# JOURNAL OF NORTHWEST SEMITIC LANGUAGES

**Contributions and books for review should be sent to**
The Editor: *JNSL*
Department of Ancient Studies
University of Stellenbosch
Private Bag X1, Matieland, ZA-7602
SOUTH AFRICA
Fax +27 (0) 21 808 3480
e-mail: cyster@sun.ac.za

**Subscriptions should be sent to the same address but marked as**
Subscription: *JNSL*

**House rules**
Articles submitted for publication must be according to the house rules
on the homepage
**JNSL homepage (house rules, contents, subscription)**
http://www.sun.ac.za/as/journals/jnsl/

---

**ORDER FORM: Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages**
☐ **Enter me as a subscriber to the JNSL**

☐ **I enclose the correct amount due**

| Per Invoice | $ 65.00 |
| | €50.00 |
| Booksellers | - 30 % |

**Name** ...........................................................................................................
**Address**................................................................ ..........................................
...................................................................Postal code ..........................
*For further subscription information:* e-mail to cyster@sun.ac.za or write to
The Editor, JNSL, Department of Ancient Studies, University of Stellenbosch,
Private Bag X1, Matieland, South Africa, 7602 or fax to +27 (0)21 8083480.

# CONTENTS

*Angelika Berlejung (University of Leipzig/University of Stellenbosch)*

# TWISTING TRADITIONS: PROGRAMMATIC ABSENCE-THEOLOGY FOR THE NORTHERN KINGDOM IN 1 KGS 12:26-33* (THE "SIN OF JEROBOAM")

## ABSTRACT

*1 Kgs 12:26-33* is a polemical dtr fiction that has no reliable historical information about the time of Jeroboam I, but reflects historical facts (such as, for example, the integration of Bethel and Dan into the political entity "Israel") of the time of Jeroboam II (not of the 7th through the 5th century BC) and the theological discourses of later periods.*

*The "sin of Jeroboam" is not Jeroboam's veneration of foreign gods or choice of the wrong cult places, but rather his production of dead artefacts and godless sanctuaries for YHWH. His calves and their dwellings were for DtrH not signs of YHWH's presence, but arbitrary simulations of presence, thus they were indications of YHWH's absence. The North, in its totality as god-forsaken country, was meant when the merism "Bethel and Dan" was chosen.*

*The dtr fiction, 1 Kgs 12:26-30A, worked with Ancient Near Eastern traditional paradigms being connected with the making of divine images and dwellings, and which were an integral part of Ancient Near Eastern image-presence and temple-presence theology. These paradigms were used by DtrH against Jeroboam I, whose kingdom and cult were said to be grounded on arbitrarily made YHWH simulations. 1 Kgs 12:26-30A links the North with (YHWH's-) absence-theology while (YHWH's) presence-theology is the monopoly of Jerusalem (and the foundation for cult centralisation). Moreover, the traditional Ancient Near Eastern patterns which were linked to the destruction of divine statues or dwellings (divine absence, wrath and punishment) were applied in 1 Kgs 12:26-30A and in the books of 1 and 2 Kgs to their production. A view in 1 and 2 Kgs makes clear that the traditional Ancient Near Eastern conceptions (being part of the royal ideology) which connected the making of images with divine reward and presence, and the abstinence/destruction of images with divine punishment and absence were inverted. The biblical texts are a systematic reversal of Ancient Near Eastern image-, iconic presence-theology and royal ideology.*

*Jan Joosten (University of Strasbourg)*

# DIACHRONIC ASPECTS OF NARRATIVE *WAYHI* IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

*ABSTRACT*

*In the debate on the development and history of the Hebrew language in the biblical period, many syntactical features remain to be described in detail. In the present paper one such feature, the narrative use of* wayhi *followed by a temporal phrase and a main clause, is analysed. What comes to light indicates that LBH authors knew narrative* wayhi *from the study of CBH texts, but that it was not an organic component of their language. Thus the analysis of this feature strengthens the chronological approach to Biblical Hebrew.*

