Following the current consensus, this commentary treats Zechariah 1-8 and Zechariah 9-14 as virtually separate documents, so that there are in effect four prophetic books under consideration. Each book is provided with a general introduction covering such matters as its historical background, authorship, structure, and literary history. The text is then divided into several main sections, and a brief overview of each section leads into the virtually verse-by-verse explication that forms the core of Redditt's work. The discussion of each book closes with a summary of its main themes.

The verse-by-verse explication is mainly philological, focusing on the elucidation of key words and phrases and on the solution of major text and translation problems. With respect to debated points of interpretation Redditt succinctly weighs competing opinions, favoring one view or putting forward a view of his own. The format does not really allow the author to present full arguments for his conclusions, but he often states a brief rationale so as to suggest the line that a full argument might take.

When the interpretation goes beyond verbal details to deal with larger themes, particularly in the introductory and summary sections, Redditt's redaction-historical theories come into play. Here he only outlines views that he has elsewhere argued in greater detail (i.e., in \textit{CBQ} 51 [1989] 631-42; 54 [1992] 249-59; 55 [1993] 676-86; and 56 [1994] 240-55, 664-78). He imagines successive editions of each prophetic book in a succession of socio-historical contexts, and this provides the background against which the main concerns of each book are discerned.

For example, Zechariah 1-8 is supposed to have gone through three editions. The first, consisting of 1:7-2:17, 4:1-6a, 4:10b-6:11a, and 6:14-15, was a cycle of seven vision reports addressed by Zechariah to exiles remaining in Babylon after the first group had returned to Jerusalem. The prophet urges these exiles to return by holding out a glowing prospect of restoration. The second edition, formed by adding 3:1-10, 4:6b-10a, and
6:11b-13, was soon afterward addressed by Zechariah, or by someone following in his footsteps, to returnees disappointed with the way the restoration had actually turned out. The Davidic monarchy had not been re-established, and the project of rebuilding the temple had encountered many serious obstacles. It was promised that the temple would soon be completed under the joint leadership of Zerubbabel, the Davidic prince, and Joshua, the high priest. A redactor created the third edition by prefacing the expanded cycle of vision reports with the introduction in 1:1-6, and by appending a collection of ten prophecies in 7:1-8:23, reformulating them in response to issues arising from the resumption and eventual completion of the temple rebuilding project ca. 515-520 BCE.

Similarly, Haggai's prophecies of 520 BCE were soon given a narrative frame by the same redactor that composed the third edition of Zechariah 1-8. Zechariah 9-14 was made from four collections of prophetic material dating to the late Persian period, each of which reinterpreted dominant themes of Zechariah 1-8 in an eschatological mode. A redactor subsequently linked these collections and supplemented them at various points, so as to express the views of a predominantly rural, socially peripheral faction against the urban priestly elite that ruled in Jerusalem. Malachi was produced by a non-Zadokite Levite around the first half of the fifth century. Two collections of prophecies, one addressed to the priesthood and one addressed to the laity, were redactionally combined and supplemented. The two original collections were intended to counter the demoralization and priestly factionalism that beset the post-exilic temple cult, and the redaction was more specifically intended to promote reform of the temple cult and unification of the priesthood.

As the texts come under such redactional analysis, they are also thematically subsumed under the stock topoi used by modern historians of the post-exilic period: utopian expectations regarding the restoration in general and the re-establishment of the Davidic monarchy in particular; disappointment resulting from the failure of these expectations to materialize; eschatological and messianic hopes born of the cognitive dissonance with which this disappointment was resisted; the emergence of factions holding divergent views about the viability of these hopes; etc. The reductionistic treatment of some pericopes as little more than "prophecies of eschatological hope" or "expressions of religious factionalism" gives rise to the methodological question of whether this set of topoi is not an ideologically preconceived Procrustean bed onto which these texts are being forced to lie.

Redditt's writing shows a peculiar stylistic idiosyncrasy. Features and contents of the biblical text are generally described in the past tense. For example, it is said that "chapter 11 of Zechariah consisted entirely of shepherd materials" (p. 122), as if this chapter of Zechariah now consists of something else, or as if it no longer exists at all. Simple description of what readers find before them in the biblical text thus gets easily confused with historical description of its linguistic, literary, and socio-historical background.
The New Century series aims to be both conversant with current scholarship and accessible to a general readership, and Redditt's commentary does a fine job of realizing this goal. Like a good guide book it provides basic coverage of the textual terrain, alerting readers to both the pitfalls and the grand vistas, informing them of the observations made by previous prominent travelers, and leaving them well prepared to do some deeper exploration on their own.