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NO ABSTRACTS

REVIEWS

W.D. Davies, *The territorial dimension of Judaism. With a symposium and further reflections*. 1991. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. (Glossary, Bibliography, a topical and a reference index).

Updated here and there - especially in the bibliography - this reprint of Davies' original University of California Press publication of 1982 investigates the role of "the Land" in Jewish thought and theology. Borrowing a phrase from Arthur Marmorstein (p. 137), Davies holds that, in a nutshell, Judaism rests on the triad "a people, a land and their God" and shows how various themes of Jewish theology relate to the land element of the triad. He traces the theme of "the Land" in the Tenak, Qumran, rabbinic, apocryphal and pseudepigraphic writings as well as in medieval and modern Jewish literature.

I found Davies' book a very readable introduction to Jewish thought, especially since the book includes criticism of his investigation by renowned scholars, also important Jewish scholars, as well as his response to their observations. This allows the reader to form a balanced view. His explanation of the various ways in which the theme of "the Land" has, since biblical times, been over- and under-emphasised, the role it plays in various sections of Judaism in Erets Israel and the Diaspora, of the difference between "exile" and "diaspora" and the varied views within Judaism on "exile" and "diaspora", the ongoing reinterpretation of the theme of "the Land" in Judaist thought and literature, and many other issues are treated in such a way that even uninformed readers will easily follow his line of argument.

I find the book a most useful contribution, not only with a view to information, but also in respect of the present Jewish-Palestinian issue as well as with regard to the Jewish-Christian dialogue. A benefit which Davies could not have envisaged also springs from this work, namely the insight it provides into the "land issue" and the question of "power sharing" in present-day South Africa. The parallel between the theme of his book and the religiously motivated attachment of a large portion of the Afrikaans speaking community in South Africa to "the South African soil" is too obvious to be missed. These people have always used the Old Testament as their pattern and standard for the interpretation of their own history. The theme of "a people, their country and their God" runs through much of our Afrikaans history and is presently creating obstacles in the way of a peaceful settlement of our problems. Anybody wishing to understand right wing politics in South Africa (especially sentiments in the circles demanding a separate "homeland") should read Davies' book. The theme of "Jabneh or Massada" is as relevant to the South African situation as it is to Judaism.

In my judgement Krister Stendahl's reaction to Davies's remark about the use of sociology in theological explanation misses the mark. On page 94 Davies reacts against the modern tendency to reduce religious convictions to socio-economic "factors". Stendahl (om p. 112) takes this remark to be typical of a theologian being afraid of psychology, sociology, and anthropology who thinks his exegesis can "unearth a pure 'theology'" from historical documents. This criticism is unfair. What Davies argues is that religious convictions represent a domain *sui generis* that can, of course, be informed and deformed by socio-economic factors, but that can also shape socio-economic realities - a pertinent

example being post-revolutionary Iran or South Africa since 1948. Theologians operating with sociological and anthropological theory as point of departure and then explaining religious convictions as mere "products" of the socio-economic environment would perhaps be well advised to re-read Eliade's 1969 publication *The quest. History and meaning in religion* (Chicago: University Press) and rethink the function of religious convictions in patterns of social behaviour.

I find it a pity that Davies could, except for a lengthy footnote on p. 93, not find the time to review his book in the light of recent theories on the "occupation" of Canaan by the Israelites. This would perhaps have altered his view on Israel's "bad conscience about the act of expropriation" (p. 11-14) which, according to him, led to the confession that the land actually belonged to Yahweh. There had been more than one historical reality behind, and consequently more than one tradition, about how Israel came in possession of the land which had been reworked (for liturgical purposes) from the perspective of violent occupation. I would also have liked to see Davies' reaction to Weinfeld's theory on the issue of the "holiness" of the land, developed in his *Deuteronomy and the deuteronomistic school*. Davies' presentation of the "holy land" (pp. 13-14) is perfectly correct, but, according to Weinfeld, this conception had, after the loss of the land, been replaced by the notion of the "holy people". The loss of the land thus changed Israel's selfconception as well as her view of God, a change which could perhaps have led to "Jeremiah's" and "Ezekiel's" more positive attitude towards the exile to which Davies draws attention. [Was it Jeremiah and Ezekiel or their editors who shared this attitude? - cf, for instance R M Patterson *JOT* 28 (1984) 37-46; C R Seitz, *VT* 35 (1985) 78-97; L Stulman, *Hebrew Studies* 25 (1984) 18-23].

