

2003

BOOK REVIEWS

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***On the Way to Nineveh: Studies in Honor of George M. Landes*, edited by Stephen L. Cook and S. C. Winter. ASOR Books, Volume 4. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999. x + 353 pp., 13 figures, 1 table. Paper. \$49.95.**

The collected essays in this volume cover a wide range of topics in biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies and thereby reflect the broad interests of the honoree, George M. Landes. Many of the contributors were students of Landes or members of the Columbia University Seminar for the Study of the Hebrew Bible. All were inspired by the breadth of his scholarship, which spanned work in philology and in Northwest Semitic languages, archaeology, exegesis, and theology.

The continuing benefits of careful work in Hebrew philology and ancient Near Eastern languages and literature are evident in several of the essays. Richard W. Corney ("'Rod and Staff' [Psalm 23:4]: A Double Image?") proposes that *šebet* and *miš'enet* call to mind implements carried by both shepherds and kings. Consequently, these words unite the pastoral and the royal images found in the psalm. David Marcus ("Nineveh's 'Three Days' Walk' [Jonah 3:3]: Another Interpretation") draws on Hebrew and Akkadian to argue that *mahälak šälöšet yämim* is an expression signifying a long journey. Close reading of biblical texts alongside imagery of the natural world from the Amarna texts allow Herbert B. Huffmon to illustrate the background and hopeful tone of Jer 31:35-37 ("The Impossible: God's Words of Assurance in Jeremiah 31:35-37"). Edward L. Greenstein ("Jethro's Wit: An Interpretation of Wordplay in Exodus 18") finds that clever use of language, especially punning, helps to establish Jethro as a clever and wise man who recognizes YHWH and gives good counsel.

Combining philology with form criticism, Ee Kon Kim ("Holy War Ideology and the Rapid Shift of Mood in Psalm 3") suggests that the holy warrior's cry (*tërû'â*), which prompts immediate help from God, provides a context for solving the puzzle of the change from complaint to praise in the lament Psalms. Thomas B. Dozeman ("The Song of the Sea and Salvation History") explores

linguistic features of Exod 15:1–18 as well as issues of content, genre, meter, motifs, and diction. He concludes that the Song is a composite of an original song of YHWH's victory at the sea (vv. 1–12, 18) and a statement of salvation history (vv. 13–17) composed by “deuteronomistic tradents” (p. 104). Stephen L. Cook utilizes what he calls a “new tradition-historical approach” (p. 292) to place Exodus 18 in the “E-stream” of tradition (“The Tradition of Mosaic Judges: Past Approaches and New Directions”). He proposes that the E-stream's social location was pre-state Israel and that its later tradents campaigned for the “restitution” (p. 302) of an earlier style of leadership and covenant administration.

The social world pictured in the biblical text is of interest to Edward F. Campbell, Jr. (“Ruth Revisited”) and Naomi Steinberg (“The Problem of Human Sacrifice in War: An Analysis of Judges 11”). The essay by Campbell, whose work on Ruth grew out of the Biblical Colloquium in which he and Landes were members, is crafted as a response to Jack Sasson's commentary on Ruth. Campbell argues for seeing Ruth as less artful in her encounters with Boaz than does Sasson and for understanding the deity to be “working in the shadows” (p. 66) of the story. He also asserts that rural people in ancient Israel were not separated ideologically from their urban counterparts, but that “lofty covenant ideology in Israel informed the ethos of ancient Israel from court to temple to village to countryside” (p. 69). In addition, Campbell makes a case for the possibility of female authorship of this and other texts in the Hebrew Bible. Steinberg uses anthropological ideas about sacrifice to shed light on Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter. Concepts of purity, holy war, kinship, and the means by which humans forge a connection to the deity combine to offer an understanding of this sacrifice in terms of the social world portrayed in the biblical text.

Robert R. Wilson's essay (“Historicizing the Prophets: History and Literature in the Book of Jeremiah”) begins with praise for Landes's “insistence” that history and literature be held together in biblical studies. Wilson shows how each informs the other by reading the biographical material in Jeremiah as an interpretive guide that aims to “clarify or disambiguate the poetic material with which it is associated” (p. 146).

Four essays in a row deal with Jonah, a favorite topic of Landes's. Phyllis Tribble's retelling and analysis of Jonah (“A Tempest in a Text: Ecological Soundings in the Book of Jonah”), which calls to attention the ways that “theology and ecology converge to stir up trouble” (p. 188), is one of the highlights of this volume. Baruch A. Levine (“The Place of Jonah in the History of Biblical Ideas”) notes that Jonah is read as part of the afternoon Yom Kippur service and thus uses the book as a springboard for discussion of repentance in the Hebrew Bible. Johanna W. H. van Wijk-Bos reviews traditional ways Jonah has been interpreted and rejects narrowing the message of the book to one option. Instead, she attempts to read Jonah

on “multiple levels,” allowing for “abiding ambiguities and . . . sets of themes and ideas that do not exclude one another” (p. 220). Her admitted Christian perspective, and her extended treatment of repentance, makes her essay a nice counterpart to Levine's. S. C. Winter reports on an Antiochene commentary on Jonah (“A Fifth Century Christian Commentary on Jonah”), showing its use of typology and arguing for “a connection between Antiochene Christian exegetical method and Hellenistic moral philosophy” (p. 239). Particularly interesting is her observation that for the Antiochenes, God's relationship to prophets was seen as analogous to a moral philosopher's relationship to his followers.

In recognition of Landes's work on translation for the NRSV, Gerald T. Sheppard enumerates several concerns that translators must address (“Issues in Contemporary Translation: Late Modern Vantages and Lessons from Past Epochs”). Interested in how the culture and context of reading affects translations, he analyzes Henry Ainsworth's popular English edition of the Psalms from 1612. He pays special attention to how Ainsworth handled historical references in the Psalms. James A. Sanders (“Intertextuality and Canon”) elucidates how the structures of biblical canons further certain ideas about theology and can promote messages about other issues, such as the meaning of history and individual responsibility, as well. Also included in this volume is the publication (by Roger Boraas) of pottery from Locus 14.132 at Shechem, where Landes served on the excavation staff.

In the introduction, the editors state that they hope that “all readers will appreciate this volume for the diversity of contemporary methods that it maps and for the tribute to George Landes that it attempts to render” (p. 17). This collection succeeds in showcasing the many interests of George Landes, the evolution of Albrightian ideas about biblical scholarship, and the value of combining philological study with archaeology, knowledge of the ancient Near East, and literary study for a better understanding of the Hebrew Bible.

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