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**NO ABSTRACTS**

## REVIEWS

L L Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*. Volume 1. *The Persian and Greek Periods*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1991. pp. 311. (Glossary, Bibliography, a topical and a reference index) (ISBN 0-8066-2620-6)

The title of this book is expressive and self-explanatory. Grabbe, senior lecturer in Old Testament and Early Judaism at the University of Hull, deals with the currently extremely vibrant research field of intertestamental/early Judaic studies in a systematic and instructive manner. He properly chose to address this rather comprehensive subject in two volumes. In the first, the one under review, the Persian and Greek periods are dealt with. The later Roman era is explored in a second volume.

Grabbe's stated intention is twofold. Firstly, the books could be used as handbooks for students interested in the history and religion of the Judaeen state during the second temple period (539 B C E - 70 C E ). Secondly, he intends them as reference works "for scholars, especially those who work in the period but are specialists in only one aspect of it or those who do research in a neighbouring discipline" (p. xxv). This is an extremely comprehensive aim, and certainly not easily within reach.

Grabbe fortunately assists the reader by the systematic format he has adopted for each chapter. At the outset he provides a useful though not exhaustive bibliographical guide. After that he lists the primary sources followed by a discussion of historical studies and issues. Each chapter ends with a synthesis consisting of useful summaries as well as the author's own interpretations and reconstructions. To add to the logical format each chapter contains extensive cross-references organized in numerical outline according to the decimal system.

One could define the structure, the form of the book as user-friendly. It contains no notes and the system of reference (Harvard) makes for easy reading and cross-reference. Compared to other major secondary reference studies it is simply easier to use. Compare, for example the comprehensive work on Hellenism by Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, which contains extensive footnotes and even the English version, which has an additional volume reserved for the notes.

In line with his stated aim of concentrating on Judah in the context of the ancient Near East, Grabbe commences with an introduction discussing the historical sources relevant to the periods under discussion. Interestingly enough the first source he examines is Josephus, immediately thereafter moving on to Rabbinic literature. The introductory chapter is completed with a brief socio-economic overview in which first of all the

broader situation in the ancient Near East and then that in Judah are dealt with.

I am not convinced that this is indeed the most appropriate place to start the discussion of the early Judaic era. In the second chapter, where the Persian period is discussed, Grabbe correctly takes the sources of this period, Ezra, Nehemiah, Trito-Isaiah, the Aramaic writings, etc. as point of departure. From a methodological point of view it is certainly correct to begin with the sources (lack of sources?). This certainly is appropriate in terms of the second aim Grabbe set himself: the book as a reference work for advanced scholars. However, to satisfy the needs of the student a somewhat different approach is needed, I would have thought, commencing with a historical outline.

The lack of a systematic historical orientation is actually one of the shortcomings in the book, although the diverse aims and format of the books should be kept in mind. One can naturally only include so much in a book! This does not mean that Grabbe did not address this issue. He actually discusses the history of the Persian period as part of a comprehensive paragraph on major historical issues (pp. 73-119). This applies to the other epochs such as the Seleucid and the Ptolemaic eras too. However, taking the needs of the student into account, a separate discussion of the broader historical lines of the periods under discussion would have been more suitable, I would have thought. The most fitting place to my mind for such an orientation would be in an introduction to the whole book. This would in any case do away with my criticism of the introduction expressed above. It would also assist the newcomer to the field in understanding the extensive and nuanced discussions of issues and problems.

A definite strong point of the book is its balanced treatment of relevant topics and viewpoints. Grabbe deals with the views held by Bickerman, Tcherikover, Goldstein and Bringman objectively. This characteristic can perhaps best be demonstrated by the extent of the Hellenization of the Jews, which can sometimes be a rather emotional issue. Hengel has without a doubt been the main commentator on viewpoints regarding the extent to which Judaism was Hellenized. It is especially his statements that from "about the middle of the third century B.C. *all Judaism* must really be designated 'Hellenistic Judaism' in the strict sense", and that one cannot separate Palestinian Judaism from Hellenistic Hellenism (Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*. 1974:1.103-106) that have led to reaction.

