P.B. Hartog, review of D.A. Teeter, *Scribal Laws: Exegetical Variation in the Textual Transmission of Biblical Law in the Late Second Temple Period*. *BiOr* 72 (2016): 745–48.

TEETER, D.A. – Scribal Laws. Exegetical Variation in the Textual Transmission of Biblical Law in the Late Second Temple Period. (Forschungen zum Alten Testament, 92). Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2014. (23,5 cm, XVI, 359). ISBN 978-3-16-153249-8. ISSN 0940-4155. € 94,-.

The transmission of the Hebrew Bible in the Second Temple period is a trending topic in current scholarship. Andrew Teeter's monograph is one of several recent studies that zoom in on the socio-cultural background and the world of thought of the individuals responsible for transmitting Scripture.[1] These studies are not primarily interested in the history of the biblical text per se, but in the context(s) in which Scripture was read, interpreted, and transmitted in Second Temple times. Teeter offers many novel and inventive insights into these issues, and his book is a valuable contribution to our understanding of Second Temple Judaism and its dealings with Scripture.

The main purpose of this book is to describe, explain, and contextualize the principles that govern the transmission and interpretation of the legal parts of the Jewish Scriptures. "This study is thus concerned with 'scribal laws' in a dual sense. On the one hand, it undertakes to discern the laws *governing* the textual transmission of legal material, the manifest 'rules' attending (sponsoring, constraining) scribal intervention or innovation within the corpus of biblical law.

[1] See also, e.g. and from different perspectives, Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Gideon R. Kotzé, *The Qumran Manuscripts of Lamentations: A Text-Critical Study* (SSN 61; Leiden: Brill, 2013).

On the other hand, it examines the character and background of the laws *produced* thereby; i.e., the interpretively altered legal formulations inscribed within manuscripts of that corpus. These two objects of inquiry, representing as they do two sides of one coin, are inextricably linked and mutually determinative; neither aspect can be understood fully apart from the other" (2–3).

Teeter's first chapter surveys "the underlying causes and effects of textual pluriformity" (7) in Second Temple times. Teeter takes his point of departure in the debates between Abraham Geiger and Julius Wellhausen. Whereas for Geiger deliberate changes in the Jewish Scriptures reflect socio-religious sentiments, Wellhausen stressed the defective nature of the scriptural text as the prime cause for textual variety. In more recent times, several studies have pointed out the central role of reading processes in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible, and the discovery and publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls has engendered an increased awareness of the interconnectedness of the reading, interpretation, and transmission of Scripture in the Second Temple period. "Redaction history, text history, exegetical rewriting, and the broader history of interpretation – all prove to be not only contiguous but profoundly interconnected (which is not to say identical) processes. All represent partially overlapping coordinates within the broader exegetical encounter with scripture constitutive of Judaism in the period" (27).

As a common thread throughout this book runs the idea that the textual culture of Second Temple Judaism, or the scriptural encounter of Second Temple Jews, differs substantially from modern academic engagements with Scripture. To understand Second Temple Judaism and the prominent position of Scripture

within this religious tradition, therefore, we must refrain, to the greatest possible extent, from analysing our sources in terms of categories familiar to us. Rather, we must develop a novel framework based on the type(s) of scriptural encounters attested in the Second Temple Jewish sources and the assumptions that underlie them. This book seeks to contribute to the development of such a framework.

The purpose of the second chapter is to offer "a descriptive typology and analysis of exegetical variation in texts of biblical law from the Second Temple period" (34). Teeter's analysis divides into two parts. The first part deals with "larger scale variation," the second one with "smaller scale variation." Under the first heading Teeter classifies moderate expansions – that is, expansions involving more than a single word or phrase – in the light of three categories: (1) "cases in which scribes have deliberately inserted 'new' material"; (2) "cases of exegetical *pastiche*," in which collocations occurring elsewhere in Scripture are combined in a textual expansion; (3) "cases of 'simple transfer'," in which collocations from other scriptural passages are borrowed unchanged in an expansion (see 34–35). The first type of expansions is examined on the basis of Exod 22:4 and 23:19, which are scrutinized at length. Lev 17:4 is the most elaborate illustration of exegetical *pastiche*; other instances are Lev 15:3; Deut 6:4; and 17:5. Lastly, Exod 21:16, 36; 23:18, 22; Deut 24:20; 28; and 30:15–16 are listed as cases of simple transfer.

