Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel

3
Volume 7
2018

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Social Scientific Study of Involuntary Migration

Mohr Siebeck

Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel

Herausgegeben von Gary N. Knoppers (Notre Dame IN), Oded Lipschits (Tel Aviv), Carol A. Newsom (Atlanta GA) und Konrad Schmid (Zürich)
Redaktion: Phillip Michael Lasater (Zürich)

Redaktionsadresse
Professor Dr. Konrad Schmid
Theologische Fakultät der Universität Zürich
Kirchgasse 9
CH-8001 Zürich
Switzerland
E-mail: hebai@theol.uzh.ch

Online-Volltext
Im Abonnement für Institutionen und Privatpersonen ist der freie Zugang zum Online-Volltext enthalten. Institutionen mit mehr als 20.000 Nutzern bitten wir um Einholung eines Preisangebots direkt beim Verlag. Kontakt: brixner@mohrsiebeck.com. Um den Online-Zugang für Institutionen/Bibliotheken einzurichten, gehen Sie bitte zur Seite: www.ingentaconnect.com/register/institutional. Um den Online-Zugang für Privatpersonen einzurichten, gehen Sie bitte zur Seite: www.ingenta connect.com/register/personal

Verlag: Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co. KG, Postfach 2040, 72010 Tübingen
Vertrieb erfolgt über den Buchhandel.

Satz: Martin Fischer, Tübingen.
Druck: Gulde-Druck, Tübingen.

ISSN 2192-2276 (Gedruckte Ausgabe)
ISSN 2192-2284 (Online-Ausgabe)

Editorial Introduction

C. L. Crouch and C. A. Strine

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Social Scientific Study of Involuntary Migration

The books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel have long invited scholars to explore their likenesses – from their historical setting in the final days before Jerusalem's destruction to their mutual concern with the deportation of Jerusalem's elite to Babylonia, their shared theological vocabulary, and their shared metaphors. And yet, these two books diverge sharply in their tone, in their advice for how to live in Babylonia, and their vision for the future of YHWH's people.

The papers collected in this volume arise from a conference designed to bring scholars working on these two books into productive conversation about the books' areas of convergence and divergence.[1] More particularly, it sought to encourage the examination of these concerns in light of these books' mutual origins in the turmoil caused by the Babylonian invasion of the land of Judah and the various forms of involuntary migration that occurred as a result of this exertion of Babylonian power. Most notoriously, this included the deportation of a significant portion of the capital's ruling classes to Babylon – to the imperial city as well as the agricultural hinterlands of Mesopotamia. In addition, however, these events also triggered other forms of involuntary migration, including internal displacements within Judah and regional displacements to the Transjordan and to Egypt. These essays have all sought to explore the potential of social scientific research on more recent migration to shed new light on the phenomena described by and reflected in these two unique biblical texts.

In "Is 'Exile' Enough? Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Need for a Taxonomy of Involuntary Migration," C. A. Strine contends that the diversity of the

1 The conference was hosted by the University of Nottingham Centre for Bible, Ethics and Theology and the Sheffield Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies with the support of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to which the editors express their appreciation. Additional thanks are due to Paul Joyce, Madhavi Nevader, and Hugh Williamson for their contributions on the day of the conference.

HeBAI 7 (2018), 285–288 DOI 10.1628/hebai-2018-0017
ISSN 2192-2276

biblical literature from this period demands a more sophisticated system by which scholars may distinguish amongst the distinct kinds of migration experiences depicted in these texts. Strine argues that social scientific research reveals meaningful distinctions in the experiences of, for example, involuntary migrants who are internally displaced, involuntary migrants who are externally displaced and relocated to urban centres, and involuntary migrants who are externally displaced and relocated to monoethnic "camps." Attending to the *realia* of these different experiences – rather than the monolithic "exile" to which biblical scholars are accustomed to refer – enables a more nuanced and differentiated approach to the biblical texts of this period. Strine explores the implications of this approach through an analysis of the book of Jeremiah's frequent references to deportees sent to the city of Babylon, whom the prophet encourages to engage with their host and other foreign societies, as opposed to the book of Ezekiel's calls for a stringent separation from outsiders, in the context of a book that points to an isolated, mono-ethnic community at Chebar.

Mark Leuchter explores the implications of chronic geographic dislocation and migration for communities' conceptualisation of space and place, in "A Resident Alien in Transit: Exile, Adaptation and Geomythology in the Jeremiah Narratives." Introducing research on the identity narratives and mythologies of populations with long histories of frequent migration, he observes these groups' tendency to disarticulate ideas of homeland from assumptions of residency, as they abstract their attachment to the homeland from any current physical attachment to space or place. Leuchter identifies this type of place-attachment – attachment not to space but to ideas about space – in the book of Jeremiah and traces the origins of this way of thinking to the prophet's own resident alien status within Judah. He undertakes a detailed analysis of Jeremiah 32, arguing that it works to replace communal identity based in attachment to geophysical space with a communal identity rooted in a prophetic text, precisely because the latter is capable of surviving a break in actual residency; identity rooted in it is more stable and may thus serve as a bridge between past and (imagined) future residency.

