

from one place to another. It is also a function of process, of redesign, that transforms, to varying degrees, national, global, and imperial structures of oppression.

Ngwa posits that the Hebrew identity emerged as a reaction to efforts at erasure and was influenced by migration. Given that this migration originated in Africa, this Hebrew community in the diaspora should be recognized as part of the African diaspora. This perspective introduces new questions for interpretation, such as: Are there parallels between this historical African diasporic community and modern African diasporas? Additionally, how would our understanding of Ancient Israel's history change if we viewed the experiences of the Exodus community through the lens of an African diaspora?

Let My People Live provides a tangible instance of culturally relevant biblical interpretation within the realm of biblical studies that integrates Africana and womanist interpretations, allowing African diaspora readers to understand their interests and issues through the lens of Africana history, literature, art, and figures. Using an allegory based on the Exodus story, Ngwa shows how Africans in the diaspora currently deal with their circumstances and presents a fresh perspective on the Exodus narrative to combat tyranny on multiple fronts, including political, social, economic, and ecological. *Let My People Live*, apart from its reader-centered reading of the Exodus narrative, can serve as a crucial reference point for contemporary postcolonial struggles and enrich the significance of the Exodus story for Africana. I recommend it as a piece of academic reading for anyone concerned with freeing Africa and African people from oppression, both within the continent and throughout the rest of the world. This book would be suitable for a class of that nature.

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Tooman, William A. *The Torah Unabridged: The Evolution of Intermarriage Law in the Hebrew Bible*. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2022. Pp. 150. Paperback \$33.

In his book *The Torah Unabridged*, Tooman begins with an introduction followed by three chapters in which he explores in detail intermarriage laws.

This is the main topic of his book. The first chapter deals with explicit intermarriage laws in the Torah; the second chapter explores the deployment of intermarriage laws in Joshua and Kings; and the third and last chapter discusses the deployment of intermarriage laws in Ezra-Nehemiah. The book ends with a conclusion recapitulating all his discussions.

Right at the beginning of the introduction, Tooman notes that the laws in Torah are incomplete since biblical codes dealing with many everyday legal issues are absent. He mentions, for example, that the Torah does not regulate the marriage institution, legitimate or illegitimate divorce (p. 1), prayer (p. 2), what activities were or were not permitted on the Sabbath (p. 5), etc. He notices “the gapped quality of the Torah’s law codes” and finds that for the Torah law codes to be operative, interpretation was necessary. Consequently, exegetes expanded the parameters of the application of the laws. Laws on a particular topic appear in multiple law codes. One law could widen the relevance of another by making it applicable to additional situations, circumstances, or persons (p. 5). Exegetes could explain, expand, or adapt laws. This process was achieved through the reformulation, adaptation, interpretation, and application of those laws (p. 7).

In the first chapter, Tooman traces the evolution of the explicit intermarriage laws within the Torah and indicates that explicit prohibitions against intermarriage appear only in Exod 34:11–16 and Deut 7:1–6 (p. 11). The source of the intermarriage prohibition, as Tooman points out, derives from the law found in Exod 23:20–27 dealing with the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. It prohibited covenants with the land’s inhabitants. Canaanites would be driven out bit by bit, and worshiping their gods would be a snare to the Israelites (p. 12). This law was maintained but with significant adaptations in Exod 34:11–16, through the addition of a law prohibiting marriages between Israelites and Canaanites, after Israelites failed to drive out the Canaanites in a single generation. Exodus 23:32–33 indicates that Israelites and the six nations present in the Promised Land would continue to coinhabit in Canaan (p. 22). Judges 2:1–3 also rewrites Exod 23:20–33 and warns that Israelites and Canaanites would continue cohabiting due to the failure to exterminate the Canaanites. As a result of the revision of Exod 23:20–33, Exod 34:10–12, 16 introduced the intermarriage prohibition law for the first time. This evolution from a covenant ban to an intermarriage ban was rather a legal extension of the interdiction of making covenants with the six nations (Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, and Cannanites, Hivittes, and the Jebusites) which were to be destroyed in Exod 23:23. Exodus 34:10–12 also reinterprets “snare” not as worshiping Canaanites gods, but as Canaanite women who will lead Israelites men to worship Canaanite gods.

Tooman indicates what happened in the subsequent stage. Deuteronomy 7:1–6 combined with Exod 23:20–33 and Exod 34:10–16 and brought together the contradiction between extermination command and the ban of making a covenant with the six nations and intermarriage. In Deut 7, the prohibition of intermarriage law expanded the logic of intermarriage prohibition and added to the six nations (Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, and Canaanites, Hivittes, and the Jebusites), a seventh nation to be banned, namely the Girgashites (p. 36). The intermarriage law at that stage included Israelite women who were not mentioned before. They could not marry Canaanite men. The danger of intermarriage was reinterpreted as an individual religious cultic threat (sons and daughters) and it was extended to the threat of Israel's purity and even to the threat of the destruction of all Israel by God. The development of the intermarriage law was due to three main factors. The first is the failure to eradicate the Canaanites; the second factor is the need to preserve the various laws like that of eradicating the six nations and the Canaanite religions and practices (Exod 23:20–27), the prohibitions of making a covenant with the Canaanites (23:32–33); and the third and last factor is the persistent presence of the land's people in Canaan (p. 37).

