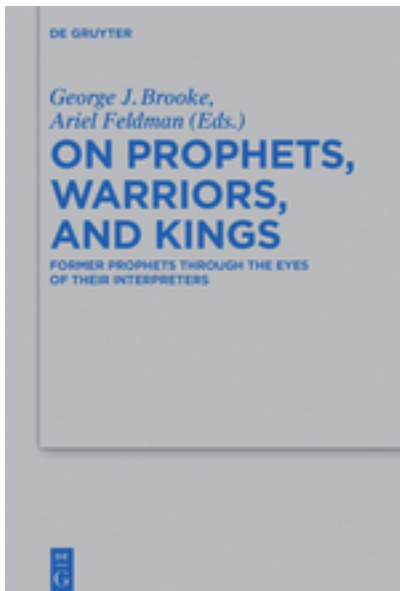


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**George J. Brooke and Ariel Feldman, eds.**

***On Prophets, Warriors, and Kings: Former Prophets through the Eyes of Their Interpreters***

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Over the last decade or so, the Bible's reception history has emerged as a major field of scholarly interest. During this same period, the completed publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls has opened access to some of the earliest interpretations and uses of "biblical" literature (see, e.g., Matthias Henze, ed., *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005]). The Qumran fragments feature prominently in a collection of essays addressing the early reception of the Hebrew Bible's Former Prophets (Joshua–2 Kings). Edited by George J. Brooke and Ariel Feldman, *On Prophets, Warriors, and Kings: Former Prophets Through the Eyes of Their Interpreters* originated in a 2014 conference hosted at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas. The contributors explore the reuse of the Former Prophets in later literary works, including other compositions in the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, deuterocanonical literature, the New Testament, patristic literature, and rabbinic literature. Together the essays nicely demonstrate the transformation of biblical figures in later literary and historical contexts as creative interpreters played off cues and traces in their esteemed written traditions.

Qoheleth satirically recasts 1 Kings's Solomon as an imperial connoisseur of information. So argues Timothy J. Sandoval in "Reconfiguring Solomon in the Royal Fiction of Ecclesiastes," the first essay in the volume. In his acquisition of exhaustive knowledge, the literary figure Qoheleth evokes Jerusalem's wise king as well as Ptolemaic rulers. Using Rebecca Fleming's notion of "extended empire" ("Empires of Knowledge: Medicine and

Health in the Hellenistic World,” in *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. Andrew Erskine [Oxford: Blackwell, 2003], 449–63), Sandoval explains how Qoheleth asserts imperial power via claims to totalizing knowledge. The scribal author subtly critiques contemporary claimants to hegemonic knowing, while maintaining a necessary show of support for the patrons of elite education. The critique of empire amplifies what appears already in 1 Kgs 1–11, according to Sandoval, when the Queen of Sheba demands that Solomon establish justice, a goal of traditional wisdom but not the inevitable result of Solomon’s divine gift.

In “The Comeback of Comebacks: David, Bathsheba, and the Prophets in the Song of Songs,” Serge Frolov considers the relationship of Song of Songs to the broader canon of the Hebrew Bible with questions of gender and theodicy in view. According to Frolov, the Song is a unified composition that alludes to David and Bathsheba, who together become an interpretive key for unlocking a critique of (prophetic portrayals of) YHWH’s attitude toward his people’s suffering. Prophetic literature frequently employs metaphors of (dysfunctional) marriage in order to explain Israel/Judah’s political misfortunes: the devoted husband YHWH disciplines Israel the faithless wife (the woman always bears the blame). Frolov argues that the Song modifies the metaphor and queries whether *the lover*—the male/the deity—might be at fault. In so doing, the Song counterbalances a “one-sided commentary on Israel’s tribulations recounted in the Bible, the commentary that tends to blame the victim” (59). The Song was created for the canon, then, in order to lighten the burden of guilt generated by earlier texts that offer clear-cut theological accounts of Israel’s suffering.

Claudia V. Camp also addresses the formation of the biblical canon in “Killing the Father: Gender and the Figure of Solomon in Ben Sira’s Hymn to the Fathers.” Camp reads the second-century BCE sapiential work of Ben Sira as an intersection for nascent canonization and the precariously comfortable social position of a (sub)elite Judean scribe. According to Camp, an emerging notion of canon helped to alleviate the scribe’s anxiety about maintaining social standing in a highly gendered, shame-oriented culture. Convention might have had Ben Sira secure authority for his writing by ascribing it to an ancient figure, Solomon being a natural choice (though compare Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016], 52–56). Yet despite his famed wisdom, the old king could not supply an authorizing pseudonym. Ben Sira takes another avenue: he shames Solomon for sexual indiscretion and then acquires for himself proverbial Woman Wisdom, who vouchsafes the integrity of his scholarly expertise. Ben Sira equates Woman Wisdom with torah, so that torah—a developing body of writings—becomes a woman whom the scribe masters. In the end, explains Camp in an imaginative Oedipal analysis, Ben Sira has slain wise father Solomon and taken Woman Wisdom for a wife.

