BOOK REVIEWS

Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible. Edited by A. J. Hauser and D. F. Watson. Biblical Interpretation Series 6. Leiden: Brill, 1994, xx + 206 pp., $74.50.

Volume-length bibliographies tend to be labors of love: love for the subject matter, and a love of the field and those who labor within it. Without such affection the effort would be an intolerably boring and wearisome task. With that affection, it may still be a wearisome task but an interesting one, and therefore doable.

We can be grateful, then, that Duane F. Watson and Alan J. Hauser cared enough about the rhetorical criticism of the Bible to produce this work. They have done their fellow scholars the admirable service of culling from the four winds a broad range of works that pertain, more or less, to the application of the methods of rhetorical criticism to both Testaments of Scripture. The result cannot be an exhaustive bibliography—the notion of rhetorical criticism is too ill-defined and the literature too large for that. But it is nonetheless a very complete bibliography.

From the moment they are published, volumes such as *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible* become instant standards, indispensable for those working in the field. But that does not mean that Watson and Hauser have done all our dirty work for us. Like all bibliographies, this one began to age the moment Watson and Hauser said "enough" and finalized their work to send to the publisher. Since that was probably as much as a year before the volume became available to the public, and since, by the time reviews such as this one appear, as much as another two years or so can have elapsed, the chances are that by now the reader will already have several years of additional bibliographical work to do just to catch up.

Still, that does not diminish the value of Watson and Hauser's work. It has established a bench-mark summary of the literature as of approximately 1992–1993, and for that we can be grateful. The introductory essays to both halves of the bibliography (Hauser on the OT, Watson on the NT) are brief but workmanlike, demonstrating that both authors know their subject. These essays make no attempt to break new ground but they do offer useful introductions to their respective subjects.

This is not a perfect bibliography (bibliographies are never perfect), but the work has been carefully and expertly done, and I refuse to nitpick about items I think might have been included or excluded. I would have preferred an annotated bibliography, of course, but we do not yet live in a perfect world. A more puzzling lacuna is the lack of an authors' index. I am not sure why it is missing since it would have added significantly to the text's usefulness, and in the age of word processing such an index is not difficult to produce. Still, the detailed table of contents serves as a useful topical arrangement by Biblical book and subject. We shall gratefully make do with that.

Duane Litfin
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

1, 2 Kings. By Paul R. House. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995, 432 pp., $27.99.

The New American Commentary series focuses on "the theological structure and content of each biblical book" to enable pastors, teachers and students "to read the

Bible with clarity and proclaim it with power." The commentaries are expected to "evidence a commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture and a faithfulness to the classic Christian tradition." They are designed to concentrate "on theological exegesis while providing practical, applicable exposition" (editor's preface). Paul R. House's commentary on 1, 2 Kings is notably successful in fulfilling these worthy goals.

In his introductory material (pp. 27–84), House concentrates on historical issues, literary issues, canonical issues, theological issues and applicational issues. Included in his discussion of historical issues are surveys of authorship and date, chronology, the political situation, the text and miracles. In discussing the authorship and date of 1, 2 Kings, House is inevitably drawn into a discussion of Martin Noth's theory on the composition of the Deuteronomistic History as a whole (Joshua–2 Kings). It was Noth's view that a single anonymous author ("the Deuteronomistic Historian") was responsible for the great history work that spans Joshua–Kings. House accepts Noth's basic thesis and concludes that this anonymous author completed his work at about 550 BC. In drawing this conclusion House appeals to R. K. Harrison (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1969) as an example of an evangelical's perspective on Noth's work. House comments: "While agreeing that one person heavily influenced by covenant thinking and the Book of Deuteronomy wrote Johsua–Kings, Harrison correctly noted that this conclusion need not be based on an acceptance of source-critical theories of the Pentateuch" (p. 35). House here is mistaken, however, because R. K. Harrison did not accept a single "Deuteronomistic" author for the material from Joshua–Kings. Harrison dates Joshua at about 1045 BC at the beginning of the monarchy and within the lifetime of Samuel (*IOT*, p. 673). He dates Judges early in the monarchical period (*IOT*, p. 690), and 1, 2 Samuel at about 920–900 BC (*IOT*, p. 709). Harrison does agree with Noth that a single author was responsible for the material of 1, 2 Kings, but he takes sharp issue with Noth's general theory of the "Deuteronomistic Historian" (*IOT*, p. 732). While House's position on this issue has little or no influence on the material content of the commentary, his appeal to R. K. Harrison in support of his conclusion on authorship is unfortunate.

