

## BOOK REVIEWS

*God, His Servant, and the Nations in Isaiah 42:1–9: Biblical Theological Reflections after Brevard S. Childs and Hans Hübner* by Frederik Poulsen. *Forchungen zum Alten Testament* 2/73. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. xiv + 269 pp., €79.00, hardcover.

This published version of the author's doctoral thesis is very good. It is a tightly focused study which offers an informed and challenging evaluation of the theories of Brevard S. Childs and Hans Hübner pertaining to the relationship between the OT and the NT, using the second Servant Song as a test case.

After a brief introduction which presents the reader to the various subfields of biblical theology, part 1 of the book surveys, summarizes, and evaluates the contributions of Childs and Hübner. Poulsen begins by presenting each of the two scholars and listing their key works. He then discusses their shared presuppositions: they are confessional theologians and ordained ministers, they both stress the role of faith in biblical interpretation, they both acknowledge the canon of the church, they both emphasize the theological aspects of biblical exegesis, and they both appreciate and practice the historical study of the biblical texts. In parallel, they differ in their views vis-à-vis the authority of the OT for the Christian church. Their opinions are influenced by their respective church tradition (Reformed, Lutheran) and also by their assessment of the formation of the canon. The key question concerns the shape of the OT at the time of the NT authors. While Hübner argues that the Hebrew canon was still open at the time of Jesus, Childs maintains that we can speak of a fairly stable canon already in the first century BCE. These two divergent views shape the two scholars' interpretations of the formation of the Christian OT. For Childs, the first Christians inherited the (already relatively stable) Jewish HB which later became the MT. Thus, the early synagogue and the early church shared the same Scripture. In contrast, Hübner maintains that the early Christians did not adopt an already existing canon because such a thing did not exist. Moreover, as most of them spoke Greek, the LXX became the dominant text which the early church used. Thus, Hübner argues, "the Old Testament was *theologically relevant* in its Greek translation" (p. 27), up and against the MT, which came to be the HB for the Jewish community. It follows, so Hübner, that the Christian church today should also use the LXX rather than the MT, which is completely Jewish in character. Childs disagrees on this point, instead arguing that the LXX has no separate integrity as it depends on

the (proto-)MT in terms of both textual form and authoritative status. Rather, it is the fusion of the HB and the NT which offers the best witness to God.

Turning to issues of authority, Poulsen demonstrates how the two scholars differ in fundamental aspects. For Hübner, the NT is authoritative because it preserves the original spoken gospel, i.e., *the kerygma of the risen Christ*; for Childs biblical literature is authoritative because it mediates *the reality of the gospel*. These two views have far-reaching consequences for their respective understanding of the authority of the OT texts. Childs stresses the importance of the whole Bible as the written word of God. The two testaments preserve the testimony of all its authors and should be read together, yet each part also conveys an independent witness to God. Speaking from a very different perspective, Hübner favours the spoken word of God, in the sense that what is canonical is the proclaimed divine word. According to this line of thinking, only the OT as received in the NT is authoritative for modern Christians (*Vetus Testamentum in Novo receptum*).

Their different views pertaining to the formation of the Christian canon influence, in turn, their respective approach to biblical theology. In short, what is the relation between the two testaments? Poulsen shows how Childs explores the inner unity of the Bible as a whole. Despite their disparities, Childs considers both parts to be equal and complementary witnesses to Jesus. In sharp contrast, Hübner argues that only a part of the OT is theologically relevant for the Christian church. He sees the link between the two testaments to be forged exclusively by the NT author's use of the OT. The OT is important because one cannot remove the quotations of the OT from the NT lest it fall apart both theologically and historically, yet those (substantial) parts that are neglected by the NT authors lack Christian significance. The HB in its totality remains, however, the Holy Scripture of the Jewish community.

Turning to their approaches to biblical theology, Childs advocates a dialectic approach which reads the OT in its own right yet also, in parallel, together with the NT. The resulting readings are by necessity multileveled and polyvalent: a biblical text can mean several things in tandem. In contrast, Hübner offers no strategic reading method, but his aforementioned approach remains true: a Christian should read the OT with the eyes of the NT authors. We should not, however, take the liberty of adopting their hermeneutics for ourselves.

In Part 2 Poulsen explores in great detail the text of Isa 42:1–9. He begins with a careful reading of the MT, followed by an equally careful reading of the LXX. He highlights how the two readings differ.

Who is the Servant? On what aspects of his ministry does the text focus? How does the text view the nations? Are there individual aspects that appear in one text and not in the other? How does the message of this passage align with that of its wider literary context? Poulsen further explores the use of Isa 42:1–9 in the NT and notices that its reception is ambiguous. First, the quote in Matt 12:18–21 fits neither the MT nor the LXX fully, and the changes that can be observed may be due to the endeavour of the gospel author to align the message of the OT text with the overall message of his gospel. Furthermore, the rest of the NT, when alluding to Isa 42:1–9, upholds the traditions of both textual traditions. The Servant is understood as an individual, i.e., representing the tasks of Jesus (cf. the MT), and also as a collective, i.e., representing the tasks of his disciples (cf. the LXX).

The final chapter defines the tasks of the Servant as seen in its different textual traditions (the MT and the LXX), as well as within its different textual contexts (Isaiah, Matthew, and Luke-Acts). Poulsen concludes that the relationship between the OT and the NT, insofar as this test case shows, is “dialectical, typological, and one of continuity” (p. 226). This, in turn, favours Childs’s approach to biblical theology in that it is easiest to adopt and apply *practically*. Poulsen ends as he began, namely to evaluate Childs’s and Hübner’s approaches and to highlight the pros and cons of their approaches vis-à-vis Isa 42:1–9. How do they help modern Christians to understand the relationship between the two testaments and what is the practical repercussions of this relationship in our understanding of the Bible as a whole?

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*Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* by Jeremy Schipper. Anchor Yale Bible 7D. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. 221 pp., US \$75.00, hardcover.

Jeremy Schipper’s recent addition to the Anchor Bible series provides an update to Edward Campbell’s 1975 Anchor Bible Commentary on Ruth. The updated volume represents a thorough shift in methodology from Campbell’s classic commentary, which interpreted the book of Ruth through the lens of narrative criticism. Schipper’s commentary employs a social-scientific approach to interpretation, providing new insights into the book of Ruth. He is well practiced in using social-scientific methods to interpret the biblical text, having written multiple works focusing on

disability in the OT. Schipper is currently associate professor of Hebrew Bible at Temple University.

Consistent with the majority of Anchor Bible volumes, Schipper's Ruth commentary offers a thorough introduction to the biblical text. In his introduction he focuses on translation and textual issues in Ruth, questions of literary context and genre, the date and authorship of the book of Ruth, and specific types of relationships within the book of Ruth. A thorough bibliography and a translation of the book of Ruth follow Schipper's introduction.

Schipper's introduction is quite different from those in most commentaries. He spends little time discussing traditional issues of background in the book of Ruth such as canonical placement, the historicity of the narrative, and the date and purpose of Ruth's composition. Though Schipper does touch on these matters, his primary concern is to discuss the nature of the relationships in the book of Ruth, thus he dedicates twenty-three of the forty-eight pages of his introduction to identifying and defining relationships in the book of Ruth.

Schipper identifies four primary areas of relationship in the book of Ruth: God to humans and humans to God (specifically in regards to fertility), the role of sexual desire in relationships, exogamy and ethnicity, and the nature of household relationships (pp. 29–51). The core of Schipper's interpretation of the book of Ruth lies in his understanding of these areas of relationships. Schipper rejects Ronald Hals's assertion that YHWH's actions are hidden in the book of Ruth because in ancient Israel "the assumption was that all humans still depended on divine action to have children" (p. 33). Schipper's examination of exogamy and ethnicity leads him away from placing any emphasis on reading Ruth in light of the condemnations of marriage outside of covenant Israel elsewhere in the OT (p. 40).

Schipper divides the narrative of Ruth into twelve sections, each divided based upon the setting of the narrative. Schipper's comments on each section are divided into two parts. He first presents his notes on the section, offering readers a rich analysis of the Hebrew text. In his notes Schipper makes grammatical, syntactical, and textual observations on the text. The second part of Schipper's analysis contains his comments on the text. Here he offers his interpretation of the text, driven by his analysis of the relationships as they are presented in the passage.

Schipper's approach to interpreting Ruth is decidedly post-modern. Rather than proposing one interpretive method by which to lay bare the message and meaning of Ruth, Schipper presents his commentary as a volume that explores the book of Ruth in a particular way.

Whereas many commentators seek to extrapolate the meaning of a text using various interpretive methods, Schipper focuses on the nature of relationships in the book of Ruth and attempts to explain how those relationships relate to most of the content of the narrative (p. 29).

Schipper's methodology makes his commentary an original contribution to the study of the book of Ruth. His exegesis is unique in its focus upon relationships between characters in the book of Ruth rather than a focus on the relationship between events in the book of Ruth and other OT material. When examining the interaction between Boaz and Ruth in Ruth 2 for example, Schipper notes that the interaction between the characters is driven by favor of Boaz rather than legal obligation based on Pentateuchal legislation (p. 129). By highlighting the social roles of Boaz and Ruth in the narrative, Schipper challenges readers to approach this passage from a fresh perspective.

Though there are strengths to Schipper's social-scientific approach to the book of Ruth, certain limitations arise due to his methodology. First, despite his lack of focus on historical issues with the narrative and composition of Ruth, Schipper cannot avoid these issues playing a significant role in his interpretation. Though he does not linger on the discussion of the date of Ruth's composition, Schipper does posit that Ruth was written in the early Persian period, noting this date is "extremely tentative" (p. 22). Schipper's position on the date of composition raises two issues. First, he never discusses how the composition of the book of Ruth in the Persian period would affect the author's understanding of relationships. Second and more importantly, Schipper fails to provide a reason for the book of Ruth in the Persian period. His analysis of relationships in the book of Ruth leads him to understand the narrative of Ruth culminating in the reunification of Abraham and Haran's descendants through Ruth and Boaz's marriage (p. 188). Schipper provides no theory, however, about why a writer in the Persian period would have been concerned with the reunification of Moab and Israel.

Despite some limitations due to his methodology, Schipper's Ruth commentary is a valuable tool for students of the OT. His fresh approach to interpretation combined with consistent linguistic and textual analysis results in a volume that possesses a balance between practical tools and theoretical possibilities for future interpretation.

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*A Mouth Full of Fire: The Word of God in the Words of Jeremiah* by Andrew G. Shead. *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 29, Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 2012. pp. 321., US \$27.00, paperback.

In *A Mouth Full of Fire*, Shead presents a two-part argument—the first directly shaping the second. First, Shead discusses the clear distinction between the uses of “word” (singular) and “words” (plural) in Jeremiah. Shead references Jer 7:22–23 to illustrate the distinction: “I did not speak with them or command them . . . concerning words [pl.] of burnt offering and sacrifice. However, this word [sg.] I did command them: ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you will be my people’” (p. 54). Fundamentally, from the Hebrew text Shead makes the distinction between the singular and plural uses of “word” based on its syntactic construction. He observes that the singular form references a general message from God, while the plural form is then an expansion upon the singular form by way of an extended speech. In Jeremiah, Jeremiah is typically the deliverer of the plural form, while the singular form is directly from YHWH. Shead argues on the basis of this distinction that a biblical theology of word and words can be formulated.

