

This commentary presents a new approach to the old problems of the dating of the book of Judges and the reconstruction of the way different sources were used. It wants to show that the book of Judges can be read as the work of one literary talented author living in the early Hellenistic period. With materials from different sources he wrote his book as introduction to the history of the kings of Israel as can be found in the books of Samuel and Kings with a clear view on leadership and on the relation between the leader and YHWH. Next to the reconstruction of the historical background of the book and its author, much attention is paid to the history of interpretation, from the earliest retellings to the newest interpretations.

PEETERS-LEUVEN



PEETERS

HISTORICAL
COMMENTARY
ON THE OLD
TESTAMENT

Judges
by Klaas Spronk

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JUDGES

HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE OLD TESTAMENT

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PREFACE

The book of Judges is popular among story tellers, not among theologians. Even in theologies of the Old Testament it is hardly mentioned. It does not seem to present a clear picture of the God of the Israelite tribes and what we can learn about YHWH does not look very attractive, because of the association with ethnic violence and atrocities committed on mostly voiceless women. Scholars researching the literary sources of the early history of Israel have found in the book of Judges their own battle field. The fight with often very different weapons (methods) rages fiercely and the idea that it was won by Noth's theory of the Deuteronomistic History is long past. New frontiers have been opened. This commentary presents a new approach to the old problems of the dating of the book of Judges and the reconstruction of the way different sources were used. It wants to show that the book of Judges can be read as the work of one literary talented author living in the early Hellenistic period. With materials from different sources he wrote his book as introduction to the history of the kings of Israel as can be found in the books of Samuel and Kings with a clear view on leadership and on the relation between the leader and YHWH.

The redaction of the HCOT did me the honour of asking me to take over the task from Johannes de Moor of writing this commentary more than twenty years ago. Since then many excellent commentaries and monographs on the book of Judges have been published. I saw it as my task to take "historical" in the name of the series serious in more than one way. Next to the reconstruction of the historical background of the book and its author, I also wanted to pay due attention to the history of interpretation, from the earliest retellings to the newest interpretations. This has resulted in long bibliographies and many overviews. I hope this will serve the ongoing study of the (even after two decades of research for me still) fascinating book of Judges.

I thank the Protestant Theological University and its librarians for their support and Robert Allan for correcting the English.

Amsterdam, Easter 2019

Klaas Spronk