

concerning possible earlier stages of the text, it was also disappointing that the author's extensive literary analyses of Judges 19–20 and 1 Samuel 9–14 were not revised to reflect this important principle. Without having worked through the ever-expanding number of close readings of 1 Samuel or the full body of such studies on Judges 19–20, the author has not fully appreciated the intricate yet subtle literary structure of the final form of these texts.

This little volume presents a number of issues and suggestions that warrant further consideration and evaluation, and the author's wit makes it easy and fun reading.

Diana Edelman
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

The Balaam Traditions: Their Character and Development, by Michael S. Moore. SBLDS 113. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990. Pp. xii + 157. \$23.95/15.95. (\$15.95/10.95 for members.)

In this Drew University dissertation Moore employs a comparative phenomenological approach to examine the Balaam traditions both in the Hebrew Bible and the Deir 'Allā Texts (hereafter DAT). He concentrates on the application of role theory to traditions about this much studied, yet still exceedingly enigmatic character. Moore's goal is to situate Balaam's actions and functions within those of a wide range of "magico-religious specialists" (his term) in ancient Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Syria-Palestine.

Moore begins by surveying previous research on the biblical and the DAT traditions. He highlights the cacophony of interpretations about the former and diminishes the difficulties of producing a solid content analysis of the latter fragmentary inscription. This reader also missed any reference to an important research tool on DAT by W. E. Aufrecht (*A Bibliography of the Deir 'Allā Plaster Texts* [Newsletter for Targumic and Cognate Studies Supplement 2; Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 1985]). Moore then summarizes his proposal: "it is manifestly obvious that every Balaam tradition already portrays Balaam as a magico-religious specialist of some repute. The present study will seek to investigate how these variously refracted portrayals compare to the actual roles enacted by selected magico-religious specialists operating during this general period in the ancient Near East . . ." (p. 11). He uses insights from contemporary role theory, which encompasses role enactment, role expectations, preemption of roles and resolution of intrarole conflicts.

Chapter 1 surveys the specific and sometimes overlapping roles of specialists in magic and religion throughout the ancient Near East (not including Egypt). Anatolian figures such as the "old woman," who functioned as an "exorcist," "purification-priestess," "incantation-reciter," "diviner," and "sorceress" are rehearsed, as is the "augur" (his term). Moore then turns to Mesopotamia, where the roles of the *āšipu* are subdivided into "exorcist," "purification-priest," "healer," and "sorcerer" (really counter-sorcery specialist) and the roles of the *bārû* are demarcated as "diviner," "dream-interpreter" and "oracle/prayer-reciter." Difficulties begin when Moore turns to Syria and Palestine. Bereft of much extrabiblical data from that general region at any time in antiquity, Moore assembles chronologically and geographically diffuse

snippets concerning specific types of “diviners,” “seers,” and “exorcists” mentioned in both epigraphic and biblical sources. Although the author recognizes the difficulty of separating the role-sets of “diviner” from “exorcist” in these meager primary Syro-Palestinian materials, he does not appear to appreciate the methodological problem of mixing biblical and extrabiblical sources in this preparatory chapter when his goal is to compare Balaam traditions in the Bible and from Deir ‘Allā in the following chapters. Since the biblical writers are generally hostile to mantic activity and functionaries, one cannot be certain if the Hebrew Bible reflects such actions and roles accurately. Yet had the biblical and epigraphic sources been treated separately, then one could easily conclude that little can be known at the present time about these specialists beyond their titles from either heterogeneous collection.

In chap. 2 Moore attempts to delineate the roles enacted by Balaam in the DAT. He identifies Balaam as a “diviner/seer” with “oneiromantic,” “ornithomantic” and “rhadomantic” specialties. These role assignments are all based on his reading of the most complete section of the DAT, Combination I. In I.1 Balaam is explicitly identified as a seer, so that much is certain in terms of role portrayals. Since Balaam is said to have seen a vision at night (I.1), which he subsequently reports to his people (I.4), Moore’s characterization of the son of Beor as a dream interpreter seems possible even though this night vision is never explicitly called a dream in the DAT itself. The unusual behavior of birds recounted in I.7–9 opens the possibility that Balaam can also be seen as an ornithomantic augur. However, just because the words for “staff” and “rod” occur in the partially preserved line 9 of Combination I, these isolated terms do not necessitate portraying him as a rhadomantic specialist. Balaam’s other principal role, that of “exorcist,” is based on Moore’s new reading of Combination II as a hybrid of ritual and mythic narrative. He proposes that Balaam was specifically a “craftsman of homeopathic images” and “reciter of incantations.” Moore thus envisions the DAT Balaam as having a rather equally balanced set of roles as “diviner/seer” (Combination I) and “exorcist” (Combination II). He subsequently characterizes this tradition as being “straightforward and direct” (p. 117).