Shead divides his discussion of word theology into four categories: word and speaker, word and hearers, word and power, and word and permanence. Word and speaker “examine[s] Jeremiah’s role as the speaker of God’s words, and to ask whether the identity of the speaker should be a significant factor in a theology of the word of God” (p. 107). Word and hearer builds upon the argument, “The word of God . . . is a message spoken by God—spoken, not written” (p. 147). This section addresses the response of the hearers to the words of God. Word and power directly addresses the topic of whose authority is recognized when the words of God are heard. Is it the prophet of God? Shead argues, “When these words are received, what the listeners hear is the word of God” (p. 185). Word and permanence further explores the mode of revelation used in Jeremiah. In this section, Shead weighs the arguments between a written or oral tradition.

Second, the argument presented in Chapters 1 to 6 and Shead’s conclusion that Jeremiah presents a convincing word theology is brought into a discussion with the systematic theology of Karl Barth. Chapter 7 presents Shead’s argument that the word theology he discovers in Jeremiah disagrees with the conclusions of Karl Barth. In this section, Barth’s doctrine is placed in and against Shead’s categories of word theology discovered in Jeremiah.

While *A Mouth Full of Fire* is certainly considered a monograph, I would more specifically classify it as a specialized commentary on the subject of the word of God in the words of Jeremiah. Shead moves through Jeremiah highlighting a majority, if not all, of the instances that might support his position. As a hybrid between monograph and commentary, he presents his opinion in clear language as he refrains from the use of overwhelming scholarly terminology. As it is prefaced, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* is meant to bring scholarly discussions to lay persons. Shead certainly accomplished this task.

I must commend Shead. It is altogether too uncommon for one to bring together biblical and systematic theology. In observation of biblical scholarship's development over the last decade, the gap between biblical studies and systematics has widened. Shead's attempt to unite the two is well received and worthy of praise.

Concerning his overall approach to the first part of his argument, word theology in Jeremiah, I was concerned at the lack of emphasis given to the articulation of his analytical method. The closest definition of his methodology I could find is on page 51, where he states that literary and textual history of Jeremiah will be observed for exegesis. His observations are primarily limited to the Masoretic Text (MT), the proto-Masoretic Text (M), and the Septuagint *Vorlage* (LXXV). In contrast to the first section of Shead's argument, when he brings together biblical and systematic theology, it is clear that he engages Barth through the categories created in observation of Jeremiah. While this section is interesting and seemingly convincing, I find it unfair to bring one area of scholarship—in this case systematics—into another realm without allowing its original method to speak. Shead emphasizes sections of Barth's argument of word doctrine, but does so in a way that seems to take Barth's work out of context. While such an unfortunate result is possibly inevitable, more space should have been dedicated to the second section of Shead's argument instead of a single chapter of twenty-five pages. When I began the book, I thought his engagement with Barth would exhibit greater significance. If more space was given to this section of the argument, I believe that the unfairness could have dissipated.

As a word of final praise, Shead presents an effective and accurate definition of biblical theology—something that is seeming to be difficult for current scholars. Shead states, "Biblical theology . . . may be defined as *knowledge of God as the God of the Bible*. What it means for God to be the God of the Bible is something that develops progressively as we read Scripture with an ear to what it says about God and about itself" (pp. 27–28). This definition is brief, to the point, and seemingly

complete when contrasted against other explanations of biblical theology produced last decade.

I recommend *A Mouth Full of Fire* to any pastor, interested lay person, or scholar who desires to explore this new avenue of thought in prophetic research. Shead's addition to this series is exceptional and deserves recognition for his work in biblical studies and biblical theology.

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*The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant c. 8000–332 BCE*  
by Margreet L. Steiner and Ann E. Killebrew. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. 885 pp., US \$175.00, hardcover

The current state of archaeology in the news and the destruction of many precious sites and artifacts makes reviewing a work on the field a strange experience. While the Levant region has (to this point) been spared what has been seen elsewhere, current affairs demonstrate both the fragile nature of the field and the tensions between present political life and research of the past. That tension has long been in evidence in the area surrounding ancient Israel and has been taken into account in this excellent handbook. The choice of "Levant" for the region, while not without political implications itself, clearly demonstrates the editors' desire to offer as neutral as possible a term for the work. In fact, given the infighting common in archaeological literature, this whole work reads as a generally charitable and careful contribution to the field.

The handbook has fifty-five separate articles by scholars gathered from around the world and is divided into three uneven parts: four orientation essays, then four essays on the impact of the immediately surrounding regions on the Levant, and then the remainder on "the Archaeological Record." Of the latter, the essays are divided first into general chronology (Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Early and Intermediate Bronze, Middle Bronze, Late Bronze, then Iron Age I and II). And within these, the essays divide into (generally) the regions addressed from north to south, plus Cyprus. By Iron Age II the regional division gives way more to geo-political and, in line with the relative proliferation of material, more than a quarter of the essays are found here.

The editors gave themselves the following aim:

to provide a comprehensive overview of the state of the art of the region in these periods, to describe the most important debates and discussions within the discipline, and to present a more integrated treatment of the archaeology of the region within its larger cultural and social context. (p. 3)

And in each case the work can be called a success. The handbook is not an introduction in the most basic sense. The jargon, chronological headaches and inconsistencies, and (more importantly) the assumptions governing the field are all left intact. But introductions that explain the field exist in plenty; the contribution here is the amassing of so much information across such a large field into a single volume. The bibliographies are very generous, especially touching some of the more debated subjects. And while those who think the Bible faithful to the historical realities will be somewhat frustrated sometimes at the vague discussions, so will those who think little of the Bible's historical reliability. The work attempts to operate separate from these and, in this case, does so with great results. (And a further word of praise should be offered on the inclusion of so many maps, pictures, and illustrations.)

The essays themselves are a bit uneven, of course. The essay on "Egypt and the Levant" reads more like bullet points of things found in Egypt regarding the Levant, put into paragraphs almost arbitrarily. But by far the majority offer a helpful blend of archaeological, social and political history (with occasional political barbs, e.g. p. 539). And as noted above, the bibliographies in each case present more than enough material for the interested student to spend a lifetime following leads.

Some of the absences, however, were rather strange to me—admittedly reading from within the field of biblical studies—and that has to do with the rather limited interest in what we can broadly call overtly religious artifacts and material: little things like temples, figurines, "idols," amulets, and so on. Very brief mention is made of the temple in Jerusalem, but even there the silence of concern for sanctuary finds (with some impressive recent developments) seems deafening. We find the majority of the discussions of religious artifacts regarding Cyprus, oddly, where we have rather less material than elsewhere. We have some hints elsewhere, to be sure, such as the note on one page that "Canaanite cult and belief . . . became increasingly homogenized" in the Middle/Late Bronze eras (p. 460). But homogenized into what? From what? What are the artifacts that give that impression? Likewise, we have a note that the most common figurines in the Late Bronze age in the northern Levant feature "a woman holding her breasts" (p. 516). Is that a religious figurine? It seems unlikely to be a kind of pornography, but the author makes no attempt to express what the figurine might be despite the

assumption of most historians. For my own interests, and those of many others, these are rather important potential contributions for archaeology to provide larger discussions. And while one can find relevant discussion fully represented in other volumes, its near-complete silence here was unexpected.

In similar fashion the lack of critical engagement with the assumptions of the field was disappointing, though in keeping with the stated purpose (“debates and discussions within the discipline”). Assumptions made in the field, whether for dating materials or interpreting the significance of the material found, are second nature to those outside the field. Archaeology and philosophy have a rather distant relationship. But enough hesitations are expressed regarding the use of ceramics for absolute dating (e.g., p. 499) to have warranted an essay in the introduction defending the methods generally used in the field—what, for instance, counts as sufficient material for describing cultural influence or its lack. Given the note that archaeology can offer nothing to speak to the dominance of Assyria over the southern Levant in Iron Age II (p. 678), though all sides grant this as a matter of fact from the texts, one can easily find grounds for skepticism that throws the whole venture under a large set of question marks. To find them addressed in a sophisticated, if introductory way, would have lessened the impression that archaeology as a field has a lasting struggle with positivism, and a corresponding dubitability for philosophers and theologians. (Even something on the order of a “critical realism” to acknowledge the questions would have been useful here.)

Nonetheless, the handbook can only be viewed as a tremendous resource. It should reside in every library as the first point of entry to this enormous and important field, with essays that are interesting, well-organized, and filled with platforms for further in-depth work.

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*“YHWH Fights for Them!” The Divine Warrior in the Exodus Narrative*  
by Charlie Trimm. Gorgias Biblical Studies 58. Piscatawa, NJ: Gorgias,  
2014. xviii + 310 pp., US \$95.00, hardcover.

*“YHWH Fights for Them!” The Divine Warrior in the Exodus Narrative*  
by Charlie Trimm, assistant professor of biblical and theological studies

at Biola University, is a slightly revised version of his dissertation written at Wheaton College. In this study Trimm looks at the use of the divine warrior motif in the exodus narrative and argues that the picture of YHWH that emerges from the prose narrative in Exod 1–14 matches YHWH’s image in the traditionally recognized divine warrior texts, which are more often than not poetic.

The book comprises eight chapters, including an introduction and conclusion. In the introduction Trimm argues that while the topic of the divine warrior in the OT has a significant history of scholarship, the question of the use of the motif in the prose narrative of Exod 1–14 has not been explored until now. Additionally, whereas much previous scholarship on the exodus narrative has had a diachronic interest, Trimm’s study looks at the divine warrior motif in the exodus narrative from a synchronic perspective—a final form perspective, in Trimm’s words (pp. 7–8).

In the next chapter, “The Divine Warrior in the Old Testament,” Trimm surveys the OT for the use of the divine warrior motif. Most of the passages that exhibit this motif are poetic, although Trimm notes that a few scholars have identified the motif in prose texts as well (e.g., Gen 32:2–3, Exod 19–20, Josh 5:13–15). While many scholars offer a broad definition of YHWH as a divine warrior or seek to situate the biblical divine warrior within the larger ancient Near Eastern context, Trimm deliberately defines the divine warrior solely from texts within the OT. To do so, he identifies a number of key elements of the motif found in biblical texts which clearly contain references to the divine warrior: e.g., the use of martial epithets (such as “man of war,” “hero”), the identification of YHWH coming from the south, the presence of a heavenly army or nature elements that play a role in battle, common military terminology, YHWH’s incomparability among the gods, and the depiction of YHWH rescuing his people from oppression. Based on the OT, it appears that the divine warrior persona was not a temporary persona that YHWH took up in times of crisis but was a consistent aspect of YHWH’s character. Furthermore, YHWH’s role as a divine warrior is distinct from, but often associated with, his role as king, judge, father, and redeemer.

In the chapter, “The Divine Warrior Motif in Exodus 1–14,” Trimm lays out the heart of his argument: The portrayal of YHWH in Exod 1–14 aligns with the depiction of YHWH as a divine warrior in Exod 15. Trimm bases this argument on a number of lexical and thematic points, e.g., YHWH uses a number of nature weapons against the Egyptians, YHWH employs psychological attacks, YHWH is associated with a supernatural envoy and employs disease as a weapon, and YHWH acts to deliver Israel from its enemy because of YHWH’s special re-

lationship with his people. Throughout the next several chapters, Trimm further explores these major motifs and addresses the differences found in Exod 1–14 and the traditional poetic portrayals of the divine warrior. He argues that these differences do not preclude identifying YHWH as a divine warrior in the exodus narrative but rather reflect the employment of these motifs adapted to the use of prose narrative rather than poetry.