In his discussion of literary issues (pp. 54–68) House addresses "five essential elements of narrative literature: genre, structure, plot, characterization, point of view" (p. 54). This material draws from recent literary studies of the narrative material of the OT and is extremely helpful in illuminating both the content of 1, 2 Kings as well as the author's design for the book.

The section on canonical issues includes discussion of the canonical placement and function of 1, 2 Kings, and the usage of 1, 2 Kings in the rest of Scripture. The section on theological issues covers monotheism versus idolatry, central worship versus the high places, covenant loyalty versus spiritual rebellion, true prophecy versus "lying spirits," God's covenant with David versus dynastic disintegration, God's sovereignty versus human pride. Under applicational issues House suggests five steps to be followed in the attempt to help pastors and teachers bridge the gap between the ancient story and the modern audience. These introductory sections are well researched and written, and they provide a good orientation to the study of 1, 2 Kings.

In the commentary proper House presents a clear and responsible exposition of 1, 2 Kings in a section-by-section treatment. At the beginning of the nine major sections into which he divides the book, House provides a "survey of historical details" pertaining to that major section. At the end of each major section, House discusses the "canonical and theological implications" as well as the "applicational implications" of that block of material. These discussions are a unique feature of House's commentary. Here one will find comments on things that most commentaries avoid but for which most readers are looking. It is here that those who desire to preach or teach from 1, 2 Kings will find helpful suggestions on how to bridge the gap between the OT period and today, and how to find the continuing significance of these narratives for con-

temporary living. This commentary is a worthy contribution to the study of 1, 2 Kings as well as to the New American Commentary series. It may well be the best general-use commentary currently available on 1, 2 Kings.

J. Robert Vannoy
Biblical Theological Seminary, Hatfield, PA

Rhetorical Criticism and the Poetry of the Book of Job. By Pieter van der Lugt. *OTS* 32. Leiden: Brill, 1995, xvi + 548 pp., n.p.

Although the title suggests otherwise, this study focuses on the speeches in Job. Van der Lugt recommends reading the book "backwards" (p. xiii), because the significant conclusions are given in final section (pp. 456–536). The methodology, statistical data and analysis of the strophic structure of Job, on which his conclusions rest, make up the bulk of the book. Following this suggestion makes the study accessible by preventing the reader from getting lost in technical data before understanding where it leads.

Van der Lugt begins with a very useful survey of the last 150 years of research and then builds on these gains. In a reversal of the traditional approach, which usually concentrates on strophes or lines, he starts with the poetic macrostructure, identifying what he calls "cantos": "two or more main units of identical or approximately identical length" (p. 33). The cantos subdivide further into units known as "canticles," then into "strophes," of which there are also usually two or more in each canto. Sometimes a canto or canticle may coincide with a strophe, particularly if the former has no relationship to the main unit. Van der Lugt's method uses four "complementary" lines of approach: (1) logical grouping of the contents of the speeches, (2) transition markers, (3) verbal repetitions and (4) identification of the different divisions within the speech. He then systematically and exhaustively examines all the speeches in Job.

Van der Lugt eventually discovers that, although there are exceptions, the macrostructure of speeches in Job reveals a pattern of two or three almost identical cantos as the body of each speech. Each canto, in turn, has a sequence of major units with an equal number of verse-lines. This basic pattern is often expanded by a unit of exactly seven lines, allowing the editors endless variation. In cases where the cantos in successive speeches are of identical length, one can often see a relationship between them (e.g. the almost identical cantos of Elihu's final speech [pp. 36–37] are precisely a verse-line shorter than each of the almost identical cantos in the divine speech [pp. 40–41], possibly an indication of reverence). The strophic pattern in the speeches is not so consistent but generally favors two or three verse-lines, with many exceptions.

