
In both Deuteronomy and Wisdom literature “Folly” distorts the moral structures of the created order. Deuteronomy presents Israel’s national pride and covenant infidelity as folly; wisdom literature presents as folly the individual’s pride and ignorance of the right time and place (p. 174). Hebraic knowing is “to live in ethical conformity with God’s ordered reality, not to escape from it into subjective analysis” (p. 3). The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, just as to obey God’s commands is to be like God and to know God (p. 24). Wisdom and Torah are thus interdependent. O’Dowd explores the mythical and narrative foundations of ancient Hebrew epistemology, showing how both Torah and Wisdom are linked to God’s cosmic intentions for humanity. This carefully presented thesis is for teachers and mature students.


To understand something means to understand oneself (p. 186). Interpretation thus proves to be a clarification and enrichment of the meaning of life. Pokorný combines the linguistic approach of Ferdinand de Saussure (vocabulary, sentence, pragmatics) with the existential approach of Martin Heidegger. Language organizes experience. A text is communication expressed in language. Each text has its own pragmatics, that is, how it works or wants to intervene in the world and change it (p. 35). Pokorný has a long and insightful section on metaphor (pp. 37–65). The exposition is accompanied by illustrations from both testaments. Being “a textbook and at the same time a monograph” (p. xv), this work is recommended for mature students and scholars.


Konrad Schmid, professor of Old Testament Studies and Jewish History at the University of Zürich, qualifies his work as “not a new project but newly of interest” (p. 22). It combines aspects of Israelite history, history of Israelite religion, introduction to the Old Testament, and theology of the Old Testament. The texts are discussed within historical epochs (not according to canonical sequence) and according to types of literature, in their linkages (horizontal and vertical), and in their different stages of growth. The Decalogue, for example, is treated (pp. 137–38) under “The Literature of the Babylonian Period.” The perspective is that of the Old Testament as essentially a literary document of the Persian and Hellenistic period (pp. 24, 26), with P as the basis for the Pentateuch, not only in the techniques of redaction but also conceptually (p. 148). This work for scholars, ministers, and students is state of the art. Hopefully, the second edition bibliography will balance the German works with more works/translations in English.