

The principal shortcoming of this book is that it does not adequately take into account the results of the current Israeli excavations at Shiloh. Schley dismisses “the *claimed* (emphasis mine) archaeological evidence for a massive destruction of the site during Iron I” without reviewing the evidence, and he takes refuge in the position that “Iron I extends from the end of the thirteenth century BCE to the middle of the tenth, and an Iron I destruction layer theoretically could occur at any time during this period” (p. 196).

Unfortunately, the work is marred by numerous typographical errors and several inconsistencies in transliterations. Still, it is a valuable study which merits the careful attention of scholars.

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The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation, by David Toshio Tsumura. JSOTSup 83. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989. Pp. 201. £22.50 (\$33.50).

The first two chapters of Genesis raise innumerable problems for the student of biblical literature. Not the least of these are the basic meaning and etymology of five key words (*tôhû*, *bôhû*, *têhôm*, *'ēd*, *'ēden*), the relationship between these Hebrew concepts and proposed Near Eastern parallels, and the overall issue of earth and waters in the stories of creation.

These questions form the basis of David Tsumura's monograph. As the book's sub-heading suggests, the author is interested mainly in presenting the linguistic evidence relating to these issues. Only after a thorough investigation along these lines, he believes, can biblical scholars then proceed to the larger issues of theology and mythico-religious thought. Tsumura clearly is correct in this latter belief, and he is also successful in his philological work.

The book begins with a thorough investigation of the etymology and meaning of *tôhû wâbôhû*. Both elements are treated individually and then the phrase as a whole is discussed. Based on passages such as Deut 32:10 (where *tôhû*, parallel to *midbâr*, is described as the place where God found his people) and Job 6:18 (where *tôhû* is mentioned in connection with caravans), Tsumura maintains that the base meaning of *tôhû* is “desert.” This definition gains support from the Ugaritic cognate *thu/thwt*, which in two texts is mentioned as the abode of *lbim*, “lions” (cf. also Arabic *tih/tûh*, “desert”). By extension *tôhû* comes to mean “emptiness.” This can be seen in passages such as Isa 40:17; 40:23; 41:29; 49:4, where *tôhû* either is parallel to or serves in a hendiadys with *'ayin*, *riq*, or *'epes*. It is a bit more difficult to pin down cognates for *bôhû*, though Arabic *bahiya*, “to be empty,” is the most promising.

The combined phrase *tôhû wâbôhû* has a possible parallel in the form *tu-a-bi-[û(?)]* which appears in the polyglot S^a vocabulary text from Ugarit. Its Sumerian and Akkadian equivalents, BAL = *nabalkutu*, typically are defined as “jump, rebel,” while the corresponding Hurrian term *tapšuhumme* unfortunately is of unsure meaning. Tsumura investigates Akkadian *nabalkutu* when it is used in conjunction with words such as *eršetu*, “earth,” and concludes that in such contexts the definition “to be unproductive” is more suitable. He also makes an argument for Hurrian *tapšuhumme* meaning “to be poor.” Accordingly, Tsumura accepts Ugaritic *tu-a-bi-[û(?)]* as cognate to Hebrew *tôhû wâbôhû*. The sum of the evidence, then, points to “emptiness,

unproductiveness” as the essential meaning of *tōhū wābōhū*. Tsumura hastens to add that “both the biblical context and extra-biblical parallels suggest that the phrase *tōhū wābōhū* in Gen 1:2 has nothing to do with ‘chaos’ . . .” (p. 43).

The next problem tackled is the word *tēhôm*. Tsumura opposes the view of Gunkel and others since his day that *tēhôm* is borrowed from Tiamat. He is obviously correct. Both words derive from a Semitic root *thm* and thus they are cognates, but a direct connection between the two is disavowed. Tsumura investigates the use of Ugaritic *thm/thmt*, Akkadian *tiāmtum/tāmtum* (in nonmythological texts where clearly Tiamat is not the intention), and Eblaite *ti-’à-ma-tum*, and determines that all these terms are simply a common noun meaning “sea, ocean.” The same is true of Hebrew *tēhôm*. Ugaritic *thm/thmt* and Akkadian *tiāmtum/tāmtum* can be personified into deities (thus Tiamat in the latter case), but depersonification does not occur. Thus, those scholars who see Hebrew *tēhôm* as a depersonification or a demythologization of a deity (Canaanite or Babylonian) are incorrect.

Tsumura next turns to problems in the interpretation of Genesis 2. Here again he sees “unproductiveness” as the main state of the earth (see especially vv. 5–6). More problematic are the etymologies and meanings of the words *’ēd* and *’ēden*. Regarding the former, there are two main theories. Tsumura thoroughly examines these: namely, Albright’s view that *’ēd* derives from Sumero-Akkadian *ÍD/id*, “subterranean freshwater stream,” and Speiser’s view that it derives from Akkadian *edû* (itself a borrowing from Sumerian A.DÉ.A), “flood.” In the end, he rejects both, and instead cautiously suggests a direct borrowing from Sumerian *e₄-dé*, “high water.” (Hebrew *’ēdô* in Job 36:27, however, is a loanword from Akkadian *edû*.) As to meaning, Tsumura states: “the term *’ēd* most probably refers to the subterranean water which comes up to the surface of the earth, rather than referring to mist or vapour which comes up from the surface of the earth” (p. 117).

