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**Rake, Mareike**

***„Juda wird aufsteigen!“: Untersuchungen zum ersten Kapitel des Richterbuches***

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This dissertation is a good example of the impressive results that can be achieved when applying consistently the literary-critical method as it is taught, for instance, in Göttingen by Rudolph Smend and Reinhard Kratz, who supervised this study. It also shows the limitations to this approach of the text.

Rake starts with a thorough survey of the many theories about the growth of Judg 1 and 2, which is much debated because of the apparent parallels, repetitions, and contradictions compared to the book of Joshua. In her overview she concentrates on the position taken by Albrecht Alt and the later development of his interpretation. Alt called part of this chapter “das negative Besitzverzeichnis” and attributed great historical value to it as a more original and reliable account of what happened in the confrontation between the Israelites and Canaanites than the version we find in the book of Joshua. Rake traces back the origin of the well-known expression, which appears to go back to an article by the German student Hans-Georg Feller published in 1927. It was used reluctantly by Alt, who apparently considered this popular saying hardly appropriate for his serious theory.

Rake tries to show that Alt’s interpretation (and the majority of modern scholars following him) of Judg 1 is no longer tenable because it does not stand the scrutiny of her painstakingly precise literary analysis. First she radically reconstructs the original text,

which leaves about half of the Masoretic Text as the “Grundbestand.” Then she compares the text to the parallel passages in the book of Joshua. She concludes—contrary to the prevalent opinion—that in most cases the texts in Joshua are dependent upon those in Judg 1. Things appear to be very complicated here, because in some cases the dependence may also be the other way around, whereas one also has to reckon with the possibility that in a later stage the older text may have been edited on the basis of the later text.

The episode of the messenger of YHWH at Bochim (Judg 2:1–5) is according to Rake in its original form (consisting of part of the verses 1 and 2 only) older than the first chapter and also precedes related texts such as Exod 34 and Deut 7 about the forbidden covenant with the inhabitants of the land.

Rake dates Judg 1 in its original form much later than Alt *cum suis*. She assumes that it was written in the Persian period and reflects the conflict between the provinces of Yehud and Samaria. This would explain the positive view on Judah in the beginning of the chapter, opposed to the negative presentation of the house of Joseph at the end. An important element in this theory is Rake’s interpretation of the verb *kbd* in 1:35. Deviating from the usual translation relating it to Joseph’s hand “laying heavy” upon the Canaanites, she suggests that it indicates that the house of Joseph was “slow to move.” Read in this way, it condemns Joseph for doing precisely the opposite of Judah, who does not hesitate to act.

The book is written in a clear style and the argumentation is built up well and easy to follow, with the help of the appendices with the reconstructed original texts and the lineup of compared texts indicating the correspondences or the different phases of their growth. In this way Rake also helps the reader to make his or her own decisions. She honestly indicates the uncertainties of her theory, where facts and hypotheses meet. One of these weak points is the interpretation of 1:35. One may also wonder whether the attempt to give Judg 1:1–2:5 its place in the history of Israel/Judah influenced the analysis of the text. The literary-critical approach with the suggested original text and relative dating appears to be far from certain, leaving room for different possible reconstruction of the redaction of the text. Here other motives play a role. Just as Alt may have been led by his conviction to have found a reliable old source, so Rake may have been influenced too much by the recent tendency to interpret the book of Judges as a late literary bridge between the Hexateuch and the books of Samuel. Rake’s very precise and valuable observations on the structure of the text and its relation to related texts in the book of Joshua do not necessarily lead to the conclusions she draws.

It would have been interesting if she had broadened her view and had not limited her study to the strictly literary-critical approach. She could have entered, for instance, the

discussion with Yairah Amit, who in her *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (1999) makes a number of important observations on the function of the first chapter as introduction to the book. According to Amit, the book of Judges should be dated near the end of the eighth century B.C.E. Amit also shows that it is possible to read Judg 2:1–5 against the background of the polemic against Bethel as a religious center (see also her article in the *Festschrift for Kallai*, VTSup 81, 2000, 121–31). Within this connection it is also possible to see a relation with the (weeping!) King Josiah in 2 Kgs 23, who cleansed the cultic places of Bethel (see Klaas Spronk, “A Story to Weep About: Some Remarks on Judges 2:1–5 and Its Context,” in *Unless Some One Guide Me ...* [Festschrift Deurloo; ACEBT.Sup.Series 2; Maastricht: Shaker, 2001], 87–94). Rake does mention the article of Amit, but only in a footnote (118). She only pays attention to the reference to Bethel in 1:22–26 as an indication of the historical background of the text but placing it many centuries later. She simply ignores Bochim, including its possible identification with Bethel, and the weeping of the people because she regards these as secondary elements of the text. Her literary analysis of these verses, however, is far from certain, and for this reason the historical reconstruction built upon it not convincing.

Despite these critical remarks, the study of Rake can be welcomed as an intelligent introduction to the benefits and the problems of the literary-critical approach of the complex transition from the book of Joshua to the book of Judges. With its solid survey of the history of research and its clear application of the literary-critical method, it shows the many possible ways to solve the problems of the texts but also the limits of this way of solving the problems.