

BOOK REVIEWS

The Abduction of Dinah: Reading Genesis 28:10–35:15 as a Votive Narrative by Daniel Hankore. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013. 262 pp., US \$24.00, softcover.

Hankore, a translation consultant with SIL’s Ethiopia branch, provides a multifaceted evaluation of the Hebrew vow with particular reference to its use in Gen 28. Combining relevance theory with strong linguistic skills and an analysis of contemporary conceptions of the vow within Hadiyya culture, Hankore argues that translations of נדר have obscured the votive nature of Gen 28:10–35:15. He goes on to argue that the incident between Dinah and Shechem should be understood as an abductive marriage as opposed to a rape based on his reading of Gen 28:10–35:15 as a votive narrative and on insights drawn from Hadiyya culture.

The book is organized around five major chapters, as well as an introduction, conclusion, and seven extremely helpful appendices. The introductory chapter provides a helpful terminological review of significant terms used throughout the text. Hankore also provides a brief survey of the Hadiyya people and the rationale for choosing to utilize the Hadiyya’s conception of the vow to inform his reading of the biblical text. He suggests, “since discourse is totally dependent on the context of the utterance . . . the study of the concept of ‘vow’ as understood in the ANE cultural context in the light of current Hadiyya culture will give an insight into the real-life context of ancient Israel” (p. 6).

The chapters that follow address literary, linguistic, and cultural aspects related to the interpretation of Gen 28:10–35:15. In chapter 2 Hankore addresses the limits of the Jacob story and the various literary structures included within that story before turning to an analysis of the concept of vow in the Old Testament in chapter 3. Following Gunkel, he identifies Gen 37:1 as the end of the narrative unit. Having defined the literary unit, Hankore discusses the difficulties associated with structuring the literary units of the narrative thematically and argues that the narrative be understood as a continuation of the patriarchal narrative. In Jacob’s case, the chosen line is at risk when he is forced to flee from Esau after deceitfully obtaining Isaac’s blessing. Jacob’s vow is, according to Hankore, echoic in so much as Jacob “interpretively selected the thoughts of God that are relevant to the context of his

distress and flight from the Promised Land without any clear idea about his future fate” (p. 40–41).

The real heart of Hankore’s argument is presented in chapters 3–6. The discussion of the vow, its fulfillment, and the manner in which it informs Hankore’s reading of the Dinah narrative is, in part, conditioned by his examination of Hadiyya culture. Hankore makes clear that “examining the Hadiyya concept of vow for the reading of the Hebrew concept וַיִּשְׁבַּע ‘vow’ will not change the Hebrew meaning” (p. 44). His application of insights from Hadiyya is primarily used to identify holes in current Hebrew scholarship. For instance, he notes the association of vows with oaths in several Old Testament reference works (p. 44).

Hankore’s analysis of ancient Near Eastern and Old Testament evidence related to the nature of vow is certainly shaped by his insights regarding the view of vows in Hadiyya while managing to avoid anachronistic readings. Hankore utilizes his understanding of Hadiyya as an impetus for further interrogation of the biblical text and related evidence. In this respect, Hankore provides an excellent example of the manner in which one’s understanding of current culture and cultural experience can be utilized in biblical interpretation. His argument concerning abductive marriage is similarly prompted by insights drawn from Hadiyya culture and then supported by analyses of biblical and ANE data.

Overall, *The Abduction of Dinah* offers a unique, well-argued discussion of an important biblical text that utilizes an array of skills and theories, including relevance theory. Despite the intersection of several disciplines and lines of thought, Hankore has produced a highly readable and accessible treatment of the Dinah narrative and the Jacob story as a whole. Hankore’s conclusions concerning the votive nature of Genesis 28:10–35:15 are compelling. His contribution of distinguishing between the vow and the oath in the Old Testament provides a particularly useful nuance to the study of vows in the Old Testament. The conclusions related to the abductive marriage are provocative. Hankore also offers useful insights concerning translation that add value and practicality to his work that is sometimes lacking from more research-oriented works.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Hankore’s work, however, is his incorporation of cultural insights from modern-day Hadiyya. While this sort of comparative study has the potential to become anachronistic, Hankore avoids this pitfall by utilizing the Hadiyya insights as an impetus for additional investigation into ANE and Old Testament data. In this way, the *The Abduction of Dinah* offers a fresh, pioneering discussion of the Dinah narrative, which contributes to both the analysis of the narrative in question and to the methods available for the interpretation of the Old Testament. This book will serve as a valuable

resource for future readers of the Jacob story, as well as, for those interested in interpretive methods utilizing multiple theories and cultures.

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Biblical Hebrew: A Compact Guide by Miles V. Van Pelt. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012. xi + 210 pp., US \$19.99, softcover.

Miles V. Van Pelt is the Alan Belcher Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Languages at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi. Having written grammars for both Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Aramaic, along with numerous other biblical language tools, Van Pelt is one of the foremost teachers of Biblical Hebrew in the world. This volume is a pocket-sized reference grammar designed for the beginning to intermediate Hebrew student. It is based on the more extensive *Basics of Biblical Hebrew*, co-written by Van Pelt and Gary D. Pratico.

In *A Compact Guide*, Van Pelt has attempted to condense a beginner's Hebrew grammar to a pocket edition, a formidable task. The book is not organized into chapters; instead, it contains major headings at the top of each section, and major sections include such topics as "Alphabet," "Vowels," "Syllabification," "Prepositions," "Adjectives," "Construct Chain," "Qal Perfect," etc., including all the major sections expected to be found in a Hebrew grammar. Each section contains information on morphology and syntax, and when necessary other notes are included. No space is wasted; almost every page is full of text or charts. The book flows in the manner of most beginning Hebrew grammars. Van Pelt starts with the alphabet, vowels, and syllabification, then moves on to the nominal system, and closes with the verbal system. The final sixty pages include two appendices, which cover all of the verbal paradigm charts as well as a brief Hebrew-English lexicon. Examples are kept to a minimum and exercises are non-existent. This is truly a reference grammar written to the level of a first year Hebrew student.

Van Pelt is successful in creating a pocket-sized, beginner's reference grammar. It cannot replace a standard beginner's Hebrew grammar, as it lacks any exercises to help ground the student in the material. It also cannot replace a standard reference grammar, as space allows for very little elaboration or examples. Ultimately, it falls short of both these categories of Hebrew grammars. It attempts to make up for

this by its small size; a student can carry this book on short trips in carry-on luggage or even simply around campus much easier than a standard grammar. Most helpful are the verbal paradigm charts, which can help students at almost any level. The major weakness of this book, however, is the small window of time in which it is applicable. Although possibly a great resource for a first or second semester student, once a student moves on to intermediate or advanced grammar and readings courses this material is not enough and the student will have to turn to the standard reference grammars. It is also an added expense for college students already on a tight budget, as this will be purchased in addition to a beginner's grammar, and at \$20 for a pocket-sized, non-essential book, most students will pass this volume up.

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The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Does Not Say About Human Origins by Peter Enns. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012. viii + 172 pp. US \$17.99, softcover.

Certain topics within theological discourse attract heated discussions, and often such polarizing topics deal with fundamental realities of the human existence. Occasionally, a work engages such topics while exhibiting the difficult blend of intelligence and accessibility. Peter Enns's work *The Evolution of Adam* is one such book. Enns brings his scholarly acumen to bear upon one of the more fiercely debated topics within popular culture in a way that even encourages those who have little to no awareness of biblical scholarship to listen. As one of the more provocative books that I have read in recent memory, it is a necessary read for evangelicals, for it will force them to revisit their position on creation, biblical literature, the nature of Scripture, and evolution.

Enns strives to determine how the Bible's message comports with evolutionary debate, which is a need that has been revitalized in the wake of the mapping of the human genome by Dr. Craig Venter and the work of the "New Atheists" (p. 1). Does the Bible speak to the topic of evolution directly? If so, is it for or against evolutionary theory? Is evolutionary theory compatible with Christianity, particularly evangelical Christianity? Enns addresses these questions, but it is critical to note that his intended audience exhibits two distinct characteristics: 1) they are Christians who take Scripture seriously—Scripture is God's revelation and thus authoritative for humanity—and 2) they believe that

the results of evolutionary theory and scientific research “must be taken seriously” (p. x). This work is not intended to be an apology to persuade those with extreme views (pp. xiii–xiv).

Enns’s understanding of revelation also fundamentally informs this presentation; he assumes the ideas articulated in his previous work *Inspiration and Incarnation* (Baker Academic, 2005; pp. xi–xii). The scholarly community has already responded to this work, and its contributions and implications therefore need not detract. One can say however that for those scholars who are uncomfortable with Enns’s *Inspiration and Incarnation*, this read will likely be difficult. Nevertheless, the “human dimension” of Scripture is a reality that must be properly understood. Only when one understands the ancient literary conventions that were used by God for Scripture’s composition does its depth and richness come alive. Enns is correct to emphasize as much.

This work exists in two distinct sections, with the first (chs. 1–4) being devoted to determining the message of Genesis in accord with its ancient context of composition. Enns predominately employs a grammatico-historical methodology, and thus the genre of Genesis, particularly the genre of Gen 1–11, is critically important. According to Enns, Genesis is largely a post-exilic narrative of self-identification (ch. 2). Genesis explains who Israel is and their relationship with Yahweh. With respect to Gen 1–11, it is an explanation of human origins that is rooted in an ancient understanding of the cosmos that simultaneously functions polemically against competing, pagan explanations of human origins (ch. 3). Enns’s conclusions are obtained through his “genre-calibration” of Gen 1–11, which considers the *Enuma Elish*, *Atrahasis Epic*, and other works against the message and symbolism of Genesis. For Enns, such calibration is critical as it helps prevent one from asking the text to bear a weight beyond its capabilities. Ultimately, Enns emphasizes that Gen 1–11, and other cosmological texts in the Old Testament for that matter, are rooted in an ancient thought world. By implication, the creation texts of Genesis and the Old Testament are not capable of *directly* addressing topics of evolution and its compatibility with a Christian worldview. To use these texts *directly* in the debate surrounding human origins is to violate the expectations of the text and its genre. Simply, it is to ask the text to bear a weight that it was not designed to bear.

Part Two, chapters 5–7, addresses Paul and his understanding of Adam and the creation accounts. Enns is correct that Paul is the pivotal point for this entire discussion. In Paul, one understands Adam not only as a historical figure, but also as the cause of humanity’s depravity. Consequently, Enns’s discussion is not only about the compatibility of

evolution with Christianity, but it is also about the tenets of orthodox Christianity. This section will undoubtedly engender the most debate.

One of the most salient points that Enns emphasizes is that Paul must be understood as a first-century Jewish interpreter (ch. 6). Paul's exegesis was therefore creative and quickly moved beyond the literal sense when necessary. Applied to the Adam story, "[W]e cannot and should not assume that what Paul says about Adam is necessarily what Genesis was written to convey" (p. 117). Yet Enns is clear that Paul's interpretive tendencies are not without warrant. Enns continually emphasizes that Paul's encounter with Christ was so transformative and so all-encompassing that it became his hermeneutical lens. Everything was therefore understood and processed through Christ, including the message of the Old Testament. In the case of understanding humanity's depravity and death, Paul transcends the literal sense of Genesis and finds in Adam the historical root of universal sin and depravity. According to Enns, "For God to have provided a 'solution' [i.e. Christ] of such earth shattering significance, there must have been a corresponding 'problem' [i.e. sin, depravity, and death] it was designed to address" (p. 131).

So what does this mean for the evolution debate? Enns concludes with nine theses (pp. 137–48).

1. Literalism is not an option.
2. Scientific and biblical models of human origins are, strictly speaking, incompatible because they speak a different "language." They cannot be reconciled, and there is no "Adam" that can be found in the evolutionary scheme.
3. The Adam story in Genesis reflects its ancient Near Eastern context and should be read that way.
4. There are two creation stories in Genesis; the Adam story is probably the older and was subsumed under Gen 1 after the exile in order to tell Israel's story.
5. The Israel-centered focus of the Adam story can also be seen in its similarity to Proverbs: the story of Adam is about failure to fear God and attain wise maturity.
6. God's solution through the resurrection of Christ reveals the deep, foundational plight of the human condition, and Paul expresses that fact in the biblical idiom available to him.
7. A proper view of inspiration will embrace the fact that God speaks by means of the cultural idiom of the authors—whether it be the author of Genesis in describing origins or how Paul would later come to understand Genesis. Both reflect the settings and limitations of the cultural moment.

8. The root of the conflict for many Christians is not scientific or even theological, but group identity and fear of losing what it offers.
9. A true approach between evolution and Christianity requires a synthesis, not simply adding evolution to existing theological formulations.

Much could be said about this work. On the one hand, there is a great deal with which to agree. In particular, Enns is correct to emphasize that Scripture is, at some level, a culturally and historically conditioned work. The “human dimension” of Scripture is a very real and critical component to understanding its dynamics and message. Consequently, the genre of the creation texts, as well as any biblical text for that matter, is a fundamental starting point for interpretation. Enns’s repeated emphasis that the genre of the creation texts is critical for responsible interpretation is spot-on. Understanding the genre allows the interpreter to recognize the governing principles of the text. In the case of the creation accounts of Genesis, the genre and context of Gen 1–11 discourages genetic, biological, and specific chronological questions.

