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interior of the gate, the recesses that accommodated the leafs of the gate, and the ceiling, the southern half of the interior, the south face, and the south lintel. With each section there is a small schematic drawing of the whole gate with the area under discussion indicated, in order to make the relationship of text to architectural context clear. Each section includes a bibliographical reference and notation of the IFAO photography, a brief description of the scene, a translation of the text, and a conclusion with a section of copious notes. It should be noted that the translation does not include a complete transliteration, probably deemed unnecessary for elements so standard that they do not need to be repeated; transliterations are interspersed only where they help to clarify the translations.

In part three the author discusses the theological importance of the monuments, the logic of the programmatic representations of the texts, and ultimately the basis for the synthesis of Amon-re and Montu-re as Amon-re-montu. The term used as part of the elucidation of this concept is “parallel convergences.”

This admirable documentation of an important Theban monument is completed with six indices: divine and royal names, epithets; geographic and ethnic terms; a vocabulary of useful terms for “the study of Theban beliefs and myths”; offerings; and men, animals, and objects represented. There is also a lengthy section of addenda, not unusual for a publication such as this that represents considerable time in its production.

WILLIAM H. PECK  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

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*Holy Lives, Holy Deaths: A Close Hearing of Early Jewish Storytellers.* Studies in Biblical Literature, vol. 1. By ANTOINETTE CLARKE WIRE. Atlanta: SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE, 2002. Pp. x + 420. \$49.95 (paper).

*The Pluralistic Halakha: Legal Innovations in the Late Second Commonwealth and Rabbinic Periods.* Studia Judaica: Forschungen zur Wissenschaft des Judentums, vol. 22. By PAUL HEGER. Berlin: WALTER DE GRUYTER, 2003. Pp. ix + 430. €110.28.

The legal formula and the semi (pseudo)-historical narrative represent two of the most basic and widespread forms of ancient Israelite, and subsequent Jewish, literary expression (joined by the more poetic but less popular vehicles of prophecy and religious hymnography, namely the psalms and later the *piyyut*). These forms embody contrasting tendencies of human articulation. Legal writing tends to be more rigid and minimalist in style and generally strives to configure (in rather dry terms) people’s behavior, demarcating the boundaries between permitted or required and prohibited or undesired actions. In comparison to day-to-day, formal legal proceedings, narratives include a greater degree of feeling and movement; they are more colorful and address a wider spectrum of experience, such as thought and emotion. The authors of tales, anecdotes, and even comprehensive sagas (who, in the ancient world, delivered most of their stories orally) might have wished to affect the lives of their audiences, but they did so in a more subtle way, hiding the moral between the lines of the account, or putting it in the mouth of one of the characters.

Despite, and perhaps because of, their dissimilarity, both of these genres attracted early Israelite authors. The books of the Pentateuch offer a stark example of how the combination of law (or in a broader sense, explicit and practical directives) and story can result in a powerful document with the capacity to carve identity and shape a way of life. Since then, especially in the days of the Second Jewish Temple (516 B.C.E.–70 C.E.) and the generations thereafter, many have followed this winning recipe and reproduced it in numerous variations. The stories about Jesus in the Gospels, for example, replicate the Pentateuchal amalgamation of sequential accounts and instruction (*pace* those who have wrongly seen them as anti-legalistic).

The rabbis—a small, elitist group of Jewish scholars who were active in Palestine and Persia during the first few centuries of the Common Era, generating numerous texts collectively known today

as rabbinic literature—mastered these two vocations as well; they were great legal scholars and at the same time talented storytellers. But the era of the rabbis also marks the separation between judicial material and narratives, with the coinage of two distinct categories: *halakha*, commonly translated as Jewish law, and *haggada*, usually seen as denoting all the non-legal material in rabbinic literature, including, although not restricted to, stories. Later, partly due to the influence of the rabbinic approach, but even more to the modern, specialization-driven academic environment, the biblical twins—law and story—dichotomized, for better or worse, into two discrete fields of study.

The two books reviewed here operate within this segregated intellectual environment. (Predictably, the authors show no sign of familiarity with each other's work.) In *Holy Lives, Holy Deaths*, Antoinette Clark Wire promotes stories to a defining category of human experience. She opens her study with a statement that sees "Human being(s) as storytelling being(s)" and proclaims "Without the story we do not have human identity or human society" (p. 1). Her introduction highlights the role of the storyteller and his or her audience in the formation of the final product and locates the methodological foundations of the study, mainly within the various disciplines of anthropology and folklore. In the rest of the book, the author arranges her material as an anthology of ancient Jewish stories about the following themes: birth prophecies (pp. 27–94), wondrous provisions (pp. 103–67), prophetic signs of deliverance and destruction (pp. 181–266), and finally stories about martyrdom (pp. 279–373). Clarke Wire collects segments from Second Temple, New Testament, and rabbinic corpora, and provides English translations of the passages, short commentaries, as well as brief chapters summarizing her findings, and a final discussion that reiterates and further develops her conclusions (pp. 381–96). The book also offers three indexes (texts, modern authors, and subjects) but no systematic bibliography.

A short glance at the topics around which Clarke Wire weaves her material reveals her debt to the organization of the New Testament. Although she defines her goals within the framework of literary studies (p. 18), and endeavors in particular to elucidate the role of storytellers who circulated and transmitted the material before its written phase, I think the main contribution of this volume lies in the literary parallels it provides to students of the canonical Gospels. Topical compilations of ancient Jewish stories are quite popular and usually much more exhaustive; the most noteworthy in English, which has achieved almost canonical stature, is the seven-volume *Legends of the Jews* by Louis Ginzberg, which appeared in the early twentieth century. Clarke Wire refers to Ginzberg's opus magnum only once. She makes no mention whatever of other major and more recent contributions to the research of ancient Jewish stories, such as the various studies by Jeffrey Rubenstein (e.g., *Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition, and Culture* [1999]), and seems to be totally ignorant of any research in this area beyond that written in English language and some German studies. This deficiency, which she shares with (too) many North American scholars, is quite lamentable, especially in relation to ancient Jewish stories that have inspired many important studies in modern Hebrew. (Notable among these is the copious work of Yonah Fraenkel; would a scholar of nineteenth-century Russian literature, for example, allow herself to neglect current Russian studies on the topic?)

