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Michael V Fox (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

EDITING PROVERBS: THE CHALLENGE OF THE OXFORD HEBREW BIBLE

ABSTRACT

The author, who is preparing an eclectic edition of Proverbs for the Oxford Hebrew Bible, discusses the special problems that Proverbs presents. Special issues are the nature of the textual resources (including the problematic LXX-Prov) and the definition of the task (which must aim at a hyparchetype, not an Urtext). The author explains his own concept of editorial practice with the aid of a survey of methodologies in use in Shakespearian text criticism. Appended is a sample chapter of OHB Proverbs.

Cynthia L Miller (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

SILENCE AS A RESPONSE IN BIBLICAL HEBREW NARRATIVE: STRATEGIES OF SPEAKERS AND NARRATORS

ABSTRACT

Within a conversation, silence that appears in place of a response will itself be understood as a response. The branch of sociolinguistics known as conversation analysis has extensively examined the ways in which silence may function meaningfully within conversation. This paper examined the functions of silence within biblical dialogue and the pragmatics of a silent response after commands, appeals addressed to the deity, yes-no questions, and rebukes or accusations. Particular attention is paid to the difference between a character's silence after a command (indicating a refusal to comply) and the narrator's silence in not representing the character's reply to the command (which assumes the character's compliance). The silence of characters and the silence of narrators indicate diametrically opposed responses.

Detlef Jericke (Universität Heidelberg, Germany)

"WÜSTE" IM HOHENLIED (CANT)

ABSTRACT

The beloved woman of the Song of Songs (Cant) comes out of the desert (3:6, 8:5). She becomes an integral part of a luxurious world. Therefore "desert" has no connotation of danger and death as in the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament. The Song was written in the time of Ptolemaic rule over Palestine (3rd cent. B.C.E.), presumably in Jerusalem. The richer Judaeen families (e.g. the Tobiads) had good connections to the Ptolemaic kings. They profited from the Arabian trade the Ptolemaic rulers organized through the desert regions east and south of Palestine. Therefore "desert" looks like a region of wealth and luxury and not like an area of danger and death.

E Martín Contreras, (CSIC, Spain)

M1'S MASORETIC APPENDICES: A NEW DESCRIPTION

ABSTRACT

The masoretic rubrics given as Appendices in the codex M1 (118-Z-42) from the Complutensian University Library were known up until now through the description by Ch. Ginsburg. In the light of the manuscript, his description presents some problems concerning the identity of the appendices. Ginsburg's description also appears not to fully describe the content of the appendices..

This article complements and modifies Ginsburg's description of the appendices, supplying the omitted content and offering a new identification of the appendices according to their common shape.

Giovanni Lenzi (Piccola Famiglia dell'Annunziata)

THE SYRIAC USAGE OF THE TERM "LIFE" FOR "SALVATION" RECONSIDERED

ABSTRACT

"Salvation" is identified in early Syriac usage with "life." The diffusion of this usage in Syriac literature and its linguistic background are examined here. The conclusion is that the Syriac feature has its roots in the common northwest Semitic. Actually, in northwest Semitic the root ḥyy/ḥyʿ has a wide semantic field, including the meanings "to have a good life, to recover, to be delivered."

Jeremy Thompson (University of Stellenbosch)

TOWARDS A MORE THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF BIBLICAL HEBREW VOCABULARY

ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been a significant increase in insights in linguistics literature concerning vocabulary and vocabulary learning. Recent Biblical Hebrew instructional materials appear to be either unaware of many of these findings or not to have incorporated many of these findings, especially with regard to findings on defining the nature of vocabulary. In this article I survey the linguistics literature for important insights concerning the nature of vocabulary, evaluate Biblical Hebrew instructional materials concerning whether or not they have incorporated these findings, demonstrate the detrimental effect of an inadequate view concerning the nature of vocabulary, and give suggestions for immediate application and for further research in the area of Biblical Hebrew vocabulary learning.

*F Javier del Barco & M Guadalupe Seijas de los Ríos-Zarzosa
(Universidad Complutense, Madrid)*

THE SYNTAX OF PARALLELISM IN ISAIAH AND THE MINOR PROPHETS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY*

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to present an in-depth study of the syntactic aspect of parallelism. We have analyzed the frequency and type of clause patterns and clause structures in parallel sequences, verb forms used, word order and verb gapping. Our research was focused on pre-exile prophetic poetry: Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Isaiah (chapters 1-23; 28-33, and 36-39). From our study we can conclude that parallelism is usually linked to specific syntactic structures.

* This article is a product of the research project BFF2002-00797, entitled Análisis unificado de textos hebreos con ordenador (AUTHOR), and sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science.

BOOK REVIEWS

Levinson, B M and Otto, E 2004. *Recht und Ethik im Alten Testament* (Altes Testament und Moderne, Band 13). Münster: Lit Verlag. Pages 208. ISBN 3-8258-5460-4. 30.90 EUR.

This collection of essays does not deal directly with the topic of ethics and law in the Old Testament in a systematic manner. It is a collection of essays commemorating the contribution of Gerhard von Rad to the study of the Hexateuch, in particular Deuteronomy, delivered at a colloquium in Heidelberg in 2001, 100 years after his birth. In addition to the essays reflecting critically on Von Rad's contributions, a couple are included which deal specifically with the Decalogue and the Old Testament as ethical norm.

