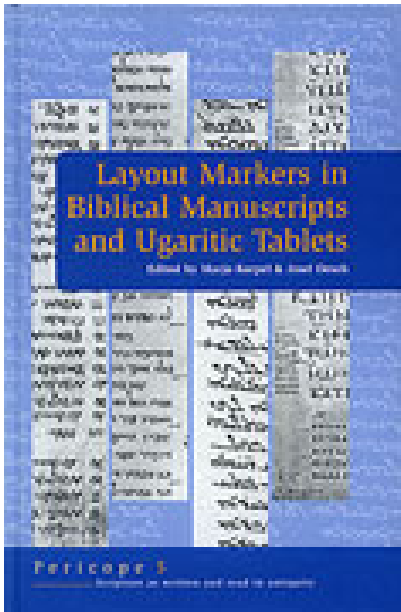**Korpel, Marjo, and Josef Oesch, eds.**

Layout Markers in Biblical Manuscripts and Ugaritic Tablets

Pericope 5

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This book forms the fifth volume of the Pericope series and is composed of papers presented at "the Fourth Pericope Meeting held in connection with the SBL International Meeting at Cambridge, 2003" (i). The compilation is very worthwhile, thought-provoking, and informative. Further, despite being formed by so many different scholars, one can trace themes that run throughout the entire book. One of these is that the Masoretes placed paragraph markers at the beginning of divine speech. Thus phrases such as "Thus says the Lord" will be preceded by either a *setumah* or a *petuhah.* This is useful knowledge to readers of the Hebrew Bible. The only small drawback of the book is that most of its authors are not native speakers of English, and this at times leads to some curious spellings, syntax, and sentences.

D. J. Clark's "Delimitation Markers in the Book of Numbers" reminds us that the breaks that occur in the text of the Hebrew Bible are not arbitrary but generally planned and that in the book of Numbers in particular we see theological and/or ideological intent in the scribal structuring of the text. Clark thus investigates large unit breaks (i.e., the *parashot*) and both weak and strong paragraph breaks (i.e., respectively the *setumot* and the *petuhot*). He focuses primarily on the significance of the *petuhot* and *setumot*. Thus in Num 2:17 the Levites receive a single-verse *setumah* paragraph in the middle of the unit consisting of 2:1–31. He observes, "Presumably this puts special focus on them and

suggests some extra editorial or scribal respect for their status and responsibilities" (9). Clark also notes that the reason why so many new paragraphs begin with a verb of speaking—and in particular the Lord speaking—says "something about the way a quotation formula is perceived as a discourse marker" (10). It further says something about the importance of the words of the Lord. There is, however, an apparent distinction between the uses of *'mr* and *dbr,* with *dbr* representing "a more significant break" (10).

Wim de Bruin in "Traces of a Hebrew Text Division in the Bible Commentaries of Jerome" informs us that "there are good indications in the commentaries to support the assumption that a Proto-masoretic Hebrew text delimitation existed, and that these delimitations were to a large extent similar to the later Masoretic text delimitation in *petuhot* and *setumot.* This text delimitation was used by Jerome in parts of his Commentaries" (29). De Bruin utilizes Isa 8–10; 17–19; 40–49; and Ezek 21–39 to demonstrate his point. In Isa 8–10 de Bruin notes that "Jerome never misses a place where the later Masoretic tradition has a *petuhah* or *setumah*" (24). In Isa 17–19 "Jerome never removed a delimitation corresponding to a *setumah* or *petuhah* in the later Masoretic tradition" (25). In Isa 40–49 "we see an exact similarity of 77%" (26). Finally, with regard to Ezek 21–39 he observes, "Though leaving out many of the later Masoretic dividers, the Church Father never inserts a delimitation if the latter Masoretic tradition does not have one. The only exception is 29:3b" (26–27). He does mention the possibility that Jerome may have been using a different text-type for the Vulgate, but this, of course, does not nullify his thesis.

Raymond de Hoop in "The Frame Story of the Book of Job: Prose or Verse? Job 1:1–5 as a Test Case" argues for seeing the framework of Job as poetry. He maintains that "the classification of the narrative framework as prose is problematic with regard to the speeches found in the narrative framework … as well as regarding the introduction to the direct speech at the beginning of the dialogues (3:1–2)" (45). He also adduces the Masoretic accentuation and layout, the layout of the LXX and Vulgate, and the verse structure of the versions and in particular that of the Peshitta. He further utilizes W. G. E. Watson's criteria of broad, structural, other, and negative indicators of poetry to demonstrate that the framework is indeed poetry.

In "The Structure of Micah 6 in the Light of Ancient Delimitations," Johannes de Moor presents us with his analysis of the chapter and a "critical evaluation of ancient unit delimitations" (78). He also discusses examples of dubious methodology and text division among ancients and moderns alike. De Moor notes, "[T]he current form-critical, stylistic and rhetorical methods of analysis possess insufficient potential to attain a basic form of scholarly agreement about the structure of a text. Therefore it is a welcome addition to our methodical arsenal to look at the paragraphing found in manuscripts from

antiquity" (86). Yet he cautions, "[T]he possibility of erroneous omission of paragraph marking at an early stage of the text's transmission should always be kept in mind" (87). In his analysis section, de Moor suggests that Mic 6 should be read as a "large compositional unit" called a canto. This canto is composed of an introductory canticle of two strophes (vv. 1–2) followed by two canticles of three strophes each (vv. 3–5 and 6–8). There then follows a subcanto "consisting of two canticles of three strophes each (6:9–13, 14–16)" (90). De Moor opines that the chapter addresses King Ahaz and the wealthy Jerusalem court. The Deuteronomistic elements of this chapter, which are a product of Micah himself, were the "inspiration for the deuteronomistic description of Ahaz" found in Kings (95).

