

harmony with the biblical text. Zertal, for instance, understands Mt. Ebal—in harmony with the biblical text—as a cultic site. Dever prefers another solution and interprets it to be a picnic site.

Second, Dever mentions the recovery of a Late Bronze Age pottery sherd from Izbeth Sartah with a Hebrew inscription, together with other epigraphic and historical data that points (at least) to the presence of Hebrews in the 13th century B.C., even though he negates the basic historicity of the biblical text. In the light of these apparent discrepancies, it appears too early to suggest that archeology may “be the primary source of new data for rewriting Israel’s early history” (p. 167). Perhaps an “interdisciplinary approach” (James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai. The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2005], 24), including faith-based narratives, could be a reliable basis for establishing biblical facts.

Third, Dever admits that an attempt to find “rational explanations” may “miss the point of the biblical narrative” because biblical truth “is a matter of faith, not reason—nor archeology” (p. 16). Why, then, is he not in accord with Hoffmeier on the point that lack of evidence is not a plausible reason to dismiss the historicity of the exodus (Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 2–8)? More reasonable to this reader is Hoffmeier’s observation that the Bible, unlike other ancient texts, is sometimes unfairly approached with a post-modernist mind set (Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 20). Furthermore, the absence of some Bronze Age Israelite artifacts may be attributed to the precarious nature of the materials (Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 150). Finally, Israel’s aniconism may ensue from prohibitions of the Israelite religion. Despite the above critical comments, Dever challenges the reader to keep abreast on issues surrounding the Bible and the material culture in which it was situated. As with most research, it is vital to compare his views with other archeological perspectives in order to develop a sustainable position.

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*A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John*, by Edmondo F. Lupieri. Translated from the Italian by Maria Poggi Johnson and Adam Kamesar. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. Pp. xxx + 395. ISBN 978-0-8028-6073. US\$ 36.00.

*A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John* is one among ten books authored by Edmondo F. Lupieri and is an English translation of the Italian edition *L'Apocalisse di Giovanni* (1999).

Lupieri divides his commentary into three main sections: introduction (pp. 1–44), the Greek text of Revelation and its translation (pp. 45–95), and the commentary (pp. 97–363). In addition, there are indexes (pp. 364–95), and a bibliography (pp. xiii–xxii).

In the “Introduction,” Lupieri insists that even though the Apocalypse does not contain all the scientific facts needed to be objectively interpreted, there are historical facts accessible for studying the Apocalypse (p. 11). This belief is based on Lupieri’s conviction that the Apocalypse is “a unified text, the work of a historical figure by the name of John” (p. 12), written within the period between 70 and 100 C.E. (p. 44). Therefore, Lupieri proposes “an analysis of the Apocalypse that aims to reconnect with the traditions of historical-critical research” (p. 12).

Lupieri provides in the “Introduction” a twelve page comparison between the Apocalypse and other Jewish apocalyptic literature (pp. 13–25) and includes references to a number of Jewish apocalyptic texts, such as the *Book of Noah*, *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, *Paraleipomena of Jeremiah*, and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. He concludes that “much of the Jewish world was concerned with apocalyptic tremors (p. 25). In this sense, the Apocalypse belongs to the general group of Jewish-Christian apocalyptic literature.

Based on the apocalyptic genre of the Apocalypse, Lupieri believes that the Apocalypse is to be interpreted allegorically. By allegory he does not refer to a method of interpretation that goes beyond the letter of the text but rather refers to the true meaning of the vision (p. 113). The “Introduction” provides the needed principles and explanation on how to read the Apocalypse.

However, the “Introduction” does not provide a thorough discussion of the structure of the Apocalypse. Lupieri only includes an eleven-line paragraph to discuss that matter (p. 40). Within the framework of the epistolary form, with an address at the beginning and greetings at the end, he divides the Apocalypse into two major sections: 1:9 to 3:21 and 4:1 to the end. Later on, under his commentary on Rev 1:19, he clarifies that the first section describes the historical situation of the seven churches, and the last section is a vision of what is to take place (p. 112).

After the “Introduction,” Lupieri arranges the complete Greek text of the Apocalypse and its translation side by side (pp. 45–95). This arrangement helps a non-specialist to refer to the Greek text and the English translation more easily. The English translation of the Greek text was made by Adam Kamesar who also translated the commentary from the Italian. Kamesar checked his English translation against Lupieri’s Italian translation of the Greek, so that readers may “move closer to Lupieri’s understanding

of the Greek" (p. xxx). This is a good practice when translating a non-English commentary into English.

