

between this version and the later ones in Berlin and Brussels.

For example, the initial section, now somewhat damaged, originally listed 13 Nubian rulers and their lands, while the Berlin and Brussels texts list five, only two of which—*K3s* and *Š3t*—appear in the earlier group. Furthermore, in this section, the parentage of the rulers named is not given as it is in the later texts. Instead, each name is followed by *ms n mwt.f*, “born of his mother,” a phrase used elsewhere when precise genealogical information is lacking. From these facts we may infer that at the beginning of the 12th Dynasty more Nubian chieftains were considered potential enemies, but not enough was known about them to record the genealogical details essential for precise identification in magical processes. The Berlin and Brussels texts, dating after the Middle Kingdom conquests in the south, show fewer, but better known, chieftains considered as enemies.

Some features of these new texts are of special interest. In the Berlin, Brussels and Mirgissa texts, as noted above, the Nubian rulers are specifically identified by the names of their parents. In the texts under consideration, however, precise identification is achieved in another way. A full entry reads:

ḥk3 n M3ki3, W3i, ms n mwt.f, ḏdw r.f ḥs, mš.f

“The ruler of *M3ki3* (named) *W3i*, born of his mother, of whom it is said ‘calf’ (and) his army” (p. 30, A11).

As already, noted, the phrase “born of his mother” serves to replace unknown genealogical facts, but magical processes against specific enemies require more precise information. This is supplied in each case by a sobriquet which removes possible doubt as to which ruler is meant. Unfortunately, these identifying epithets are mostly defaced or unreadable: “a bull born of a monkey(?)”, “Shall one obey him?”; etc. Since these epithets are obviously perjorative in intent, the epithet *ḥs*, “calf,” quoted above, might be a sportive writing for *ḥs*, “excrement.” One might also translate the phrase *ḏdw r.f* as “against whom it is said.”

Among these rulers is a princess (*ḥk3.t*; p. 29, A9), a unique case in all collections of the Execration Texts, who ruled a place called *ʔ3mn3s*, perhaps part of the well-known land of Yam specified by the element *n3s*. The significance of this isolated example of a female ruler in Nubia is unclear, though Posener notes the possible importance of women in Nubia in much later times. There is no doubt that this is a woman since the whole formula is in the feminine: *mst n mwt.s, ḏdt r.s . . . mš.s*.

Even though these texts contain little that is new, Posener has elicited whatever information there is in his detailed commentary. He gives a valuable catalogue (pp. 2–6) of all texts of this type and related figurines, material which stretches from the 5th Dynasty to late times. The magical imprecation against enemies of the state was thus a long-standing tradition in Egypt. While this magical practice has long been related to the ceremony called “smashing the red

jars” mentioned frequently in Egyptian literature, the precise connections remain somewhat obscure.⁵

Posener’s monograph concludes with photographs of the five alabaster plaques, the wax arms and feet, and hand copies of the texts. It is an admirable publication of a difficult class of magical literature.

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⁵ Van Dijk, *LÄ VI*: 1389–96.

King and Kin: Political Allegory in the Hebrew Bible. By JOEL ROSENBERG. Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature. Bloomington: INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1986. Pp. xvi + 255.

The main objective of this book is to demonstrate how three rather diverse sections of the large narrative stretching from Genesis through Kings are interrelated. The three sections are the Garden of Eden story (Genesis 2–3), the Abraham cycle (Genesis 12–25), and the life of King David (2 Samuel 16 through 1 Kings 2). The new approach which Rosenberg adopts is to read them as political allegories.

Clearly, there is much to gain from a careful reading of this book. Rosenberg has an astute eye and has pointed out many interesting *Leitwörter* in these three narratives. The discussion on *bayit* “house” in the David structure (pp. 113–23) is highly original and extremely illuminating. Numerous commentators have called attention to the significance of this word in 2 Sam 7:11–13, but Rosenberg has advanced the discussion much further. Similarly, Rosenberg notes how the root *ntš* operates in 1 Sam 17:20–28 and how it reverberates in passages farther afield such as 1 Sam 4:2, 10:2, 12:22, 30:16, 2 Sam 5:18, 5:22 (p. 177).

However, although I am sympathetic with the overall intentions of this book, I must report that I came away unconvinced that the three narrative units are closely linked and that they contain much in the way of political allegory. Rosenberg argues that the common thread running through Eden, Abraham, and David is the apparent conflict between “conditional” and “unconditional” divine blessing” (p. 199). In his view the former are represented by the Tree of Knowledge, Genesis 15, and the conditional statements in 2 Samuel 7, and they in turn represent matters of everyday reality in Israelite life (law, ethics, etc.). The unconditional aspects are represented by the Tree of Life, Genesis 17, and the unconditional statements in 2 Samuel 7, and they in turn represent matters of utopian reality (hope, prayer, etc.). Now

I do not deny that such a dichotomy may exist in biblical literature, rather I simply do not see how these texts relate to this issue. I am afraid that there is more *eisegesis* here than *exegesis*.

