

under review is not intended to replace other introductory grammars, but as a companion to them. Besides, students who already have some exposure to Akkadian or another Semitic language will find the charts self-explanatory.

The best way to present my assessment of Malbran-Labat's contribution is to compare it with a similar work that appeared a decade earlier, i.e., Douglas B. Miller and R. Mark Shipp, *An Akkadian Handbook: Paradigms, Helps, Glossary, Logograms, and Sign List* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996). The latter gives a whole set of complete paradigms along with other reading helps, such as a useful list of common cuneiform signs. Malbran-Labat's work complements this earlier work in that the majority of the charts attempt to explain the mechanics of how Akkadian morphology works. For example, charts 14-15 (p. 18) explain the consonantal root system and the verbal stems. Then chart 16 (p. 19) describes the interplay between the consonantal roots and the stems, and charts 17-19 (p. 20) outline the typical vowel patterns of the verbal conjugations.

A mastery of the principles contained in Malbran-Labat's charts enables students to generate full paradigms, such as those found in Miller and Shipp and in most introductory Akkadian grammars. Alternatively, a mastery of the paradigms found in Miller and Shipp results in at least an intuitive knowledge of the principles presented in Malbran-Labat's charts. Of course, the third section of Malbran-Labat's book does provide some sample complete paradigms. Nevertheless, it seems that Malbran-Labat's contribution is best aimed at helping students learn Akkadian morphological patterns, whereas Miller and Shipp's book, though also useful as a learning tool, serves even better as a quick reference for reading or reviewing Akkadian. Together, they complement each other very well.

Students of Akkadian are fortunate to have so many learning tools at their disposal. I welcome Malbran-Labat's book as a useful service to Akkadian students. It is a contribution that I heartily recommend.

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TARSEE LI

Mettinger, Tryggve N. D. *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-historical Study of Genesis 2-3*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007. xvii + 165 pp. Hardcover, \$29.50.

Tryggve N. D. Mettinger is Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Bible at Lund University, Sweden, where he taught from 1978-2003. During his career he served as a visiting professor at various institutions in Europe, USA, Israel, and South Africa. He is a member of The Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, Stockholm, and an honorary member of The (British) Society for Old Testament Study. He has numerous publications focusing on various aspects of Israelite kingship, the notion of God in ancient Israel, Israelite aniconism, and the phenomenon of the dying God. *The Eden Narrative* is his latest monograph, which provides a fascinating study on Gen 2-3.

Mettinger states that his curiosity regarding the central theme(s) of the Eden Narrative developed when he noticed that knowledge and immortality

are also central motifs in the *Gilgamesh Epic* and *Adapa and the South Wind*. The monograph, *The Eden Narrative*, looks at the following three questions regarding Gen 2–3: What is the theme of the Eden Narrative? and Is there a preliterary story behind the Gen 2–3 narrative? If so, how did the poet use or reshape this tradition (1)? In his attempt to answer these questions, Mettinger applies techniques used in comparative literature: narratological analysis, genre analysis, and definition of theme. He questions the source-critical approach to the Eden Narrative, arguing that the passage is instead a self-contained piece of literature.