It was fortunate that Davies devoted a great deal of his response to the symposium to the Holocaust (pp. 119ff.). This tragic event definitely changed many Judaists' views on "powerlessness" and decidedly influenced the history of the Middle East. In this regard M. H. Ellis's 1987 publication *Towards a Jewish theology of liberation* (see my review in *Missionalia* 16/1 (1988), 45) develops a highly critical Jewish response to the state of Israel in the light of the Holocaust, a view which certainly merits incorporation, should this book be revised in future.

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E. von Nordheim, *Die Selbstbehauptung Israels in der Welt des Alten Orients*. 1992. Fribourg: Universitätsverlag/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 115). Pp. 214, Register der Bibelstellen.

The main theme of the work concerns the history of Israelite religion against the backdrop of the ancient Near East with a view to demonstrating the peculiarity of the Israelite belief system.

The introductory section reviews 20th century history of religions analyses of Israelite religion and the present scholarly discussion on the issue of the "identity" of Israel. Adhering to the more "conservative" view of Israel as an originally semi-nomadic group that occupied Canaan, Von Nordheim rejects the view of Israel as "just another" Canaanite

ethnic or social group: "Der Glaube Israels ist sicherlich kein Spross Kanaans" (p. 9).

The ensuing sections argue the validity of this conviction. Section B treats three patriarchal narratives (Gn 15:7-21; 22:1-19; 28:10-22) and concludes that they had originally all been Canaanite sanctuary legends or aetiologies that, after having been "Israelitised" and "Yahwehised", were integrated into the Yahwistic belief system. Section C investigates the question why Israel had to leave Egypt and finds the reason not so much in their oppression, but in the Egyptian attitude towards foreigners resisting absorption into Egyptian culture and religion. Since Israel - even after an administrative effort to force them into acceptance of Egyptian culture - would (and could) not compromise their religion, they simply had to flee the country. Section D focuses on the prohibition against temple building in the Nathan oracle (2 Sm 7) and argues that this was a blanket negation of the ancient Near Eastern royal ideology, which always implied a royal or state sanctuary, while the accompanying promise of an "everlasting dynasty" represented a compromise with that ideology. This compromise soon led to the total acceptance of the royal ideology in some circles, while other circles, retaining something of the genuinely Israelite religion, kept resisting the idea. Biblical authors and editors did their best to conceal the failure of the initial compromise by trying to justify the existence and right of the Davidic dynasty and the Solomon temple. Section E treats Elijah's resignation as a prophet of Yahweh and Yahweh's consequent theophany at Horeb, whereby he demonstrated his superiority over the Baal religion. The editorial history of this story reveals the process through which Israel took over, adapted and integrated foreign religious concepts into their own belief system. Section F compares Psalm 104 with the Great Hymn of Echnaton and other ancient Near Eastern creation hymns and concludes that Egyptian influence can only be detected in vss. 20-30, while vss. 1-19, 32 show signs of Sumero-Akkadian influence. However, the psalm as a whole had been cast into a typically Israelite imperative hymnic style, so that all the "foreign" elements had been thoroughly reinterpreted in terms of Israelite faith. Section G summarises the results of the investigation. On the one hand Israelite literature clearly shows continuity with ancient Israelite religious convictions. On the other hand there are equally clear signs of a constant process of modernising and adaptation in an effort to remain relevant in new circumstances. Section H takes a look "ahead": the inclination towards retaining continuity carried in itself the possibility of stagnation and of becoming irrelevant in the face of new challenges, while the efforts to remain relevant constituted a constant threat to their religious identity - a predicament in which present-day Judaists still find themselves.