In the second chapter, Tooman discussed the deployment of intermarriage law in Joshua and Kings where he found that Joshua 23 and 1 Kgs 11:1–11 fit in the evolution of intermarriage laws (pp. 54–55). As he noticed, Josh 23 seems to be close to Exod 23:20–33, 34:10–12, and Deut 7:1–6. Joshua 23 prohibited all marriage with the nations without naming them, and this change expanded the intermarriage ban from six nations in Exod 23:23–33; 34:11 to seven nations in Deut 7:1 and finally to all Canaanite nations in Josh 23. In 1 Kings 11, the author extended the trajectory taken by his legal predecessors, hence, the intermarriage law was extended to include the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammonites, Syrians, Idumeans, Chettites, Amorites, and Edomites. This extension is informed by Deut 23:4–9, which excluded Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Egyptians from the congregation of the Lord, an exclusion understood in 1 Kings 11 as an intermarriage prohibition. Joshua 23:12 also increases the number of intermarriage laws by putting the verb “enter” in parallel with “marry,” which makes it possible for the command of Deut 23:4–9 to be part of intermarriage laws (pp. 55–56).

The third chapter deals with the deployment of intermarriage laws in Ezra–Nehemiah. The author indicates that Nehemiah used Deut 7:3 retroactively and applied it to existing marriages, not just preventively to potential future ones. Nehemiah believed that the Torah gave him the power to apply the law even to already established marriages (p. 63). For Nehemiah,

intermarriage is not evil because of its consequences, but intermarriage itself is an “act of great evil” and a “treachery” to the God of Israel. In Ezra 9:1–2, the charges of some officials brought to Ezra indicate that the people had failed to separate themselves from the Moabites, Egyptians, and Edomites (Deut 23:4–9), which implies that officials esteemed Deut 23:4–9 to be an intermarriage regulation (p. 81). In Ezra-Nehemiah’s time, it was not a matter of regulating interaction with specific people, considering how the author extended Lev 18:24–30 and magnified the threat of gentiles by their behaviors, as permanently prone to “abominations” (p. 82). Therefore, it was necessary to separate themselves from all the Gentiles. The rationale behind this separation was that holy and profane things could not be mixed because the mixture of the holy seed with gentiles was an “evil deed” and “great guilt,” a sin that would lead to the destruction of Israel. Not only intermarriage with any gentile was proscribed, but all intermarriages were also to be dissolved and gentile spouses and illegitimate children had to be expelled from the community (p. 83).

The main feature of the evolution of intermarriage laws is the continual widening of restrictions. Tooman noted that each time there was an intermarriage restriction, “it expanded the sphere of relevance, gradually prohibiting marriages with more Canaanite nations, more neighboring nations, and finally with all Gentiles” (p. 84). As a synopsis of the logical operation in the evolution of intermarriage law, the failure to drive out Canaanite nations required an adaptation of the law regulating Israel’s interaction with the Canaanites. Yahweh’s prohibition against making covenants with Canaanites and the ban of Canaanite religions (Exod 23:28–33) was adjusted and became a prohibition against marriage with Canaanites. Later, the image of the snare of Canaanite religion (Exod 23:33) was reinterpreted and applied to Canaanite people (Exod 34:12). In the following stage, Deut 7: 1–6 extended the applicability of the intermarriage prohibition to both Israelites and Canaanites. Joshua 23 added other Gentile nations, and Deut 23:4–9 became part of the intermarriage laws. After the exile, Nehemiah dissolved existing marriages, a stage which demonstrated an evolution in the understanding of the intermarriage law in Nehemiah’s time. Eight exegetical operations were used: explication of implicature, inclusion, specification, gap filling, coordination, semantic modification, transfer of referent, and analogical reasoning (pp. 85–87). Tooman found that the main hermeneutical assumptions for the biblical exegetes or legal redactors were: (1) the content of a law cannot be reduced to the sum of its explicit semantics; (2) the sphere of force exerted by a law was very malleable in the hand of a biblical writer; and (3) the diverse laws in Torah are coherent (pp. 88–89).

Tooman's book contains many insights in relation to the evolution of the intermarriage law. He clearly traces the different stages of the intermarriage law in the Old Testament and touches on all important biblical texts dealing with intermarriage in chronological order from the settlement to the post-exilic period. His conclusions and all the points he makes are text-based and derive from a clear and deep exegetical analysis.

However, Tooman's assumptions are based on the documentary hypothesis as it is revealed through his mentioning of certain texts as belonging to E or J sources. He classifies Exod 23 and Exod 34, respectively, in E and J sources (p. 12), tearing apart the unity of Scripture. Though he denies it, Tooman's assumption guides his reasoning on this subject of intermarriage, and makes questionable some of the points he makes in this book. For example, his assumption that Deut 7:1–6 derives from Josh 23 and not vice versa (p. 55) defies biblical internal evidence, which makes questionable his conclusion. Furthermore, Tooman's stratigraphy of the Scripture, especially that of Neh 13:1–3 and Neh 13:4–31 (p. 62) can affect the reliability of some of the points he makes.

To conclude this review, it is worth asserting that Tooman provides a good discussion which offers a deep and comprehensive study of the evolution of intermarriage laws in the Hebrew Bible. *The Torah Unabridged* is a scholarly work conducted with a diachronic approach and an exegetical analysis of most relevant biblical texts on intermarriage. Despite the scholarly aspects of this book, Tooman used a style that can be read and understood by both scholars and biblical students at the undergraduate or graduate level. It contains many insights regarding the evolution of intermarriage laws in the Hebrew Bible and can help whoever needs to explore more about this topic.

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Mbuvi, Andrew M. *African Biblical Studies: Unmasking Embedded Racism and Colonialism in Biblical Studies*. London: T&T Clark, 2023. Pp. 228. Paperback \$31.75, Kindle \$27.16.

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