

program. This book succeeds in raising awareness of Herod's gift for architecture and its place within the Roman world. No scholar can safely write about Herod or his times without consulting *The Building Program of Herod the Great*. After reading this book, one could conclude that any treatment of Herod that does not place his life within the context of his building program would be incomplete.

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DAVID MERLING

Roth, Ariel A. *Origins: Linking Science and Scripture*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998. 384 pp. \$29.99.

Ariel Roth is one of the deans of Seventh-day Adventist creationism, having been active for over thirty years defending a literal interpretation of Genesis. Before retiring in 1994, he served for fourteen years as director of the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI). The GRI is a group of scientists sponsored by the Adventist church to research apparent conflicts between current concepts in science and the creation model. Because of his publicly declared position on science and faith, Roth is loved by some, while suffering from others the antipathy usually bestowed on those who question current paradigms in science. His new book, *Origins: Linking Science and Scripture*, is likely to engender the same polarity of reactions in its readers.

Recent years have seen a renaissance in publications questioning evolutionary theory and attempting to reconcile scientific data with a creator God. Many of these books have dealt with newly discovered information about the universe and biochemistry. One major example of this class of books has been *Darwin's Black Box* by Michael Behe, dealing with the biochemical challenge to evolution. Instead of dealing with a single area of science and questions raised about evolution in that narrow field, *Origins* takes a much broader approach. Dealing with philosophy, biology, physics, geology, and theology in a single book is an impressive feat, reflecting Roth's broad understanding of these areas and their bearing on the question of creation. Few other authors have had the breadth of expertise and nerve to attempt such a comprehensive work, although at least one other book published in 1998, *The Big Bang Exploded*, by Russell and Colin Standish (Hartland Publications), has attempted this at a more popular level.

The dazzling scope of *Origins* is both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, it is interesting to see the question of origins dealt with in such broad brush strokes, and Roth does an excellent job of placing volumes of information and complex questions into perspective. On the other hand, it is impossible in one book to cover in detail every subdiscipline of science to the satisfaction of experts in that field. Thus, to this molecular geneticist, the chapters dealing with biochemistry and molecular genetics seemed inadequate. Whether this is a fair criticism or not, it is one that is almost certainly going to be heard from experts in different areas when they comment on this book. In response to such criticism it is necessary to note that a book of this scope would be unreadable if it attempted to deal with every detail that might be out there, or used the specialized jargon of each discipline. Because of its breadth, Roth wrote *Origins* in a style easily understood by any adult reader.

While *Origins* is easy to understand and the text is liberally illustrated with fascinating stories, there are times when all the stories and illustrations, while

enjoyable to read, make getting to the point a circuitous affair. In addition, occasional parts read like a collection of notes and comments instead of a coherent narrative or argument. Chapter 8, entitled "More Biological Questions," is a clear example of this. Other chapters contain sections of material previously published by Roth. Regular readers of the journal *Origins* (not to be confused with this book) will recognize in Roth's work many of the thoughts expressed when he served as editor of the journal. A section entitled "Life in the Deep Rocks," which readers of the journal *Origins* will instantly recognize, illustrates the use of previously published material. This is not necessarily unfortunate, as this book takes many of Roth's previous thoughts and places them in a much more comprehensive framework than when they were initially published.

Modern geology has served up many of the greatest challenges to biblical creationism, and it is in this area that Roth's expertise is most evident. It is refreshing to read the interpretation of an ancient-earth skeptic. As long as readers are willing to entertain rapid formation of the geological column as a possibility, they will enjoy Roth's thoughts on swift deposition of geological strata by a recent global flood. Those committed to accumulation of the geological column over long ages will find much of what is written exasperating.

One of the great positives of *Origins* is the extensive documentation provided in endnotes following each chapter. The wealth of bibliographic references and the glossary of technical terms following the last chapter make *Origins* a valuable resource for both novices and those already familiar with creationist arguments.

The extensive endnotes do make one wonder about the intended audience of *Origins*. In fact, many readers may find themselves wondering whether the book is supposed to be a textbook or a book for professional scientists and theologians, a book for general readers, or a reference book. All those endnotes may cause some to think it is a reference work or technical publication, but the use of language and illustrations makes it accessible to a general audience. *Origins* is a very difficult book to categorize. It is probably best described as a book recording the thoughts of someone who has paid his dues as a professional scientist studying questions surrounding the origin of life and who has chosen to place his faith in the literal interpretation of Scripture.

It is unfortunate that so much emotion is expended on the positions taken by believers and unbelievers, as many will reject arguments made by Roth purely on the basis of prejudice. Anyone interested in the creation-evolution debate can profit from reading *Origins*. Others, equally committed to the creation model, may interpret the data differently, and evolutionists will have major objections to the interpretations offered, but Ariel Roth has, after thirty years at the epicenter of the creation-evolution debate, earned the right to have his perspective taken seriously.

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TIM STANDISH

Sheeley, Steven M., and Robert N. Nash, Jr. *The Bible in English Translation: An Essential Guide*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997. 116 pp. \$12.95.

Sheeley and Nash, both teachers at Shorter College in Georgia, have written this guide to help laypersons in selecting a Bible translation. The first two chapters, the first on the history of the canon and the English Bible, the second on textual criticism