This collection of essays is divided into six sections: “Israel and Judaism,” “Foreign Rule,” “Jewish History,” “The Tradition,” “Theocracy and Eschatology,” and “The Haggada.” Most of the essays have been previously published, mainly in German, but a few in English. The oldest essay appeared in 1992, and about half are less than five years old. Each section has its own introduction. The volume contains the following essays.

Israel and Judaism: “The Rise of Judaism: On the Controversy between E. Meyer and J. Wellhausen” discusses the notorious debate between Wellhausen and the ancient historian Meyer about how Judaism arose from Judah and Judeans. This debate of a century ago is still important because of its paradigmatic character in setting out two positions that have been influential on the subsequent discussion. This is whether Judaism is better understood through “external” ancient Near Eastern parallels or from the “inner,” biblical tradition, with Wellhausen taking the latter position and Meyer taking the former. These two positions have perhaps been less important for English-speaking scholarship, but the differences between Meyer and Wellhausen coincided with other aspects of the debate that still continue, such as whether the “Persian documents” in Ezra 4–7 are authentic.
Foreign Rule: In “Babylon in the Old Testament” Kratz notes that there is no unified view of Babylon in the Bible. In the book of Isaiah (e.g., Isa 47), the restoration of Zion is at the expense of Babylon, but the Jeremiah tradition is different: Babylon acquires a new meaning, as a second home for Judeans. As for Daniel, chapters 1–6 project the relations of the Persian period back into the Neo-Babylonian period. The Old Testament created for Babylon a memorial that continues even to today. The main concern of “Nabonidus and Cyrus” is the variety of sources and their individual ideologies. The focus is on Nabonidus, but the many different sources—Neo-Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Jewish—are surveyed, and Kratz examines how much the ideologies of the sources have shaped the history reconstructed from them.

Jewish History: “The Second Temple at Yeb and at Jerusalem” was originally read in English at a symposium in Heidelberg in 2003 and should appear in the volume Judah in the Persian Period (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming), edited by O. Lipschits and M. Oeming. This essay compares what we know of the Jewish temple in Elephantine with that built in Jerusalem in the Persian period, concentrating on three aspects: the archaeological finds, the historical constellation, and the religio-political argumentation. Because of the nature of the sources, we know a fair amount about the temple at Yeb, but much of what we know about Jerusalem is a theological reflex of a literary fiction. Kratz states that the Yeb temple was rebuilt, but I am not aware that we can be sure of that: all we can say for certain is that permission was given for its rebuilding. The essay on “Zerubbabel and Joshua” (not previously published) goes deeper into the “literary fiction” of the biblical sources. According to Kratz’s redaction analysis, none of the references to Zerubbabel and Joshua are part of the original prophecies in Haggai and Zechariah. All that the original prophecies show is that the Persian administrators agree to allow the rebuilding. It is therefore no longer possible to say how much of a genuine historical memory of Zerubbabel and Joshua remains in the tradition. “Governor, High Priest, and Scribe in Persian Judah” (not previously published) looks at the “external evidence” for these offices and then compares with the biblical tradition. Kratz finds little historically certain, limited mainly to the following: Judah and Samaria as independent Persian provinces, the temple building under Darius I, and the wall construction of Nehemiah under Artaxerxes I. Beyond this, the historical role of Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, Joshua, Nehemiah, and especially Ezra is uncertain—even their titles. Whoever would read the tradition in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah as a historical witness does violence to it.

The Tradition: “Inner-biblical Exegesis and Redaction Criticism in the Light of Empirical Evidence” surveys the various types of exegesis: commentary (pesher), quotation and “rewritten Bible,” text development and translation, and redaction. One concern through this is the use of “external evidence” (analogies from other literature) to demonstrate the
validity of the methods being used. “The Quest for Identity in the Post-exilic History of Theology: Toward a Hermeneutic of the Chronicler’s History and Its Meaning for the Understanding of the Old Testament” uses the quest for identity and the Chronistisches Geschichtswerk (Chronicler’s Historical Work, i.e., 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah) for a discussion of the hermeneutical process. Three aspects of “the quest for identity” (in the sense of the question of who Israel is and who the God of Israel is through the passage of time, experience, and history) are looked at in the Chronicler’s history, in comparison with its Vorlage: identity in the text, identity in time, and identity according to the prophetic spirit.