However, there is much here that will garner significant debate. Enns creates a tension between Paul’s exegesis and Genesis. According to Enns, human depravity, original sin, etc. are not the primary concern of Genesis. Rather, Paul’s wrestling with the significance and rationale of Christ allows Paul to understand the Adam story in that manner. In response, while the narratives of Genesis are not explicitly concerned with human depravity and original sin, the narratives beg the question. To be more precise, Paul is stretching the literal sense when he interprets Adam as the father of sin in his New Testament letters; he is exploiting the gaps that are created by the narrative. Enns could have done better with this. Only in one place does he appear to acknowledge that Paul is not considering things totally foreign to the Adam story: “Rather, I am saying that the Old Testament stories have *at best submerged interest* in the question of ‘why we do what we do’” (p. 86; emphasis mine).

Enns’s tension also revitalizes the perpetual question of the role of literary intent, authorial intent, and/or literal sense for theological discourse. Considering Christ for understanding the Old Testament is the defining characteristic for Christian exegesis, and in many cases it requires transcending the literal sense of the Old Testament. When one transcends the literal sense of a text, how does Christian exegesis responsibly consider the literary or authorial intention in a manner that preserves its coherence? Indeed, these are complex questions that are not easily answered. Enns’s work here thrusts them back to the forefront of the conversation.

Enns's work also revisits the idea of accommodation and its role within theological discourse. Enns states, "A barrier to the evolution-Christianity discussion is a view of the Bible where God's *accommodating* himself to the views of the time—whether in Genesis or in Romans—is assumed to be untrustworthy of God" (p. 143; emphasis mine). It becomes clear that Enns does not feel threatened by the possibility that God would have used expressions and culturally conditioned methods for the communication of his revelation, that they must be weighed critically, and that texts cannot be simply imported into a modern context. Furthermore, Enns is not alone in his consideration of accommodation. The idea that God's revelation accommodates itself to humanity reaches back to patristic exegesis. More recently Kenton Sparks has constructed a systematic hermeneutical framework built upon this principle (*God's Word in Human Words* [Baker Academic, 2008]). Enns's contribution brings the idea of accommodation to bear upon a specific topic that is particularly theologically sensitive.

What is incontrovertible is that evolutionary theory must be brought into theological discourse. Pope Benedict XVI during his tenure continually emphasized that evolution and Christianity were not necessarily at odds. J. B. Lightfoot also understood this need. Addressing his fellow clergy in 1881, Lightfoot stated (Eden and MacDonald, *Lightfoot of Durham*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932):

Here again we are confronted with a giant force, of which the Church of Christ must give an account. If we are wise we shall endeavor to understand and to absorb these truths. They are our proper heritage as Christians, for they are manifestations of the Eternal Word, who is also the Head of the Church. They will add breadth and strength and depth to our theology. Before all things we shall learn by the lessons of the past to keep ourselves free from any distrust or dismay. Astronomy once menaced, or was thought to menace, Christianity . . . Geology next entered the lists . . . And now, in turn, Biology concentrates the same interests, and excites the same distrusts. Will not history repeat itself? If the time should come when evolution is translated from the region of suggestive theory to the region of acknowledged fact, what then? Will it not carry still further the idea of providential design and order? Will it not reinforce with new and splendid illustrations the magnificent lesson of modern science – complexity of results traced back to simplicity of principles—variety of phenomena issuing from unity of order—the gathering up, as it were, of the threads which connect the universe, in the right hand of the One Eternal Word?

Evangelicals must be willing to discuss publically the intersection of orthodox Christianity and evolutionary theory. However this happens, Enns is certainly correct that it will require intelligence. “Evolution is not an add-on to Christianity: it demands synthesis because it forces serious intellectual engagement with some important issues” (p. 147). To his credit, Enns does not attempt any specific answers. He merely offers fundamental considerations that are rooted in a reading that considers the ancient context of Scripture. He leaves it to others to flesh out what a responsible evangelical response to evolution will look like.

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The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Numbers to Ruth edited by Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland. Revised Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012. 1348 pp., US \$49.99, hardcover

The original edition of the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* has been a helpful resource to the church and the academy for 35 years, and this volume, which covers Numbers through Ruth, is part of the highly anticipated, updated, and completely revised 13-volume set. Like the volumes in the original series, this commentary gives a historical-grammatical interpretation of the biblical books with fresh scholarly interaction. The authors engage grammar, syntax, historical setting, and more to systematically exegete and exposit each passage.

The authors of this volume are excellent scholars in the Old Testament. Ronald B. Allen wrote the commentary on Numbers and serves as senior professor of Bible exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary. Michael A. Grisanti, the author of the Deuteronomy commentary, is professor of Old Testament at The Master's Seminary in Sun Valley, California. H el ene Dallaire wrote on Joshua and is Associate Professor of Old Testament at Denver Seminary. Mark J. Boda, who serves as professor of Old Testament at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, wrote on Judges. Finally, George M. Schwab wrote on Ruth and is associate professor of Old Testament at Erskine Theological Seminary in Due West, South Carolina. The structure of the commentary is clear and easy to follow. First, the author begins their treatment with an introduction to the book in which they interact with pertinent issues related to background, purpose, authorship, theology and more. A bibliography and an outline of the book close each introductory

section, each serving as a helpful resource for those who wish to dig deeper into these biblical books.

The following expository sections begin with an “Overview” that summarizes the interpretation of the passage. Next, the passage itself is printed in the commentary. Then, the author explains his or her text in a verse-by-verse manner. Following this is a “Notes” section where the author interacts with the original languages and key words or phrases in the passage. Finally, with many units there is a “Reflection” section where the author offers thoughts or applications based on the interpretation of the text. These reflections are an extremely helpful resource to pastors.

The commentary gives a solidly evangelical interpretation of the biblical books in a concise and easily accessible treatment. The ability of the commentators to offer dependable scholarship without becoming burdensome lends its use to students and pastors alike. The theological commitment to the authority of God’s Word is a major plus. The authors interact with up-to-date scholarship and key issues while showing the flaws in critical approaches that undercut the authority of these books.

Another strength to note is the grace-centered nature of the book. For example in Deuteronomy, it helpfully links Israel’s status and subsequent laws to God’s gracious act of salvation (cf. 478–79; 535, 564, among many). In contrast to the popular divide of the Bible into law (Old Testament) and grace (New Testament) this commentary correctly demonstrates that the Old Testament presents the Lord as the gracious Savior, whose demands on the people are not requirements for salvation, but the reasonable response from the saved.

While there are many strengths in the book, there are two shortcomings to be noted. First, there is an uneven interaction with Christocentric interpretation and typology. The treatment is uneven because while Numbers, Joshua, and Ruth mention these items briefly, they are missing for the most part in Deuteronomy and Judges. The Numbers commentary argues that the rock in the wilderness points to Christ (p. 283), that the manna and the serpent on the pole are portraits of the Savior (p. 296), and that Balaam’s prophecy speaks of the Messiah (p. 330). However, the Deuteronomy commentary treats Jesus almost as an afterthought, if at all. The commentary on Deut 1:31 makes no link between the nation of Israel’s sonship with the coming Son of God (p. 488). When referencing the fact that “God will raise up for you a prophet like me” in Deut 18:15, the commentator makes no mention of Jesus in the main text (p. 653). One has to look at the notes to find reference to Christ (p. 654). Likewise, it is only in the notes that the commentator references Galatians or the cross of Christ when discussing the cursed body hung on a tree (Deut 21:22–23; p. 672–73). Not even in discussion

of the Deut 34:10, which states “there has not arisen a prophet like Moses” is Christ mentioned (p. 813).

The Joshua commentary mentions the possibility of a Christological interpretation in regard to the rescue of Rahab and the scarlet cord (p. 872). It also mentions that Rahab is in the line of the Messiah (p. 874). However, the Judges commentary makes no typological link between Samson and the coming messianic deliverer. Samson is never linked to Jesus even though Samson’s miraculous birth was foretold by an angel, he was promised to be a savior in Israel (Judg 13:5), he was anointed by the Spirit, and he gained his greatest victory in his death.

The second shortcoming is that at critical points the commentary fails to bridge the gap between the Old Testament world and today’s audience. There is no discussion of contemporary application for key stipulations that are often used by critics of the Bible to legitimize behavior specifically condemned by the Bible. For example, no insight is given on how to understand the prohibition against planting two types of seeds or wearing two types of fabrics that sit in the same context as the prohibition against cross-dressing (pp. 674–76). Pastors who preach these texts are being bombarded by arguments that Christians are hypocrites if they oppose homosexual marriage and yet have ever worn polyester. How should pastors deal with this text and be faithful to the authority of the Scriptures? It would be helpful for the commentary to give a brief discussion on these pressing issues of practical application or point the pastor somewhere that would.

These critiques may seem tangential to the commentary’s purpose of providing a succinct historical-grammatical interpretation. However, as a pastor—someone who belongs to the intended audience for this commentary (p. 7)—I contend that these shortcomings are real misses. Pastors need guidance in both preaching Christ from the Old Testament and applying the Old Testament to their hearers as Christian Scripture. In the preface the editors state that the Bible invites us “to hear God and to confess that his Son, Jesus Christ, is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:10)” (p. 8). Yet, the exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord is not a dominant theme in this work.

The strengths of this commentary far outweigh the weaknesses. This is an excellent volume that I would recommend to every pastor, student, and professor who wants to read a faithful exposition on these biblical books. This work would be invaluable to busy expository preachers who do not have time to read massive tomes on each passage they preach. However, for pastors who want to preach these Old Testament books as Christian Scripture that finds its ultimate fulfillment

in Christ, they will probably need to supplement this volume with other resources.

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The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction by David M. Carr. New York: Oxford University Press. ix + 492 pp., US \$74.00, hardcover.

In *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, David M. Carr makes a well-informed contribution to the current methods scholars use to explain the emergence and growth of the Hebrew Bible. Carr calls his book a final redaction and synthesis of several prior and current publications. To Carr's credit, his own redaction does not reduce his book's readability. It does, however, pose a challenge to the congruity between Carr's method and its application. In fact, Carr advances at least two methodological - discussions. The first is deconstructive as it problematizes traditional approaches to transmission-history, source criticism (e.g., JEDP), and expectations of achieving certainty (chs. 1-4). Here, readers will find Carr's latest proposals on the role of memory in the process of oral-written transmission. The second discussion is built on more tenuous, less objective grounds. Carr appropriates the observations of scholars over the past century (e.g., Wellhausen), adding his own, in order to construct a set of malleable historical profiles, which are used to categorize various substrata of the Hebrew Bible (chs. 5-17). While his book has three parts, Part Three is a methodological extension of Part Two. A larger gap exists between Part One and Parts Two-Three.

In "Part One: Methodological Prologue: Textual Transmission in the Ancient World and How to Reconstruct it," Carr suggests that scribes used mnemonic methods in the transmission of earlier texts. For example, ancient Mesopotamian scholars sang the *Atrahasis* creation epic, Egyptian scribes recited sayings of earlier sages, Greeks performed classical texts, and Israelite sages were urged to "write this Torah/commandment on the tablet of your heart." This internalization of texts, in the process of reception and transmission, has blurred the contours of compositional growth, drastically impairing our ability to reconstruct transmission-history. Carr rejects a strong dichotomy between orality and textuality, arguing instead for considerable overlap. He suggests that greater clarity on the shared territory between oral and

written transmission will be achieved by focusing on the way memory was supported by writing.

Carr bases his observations on documented cases of transmission (e.g., Gilgamesh, Temple Scroll) in which he finds abbreviation, replacement of less familiar terms with more familiar terms, word order shifts, substitution of lexical equivalents, minor shifts in grammar, rearrangement of lines, and the presence or absence of an optional preposition. Moreover, while Carr offers the most recent synthesis of oral-written transmission, others anticipate his conclusions: Helmer Ringgren (“Oral and Written Transmission in the Old Testament: Some Observations,” *ST* 3, [1949]) Günter Burkhard (*Textkritische Untersuchungen zu zu ägyptischen Weisheitslehren des alten und mittleren Reiches*; Harrassowitz, 1977), Ed Greenstein (“Misquotation of Scripture in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Frank talmage Memorial Volume*; Haifa University Press, 1993), and Raymond Pearson (*The Deuteronomic School: History, Social Setting, and Literature*; SBL, 2002).

Carr’s approach has the potential to account for an array of textual variation that does not have sufficient explanation. For example, what should we do with two or more *good* variants (where more than one seems to make sense, excluding “aural” and “graphic” variants)? Carr suggests these *good* variants may be a type of “memory variant,” resulting from the subconscious substitution of synonymous terms (p. 18). During the repeated recall of texts, these memory variants are an unintentional byproduct of the reconstructive character of memory.

Carr’s approach is balanced. He provides detailed argumentation, but also shows how many of his conclusions are tentative and provisional. In his discussion on Proverbs, he suggests that so-called memory variants could simply result from a tight web of conscious intertextual connections and revisions. He concludes: “It often is impossible to separate intentional alteration from unintentional memory shifts in textual transmission” (p. 36).