Grabbe correctly approaches Hengel's book as a comprehensive work in which Judaism is not studied *ad hoc*, but as part and parcel of the Hellenistic setting of the day. It is certainly a formidable task to criticise Hengel because his arguments are nuanced and grounded in the primary sources. He has nevertheless been subjected to critique from time to time. Feldman has presented the most extensive criticism of Hengel's work. Grabbe treats this critique in a balanced and systematic manner. As Grabbe demonstrates Feldman is evidently oversensitive about the real

possibilities that Greek culture actually influenced Jews, presupposing that Hellenization means "apostasy and intermarriage" (Grabbe p. 151). The number of Greek words and ideas in the later rabbinic literature militates against this view. However, once this has been said it should be remembered that there were actually different views on this issue, which differed in varying historical contexts. The diversity in Judaism during the period under discussion should not be underplayed.<sup>1</sup>

In this regard Grabbe rightly expresses criticism of Hengel's position. Regarding his last point (p. 153), on the selection of examples, I would like to add another. The writings of Hengel tend to systematize the available information. This is the logical result of the all-inclusive nature of the approach followed by him, which is to a great extent plausible and understandable. He was one of the first scholars who succeeded in actually synthesising the whole field. Consequently he is apt to accept viewpoints and build on them. In the field of Septuagint studies there is one appropriate example. It has been the consensus since the writings of Gerleman that the Septuagint, and more specifically the books of Proverbs and Job, are the products of their Hellenistic historical milieus. Decisive for these issues is the dating of the Greek Proverbs as well as the actual location of the writings. Gerleman dates LXX Proverbs approximately during the early second century B C E (170 B C E). At the same time he places it in Alexandria which by that time was Hellenised quite extensively. As opposed to this, I would argue (cf. my contribution to this volume) that this writing should rather be placed in Palestine (Jerusalem) and that a somewhat earlier dating is to be preferred (cf. my article in *ETL*). On account of certain significant textual differences between the Masoretic version and the Septuagint of Proverbs, I find evidence, not of Hellenistic, i.e. Stoic, deposits in the text as argued by Gerleman, but on the contrary of Jewish religious perspectives. What on the surface seems to be typical of Greek culture, is in my opinion rather evidence of what I would call a "conservative" Jewish position. The translator(s) responsible for the Septuagint Proverbs were extremely cautious of the negative influence Greek culture could have in Palestine and wanted to make certain that their readers were well aware of this.<sup>2</sup>

If my interpretation is indeed tenable it must have implications for our views on the extent of the Hellenization that took place in certain historical settings. I think one should be extremely careful of oversimplifying the real situation, which is complicated partly because of the notorious lack of available sources. The position formulated above has been reached by me through concentrating on the book of Proverbs (LXX) over a number of

1 G G Porton, 1986. Diversity in Postbiblical Judaism, in Kraft, R A and Nickelsburg, G W E (eds.) *Early Judaism and its Modern Interpreters*. Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 57-80.

2 Cf. L H Schiffman, The Sadducean Origins of the Dead Sea Scroll Sect, in Shanks, H (ed.), *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls*. London: SPCK, 1992:47 who refers to "Extreme Hellenism" in this regard.

years. In my opinion these results underscore the absolute necessity of primary research, of reading the sources. In this regard the books by Grabbe will undoubtedly be of immense help. They contain the most recent views on burning issues.

The books by Grabbe have indeed filled a lacuna in the availability of scholarly works on the intertestamental/early Judaic period. My experience of the book is a positive one for it is a handy reference tool for primary research, with a large number of creative viewpoints that forces one back to the primary sources. I have actually prescribed it to my students (graduate and postgraduate) who find it helpful as it contains a concise but handy orientation into basic problems and the relevant literature.

