

III, 837 B.C., when the Assyrian king invaded Tabal and came to Mount Tunni (cf. J. D. Hawkins in *Cambridge Ancient History* III. 2 [1982], p. 394). For Tarsus, Hanfmann suggested that the withdrawal of the Assyrians in 853 marked the end of the Early Iron Age and the start of a new era; Tarsus has no destruction level at this time. These references to Assyrian chronology remain hypothetical props.

The new aspect of level III ceramics at Porsuk is a turn to fashions belonging to the plateau rather than Cilicia. Some of the pottery decoration now resembles patterns familiar from Gordion and Alishar; a small amount of gray ware is imported from Phrygia, and matt black-on-red painted ware from southwest Anatolia. One trimmed disc comes from a Rhodian wild goat style jug, the only Greek import in the book (No. 272, pl. 99, p. 83).

Most of the pottery production of level III continues to be local and conservative. The connections with the Phrygian zone allow a tentative correlation with the pre-destruction level at Gordion (pre-696 B.C., Kimmerian raid) for the bulk of level III, and a seventh to sixth century B.C. date for the later phase of III which indulges in complex bichrome patterns also popular in the Kültepe and Alishar area.

Level III historically is associated with the Hittite Hieroglyphic inscription from Porsuk. The eighth-century interaction between Phrygians (Mita of Mushki), Tyana (Warpalawas) and the Assyrians is extensively documented by records from elsewhere and may soon be illuminated by discoveries from Porsuk itself.

Dupré's book is an excellent, lucid and systematic study of the pottery types characteristic of levels V-III. Archaeologists will find this volume very helpful for comparative study of ceramic shapes, techniques, wares and decoration. Historians will find a responsible exposition of provisional conclusions and unsolved problems concerning the history of this strategic site from ca. 1400-600 B.C.

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The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading. By MEIR STERNBERG. Pp. 580. (Indiana Literary Biblical Series.) Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1985. \$57.50.

Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative. By ADELE BERLIN. Pp. 180 (Bible and Literature Series.) Sheffield: The Almond Press. 1983. Paperback.

The last decade has witnessed a spate of books devoted to the literary study of the Bible, and the two volumes under

review are among the best of the lot. The two are quantitatively different—the 500+ pages of Sternberg's book allow him the most complete contribution to the subject which has been attempted to date, whereas Berlin's book at less than one-third the size affords a sampling of ideas and approaches. But qualitatively there is much to commend both of them. The two books share not only strikingly similar titles, but valuable insights throughout.

Sternberg begins with stern words directed at many approaches. He sets forth various ground rules from the beginning: source criticism is misguided; defining biblical narrative by such terms as "historicized fiction" or "fictionalized history" is fanciful because the prose is "historiography pure and uncompromising" (pp. 34-35); and having to choose between whether the Bible should be read as a religious document or as a literary work is unnecessary because clearly "the literary coexists with the social, the doctrinal, the philosophical" (p. 35).

Sternberg then proceeds to the meatiest part of the volume, a presentation of the various techniques and devices employed by the biblical writers. Narrational mode and ideology, the reader's perspective, gaps and closures, deliberate ambiguity, proleptic portraits, repetition, and the art of persuasion are among the features discussed. Each is presented with background information from the world of literary theory and is then exemplified with ample illustrations from the biblical text itself. A few comments on each of these techniques will serve to summarize much of Sternberg's book.

The mode of narration in biblical prose is omniscient. Throughout the corpus, even in such disparate books as Genesis, Samuel, and Jonah, we consistently encounter omniscient narration. The storyteller is "nameless and faceless" (p. 71), that is, he gives us no clue as to his identity or character. And yet throughout biblical narrative, the author assumes the role of the all-knowing one, with a complete awareness of past, present, and future. Sternberg contrasts this mode with other modes of writing in antiquity (Homer, ancient Near Eastern, etc.) and refers to this technique as stemming from "an epistemological revolution, which shifted the center of gravity from existence to knowledge" (p. 88). Moreover, this narrational mode translates to an ideological one, for it is consistent with the Bible's obsession with knowledge. To illustrate this point, note that the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden and the theology of the omniscient deity are both unique in the ancient world. Others, such as Gilgamesh, seek immortality, but Adam and Eve forego the tree of life and concentrate on obtaining knowledge. The Homeric gods often are portrayed as blindly acting out their appointed tasks, unaware of basic happenings around them. All of this, according to Sternberg, is intertwined: "the ideological thrust accounts for various distinctive regularities of composition and narration" (p. 101).