*Joseph Fleishman (Bar-Ilan University)*

# RECOGNITION OF CHILDREN IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LAW
# (PART ONE)

*ABSTRACT*

*In the first part of this study, we investigated whether in Mesopotamian law a spouse's natural child was considered legitimate at birth or needed to be recognized as such by his father, and whether in the absence of such recognition the child would be denied legitimacy. The former possibility would imply that the child's legal status was determined by law, and the father has no say in the matter, while the latter possibility would indicate that the newborn's legal status was at the father's discretion.*

 *Analyzing literary sources, and legal documents, we attempted to prove that a natural child's legal status was not contingent on his father's recognition, but was contingent on two conditions: 1) The child was the natural offspring of his father; 2) the child's parents had a spousal relationship.*

*Nachum Avraham (Haifa, Israel)*

# THE DIVORCÉE – A LIMINAL ENTITY IN ISRAELITE SOCIETY IN THE BIBLICAL PERIOD

*ABSTRACT*

*This article analyses the sociological status of the divorcée in her daily life (after the divorce ceremony) and tries to understand the thoughts, beliefs and concepts underlying this status. Since biblical and Mesopotamian sources tend to neglect social topics, the article applies the theories of van Gennep and Turner, which offer a wide range of anthropological perspectives that help to define the divorcée status as liminal. On the other hand, it searches for technical legal terms paradigmatically and syntagmatically, such as reproach (חֶרְפָּה), stripping off their regular meaning in order to explore sociological and juridical implications and data.*

*Elie Assis (Bar Ilan University)*

# LOVE, HATE AND SELF-IDENTITY IN MALACHI: A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO MAL 1:1-5 AND 2:10-16

*ABSTRACT*

*There are close affinities between the anti-Edomite oracle in Malachi 1:2-5 and Malachi's condemnation of mixed marriages in 2:10-16. Following the demonstration of these connections, this paper suggests that intermarriage is the consequence of the people's conviction that they are rejected by God. After the destruction of the Temple, the people felt that they were rejected as the chosen people. This feeling is reflected in the anti-Edomite oracle. Because they felt that they were no longer the chosen nation, the people felt that the distinction between them and other nations was no longer relevant. This paper posits the view that the people of Yehud adopted a humanistic ideology of equality between peoples that enabled intermarriage with foreign women. Malachi refuted these ideologies and conduct by claiming that Israel was still the chosen people, and that the ideology justifying relationships with foreign women should be abandoned.*

# BOOK REVIEWS

Mobley, G 2005. *The Empty Men. The Heroic Tradition of Ancient Israel* (The Anchor Bible Reference Library). New York: Double Day. pp. 294 + xvii. ISBN 0385498519.

M. verfolgt das Ziel, die Kriegerkultur der frühen Eisenzeit in Israel zu rekonstruieren, sie einerseits aus den Heldenerzählungen des Richterbuchs zu erheben und andererseits diese Erzählungen von diesem Hintergrund her zu interpretieren. Zunächst sammelt er aus Episoden des Richterbuchs und der Samuelbücher Hinweise auf die Kultur, die Konventionen und die Wertehierarchien des "heroischen Zeitalters," das mit der Errichtung des Königtums und einer gefestigten Staatlichkeit sein Ende fand. Er schildert die israelitischen Helden als Einzelkämpfer, die einem Ehrenkodex folgen, den sie mit Kriegern aus dem "heroischen Zeitalter" anderer altorientalischer und antiker Gesellschaften teilen. Eingehender analysiert er darauf im Richterbuch die Erzählungen von Ehud, Gideon und Simson und schließt mit einer Zusammenschau seiner Ergebnisse zum heroischen Zeitalter, in der er Joab als letzten derartigen Krieger schildert, den zwar einerseits David zur Gründung seines Königtums benötigte, der aber andererseits in das Regelwerk eines Staates mit königlicher Spitze nicht mehr passte und daher unter Salomo ein böses Ende nehmen musste.