In “The Book of Judges in Early Jewish Interpretation: The Contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” Ariel Feldman surveys the appearance of Judges in the Dead Sea Scrolls, beginning with the few extant fragments of the book of Judges. Three of four Judges manuscripts come from Qumran Cave 4; the provenance of the fourth is uncertain. Although these scrolls “yield multiple variant readings,” Feldman explains, they do not provide evidence of a “shorter edition of Judges” (81). Feldman next surveys the reception of Judges in nonbiblical scrolls, as well as other Second Temple writings, employing Devorah Dimant’s useful classification of literary relationships (“Use and Interpretation of Mikra in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha,” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Martin J. Mulder [repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004], 379–419). When Feldman accounts for Judges’s relatively sparse reuse in Second Temple literary works by appealing to the “moral and exegetical challenges that this book presented to its readers” (94), he seems to assume for the ancients the ethical sensibilities of modern readers. Nevertheless, Feldman helpfully presents the intriguing early reception of Judges and charts a promising course for further study.

In an essay titled “Zedekiah, Covenant, and the Scrolls from Qumran,” George J. Brooke explores the role of covenant ideology in early Jewish historiography. Bringing together three fragmentary sectarian texts that mention Zedekiah (4Q470 [Text Mentioning Zedekiah]; 4Q247 [Peshier on the Apocalypse of Weeks]; 4Q398 [papMMT<sup>c</sup>]) and several Jeremianic traditions, Brooke demonstrates how this last Judahite monarch figured in a historiographic schema organized by God’s covenant(s) with human beings. Brooke notes additional texts that invite further reflection on the topic, both within the Qumran corpus (1QS 2:2–4; 4Q252 [Commentary on Genesis A]) and without (Matt 1:17; Luke 3:23–38; 22:20), and makes a strong case for identifying “a periodisation of history that in large measure is aligned with the various iterations of God’s covenant first with humanity and then with Israel and its royal representatives” (106).

In “Dethroning David and Enthroning Messiah: Jewish and Christian Perspectives,” George J. Brooke and Hindy Najman offer a reception history of David in early Judaism and nascent Christianity. Two main sections reflect the elements in the essay’s title, each corresponding approximately to historical stages. With regard to “Dethroning David,” the earliest references to David in Jewish texts do not stress his kingship but rather develop other dimensions of this royal figure latent in the scriptural depictions. Brooke and Najman show how these texts emphasize and extend David’s role as a poet and prophet and even transform the monarch into a master scribe. The second section of the essay, “Enthroning Messiah,” discusses David in the rise of Jewish messianism, as attested in the sectarian scrolls from Qumran and select New Testament texts. It might come as a surprise to some readers that David’s role in these messianic writings is quite limited. The

authors show that the messiah's Davidic heritage tends to be only incidental. This essay highlights the flexibility of the figure David for ancient writers, a flexibility afforded in part by the diversity of traditions at their disposal.

The next chapter will be of special interest to readers who study the reception of biblical texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls: "Probing the Former Prophets with a New Online Tool for the Study of Biblical Quotations and Allusions in the Dead Sea Scrolls," by Ariel Feldman, Faina Feldman, Joseph McDonald, and Ron Serino. The Dead Sea Scrolls Quotations Databank is an online project that aids scholars seeking to understand the use of "scripture" in the Qumran manuscripts. An introduction briefly surveys past studies of the use of the Hebrew Bible in early Jewish and Christian literature and outlines the need for such a tool, which enables the user to immediately search references to biblical texts in the Scrolls. The chapter presents screen shots, explains the search function (handily, by scroll or by biblical book), and describes the tool's adaptability (it can be updated in order to incorporate new data and research). The search results identify the manuscript, column, and line in which the biblical tradition appears and usually provide brief bibliography. The URL for the open access website is <http://bibledeadseascrolls.com/>. [Editor note: the URL is not working at the time of publication of this review.]