All this leads van der Lugt to make some fresh observations about the general design of the speech cycles. He contests as "nowhere indicated by the poet himself nor by any of the redactors" the usual arrangement under which Job continuously responds to the speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (p. 504). Instead, he conjectures that the discussion between Job and his friends, determined by Job's speeches, not those of the friends, consists of only two cycles (chaps. 4–14, 15–26), and that the exchange between Job and God, added later, comprises the third cycle (chaps. 27–31, 38–41). Each speech-cycle thus consists of exactly 270 lines of poetry, a factor van der Lugt considers decisive for his view that chaps. 15–26 conclude the second speech-cycle.

Job 27–28 therefore make up the opening speech of Job in the third cycle, chap. 27 signaling the failure of the friends' arguments and chap. 28 containing a testimony of Job's despair. Job 28 is not an insertion, as is often claimed. The poet who

added the third cycle sought to relate to the failed arguments of the friends in the previous cycles and to show that Job has been reduced to his own ruminations. Van der Lugt transposes Job 40:1–5, a "relatively independent dialogue" (p. 532), to a position preceding the third cycle, and God's dramatic responses (chaps. 38–39; 40:6–41:26), following the Elihu speeches, were also added later. The resulting macrostructure appears as follows: Prologue (chaps. 1–2), Job's opening curse (chap. 3), First speech cycle (chaps. 4–14), Second speech cycle (chaps. 15–26), God and Job (40:1–5), Third speech cycle (chaps. 27–31; 38–41), Elihu speeches (chaps. 32–37), God's first and second reply (chaps. 38–39; 40:6–41:26), Answer by Job (42:2–6), Epilogue (42:7–17).

This reviewer knows of no comparable study of Job offering the depth of analysis at the metric, colometric, strophic, and verse (or canto) level this one does (cf. Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 1978). Although Hebraists will find the use of transliteration bothersome, the full panoply of statistical data, bibliography and lexicography is useful, making van der Lugt's study an indispensable reference.

His rearrangement of the macrostructure of the book is less defensible. Van der Lugt seems to find a consistent line count, then uses this as a basis for a new macrostructure. Although suggestive, this circular reasoning is not likely to make his new proposal of structure widely acceptable. Despite this caveat, however, van der Lugt's *Rhetorical Criticism* is an extremely valuable resource for any student of the book of Job.

Jerry A. Gladson
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Garden Grove, CA

Proverbs. By R. N. Whybray. NCBC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994, xxxii + 446 pp., $19.95 paper.

Proberbs is the third commentary by Whybray in the NCBC series. His others are on *Ecclesiastes* and *Isaiah 40–66*. This volume demonstrates the same degree of thoroughness and competency with the Hebrew text and the secondary literature as the others.

After a table of abbreviations and a 20-page bibliography, there follows a relatively brief introduction (18 pp.). Relative to the question of authorship, he apparently sides with "the majority of scholars [who] now believe that the book contains a good deal of material originating in the period of the Israelite monarchy" (p. 6; cf. p. 16). But relative to the date of Proverbs in its present canonical form, it "cannot be earlier than the early post-exilic period" (p. 6).

Whybray is not sympathetic to the idea that Israelite wisdom is "secular" or that the proverbs can be pegged to a certain development in wisdom literature on the basis of whether or not they mention God. He understands wisdom to be related and integrated with the rest of the OT. Proverbs complements rather than opposes the rest of the OT. A strength of this commentary is the author's efforts to see connections and organization in the Biblical book. While this is regularly done through the commentary, he notes in the introduction the possible connection between Lady Wisdom in the fist nine chapters, but especially chaps. 8–9, and the noble wife of chap. 31.