Mobley hat das Verdienst, häufig unterbelichtete Details der Heldenerzählungen des Richterbuchs deutlich herauszuarbeiten und zu einem Gesamtbild zusammenzufügen. Es gelingt ihm, neue Akzente zu setzen. Er wertet die Texte des Richterbuchs unter breiter Kenntnis der ihm auf Englisch zugängigen Sekundärliteratur und unter sorgfältiger Beobachtung des Erzählstils aus. Dennoch kann seine Textarbeit nicht überzeugen. Er bezieht sich zwar vage auf konventionelle Thesen zur Literargeschichte des Richterbuchs, bleibt aber in aller Regel den Nachweis schuldig, warum er einen Textteil entweder für sehr alt hält oder zumindest ihm zutreffende Informationen über die vorstaatlichen Zustände entnehmen zu können meint. Es wird oft nicht klar, auf welcher Textebene er sich bewegt und wie er diese isoliert. Er extrahiert locker ihn interessierende Motive, führt undefinierte moderne Termini wie "warlord" ein, enthält sich, obgleich er soziologische Zusammenhänge erfragt, einer detaillierten Analyse der vorstaatlichen Stämmegesellschaft, bezieht sich gelegentlich auf zeitgenössische Filme und lässt seiner Fantasie die Zügel schießen, wobei er zu freihändiger Mythologisierung neigt.

Die in der Ehud-Erzählung zweimal als Grenzmarkierungen erwähnten Pesilim (Götterbilder) 3,19, 26 sind mal Schwellen zur Unterwelt (S. 99) und Tore des Todes, mal Triumphbögen (S. 101). König Eglon liegt im "heart of darkness" (S. 80) als Herrscher der Unterwelt in seinem Schmutz. Welchen Erkenntnisgewinn verspricht eine derartige an Science-fiction-Filmen geschulte Einführung eines sprachlich nicht einmal angedeuteten mythischen Hintergrunds, "though it never quite breaks through" (S. 99)?

Um die umfängliche Gideonerzählung etwas handhabbarer zu machen, unterscheidet M. zu Beginn seiner Auslegung unter ausdrücklicher Ablehnung einer detaillierten literarkritischen Analyse zwei "designs." Aus der Musterung von Abieser, Manasse, Ascher, Sebulon und Naftali 6,34-35 isoliert er einerseits Abieser = 300 (die mehrfach erwähnten 300 werden nirgends als Abiesriten bezeichnet), andererseits Manasse = 32 000 (sie werden nirgends als Manassiten identifiziert, stattdessen in 7,8 Israeliten genannt), die Gideon auf 300 reduzieren muss. Aus der Schlachtenschilderung 7,16-22 teilt M. freihändig den Abiesriten die Tonkrüge und Fackeln, den Manassiten die Widderhörner zu. Die Abiesriten-Version beginnt in 6,11 mit Gideon an der oberen Tretkufe der Kelter und endet mit der Hinrichtung des Midianiterfürsten Seeb (Wolf) an der Wolfskelter, wobei hier das Wort für die untere Sammelkufe der Kelter gebraucht ist. Dass dies nicht der Erfolg der Abiesriten, sondern der Efraimiten ist, wird vernachlässigt. Die weiterhin auf 300 reduzierten Manassiten begleiten Gideon auch bei der Blutrache im Ostjordanland (obgleich sie auch in Kap. 8 nicht Manassiten genannt werden und nach erfolgreicher Blutrache in 8,22 die Israeliten zu Gideon sprechen). Man kann nur hoffen, dass der zu solcher Willkür verleitende Terminus "design" nicht Eingang in die exegetische Methodik findet. Dass M. seinen methodischen Zugriff von den literarkritischen Analysen seiner Exegetenkollegen als "not misguided," aber leider auf Grund "subjective nature" (S. 127) frei von konsistenten Resultaten abhebt, verwundert dann doch.