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P B Dirksen & A van der Kooij (eds.), *Abraham Kuenen (1828-1891) - His Major Contributions to the Study of the Old Testament. A Collection of Old Testament Studies Published on the Occasion of the Centenary of Abraham Kuenen's Death (10 December 1991)*. Leiden - New York - Köln: EJ Brill. 1993. pp. 147 (ISBN 90-04-09732-5)

This memorial volume marks the centenary of Abraham Kuenen's death. It contains four papers (Emerton, Houtman, Rogerson and Smend) read at the symposium in Leiden on 10 December 1991 to commemorate the unique contribution to Old Testament studies by Kuenen. Five other articles were included to add further lustre to the volume.

Abraham Kuenen was a remarkable scholar who really broke new ground in his life. Martin Mulder, one of his later successors as professor at Leiden, introduces Abraham Kuenen the academic in a lively and informative manner. He paints the deceased's scholarly background, indicating the main influences that formed him and providing interesting and at the same time relevant information. Of special importance is Kuenen's fundamental language background which, in addition to Hebrew, includes Arabic, Aramaic, Syriac and even Sanskrit. This stress on linguistic expertise is a prominent tradition that is still active in Leiden even to this day.

Kuenen was influenced by the founder of the "Modernist Theology" in the Netherlands, J H Scholten. Important from a South African perspective is the direct influence the South African Anglican bishop, J W Colenso, exerted on him, especially as far as his dating of the Priestly source of the Pentateuch is concerned. This is a theme which Emerton and Rogerson also touch on in their respective contributions.

It is significant that this Dutch scholar was profoundly influenced by a



different tradition in South Africa than his own.<sup>3</sup> The Netherlands had the greatest impact on South African theology during the previous and present centuries. I have just completed a contribution for the Sebastian Brock *Festschrift* in which I indicated that the general textual approach characteristic of the Dutch tradition actually directed Semitic and Old Testament studies in this country.<sup>4</sup> The fact that there was no direct feedback to the Netherlands initially certainly had to do with the peculiar nature of the theological tradition which developed in South Africa in which Calvinism became a dominant force.

Emerton also discusses those aspects of Kuenen's contribution that have remained timeless. He correctly places this research in the context of late nineteenth-century scholarship. It is remarkable how many new insights Kuenen displays, of which many, such as the possibility that the bull referred to in I Kings 12:28, represents Jahweh, is only one example. He clearly belongs to a generation of scholars who concentrated on primary sources. It should be remembered that he lived before the epochmaking discoveries at Ugarit and the Dead Sea scrolls. Wellhausen is another example of a scholar who had an ingenious "sense" for variant readings. When his reconstructions in the books of Samuel are compared with the scrolls from the Judean desert, one is time and again simply astounded when they are actually attested.<sup>5</sup>

Kuenen together with colleagues of his day, such as Colenso and Graff, contributed largely to a view of the Old Testament that has stood the test of time to a large extent (Emerton p. 27). However, they (inter alia Kuenen) did not only influence theological thinking outside of the Netherlands, but also within the boundaries of the "lowlands" to which the next contribution is devoted (Houtman).

Houtman introduces a surprising and novel element of Kuenen's contribution, arguing that although some modernists of the previous century held him in high esteem, they actually thought he was a conservative. He did, however, also encounter criticism from other modernist circles, especially in the person of Pierson. Much more extensive and stinging was the critique from orthodox ranks, especially from Da Costa, who was a converted Jew and the central figure in the *Reveille* movement.

A well-known figure from orthodox circles, who had a significant influence in South Africa, is Aalders, who was professor in Old Testament studies at the Free University of Amsterdam. He spent much of his academic career in disputing historical critical research. The results of Kuenen's research were also rejected by some Roman Catholic scholars.