In an introductory article E. Otto presents a critical appraisal of Von Rad's Deuteronomium (Dtr) commentary. Von Rad defended the homiletic nature of Dtr and contended that its instructions were not meant to be legalistic, and therefore were not prerequisites for salvation. The fact that Von Rad located the homiletic nature of Dtr's message to the nation of God within the Levite priestly circles has nowadays been demonstrated to be one of the weaknesses of his writing. Otto then shows that the Dtr laws in essence and structure reflect the laws of the Book of the Covenant. Otto has also brought to the fore his own view on the Assyrian legal influence, which may explain the most typical pre-exilic perspective of Dtr in terms of which the legal stipulations are related to Yahweh's sovereign dominion – by analogy with the absolute loyalty of the new Assyrian kings.

Georg Braulik illuminates the hermeneutical key of Von Rad's approach to Dtr, which boils down to an assumption of a unified Dtr, best expressed through the central position of the sacred "Gottesvolk" – a key concern further illuminated in the article by Udo Rüterswörden. Braulik also refers to the ambivalence of Von Rad's earlier fascination with Dtr, and his almost total avoidance of the subject after his Dtr commentary in the sixties. Timo Veijola, in his appreciation of Von Rad's theological relevance for Old Testament interpretation, alludes to the crucial cue that Von Rad found in the text of Dtr itself. The fact that Dtr re-interprets and re-contextualised old material in a particular historical period signified to Von Rad a paradigm in terms of which he could make the message of the Old Testament relevant for contemporary circumstances.

An article I found particularly illuminating, is the one by Bernard Levinson and Douglas Dance. In this article the authors explain the peculiar position Von Rad holds regarding the legal material in the Pentateuch, and his almost obstinate determination to avoid any form of legalism. They refer the reader back to the socio-political conditions of the Nazi era at Jena, where Von Rad taught. They convincingly show how Von Rad deliberately sought to protect the homiletic character of Dtr (also other priestly texts) against the onslaught of the national socialist pressures to abandon these "laws" as a legalistic Jewish heritage. His emphasis on the core kerugma of the Hexateuch was a way to circumvent personal and contextual pressures to abandon the Old Testament. The emphasis on the kerugma facilitated an argument that linked the Old Testament to the same homiletic nature of the New Testament. The same motivation is to be found in his emphasis on Old Testament wisdom and its relevance to Christian teaching. I am sure that this piece of Von Rad's own history could assist many scholars to appreciate Von Rad's efforts to maintain the Old Testament as part of Scripture despite his denial of the surface value of the laws.

In an article on the current position of the Decalogue research, Frank-Lothar Hossfeld gives a clear exposition of the intricacies regarding the historical sequence between the Book of the Covenant and Dtr 5, as well as the connection of the Decalogue to the Sinai and Horeb theophanies.

The attempt to explain the origin of Dtr's effort to expound the relation between people and God in terms of treaty structure and terminology has always been problematic. In this regard an article by William Morrow evaluates the Mesopotamian treaty material in terms of its contribution towards creating a better understanding of Dtr. He cautions against direct application, but is of the opinion that much may be gained from the so-called "Fortschreibung" evident in the treaties and laws of Mesopotamia, in particular Hittite treaties.

Two applied articles on the interpretation of biblical law are included. In the first, Joachin Schaper takes his cue from Von Rad to show that inner-biblical exegesis is valid in determining the development and changes of tradition. This is illustrated by two case studies of Ezek 44 and Isa 56. In the second, Siegfried Kreuzer contributes a reception historical perspective in discussing the priority given to the Decalogue and Dtr by Martin Luther. It becomes evident that Dtr functions as a "filter" of the Decalogue for Luther and that his Catechism is based on his interpretation of Dtr.

Three articles reflect on the ethics of the Old Testament. The first presents a discourse between F. Cruseman, W. Dietrich and H-C. Schmitt on the relevance of Old Testament ethical norms for contemporary society. Despite many prerequisites and

conditions, these scholars maintain in principle that the Old Testament still retains validity for the current debate on ethical norms. In the second, Otto seeks to maintain the validity of the Old Testament in terms of the fact that the Old Testament has permeated civilization to such an extent that it inevitably plays a role. More specifically, he demonstrates that the ethics of the Old Testament has in many instances moved beyond the law and legalism, so that the most prominent aspects are its strong emphasis on a just order and on obedience to God. In the third, Eilert Herms concludes the collection of essays with a philosophical treatise on the ethical relevance of the Old Testament. He sees the connecting relevance between the past and the present realized through the possibility that comprehending the experience of reality in the past may assist one in the present to understand how the people in the past understood that reality as a whole. The categories of reality are still in existence; therefore, as soon as a new form or progression is accorded to them, then by implication the discourse on historical reality shapes and changes the understanding of reality in the present. In old documents, such as the Old Testament, one encounters communication on how the understanding of reality was achieved, and this may impact on the way one is forced towards new definitions of reality in the present. The cultic communication situations of the past have proven to be of cardinal importance. With this rather abstract argument (and I am not claiming that I have presented it satisfactorily in this abbreviated form), Herms seeks to procure the lasting importance of the Old Testament for current society.

The publication presents quite a broad spectrum of diverse voices on the Decalogue and the ethics of the Old Testament, but it particularly brings to the fore valuable critical appraisals of Von Rad's contribution to Old Testament scholarship. For this reason alone this publication is commendable. Some of the articles are written in a very condensed manner, so that uninformed readers may often find the "stacking" of data too difficult to unpack. To scholars interested in Deuteronomy, this publication assembles a rich selection of views.

Philip J Nel
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