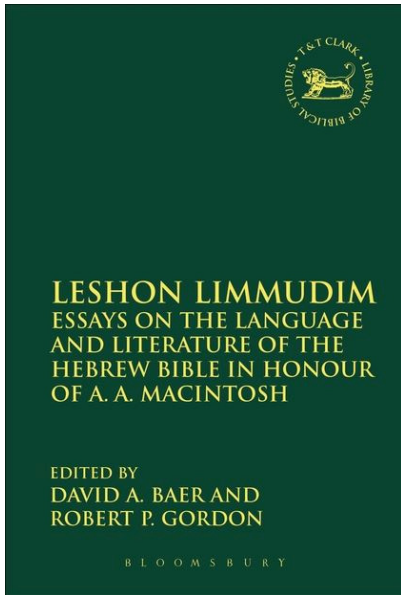


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David A. Baer and Robert P. Gordon, eds.

***Leshon Limmudim: Essays on the Language and Literature of the Hebrew Bible in Honour of A.A. Macintosh***

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The goal of an anniversary volume is to celebrate an eminent scholar with a collection of essays that deal with topics studied by that academic or can attract his or her interest. So it is that anniversary volumes often contain papers dedicated to curious topics of apparently minor weight that nevertheless delight readers with a series of intelligent and insightful observations. Judged from this perspective, this volume of studies in honor of Andrew A. Macintosh, the instructor in introductory Biblical Hebrew in the Cambridge Faculty of Divinity, suits its purpose. It provides the reader with many interesting discussions of various Hebrew words, scriptural texts, and biblical themes. The volume is organized internally into sections devoted to the divisions of the Hebrew Bible (Pentateuch, Historical Books, Prophets, and Writings), with a final section on themes and resonances of biblical language and literature.

In the first essay, "A Text in Search of Context: The *imago Dei* in the First Chapters of Genesis," Nathan MacDonald reviews recent interpretations of Gen 1:26 in relation to the way their authors perceive the source-critical assignment of the initial chapters of the book of Genesis. In the second part of the contribution MacDonald comments on Irenaeus's account of the *imago*. The next paper, by Robert P. Gordon, "Evensong in Eden: As It Probably Was Not in the Beginning," also contains two parts. In the first part

Gordon evaluates various parallels between the garden of Eden and the tabernacle/temple and concludes that they are of variable strength and relevance. On this basis, he contends that the vocation of the first human couple and of the entire creation to God's worship is not so self-evident in the message of the Eden narrative as is commonly held. The second part of the essay, inspired by passages from book 4 of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and by Karl Barth's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, contains comments about the religious experience of Adam and Eve. In "Noah's Drunkenness, the Curse of Canaan, Ham's Crime, and the Blessing of Shem and Japheth [Genesis 9:18–27]," John Day, after reviewing several interpretations of the biblical episode, concludes that Ham's crimes consisted in the lack of care for the intoxicated father, a serious lapse of filial duties, as is made clear in the Ugaritic Aqhat Epic (KTU 1.17.I.30–31) and Isa 51:18. The last contribution in the Pentateuch part of the volume, Graham Davies's "Dividing Up the Pentateuch: Some Remarks on the Jewish Tradition," tackles the question of the distinctive division of the Pentateuch into chapters in printed Hebrew Bibles. Jacob ben Chayim explained in his introduction to the Second Rabbinic Bible that he adopted in his edition the division of the chapter made by R. Isaac Nathan in his Concordance. Davies, who had access to R. Isaac Nathan's work in the Cambridge University Library, confirms that indeed he is the source of the Hebrew divisions. He proposes that these differences originated from the use of a different version of the Vulgate divisions on which R. Isaac Nathan based his own divisions employed in the Concordance.