Whybray breaks down the somewhat miscellaneous first nine chapters as a "series of 10 instructions" (1:8–19; 2:1–22; 3:1–12; 3:21–35; 4:1–9; 4:10–19; 4:20–27; 5:1–23; 6:20–35; 7:1–27), interrupted by three insertions (1:20–30; 3:13–20; 6:1–19), preceded by a preface (1:1–7) and concluded by a "diptych" contrasting Lady Wisdom

and the Woman Folly (chaps. 8–9). There is both miscellany and unity in these nine chapters, but all the sections more or less expand on the preface and share its vocabulary. Nevertheless they lack logical arrangement.

One of the most frequent themes is that young men should avoid evil company and immoral women. Both terms for these women are understood as "the wife of another man" rather than non-Israelite women or cult prostitutes (p. 55). Whybray believes that these chapters were written to upper-class youths, because there are no references to manual labor, and the Biblical author assumes they were literate. He explores, but does not support, the possibility that wisdom personified has extra-Biblical roots and that it has been "demythologized." "Whatever remnants of polytheism may be detected in these chapters, there is no question that the text in its present form is monotheistic" (pp. 28, 119, 120). He devotes considerable discussion to pivotal words, e.g. "create/acquire" in 8:22 and "master workman" in 8:30. But usually after a survey of alternatives, the author fails to endorse any particular view. Occasionally Whybray dismisses a view as unsupportable, or sometimes he complains that the RSV is speculative, but he seldom offers a convincingly better solution. There are frequent judgments that this or that is added or is an intrusion or is subsequent to something more original, yet there is a reluctance to date such "additions." Never does the question of inspiration arise or any discussion regarding at what point the Holy Spirit was active in the oral or written history of the book of Proverbs.

In the commentary proper all Hebrew is transliterated. All "footnotes" are in parentheses in the text using abbreviations and page numbers of those works cited in the front of the book. The actual words of the RSV are in bold type scattered through the pages, so it is easy to find your place. Whybray is familiar with virtually all commentaries on Proverbs and alludes to these often. The most frequently cited are McKane and Plöger.

In the comments there is a good balance between genre observations, alternate views of commentators, structure questions, various translations of given words or phrases, and notes about *hapax legomena* or Qere and Ketiv. There are minimal textual emendations and sidetracks. The author is remarkably nonpolemical. Homiletic applications are left to the reader. Some verses are dealt with in a line or two; others with exegetical problems sometimes consume more than a page. Normally two to four verses are covered on each page. The further along the commentary goes the more cross references there are to similar words, phrases, or whole proverbs discussed.

In sum, the strengths of this rather technical commentary are in the thoroughness of the discussion of textual problems and in the efforts Whybray makes to see organization and connections within the book. In the "proverbs of Solomon" sections of the book most English Bibles set up each proverb as a separate entity. This commentary seeks to rectify that. If there is any weakness, it is in failing to endorse particular solutions to the many textual, interpretative, and translation questions that plague this collection of ancient, cryptic, Semitic wisdom sentences.

Robert L. Alden
Denver Seminary, Denver, CO

The Prophets as Preachers: An Introduction to the Hebrew Prophets. By Gary V. Smith. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994, 372 pp., $27.99.

This introduction aims to serve as a primary text for upper-level college/seminary courses on the writing prophets or as a supplemental text for preaching classes. Gary

V. Smith, professor of Old Testament at Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, has also authored an excellent commentary on the book of Amos and the article "Prophet; Prophecy" in *ISBE* 3 (1986). The unique slant in this introduction is steady use of communication theory and the sociology of knowledge to evaluate the Biblical prophets. Smith analyzes God's use of the prophets as change agents in terms of the persuasiveness of their prophetic communication, the theology of their messages and their sociological involvement with their audience. While the author upholds a theistic worldview, his book may have secular appeal because of its focus on this interplay between prophet and hearers in terms of human motivations and responses.

The first two chapters give theories about the nature of communication and social change, the next sixteen chapters apply the theories to each of the sixteen writing prophets, and a final chapter summarizes principles characterizing prophetic endeavors. Chapter 1 explains factors that inhibit or promote transformation in hearers offered persuasive reasons to change. Chapter 2 considers whether the prophet held a socially peripheral or central position. It also introduces terms that will recur through the book, such as objectification, legitimation, externalization and internalization. While the vocabulary may be new, the ideas are straightforward and uncontroversial.

