

BOOK REVIEWS / BOEK RESENSIES

Dale C. Allison, Christine Helmer, Volker Leppin, Choon-Leong Seow, Hermann Spieckermann, Barry Dov Walfish, Eric Ziolkowski, eds. *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception 8: Essenes – Fideism*. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2014. xxvi + 1200 cols. Cloth. Price: 238 Euro ISBN 978-3-11-018376-4.

Like previous volumes, the present eighth volume of the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception (EBR)* combines what one would expect of a classical Bible dictionary (including occurrences in the ANE) with a broad survey of the reception of biblical material in the NT, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, literature, visual arts, music and film. The introduction to volume one (Aaron – Aniconism, 2009) provides an introduction to the scope and approach of the Encyclopedia:

EBR pursues the twofold task of (1) comprehensively recording – and, indeed, advancing – the current knowledge of the origins and development of the Bible in its Jewish and Christian canonical forms and (2) documenting the history of the Bible’s reception in Judaism and Christianity as evident in exegetical literature, theological and philosophical writings of various genres, literature, liturgy, music, the visual arts, dance, and film, as well as in Islam and other religious traditions and contemporary movements. With this broad program of reception history, EBR moves into new terrain in recognition of the fact that biblical texts not only have their own particular backgrounds and settings but have also been received and interpreted, and have exerted influence or otherwise have had impact in countless religious, theological, and aesthetic settings (ix).

The entry on the book and person of Esther serves as an example of this approach. The entry consists of the following sub-entries. Starting with “Esther I: Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (Book and Person)” (10-13, Anne Steward) the following sub-entries trace the full reception history, namely: “Esther II. Judaism A. Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism” (13-19, Michael G. Wechsler), “Esther II. Judaism B. Rabbinic Judaism” (19-21, Eliezer Segal), “Esther II. Judaism C. Medieval Judaism: General” (21-24, Barry Dov Walfish), “Esther II. Judaism D. Medieval Judaism: Judeo-Arabic Commentary” (24-27, Michael G. Wechsler), “Esther II. Judaism E. Modern Judaism” (27-30, Elliott Horowitz), “Esther III. Christianity A. Patristics and Western Christianity” (30-34, Elliott Horowitz; while there is a summary of the reception in Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, reception of Esther in other parts of the world is not mentioned), “Esther III. Christianity B. Near Eastern Christianity” (34-38, Michael G. Wechsler), “Esther IV. Islam” (38f, Yasir Mirdamadi), “Esther V. Literature” (39-42, Anthony Swindell), “Esther VI.

Visual Arts” (42-48, Ori Z. Zoltes), “Esther VII. Music (48-50, Jo Carruthers and Helen Leneman), “Esther VIII. Film” (50-54, Rhonda Burnette-Bletsch).

Of particular interest for the study of the OT are the following entries of this volume. Our focus is on the OT itself, not on the reception history of the biblical material which is described in the following sub-entries (as above with Esther): “Ester Rabbah (EstR), Esther Midrashim” (6-9, Joseph Tabory), “Eternal Life I. Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (59-61, Hermann Spieckermann); “Eternity I. Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (73-75, Hermann Spieckermann), “Ethics I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (97-100, Jacqueline E. Lapsley), “Ethiopia, Ancient I. History and Civilisation” (138-142, Witold Witakowski) and “Ethiopia, Ancient II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (142-144), “Eunuch, Eunuchs I. Ancient Near East” (172-174, Martti Nissinen) and “Eunuch/Eunuchs II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (174f, Peter Porzig), “Euphrates I. Ancient Near East” (185f) and “Euphrates II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (186f, Mareike V. Blischke), “Eve I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (285-287, Hermann Spieckermann) (285-287), “Evil I. Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (321-324, Hermann Spieckermann), “Excommunication I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (366, Peter Porzig, too brief!), “Exhortation I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (384f, Melvin Sensenig), “Exile I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (388-391, Bob Becking), “Exodus, Book of I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (428-436, Christoph Berner), “Exodus, The I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (464-467, Christoph Berner), “Exorcism I. Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (513-519, Tzvi Abusch), “Expiation I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (535f, Hermann Spieckermann), “Eye, Eyes I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (559-561, Kristin Helms), “Ezekiel (Book and Person) I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (582-590, Paul Joyce), “Ezra (Book and Person) I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (626-629, Juha Pakkala), entries on “Ezra, Greek Apocalypse of,” “Ezra, Questions of,” “Ezra, Revelation of” and “Ezra, Vision of” (642-646, all by Tom O’Loughlin), “Face I. Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (659-662, Friedhelm Hartenstein), “Faith I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (690f, Anja Klein), “Fall of Heavenly Beings I. Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (733-735, Heath D. Dewrell), “Fall of Humankind I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (751f, Thomas Römer, one column is short!), “False Teachers, False Prophets I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (779-781, Anja Klein), “False Witness, False Accusation” (797f, Tony Colaianne), “Family I. Ancient Near East” (816f, Heath D. Dewrell) and “Family II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (817-819, Carol Meyers), “Famine and Drought” (851-853, Nathan MacDonald), “Farewell Speech I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (875-877, Marvin A. Sweeney), “Fasts, Fasting I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (903f, Hannah S. An), “Fate I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (927f, Davis Hankins), “Father, Fathers, Fatherhood I. Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (951-954, Hermann Spieckermann), “Fauna, Biblical I. Biblical Texts” (990-