The section on the Historical Books begins with Charles L. Echols's "Can the Samson Narrative Properly Be Called Heroic?," in which he applies to the Samson narrative the definitions of heroic literature elaborated by H. Munro Chadwick, Nora K. Chadwick, and C. M. Bowra. Echols argues that this narrative is to be classified as heroic because it lacks nonheroic features such as community orientation, defensive warfare, and didacticism. In my view, Echols's assessment of these features is somewhat subjective. In general, his reasoning is difficult to follow and loses much of its strength because it is based on negative evidence. In order to evaluate the validity of Echols's contribution, readers should ask themselves what kind of hero and why the Samson narratives present should they indeed be "heroic." In "Translating Politics into Religion: Theological Enrichment in 1 Kings 5–9," Gönke Eberhardt accepts a historical kernel in the account of the temple construction on the premise of Solomon's need for the temple in order to consolidate the newborn state. In the body of the paper he traces the textual development of the account in the process of its becoming a "verbal icon" that embodied the veneration of the Lord for postexilic Israel. The section on the Historical Books ends with a paper by Ronald E. Clements, "Behind Closed Doors: The Hidden World of Jerusalem's Royal Palace," in which he speculates on the life and political significance of Hamutal, the widow of Josiah and mother of Zedakiah.

David A. Baer begins the Prophets section with “Israel’s Sage (Psalm 1) in LXX Isaiah 31:9b–32:8: A Palimpsest,” in which he argues that the translator of Isa 31:9b–32:8 into Greek introduced eight textual novelties in order to associate this text with Pss 1 and 2. Diana Lipton’s “Food for the Birds of Heaven: Staged Death and Intercession in Jeremiah in Light of Shakespeare’s Cymbeline” is an exercise in reading the biblical text side by side with another work of literature. This confrontation proves useful for highlighting the role of Jeremiah as a successful intercessor and mediator between God and Israel. In a short and lucid note, “David Their King (Whom God Will Raise): Hosea 3:5 and the Onset of Messianic Expectation in the Prophetic Books,” Alexander Rofé advances an interesting proposal about four texts (Hos 3:5, Jer 30:8–9, Ezek 34:23–24, Ezek 37:24–25) that speak about a renewed faithfulness of Israel to the Lord under the leadership of *David redivivus*. According to his historical-critical arguments, these texts represent a single redaction layer introduced into the oracles of the major prophets towards the end of the Persian period. Next, Judith M. Hadley, in her insightful discussion of the Masoretic Text of Hos 14:8 (“Goddess, Trees, and the Interpretation of Hosea 14:8[9]”), argues that this verse likens Yahweh to a “luxuriant tree, bearing fruit” in an act of anti-Asherah polemic in order to portray Yahweh as able to function as a fertility deity. Similarly, the next study by Edward Ball, “The Text and Interpretation of Nahum 2:2,” is concentrated on a detailed discussion of a biblical verse. Although the verse appears unproblematic in a cursory reading, it contains several lexicographic and semantic difficulties. The major problem is the addressee who is identified by Ball as Judah. Based on this identification, the verse invites Judah to contemplate God, the divine warrior at work in history, namely, in destroying the seemingly invincible city of Nineveh.

The part dedicated to the Writings begins with a fine study by William Horbury: “Psalm 102:14 and Didache 10:6 on Grace to Come.” Starting with a discussion of Ps 102:14, Horbury reviews various texts of Jewish and Christian traditions that use the word “grace” in an eschatological context in order to give to it the connotation of a coming divine redemption. Cynthia L. Engle’s “Wisdom and Psalm 119” begins with a lengthy overview of the assignment of a literary genre to Ps 119 in recent scholarship. Engle’s own discussion of the topic is balanced: while affirming a sapiential character of the psalm on the basis of its wisdom features, she duly acknowledges the lack of some expected wisdom elements. Additionally, she recognizes Torah and prayer as important foci of the psalm. The following study, Hilary Marlow’s “The Hills Are Alive! The Personification of Nature in the Psalter,” gathers the instances in which the Bible has recourse to the personification of nature, that is, a literary device that depicts the elements of nature as animated and having their own voice. Since this device is used in the texts that focus on the Lord as creator and sustainer of life and in which personified nature uses its voice to react with praise and worship to the wonder of creation, Marlow concludes that these texts “de-

