

Dale C. Allison, Christine Helmer, Volker Leppin, Choon-Leong Seow, Hermann Spieckermann, Barry Dov Walfish, Eric Ziolkowski (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception 9: Field – Gennesaret*. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2014. xxviii + 1212 cols. Hardbound. Price 259.00 €. ISBN 978-3-11-018377-1.

Like previous volumes, the most recent ninth volume of the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (EBR) combines what one would expect of a classical Bible dictionary (including references to the Ancient Near East) with a broad survey of the reception of biblical material in the New Testament, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, literature, visual arts, music and film. The introduction to volume one (*Aaron – Aniconism*, 2009) provides an introduction to the scope and approach of the *Encyclopedia*:

EBR pursues the twofold task of (1) comprehensively recording – and, indeed, advancing – the current knowledge of the origins and development of the Bible in its Jewish and Christian canonical forms and (2) documenting the history of the Bible’s reception in Judaism and Christianity as evident in exegetical literature, theological and philosophical writings of various genres, literature, liturgy, music, the visual arts, dance, and film, as well as in Islam and other religious traditions and contemporary movements. With this broad program of reception history, *EBR* moves into new terrain in recognition of the fact that biblical

texts not only have their own particular backgrounds and settings but have also been received and interpreted, and have exerted influence or otherwise have had impact in countless religious, theological, and aesthetic settings (ix).

The entries on the Flood and the book of Genesis serve as examples of this approach. They consist of a number of sub-entries:

Brian B. Schmidt, “Flood I. The Ancient Near East” (219–222); Heath D. Dewell, “II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (222–225); Janet E. Spittler, “III. Greco-Roman Antiquity” (225); Hans Förster, “IV. New Testament” (226); Navad Sharon, “V. Judaism A. Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism” (227–229); Aryeh Amihay, “V. Judaism B. Rabbinic Judaism and C. Medieval Judaism” (229–233); Joseph Davis, “V. Judaism D. Modern Judaism” (233f); Hans Förster, “VI. Christianity A. Greek and Latin Patristics and Orthodox Churches” (234–236); Ad Putter, “VI. Christianity B. Medieval Times and Reformation Era” (236–239); Jonathan Huddleston, “VI. Christianity C. Modern Europe and America” (239f) – one looks in vain for the Christian reception elsewhere in the world, see below – Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, “VII. Islam” (240f); Anthony Swindell, “VIII. Literature” (241–244); Sara Kipfer, “XI. Visual Arts” (244–247); Helen Leneman, “X. Music” (247–249) and Anton Karl Kozlovic, “XI. Film” (249–252).

Thomas Römer, “Genesis, Book of I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1147–1152); Steve Moyise, “II. New Testament” (1153–1156), Sidnie White Crawford, “III. Judaism A. Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism” (1156–1160); Marc Bregman, “III. Judaism B. Rabbinic Judaism” (1160–1162), Meira Polliak, Marzena Zawanowska, Nehamit Pery, “III. Judaism C. Medieval Judaism” (1162–1169); Michael G. Wechsler, “III. Judaism D. Medieval Judaism: Mysticism” (1169–1171); Rachel Friedman, “III. Judaism E. Modern Judaism” (1171–1174); Barry Dov Walfish, “III. Judaism F. Jewish Liturgy” (1174f); Charlotte Köckert, “IV. Christianity A. Greek and Latin Patristics and Orthodox Church” (1175–1178); Brian Murdoch, “IV. Christianity B. Medieval Times and Reformation Era” (1178–1181); Michael C. Legaspi, “IV. Christianity C. Modern Europe and America” (1181–1183) – again one looks in vain for the Christian reception elsewhere in the world, see below – Stephen Burge, “V. Islam” (1183–1185); Emily O. Gravett, “VI. Literature” (1185–1188); Lubomir Milanovic, “VII. Visual Arts” (1188–1193); Nils Holger Petersen, “VIII. Music” (1193–1195) and Emily O. Gravett, “IX. Film” (1195–1197). The entries on the reception of Genesis in literature, visual art, music and film make no mention of African examples.

The obvious strength of this approach is that each sub-field can be assigned to specialists, given that mastery of the whole range of biblical evidence and its reception is beyond individual scholars. However, this approach

results in a lack of coherence and synthesis. The interpretation of this mass of information and the search for trajectories is left to the reader.

