

of D-like language in the Tetrateuch beyond Deuteronomy itself simply indicates the use of Dtr “Sprachklischees” by later redactors (e.g., pp. 157, 343, 614, 645 n. 32); but that argument prodigally jettisons the very evidence at the disposal of the critic. Thus, *ex hypothesi*, Otto can find neither D nor P in Num 13–14 and must therefore invoke post-Dtr and post-P redactors, reusing D and P’s sources. But, if the argument about P^G and P^S above has force, then these restrictions are removed, and a much more economical theory is available. The essentially unitary material in Deut 1 provides a reminiscence of a Dtr story embedded in Num 13–14. The variations from Deut 1 in Num 13–14 are indeed to be accounted for by the work of a later editor in the latter. Otto identifies that later editor as “post-priestly”. But, once again, how does one distinguish between priestly material and subsequent reuse of that material (an issue noted on p. 427 n. 24)? The editorial procedures in Num 11–21 are recognizably similar to those in Exodus (reuse and transposition of older material; insertion of blocks of new material), where the hand of P can readily be recognized (as I have argued in FS Nicholson).¹⁵

On Otto’s argument, every piece of writing is pulled out and strung along an extended timeline. Literary history is conformed to political history (the circular argumentation of which Otto accuses De Wette and his successors can thus only be intensified). Parallel materials have to be located at different points on that timeline. If Otto is really impressed by “external evidence”, then perhaps the literary conservatism of ancient Near Eastern writing, not least its legal compositions, should be borne in mind.¹⁶ This reviewer would espouse the much simpler hypothesis that parallel materials come from the same source and that there are only two main streams in interaction. Oddly enough, Otto makes sounds in the same direction: “a critical discourse [took place] between D and P during the exile. Post-exilic Jewish scribes mediated these two exilic programmes and created the Pentateuch as the result of innerbiblical scribal exegesis of D and P” (p. 3). The disagreement arises from one’s account of the process and progress of this mutual critical discourse. Over against Otto’s maximalism, I should affirm minimalism: uniform D-version followed by P-edition of it.

One wishes Otto well in the completion of his commentary which, every indication suggests, will be of epic proportions. It is, I suppose, too late to hope that the enterprise already well launched can be redesigned in slimmer, more manageable, form.

University of Aberdeen, Scotland,
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William JOHNSTONE

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¹⁵ Reviewed by Otto in ZAR 11 (2005), pp. (361–69) 364–66, not included in this collection (I thank Dr. R.B. Salters for obtaining me a photocopy of that review).

¹⁶ The point was neatly put long ago by Samuel Greengus, “Some Issues Relating to the Comparability of Laws and the Coherence of the Legal Traditions,” in Bernard M. Levinson, ed., *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law: Revision, Interpolation and Development*, JSOT SS, 181, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, (pp. 60–87) p. 72: “Bible scholars, recognizing that the history of ancient Israel includes memory of a number of important social and cultural changes, have been more ready [than their ancient Near Eastern counterparts] to create diachronic analyses.”

LEMAIRE, A. — The Birth of Monotheism. The Rise and Disappearance of Yahwism. Biblical Archaeology Society, Washington, 2007. (23,5 cm, 160). ISBN 978-1-880317-99-0.

Although it is not clearly indicated in the book itself, we are dealing here with the English version of a French study (*Naissance du monothéisme. Point de vue d'un historien*, Éditions Bayard, Paris), published in 2003. This explains why with a few exceptions the secondary literature referred to is not later than from 2002.

Lemaire’s sketch of the history of the religion of ancient Israel in the period of the Old Testament is aimed at the general public. It does not break new ground or seriously enter into the scholarly discussions. It pictures Yahwism as a particular nationalistic religion of monolatry, which developed in a clear linear process into a religion of universal monotheism. It originated in Midian, became the national religion of Israel under David, was reformed to a pure aniconic religion under Hezekiah and Josiah, and turned into a monotheistic religion of the one, universal creator god in the period after the Babylonian exile, initiated by the message of the prophet, whom we call the Second Isaiah. With the ‘disappearance of Yahwism’ mentioned in the subtitle of the book the author refers to the fact that in the final centuries BCE the name Yhwh was no longer used. Yahwism itself was transformed. It ‘fulfilled its historical role by giving birth to universal monotheism’ (p. 134). The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the end of the temple cult is regarded as an important step in this process. Even before the destruction of the second temple people had started to come together in synagogues, focusing on learning the Torah and knowing God. This gradually replaced the sacrificial cult and was in line with prophetic criticism concerning the temple cult.

In his presentation Lemaire follows the general line of the Old Testament, suggesting that this gives an accurate historical picture, which is confirmed by archaeological and especially epigraphical evidence. An important place in his reasoning is taken by the arguments derived from the use and spreading of theophoric names. In one of the more detailed chapters of this book Lemaire discusses the evidence concerning archaeological and epigraphical evidence about ‘Yhwh and his asherah’. He comes to the conclusion that there is no reason to assume that in the first temple period Yhwh was believed to have a consort.

In the final chapter Lemaire gives a short survey of the arguments concerning the pronunciation of the tetragrammaton. In a discussion, which is more technical compared to the rest of the book he concludes that the name, which was initially a place-name, was probably pronounced ‘Yahwoh’. The ‘Yahweh’ pronunciation would have been the result of a later theological interpretation of the name.

This final chapter and also the discussion of the material about Asherah are the most interesting parts of this book, which as a whole can be considered a rather conservative simplification of the history of the religion of ancient Israel. One misses a serious discussion with the many scholars who see reasons to assume that the Old Testament does not give an accurate picture of the development of Yahwism. The archaeological evidence used by Lemaire is limited to what fits into his framework and even this evidence can be interpreted differently. To be fair, Lemaire does mention some of the alternative views in his endnotes.



Even more interesting would be a discussion of his views from a Jewish perspective. As it is presented here, Yahwism primarily functioned as a preparation for a universal monotheistic religion. Is this the same as Christianity? Lemaire does not say so, but it seems to be the implication of his description of Yahwism as an evolutionary process, in which things are getting better all the time and in which the loss of the temple in Jerusalem is in this framework a positive development. Not everyone will agree with Lemaire's picture of the origin of the synagogues and their relation to the temple cult. One can also question his use of the prophetic texts criticizing cult practices. Their condemnation of misuse can also be interpreted as a way of helping to restore the right temple cult in Jerusalem.

The book contains a number of illustrations. They seem to have been added to the book by someone other than the author, as can be derived from the lengthy and redundant marginal notes relating to these pictures.

The endnotes of chapter 13 are missing.

Kampen, January 2010

Klaas SPRONK

