

Long, V. Philips, ed. *Israel's Past in Present Research: Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography*. Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, vol. 7. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999. xx + 612 pp. Hardcover, \$37.95.

There is hardly a topic that is currently more hotly debated in OT studies than the history and historiography of ancient Israel. The present volume will not settle the debate, but it is an important contribution. The book continues V. Philips Long's scholarly contribution to OT historiography, which began with the publication of his doctoral dissertation, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence* (SBL Dissertation Series, no. 118 [Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1989]), and has subsequently included various articles and a monograph, *The Art of Biblical History* (Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, vol. 5 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994]). The series in which this book is published, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, consists primarily of anthologies limited to the English language on various subdisciplines of OT research. The aim of the series is to provide scholars with synopses of the growth and development of each of these subdisciplines.

The book is divided into six parts. Each part, except the last one, contains a brief introduction, a list of additional readings, and a sampling of recently published works. Part 1, "Israel's Past in Present Research," includes articles that cover the history of biblical historiography from the Renaissance to the present "crisis." Part 2, "The Historical Impulse among Israel's Neighbors," addresses the relevance of the practice of history writing in the Ancient Near East in terms of the light it can shed on biblical historiography. Part 3, "Israel's History Writing: Its Multiplex Character," is subdivided into three sections. The first section deals with the issue of antiquarianism, i.e., whether and to what extent biblical writers had the intention of recording historical events. This is followed by two sections dealing with two major reasons for denying antiquarianism in most biblical narratives: biblical writers wrote with theological or prophetic perspectives, and hence the alleged dichotomy between narrative art and history. Part 4, "Writing Israel's History: The Methodological Challenge," discusses general methodological issues, the relevance of the social sciences, and the impact of new literary approaches. Part 5, "The Historical Impulse in the Hebrew Canon: A Sampling," presents sample discussions on the historical impulse within the major divisions of the Hebrew canon. Part 6, "The Future of Israel's Past," is the author's personal conclusion. He compares the task of a historian to that of a jury in a court of law in evaluating both verbal and material evidence. He then shares the hope that among historians discussion concerning epistemological models will take precedence over discussion regarding methodology. He would like to see increased openness among scholars to discuss their own background beliefs, as well as the adoption of the biblical worldview as an interpretative strategy, with recognition that in the Bible "actual historical truth claims are being made" (588). He also makes three methodological suggestions: first, to redefine the canons of the historical-critical method; second, to recognize that the social sciences can deal only with backgrounds and general features, not specific events; and third, to increase exploration of how modern literary approaches to the Bible bear upon historical questions.

Since this volume is an anthology of previously published works, my comments

will focus on the book as a whole, rather than on the views of individual (excerpted) contributors. Long has attempted to include a broad selection of views. Both minimalists, such as T. L. Thompson and N. P. Lemche, and maximalists, such as W. H. Hallo and A. R. Millard, are represented. As Long himself admits, his own views, which are positive toward the historical character of the biblical texts, have clearly influenced the selections and the arrangement of this book. This is not a problem for him because he assumes that complete objectivity is an unreachable goal. He cites J. M. Miller's statement that "any history book reveals as much about its author as it does about the period of time being treated" (283). Those who disagree with Long's theistic worldview would perhaps have chosen a different arrangement of chapters and selected material differently.

Since Long's "overarching perspective" (xiii-xiv) is a philosophical one, a section dedicated to articles dealing with the interplay between philosophy and historiography in general would have been a useful addition to the book. It should also be noted that Long's views were previously presented in his 1994 monograph, indeed sometimes with more detail, and he does not propose much that is new in this present work. However, the present volume has a different intended audience and purpose. Thus, it must be evaluated in the light of Long's intended goal. He has succeeded in gathering together some of the most significant recent contributions to the current debate and in summarizing the basic issues of presuppositions and methodology. This volume is an excellent introductory survey, which can serve both as a textbook for a course on the historiography of ancient Israel, as well as a resource for scholars working in other subdisciplines of biblical studies.

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Maag, Karin, ed. *Melanchthon in Europe: His Work and Influence beyond Wittenberg*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999. 191 pp. Paper, \$17.99.

Karin Maag, the director of the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies in Grand Rapids, has authored and edited three other volumes on the Reformation. The present volume, *Melanchthon in Europe*, is part of the Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought series, edited by Richard A. Muller. The series is designed to fill some of the gaps in our knowledge of the Reformation and the era of Protestantism with special emphasis on the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The eight essays in this volume reflect the increasing interest among historians in the life and work of Philip Melanchthon. This interest was further sparked by the conferences and colloquia held during 1997 to mark the 500th anniversary of Melanchthon's birth. In her introduction to this volume, Karin Maag reminds us that recent Melanchthon scholarship has focused on his work as a humanist. He integrated his emphasis on rhetoric and dialectics, as practiced in the classical world and by Bible writers, with his theology. The editorial oversights in the following sentence are not characteristic of the volume: "In doing so, these scholars have underlined once again that the German Reformation did come to an end [*sic*] with