Anlässlich Simson traktiert M. das Modell des "wilden Mannes." Vergleichbar Enkidu und der Prostituierten humanisiert, zivilisiert die Delila den haarigen wilden Simson. Freilich scheint Zivilisierung, wenn man Simsons unmittelbar mit dem Scheren seiner Haare verbundenes Schicksal betrachtet, nicht gerade erstrebenswert zu sein. Außerdem hat der wilde Mann sich zuvor in Timna durch wohlgesetzte Rede hervorgetan. In Ri 14-15 sieht M. Simson auf einer Totschlagorgie durch die Orte der Küstenebene ziehen (S. 225); dass die einzelnen Szenen sorgfältig unter Beachtung rechtlicher Kategorien (15,3.6) als Steigerung von Gewalt und Gegengewalt angeordnet sind, kommt gar nicht in den Blick. Die Analyse der Simsonerzählungen offenbart deutlich die Schwächen einer derartigen Jagd nach Motiven, die diese aus ihrer literarischen Einbindung isoliert. Die Aussageintention des Textes kommt so

nicht zum Vorschein. Außerdem huldigt M. hier wieder seiner Mythisierungstendenz. Simson ist JHWHs Chaosmonster, gesandt, die Macht der Philister zu zerstören (S. 204). Die Philister haben Simson als heilige Trophäe in ihrem Dagontempel niedergelegt (S. 205; 16,21 spricht statt dessen vom Gefängnis; die Parallelisierung Simsons mit Saul und mit König Zidkija kommt gar nicht in den Blick). Schließlich muss Simson im "Circus Maximus" von Gaza als Gladiator kämpfen (obgleich von einem Gegner und von Zweikampf keine Silbe verlautet) und sucht seinen Untergang im "chthonischen Vakuum des in Ruinen gestürzten Dagontempels" (obgleich das auf zwei Säulen ruhende Gebäude mit seinem Flachdach in Ri 16 nicht als Tempel bezeichnet wird).

Mit etwas weniger Fantasie, schärferen Kategorien und präziserer Textarbeit hätte M. seiner sinnvollen Absicht, die Vorstellungswelt der Helden des heroischen vorstaatlichen Zeitalters Israels aufzudecken, besser gedient.

Walter Groß
Universität Tübingen

Zewi, T 2007. *Parenthesis in Biblical Hebrew* (Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 50). Brill: Leiden / Boston. pp. 201. ISBN 0081-8461 / 978 9004 16243 3.

This book "aims at a comprehensive presentation, discussion and analysis of parenthesis in Biblical Hebrew" (p. 1). After a theoretical orientation in Chapter One, parenthetical clauses and parenthetical words and phrases in Biblical Hebrew are discussed in Chapters Two and Three respectively.

From the first page of **Chapter One** it is obvious that the author is fully aware of the challenges that are posed by a study of parenthesis in Biblical Hebrew. It is therefore important for Zewi to ground her investigation on a justifiable theoretical frame of reference. With reference to studies across languages, she found that it is not easy to establish a set of formal criteria for the identification of parenthesis. She identifies only two formal criteria, namely that parenthetical units are syntactically relatively independent, and that they tend not to be bound to specific positions in a sentence. The third criterion for identifying parenthesis is of a semantic-pragmatic nature and "relies on contextual considerations" (p. 8).

Since Zewi's perusal of studies in the field of general linguistics had shown that scholars often resort to "pragmatic discourse" terms, she turned to the field of general discourse studies for insights that could underpin her investigation. She found

particularly useful studies on "external information deviating from the main course" (p. 9). For her, notions such as "break of the narrative flow," "off-line information," "new and contrastive background" provide more nuanced ways of talking about "external information."

In recent years the field of text linguistics has enjoyed the attention of many Biblical Hebrew scholars. Zewi critically discusses a range of these studies (e.g. the work of Andersen, Longacre, Niccacci, Eskult, Heimerdinger, Zevit and De Regt) that address constructions which may be relevant to her purposes. She also points out, however, that parenthesis is hardly ever discussed in the syntactic studies of other Semitic languages. According to her (p. 20), "the elusive nature of parenthesis in general and certain parenthetical patterns in particular, and the difficulty in recognizing, defining, and analyzing them, have certainly aggravated the relative ignorance of scholarly studies on Semitic languages about these constructions" (p. 20).