3 Cf. F E Deist, John William Colenso: biblical scholar. *OTE* 2 (1984), 98-132.

4 The theme is "Syriac Studies in South Africa". It will appear in the newly formed periodical *ARAM*. Dutch scholars, especially A van Selms, left their characteristic imprints on South African students.

5 Cf. J Cook, Hannah and/or Elkanah on their way home (1 Samuel 2:11)? *OTE* 3/3 (1990), 252.

However, as was also the case in other contexts, these results have prevailed with the passage of time.

In the Netherlands there developed a middle-of-the-road position which was also the result of Kuenen's work. The person who played the most conspicuous role in this regard was actually a student of Kuenen. Wildeboer first taught Old Testament at Groningen but was later responsible for Hebrew and Aramaic in Leiden.<sup>6</sup> Valeton was another example of this group who adopted a direction which interestingly was not fully accepted by Kuenen himself. Ironically enough it is this development more than any other, as Houtman indicates convincingly, that was actually responsible for the preservation of Kuenen's ideas. Although Kuenen did not create a school of thought, his influence indeed can be seen beyond the boundaries of the Netherlands, even in South Africa.<sup>7</sup> A similar development has also taken place in both countries in that scholars tend to concentrate on the so-called *final form* of the Old Testament text.<sup>8</sup> I find myself in total agreement with Houtman's evaluation of this trend which is diametrically opposed to the direction of Abraham Kuenen's thought.

Van der Kooij adds an interesting element to the discussion by pointing to novel developments from the time of Kuenen to modern day studies, indicating that Kuenen's research is still relevant in more ways than one. This is the result of the specific approach Kuenen had to textual material, called a historical-cultural approach by Van der Kooij. Enlightening is the relationship he draws between Kuenen's explanation of the tradition-historical development of the Priestly text of Exodus 25-40 and modern day text-critical methodology. Kuenen had already remarked that the Septuagint version of that text reflects an earlier stage of the text. In contemporary formulation, this means that textual criticism is part and parcel of the exegetical process.

Following upon the nuanced discussion by Mulder of Kuenen's contribution concerning the concept of "ethical monotheism", Rogerson addresses some British responses to the pentateuchal studies of Kuenen. These responses were rather diverse. Rogerson spends a fair part of this essay on William Colenso's relationship with Kuenen, describing it as a reciprocal relationship.

In other British circles Kuenen's works had a more ambivalent reception. On the one hand, his views on the religion of Israel had an impact on the youth of Britain, when *The Bible for Young People* was translated into English from Dutch. This book, based on *The Religion of Israel* by Kuenen, was even used in Sunday schools in the Manchester area.

6 Cf. J A Loader, *Die bydrae van Gerrit Wildeboer (1855-1911) tot die Ou-Testamentiese inleidingswetenskap*. OTE 27 (1984), 148-166.

7 Cf. J A Loader, 1984. *Die etiese Ou-Testamentici in Nederland tussen 1870 en 1914*. UNISA: doctoral dissertation, 209f.

8 This conspicuous trend has recently led to a publication by J H le Roux with the expressive title *A Story of Two Ways - thirty years of Old Testament scholarship in South Africa*. OTESupplement, vol. 2 1993, Verba Vitae: Pretoria.

On the other hand, he suffered greatly at the hands of "conservative" scholars. However, in this regard too the reaction was ambivalent. Initially Robertson Smith was vehemently critical of the position held by the Dutch scholar. However, after he himself had been attacked by church authorities he changed his views and actually recommended Kuenen's works in glowing terms.

From Jewish quarters Rofé presents a primarily assenting view. He is mainly positive about Kuenen's contribution. He regards the following aspects of the research as timeless. The first concerns the late scribal activity in the Hebrew Bible (the specific example is taken from Jos. 20:4-6). The second applies the concept of independent documents not belonging to the JEDP cycles, composed in postexilic times and appended to the narrative of the Hexateuch (p. 110).

