

have in particular much to offer. Naturally one will not always agree with Rofé's conclusions, and the present reviewer especially misses a better integration of the book of Deuteronomy in the larger literary context of the Pentateuch/Hexateuch, as well as a more detailed argument with current scholarship (E. Otto, B. M. Levinson). Also, the reason why D₂ must have happened in the time of Josiah is not always clear to one. All this, however, must not distract from pointing out again that this impressive collection of essays will have to be taken very seriously by anybody working on the vexing problems of the literary and historical origins of the book of Deuteronomy. Since they are now available in English, scholars will have little excuse not to engage with Rofé's detailed and thought-provoking observations.

Detailed indexes of subjects, persons and passages help the reader to navigate within the book.

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HAROLD V. BENNETT, *Injustice Made Legal: Deuteronomic Law and the Plight of Widows, Strangers, and Orphans in Ancient Israel* (The Bible in its World). Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge, 2002. xii, 209 pp. £19.99/\$50.00. ISBN 0-8028-3909-6.

It has become scholarly *opinio communis* to stress the humanitarian emphasis of many of the laws found in the Deuteronomic Code. In his recent study, H. V. Bennett wants to turn this generally accepted view on its head, and he sets out to argue that many of the social laws in Deuteronomy were in fact constructed to cement the position of those members of society already holding power and privilege. The textual basis for his enterprise is the provisions dealing with the status of the widow, orphan and alien (Deut. 14:22–29; 16:9–12, 13–15; 24:17–18, 19–22; and 26:12–15). Before starting to look at the texts themselves he provides an extensive methodological framework, drawing especially on recent critical theories such as 'critical legal studies', 'feminist theory' and 'critical race theory'. Thus a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' emerges, as well as the insight that law and legal sanctions are a powerful tool for institutionalised social control, 'maintaining relations of dominion and subordination' (p. 14). Immediately from the beginning of the book it becomes clear that the use and discussion of critical legal theory is one of the strongest parts of the book, and is highly recommended for anybody working on the social background of biblical law. In his survey of the references to גֵּר, יְתוֹם and אֵלֶּמְנָה, Bennett draws heavily on N. K. Gottwald and G. Lenski's models of an agrarian society to argue for a certain social stratification within Israelite society. Within such a stratified society the alien, orphan and widow lacked a proper guardian and were therefore especially vulnerable to exploitation. Whether all this necessarily leads to the conclusion that the laws regulating the status of the *personae miserae* must have been written in the Omride period remains doubtful.

It is one of the puzzling features of the book that many of the fascinating insights of Bennett's study are clouded by a rather unconvincing model of the origin of the Book of Deuteronomy. This is especially unfortunate since during the course of the book it becomes quite obvious that his chosen interpretative framework does not need the historical reconstructions. When law really creates and maintains socioeconomic inequality and dehumanisation (p. 174), the continued existence of the book of Deuteronomy in the exilic and post-exilic period would mean that this inequality was preserved. Also the importance of an urban setting within the Deuteronomic Corpus is difficult to reconcile with Bennett's thesis that the legislation favoured rural elites. However, his argument that the laws under scrutiny allowed for the existence of groups of landless

persons without having to challenge the structure of the society that produced them is worth taking into account. Maybe life in an agrarian society was less humane than we generally want to believe.

Bennett's work is a fine example of a social-scientific study of biblical law that nevertheless lacks the diachronic analysis required for such an enterprise. The insights into the interplay between the formulation of laws and the social-economic interests of elites will be worth discussing further, and his critical framework should be expanded to other parts of the legal material in Deuteronomy.

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DAVID-MARC D'HAMONVILLE, *La Bible d'Alexandrie, 17: Les Proverbes*, traduction du texte grec de la Septante, introduction et notes. Cerf, Paris, 2000. 357 pp. €37.00. ISBN 2-204-06486-6.

This sensitive and instructive commentary on the earliest Greek translation of Proverbs keeps to the usual arrangement of the *Bible d'Alexandrie*: a lengthy introduction (pp. 19–155) followed by a French translation with compact (but meaty) lexical, exegetical and historical notes (pp. 158–342). The notes on LXX Proverbs' reception history include other Hellenistic Jewish works, the New Testament and patristic writings, but not rabbinic references, for which the reader is referred to the 1993/1996 commentary by A. Lelièvre and A. Maillot. Much needs and deserves to be said about the detail of the translation and notes, but this review will confine itself—for reasons both of space and of intrinsic interest—to the Introduction, which could almost stand on its own as a monograph. Of particular interest and importance are the demonstrations of the thoroughly Jewish translator's verbal and poetic skills, his high level of education and the degree to which he has, apparently happily, absorbed and expressed Greek culture and ideas.

Concerning the text, d'Hamonville demonstrates that the freedom of the translation does not reflect a Hebrew source appreciably different from the later MT, except that he argues for the divergent order of 24:25–31:31 reflecting an existing pre-Masoretic Hebrew arrangement, rather than a deliberate reworking by the translator himself (pp. 35–36). The translator however has created a different, and more coherent, structure by organising the material through a series of 'distichs' and 'strophes' (these are tabulated). The many divergences, pluses, minuses and unusual lexical choices that make LXX Proverbs so distinctive a translation all contribute to a consistency not found in the Hebrew. This is effected especially through the *tour de force* whereby Solomon remains the subject while other characters are airbrushed out. Although emphasising the control exercised by the translator on the shaping of the Greek text, he claims originality in attributing at least five of the pluses (all doublets) to the work of a reviser (p. 49).

The translator is found to have a good command of Greek and to be so well-versed in Classical Greek literature that allusions and echoes (all listed) both literary and metrical occur with great frequency. Many examples are given (some of the scansion on p. 95 seems odd, but the discussion is well-balanced). What emerges is the picture of a work which, without compromising its Hebrew parentage, can stand on its own, not as midrash or as targum, but as a Hellenistic literary text. One of the most valuable contributions of the *Bible d'Alexandrie* is to insist on reading the LXX first and foremost as a Greek text, and it certainly pays dividends with Proverbs. D'Hamonville makes interesting connections with the proverb form, already a popular feature in Greek literature from Aeschylus onwards and especially in Aesop. His literary and