

tures; he discusses, for example, the transition from the biblical practices of prostration and spreading one's hands in prayer to the vastly different rabbinic regimen. The standing rabbinic posture, he indicates, owes much to Roman norms governing the servant-master relationship. On occasion he finds prayer gestures to have been influenced by priestly temple practice or even by the model provided by angels at their service. More generally, gesture in prayer before God also reflects the inter-personal sphere.

Nonverbal Language does not limit itself to the physical aspects of the gestures studied, then, but discusses as well how these express and contribute to the human-divine relationship. Rabbinic prayer, we see, takes the divine presence as given and engages this presence in the language of gesture. Indeed, rabbinic prayer is characterized here as "dialogic," based on the reality of a divine presence which hears and listens. Ehrlich makes the case that as *kavvanah* (inner intention) became more significant, physical gesture itself became less salient. Does this indicate a resurgence of textuality at the expense of gesture? All in all, Ehrlich suggests that we discern a struggle between gesture and intentionality, perhaps even between individualism and standardization. If he is right, gestures gradually become governed by intentionality—but within limits.

Ehrlich's study is thorough but avoids hair-splitting and nit-picking. The writing is clean, cutting superfluous verbiage and argumentation to the bone. The Index is unusually user-friendly: in addition to indices of source, topic, and rabbinic figures, Ehrlich provides a most helpful index of "gestural categories."

It should be noted that this is a study of rabbinic sources and practices. Though medievals and even moderns are occasionally cited, the book is anchored in the Talmuds and associated literature. This should have been made apparent in the sub-title. Ehrlich sticks by his chronological framework—so far as I could see, he does not discuss the prevalent practice of swaying in prayer, probably because he found no clear indication of this custom in rabbinic times (though perhaps some of the more maximilist sources on bowing could lead in that direction).

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Song of Songs, by Richard S. Hess. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2005. 285 pp. \$29.95.

The Baker Commentary series to which this book belongs is directed primarily to clergy and seminary students, with the object of "expos(ing) God's mes-

sage for his people" (p. 8). It is consequently an overtly Christian commentary, each of whose sections concludes with a brief theological reflection on its application to the Christian community, supported throughout by incidental references to the New Testament. Given the theological constraints of the series, Hess has written a remarkably fair, thorough, and interesting commentary. He has a very good grasp of the literature and a fine grasp of semantic detail and is insightful about poetic patterns, cultural background, and the interplay of metaphor and imagination. If the test of a commentary is that one learns from it, one can truly say, *dayyenu!*

Hess's judiciousness is manifest in his introduction, which carefully presents the evidence for date, traces the history of interpretation, discusses the question of unity, and alludes to various modern and postmodern approaches. He eschews extreme or one-sided views, though he does consider the Song to be a structured whole. In keeping with mainstream scholarship, he rejects traditional allegorical interpretation, but he is sensitive throughout to theological implications. For instance, he notes von Balthasar's emphasis on the aesthetic element in theology (p. 158). Perhaps with his conservative audience in mind, he assumes a context of married love for the Song, while recognizing that this is never made explicit (p. 38): "the erotic love of the couple does not lie outside the bounds of marriage but is integral to it" (p. 237).

Hess is good at tracing wordplays and interconnected motifs throughout the Song. The "locked garden/pool" (*gan/gal na'ul*) of 4:12 is reflected in the "lock" (*man'ul*) on which myrrh from the woman's hands drips in 5:5, and in the "sandals" (*ne'alim*) in which she dances in 7:2 (p. 212). That which has been closed and static opens to the lover's gaze, in fascinating motion. In discussing the dream narrative in 5:2–8, Hess resists direct sexual interpretations, for instance of 5:4–5 as a euphemistic description of intercourse, pointing out that "the whole point of the passage is the failure of the couple to reach and touch each other" (p. 172). At the same time, he shows effectively how it suggests the sexual dimension indirectly, through image and metaphor (p. 171). The male lover's complaint that his locks are wet draws attention to the most attractive part of himself, as does the woman's excuse that she has already gone to bed.

There are a number of issues Hess does not address. He does not regard the imagery of the *wasfs*, or itemized portraits of the lovers, as problematic, and is dismissive of interpretations of them as parodic (Brenner, Whedbee) or grotesque (Black). This is refreshing, insofar as it avoids the orientalism endemic in previous scholarship; Hess explicates the imagery without embarrassment or fuss. On the other hand, he thereby ignores the strangeness of the imagery as having a communicative function. For example, I have argued that it has a

surreal quality, which both contributes to the dreamlike, fantastic character of the Song, and tends towards apophysis, a suggestion of the inexpressible.

Feminist interpretation of the Song is also rather neglected. Hess duly notes the prominence of the female voice in the Song, discusses the possibility of female authorship, and has some interesting observations, for instance that the term "mother's house" is used exclusively for daughters (p. 106). Nonetheless, Hess pays little or no attention to discussions of the Song as a critique of patriarchy, as suggested by Pardes and Tribble among others. In fact, and perhaps with regard to the prospective audience, he tends to harmonize the Song with the rest of the Bible, and in particular with the New Testament.

Inevitably, as with every commentary, Hess has his favorite resources, and there are some omissions. He overlooks one of my favorite books on the Song, Hans-Josef Heinevetter's *Das Hohelied als programmatische Komposition* (1989), Harold Fisch's excellent essay on the Song in *Poetry with a Purpose* (1988), pp. 80–103, and Gunter Krinetzki's second commentary on the Song (1981).

In general, despite these reservations, Hess has produced a very good, solid commentary, one of the best of recent years. It lacks sentimentality, is highly informative, and is sensitive to detail. I would have liked some more attention to cultural context. Hess is rather dismissive of similarities between the Song and ancient Egyptian love poetry, as traced in detail by Fox and White, and does not mention possible connections with Hellenistic literature. He tends to prefer determinist readings to ambiguities. He relies heavily on traditional commentaries, such as those of Murphy and Snaith, and marginalizes recent literary criticism. But these are small quibbles in discussing a commentary that is always lively, full of insight, and challenging.

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Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection, edited by Gabriele Boccaccini. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 472 pp. \$40.00.

This volume of collected essays is the product of the second Enoch Seminar held in Venice in July 2003. Fifty-three scholars gathered to discuss their research surrounding a particular set of questions. "How do the Dead Sea Scrolls affect our knowledge of Enoch literature? And how does the Enoch literature affect our understanding of Qumran? In particular, how does the study of Enoch challenge or modify the Essene Hypothesis, and to what extent does it support or dismiss alternative hypotheses, such as García Martínez's Groningen Hypothesis and Boccaccini's Essene-Enochic Hypothesis?"