“*YHWH fights for them!*” is a clearly written, well-researched, well-edited, and thorough study of the expansion of a specific motif within a defined, albeit substantial, narrative. Trimm also provides the most current summary of divine warrior research within OT studies. He convincingly shows that the divine warrior motif has been extended into the exodus narrative.

A few criticisms should be offered. First, the decision to define the divine warrior solely by the portrait painted by the OT appears arbitrarily constraining. The texts of the OT are ancient Near Eastern texts, and the Israelite conception of YHWH as a divine warrior can hardly be separated exclusively from its larger ancient Near Eastern context. Thus, the study could have benefited from incorporating aspects of the divine warrior motif found in other ancient Near Eastern literature above and beyond that only found in OT texts. This would have helped him provide a more robust definition of the divine warrior.

Second, Trimm bypasses the need to deal with traditional source-critical divisions by focusing on the final form of the book. However, Trimm does not demonstrate that the exodus narrative as a whole is univocal in the view of YHWH as a divine warrior. By taking a “final form” view of the narrative, and without dealing with the traditional sources, Trimm’s study risks projecting a coherence to the narrative that may not exist. Trimm is aware that the exodus narrative contains strands from various sources (p. 7 n. 24). Additionally, he is also familiar with Stephen Russell’s work, in which he argued that the various traditions within the HB remember Egypt differently and not all conceived of deliverance from Egypt in terms of YHWH the divine warrior or in terms of an “exodus” from Egypt (p. 125 n. 182, 183; Russell, *Images of Egypt in Early Biblical Literature* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009], 194–95. I am grateful to Dr. Christopher B. Hays for pointing out this study.). There is nothing inherently wrong with taking a final form view of the narrative. However, if, as Trimm writes, “part of the purpose of this work is to determine the relevance of the divine warrior motif as a heuristic model for understanding the exodus narrative” (p. 7), then he could have strengthened his argument and fulfilled his stated purpose by attending to the various strands within Exod 1–14 and showing that they each do

depict YHWH as a divine warrior, thus showing that a final form study of the text does not arbitrarily force the narrative to be univocal in its depiction of YHWH.

Third, the divine warrior motif may not be as pervasive within Exod 1–14 as Trimm argues. Trimm spends several chapters arguing differences between the characterization of YHWH in Exod 1–14 and the divine warrior motif displayed in poetic texts do not disprove that the divine warrior motif is present, but that the motif has been expanded due to the nature of the genre. This is well and good, and perhaps correct; however, this raises a few questions: What could prove that the motif is not present, or that the exodus narrative does not depict YHWH as a divine warrior but rather as something else? Are the extensions of the divine warrior motif that Trimm identifies legitimate extensions of the motif, or does Trimm see the divine warrior motif where it is not? For example, Trimm argues that YHWH's affliction of the Nile in Exod 7:14–24 reflects the use of water as a nature weapon, a "martial expansion" of the divine warrior motif. He supports this by pointing to other passages in the HB in which YHWH punishes using water or famine, such as Lev 26:19–20, Amos 4:7–8, curses in Neo-Assyrian treaties, or Adad's use of rain to punish humans in the Atrahasis myth. However, Trimm notes that the use of water—or other environmental crises—as a weapon is not a common element associated with the divine warrior motif but that YHWH's use of water as a "weapon" against the Egyptians is evidence that YHWH is being depicted as a divine warrior. This appears to be a form of circular reasoning. Is it not more plausible that the use of nature as a means of punishment is more in line with YHWH acting as a nature god? It is worth asking what elements of YHWH's actions in the exodus narrative are *not* part of the divine warrior motif if, as Trimm argues, so much is?

There is no doubt that the divine warrior motif exists in the narrative material. Certainly, the concept that YHWH is a warrior god is an old—perhaps one of the oldest—understanding of YHWH, but perhaps the use of the motif is not as extensive as Trimm has attempted to demonstrate. As early as 1981 John Oswalt criticized Frank Moore Cross, Paul D. Hanson, and William R. Miller on their overuse of the divine warrior motif, and the criticism may apply here as well (Oswalt, "Recent Studies in Old Testament Eschatology and Apocalyptic," *JETS* 24 [1981]: 296–97. I am grateful to Christopher B. Hays for pointing me to this article as well.).

In spite of these objections, Trimm has written a fine book that positively contributes to the study of the divine warrior in the OT and a literary reading of the exodus narrative. Students and scholars interested

in studying the divine warrior and/or Exod 1–14 will benefit from referencing this study.

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*Exploring Our Hebraic Heritage: A Christian Theology of Roots and Revival* by Marvin R. Wilson. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2014, xxviii + 304 pp., US \$22.00, softcover.

The present volume functions as the sequel to Marvin Wilson's widely read book, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Eerdmans, 1989). Wilson serves as the H. J. Ockenga Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Gordon College. He coauthored and coedited the *Dictionary of Daily Life in Biblical and Post-Biblical Antiquity*, a projected three-volume set (Hendrickson, 2014–).

In this offering Wilson compares Christian and Jewish thought and contends that “the areas we share in common are far greater than those teachings, beliefs, and practices that divide us” (p. xvi). Because “biblical Christianity is Hebraic to the core,” the contemporary church should seek to understand and cherish the HB (p. 64).

The book contains five parts: part 1 (“Theological Sources and Methods”), part 2 (“People of God: An Abrahamic Family”), part 3 (“God and His Ways”), part 4 (“On Approaching God”), and part 5 (“Moving into the Future”). The back matter includes an eight-page select bibliography and set of indexes. Throughout the treatise Wilson speaks fondly of his hero and dialogue partner, the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (p. xxv).

The author advocates grammatical-historical hermeneutics (p. 30). Frequently he sets forth reliable guidance concerning biblical interpretation. For instance, one “must primarily establish the meaning of Scripture by Scripture” (p. xxi). Moreover, he states, “I often like to remind my students, ‘The Bible didn't come out of heaven on a parachute.’ Rather, the theology of the Bible is inextricably interwoven into the chronology, places, and circumstances of Israel's history” (p. 22). A warning comes across loud and clear: we ought to regard Scripture as our highest authority, rather than “a denominational creed, a Reformer, a church father, a theological system, or some other perspective” (p. 75).

In stride with many scholars, Wilson divides the Mosaic law into three parts—moral, civil, and ceremonial—and avows that Christians remain under the moral law, which primarily consists of the Ten Commandments (p. 54). This of course implies that believers today must keep the Sabbath, one of the purported moral laws (Exod 20:8–11). Other Bible interpreters, such as this reviewer, maintain that a threefold division of the law appears artificial and forced. The Mosaic law cannot be divided (Jas 2:10). Christians are not under the Mosaic law but the law of Christ, also known as the law of the Spirit, the law of liberty, the perfect law, and the royal law (Rom 7:3; 8:2; Gal 6:2; Jas 1:25; 2:8).

Additional matters emerge regarding the relationship between the Testaments. For one, Jesus endorsed multiple interpretations of the Mosaic law: “Jesus . . . was not prescriptively enslaved or chained to one interpretation of the law” (p. 52). Moreover, the author reads Gen 9:27 as follows: “May God enlarge Japheth and may he [Japheth] live in the tents of Shem.” Since Japheth never lived in the tents of Shem, the NT suggests a “deeper meaning,” namely, that the Jews will bless Gentile Christians (pp. 64–65).

Wilson opposes replacement theology (pp. 248, 254). He states, “If supersessionism is the will of God, then the logical conclusion of such teaching is to call for the removal of the Jewish people and their distinct religious identity from the face of the earth” (p. 246). On the other hand, the author offers little exegetical support for his claim that Jesus partially inaugurated the kingdom at the first coming (pp. 146, 148).

Three issues pertaining to the Godhead require attention. First, concerning Gen 1:26 (“Let Us make mankind in Our image”), Wilson states, “The first person plural, ‘Let us,’ may be a plural of majesty or an address to the heavenly court, but clearly the author intends no Old Testament ‘*vestigium Trinitatis*’” (p. 157). But could the plural allude to multiple members of the Godhead without specifying the number of members? Second, Wilson believes that Jacob wrestled with God but refers to him as an “angel” (pp. 228–29). This creates confusion because angels are created beings. For clarity it would be better to identify him as a “divine being” or “messenger.” And third, he translates Exod 3:14 as “I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE” because imperfect verbs convey the future tense (p. 126). Hebraists such as the late Rabbi Umberto Cassuto maintain that the context and context alone determines the tense of a Hebrew verb (*Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, repr., Magnes, 1992, part II, p. 91).

The author embraces the new perspective on Paul. According to him, the reformed position reflects “a rather cursory reading of the Pauline corpus,” whereas proponents of the new perspective such as E. P.

Sanders offer “a more careful and thorough study of early Jewish texts” (p. 53). A robust discussion of the issue, he says, exceeds the scope of the book.

At times Wilson expresses his opinion concerning the finer points of eschatology. He regards the shepherd of Ezek 34:23 as someone other than King David himself (p. 145). And he seems to anticipate a heavenly (rather than earthly?) setting for the eschatological banquet of Isa 25:6 and Luke 13:29 (pp. 68, 89–90).

Two other tidbits merit mention. Wilson indicates that “Abraham is the first person in the Bible . . . to bear the title ‘prophet’” (p. 83). Readers may recall that prophets such as Abel preceded Abraham (Luke 11:50–51). On another note, the author sees the plagues of Exodus as an attack on the Egyptian gods (p. 135), whereas Duane Garrett argues that the plagues were not an attack (*A Commentary on Exodus*, Kregel, 2014, p. 301).

This reviewer recommends Wilson’s work as catalyst for motivating the Christian church to apprehend and appreciate the OT. One need not adopt every doctrinal nuance in order to profit from the book.

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*Dictionary of Daily Life in Biblical & Post-Biblical Antiquity, vol. 1, A–Da* edited by Edwin M. Yamauchi and Marvin R. Wilson. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2014, xxxvi + 400 pp., US \$24.95, soft-cover.

Over thirty years in the making, the *Dictionary of Daily Life in Biblical & Post-Biblical Antiquity* (DDL), edited by Edwin Yamauchi and Marvin Wilson, is a much anticipated resource. Unlike other Bible dictionaries that limit entries to terms *explicitly* mentioned in the biblical text, DDL expands its scope based on the Human Relations Area Files database. This anthropological grid “systematically and comparatively [surveys] different aspects of culture, whether they were highlighted in the Bible or not” (p. 1). This convention is significant due to the assumed cultural knowledge underlying much of ancient literature. Admittedly, the topics selected do not play an equal role in the Bible. Nonetheless, they do serve to illuminate significant features of the ancient world.

The present volume is the first of three, ranging from articles on “abortion” (A) to “dance” (Da). The thirty-nine dictionary entries are the work of ten contributors: eight men and two women. While most authors contribute no more than three entries, Yamauchi is responsible for twenty-three of the total articles, twelve of which are co-authored with the late R. K. Harrison. Yamauchi’s vast knowledge of antiquity is evident in the wide range of subject matter covered, from “contraception & control of birth” to “art” and “athletics.”

Each article is divided into six identical sub-sections: 1) The Old Testament; 2) The New Testament; 3) The Ancient Near Eastern World; 4) The Greco-Roman World; 5) The Jewish World; and 6) The Christian World. The amount of space given to each area differs based on the author and subject. Depending on one’s particular interest, a reader may wish to see a more detailed treatment of a particular sub-section. For instance, Paul Maier’s contribution on “armies” contains less than a half-page on the Near Eastern data, while the Greco-Roman section is given more attention. For scholars of the ancient Near East, this disparity may leave something to be desired. Certainly there is more data on Mesopotamian warfare that could have been included. While this is inevitable due to the specialty of the author, some articles could perhaps receive a more extensive treatment.

