One other minor point: in describing how the first study had been revised since its initial 2002 publication, Levinson states that he "clarified the analysis of the morphosyntax of cuneiform law" (xi, n. 1). Nonetheless, the study includes a rather peculiar claim (substantially unchanged from the original article) about the use of Akkadian verb forms in the Laws of Hammurabi (LH). According to this claim, just as the Covenant Code alternates between כי and אם to differentiate between conditions and subconditions, LH alternates between preterite verb forms and perfects in the protasis of laws to mark conditions and subconditions, respectively (24, esp. n. 73). The evidence, however, simply does not bear this out. For example, LH §9 gives a main condition and §§10–12 give related subconditions, but in the protasis of LH §9, the verbs are all perfect forms.

Even so, this claim is marginal at best to Levinson's overall arguments, and when scrutinizing these arguments, one is hard-pressed to find fault. Instead, one can only feel admiration for how the author with his typical aplomb manages to draw from a variety of subdisciplines to produce a stimulating pair of case studies.

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Anne W. Stewart. *Poetic Ethics in Proverbs: Wisdom Literature and the Shaping of the Moral Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. 247 pp.

A revision of the author's 2014 Emory doctoral dissertation, this book insightfully critiques the idea that in the biblical wisdom tradition character is imagined to be static and predetermined. Stewart argues, building on the work of William P. Brown, that "the cultivation of wisdom and the formation of wise character in its student" is the purpose of Proverbs as a work (2). Stewart's innovation to this claim is that Proverbs not only advances this message in its content, but significantly, in its poetic form. "Through its poetic form, Proverbs appeals to the whole human person, attending to his emotions, motivations, desires, and imagination, not simply his rational capacities" (3). Stewart's core insight is important: Proverbs, in its received form, articulates a view of wisdom distinct from an idea encountered elsewhere in the biblical literary tradition, that wisdom is a divine gift, a static virtue outside of human control. That Stewart recognizes the central role form plays in Proverbs and in articulating its argument for "character formation" (or, using the vocabulary of Proverbs itself, "the acquisition of wisdom") is all the more deserving of praise. Broadly, such an argument will raise questions regarding the idiosyncratic nature of Proverbs as a work (see p. 69), and more sharply, how biblical scholarship maintains the category of wisdom literature (either lexically or formally) when Proverbs is considered the exemplar of the scholarly category (see p. 216).

Following the introduction, chapter 2, "Character Ethics and the Shaping of the Self," reviews previous work on Proverbs and ethics. The chapter is framed by a positive focus on the work of Brown and his insistence on "the concept of the self in biblical literature," and a critique of Barton's monolithic claim that "moral formation is foreign to the Hebrew Bible" (14). The extent to which the notion of the "self" in biblical literature is an imposition of later conceptual frameworks, however, remains a matter of debate, and Stewart's argument might have benefited from further reflection on assumptions made in either direction in her review of scholarship. In chapter 3, "Form Criticism and the Way of Poetry in Proverbs," Stewart moves beyond the challenge of assigning genre, and examines how Proverbs's message of wisdom acquisition is shaped by formal devices, including fundamental structuring devices like parallelism, as well as sound and lexical patterning (what she calls "terseness and unusual word choice," p. 47), parataxis, and figurative language. Here I find a problematic articulation of poetry's function and the specific type of poetry of Proverbs. In the book's introduction, Stewart appeals to the poetic form of Proverbs to encode its message of "character formation," and claims that the poetic form renders the work "more than an intellectual project, and, consequently, demands more than appeal to logical reasoning" (3). Stewart draws on Lowth's characterization of poetry, that "poetry … calls the passions to her aid," but here she has conflated two distinct concepts Lowth articulates about poetry in his developmental scheme. Lowth locates the essential meaning of poetry in the sublime. Lowth's category of "didactic poetry" remains a somewhat incoherent one when considered outside of his evolutionary scheme—the notion that the form of the proverb developmentally precedes true sublime poetry as chiefly demonstrated by works like Isaiah. According to Lowth, "didactic poetry," the poetry exemplified by Proverbs 10–29, cannot be considered truly poetical:

> [The משל and מליצה of Prov 1:6 indicate] two species of poetry…. The [first] one I call *didactic*, which expresses some moral precept in elegant and pointed verses … similar to the *gnomai* and adages of the wise men: The other was truly poetical, adorned with all the more splendid colouring of language, magnificently sublime in the sentiments … such are almost all the remaining productions of the prophets. (*Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 1835 edition, 47–48)

Stewart's claim that the poetic form of Proverbs shapes its reader aesthetically, not only intellectually, is weakened by reliance on Lowth's paradoxical characterization of poetry, which entails a determination of "didactic poetry" as a less poetical form of poetry.

