

LeMon, Joel M., and Kent Harold Richards, eds. *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009. xix + 624 pp. Paper, \$49.95.

In this festschrift dedicated to Daniel L. Petersen, scholars undertake a thorough look at various methods to approach the Hebrew Bible, starting with the classical historical-critical approaches and progressing to more recent methods.

In a brief tribute to Petersen's scholarship and teaching, S. Dean McBride and James Luther Mays highlight the breadth of Petersen's methodology. In his interactions with many institutions and his own faith community, he encourages students, laymen, and scholars to value the process of interpretation—in essence the methodology—of the Scriptures.

Two distinctly different article types have been considered in this tribute: a presentation style, in which a particular hermeneutical method is introduced, and a taxonomical approach, in which methodological approaches are grouped into families. Twenty-three methodological articles are included that showcase a variety of hermeneutical approaches such as the traditional historical-critical approach (form, source, redaction, and textual criticism), comparative, iconographic, religiohistorical, historiographical, psychological, anthropological, sociological, narrative, poetic, feminist, gender, ecological, ethical, theological, homiletical, Latin American (liberation), midrash, and postmodern literary approaches. The second set of articles reflects on the taxonomical categories of historical-critical, social-scientific, literary, ideological, postcritical, and reception criticism.

Thomas Römer, "Redaction Criticism: 1 Kings 8 and the Deuteronomists," traces the history of redaction criticism from the early stages of the documentary hypothesis to its current development. The quest for the original text of the Hebrew Bible was the early driving force, and little attention was given to the redactors' approaches. By the mid-twentieth century, and largely due to the work of Martin Noth and Willi Marxsen, this trend changed and the redactors were now viewed as careful and educated individuals or communities of thought. Subsequently, two schools of thought developed, subdividing the redactors into two (following Frank Moore Cross) and three (the "Göttingen school") different redactors. These various redactors are labeled according to the themes they cover in their redactions: the Deuteronomistic Historian (DtrH), explaining the reasons for Israel's fall; the Prophetic Deuteronomist (DtrP), emphasizing the prophetic stories; and the Nomistic Deuteronomist (DtrN), detailing aspects of the law. Currently, scholarship is expanding this methodology from the Pentateuch and the historic books to the wisdom literature and the prophets. Next, Römer highlights three literary indicators of a redactor's insertion: literary and historical dissonance, literary coherence, and resumption (*Wiederaufnahme*).

To illustrate these processes, Römer turns to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple in 1 Kings 8. Based on different themes he finds in the corpus of the prayer, Römer observes the work of three redactors: the portrayal in vv. 14-21 of Solomon as a worthy successor to David, originating in the Josianic era; in vv. 22-40 and 46-56 of Solomon as the temple builder, originating in the Babylonian exile; and in vv. 52-53 and 57-61 of Solomon as the preacher of the Torah. Römer concludes with the premise that the redactors "did not want to hide their work," but saw themselves as literary craftsmen who interpreted, validated, or altered the material at hand. Since they were just as instrumental in crafting the Hebrew Bible as the primary author(s), they should, therefore, be treated with the same respect.

Römer's summary of redaction criticism is laudable. In a limited number of pages he succinctly highlights the major landmarks in history, interpretation, and case study. At the same time, however, brevity works against him. First, the interested reader will want to have further endnotes for blanket statements, especially those referring to the work of other scholars ("scholars agree" or "there is disagreement"). Second, his critique of the redaction skeptic John van Seters singularly rests on an attestation of redactionism in the Gilgamesh epoch. Such evidence only proves the possibility of redactors in the Hebrew Bible, rather than mandating them. A stronger argument, especially from the Hebrew Bible would be more convincing. Third, brevity works against Römer in the sample passage. Here he presents only summary statements of his findings. How these are evident in the text and preferable to other readings of this passage is not divulged. As a result, his arguments appear simplistic and even circular. Fourth, it is unclear how he fits into the dual or triple division of redactors as outlined in his historical development. He divides the passage into three redactors, but this division has no correlation to the "Göttingen school." In fact, he considers the nomistic influence (presumably DtrN) to be the first strata and located in the Josianic era. This would contradict the general assumption that DtrN is, instead, postexilic. Finally, he considers the core of the story to consist only of 1Kgs 8:12-13, at best 8:1-13. As a result, Solomon's prayer is comprised entirely of redactions, which raises the question, Why would redaction criticism be the preferred method over source criticism? At what point does a redactor become a source?