divinize” the natural world rather than being a relic of polytheistic religious beliefs. Katherine J. Dell authors the next study, which touches on an aspect of the reception history of the book of Job: “Biblical Texts in New Contexts: The Book of Job in the English Choral Tradition.” Her review of the evidence shows that the authors of English church music had a particular penchant for Job’s words of lament and his musings on life and death. In particular, Job 19:25–27, 1:21, and 14:1–2 play an important part in the Anglican liturgy of the Burial of the Dead. Among English composers who were inspired by excerpts from the book of Job, Dell discusses the works of Henry Purcell (Job 14, 3, and 10), William Byrd (Job 10:20–22), Maurice Greene (Job 22:21–30), and William Boyce (Job 28). H. G. M. Williamson contributes the short but interesting “An Overlooked Suggestion at Proverbs 1:10.” In it he returns to the proposal of D. H. Müller and G. R. Driver that the last word in Prov 1:10 is in reality an abbreviation to be understood as “do not walk in the way with them.” The discussion of this possible abbreviation is for Williamson an occasion to recall other instances in which the Hebrew text of the Bible might use abbreviations, which he argues occur more often than is commonly supposed. The last two essays in the Writings part of the volume deal with the book of Daniel. In “Nebuchadnezzar’s Dreams in Daniel 2,” Erica C. D. Hunter discusses the Babylonian setting of Dan 1–6, in particular by identifying in Dan 2 three stages of the Babylonian *pišru*, a divinatory technique of elucidating a dream and removing its evil portents. She also makes a suggestion that, in my opinion, is worthy of further pursuit. According to her, the switch from Hebrew to Aramaic in Dan 2:4 is motivated by the will to avoid using Hebrew, the sacred language, in connection with gentile rituals. B. A. Mastin uses his contribution on a detail of Dan 3:16 to illustrate his approach to textual criticism and his vision of the history of the text. After discussing a host of readings, variants, versions, and manuscripts, he explains the current character of the text as an intervention enacted by the Masoretes who repunctuated it. Nevertheless, he argues against its conjectural emendation.

The last section contains miscellaneous studies. Stefan C. Reif’s “Some Comments on the Connotations of the Stem גער in Early Rabbinic Texts” confirms the observation made by A. A. Macintosh in his 1969 study that the root גער in postbiblical Judaism conveys the sense of moral and legal rebuke and rejection and reflects the position of authority held by the person who uses it. Likeise the next study, “Wine Production in Ancient Israel and the Meaning of שמרים in the Hebrew Bible,” by William D. Barker, is devoted to a lexicographical issue. Based on insights from the archaeological data and from the chemistry of wine production, Barker contends that the Hebrew word שמרים has two different denotations: the dregs or wine sediments that appear during its manufacture or the aged wine of quality that sat upon its dregs and was later filtered. Rachel M. Lentin, in “The Cherished Child: Images of Parental Love in the Hebrew Bible,” reviews six biblical

images that employ the metaphor of parental love and contends that they operate on multiple levels. The last essay, David F. Ford's "Beginning, Ending and Abundance: Genesis 1:1 and the Gospel of John," begins with a clever observation: the Gospel of John alludes to Gen 1:1 not only in the opening phrase "at the beginning" but also in the postscript. The allusion at the end of the gospel is significant for at least two reasons. First, it identifies the agency of God with the agency of Jesus (Gen 1:1's "God made" is parallel to "Jesus did" in 20:30 and 21:25). Second, the reuse of the same theologically significant phrase in John 20 and 21 suggests that both chapters were written by the same author. By referring to Gen 1:1, Ford's contribution brings the reader back to the beginning of the volume, which opened with an essay on a text from Gen 1 as well.

As previously stated, the quality of essays is good overall, with only a few exceptions. This collection of studies dedicated to a Hebrew teacher testifies also to the importance of proper instruction in Biblical Hebrew to students of the Bible and thus to the necessity, now too often neglected, of employing a qualified Hebrew professor in a faculty of theology. In fact, many contributions to this volume were authored by former students of A. A. Macintosh who remember his classes with gratitude for their stimulating content, which did not arrest on the morphological and syntactical minutiae, but extended to an attentive and intelligent comprehension of the biblical text. The essays in this volume attest to the effectiveness of his teaching, which has brought abundant fruits in his disciples.