**Theocracy and Eschatology:** “The Kingdom of God and Law in Daniel and Subsequent Judaism” begins with the different perspectives between Wellhausen and O. Plöger about law in postexilic Judaism. It is built on Kratz’s views about the literary growth of the book (see the next essay), with the view about law and God’s kingdom being different at different stages of growth. Kratz rejects Plöger’s opposition between theocracy and eschatology as too simplistic, seeing himself more aligned with Wellhausen’s view. The essay begins with a reference to the different views of law in the New Testament and concludes with observations on the relationship between law and God’s kingdom in the New Testament. “The Visions of Daniel” appeared in English in J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint, eds., *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (The Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature 2 = VTSup 83; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:91–113. Its concern is the literary growth of the book, used to explain why there seems to be a good deal of repetition in the visions. Kratz believes that Dan 1–6 was the original collection, to which chapter 7 was added to make the book eschatological. To Dan 1–7 was added chapter 8 to give a new interpretation to Dan 7, followed by Dan 10–12. Chapter 9 was added last to give a final interpretation of the vision. “The Grace of Daily Bread: Late Psalms on the Way to the Lord’s Prayer” begins with themes in Ps 104 on divine bread and the gift of nourishment. This psalm is quoted and interpreted in Pss 145–147, which represent an innerbiblical interpretation, using the categories of wisdom, prophetic, and Chronistic Heilsgeschichte theology—categories of understanding found in the context of the Lord’s Prayer. “The Torah of David: Psalm 1 and the Five-Fold Doxological Division of the Psalter” explores the theme of how the book of Psalms became David’s Torah. The Psalms do not speak of the “torah of Moses” but the “torah of God/the Lord,” beginning with Ps 1. There are many indications that the Psalter is David’s Torah, but the main two are Ps 1 and the five-fold division of the collection (which is explored at some length). This division follows the main epochs of Israelite history as marked off doxologically in the Chronistic History Work and also in the Deuteronomistic History and the prophets.
The Haggada: “‘Open His Mouth and His Ears’: How Abraham Learned Hebrew” takes as a theme Jub. 12:25–27, which tells how Abraham was taught Hebrew by an angel. With some references to the Genesis Apocryphon, it discusses how Jubilees fills in and interprets the biblical Abraham story in the context of second-century B.C.E. history. He notes in conclusion, however, that the Abraham of Jubilees is a fundamentalist (in contrast to Genesis), which carries dangers for those who wish to use him as a model of how to serve God. “The Reception of Jeremiah 10 and 29 in the Pseudepigraph Letter of Jeremiah” discusses the structure of the Letter of Jeremiah in the Apocrypha. Contrary to those who have seen no discernible structure to the writing, Kratz shows that the author compiled the work with a definite framework for the contents, not only drawing on Jer 10 and 29 but also on other passages polemicizing against divine images (e.g., Bel and the Dragon).

As a whole, these essays provide significant perspectives on aspects of Second Temple Judaism. The interests and orientation are clearly Christian. A number of the essays conclude with hermeneutical observations, which suggest that this is Kratz’s ultimate interest. This is perfectly legitimate. Kratz often mentions not only Christianity but also later Judaism and Islam and is never less than ecumenical. But it is clear that his primary occupation and interest is being a Christian biblical scholar and theologian. Considerable insight is given into the Persian period and also in Daniel and the Psalms. But much of the rest of the Second Temple period lies outside the purview of the essays, despite occasional mentions. Some statements suggest that Kratz’s interest is not ultimately the whole of Second Temple Judaism. An example of a statement suggesting that Second Temple Judaism is only a road on the way to later Judaism and Christianity is found on page 350: “The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha were a sort of theological ‘language teacher’ for the pious and the link between the biblical and the rabbinic Judaism, just as the Septuagint was the ‘language teacher’ for Hellenistic Judaism and Christianity” (a similar statement about Qumran is found on 155).

Perhaps a more significant observation, however, is that Kratz’s analysis of other Second Temple sources and his knowledge of Second Temple scholarship as a whole is less acute than for the Bible. An example is his essay on God’s kingdom and the law in Daniel. With some caveats he suggests certain equations between theological streams and particular Jewish groups. His cautions are well taken, but the real point is that he lists the various Jewish groups (Pharisees, “Hasidim,” Zealots, etc.) without much discussion or analysis, yet a great deal has been written on this question in the past several decades. To me the question of these groups is as complex as any other point in Kratz’s article, yet he seems to take these for granted. In fact, one’s response to questions about these groups could considerably affect the conclusions.
In sum, there is a great deal of importance and interest here, but this volume is likely to be of more value to scholars of the Hebrew Bible than of early Judaism.