

Literarische Fiktionen und Identitätsbildung in antiken Literaturen

Chancen und Grenzen literaturwissenschaftlicher Zugänge bei der interpretativen Erschließung antiker Texte

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Outline:

Seit einigen Jahren zeichnet sich für die Fächer der klassischen und orientalischen Philologien ein Paradigmenwechsel ab, der methodisch mit dem Wandel von einer weniger literar-historisch zu einer stärker literaturwissenschaftlich geprägten Analyse und Interpretation zu beschreiben ist. Zu den Pionieren auf diesem Gebiet gehören neben der Bibelwissenschaft vor allem die Ägyptologie und die Altphilologie. Demgegenüber finden sich bei den syro-aramäischen und mesopotamischen Literaturen noch eher vereinzelte Versuche, die Ergebnisse der modernen Literaturwissenschaft und ihre hermeneutischen Implikationen für die Erschließung antiker Texte fruchtbar zu machen. Eine Verhältnisbestimmung beider methodologischer Zugänge, ihrer Chancen und Grenzen steht noch aus. Und daher hat auch die Einbeziehung literaturwissenschaftlicher Kategorien (Dekonstruktivismus, Rezeptionsästhetik, Sprechakttheorie u.a.) noch keinen durchgehenden Eingang in das methodische Curriculum der antiken Philologien gefunden.

Eine interdisziplinäre und internationale Konferenz soll nun erstmalig jene Wissenschaftler und Wissenschaftlerinnen zusammenbringen, die, in unterschiedlichem Umfang, literaturwissenschaftlich an antiken Texten arbeiten. Angesprochen sind Wissenschaftler aus den Fachbereichen Ägyptologie, Altphilologie, Assyriologie, Bibelwissenschaft, Jüdische Studien/Rabbinische Literatur, und Religionswissenschaft. Wir wollen den bisherigen Ertrag der neuen Methoden auswerten und offene Fragen erörtern:

Ø Ist es methodisch redlich, antike Texte mit modernen literaturwissenschaftlichen Fragestellungen zu analysieren?

Ø Welche Erträge haben solche Fragestellungen bisher erbracht?

Ø Sind in den verschiedenen altphilologisch arbeitenden Fachbereichen unterschiedliche literaturtheoretische Schwerpunkte zu beobachten?

Inhaltlich betreffen diese methodologischen Erwägungen über literaturwissenschaftliche Zugänge zu antiker Literatur eine ganze Reihe derzeit intensiv diskutierter Themen, deren Ergebnisse in der einen oder anderen Form wiederum Auswirkungen auf das literaturgeschichtliche Verständnis einzelner Texte und ihre kontextuelle Verortung im Kanon antiker Literaturen haben:

Ø Inwieweit können antike Rechtstexte als Literatur verstanden und bearbeitet werden?

Ø Können (und dürfen) priesterliche Literaturen als fiktionale Texte verstanden werden?

Ø Welche Zusammenhänge bestehen zwischen Dichtung und Identität, Poesie und Ideologie u.v.m.

Teilnehmer und Teilnehmerinnen:

Vortragstitel und abstracts werden laufend ergänzt.

Nehama Aschkenasy, University of Connecticut

From Aristotle to Bakhtin: The Book of Ruth and Genre Theory

Reading the Book of Ruth in light of the theories of drama and the conventions of the theatre, ancient and modern, means interpreting the scriptural text against its grain. Yet more than any other biblical tale or cycle of tales, Ruth lends itself to the dramatic genre by virtue of the centrality of its dialogue and its narrator's limited omniscience. Such a study can serve as an example of the benefits as well as limitations of deconstructing the biblical story by placing it within the context of genre theory.

