



**Malena, Sarah, and David Miano, eds.**

***Milk and Honey: Essays on Ancient Israel and the Bible in Appreciation of the Judaic Studies Program at the University of California, San Diego***

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Books may be published for several reasons, but very rarely as expression of appreciation for a scientific institution. Having started in 1976, the Judaic Studies Program of the University of California, San Diego, became, within thirty years, one of the leading study programs of this kind in the States. All together, the book contains fifteen articles from different fields of research (“Genesis”; “Poetry and Prophecy”; “Narrative and History”; “Lexicon”; and “Archaeology and Paleography”), written partly by the staff of the University of California and partly by colleagues from other universities.

The following essays are published in this book: Sh. Dolansky, “A Goddess in the Garden? The Fall of Eve” (3–21); J. C. Geoghegan, “Jacob’s Bargain with God (Genesis 28:20–22) and Its Implications for the Documentary Hypothesis” (23–36); “M. Sherman, “Do Not Interpretations Belong to God? A Narrative Assessment of Genesis 40 as It Elucidates the Persona of Joseph” (37–49); “B. Kelly, Quantitative Analysis of the Tribal Sayings in Deuteronomy 33 and Its Significance for The Poem’s Overall Structure” (53–63); J. R. Lundbom, “The Lion Has Roared: Rhetorical Structure in Amos 1:2–3:8” (65–75); E. Goldstein, “On the Use of the Name of God in the Book of Jonah” (77–83); M. M. Homan, “The Good Book and the Bad Movies: Moses and the Failure of Biblical Cinema” (87–112); D. Miano, “What Happened in the Fourteenth Year of Hezekiah? A Historical

Analysis of 2 Kings 18–20 in the Light of New Textual Considerations” (113–32); R. L. Kohn and R. Moore, “Where Is God? Divine Presence in the Absence of the Temple” (133–53); Z. Zevit, “The First Halleluyah” (157–64); S. Malena, “Spice Roots in the Song of Songs” (165–84); F. I. Andersen and A. D. Forbes, “The Participle in Biblical Hebrew and the Overlap of Grammar and Lexicon” (185–212); M. Burton, “Biomolecules, Bedouin, and the Bible: Reconstructing Ancient Food-Ways in Israel’s Northern Negev” (215–39); L. M. Zucconi, “From the Wilderness of Zin alongside Edom: Edomite Territory in the Eastern Negev during the Eighth-Sixth Centuries B.C.E.” (241–56); Y. Arbel, “The Gamla Coin: A New Perspective on the Circumstances and Date of Its Mining” (257–75).

Since a review cannot offer enough space to discuss all of these essays, just a selection of some important contributions may be addressed here. These reflections will introduce some traditional German views into the international exegetical discussion. Celebrating an important institution of exegesis in the States, this book is likely to show typical ways of research in the States as well. This kind of exegesis, however, is, in many ways, completely different from the German approaches, as I will show in the following remarks.

Geoghegan starts with an important observation concerning Gen 28:20–22: the three requests to God mentioned by Jacob in his vow (protection on the way by God; provision of food and clothing by God; peaceful return in his father’s house) were granted by God in Gen 29–33. In 31:3 God agrees to be with Jacob, and in 31:22–55 and 33:16 God protects Jacob, Jacob becomes rich, and he returns safely to his home country (33:18a). Geoghegan observes that the texts connected with the requests and their fulfillment belong to different sources. Since he agrees with the method of literary criticism, he offers the following solution: “An alert editor, aware of the faint outline of this development in the Jacob material, arranged and augmented his sources to bring this theme into sharper relief” (33). His analysis, however, does not take into account the most recent results of German literary criticism or the history of redactional work. Many younger scholars no longer believe in the existence of the E source. There have been many changes in literary analysis recently that offer different interpretations and results, which should be taken into account by any new analysis of the text. This might well lead to completely different conclusions.

The same problem becomes evident in the essay written by Lundbom about the rhetorical structure in Amos 1:2–3:8. The most prominent recent German commentary on the book of Amos, by J. Jeremias, is not even mentioned. For many years German exegesis has played a leading role internationally, and many important German contributions were translated into English. It is a pity that scholarship aiming ambitiously to international standards tries (and fails) by drawing exclusively on American or English contributions, ignoring contributions written by scholars not working the Anglo-American academic

