the sanctuary (p. 169). Chapter 7 synthesizes the information presented in the preceding two chapters. Hundley often concludes that the rites described in these chapters are "preexisting" (e.g., p. 156), but he does not make clear on what basis he draws such conclusions. He sees Leviticus 16 as the pinnacle of the rhetorical trajectory of Leviticus 1–15, providing what he calls a "Priestly masterstroke" (p. 182) to ensure that YHWH's presence continues. Ultimately, Hundley sees P's rhetoric as geared toward ensuring the priests' own place in it, only thereby making YHWH more transcendent and also more efficacious than his ancient Near Eastern rivals (p. 207). Its efficacy in turn draws people into the system, further cementing the priests' place in it.

The main strength of this volume is its synthesis of a considerable amount of information, both primary texts and secondary material. Hundley covers a lot of ground, often in depth, and he draws frequently on the work of other scholars, including those at the forefront of research on the Priestly material. In addition to his discussion of technical vocabulary, which should be useful to anyone interested in the Priestly system, his conclusion that the Priestly system ensures that priests are necessary for YHWH's continuing presence is especially compelling. He connects this to his points about the frequent use of imprecise or ambiguous terminology in P: "even if suitable language existed, the Priests would not offer it. Precise interpretations leave the system open to critique and competition. If people understand the system too well, they may become convinced that they no longer need it, thereby questioning its authority" (p. 190).

Similarly, Hundley claims that "the sanctuary admits pollution because and so that it can be conclusively eliminated" (p. 199)—an interesting argument about the nature of Priestly religion and one that works at the rhetorical level in P, but one that also needs to be placed within a larger discussion of the development of ancient Israelite religion (not just that of other ancient Near Eastern religions) and the place of P within it. In particular, this study would have benefited from some analysis of P in comparison to other biblical cultic models, as surely P was also invested in showing how its system outstripped competing Israelite conceptions of deity and the ideal cult.

The volume is also open to some additional criticisms, primary of which is the apparent assumption that anyone other than priests would actually have read the Priestly text at some point. Hundley's claim that the rhetoric of the text was meant to convince someone of the system's authority assumes that it reflects reality and also that it was a system, and even a text, that non-priests had ready access to—or if that is not the case, that the text represents usual cultic practice. He does not adequately address the possibility that the P system is entirely hypothetical or that it was only accessible to other priests or literary elites, not the Israelite population at large.

Finally, Hundley hangs much of his argument on comparison with other ancient Near Eastern cults. Though he notes that the treatment of this material has to be selective (p. 10), he nevertheless includes far less of it than he at first suggests he will. It is also not clear why he devotes an entire chapter to the ancient Near East only on the topic of damage control.

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Biblical History and Israel's Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History. By Megan Bishop Moore and Brad E. Kelle. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011. Pp. xvii + 518. $46 (paper).

This book is an intelligent overview and assessment of modern critical scholarship with regard to "biblical history" and ancient Israel, and is meant for scholars as well as students. The express aim "is to describe the changing study of Israelite and Judean history and the relationship of the biblical literature to that history since the 1970s, when the idea began to be widespread that the story of Israel's past might at times be quite different from the Bible's description of ancient Israel" (pp. 39–40). As such, it follows the trend of other books that discuss and critique the methodologies used to understand

ancient Israel's history—such as Megan Bishop Moore's *Philosophy and Practice in Writing a History of Ancient Israel* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), Philip R. Davies' *Memories of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Biblical History—Ancient and Modern* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), and others—but aims to be more comprehensive.

The book excels in clarity, although there is some repetition of content between chapters. After an introduction that surveys the stages of modern critical scholarship from the nineteenth century to the present, each chapter thereafter gives a detailed review of scholarly methods used and the most recent perspectives for each major era in the Hebrew Bible's chronology, from the patriarchal-matriarchal period to the postexilic. The book's format includes some features that follow the American university textbook model: sidebars with explanations of terms and concepts, and discussion questions and suggestions for reading at the end of each chapter. These characteristics will be of varying interest or use to specialists; however, the volume overall is a fine reference for research and teaching. There are a moderate number of footnotes, a thirty-four-page bibliography, and a general index.

In chapter 1's survey of modern critical scholarship, the authors begin by sketching the lasting assumptions of historical criticism that came out of the work of Wellhausen and others in the nineteenth century. The most important of these was the proposition that the biblical text itself has a historical context, in that its authors shaped their understanding of Israel's past based on the concerns and circumstances of their own place in time. New methodologies from archaeology to the social sciences and literary theory, from the early twentieth century onward, have prompted even further reflection on how to use the Bible for reconstructing the past. The most recent critical juncture arrived in the form of the "maximalist-minimalist" controversies of the 1990s, in which the so-called "minimalists" radically challenged the view that the Bible could be used even selectively as a historical source. Moore and Kelle think the field has now moved beyond these controversies to a more fluid and somewhat less polarized situation, in which most scholars are very conscious of methodology and make a point to critically examine their use of textual sources.

