

chapters on demons, God, and angels, marking them as distinct from the chapters on artifact, cosmos, and language. Overall, the book approaches a somewhat neglected field in history, Late Ancient epistemology, that should be understood by those studying the origins and development of Jewish and Christian ideas, which shaped Western culture.

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deClaissé-Walford, Nancy, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner. *The Book of Psalms*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. xxii + 1051pp. Hardcover, US\$60.00.

This New International Commentary on the Old Testament (NICOT) volume on the Psalms is the result of the combined insights and expertise of three excellent biblical scholars: Nancy deClaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner. True to the evangelical tradition of NICOT, which delicately balances the use of standard critical methodologies with humble respect and admiration for the biblical text as God's inspired Word (xv), the authors draw on historical, form-critical, canonical, and theological approaches, and pay attention to the text's literary features, theological themes, and practical implications for the life of modern readers. The book does not delve much into technical issues (such as literary structure, date, and original setting) that are usually treated extensively in some commentaries. Rather, it focuses on the linguistic features and theological message of each psalm in particular, and the whole Psalter in general.

The authors offer a comprehensive fifty-one-page introduction to orient readers to the Psalter with regard to some key issues: the title, text, translation, authorship, superscriptions, and date of the Psalms, the main approaches to the study of the Psalms (form-critical, historical, and canonical approaches), the main poetic features of the Psalms (parallelism and evocative language), the overview of themes and theology, and the outline of the Psalter. Some issues are discussed in more detail than others. For example, the authors devote seventeen pages to the canonical shape of the Psalter (five pages to form criticism and historical approaches). This is done to both shed more light on this recent approach to the Psalms (championed in the mid-twentieth century) and set the tone for the authors' method. The authors approach the Psalter canonically, meaning that they pay careful attention to the division of the Psalter into five distinct books and its "story line" (from the reign of King David through the Babylonian exile to the return to the land and rebuilding of the temple). This reviewer believes that certain matters deserve additional attention in the introduction. For example, themes and theology of the Psalms are given only two pages. The authors provide a helpful overview of leading scholars and their methods and approaches to the theology of the Psalter, but this book would have been enriched by a fresh exposition of the theology of the Psalter that would demonstrate the dynamic of the encounter and fellowship between God and his people in the Psalms. The introduction comes with a useful five-page bibliography of secondary sources.

The main body of the book consists of introductions to each of the five books of the Psalter, and translations and analyses of the psalms. The introductions provide brief overviews of the psalms in the book, psalm superscriptions, prevalent psalm genre(s), psalm collections, and reflections on the possible reasons of the editor(s) of the present Psalter in grouping certain psalms together or in a particular order (the canonical shape of the book). A new translation of each psalm is given that settles on the Masoretic text, but also takes special account of the Dead Sea Scrolls. One peculiarity of this commentary is that the authors have opted not to translate the Hebrew term *chesed* (loving-kindness, steadfast love), but simply to transliterate *hesed* and treat it as a loanword from Hebrew to English (similar to “shalom”) because there is no English term that can adequately render the full meaning of this important Hebrew word (7–8).

This book differs from other traditional commentaries in that it pays special attention to the canonical shape of the present Psalter and the role each psalm plays in it. This means that the authors approach the Psalter as a book with a unified message, and seek to discover the purposeful arrangement of the psalms within the collection and understand the message of each psalm in the context of the surrounding psalms and the entire Psalter. The authors believe that the story of the shaping of the Psalter narrates the history of ancient Israel, from the reigns of Kings David and Solomon (Books One and Two), the dark days of the divided kingdoms and their eventual destruction (Book Three), the years of Babylonian exile during which the people of Israel had to rethink their identity as the people of God (Book IV), and the days of restoration and postexilic Israel (Book V) (38). A number of clues in the Psalms point to a possible underlying narrative behind the present Psalter. Books One and Two focus on King David, whose name appears in most psalm superscriptions; the temple; and Ps 72 (“a psalm of Solomon”). Book Three seems to tell that the main pillars that represented ancient Israel’s national and religious identity (the temple, the king, and the land) have collapsed (e.g., Pss 74, 79, 89). The canonical placement of the royal psalms suggests they are arranged to promote the rule of God that is most clearly voiced in Pss 93–99. Although the human component of the covenant failed, the people could rest in assurance of the unchanging purposes of God through the Davidic King, the Messiah. Books IV and V continue in this emphasis on the renewed and complete reliance on the Lord. The language of some psalms strongly suggests a postexilic setting for the Psalter (e.g., Ps 107:3). The authors build their theological analysis of the psalms on the observations of W. Brueggemann, J. Clinton McCann, James L. Mays, Harry P. Nasuti, James A. Sanders, and others. Readers who are familiar with the canonical approach will appreciate the theological insights of this book (see 21–38).

It is certainly refreshing to read a book on the Psalms that does not give the majority of its space to the disciplines of textual, source, form, and redactional criticism, but rather focuses on the final form of the Psalms and their theological message for the communities of faith in history and today. This book’s study of the Psalms in their canonical placement is insightful. This

is one of the main strengths of this book. Yet, sometimes the authors assume the accuracy of “the story of the Psalter” (398), rather than demonstrate it clearly from the biblical text. For example, it is not always apparent from the analysis of Pss 107–150 that “Book Five of the Psalter tells the story of ancient Israel as it returned from exile in Babylon” (989). In this way, readers are challenged to further advance the study of the canonical shape of the Psalter.

The writers of the New Testament extensively quote the Psalms, and the authors of this book duly note and comment on the main instances. In the concluding comments on most psalms the authors seek to demonstrate the transforming power and beauty of the psalms in the context of the Christian message. Readers will appreciate hearing the psalms speak to the world today. Yet, some readers interested particularly in the NT interpretation of certain psalm quotes and the messianic psalms (e.g., Pss 16, 110) may wish that the authors offered more elaborate interpretation of the NT use of psalms.

The gender-inclusive language of the book is commendable, but the constant reference to the psalmist as both “he” and “she” will be distracting to some readers, especially for the psalms which are traditionally attributed to David and Asaph. Also, occasional typographical mistakes may be frustrating (for example, on p. 153 readers are directed to see n. 9 for a suffix supplied by LXX, but the information is given in n. 6). In addition, this work offers a very helpful index of authors, names and subjects, and Scripture and other ancient literature.

This minor critique of the book should by no means cast any depreciating shadow on this outstanding work on the Psalms. Readers will find the commentaries on the Psalms insightful and immensely enriching. It is no wonder that several eminent Old Testament and Psalms scholars have praised the book, including John Goldingay, W. H. Bellinger Jr., Patrick D. Miller, Erhard Gerstenberger, and J. Clinton McCann Jr. This book is a fine tool for use by laypersons, students, scholars, and pastors.

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Elliott, J. K. *A Bibliography of Greek New Testament Manuscripts*. 3rd ed. NovTSup 160. Leiden: Brill, 2015. xliii + 408 pp. Hardcover, US\$149.00.

James Keith Elliott is currently honorary professor of New Testament textual criticism at the University of Leeds. His recent publication, *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Application of Thoroughgoing Principles: Essays on Manuscripts and Textual Variation*. NovTSup 137 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), that contains thirty-two of the fifty-seven articles he published over the past forty years in several journals and books, bears witness not only to the expertise of this giant in the field, but also to his methodology. By using “thoroughgoing eclecticism” Elliott is walking in the footsteps of George Kilpatrick, C. H. Turner, and A. C. Clark.