

Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011).

*Part D: The Literature of the Babylonian Period (Sixth Century BCE)*

This chapter devotes itself to developing the idea that

The texts and writings created in this period had had to deal in no small way with the experience of the demise of the Northern Kingdom, and thus they began to develop conceptions of "Israel" that were not determined by statehood and political sovereignty but bore accents of promise ... election ... or covenant theology ... (p. 107).

So, along those lines, Schmid believes that

Most likely texts of lament were the first texts produced (p. 109).

Certainly he is correct. He then investigates, in turn, the Hezekiah-Isaiah narratives, of which he believes that

... some elements in the presentation betray the fact that these narratives apparently also rework experiences from the time after 597 BCE and project them back into the situation of the siege of Jerusalem under Hezekiah (p. 115).

He also thinks that Exodus 2- 2 Kings 25 was also assembled into its present form (for the most part) during this era. So too the Joseph narrative (which he calls a Novella) and the Patriarchal Narratives in Genesis.

He sees too the Jeremiah material finding its compositional roots in this time. Interestingly, Schmid examines the text of Jeremiah and finds in it materials which

... are aimed directly at the Jerusalem-Zion theology (p. 128)

found in texts like Psalm 48.

For Psalm 48, Zion is secure against all attacks... In Jeremiah 6 the horrors foreseen from the enemies fall on the inhabitants of Zion itself (p. 128).

Schmid thus perceives (obviously rightly) that Jeremiah will have none of the Zion Theology which was a staple of earlier times; nor will he support the monarchy, since he was

... a critic of the royal house of Judah (p. 129).

Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah, the Decalogue and 'The Deuteronomistic Deuteronomy' all also can trace their literary-historical roots to the period of the Babylonians. Of the latter Schmid writes

Deuteronomy was now reshaped into a constitutional project and "decalogically" restructured (p. 138).

As has been the case all along in our examination of Schmid's work, we find here a thoroughness and meticulousness which requires admiration. He may not persuade some but he will persuade most.

Next, the longest chapter of the volume (in terms of the actual treatment of the literary-historical question) – the history of the literature of the Persian period.

Jim West  
Quartz Hill School of Theology