Lupieri does not indicate explicitly what major interpretive approaches are applied in his commentary. However, it seems that preterist ideas predominate. This is evident in the references to Jewish people and Jerusalem as the fulfillment of many prophecies in the Apocalypse. For example, the two major groups of people in the two harvests mentioned in 14:14–20 are Jewish Christians and Non-Jewish Christians. Here the word "Christian" functions only as an adjective modifying Jews (p. 231). The names of Nero, Vespasian, and Domitian are mentioned in the interpretation of Rev 13, a chapter that describes the satanic activities during the period of the 1,260 days (pp. 203–18); the number of the beast (666) of Rev 13:18 points to Nero Caesar (pp. 217–18); the word Jerusalem occurs on 113 pages of the commentary. The Babylon of the Apocalypse is identified as Jerusalem. The occurrence of these interpretations in the section "What is to take place" (4:1 to the end of the Apocalypse), suggests that in the mind of the author many future events predicted in the Apocalypse had taken place even in the first century C.E.

Lupieri organizes the third section, his commentary on the text, in a verse-by-verse style. Under each verse, some words and phrases are discussed. It is as easy to find a comment on any verse in the commentary section as it is to find the translation of any text in the previous section.

The historical backgrounds provided by Lupieri in the third section, i.e., the commentary proper, are helpful. Almost all of the OT books have their place in this commentary. Of the 27 NT books, only Philemon is not mentioned in the commentary. Lupieri also consults with the extrabiblical primary sources such as the Apocrypha, OT Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Rabbinic Works, Apostolic Fathers, NT Pseudepigrapha, and the Greek and Latin works of the church fathers, as can be easily seen from the indexes. Information from the primary sources that he presents is indeed significant for understanding the Apocalypse. Moreover, they are interwoven into the text in such a way that readers do not need to be distracted by footnotes or endnotes.

The commentary also provides an interesting discussion of numbers in the Apocalypse. Numbers like 42 months, 1,260 days, half a week, 666, and 144,000 are thoroughly discussed. It seems that Lupieri is innovative in suggesting an A/B//A/B structure for the use of "42 months" and "1,260 days" in Rev 12 and 13. He does not focus much on identifying the time periods. Instead, he emphasizes their theological meaning in connection with the great conflict between God and Satan. This is only one among many noteworthy discussions in the commentary.

Complete indexes of modern authors, names, places, subjects, and references, Lupieri's *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John* provides a rich, compact, and easily accessible historical background for the Apocalypse. Any serious student of the Apocalypse should consult this volume, particularly in view of the important contextual data Lupieri provides for his historical reading of the Apocalypse. Prudent use of the backgrounds provided in this book, together with a proper interpretive method and approach to the Apocalypse, may help readers to convey the truth of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Even though Lupieri does not comment on roughly a quarter of the verses of the Apocalypse (124 out of 405), this book can be recommended to any serious reader of the Apocalypse.

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*Die Macht des Namens: Altorientalische Strategien zur Selbsterhaltung*, by Karen Radner. SANTAG Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005. Pp. x + 341. ISBN 3-447-05328-3. € 98.00.

The importance of the "name" has long been recognized in studies focusing on the Ancient Near East and the biblical world. Radner's study looks at the issue from an intriguing angle. Her work represents a slightly updated version of her *Habilitationsschrift*, submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Sciences of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany, in November 2004. Those not familiar with the European academic scene should understand that a *Habilitationsschrift* is a major post-doctoral research project which is required of those who wish to be considered for a professorship at a University. Radner's volume is divided into two main sections, i.e., the discussion of the conceptual basis of the work (pp. 11–66), followed by the main section of the study dealing with the power of names (pp. 67–278), in itself subdivided as will be discussed below. As customary, Radner includes an introduction (that she calls in good German fashion "prolegomena" [pp. 1–10]), in which she presents the specific purpose of the study, the chronological and geographical frames of reference as well as the utilized sources, a brief review of earlier work on the topic, and a helpful description of the writing and dating conventions used. Radner seeks to describe the use of names in terms of the human endeavor to "survive" or overcome the physical limitations of mortal human beings (p. 1). Thus, her work is not concerned with onomastics or name magic, just to mention two other relevant research areas involving names in the ANE.

The author postulates two important objectives: first, to understand the significance of names as the means to overcome the mortality of human