

Review

Author(s): Douglas A. Knight

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that "a fairly later biblical redactor beautified Solomon with the plumes of Azariah" (p. 41) by projecting the history of the embarrassingly successful Israelite king onto the figure of Solomon. In chapter 13, he revives the hypothesis that Ezra is an historical fiction, whose reforms are patterned on those of the high priest Alcimus, ca. 159 B.C.E.

Garbini has written a saccharin-free guide to the art of historiography in the Old Testament. The book is highly recommended both to the non-specialist interested in sampling the numbing complexity of genuine Syro-Palestinian history and the specialist who would benefit from the searching insights of this fine scholar.

STEVEN W. HOLLOWAY, *Chicago, Illinois.*

DEROUSSEAU, LOUIS, ed. *La création dans l'orient ancien*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1987. 553 pp. Fr 250 (paper).

Creation has, in recent years, become a popular topic for conferences and publications alike. It lends itself to numerous angles of vision: fundamentalist controversies, scientific versus pre- or nonscientific cosmologies, ecological issues, comparative studies, and theological and moral implications.

The present volume, stemming from a congress held at Lille in 1985 by the Association Catholique Française pour l'Étude de la Bible, presents studies by sixteen scholars on a variety of subjects related to creation. It is a selective, not a comprehensive, treatment of the theme in the ancient Near East, with considerably more attention devoted to biblical than extrabiblical traditions.

Following an introductory essay by Jean Ladrrière on philosophical aspects of the idea of creation and the nature of being, the first major section contains chapters on the cosmogonies of Sumer and Akkad (by Marie-Joseph Seux), Ugarit (by Jésus-Luis Cunchillos), and ancient Egypt (by Bernadette Menu). Although as a group they fall short of providing an overall picture of creation thought throughout the ancient Near East, each focuses on questions distinctive to its respective culture, questions that are to a degree prompted by issues in biblical interpretation: Sumero-Akkadian perspectives on the human condition resulting from creation by the gods; the Ugaritic concept of creation as procreation, that is, the divine-sexual generation of both deities and humans; and the Egyptian cosmogonies featuring the crucial role of the demiurge in establishing order, initially and continually, within all existence.

The second, and by far the largest, section is devoted to analyses of biblical literature. While many of these attempt to place the discussion in the larger biblical context, there is a general absence of direct references to each other or of synoptic, historical, theological overviews. Yet the discussions taken by themselves have a cumulative effect, for they cover many of the key as well as some less obvious biblical and postbiblical texts on creation: Genesis 2–3 (by Jacques Briand), Gen. 1:1–2:4 (Paul Beauchamp), Deutero-Isaiah (Jacques Vermeylen), Jeremiah (Laurent Wisser), Job (Jean Lévêque), Psalms (Claus Westermann), the Wisdom of Solomon (Maurice Gilbert), Philo (Jacques Cazeaux), and the Gnostic writing known as the Paraphrase of Shem (Michel Tardieu). These are supplemented by five additional studies: Germain Bienaimé on the haggadic tradition about paradisiacal marvels in the wilderness after the Israelites' exodus from Egypt; Jacques Cazeaux on a dialectical reading of 1 Samuel 24–26, a study that deviates from the theme of creation more than any other in this volume; Pierre Gibert on

the intriguing assertions about creation in 2 Macc. 7:28; again Gibert on historical and literary problems attending to the account of the origins; and Jean Calloud on a semiotic analysis of Genesis 1–3.

Suffice it here to call attention to a few significant points emphasized in the main biblical studies. Briend argues that the creation of humanity is achieved not simply with the formation of *hā'ādām* in Gen. 2:7 but with the differentiation of male and female by the end of that chapter. In a subtle study of Genesis 1 and 9, as well as other biblical traditions, Beauchamp maintains that the symbolic value attached to animals and the relationship existing between humans and the animal world are prominently reflected in the concept of the *imago dei*. Vermeulen attempts to group historically, in terms of political intention, the Deutero-Isaianic texts on creation: the authentic sayings envision God's salvific actions through Cyrus; a redactor in Nehemiah's time had in mind the reuniting of Israel as a people faithful to YHWH; and a later redactor contemporaneous with Ezra drew on mythical language to show God's power over the force of evil, namely, the impious of that period. Jeremiah, normally less treated than Deutero-Isaiah with respect to this theme, emerges in Wisser's study as the pivotal figure who perceived in YHWH's role as creator the authority to judge the people's moral and religious behavior. Lévêque demonstrates the different purposes to which views of creation can be put throughout the book of Job—in the friends' speeches, in Job's responses, in the poem of chapter 28, in Elihu's discourse, and in the divine response. In the least original discussion in the volume, Westermann describes how creation is used as the grounds for giving praise to God, and he elaborates further on the distinction between traditions about the creation of the world and those dealing with the origin of humanity. The Wisdom of Solomon includes a rereading of almost all of Genesis 1, while from Genesis 2–3 there is no reference to the Garden of Eden, the creation of the woman, or most details of the rebellion story; Gilbert demonstrates how this fits into the theology of the book and its general Hellenistic and Egyptian background, although he does not hypothesize about the community responsible for this interpretation of the creation tradition.

Multigraphs such as this are notorious for their spotty treatment of a subject; a single author of a book can more easily control coverage of all pressing aspects. Noticeably lacking in this volume, for example, is a sustained engagement with such cruxes as the origin of evil; the antiquity and historical development of creation thought in Israel (note Gerhard von Rad's contested thesis that its significance is basically late); the importance of cosmogony elsewhere in the ancient Near East and in other parts of the Hebrew Bible than those mentioned above; the sociological matrices and ideological purposes of such thought; the appeal made to creation in the wisdom tradition (beyond Job), especially in dealing with theodicy; the notion of order—from cosmic to human—and even the possible presence of a natural theology; and the connections between creation and cult as well as between creation and ethics. Many of the studies collected here do represent substantial contributions in their own areas, yet it must be left to the reader to turn elsewhere for treatment of these insufficiently discussed questions.

DOUGLAS A. KNIGHT, *Vanderbilt University*.