On the whole Von Nordheim's book makes a valuable contribution to the history of Israelite religion by correctly stressing the importance of appreciating the identity of this faith. Of special interest are his discussions on the flight from Egypt, the prohibition against temple building and Psalm 104. These sections certainly contribute to an understanding of the "genius" of Israelite religion. Of importance is also the fact that he does not (in typically positivist fashion) merely try to discover "features" typical of Israelite religion as had been the case in the history of religions approach at the beginning of the 20th century, but goes on to uncover those attributes of Israelite religion that made up its identity. Especially in the current debate over Israel's Canaanite origins the question of identity becomes even more crucial. Equally important is his observation that Israel's religious answers to new social and political challenges did not leave their view of God unaltered. Even though (in historical critical terms) his approach is fairly conservative, he does not

subscribe to the old view that Israelite faith had some unalterable "hard core", but fully accepts W.H. Schmidt's conviction, expressed early in his *Alttestamentlicher Glaube in seiner Geschichte*: "Alles, was in der Geschichte erscheint, ist selbst Geschichte", which is something worth remembering when dealing with any faith system. I also have special appreciation for the fact that he does not reduce religious belief systems to important, though, from the point of view of religion, secondary (psychological, sociological or anthropological) factors, and tries to understand the relevant faith on its own plane of reference.

The fact that this work consists largely of previously published material (four out of six sections constituting the "body" of the book) puts some strain on the thematic coherence of the whole. For instance, Section E had to be forced somewhat to fit the scheme of the book. One also gets the impression that Section B's historical critical analysis of the patriarchal material violated their integrity as stories - especially in the case of Genesis 22. An ordinary folkloristic analysis of these tales explains most of the "discrepancies" Von Nordheim detects in them. After his analysis the reconstructed "original" Canaanite story is a mere, very vague, structure. In his own words: "Im Grunde handelt die Erzählung von einem Vater und seinen Sohn. Die beiden sind nicht einmal als typische Gestalten dargestellt" (p. 57). There is nothing "Canaanite" in this "origin" that could be "Israelitised". A much more profitable avenue would have been to explore Wellhausen's observation that the 'erets hammoriyâ (= Jerusalem) referred to in this narrative had originally been 'erets hamorîm (= Shechem), an alteration concealing an ancient dispute between Judaeans Yahwists and Samaritans over the correct location of the sanctuary. Had Von Nordheim also consulted Samaritan documents, they could have provided valuable insight, not only into Genesis 22, but also into (or at least an alternative view on) the reason for the prohibition against the building of a temple as well as into the Elijah cycle. The Israelite documents not only bear witness to the "genius" of Israelite religion as such, but also to the highly ideologised picture of that religion we encounter in the Massoretic text. This text is the product of a very small upper class minority, who operated on the level of a national religion, while the national religion had probably been something quite different from the local and personal religion of the ordinary people. What makes this face of Yahwism more correct, true or acceptable than the religion of the ordinary Israelites? Does the Yahwism of the Massoretic text really provide us with the only legitimate insight into the identity of Yahwism? The tendency in his work to treat Israelite religion as a fairly homogeneous entity and the fact that he only consulted the Massoretic text in his reconstruction of Israelite religion, prohibited Von Nordheim from discovering this ideological dimension in the Massoretic text, so that his conclusions on the "identity" of Israelite religion might therefore just be somewhat one-sided.

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S. L. McKenzie, *The trouble with Kings. The composition of the book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History*. 1991. Leiden: Brill (Supplementum Vetus Testamentum Vol. XLII). pp. 183. Indices of authors and biblical references.

After a survey of the present state of confusion regarding the editorial history of the Deuteronomistic History (DH), McKenzie investigates the role of the Dtr author/ editor in the compilation of DH. He concludes that it is unnecessary to posit numerous "sources" behind and later "redactions" of DH - as is customary at present - and that a slightly adapted version of Martin Noth's theory of a single author-editor for DH remains the most acceptable solution to the question on the origin of this work. DH is the work of one author-editor (circle) to whose history various unrelated glossators (not editors) added shorter or longer sections.