This paper studies Ruth in the light of the long history of dramatic tradition, paying special attention to Aristotle's Poetics and the classical practitioners of drama, Shakespearean comedy, and Moliere's theatre, as well as to modern theories of the tragic and the comic, including Henri Bergson's, Freud's, Northrop Frye's, Dorothea Krook's, and Bakhtin's. It will argue that Ruth meets the major criteria of the dramatic form, such as Aristotle's requirements of the "unity" of the plot and its pyramid structure, Shakespeare's understanding of comedy as verging on the tragic, Frye's conception of comedy as "the Mythos of spring," and Dorothea Krook's mappings of the elements of tragedy, beginning with an "act of shame and terror" and concluding with "affirmation." Ruth emerges as comedy in the best sense, that is, as tragedy in reverse, featuring the main components of tragedy yet with a happy, rather than catastrophic, denouement, and offering scenes in which trickery, the unexpected, the incongruous, and human frailty coalesce to evoke laughter and a sense of merriment. Further, uncovering the sources of laughter and humor in this tale reveals a rebellious, liberating voice, in line with Freud's understanding of humor, and even lends a subversive and antinomian timbre to it, in line with Bakhtin's theory of comedy. The comic mode allows for an irreverent perspective on the elderly patriarch and thus on patriarchy, and elevates the female figures to the role of the conscious creators of the comic spirit rather than its victims. Contrary to tradition, which placed the tale as a solid link within the historic continuum of Hebrew society, reading Ruth as comedy exposes the anti-establishment and destabilizing tenor of the tale.

Jan Assmann, Konstanz/Heidelberg (emer.)

Opening lecture

Abstract liegt noch nicht vor

Adele Berlin, University of Maryland, Maryland

The Concept of Exile in Postexilic Biblical Literature

The idea of exile forms a central aspect of postexilic Jewish identity. In fact, postexilic Jews view themselves as living in an on-going exile, whether they are in the Land of Israel or in the Diaspora. This paper will discuss the exile as a concept, as opposed to a historical event, and will investigate the literary expression of this concept in selected biblical texts.

Dagmar Börner-Klein, Universität Düsseldorf

“Tell me who I am”. The Alphabet of Ben Sira and its Place within Rabbinical Literatur

With the Alphabet of Ben Sira, the reader is confronted with a genre of literature which does not have an immediate comparison in any other literal Hebrew work of that time. Therefore, the whole range of possible interpretations has to be taken into consideration, before classifying the work. In contrast to earlier classifications, I will read the Alphabet as a critique of rabbinic hermeneutics without any intention on being comical or frivolous.

This new reading of the Alphabet of Ben Sira has to address the methodological problem that “a work ... directs the public’s response” but it is not arbitrary: “there are right ways and wrong ways ... of reading”.

In his Encyclopaedia Judaica article on the Alphabet of Ben Sira, Yosef Dan characterizes the Alphabet of Ben Sira as „a ... satirical work, written probably in the geonic period in the East ... one of the earliest, most complicated and most sophisticated Hebrew stories written in the Middle Ages“ (EJ 3:548). On the other hand, David Stern, Norman Bronznick and Mark Jay Mirsky — explain the style of this work as an ‘aggadic midrash’ which “treats various biblical characters and rabbinic motifs irreverently, at times to the point of inanity. ... In fact, parts of ‘The Alphabet’ clearly parody not merely the genre of aggadah but specific passages in the Talmud and midrash.” They conclude: “Indeed, ‘The Alphabet’ may be one of the earliest literary parodies in Hebrew literature, a kind of academic burlesque – perhaps even entertainment for rabbinic scholars themselves – that included vulgarities, absurdities, and the irreverent treatment of acknowledged sancta.” (D. Stern, M.J. Mirsky, Rabbinic Fantasies, New Haven, London 1990, 167f.)

My claim is that both classifications of the Alphabet of Ben Sira - as a parody and as a satirical work – need to be reconsidered. Both classifications appear to give evidence of the hermeneutic circle: they reflect the readers’ presumptions and expectations about the text.

