

expands consciousness, bridges gaps, and stimulates reflection. For the benefit of subsequent offerings by scholars of ritual, it provides a starting point, a benchmark, and a target for constructive criticism, which is the purpose of the present review. We have needed such an introductory volume for a long time. Perhaps the prospect of criticisms, such as those that I have offered, has previously prevented anyone from taking on such a daunting task. But somebody had to begin somewhere, and Klingbeil should be heartily commended for sacrificially braving the fire for the benefit of all.

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Knoppers, Gary N., and Bernard M. Levinson, eds. *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007. 352 pages. Cloth, \$59.50.

As a result of the July 2-4, 2006, International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature held in Edinburgh, a collection of some essays presented there now appears as *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson. The focus of this volume is on examining the complex issues surrounding the development of the Pentateuchal law, its historicopolitical philosophy and socioreligious impetus in light of Achaemenid and Hellenistic imperial interests. In other words, these essays attempt to explore the composition of the Pentateuch, its promulgation, transnational or international significance, re/interpretation, translation, recognition and also acceptance and application. The question which lingers in anyone's mind is, how close does *The Pentateuch as Torah* bring us to the resolution of the recurrent problems cited by scholarship on the role of the Torah from the Persian period onwards?

The editors of *The Pentateuch as Torah* presented an introductory essay that not only surveys the development of the Pentateuch into Torah, but also highlights the contribution of each essay included in this book. Besides the introductory essay there are 14 essays by different scholars. These essays are appropriately grouped into four parts which address specific issues with regards how the Jewish Torah was viewed or tolerated by different colonial powers. The essays here evince a deliberate interdisciplinary approach to addressing questions on the promulgation and publication of the Hebrew Bible Torah in diverse historical settings. The Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, Elephantine texts and other ancient Near Eastern legal texts are explored in light of the law collections of the Pentateuch. I will review the fifteen essays in the order they appear in *The Pentateuch as Torah*.

The introductory essay by editors Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson, "How, When, Where, and Why did the Pentateuch Become the Torah?" starts out by informing us on the developments which led to the compilation of the book *The Pentateuch as Torah*. Knoppers and Levinson raise distinct questions on the Pentateuch especially on its composition, promulgation, scope, provenance, transmission, authorization, interpretation, translation and application. These questions seem to be the focus on the

entire book and each following essay attempts to address some elements of what Knoppers and Levinson outlined in their introduction. The rest of their essay presents a synopsis of the four parts which compose the book. The editors briefly discuss the main ideas given by each contributor.

Part 1 of *The Pentateuch as Torah* is composed of 5 essays which deal with "Ratifying Local Law Codes in an International Age." Konrad Schmid's essay "The Persian Imperial Authorization as a Historical Problem and as a Biblical Construct: A Plea for Distinctions in the Current Debate," begins by discussing the theory of "Persian Imperial Authorization of the Torah." The concept of the authorization of the Torah in the Persian times was mostly popularized by Peter Frei who asserted that the Persian imperial authority adopted the Torah, established it and accepted it as its own. Schmid observed that Frei was just advancing a hypothesis which was already in discussion among various scholars. Further, Schmid argued that Ezra 7 is vested with the Persian imperial authority in its presentation of the Torah despite the author's expertise in the application of that law. However, he leaves the debate on the Persian authorization of the Torah open for new trend of thoughts.

David M. Carr traces the epigraphic evidence of ancient Israel's administrative texts to show that their transmission was a long process of communal education and enculturation. His essay, "The Rise of Torah," identifies three stages in the composition and rise of the Torah, which include the collection of independent narratives, proto-pentateuchal narratives in exile, and postexilic period narratives. He supports the idea that the Torah reached its final form in the Persian period. However, Carr does not show anywhere in his essay what is "really Persian" in the Pentateuch. The fact that the Persians gave permission slips to Ezra and Nehemiah respectively to revive their religion in Judah is seen as a theological domination as well as the legalizing of Judaism. For Carr, the Torah is an exilic document.