McKenzie directs special attention to the refutation of the theories of an older continuous history and/or a "prophetic source/redaction" underlying DH. He argues that Dtr sometimes did have access to single, previously unconnected prophetic legends and other stories, but that he fabricated his own version of these stories before including them in his work. Because of his thorough reworking of such "borrowed" material, it is now impossible to retrieve their "original versions" from DH. More frequently, however, he simply created prophetic announcements to fit the schematic framework of his history. Quite a number of prophetic stories (e.g. the Elijah and Elisha cycles) were later added to the already existing DH. A prime example of the way in which DH originated is 1 Kgs 18-20 (relating the Assyrian war in Hezekiah's time). The narrative demonstrates Dtr's concern with the theme of "trust paying off". In constructing this story Dtr used an existing tradition about the time of Hezekiah (i.e. A narrative), while adding a retouched B1 narrative and composing the B2 narrative to explain Yahweh's faithfulness to Jerusalem. (The narrative of the Babylonian envoys is a clear *vaticinium ex eventu* added to DH).

By basing quite a number of his conclusions on arguments developed by other scholars McKenzie avoids inventing the wheel afresh and succeeds in integrating an enormous amount of previously unconnected information into a single theoretical framework. To my mind his most original contribution lies in the inclusion in his own research of various ancient - especially Greek and Latin - versions of DH. Many a "discovery" of yet another "source" behind or "redaction" of DH could have been avoided, had scholars not focussed exclusively on MT and followed this much more sound procedure. He once more showed that the borders between textual and redaction criticism are very fluid and that it is impossible to do redaction historical research without consulting at least the various Greek versions. In this way he could successfully solve the confusion around Jeroboam's role at Shechem in 1 Kgs 11-12 by pointing out an ancient haplography that resulted in the confusion in MT, while LXXB retained the more original account.

McKenzie's dating of DH before the exile also makes more sense than a date in or after the exile. Apart from the arguments presented by him, there is a fairly simple, yet important, reason why such a work fits into pre-exilic times. All over the ancient Near East historical documents reviewing the history of kings were the product of "golden ages", not of times of national depression. The exile gave birth to soul searching literature such as Lamentations, but one can hardly imagine a person or people in such a state of mind creating a historical work like DH. Given the theme and ideology of DH the hopeful time of Josiah just makes better sense as a time of literary creativity than does the exile.

In my opinion McKenzie has vindicated Noth's theory of a single author-editor for DH, so that it will probably be an unrewarding exercise to search for continuous "sources" behind and certainly futile to theorise about coherent "redactions" of DH.

It is impossible to evaluate his detailed arguments in a short review like this. But in spite of what has been said earlier about the useful incorporation of other research results in this work, incorporating conclusions fitting one's own theory implies the danger of repeating the mistakes of others in one's own research. McKenzie himself (p. 85) refers to scholars uncritically repeating Fohrer's (mistaken) theory of a Deuteronomistic redaction of the Elijah cycle. One sometimes gets the uneasy feeling that, although rarely, the same might have happened in McKenzie's own study (cf, for instance, pp. 75-79, 103-107, where he relies to a large extent on conclusions reached in other studies). This certainly applies to p. 103 note 4, which simply reads, "I am excluding the Isaiah 36-39 parallel from my present discussion since there is a general consensus that the Kings version is prior." For McKenzie the Kings version provides a telling example of Dtr's compositional techniques (p. 108). Yet, unlike Dtr's manner of thoroughly rewriting "borrowed" material in his own style (as McKenzie argues convincingly), he simply "retouched" the B1 narrative. Why? One could also ask why DH is completely silent about all the so-called "writing prophets" except in the case of Isaiah, a portion of which also appears in DH. If Dtr really rewrote his "source material", should one not perhaps (in the case of Isaiah) think of a later incorporation and "retouching" of prophetic material in the style of DH? Comparison of MT with the LXX sometimes seems to indicate that "Dtr-like" additions were still being made to MT long after the two traditions separated, i.e. well into post-exilic times. Should one not look at 1 Kings 18:13-19:37 // Isaiah 36-39 (cf. also 1 Kings 24:18-25:21 // Jeremiah 52 not referred to by McKenzie) as well as to the so-called Dtr redaction of prophetic books before answering these questions? Is it really a foregone conclusion that the Kings text is chronologically prior to the Isaiah and Jeremiah texts, or does the scholarly consensus lead us astray?

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