in tone is just that—a change in *tone*. The militant ideology driving the work of the "Welsh atheist" (Thomas L. Thompson's playful label; "Critical Notes: A Neo-Albrightian School in History and Biblical Scholarship?" *JBL* 114 [1995] 696) remains firmly, resolutely, and defiantly intact. Muted may be the *ad hominem* attacks and blistering zingers Kenneth Kitchen once attributed to the "bizarre frolics" of "late-period minimalism" (*On the Reliability of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003] 485). Yet this *Handbuch* remains firmly stuck on the same old prolegomena questions: What is history? What is historiography? What is Israel? What role ought archaeology to play in reconstructing history? What role can Tanak legitimately play in reconstructing a history of "ancient Israel" (whatever *that* is)?

Of course, these are important questions, absolutely essential to the performance of competent historiographical work (see, e.g., John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983]). Yet the answers proposed here, as John Hayes once observed, seek little more than to "distil the biblical traditions, to siphon off the supernatural, the miraculous, and the unbelievable, and to leave behind the pure essence of a reasonable faith" ("The History of the Study of Israelite and Judean History," in *Israel's Past in Present Research: Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography* [ed. V. Philip Long; Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 7; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999] 21). Where Rolf Rendtorff finds it difficult to "understand the *raison d'être* of a history of Israel that is not carried out in close contact with the Hebrew Bible" ("The Paradigm is Changing: Hopes—and Fears," in *Israel's Past in Present Research*, 63), the Welsh atheist boldly proclaims that the Bible "can no longer be relied upon as a secure framework for any kind of history" (p. 12). Where Ziony Zevit observes that "some scholars have successfully undermined confidence in the validity of most historical interpretations as well as the reliability of historians even to determine what constitutes a datum or an event" ("Three Debates about Bible and Archaeology," *Bib* 83 [2002] 1), the Welsh atheist insists that "no ancient historiographer has adequate knowledge and can guarantee to be right about the past" (p. 28). Where Gerhard von Rad sees Israel's understanding of history as "consisting only of Yahweh's self-revelation by word and action," noting that "on this point conflict with the modern view is sooner or later inevitable, for the latter finds it perfectly possible to construct a picture of history without God" (*Old Testament Theology* [2 vols.; New York: Harper, 1965] 2:418), the Welsh atheist insists that "history" seeks only "to understand humanity, and not the ways of gods" (p. 25).

So there's nothing new here. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's "broad and ugly ditch" is (a) still just as "broad" (*breite*), and (b) still just as "ugly" (*garstige*) as it was in when Lessing first coined the metaphor in 1777 (*Über den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft*, reprinted in *Lessings Werke* [ed. G. Witkowski; Leipzig, 1911] 7:84).

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JASON M. H. GAINES, *The Poetic Priestly Source* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015). Pp. xix + 546. $49.

From the outset of Jason M. H. Gaines's imposing volume, it is plain that a firm foundation of thorough research and painstaking methodological experimentation underlies the

final product. G. evidently has devoted substantial legwork to the task of developing a quantitative method for isolating and evaluating features of biblical literature that are understood by consensus to be constitutive, or at least representative, of biblical poetry. Moreover, he pushes beyond the theoretical purview of the method itself, by applying it toward a systematic study of the entire Priestly source (excluding the non-narrative legal material in Leviticus and Numbers, such as the Holiness Code in Leviticus 17–26). In so doing, he convincingly demonstrates that P evinces a profound yet heretofore woefully underappreciated poetic character, and he proposes that a poetic base document, "Poetic-P," served as a continuous core that was supplemented at various stages by prosaic insertions, which he subsumes under the single label "Prosaic-P." Thus, G. articulates a new direction from which to approach the matter of the stratification of P, namely, along stylistic lines.