The final etymological discussion concerns *’ēden*. Akkadian *edinu*, “plain, steppe,” cannot be the source of the Hebrew form, since *edinu* occurs only in one lexical list where it presumably is a “learned scribal transcription” of Sumerian *edin*, “plain, steppe.” The Sumerian form could be the source of Hebrew *’ēden*, but this would entail accepting the presence of the phoneme /‘/ in Sumerian and “the evidence for this is very thin” (p. 126). New light on Hebrew *’ēden* is forthcoming from the use of *m’dn* in the Aramaic version of the bilingual inscription from Tell Fekheriyeh. Its equivalent in the Akkadian version is *mutahhidu*, literally “make abundant,” but often used in the description of abundant rain or high water. This meaning fits the context of the Tell Fekheriyeh as well, so that Aramaic *m’dn* is to be translated “make abundant in water-supply.” Ugaritic *dn* in *UT 51:V:68–69* is to be similarly interpreted, since the phrase in question refers to Baal’s attributes. These data are then applied to Hebrew *’ēden*. Tsumura concludes that it derives from a West Semitic root *dn*, and that the nominal form means “a place where there is abundant water-supply” (p. 136).

What are we to make of all these findings derived from a linguistic investigation? In shorter sections in the book, Tsumura discusses the relationship between the earth and the waters in the two creation stories. He disagrees with earlier scholars who have assumed the presence of a *Chaoskampf* in the first story and who have stressed the differences between the two stories. As I noted above, Tsumura sees no reference to chaos in *tōhū wābōhū*, and this position is bolstered by his denying any commonality between *tēhôm* and Tiamat. Tsumura still admits to certain differences between

Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, but he believes these are tempered by the similarities between the two accounts. Most important is the conclusion that “in both chapters the earth was ‘not yet’ normal, i.e., unproductive and uninhabited, and was covered by flood-waters” (pp. 167–68).

In the main I find most of Tsumura’s conclusions convincing. One might question the derivation of *’ēd* from Sumerian *e₄-de*, not because it is impossible, but rather due to lack of positive proof for such a borrowing. Also troublesome is the need to restore the sign *ú* to the end of *tu-a-bi-[ú(?)]* to yield a cognate to *tōhū wābōhū*. This too is not impossible, but one should proceed cautiously when building theories on reconstructions.

I find myself in disagreement on several minor issues. The discussion about (de)personification which crops up throughout the book is only germane from the modern perspective. I seriously question whether an ancient Near Easterner would have differentiated between, let us say, “sun” as an astronomical body and “Sun” as a deity. They were one and the same to him, and it is irrelevant whether the one is a personification or depersonification of the other.

From a linguistic viewpoint, no distinction should be made between “Hebrew” and “Canaanite” (e.g., p. 62). The former is a dialect of the latter.

Tsumura incorrectly holds to the opinion that *rūah* in Gen 1:2 means “Spirit” (with capital “S” no less!) (p. 153). If a distinction must be drawn here—and I question whether this is necessary given the worldview of an ancient Israelite—then *rūah* means “wind” (see H. M. Orlinsky, “The Plain Meaning of *Rū^{ah}* in Gen. 1.2,” *JQR* 48 [1957–58] 174–82).

Tsumura states that “if the Genesis account were the demythologization of a Canaanite dragon myth, we would expect in the initial portion of the account, the term *yām* ‘sea,’ the counterpart of the Ugaritic sea-god Yam” (p. 65). This line of argumentation fails, however, when one realizes that the non-use of *yām* is part of a larger agenda. The biblical author consciously omitted any reference to pagan deities. Thus, *šemeš*, “sun,” and *yārēah*, “moon,” do not appear in Gen 1:14–16 (see C. H. Gordon, “The Seventh Day,” *UF* 11 [1979] 299–301). The author did not wish to attribute to Yahweh the creation of pagan deities, so he carefully worded the story to prevent such a statement (*yammīm*, “seas,” in Gen 1:10 is not the same, since it is not the name of a Canaanite god; and in Gen 1:26, 28, the expression *bidēgat hayyām*, “over the fish of the sea,” is a common expression which would not draw the reader’s attention to the god Yam).

These are minor points, however, and generally they do not affect Tsumura’s main hypothesis. No future commentator on Genesis 1–2 will be able to disregard this book. Its seventeen pages of indexes (authors, texts, terms, subjects) make it all the more useful.

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The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment, by Mark A. O’Brien. OBO 92. Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989. Pp. xiii + 319. SFr 86.

This book is the latest of a number of studies on the composition of the Deuteronomistic History (DH) to appear in the past two decades. Contrary to what