

epistolary theory (pp. 232–38) and further attempts to justify the use of modern theories of rhetoric, claiming that the “modern theories of rhetoric are useful to the extent that they provide a framework for evaluating the persuasive impact of a text” (p. 238). Furthermore, the author asserts, the modern theories of rhetoric make it possible to work *behind* the text and discover the intentions of the author (p. 238). A question may be raised as to the extent to which one may stay within the constraints of the text with this method. Going *behind* the text may eventually lead to going *beyond* the text. A significant contribution that Gordley makes in this chapter is the offering of a demonstration of how the contents of the hymn feature in the rest of the epistle. Table 5.2 summarizes his findings and represents a helpful tool for the study of Col 1:15–20 (pp. 265–66).

In his conclusion, Gordley admits that the “original function” of the hymn cannot be recovered (p. 269). He finds the hymn to have a didactic function and to set the stage for arguments and exhortations that follow in the subsequent chapters. Another angle of exploration open to biblical scholars is the theology of the hymn. Gordley dedicates 27 pages to examining the content of the hymn without highlighting its theological import. He fails to recognize the contribution of, or even acknowledge, the work of Andrew T. Lincoln and A. J. M. Wedderburn (*The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993]), who state on page 23 that “the chief focus of theological interest in Colossians is the hymn of 1:15–20 and the use which the author makes of it.” This omission, however, does not in any way diminish the contribution that Gordley has made in building a foundation on which biblical theology may stand.

Gordley’s extensive research is a milestone not only in the study of Colossians but in the approach to hymnic texts in the New Testament. Even those who may not accept some aspects of his work may build on it. This book will be of interest to biblical scholars and theologians in their study of Christology in Colossians and the New Testament in general.

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Bridging the Gap: Ritual and Ritual Texts in the Bible, by Gerald A. Klingbeil. Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements 1. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007. Pp. xiv + 304. ISBN 978-1-57506-801-5. Hardcover. US\$39.50.

This book, written after a decade of careful research, is a product of cultural and methodological “cross-pollination” (p. 1), as implied in the introduction. In his introductory chapter (pp. 1–4), Klingbeil invites his readers into the new field of ritual studies, by describing how deeply this book was

rooted in his personal life story and professional career. In fact, his life and work has been linked with four different cultural contexts, i.e., European, South African, South American and Asian. It may be assumed therefore, that this kind of changing environment helped him to better understand how to approach ritual studies in the light of cultural contexts.

In chapter two (pp. 5–22) Klingbeil lays the basic foundation for his later discussion by defining four key terms used in ritual studies (cult, ritual, subrite, and symbol). These terms are defined because often scholarly writings employ them in a non-technical way, thus causing confusion or misunderstanding. In this foundational chapter the author also endeavors to probe the crucial elements of cult, ritual, subrite, and symbol by paying close attention to the interaction of this religious universe within the larger cultural universe.

Chapter three (pp. 23–44) reviews the study of ritual in the social sciences. Methodological and philosophical developments are traced over the past 150 years in the areas of cultural anthropology, history of religion, psychoanalysis, phenomenology-of-religion school, et al. Klingbeil's groundbreaking efforts to establish a foundation for an edifice of this formative learning is thorough and persevering. His approach recognizes the fact that "we always stand on the shoulders of those who preceded us," (p. 42) and also that ritual studies in the social sciences can provide important clues to biblical and religious scholars in the study of biblical ritual (p. 44).

In chapter four (pp. 45–69) Klingbeil focuses on ritual studies in the Bible as a new discipline, noting the increasing scholarly interest over the past 25 years. He succinctly summarizes and evaluates the contributions of some prominent scholars in biblical ritual studies such as Jacob Milgrom, Baruch Levine, Menahem Haran, Saul M. Olyan, Ithamar Gruenwald, Wesley J. Bergen, Jonathan Z. Smith, etc. Through a meticulous analysis of approaches found in ten different Leviticus commentaries published between 1962 and 1993, Klingbeil suggests that "there is a shift from text-oriented analysis to meaning-oriented interpretation" (p. 50). At the end of this chapter, the author suggests five very helpful guidelines for dealing with biblical ritual texts (pp. 66–69).