Ute E. Eisen, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen

Fiction in Early-Christian Literature? The Acts of the Apostles as Test Case

The category of "fiction/fictionality" is seldom employed in the interpretation of Early-Christian literature, necessitating a deeper discussion of its relevance to New Testament exegesis. Citing as examples the Acts of the Apostles (and the apocryphal Acts), this paper examines whether fiction/fictionality may be a productive concept in understanding Early-Christian literature. The Acts of the Apostles relate inter alia events which are likely not historical, but nevertheless are important in narrating the beginning of Christianity. How can we explore this concept in terms of literary theory? What theological implications does it have? The analysis of selected texts points to a more exact formulation of the concept.

Dorothea Erbele Küster, Kampen/Heidelberg

Writing as an Act of Offering. Lev 1-7, a Ritual Text or an Example for Fictional Literature?

Das Interesse an den Opfergesetzen in Lev 1-7 in der (deutschsprachigen) alttestamentlichen Exegese kreist vor allem um die literarkritische Einordnung und die formgeschichtliche Bestimmung der Texte (als Ritualtexte). Über ihre theologische Funktion ist damit noch wenig gesagt. Auch bleibt unklar, warum die Texte in Situationen jenseits des Kults rezipiert werden.

Eine literaturwissenschaftliche Lektüre lenkt das Augenmerk auf die Leerstellen in den Opferbestimmungen und damit auf die Schwierigkeiten einer (rituellen) Realisation dieser Texte. Nicht zuletzt läßt die Analyse der literarischen Verortung der Texte deren fiktiven

Charakter und deren identitätsstiftende Funktion in einem Kontext jenseits des Tempels bzw. der Kultpraxis sichtbar werden. Im Niederschreiben der Anweisungen für die Opfer vollzieht sich das Ritual selbst. Auf ihre Tragfähigkeit hin wird diese These in der gemeinsamen Lektüre/im Lesen der Texte, geprüft. Gefragt wird damit nicht nach der Wirklichkeit hinter den Texten, vielmehr wird der Raum, den die Texte, in diesem Falle die Opfertorot, im Schreiben und Lesen eröffnen, analysiert.

Jan P. Fokkelman, Universität Leiden, Leiden

Crisis and Identity, Job 29-31

The decisive contribution to the debate proper in the book of Job is offered by the hero and consists of three poems, the chapters 29-31. They hang together as a triad and are the climax of the debate. Ch. 29 is a poem of hindsight; in it, Job gives a last and full picture of his former life: happiness, wellbeing and high reputation. Ch.30, about his present suffering and humiliation is the opposite. In ch.31, not by chance the longest poem of the book (forty verses, showing many kinds of numerical precision), Job wrestles with this crisis in his life and convictions. He refuses to budge. Accordingly, his very last words (in 42:6) deserve a new rendering and our image of Job will be quite different from the usual one.

Christoph Hardmeier, Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität, Greifswald

Preserving orality – Emergence and Functions of Biblical Literature beyond Fiction and Construction of Identity

First it will be reminded that we have to be careful to transfer modern concepts of literacy to ancient literatures and to biblical books in particular. The communicative functions of writing and the ways of using the medium of written language are too manifold to learn from the high elaborated literacy of our times without thinking. Thus we have to investigate and reconstruct these functions of written language out of the transmitted literature itself. The second part gives some examples for how and why oral performance is preserved in literary works of the bible like the book of Ruth or Job and in the Torah of Deuteronomy 1-30 in a highly extensive way. The third part then sketches a methodological approach to reveal such functions of biblical literature based on textpragmatic theories of communication in written language.

Irene de Jong, Universiteit Amsterdam

Narratology and the classics: an overview and two examples

This paper will start with an introductory section on modern theory and the classics. Classics has been slow in adopting modern theory, but the last decades have seen a rapid catching up. One of the modern approaches which has been most widely and successfully adopted is narratology. It would seem that the consistent terminology of structuralist narratology has greatly appealed to classical scholars, steeped as they are in the rigor of ancient rhetorical terminology.