On the whole, Carr is to be commended for his perceptive description of transmission variants and their origins. It is also evident, however, that memory variants are one option among several. Carr suggests that rearranged word-order and textual pluses/minuses are characteristic of memory variants. The former could just as well be related to the influence of Aramaic word-order (pp. 125–132, 207) or explained by theoretical linguistics (e.g., Information Structure/Topic-Focus positioning). In these cases, the reconstructive nature of memory-recall does not *cause* variation but is *correlative*. And while Carr is on the whole sensitive to versional differences, his description of some variant pluses/minuses as memory variants may just as well be part of a

scribe's *Vorlage* (e.g., the *plus* "Gergashites" in 11QT 62.14b–16 is also found in LXX and SP of Deut 20:17, but lacking in MT, p. 55). At any rate, his discussion on variants that go in both directions is more convincing (pp. 54–55, 58; 62; ה–relative vs. אשר, and various exchanges involving א and כול). Carr alters his course near the end of Part One (ch. 4), and sets up his second major methodological discussion.

In "Part Two: Excavating the History of the Formation of the Hebrew Bible," Carr links each major compositional stage to a historical time period. With copious footnotes and familiarity with international scholarship, Carr's approach is far from insular. His primary agenda is outlined by this statement: "The analysis of texts more obviously dating to the Persian period can lead to the Persian dating of less obviously Persian-period texts, the same for texts from the neo-Babylonian exile, and so on" (p. 149). He also seeks to answer: "What state structures are a prerequisite for the development of literary textuality?" (p. 8). Carr's profiles reflect his innovative perspective on Israelite and later Judean textuality—the function of language that is characteristic of written works within socio-political contexts. In each period, Carr emphasizes different modes of textuality (e.g. "Priestly and Diaspora Textuality," "Textuality of Persian-Sponsored Returnees," and "Textuality under Empire").

Carr suggests that the clearest picture of the Hebrew Bible's formation will result from reverse engineering. Thus Carr begins with the most recent time period, the Hasmonean (for which the most empirical evidence exists), and works backward into the Hellenistic, Persian, Babylonian, and Neo-Assyrian periods (chs. 5–11). Lastly, he peers into the veiled stages of the early Israelite Monarchal period (Part Three, chs. 12–17). Carr's argument for these historical profiles reads like a domino effect in reverse, each contingent on the next, until all the pieces are standing. His overall goal is to develop (non-comprehensive) profiles for each period and give illustrative examples of how they can be used to date *some* texts in the Hebrew Bible (p. 8).

For the Hasmonean period, Carr suggests that standardization happens in specific social contexts in which it is valued. Thus, the Hasmonean monarchy is the most plausible socio-political context that had both the power and interest to initiate the Hebrew Bible's textual standardization in Second Temple Judaism (p. 153). Here, Carr addresses the impact of the Hasmonean scribal establishment on the shape of proto-MT and the revival of Hebrew as a national language (p. 170). Next, Carr characterizes the Hellenistic period by priestly reactions to loss of power and authority. This often took the form of esotericism and apocalypticism underlined by an affirmation of individual reward and punishment for Torah obedience (p. 203). In the Persian context, older

Hebrew literature was given a cultic reorientation, intended to draw requisite Persian support. Carr suggests, “the process of seeking and getting Persian sponsorship may have been a factor leading to a final redefinition of the foundational corpus of subsequent Judaism” (p. 220). During the Babylonian period, the elite upper class exiled Judeans were particularly focused on “establishing their own identity in diaspora” amidst traumatic dislocations and forced migrations (p. 253). The Neo-Assyrian period literature reflects the tendency to invert royal ideology (p. 304). For example, Deut 13 and 28 contain elements of Esarhaddon’s Succession Treaty, the books of 1–2 Kings share the focus of “Mesopotamian royal historiography,” and Gen 11 (Tower of Babel), along with Exod 2 (Birth of Moses), is anti-Assyrian in its polemical appropriation of Sargon II traditions. Near the end of Part Two, Carr discusses the integration of his method(s) with the profiles of each time period (pp. 346–51). Chapters 4 and 11 reveal the macrostructure of Carr’s argument.

In “Part Three: The Shape of Literary Textuality in the Early Pre-Exilic Period,” Carr suggests that wisdom literature is both early and integral to Israel’s emerging scribal curriculum. Carr epitomizes his view—“In the beginning was the writing-supported teaching of the wise” (p. 407). He places wisdom literature, along with the Covenant Code and non-Priestly primeval history, at this early stage for two reasons. First, they are similar (and non-polemical) to foreign models of textuality (e.g., Mesopotamian, Egyptian), and second, they are relatively silent in their reflection of Torah/Prophet traditions.

Based on content alone, there is little reason to disagree with Carr’s cautious proposal that *some* portions of Song of Songs or Qoheleth fit an early profile. But this also requires an explanation of the high density of late linguistic features in the present form of those books. Carr proposes that this “later linguistic profile may have been produced by the more fluid character of the scribal transmission process for those books” (p. 128, 432–55); the late linguistic profile (e.g. Song of Songs compared to the Pentateuch) is a result of freer transmission, not production. In the debate between Standard Biblical Hebrew and Late Biblical Hebrew, Carr argues that only “early/classical/archaic” Hebrew existed (contra Young, Rezetko, Ehrensverd). According to Carr, the evident features of “late” biblical Hebrew are merely the result of later scribes trying to write in an “early” form with an ever-increasing inability to do so (p. 132, n. 72).

In summary, Carr acknowledges that the “dynamics of revision are so subtle and the process of revision so long, that we rarely have the tools we wish we had to reconstruct comprehensively the early literature

of ancient Judah and Israel” (p. 483). Such qualifications reflect Carr’s modesty and resemble a common thread that runs through this book.

The strength of Carr’s work is no doubt methodological. Scholars and students will benefit from Carr’s insight. Precise clarity on all points, however, will require further conversation as Carr’s intentions are sometimes unclear. For example, he compares the confession of sin in the *Rule of the Community* (1QS I 24–II 1) with the *Damascus Document* (CD B XX 27–30) and states that this is an instance of “textual transmission without the aid of writing” (p. 64). However, he gives no indication of the direction of transmission between 1QS and CD—a very important question in Qumran studies. At any rate, many will appreciate the transparency of his discussion. He provides many counterexamples along the way (e.g. p. 72 in his discussion of the “trend towards expansion” in the reproduction of written texts: Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, Chronicles, 1 Esdras, and 1QS // 4QS).

I am convinced that Carr achieves one of his goals: “to establish the probability that the manuscript traditions discussed . . . were transmitted, at least in part, through a process of writing-supported memorization, a process that is betrayed by extensive verbatim agreement between traditions combined with occasional variation between expressions of similar or virtually identical semantic content” (p. 65). Carr provides solid argumentation that memory plays a considerable role in the formation of written texts.

There remains, however, some methodological incongruity between Carr’s critical achievements in Part One, and his constructive attempts in Parts Two–Three. In other words, the reader should not assume that Carr’s discussion on writing-supporting memory (and the particularities of documented cases of transmission) has direct implications for the actual formation of the Hebrew Bible (a discussion that stands or falls in relation to the general profiles of the Hasmonean through pre-exilic Monarchic time periods). In Parts Two–Three, Carr uses “different strategies” and “criteria appropriate to each period to build a profile of a given set of texts and then build outward from that profile to identify other texts that might date from that period as well” (pp. 7, 149). While I do find Carr’s historical profiles generally convincing, they will likely undergo modification as his method(s) for establishing them are further scrutinized, especially by those who are more confident in redaction criticism (cf. *RBL 06/2012* review by Christoph Berner).

Scholars must judge how well Carr’s observations support the weight of his claims for attributing large blocks of the Hebrew Bible to each period. Close attention should be given to Carr’s use of “manuscript evidence to attempt recovery of Hasmonean-period changes that led to

the proto-MT. . . trauma studies to help in the identification of texts written in the wake of Jerusalem's destruction and Judean exile. . . [and the inversion of] Neo-Assyrian motifs" (p. 7). I do not disagree with one reviewer who suggests that Carr's book could be an *Einleitung* for the twenty-first century. It may, however, become one only through careful reflections and critical conversations such as those taken place at the previous SBL meeting (Chicago, 2012).

In the end, the aperture between Part One and Parts Two–Three may actually be quite informative. It exposes new light on the issues involved in jumping from scribal writing to scriptural formation. On the one hand, Carr provides remarkable clarity on ancient writing practices. On the other hand, the transition from these practices to the actual formation of a culturally-central theological collection of scrolls is an adequate bridge that Carr designs, but is subject to zoning problems. Many will find Carr's work instructive and valuable. Perhaps most importantly, it clarifies the questions to be asked and the many challenges associated with answering them—questions that poke into the shadows of the connections between the general composition of texts and the subsequent selective transmission and intentional formation of those texts.

The following *typos* and *transcription errors* are intended to be of aid in a future corrected edition: multiply—multiple (p. 23); 11 QT—11QT (p.50); 11Q Temple—11QTemple (p. 51); צדיקים—צדיקים (p. 53 n. 44; Deut 16:19); ויפשוטו—ויפשוטו (p. 60; 1 Sam 31:9); ויפל—ויפל (p. 61; 1 Chr 21:16); בשקים (p. 61; delete extra form); הע[ורים]—הע [ורים] (p. 62; delete extra space; 2 Sam 5:8); אם (at fig. [?]) . . . (p. 64, missing fragment number); על פי—עפי (pp. 85 and 86; 1QS V); ועיניהו—ועיניהו (p. 87; 1QS V 5); “*Rethinking* . . .—*Rethinking* (p. 94 n. 108; remove [“ ”]); הממותים—הממותים (p. 96; *ketib* of 2 Kgs 11:2); *des Hexateuchs*—*des Hexateuchs* (p. 104 n. 6); אמהות—אמהת (p. 107; Gen 31:33); רכוש—רכוש (p. 133; orthography without ו in Gen 14, although root is רכוש); The Many. . . —“The Many (p. 139 n. 93, add [“]); אאר—אשר (p. 143 n. 106; Exod 7:20b and 4:9); along—alone (p. 193); response—responses (p. 232); יארכו—יארכו (p. 233; Ezek 12:22); נבאיה—נבאיה (p. 233; Lam 2:9); Second Temple—First Temple (p. 235); להייה—להייה (p. 244; 2 Kgs 22:19); guilt—hope (p. 248, is “hope” intended? cf. ff. para.); Yhweh’s—Yhwh’s (p. 250; Exod 32:28—Exod 34:28 (p. 265); וישם—ויישם (p. 276; Gen 50:26); counterwwrite—counterwrite (p. 303); חתום—חתום (p. 325; Isa 8:16); חשך—חשך (p. 333; Amos 5:18); check formatting of sixth line from top of p. 367 (there is no spacing between the words); delete extra space (4QPs^x [p. 392]); inconsistent capitalization of bible/Bible (p. 399); delete extra space 4Q

417 (p. 404); צדק—זדק (p. 424); ויניחהו—וינחהו (p. 466; Gen 2:15); Exod 22:22–23:33—Exod 20:22– . . . (bottom of p. 471).

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Guide pour l'exégèse de l'Ancien Testament: Méthodes, exemples et instruments de travail by Matthieu Richelle. Charols, France: Éditions Excelsis, 2012. 360pp., €25.00, softcover.

This French university-level textbook in Old Testament exegesis comes from the Professor of Old Testament at the Free Faculty of Evangelical Theology, Vaux-sur-Seine, France. I will be recommending it to the translation departments of all the francophone Bible Societies I serve, and if it were in English, I would now make it my standard textbook and first-level reference for my students in Nigeria in place of Stuart's *Old Testament Exegesis* (Westminster John Knox, 2009) and alongside Osborne's *Hermeneutical Spiral* (IVP Academic, 2006).

After a very user-friendly introduction, the book is divided into two main parts. The first part “Synchronic Approaches” includes with chapters on: literary genre (ch. 1), literary context (ch. 2), geographical, historical and socio-cultural context (ch. 3), structure (ch. 4), narrative analysis (ch. 5), intertextuality (ch. 6), canonical context (ch. 7), and reception (ch. 8). The second part titled, “Establishing the Text and Diachronic Approaches” takes up more technical issues, which may require knowledge of Hebrew. This part looks at translation (ch. 9), textual criticism (ch. 10), and redactional analysis (ch. 11). Then there is a postscript on the (limited) role of scholarly exegetical methods in preaching. The book also has 26 pages of appendices that list standard reference works, commentary series, journals, and a discussion of literary structural approaches. Good annotated bibliographies are found throughout.

Writing from an evangelical perspective and maintaining a high view of the canon and understanding of inspiration, the author writes in an irenic way, giving extra explanation when more conservative students may need it (e.g. on redactional analysis) and noticeably avoiding some of the famous “red rags to a bull” such as the unity of Isaiah and dating of Daniel. However, he doesn't avoid reference to Pentateuchal source criticism, and does include thorough discussion of textual criticism and an excursus on various views of the redaction history of Amos. In all comments on source, textual, and redaction criticism, the student is

encouraged to distinguish clearly between data-driven arguments and conjectures.

The style is self-consciously didactic and procedural, in very clear and easy-to-read French and with an attractive and helpful page layout. Each of the core chapters has an introduction to the main issues and then a section on methods. The methods section includes at least as much attention given to worked-out examples from a wide range of biblical texts and excurses on relevant tools as it does on explanation and argument.

Digital and print resources are referenced in almost equal measure, which seems to me an excellent balance. Many of the essential classic resources are still only or most easily available in print form. And yet so much of the latest scholarship is now available online, as well as many very useful popular tools such as Google Earth. The use of so many internet references is a brave move, since it will date the book quickly. I hope the publishers will produce a digital edition, which will allow use of the hyperlinks as well as permitting regular revision. Resources referenced are in French, German and English, and the *Nouvelle Bible Segond* Study Bible is certainly a good choice here as a key resource. *JESOT* readers may be unaware of how much good work is available in French in particular. This work and its references may encourage them to consult it more often if they can.

