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**"Review of *A Star is Rising: The Historical Development of the Old Testament Royal Ideology and the Rise of the Jewish Messianic Expectations*"**

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Kabasele's major theses are that the literary unity of the entire Book of Baruch resides especially in its dependence on Deuteronomy 28–33 and Jeremiah 27–33, that the book was conceived as a continuation of the Book of Jeremiah (as the Greek manuscript tradition suggests), and that it was composed in Hebrew at Jerusalem in the middle of the second century B.C. in connection with the high priesthood of Alcimus (161–159 B.C.).

After delineating the state of the question regarding Baruch, K. proposes to study the work both synchronically (through rhetorical and structural analysis) and diachronically (through source and redaction criticism, and through historical analysis). For each of the four parts he provides a new annotated translation, a literary analysis (with particular attention to genre and structure), an examination of biblical sources and parallels, and a discussion of the original language. Also included are a synthesis and historical hypothesis, a general conclusion, two appendixes (synopses of Greek texts), and a thirty-seven-page bibliography.

This is an excellent study of a neglected work. It deserves a place alongside Odil Hannes Steck's two books *Das apokryphische Baruchbuch* and *Das Buch Baruch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993 and 1998) as newly available research tools on Baruch. K. entitles the four main parts in a way that expresses well his understanding of their genres and functions: the historical preface, the collective supplication, the sapiential instruction, and the prophetic exhortation. In his literary analyses he detects many concentric outlines and uses this structural principle to unfold the logic of various passages. His discussions of the biblical parallels go beyond the obvious texts and serve to highlight the work's anthological style and its links to Deuteronomy and Jeremiah. For each part he assembles and sifts critically the data concerning the original language, concluding, with varying degrees of confidence, that Hebrew was the original language of the whole book.

Kabasele admits that many questions about the Book of Baruch remain. One can raise theoretical objections about his concept of "literary unity" (What does it mean?) and about the objectivity of the structural analyses (Do they reflect the ancient author's intention, or are they merely helps for the modern reader?). Also, more attention might have been given to the thematic or theological unity of the book, especially to the complex of sin, exile, repentance, and return. And the circle of Alcimus at Jerusalem remains a shadowy entity. Nevertheless, K.'s monograph fully deserves the epithet "magisterial."

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ANTTI LAATO, *A Star Is Rising: The Historical Development of the Old Testament Royal Ideology and the Rise of the Jewish Messianic Expectations* (USF International Studies in Formative Christianity and Judaism 5; Atlanta: Scholars, 1997). Pp. x + 456. \$79.95.

Professor Laato states that "the aim of this study is to examine how certain historical circumstances have provided the impulse for the birth and the development of the Old Testament royal ideology and how this ideology generated different messianic expectations in Judaism(s) of late antiquity" (p. 1). After a chapter on the "coming

ideal king” in Mesopotamian and Egyptian texts and a chapter on Nathan’s dynastic oracle, L. structures his study chronologically from premonarchic Israel to the time of the NT and tannaitic Judaism. Each chapter begins with an overview of a particular period in the history of Israel and Judah which sets the stage for the heart of L.’s study: a redaction-critical discussion of selected royal-messianic texts.

Laato devotes more attention to reconstructing the history of Israel than to unfolding the character and function of Israelite royal ideology. He states that “the Old Testament does not present us with a single, coherent royal ideology” (p. 4); however, he subsequently alludes to such an OT royal ideology (pp. 10, 13, 33). He provides a comprehensive description of Judaeen royal ideology for the first time about halfway through the book, in a section entitled “Decrypting Josianic Royal Ideology behind Isaiah 40–55.” The absence of an initial, general description of the character of Judaeen royal ideology is one reason why the nature of this ideology remains unclear as L. goes about the complex task of reconstructing each historical period from limited biblical and extrabiblical sources that are often difficult to date. L.’s exegeses of selected texts are most often designed to yield data for historical reconstruction rather than to elucidate distinctive features of royal ideology.