Chapter 2, "The Patriarchs and Matriarchs," explores central issues in studying Genesis 12–50 that have become foundational for understanding other areas of the Bible's historical trajectory (pp. 43–76). Since John Van Seters and others uncovered the first-millennium biases in the Bible's account of Abraham and the ancestors, Genesis 12–50 is no longer thought to be a reliable source for the second millennium B.C.E. In particular, the parallels between the patriarchal traditions and social or other customs elsewhere in the ancient Near East (e.g., at Mari, Nuzi, and Ebla), alleged in the earlier twentieth century, have fallen apart upon closer inspection. Current approaches have prompted understandings of the Genesis family sagas as expressions of a "cultural memory," which reinforced the foundations of religion, culture, and society of the first millennium B.C.E.

Chapter 3, "Israel's Emergence" (pp. 77–144), deals with a biblical era both more controversial and more difficult for historians than the ancestral narratives. The chapter is divided in two parts, the first of which examines the disappearance of the Egyptian sojourn, exodus, and wilderness wanderings from critical histories, and the second of which looks at the changes and major trends in understanding the emergence of Israel in Canaan. The three classical theories since the early 1980s for Israel's origins in 1300–1100 B.C.E. (conquest, peaceful infiltration, and peasant revolt) have now led to a multiplicity of approaches. Archaeological evidence for a burgeoning population in the central highlands at this time and for sparse destruction in the major urban sites (contradicting the biblical tradition of mass devastation) serves as the most important source for information, but other approaches, from the social sciences especially, have been enlightening as well.

The next three chapters are devoted to the biblical period of the monarchy. Chapter 4 examines the changing evaluation of sources for the entire period (pp. 145–99), while chapter 5 discusses the United Monarchy of Israel (pp. 200–65) and chapter 6 the Iron Age kingdoms of Israel and Judah (pp. 266–333). Two major trends evident since the 1980s involve an appreciation of the literariness of historiographic writings such as the Deuteronomistic History, and a tendency to date these writings to later times than those they purport to describe.

With regard to the United Monarchy, the Bible's lengthy portrait of Kings Saul, David, and Solomon is subject to a great deal of skepticism nowadays, especially since extrabiblical evidence for this

period is extremely sparse. The Aramaic Tel Dan inscription is witness to the existence of a "House of David" in the ninth or eighth century B.C.E., but tells us nothing about the dynastic founder, David, himself. Additionally, according to Israel Finkelstein's proposal for a "low chronology" in the 1990s, sites or structures that used to be connected to the great King David or his son Solomon in the tenth century B.C.E. (such as the monumental gates at sites such as Hazor, Gezer, and Megiddo) may now be dated up to a century later. Furthermore, even scholars who would follow a "high chronology" have been compelled by the archaeological evidence to downgrade the extent of any tenth-century kingdom centered around Jerusalem. David continues to be a hot topic for scholars, however, as several new books attest; missing in this volume is any mention of John Van Seters's *The Biblical Saga of King David* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), which would have been available to the authors.

Differently from the United Monarchy, study of the Iron Age kingdoms of Israel and Judah involves an abundance of extrabiblical evidence, especially cuneiform texts from Mesopotamia. The common term for this period, the "Divided Monarchy," follows the Bible's portrait of sister kingdoms split from a united Israel after the death of Solomon, but based on archaeological evidence and Assyrian sources, many scholars now view Israel and Judah as "separate kingdoms" that emerged one after the other. Israel in the north with its capital at Samaria only became a stable entity in the ninth century with the kings Omri and Ahab, and Judah in the south with its capital at Jerusalem was not established until the late eighth or early seventh century B.C.E. Furthermore, scholars have taken to deemphasizing the reigns of biblical kings for whom we have no extrabiblical evidence and examining areas of history the Bible ignores, such as Samarian society after the Assyrian conquest in c. 720 B.C.E.

Chapters 7 and 8 discuss periods that have been greatly neglected by historians until only very recently: the "exilic" or Neo-Babylonian period (pp. 334–95) and the "postexilic" or Persian period (pp. 396–464). With regard to the exile, the Hebrew Bible describes vast destruction in Judah by the Babylonians, followed by mass deportations to Babylonia and a mass return early in the Persian period (539–333 B.C.E.). Several aspects of this picture are now undergoing substantial reassessment. For instance, the myth of the "empty" or uninhabited land during the neo-Babylonian period has been disputed by several scholars (such as Hans Barstad, Oded Lipschits, and others) based on a reevaluation of the archaeological evidence. They assert that Jerusalem was not totally uninhabited, that material culture in Judah shows no abrupt changes during the Neo-Babylonian period, and that it was only certain major urban sites that exhibit destruction (Jerusalem and its environs), which was not as severe or complete as previously estimated. Certain areas of Judah, especially around Mizpah in the region of Benjamin, seem to show settlement continuity or even increased growth. While some scholars (among them the archaeologist Ephraim Stern) have contested this interpretation of the archaeological record, it seems a major reconsideration of Judean life in the Neo-Babylonian period is underway.