Equally distressing is my inability to see the political allegory which Rosenberg sees. I agree that on a micro-level there are such tendencies in some of these texts, but I cannot agree that on a macro-level this is what the authors of these narratives intended as their main objective. I am the first to admit that the Garden of Eden episode is among the most difficult of biblical stories to interpret, but I remain unconvinced by Rosenberg's attempt to view these chapters as political allegory related to the large body of narrative literature concerning King David. I reiterate that I am sympathetic to the overall approach, but, in my opinion, I believe I demonstrated more such interconnections in the few pages of my article in *VT* 36 (1986): 438–46, and in the final chapter of my monograph *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1986), 107–20, than Rosenberg has accomplished in this book.

Unfortunately this volume is marred by several errors and misstatements:

P. 4: Amos lived in the 8th century (not 9th) and Second Isaiah is dated to the 6th century (not 5th).

P. 39: Rosenberg is technically correct that “the brief story recounted by the prophet Nathan to King David in II Sam. 12:1ff. is a *mashal* in all but name only,” but it would be of interest to note that it is specifically called a *mashal* in the Talmud, Baba Batra 15a.

P. 43: The Hebrew Bible is not the center text of the Talmud page; instead the author must have in mind *Miqra'ot Gedolot*.

P. 54: The plant stolen from Gilgamesh by the water serpent is not a “plant of eternal life,” rather one of rejuvenation. There is a difference; see A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago, 1949), 92, n. 211; and J. H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia, 1982), 37, 257.

Pp. 101–2: In light of recent advances, especially the penetrating studies of Avi Hurvitz, *Beyn Lashon Le-Lashon* (Jerusalem, 1972), and *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel* (Paris, 1982), it is odd to find Rosenberg claiming that “to affirm the linguistic datability of sources may create more problems than it solves. . . . We simply know too little about biblical Hebrew to use linguistic criteria with any confidence.”

P. 116: Rosenberg is not alone among modern scholars in stating that Ichabod means literally “Inglory,” but this is incorrect. Notwithstanding the popular etymology given in I Sam 4:21, the name means “Where is (the) Glory?” (cf. Ugaritic *ʿiy*). For discussion see P. K. McCarter, *I Samuel* (Garden City, N. Y., 1980), 115–16.

P. 180: The two introductions of David and Saul in I Samuel 16 and 17 need not be variant traditions. Literarily, they work in conjunction with each other to presage respectively the private and the public aspects of the relationship between these two men. See K. R. R. Gros Louis, “King David of Israel,” in *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives*, vol. II, ed. K. R. R. Gros Louis (Nashville, 1982), 210.

In addition, one footnote should be updated. On p. 235, n. 57, Rosenberg refers to my 1982 conference paper on the redactional structuring of the Abraham cycle. This has now been incorporated into *The Redaction of Genesis*, 27–52.

I wish to reiterate that there are positive aspects to this book. No one dealing with the three narratives treated by Rosenberg can afford to neglect the results of the author's close reading of these tales. Let me put forward one more example of an insightful comment by Rosenberg. Concerning the story in 2 Samuel 6, he writes, “One must note here that the intended destination of the Ark has not yet been mentioned. Finally, verse 13 [*sic*: verse 12] reports that . . . the Ark enters ‘the city of David’.” We the readers of this story know the historical tale and the ultimate outcome, thus we have been duped into believing that we know all along where the ark is heading. It is sobering to have Rosenberg remind us that in truth the narrator has kept hidden the intended destination of the ark.

The reviewer has benefited greatly from Rosenberg's previous work on biblical narrative and considers his essay “Biblical Narrative,” in *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, ed. B. W. Holtz (New York, 1984), 31–81, to be the best entree to the subject available. In fact his treatment of the Garden of Eden story therein (pp. 52–62) is in many ways superior to the one appearing in the book under review. Rosenberg's talents are visible in many of the fine points he raises, but the broad strokes attempted in *King and Kin* fail.

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Hebrew in its West Semitic Setting. By A. MURTONEN. Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics, vol. 13. Leiden: E. J. BRILL, 1986. Pp. 341. \$87.25.

This is but the first volume in the well-known Brill Semitic Languages and Linguistics series edited by Semitist J. H. Hospers of the University of Groningen. The author informs us (p. ix) that the second volume is currently in press with Brill, with the third volume already one-quarter finished (as of mid-1985). Thus it is very premature for any reviewer to give an overall evaluation of Murtonen's seminal work and