Our narrator is omniscient, but of course the reader and the characters cannot be. The question remains, however, who is more knowledgeable? The answer depends, says Sternberg, on which of three possible perspectives the narrator chooses for his reader. These viewpoints are termed a) "reader-elevating," where the reader knows more than the character, e.g., Balaam's quarrel with his ass or the stealing of the blessing from Isaac; b) "character-elevating," where the character knows more than the reader, e.g., the reasons why Abimelech restores Sarah to Abraham or why Jonah flees from God; and c) "evenhanded," which is the Bible's norm, where the drama unfolds before the reader and the character(s) simultaneously, e.g., the two women and the one baby before Solomon.

The narrator may choose to use either of the former two strategies, but, as just noted, quantitatively it is the third perspective which predominates. Again, this is not just for literary purposes, but it too is tied to the Bible's ideology. Perspectives a) and b), if used too much, will make either the reader or the character omniscient, or nearly omniscient, and in either case will blur the distinction between God and man. One should keep in mind, here especially, the subtitle of this book, and realize that indeed ideology and reading meet in ways seldom considered.

Gaps are the stuff that a literary work is made of. As we read a story, there are questions which arise in our mind. The filling of these gaps, or closures, is the result of our reading. In Sternberg's words, "This gap-filling ranges from simple linkages of elements, which the reader performs automatically, to intricate networks that are figured out consciously, laboriously, hesitantly, and with constant modifications in the light of additional information disclosed in later stages of the reading" (p. 186). To illustrate this process, the author leads us through the tale of David and Bathsheba and brilliantly charts for us how gaps are created and then filled. If nothing else of this volume is read, every biblicalist should take the time to read these pages. Why does David not go out to war? Why are we told Bathsheba has just purified herself from her uncleanness? Why is Uriah summoned to Jerusalem? Does Uriah know about his wife's doings? The answers to some of these questions, the third one, for example, are easily reached. But others are not so easy to answer. And if the reader believes that the answer to the last of the questions listed above is obviously "no," I repeat my invitation to read Sternberg's material on 2 Samuel 11. It is an experience to have one master reveal the brilliance of another master.

Critics have often noted the ambiguity of numerous biblical narratives. No one denies the presence of these ambiguities, but Sternberg has placed them within the context of narrative art. They are not problematic in the least, rather they are deliberately placed in the stories, the result of the gap-filling discussed in the preceding paragraph. Further-

more, as is obvious from the study of literature worldwide, ambiguity functions to add curiosity, suspense, and surprise to the story.

The proleptic portrait is a feature that any reader of the Bible will be familiar with. The narrator's style is to impart to his reader necessary data concerning a particular character. Never, of course, is this information wasted. We will always find it useful to explain a particular event. Ehud's left-handedness and Eglon's obesity are not passing comments; the story in Judges 3 loses all sense without these crucial facts. But it is not that simple either, for whereas sometimes the information relayed in a proleptic portrait will be of immediate value, e.g., Tamar's beauty in 2 Sam 13:1, at other times it takes several chapters for the reader to learn the relevance of an apparently trivial fact, e.g., Esau's hairiness in Gen 25:15 which reverberates only in 27:11.

Repetition is another feature well known to Bible readers. It too has been the target of critics, very often too quick to point out the failings of such repetition. But again Sternberg teaches us. Let one example suffice. In Genesis 39, first the narrator tells the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife and then she tells her fabrication to both the servants of the house and to her husband upon his return. The reader must plow through these three accounts before the action continues. And yet from this repetition we learn innumerable points. The narrator tells us Joseph "fled and got outside," but according to Potiphar's wife he "fled outside." Or, to the servants she terms Joseph "a Hebrew man" and to her husband she calls him "the Hebrew slave." These differences highlight much, making the repetition far from unimaginative, as is often held.

In his chapter on the art of persuasion, Sternberg tackles the way in which the Bible presents interpersonal relations with an eye to developing an ethical code. Seasoned readers of the Bible know how cleverly the Israelite authors accomplished this, never explicitly stating, *à la* Aesop, "and the moral of the story is . . ." Judgments are never pronounced, and yet through their use of rhetoric the narrators leave no doubt where their sympathies lie. The story Sternberg selects to exemplify this method is the rape of Dinah, a story in which at one time or another we are moved to side with each of the *dramatis personae* (Shechem and Hamor, Simeon and Levi, Jacob), but through twists and turns we see the failings of all concerned. The rapist and his father honestly want to work out a just deal, until we learn in Gen 34:26 that Dinah has been detained in their house, so that their negotiations amount to blackmail. The brothers do right to champion Dinah, but they act out of personal motives and resort to deceit and bloodshed. Jacob wants to protect his household, but he too appears callous and selfish. This last point is driven home brilliantly by the last verse of the chapter. As Sternberg reads the line, Simeon and Levi's retort in Gen 34:31 is not addressed to Jacob with reference to Shechem,

rather they speak to one another and refer to Jacob. One is left to marvel at the biblical writer for this maneuver and to congratulate Sternberg for bringing to light its proper understanding.