The first chapter lays out G.'s process for tallying and weighing poetic features in the biblical text in accordance with nine overarching categories, including parallelism of various kinds, chiasmus, *inclusio*, *Leitwörter*, archaisms, and so on, which he subdivides further into dozens of subcategories (the entire schematic appears in outline form in appendix 1). Chapter 2 follows with an exploration of how to utilize this process to differentiate between poetic and prosaic texts, based not only on the stark quantitative distinction between the two realms—a poetic line averages sixteen of G.'s poetic features, while a prosaic sentence averages only four—but also on the "strength" and "dominance" of the features identified, and the surrounding context of the line in question. In chaps. 3 and 4, the author proceeds to apply his method to two Priestly pericopes, one short (Gen 17:1-14) and one more extensive (Genesis 6–9). These texts constitute a manageable sample set for the detailed enumeration of the specific devices identified and counted therein, the exploration of their literary force, and the consideration of why and how supplemental prosaic materials were incorporated into the poetic base stratum.

In principle, one might reasonably take issue with the notion of a systematic quantification of the hallmarks of poetic expression, which, to say nothing of the subjectivity of its reception, surely achieves literary potency by defying as well as adopting convention. The author has addressed this, however, by soliciting from colleagues a series of sample texts whose respective identifications as either poetry or prose are well established. Having applied his approach to these texts, G. shows that the statistics speak to its effectiveness: his identification of prosaic texts accords with the consensus 95 percent of the time, and he achieves 91 percent agreement in the poetic materials. To be sure, one might interpret these data as reflective of the sound assessment of prior scholarship, even without the advantage of the method G. has developed; but the potential for evaluating texts with increased rigor pays dividends within this very study, since the author is able thereby to demonstrate the poetic character of P to a degree considerably beyond what prior scholarship has perceived.

A puzzling aspect of G.'s presentation is his occasional tendency to pronounce final verdict on the sundry perspectives that he draws together in his study. James L. Kugel, in particular, suffers for his proposal, articulated in his seminal 1981 volume *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press) in the context of his discussion of parallelism, that prose and poetry exist in the Bible not as polar opposites but rather on a continuum. Overreading Kugel's hypothesis, G. criticizes it on the grounds that "parallelism is not a guaranteed indicator of poetry, but it does not follow that poetry therefore does not exist" (p. 91; Kugel refutes this very point as a misrepresentation of his work, in his 1987 review article "A Feeling of *Déjà Lu*," *JR* 67 [1987] 66-79, here

72). Despite his criticism, however, G. follows Kugel in eschewing the notion of a hard line between "prose" and "poetry" and suggests a similar, albeit ostensibly more moderate, "prosaic–poetic" continuum. Such a move indeed allows for a range of fluid descriptors such as "poetic prose" or the like; but it is difficult to escape the impression that G. has simply replaced one binary with another. This is evident not only in the simple terminological substitution but also in his presentation of biblical texts throughout the volume: all "poetic" material is laid out on the page as *poetry*, with short lines, alternating indentation, and so on; and all "prosaic" material is presented as continuous *prose*. Thus, G. ultimately perpetuates a diametric opposition that he goes to great lengths to escape, while simultaneously condemning yet closely paralleling Kugel's continuum model. One is left wondering whether his insistence on this point, to which he returns repeatedly throughout the book, really constitutes an essential pillar of the larger and far more significant arguments he seeks to make.

In the remaining three chapters, G. undertakes an application of his method to the entire narrative swath of P (excluding non-narrative legal material). Despite its slightly disruptive placement, the broad and balanced review of secondary literature in chap. 5 effectively marks this transition. Chapter 6 stands as the crowning achievement of G.'s study, with the running text of P separated into his "Poetic-P" and "Prosaic-P" layers and accompanied by terse but abundant comments on the many points of interest encountered along the way, as well as on trends across P that have caught the author's eye. Following a reiteration of the book's central argument regarding a poetic stratum underlying P, in chap. 7 G. offers remarks on how this treatment intersects with prior scholarship, and he looks forward to new discursive directions based on the present method and findings.