Co-editor Marvin Wilson also contributes a number of articles to DDL (six total). The content of these entries further show the breadth of the work, from “alcoholic beverages” and “bribery” to “bellows & furnaces” and “bones & objects of bone.” Another notable article is by Rozenn Bailleul-Lesuer on “birds.” This well-written entry is as exhaustive as an eleven-page survey can be. Her expertise on the subject is apparent in the organization, detail, and bibliography of the section.

There are indeed many things to commend about this volume, but I must limit my comments to three areas. First, the book begins with a brief but helpful summary of dating and chronology. Readers unfamiliar with political and technological ages will find a brief discussion and simple outline. Included are the distinction between the early and late date of the exodus.

Second, the parallel format of each article in the six-fold structure affords an accessible and consistent presentation. A reader interested only in the Greco-Roman data, for example, need not wade through an entire entry to find relevant material. While the amount of attention for each sub-section will vary, as has been noted, the continuity of this outline will serve readers well.

Third, as with any good dictionary, DDL contains extensive bibliographic information. At the conclusion of every article readers will find up-to-date publications for further research. Moreover, a selective

bibliography is included at the back of the book that references the major dictionaries, encyclopedias, and monographs for each of the six subsections more generally.

And while there are many things to commend about this volume, there are several areas that could be improved upon. First, the title of the dictionary has the potential to mislead its readership. Someone interested in the *daily life* of a military unit or soldier, for instance, will not find much help in this volume. While some entries are more detailed than others, the combination of the broad scope and abbreviated article length make each entry cursory in nature. What the dictionary does is provide more of an overview summary of each topic in the light of the available evidence. Due to the amount of information included, there are instances where something is mentioned in an article without a reference. One example is the mention of the exile of Nero's wife for having an abortion. Though stated, the author does not cite the reference in Tacitus. Those interested in reading the original source must search elsewhere. While this is not the norm in every article, it is a noticeable omission.

Second, while there are several high-quality images at the back of the book, a reader could benefit from the inclusion of more graphics. Of course, the nature of the dictionary may limit the inclusion of such images. Nonetheless, many of the articles could benefit from more visual aids. For instance, the entry on "art" describes several fascinating discoveries that could be enriched with the inclusion of more pictures.

Third, the volume contains no ancient source index at the back of the book. This is most regrettable. A researcher looking for a specific reference in an ancient text must resort to exploring several potential topics that may or may not include the text. A detailed index of ancient sources would greatly increase the usefulness and accessibility of the dictionary.

Fourth, while the table of contents lists the article entries, it does not include individual authors in conjunction with their respective articles. This may be more of the reviewer's preference, but a reader may be interested to associate articles with authors at a glance. This would be all the more helpful since the contributors' page lists all the contributors for all three volumes. Thus, there is no way to know which articles a particular contributor authored without visiting the last page of each individual entry. Again, this may be more of a preference, but would be a helpful feature of the dictionary.

Finally, the layout of the bibliographic material at the conclusion of each chapter could be organized better. Like some other dictionaries, the secondary literature forms one long paragraph, with no special

markings separating sources. This can make it unnecessarily difficult to locate a particular reference. One simple solution would be to bold the names of the authors to provide some sort of conceptual break. This would help the reader more quickly navigate the bibliography.

Overall, DDL makes a unique contribution to the study of the ancient world. It will certainly be established as one of the standard reference works of biblical/post-biblical antiquity for future generations. Both students and scholars alike will reap the benefit of this work. The avoidance of excessive transliteration makes each article accessible to those with even the most basic knowledge of the languages of each academic field.

While one could quibble over details of particular articles, this work is incredibly valuable for its presentation. While it may not reflect *daily* life in biblical and post-biblical antiquity, it nonetheless paints a clear picture of cultural symbols and practices as they existed across the ancient world.

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*Eating in Isaiah: Approaching the Role of Food and Drink in Isaiah's Structure and Message* by Andrew T. Abernethy. Biblical Interpretation Series 131. Leiden: Brill 2014, 234 pp., US \$128.00, hardcover.

*Eating in Isaiah* is a revision of Abernethy's 2012 Ph.D. dissertation written under the supervision of Willem VanGemeren. He begins by observing that the topic of eating appears in nearly 150 verses in Isaiah. Because food and drink are so common, they are often overlooked as important metaphors in biblical literature. Abernethy argues in this monograph that food and drink are used by Isaiah to support and reiterate major themes and contribute to the book's coherence. The primary theme of Isaiah is YHWH's status as the supreme king. In the first part of Isaiah YHWH is supreme, in contrast to the arrogant claims of the Assyrians. In the later chapters of Isaiah, YHWH is the supreme king because he is restoring Zion to glory and creating a community of obedient people. Provision of food and drink play a major part in demonstrating these themes and therefore unify the book of Isaiah.

After a short survey of previous scholarship of the importance of food and drink in the Old Testament, Abernethy describes his sequential-synchronic approach to the importance of eating in the book of Isaiah. The first and final chapters of Isaiah, along with chapters 36–37 and 55

function as “scaffolding chapters,” and each of these sections feature food and drink. The motif of eating is therefore integral to the structure and thematic coherence of Isaiah. Abernethy calls this a “sequential-synchronic approach” that attempts to take the literary seams of the book as editorial guides to the conceptual message of each section.

Abernethy applies this method to Isa 1 in order to argue that eating functions as both an introduction to the book of Isaiah and as a hermeneutical guide for reading the whole book of Isaiah (p. 51). He argues Isa 1:7 is a portrayal of the Assyrian battle tactic of confiscation and destruction of food supplies, but it is God who directs this punishment on his people (p. 33). Yet they can be forgiven and once again “eat from the good of the land” (Isa 1:19). If the people do not repent, they will be eaten by the sword. Their choice, according to Abernethy is to “eat, or be eaten” (p. 41). Food is therefore a “symbol of Israel’s spiritual status before God” (p. 47).

This theme is further developed in Isa 2–35, the unit bordered by the “scaffolding chapters.” Abernethy traces the lack of food in this section of Isaiah, concluding that the Lord used Assyrian imperial tactics to judge Israel’s sin (p. 68). All of the descriptions of lack of food are in the context of warfare and in nearly every instance the Lord has used warfare to judge Israel, Judah, or the nations. But Isa 2–35 also includes a number of promises of restoration of food and drink in the future. Perhaps the primary text for this restoration of food is feast prepared by the Lord on Zion for his people in Isa 25:6–8. Abernethy surveys several suggested ways to understand this feast (a covenant meal, mythological victory feast, or enthronement feast) and rejects labeling it as any one type of feast. Instead, he reads the feast within the context of Isa 24–25 as an example of imperial propaganda. Ancient Near Eastern kings often used feasts to demonstrate their power (p. 82). Similarly, abundant feasts are used frequently in the Old Testament to describe God’s power. Any ancient reader would see the feast in Isa 25:6–8 as a demonstration of power, whether the context was a covenant, victory, or enthronement feast. In fact, feasting is the “other side of the ‘imperial-retributive’ coin” (p. 90). Those who offend the Lord will lack food and drink, but those who return to covenant faithfulness will eat splendid food on Zion itself.

Abernethy develops this imperial-retributive schema in Isa 36–37, the Assyrian threat against Hezekiah (ch. 4). The central theme of these two chapters is “can YHWH be trusted to deliver his people from this blasphemous superpower?” (p. 98). Who is the real king, Sennacherib or YHWH? The Assyrians promise prosperity and good food if Hezekiah surrenders (Isa 36:16); if he does not, Jerusalem will eat their

own excrement (Isa 37:12). But the promised food and drink is described in terms evoking biblical traditions in which God leads his people into the new land (Deut 7:13, for example). For Abernethy, this use of food as a promise/threat recalls the imperial-retributive motif of Isa 1.

In Isa 40–55 eating and drinking is used to comfort God’s people (ch. 5). He examines two ways the invitation of 55:1–3a has been understood (an invitation to a feast and an invitation by Wisdom) and concludes the most promising suggestion is a merchant assuring his poverty-stricken customers they are able to purchase food and drink at no cost (p. 122). This food and drink may be spiritual nourishment, but Abernethy suggests there is “a promise of fullness of life at Zion” that includes both physical and spiritual needs (p. 123). There are frequent references to hunger and thirst in Isa 40–55 as well as eating food of the idols. The merchant of Isa 55:1–3a is calling people to turn back to God and eat the “real food” offered for free rather than the food provided by Babylon. It is possible Abernethy has overplayed the metaphor of a merchant in Isa 55:1–3a, since the evidence can be read plausibly as an invitation to participate in a banquet. Since he has already argued Isa 25:6–8 is like an imperial banquet demonstrating the power of a great king, perhaps this is a similar invitation to participate in a banquet. As such, it summarizes Isa 40–55 better than a merchant offering his goods for free. In fact, Isa 40 begins with the comforting invitation to return to the wilderness and participate in a new exodus where God will provide food and water evocative of not only the original exodus, but Eden itself (Isa 41:17–20).

Finally, in chapter 6 Abernethy argues Isa 65–66 uses eating as a conclusion to the book of Isaiah. Remarkably, food and drink appear in eleven verses of the final two chapters of Isaiah, a fact often overlooked in Isaianic studies. In these chapters eating determines who is “in” and who is “out.” For example, in 65:3–4 some people provoke the Lord by making unauthorized sacrifices and eating impure meats (including the flesh of pigs, cf. 66:17). They demonstrate their rebellion through improper eating and will therefore receive “the full measure for their deeds” (Isa 65:7). On the other hand, the servants of the Lord will never go hungry nor will they be thirsty (65:13–14) because the Lord himself will provide for them in Zion. The servants of the Lord will plant vineyards and eat their fruit (65:21) and return to Zion to celebrate festivals (66:23). Abernethy misses an opportunity to develop the theme of food and drink further by noticing allusions to creation and Eden in Isa 65–66. It was in Eden God provided food and drink to his people; in the final restoration God will once again provide for his people in a world which resonates with peace and prosperity.

In conclusion, Abernethy achieves what he has set out to accomplish, showing that the use of food and drink plays a supporting

role in Isaiah's goal of presenting God as the supreme king. Although it is possible a creation motif is more important in Isaiah than Abernethy can demonstrate in this focused monograph, he has made his case well that provision of food is one way a powerful king demonstrated his sovereignty over his people. It is therefore not surprising Isaiah would use this motif in his presentation of the ultimate sovereign Lord. Abernethy has provided a wealth of support for the importance of food and drink in the book of Isaiah.

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*Deuteronomy: One Nation Under God* by George Athas. Reading the Bible Today. Sydney: Aquila, 2016, 322 pp., AU \$24.99, softcover.

This is the latest in Aquila's Reading the Bible Today Series. George Athas, a lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament at Moore College, brings his expertise in the language, literature, and theology of the Old Testament to bear on Deuteronomy and has produced a work that is ideal for lay people, preachers, and anyone else who wants to discover what this book of the Bible is saying, but without a lot of technical discussion. Three features of this work stand out as making it an ideal working tool for individual or group Bible study.