Next is Anselm C. Hagedorn's "Local Law in an Imperial Context: The Role of Torah in the (Imagined) Persian Period." Hagedorn poses his premise against Frei who believed that the Jews succumbed to Persian dictation in shaping their legal and customary legislature. In contrast, Hagedorn argued that the writers of the Torah created their own legal corpora which allowed them to function without having conflict with the Persian hegemony. Nevertheless, Hagedorn holds on to the idea that the writers of the Pentateuch were informed by their Assyrian and Babylonian sociohistorical context to document their laws in conformity with the Persian rule. As it shows, Hagedorn understands that the origin of the Pentateuch is limited to the Assyrian and Babylonian periods and he does not see anything prior to this time period. Such an understanding leaves many questions unanswered with regard to his assertions.

In "Temple and Torah: Reflections on the Legal Status of the Pentateuch Between Elephantine and Qumran," Reinhard G. Kratz makes explicit the real issue scholarship is struggling with. Kratz argues that the prominence of the Torah is not limited to the late Persian period, but that one should also explore the Hellenistic and Hasmonean contexts so as to discover the

“process leading to the codification, distribution, and acceptance of the Pentateuch as Torah” (77). He acknowledges that copies of the Torah of Moses were not found in the documents recovered at Elephantine Island although some aspects of that Torah and its customary and cultic laws are mentioned in several of these documents. However, to conclude that the absence of the Torah of Moses from the Elephantine community is evidence that the Torah did not yet “belong to the official canon of Jewish Educational literature” (94), is not quite convincing. Further, Kratz asserts that the lack of the Torah at Elephantine indicates that the Torah’s oral and literary traditions came to completion during the Persian times. Kratz’s convictions reveal that he ignored exploring objectively the complexity of the Torah’s socio-religious, historico-political and literary developments.

Gary N. Knoppers and Paul B. Harvey Jr’s essay, “The Pentateuch in Ancient Mediterranean Context: The Publication of Local Lawcodes,” concludes part 1 of *The Pentateuch as Torah*. Here Knoppers and Harvey deal with ancient written laws in the Mediterranean world from the seventh to fifth centuries B.C. Specifically, they examine the Greek and Roman legislative procedures and concluded that law codes were written for “illustrative guidance, royal propaganda, or as a kind of judicial philosophy but not as actual legislation” (121). Knoppers and Harvey surveyed different theses on how law codes were developed. They see the intensification of the Torah of Moses during the Persian times. What must be pointed out is that the Torah of Moses went through cycles of intensification and relaxation throughout the monarchical times. Perhaps the Persian times could be just one of those times when the Torah was revived and not that it ultimately reached completion as a written code.

Part 2 of this book has two essays only. Jean-Louis Ska presents “From History Writing to Library Building: The End of History and the Birth of the Book.” Ska traces the developments of oral and written traditions, rightly pointing out that in many instances they coexisted. Although Ska insists that the formation of the Torah must have taken place in Jerusalem, he is also of the opinion that the Torah is of postexilic origin. Another dimension is added by Eckart Otto who affirms that the Pentateuch was formed in the postexilic times along with the book of Jeremiah. His essay, “Scribal Scholarship in the Formation of Torah and Prophets,” is very sympathetic to Julius Wellhausen and Abraham Kuenen’s Documentary Hypothesis which posits the idea that some preexilic materials were used to compose the Hexateuch and the Pentateuch. Otto is convinced that the Pentateuch, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel are all *vaticinia ex eventu* postexilic documents and should be viewed that way, but he fails to bring out compelling evidence to substantiate this old claim.

“The Torah as a Foundational Document in Judah and Samaria,” is the focus of Part 3 of *The Pentateuch as Torah*. The first of the three essays in this section is by Christophe Nihan who writes on “The Torah Between Samaria and Judah: Shechem and Gerizim in Deuteronomy and Joshua.” Interestingly, Nihan attempts to review the old and recent opinions on the development of the Pentateuch in light of the cultic developments on Mt. Ebal and Mt.

Gerizim in Samaria, but his essay, too, is characterized by a lot of assumptions and speculations. He devotes much of his essay to textual criticism of several passages in Deuteronomy, Joshua and other related texts, and draws the conclusion that the Torah was composed in the Persian times for both the people of Judah and Samaria.