All told this is a powerful book. There is much in it to digest, and my review here has only revealed the tip of the iceberg. The general literary theorist will use it as a way of introduction to the workings of biblical narrative, and the biblical critic will find it a pathway into the often tortuous arena of literary theory.

Large portions of this book have already appeared elsewhere, mainly in the Hebrew language journal *Hasifrut*. Accordingly, they have not reached a large audience. Happily, the appearance of this English volume should change matters. And even for those who have read Sternberg's previous studies, the present book allows a synthesis and an overview unattainable in the essays in *Hasifrut*.

In fairness to other authors who have dealt with the same stories treated by Sternberg, I should note that occasionally Sternberg repeats insights previously published. For example, D. F. Murray, "Narrative Structure and Technique in the Deborah-Barak Story (Judges IV 4-22)," *VT* 30 (1979), 183, n. 49, has already suggested that Sisera's use of the masculine singular imperative *'amōd* to Jael in Judg 4:20 is not erroneous, rather purposefully ironic (p. 282); N. M. Sarna, "The Anticipatory Use of Information as a Literary Feature of the Genesis Narrative," in R. E. Friedman, ed., *The Creation of Sacred Literature* (Berkeley, 1981), pp. 76-82, has already devoted an entire essay to the technique of proleptic portraits (pp. 321-41); and R. Davidson, *Genesis 12-50* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 197, has already noted the poetic justice of Simeon and Levi's looting in Gen 34:28 *vis-à-vis* 34:23 (p. 471).

Sternberg's oversight in not citing his fellow laborers in the field can hardly be considered a flaw. Obviously, with someone whose interests are as wide-ranging as Sternberg's—he has published tomes on literary theory in general and essays specifically on such authors as Ian Fleming and William Faulkner—he should not be expected to know the entire gamut of secondary literature in biblical studies. Moreover, these innocent omissions of approbation do not detract from a majestic study. All who engage in close readings of the Bible should welcome this important contribution.

Due to its size and to the author's style of writing, many will find Sternberg's volume a ponderous one to read. Such will not be the case, however, with Berlin's book. This monograph is clearly and lucidly presented and is written in beautifully simple language. It is the single volume which should be recommended to anyone seeking an entree into the burgeoning new world of literary criticism of the Bible, and it would make an excellent textbook for any course devoted to this subject.

Naturally Berlin does not cover the mass of territory surveyed by Sternberg. Instead, she concentrates on two aspects of the art of biblical narrative: characterization and point-of-view.

To illustrate the way in which different character types appear and are used in biblical narrative, Berlin selects the case of David's four wives. A most original observation here is the manner in which each of these women from David's private life corresponds to the king's position in the public sector (p. 33). Michal, who is used for political gain, typifies David's cold, calculated gaining of power; Abigail, to whom David is eager but gentlemanly, typifies David's self-assurance as a popular leader; Bathsheba, with whom David's lust comes to the forefront, typifies his desire to increase his holdings and expand the empire; and Abishag, where David's impotence is self-evident, typifies the loss of control of the kingship. It is discoveries such as these which make the task of literary criticism such an exciting endeavor.

The chapter on point-of-view is equally engaging. Here Berlin often parallels Sternberg's discussion on perspective, e.g., she too refers to the omniscient narrator (p. 52). But always there are new points raised. Mention may be made of two, both from the familiar story of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 37. Although we follow Joseph as he approaches his brothers on his journey from home to Shechem to Dothan, when he nears the perspective changes to that of his brothers. Hence "it is from the brothers' point of view that we see this episode." We totally lose touch with Joseph, with no knowledge of his feelings, the result being that "our sympathy for Joseph is diminished" (pp. 49-50). Moreover, by the variation in the way the protagonist is referred to, we learn a tremendous amount. The narrator used the neutral term "Joseph"; Reuben's concern for his younger brother is indicated by his use of the word "the boy"; and the scheming brothers never use either term but rather speak of him only with pronouns "he, him, etc." (pp. 71-72). Multiply such observations by Berlin and one can get an idea as to how enjoyable her book is to read.

The only biblical story which is discussed in detail is the book of Ruth. Berlin utilizes this idyll to show how various artistic techniques work together to create the literary whole. Although Sasson, Campbell, Tribble and others have all been sensitive to the literary approach in their treatments of Ruth, still, Berlin is able to share new insights with us. Again one example will suffice. Among the elements delineated by William Labov in his study of narrative patterns is the coda, a signal that the story has reached its end. In Berlin's words it "takes the audience out of the time frame of the story and brings them back to real time" (p. 107). In the case of Ruth, there may actually be three codas: the birth of the child (4:14-16), his naming (4:17), and the genealogy (4:18-22). But, contrary to the opinion of critics ever too eager to carve up a literary whole, these endings, especially the genealogy,

need not be seen as later additions. In other words, from the perspective of narrative poetics, the genealogy is unquestionably “part of the original text—part of the discourse—and serve[s] a poetic function of closure” (p. 110).

