



LUND UNIVERSITY

Review of History of New Testament Research: volume three: from C.H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz

Nylund, Jan

Published in:
Svensk exegetisk årsbok

2014

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Nylund, J. (2014). Review of History of New Testament Research: volume three: from C.H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz. *Svensk exegetisk årsbok*, 79, 148-151.

Total number of authors:
1

General rights

Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

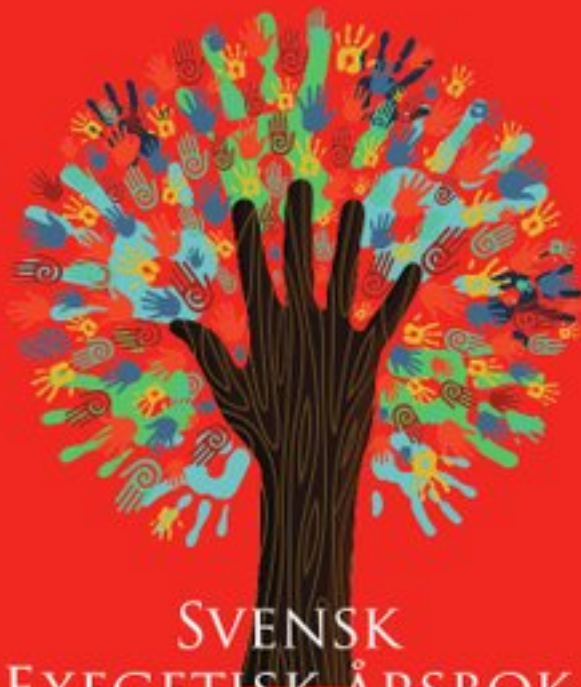
Read more about Creative commons licenses: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117
221 00 Lund
+46 46-222 00 00



SVENSK
EXEGETISK ÅRSBOK
79 · 2014

ETNICITET I BIBELN OCH I
BIBELVETENSKAPLIG FORSKNING
ETHNICITY IN THE BIBLE
AND IN BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

uppmärksamhet, en del för att de på ett utmärkt sätt sammanfattar den aktuella textens budskap. Många av slutraderna i kommentarerna är träffande och homiletiskt användbara. Ett par exempel kan få belysa saken. Kommentaren till 2 Mos 13:20–22 avslutas med meningen: "Ibland får man nöja sig med att gudomliga uppenbarelser är ... gudomliga!" (223). Och i kommentaren till Jes 35:1–10 står det som sammanfattning: "Vända om som blir vända hem är tidlös biblisk teologi" (36).

Fyller då Gunnel Andrés bok det behov jag antydde inledningsvis? Svaret måste bli både ja och nej. Ja, det är det enda sammanfattande som finns tillgängligt och där genomgången av texterna är någorlunda utförlig ur exegetisk utgångspunkt. Nej, boken behöver kompletteras på flera punkter både vad gäller exegetik och hermeneutik. En del av det exegetiska är föråldrat, och kopplingen både till utläggningshistorien och till övriga texter i evangelieboken lyser med sin frånvaro. I en predikan – i motsats till i en exegetisk föreläsning – går det inte att utesluta sådant.

Slutligen en kommentar vad gäller bokens yttre. Boken som sådan är vacker och behaglig att använda. Dessvärre skäms den av en hel del tryckfel och inkonsekvenser. Och sorgligast av allt är att den inledande kombinerade innehållsöversikten/ställregistret inte har en siffra rätt vad gäller sidhänvisningar.

LarsOlov Eriksson, Johannelunds teologiska högskola

WILLIAM BAIRD, *History of New Testament Research: Volume 3: From C. H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013. Hardcover. XIX + 775 pages. ISBN: 9780800699185. \$70.00.

History of New Testament Research: Volume 3: From C. H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz is the third volume in William Baird's trilogy on the historical development of NT research and his crowning achievement in his attempt to provide a full picture of the research efforts of NT scholarship from the late 1500s up till today. His volume is divided into three parts. Except for a 40-page bibliography, Baird includes three helpful indices – an Index of Subjects, an Index of Names and an Index of Scripture – that make the volume useful as a resource to be consulted.

Part 1: By the Anglo-Americans (ch. 1), the Gospels are generally conceived of as reliable accounts: Vincent Taylor rightly notes that the form-critics ascribe too much creativity to the early church and do not succeed in acknowledging the presence of the disciples as eyewitnesses; Henry J. Cadbury's (yes, he belongs to the chocolate producing Cadbury family!) argues for the unity of Luke-Acts, a term he in fact minted; the famous C. H. Dodd, who rejects the separation of a theological and historical understanding of the gospels, and whose centrepiece is realized eschatology, stresses Christianity as a historical religion.