Chapter five (pp. 70–126) provides for the first time a bird's eye view of the history of the study of biblical ritual throughout the past millennia and will be an indispensable landmark for future research. Klingbeil begins with the critique of ritual found in the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible and explores trends and perspectives toward ritual in Intertestamental Judaism, early Christianity, Medieval Christianity, and the Protestant Reformation, inclusive of modern and postmodern eras. This survey reinforces the notion that the interpretation of biblical ritual texts cannot be separated from the

larger hermeneutical discussion. This brief but valuable review can also offer some insight into the development of biblical hermeneutics. Special attention should be given to "the idea of the globalization of hermeneutics" since "western interpretation of Christianity or Scripture cannot be the only voice in academics" (p. 125).

Chapters 6–9 (pp. 127–225) should be considered the central part of this book, with chapter 6 functioning as a general introduction for the following three chapters. In it Klingbeil presents a methodological strategy for a close reading of biblical ritual texts. This strategy involves ritual morphology, ritual syntax, ritual semantics, and ritual pragmatics, which are dealt with systematically, guiding an interpreter to the overall meaning and function of the ritual in the larger historical and religious context. Klingbeil then undertakes a more detailed look at nine major elements of ritual: structure, order and sequence, space, and time in chapter 7 (pp. 147–73); and objects, action, participants, and language in chapter 8 (pp. 174–204). The author stresses especially that, in dealing with ritual elements, careful attention should be paid to the interaction between literary structure (including syntactical analysis of the texts) and ritual structure. In chapter 9 (pp. 205–25), Klingbeil addresses the final stage of interpretation of biblical ritual texts, focusing on "ritual pragmatics" and looking at the function of ritual. More specifically, "ritual pragmatics describes the illocutionary force of a given ritual or subrite and seeks to locate it in the larger societal context" (p. 205). After discussing analytically the merits and possible pitfalls of suggestions regarding the ritual functions or dimensions proposed by several scholars such as Frank Gorman, Ithamar Gruenwald, Ronald Grimes, and Catherine Bell (pp. 206–208), Klingbeil offers ten basic ritual dimensions as an alternative which are condensed from the thirteen ritual dimensions previously suggested by Dutch scholar Jan Platvoet.

Chapter 10 (pp. 226–41) looks at the interaction of biblical ritual studies with other areas of biblical and theological research. Through this interaction the author attempts to "look over the proverbial 'fence' surrounding each hyper specialized area of biblical and theological study" (p. 226). The author is arguing for a dynamic link between ritual and biblical theology, the study of legal texts of the Hebrew Bible, liturgy and worship, healing and therapy, and even missiology. This effort seems to reflect the author's consistent belief that the common denominator for these five distinct disciplines is communication, and that one of the most important functions in rituals is also "intercommunication, on both an interpersonal and a societal level" (p. 241).

In his concise conclusion (pp. 242–44) Klingbeil expresses his personal confidence that by employing ritual as a key, we can begin communicate

with the ancient cultures and their written ritual expressions. He holds that ritual has far-reaching implications for the 21st century church in that it can help to promote solidarity in an age of individualism and an "island" mindset, and that it also has a potential to be a powerful missionary tool for penetrating non-Christian areas (p. 243). The author dreams of ritual studies becoming a subject in future theological seminary education. This subject would easily link with other adjacent areas of theological research. His concluding sentence shows a very suggestive and all-inclusive gist of ritual: "Ritual connects us back to the past, enlightens our present, and can help us prepare for the future" (p. 244). The value of this volume is augmented by the inclusion of an appendix identifying ritual texts in the Pentateuch (pp. 245–52). Finally, the volume concludes with a substantial bibliography (pp. 253–86) and three different indexes (modern authors, Scriptures, and other ancient sources) (pp. 287–304).

Klingbeil has effectively accomplished one of the main objectives of this volume, namely to introduce university and seminary students to the neglected field of ritual studies by attempting a look at the work done on ritual in the social sciences and by providing a view of biblical ritual studies from the broader perspective of biblical and theological studies. The author has also successfully attained a second objective, focusing on the level of academic interaction with scholars in this field by presenting a clear-cut and thoughtful analysis and discussion, demonstrated by the extensive literature referenced and the copious footnotes. He mentions and interacts with about 640 different scholars in the main text while in the 913 footnotes he quotes from and criticizes their studies composed in four different languages (English, German, French, and Spanish).

Several remarkable points found in this book should be highlighted. First of all, as the title of his book implies, Klingbeil, in this significant book, prudently attempts, through this research on ritual and biblical ritual texts, to bridge various gaps which exist between the biblical and secular worlds, between the modern readers and the ancient authors, between biblical and social sciences, between biblical written texts and their cultural-linguistic contexts, between biblical and theological studies, and even between the history-of-religion school and biblical theology. Second, the author consistently pursues of balanced positions in evaluating other scholarly materials, in constructing his own theory and methodology, and in interpreting biblical ritual texts. Third, Klingbeil shows talent for analyzing theoretical, methodological, comparative, theological, and historical information and data into figures and tables, which are helpful in visualizing his thinking and position (pp. 6, 9, 13, 120, 128, 129, 132, 140, 149, 151, 155, 156, 157, 162, 164, 170, 176, 192, 195, 201, 206, 245–52). Fourth, one of the most significant contributions of this book lies in providing a methodology for the study of

ritual biblical texts that is not ignorant of the "globalization of hermeneutics." In summary, this book will be an essential "rite-of-passage" for seminary students who want to enter into the new world of biblical ritual studies in that it occupies not only the first and unique position as an introductory textbook to biblical ritual studies, but also, to be sure, will be an important catalyst and incentive for the future study of ritual texts, biblical theology, and even the Bible as a whole.

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Biblia Hebraica Quinta. Fascicle 18: General Introduction and Megilloth, by Adrian Schenker (general editor), J. de Waard (Ruth), P. B. Dirksen (Canticles), Y. A. P. Goldman (Qoheleth), R. Schäfer (Lamentations), and M. Sæbø (Esther). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004. Pp. c + 96 + 168*. ISBN 3-438-05278-4. Paper. €49.00.

The publication of a new critical edition of ancient texts is generally a very important event in academia. The publication of the first fascicle of a new critical edition of the Hebrew Bible is an even more significant event, since its publication is aimed at providing the most up-to-date critical text of the Hebrew Bible, making available to the biblical scholar not steeped in text-critical research and perhaps also lacking the significant financial resources necessary for maintaining a library that caters to the primary editions of important ancient (biblical) texts, the best possible basis for exegetical and theological work. In this sense, the ambitious project undertaken under the leadership of the German Bible Society in Stuttgart claims its place among some of the other important editions that are currently being developed, including the *Hebrew University Bible* (HUB) and the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* (OHB). Since both the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ) and the HUB are diplomatic editions, i.e., editions based on a single Masoretic manuscript (such as the Codex Leningradensis in the case of BHQ or Codex Aleppo in the case of HUB) the text-critical notes of the apparatus are highly relevant, since they provide the user with the necessary information to make intelligent choices when faced with a textual variant, even though (as readily agreed by any editor of a critical edition) these variants have already been filtered by the editor (or editorial body) of the respective biblical book (cf. the very helpful comments about the crop of new critical editions of the Hebrew Bible by Richard D. Weis, "Biblia Hebraica Quinta and the Making of Critical Editions of the Hebrew Bible," *TC: A Journal of Textual Criticism* 7 [2002]: n.p. [cited 20 January 2008]. Online: <http://purl.org/TC>).