First, Athas provides enough of the general background and provenance of Deuteronomy to enable the reader to appreciate the culture and history out of which the book comes and which influences its narrative. The reader of Deuteronomy cannot ignore the progress of Israel towards the promised land, but may not want an extensive geography lesson. I believe a good balance is struck here, and a strategic map gives uncomplicated visual support to the descriptions. The author's introduction does indicate some of the areas that have exercised critical comment (date, authorship, structure, etc.) but has remained true to the aims of this series to provide guidance to the lay Christian Bible student.

Second, Athas brings his ability as an exegete to bear in carefully laying out the essential message of the text of Deuteronomy. In the writing of Old Testament commentaries, both these features (provenance and exegesis) are often so technical and detailed as to be daunting to the non-technically trained reader. This volume avoids this extreme while not sacrificing accuracy. There is an art in bringing the results of sound academic scholarship to the form that does not bewilder the theologically

untrained reader. Athas is able to refer unobtrusively to the Hebrew text when deemed necessary, but I doubt if this will deter even the most ardent pietist who just wants to “read the Word.” The positive effect is that skills in exegesis are taught without drawing attention to what is happening. I cannot think of a more important task for our pastors and Bible teachers to engage in than that of helping lay people ask the important questions about what the text is actually saying.

The third feature is one that is often lacking in Old Testament commentaries. The context of any text is crucial to our proper understanding of it. For a lot of people this is really an unexplored issue. It is the role of biblical theology to help us see how any text relates to any other text and, above all, how any part of the Bible testifies to Christ. There are two main parts to this process: an analytical one of exegesis and then the synthesis. Exegesis of a book or part of a book involves the analysis of the theology that is there. The often neglected process is the needed placing of the results of analytical exegesis within the context of the whole canon of Holy Scripture. Christians studying the Old Testament frequently need to be helped to see how the unity of the biblical message requires a legitimate Christian assessment of the ancient Hebrew text. In other words, we all want to be able to treat Old Testament texts as Christian Scriptures that tell us about our God and how he has come to us in Jesus. Often commentaries disappoint in this respect and disregard the unity of the Bible’s message. Not so this volume. Each chapter concludes with commentary on the text in its wider Old Testament context and then in its relationship to the message of the New Testament. By following this procedure, the author progressively shows how Deuteronomy testifies to the person and work of Christ. This is as it should be. This volume will edify and enrich all who read it.

There is one other useful feature to mention: the provision of questions for discussion at the end of each chapter. Individuals or groups may feel that these are just making hard work for them. But, if all you do is merely read them through, you will be challenged to think about the Christian applications of this important part of the Old Testament. The more I look at these appendages, the more I am impressed with the way the author is absolutely determined to see Deuteronomy through Jesus. And that, after all, is how Jesus, the apostles, and the first Christians looked at the only Bible they had: the Hebrew Scriptures. The questions echo the pronouncement of *Article VI* of the *XXXIX Articles*: “The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and the New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ.”

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*“Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt?” Biblical, Archaeological, and Egyptological Perspectives on the Exodus Narratives* edited by James K. Hoffmeier, Alan R. Millard and Gary A. Rendsburg. BBRSup 13. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016, vii + 333 pp., US \$59.50, hardcover.

*“Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt?”* is a part of the Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements and is a collection of essays, most of which were presented at a symposium at Lanier Theological Library in Houston, Texas on January 17–18, 2014. The purpose of the book is to review the exodus narrative alongside literary and historical evidence to determine whether it is consistent with “the historical period implied in the Bible” (p. x). The book is organized by four parts, with multiple essays in each part (14 total).

The first part consists of four chapters with a focus on linguistic issues (especially loan words) in the exodus-wilderness narratives and Egyptology. James K. Hoffmeier (ch. 1) begins by exploring possible evidence of Egyptian influence in the exodus narratives. This includes the existence of Egyptian names, terms for priestly regalia, and archaeological evidence. Richard S. Hess (ch. 2) examines around forty personal names from the exodus-wilderness narratives and argues that if these are related to Egyptian names, then this provides credibility to the claims in the book of Exodus. A similar argument is made by Benjamin J. Noonan (ch. 3) regarding Egyptian loanwords. He begins from the viewpoint that if the Israelites were at one point historically living in Egypt, then we might expect this to impact the language in the book of Exodus. Noonan provides three helpful charts that outline the loanword in Hebrew, the Egyptian donor term, and the frequency of occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. David Falk (ch. 4) finds symbolic and practical significance of the horned altar described in Exod 27:2 in light of Egyptian altars (attested from Dynasty 2 through 18).

The second part (six chapters) of this book relates to Exodus in the Pentateuch/Torah. Richard C. Steiner (ch. 5) looks at Lev 18:3 (“You shall not copy the practices of the land of Egypt . . .”) in light of practices of incest. He speculates this might refer to Ramesses II and his children, given the increase in royal incest following the reign of this pharaoh (p. 84). Steiner arrives at the conclusion that the Israelites were living in Egypt during the reign of Ramesses II. In chapter 6 Joshua Berman examines the Exodus sea account (Exod 13:17–15:19) and the Kadesh inscriptions of Ramesses II with the hypothesis that the account has “strong affinities” with the Kadesh inscription (p. 94). He argues that it

has more similarities with the Kadesh Poem than the Baal Epic and thus strengthens the connection between ancient Egypt and the exodus narratives (p. 108).

Gary A. Rendsburg (ch. 7) challenges the source division maintained by the Documentary Hypothesis for Exod 1–14 and instead makes a bold proposal for the literary unity of this section. He explores several patterns within the plague cycle (pairs, triads, and number of verses for each plague) and contends that source division here is unconvincing and “strips the narrative of its literary structure, belletristic artistry, textual interconnections, and at times its theological messages” (p. 132).

Alan R. Millard (ch. 8) looks at the tension in the text between Moses’s claim that he cannot speak adequately and his ability to sing and (presumably) speak well after crossing the Sea of Reeds. Millard argues that Moses’s “heaviness of mouth” may refer to a type of speech impediment which affects speech but not singing (p. 142). Chapter 9 is an essay by Richard E. Averbeck concerning the deliverance of the Hebrew people from slavery and how this appears in shaping the Mosaic law. Attention is given to Exod 19–Deut 26 and Lev 25.

Jens Bruun Kofoed focuses on the exodus as cultural memory in chapter 10. He interacts significantly with the work of Egyptologist Jan Assmann on cultural-memory theory and proposes that this can be applied to a “different arrangement and dating of the biblical sources,” (pp. 177–78). He critiques aspects of the assumptions/positions of Assmann, such as reconstruction based on the classic source-critical dating of the biblical text (p. 190). Instead, Kofoed invites readers to consider the possibilities if cultural-memory theory is applied to the canonical chronology of events (p. 193).

Part 3 contains two essays on Exodus, the wilderness period, and archaeology. In chapter 11 K. Lawson Younger Jr. addresses recent developments in understanding the origin of the Arameans and challenges the “immobilist model” pertaining to migration and the early Israelites (p. 201). He calls scholars to begin examining the evidence differently, “developing explanations that incorporate more recent migration theory in their model” (p. 222). In chapter 12 Thomas W. Davis observes that the lack of archaeological evidence for the exodus has been used by scholars as a means of debunking the historical claims of the Hebrew Bible (p. 223). Davis argues this is a flawed approach to interpreting the data and encourages scholars to consider that the model is deficient, rather than the text.

The final part of this book contains two essays on Exodus in the Hebrew Prophets. Jerry Hwang (ch. 13) explores Hosea’s use of the exodus traditions and issues pertaining to the literary relationship between the Torah and the Prophets (p. 243). Hwang disputes the theory

that the book of Hosea predates the pentateuchal traditions. He argues that in Hosea the references to the exodus demonstrate how deeply imbedded it is with the covenant, exile, and return (p. 245). J. Andrew Dearman (ch. 14) reviews the exodus-wilderness traditions in Amos and Micah. He detects “formulaic language representing broader account of Israel’s origins” and explores the ways Amos and Micah drew upon this in order to address matters of religious identity (p. 255).

Anyone with an interest in the current research on the exodus-wilderness narratives, Egyptian loan words, and points of contact between the biblical world and Egypt will find this volume fascinating and worthwhile. The scope of these essays is impressive, ranging from archaeological evidence, linguistic studies, literary-critical issues, and cultural-memory theory. Critics might note that while diverse topics were presented here, the positions (and perhaps presuppositions) of the contributors appear to be rather similar. This is not altogether surprising given the purpose and aim of the book, but it should be acknowledged. The maximalist approach of the contributors will be criticized by some Hebrew Bible scholars but likely will be well received by an evangelical audience. It may have been beneficial to include a chapter devoted to addressing the main critiques of the positions presented here (which is hinted at in individual chapters), but this goes beyond the scope of this collection. Overall this book is recommended for students and scholars interested in the exodus narratives and discussion on the Egyptian evidence.

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*Latino/a Biblical Hermeneutics: Problematics, Objectives, Strategies*  
edited by Francisco Lozada Jr. and Fernando F. Segovia. SemSt 68.  
Atlanta: SBL, 2014, xi + 372 pp., US \$46.95, softcover.

It is more crucial than ever for North American evangelicals to recognize the diverse world in which they live. One of the implications of this multicultural context is that the disciplines of biblical interpretation and theology must be re-assessed based on the needs and settings of diverse communities. SBL Press’s edited volume *Latino/a Biblical Hermeneutics* thus fills the double role of assisting Latino/a scholars in taking inventory of the major trends and schools of thought within this stream

of contextual interpretation and giving interested readers from other backgrounds a much-needed recalibration of the guiding concerns that they may all too easily view as self-evident.

Structurally, this volume begins with an introduction by Segovia. The main body of the text contains fifteen essays, all grouped under the heading of “Addressing the Problematic: What Does it Mean to Be a Latino/a Critic?” A concluding section contains separate chapters by Segovia and Lozada reflecting on the viewpoints presented and future possibilities. Due to the large number of essays in this work, the engagement in this review will necessarily be selective.

Segovia’s introduction helpfully situates the vision for the volume as a whole. He defines and describes the relationships between the fields of racial-ethnic studies, biblical studies, and minority biblical criticism. Specifically, he intends to, “analyze the vision of the critical task espoused by Latino/a critics,” and focus on the oft-neglected topic of, “the mission of the critic as critic” (p. 2). This is followed by a summary of recent work in Latino/a biblical studies, with particular attention to the nature of the critical task and the social/cultural location of the critic.

From an evangelical perspective, one of the most challenging yet revealing essays is the contribution by Hector Avalos, “Rethinking Latino Hermeneutics: An Atheist Perspective.” Avalos, who is also the author of a book entitled *The End of Biblical Studies* (Prometheus, 2007) bluntly opens with the assertion that his lack of religious belief has a far stronger bearing on his scholarship than his Mexican ethnicity and that he sees the majority of biblical scholarship—both in its confessional and non-confessional forms—as simply trying to make a case for the continued cultural relevance of the Bible in the current age when it is, in Avalos’s perspective, a morally regressive text. He chastises Latino critics who, in the name of “liberation,” have ironically failed to liberate themselves and their audiences from Christian scripture. Two hermeneutical strategies are isolated and condemned: “Representativism,” which arbitrarily picks one biblical viewpoint as praiseworthy while ignoring more difficult passages (his illustration here is the tendency to make the social justice of Deuteronomy normative while ignoring its genocide), and “Reinterpretation,” which freely ignores the historical meaning of the text. He then surveys the work of liberationist theologians and finds it guilty of relying heavily on these strategies. While many “minority” scholars appreciate the ethical perspective of the prophets, Avalos reads them as being hegemonic opponents of religious pluralism and unsuitable for today’s world; in fact, he sees this as being as equally incoherent as using Cortés as a “paradigm of liberation” (p. 69). He ends the essay by revealing that he is against all “religious empires” (p. 70). While

Avalos's blunt unbelief puts him in the minority in this volume, the reminder that Christians face a context in which they are seen not only as metaphysically incorrect but also totalitarian and bigoted is not out of place. Furthermore, it clearly shows the ineffectiveness of apologetic readings of Scripture that simply pass over its uncomfortable aspects.

