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F CHARLES FENSHAM

*Professor at the University of Stellenbosch,
South Africa*

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NO ABSTRACTS

BOOK REVIEWS

WOLFGANG RICHTER, *Grundlagen einer althebräischen Grammatik*, III, 1980, pp. 252. Eos Verlag St. Ottilien, DM 32.

For Vol. I-II cf. our discussion in *JNSL* 7 (1979), 96. This is a very important contribution to our knowledge of Biblical Hebrew. In this third volume the author describes the Hebrew sentence. It is F. I. Andersen who has recently drawn our attention to the importance of the sentence in Hebrew (cf. F. I. Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch*, 1970 and *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, 1974). While taking these studies in full consideration the author offers us some stimulating and fresh views on this neglected subject. Working with modern tools of linguistics he succeeds in bringing clarity and precision in the description of the Hebrew a verbal and verbal sentences. The importance of the structure, the word-order in sentences is stressed. The different types of sentences are carefully described. The descriptive approach of the author is to be welcomed and nowhere is an argument built on uncertainties or on thin air. Although one can put a questionmark after some of his descriptions, this volume of Richter's grammar is a major, even a brilliant, contribution to our knowledge of the Hebrew sentence. It is to be recommended strongly for further research on the sentence and we are looking forward to the next volume on Biblical Hebrew.

F.C.F.

DAVID NOEL FREEDMAN, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry*. 1980, pp. 376 Eisenbrauns, US dollars 15.

This is a collection of 18 articles of the author published in various periodicals and *Festschriften*. David Noel Freedman must today be regarded as one of the foremost scholars in the field of early Hebrew poetry. He has studied Hebrew poetry for more than 30 years and as a student of Albright has made ample use of Northwest Semitic poetry, especially Ugaritic. The whole new approach which started with Albright and his students, has brought the interpretation of Hebrew poetry out of the impasse in which it got stuck after the studies of Ley, Sievers, Gray etc. Although indebted to Albright as it is visible on the pages of this book, the author has also developed his own approach which is most stimulating. One of the cornerstones of Freedman's study is the syllable count. And it is amazing how consistent this count remains. But sometimes one has the uneasy feeling that the author has too much confidence in the syllables written down by the Massorettes, although he does not rely entirely on them. Another feature is the dating of the ancient Hebrew poetry which is built upon linguistic evidence, even upon divine names and titles. The whole book is full of new and fresh ideas of which some must still further be studied. I want to draw the attention to his intriguing view that the exodus lies at the background of Ps. 23. (pp. 275 ff.) As one could expect of a book full of new suggestions, difference of opinion on some of the issues discussed, would prevail.

One is amazed that a book of 376 pages, nicely printed and bound, could still be offered in times of inflation at such a low price.

All in all this collection of articles by the author is a major contribution to a better understanding of early Hebrew poetry and can be strongly recommended.

F.C.F.

HAGIA WITZENRATH, *Süss ist das Licht . . .* (Koh. 11:7-12:7), 1979, pp. 60. Eos Verlag St. Ottilien, DM.

This is a *literaturwissenschaftliche Untersuchung* of Koh. 11:7-12:7, that beautiful poem in Kohelet. Dr. Witzernath tackles the literary problems in an exemplary way. She starts with *Der Text und seine Gliederung*, proceeds to *Beschreibung der sprachlichen Struktur, Aufbau* (which is interesting indeed), *Semantische Felder, Themen und Bilder, Rede, Leitwörter, geprägte Sprache, Bilder* and concludes with *Literarisches Kunstwerk*. Of special interest is that she works from the text, from what is written in Kohelet. In her study of the semantic field not much is made of comparative material. It should have been most interesting to see in what relationship the semantic field of a given term stands with postexilic Hebrew. A diachronic

comparison with the language and literary devices of Jesus Sira could also be of importance. The method of the author is such that she cannot make a decision whether this poem is allegorical or not. This shows the limits of her method. But her study is a highly instructive piece of research, done with the utmost care. It can be warmly recommended for further research.

F.C.F.