The format of the ensuing chapters is particularly conducive to achieving a comprehensive picture of each prophetic book. After a short introduction suggesting the book's key issues, each chapter has several pages on "Social Setting" that give the historical context, structure of the social order and social location and role of the prophet. The main section of the chapter, entitled "Social Interaction," presents an outline of the book and then follows the book's own sequence in a review of its content.

This review shows how the prophet worked to affect his hearers/readers in each part of his message. The sociological emphasis gives a sense of the tensions that drove the prophet to speak and affected the form of his message. Smith adds historical clarifications and cross references to other prophets. He handles matters of detail and scholarly disagreement in up-to-date footnotes that adduce sources for competing views but generally favor conservative positions. Each chapter closes with about a page of theological and social implications of the prophet for contemporary preachers, and then several questions for discussion. Willem VanGemeren's *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (1990) is longer and more schematic, generalizing and heavily footnoted, but *The Prophets as Preachers* often has more analysis of a prophetic book's content.

Smith's book offers a glossary, a categorized bibliography and indexes on subjects and names. The considerable number of minor errors of versification and typography suggests that the final editing process was hasty.

Harold R. Holmyard III
Dallas, TX

Old Testament Ethics: A Paradigmatic Approach. By Waldemar Janzen. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994, 236 pp., $19.95 paper.

Janzen has developed the paradigmatic approach to doing OT ethics in deference to what he regards as the western attraction to principles. "Story," Janzen affirms, is the most important theological genre of the OT, for it is the means through which the ethical-theological instruction of God to his people is communicated.

His starting point is C. J. H. Wright's definition (in *An Eye for an Eye*, 1983, p. 43): "A paradigm is something used as a model or example for other cases where a basic principle remains unchanged, though details differ. . . . [I]t is not so much imitated as applied." However, Janzen immediately drops the concept of a "basic principle" out of

Wright's definition and substitutes instead "mental images of model persons" (p. 27). It is not the "basic principle" that links the paradigm and the new situation, as in Wright's definition, even though that may be true of grammatical paradigms (from which the metaphor of paradigm was borrowed), but a paradigm is understood as "a personally and holistically conceived image of a model (e.g. a wise person, a good king) that imprints itself immediately and nonconceptually on the characters and actions of those who hold it" (pp. 27–28). To attempt to extract principles from the OT would be to treat the Bible reductionistically and, I suppose, propositionally.

Janzen's overarching paradigm is the familial paradigm, which is exemplified in the behavior of Abraham who seeks to keep the peace with Lot (Genesis 13). Three ethical components are central to this familial paradigm: the preservation and continuation of life, the possession of the land, and the maintenance of kinship through hospitality. Four other secondary paradigms model what he calls a "God pleasing life": the priestly (Phinehas in Numbers 25), wisdom (Abigail in 1 Samuel 25), royal (David in 1 Samuel 24) and prophetic (Elijah in 1 Kings 21) models. Finally, Christ serves as the paradigm of all these models, for he is the preeminent familial paradigm proclaiming the kingdom of God. These five Biblical characters (Abraham, Phinehas, Abigail, Elijah and David), we are told, are "exemplary in certain very specific actions" and they are "models only with respect to these actions," but they must not be held up to us for "comprehensive imitation" (p. 20).

Despite the creativity of this approach, a key problem is his definition of ethic: He never tells us what is right or what is wrong. Janzen struggles to avoid any principial standards while still maintaining that we are somehow guided by these paradigms. So why was the story of Abraham and Lot chosen as the central paradigm? And what in the story is significant for giving to us ethical guidance? Was it, indeed, Abraham's self-effacing offer toward Lot that was the exemplary point, or does Scripture elevate Abraham's faith as the central feature of the text? What made the other four stories models in their own right? Are we not owed some criteria for selecting the models that are central? And what are the rules for sorting out the descriptive materials from those that are prescriptive and normative, even if they are only models that are exemplary and do not demand imitation?