The book has many clear strengths. The presentation is of very high quality, and there are almost no typos. The structure described above seems to me very helpful, with three chapters on textual analysis (chs. 4–6) surrounded by others on contextual considerations, and then a second section on more advanced issues. The chapters on literary genre and textual criticism are the best in my view. Literary genre is treated entirely within the framework of what we know about ANE literature. Helpful lists are provided showing parallels between biblical and ANE comparative texts, and the reader is referred to works which examine those parallels. The chapter on literary context (ch. 2) includes reference to the context provided by doublets and cycles, which is often neglected. On socio-cultural context (ch. 3) the author refers helpfully to iconographic exegesis. Chapter 4 on structure includes a very helpful excursus on “chiasmo-mania and chiasmo-phobia.” I, for one, am happy to *not* see the interest in outlines or propositional displays so popular in comparable books (Stuart, Osborne, Schreiner on Pauline Epistles, etc.). The author cautions against illegitimate totality transfer and the etymological fallacy with translation (ch. 9, “Translation”), against narrow concepts of an “original text” (ch. 10, “Textual Criticism”), and against the use in dating biblical texts of archaeological evidence for the beginnings of literacy in Judah (ch. 11, “Redactional Criticism”). Such

cautions seem to me very helpful for students who so easily fall into these traps. I find the many long-worked examples of textual criticism both well-explained and a good addition to those I have used from McCarter's *Textual Criticism* (Fortress, 1986). Indeed, the many examples given throughout the book are very helpful, and it is a great strength of the book that they are all the author's own, in his own words and style rather than culled from elsewhere.

Some weaknesses of the book are worthy of note. Chapters 4–6 on textual analysis get a bit wordy at times. It would be nice if amidst the many examples there might have been room for some more generalizations to be made. The chapter on canonical context (ch. 7) could have spent more time focused upon the OT canon before jumping to include the NT—this would help the reader better understand the OT as a part of our own Christian reception history. The chapter on reception history (ch. 8) is really not much more than a list of references and resources; I would have liked to see more guidance for students on how to use this material constructively, such as relating historical readings of biblical texts to their new contexts and showing trajectories of interpretation and use through church history. Students need to see the importance of ANE parallel texts, Septuagintal, Qumran and Targumic readings, and rabbinic and patristic interpretations in their own contexts lest the reader overestimate their value in interpreting biblical texts. Failure to do so is to commit the literary equivalent of the etymological fallacy or illegitimate totality transfer. Some important resources are omitted in chapter 9, "Translation," including the old and new Gesenius dictionaries and the excellent corpus of resources available in Logos (www.logos.com), which includes marked-up source texts. Finally, the book would have benefitted from a subject index.

With the rapidly broadening horizons of what is involved in biblical exegesis, there seems to me an increasing need for summary and fully referenced/hyperlinked textbooks of this type. I find this a really excellent product, and hope that other evangelical biblical scholars will warm to the author's irenic vision for our field.

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Haggai und Sacharja 1–8. Eine Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung by Martin Hallaschka. BZAW 411. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011. xii + 371 pp., US \$168.00, hardcover.

The composition history of Zechariah's night visions has been a frequent topic of scholarly research, having been previously treated in monographs by, *inter alia*, Rignell, Beuken, Petitjean, Jeremias, and Schöttler, as well as in the voluminous periodical literature. This book, originating as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Göttingen in 2009, represents the most recent contribution to this field. It differs from many (though not all) prior studies in that it seeks to reconstruct not only the redactional history of Zechariah 1–6 (or 1–8) but the book of Haggai also. According to the author these two histories are intertwined, each work having originated independently and possessing separate courses of textual development, while also intersecting with one another at various junctures and thus influencing the overall *Redaktionsgeschichte*. In his introduction the author provides a selective discussion of some of the prodigious literature on the subject, and more detailed interaction occurs in the main section of the book.

The study proceeds unit-by-unit, first through Haggai (pp. 15–138) and then through Zechariah 1–8 (pp. 139–313), to develop a comprehensive account of the redaction history of these two works. This general approach is well-suited to the texts in question, as the pericope boundaries are very straightforward and rarely, if ever, disputed. The author's method with each unit is to begin by making a number of detailed observations on the text. These observations treat a variety of exegetical issues, dealing with text-critical or philological details as needed. In these sections the author notes particular features which allegedly indicate literary or theological tensions within the work and thus provide evidence of redactional activity. These textual observations enable the author to proceed to a literary-historical analysis of the passage in question, seeking to delineate the compositional layers in the text. On the whole, the author's methodology is quite typical of studies of this nature. Occasionally an excursus is included in order to address matters that are particularly substantial and relevant to the larger discussion. Each section concludes with a clear review of the author's analysis of each textual unit with respect to its redactional strata. At the conclusion of the discussion of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 respectively there is a more comprehensive summary which brings together the results of each subsection, from which a more complete picture of the overall composition history emerges.

The author's discussion is highly detailed, and only a brief summary of his proposed analysis is possible here. The author concludes that the two works exhibit a literary development that lasted from the sixth century B.C.E. to the Hellenistic period. Each originated separately and experienced a process of extensive growth and redaction independent of one another for a period of time, which the author seeks

to describe in great detail. It must be said that the author's proposed original stock (*Grundbestand*) of each work is so miniscule as to be most implausible: Haggai allegedly consisted originally of only two sayings (Hag 1:4,8 and 2:3, 9a) and Zechariah of two brief visions (Zech 1:8–9a, 10–11b, and 2:5–6). But it is extremely hard to believe that these texts would have been preserved at all, let alone subjected to such far-reaching redactional activity and massive textual additions, had they originally been as fragmentary as the author supposes. Be that as it may, the author argues that, following a period of independent development, the two compositions were linked together in the mid-fifth century B.C.E. by a system of dating formulae in order to allow them to be read as a unified work. Subsequently, other sections were added at different historical junctures (e.g. Hag 2:10–14 was included at some point in the Persian period). According to the author, the theological nature of the promise to Zerubbabel in Hag 2:20–23 reveals it to be an addition from the Hellenistic period. At some point in the late Persian or early Hellenistic period a prologue was added to Zechariah 1–8 (1:1–6) in order for it to regain a degree of literary independence from Haggai.

The book displays a number of strengths that make it a useful contribution to contemporary scholarship. It is clearly written and meticulously researched, containing a generous and up-to-date bibliography. Anyone interested in pursuing redaction-historical research on Haggai-Zechariah 1–8 will want to consult this work for those reasons alone. The well-informed discussions of numerous textual details will also make it worthwhile for exegetes, though there are certainly many places where the author's interpretations could be justly criticized. On the other hand, the main purpose of the study is to present a comprehensive model for the textual development of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8, and that is where it remains to be seen just how influential the author's contribution will prove to be. Even if one accepts the basic presuppositions and methodology of the redaction-historical approach as the proper starting point for the study of this corpus, the subjective component of textual interpretation involved ensures that such scholarly models will continue to vary from each other in dramatic and often contradictory ways. The author has presented a stimulating discussion, but surely not the last word on this subject.

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The Hebrew Prophets and Their Social World: An Introduction by Victor Matthews. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012. xi + 244 pp., US \$26.99, softcover.

Prophetic literature continues to function as the *crux interpretum* of the Hebrew Bible. Many factors contribute to why the prophets are so difficult to interpret, and one of the most significant is the historical and cultural distance between the world of the text and the world of the interpreter. Matthews's *The Hebrew Prophets and Their Social World* attempts to bridge the gap between the ancient prophet and the modern interpreter. This newly revised and expanded edition of Matthews' 2001 monograph, *The Social World of the Hebrew Prophets*, includes two new chapters and some significant additions to material included in the first edition. Matthews notes that "one of the greatest challenges for modern readers is to become acquainted with the social and historical forces that played such an important role in the lives of the prophets and their audiences" (p. x). The goal of Matthews's book is to help modern readers overcome these challenges by familiarizing them with the foreign and often strange world of the Hebrew prophets.

In order to accomplish this goal, Matthews indicates that he will "introduce each prophet as he or she appears chronologically in the biblical narrative, sketch out his or her social and historical context, explain aspects of historical geography where relevant to their message, examine the economic and social forces that dominate that particular moment in time, explain the literary images and metaphors used by the prophets, and make continual references to intertextual links between the prophets" (p. xi). Chapters 1–2 describe the historical geography of the Ancient Near East and also discuss the role of the prophet in ancient Israel. Matthews identifies six primary characteristics which made the prophets unique and ultimately argues for the commonly accepted notion that the prophets' role "was to challenge the establishment and the social order, to remind the leadership and the people of their obligation to the covenant with Yahweh and to warn the people of the punishment that would surely ensue if they violated this covenantal agreement" (p. 19).

Chapters 3–5 consider the prophets during Israel's pre-monarchic and early monarchic times through the time of Elijah and Elisha. Beginning with Moses, Matthews examines each prophet in the biblical record and the characteristics of their prophetic activities. Chapters 6–14 treat the writing prophets. After a short chapter that introduces the prophetic writings and the differences between the Major and Minor Prophets (ch. 6), Matthews analyzes each of the prophetic writings in chronological order. Amos (ch. 7), Hosea (ch. 8), First Isaiah (ch. 9), Micah (ch. 10), Jeremiah (ch. 12), and Ezekiel (ch. 13) are

treated in their own chapters. The other prophets are integrated into chapters on “Prophetic Voices of the Late Seventh Century” (ch. 11) or “Postexilic Prophecy” (ch.14). Matthews also explores the book of Daniel (ch. 15), then provides some brief final thoughts on the closing of the Hebrew canon (ch. 16).

In many ways Matthews’s new edition is a significant improvement to the first edition. The format of the text and the excursus boxes are cleaner and more aesthetically pleasing. The inclusion of maps in the chapter on historical geography is very helpful and I am confident students will now find the chapter much easier to understand. The inclusion of a chapter on the difference between the Major and Minor Prophets increases the value of the book as an introduction for the uninitiated. Likewise, the inclusion of concluding chapter helps the book not end as abruptly as the previous edition.

Further, many of the strengths of the first edition are still present in the second. Matthews’ writing is very clear and will be accessible to almost any level of reader. Likewise, a glossary of technical terms that are bold-faced throughout the book adds to its pedagogical value and is an ideal feature of any lay or freshman level introduction to prophetic literature. Also, some sections of Matthews’s work are quite insightful such as his examination of the agricultural background of Isaiah’s “Song of the Vineyard” in Isa 5 (p. 102–106).

However, Matthews’s work does have problems. Matthews generally adopts higher-critical theories of dating and composition that will disappoint many of his evangelical readers. For example, he asserts that the prophetic books as we now have them are not ultimately the products of the writing prophets themselves but instead are the final product of editorial revisions that “took place over many years and reflected shifting theological agendas as the fortunes of the nation changed” (p. 34).

Further some of the excursus boxes contributed very little to the book. For example the discussion of spatial concepts in ancient Israel was too underdeveloped to be useful to readers and is probably not the best type of material for an author to include in an introductory textbook. Also in the introduction Matthews indicates that in this book he will “make continual references to intertextual links between the prophets” (p. xi). Yet he never indicates how these intertextual connections help readers reconstruct the world of the Hebrew prophets—which, after all, is the primary task of the book.

Overall, *The Hebrew Prophets and Their Social World* is a significant improvement to the book’s first edition. Most evangelicals will probably avoid using the book in introductory Old Testament courses due to Matthews’s acceptance of critical theories of composition

and authorship. However, even Matthews's detractors should take note of his ability to communicate difficult concepts with clarity and concision. Matthews has produced an accessible introduction to the prophetic literature and the world of ancient Israel. Considering the complexity of the material, this work is commendable.

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Interpreting Deuteronomy: Issues and Approaches edited by David G. Firth and Philip S. Johnston. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012, 280 pp., US \$28.00, softcover.

David G. Firth is Lecturer in Old Testament and the Director of Research Degrees at St. John's Nottingham. He also chairs the Old Testament Study Group at the Tyndale Fellowship. Philip S. Johnston is a Fellow and Senior Tutor in Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge. *Interpreting Deuteronomy* is the third volume by InterVarsity Press that introduces readers to the various issues and approaches to an Old Testament book (see *Interpreting the Psalms* [2006] and *Interpreting Isaiah* [2009]). As the title suggests, the editors set out to provide a complementary volume on Deuteronomy, one that introduces and bridges the gap between a macro overview of scholarship and the minutiae related to the book (p. 14).

Over the last one hundred years, much has changed in the field of Deuteronomistic studies and, yet, not much has changed. Scholars still have not come to consensus regarding the literary composition of Deuteronomy. More recently, the seminal efforts of the previous generations have been critiqued, abandoned, and completely revolutionized. Many of the older arguments are reappearing, some slightly altered and others dramatically modified. One constant, however, still remains—the book of Deuteronomy is a fertile plain for academic postulation. Thus, it is with timely acumen that Firth and Johnston have compiled a welcome volume of intriguing essays that delve into the depths of one of the Old Testament's most theological and disputed books. The editors divided the book into three parts: Approaching Deuteronomy, Issues in Deuteronomy, and Reading Deuteronomy.

