

pastor, family professional, or church member) can benefit from its reading, enriching their biblical knowledge on marriage and related topics.

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Niesiołowski-Spanò, Łukasz. *Goliath's Legacy: Philistines and Hebrews in Biblical Times*. Philippika: Altertumswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen/Contributions to the Study of Ancient World Cultures 83. Translated by Maria Kantor. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016. 321 pp. Hardcover. USD 71.00.

As the title indicates, Niesiołowski-Spanò's book essentially comprises a historical-critical study of all biblical sources concerning the Philistines and their often volatile relations with Israel and Judah. In the introduction, the author describes his moderately critical stance as one which, on one hand, argues that the biblical historians compiled and redacted their works largely during the post-exilic period, but also recognizes that these same writers were "characterized by a conservative desire to preserve the early heritage." Although the author states that "the Old Testament still remains a valuable source of getting to know the realities of the pre-exilic epoch" (xi), his overall assessment is nevertheless overwhelmingly negative regarding the historical veracity of its contents, especially in regards to later texts, such as those in Chronicles, lacking parallel passages in Samuel or Kings. He suggests that the biblical Philistines "had very little in common with the historically existing people bearing the same name" and are "presented in a very anachronistic way" by the Old Testament texts. Thus, the author concludes that "one can speak of the biblical picture of the Philistines but its connection with reality is mostly indirect" (180).

The author's approach, in turn, creates a potentially serious methodological crux that becomes immediately apparent when addressing his main research question. For better or worse, apart from archaeological data, the Hebrew Bible basically comprises our best, and often sole, historical source for the Philistines from the late twelfth until the seventh century BCE. Thus, the author supplements the relevant biblical accounts with rather suspect anthropologically based analogies from much later and dissimilar cultural contexts rather than limiting his search for comparisons to archaic Greek, Anatolian, and Levantine sources. He also readily draws parallels from Israelite relations with the indigenous peoples of Canaan, even though these accounts originate from the same "highly dubious" biblical sources he rejects elsewhere, which raises the issue of historical-critical selectivity in his argumentation. Moreover, the author launches several ventures into peripheral subjects that, while interesting, shed only a modicum of light upon the subject at hand. His historical treatment of Israelite-Philistine relations, which arguably should comprise the bulk of the book, covers merely 80 pages. The brevity of attention and, more importantly, the lack of historical credibility given to biblical narratives regarding the divided monarchy is particularly apparent

and, in my opinion, significantly weakens the usefulness of the book. There are some surprising claims, such as the author's belief that many elements from the Samson story derive from Philistine folklore, if not historical reality, a viewpoint buttressed by identifying the tribe of Dan and the Danites with the *Danuna*, one of the Sea Peoples. This example demonstrates one of the greatest strengths of the book, which is the author's careful study of biblical place names or "toponyms" and their corresponding contextual appearance(s) in the Hebrew Bible. A number of fine contributions of interest to biblical scholars are found here, such as the very interesting observations made concerning the biblical giants, specifically their relationship with the city of Hebron and their connectivity with later biblical and post-biblical literature (168–171). While not always unique, the author's observations and interpretations make interesting, if not thought-provoking, reading.

It is also important to note that the author presents his overwhelmingly text-based study with only minimal references to historical, geographical, and archaeological data and sources. This is especially apparent throughout his discussion of the various Philistine epicenters and satellite towns. Most notably, the author fails to discuss the location of Philistine Gath, a long-debated, historical-geographical question, nor does he mention the recently emerging consensus that equates this city with Tell es-Safi (Tel Zafit), based partly on archaeological data from the site (148–151). The inclusion of one or two maps to illustrate the extent of Philistia and its main population centers would have been helpful.

In the concluding section, titled "Terminology and Imports," the author presents a study of plausible to probable "Philistine" loan words imbedded in the biblical text. While not exhaustive (see, for example M. Ben-Dov, "גת—A Geographical Term of Possible 'Sea People' Origin." *Tel-Aviv* 2 [1976]: 70–73; E. Stern, *Dor: Ruler of the Seas*, rev. ed. [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000], 85–88), this annotated catalogue contains many examples of such terms potentially of benefit to specialists and demonstrates extensive cultural interchanges between the two peoples.

The bibliography is extensive and very helpfully divided into the following classified listings: (Primary) Sources, Dictionaries, Commentaries, and Secondary Literature. Apart from the brief and eclectic selection of commentaries, which omits a number of important works, the sources are well chosen. Unavoidably, a few recent papers were not included. Inexplicably absent was the important volume edited by Ann E. Killebrew and Gunnar Lehmann, *The Philistines and Other "Sea Peoples" in Text and Archaeology*, ABS 15 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013). The production of the book is superb. Likewise, the overall editing and English rendering are reasonably well executed.

As is well known, the Philistines are a popular topic for historians of the biblical period and there is no shortage of literature, both general and technical, devoted to these famous, yet still obscure people that settled along the eastern Mediterranean coast during the twelfth century BCE. The appearance of this volume in the wake of various other treatments may raise questions of necessity. Nevertheless, *Goliath's Legacy*, despite its lacunae, is a

worthy contribution relating particularly to the Sea Peoples and offers a fresh historical-critical discussion replete with interesting observations and insights devoted to this formative period in biblical history.

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Peckham, John C. *Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura, and Theological Method*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. xiii + 295 pp. Softcover. USD 35.00.

John C. Peckham, associate professor of theology and Christian philosophy at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, has written a seminal work on canonical theology and the theological method of *Sola Scriptura*. It is a thought-provoking book and perhaps the most significant study to be written on *Sola Scriptura* and theological method in recent times.

Peckham tackles some difficult, yet fundamentally important, issues in doing theology and he does so with theological acumen and great skill. Peckham provides helpful guidance through a maze of different positions and theological approaches, old and new. In ten chapters, he covers the basic ground to lay out the parameters for an approach to canonical theology that has the potential to significantly stimulate the current theological debate.

In the first four chapters, Peckham competently addresses the crucial issue of canon versus community. What is the role of the canon and how is the canon established? Which has priority? The canon or the community? Peckham points out the crucial difference between what he calls “intrinsic canon” and “community approaches” and pinpoints significant implications that arise from the fundamentally different approaches. He unashamedly calls for the priority of the canon over community. Peckham proposes that “divinely appointed books are intrinsically canonical independent of extrinsic recognition” (5). The author identifies three criteria for books that possess some traits that assist in recognizing them as canonical: those “books must be (a) divinely commissioned as prophetic and/or apostolic, (b) consistent with past ‘canonical’ revelation, and (c) self-authenticating” (32). These criteria are difficult to sustain historically or scientifically and are ultimately based on faith. But they are congruent with the biblical account. Hence, he proceeds to list canonical indicators for this claim (22–47) and then addresses some historical questions related to the origin of the canon and extracanonical literature (48–68). Since no community is monolithic, Peckham repeatedly raises questions such as, “What qualifies a legitimate community to serve as arbiter of the canon and which community is adequate to determine the canon?” (55–60 and passim). These questions deserve to be taken seriously. In similar manner, the rule of faith and its value as interpretative authority is discussed in chapter five. With keen reasoning, Peckham points out the inadequacy of any communitarian approaches, even though they recently have become *en vogue*.