The first chapter of Mettinger's monograph gives a short overview of the various opinions held regarding the main theme of the Eden Narrative (he concludes that there is no consensus view) and the numbers of trees in the garden of Eden (Were there one or two special trees?). The second chapter gives a narratological analysis of Gen 2–3, concluding that neither Adam or Eve were aware of the Tree of Life, the second tree in the garden. Furthermore, the analysis suggests that they were unaware that passing this "test" by not eating the fruit from the forbidden tree would be rewarded by free access to the Tree of Life and, hence, immortality. Thus Adam and Eve never eat from the Tree of Life since God expelled them from the Garden and placed cherubim to guard the way to that tree after they had failed the test (Gen 3:24). The third chapter deals with the theme of the narrative. Mettinger concludes that the narrative regards a divine test in which both trees play a crucial function. His synchronic analysis ends with a genre analysis (chap. 4), which places the Eden Narrative in the myth category and thus it should be given a functionalist interpretation. Chapter 5 applies a diachronic approach in an attempt to reconstruct the preliterary story behind Gen 2–3. Mettinger's central assumption is that Gen 2–3 should be dated to the late postexilic or Persian period (Deuteronomistic source) rather than to the earliest source (J-source). As such, Ezek 28 should be viewed as the preliterary Adamic myth, which the poet of Gen 2–3 combined with his Deuteronomistic value system to create the Eden Narrative. Chapter 6 compares Gen 2–3 with the prime ancient Near Eastern material, *Gilgamesh Epic* and *Adapa and the South Wind*, which also deals with wisdom and immortality motifs. The monograph concludes with several implications of his findings, for example, that the Eden Narrative is a sophisticated literary unit regarding "the failure of the first humans and the calamitous consequences of this failure" (134).

The Eden Narrative gives a solid introduction on how to approach any given narrative. Especially helpful is the index of literary terms that Mettinger provides to help students understand the technical vocabulary involved in such analysis. The only weakness of this monograph is chapter 5, in which Mettinger attempts to reconstruct the preliterary story behind Gen 2–3. Although an intriguing hypothesis, he fails to provide sufficient support for his tradition-historical reconstruction, noting only that "it is increasingly common in current scholarship to date the Eden Narrative to late postexilic time even to the Persian period." He is "convinced" (11) that the three scholars listed in the footnotes 56 (11) and 29 (134) are correct in their late dating and are

representative of current scholarship on this issue. Due to the crucial nature of this issue for Mettinger's hypothesis, if Ezek 28 and the other passages he quotes are dated later than Gen 2–3 his argument would collapse, thus, the issue of dating should have warranted more attention. Regarding the dating of the Eden Narrative, it would have been relevant to have dealt with Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn's argument for the important role Gen 2–3 plays in the larger unity of Gen 1–11 in light of its structural parallel with the *Atrahasis Epic (Before Abraham Was: The Unity of Genesis 1–11* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1985], 36-53). From this parallel comparison, they argue that Gen 1–11 follows the same pattern as other ancient Near Eastern epics and, as such, it should be viewed as an early composition. Walter Brueggemann's article regarding the parallels between Gen 1–11 and Samuel-Kings ("David and His Theologian," *CBQ* 30 [1968]: 156-181) also lends support for a preexilic dating of Gen 2–3. Jacques Doukhan also makes a convincing argument that Gen 1–2 is structurally unified, which again supports a preexilic dating (*The Genesis Creation Story: Its Literary Structure*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, 5 [Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1978]).

On the whole, *The Eden Narrative* is a great contribution to the study of the Eden Narrative. Mettinger provides numerous references throughout the monograph and a substantial bibliography. It is a solid work, well edited, and enjoyable to read. This is a great introduction to narrative studies and should be considered as a textbook for a variety of courses relating to the Bible and the ancient Near East.

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Oden, Thomas C. *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Christianity*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007. 204 pp. Hardcover, \$22.00.

There is a widespread belief among Christian believers and non-Christian observers alike that Christianity is a Western religion and was introduced to Africa by Western missionaries during the colonial period, but is this assertion really true? Christianity has had a much longer history in Africa than in the West. The fundamental belief structure, the exegetical methodology, monasticism, conciliar patterns, Christian leadership, and the rhetorical and dialectical skills of early Christianity have their roots in Africa. The brightest theological minds, the foremost historians, the great teachers and preachers of early Christianity were born and matured in Africa. How then can Christianity be classified as a religion of the West when it was born and matured within the African context?

The author of this small book seeks to set the record straight by demonstrating the decisive role that Africa has played in shaping Christianity. This is an incredibly difficult task as the weight of the historical evidence of the past 1,000 years seems weighed against him. He is aware of the herculean task he is undertaking and throughout the book he keeps repeating the need for future African scholars to explain and uncover the necessary evidence to prove beyond a doubt the African roots of the Christian faith.