This contrast between the conclusions of the narrative poetics approach and of the historical-critical method receives further attention in an additional chapter. To Berlin it is clear that the former is upending many of the long-held convictions of the latter. To demonstrate this she strikes at the very showpiece of the usual source-critical analysis, the division of Gen 37:18–30 into its J and E strata. Leading us through this pericope verse-by-verse, she demonstrates conclusively that “on the basis of plot and discourse, the present text is a unified product” (p. 121).

Ultimately, this conclusion and others like it will bring an end to the JEDP approach. For those who utilize literary analysis of the sort conducted by Berlin, Sternberg, and others, it is clear that time and again a close reading of a particular text reveals an essential unity. Those who continue to adhere to traditional source criticism miss not only the beauty of the literature created by the ancient Israelite masters, but the excitement of discovering that beauty.

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The Topography of Thebes: From the Bronze Age to Modern Times. By SARANTIS SYMEONOGLOU. Pp. xxii + 334 + 25 figs. + 53 pls + 2 maps. Princeton: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS. 1985. \$60.00.

Professor Symeonoglou is now teaching archaeology at George Washington University in St. Louis and for two years in the 1960s he was *Epimelitis* (Assistant Curator) of Antiquities of Boiotia. He is thus in an excellent position to undertake this comprehensive topography. This splendidly produced volume consists of chapters on the archaeological and legendary evidence concerning Thebes from the Neolithic to Christian times and a detailed analysis of Pausanias' description of the city in the 2nd century A.D. These are followed by an exhaustive survey of the individual archaeological sites in and around the city. The book is well set out, with ample maps; architectural, demographic and chronological charts as well as photographs of many sites. The publication has set a high standard so far not reached for other Greek cities.

In this generally magnificent context, there are, however, some disappointments for students of relations between Greece and the Levant. The sensational Near Eastern finds in the Kadmeion from L.H III are noted, (226–27) but their

significance in the light of the overwhelming mass of legendary evidence pointing to Phoenician influence in, if not settlement at, Thebes in the 2nd millennium, is not investigated. Dr. Ruth Edwards' cautious but powerful work tending to confirm the tradition is cited in the bibliography but is not treated in the text.¹ Michael Astour's seminal *Hellenosemitica* which includes a major chapter on “Kadmos and the Cadmids” is not even mentioned.²

Despite his denial of Phoenician or West Semitic colonization in the mid 2nd millennium, Professor Symeonoglou suspects that the Kadmean legends may be connected to foreign influence which he sees at the end of E.H. II, around 2100 B.C. Although he admits that the movement represented in tradition by Kadmos may have originated in Phoenicia, he maintains that the immigrants were essentially Minoans from Crete (70–71). Thus he conforms to the Hellenists' preference for Aegean rather than Levantine or Egyptian influences on Greece. To place Kadmos so early, however, he has to reverse the major tradition of Homer and Pherekydes which stated that Kadmos' settlement of Thebes had come long after some earlier ones, notably that of Zēthos (77). In this connection, it is striking that he only refers to one article by the distinguished modern excavator of Thebes, T. Spyropoulos. In fact, however, Dr. Spyropoulos published over ten articles on Theban Bronze Age archaeology between 1968 and 1973. In two of these he argues that the generally admitted foreign influence at the beginning of E.B. III was the result of Egyptian colonization. Specifically, he associates this with the Tomb of Amphion which he sees as an imitation pyramid and dates to this period the draining of Lake Kopais which also may have taken place at about this time.³

This reviewer tends to accept elements of these hypotheses, because, in addition to the archaeological evidence, there are the many traditions associating Egypt with Boiotia. It is especially interesting to note those concerning Rhadamanthus whose name can, I believe, be plausibly identified with the pharaonic name Menthotpe, used at precisely this period, the 21st century, by the rulers of the expansionist 11th Dynasty. Nevertheless, I agree with Professor Symeonoglou that this foreign influence on Boiotia probably came through Crete, which began its palatial culture in the 21st century and which incidentally also had legendary connections with Rhadamanthus. This is not, however, the point. The objection made

¹ *Kadmos the Phoenician: a Study in Greek Legends and the Mycenaean Age.* Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1979.

² *Hellenosemitica: An Ethnic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece.* Leiden: Brill, 1967.

³ Αιγυπτιακός Έποικισμός εν Βοιωτία, *Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν* 5 (1972) 16–27; and Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν Μελετήν τοῦ Κωπαϊκοῦ Χώρου. *Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν* 6 (1973) 201–14.