community. Lundbom wants to show that Amos 1:2–3:8 (excluding the supplementary 3:1) is a single discourse; some portions of this text may have once been independent and isolated statements, but they have now been unified in a homogenous prophetic utterance. For instance, 1:2 corresponds closely to 3:8, which is reflected by the use of very similar words. In the book of Amos, many enumerations containing the numbers seven or seven-plus-one can be found as well: there are not only seven-plus-one oracles against the nations (1:3–2:16) but also seven transgressions of Israel in 2:6–8, seven acts of punishment in 2:14–16, seven-plus-one rhetorical questions in 3:3–8, seven verbs calling ironically for the sanctuary worship in 4:4–5, seven prior calamities in 4:6–12, seven verbs in the hymnal fragment of 5:8–9, seven things Yahweh hates in 5:21–24, seven verbs calling for woe in 6:4–6, and seven damning quotes from the merchants in 8:5–8. Moreover, Lundbom considers 2:10–12 as an original part of the speech because of the appearance of some key words in those verses as well as in 2:9 and because of the inner structure of verses 9–12. This method shows some fundamental differences in German and American (or Lundbom's) methodology: in Germany, literary criticism still holds a leading position among the methods of exegesis, while in the States the structural analysis of the final text has a more dominant position. However, both methodological approaches have to be considered as essential for trying to understand a text as completely as possible. In Amos 3:3–8 (3:8 is additional), the author observes seven rhetorical questions belonging together in a complex structured way; thus, 1:2 and 3:8 belong together. The same can be observed between a sevenfold structure in 1:3–2:16, on the one hand, and 3:3–6, on the other hand, while its centerpiece is 3:2. In view of such complex and hard-to-observe compositional structures, the question arises whether ancient authors really thought and wrote in such ways. If we assume that most of the people could not read the text, was it really possible to understand such a compositional structure only by hearing? Do such observations really reveal the ancient authors' thoughts and methods of writing, or do they merely reflect the structural approaches of modern authors? Such questions demand further research on the basis of broader textual evidence to explore the validity of such a structural approach as an appropriate method of text analysis.

Miano's essay concerning the history of Israel also clearly reflects the typical differences between German and American approaches. Miano tries to find a solution for the problematic chronologies in 1 Kgs 18. Based on structural text analysis, he proposes a new order of text passages in the following three chapters: 2 Kgs 18:13a; 18:17–19:8; 20:1–19; 18:13b–16; 19:9–37. This offers many new possibilities to better understand history in that period. Particularly remarkable for me as a German scholar is the intensive use of nonbiblical inscriptions in this essay. Currently, the study of history on the basis of a thorough knowledge of non- or extrabiblical texts holds a much more central role in American research than in German scholarship. On the other hand, however, Miano does

not look for layers of redaction, which would be so typical and prominent in present German research. He focuses solely on reconstructing the history behind the biblical texts. Maybe this is the better way to understand a small text than to reconstruct a whole redactional layer with many uncertain points. Again, both ways of research are necessary for understanding biblical texts, and we must strengthen both approaches in the States as well as in Germany.

The closest parallels between biblical research in Germany and the States seem to exist in the area called “Lexicon” in this volume. Lexicography is still one of the most important fields of research in Germany, and we have a long tradition starting with Wilhelm Gesenius and others. In a thorough study, Malena presents the biblical and extrabiblical references for spices mentioned in the Song of Songs. She also shows the close connection between Ezek 27 and the spices mentioned in the Song of Songs.

No department of theology in Germany or Europe would present in our days an independent section on “Archeology and Paleography” in order to celebrate its own research in exegesis. Despite an increasing international or American trend in Germany and all over Europe, many professorships connected with archaeology or paleography were given up in order to concentrate on the biblical text and the study of the development of this text. Extrabiblical studies do not play a central role in European research any longer, nor are there many special departments or, at least, chairs for this kind of research in the faculties of theology or Jewish studies. Ironically, only the most prominent topics of the latest research, such as on the emergence of ancient Israel or the debate about monotheism and the role of religion in the daily life, are and remain strongly connected to archaeology. Burton’s article shows just how important ethno-archaeology is for getting information on daily life in biblical times.

More closely connected to classic “biblical archaeology,” the article written by Zucconi shows, however, that the combination of archaeology and exegesis demands more thorough hermeneutical considerations than are normally found in biblical scholarship. Moreover, Zucconi’s article shows regrettable ignorance of still-relevant publications of German research on the historical topography of the Holy Land. Those publications contain many still-valid results, including those by Martin Noth and Albrecht Alt in the middle of the last century or the scholarly team editing the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (1969–1993) and several other authors. Zucconi proposes that Num 34:3–5 as well as Josh 15:1–4 should be attributed to a preexilic author because the Edomite frontier in those texts corresponds to the frontier in the eighth to sixth centuries B.C.E. This would be an argument for considering the P source (cf. Num 34) as preexilic. However, in his commentary to the book of Numbers, Noth has already shown that Num 34 depends on Josh 15, which is generally regarded as preexilic; therefore, Num 34 must be younger and

should be considered postexilic. At any rate, we have a significant hermeneutical problem. Texts do not always rely on reality but may rather express claims or even be completely utopian. In my opinion, Num 34 is a claim in postexilic times to reoccupy and resettle the whole country owned in preexilic times, and that is why the author of Num 34 used the border line of Josh 15 for his description. So, the traditional postexilic date of P does not need to be changed.

Looking at the book as a whole, I must emphasize the different developments of and approaches to research in the States and in Germany (or in Europe, if Germany is considered as one major portion of Europe). Naturally, different countries always develop differently in their research. However, our field of biblical studies is too small to ignore the most important developments in other countries and to exclude them from one's own research. Perhaps we need more exchange of ideas and a closer cooperation to work together on our main common interest: to understand the Hebrew Bible better. My hope is that American scholars will start to recognize the most important European studies or to refer more to them in their research, even if they are written in German or other European languages, since a many good observations and publications have been offered by European scholars in the last years. On the other hand, I hope that, by an international dialogue, European and German scholars will recognize again that the historical setting of the texts is essential for understanding all of its aspects and implications. This demands a thorough knowledge of extrabiblical sources and material evidence on the history and archaeology of biblical times.