Zewi pays special attention to the views of Gottstein and Weingren on a few cases of so-called anacoluthon in a section she calls "Textual philology: interrupted syntactic structures as possible parenthesis" (pp. 21-22). According to her, this type of interrupted syntactic construction is not necessarily parenthetical. In this same section Zewi critiques Miller's identification of parenthetical material in discontinuous quotative frames, e.g. in 1 Sam. 22:9 וְהוּא נִצָּב עַל־עַבְדֵי־שָׁאוּל. This is, according to Zewi, (p. 23) a circumstantial clause that is "natural to Biblical Hebrew." Why she regards this type of circumstantial clause as different from those that she lists on p. 66 (i.e. not parenthetical) is not obvious to me. In the penultimate section of her introduction Zewi turns to the literary studies of Alter, Sternberg, Amit and Brichto. She does not engage critically with the views of any of these scholars, but focuses only on those aspects of their models that could be useful for her investigation.

To conclude Chapter One Zewi formulates her "frame of work" (pp. 27-29). Zewi restricts her investigation to "Classical Biblical Hebrew prose." For her this means all the books of the Pentateuch, Josh-2 Kgs (the Early Prophets), the book of Ruth and the prose parts of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Each case in this corpus which could be potentially parenthetic is then investigated in terms of the following questions: "1. Does the parenthetical units have some sort of syntactic relation to the host clause or not?... 2 .What is the context in which each parenthetical unit occurs? ... 3. Does the parenthetical unit add information or comment on one specific part or on the whole sentence? ... 4. Does the additional information or comment expressed by the parenthetical unit include a subjective opinion or the writer or speaker? .... 5. Should a certain parenthesis be regarded as a natural spontaneous parenthetical unit which is part of direct speech cited in the story or general flow, or is it an editorial  addition

inserted ….?" (pp. 27-28). Zewi's understanding of the notion "pragmatics" is a broad one. As far as her literary approach, she states that she tries to benefit from each of the scholars she introduced above. Somewhat surprising is her decision to consult a fairly *ad hoc* (or in her words "selected eclectically" (p. 29)) collection of Semitic translations, each of which she intends to use only if they can shed light on a specific construction. Although the use of these remarkable translations could provide interesting perspectives on the interpretation of parenthetical constructions, scholars familiar with the rigours of Corpus Translation Studies and Descriptive Translation Studies would be hesitant to assign any empirical status to the findings of such an eclectic use of translations.

As mentioned in the first paragraph, Zewi first deals with parenthetical clauses, and then parenthetical words and phrases. She starts with the bigger units, since they are more apparent that the smaller units. The latter are often "on the borderline between adverbs and parenthesis" (p. 27).

As far as the parenthetical clauses are concerned, Zewi distinguishes three major categories in **Chapter Two**: 1. External expressions referring to a speaker, appealing and pleading, affirming God's existence, identity and status or indicating external intervention and oath patterns; 2. Narrative formulas which may be a formula introduced by עַל־כֵּן / לָכֵן, by יֶתֶר דִּבְרֵי or by a proper name, month name or related information; and 3. External information typically expressed by means of a circumstantial clause. Among these references to external information, Zewi distinguishes between examples introducing background information, examples of foreshadowing, examples introducing explanatory information, theological remarks, historical remarks and examples introducing other marginal information.

In **Chapter Three,** among parenthetical words and phrases, Zewi distinguishes two major categories, viz. 1. External expressions referring to a speaker, an observer's identity or an individual standpoint, epistemic adverbials, appeal and plea and address (i.e. vocatives); and 2. Narrative time coordinates. The latter include the following: עַד מִיָּמִים יָמִימָה and בָּעֵת הַהִיא, בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם and בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, לְפָנִים, עַד־הַיּוֹם and הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה.

I enjoyed reading this book. I found its layout one of the best in the field of Biblical Hebrew that I have come across. The empirical status of the notion of "parenthesis" is without doubt not uncontroversial, in particular if one tries to be as comprehensive as Zewi tries to be. However, she defines her frame of reference and then sets out to argue as rigorously as possible in terms of the parameters of this framework. Although (i) one could argue that Zewi has been too eclectic in determining the parenthetical status of a construction; (ii) I did not find her use of the translations very

helpful; and (iii) I did not always agree with her analyses (e.g. that אֲשֶׁר is a shortened form of כַּאֲשֶׁר in 2 Kgs 4.17 (p. 38), that Gen. 4.22 is parenthetical (p. 99)), it will be difficult in future to talk about "parenthesis" in Biblical Hebrew without engaging carefully with this publication. Zewi does not consider this to be the last word on parenthesis and she expresses the hope that it will stimulate research in this field. I think it certainly will.