Of particular interest for the study of the Old Testament are the following longer entries of this volume (not including names of minor places or persons). Our focus is on the Old Testament itself, not on the reception history of the biblical material which is described in the following sub-entries (as above with Genesis): Soo Jung Kim, “Fiery Furnace I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (4f); Andreas Wagner, “Finger of God I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (52f); Kristin Helms, “Fire II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (68f); David Moster, “First Fruits I. ANE and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (97–99); David Moster, “Firstborn I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (105–107); Yosef Ofer, “Five Scrolls” (139–143); Markus Saur, “Flesh I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (175–177); Katie M. Heffelfinger, “Flock I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (214f); Naama Zahavi-Ely, “Flora, Biblical” (252–254); Susan Niditsch, “Folklore in the Bible” (286–288); Brennan Breed, “Folly and Fools I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (353f); Nathan MacDonald, “Food II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (365–368); Choon-Leong Seow, “Footstool I. ANE and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (386–388); Sebastian Fuhrmann, F. Uhlenbruch, “Footwashing I. ANE and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (390–392); Judith Krawelitzki, “Footwear I. ANT and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (403–406), Peter Porzig, “Foreigner I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (415–417); oddly enough the sub-entry on Christianity (422–427), like a good number of others in this category, ends with “Medieval Times and Reformation Era”, as if the reception of biblical references to foreigners ended after that period; Hermann Spieckermann, “Forgiveness I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (435–437); Marvin A. Sweeney, “Form Criticism I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (468–470); Hermann Spieckermann, “Fornication I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (477); in the sub-entry on Christianity, col. 489f no mention is made of the role biblical references played in debates about polygamy); Steed Vernyl Davidson, “Foundation I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (512f); Seon-Eun Jeong, “Four Empires I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (517f); Christopher Ocker, “Four Senses of Scriptures” (551–556); Amy Erickson, “Fratricide I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (621); Hermann Spieckermann, “Free Will I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (634f); Peter Porzig, “Freedom I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (671f); Renny Khoo, Choon-Leong Seow, “Friends, Friendship I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (715–717); Judith Krawelitzki, “Frog I. ANE and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (755f); Nathan MacDonald, “Fruit I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (773f); Martin Prudký, “Fulfillment I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (786f; oddly enough there is no sub-entry on Christianity); Christopher B. Hays, “Funerary Inscriptions II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (836–838); Tyler Mayfield, “Gabriel I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (859f); Ulrich Hübner, “Games I. ANE and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (937f); Crais Evans Anderson, “Garden I. ANE and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (971, an entry of just 10 lines!); Mareike V. Blischke, “Garland I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testa-

ment” (986f); David Moster, “Garment I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (991f); Lahpai Fanang Lum, “Gate, Gates I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1008f); Yigal Levin, “Gaza” (1046–1057); Mareike V. Blischke, J. Edward Wright, “Gehinnom I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1068f); Mark W. Hamilton, “Gemstones I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1098–1100); Brian Rainey, “Gender I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1104–1106); “Genealogy, Genealogies I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1126–1128); Hermann Spieckermann, “Generation/Generations I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1138f); Daniel Machiela, “Genesis Apokryphon” (1143–1147), William A. Tooman, “Gential Discharge I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1199–1201); Robert L. Cohn, “Genitalia I. Biblical Texts, Judaism and Christianity” (1204–1206).

There is also a survey article on how the Bible has been portrayed in films: Marek Lis, “Film, Bible in” (36–39); Eric Ziolkowski, “Bible in Literature” (39–46) and Andreas Bückler, Nils Holger Petersen, “Bible in Music” (46–48). The volume also includes entries on Biblical scholars such as David J. Fine, “Finkelstein, Louis” (59–61) and Hans Wißmann, “Frazer, James George” (632–634) and authors, painters and composers who in various ways were inspired by the Bible.

My main concern is not with the excellent material that is collated by international specialists who worked hard to bring all this knowledge together, but rather with an omission that was also evident in previous volumes, and which is of particularly interest given that this journal is edited and printed in South Africa. The sub-entries on Christian reception extensively document the reception of biblical material in the Ancient Church, the era of the Reformation and in modern Europe and North America. The same applies to the sub-entries on literature, visual arts, music and film. The rich reception of the Bible in other contexts, be it in Africa, Asia and Latin America, is only rarely documented. Two examples of the few references to other contexts in this volume should be mentioned:

In the entry “Flight into Egypt VIII. Film” (211–213), Jeffrey Staley writes:

Finally, Mark Dornford May’s 2006 South African film *Son of Man* shows Joseph being warned by an angel to flee the township where Herod’s militia is seeking the child – but nothing is said about where the family is to go. In this film they are on the road when the slaughter happens, and Mary turns her four-year-old son’s head, forcing him to look at the children’s corpses. But Dornford May does not show the family spending time in “Egypt” or returning to “Nazareth” (213).

The entry by Susanne Scholz, “Gender VII. Film” (1121–1126) 1125 notes:

Similarly urgent is the task of exploring the constructions of gender in non-American Bible-related films. For instance, a retelling of Genesis

34 comes from the Mali filmmaker Cheik Oumar Sissoko in his film *La Genese* (1999). The movie, an inculturated depiction of the biblical narrative with traditional Mali costumes and sensibilities, focuses on the complex relationships among Jacob, Dinah's brothers, and the male Shechemites. The gaze is obviously androcentric telling the biblical story as an African myth about the deeply rooted ethnic divisions afflicting the African continent today. Another example is Mark Dornford-May's *Son of Man* (2006), a powerful depiction of Jesus as an African man in a fictional war-torn African nation that also sidelines issues of gender due to its focus on ethnic-racial and economic disparities as the cause for Jesus' fate.