In reacting to the suggestion that the holiness of God, indeed, an *imitatio Dei*, is the central organizing feature of OT ethics, Janzen pleads that the very "otherness" of God, which God's holiness naturally embodies, means that "humans cannot be and do, and are not meant to be and do, what God is and does" (p. 115). Thus mortals are let off the hook on account of their frailty and creatureliness.

But even more importantly, the most surprising missing ingredient in this ethic that focuses on the familial paradigm is that it makes little place for God in an ethic that purports to originate from the divine. The "good life" appears to be a life that is lived in harmony with humanity. While there are "laws" in the Decalogue, for instance, Janzen declares that these are merely "shorthand" formulas for Israel's story (p. 58). To say that the laws emerged from the story does not fit with the Biblical claims that the laws came through revelation, in the context of a covenant with binding legal obligation, similar to that between the suzerain and his vassals.

Thus while a narrative ethic of stories can provide a general ethical framework it is unable to give specific principles or directions that one can apply to one's life, the very aspect that Wright had included in his definition but that Janzen deliberately deleted from his. Only in his final chapter does the presence of God enter, in what otherwise has been more of a sociological grounding of ethics than a theological one. But does Janzen ever really close the gap that separates the story and ethics? The closest he seems to come is on p. 178: "In briefest summary, we can say that the Old Testament's ethical directive points the way to true, God-intended humanity. To be truly human in this sense is to be holy, to be wise, to be just, and to serve, if necessary to

the point of suffering. True humanity both embraces and transcends these distinctive ethical quests." But how it embraces is left unclear, and in what way(s) and according to what criteria it transcends is likewise a mystery, especially if Scripture is to function as its norm.

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA

Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar-Syntax. By A. B. Davidson. Revised by J. C. L. Gibson. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994, xi + 229 pp., $39.95.

The well-known Semiticist, J. C. L. Gibson, is to be warmly commended for his substantial revision of Davidson's venerable *Hebrew Syntax* (3d ed., 1901). *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar-Syntax* represents a significant new introduction to Hebrew syntax.

While generally following Davidson's ordering of topics in the third edition, Gibson endeavors to update and correct the work of the one whose chair he now occupies at New College, Edinburgh. For instance, Gibson rectifies the misunderstanding of the *he locale* as a remnant of an old case ending, an error still perpetuated by Weingreen (*Practical Grammar*, p. 67). Rather, the *he locale* serves as a genuine locative ending, as demonstrated by Ugaritic (p. 24).

Gibson dedicates a major portion of the volume to clauses and sentences. The treatments are typically insightful and beneficial, although Gibson's analysis of the *waw* consecutive fails to give the detail anticipated in a volume intended for advanced students.

Unfortunately, several significant omissions and errors flaw the revision. Perhaps the most important omission is any discussion of the Hebrew stems. This is particularly surprising in light of the numerous studies that have appeared since the third edition.

Gibson's treatment of particles is also inadequate. For instance, prepositions are mentioned only in the context of clauses. No attention is given to prepositions' diverse meanings.

Gibson's "correction" of Davidson's explanation of the perfect and imperfect "tenses" remains perhaps the most troubling section of the volume. Regarding the perfect Davidson writes: "The simple perf. is used to express an action completed either in reality or in the thought of the speaker" (*Hebrew Syntax*, 3d ed., p. 58). However, Gibson opines: "The distinction [between perfect and imperfect] being advanced here is in essence one between states and actions" (p. 60), and "QATAL denotes states" (p. 61). He continues: "The YIQTOL . . . conjugation denotes actions and processes as opposed to states" (p. 70).

Gibson's notion that the perfect refers to states while the imperfect portrays actions fails at several points. First, Gibson blurs the distinction between stative and fientive verbs in both "tenses." Gibson does not explain how כָּבֵד represents a state, while יִכְבַּד represents an action. Nor does he clarify in what sense אָמַר conveys a state, whereas יֹאמַר indicates an action. Thus his treatment overlooks issues at the sentence level such as verbal meaning, not to mention the presence of adverbs that significantly alter meaning. Second, Gibson appears to see no difference between "event" and "process" in the tenses.

The text is well printed—a significant improvement over Davidson's third edition. Only a couple of minor misspellings of Hebrew words were discovered.