Christo H J van der Merwe
University of Stellenbosch

Kofoed, JB 2005. *Text & History. Historiography and the Study of the Biblical Text.* Winona Lake, ID: Eisenbrauns. pp. xiii + 298. ISBN: 1-57506-094-9.

When a publication with a strong polemical character generates equally strong counter-reactions from those who are criticized in the original publication, any reviewer should be hesitant to join the quarrel! At least, that is one of the reasons why the present reviewer has only now – after the dust has settled somewhat – taken courage to review the above-mentioned published dissertation. After this book prompted fierce criticism in a review article by TL Thompson,[1] one of the so-called "Copenhagen School" members against whom Kofoed's publication is aimed, the author responded strongly in a follow-up article.[2] When quotations from Winnie the Pooh, such as "When you are a Bear of Very Little Brain, and Think of Things, you find sometimes that a Thing which seemed very Thingish inside you is quite different when it gets out into the open and has other people looking at it" (Kofoed 2007:291), are used to argue that the debate should not be conducted on an *ad hominem* level, but that all parties should engage in public scientific discussion, one wonders who the "Bear(s) of Very Little Brain" are according to Kofoed!

The present review was written shortly after the following very insightful words of Phillip Davies (also a prominent member of the so-called minimalists of whom the

---

1    See Thompson, T L The Role of Faith in Historical Research. *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 19/1 (2005), 111-134. See also the article by another member of the so-called "Copenhagen School" in the same volume: Lemche, NP Conservative Scholarship on the Move. *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 19/2 (2005), 203-252. Although Lemche does not respond directly to Kofoed's publication, he deals extensively with Kofoed's work as an example of what Lemche characterises as conservative scholarship.

2    See Kofoed, J B The Role of Faith in Historical Research. A Rejoinder. *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 21/2 (2007), 275-298.

"Copenhagen School" is part) appeared on a website:[3] "I once wrote a book called *Whose Bible Is It Anyway?*, which opened with an attack on confessional biblical scholarship and suggested some lines of explicitly non-religious exegesis. I suppose I was particularly annoyed by the claims of certain eminent scholars that the Bible 'belonged to the Church' and that explicitly faith-based exegesis was an integral (indeed, even the only correct) approach. … The world and I were younger then. But even non-religious scholars like me were sharply conscious of the irony of our situation: without the affection and interest of religious people, we would be out of a job." Not that the present reviewer deduces from this quotation that the battle is over! However, at least it seems as if a new openness to listening to one another is developing. More moderate positions, it seems, are desirable and indeed possible!

But, back to the publication under review! The writing of this book was prompted by Kofoed's move to a teaching position at the Copenhagen Lutheran School of Theology in 1992. He was trained in the Alt-Noth and Albright-Bright models of biblical historiography, but was then confronted with the minimalist views advocated inter alia by colleagues (such as Thompson and Lemche) at the University of Copenhagen. Although the published dissertation cannot be regarded as a mere "setting things right with the Copenhagener colleagues" – the author acknowledges the necessary and valuable contribution of the minimalists – this biographical information remains in the background when reading this book.

In the introductory chapter (Chapter 1) the author situates the minimalist views on biblical historiography (i.e. that biblical texts do not have any value for the reconstruction of pre-Persian Israel's history) within broader (postmodern) developments in the field. He formulates his thesis and purpose as follows: "The thesis of the present study … is that the texts of the Hebrew Bible contain reliable information for a reconstruction of the period it purports to describe, and the purpose of the following discussion is therefore to substantiate this claim" (p. 30). He then proposes to carry out the substantiation by investigating two sets of "(possible) 'epistemic' or 'historiographical' markers in the text," namely "those of source-critical value and those of historical intentionality and referentiality" (p. 30). He explains these as follows: "(W)e must distinguish, first, markers that can help us trace the history of the text beyond the date of the oldest known manuscripts by comparison of various features with different kinds of extant nonbiblical material from, second, various literary features that can help us determine the genre of the text" (p. 30). In order to make the study manageable, he takes the Books of Kings as his sample text.