In the second and main part of the paper I would discuss two of my recent narratological projects.

The first project is the Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey (Cambridge 2001). Whereas traditional commentaries are comprehensive and micro-textual, this commentary focuses on one aspect of the text, its narrativity, and also pays attention to the meso- and macro-levels.

The second project is the multi-volume literary history of ancient Greek (narrative) literature, which I am currently editing and of which one volume has appeared (Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature, Leiden 2004). Instead of dealing with 'the man and his work', this narratological history analyses the use by different authors working in different genres of central narrative devices, such as the narrator, focalization, time, characterization.

I hope to demonstrate how the application of narratology can give new dimensions and forms

to traditional scholarly tools, such as the commentary and the literary history, and lead to new questions and insights.

Admiel Kosman, Uni Potsdam

From Literature to Theology: The New Literary Reading of the Talmud and its Implication to a New Understanding of the Spiritual World of the Sages

One of the claims that was prominent in the new feminist readings of the Bible (for example in Tribble's books) is that the chauvinists character of the bible is mainly the outcome of the male commentators efforts to explain the text as if the text is aimed to show the inferiority of women - while close reading of the bible text itself will show the opposite. Following that, I would like to show that the same problem exists in the readings of the designed stories in the Talmud.

However, here I am interested not only in the fact that the commentators of the Talmud had a permanent tendency not to except plainly Talmudic texts if they might be interpreted as declaring any superiority of a women - but rather to show that any spiritual capacity that the Talmud itself attributed to women was denied totally by the commentators cunning explanations in the middle ages. That claim would shed some light on the Theological side of the Aggadic sage's inner world, and on the unique perception of the terms God, Torah, and spirituality in the Talmudic literature.

Gerrit Kloss, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg

Abstract liegt noch nicht vor

Joachim Kügler, Universität Bayreuth

When the Gospel is fiction ...: The theological problem of reading the gospels as literary fiction

For more than 30 years, New Testament studies have looked at literary criticism as its prime partner. Especially the reader-response-criticism (in German "Rezeptionsästhetik") has had and still has great influence on reading the narratives of the New Testament (i.e. the four gospels and the acts) as literary texts i.e. als fictional texts. Within the theological context , this result(s) seem to be a big problem, as the gospels themselves (esp. Luke and John) claim to represent historical reports rather than fiction (myth). Important theologians like Josef Ratzinger even claim that understanding the Gospels as fiction ("mere" fiction) result in conceiving theological entities (even God Himself) as fiction. How, then, can such a theological problem be solved?

David Kraemer, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York

The Babylonian Talmud as Literary Fiction

For centuries, the Babylonian Talmud was read as representing the debates of rabbinic academies in Sassanian Iraq; at times, it was even described as a virtual transcript of those debates. In recent times, it has come to be recognized that the Babylonian Talmud is nothing of the sort. Rather, it is a fiction—a constructed, formulated dialogue emerging from the schools of relatively late (6th century) author-redactors.

Moreover, the sensibility informing the formulation of the Talmud's dialogues—even those whose focus is rabbinic law—is distinctly "literary." That is to say, readers may recognize in the Babylonian Talmud's formulation elements of style and flourish the meaning of which is best accessed by applying the lens of the literary critic.

In my earlier work, *Reading the Rabbis: The Talmud as Literature*, I examined eight selected Babylonian Talmud texts employing the approach (primarily) of reader-response criticism. In this paper, I return to the argument made there, re-affirming the power of the approach exemplified there by application to new examples.

Francis Landy, University of Alberta

Where is Isaiah in Isaiah?

The problem is this: Isaiah, like all prophetic books, foregrounds the personality of the prophet and the prophetic experience, especially but not only in its first part. As Peter Ackroyd long since pointed out, this personality is a literary and rhetorical construct. Moreover, in the last decades historical-literary scholarship has tended to disavow the search for the authentic message of the prophet in favour of a consideration of the book as a conscious composition of scribal communities, predominantly in the Persian period. Isaiah was the subject of some of the earliest and best modern literary-critical readings of the Bible, especially by Luis Alonso-Schökel.