From a structural perspective, the editors of the book do an excellent job in providing readers with a macro view of Deuteronomistic studies (Part 1) and a thorough, yet economical, overview of the trending

issues related to the book (Parts 2 and 3). Below, I will examine each essay giving more attention to selected essays.

Two essays comprise the section on “Approaching Deuteronomy.” The first essay by James Robson is the longest in the book. Robson provides readers with an erudite overview of the literary composition of Deuteronomy. The essay is structured to graduate readers from the basic issues to the complex. It takes the reader through the following subjects: the explicit testimony *of* Deuteronomy; implicit evidence *from* Deuteronomy; the testimony of tradition; Deuteronomy and the Pentateuch; Deuteronomy and the Josainic Reforms; Deuteronomy and other Old Testament material; and Deuteronomy and the ancient Near East. Key components within each of the aforementioned areas are summarized and evaluated. In closing, Robson provides seven propositions concerning the composition of Deuteronomy (pp. 57–59). First, he correctly notes the complexity related to the composition of Deuteronomy, evidenced by earlier material (e.g., parallels to Hittite treaties) and later material (e.g., shift in rhetorical perspective). Second, he encourages careful reflection of the evidence, both internal and external. Third, the date of composition must “be a cumulative and coherent one” based on all the evidence (p. 57). Fourth, Deuteronomy is “genuinely Mosaic” in origin, but redactors reframed some of the material of Deuteronomy. Fifth, he underscores the warning of Moshe Weinfeld—ancient authors are best understood as collectors and compilers of traditions. Sixth, the composition of Deuteronomy extends into other arenas (e.g., hermeneutics and ancient Near Eastern parallels). Seventh, the issue of composition should not “paralyse the reader” (p. 58). In an attempt to circumvent paralysis, Robson explains that Deuteronomy “should be read standing with Moses and the people on the edge of the Promised Land, the rhetorical situation *in* the book” and “in the context of the exile, the likely rhetorical situation *of* the book” (p. 58, emphasis his).

The second essay by Paul A. Barker introduces readers to the contemporary theological interpretations of Deuteronomy. The themes Barker examines are missions, election, war, politics, community, monotheism, name theology, grace, and covenant. Attention is given to the scholarly treatment of each theme, which provides readers a wonderful resource for further research.

In Part 2, five essays are dedicated to issues in Deuteronomy. John Walton’s essay on “The Decalogue structure of the Deuteronomic Law” revisits his earlier treatment of the theme (see “Deuteronomy: An Exposition of the Spirit of the Law,” *Grace Theological Journal* 8 (1987): 213–25). In the current essay, like the previous one, Walton reiterates his departure from and elaboration of the arguments posited by

his mentor Stephen Kaufman (see Stephen Kaufman, "The Structure of the Deuteronomic Law," *Maarva* 1/2 (1978–79): 105–58). Both Kaufman and Walton argue that the book of Deuteronomy is a "legal commentary on the ten words" (p. 95). Walton's primary departure centers on Words 1 and 2 (i.e., commandments 1 and 2). For Kaufman, the first two words are found in Deut 12; however, Walton maintains that Word 1 is not introduced in the Deuteronomic Law, but rather in the paraenetic introduction (Deut 6–11). Like Kaufman, Walton places Word 2 in Deut 12. Additionally, Walton continues to advocate his elaboration of Kaufman's theory by structuring the Deuteronomic Decalogue into four categories (i.e., authority, dignity, commitment, and rights/privileges) with two levels (i.e., divine and human). In the current essay, Walton adds a new tool for aiding in the discussion: the application of various categories within speech-act theory to the 10 Words (pp. 104–14). However, it should be noted, that Walton does not completely advocate speech-act theory as a whole.

The essay by Peter T. Vogt, "Centralization and Decentralization in Deuteronomy," builds on the material in his monograph *Deuteronomic Theology and Significance of Torah: A Reappraisal* (Eisenbrauns, 2006). For many historical-critical scholars, the Deuteronomic concept of centralization represents the secularization and demythologization of the cult in Jerusalem during the reforms of Hezekiah or Josiah. Vogt briefly highlights the various nuances of this theory as well as other notable ones related to centralization. In his essay, however, Vogt argues that the Deuteronomic mandate of centralization to the "place that Yahweh will choose" applies only to sacrifice. The worship of Yahweh, on the other hand, is decentralized and can be practiced throughout the land (pp. 119, 127–38).

The "Civil Leadership in Deuteronomy" is the focus of the essay by Philip S. Johnston. Attention is given to the various offices of civil leadership outlined in the Deuteronomic Law: elders, judges, commanders and officers, and king. Collectively, these civil leaders portray the leadership of the Israelites once they enter the Promised Land. Moreover, Johnston concludes that the depiction of leadership in Deuteronomy "reflects the pre- and early monarchy periods" over and against later periods in Israel's history (p. 155).

The role of faith, particularly the passing it along to others, is the subject of David G. Firth's essay. He defines faith within Deuteronomy as the "acceptance of Yahweh as Israel's covenant God, and therefore the need to live out the terms of that covenant" (p. 158). Furthermore, he argues that the passing along faith is not "an addendum" to following Yahweh, but rather an element intertwined throughout Deuteronomy's

rhetoric (p. 158). Moses is the model teacher of faith not only for his generation but also for Israelites throughout the centuries (p. 165).

As the title suggests Heath Thomas's contribution, "Life and Death in Deuteronomy," explores the theme of life and death in the book. For Thomas, life corresponds to "Israel's proper existence *before God in his divinely appointed place*" and death to "Israel's *rejection of God and banishment from his divinely appointed place*" (p. 177–78, emphasis his). Devotion to Yahweh is recognition that He is the divine life giver (p. 182). The life of Moses captures this reality. Throughout the Pentateuch, Moses is presented as "an exemplar not only of *faithfulness* but also of *faithlessness*" (p. 190). Moses' death outside the Promised Land (Deut 32:48–52) reiterates the theme of life and death for the Israelites waiting entry into the land (p. 193).

The third part of the book contains four essays on specialized topics related to reading Deuteronomy. Csilla Saysell examines the innerbiblical relationship of intermarriages between Deuteronomy and Ezra–Nehemiah (EN). She maintains that EN provides the "earliest clear example" of Deuteronomy's reception within the canon (p. 197). The Deuteronomic influence on EN is evidenced by the Torah's pride of place in the postexilic period (cf. Neh 8). According to Saysell, EN advances beyond the teaching of Deuteronomy (Deut 7; 23:3–6) to interpreting its message (Ezra 9–10; and Neh 13:23–31) in the postexilic community (p. 207).

The essay by Greg Goswell discusses the paratext of Deuteronomy. Goswell defines paratext as the "elements that are adjoined to the text but are not part of it" (p. 209). Examples of paratext are book order, names of books, and the versification/chapter divisions. For Goswell, the text and paratext of Deuteronomy, although different, are inseparable given the influence of both on the reader (p. 209). To prove his point, he provides an excellent overview to Deuteronomy's placement within the Pentateuch, the name(s) for the book, and the internal divisions (p. 210–27).

Jenny Corcoran compares the covenant renewal in Deut 29:10–15 with contemporary ecclesiology in "The Alien in Deuteronomy 29 and Today." After taking into consideration the role of the stranger within Deuteronomy and in its wider context, Corcoran utilizes Christopher Wright's hermeneutical lens that "the people of God in the Old Testament" represent "a pattern for the people of God in the New Testament" (p. 235). In conclusion, she briefly addresses an underlying question in her essay: When should new church members "adopt Christian norms, values and ethics" (p. 239)?

In the final essay, "Genocide in Deuteronomy and Christian Interpretation," Christian Hofreiter examines the Hebrew concept of holy

war (הרם) from a moralistic and hermeneutical perspective (p. 241). After examining the contexts of the Deuteronomic genocidal commands (7:1–12, 13:12–17, and 20:16–18), Hofreiter summarizes the most prominent theories that attempt to answer the question: Did God actually command Israel to enact genocide?

With *Interpreting Deuteronomy*, Firth and Johnston provide readers with an accessible and thoroughly learned introduction to the book of Deuteronomy. The book could have easily consisted of 30 articles and 600 pages of reading. The task of deciding the topics to address for a book so rich in history, law, and theology is truly difficult. For this reason, it would be unfair to question the inclusion, or exclusion, of some topics.

The division of the book into three parts allows readers of all levels to choose areas of interest. That being said, a few words should be said about select essays. The essays by Robson on the literary composition of Deuteronomy and Hofreiter on genocide are worth the price of the book. Every serious student of Deuteronomy should read, *and reread*, Robson's careful treatment of Mosaic authorship and Mosaic origin. His deft approach to the pitfalls related to the literary composition of Deuteronomy is masterful. The essays by Walton and Vogt provide thought provoking and sustainable alternatives to two of the more debated issues related to Deuteronomy: compositional arrangement and the concept of centralization. Last, Hofreiter delicately married two fields of research in his approach to genocide in Deuteronomy: biblical studies and philosophy. His treatment of the subject certainly adds a credible voice to the dichotomy of genocide in the Old Testament and the love of Jesus in the New Testament. In sum, *Interpreting Deuteronomy* will enlighten its readers to the wonderful field of Deuteronomic studies. For students, the book will become a handy resource for further study. For professionals, the book will serve as an endless source of information for teaching Deuteronomy.

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Jeremiah and Lamentations by Hetty Lalleman. TOTC. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012. 373 pp., US \$16.00, softcover.

This volume in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries Series is a replacement for the one written by R. K. Harrison, published 40 years previously. The Tyndale series is committed to “interpreting the text of

the Bible as Scripture” (p. 7) and Lalleman, a tutor at Spurgeon’s College in London, offers serious fare for the reader’s consideration. Dr. Lalleman is eminently qualified to write on these biblical texts. This is not her first book on Jeremiah and she demonstrates a wide familiarity with research on both texts. Her efforts prove to be a worthy successor to Harrison.

One can characterize her presentation style as straight-forward and her references to other sources, whether as footnotes or internal citations, do not overwhelm. This style enhances the reading and assimilating processes, which is surely a blessing to the majority of readers. It does mean that those who want to use her commentary as a research instrument and a barometer for scholarly issues related to Jeremiah and Lamentations will have to work a bit harder. Such a statement is not meant as a criticism of either Lalleman’s knowledge of the field of research or failure to address adequately her intended audience. Her goal, consonant with that of the revised series (pp. 7–8), is an up-to-date reading of the biblical books, but without getting sidetracked by “the minutiae of scholarly debate.”

The commentary format is a scriptural reference (e.g. a pericope such as Jer 1:4–19) followed by a three-fold presentation. First comes “Context,” placing a passage in the context of the book and noting crucial matters of historical interpretation. Second comes “Comment,” where exegetical comments are made. Almost invariably, this section is the largest of the three presentations on a given passage. The third is “Meaning,” bringing focus to the theological implications from the previous two sections.

The introductory section interprets the book of Jeremiah in the context of the chronology the book presents (pp. 22–27). This (seemingly simple) approach has several implications for her interpretation of the book. For example, according to 1:2, Jeremiah’s call to prophecy comes in the thirteenth year of Josiah’s reign, which Lalleman dates to 627 B.C. This reflects a departure from many scholars who see that date as either redactional (and perhaps historically inaccurate) or as a reference to the prophet’s birth, but not as a reference to the onset of his public prophetic activity, which they put towards the end of Josiah’s reign or even at the beginning of Jehoiakim’s. Indeed, the Jeremiah has a surprising lack of references to Josiah’s reforms from the king’s eighteenth year, so dramatically described in 2 Kings 22–23. Lalleman briefly acknowledges the absence, but as noted above, does not get caught up in a long discussion and proceeds with a traditionally interpreted chronology.

Jeremiah 36 provides two dates (vv. 1, 9) that are significant for her reading of the book. She interprets them in light of the dramatic changes brought by the Neo-Babylonian rise to power (pp. 252–56). She

sees the latter date (Jehoiakim's fifth year/ninth month; December 604 B.C.) as a turning point for the prophet. Before that time, when a scroll of his prophecies was literally destroyed, Jeremiah continued to hope for Judah's repentance. After that event, she concludes, subsequent prophetic announcements of judgment have an inevitability about them.

The date of the destruction of Jerusalem is a thorny issue, with scholars arguing for 587 or 586 B.C. Per her style, Lalleman notes the issue and succinctly states her preference (587 B.C.). One should note her brief comments on Jer 27:1 (pp. 210–11), which refer to the "beginning of Jehoiakim's reign." A number of interpreters think that "Jehoiachim" is a mistake and for contextual and historical reasons should refer to Zedekiah. She, indeed, proposes a copyist error (which is certainly plausible) for the name Jehoiakim, but suggests that the reference to the "beginning" of (now) Zedekiah's reign could cover the events of chapters 27–28, at least some of which occur in Zedekiah's fourth year (cf. 28:1). It is not clear, however, from comparative usage that the term "beginning," when used of a king's reign, can be extended to a fourth year of rule.