Paul Heger in *The Pluralistic Halakha* displays the same mindset as Clarke Wire, although applying it to the "opposite" realm—to the judicial literature of the rabbis. Mirroring Clarke Wire's fascination with stories, Heger conjectures that "The significance of the halakha in the creation of the Jewish people . . . cannot be underestimated" (p. 2). Unlike the anthological organization of Clarke Wire's work, Heger shapes his book as a phenomenological-historical study. His goal "is to present an objective and critical investigation of the rabbinic halakha and the underlying philosophy and beliefs of the sages" (p. 4). Identifying the major turning point in Jewish law as the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., his central thesis, which crisscrosses the various chapters of the book, is that "The most outstanding difference between pre- and post-70 periods is the pluralism of the halakhic environment, with respect to both doctrine and practice, which characterized the pre-70 period, as opposed to the quest for a fixed halakha in the post-70 period" (p. 2). The introduction lays out the various positions that the book aspires to substantiate, and its methodological section sets out to refute what the author calls the "traditional" background that has misled modern scholars of talmudic law. ("Traditional" is the "clean" term used in the modern field of rabbinics to denigrate other works as tainted by Jewish orthodox or semi-orthodox biases.) The subsequent three chapters engage in terminological and case studies regarding two central themes of rabbinic legal discourse: the tension between tradition

and interpretation (pp. 43–93), and the procedures that led to decision-making (pp. 94–241). The fourth chapter deals with the core of the author's thesis regarding the development of Jewish law before and after the destruction (pp. 242–334). After the conclusion (pp. 335–54), Heger adds an appendix about the two ancient rabbinic "houses," a bibliography, and two indexes.

Time and again Heger labels his work as "critical" (p. 4: "My aim is to present an objective and critical, . . ."; p. 6: ". . . we examine the text critically"; p. 7: ". . . analyze them critically . . ." et passim) as if this were a magic formula that could automatically transform a work from "traditional" to "scholarly." Ironically, this book suffers from the same shortcomings as the "traditional" scholarship the author wishes to rectify. Heger views the entire Jewish experience of the post-Second-Temple era through the lens of rabbinic literature. He thinks that these ancient scholars were the major forces in the Jewish world, affecting it and molding it to their vision. He sees the rabbinic literary production during those centuries (particularly the texts known as the *Mishnah*, *Tosefta*, and the two *Talmuds*) as they came to be viewed hundreds of years later, especially in early Islamic Persia and then in medieval Europe, namely as great legal codices of Jewish life. Consequently, he portrays the sages (another name for the rabbis) as a sort of legislative body handing down verdicts and engaged in decision-making. In doing so, Heger ignores one of the basic requirements of modern ("critical") scholarship—to study a literary composition in its own context. Attuned to the Jewish landscape of the first few centuries of the Common Era, he would have noticed that the people he calls rabbis were practically non-existent in that period, and definitely were not a group with any self-awareness or cohesiveness. Such a landscape requires a completely different reading of the early rabbinic material than the one Heger offers us.

YARON Z. ELIAV  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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*The Transformation of an Ancient Egyptian Narrative: P. Sallier III and the Battle of Kadesh.* By ANTHONY J. SPALINGER. Göttinger Orientforschungen. IV. Reihe, Ägypten, vol. 40. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2002. Pp. xiii + 389. €98 (paper).

Going beyond previous studies of the transmission of the ancient accounts of Ramesses II's encounter with the Hittites at Kadesh in his fifth regnal year, Spalinger has produced an important scholarly monograph on the reasons why pSallier III [BM EA 10181](+ pRaifé)—a version of the "Poem"—looks and reads the way it does. Spalinger's work blends meticulous attention to detail and careful analysis with occasional *obiter dicta*. Although he must inevitably deal (and sometimes disagree) with the views of previous scholars, the book is not primarily polemical. The amount of work and thought, and the command of both the modern literature and Egyptian texts, are impressive. Only a brief outline of the book is possible here.

Chapter one presents a line-by-line study of the principal differences between pSallier III and the other versions collected by Kitchen (*RI* II, 2–101), based also on recent photographs compared with Netherclift's 1841 transcription for passages no longer preserved. Spalinger also analyzes some significant paleographical features of the papyrus. He offers (pp. 99ff.) three main conclusions on the sources of the divergences from the monumental copies: (1) idiosyncratic writings of the copyist and his difficulties in understanding the hieratic of his exemplar; (2) alterations of grammar and syntax that reflect "more contemporary language"; and (3) the errors that may well have been in the text Pentaweret set himself to copy.

In chapter two, Spalinger persuasively argues that the year 9 date of the colophon of pSallier III is the date of the original composition (not necessarily of the copy Pentaweret worked with). He goes on to argue that Pentaweret's position was within the mid-level civil administration, probably the fiscal bureaucracy. That Pentaweret chose to copy a text associated with the Delta Residence in which the king figures most prominently ("nationalistic-propagandistic") suggests that the copyist was employed somewhere in northern Egypt. Spalinger regards Pentaweret as a reasonably competent scribe, trained in bureaucratic texts, but interested (if less competent) in literary narrative.