

Early Adventist Educators, although not intended to be a systematic history, even of Adventist education, will prove helpful both to serious and casual readers.

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Lemaire, André. *Les écoles et la formation de la Bible dans l'Ancien Israël*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 39. Fribourg, Switzerland: Editions Universitaires; and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1981. 143 pp. SFr 29.

In a preceding article, the author, a specialist of North Semitic epigraphy, currently *chargé de recherches au CNRS*, had addressed himself to the question of the "abecedaries and the school-exercises in the North-Western epigraphy." Now, on the basis of this essay and taking into account new archaeological discoveries, he wishes to deal with wider questions concerning the existence of schools in ancient Israel and the role they played in the making up of the biblical canon.

Well-organized, and also in pellucid language, this book develops its subject in four steps. The first is an exploration of the contents of epigraphic materials from ^cIzbet Šarṭah, Gezer, Lachish, Khirbet el-Qôm, Arad, Aroër, Qadesh-Barnea and Kuntilat-Ajrud. Lemaire thinks that these materials reveal several types of class exercises (abecedaries, repeated letters and words, personal names, listing of months, drawings, exercises in learning a foreign language).

The second step is an investigation of the biblical testimony in eleven passages which allude to schools in ancient Israel, as well as texts which belong to the so-called sapiential literature.

Then, on the basis of these two lines of inquiry, the author attempts, in his third step, to draw a synthetic picture of the school organization in Israel. He finds that three types of schools seem to have been operating at that time: the kingly school, the priestly school, and the prophetic school. Each of these schools may have developed a literary tradition, with its own collection of texts—its own textbooks of classics which developed ultimately into the biblical canon. The didactic function of those writings, according to Lemaire, has its equivalent in ancient Greek and Latin literature (see his discussion on p. 74), with the advantage not only of giving rationality to the canonization process, but of enabling us to reconstruct the history of this process.

This reconstruction itself is undertaken by Lemaire in his fourth and final step. Here, adopting the general outline of the Documentary Hypothesis, he proceeds as follows: The Yahwist tradition (J), which was promoted in the kingly school of Jerusalem under the reign of David, provided texts dealing with the history of David and of the patriarchs, his forefathers. The Elohist tradition (E), which appeared after the schism and within the kingly school of the Northern Kingdom, transmitted texts dealing with the history of the kings of Israel, and especially Jehu; it also included some of the Proverbs (25-39), some Psalms, and a prophetic tradition which started by the time of Elijah and Elisha, and which was finally written down in the eighth century (Amos, Hosea). At the fall of Samaria, the Elohist tradition was taken over in Jerusalem, in the context of Hezekiah's reform, and was integrated into the teaching of the kingly schools. The textbook which was then used in these schools brought the historical traditions of the North and of the South together into one single text (JE), the wisdom tradition collected by the people of Hezekiah (Prov 25-29), plus several prophetic writings (Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah). Josiah's reform yielded the development of the Deuteronomist tradition (D). The fall of Jerusalem brought an end to the kingly schools. Yet the cultural legacy of Israel survived and was combined into the priestly tradition, which until now had followed an independent path. Thus, the texts of the kingly schools, with those of the old priestly tradition and the new prophetic texts in the priestly vein (Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi), constituted the textbook of the priestly school (the so-called P). Finally, just after the catastrophe of the year 70, all the traditions (JEDP) were brought together and received their normative status, the canonization process being then closed.

Thus, according to Lemaire, the concept of a "canon" should have been reached at a last stage of the history of the schools—this as the result of a lengthy *natural* evolutionary process.

However, the material which he has collected in this book actually is too scattered and too fragmentary (see his own statement on p. 84) to be of decisive significance. Also, his arguments are often quickly drawn and weak. E.g., how can Lemaire be so sure about the drawings of Kuntilat-Ajrud mentioned on pp. 29, 31? Are they indeed from children's hands in schools? No historical proof is set forth, and the fact that these drawings seem to be of coarse features does not at all signify that the origin was from a child.

Furthermore, there are instances of sources being vague or absent. We have no precise reference to support Lemaire's statement that a priestly tradition is attested in Ugaritic literature (p. 70). The same can be said about his treatment of the function of the prophetic school, a matter which is not clearly settled and which has no biblical reference to it (see *ibid.*).

Lemaire's hypothesis of the canonization process of the schools' *text-books* remains itself questionable: Did the biblical texts become normative—hence canonical—as a result of their didactic function? Or, on the contrary, did they receive their didactic function because of their normative value?

In the final analysis, there is indeed cause to fear that the author's hypothesis, consciously referred to all along in his inquiry (cf. p. 84), has unduly affected and ultimately oriented his conclusions and interpretations so as to give birth to a highly speculative reconstruction of a history of the biblical texts. This history still remains, after all, without (if not beyond) control.

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Meuser, Fred W. *Luther the Preacher*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983. 94 pages. Paperback, \$4.50.

It would have been strange indeed if the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther (the year 1983) had gone unnoticed by the Protestant churches. It was not so strange, given today's frantic ecumenical spirit, that a Roman Pope would join in celebrating that anniversary in a Lutheran church. But what is really strange is that centuries of Luther research have not yet produced significant literature on Luther as a preacher. To the bridging of this vast literary chasm, Meuser makes a modest, albeit good and happy, contribution.

This book is divided into three chapters, in which are discussed Luther's passion for preaching, his style of preaching, and his gift for preaching. The presentation is a marvelous stimulant to thinking about that always-dynamic and sometimes-bombastic pulpiteer of Wittenberg.

Whatever else Luther was, he was first and foremost a preacher. His appointment by Staupitz to preach to the monks of the Augustinian cloister at Wittenberg, a task which at first terrified him, is what made him a theologian. That is the way it ought to be. One can be a good theologian and a bad preacher (of which there are many), but one can never be a good preacher if he or she is a bad theologian. It was the challenge and responsibility of the pulpit that drove Luther to the theologian's desk. He discovered early what every preacher and theologian must discover: that the best theology does not exist for itself, but is in the service of the pulpit.

One of Luther's major contributions was the deep conviction that God is present in the Word, in the preached Word. The sermon is the Word of God when the preacher preaches what the Bible says. In fact,