The author's attention to the historical context of the prophet's work influences her theological approach in exegetical comments and the final "Meaning" sections. She accepts that God speaks definitively through the prophet's words and deeds, and her focus is the sense of these things in Jeremiah's own day as they may guide modern reflection. Thus her employment of such matters as a spiritual meaning, *sensus plenior*, or a Christological focus, is restrained. She will note, for example, that Paul's sense of call was likely influenced by Jer 1:5–9, but it is Jeremiah's own sense of call to the prophetic task that drives her comments. She will explain that the prophecy of the new covenant in 31:31–34 is taken up by Christ and ultimately fulfilled in his life, death, and resurrection, but also state that Jeremiah himself may not have realized this (p. 60). Her comment about Jeremiah's knowledge of the future import of his prophecies is not from theological skepticism or a sense of the prophet's inadequacies; it comes from her sense of the primacy of the historical sense in interpreting the book.

Lalleman gives sustained attention to the literary aspects of the book. Examples abound: She traces the repeated use of the verb *šub*, "turn/return," to show the movements of God and people in relationship with one another (pp. 37–40). She pays careful attention to the formal properties of laments in describing Jeremiah's personal expression of pain in carrying out his prophetic tasks (pp. 136–39). She notes on more than one occasion the bold anthropomorphic depiction of God in anguish over wayward Judah and Israel. Lalleman's dissertation dealt with the book of Jeremiah and its connection to other prophetic traditions (e.g.

Hosea), and her comments in this volume on particular texts often contain references to related material elsewhere in Scripture. This last trait is a plus for her commentary. These references are offered to the reader typically as data for follow up.

As one might expect from the preceding comments, the author's treatment of Lamentations proceeds from the event of Jerusalem's destruction in 587 B.C. The painful voices in the book's poetry are seen as reflecting the historical impact of that destruction in the exilic or early post-exilic community. Lalleman also skillfully explains the broader lamentation traditions of the ancient Near East as well as the various literary forms that comprise the biblical book itself. She indicates that Lamentations is not a book for discussing human suffering abstractly. It takes its form from a historical rupture in the relationship between God and his people. Her matter-of-fact, straight-forward style of analysis is well illustrated in the following: "The book deserves to be read and reread, in view of the different aspects of suffering contained with it: the distress, the anger, the questions, the sparks of hope when remembering God's covenantal love and faithfulness, the tears over the children who die from hunger, and the realization of guilt because of sins" (p. 328).

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Job by John H. Walton. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012. 454 pp., US \$29.99, hardcover.

In this new addition to the NIVAC series, Walton offers a coherent reading of the book of Job. The NIVAC series uses the distinctive format of addressing the text under the headings of Original Meaning, Bridging Contexts, and Contemporary Significance. Walton makes adjustments to this format so that in the Bridging Contexts section Walton often omits the discussion of "the message that comprises the authoritative teaching of the text" (p. 72) and in the Contemporary Significance section he replaces the standard application discussion with the story of a former student who has gone through a journey of tremendous personal suffering. Walton claims that the special nature of the book of Job calls for these necessary adjustments.

In the introduction Walton discusses the issue of historicity of the story at length and the difference it would make in deciphering the message of the book. This discussion may not be of interest to the scholarly community in general but it is certainly crucial to many

evangelicals, which are the intended audience of this series. Walton argues for reading Job as wisdom literature rather than historical narrative. The introduction also does a good job bringing relevant information from the ANE into the discussion (see the chart on p. 34 showing Mesopotamian wisdom texts that are comparable to Job). Indeed, parallels between Job and literature from ANE are addressed throughout the commentary, which illuminates and enriches the interpretation.

What is the central problem of the book of Job? Walton asserts that the purpose of the book “is to explore God’s policies with regard to suffering in the world, especially by the righteous or the innocent” (p. 22). Readers are thus invited to revolutionize their concept of God and the way he operates the world. To facilitate the discussion, Walton introduces the article of Tsevat (“The Meaning of the Book of Job,” *HUCA* 37 [1966]), who has illustrated the major tension in the book of Job with a triangle diagram. In his model, the three corners of the triangle represent the three elements to be defended by various speakers: God’s justice, Job’s righteousness, and the Retribution Principle (RP). Since all three elements cannot be simultaneously maintained, each speaker chooses which element must be defended and which element must be forfeited.

While many scholars see issues with the unity of Job, Walton is a fervent defender of its compositional integrity. To him, the prose framework, the Elihu speeches, and the divine speeches are all indispensable components of the story. Whereas many scholars explain the difficulty in the third cycle of debate between Job and his friends as the result of a displacement in the original manuscript during scribal transmission, Walton finds no serious problem there. Walton considers the prologue (Job 1–2) as a necessary setup for a thought experiment, which the author employs to explore a theological problem. He argues that such an experiment is “designed to raise issues and discuss philosophical options” (p. 110). Walton intentionally translates the satan in the prologue as “the Challenger” and argues extensively that this heavenly being should not be understood in the same way as the New Testament Satan. The Challenger’s question in 1:9 sets up the discussion in the first half of the book (chs. 4–27) by casting doubt on God’s policies for prospering the righteous. Regarding Job 3, rather than seeing an abrupt shift in genre as evidence of multiple authorship, Walton argues that Job’s lament highlights his psychological despair and builds the transition between the prologue and the speeches. In this chapter Job is presented as a person with whom the reader is able to sympathize. Nevertheless, Walton warns against making Job a role model for those who are undergoing similar experience.

Walton interprets each of the three cycles of dialogue between Job and his friends as separate units. This is due to the assumption that each of the cycles of dialogue accomplishes a specific philosophical point. For the first cycle (chs. 4–14), Walton contends that the major role of the friends is to “appeal to Job to think about getting his benefits back and doing whatever is necessary to accomplish that” (p. 185). Therefore, the friends have unknowingly begun to argue the case of the Challenger. Instead Job rejects the friends’ advice, defends his own righteousness and calls into question the justice of God.

For the second cycle (chs. 15–21), Walton argues that the dispute is over the validity of the RP. While each of the friends affirms that “the wicked demonstrably and inevitably suffer the judgment of God” (p. 225), Job refutes such a claim. In this cycle, the gap between Job and God has widened as Job continues to consider God as the object of his suspicion.

The relative brevity of the third cycle (chs. 22–27), according to Walton, reveals that the discussion between Job and his friends is essentially exhausted. All Eliphaz can do is to accuse Job of injustice, Bildad can only reiterate his previous arguments, and Zophar even comes to complete silence. As for Job, he denies the charge that his calamity is the result of wrongdoing. The climax of this dialogue, according to Walton, comes in Job 27:1–6. In this passage Job disproves the Challenger by demonstrating that his piety is not based upon God’s favor toward him. What is still not resolved up to this point is Job’s contention that it is bad policy of God for righteous people to suffer.

The poem in Job 28 brings a change in tone and content which makes Walton believe that these are the words of the narrator, the real author of the book. As the authoritative voice in the poem it indirectly rejects the friends’ arguments and the case of the Challenger is now brought to complete closure. The wisdom poem in ch. 28 also serves as a transition so that the book shifts “from a search for justice to a search for wisdom” (p. 294). In Job 29–31, the book’s attention return to Job’s contention against God’s policies. Job recalls the coherence of the past (Job 29), describes the incoherence of the present (Job 30), and then, in ch. 31 he seeks to regain coherence by attempting to vindicate himself through his oath of innocence. In Walton’s assessment, Job’s strategy is a self-centered pursuit that discounts God’s wisdom.

While many interpreters regard the Elihu speeches as a later addition, Walton adopts a contrary position and argues that these chapters serve a crucial role in the story. Elihu is the only character who seeks to defend the corner of the triangle that represents God’s justice. He offers a cogent theodicy that sees suffering as a means of education. For Walton, Elihu’s theology is not meant to be embraced by the reader,

though his rebuke of Job is sound and so should be taken seriously by the reader.

Walton espouses the conventional position that the divine speeches are normative and represent the resolution of the book. The first divine speech is meant to demonstrate God's knowledge and power. At the heart of the created order is God's wisdom, not God's justice. The first response of Job is a word of submission and humility, but not recantation. Regarding the second divine speech, Walton rejects the idea that Behemoth and Leviathan represent cosmic evil, rather Behemoth is an example of stability and trust for Job to imitate and Leviathan is an example of a creature that cannot be challenged. The object lesson to learn is that humans, like Job, should recognize their role in the world and should not challenge God. The second response of Job reveals that he wishes to retract his previous words.

The Lord's indirect commendation of Job in 42:7–8 creates one of the greatest tensions in the book. According to Walton, the Lord does not exonerate Job totally, but recognizes that Job has drawn logical conclusions based on his personal experience. In contrast the friends were spouting unverifiable accusations based on theory. Regarding the restoration of Job's fortune in the epilogue, Walton argues that prosperity is a gift from God rather than a reward that Job deserves. This reveals that God is not bound by the RP.

Although Walton's voice is a welcome addition to the discussion of this difficult book, at times he appears to smooth out interpretive difficulties by harmonization. The interpretation of 42:7–8 serves as a good example. The text nowhere suggests that the Lord is concerned with whether one's argument is verifiable. His interpretation seems to be an easy way out of a complicated problem. Walton also does not address the issue of Elihu adequately. While it is absolutely fine to argue that the Elihu speeches are not secondary, Walton fails to give a reasonable explanation as to why there is no response to them. Further, Elihu is not addressed by the Lord though he does address Job and the three friends. If Elihu is a defender of theodicy, which is to be rejected according to Walton, it appears that no authoritative voice in the text has explicitly refuted his arguments.

These issues aside, Walton's commentary has much to commend it. First, he shows extraordinary sensitivity to the evangelical community. Second, his expertise with the ANE makes Walton's commentary rich with relevant background information. Finally, although I do not endorse Walton's overall reading, he does provide a coherent interpretation of the book in its canonical form which is a huge success. Walton identifies the central problem of the book upfront and chapter after chapter he is able to find support and reiterate his claim. This commentary certainly offers

another interpretive option for those who seek to attain a coherent reading experience of this literary masterpiece.

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Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants by Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012. 848 pp., US \$45.00, hardcover.

As the title suggests, the main focus of this lengthy volume by Wellum and Gentry is on the place and significance of covenants in the biblical metanarrative. Maintaining that both dispensationalism and reformed theology have failed to “put together” the biblical covenants correctly, the authors present their work as a *via media* that “makes better sense of the overall presentation of Scripture and which . . . will help us resolve some of our theological differences” (p. 23). Labelling their view, “progressive covenantalism,” and loosely aligning themselves with new covenant theology, they maintain that God’s kingdom is gradually manifested and established by a plurality of divine-human covenants, culminating and finding *complete* fulfilment in the new covenant inaugurated by Jesus. This Christological lens is key to determining how each covenant fits within God’s unfolding plan and how those under the new covenant should relate to previous covenants.

The book is comprised of three main parts. Part One articulates the importance of the covenants for biblical and systematic theology, both of which are carefully defined in the first chapter. Key differences between dispensational and covenant theology, particularly in relation to the biblical covenants, are then set out (ch. 2). This is followed by an explanation of the hermeneutical assumptions employed in *KTC*, in contradistinction from those reflected in the two alternative approaches (ch. 3). Part Two, the main body of the book, begins with a discussion of the covenant idea in the Bible which correlates the major divine-human covenants with the plot structure of the Old Testament narrative (ch. 4). This is followed by a detailed analysis of the aforementioned covenants (chs. 5–14), somewhat strangely concluded with a discussion of behavioral requirements of the new covenant community (ch.15). Part Three explores the ramifications of the thesis and conclusions of *KTC* for biblical and systematic theology. Focusing on the former (biblical theology), chapter 16 succinctly summarizes the major thesis of the book and seeks to demonstrate how the authors’ approach significantly differs

from both covenant theology and dispensationalism. This summary chapter provides a helpful overview for readers wishing to distil the main arguments of the book as a whole. Turning to the theological implications, chapter 17 includes a discussion of the work of Christ (in terms of his active obedience and the extent of the atonement), the nature of the church (*vis-à-vis* the covenant community in the Old Testament), the practice of Christian baptism (an apologetic for believer's baptism), and the significance of God's territorial promise in biblical eschatology.

While generally engaging and well-argued, this book is much longer than seems necessary. As well as being somewhat repetitive, it is not immediately evident why certain sections/chapters (e.g. ch.15) have been included. More disciplined editing may also have eradicated the insensitive language occasionally used to critique others. Given the emphasis on the biblical metanarrative, it is initially surprising that the discussion of covenant (both in terms of its definition and outworking) appears almost entirely restricted to Old Testament texts. To be fair, however, the discussion is not as skewed as chapter headings suggest; some of the relevant New Testament material is incorporated (in particular, with respect to the outworking of the new covenant) where appropriate. Even so, one tends to lose sight of the biblical metanarrative to some extent.

Also surprising is the fact that the discussion of biblical covenants begins with the *Noahic* covenant rather than the so-called "Covenant with Creation" that the authors (following Dumbrell) discern in Gen 1–3. The latter is, however, defended at length in the following chapter, in which my own conclusions on this issue are rather sharply criticized.