Warren Carter examines the relationship between Matthew's Jesus and the hero of LXX Joshua in "Septuagint Joshua and Matthew's Jesus: Salvation and Land Wars?" Previous scholarship recognized literary connections between Jesus in Matthew and Joshua son of Nun but in the end determined that Joshua is a warrior concerned with *military* exploits, while heavenly minded Jesus cares mainly for the souls of those he saves. To the contrary, Carter demonstrates that Joshua does concern himself with theological matters, and, conversely, Jesus's salvation is not purely spiritual. Carter argues that the Matthean Jesus seeks reclamation of the land and the violent overthrow of Roman imperial rule. This is indicated, for example, by Jesus's entrance into "Galilee *under* the Gentiles" (Matt 4:12–15), his beatitude promising land inheritance (Matt 5:5), and his eschatological vision (Matt 24). Carter's essay rightly challenges the dichotomy between the spiritual and the material that post-Enlightenment readers too easily (and unwittingly) project onto ancient texts.

In "Elijah, Ezekiel, and Romulus: Luke's Flesh and Bones (Luke 24:39) in Light of Ancient Narratives of Ascent, Resurrection, and Apotheosis," Shelly Matthews exhumes a complex of traditions and beliefs pertaining to Luke's depiction of Jesus's resurrected body. She demonstrates the influence of Roman apotheosis traditions on Luke (e.g., from Plutarch) and reasons that, because these traditions typically feature transfigured, less-than-corporeal resurrection bodies, Luke fills Jesus out with a fleshly form by drawing on Jewish texts (notably Ezek 37:1–14 and Pseudo-Ezekiel [4Q385]). In Luke-Acts, Jesus's

resurrected body establishes the ecclesial authority of those who claim to have witnessed it and the credibility of the future judgment they preach. Matthews traces briefly the development of this Lukan perspective in several patristic works (Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian).

Like other contributors to the volume, Matthias Henze brings attention to the multivalence of biblical figures. In “King Manasseh of Judah in Early Judaism and Christianity,” Henze’s material ranges from biblical to patristic and rabbinic, making for a fascinating and diverse treatment of the topic. An initial review of Manasseh in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles leads to substantial sections covering three major traditions: Manasseh’s repentance, which magnifies the mercy of God; Manasseh’s role in the martyrdom of Isaiah, which swells the monarch’s reputation for wanton violence; and Manasseh’s idol building, which appears in both Christian and Jewish texts though in variously refracted forms. Broad in its historical and literary scope, this essay furnishes a trove of fascinating material relating to the transformations of an ambiguous biblical character.

Most of the essays in this volume deal with ancient Judaism. Scott M. Langston’s essay, “‘A Running Thread of Ideals’: Joshua and the Israelite Conquest in American History,” is an exception. This piece tracks the deeply disturbing “use (and abuse)” (11) of Joshua’s conquest of Canaan in the American context. With sources ranging from a 1493 papal bull to an internet post in 2011, Langston reveals the problematic and permeating legacy of Joshua in the Land of the Free: how the biblical text, supposedly infused with Euro-American ideals, supplied conceptual categories and a narrative framework that justified and practically impelled the programmatic eradication of indigenous culture(s). Joshua’s territorial conquest and dispossession of “Canaanite” inhabitants became for Christian Americans a model to replicate. Langston challenges readers of Joshua to take seriously the ongoing lethal potential of this ancient story (258) and insists that listening to indigenous voices constitutes an essential ingredient for ethical interpretation of the biblical text. Although it feels quite out of place in a collection otherwise dealing with antiquity, this is an important—even exemplary—essay for anyone concerned with the role of the Bible in contemporary American society.

An introduction to the volume summarizes each chapter briefly, though it unfortunately offers no discussion of methodological issues encountered in the project, nor does it contextualize the volume within current trends in biblical and cognate studies. Given the stated hope that “the new insights offered here will stimulate further inquiry into this fascinating field” (11), a brief orientation to reception history would have enhanced the usefulness of the volume significantly. For example, do these essays collectively represent a methodological development in the field? Or do they mainly serve to showcase the interpretive potential of the Former Prophets by uncovering actual readings in particular

historical and literary contexts? (The latter seems to be the case.) Readers interested in the (implicit) theoretical underpinnings of this volume will have to look elsewhere (e.g., Jonathan Roberts's "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*, ed. Michael Lieb, Emma Mason, and Jonathan Roberts [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 1–8 ). To be clear, however, Brooke, Feldman, and the contributors are to be commended for this collection of insightful, creative, and compelling studies on the early reception of the Former Prophets.