Of particular interest and particularly telling is the entry "Folkloric Reception of the Bible." It consists of the following sub-entries: Yosef Tobi, "I. Judaism A. Jewish Communities of the East" (289–292); Tamar Alexander, "I. Judaism B. Sephardic" (292–296); Vered Tohar, "I. Judaism C. Medieval Ashkenazic" (296–300). After eleven columns on Judaism, "Folkloric Reception of the Bible II. Christianity" consists of: Nicolae Babuts, "II. Christianity: Europe and Russia A. Romance Languages" (301–306); Kathrin Pöge-Alder, "II. Christianity: Europe and Russia B. German" (307–311); Anthony Swindell, "II. Christianity: Europe and Russia A. British Isles" (311–315); Tracy Sands, "II. Christianity: Europe and Russia C. Nordic/Scandinavian" (316–321); Roberta Reeder, "II. Christianity: Europe and Russia E. Russia" (321–327) and Margaret C. Ziolkowski, "II. Christianity: Europe and Russia F. West Slavic" (327–333). After 32 (!) columns on Europe and Russia and seven on "West Slavic" receptions (I am not sure why West-Slavic is a category of its own between Europe and Russia) come just three columns, by one author, on all of Africa: Eric Anum "III. Christianity: Africa" (333–336). This beggars belief. Next comes "IV. Christianity: Americas" (336–346) in ten columns with three sub-entries: Anand Prahlad, "IV. Christianity: Americas A. African American" (336–339); John Bierhorst, "IV. Christianity: Americas B. Latin American" and "IV. Christianity: Americas C. Indigenous Peoples of the Americas" (343–346); this might have served as a model for the entry on Africa! Strangely enough there is no sub-entry on Asia. Are there no instances of a folkloric reception of the Bible in India, China and elsewhere? Further sub-entries are Stephen Burge, "V. Islam" (346–349) and Rhonda Burnette-Bletsch, "VI. Film" (349–352).

To move beyond the common complaints that the rest of the world is not paying enough attention to Africa and is neglecting its rich heritage (many such complaints are justified), one wonders what went wrong in this instance. No doubt, the folkloric reception of the Bible in Africa was in the view of the editors. However, to what extent was it in view in comparison with other parts of the world? There are the obvious methodological problems: for long times much of the reception of the Bible in Africa consisted of oral traditions and was not recorded. What is available and extant? What and how much of what has

been documented is representative? Where is it documented and published in forms which could be cited in a scholarly article? Where and who are the specialists to be invited to write entries on the folkloric reception of the Bible in East Africa, in North Africa, in southern Africa and in West Africa? In particular, where are the African scholars to undertake this task and select from their rich heritage what is representative? In view of the complexity of the task, others can hardly be expected to do so. It is perhaps telling that the two references to African films which draw on the Bible (see above) come from a study published in Europe (R. Walsh et al., eds., *Son of Man: An African Jesus Film* [Sheffield: Phoenix] 2013, a volume devoted to Dornford May's film). See my reflections in the article "Recent Contributions to the Study of the Reception of the Bible and their Implications for Biblical Studies in Africa," *Religion and Theology* 22 (2015): 329–383.

Despite the problems involved in the study of the reception of the Bible in these contexts, a lot of work still needs to be done in order to produce – perhaps in the second edition of the EBR – an encyclopedia that is willing and *able* to move beyond North America and Europe and is truly representative of the reception of the Bible throughout the world.

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Allen P. Ross, 2011 / 2013 / 2016. *A Commentary on the Psalms. Volume 1 (1–41) / Volume 2 (42–89) / Volume 3 (90–150)* (Kregel Exegetical Library). Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic. 887 / 841 / 1018 Pages. Hardback. ISBN 978-0-8254-2562-2 / 2563-9 / 2666-7.

This three-volume commentary on the Psalms is one of the most extensive interpretations of this book of the Bible. The author (with a Ph.D. from Cambridge University, UK) is a professor at the Beeson Divinity School in Samford University (USA). Previously he taught, inter alia, at Dallas Theological Seminary. The commentary was written "with pastors, teachers and serious students of the Bible in mind" (III, p. 11). Vocalised Hebrew square script is used, but since a translation is provided in each instance, the commentary can be utilised also by those who have little or no knowledge of Biblical Hebrew.

The volumes are structured as follows: Vol. I has an approximately 180-page introduction. After the Preface (concerns and procedures) and list of abbreviations, there follows two short sections on the meaning and textual tradition