Literary criticism both collaborates with recent historical criticism, and has very different interests: in aesthetics, figurative language, inter- and intra-textuality, and the entire sensual, emotional, and semantic import of the work. Furthermore, literary-criticism tends to resist monothetic simplicity, as assumed by the historical-critical tendency to assign different ideological points of view to different compositional strata. Real people wrote these texts out of their most passionate concerns, with a rare verbal brilliance, poetic craftsmanship, and imaginative and intellectual complexity. Furthermore, the prophetic narrative, self-authentication, resistance to and acceptance of his mission are an intrinsic part of the mission itself.

In this paper, I will be concerned with the prophetic personality as mediated in the texts, and with the traces of the human beings who created them. At the same time, the identity of the prophet/poet is complicated by the ventriloquism whereby he becomes a medium for God, by his different personae e.g. as female singer, by his literary shaping and his adaptation to a tradition. A prophet, like all of us, is a product of and speaks for a culture. Further layers of complexity are introduced by the innumerable voices that compose the book, by the communities that received and inflected it, and the readers who imagine and adopt the author's voice, real and/or implied. One may think of it, perhaps, as a poetic voice that passes through many bodies and cultures, in many different forms. This will not provide a unified text, and certainly will transgress the textual boundaries, but it will suggest an approach to the text as a human document, with an impress of a personality or personalities, which is also a collective witness.

Gerald Moers, Universität Göttingen, Göttingen

The reception of literary theory in Egyptology: an overview

The interplay of literature(s), literary studies and literary theory becomes more and more apparent to be a specifically historical and also – originally at least – European one. While contemporary literary studies therefore begin to silently dismiss literary theory as their leading discipline, as Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht has put it recently, some of our academic disciplines which are concerned with the ancient Mediterranean worlds and their textual heritage are still eagerly importing – others are just starting to do so – the aims, methods and interpretative strategies of diverse theories of literature which all have in common that we thought them to be metahistorically and transculturally valid. If however, as it becomes more and more clear, there is no metahistorical or transcultural notion of literature to be produced by literary theory at all – especially the concept of world literature is the most historically and culturally bound of all of these concepts – how can we intermediate between theories and textual objects which do not have anything in common except for being brought together by individual scholarly purpose at first and by institutionalized academic practice in a second step?

Of course this poses a severe if not fundamental methodical problem that at least all of us in Egyptology are far from resolving. A first step to become aware of the inherent problems of our everyday practice may however be to take a step back from simply using the theories at hand and instead to reflect on their historical conditionality. Only after it becomes evident what it means to appropriate modern concepts with all their cultural implications for ancient non-European texts as for example fictionality or theories of reception, we can decide

whether it makes sense to do so at all.

We should therefore ask for the surplus of our methods of interpretation not only in terms of the texts that existed quite well for several thousands of years without our theories but especially in terms of ourselves as “Geistes-“ or “Kulturwissenschaftler” who have to explain to our contemporary non-academic environments quite precisely why we are doing what we are doing.

Melanie Möller, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg

The Powers of a Lost Subject. Reinventing Poet's Identity in Catullus, carmen 8

This poem is by no means merely the melancholy manifesto of a poet unhappily in love, as most interpreters have believed, but rather is to be read as the self-reflective, poetic subject's attempt to emancipate himself. I will attempt to demonstrate this in a close reading of the poem with reference to (post)modern theories of the subject and the author (esp. M. Foucault, G. Agamben). In carmen 8, the poet attains his poetic identity by transforming his love for “Lesbia”, disguised as autobiographical material, into poetry and at the same time attempting to distance himself from the apparently defining substance of his poetry, his genius “Lesbia”. By means of this struggle, artificial and strategic as it is, the poet develops and achieves an emphatic particularity, an unmistakable and therefore unique status.

