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utgiven av Göran Eidevall

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holds that the former understanding fits best. Most of the diversity of early theologies can be explained by the experimental contextualization prompted by diverse circumstances, and the common conception of a “crisis” of Christian theology in the second century is unnecessary, Markschiefs argues. Amidst the many different Christian theologies developed in various circumstances, Markschiefs estimates that a shared theological center—Jesus of Nazareth as the crucified and resurrected Christ, certain ideals of a Christian life in a Christian community, and a basic stock of holy scriptures—is enough to speak of a common identity, even though this identity is a plural one.

With its terminological precision and detailed analysis of Greek, Latin and Syriac sources, Markschiefs’s monograph has already proven to be valuable in the on-going conversation of how best to conceptualize the theological developments in the early church. It will prove to be even more useful in this attractive English translation.

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TRYGGVE N. D. METTINGER

Reports from a Scholar’s Life: Select Papers on the Hebrew Bible

Edited by Andrew Knapp, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015, Hardcover,
xxv + 349 pp., \$59.50, ISBN: 978-1-57506-379-9

This book contains a selection of short works in English by Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, internationally renowned and highly influential Professor of Hebrew Bible at Lund University from 1978 to 2003. The works, including one monograph, twelve articles and essays, and three reviews, published 1970-2008, reflect the primary focuses of his work on the history of ancient Israelite religion and theology, royal ideology, and the book of Isaiah. A retrospective lecture delivered by Mettinger upon retiring is also published here for the first time.

Reports is divided into six parts. Part I addresses the central theme of Mettinger’s scholarship: “the Study of the *Gottesbild*” (ch. 2), that is, the development of Israelite images of God in their ancient Near Eastern milieu. In ch. 3, “The Elusive Essence,” Mettinger argues that the Canaanite heritage of Israelite religion is evident in the fact that Yahweh

displays traits of both El (royal) and Baal (martial) as known from Ugarit. In ch. 4, “Yhwh Sabaoth,” Mettinger uses ancient iconographic and textual evidence to show that this title emphasizes Yahweh’s role as the king of a divine council who sits, invisible, upon a cherub throne in the temple on Zion. Ch. 5, “The Name and the Glory,” proposes that, in response to the temple’s destruction in 587 B.C.E., divine immanence was reconceived in the theologies of Yahweh’s name (Heb. *shem*—in the Deuteronomistic History) and his glory (*kabod*—in P and Ezekiel). In ch. 6, “The Dying and Rising God,” Mettinger renews the arguments that this contested mytheme is attested for at least certain Near Eastern gods.

Part II concerns aniconism in Israel. In ch. 7, “The Veto on Images,” Mettinger argues that “the Israelite cult was aniconic from the beginning” (171): Bethel’s bull and Jerusalem’s cherubs were pedestals for the invisible god. In ch. 8, “A Conversation with my Critics,” Mettinger introduces a distinction now fundamental in the debate, namely, between *de facto* (non-prohibitive) aniconism and programmatic (prohibitive) aniconism. Mettinger relates the *de facto* aniconism of early Israel to the widespread West Semitic “material aniconism” of standing stones (*massebot*). The Decalogue’s distinctively Israelite programmatic aniconism arose during the exile.

Royal ideology is the subject of Part III. Ch. 9, “The Last Words of David” is a detailed philological analysis of 2 Sam 23:1–7. In ch. 10, “Cui bono?,” Mettinger proposes that the earliest function of 2 Sam 7—Yahweh’s dynastic promise to David—was as rhetoric legitimizing Solomon’s succession.

The book of Job is highlighted in Part IV. In ch. 11, “Intertextuality,” Mettinger shows that the heavily allusive nature of Job’s poetry aims at challenging basic tenets of Israelite faith. In ch. 12, “The Enigma of Job,” Mettinger analyses how the conflicting *Gottesbilder* present in the book function together to construct a theodicy.