Rooted as it is in source criticism, at times G.'s work manifests some of the pitfalls that can occasionally beset this kind of analysis. Most prominent is the tendency to assume outright that the appearance of prose in a poetic context necessarily constitutes an "intrusion." In his introduction, G. briefly steps outside of P and offers Amos 3:7, a prosaic statement that concludes a manifestly poetic series of rhetorical questions, as a representative example of this phenomenon. Drawing on Shalom M. Paul's statement, in his well-known 1991 Amos commentary (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress), that this verse "is a prose, didactic, declarative, dogmatic assertion" (p. 112), G. declares it to be "a prosaic addition into a preexisting poetic context" (p. 15).G.'s perspective accords with a good many other voices in the discourse; but it hardly constitutes the only possible ramification of the observation made by Paul, who goes on to say that "it does not inevitably and absolutely follow that the prophet could not have expressed himself in this manner" (p. 113). Given G.'s usually attentive eye, it is indeed strange that the rhetorical force of the abrupt declaration in v. 7 seems to have escaped him.

Turning to the Priestly source, we likewise may consider the author's treatment of Exod 34:29-35, in which vv. 29, 30, and 35 each state that Moses' face is shining. G. indicates at several points (pp. 10-11, 307, 414-15, 436 n. 332) that the first two instances are to be seen as proleptic prosaic insertions that detract from the literary force of the poetic foundation to which the third belongs. In his view, such anticipation "is unnecessary and lowers the reader's surprise about Moses's appearance (narrated in Poetic-P in v. 35)" (p. 415). Even if one were inclined to reject the possibility of subtle variations in perspective or circumstance across these three verses, however, one still must reckon with the wide-

spread scholarly recognition of prolepsis as an established literary device in biblical narra-
tive, a reality that undermines the author's assertion of stylistic degradation.

These instances, which represent a pervasive aspect of G.'s approach, constitute more
than mere quibbling over his handling of a few specific verses; on the contrary, they raise
legitimate questions about how we are to interpret his findings. It would be an unfortunate
error, however, to suppose that such concerns detract significantly from the scope and sig-
nificance of G.'s work. The author's isolation of a largely continuous Poetic-P is a monu-
mental achievement. His careful consideration of the intersection between his own work
and prior scholarship, together with some informed and fairly moderate speculation on
matters such as the contexts that gave rise to the various Prosaic-P insertions, demonstrates
his meticulous digestion and synthesis of an enormous array of secondary literature. Above
all, the author is cognizant of the potential for the preliminary groundwork he presents in
this volume to transform as it is scrutinized and refined in the crucible of scholarly discourse.
Having initiated this process, G. promises to emerge as an important new voice whose work
will reverberate in both stylistic and source-critical spheres, and across biblical studies in
general.

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ALISON RUTH GRAY, *Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures: A Reading through Metaphor*
(BIS 127; Leiden: Brill, 2014). Pp. xvi + 247. €103/$133.

In this revised version of her doctoral thesis (University of Cambridge, 2012), Gray
presents an in-depth study of the figurative language and "word-pictures" of Psalm 18, a
work that underscores the continuing value and contribution of metaphor interpretation in
the Hebrew Bible. The book's "complementary approach" incorporates lexical, semantic,
pragmatic, and conceptual theories to investigate the content, function, and interplay of
metaphors in the psalm.

Gray rightly acknowledges the importance of a close consideration of metaphor in a
study of the poetry of the psalms and argues for a consideration of how such metaphors and
images create "scenes in the mind of the reader" (p. 1), an endeavor not often undertaken
in much depth. Focus on one specific psalm allows for consideration of metaphors in the
context of a literary unit and for the interweaving or overlapping of words and pictures in
the psalm; G. suggests that this approach will provide insight into the structure, purpose,
and theology of the psalm. In chap. 2, G. provides a helpful survey of important aspects of
metaphor studies and an overview of theories and approaches to metaphor. She then outlines
her own "complementary" approach and intent to engage the "performative function" of
metaphor and incorporate literary, geographical, archaeological, and iconographic data to
elucidate the conceptual world behind the text.

Chapter 3 includes a concise review of specific issues such as authorship, dating, form,
unity, *Sitz im Leben, Sitze im Buch,* and their impact on interpretation of specific metaphors
in the psalm. G. utilizes Benjamin Harshav's ideas of "relegating principles" and "frames
of reference" to investigate frames of Psalm 18 in book I of the Psalter and the place of the