The biblical theology of Karl Barth (ch. 2) – by some referred to as 'neo-orthodoxy' – was one of the great influences of the 20th century, matched only by Bultmann's existentialism. Barth left liberalism behind and, after a period of dialectical theology, settled in his mature biblical theology. Barth's 13-volume *Dogmatics* figures as one the greatest accomplishments in the history of Christian doctrine. Even though Barth offers theology in a most eloquent fashion, he de-

serves some criticism for questionable exegesis, as mentioned by Baird. Bultmann synthesizes in his theology liberalism, Marburg neo-Kantian Lutheranism and Heideggerian existentialism. By the controversial concept of demythologization Bultmann aspires to make Christianity more relevant. Bultmann's theology has been much criticized as reductionist, overly sceptical and for reducing theology to subjectivity. The greatness of Bultmann primarily neither consists in his overall contribution nor in the details (as Baird notes), but in his presenting a coherent synthesis of dialectical theology (of the early Barth), philosophical existentialism and historical criticism.

A paper (1953) by Ernst Käsemann, member of the Bultmann school (ch. 3), signals the start of a new quest for the historical Jesus with the acknowledgment of reliable tradition in the synoptic gospels, continuity between the kerygma and the historical Jesus tradition and a shift in emphasis from Hellenistic-Gnostic material to Jewish backgrounds and the OT. Baird chastises Käsemann for his caricature of Judaism. Günther Bornkamm pioneers redaction criticism, argues for continuity between the historical Jesus and the Jesus of post-Easter faith but rejects the historical inquiry of the resurrection. In America James Robinson reaffirms Bultmann's demythologization and sees the potential of the new quest in the combination of devotion to the kerygma and modern historical method.

Part 2: The new discoveries (ch. 4) in Nag Hammadi (1945) give a clearer picture of Gnosticism and the Messina conference places its mature form in the second century, thus nullifying a central presupposition of Bultmann and the Bultmann school. The finding of the fourth-century Coptic *Gospel of Thomas* contributes to gospel studies. The finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947) provides a crucial parallel context for NT studies, and ideas thought to have derived from a Hellenistic milieu are now found on Jewish soil. New archaeology affirms the essential Jewishness of Galilee and findings in Sepphoris, Ephesus, Corinth and Antioch put NT text in new light. Textual criticism develops in terms of number of documents, methods and ideological agendas; even though the reasoned-eclectic method prevails, innovative and provocative ideas are presented by David Parker and Bart Ehrman.

The Holocaust provoked a reassessment of Judaism (ch. 5) among NT scholars. Joachim Jeremias, the anti-thesis of Bultmann, affirms parallels and continuity between Judaism and the NT. E. P. Sanders' covenantal nomism leads to the establishment of the 'new perspective', a positive assessment of Judaism. Martin Hengel, advocate of the 'old perspective', argues for Hellenism and Judaism as parallel influences, values the reports of early eyewitnesses and their preservation of tradition, and rejects both critical and orthodox biblicism.

Werner Kümmel and Helmut Koester are known for their NT introductions. The developments of historical criticism (ch. 6) are demonstrated in the redaction-critical works of Hans Conzelmann on Luke and Willi Marxsen on Mark, where the *Sitz im Leben* of the gospel writers is underlined. Farmer revives Griesbach's hypothesis on the synoptic problem. The Farrer-Goulder hypothesis, furthered by Mark Goodacre, seeks to dispense with Q, the research on which – particularly by Kloppenborg – has considerably polarized NT research. The powerful advance of Roman Catholic scholarship (ch. 7) since Vatican II is demon-

strated in the works of Rudolf Schnackenburg, Raymond Brown and John Meier, all three fairly conservative in their criticism but in their results, in Baird's words, 'all the more convincing', compared to those of excessive scepticism. The development of scholarly societies (ch. 8) begins with Philip Schaff's Society of Biblical Literature in 1880 and is then followed by The Catholic Biblical Association and Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas (SNTS). Strikingly, Baird does not include the well-known Evangelical Theological Society. Robert Funk founds the much-criticized Jesus Seminar whose perspective is much reminiscent of Reimarus.