In "Before and after Exile: Involuntary Migration and Ideas of Israel," C. L. Crouch explores the impact of the deportations to Tel Abib on the community called Israel, taking as a starting point certain differences in the way that the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel depict this entity. Arguing that both books conceive of Israel as an ethnic entity, with a strong sense of its members' shared genetics, history, and culture, Crouch contends that the book of Ezekiel exhibits a special interest in Israel's past and an unusual focus on the Israelite homeland that may be best understood as a result of the Ezekielian

community's experience as involuntary migrants. Crouch draws an analogy between the implied setting of Ezekiel's community in a semi-rural agricultural settlement isolated from outsiders and contemporary involuntary migrants settled in remote, monoethnic refugee camps, observing that studies of the latter have revealed a tendency to articulate history in moral terms that link the group's past misdeeds to its present dislocation. This, Crouch argues, mirrors the book of Ezekiel's unusual negativity about Israel's past, as well as its particular concern for Israel's moral standing as requisite for possession of the land.

David Reimer's "There – But Not Back Again: Forced Migration and the End of Jeremiah" returns to a perennial problem in the interpretation of Jeremiah, namely, why the prophet who warned against flight to Egypt goes there himself. Drawing attention to the mutual fate of Jeremiah and Baruch with the rest of the group, Reimer suggests that the rebellion against Gedaliah is best understood as an incident of civil conflict and that the text's description fits the phenomenon known in refugee studies as conflict-induced displacement. It is, Reimer argues, not only Jeremiah and Baruch who are "taken" to Egypt by Johanan and the other named leaders, but the rest of the company. These people are characterised as vulnerable and dependent, at the mercy of these military elites whose jockeying for power created the civil conflict and thereby the conditions for displacement.

In response to these four pieces Dalit Rom-Shiloni has offered "Forced / Involuntary Migration, Diaspora Studies, and More: Notes on Methodologies." Rom-Shiloni discusses the variety of social scientific research brought to bear on the texts of Jeremiah and Ezekiel by the preceding papers, mapping them against eight points concerning the Babylonian deportations from Judah in the early sixth century that she highlights are central in importance for her own thinking, including the circumstances, destination and social dimensions of exile and of the exiles' relocation. Her discussion draws particular attention to the importance of extra-biblical evidence in reconstructions of the circumstances of life in Babylonia.

To end the volume, the editors offer some final reflections on the use of social scientific research on the phenomena of involuntary migration ("Final Thoughts: Reflections on Methodology"). They argue that the volume, with its noteworthy points of agreement and clear areas of disagreement, represents the manner in which scholarly progress is made: through a give-and-take process wherein fresh methods are employed by some scholars to push our extant evidence into new areas, as others highlight elements susceptible to error or anachronism.

What follows, then, is a documentary record of an enriching instance of scholarly discourse that aims, above all else, to generate more of the same in the future.

Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel

Contact address:
Professor Dr. Konrad Schmid
Theologische Fakultät der Universität Zürich
Kirchgasse 9
CH-8001 Zürich
Switzerland
E-mail: hebai@theol.uzh.ch

Publisher: Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co. KG, Postfach 2040, 72010 Tübingen
Can be purchased at bookstores.

Printed in Germany.
Typeset by Martin Fischer, Tübingen.
Printed by Gulde-Druck, Tübingen.

ISSN 2192-2276 (Print Edition)
ISSN 2192-2284 (Online Edition)

Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel

volume 7 (2018), no. 3

Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel is a peer-reviewed, quarterly journal focusing primarily on the biblical texts in their ancient historical contexts, but also on the history of Israel in its own right. Each issue has a topical focus. The primary language is English, but articles may also be published in German and French. A specific goal of the journal is to foster discussion among different academic cultures within a larger international context pertaining to the study of the Hebrew Bible and ancient Israel in the first millennium B.C.E.

Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel erscheint vierteljährlich, die Beiträge werden durch einen Peer-review-Prozess evaluiert. Ihr Thema sind die Texte der hebräischen und aramäischen Bibel in ihren historischen Kontexten, aber auch die Geschichte Israels selbst. Jedes Heft wird einen thematischen Fokus haben. Die meisten Beiträge werden in Englisch verfasst sein, Artikel können aber auch auf Deutsch oder Französisch erscheinen. Ein besonderes Ziel der Zeitschrift besteht in der Vermittlung der unterschiedlichen akademischen Kulturen im globalen Kontext, die sich mit der Hebräischen Bibel und dem antiken Israel im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. beschäftigen.

Mohr Siebeck

2192–2276(201809)7:3;1–L