Meindert Dijkstra's "Unit Delimitation and Interpretation in the Book of Amos" finds that "delimitation of sense units in Amos … is strongly related to demarcation of the divine word, i.e., by means of formulae such as the messenger formula, the נאם יהוה phrase both as opening and closing formula, the quotation formula אמר יהוה, the summon to hear the word … and also the introduction of visionary reports" (128). He further notes, "This principle of marking the divine word may sometimes lead to inclusion of major delimiters before a messenger formula that are unjustified by text-criticism and exegesis" (130). Despite this guiding principle, there is still a great deal of variety in the paragraph divisions of the various editions and manuscripts. Thus the evidence of pericope division has to be weighed and not counted as with textual criticism, since it is subject to all the same forces of varying traditions, scribal errors, helpful emendations, and differing *Vorlagen.* In the end, however, there are some grounds of regularity. For instance, "The distribution of open and closed sections of Amos in BH(S) is rather odd, for Chapters 1–3 are divided into *petuhot* and Chapters 4–5 mainly into *setumot*" (128), and there seem to be "two major textual traditions of unit delimitation in Amos" (132) with Mur, CC, CL, CA forming one group and 4Qg, CP, CR, PB, and V2 forming the other.

Marjo Korpel in her "Unit Delimitation in Ugaritic Cultic Texts and Some Babylonian and Hebrew Parallels" examines word, sentence, and section delimitation in some Ugaritic cultic texts. She believes that the Ugaritic scribes began to employ word dividers to save space on expensive clay tablets and that these same vertical slashes or narrow wedges were also used to demarcate the end of sentences. Larger sections were marked by either single or double horizontal lines. These section lines follow varying logical groupings of associated deities, calendar days of rituals, stylistic structure and content, or even simply a fixed number of lines. In fact, Korpel notes that "such a horizontal dividing line might even occur in the middle of a sentence which probably means that just as in much later Hebrew, Greek, Syriac and Latin manuscripts a major division could be put in proleptically" (145). But all these delimiters are used inconsistently and irregularly, and

this corresponds well with what we see in the Masoretic tradition. Korpel observes, "Just as it was impossible to establish a hierarchy between double and single rulings on the Ugaritic tablets, so it is impossible to establish a functional difference between *setumah* and *petuhah*" (154). She goes on to say, "Although a *petuhah* is supposed to 'open' a new section whereas a *setumah* 'closes' it, the two types of separators are often interchanged" (154 n. 81). Likewise, section marking appears to be governed by the logical considerations of direct speech or conditional particles. Indeed, the *petuhot* and *setumot* can also appear in the middle of verses, just as the Ugaritic section markers can appear in the middle of sentences.

In "Pericope Markers in Some Early Greek New Testament Manuscripts," Stanley Porter looks at "three major types of section markers" (163). They are: "places where letters are written ekthetically … And usually protruding into the margin"; places "where a distinct stroke or paragraphos is written," usually in the margin; and places "where lines are intentionally written short so as to start the next line on the margin" (163). He examines P90, 77, 103, 4, 64, 67, 66, 15,16, 75 88, 71, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, and Bezae. Porter argues that "instances of pericope marking are apparently haphazard in the earliest manuscripts" (172). Even individual manuscripts are not "internally consistent" with their own systems (172). He further argues that "there appears to be an irregular pattern of growth in both the frequency and the regularity of the use of pericope markers in manuscripts, so that by the time one arrives at the major codices there is a more apparently systematic marking system in place, as evidenced by Sinaiticus" (172–73).

David Trobish's "Structural Markers in New Testament Manuscripts with Special Attention to Observations in Codex Boernerianus (G 012) and Papyrus 46 of the Letters of Paul" examines the role of the author, scribe, editor, publisher, and reader in structuring the text of New Testament manuscripts. Indeed, in the ancient world these five roles were not necessarily carried out by five different people but were often carried out by one and the same person. The structural markings of the text, however, will differ in accordance with the role played by the person interacting with the text. Thus publishers will demarcate the text differently than a public reader will. One also must be careful to observe for what purpose that text itself was written. Thus Trobisch states, "Just like their secular counterparts, text variants of the Christian Bible are best explained as attempts to better serve different constituencies and needs like education…, public reading during worship services…, personal edification, or purely scholarly interests" (178).

Marianne van Amerongen in "The Structure of Zechariah 4: A Comparison between the Masoretic Text, Ancient Translations, and Modern Commentaries" stands against the text division of the MT and most Bible scholars and argues for the text division of the

versions, which divide 4:1–14 into a separate unit, and for the "thematic coherence" of Zech 4 (199). She sees the chapter as a canto made up of the three subcantos: verses 1–4, 5–10, and 11–14. The first subcanto "forms the basis" of the canto and describes the vision that the prophet saw (199). Verses 5–10 and 11–14 then explain the vision of the lampstand and the two olive trees, respectively. Her overall argument for coherence, however, does suffer somewhat from the inconsistency of saying in the article section that it is the seven eyes that rejoice and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel (thus the seven eyes are "the subject of the verbal forms") and then translating it differently in the translation section (203 and 199–200).