A different kind of highlight is found in the more overtly exegetical essay of Aída Besançon Spencer, "Position Reversal and Hope for the Oppressed." Spencer reads Mary's Magnificat in Luke 1:46–55 as teaching "position reversal" and the "liberation of the oppressed" (pp. 95–96). She finds this emphasis on God's deliverance of the humble throughout the rest of the New Testament. Thus, Hispanic women can trust that God will elevate and recognize them. Similarly innovative in its engagement with the biblical text is Cristina García-Alfonso's "Latino/a Biblical Hermeneutics: Problematic, Objectives, Strategies," which begins with reality of *resolviendo*, which is the situation of economic desperation faced by many Cubans, in which various forms of theft and sometimes prostitution are necessary for survival. With this setting in mind, she reads the story of Rahab as portraying a woman who uses her unique outsider status to her advantage and finds crafty ways to survive. It thus functions as a paradigm for "women's power to be born from within the same oppressive system where they find themselves" (p. 163).

Elsewhere, other voices insightfully articulate the multifaceted nature of Latino/a identity. Lozada's "Toward Latino/a Biblical Studies: Foregrounding Identities and Transforming Communities" asserts that the overriding similarity of all those falling under the Latino/a label is the experience of being an "Other" in the United States (p. 189), a trait that still allows for some degree of uniqueness for both different groups of South American heritage and individuals. Perhaps most constructive of all is Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo, who in his "Toward a Latino/a Vision/Optic for Biblical Hermeneutics" provides a five-point framework for a Latino/a hermeneutic: "A Christian Identity beyond Nationalistic Overtones," "A Message of Hope and Liberation from Faith to Faith," "A Balance between Biblical Paradigms and Popular Beliefs," "Revising the Structures of Power in Our Traditions," and "From the Theoretical and Scholarly to the Practical and the Vernacular" (pp. 205–15). More autobiographical but no less powerful is the contribution of Timothy J. Sandoval. His essay, "How Did You Get to Be a Latino Biblical Scholar? Scholarly Identity and Biblical Scholarship" simply uses most of its space to unpack the various struggles he encountered relating to his ethnicity from primary school through doctoral studies.

In the concluding section, Segovia first gives a short evaluation of and response to each of the essays before synthesizing their major trends in the areas of theology, methodology, and social stance. Finally, Lozada asserts that “Latino/a biblical interpretation is a process of becoming” (p. 365) and commends the various contributors for being able to find commonality despite their diversity. He also notes that the nature of what Latino/a criticism *is* can be described as fluidly existing between being and practice. Lozada concludes by calling upon scholars to focus on their discipline constructs knowledge, and to explore the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, and sexuality.

In conclusion, *Latino/a Biblical Hermeneutics* is a cohesive assortment of essays that function well together. Despite some minor shortcomings, such as the lack of indices at the back and additional subgroupings for the chapters, the collection as a whole does an admirable job of making the reader aware of not only the current trends in Latino/a biblical interpretation but also the variegated nature of what it means to identify as a Latino/a critic.

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*Joel* by Christopher R. Seitz. International Theological Commentary. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2016. 256 pp., US \$94.00, hardcover.

This theological commentary is the first OT volume (a two-volume commentary on Revelation already exists) in a new series published by Bloomsbury, aimed to serve as a companion series to the well-known ICC (International Critical Commentary) published by the same publishing house. It aims to “offers a verse by verse interpretation of the Bible that addresses its theological subject matter, gleaning the best from both the classical and modern commentary traditions and showing the doctrinal development of Scriptural truths” (<http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/series/tt-clark-international-theological-commentary/>). The name of the series is, however, unfortunate as it is easy to mix it up with the commentary series with the same name published by Eerdmans. This aside, this is a very good volume which, standing squarely in the Christian tradition, highlights the theological value of the book of Joel.

Seitz’s commentary falls into two main parts. The first part, constituting nearly half the book, contains introductory matters. At times this part reads more like reflections on matters pertinent to the interpretation of prophetic books in general and Joel in particular, an

observation that is not meant as a critique. Seitz begins by discussing matters of diachrony and synchrony. His theological reading is based on the final form of the text yet takes into account the historical processes that caused this form to come into being. Seitz further makes clear that his present commentary, although it will draw inspiration from research on the Book of the Twelve, will nevertheless “guard the integrity” of Joel as a specific witness in being an individual book and aim to make its own unique message heard. How, for example, is the motif of the “Day of the Lord” used in Joel and how does this use differ from the way that the same motif is employed elsewhere in the Twelve?

In parallel, Seitz explores what it means to read Joel canonically, paying attention to how Joel’s message fits in with that of the surrounding books, read in their final form, but also resisting some of the tenets of pre-critical interpretations. Is it, for instance, possible to read Joel in its current position in the Twelve yet at the same time acknowledge its likely post-monarchic date of composition?

Continuing on this point, Seitz explores the verbal and thematic links between Joel and other prophetic books which, according to him, reveal a pattern of mutual influence in the Twelve. For Seitz, Joel’s dependence on earlier prophecy suggests a continuum where Joel is part of a long line of prophecies that seek to become fulfilled. Again, using the Day of the Lord as an example, Seitz highlights how Joel’s adaptation of earlier theological/literary motifs contributes to its overarching message.

Speaking about the inner coherence of the book, Seitz offers a brief history of research. His survey touches both on those scholars who uphold unity and those who see Joel as consisting of two or even three parts, as well as those who perceive this gradual growth as having taken place within the context of wider redactions which encompass the gradually expanding Book of the Twelve. Although Seitz neither denies nor confirms any of these theories, for him the canonical shape of Joel takes precedence, as he regards 2:17–20 as its intended centre piece.

Turning from book to prophet, Seitz notes the absence of a call narrative as well as the changing temporal landscape of the book. Seitz argues that it is his *book* that prophesies, a feature underlined by the author’s anonymity and by the absence of any kind of historical information about him. These aspects lend a sense of timelessness to the book which enables it to communicate to future generations.

Seitz also discusses the message and purpose of Joel. He argues that the book has been composed to respond to the scenario set out at the end of Hosea, namely the invitation to repent and to walk in God’s ways.

Seitz further analyses the structure of Joel and how the various parts of the book interact with and complement one another. There are, for instance, parallels between the structure and message of Joel and that of Malachi in its use of the motif of a messenger who precedes the future Day of the Lord. Seitz likewise explores the interaction between Joel and Zephaniah and between Joel and Jonah.

The substantial penultimate chapter in the introduction is devoted to the Day of the Lord. Seitz discusses the distinctive features of this motif as it appears in Joel, up and against its appearance in the surrounding texts (e.g., Amos, Isaiah). Seitz identifies five distinctive features that are unique to the portrayal of the Day of the Lord in Joel: its specific outcome, its links with the threat of locust, the possibility of survival of a whole generation, its present reality, and its connection to God's compassion.

The final chapter places the book of Joel in its Christian context and in dialogue with the message of Jesus's death and resurrection as celebrated at Easter. Seitz emphasizes the importance of Joel's message in the celebration of Ash Wednesday in many church traditions. Notably, Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer incorporates the text of Joel 2:1–2, 12–17 in its liturgy on that day. Seitz also touches upon Joel's liturgical position as the Haftarah reading on the Sabbath immediately preceding Yom Kippur. Each in its own way, both traditions serve, to cite Seitz, "to bring the sinful human soul straight into the vortex of judgment—the confrontation with God's righteousness through all time—and plot the course of forgiveness and new life" (p. 93). The introduction ends with a relatively short bibliography. Throughout the commentary Seitz is strongly indebted to the work of Jörg Jeremias.

Turning to the commentary proper, Seitz begins by citing the NRSV translation of Joel for easy reference. He then proceeds systematically through the text. There are few textual notes and any discussions of individual Hebrew words take place in the footnotes. There is also no recurring structure to the comments. Rather, as in the introduction, Seitz comments on the text with focus on its literary structure and its theology, as well as on its dialogue with other (prophetic) texts. His interpretations are centred on comparisons between Joel's message and that of these other texts, with the explicit aim of establishing the uniqueness of the former. Further, how does the theology of the book contribute to Christian theology?

In sum, Seitz's commentary offers a distinct theological perspective and it demands the reader's full attention. At times it reads more like a contemplation on the theological message of Joel than as a commentary, yet this style is surely intentional and contributes to its unique perspective. As a result, this commentary does not fill all the needs of an

exegete but it certainly carries out the aims of the commentary series, namely to serve as a companion to the ICC. Together, the two make a whole.

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*Was There a Wisdom Tradition? New Prospects in Israelite Wisdom Studies* edited by Mark R. Sneed. SBL Ancient Israel and Its Literature 23. Atlanta: SBL, 2015, xi + 325 pp., \$40.95, softcover.

*Was There a Wisdom Tradition?*, edited by Mark R. Sneed (Professor of Bible at Lubbock Christian University), sets out to explore the title question, which has sparked significant scholarly interaction since Sneed provocatively posed it in an eponymous 2011 article (Mark R. Sneed, “Was There a Wisdom Tradition?” *CBQ* 73 [2011]: 50–71). In the introduction Sneed sketches “the paradigm position in Hebrew Bible studies concerning the nature of the wisdom corpus” (p. 1). In short, wisdom literature was thought to represent the distinct tradition and worldview of the scribes as opposed to the covenantal traditions of the prophets and priests preserved in the Hebrew Bible more broadly. Though this position has been dominant for some decades in biblical studies, it was not always so and has recently come under harsh critique. The twelve essays in this volume represent “the most recent reassessment of the prevailing consensus” (p. 2). The discussion centers around questions of identity, genre, and setting for the so-called wisdom texts: Was there a wisdom tradition? What was distinctive about it? How does it relate to Israel’s scriptures more broadly?

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1, “Genre Theory and the Wisdom Tradition” contains seven essays; Part 2, “Case Studies,” contains 4; and the third part, “Ancient Near Eastern Comparison,” contains just one. In the introduction Sneed provides a valuable summary of each essay in the volume, so I will not reduplicate that work here—suffice to lay out the broad shape of the collection and make some comments on the conversation as a whole.

The contributors approach the discussion from all angles. Some, like Sneed, Kynes, and Weeks are keen to overthrow the “paradigm position,” going so far as to deny that wisdom literature is a genre (Sneed) or even that it is a useful or meaningful term at all (Kynes).

Weeks likewise believes the discussion of genre theory and wisdom to be methodologically narrow-minded and constrained by form criticism's sometimes procrustean bed. While not wanting to minimize their differences, these three essentially want a thorough reworking of the way biblical scholars think about so-called wisdom literature in light of a better engagement with genre theory and, dare we say, clearer thinking overall.

The majority of essays, however, call more for the remodeling of the paradigm position than for its demolition. Several of the essays represent fresh attempts to define or delimit the genre of wisdom literature. Schellenberg renovates the idea of worldview, Miller seeks to establish *gestalt* features for wisdom, and Dell frames a generic definition based on the concept of family resemblance. The problems with genre identification become more apparent as the approaches of the contributors diverge. Wisdom is clearly not a genre in the way that the lament psalm or the judgement oracle are genres; however, the very discussion itself suggest that there is something that holds Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes together as distinct from the rest of the Hebrew Bible. If not, then why are we talking about them?

