

J. C. DE MOOR and H. F. VAN ROOY (eds), *Past, Present, Future: The Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets* (Oudtestamentische Studiën 44). E. J. Brill, Leiden, 2000. ix, 342 pp. £66.02. ISBN 9004118713.

In the world of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament scholarship, the Dutch punch above their weight. Their lively Old Testament Society has long published some of its more significant proceedings in the distinguished Oudtestamentische Studiën series, and similarly the joint meetings held every third year with the British Society for Old Testament Study have found an outlet for publication in the same way. Now a third member has joined the party, namely the South African Society, with whom the Dutch have an especial affinity for historical reasons, and the present volume publishes the papers given at the first (though it should by no means be the last) joint meeting of the two societies in 1999. Our Dutch colleagues are to be congratulated on initiating this further development in international scholarly cooperation.

Unless the conference is specifically focused on a single theme, collections of proceedings do not always make for a coherent volume, however. That does not mean that the collection is less valuable, any more than a journal need be, but it leaves the reviewer with the problem of how to organise his or her remarks. From the title of the present volume, it might be supposed that the papers would concentrate on links between the Deuteronomistic History (i.e. the great historical work spanning Deuteronomy to the end of 2 Kings) and the work of the prophets, a perennially fascinating subject; after all, in the Hebrew Bible these two collections are known as the Former and the Latter Prophets, so that connections of some sort have been recognised since antiquity, and in more modern times these have been worked over from a variety of different literary, social, religious and historical points of view.

In fact, however, of the nineteen papers (all in English) only one (by M. D. Terblanche) tackles this issue head on as he briefly attempts a renewed answer to the old conundrum of why Jeremiah is not mentioned in the books of Kings, while a further two come close: H. J. M. van Deventer finding Deuteronomistic influence in Dan. 9:4–19 (which in his view, however, is a later addition to its present context) and E. Noort tracing the early reception history of the figure of Joshua as a prophet.

Beyond that, most of the essays tackle specific issues in either the historical books or in one of the prophets, though a few do not seem even to come into those broader categories. One of the editors (de Moor), for instance, argues that although Genesis 49 shows evidence of having gone through a long history of composition, so that it includes late elements, it nevertheless also has material which derives from early, pre-monarchic times. In somewhat similar anti-revisionist vein, M. D. Koster enters a passionate plea for the recognition that, despite much that has been written in recent years, the Bible nevertheless contains a great deal of historical value and that to downplay this recognition is seriously misleading both academically and pastorally. M. Dijkstra introduces new considerations into the problem of the dating of the Samaria ostraca; and in a long and rather difficult essay G. Snyman draws on recent developments in South African politics and society to discuss the proposition: 'Texts are Fundamentally Facts of Power, Not of Democratic Exchange'.

Also drawing on South African experience is one of the several essays on topics relating to the Deuteronomistic History itself: W. Boshoff recalls that the historian shows considerable anti-northern bias and that this must be taken into account when attempting historical reconstruction. E. Scheffler makes the same point with particular reference to the reign of Israel's first king, Saul; once stripped of such later judgements, a really rather sympathetic portrait emerges, that of an honourable and heroic father of the nation who gave it military security through his largely successful campaigns and was also responsible for establishing their religion in the form that we later recognise

it. P. J. Botha studies the 'incomparability formula' that is used of the kings Hezekiah and Josiah but without reference to the fact that it is also used of Solomon nor to the very perceptive article on the same topic by G. N. Knoppers, *CBQ* 54 (1992), pp. 411–31. A. Breytenbach argues that the literary creation of the figure of Samuel as we now have it is the product of Zadokite priests of the time of Hezekiah; E. Evnikél defends the traditional view of the existence of an ark narrative in Samuel against some recent doubters; A. van der Kooij examines two issues, one literary and the other historical, arising from the narratives of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah as recorded in 2 Kings 18–20; and J. T. Walsh attempts a new literary analysis of 2 Kings 17 which results in the suggestion that the passage is more sympathetic to the Samaritans than is usually thought.

The final group of essays relates to the prophetic literature and may be equally briefly surveyed. U. Berges continues his research into the servants in the last part of the book of Isaiah and in the Psalter, H. Leene suggests that the new covenant material in Jeremiah is dependent on that in Ezekiel rather than the reverse, E. Peels analyses the Elam oracle in Jer. 49:34–39, L. de Regt uses changes of person as a means for identifying paragraph divisions in the book of Hosea, and J. Renkema discusses the date of Obadiah.

There is thus no hiding the fact that this is a collection of articles, for which the book's title is little more than a brave, but ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to give an impression of unity. This is a trivial point, however. Although inevitably the essays are of uneven quality, some are valuable contributions in their own right, and we must be grateful to our Dutch colleagues for once again taking the initiative in providing us with so much food for thought.

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MARK S. SMITH, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*, second edition, with a forward by Patrick D. Miller (The Biblical Resource Series). Eerdmans, Grand Rapids & Dove, Dearborn, 2002. xlvii, 243 pp. \$25.00 (paperback). ISBN 0-8028-3972-X.

The release of this second edition of Mark Smith's *Early History of God* is timely as it follows the publication of what is effectively the sequel, namely Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001). As Smith explains (p. xxxvii), his *Origins of Biblical Monotheism* picks up where his *Early History of God* leaves off, and certain aspects of the earlier work are presumed in the sequel. Between the publication of the first edition of Smith's *Early History of God* in 1990 and the publication of its sequel in 2001, however, the study of ancient Israelite religion witnessed an explosion in scholarly output which, coupled with new archaeological, epigraphic and iconographic data, necessitated its revision.

For those not acquainted with the basic tenets of the first edition, a brief summary is in order before we consider what is different in this second edition. In short, Smith argues that ancient Israel, being essentially Canaanite, was polytheistic. Israel's central deity was Yahweh, who eventually converged with El. El's traditional consort, Asherah, was perhaps associated with, and worshipped alongside, Yahweh in the pre-monarchic period, but during the monarchy, this association and the worship of other deities, including Baal, became less acceptable. Smith further argues that, as a Yahwehistic 'monolatry' developed during the period of the Israelite monarchies (monotheism emerging later only in the Persian period), many of the attributes and functions of