Despite endorsing my interpretation of Gen 12:1–3 in terms of two distinct foci (national and international) "corresponding directly to the later distinct double foci of chapters 15 and 17," (pp. 233–34) the latter chapters (Gen 15 and 17) are not interpreted by Gentry and Wellum in terms of two different covenants, but as two stages of a single covenant. In support of this, the authors endorse and refine Dumbrell's argument that a lexical distinction is maintained between various verbs used in association with "covenant." However, not all the lexical evidence (comprehensively set out in a lengthy appendix) supports the distinction they wish to make between "cutting" (i.e. initiating) a covenant and "confirming" or "maintaining" it. For example, Exod 6:4, Deut 29:1, 2 Kgs 23:3, and Ezek 16:60, 62 seem to use the wrong verbs according to this lexical distinction. Aware of this, the authors are thus forced to conclude that (a) Exod 6:4 refers to "affirming" rather than "establishing" a covenant with the patriarchs; (b) a separate covenant is initiated at Moab which supplements the Sinai covenant (as an addendum

or codicil); (c) Josiah and his subjects are initiating rather than renewing their covenant to observe the Book of the Law; and (d) Ezek 16 probably reflects a linguistic development of Late Biblical Hebrew. Certainly each of these interpretations are debatable and there are several other texts which suggest that verbs other than *kārat* can be used for *initiating* covenants (e.g. Num 25:12; Deut 29:11; 2 Sam 23:5; Jer 34:10; Ezek 16:8).

Even apart from the lexical anomalies that don't quite fit their argument, it seems to me that bracketing Gen 15 and 17 together as one covenant raises an important question that they appear to leave unanswered: since the international aspects of God's promises were not included within the covenant established in Gen 15, how can one speak of Gen 17 in terms of "maintaining" or "fulfilling" this covenant? Admittedly, it may supplement the earlier covenant, but that's precisely what I have suggested in my own work: that Gen 17 picks up the international aspects of God's promises in Gen 12:1–3 and anticipates their covenantal ratification in Gen 22. However, given our common perspective on so much of the patriarchal narrative and its significance for the biblical metanarrative, it is perhaps unfortunate that *KTC* spends so much time focusing on our differences.

While *KTC* will certainly not persuade everyone, or even persuade some readers in every respect, this book will certainly stimulate, challenge, and inform our thinking on the importance of covenant as a framing concept in the metanarrative of Scripture.

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Neo-Assyrian Prophecy and the Hebrew Bible: Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah by Russell Mack. Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Contexts 14. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011. xviii + 386 pp., US\$160.60, hardcover.

Given the relatively recent "birth" of Assyriology (cuneiform being first deciphered in the mid-nineteenth century), biblical scholarship continues to work through the growing pains of sifting through the textual remains of the ancient Near East in search of insights that may help interpret the biblical text. Russell Mack's recent volume *Neo-Assyrian Prophecy and the Hebrew Bible: Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, a revision of his doctoral dissertation from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, seeks to aid in that process. Mack systematically works through

a collection of Neo-Assyrian prophecies (and other supplemental genres) and then compares and contrasts them with the biblical books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. Consequently, he concludes that his analysis indicates that the biblical material cannot be dated to the 7th century B.C. as has traditionally been believed.

Mack begins his argument by discussing recent developments in assessing prophecy in the ancient world, and specifically those that look at Israel's prophets in relationship to her neighbors. In these first three chapters Mack introduces some of the major ideas that ultimately shape the direction of his work. Frist, following the work of Susan Niditch (*Oral World and Written World* [John Knox, 1996]), he argues that there is no way to positively identify signs of oracular activity in oral cultures. Those literary clues that have often been believed to point toward oracular events can and should be understood as a display of an "oracular aesthetic" placed within an exclusively literary text. Next, Mack then explains the multiple methodological approaches he uses when analyzing the texts at hand: semiotics, structuralism, genre theory, anthropology, Marxist literary criticism, new historicism, and reader response theory.

In chapter 4 Mack discusses certain prophetic texts (SAA 9 1.1–9 11) taken from Simo Parpola's *Assyrian Prophecies in the State Archives of Assyria Series*. In chapter 5 he expands his survey to include supplemental texts, such as Ashurbanipal's prism inscription (Prism T ii 9-19), letters to Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal that give secondhand accounts of prophetic utterances (SAA 10 352; 10 111; 10 284; 13 144; ABL 1217 + CT 53 118; CT 53 17 + 107; LAS 317), and a recorded dialogue between Ashurbanipal and Nabû (SAA 3 13). Mack is to be commended for the attention and detail with which he treats these texts. It must be stated that too often in comparative studies with biblical material the ancient Near Eastern sources are shortchanged. However, this is not the case in Mack's analysis. He is thorough in his treatment and rightly concludes based upon the prophetic texts (SAA 9 1.1–9 11) that: 1) this corpus of texts is generally propagandistic in nature, 2) that the material did not undergo an extensive editorial process, 3) the material strongly reflects "the concerns of its monarchic patron" (p. 129), and is consequently predominately political in focus. After carefully analyzing the supplemental texts he goes on to say that in the Neo-Assyrian Empire the prophet played a central role in the administration of the empire. However, "[P]rophetes were never the final word on a subject. Extispicy was sometimes required to verify the legitimacy of a prophecy. It also appears as though the king were the one with final authority to determine whether a prophecy was legitimate and should be obeyed" (p. 173).

In chapters 6 through 8 Mack systematically works through the books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah with an intentional eye toward possible correspondences with the Neo-Assyrian corpus. However, as he himself states “little correspondence exists” (p. 174). Mack’s answer to this lack of correspondence is that the two collections reflect differing social and political contexts—one highly monarchical and the other less monarchical. Working through the biblical books, he highlights the use of literary features such as parallelism, chiasm, acrostics, and metaphor as indicators that the biblical prophetic books are literary works created to transform the ideologies of the post-exilic community, instead of monarchical propaganda. These two descriptions of the biblical data—non-monarchical and highly poetic—summarize Mack’s conclusions for each of the biblical books. Consequently, the non-monarchical nature points toward a period when the monarchy was weak or did not exist, and the literary components seem to indicate that the texts were produced for ideological reasons, not a collection of prophetic oracles.

Mack’s research is exhaustive and his ability to competently work in two ever-expanding fields of study is commendable. The interdisciplinary nature of his research is also praiseworthy. However, some considerable problems permeate Mack’s research and dramatically affect his conclusions. First, Mack’s Marxist and reader-oriented approach to the biblical text leads him to accept conclusions that go directly against the stated text. In the book of Nahum, Mack argues that the oracle against Nineveh should be understood as coming from a post-exilic context: “The author(s) writes with full knowledge of these events because they have already unfolded. He takes up his ‘prophetic’ mantle transporting himself back in time so that he can prophesy of Nineveh’s destruction” (p. 230). Why would the post-exilic prophet spend so much time addressing the demise of a city that fell over a hundred years prior? Mack’s point is well taken when he says, “There is nothing in Nahum that points toward prophets or prophecy being political instruments” (p. 231). However, does this fact necessitate the composition of the book during the post-monarchical period after the exile?

This leads to a second problem. While Mack should be commended for seeking to understand the differences that appear when comparing the Neo-Assyrian texts to the biblical texts, he goes too far in assuming there one-time similarity. He assumes that seventh century prophecy looked identical across the ancient Near East. Therefore, if Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah were truly seventh century, they would look like the Neo-Assyrian texts. Kings and temples sponsor texts; therefore, texts that do not speak to kings and temples must be from a time without kings and temples. While the former statement may be

demonstrated, the latter is an argument from silence that does not necessarily follow. In fact, given the paucity of textual evidence from the ancient world, I personally find it highly speculative to make such a definitive claim. There were certainly weaknesses within the monarchy during the 7th century leading up to exile that would have afforded the opportunity for outside voices to speak against a *coming* judgment. Emphasizing YHWH's true kingship is just as appropriate when dealing with unfaithful kings as it is in the absence of a king.

Mack does include several ways in which the Neo-Assyrian texts are similar to the biblical books. In his discussion of Habakkuk, he lists eight ways in which Ashurbanipal's dialogue with Nabû is similar to Habakkuk (p. 252). He also notes similar metaphorical themes that run through both sets of texts. However, overall the study demonstrates a striking dissimilarity between Neo-Assyrian prophecy and the books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. Mack's rationale for such a disparity is one possible solution, but I believe other more likely answers can be proposed.

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Reconciling Violence and Kingship: A Study of Judges and 1 Samuel by Marty Alan Richardson. Cambridge: James Clarke, 2012. ix + 230 pp., US \$26.00, softcover.

Marty Alan Michelson is founder and director of Eupan Global Initiative, and author of *The Greatest Commandment, The LORD's Invitation to Love* (Dust Jacket, 2012). He earned his Ph.D. in Ancient Jewish History and Literature at the University of Manchester, and is Professor of Old Testament at Southern Nazarene University, where he teaches integrative courses that deal with issues of peacemaking, ecological and global stewardship, and Shoah/genocide studies. The present volume reflects his interest in conflict resolution and an interdisciplinary approach to biblical studies. It offers a fresh approach to texts that have always featured centrally in discussions of the emergence of kingship in Israel: the story of Abimelech's disastrous reign (Judg 9), the two stories at the end of Judges linked by the refrain "in those days there was no king in Israel" (Judg 17–21), and the account of the eventual emergence and establishment of Israelite kingship (1 Sam 9–11). Through a careful literary reading, Michelson convincingly demonstrates 1) the deep connections of motif and subject-matter between these texts, and 2) the

ambivalence they share towards the monarchy as an institution. Traditionally this has been attributed to an underlying tension between pro-and anti-monarchical sources.

Michelson's original and stimulating contribution in this monograph is to offer a new way of understanding this ambivalence by utilizing insights from the philosophy of culture, and in particular from the work of French philosopher and anthropologist René Girard. The main categories of Girard's thought are 1) mimetic desire: all of our desires are borrowed from other people; 2) mimetic rivalry: all conflict originates in mimetic desire; and 3) the redirection of violence through scapegoating: the scapegoat mechanism is the origin of sacrifice and the foundation of human culture.

Michelson argues that applying Girard's categories of thought makes sense of what is going on with regard to the ambivalence towards kingship found in the above texts. In Judg 9 there is mimetic rivalry, violence, and a pseudo-king; but there is no priesthood and no sacrificial scapegoating. In Judg 17–21 there is rampant violence, scapegoating, and priesthood; but no king. Only in 1 Sam 9–11 have all the necessary Girardian elements for quelling violence come into play. Saul, who displays both priestly and royal qualities, brings the violence to an end by the sacrificial slaughter of his oxen, his liberation of Jabesh-gilead, and his insistence that no more Israelites are to be slain, not even his enemies (1 Sam 11:13). Saul's subsequent recognition as king completes the emergence of Israelite kingship. The process has followed the lines outlined by Girard, and this reading of the texts provides a better understanding of the ambivalence towards kingship than could be achieved by a merely literary or historical reading. In the author's own words: "Girard's work allows us to see beyond source-critical assumptions and perceive a unique literary and anthropological dis-ease with kingship. In the course of the stories we have studied . . . we have, like Israel, traversed from conflict, through chaos, to reconciliation. We witnessed reconciliation by means of Saul's violent scapegoating that brought a new thing to Israel, kingship. Taken together, these stories narrate how conflict and chaos can be quelled with sanctioned violence in the reconciling act of kingship" (p. 201).

There are a number of aspects of this work that I found impressive. First, Michelson does an honest job of trying to listen to the texts and understand them on their own terms as literary works before subjecting them to an explicitly Girardian interpretation. His close reading of the texts in chapters 3–5 is well done, and contains many fine insights. I was better able to assess this in the Judges passages than in 1 Samuel, because that is where my own expertise lies. But what I saw there was sufficient to convince me of the quality of this aspect of

Michelson's work. For example, Michelson argues well from the text that kingship and priestly mediation are both present in the Gideon-Abimelech story but are ineffectively combined. Michelson states, "Gideon is no king, but has an ephod. Abimelech has no ephod but he wants to reign" (p. 178). He also shows (against Mayes and others) that Judg 17–21 is "not an 'interruption' to the story of Judges and Samuel," and does not "disrupt the continuity of the Deuteronomistic history" (p. 73). This enables him to argue, on purely literary grounds, that the texts in question do offer a coherent account of a move towards kingship, and have the elements that are central to Girardian theory. In other words, his literary reading establishes a good *prima facie* case for trying an *explicitly* Girardian reading as a heuristic experiment.

Nevertheless, I found his work less persuasive when he actually performed a Girardian reading of the text in chapter 6. With respect to Saul in 1 Sam 11, for example, it seems he has to work too hard (against the text rather than with it) to attach priestly significance to Saul. Is Saul's slaughter of his oxen in 1 Sam 11 really a "sacrifice" in the priestly sense, or simply a threat of violence that he uses to summon his fellow Israelites to war? Michelson himself acknowledges that "threat" is present (pp. 143, 145), but subordinates it to "sacrifice." He then makes the significance of this being a sacrifice huge. He asserts that the slaughter of the oxen is used to "unite the brothers of Israel around sacrifice" (p. 149) and that "from the chaos of these stories emerges a unique reconciliation in Israel, through the violent sacrificial scapegoating of this King" (p. 150). But I am not convinced. The priestly role in 1 Sam 9–11 is played by Samuel, not Saul, and Saul's slaying of his oxen to summon Israel to war simply cannot bear the weight of Girardian interpretation that Michelson gives it. At best, 1 Sam 9–11 is a further step *towards* the kind of reconciling, sacral kingship that is eventually achieved in David, who clearly *does* offer sacrifice, wears a linen ephod (2 Sam 6:12–15), and unites Israel around the worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem.

To be fair, Michelson's claims are modest in this work. His reading doesn't prove Girard's theory, nor does the theory prove that the text is Girardian; rather, he argues that the texts "help support" the theory, and the theory "helps us understand" the texts (p. 155). In general this is true, yet in parts this attempt to "help us understand" has been pursued a little too zealously in my judgment.

