

introduction the misimpression that the meaning of a given word is partly based upon its Semitic etymology. In spite of this danger, I think judiciously presented lists of well-established cognate words would be helpful for many users, e.g. as indices to entries in dictionaries of other Semitic languages.

It is impossible, of course, for a reviewer to check thousands of references for accuracy. My study of the first volume of the dictionary indicates that its entries are generally well conceived and carefully done. Positive characteristics include: hierarchical arrangement of semantic and syntagmatic analyses, summaries at the beginning of some long analyses, flexibility of format with regard to the integration of semantic and syntactic data, clear explanations which express caution when necessary, and appropriate redundancy.

The tremendous syntactic detail included in the dictionary, which makes it so valuable as a reference tool, poses a challenge to the user who is attempting to quickly find a particular piece of information in a long section of an entry. Section headings such as SUBJ (= subject), NOM CL (= noun clause), APP (= apposition), etc., are well marked, and long sections group references in quasi-paragraph format. However, within such a group there is no easily discernible, generally applicable principle by which Hebrew words appearing in a particular syntactic relation to the main headword are arranged. To me the most logical solution would be to alphabetize the Hebrew words. If more than one reference to the same word must be presented, e.g., because the word is used both in a technical and less technical sense, these references should be juxtaposed.

As stated in the preface, constraints of cost-effectiveness and time do not allow the dictionary to take into account all of the secondary scholarly literature. The editor states that "we can hope to do no more than report the position of the best scholarship we can find" (10). The focus of the dictionary is not so much on state-of-the-art translation equivalents as on providing comprehensive, contextually conditioned evidence so that the user can arrive at his/her own conclusions regarding precise meanings.

Although *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* cannot meet all our needs, it does well what it sets out to do and is on its way to setting a new high standard for Hebrew lexicography. May it be completed soon!

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Davies, Gordon F. *Israel in Egypt: Reading Exodus 1-2*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series no. 135. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992. 204 pp. \$50.00.

The last two decades have witnessed the development of several new directions in exegesis which diverge from diachronic literary methods

based on source, form, tradition, and redaction criticism, methods that considered the historical growth of composition, toward synchronic approaches of interpretation. These approaches include structuralism, rhetorical criticism and postmodern uses of reader-response criticism, each based on unique philosophical and theoretical foundations. These hermeneutical systems differ from earlier diachronic methodologies in that they place emphasis on the internal relationships within larger units of narrative rather than aiming to divide individual texts into various sources or traditions. Although some historical critics continue to conceive of structuralist methods as one more methodological perspective to be added to diachronic methods, others view them as two separate paradigms (see below). The number of exegetical studies utilizing these methods among commentaries and other literature in recent years indicate the multiplicity of outcomes that result from a synchronic approach. It is this and the dichotomy between methodological approaches that Gordon F. Davies addresses in this useful monograph on the first two chapters of Exodus. He aims to bridge all of these exegetical approaches in an openly eclectic manner by taking a middle ground that "stands on one side of the line between diachronic and synchronic analyses, but also at a distance from those who attempt a merely aesthetic evaluation of the Bible and discount references to extratextual sources" (16). Davies espouses to work within reader-response criticism although in "moderation." What emerges is a concise exegetical study presented with clear organizing principles outlined in the introduction.

The following seven chapters divide Exodus 1-2 into individual pericopes that are clearly outlined in consistent interpretive sections. Each chapter begins with a literal translation of the text followed by notes on the translation. These notes consist of syntactical and grammatical observations. The second section, "Delimitation," sets the context of the pericope under discussion. The actual analysis begins with the third section "Narrative Structure." Here Davies' investigation of "deep" and "surface" structure depends heavily on Vladimir Propp, the well-known Russian structuralist. Thus, the deep structure of Exodus 1:15-22 is interpreted as "problem-attempted action-result." The problem is the same as that of 1:8-14 and is "Pharaoh's perception of a threat in the Israelite's growth" (69). A section on surface structure focuses on the tension and unfolding plot in the narrative (29). Other sections include point of view (the perspective of the narrator), repetition and narrative gaps (how each assumes the interaction of the reader to fill in missing parts), narrative symmetry (chiastic structure and other aspects of symmetry), and vocabulary (lexicographical and semantic word studies), followed by a brief section of conclusions.

The volume accomplishes its task of providing a broad synthesis of sources from various methodological perspectives. This is evident in the concise discussion of interpretations concerning vocabulary and notes on

the translations in which Davies engages. However, it is this very discussion of translation and word studies that frustrates Davies' original intention. For if this were indeed an attempt to harmonize the various synchronic approaches, one would expect an analysis of the vocabulary and syntactical aspects of the text to begin with the reader, as is consistent in reader-response criticism. Instead the author engages in word studies that seem much more concerned with the original intention of the text and narrator than he is with the reader's response and interpretive interaction with the text. Much attention is given to the technical details of Hebrew syntax and lexicography. *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum AT*, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, and other technical studies which are written from a diachronic perspective are cited. Hence, the author's intent of providing a discourse between both diachronic and synchronic approaches seems to lean more toward the diachronic. In fact, reader-response criticism constitutes a minimal part of the present study. Yet, despite its detailed linguistic analysis of some parts of Exodus 1-2, other parts are not treated. One would expect that the specific location of the events would be significant for the reader. The narrator is specific concerning the location of Raamses and Pithom as being the center of the activity of the Israelites. Davies states, "The presence or absence of names in Exodus 1-2 strikes the reader/listener. Pharaoh is not named, but the store cities Raamses and Pithom are, as the midwives will be later" (61-62). But there is no discussion of the relevance of this fact. Davies centers on the importance of the midwives while neglecting the importance of their location. If the naming of the store cities are significant, why is there no linguistic analysis of these terms that come from outside the linguistic realm of Hebrew? It appears that Davies' eclecticism at times results in the oversight of important elements.

Despite these lacunae, this volume provides a concise (at times overly concise) treatment on the first two chapters of Exodus that is useful for those interested in solving dichotomies between diachronic and synchronic hermeneutical methods. The question remains whether hermeneutical methodologies with such diverse philosophical and theoretical backgrounds can indeed be synthesized in this eclectic manner. Contrary to Davies position, others have pointed out the difficulty of such tasks (see D. Patte, *What is Structural Exegesis?* [Philadelphia, 1976]; J. Barton, "Structuralism," *ABD* 6 [1992]: 216). The strength of this volume rests in its ability to document these methods and its aim to achieve positive results. Further studies of this nature are warranted if such a synthesis is to become a reality.

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