Brent A. Strawn, "Comparative Approaches: History, Theory, and the Image of God," traces the beginning of the comparative approach to Müller (1870), who was fueled by archeological discoveries. However, even early on, the discipline encountered difficulties that are still prevalent today. On one hand, the lack of understanding and appreciation between biblical scholars and comparative scholars has alienated the two camps. On the other hand, comparative scholars have easily fallen prey to a bias of overemphasizing either similarity or dissimilarity. Additionally, the field of comparative approaches has lent itself to gross misjudgments, and Strawn even shows how the approach

was influential to anti-Semitism among German theologians in the post-World War I era. Attempting to develop a solid scientific foundation, Hallo and Smith advocated a contextual approach, which included a fourfold differentiation into ethnographic, encyclopedic, morphological, and evolutionary elements. Much like Strawn, Smith warns of both an apologetic presupposition to comparative approaches and a sole presupposition of similarity. Smith asserts that there always needs to be an element of dissimilarity. Miner will go even a step further. Objectivity can only be reached if the comparison is intercultural and if the comparison includes not only two but three comparative elements. Strawn appreciates this attempt, though he argues that in most cases this triangulation approach is hardly possible.

With the historical and methodological background settled, Strawn takes a fresh look at the concept of the *imago Dei* found in the Genesis account of creation and the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Neo-Assyrian records. In comparing the Neo-Assyrian annals with Genesis, Strawn demonstrates that in both records gods bestow humans with authority over animals. Dissimilarity can be established by observing how the authority manifests itself. Neo-Assyrian kings employ the hunt as a sign of their superiority and as a metaphor for the battlefield, and conversely enemies are equated with butchered game. The language of Genesis could etymologically imply a similar view, but contextually it becomes clear that humanity's authority over the animal kingdom and the land is not based on violence but "serving" (*šm*) and 'preserving' (*bd*)" (134). The *imago Dei* is, then, in some ways similar to the Neo-Assyrian assertion, in that royal and authoritative language is employed; but Genesis produces a picture of nonviolence (even vegetarianism) contrary to the violence of the Neo-Assyrian royal imagery. Strawn, then, continues to follow Miner in reinforcing this distinction on the basis of triangulation. He examines iconography of the Assyrians and Neo-Assyrians, noting that some of the icons go beyond the written records. A royal figure is depicted as saving a helpless creature from a predator and thereby ruling on behalf of those needing assistance. This nontextual data expands the view of the ANE backdrop, though it is removed by several layers from a direct comparison.

Strawn presents a compelling and eloquent summary of comparative methodology. His foremost achievement in this chapter is the balanced approach he espouses in regard to similarity and dissimilarity. Additionally, he does not shy from exposing tensions among advocates of this methodology or from proposing a resolution. Most of the chapter is spent illustrating the interpretative steps on the basis of Neo-Assyrian royal iconography and texts. A substantial number of primary sources have been woven throughout the article, which allows the reader to personally evaluate the documents.

At the outset of her chapter, "Narrative Analysis: Meaning, Context, and Origins of Genesis," Yairah Amit argues that although narrative criticism is a relatively new discipline, sages and Jewish commentaries have practiced it for

ages. She then differentiates between a synchronic and diachronic approach of narrative criticism, which should be more accurately defined respectively as a “final form approach,” and a “historical-critical approach.” The synchronic approach is for scholars who have a “(to put it bluntly) . . . unfamiliarity with the broad scope of redaction- and source-critical research” (272). Amit then addresses how a singular story with multiple redactions can still be treated as a narrative unit. She argues that the editors all followed an editorial policy to maintain the unity and meaning of the story.