M. O'CONNOR, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 1980, pp. 629. Eisenbrauns. US dollars 15.

Hebrew poetry has been studied from various angles in the past decade, cf. e.g. the studies of D. A. Robertson, D. K. Stuart, T. Collins, S. A. Geller, D. N. Freedman and F. M. Cross. It is interesting that these studies came from the United States of America and were mainly inspired by Freedman and Cross. One of the exceptions is the published dissertation of Pieter van der Lugt of Kampen in the Netherlands. Important fresh views are produced on Hebrew verse and metrics, but the puzzle of Hebrew metrics still exists. M. O'Connor has tackled the problem of Hebrew poetry from a broad base. By studying the grammatical factor and literary devices he tries to solve the problems of Hebrew verse. An amazing amount of work is done by the author to penetrate the mysteries of Hebrew metre. All the more important and relevant approaches of the past is critically discussed and weighed against the advancement made in recent linguistics and literary criticism. The author correctly believes that Hebrew poetry forms part of the broad Canaanite tradition of poetry which runs from Ugaritic to the Qumrân-psalms. His view that the position taken by Ley and Sievers on a rigid metrical system of accentuation, is no longer tenable, is to be endorsed. He is also not quite satisfied with the syllable count of Freedman, although Freedman does not regard it as metrical, but only pointing to a kind of system. The author shows that in some other poetic traditions phonology does not play any rôle, but syntax. It is his contention that in Canaanite verse (in which Hebrew is included) some series of syntactic requirements, i.e. a system of syntactic constraints are present. This means that one of the poetic features of Hebrew is to be sought in its syntax. And this is one of author's important observations, never considered in the past.

This book is so massive and so full of fresh suggestions that it will take us too far afield to discuss all his different insights here. It is an important book which should be studied by all who are interested in Hebrew poetry. It can be heartily recommended for further research. As with the book of Freedman discussed in this issue the price of this book is amazingly low.

F.C.F.

FRIEDRICH VINZENZ REITERER, "*Urtext*" und *Übersetzungen. Sprachstudie über Sir 44, 16-45, 26 als Beitrag zur Sira-forschung*, 1980, pp. 272. Eos Verlag St. Ottilien. DM 32.

In this interesting study the author studies the text of a part of Jesus Sira in light of the Hebrew in comparison to the LXX, the Latin and Syriac translations. The method followed is the descriptive approach built on the linguistic method of Wolfgang Richter. Every rendering of a given language is carefully weighed against other renderings. One of the main problems with such a comparative study is the difference between the Hebrew textual traditions, e.g. between traditions A and B. It is very difficult to find a reliable base to build on. (Cf. the remark on p. 15 footnote 1). The aim of his study is to discover such a base and to state frankly all the problems concerning such a relative base. One of the many problems is that the translations have in themselves through many years of transmittance certain differences, especially the Latin version has many variant readings. By using Ziegler for the LXX and the concordance of Winter for a reconstruction of the Syriac text the author has taken an important step forward. Another important feature is recognized by the author, viz. that especially with the word order the translator(s) has used his own feeling for the style of the language in which it is rendered.

These remarks show how thoroughly the author has grasped problems concerning such a comparison. One would hope that the author in another study would trace the different traditions from their origin to the time of Jesus Sira and their continuity into the time of

Rabbinic literature to make certain other conclusions on the textual tradition of this important writing. We can recommend this careful study and the method applied, for further study.

F.C.F.

J. B. VAN ZIJL, *A Concordance to the Targum of Isaiah*, 1979, pp. vii + 207. SBL Aramaic Studies 3, Missoula, MT: Scholars Press. U. S. dollars 9.

The author has worked for many years on this concordance. For his doctor's degree at the University of Stellenbosch he has studied the eschatological traits in the Targum of Isaiah. He got interested in this Targum and started to compare British Museum Or. Ms. 2211 which was used for Sperber's edition, with Sperber's edition and discovered various mistakes made by Sperber. (cf. e.g. *ASTI* 4 (1965), 189-191 and *ASTI* 7 (1968-69), 132-134). Van Zijl in the meantime started on the long and arduous task to prepare this useful concordance. It is done with the utmost care. Its usefulness is enhanced by placing after the Aramaic form the Hebrew original.

We want to recommend this concordance heartily to all who are interested in Targumic studies.

F.C.F.