As is well-known, Kuenen's thought had ramifications in Germany too. Smend (Göttingen) examines the interesting and intricate relationship between him and Wellhausen. With vivid quotations from personal letters and other personal documents, Smend draws the reader's attention to the very sympathetic but scientifically critical relationship between these colleagues from different countries. It is clear from the discussion that they had a mutual respect for one another, on the academic as well the human levels, as can be gathered from the following quotations: Wellhausen on Kuenen: "Ich habe vor Kurzem Kuenen in Leiden besucht, der Mensch ist noch bedeutender als seine Bücher" (p. 119). Kuenen also had a high opinion of Wellhausen. After the latter had left Hebrew studies for Arabic he mourns the paradigm switch in the following manner in a letter to Robertson Smith: "Met leedwyse zie ik Wellhausen zijn aangezicht naar Mekka en Medina richten. Ook dáár zal hij werk in overvloed vinden en groote dingen doen, maar wij hadden hem te Jerusalem nog zoozeer noodig!" (p. 117).

The correspondence between these two giants, especially the recently discovered letter of Wellhausen to Kuenen mentioned by Smend, acts as a primary source for establishing the nature of their relationship. It is nevertheless rather problematic to define the exact content of their relationship. Smend is consequently correct in stating that it is pointless in many instances to allot to either one a priority in connection with a specific view (p. 125). The continuing contact, on a personal as well as a communicative level, led to many fruitful discussions and joint projects. Smend indicates that Kuenen made lavish use of Wellhausen's studies in the final formulation of his own views, which in the words of De Vries "represent the consensus of international thought, alongside the notable works of Julius Wellhausen" (p. 121). Wellhausen also clearly indicates the influence Kuenen had on his thought. He states explicitly that he consistently had the latter in mind as a discussion partner.

Perhaps it is best (as is indeed done by Smend) in the final analysis to let the authors answer the question as to the exact nature of the relationship between them. Their concurring viewpoints have been mentioned already.

But they also differed extensively on certain scholarly issues. It is clear that in the academic sphere Wellhausen was critical of Kuenen, seeing him as an analyst rather than as a synthesiser (p. 118), someone who developed his views "mit gewissenhafter Rücksichtnahme auf andere Meinungen" (p. 127). This is not meant in a disparaging sense, for he had too much respect for his colleague from the Netherlands. One real problem which Kuenen had was the inaccessibility of his writings because of the language barrier. Perhaps De Vries is correct in stating that Wellhausen relegated Kuenen to a supportive rather than a dominant role (p. 129).

The volume concludes with the contribution of Simon de Vries from Delaware, Ohio who compares recent North American pentateuchal studies with those of Kuenen. After discussing some of the characteristic traits in Kuenen's research he compares this work with that of two scholars whom he regards representative of the research done in North America on the pentateuch.

He firstly praises George Coats' contribution to pentateuchal studies, drawing direct parallels with Kuenen. According to him it is especially in methodology that Coats resembles the Dutch scholar.

I fail to see why De Vries has chosen Van Seters as a second example unless he needed someone to criticize. According to his discussion Van Seters opted for working with a "highly speculative theory" (p. 144) which he employs without testing whether the premise is acceptable (p. 145). I take it that this point is made in order to demonstrate how Kuenen would not have done his research. The rest of this contribution is devoted to criticizing Van Seters and praising Coats, who in his own words has an open searching mind, following the example of Abraham Kuenen (p. 147). In my opinion De Vries underplays the important role Van Seters fulfilled in his creative and daring pentateuchal research. In more than one way he indeed achieved for modern textual research what Kuenen did a century earlier in a basically conservative Netherlands.

The volume under discussion contains a well selected array of articles on the major contribution which Kuenen made to Old Testament studies. As could be expected of a truly international scholar, his work had implications way beyond his own small country. In South Africa, Germany, the United Kingdom and in North America people knew who Abraham Kuenen was, for they had read at first hand the marvellous fruits of his pen.