---

3       http://www.bibleinterp.com/opeds/whose.shtml (accessed 20 July 2009).

In Chapters 2, 3 and 4 he deals with various aspects of the first set of markers. In order to trace the history of the text back beyond the date of the oldest known manuscripts, he firstly investigates the dating of the text, arguing that the lateness of the text does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that those texts cannot contain any traces of the events of the far-away past (Chapter 2). His main argument goes back to a very particular view on oral tradition in which he accepts that oral tradition could have preserved the memory of past events in a fairly accurate way. Since the majority of biblical scholars would concede that the written material in the Hebrew Bible mostly go back to oral traditions, Kofoed argues that we could at least assume that the written material would bear a memory of past events. In Chapter 3 he investigates linguistic differentiation in Hebrew literature of differing ages, concluding that "the Hebrew of the books of Kings has more features in common with the Hebrew of the preexilic inscriptions. That is, the book of Kings was composed at a date closer to the preexilic inscriptions of the $8^{th}$-$7^{th}$ century B.C.E. than to the extant LBH texts of the $3^{rd}$-$2^{nd}$ century B.C.E." (p. 162). In Chapter 4 Kofoed turns to comparative material in his investigation and comes to the following conclusion: "(T)he information given in the books of Kings is in accord with the external sources wherever we can check it. Comparative analysis favors the view that what has been transmitted by the author of the books of Kings (wherever we can check it) paints a picture that is consistent with the information of the extrabiblical sources and that the author(s) or editor(s), irrespective of when the books of Kings were written or edited, based his (their) account on reliable sources. On the basis of the parallel studies referred to above, it is also my contention that a basic trust in information that cannot be checked against external sources is both defensible and commendable" (p. 189).

In Chapter 5 he investigates the second set of markers, those of historical intentionality and referentiality. His investigation boils down to answering the following question after having identified the genre of the text: "Were the texts intended to be history-writing in the first place?" (p. 31). He comes to the following conclusion: "(A)lthough we have not proved the author's historical intent, both the literary features investigated on the explanatory/representational levels and the coherence between information on the documentary level and external sources are suggestive of historical intent, at least for the relevant parts. While remaining aware of the danger of confusing parts for the whole, I suggest that, based on the considerable amount of literary features and documentary information, the books of Kings should be recognized as intended history-writing" (p. 247).

The book (unfortunately) ends abruptly with a very short paragraph on "Further Research" added to Chapter 5. One would have expected in a dissertation (or monograph, for that matter) a final chapter in which a synthesis is presented. This is

absent in Kofoed's book. A good bibliography and various indices are included, however.

The value of this publication lies in the very important cross-checking questions it asks historiographers of Ancient Israel working from a minimalist point of view, and in the process discarding the biblical texts in their investigations. Those still adhering to extreme minimalist positions would do well to try to respond to some of the questions Kofoed is posing. Whether his publication contributes its own convincing position in the debate may be doubted. He does not really proffer a well-argued theory, but rather remarks in various ways that there is at least a probability that things could have been different from that the minimalists would describe them. He often employs arguments-from-silence, which could of course be countered very easily.

This publication has convinced the reviewer that more moderate and nuanced positions between maximalism and minimalism are needed. When quarrelling about so-called primary, secondary and tertiary evidence in the historiography of Ancient Israel, one question is often missing from both extreme views, namely: "Evidence for what purpose?" If the purpose of the scientific endeavour is to reconstruct the material culture or political events of pre-exilic Israel, books such as Kings would not be very helpful and might be considered secondary (or even tertiary). However, if one wants to reconstruct the more abstract realities of the time of origin of the books of Kings – for example, the religious convictions held during this time – those same books might offer primary evidence.

<div align="right">

Louis Jonker
University of Stellenbosch

</div>