

for example, Achzib, no. 91). This might be due to a problem in the publication process and should not detract from the generally high quality of the photos. It is hoped that the drawings included in the *corpus* were based on personal handling of the seals and not on highly imaginary reconstruction.

The volume also includes some corrections and additions (especially in regard to the bibliography) of the introductory volume (779-802). One slightly confusing feature concerns the English language of some descriptions from Achzib (for example, nos. 110-162) which were published by B. Brandl. In a book that is generally written in German this change seems surprising, especially in view of the fact that a translation of the contribution should not have been too complicated (e.g., on p. 728 Keel spells *harding* instead of *Harding*, and on p. 62 *Date* should have been spelled with capital letters).

All in all, Keel's contribution (and that of his team) is enormous. The points of critique mentioned above should not detract from the general usefulness and importance that this project will provide when it is finished. Congratulations to the author seem to be in order.

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Klingbeil, Gerald A. *Comparative Study of the Ritual of Ordination as Found in Leviticus 8 and Emar 369*. Lewiston, ME: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998. xiv + 679 pp. \$139.95.

Gerald Klingbeil is a professor of biblical languages and OT at the Universidad Peruana Union in Lima, Peru. This book is based on the author's doctoral dissertation in the field of Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) Studies presented to the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, in 1995. Certain portions of this dissertation have already been published in various scholarly journals in both English and Spanish.

Klingbeil presents an interdisciplinary study with the purpose of understanding religion in the context of culture. In this respect he chooses to follow the phenomenological method in an attempt to apply the comparative method in the study of religion by carefully avoiding the extremes of parallelomania on the one hand, and parallelophobia on the other.

The study focuses first on the rite of ordination of Aaron and his sons as recorded in Lev 8. The author rightly deplores the neglect of this Pentateuchal chapter in the discussion of ancient Israel's rituals: "It is symptomatic of recent studies on the role, function, and history of the priesthood that this crucial chapter is not included (or only marginally)" (68). In contrast, Klingbeil considers Lev 8 to be vital in any discussion of Israel's priesthood. Here too, there are two extremes to be avoided, so he chooses a middle road of interpretation between universalistic and atomistic approaches. In dealing with the text of Lev 8, the author espouses the exegetical method, which he also qualifies as "philological" (97). Special attention is given to the study of the structure and of the verbal forms in the text.

The next step in the study is an in-depth look into an extrabiblical text, which deals with the subject of priestly ordination. The document Emar 369, which was

discovered in eastern Syria, contains a detailed prescription for the ritual of the ordination of the NIN.DINGIR. Klingbeil presents a comprehensive list of parallels and differences between this text and Lev 8. The book concludes with several recommendations for future studies in the rituals of the OT and the ANE. An appendix follows, which contains a transcription of Emar 369, a complete bibliographical list, and no fewer than four indexes.

Even a casual reader who considers the number of pages in this book must conclude that Klingbeil's study is rather encyclopedic in scope. The author is a meticulous scholar, whose study provides many valuable insights into the biblical as well as extrabiblical texts. No serious future study on Lev 8 can afford to ignore the data or the conclusions presented in this study.

A couple of minor constructive suggestions: While I fully agree with Klingbeil's interpretation of the expression "a pleasing aroma" (282-285), it would be good in the discussion on this particular term to consider the recurring expression in Lev 21, "the food of (their or his) God," which does lead to a conclusion that both of the above expressions should be considered as anthropomorphic metaphors. Second, one could pay more attention to the outstanding gender difference between the ordained parties in the two texts that are being compared. Whereas in Lev 8 we read about the ordination of Aaron, the high priest in Israel, and his sons the priests, Emar prescribes the details of the ordination of the NIN.DINGIR, a high priestess. Any reader who might be interested in a cross-gender comparison between two rituals of ordination is assured to have good company nowadays. Lastly, there are a good number of untranslated quotations in German throughout the book, and these are generally accurate, with the exception of "iraelitisch" (61). This valuable book is highly recommended.

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Lash, Nicholas L. A. *The Beginning and the End of 'Religion.'* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 296 pp. Paper, \$19.95.

In this collection, England's most brilliant contemporary Roman Catholic theologian reflects insightfully on the nature of religion and its place in contemporary culture. The disparate essays are united by several concerns: the socially embodied character of religion, the doctrine of God's Trinity as a safeguard against idolatry, the link between inadequate understandings of the personal and inadequate understandings of religion, and the significance of scientific inquiry for religious belief and the limits of such inquiry.

Lash begins by sketching a Trinitarian account of the nature of religion in dialogue with South Asian sources. The three chapters in which he does so were originally presented as Teape Lectures in India, and he peppers them with often humorous references to relatives who served church and state in South Asia. He reflects engagingly on all manner of topics, but he seeks throughout to criticize accounts of religion that conceive of it as a generic category. Religion is not in any simple sense one thing, he insists; not all religions are identical "deep down." Indeed, the whole category of "religion," a creation of the Enlightenment, serves