Michael V. Fox's essay, "Three Theses on Wisdom," emerges as a helpful mediating position. His three theses are simply stated: "(1) there was no wisdom school; and (2) the authors of wisdom literature were not a distinct faction; but (3) there was a wisdom literature" (p. 69). Fox argues that the "ethical instruction" was indeed a real genre in the ancient world (p. 81). (Later in the collection he is supported by Shupak's formidable essay, "The Contribution of Egyptian Wisdom to the Study of Biblical Wisdom Literature," in which she establishes this point for Egyptian literature beyond any doubt). "Wisdom literature, in distinction," Fox continues, "is a heuristic genre, a construct of modern scholarship" (p. 82). Fox offers fuzzy set theory as a helpful framework and concludes that literary works can participate in multiple genres and to varying degrees (p. 78). If we ceased to talk about Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes together in one breath (הבל) then what *would* we do with them?

From the collection as a whole, intertextuality emerges as a promising path forward. Kynes closes his essay (the first in the book, and easily the most radical) with a call for "a more consciously intertextual approach" (p. 33). Several articles pick up this call in interesting ways. Heckl's main argument in his essay, "How Wisdom Texts Became Part of the Canon of the Hebrew Bible," is that intertextuality between the Job frame narrative, Proverbs 1–9, and Deuteronomistic texts is so pervasive that one cannot help but conclude that the redactors of Job and Proverbs were consciously using the authority of Deuteronomy to bring

older wisdom poetry into the canon. In so doing they brought wisdom literature into new literary and theological contexts. Hamilton's essay, "Riddles and Parables, Traditions and Texts: Ezekielian Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom Traditions," exemplifies this brilliantly. Through careful study of intertextuality in Ezekiel, Hamilton shows that scribes could rework multiple genres and forms toward complex purposes (pp. 256–58). He thinks wisdom texts do "reflect a tradition in a loose sense" (245), but reconsidering "how ideas moved about in ancient Israel" may help "to reframe our notions of wisdom traditions" (pp. 257–58). Even Teva Forti, whom Sneed says affirms "the paradigmatic position without modification" (p. 3), advocates for an intertextual approach to determining wisdom psalms (pp. 210, 215). Thus, from the most radical to the most conservative, these scholars agree that a more rigorous engagement with intertextuality is crucial to understanding Israel's wisdom tradition or lack thereof.

From an editing standpoint, the essays in the volume could have clustered around the question posed in the title more tightly. Some of the essays in parts 2 and 3 seem to address it as an afterthought. The most successful pieces framed their studies at the outset as genuine test cases of Sneed's thesis and actually moved the discussion forward by suggesting paths for future investigation (e.g., Hamilton). More such essays would have made the volume more constructive. Nevertheless, *Was There a Wisdom Tradition?* will be of interest to anyone working on genre studies in biblical texts and must be consulted by anyone whose work relates to the wisdom literature of ancient Israel. For students of biblical wisdom, this volume is an essential window on the current state of the scholarly debate.

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*The Historical Writings: Introducing Israel's Historical Literature* by Mark A. Leuchter and David T. Lamb. Introducing Israel's Scriptures. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016. 606 pp., US \$49.00, ebook.

Works on the historical books are numerous. Contributors are, therefore, forced to enter a crowded room in the building of Old Testament studies. Whether because of archaeological, historical, or literary reasons, there is

a cacophony of voices, proving it difficult to stand out amidst the commotion. Nevertheless, Leuchter and Lamb may not struggle to find a place of prominence in that room. Their new publication represents an up-to-date and insightful introduction to the historical books that also transcends the expectations of the genre to offer a section of commentary for Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles (Ruth and Esther are omitted from the work because of a perceived difference in genre). The result is a resource that is not only current but also provides a catalyst for subsequent discussion.

Each chapter exhibits the same structure, resulting in a very predictable but accessible presentation. In each case a brief introduction gives way to sections devoted to literary issues, historical issues, theological themes, and bibliographic data. The penultimate section of each chapter is a brief commentary. It does not succumb to meticulous details, but rather it walks the reader through the content of each book in broad strokes while maintaining a concern for the whole. In my opinion, the commentary section constitutes the definitive characteristic and is arguably the work's most valuable asset.

There are also recurring side-bars devoted to a number of popular topics. For example, Leuchter and Lamb tackle the perpetual question, "Did David kill Goliath?" (Kindle ebook loc. 3390–3400). While the authors ultimately doubt it, instead yielding to a perceived monarchical convention of taking credit for the feats of others for the sake of their reputation among the populace, evangelicals should not allow individual disagreements to prevent their use of this resource. Leuchter and Lamb do many things well. For instance, their discussion of the diachronic issues associated with Samuel properly holds in balance synchronic concerns. Thus, they can state eruditely, "The shapers of the book of Samuel neither attempted to idealize the era that saw the rise of kingship nor did they attempt to vilify it—even if the sources they received were concerned for such purposes" (loc. 3328). These are good points, as Samuel's history of development is rich and complicated. That the development of Samuel was affected by the socio-historical developments of the community, theological discourse should be wedded with literary-critical and socio-historical discourse.

As for the ever-critical distinction between history and historiography, Leuchter and Lamb do well to discuss it. For the authors, history is the record, or memory, of the events of the past (loc. 259) whereas historiography is the genre that molds the memories into a narrative and projects a specific point or value (loc. 288). In particular, their tenets of historiography—being rooted in a literary endeavor and a desire to communicate a certain point or points—are laudable. Yet the lacuna about accuracy is significant. Yes, history writing is literature that

has an “agenda,” but the absence of an explicit concern for accuracy destroys the quintessential barrier between historiography and fiction. While the nuances of the term “accuracy” are a debate in itself, this issue for evangelicals cannot be overstated. Consequently, if there was a preliminary section that deserved a more robust discussion, it was this one. The debate over the dynamics of history writing is fierce, but if one’s exposure to the discussion was solely based on this resource, one may come away with a different, and inaccurate, impression of the debate.

Another thought provoking section discusses the interaction between author and audience (loc. 346–405). Leuchter and Lamb detail historical and socio-economic realities that affect the composition and development of ancient literature. In the end, Leuchter and Lamb paint a picture that reconstructs Israelite culture as moving from orally preserving their authoritative traditions to a written medium. As a result of this process, its literature manifests certain dynamics, and such dynamics are critical for forming a stance on Scripture’s authority and the essence of God’s revelation. In particular, one’s view and discussion of Scripture must accommodate the reality that God’s people periodically revisited their memories (oral and written) in light of new experiences, thereby establishing a mutual interaction between text, author, and audience. “This means that the authors of these later texts were very much a part of the audience for them, and wrote their works to highlight, promote, and sometimes argue against the ideas that these older texts contained” (loc. 384-94). Applied to the historical books, therefore, this shows that Israel’s national identity throughout the Iron Age and into the Persian Period was not rigid or static. Rather, it was malleable and responded to the revelations of God through the contours of history. Such awareness permits a deeper appreciation for the complexities of the canonization process, and it forms the foundation for constructing a theology of the human/divine interaction in the medium of history.

Other noteworthy features of this work include an ability to introduce complex debates without overwhelming the reader with cumbersome details. For example, Leuchter and Lamb do not try to solve the debate of the Deuteronomistic History, a literary-critical issue perpetually connected to the historical books. Without crippling the reader with Noth’s hypothesis, its subsequent variations, or conflicting schools of interpretation, they instead briefly introduce the topic in the opening chapter and discuss details as necessary in conjunction with each respective book. As another example, the frustrating historical questions of Israel’s emergence, the archaeology of the settlement period, and

Ezra's historical relationship with Nehemiah and the Persian Empire are discussed in a way that allows the reader to understand the complexities of the debates without being suffocated by them.

Leuchter and Lamb also make repeated references to Old Testament books outside of the historical books, and when this characteristic is considered along with the cross references between the books within the historical corpus, the reader cannot help but appreciate the literary, theological, and historical relationships that connect the Old Testament. The authors ponder the implications of the Chronicler's use of Jeremiah and Isaiah while ignoring Ezekiel. They also suggest the importance of being aware of Haggai and Zechariah for understanding the opening chapters of Ezra. These and other examples construct the impression that the historical books should be understood as an important thread within the biblical meta-narrative that traces ancient Israel through its Formative Age, Golden Age, Dark Age, and Restoration. These are not individual accounts read in isolation from each other and/or the Old Testament as a whole.

If one were offering a course on the historical books as a corpus, then I would certainly recommend this book as a chief text. At the very least it should find its place on any recommended reading list. For courses that focus upon only a particular book, this work will likely only function as a dialogue partner for certain issues and interpretive conclusions. Yet for those who specialize in the historical books, this resource deserves familiarization.

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*Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus* by L. Michael Morales. New Studies in Biblical Theology. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015, 349 pp., \$27.00, softcover.

Framing the narrative of the book of Leviticus, the gate liturgy asks the question, "Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord?" and it drives "*the drama and plot of the Bible*" (p. 304, emphasis original). This gate liturgy narrates not only who may enter God's presence but also how that entrance is made possible. So writes L. Michael Morales in his insightful book, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, one of the latest additions to the New Studies in Biblical Theology series. Morales is Professor of Biblical Studies at

Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Morales carefully shows how the people of God come to dwell in the house of God not only in the covenantal context of Leviticus but also in light of the new covenant reality of Christ and the church. Through the dramatic unfolding of the book of Leviticus, he explains how the *mishkan* (house) of the Lord becomes the ‘*ohel mo’ed* (tent of meeting) with the people (p. 110). Or to put it another way, Morales seeks to describe how the revelation of who God is becomes experiential in the lives of his people, namely through the Levitical cult.

Morales spends about one third of the book laying the foundation for Leviticus by describing its connection to Genesis and Exodus. He claims that Leviticus contains the heart of the Pentateuch’s theology, indicated by its central position in the Pentateuch. For Morales, the Pentateuchal heart is that the Lord intends to dwell among his sacred people in sacred space at sacred times (p. 53). As he introduces fundamental concepts related to ancient Near Eastern cosmology, he explains that Eden was understood to be the mountain of God, with all life and communion with God governed by one’s proximity to the mountain summit. This communion was lost in the Fall, as Adam and Eve were cast down from and out of the mountain-garden (p. 240). Because exile is a major motif in Israel’s history, the rest of Genesis and all of Exodus sets the stage for a God-ordained house (the tabernacle/temple) where he will once again dwell with his people (Israel).

When Morales turns to the New Testament, he navigates the complexities of fulfillment and covenant theology with remarkable skill. He shows that Jesus is the new, resurrected Israel and the fulfillment of the Levitical cultus. So with the gate liturgy in mind, Jesus Christ is uniquely qualified to ascend the mountain of the Lord. Further, the church—the house and household of God—is made holy by being united to Christ and is able to ascend as well (p. 232). Looking forward to the eschatological hope of the New Jerusalem, the church’s final Sabbath rest is atop the heavenly Mount Zion enjoying perfect and eternal union with the Lord.

One of Morales’s numerous insights pertains to the narrative climax of the creation account. Contrary to some, he asserts that the creation of mankind on the sixth day was *not* the climax of the creation narrative; rather, the consecration of the Sabbath day marks the dramatic height of God’s creative activity (p. 46). This heightened emphasis on Sabbath communion with God shapes Morales’s understanding of the goal of the Levitical cult.

