



EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

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This volume presents the proceedings of an international exploratory workshop titled “Egypt’s Role in the Hebrew Bible,” held at the University of Lausanne on April 22–23, 2015.

The incentive for the workshop was the impression, shared by Thomas Römer and Shirly Ben-Dor Evian, that the general integration of Egyptological data within biblical research is not yet optimal.

First and foremost, it appeared that for a long time, when dealing with Egyptian backgrounds and allusions to Egyptian documents and practices in the Hebrew Bible, scholars often drew on Egyptian records dating to the second millennium BCE. This practice, although justifiable in the context of Ancient Near Eastern studies, is incompatible with current trends in biblical research, that consider most texts of the Hebrew Bible to have been composed during the first millennium BCE, and especially during the 7th and 3rd centuries BCE. Moreover, it seemed that strict methodologies for the integration of Egyptological and biblical studies have yet to be implemented and were essential for “breaking new ground” in the interdisciplinary field.

Therefore, a workshop that explores the Egypt-Bible interface within chronological and methodological constraints was deemed necessary.

Such a focus on first millennium BCE sources entailed that attention was diverted away from the time in which the biblical events were put by its authors (the Patriarchs, Moses, the conquest, etc.) towards the compilation time of these texts. This in turn, generated new lines of interrogations revolving around questions of transmission and reception rather than on the historical background of the events themselves. In other words, the process by which Egyptian traditions could find their way into the written tradition of ancient Israel and Judah became the focal point of the discussion.

Thomas Römer begins the discussion by outlying the special significance of Egypt in many documents of the Hebrew Bible and the various distinct roles it carries within them. Shirly Ben-Dor Evian follows with a short overview of scholarship regarding the interface between Egypt and the Bible, while emphasizing the importance of the archaeological evidence in issues of transmission and reception. Four scholars then present different case studies of transmission and reception of Egyptian traditions, through archaeological and extra-biblical records.

Ido Koch elaborates on the lingering effect of Egyptian traditions in the Levant as the long-term outcome of colonial encounters in Late Bronze Age Canaan. Stefan Münger shows how the image of the pharaoh persisted in local ideologies long after the abolishment of the Egyptian empire in the Levant. Jaeyoung Jeon analyses the changing attitudes towards Egypt in prophetic texts as a reflection of shifting political situations

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in the Levant. Finally, Bernd Schipper adopts a direct path of transmission reflecting on the role of the Egyptian diaspora in the compilation of the Joseph story while introducing new textual evidence from Egypt.

Read together, the articles in this volume present different methodologies that provide new tools for the continued integration of biblical research in its Ancient Near Eastern context.

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