

nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Rev 21:4).

The book would have been more complete and up-to-date had some kind of mention of this crucial aspect of creation care been included. But even without it, the book is a valuable resource and rich treasure for anyone seeking to be a faithful and responsible steward of this world while looking forward to that Day when all creation will be able to cease its groaning (Rom 8:21–22).

Andrews University

JO ANN DAVIDSON

Nissinen, Martti. *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xix + 448 pp. Hardcover. USD 125.00.

Nissinen's treatment of ancient prophecy is the first of its kind to discuss individual features of, and examine potential relationships among, the three major extant textual caches attesting the prophetic phenomenon in antiquity altogether—namely, Greek, Ancient Near Eastern, and Biblical. Nissinen's book is to be seen among works that have (a) dealt extensively with the relationship between Biblical and Near Eastern prophecies (e.g., Erhard Blum, "Israels Prophetie im altorientalischen Kontext: Anmerkungen zu neueren religionsgeschichtlichen Thesen," in *From Ebla to Stellenbosch: Syro-Palestinian Religions and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. I. Cornelius and L. Jonker, ADPV 37 [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008], 81–116), (b) offered some comparison between Greek and Near Eastern prophecies (e.g., Jean-Georges Heintz, ed., *Oracles et prophéties dans l'Antiquité: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg 15–17 Juin 1995*, Travaux du Centre de Recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce antiques 15 [Paris: de Boccard, 1997]), and (c) grasped connections between Greek and Biblical prophecies (e.g., Armin Lange, "Literary Prophecy and Oracle Collection: A Comparison between Judah and Greece in Persian Times," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak [New York: T&T Clark, 2006], 248–275). Unlike such authors, however, Nissinen seeks to acknowledge all three sources as conceptual "keyholes" giving access, individually, to parts of a conceptually unified "landscape" of the prophetic phenomenon in antiquity (5–6).

The book's first part deals with issues pertaining to the nature, constitution, and definitions of ancient prophecy. Nissinen rightly observes that prophecy stands in modern analyses as a "scholarly concept" (4). As such, it is susceptible to the scholars' attempt to conceptually define it, which either narrows or expands the horizon to be appraised. Thus, academic studies on ancient prophecy tend to adopt technical decisions that may not be akin to the way the phenomenon existed in history. I find such an observation appropriate for a book that attempts to analyze three corpora of textual material spanning throughout millennia. It rightly supports the author's withdrawal from claiming any movements in regard to causality and directionality. A comparison, nevertheless, among the three corpora allows

Nissinen to regard the phenomenon of prophecy as an intuitive type of divination at large. Although not strict, the division between technical and intuitive divinations is only possible in connection to a social/communal realm that nurtured the need for supernatural communication and human intermediation. This way, for Nissinen, in order “to cope with contingency, uncertainty, and insecurity” (19), humans in antiquity sought in divination a channel for the elaboration of their symbolic universe. Thus, prophets, regardless of their cultural background, were direct messengers of the divine speech who operated within an intuitive, non-technical, psychological, and conceptual realm.

The second part of the book analyzes each of the three textual corpora. Firstly, it deals with the evidence drawn from ANE sources, analyzing material from six distinct textual genres. An interesting aspect of this chapter is Nissinen’s treatment of texts attesting the reuse of prophecy in ANE sources. Examples like the three Mari letters describing and interpreting the same prophecy by using a common catchphrase sample the apparent scribal practice of standardization of older oracles. Nissinen clearly shows that, in Assyria, the practice of listing older prophecies served different historical momenta than the ones originally intended. However, the idea that such prophecies hint toward a more complex process of source combination is not compelling to me, since no document bears signs of a scribal merging of sources into a unified text. Thus, Nissinen’s suggestion that these lists are the beginnings of more elaborated scribal processes, which are allegedly represented by the Hebrew Bible (348–353), remains at this point simply an unsubstantiated hypothesis.

The chapter dealing with Greek documentation evaluates epigraphic and literary sources. I find the literary sources as bearing the most interesting phenomena, specifically, the technical work of the *χρησιμολογος* —people “specialized in writing, collecting, performing, and interpreting oracles” (139). Their activity stands as a striking evidence of oracle collection and reinterpretation in antiquity. The chapter dealing with the Hebrew Bible defines the biblical evidence as a literary or secondary source, meaning that, as it stands, the text does not allow for the words of the prophets to be differentiated from the scribes’. Differently from his treatment of ANE and Greek sources, Nissinen uses this chapter more to elaborate on his theory of composition of the prophetic books than to directly present the textual features of the prophetic material in the Hebrew Bible as they stand. I agree with Nissinen that the idea of non-prophetic transmission of the prophets’ words underlies the actual form of the biblical text, since the existence of antagonistic messages against the court hints toward a ‘post-prophet’ possibly secret process of purposeful preservation, as attested by the narratives embedded in the Hebrew Bible’s prophetic material. It is hard not to observe, however, that such theorized secrecy also did not necessarily foster a more complex scribal activity.