This fourth edition will reintroduce Davidson's syntax, a study that has been underutilized by current students of Biblical Hebrew. The volume may also serve as a first encounter with J. C. L. Gibson's outstanding scholarship.

George L. Klein
Criswell College, Dallas, TX

God Is a Warrior. By Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995, 224 pp., $16.99 paper.

In this contribution to the Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology series, the authors trace through both Testaments what they call "one of the most pervasive of all biblical themes," that of the divine warrior. After an introductory chapter, the authors devote five chapters to the OT and five to the NT development of this theme. The book concludes with a bibliography and indexes. It lacks a concluding summary chapter, which would have served as a valuable complement to the detailed analysis of the bulk of the book.

Though the actual text is less than 180 pages, the authors have done an admirable job of providing an in-depth and insightful survey of the divine warrior motif in the Bible. Especially valuable is the description of the OT background to the NT use of this theme. The approach used to consider the divine warrior theme varies. In the OT, the authors take what they call a "synthetic" approach. In practice, this means that the OT material related to the divine warrior theme is considered according to chronologically ordered categories (e.g. "The Wars of Faithful Israel," then "The Wars Against Unfaithful Israel," etc.). These categories are used to describe the so-called "history of revelation" related to the divine warrior theme.

In contrast to the OT materials, the gospels are studied "textually," Paul's letters "topically" and "synthetically," and the book of Revelation "thematically" (other NT books are not considered in depth). The end result is that the NT materials are considered using more canonically oriented categories. A significant question raised by this eclectic approach is just what it means to do Biblical theology. Is the object of Biblical theology to trace categorically the development of a theme through historical eras (as is done with the OT)? Or is it to describe the theme as seen through the perspective of various Biblical books and authors (as is done with the NT; cf. the allusion to this tension on p. 91)?

In addition to its careful analysis, the book therefore provides a useful example of method in Biblical theology. While its topic might be too narrow for a college course, it could profitably be used to stimulate discussion and thinking on the issue of how Biblical theology is done. The book can thus be recommended with enthusiasm for any course on method in Biblical theology, as well as courses at the college or seminary level concerned with more specific themes in Biblical theology.

Eric W. Bolger
College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, MO

The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth. Edited by Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham. JSOTSup 182. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994, 326 pp., $60.00.

Martin Noth is honored in this volume on the 50th anniversary of the publication of what is arguably his most influential work, his *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, published in 1943 (English translations appeared in 1981 and 1987 as *The Deuteronomistic History* and *The Chronicler's History*). The 13 essays here were all presented first at the Society of Biblical Literature meetings in November 1993.

In his 1943 volume, Noth presented his theory of a "Deuteronomistic History," a unified document comprised of Deuteronomy–2 Kings, composed by a single author ca. 550 BC. It was supposedly written to explain the downfall of Israel and Judah. Noth's theory had the effect of demolishing the hypothetical scholarly construct of a Hexateuch (Genesis–Joshua) popular in the early part of this century in liberal

scholarship. Noth envisioned one author, working with blocks of preexisting materials, bringing these materials together into a coherent whole to explain the nations' downfall.

Noth's theory has dominated scholarly discussion of the books of Deuteronomy–2 Kings ever since. It has been revised and challenged at many points, but it has had an enduring effect. The present volume is a testament to Noth's influence in this area.

Part 1 of this work consists of eight essays assessing "The Impact of Martin Noth's *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*." Here essays deal with Noth's life and work (C. T. Begg), as well as Noth and the Deuteronomistic History (A. F. Campbell), the Chronicler's history (R. L. Braun), Israel's history (T. L. Thompson), tradition criticism (R. Rendtorff), OT theology (T. Veijola), and assessments of Noth's Deuteronomistic History theory (D. N. Freedman and J. C. Geoghegan and W. Dietrich).

Part 2 is a helpful assessment of Noth's theory of a Deuteronomistic History applied to the individual books in that supposed corpus, with essays by T. Römer (Deuteronomy), B. Peckham (Joshua), M. A. O'Brien (Judges), P. K. McCarter, Jr. (1–2 Samuel), and S. L. McKenzie (1–2 Kings).