The second part of this chapter lists rather than extensively discusses cases of smaller scale variation. Teeter provides the evidence under four headings: (1) minor expansions; (2) combined expansion and change; (3) change/exchange; (4) exegetical omission. These categories may be further subdivided; examples of the

first type of textual variation ("minor expansions"), for instance, are specified in view of the purpose they are meant to fulfil (specification or extension of a law, euphemistic renderings, solutions to a grammatical or syntactical problem in the text). At times, Teeter singles out an example for more thorough treatment, so as to illustrate his approach (e.g., 141–55 contains an elaborate discussion of letter-level change in Exod 21:22–23). Taken together, the two parts of this chapter provide a systematic classification of the sorts of textual variety that one finds in Second Temple manuscripts of the legal parts of Scripture.

The third chapter probes the hermeneutics of this textual variation. Teeter outlines the resources used in scriptural interpretation and transmission as well as the assumptions that underlie their use. The main point in this chapter is that the transmission and interpretation of legal Scripture in the Second Temple period is not random, but rather governed by a particular hermeneutics. In characterizing this hermeneutics, Teeter follows Jean Koenig in speaking of a "hermeneutic of analogy."[2] The most characteristic feature of this type of hermeneutics is that "words (as semantic entities) and even letters (as graphic signs) within the text were conceptualized as connected to others with similar features" (181). Thus, "one of the generative forces behind the textual pluriformity so evident in the Second Temple period is … an awareness of an interrelated, sacred scriptural whole and the formative pressure that such a collective whole exerts upon texts and communities alike" (204).

[2] See Jean Koenig, *L'herméneutique analogique du Judaïsme antique d'après les témoins textuels d'Isaïe* (VTSup 33; Leiden: Brill, 1982).

In his fourth chapter, Teeter aims to situate the results from the preceding chapters within their broader socio-historical context. After providing an elaborate survey of earlier scholarship, again starting in the nineteenth century, he accepts the existence of two scribal approaches, one that is geared towards a producing a faithful (by our standards) copy of a *Vorlage*, and one that is more interventionist. The central issue addressed in this chapter is the relationship between these two approaches. Teeter is critical of the habit to refer to non-interventionist texts as "standard" texts and to the others as "vulgar" exemplars. Consequently, he raises doubts as regards the putative different social contexts (e.g., Temple vs. non-Temple) in which these scribal approaches may have been employed. Rather, Teeter argues that both approaches were in use simultaneously in a single textual polysystem, in which they would have played different roles. In his words: "The *simultaneous coexistence* of both kinds of manuscripts in a single environment, the *functional difference* between the two attested by their distribution, and the *structural and functional similarities* to the classical Targumim, combine to suggest that the pluriformity of Hebrew manuscripts in the late Second Temple period … is not reflective of incompatible scribal mindsets, nor does it reflect the textual practice of mutually isolated or antagonistic communities; rather, it represents the complex reality of a multiform, multi-generic textual polysystem of scriptural study …" (264).

This is an ingenious and well-conceived book. Teeter's command of the secondary literature and his habit of choosing among his conversation partners scholars from the nineteenth century yields interesting insights in the history of scholarship. Perhaps the most profound thing to be learnt from this is that textual

criticism alone does not suffice to understand the position(s) and function(s) of Scripture in Second Temple Judaism. Teeter stresses the need for multidisciplinarity: "understanding textual variance requires working across disciplinary divisions.… The *Wissenschaft des Judentums* pioneers of the nineteenth century already understood this point well. If a distinct program of research is advocated in the present study, it is in essence the continuation and incremental refinement of the program that they began" (270).

Teeter's critical evaluation of socio-historical setting(s) of textual variation is particularly useful. He not only illustratively points out weaknesses in previous explanations of the source material, but he also develops a convincing framework in which textual variety may be positioned. The suggestion that the two scribal approaches reflected in Second Temple Jewish literature functioned side-by-side within one textual polysystem is persuasive and worthy of playing a central role in any further thinking on the context(s) in which Scripture was read, interpreted, and transmitted in Second Temple Judaism.

The value of this book lies not only in the answers it provides, but also in the questions it raises. In chapter 3, Teeter touches on the background of Second Temple Jewish textual culture within the ancient Near East and the Hellenistic-Roman world. His treatment of this topic is very concise, but the information provided in this book invites a more thorough examination of this issue. In similar vein, one may wonder what Teeter's insights into the legal material may have to teach us about Jewish engagements with other types of material. In some places, Teeter expresses his suspicion that there are no major differences between these various types of material and how they were read and appropriated in Second

Temple Judaism. But to what extent, for instance, does the presence of explicit interpretations of prophetic passages in the Jewish Scriptures reflect a difference from the interpretation and transmission of legal material, which always takes the form of implicit exegesis? Also by raising this kind of questions, Teeter's work is prone to stimulate further study and reflection, for which it has already set a high standard.

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