The second part of the book, chapters 4–8, examines how Proverbs's discourse shapes its reader's character through different patterns of thought: "rebuke, motivation, desire, and imagination," all four thought patterns are subsumed under a concept of מוסר, "discipline." The identification and organization of these four models is illuminating, moving from the most physical and embodied form (rebuke) to the most abstract and disembodied (imagination). The select

textual analysis in this section of the book, however, seems more interested in the content of the discourse than in engaging in an extended analysis of those very poetic features Stewart points out in the first half of the study to be crucial to Proverbs's message. Many of the passages subject to Stewart's extensive analysis come from Prov 1–9, reinforcing the problematic conflation of Lowth's "truly poetical" of Prov 1–9 and the "not truly poetical" of Prov 10–29. In "rebuke," the analysis is focused on Prov 1:20–33, and only three pages are dedicated to Prov 25:12; 26:3; 26:11. "Motivation" is somewhat more balanced, with an examination of Prov 10:1–7 in addition to a study of Prov 3:1–12 and 3:13–18. "Desire" by Stewart's own admission is "developed to the most elaborate extent in chapters 1–9," but there she draws out from the other chapters "a subtle shaping of desire," for example, the desire for food in Prov 24:13–14 and 20:17. The majority of analysis, however, is focused on Prov 4:1–9; 7:1–27; 8:1–21; 8:32–36. The most promising of the four chapters in developing an integrated study of form and content is chapter 8, "The Model of Imagination." Imagination is, as Stewart lucidly states, "the capacity to create mental images" and more significantly "involves organizing such images into meaningful structures that allow one to make sense of the world" (172). This perspective of the discourse in Proverbs, of how the aesthetic meets the conceptual, insightfully verges on an integrated theory of language and social patterning: "The construction of the moral prototype throughout the book has a pedagogical function … as it familiarizes the student with the contours of the prototype, it equips him to make moral judgments in a world in which events do not always correspond evenly to the prototype" (180). Stewart's view of the prototype, that its discourse "does not function descriptively but prescriptively," can improve our understanding of how the advice dispensed in Proverbs can appear as descriptions (i.e., observations of the natural world, human relationships) but their parallelistic and juxtaposing form renders these descriptions prescriptive for the reader (i.e., shaping the world and its actors into neat categories and binary divisions).

The book's conclusion moves from a study of how Proverbs's formal devices shape its reader's character to a study of character in the work as a whole. Stewart bases her analysis on the work in its final received form. The initial set-up of the book does not take into account the fact that Proverbs appears to be an anthology (or an anthology of anthologies, if one considers that its constituent sections are themselves configured as collections of instructions or sayings). Whether the work's anthological nature results from a complex compositional history or is the result of deliberate shaping is a matter of debate, but one cannot ignore the headings outlining the "collections" in Prov 10:1 and 25:1, for example. This said, Stewart's observation that Proverbs is not configured as a narrative or even within a narrative frame essentially admits its anthological form. Her claim that "Proverbs stands in contrast to other wisdom texts from the ancient Near East … often prefaced with a prose framework that situates their wisdom in a particular narrative context" (211), is an important insight. These observations lend further support for her broad argument, in that outside of the narrative frame of instruction from father to son, the form of the text itself becomes the central focus: "Proverbs highlights the merit of examining poetry *qua* poetry within the

scope of character ethics" (213). In fact, because the narrative frame is absent the reader's focus on non-narrative forms becomes possible and indeed imperative:

> Proverbs provides a non-narrative way of articulating character that does not rely on a linear plot but is instead revealed in discrete moments and particular situations…. Proverbs' emphasis remains on the quality of the agent rather than the act itself, for individual episodes provide windows into the quality of the character displayed, whether wise or foolish. (213)

The book concludes with a reconsideration of Proverbs within the traditional wisdom corpus, and counters the conventional view that Proverbs is a "prototype" of this corpus since its nonlinear scheme "unfairly position[s] Proverbs as the inferior … a [textual] model that is eventually proven inadequate to or outmoded for changing climes" (216). Such a conclusion unintentionally presents an argument against the very paradox created by Lowth's characterization of poetry and its consequential devaluation of the kind of poetry Stewart champions in her study. And so, while some of the set-up of Stewart's analysis might have benefited from further nuance in its understanding of "didactic poetry," the conclusions of her well-researched and eloquent study succeed in advancing the study of Proverbs.

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JUDAISM IN ANTIQUITY AND RABBINICS

Steve Mason. *A History of the Jewish War: A.D. 66–74*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. xii + 689 pp.

Steve Mason has rightly emerged as the leading Josephus scholar of our time, and this massive volume—occupying the footprint of a collegiate dictionary—will surely serve as the benchmark book on the first Jewish revolt against Rome for the foreseeable future. Indeed, it is difficult to believe that anyone will write a more thorough treatment of the revolt, and one can safely wonder when, or whether, another publisher will wager on such an expansive—and expensive—undertaking. Without a doubt, the volume proposes many important correctives to prior approaches to Josephus and the Jewish War. But as the discussion shifts back to reviews, articles, and even monographs, there will remain much to ponder.

The volume is divided into two parts and nine chapters. Part 1, "Contexts," includes three chapters of roughly equal length, comprising nearly two hundred pages. Chapter 1, "A Famous and Unknown War," cuts through Roman boasting