

GÖRG, M. - Mythos und Mythologie: Studien zur Religionsgeschichte und Theologie. (Ägypten und Altes Testament, 70). Verlag Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 2010. (30,5 cm, 337). ISBN 978-3-447-05895-7. ISSN 0720-9061. €68,-.

This collection of twenty-five essays from the German catholic Old Testament scholar and Egyptologist Manfred Görg, who died in september 2012 at the age of 74, contains some of his work published between 1993 and 2009. It is the companion to a first compilation *Studien zur biblisch-ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Stuttgarter Biblische Aufsatzbände 14), Stuttgart 1992 (with essays previously published between 1970 and 1991).

The title of the book is explained in the preface as a reference to the insight gained by his study of the Old Testament and the history of the religion of ancient Israel that "myth" should not be regarded as the opposite of "truth" but as a way in which man defines his place in this world and his relation to the divine world. This is elaborated in the final essay ('Offenbarung als Mythos?', pp. 325-334) and also in his study on the question whether the traditions about Abraham can help to bring Jews, Christians and Muslims together ('Abrahamsbilder in der Bibel. Zum Problem einer interreligiösen Orientierung am „Vater des Glaubens“', pp. 195-207). Apart from these essays this theme does not play an important part in the rest of the volume. Although it is presented as a coherent collection, subdivided in five parts (Gottesbilder, Schöpfungsbilder, Menschenbilder, Geschichtsbilder, Glaubensbilder), there is a wide variety of themes and also in style, from popular to very technical. It is unavoidable for such a volume that there is some kind of overlap between the different essays. In some cases a different order would have been better. For instance, the essay 'Mose und die Gaven der Unterscheidung. Zur aktuellen Diskussion um Jan Assmanns Buch „Moses der Ägypter“' (pp. 271-281) could have functioned as a good introduction to the essay 'Mose – Name und Namensträger. Versuch einer historischen Annäherung' (pp. 209-228), which starts with a reference to the discussion with Assmann. The fact that the latter essay is placed in the third part of the book ('Menschenbilder') and the former in the fourth ('Geschichtsbilder') highlights the fact that the overall division is not always convincing.

What is characteristic, is primarily the attempts by Görg to bring together very different themes and approaches. He proves to be able to combine his being a catholic priest, Old Testament scholar and Egyptologist. One could add that he also likes to enter into philosophical debates. In this way he succeeds in building bridges between the Old Testament and Egyptology, between church and university, between Jews, Christians and Muslims, between science and religion. Next to all this he also pays much attention to the history of modern research, beginning in the age of the Enlightenment. What will probably be appreciated most by the readers of the present review is his work on the relations between ancient Egypt and the Old Testament.

In the first essay '„Menschenwort“ und „Gotteswort“. Die biblische Ursprache als Gegenstand biblischer Theologie' (pp. 13-27) he offers an original contribution to the ongoing discussion about the relation between biblical theology with philology. He starts with a discussion of the work of Johannes Reuchlin and the interest in the Hebrew language in the age of the Reformation. It would have been interesting if he had also taken into account the theory of Theodore Bibliander (sixteenth century) about Hebrew as the mother of all languages.

The next two articles take up issues concerning the origin and meaning of the name of the god of Israel: 'Der eine als der Andere. Der Gottesname im Alten Testament' (pp. 29-43), 'YHWH als Toponym – Weitere Perspektiven' (pp. 45-51). Here he discusses among other things the possible relations of Israel with the Shashu-bedouins being liberated from Egypt. The name YHWH could have been derived from the symbol of a bird of prey falling down. In 'YHWH als Ehemann und als Löwe. Ambivalenz und Kohärenz in der Metaphorik des Hoseabuches' (pp. 53-64) Görg studies the interlinking images of YHWH as husband and lion in Hosea and Egyptian glyptic. In 'Gott als König. Die Bedeutung einer komplexen Metapher für das Gottesverständnis in den Psalmen' (pp. 65-93) he argues that Israel's notion of divine

enthronement resembles Egyptian ideas of a throne resting above the cosmos. It is one of many examples of the fact that in his study of the Old Testament Görg tends to look for parallels in ancient Egypt more than, as is usually done, to assume relations with Syria and Mesopotamia. In his apparent attempt to restore the balance between these different approaches he may sometimes have overstated the case of a possible relation with Egypt.

From the second section of the book, on images of creation, only the first two are entirely devoted to that theme. In 'Chaos und Chaosmächte im Alten Testament' (pp. 97-107) he gives a survey of the theme of chaos in especially Genesis 1:2; Psalm 93; and Isaiah 51-9-11, noting parallels in ancient Egypt, but also associating it with 'das „Anti-Leben“ von Auschwitz'. In 'Vorwelt – Raum – Zeit.

Schöpfungsvorstellungen im ersten Kapitel der Bibel' (pp. 109-126) he points to a parallel threefold structure in ancient Egyptian conceptions of creation.