Michelson is to be commended for experimenting with a cross-disciplinary approach to texts where literary and historical readings have too often been done without reference to each other. However, this does present challenges that are not easy to negotiate in a monograph of this length. For example, his use of Girard's sociology requires him to

maintain that the texts reflect something that actually happened in the emergence of Israelite kingship; that they have “some kernel of real history” (p. 118). I have no problem with this in principle; it’s a view that I share. However, although Michelson asserts it several times, he does not provide sufficient justification for it, and given the skepticism about it in so much contemporary scholarship, the works he cites are too dated to provide the kind of support that is needed: e.g. Alt 1988 (p. 118), Cohen 1965, (n. 78, p. 144), Washburn 1990 (pp. 118–119); Na’aman 1992 (p. 141). Provan, Long, and Longman’s *A Biblical History of Israel* (Westminster John Knox, 2003), which is listed in the bibliography but is rarely referenced in the work, could have provided better in-principle support with its carefully argued defense of “narrative history.” This work in combination with other (preferably recent) works being cited elsewhere with reference to particular texts and issues would have strengthened this part of Michelson’s argument.

Finally, this volume would benefit from careful proof-reading and style-editing. Typos and grammatical errors were particularly frequent in chapters 2 and 3, but also occurred with less frequency throughout. This was unfortunate, and detracted from what was otherwise a stimulating piece of scholarship with much to offer. Nonetheless, Michelson’s work is certainly worth a read by those interested in the study of important texts that have too long been caught in an unfruitful impasse between literary and historical readings.

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Time and the Biblical Hebrew Verb: The Expression of Tense, Aspect, and Modality in Biblical Hebrew by John A. Cook. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012. xvi + 384 pp., \$US 54.50, hardcover.

Scholars have considered the Biblical Hebrew Verbal System (BHVS) an enigma for generations. While John Cook does not seek to solve all the problems of BHVS, he does intend to add clarity and more objective means of analysis by his theoretical, yet, at times, extremely practical work. Cook, who is Associate Professor of Old Testament at Asbury Seminary, wrote his dissertation under the guidance of Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé. His dissertation provides the backbone for the current monograph, though, he completely reworks the heart of the book. Chapters 3 and 4 contain updated conversations with scholars and

rejection of former positions; most notable is his new disfavor of panchronic analysis.

At times, Cook may seem to be espousing what a majority of grammarians already believe, the perfective/imperfective dichotomy as the basis of BHVS. He, however, connects the study of biblical Hebrew (BH) to linguistics while avoiding typical statistical analysis on BHVS. Cook attempts to demonstrate objectivity by diachronic typology and grammaticalization. He describes the former as the observance of structural changes that occur over time. He considers the latter to be the shift of lexical items to grammatical or grammatical to more grammatical (p. x). His program seeks to answer the complex yet basic question: what is the range of meaning of a form (p. vi)? The format of the book is straight forward. He moves from theory (chs.1 and 2) to the semantic sense of a form (ch. 3) then to its use in discourse (ch. 4). In a sense, this format reflects how an exegete should handle a given verb.

Chapter 1 contains a summary and necessary discussion of tense, aspect, and modality (TAM). This helps to orient the reader for the ensuing theoretical discussions. As Cook introduces theories, he elaborates on concepts and terms that appear prominently in subsequent chapters. Throughout this and subsequent chapters Cook places the often complex theories in simplified charts.

In chapter 2, Cook moves the survey of TAM to BH, dealing briefly but thoroughly with scholarly discussions and trends. He focuses on three main issues of TAM within BH that he feels must be resolved in order to put forth an adequate theory: diachrony vs. synchrony, meaning vs. function, and the problem of induction (pp. 172–74). He argues in favor of synchrony, meaning, and typology, respectively.

He begins to explicate his own semantic theory in chapter 3, while noting the insufficiency of other approaches. These approaches afford Cook the opportunity to critique and provide an alternative to both syntax structure and discourse pragmatics. Briefly mentioning the problems with both positions, he explains that his approach is built on ideas and data from diachronic typology and grammaticalization of the world's verbal systems (p. 185). His approach creates objective markers that can possibly solve the well-known problem of no living speaker of BH. Cook's balanced approach analyzes synchronic stages as they are seen in diachronic stages. The latter stages provide the outside objective, which gives more explanatory power to the understanding of a conjugation. He further justifies the diachronic typological approach because of the "intergenerational character" of the Hebrew Bible (p. 269). Cook presents his theory with a focus on how it works as a system, not a sustained explication of each conjugation.

Progressing to the discourse level, chapter 4 contains Cook's semantic theory at work through many examples, notably 1 Sam 8 and Exod 12. Here, Cook charts a middle road between sentence syntax and discourse pragmatics. He does this by attempting to move away from the circularity of argumentation of discourse scholars, while observing the helpfulness of pragmatics to understand the precise use of a conjugation. For example, Cook does not find *wayyiqtol* as characterized as temporally successive, as commonly thought and titled, because *qatal* may have the same function. Rather, he finds *wayyiqtol*, first, as semantically perfective aspect (p. 297). He then sees the prominence of *wayyiqtol* in narrative to be what is normally called foregrounding. The book of Psalms gives evidence that this common pragmatic feature of *wayyiqtol* in narrative is used to show temporal succession in Hebrew poetry by the overt marking, which is not a common feature of biblical verse (p. 304). Thus Cook demonstrates how to move from the semantics of a conjugation (e.g. *wayyiqtol*) to its use in discourse (e.g. narrative) to show how specific meaning (e.g. temporal succession) is contained in some chapters that have this specific use of *wayyiqtol* in Psalms.

By and large Cook argues strongly—persuasively at times—for more precise and objective criteria to elucidate the meaning of a form. He hears his own call and attempts to answer it with diachronic typology and grammaticalization. To do so, however, involves a significant amount of deconstructive work. Given the necessity of this deconstruction, it would benefit the reader to have more thorough explanations of the insufficiency of syntax and discourse pragmatic approaches (p. 184–85). While his criticism of these two major approaches may be correct, the disparagement of the latter approach seems reductionistic. In the same vein, he denigrates statistical analyses by making at least five claims in a single paragraph for the insufficiency of such methodology (p. 184). These claims, however, often fall short of substantiation and do not always follow sound argumentation. For example, he argues that statistics only collect the interpreter's "subjective and often predetermined" interpretation and do little to convince without substantiation (p. 184). He interacts with statistical analyses throughout the book but offers few substantial reasons to support his claims. Again, Cook's conclusions here may be correct, but clearly stated reasons with detailed evidence would bolster his argument immensely.

As a result of the lack of standard terminology within the current study of BHVS, there seems to be a lack of precision in the scholarly dialogue. Cook's emphasis on aspect proves helpful here, offering both balance and precision. For students who are beginning their study of the Hebrew verb or scholars whose research does not focus primarily on TAM in BH, the first two chapters provide a sophisticated yet brief

introduction to the current conversation. Additionally, current studies in discourse and increasing interest in linguistics demonstrate the value of Cook's research. Regardless of one's view on sentence or discourse approaches, Cook's monograph provides a helpful point of departure for scholarly discussion on the precise validity and progression from sentence to discourse. While the monograph contains dense terms and typographical errors, notably the misspelling of a scholar's name with whom Cook interacts, the scholar and student will benefit immensely from Cook's work due to his competence in linguistics, BH, and rabbinic Hebrew (p. 216). Cook's thorough analysis of the BHVS will require scholars to deal with his connection to linguistics and his methodological concerns for more objectivity as they seek to explicate a given conjugation, discourse, or clause.

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Understanding Wisdom Literature: Conflict and Dissonance in the Hebrew Text by David Penchansky. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012. xii + 129 pp., US \$20.00, softcover.

David Penchansky, who holds a Ph.D. in literary criticism and teaches theology at the University of St. Thomas, examines the diversity within Hebrew wisdom literature in this monograph. Penchansky works from the position that a school of sages composed the wisdom literature. He understands this literature to be the reflections of men about the natural order of creation: "The sages regarded the world of nature as a sacred text upon which Yahweh has written important insights about life. Sages disagree as to whether Yahweh's embedded message is easy or difficult to read" (p. 2). Given this, Penchansky is not optimistic about attempts to discern a uniform voice behind the biblical wisdom—considering the attempt to be an imposition (p. 7). Instead, he proposes a musical metaphor to describe the dissonance in the wisdom books. He suggests that the contradictions make the "music" of the biblical wisdom richer.

The rest of the work examines the corpus of Hebrew wisdom literature, which for Penchansky is comprised of Proverbs, Job, Qoheleth, Ben Sira, and the Wisdom of Solomon, though he acknowledges that Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon are properly Greek wisdom. Penchansky excludes wisdom psalms and the Song of Songs from his corpus.

Penchansky explains that the earlier wisdom texts (Proverbs in his view) were more primitive in insisting on the principle of retribution—the belief that if people live wisely they will be blessed, and if they live foolishly they will be punished. He posits three voices within Proverbs: 1) the “Fear God” sages, 2) the “Get Wisdom” sages, and 3) Woman Wisdom. The “Fear God” and “Get Wisdom” sages are at war regarding the availability of wisdom. The former see God as unpredictable and thus wisdom is less certain, whereas the latter trust the reliability of the law of retribution. The thread of Woman Wisdom, whom Penchansky identifies as Yahweh’s daughter, weaves through the tapestry of Proverbs (p. 28).

Later, Job and Qoheleth, who were enlightened sages according to Penchansky, expressed doubts. The author(s) of Job understood that real life does not work as neatly as the principle of retribution would have it. While some may naturally understand Job as affirming God’s rights as the creator, Penchansky challenges traditional understandings and reads the book through the lens of Job 42:7. This reading of Job suggests that Yahweh confesses his own sin against Job—that he “unjustly pursues and destroys him” (p. 46). In Penchansky’s view Job seems to present God as capricious or even cruel. This picture of God clashes with the traditional view that Job speaks rightly when he states, “Though he slay me, I will hope in him” (Job 13:15 ESV). Such a reading of Job is novel and provocative, but fails to convincingly challenge traditional interpretations. Accepting Penchansky’s interpretation of Job would require a significant theological realignment; such endeavor gives one pause.

Similarly, Penchansky identifies three contradictory voices in Qoheleth—“Pessimistic Qoheleth,” “Fear God Qoheleth,” and “Enjoy Life Qoheleth.” The first of these emphasizes the emptiness and vanity or existential absurdity of life. Penchansky claims that “Pessimistic Qoheleth” rejected the traditional wisdom reflected in the principle of retribution. The second, in contrast, holds that God justly rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, and on that basis people should obey. In the midst of these voices, one hears the third voice claiming that people might as well enjoy God’s good gifts while they have the chance. Penchansky identifies “Pessimistic Qoheleth” as the true voice of the book. While these three emphases are undoubtedly present, they are woven together in such a way that frustrates separation into irreconcilable competing voices.

Penchansky transitions from Hebrew to the Greek wisdom books to explain the shift that took place. He argues that “covenantal” theology is absent from the Hebrew wisdom books. He examines possible references to the major covenants that are prominent in the rest of the

Bible and finds them wanting. In his view, the only covenantal characters mentioned (such as David or Solomon) are inserted to give the “illusion” of authorship. He concludes that the sages evidently thought the covenantal themes were unimportant.

This conspicuous silence is overturned in the Greek wisdom books. Ben Sira identifies Lady Wisdom from Prov 9 as Torah, and the Wisdom of Solomon appeals frequently to the sacred history—especially Genesis and Exodus. In his view Ben Sira and especially the Wisdom of Solomon adopt the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul. These works reinterpret retribution as eschatological. Penchansky explains the results of the Hellenization of the later Hebrew sages with two possible alternative narratives. Either the later sages triumphantly adapted the wisdom tradition in order to meet the needs of their time or they tragically lost the essence of wisdom by interpreting the principle of retribution with an eschatological twist (pp. 111–13).

In summary, Penchansky deconstructs the wisdom literature. His method elevates marginalized meanings within the wisdom literature. He argues this literature, at its high point, embraced ethnic diversity, encouraged doubt in the goodness of God, and elevated the human voice above the divine (p. 108). Concerning Job, Penchansky utilizes a reader-oriented hermeneutic in which he says the “reader must decide which portion and which voice to listen to, in order produce a meaning from the book” (p. 48).

Penchansky finds the idea of divine retribution distasteful and oppressive because it “discourages people from complaining about their conditions or trying to change them” (p. 108). The repugnance felt at the principle of retribution is understandable, especially considering the common experience of suffering. Why would a good and just God allow innocent suffering? However, the principle of retribution is not only at the heart of wisdom literature, but it is at the heart of the cross of Christ. Rejecting the principle of retribution seems to require a relinquishment of the need for atonement.

Understanding Wisdom Literature is appreciated for raising and addressing questions that cannot be ignored. While Penchansky raises many important questions, readers who expect to hear from God when they read the biblical wisdom books will balk at the book’s presuppositions. Its fundamental assumption is that there are multiple contradictory messages in the ancient wisdom writings—a view that conservative evangelicals reject. Penchansky writes provocatively and clearly, but his argument fails to satisfy or convince. His work may,

however, incite thoughtful evangelical reflection on the difficulties encountered by the apparent contradictions that he identifies.

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