

<https://helda.helsinki.fi>

Saul M. Olyan and Jacob L. Wright (eds): Supplementation and the Study of the Hebrew Bible. [Book review]

Pakkala, Juha

2020-09

Pakkala, J 2020, 'Saul M. Olyan and Jacob L. Wright (eds): Supplementation and the Study of the Hebrew Bible. [Book review]', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 628-629. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jss/fgaa013>

<http://hdl.handle.net/10138/347697>

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jss/fgaa013>

unspecified

acceptedVersion

Downloaded from Helda, University of Helsinki institutional repository.

This is an electronic reprint of the original article.

This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

Please cite the original version.

Book Review of Saul M. Olyan and Jacob L. Wright, *Supplementation and the Study of the Hebrew Bible* (Brown Judaic Studies 361; Providence: Brown University, 2018).
by Juha Pakkala

The edited volume discusses the literary growth of the Hebrew Bible, a topic that has received renewed interest in recent scholarship. It offers a representative collection of expanded texts in different genres from poetry to prose, from legal texts to prophecy. The editors seek to illustrate “how common, variegated, and significant” supplementations have been and to “significantly advance” our understanding of this editorial technique (p. xv and back cover). These goals are rather briefly addressed in the introduction, and some of the most significant observations of the individual articles are summarized on pages xvi–xvii. With some exceptions (e.g., Milstein, Klein, Kratz), many of the articles contain only a marginal discussion about supplementations as an editorial technique, and the focus is mostly on the scholarly discussion of the book or passage in question. Many of the analyzed texts would provide more substance for methodological issues; for example, how supplementations technically relate to the older text, how the scribes perceived the older text in relation to the addition, or what the editor’s main motives for supplementing the texts were.

A central audience of the introduction (but not of the contributions) seem to be the Neo-Documentarians, who largely deny (the importance of) supplements after the pentateuchal sources were collected into a single composition. Accordingly, almost half of the introduction of only seven pages discusses the history of the documentary hypothesis from the 19th century onward (xi–xiv). Another apparent audience is the increasing number of scholars who focus on “final” texts (mainly the MT) and neglect or disregard additions as a significant phenomenon. The discussed cases clearly show the impact of additions and thereby underscore the methodological problems of using the “final” texts as historical documents for early Judaism.

In view of the lengthy discussion of the documentary hypothesis, the history of literary criticism (*Literarkritik*) is underrepresented. Introductions to exegesis, which discuss many of the volume’s issues in detail,¹ and much of the recent discussion on the subject,² are neglected. The editors only mention Zimmerli, Fishbane, and Kugel as the methodological forerunners (p. xv), who are hardly representative of recent discussions. The volume also fails to address recent challenges to diachronic approaches (especially *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism*).³ The editors do bring up the issue of “how do scholars identify supplements” (xvi), but this is discussed briefly and without a discussion of scholars, such as Person, who deny that supplements can be identified with enough certainty. Method books of exegesis discuss this and other issues related to supplementations in detail, and it is not clear what the new insights that the present volume provides in this respect are.

As for the individual contributions, one can detect different approaches. For some authors, text-critical evidence is core to the analysis (e.g., Kratz, Milstein, Nihan), while others largely build on classic literary-critical evidence or text-internal observations (e.g., Olyan, Römer, Schmid). A better

¹ E.g., Uwe Becker, *Exegese des Alten Testaments*, UTB 2664 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); Odil Hannes Steck, *Exegese des Alten Testaments: Leitfaden der Methodik*, 12th ed. (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989); Helmut Utzschneider and Stefan Ark Nitsche, *Arbeitsbuch literaturwissenschaftliche Bibelauslegung: Eine Methodenlehre zur Exegese des Alten Testaments* (Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2001).

² E.g., *Scripture in Transition. Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Seas Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*, FS Raija Sollamo, Voitila and Jokiranta (eds.), SJSJ 126 (Leiden: Brill, 2008); *Changes in Scripture. Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period*, von Weissenberg et al. (eds.), BZAW 419 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2011); David Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); *Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible*, Müller et al. (eds.), SBL RBS 75 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014); *Insights into Editing in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East: What Does Documented Evidence Tell Us about the Transmission of Authoritative Texts?* Müller and Pakkala (eds.), CBET 84 (Leuven et al.: Peeters, 2017).

³ *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism*, Person and Rezetko (eds.) (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016); also, Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*.

methodological distinction between documented additions in text-critical evidence and literary-critical hypotheses would have been necessary, although some contributions (Kratz in particular) make significant methodological notes in this respect (pp. 46–50). The question of how reliable hypothetical supplementations based on literary-critical considerations are in comparison with those observable in text-critical evidence is methodologically especially crucial. The methodological imbalance is also seen in the contributions. It is surprising that Schmid largely fails to appreciate text-critical evidence in Kings; for example, the reference to the destruction of the city walls in 2 Kings 25:10 (discussed on p. 91) is very probably an addition, as suggested by Codex Vaticanus where most of the verse is missing; the reading probably goes back to the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Old Greek and preserves the oldest reading. Other significant variants, although not always observable in the main LXX manuscripts, can be found in many of the discussed verses but they are not mentioned.

A brief note on why the editors use the term “supplementation” would have been in order since the words ‘addition’ and ‘expansion’ are more commonly used technical terms for the editorial technique; is the word ‘supplementation’ used synonymously? One should also note the lack of a bibliography, which saves pages but is impractical for the reader. The book is technically well finalized and the textual examples are clearly presented.

In spite of some critical comments, which especially concern the introduction, the volume is a fine collection of essays that underscore the importance of recognizing supplements in the Hebrew Bible. Most of the articles are solid contributions that first and foremost bring new insights to the study of those passages. The lack of coherence is rather typical of conference volumes. The clearest deficiency is the lack of an extensive methodological discussion of supplementations as an editorial technique and dialogue with recent research on the subject. It also remains unclear what the new methodological insights that the book promises to deliver are.