In 'Das Übersetzungsproblem in Gen 2,1' (pp. 127-134) Görg proposes to translate the Hebrew word צבא not as is usually done with 'host', but to interpret it as a Egyptian loanword and thus as a homonym, meaning 'ornament' or 'equipment'. The essay 'Der Granatapfel in der Bildsprache des Hohenliedes. Ein Beitrag zur schöpfungs- und lebensnahen Bibelauslegung' (pp. 135-140) presents some iconographic material on pomegranates leading to the interpretation of the image used in Song of Songs 4:3 as referring to a French kiss. The final essay of the second section '„Gegenwelten“—biblisch und religionsgeschichtlich betrachtet' (pp. 141-155) stems from *Aufgang. Jahrbuch für Denken, Dichten, Musik, Band 2: Sehnsucht* (2005). It attempts to describe and explain the specific relation between Israel and its God against the ancient Near Eastern background.

Section 3 focuses on biblical anthropology. It starts with an essay on '„Ebenbild Gottes“. Ein biblisches Menschenbild zwischen Anspruch und Realität' (pp. 159 – 171) in which the creation story is connected to Egyptian royal ideology and where Görg also discusses the views of Moses Mendelssohn. In 'Mensch und Tempel im „Zweiten Schöpfungstext“' (pp. 173-194) Görg gives a detailed analysis of temple imagery in Genesis 2:4b–3:24, which can be situated in an Egyptian environment.

After the already mentioned study of the stories of Abraham a very instructive survey on the possible historical background of Moses according to Egyptians sources is given in 'Mose – Name und Namensträger' (pp. 209-228) with a discussion of all pros and cons in relating Moses to Amenmesse, By/Beya, or Ramsesperre.

In '„Schreiten über Löwe und Otter“. Beobachtungen zur Bildsprache in Ps 91,13a' (pp. 229-239) Görg locates the imagery in the context of Egyptian ideas as seen in glyptic. Also in the first essay of section 4 (on images of history), 'Abraham und die Philister' (243-250) he uses iconographic material. His interpretation of some newly found scarabs is rather speculative. His interpretation of the representation of female figures as sexually stimulating is not convincing, neither is his association of these scarabs with the stories of the endangered ancestress.

In 'Israel in Hieroglyphen' (pp. 251-258) Görg presents a new reading of a fragmentary name ring on a topographical pedestal relief in the Berlin Museum. If he is right, the name Israel would have been known in Egypt long before the Merneptah stele and that that Proto-Israelites would have migrated to Canaan sometime nearer the middle of the second millennium BCE. A reworked English version of this article was published together with P. van der Veen and Chr. Theis, 'Israel in Canaan (long) before Pharaoh Merneptah? A Fresh Look at Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief 21687', *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 2:4 (2010), 15-25. This article is mentioned in a footnote on p. 9 of the present volume, but oddly enough not related to the essay within the volume for which it is meant as a follow-up.

In 'Der sogenannte Exodus zwischen Erinnerung und Polemik' (pp. 259-270) Görg discusses the way in which Moses and the exodus have been related by the ancient historian Manetho to the history of Egypt, especially to the period of Echnaton.

After the already mentioned essay 'Mose und die Gaben der Unterscheidung' he defends his earlier suggestion of a connection of Asasel (Leviticus 16) with the Egyptian god Seth in 'Der Dämon im Ritualgesetz des Yom Kippur' (pp. 283-290).

Section 5 (on images of faith) contains a number of essays in which Görg in a sometime provocative or at least thought provoking way discusses some Christian traditions from the perspective of a possible relation to ideas from ancient Egypt. In 'Vom Wehen des Pneuma' (pp. 293-296) he defends the relation, as proposed by the Egyptologist Kurt Sethe, between John 3:8 and the saying from a hymn to Amun 'One hears his voice, but one cannot see him'. In 'Die „Heilige Familie“. Zum mythischen Glaubensgrund eines christlichen Topos' (pp. 297-305) Görg compares notions of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus with those about Osiris, Isis, and Horus, concentrating it to the role of the mother in 'Die Göttin Isis und die Heilige Maria. Gottesmütter im Vergleich' (pp. 307-316), and to the role of the son in 'Gottes Sohn und Gottes Kind. Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis Mythologie und Mystik' (pp. 317-323), in which he also discusses the book of pope Benedikt XVI on Jesus.

With regard to the editing it can be noticed that the original layout of the articles is left unchanged when it comes to the bibliographic renderings. That means that sometimes one finds lists of literature at the end of an essay, but most of the times not. Unfortunately, helpful indices on texts and authors are missing. One comes across quite a number of typographic errors, for instance 'Pierre' Ricoeur for 'Paul' Ricoeur (p. 53, n. 1), 'Ch. Westermann' for 'Cl. Westermann' (p. 98, though correct in n. 10), 'bettrachtet' for 'betrachtet' (in the heading of pp. 143ff), 'Job 3,8' for 'Joh 3,8' (2 times on p. 295).

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