Perhaps the greatest strength of Morales's work is his emphasis on the connection between the cultus and the community it creates—namely, the cultic liturgy shapes the covenantal community. Rooted in the creation account, mankind exists to enjoy Sabbath-day communion with the Lord, so all of the ceremonial instructions and cleanliness laws are intended to create the kind of community that is able to “[bask] in the renewing light of God's Sabbath-day presence” (p. 200). God's purpose in creation was again being realized among the Israelites through the cultus and is ultimately fulfilled in the new covenant as Jesus's incarnation establishes him as the *mishkan* of God and his resurrection transforms him into the ‘*ohel mo'ed* of God. In this way, Jesus fulfills the Levitical cult and ushers God's people into the eschatological Sabbath-day worship (p. 263).

One question that goes unaddressed is that of a center in biblical theology. Morales states that “the history of redemption, along with all of its narrative drama, is driven by one theological theme: *YHWH's opening a way for humanity to dwell in the divine presence*” (pp. 254–55, emphasis original). In another place he writes, “Entering the house of God to dwell with God, beholding, glorifying and enjoying him eternally . . . is *the* story of the Bible, the plot that makes sense of the various acts, persons and places of its pages, the deepest context for its doctrines” (p. 21, emphasis original). Considering the nature of the New Studies in Biblical Theology series, Morales's comments are striking. Though many works of biblical theology may claim that their theme is the central, fundamental, meta-theme that explains all others, the very reality of those perspectives testifies to a multifaceted nature of biblical theology. Morales does not seem to be deterred by contrasting perspectives, nor does he defend his approach. Regardless of whether or not the reader agrees with the author's method and conclusion, perhaps a methodological statement with reference to other works of biblical theology would help to place this book in its context among other biblical theologies.

Morales has done a great service for the church by providing an accessible theology of Leviticus that removes much of the intimidating mystique surrounding Israel's tabernacle and sacrificial administration. Not only that, Morales has also made a significant contribution to Pentateuchal studies as he readdresses the significance of the cosmological background to Israel's cultic system. The final result is a beautiful, literary-canonical reading of Leviticus that is sure to provide the church with a theological entry into the book of Leviticus. From his insightful review of Genesis and Exodus, which puts Leviticus in its canonical context, to his fresh and profound retelling of the drama of Leviticus, one inevitable effect of this book is that it will certainly make

the reader open a Bible to read and re-read the Old Testament with fresh perspective. For that reason, Morales is to be commended for his stimulating work.

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*Qumran Hebrew: An Overview of Orthography, Phonology, and Morphology* by Eric D. Reymond. Society of Biblical Literature Resources For Biblical Study 76. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014, xvii + 309 pp., US \$37.95, softcover.

In this rewarding book, Eric Reymond has provided an excellent, must-read reference for both scholars and students working on Qumran Hebrew (QH), or those simply desiring to understand the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls better. The usefulness of the volume partly derives from its origin in an attempt to provide students at Yale Divinity School with an introduction to QH (p. 1). It is not intended to be a comprehensive grammar of QH, but aims in particular to fill in gaps in the standard works of Abegg and Qimron (p. 4).

After a brief “Introduction” (pp. 1–4), and short chapters outlining the “Corpus” (pp. 5–11) to be studied (more up-to-date than, e.g., Qimron’s much older work), and some “General Remarks” (pp. 13–21), in which Reymond sets out some of the assumptions he is making about QH, the book settles into its three major chapters. These are on “Orthography” (pp. 23–63), “Phonetics and Phonology” (pp. 65–150), and “Morphology” (pp. 151–224). Finally, there is a chapter of “Conclusions” (pp. 225–34). There are also indexes of sources, words, and authors. There is no subject index, but the table of contents gives a guide to the main areas.

It is not possible to give a sense of all the riches of Reymond’s analysis. Each chapter contains a wealth of observations and data that will reward close reading. It is not really a book best read from cover to cover. More helpful would be to use the book as a reference tool while working through specific texts. A reader could, for example, use the index of sources to follow through the comments on one particular text, with the option of reading further on any of the issues that come up in that context in the book. Nevertheless, I will note here two of the sections that I most appreciated. Something of a surprise (because it is

not done often enough) was the amount of attention given to scribal mistakes (pp. 23–35) which, of course, are an important phenomenon in ancient texts. This section is highly recommended not only for those interested in QH, but also for scholars working on the textual transmission of any ancient Hebrew texts, as it is full not only of data, but also peppered with useful methodological observations. I will also mention a magnificent section on the question of the “Weakening of Gutturals” (pp. 71–114!), which makes an important contribution to the study of QH, concluding that “the gutturals had ‘weakened,’ but they had not all become weak to the same degree” (pp. 111–12), having provided the details for this much more nuanced approach to the question than in previous presentations.

Among the other strengths of the approach in the book, in fact, are the various other areas where Reymond presents a more nuanced view on some issues than earlier introductions to QH. For example, Reymond is sensitive to the variety of types of Hebrew in the Scrolls (e.g., pp. 1, 35, 112). He knows that “a significant minority of the texts do not actually exhibit the most distinctive linguistic traits” (p. 6), and that mixtures of different forms occur in the same texts (p. 7). I have suggested (in Young, Rezetko, and Ehrensverd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*, 2008, 1:264) that we could speak of several “Qumran Hebrews.” Importantly, Reymond is aware that far from being the definition of QH, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is in many respects not typical (p. 11). Reymond is also aware of the complexity of the concept “biblical scrolls” when talking about Qumran (pp. 5–6). In general, Reymond demonstrates both the ability to make sensible judgements when presented with a range of interpretive options from older scholarship, and an incisive mind that often suggests a way forward in a number of areas of dispute.

As mentioned, Reymond makes it clear that this is not an attempt at a comprehensive work on QH. This is notable in regards not only to the subjects treated (e.g., unlike Qimron’s book, there is no section on syntax), but also in the references. It presents a useful summary of and interaction with major publications in the field by scholars such as Abegg, Kutscher, and Qimron. This is only right. Beyond the standard works, however, the coverage of scholarship is patchy. I, of course, did the common scholarly thing and checked where my own publications are referenced, and so I use my own work on the language of the Scrolls as an illustration of further scholarship that could have been referenced. Although three works of mine are referenced in the bibliography, only one of these actually features in the index of authors, a page where it is referenced as “see also.” Although cited in the bibliography, my article on the language of Peshet Habakkuk (“Late Biblical Hebrew and the Qumran Peshet Habakkuk,” 2008) is not actually referenced, even in

sections where issues dealt with in it are discussed, such as the issue of “imitation” of biblical language (p. 16). Other publications are not mentioned at all. For example, Reymond discusses the language of the Song of Songs scroll 4QCant<sup>b</sup> on a number of occasions (e.g., pp. 11, 66, 67), but does not seem to know my article on it (“Notes on the Language of 4QCant<sup>b</sup>,” 2001). So too, there is no reference to the chapter on QH in *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts* (2008), which leads me on to my last point.

This book, with all its strengths, led me to muse on how research on QH now finds itself in an interesting situation, since the main presuppositions of the dominant framework in which QH has heretofore been understood have been, to my mind, demonstrated to be false. The understanding of Hebrew, coming from the nineteenth century, was that it developed in a more or less linear fashion from its golden age in the pre-exilic period in books like Samuel, to the deteriorated Hebrew of the silver post-exilic age found in Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles (Late Biblical Hebrew: LBH), which in turn developed into post-biblical Mishnaic Hebrew (via the very late language of Song of Songs and Qoheleth). Because of its date, QH was simply assumed to be a later development along this path, and hence is regularly described as a development of LBH. In fact, if a scientific theory can be falsified by the utter failure of predictions based on it, the discovery of QH should have been the death of this chronological model. QH is much more “classical” than the five LBH books, and no QH text so far examined is in the LBH style (see, inter alia, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*). Scholars avoided this obvious conclusion by pointing to examples of LBH linguistic features in QH, but since every type of ancient Hebrew (including pre-exilic Hebrew inscriptions or “early” biblical texts) has a few of these features, the mere appearance of these features is beside the point, which is rather the concentration or “accumulation” of them in the five LBH books. The fact that Qumran is chronologically late, but not in the same type of Hebrew as the LBH books, allows us to realize that there is plenty of evidence of post-exilic Hebrew that is not LBH, whether in the Bible, like Joel, Haggai or Zechariah, or outside the Hebrew Bible, like the early second century BCE Ben Sira (see e.g., my “What Do We Actually Know about Ancient Hebrew,” 2013, 21–24). The five “LBH” books are the odd ones out, not the norm for post-exilic Hebrew.

In fact, we do not even have enough evidence to distinguish post-exilic Hebrew from pre-exilic Hebrew. Although this has been confidently done, it has been based on the presupposition that the language of the Masoretic Text (MT) of the Bible represents in detail the

language of the original authors of each of the books, a view in direct opposition to all mainstream scholarship on the history of the biblical text (Rezetko and Young, *Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew*, 2014). Evangelical authors have been prominent among those to acknowledge linguistic updating, for example Richard Hess's opinion that it "is both reasonable and likely" that "the Pentateuch, though written earlier, was edited or updated at a later period so that its language would conform to that of the remainder of the Bible" (Hess, "Language of the Pentateuch" in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 494). Similarly, Alan Millard notes that "scribes could substitute current words for older ones, or replace one with another for now imperceptible reasons, practices attested in manuscripts from other Ancient Near Eastern societies" (in a review of my *Biblical Hebrew, Studies in Chronology and Typology*, 127). Even just a consideration of parallel texts in the MT shows that ancient authors and scribes did not consider that the distinctive details of the language of the biblical books (as opposed to basic, common grammatical forms) were important to reproduce exactly. We have, therefore, no reason to expect that any of the linguistic details in any of the late manuscripts of the Bible in our possession was written by original authors. The MT, like all our biblical texts, contains a mixture of older and later linguistic forms, but we do not have enough dated evidence for ancient Hebrew to tell which is which.

So where does Reymond's book fit in all this? On the one hand, it is clear that he is not out to dispute with the standard approach so far in this sub-field, and he makes the specific link with LBH (e.g., pp. 13, 18). Every so often he dutifully points to linguistic forms which he identifies as LBH (e.g., pp. 38, 68–69, 119). These seem to be occasional times when the evidence fits that presupposition, and no chronological comment is made when the data do not fit the theory (e.g., p. 123). Even then, many of the LBH links are not very convincing to someone who does not share those presuppositions, and in Reymond's work his references to LBH forms are usually peripheral to his main point, rather than forming the key to their interpretation. Furthermore, a major advance on some other work is that he refers to the language of the MT Bible as simply that "the MT" (e.g. p. 3) not, as was commonly done by scholars such as Kutscher, "the Bible," who thus betrayed his assumption that the MT was the original text of the Hebrew Bible (I did, however, notice a slip on p. 125). This means that Reymond generally frames his discussion as a comparison between the form of language in the MT and that in various scrolls, which is a more neutral approach which allows his work to be used in different frameworks (pp. 6–7).

In summary, Reymond's book is very helpful and an essential read for anyone interested in ancient Hebrew. Reymond's ability to think

and write clearly makes me hope that he will one day produce a second, more comprehensive edition of the book as an even better reference guide to QH as a whole. I also hope that QH scholarship can develop away from its now outdated chronological framework, although that is part of the long road ahead for all scholars of ancient Hebrew, as we take seriously the current state of scholarship on the nature of the manuscript evidence in our possession.

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