At the outset of his study L. singles out the motifs of “the coming ideal king” and “the eternal dynasty of David” as recurring elements of the Judaeen royal tradition, elements that encompass the hope for both dynastic and messianic rule in Israel. On the basis of texts of similar genre from Mesopotamia and Egypt, L. makes the case that these motifs or elements of an OT royal ideology were well known in the monarchies of the ancient Near East by the time of David and Solomon. L. claims (1) that the promise of an eternal dynasty to David in 2 Samuel 7 dates from the tenth century B.C.E., and (2) that the eighth-century prophets could have envisioned an ideal Davidic king such as the one found in Isaiah 11. Throughout his study L. argues not only for the early influence of Davidic dynastic-messianic hope but also for its pervasiveness and resilience in Judaeen society. For example, he claims that the Hasmoneans’ seizing the title of “king” drew attention to an already existing, self-evident hope for a Davidic messiah and did not give birth for the first time to such a hope for the Jewish people of Hasmonean times. L. also argues that Ezra has messianic elements in his eschatological outlook, which runs counter to the usual assessment that hopes linked with the house of David are absent from texts about Ezra or have been suppressed in them.

At the conclusion of his section on Ezekiel L. summarizes four points on the distinctiveness of the role of the *nāšî’* in Ezekiel 40–48 (pp. 172–73). This summary helps to clarify how these texts factor in Judah’s messianic expectations. If summaries like this were a more regular feature within each chapter, they could serve as a vehicle for communicating more clearly the development of the royal ideology. Too often L.’s exegetical conclusions remain embedded in the sections analyzing a particular text until, in the discussion of a later text, he makes reference to such conclusions. This tendency to bypass summaries is also evident in the conclusion to the whole book: instead of summarizing the main findings of the study in this conclusion L. digresses on the distinction between his scientific interpretation of texts and one that sermonizes on the texts.

Laato weaves together a picture of the OT and Jewish background important for the proper interpretation of NT messianic texts. For example, he claims that Zechariah 9–14 is the locus for the Christian idea of the suffering Messiah, and that these prophetic texts may have shaped Jesus' self-understanding and vision about his mission. L. draws upon his earlier, detailed analysis of Zechariah 9–14 in which he shows how the criticism of the house of David led to the expectation of an eschatological messianic figure. He links such a messianic expectation with the trauma over Josiah's death expressed in the tradition and with the restrictions on the exercise of royal power by the *nāšī'* in Ezekiel 40–48, so as to provide a broader picture of possible influences on the development of postexilic messianic thought.

Laato's carefully researched historical reconstruction of more than 1,000 years of royal-messianic thought in Israel provides important new understandings of the ways in which royal ideology influenced the Israelite, Jewish, and Christian peoples of that time. L.'s voice will be heard for some time in the discussions of texts examined in this study.

Although this important book is written in comprehensible English style, it is hampered by numerous errors in English grammar, diction, and spelling. It is enhanced by an extensive bibliography and by indexes of passages, biblical and extrabiblical, and of authors.

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ERIC M. MEYERS (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*. Prepared under the auspices of the American Schools of Oriental Research. Volumes 1–5 (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). Pp. xviii + 492, vi + 488, vi + 489, vi + 536, vi + 553. \$575.

*The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East (OEANE)* is a valuable reference work. As one would expect, it provides expert summaries of the excavations of specific archaeological sites in the ancient Near East. But it also contains survey articles on the lands and peoples of the ancient Near East and on writing, languages, and texts; typological articles on the material culture, including artifacts, technologies, and trade; theoretical articles on archaeological method; and historical articles on the practice of archaeology in the Near East, including biographies of noteworthy archaeologists of previous generations. The contributors of the articles were well chosen; the individual contributor is often the principal excavator of the archaeological site or a scholar engaged in primary research on a given topic. In keeping with the encyclopedic format, individual entries contain an appropriate amount of useful information, but the reader is not drowned in a sea of scholarly detail.

The multivolume *OEANE* rightly assumes a place on the reference shelf, alongside two other recent multivolume encyclopedias in English on archaeology in the ancient Near East, namely, *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land (NEAEHL)* (4 vols.; ed. Ephraim Stern; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration