברך werden nämlich nicht untersucht, ebenso wenig die in den Psalmen recht häufigen אשרי-Formulierungen (Seligpreisungen). Der Einbezug von Gattungsüberlegungen und das Bedenken von kommunikativen Sprecherebenen hätte der Studie gut getan. Zudem wäre es vorteilhafter gewesen, diejenigen Psalmen, die mehr als einen der Leib-basierten Freude-Begriffe enthalten (Ps 16; 35; 51), nicht aufzuteilen, sondern die Nuancierung

gen in einem einzigen Psalmdurchgang darzulegen. Wenn im Ertrag bei der Ausdrucksweise der Freude als wesentliche Kategorien zwischen „spontan“ und „anhaltend“ differenziert wird, fragt man sich, ob damit viel gewonnen ist.

Häufig wird auf die BHQ (Biblia Hebraica Quinta) als wissenschaftliche Edition der hebräischen Textüberlieferung hingewiesen. Diese (von Gerard J. Norton verantwortete) Ausgabe liegt aber für die Psalmen bisher noch nicht vor. Die nachgeprüften Beispiele legen nahe, dass Vfn. BHQ schrieb und BHS meinte (im Abkürzungsverzeichnis wird BHQ auch als „Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia [Quinta]“ aufgeschlüsselt). Im Einführungskapitel ist mehrfach die Zeichenfolge der hebräischen Quadratschrift unschön und / oder falsch wiedergegeben – Unvorsorglichkeiten, die bei einer Schlusskorrektur nicht zu übersehen gewesen wären.

Insgesamt sind der fleissigen Studie manch gute Detailbeobachtungen zu attestieren. Methodik und Anlage sind aber unzureichend, und das Ergebnis bleibt eher blass.

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