Part 3: The biblical theology initiated by Barth had its continuation in theological and hermeneutical developments (ch. 9), as in the salvation history of Oscar Cullman, which is linear and includes a future eschatology with both historical and temporal significance, and in the works of F. F. Bruce that demonstrate the fruitful combination of faith and historical criticism. Among the critical and exegetical accomplishments in Europe (ch. 10), we find those of C. K. Barrett, and the prolific James Dunn, known for seeking the larger picture rather than the details, thus producing works of varying quality. Dunn's implementation of the 'new perspective' marks a decisive point. By reference to Birger Gerhardsson, Dunn emphasizes oral tradition to understand the relationship of the Gospels. Gerhardsson is the primary exponent of the Scandinavian school and known mostly for his works on oral traditioning that revolutionized gospels studies, underlining the dependability of the early eyewitnesses. The critical and exegetical accomplishments in North America (ch. 11) include the feminist theology of Schüssler Fiorenza that replaces the authority of the Bible with the feminist interpreter's experience, and the works of the liberals Louis Martyn and Leander Keck as well as those of Victor Furnish and Hans Dieter Betz that all are concerned with ethics and NT theology.

Baird's accomplishment in completing this third volume in his three-volume series is in itself admirable. Baird does his best to be fair with regard to contributions from all perspectives, but leans towards liberalism – both in thought and his personal experience – in his overall assessment. Baird's failure to include the Evangelical Theological Society in his chapter on the development of scholarly societies is an indication of this imbalance. His leanings also result in a selection of scholars in his volume that includes too many less weighty ones and leaving out quite a few of more importance. Baird's volume would certainly have benefited from a more carefully selected set of scholars. Also, rather than spending too many pages on each scholar, he could have allotted fewer pages to each scholar and made room for a greater total number of scholars in his volume. Because of these shortcomings, the result is a volume that is not fully balanced for an all-round audience.

Among the redeeming strengths of the volume is that Baird demonstrates a hermeneutical awareness by repeatedly highlighting the pertinent observation that scholars of different perspectives using the same methods often end up with very different results, and he concludes that factors such as worldview and presuppositions are elements that must be taken seriously. Baird underlines the continual dilemma of the relation between history and faith. The old confessional/non-

confessional and conservative/liberal dichotomies come forth as out-dated and imprecise designations. On a more superficial note, the grammatical and spelling mistakes in this volume are so frequent that they cannot seem to escape the reader's attention. Nevertheless, Baird's volume is certainly worth both reading and having as a resource to consult.

Jan H. Nylund, Lund University

JENNIE BARBOUR, *The Story of Israel in the Book of Qohelet: Ecclesiastes as Cultural Memory*. Oxford Theological Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Hardcover. XV + 256 pages. ISBN: 9780199657827. £69.47.

This well-written and well-researched monograph is Jennie Barbour's published D. Phil. thesis. It challenges the prevalent view that Qohelet/Ecclesiastes has no interest in history in general and Israel's history in particular. In fact, the current scholarly consensus is that the Israelite Wisdom literature is unconnected with the notion of God's encounter with Israel in history. In her book, Barbour makes a convincing case that history, in particular the *memory* of history, plays an important role in Qohelet. Barbour's study belongs within the subfield of inner-biblical interpretation. However, rather than looking for precise textual allusions to earlier texts, with focus on the author's intention, she seeks to uncover fragments of Israel's cultural memory which are embedded in Qohelet, i.e., which earlier texts and literary themes are evoked in the readers as they encounter specific images and phrases in the text in front of them.

The study falls into five chapters. The first part explores the portrayal of Qohelet as king of Jerusalem and as the son of David (Eccl 1:1). This portrayal is, according to Barbour, an invitation to read the book as a reflection of Israel's past kings. With his court and his wealth, Qohelet brings to mind the monarchs of the ancient Near East. Yet, as certain stereotypical elements are missing, Barbour argues that the description of Qohelet has more affinity with the descriptions in the Hebrew Bible of the indigenous Israelite kings. The opening statement conjures up the memory of Solomon, but the royal fictional character is not restricted to him. He is rather a mosaic which consists of *all* of Israel's past kings, with special focus on Hezekiah and David. Furthermore, this composite portrayal is a critical one which resembles the satirical portrayal of the Persian monarchs in the Hebrew Bible and in Greek literature. Qohelet 'is making Solomon another Nebuchadnezzar or another Xerxes' (35). This fictional king falls short of the ideal, as he looks out on (the author's post-monarchic) reality. In this way, the book of Qohelet criticizes the past kings of Israel who brought about its current national trouble.

In the second chapter Barbour discusses what we usually mean when we speak of 'history', and what 'historical interest' would look like in a work such as Qohelet. She isolates three key criteria: the past dimension, human deeds, and a public significance. In other words, history is events involving humans in the past within a sphere that is wider than the personal. As we can see from looking at the writings of Herodotus and others, these three criteria are employed in history writing in the ancient world. Barbour goes on to show that these criteria match