Catullus' poetic gesture consists, to quote Agamben, in “staking his life on his work”; since this poetically risked life becomes inflamed by a fictitious love, the author Catullus remains unreachable – in so far as he, as a “real individual”, evades the reader's grasp and can be described only from a functional perspective (Foucault).

Barbara Porter, The Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, Chebeague Island

Ancient Writers, Modern Readers, and King Assurnasirpal's Political Problems: An Exploration of the Possibility of Reading Ancient Texts

My paper will explore the particular case of Assyrian royal inscriptions and how they have been read, using as an example the case of Assurnasirpal II's inscriptions, carved on the stone walls and floors of his throneroom and also carved on the walls of the temple of the god Ninurta, which was part of the palace compound. The temple inscription was the first to be discovered and was treated as a “simple statement of fact,” describing events in the reign. Its early publication, and its acceptance as a “factual” account of the reign, were important in creating the widespread understanding of the Assyrians as a violent and merciless people, lacking in any political subtlety or diplomatic skill. The quite different “standard inscription” of Assurnasirpal, displayed hundreds of times on the walls of the throneroom and other public rooms of the palace, were taken as summaries of the temple inscription (despite striking differences). Assurnasirpal's reign has been to a large extent assessed in the light of those documents taken as “factual” reports, with very little discussion of their intended purpose and audience; of who actually had access to them or could understand them, of the relationship of their “message” to the visual “texts” that accompany them.

I would like to explore their nature as “speech acts,” in the case of the palace inscriptions, as a set of associated texts and pictures integrated to create for visitors to the throneroom a carefully constructed experience intended to communicate certain messages to visiting vassals and tributaries and somewhat different messages to the court and king. The throneroom texts and pictures represent, to my mind, a complex “propaganda” (in a non-pejorative sense) directed at several audiences and sending a complex message of friendly persuasion, intimidation, and for the Assyrian ruling class, self-reassurance.

Manfred Oeming, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg

The Image of the Persian Kings in Chronicles/ Ezra /Nehemiah – the Interplay of Historical Fact and Literary Fiction

Frank Polak, Tel Aviv University

Sociolinguistics and the Socio-Cultural background of Classical Biblical Narrative

The language forms used by the biblical narrators are indicative of their socio-cultural background. Narratives from the Achaemenid period (Corpus A) include many features belonging to the scribal register, and Aramaisms in the fields of administrative and commercial practice. These narratives reveal a clear preference for features that according to cross-cultural linguistic analysis (Chafe; Halliday) are typical of written language (long noun groups, hypotaxis, elaborate syntax). Thus, corpus A reflects the scribal culture of the Judean provincial chancery under the Babylonian and Persian domination.

Stylemes of this type are also much in evidence in texts from the seventh and early sixth Century B.C.E.: Deuteronomy, the Jeremiah Vita and parts of the book of Kings (Corpus B), but Aramaisms and other features of Late Biblical Hebrew are not or scarcely attested. Writing and written documents are central to this corpus, which thus reflects the scribal chancery of the late Judean monarchy, also the locale of ancient Hebrew inscriptions, e.g., the Siloam text.

Large sections of Genesis, Exodus, Samuel (and Judges) are not characterized by an administrative background of this kind (Corpus C). This corpus is dominated by short clauses in which long noun groups, elaborate syntax and hypotactic clauses are extremely rare. This style fits the typology of spontaneous spoken discourse (Miller-Weinert, Chafe, Halliday), and thus seems close to oral narrative. These narratives, then reflect a predominantly oral culture, as also indicated by dialogued interaction and negotiations.

In the world represented by this corpus, public discourse is significantly conducted by word of mouth, even in official/semi-official and literary context (singing and speaking by Moses, Deborah, David, Solomon, and patriarchal covenant). If writing is not related to the divine sphere, it is mainly connected to ominous orders and intentions (the Uriah letter, or the list of culpable town magnates).