Joachim Schaper illustrates the practice of publishing legal texts in the Hebrew Bible. His essay "The 'Publication' of Legal Texts in Ancient Judah," is very insightful and it includes a survey of archaeological and textual evidence on oral and written legal codes. He raises the fact that the verb *קָאָר* in Deut 1:5; 27:8; and Hab 2:2 was an important element in the process of law enforcement. However, the two ways Schaper finds that ancient Judah published the legal texts were "through writing it down and through reading it aloud publicly" (231). Thus, the ancient people made a deliberate effort to publicize the legal codes so as to make the claims of those laws binding.

The Samaritans/Samaritans share the same roots with the Judaeans (Jews) as was observed by Reinhard Pummer, in "The Samaritans and Their Pentateuch." It is appropriate to explore the literary traditions which highlight on how the Israelites became Judah and Israel (Samaritans); what brought the breakup of this group; and what the two factions continue to share in terms of their religious and cultural heritage. Pummer examines these issues, but his focus is on the Jewish and Samaritan historico-political and socio-religious developments of the fifth-century B.C. onward which he assumes to have prompted their separation. He attempts to back his convictions with some meager archaeological finds that the separation of the Jews and Samaritans occurred in the time of John Hyrcanus (251). Such an opinion may be popular but it is definitely not in accordance with the biblical text. It is also superficial and not based on an objective analysis of all possible evidence on the historicopolitical background which led to the breakup of Jews and Samaritans.

Part 4 includes four essays on "The Translation, Interpretation, and Application of the Torah in Early Jewish Literature." In this section of *The Pentateuch as Torah*, Sebastian Grätz discusses the role of the Torah in the postexilic Jewish times. His essay, "The Second Temple and the Legal Status of the Torah: The Hermeneutics of the Torah in the Books of Ruth and Ezra," examines how the Torah was implemented in Persian times. Interesting is Grätz's observation that the law in Ezra is used to rectify wrongs in the community while in Ruth, it is used to reward one's loyalty. In Ezra the law is used to send away the foreign woman while in Ruth the same law is used to reward a foreign woman with establishing a family in Judah. So one could conclude that the Torah could be used for either theological or social convenience.

Arie van der Kooij writes on "The Septuagint of the Pentateuch and Ptolemaic Rule." He explores the history of the translation of the Pentateuch in the Persian period in Alexandria, Egypt. Van der Kooij outlines four hypotheses on the translation of the Torah into Greek. He concludes that by approving the translation of the Torah, the Ptolemaic Empire authorized

the Jewish law as part of their legal apparatus. His essay does not offer any new insights into the issues he writes about. The following essay is by Sidnie White Crawford who writes on “The Use of the Pentateuch in the Temple Scroll and the Damascus Document in the Second Century B.C.E.” Crawford looks at how the manuscripts recovered at Qumran reflect the Pentateuch. He affirms that the exegetes at Qumran wrote their own hermeneutics on the Pentateuch. For example, the *Temple Scroll* is rewritten scripture which is embedded with interpretation. On the other hand, the *Damascus Document* claims its authority from exegeting the scriptures. Crawford sees the Qumranic documents to have been meant to fill in the gaps of information which may be lacking in the Torah.

James W. Watts writes the last essay in this section and in the book *The Pentateuch as Torah*. He addresses “The Torah as the Rhetoric of Priesthood.” As one might expect with such a topic, Watts argues that the priesthood manipulated the Torah in order to advance their political claims. They used the Torah which was regarded as divine scripture, to make more politico-religious and socio-cultural stipulations and policies. Further, Watts says that what the priesthood crafted accommodated Persian and Egyptian imperial interests.

The essays in *The Torah as the Pentateuch* evince scholarly quality. They are not only interdisciplinary but quite informative. I appreciate the citing of some archaeological resources to shed light on the development of the biblical text. Despite this, these essays thrive on the assumption that the Pentateuch was written in the Persian Period. The authors of this book need to distinguish between the original composition/writing of the pentateuchal Torah and the so-called authorization in the Persian period. While the purpose of this book was not to examine the provenance of the Pentateuch, it could have been helpful to review how recent scholarship sees some of the pentateuchal traditions such as the dating and socio-religious development of the text.

As it seems, the authors of this book were not so much persuaded to explore new trends of thought as to affirm what has been circulating in scholarship. However, *The Torah as the Pentateuch* stimulates thinking, keeps the debate alive, and is a good resource for pentateuchal studies.

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Lilla, Mark. *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007. 334 pp. Hardcover, \$26.00.

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