Part V brings back into print Mettinger’s brief, but devastating 1983 monograph, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs* (ch. 13). Here Mettinger systematically assaults the arguments in favour of Duhm’s once widely-

accepted hypothesis concerning an originally independent “servant” corpus within Isa 40–55. Mettinger thereby undermines the foundation of much subsequent exegetical work. In ch. 14, “In Search of the Hidden Structure,” Mettinger links Chaokamp motifs in Isa 40–55 with Yahweh’s kingship.

Three book reviews constitute Part VI, two of which appear in English for the first time (chs. 15 & 16). Apart from the review in ch. 17, in which Mettinger responds to criticisms of his own views, the relevance of the reviews to the wider work is unclear.

The image of Mettinger gathered from reading these works is extremely positive. The roughly chronological arrangement within the parts shows Mettinger’s increasing scholarly maturity. He “accepts correction,” adjusting his opinions in light of critique, and nuances his claims (cf. the stances taken on Isa 49:5–6 in chs. 13 and 14). In this, Mettinger evinces the philosophy of Karl Popper, whom he cites frequently and according to whom science is a series of “conjectures and refutations” (13). Additionally, Mettinger’s writing is a pleasure to read. He states his questions clearly, argues methodically and perspicuously, and offers succinct summaries. Furthermore, Mettinger admirably distinguishes between sure conclusions, probable inferences, and speculation.

As an edition, *Reports* has much to commend it. The volume is well structured, each of Parts I–V presenting the central theses or approaches of one or more of Mettinger’s monographs. The book therefore makes available in a single volume the chief results of Mettinger’s research, and any repetition that is presents serves to reinforce these core ideas. *Reports* would function well, then, as a “Mettinger Primer,” as its editor Andrew Knapp points out (xv). Knapp’s preface provides a helpful overview of the book and of Mettinger’s scholarship. A bibliography of the author’s English works is included, as is an index of scriptural references.

The edition, however, has certain deficiencies. Most frustrating is the fact that, apart from in ch. 1, cross references to Mettinger’s own works contained in this collection are not highlighted. Only the initial publication information and original pagination (not preserved in these essays) are given, making quickly flipping between articles impossible. A

comprehensive bibliography of works cited would also have been convenient, and important images (e.g., of Phoenician cherub thrones) could have been gathered in one place instead of appearing numerous times.

For a volume such as this to be more than a monument to a scholar's legacy, the studies it reproduces must be valuable and relevant today. Two aspects of Mettinger's work are potential obstacles to an enduring appreciation of *Reports*. First, Mettinger regards the Hebrew Bible as a useful source for early Israelite history. This is a view rejected by many contemporary biblical scholars, not just the "Copenhagen school" (cf. 18). Uncharacteristically, in *Reports* Mettinger ignores the challenges both of the exegetical "minimalists" and of archaeologists like Israel Finkelstein who question the evidence for Judah's statehood before the 8th century BCE and for a Jerusalem temple-palace complex. This does not seem satisfactory for studies published within the last decade, like ch. 10. Secondly, while Mettinger embraces "intertextuality" as a tool for literary analysis, he does so within a framework which accepts notions of authorship and recoverable intention (see ch. 11). His dismissal of much of "the post-modern theorizing that has spread like a pandemic disease" in the humanities (15) is a barrier to scholars who prioritize just such approaches.

Despite these remarks, few of Mettinger's positions are wholly outside today's scholarly consensus. Indeed, many continue to shape contemporary discourse, most notably in the area of Israelite aniconism and in the study of Deutero-Isaiah. In fact, what might be regarded as the distillation of Mettinger's oeuvre, and the end result of his "unconscious quest for the distinctive features of Israelite faith" (9) is extremely current and bears repeating: Israel's difference was not present *ab initio* nor did it arise *ex nihilo*; rather it developed gradually, in response to historical experiences, out of materials present in its ancient Near Eastern setting. Overall, then, *Reports from a Scholar's Life* proves to be highly valuable and relevant. I am convinced that this book will ensure that the remarkable achievements of this great Swedish exegete will be appreciated for many years to come.

Cian Power, Uppsala University