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C J Labuschagne, *Vertellen met getallen. Functie en symboliek van getallen in de bijbelse oudheid*. Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum B.V. 1992, pp. 135.

This book is a popularisation of the author's views on the numerical composition of sections of the First Testament. He explains the symbolism of certain biblical numbers, e.g. 40, 12 and 7; various numerical patterns formed by the announcement formulae of divine speeches and the number of words occurring in divine speeches in certain portions of Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy (e.g. specific formulas occur in the pattern  $7+3+1$  or  $7+4$ ); and the meaning of the numbers 17 and 26 (as the sum of the numerical values of respectively *kbd* and *kbwd*). The book makes interesting reading and presents in a nutshell some of the major results of the author's research.

Though I may not share the author's conviction that this approach will lead to a paradigm switch in biblical scholarship or condone the precedence he gives to numerical analysis over historical interpretation (pp. 121-122), I would also not share the highly negative views some of his critics expressed when he first announced his findings on the "logotechniques" of the divine speeches in the Pentateuch [cf. Labuschagne, VT 32 (1982), 268-296; 34 (1984), 91-95; Davis & Gunn, VT 34 (1984), 399-406; Labuschagne, VT 34 (1984), 407-413]. In a sense both parties are in the right.

On p. 121 the author observes that these patterns are evidence of a carefully contemplated *final redaction* of the biblical writings. Apart from the fact that the focus on the "final text" has become fashionable in biblical scholarship - sometimes without due reflection on the implied presuppositions (see Deist, JNSL 18 (1992), 37-47) - Labuschagne's use of the term might have caused confusion in the earlier debate. "Final form" here refers to the *medieval* form of the Ben Asher branch of the Masoretic tradition as reflected in Codex B19A.

That we are dealing here with a very late phenomenon in the Masoretic tradition is evident from the author's description on pp. 84-85 of the patterns, "These numbers speak their own language and tell their own story. By virtue of their symbolism they contain a *veiled* ("latente") message, *hidden* in the text... Perhaps the average reader could not perceive [these patterns], since they belonged to the *secrets* of writers... This *esoteric* knowledge was the *secret* of the learned scribe, the educated, who had knowledge of the *hidden* structures and the message *concealed* in them" (my translation and emphasis). The mysteriousness of these numerical structures not only explains why the author himself sometimes loses track of them (as critics have pointed out and the author has conceded) but also betrays their medieval cabbalistic origin. The late origin of the legitimately observed patterns is also shown by the fact that they cannot be found in the LXX's fairly literal translation of the Pentateuch. Perhaps the construction of such patterns was the trademark of the Tiberian Masoretes or even one Tiberian Masoretic family. It would

therefore be interesting to know whether the patterns also occur in, for instance, Ben Naphtali manuscripts.

Even though the criteria for the recognition of particular patterns are not always clear, some patterns cut across clearly defined *literary* patterns, and some of the patterns appear to have been forced, it cannot be denied that the author has demonstrated the occurrence of certain numerical regularities in the narrative formulae of the Pentateuch.

The last two lines of Guido Gezelle's poem *Het schrijverke* ("The whirligig") printed after the title page may explain the function of this scribal innovation. Whether or not modern exegetes (should) take these codes (and their implied dogma) seriously, the copyists would repeat after Gezelle's whirligig (my translation),

'We write,' he said, 'whirligigging down  
what our Master, when long ago  
he had created us, taught us to inscribe,  
one lesson, nothing more, nothing less;  
we write, and you, can you not read  
the lesson? Are you so obtuse?  
We are writing, rewriting, and writing again  
the Holy Name of God!'

Perhaps medieval copyists had also been inserting into the text "whirligig" codes that would be visible to the initiated but invisible to the uninitiated, to say, "these are the words of God" (see pp. 85-90).

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