The social and cultural importance of narrative in a predominantly oral society is indicated by the royal correspondence from Mari (around 1770 BCE), in which the reports of many official envoys, army commanders and other royal officials, written in Old Babylonian but originally enunciated orally in 'Amurrite' or some Northwest Semitic vernacular, are formulated according to narrative conventions that are very close to Biblical Hebrew narratives in corpus C. Some of those reports even preserve the diction of spontaneous spoken discourse. Accordingly in a predominantly oral society the culture of narrative is closely related to those complex functions of a developed society, which in a literate society are fulfilled by written texts.

Ronen Reichman, Hochschule für Jüdische Studien, Heidelberg

“Language games” in early rabbinic legal Texts

As to the fact that the conference is interested especially in methodological considerations regarding the application of modern literary approaches to ancient literary texts, it will be interesting to focus the question in my field of research on the formative period of halakhic discourse in the rabbinic literature and to make some general remarks on structures of rabbinic argumentation, their so-called *Sitz im Leben* and their relevance as to practical application of law. The paper will pay special attention to a dialectical form in early rabbinic Midrash, which certainly represents an interesting form a literary fiction.

Short abstract: One could apply the notion of “Fiction/fictitious literature” to a large variety of texts within rabbinic literature. Denoting “literal fiction” in the case of purely halachic texts should, however, be methodologically restricted to fictional representations of a reality of legal discourse, a common form of transmission that forms a rhetorical persuasive way to introduce virtual mode arguments and their counter arguments.

This kind of literal fiction, a sophisticated form and kind of a “language game” (Sprachspiel), is represented in a unique literary entity in early rabbinic works, the halakhic Midrash to Leviticus, called Sifra. We will discuss the anonymous dialectical argumentation and explore the theoretical interest underlying it. We will conclude with some general

considerations/aspekts on the nature of legal texts in the formative phase of rabbinic Judaism.

Helmut Utzschneider, Augustana Hochschule, Neuendettelsau

Are there universal literary genres? Conjectures on the basis of „dramatic“ texts in the Old Testament and its neighborhood

Scholarly examination and interpretation of ancient literature is per se cross-cultural. It assumes concepts, which are valid for the modern readers and appropriate to ancient texts. In other words: The concepts should be universal. Some concepts are very frequently used in studies of ancient literature are e.g. communication, poetry, fiction, narrative and last but not least „literary“. For some of those concepts, e.g. „fiction“, there is a considerable debate. Are they valid and appropriate or are they conceptual modernisms? The paper asks this question for the genre-concept of the “drama” and “dramatic”. Can this concept be constructed in a way that it is valid and appropriate for ancient texts, especially for texts of the Hebrew Bible? The question will be examined on the basis of Old Testament texts (Song of Songs; Prophets), they will be compared with texts of the classical theatre and ancient liturgical texts.

Joachim Vette, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg

Samuel’s „Farewell“. Reading and Re-reading 1 Samuel 12

Ever since Noth’s “Deuteronomistic history”, 1 Samuel 12, along with Dtn 1-3 and Jos 23 et al., has been regarded as a historical and theological summary by the “Deuteronomist” in the guise of a farewell speech. This paper will focus on the narrative structure of 1 Samuel 12 and contrast it with its retellings as found in Pseudo-Philo and Josephus. The question will be asked whether 1 Samuel 12 can indeed be read as a farewell speech and whether Samuel’s speech is a suitable carrier for condensed Deuteronomistic theology.

Hanna Liss, Hochschule für Jüdische Studien, Heidelberg

The Laws of Ritual Purity and the Construction of Identity: Methodological Considerations on Literary Theories and its application to the Laws of Purity in the Hebrew Bible

Abstract liegt noch nicht vor.

Antonio Loprieno

Abstract liegt noch nicht vor.

Stefan Maul

Abstract liegt noch nicht vor.