Amit examines the Judah and Tamar story of Genesis 38 as a case study. Based on explanatory phrases by the narrator, she argues that both Judah and Tamar were justified in their behavior since they sought a greater good. She proposes this interpretation as an embracing of intermarriage based on the equality concepts of the Holiness Code. As a result of her study, she concludes that the writers of the Holiness Code must have been members of the tribe of Judah, who tried to strengthen their position among the tribes over the Benjaminites during the Persian exile.

Amit’s chapter is an attempt to reevaluate Adler’s famous treatment of the passage and fit it into a “diachronic” view of the development of the text. Unfortunately, the article leaves many important questions unanswered, especially in regard to methodology:

First, she claims that only a “diachronic” approach, based on source and redaction criticism is valid. However, these approaches stand in contrast to the idea of a literary unit, since by definition redactors had distinctive themes and theologies that are intended to be clearly identified (see Römer above). Amit tries to solve this contradiction with the blanket assertion that “despite the repeated editorial interventions and the various motivations of the editors,” the text became a unit by process of an “editorial policy that gave the work the appearance of consistency” (272), which “harmonizes with its setting” (280). This leap of faith is neither explained nor further elaborated. Additionally, the question of what role narrative criticism is to play if it is only second-tiered to source and redaction criticism remains unanswered.

Second, the ideal of following source or redaction criticism is not followed up in the study of Genesis 38. For all practical purposes, Amit approaches the text with the “final form” she so ardently fights against. The closest she gets to a historical-critical approach is her disregard for the immediate context as helpful for understanding the passage. Instead, she draws from 1 Samuel, Ruth, Nehemiah, Leviticus, and Jeremiah as the contextual setting that sheds light on the dynamics of the passage. The dissimilarities, for example, in narrative style, content, and character are disregarded for the sake of her argument.

Third, methodologically Amit fails to inform and demonstrate to the reader objective considerations to the narrative approach. With the exception of her treatment of the narrator aside, the sample analysis of Genesis 38 becomes

a subjective rereading of the narrative rather than a study based on a set of literary devices and techniques (e.g., hetero- versus homodiegetic elements, diction rules, verbal threads, character perspectives, norms, and distance).

Fourth, Amit argues that the passage is based on a pro-law stance, as showcased by the authors of the Holiness Code. In her single view, she forgets to observe the general positive disposition of the Hexateuch toward sojourners, as well as the dissimilarities between Genesis 38 and the Holiness code (e.g., sexual improprieties). The dissimilarities are larger than the similarities.

Fifth, Amit's proposed reconstruction of the social agenda of two dueling tribes in the Persian exile, which rely on the Holiness Code writers to insert passages to sustain power, lacks larger support. Were the Holiness Code authors politically rather than ethically or religiously motivated? How do the authors of the Priestly Code and the tribe of Levites fare in this dispute?

Finally, Amit glosses over the historical background and, at times, employs a polemical style toward her skeptics.

In conclusion, this festschrift excels in presenting a wide range of different methodologies from the traditional to the recent. The layout of each chapter is helpful and engaging as history and method, with an illustrative example included. The readability appeals to scholars-in-the-making without (for the most part) losing depth. Even the seasoned scholar will find a pool of resources in this book. Inherently though, this presentation style focuses on the idea of constructive diversity; but, at the same time, it leaves out contradictions between the methodologies (e.g., repetition may be a sign of redactors or of narrative emphasis). Additionally, no attempt is made to struggle with the underlying philosophical presuppositions that each methodology is built upon. The presentation is rather like a potpourri, in which all methods are treated as equal partners with equal justification. While this pluralistic trend is a welcome change to the exclusive methodological approach of previous decades, it does beg further discussion of these philosophical presuppositions—the metanarrative, so to speak. While the scope of this book cannot cover all of these concerns, it is the hope of the reviewer that such a follow-up will be considered in the future. Additionally, a similar volume covering the NT would be valuable. With consideration for its limitations, this book is a valuable resource in any personal or public library, as well as a tool in the classroom.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

EIKE MUELLER

Mack, Phyllis. *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 301 pp. Hardcover, \$175.00.

Methodist historiography—like Seventh-day Adventist historiography—has long been dominated by men. In this groundbreaking work by Phyllis Mack,