

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. Evnikel 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.

Christ Church, Oxford

H. G. M. WILLIAMSON

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

the other deities were transferred onto Yahweh, with two significant exceptions being those associated with death and sexuality. Characteristic of this new 'monolatry' was a gradual rejection of Canaanite religious practices, such as the use of high places, feeding and consulting the dead and child sacrifice. For reviews of the first edition, see in particular those of Freedman in *JBL* 110/4 (1991), pp. 693–98 (696–98), Hendel in *CBQ* 54/1 (1992), pp. 132–33, and Edelman in *Journal of Religion* 72/1 (1992), pp. 89–90. See also the comments of Dever in *BASOR* 298 (May 1995), pp. 43–44. In contrast to most reviewers, who seem to be intoxicated by Smith's erudite style, Edelman and Dever both provide sobering criticisms of his methods that should be taken into account.

As Smith's thesis has not really changed in the years between the first and second editions, the question remains as to the value of this second edition. In addition to correcting errors present in the first edition, Smith has updated the bibliographic data and discussions of primary sources and also included cross-references to his *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*. Some parts of the text have been revised, particularly the discussions of Yahweh's origins and assimilation into the Canaanite highland pantheon. Perhaps the most significant innovation in this second edition, however, is the provision of a new preface (pp. xii–xli), in which the author gives an account of how research into ancient Israelite religion has developed since the first edition was published in 1990. Sufficient indices are furnished (texts cited, authors and a general index) but, disappointingly, this volume lacks a bibliography, which means one is often forced to comb back through pages of footnotes to find the full reference.

Yale University

SIAM BHAYRO

JOSEPH A. FITZMYER, *Tobit* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature). Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/New York, 2003. xviii, 374 pp. €88. ISBN 3-11-017574-6.

The Book of Tobit is one of the most charming and edifying works of ancient Jewish literature. Long neglected, the story has recently attracted attention because of the official publication of the Qumran fragments of the text. A few years ago, Professor Joseph Fitzmyer completed the pioneering work of Josef Milik by publishing the five Dead Sea manuscripts of the book in *Qumran Cave 4, XIV: Parabiblical Texts*, part 2 (DJD 19; ed. M. Broshi et al.; Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995), pp. 1–76. Building on this publication, but going well beyond it, he now presents us with a solid and reliable commentary on the story of Tobit as attested in several ancient traditions (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin).

Unfortunately, the important Qumran manuscripts preserve barely a fifth of the narrative. Accordingly, Fitzmyer's commentary gives pride of place to the two major forms of the Greek text: the longer recension found in Sinaiticus (so-called Greek II) and the shorter recension of Vaticanus (so-called Greek I). A particularly useful aspect of this volume is the translation of both Greek recensions in parallel columns, so that the reader can instantly see the differences. Fitzmyer sides with the majority view that so-called Greek II represents a more original form of the book, not least because it matches the Qumran fragments more closely than does Greek I.

A significant feature of this commentary is the careful attention given to textual questions. Thus, Fitzmyer helpfully uses italics in his Greek II translation for any words that are represented at Qumran. Moreover, in order to present a complete text of Greek II, Fitzmyer supplements the first major lacuna in Sinaiticus (Tob. 4:7–19b) with MS 319, and the second lacuna (Tob. 13:6i–10b) with the Old Latin plus Vaticanus. After each section of the translation throughout, the commentary explains