994, Hendrik L. Bosman of the University of Stellenbosch), “Fear I. Ancient Near East” and “Fear II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1012-1014, both Hendrik L. Bosman), “Fear of God I. Ancient Near East” and “Fear of God II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1020-1023, both Hendrik L. Bosman), “Feasts and Festivals I. Ancient Near East A. Introduction” (1044f, Beate Pongratz-Leisen), “Feasts and Festivals I. Ancient Near East B. Egypt” (1045-1047, Jaana Toivari-Vitala), “Feasts and Festivals I. Ancient Near East C. Mesopotamia” (1047-1050, Beate Pongratz-Leisten), “Feasts and Festivals I. Ancient Near East D. Syria” (1050-1053, Elizabeth Ann Knott), “Feasts and Festivals I. Ancient Near East E. Anatolia” (1053-1055, Mary R. Bachvarova) and “Feasts, Festivals II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1055-1059, Corinna Körting), “Feeding Miracles I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1094-1096, Nathan MacDonald), “Feminism, Feminist Hermeneutics I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1124-1128, Nancy R. Bowen) and “Fertility I. Ancient Near East” (1167-1170, Gwendolyn Leick) and “Fertility II. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament” (1170-1172, Marianne Grohmann).

Not only because four OT books are included between the lemmata “Essenes” and “Fideism” (Esther, Exodus, Ezekiel, Ezra) is this an important volume in the EBR. A flaw also evident in previous volumes also appears in the eighth volume. The sub-entries on Christian reception usually well document the reception of biblical material in the Ancient Church, the era of the Reformation and in modern Europe and North America (so explicitly in the entries “Faith IV. Christianity A. Greek and Latin Patristics and Orthodox Churches,” 711-714 by Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, “Faith IV. Christianity B. Medieval Times and Reformation Era,” 714-717 by Miriam Rose, “Faith IV. Christianity C. Modern Europe and America,” 717-721 by Johann A. Steiger and Heinrich Assel). The same applies to the sub-entries on literature, visual arts, music and film. The rich reception of the Bible in other contexts, be it in Africa, Asia and Latin America, appears only rarely. One instance should be mentioned. While the major entry “Exodus, Book of” (428-464) surprisingly contains no sub-entry on its reception in Christianity, the entry “Exodus, The” addresses the Christian reception of the exodus in “Christianity IV” in Greek and Latin Patristics through Medieval times (484-486) and in the Reformation era to modern times (486-488 by Scott Langston) notes:

Diverse groups envisioned themselves as modern Israelites; these include black South Africans struggling against apartheid, Zimbabweans striving to free themselves from British colonial rule, and African Americans seeking freedom and equality. Liberation theologians have found the exodus particularly helpful in developing a theology for resisting and overcoming social and economic oppression, especially in Latin America and Africa (e.g., George V. Pixley’s, *On Exodus*). The exodus has provided hope for deliverance, Inspiration to act, and a way to bring legitimacy to particular causes (487).

Other than this brief mention (no reference whatsoever to liberation hermeneutics in Latin America, Africa or Asia!), the remainder of the sub-entry focuses on the reception of the exodus in North America (mainly by African Americans) and in European history. In view of 6,5 columns on the book of Exodus in films (457-464 by Robert Torrey and Susan L. Aronstein, a detailed survey of three North American films!) this brief reference to African reception is hardly sufficient!

Despite the obvious problems involved in the study of the reception of the Bible in these contexts (what is extant, available, representative?), a lot of work still needs to be done in order to produce – perhaps in the second edition of the EBR – an encyclopedia that is truly representative of the world-wide reception of the Bible.

Volume nine of the EBR on “Field – Gem Stones” appeared in 2014 (ISBN 978-3-11-018376-4).

Recently the publisher has started three projects supplementary to the Encyclopedia:

- (i) The series *Handbooks of the Bible and Its Reception* (HBR) which offers broad and in-depth analyses of selected issues found in EBR, focusing on particular themes, regions, figures, and historical contexts,
- (ii) The series *Studies of the Bible and Its Reception* (SBR) which comprises monographs and collected volumes that explore the reception history of the Bible in a wide variety of academic and cultural contexts.
- (iii) *The Journal of the Bible and Its Reception* (JBR) promotes the study of the reception of the Bible in terms of both methodology and content.

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Jeffrey G. Audirsch. *The Legislative Themes of Centralization: From Mandate to Demise*. Pickwick: Eugene Oreg., 2014. xvi + 224 pages. Paperback. Price \$ 21.60. ISBN 978-1-62032-038-9.

This study is a revision of Jeffrey Audirsch’s dissertation, submitted in 2010 at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The “legislative themes of centralization” are five themes related to the cult centralization in Deuteronomy: idolatry, tithing, festivals, judiciary officials and priesthood. These themes are investigated throughout the Enneateuch.