I also agree with Nissinen that many of the Hebrew Bible’s oracles were performative in nature and apparently not intended to be written, which

suggests the use of scribes, as Jeremiah 36 shows (157–158). However, the idea that scribal activity presupposes lack of integrity in a prophecy is not directly attested in ancient texts. Both in Assyrian and Greek sources, prophecies are compiled, not combined; and even when reapplication is clear, the interpretation is kept separated from the textual collection. It seems that even for professional oracular collectors, like the χρησμόλογος (139), textual integrity lay at the foundation of their reinterpretation. Therefore, a stable collection is a prerequisite for reinterpretation, but is not necessarily an evidence of conflation. Thus, if anything, the very mention of a scribe in Jeremiah 36 suggests a possible pacific coexistence and potential efficient collaboration of a prophet and a scribe, which at that point of this prophet's ministry possibly accounted for the writing down of more than half of Jeremiah's book. In other words, if the scribes wanted to highlight and stress Jeremiah's identity and integrity as the author of the oracular collection holding his name, why would they leave a narrative with a scribe in the text? Why not exclusively attribute authorial legitimacy to the targeted author?

In consonance with older studies on the presence of cognitive dissonance structures in post-exilic prophecy (Robert P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed: Cognitive Dissonance in the Prophetic Traditions of the Old Testament* [New York: Seabury, 1979]) and with the conclusions coming from more recent trauma studies (David M. Carr, *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014]), Nissinen sees prophecy as one of the strategies for reconstructing the shattered Israelite symbolic universe in the post-exilic period (152). I do concur with this idea, for the books of Haggai and Zechariah, for example, are clear about such a role. However, it is difficult to understand such strategy as the only possible motivation for literary prophecy to arise. At this point, it seems that Greek and Assyrian sources could well be understood as “keyholes” for understanding that such has not always been the case, since the rise of oracular collection, as attested by these documents, does not seem to be connected to any psychological crisis.

I cannot keep from noticing that Nissinen's approach facilitates circular argumentation in certain points of his elaboration on the post-exilic scribal creative activity. An example is the assumption that the post-exilic shift in the national spoken language from Hebrew to Aramaic narrowed the community of literati in Jerusalem even more, which allegedly fostered further restriction in the monopoly for handling the sacred texts (153). The circularity of this argumentation lies in the observation that it is precisely because Nissinen subscribes to a theory describing a post-exilic creative scribal activity responsible for the majority of the Hebrew Bible's prophetic corpus that the language shift becomes a problem—a problem that supports the very scribal theory that creates it. Taken as it is, such a shift does not indicate intensive editing, but possibly purposeful preservation by the hands of pious individuals, just as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah directly claim. Additionally, it is difficult to think of the shift to Aramaic, a language very

close to Hebrew in several aspects, as a significant impairment factor for Hebrew speakers/readers.

In the last part, Nissinen elaborates on the information drawn from the three analyzed sources and merges them into a conceptualization of the ancient prophetic landscape. Nissinen explores the prophets' ecstatic behavior, their relationship to ancient temples, with kingship, and their distribution in terms of gender. Such chapters are rich in details and Nissinen's integration of the information coming from Greece, the Near East, and the Hebrew Bible is responsible. It leaves clear boundaries among the distinct cultures and allows the reader to evaluate the argumentation. These boundaries are not left, however, as necessarily indicating either generic or genetic dissociation. Thus, for Nissinen, the three sources support the appraisal of ancient prophecy as a human phenomenon, in spite of how the Greek *προφήτης*, the biblical *נביא*, and the Akkadian *mubhûm* were appreciated in their distinct societies and how one's activity influenced another's throughout history.

"Ancient Prophecy" is a dense and well-articulated book. It draws from a massive amount of primary data and elaborates responsibly on the necessity of methodological rigor for the development of comparative studies. It also represents an impressive elaboration on the most recent bibliography in the field of comparative studies on ancient prophecy. As such, the book is both a competent introduction to the modern study on ancient prophecy for the non-specialist reader and a piece of high-standard academic work, proper to the current ongoing discussions of its type within professional circles.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

FELIPE MASOTTI

Siecienski, A. Edward. *The Papacy and the Orthodox: Sources and History of a Debate*. OSHT. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. xiv + 510 pp. Hardcover. USD 78.00.

The question of authority in the church and the unique ministry of the Bishop of Rome within Christianity has been a matter of intense discussion for centuries. In *The Papacy and the Orthodox: Sources and History of a Debate*, Edward Siecienski, associate professor of religion, and Clement and Helen Papas Professor of Byzantine Civilization and Religion at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, set out "to trace the history of the Orthodox understanding of the papacy and the place it has played in East-West relations since the beginning of the 'estrangement' that eventually split them apart" (xi). Like his other book, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, OSHT (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), "this book intends to trace the history of a controversy—that is, the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as it has been received (or rejected) by Orthodox Christianity" (xii). His "intent is not to convince, but rather to lay out the history in as clear, objective, and interesting a manner as is possible" (xiii). And in this endeavor, I believe Siecienski succeeds admirably.