One strength of the present volume is that it brings together scholars from the R. Smend and F. M. Cross schools, whose positions represent the two most popular revisions of Noth's theory. Those who attended the meetings in 1993 will remember the friendly interactions between the two camps, although the prospects for a unified understanding of the entire corpus under consideration still seem remote.

This is an important volume on the Deuteronomistic History and tradition history, and anyone interested in either will do well to consult it. Two recent evangelical assessments of Noth's positions may be found in my *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books* (Moody, 1993) 77–78, 179–182, and J. G. McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology* (Zondervan, 1993). The point at which evangelicals will disagree most vigorously with Noth's work and the present volume concerns the 7th-century dating of Deuteronomy; there are other aspects of Noth's theory that will be challenged as well. However, evangelicals cannot afford to ignore Noth's work, and the present volume is a good entrée into it.

David M. Howard, Jr.
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA

Words Become Worlds: Semantic Studies of Genesis 1–11. By Ellen van Wolde. Leiden: Brill, 1994, xi + 218 pp., n.p.

As the sixth volume in the Biblical Interpretation series, *Words Become Worlds* meets the series' objectives by proposing a newer hermeneutical method and applying it to specific Biblical samples. The first half concerns readings in Genesis 1–11, and the second half lays out the philosophical underpinning of her method—namely, text semantics. The title captures the essence of her exegesis. "Words" concerns the Biblical text, which requires knowledge of the Hebrew language and the mode of thinking among the ancient authors and their readers. But the text of "words" provides for new "worlds" of meaning when it is read anew. There is a collision between the old "world" of the text and the new "world" of the interpreter who must make choices in giving meaning to the text. Although the text has many possible meanings, it is the reader in making choices concerning the text that limits the scope of meaning. Essentially, van Wolde believes that meaning is an interactive process involving language, text and reader.

By seizing on the complementary features of structuralist semiotics (Saussure and Greimas) and the semiotics of interpretation (Peirce), van Wolde calls for a holistic approach to textual exegesis. Structural exegesis provides the method by calling for a synchronic reading of the text as an autonomous unity, but by itself structural exegesis is deficient. It fails to acknowledge the referential world (real) in which the text was produced and for whom it was written. Peircean semiotics overcomes this impasse by recognizing that the author assumed his (ancient) reader had a knowledge of the text's "connotative subcode" as well as its denotative meaning. The exegetical process is not complete, however, without a study of the conventional hermeneutics of (ancient) history and culture that produced and transmitted the text.

Her text semantics observes that meaning involves both logical inferences derived from the text and innertextual analogies between elements of the text (e.g. similarities in sounds, forms, lexemes, and syntax). When applied to readings in Genesis 1–11, her conclusions differ remarkably from traditional Jewish and Christian exegesis. God's interest in humanity is subsidiary to the progress and perpetuation of the earth. The orientation of Genesis 1–11 is not vertical, where humanity strives to obtain immortality and suffers punishment for its rebellion; rather, it is horizontal, the spreading out of humanity upon the face of the earth.

The emphasis van Wolde gives to the reader in the hermeneutical process is both the weakness and strength of her semiotic method. The weakness is that the reader is invested with too much authority over the text. It is left to the reader to observe the conventional meaning of the text but also to discern and integrate the analogic (iconic) subtext(s) that is the reservoir for potential readings. Too often, however, in her readings proposed for Genesis 1–11 the subtext(s) takes priority over the linguistic conventions of the text. Yet the recognition of the role of the reader is a positive aspect in her method since the meaning process must involve the reader, though the locus of meaning is not found in the reader. Some close readings of the text and the analogic associations of the linguistic phenomena result in different ways of stating what is generally found already in the explicit denotative meaning. Here there is benefit for the traditional exegete, and the iconic associations proposed undergird the conventional sense. Some new readings, however, counteract what the explicit level of the text has presented. All in all the volume challenges the reader to look for such embedded associations of meaning and drives the reader all the more to the text.

Kenneth A. Mathews
Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, AL