The critical study of the postexilic or Persian period is even more in flux. Since the biblical sources for this era are especially sparse and chronologically unclear, even historians from before the 1970s who generally accepted the Bible's account had to critically investigate its substantial gaps. Now, approaches since the 1980s have concentrated on an elemental reappraisal of the evidence for the Persian province of Yehud/Judah, and some recent scholars (Diana Edelman, for instance) have proposed that biblical traditions may not correspond to a fifth-century but to a fourth-century milieu. This has great implications for what it means to claim, as most do, that the Hebrew Bible was largely produced in the Persian period. Ongoing investigations promise to be very fruitful, and include studies on the nature of Judean society in this period, the relationship of Judeans to Samarians, and continued reflection on what Persian-period writers of the Bible meant by identifying themselves with "Israel." The analysis of newly published documents from Judean communities in exile will also be important to the discussion of this period. See now L. E. Pearce and C. Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer* (Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 2014).

The authors conclude with a postscript ("Afterword: What is the Future of Israel's Past?"), in which they strike an optimistic tone for future scholarship of biblical history. They suggest that, after a period of confusion since the 1970s, it is now possible to again write comprehensive histories of ancient Israel, if the broader concerns arising from anthropological, sociological, literary, and other approaches are

integrated. The authors also sensibly urge a reordering of historical study that makes "biblical history" a subdiscipline of the "history of ancient Israel and Judah."

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Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey. By RICHARD S. HESS. Grand Rapids, Mich.: BAKER ACADEMIC, 2007. Pp. 423, illus. $34.99.

This book is a careful review of the archaeological and biblical evidence regarding ancient Israelite religions. The plural in the title stems from the recognition that recent findings reflect a more diverse situation than the early monotheism assumed by scholars of a few decades ago. On the other hand, the author often favors a more traditionally conservative interpretation, which stresses the historical reliability of the biblical text. Moreover, he seems to have in mind an audience that shares this view, although he is usually quite willing to explore many of the questions raised by the evidence.

The book is mainly organized around a biblical timeline that follows the sequence of the Torah through the Former Prophets. This approach assumes that each part retains primary evidence from the biblical period to which it relates. The work is divided into twelve chapters, the first three of which deal with introductory matters, such as definitions of "Israelite" and "religion," various approaches to the study of religion, and a review of past scholarship. Chapters 4 and 5 examine pre-Israelite religion in West Asia: Syria and Egypt in chapter 4 and Palestine and Jordan in chapter 5. Chapters 6 to 11 then survey Israelite religions throughout the major eras of the Hebrew Bible, starting with two long chapters on the traditions of the Pentateuch and ending with a short chapter on religions in the exilic and postexilic periods. The core of the book is found in chapters 8–10, in which biblical evidence is set beside material culture and epigraphic evidence for early Israel, the United Monarchy, and the Divided Monarchy. Chapter 12 is devoted to a brief summary of the author's conclusions. The book is well illustrated and indexed, with an extensive bibliography of about fifty-five pages.

Of special note in Hess's early chapters is an excursus on the Documentary Hypothesis of the Pentateuch in chapter 3, which illustrates his tendency to push back as far as possible in time the evidence for a Yahwistic cult. He concludes that, while the Hebrew of the Torah/Pentateuch leaves the impression that it was composed in the first half of the first millennium B.C.E., it "may preserve traditions of greater antiquity than commonly asserted" (p. 58). In chapter 6, on the narrative and legal strands of the Pentateuch, and chapter 7, on the priestly and cultic strands, the author asserts that this material is "foundational" and "largely undated or archaic" (p. 207). However, the author often places more confidence in a robust mid-second-millennium B.C.E. Yahwism than the evidence can bear. With regard to his later chapters, Hess uncritically accepts the Bible's portrait of a United Monarchy under Saul, David, and Solomon in the tenth century B.C.E. (something widely debated among other scholars because of the sparse extrabiblical evidence for it), and does not address the issues that arise from the tendency in recent scholarship to date much of the Hebrew Bible, including its historiographic portions, to the Persian period.

Hess's survey of non-Israelite religions is much appreciated, as is his detailed review of onomastics and inscriptions in ancient Israel and Judah. His own expertise in Bronze Age texts and names is manifest here, as elsewhere. In the chapters dealing with the emergence of Israel through to the end of the Divided Monarchy (chapters 8–10), the review of cultic sites, epigraphic evidence, and iconography is quite thorough. Hess surveys both the biblical and extrabiblical evidence for beliefs in multiple deities, and traces the evolution of Israelite beliefs from the variety that came out of earlier West Semitic ideas to a distinctive Yahweh-alone stance. He deals in sufficient detail with the significance of finds such as the Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscriptions and the Khirbet el-Qom blessing as indications that some Israelites worshiped female deities like Asherah. Nevertheless, although both henotheistic Yahwism and a diverse polytheism co-existed for some time until after the exile, Hess