Although it is clear that the author has spared no effort in trying to understand the DAT Balaam tradition, his interpretation is suspect on three grounds. First, he never presents a full transcription and translation of these very short and difficult fragments. Since there is no consensus among epigraphic specialists concerning these basic issues, it would have been obligatory to set out his overall reading before selecting specific words, phrases, and partial sentences for use in the classification of specialized roles. Instead he begins this chapter with a quotation from Philo (*Vit. Mos.* 1.264) in which Balaam is typified as a diviner *par excellence*. Second, the writer concludes that: “The Deir ‘Allā texts do not lend themselves to precise exegesis, but they do permit phenomenological analysis” (p. 96). This implies that he works from an overall hypothesis to an examination of the data, rather than allowing his analysis of the data to lead him to construct a working hypothesis. His procedure may be the source of the overstatement that the DAT Balaam was a rhadomantic specialist. One also wonders how it is possible to present a new interpretation of Combination II without a precise exegesis. Third, Moore vacillates in his portrayals of the powers who assembled in the DAT vision of Combination I. At one point he calls them “divine beings” and compares their meeting to other divine council sessions (p. 83); yet he also includes references to the biblical divine epithet *šdy* in an overview of Akkadian

šēdu, “daimon” (p. 34 n. 85), and ends up characterizing the DAT *šdyn* as enacting a “demonic” role (p. 87). Where on the continuum of magic and religion, which Moore believes can be distinguished (p. 17 n. 59), do the DAT stand? Has he demoted the *šdyn* deities of Deir ‘Allā to demonic status? Did those who transmitted the DAT believe that their gods and goddesses could be exorcised? Answers to such questions seem crucial to establishing the role of exorcist for Balaam in DAT II.

Chapter 3 contains an examination of the roles of Balaam in the Hebrew Bible: “diviner/seer” (“oneiromantic” and “oracle-reciter” specialties) and “exorcist” (“purification-priest” and potential “sorcerer”). Moore sees the former set of roles in the nocturnal auditions of Numbers 22, while positing an overlap of the roles of “diviner/seer” and “exorcist” in the narratives and poetry of the remainder of the Numbers Balaam cycle. He argues that the repeated sacrifices of Numbers 23 and 24 represent the actions of a purification-priest trying to meet the *’ēlōhîm* to obtain a favorable reading for his client, King Balak. His handling of the biblical Balaam traditions (plural) is subtle and nuanced. The major interpretative “glitch” that this reviewer noticed was Moore’s relegation of the Balaam *’lhy*m to non-Yahwistic status. Numbers 22–24 is unambiguous both in narrative (e.g., Num 22:18) and poetry (e.g., Num 23:8) that Balaam was a Yahwist. One wonders if ancient Israelites believed that their deity could have been influenced by the actions of a professional exorcist. Is this the reason why the biblical Balaam *’lhy*m needs to be viewed as other than Yahweh?

Chapter 4 contains the focal point of this study: the character and development of the Balaam traditions. By development Moore means “any significant divergence in these traditions from the phenomenological *realia* represented in chapter 1 . . .” (p. 110). He states his principal conclusion as follows: “The Balaam traditions in both DAT and the Bible, in remarkable congruence with this phenomenological *realia* in Anatolia and Syria-Palestine, reveal to us a character who (1) enacts a variety of complementary roles, and (2) enacts roles which overlap to varying degrees both the ‘diviner/seer’ and ‘exorcist’ role-sets. This is perhaps the most fundamental discovery of our study” (p. 111). His other significant finding is summarized as follows: “Bereft of the necessary limitations provided by carefully defined methodological controls, *sui generis* interpretations tend to ignore questions of a socio-historical nature and thus, tend to position the ‘cursing’ side of [biblical] Balaam within the parameters of a ‘diviner/seer’ rather than an ‘exorcist’ role-set” (p. 113). From my perspective, Moore has only established the possibility of an “exorcist” role-set for Balaam at Deir ‘Allā and proposed a suggestive case for such a role-set in some of the biblical tradents’ portrayals of the son of Beor. I would thus concur with part of the author’s own conclusion: “This study is therefore more suggestive than determinative” (p. 123).

Is role theory useful when applied to the biblical and epigraphic Balaam traditions? Perhaps. Yet perhaps this branch of synchronic phenomenology may prove more useful when combined with a source-critical approach that seeks to investigate the Balaam traditions diachronically.

Quite apart from any criticisms noted above or hesitations over his conclusions, Moore is to be applauded for this dissertation. He was bold to select the difficult topic of comparing the biblical and Deir ‘Allā Balaam traditions, wise to include material from Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine, careful and concise in his writing. No person who wants to know more about Balaam, as well as a wide range of specialists

in magic and religion in the ancient Near East, can afford to be without this publication.

Gordon J. Hamilton
Huron College, London, Ont., Canada N6G 1H3

Beobachtungen zu der Plagenerzählung in Exodus VII 14–XI 10, by Ludwig Schmidt. Stubbib 4. Leiden: Brill, 1990. Pp. v + 119. Hfl 47 (\$27) (paper).

Schmidt's goal is to reassess the literary development of the plague narrative into its present form. He argues for four levels of tradition in the formation of the literature: Jahwist (J), Jehowist, P, and a final redactor. Three presuppositions about the character of these traditions influence the results of the study. One, that J is a source. Two, that J has undergone a significant expansion by the Jehowistic redaction. Third, that P is not a supplement of J, but an independent source, which is woven into the Jehowistic account by the final redactor of the plague narrative. Chapters 2–3 are a detailed literary argument in support of this four-part sequencing of tradition, and chap. 4 is a brief interpretation of the plagues in Pss 78:44–51; 105:28–38. The literary history of the plague narrative can be summarized under the following three headings: (1) scope and structure, (2) central message or purpose of power, and (3) tradition history.

First, J. (1) J consists of four plagues: the pollution of the Nile (7:14, 15a, 16a, 17b*, 18, 20aa, 21a, 23–25), frogs (7:26, 27, 29*; 8:4, 5aa*, 6a, ba, 7a*, 8–11aa, b), flies (8:16, 17a*, b, 20, 21–28), and locust (10:1a, 3–5a, 6b–11, 13aa, b, b, 14aa, ba, 15aa, b, 16–19, 24–26; 11:8b), which separate into two pairs: pollution of Nile-frogs and flies-locust. (2) The central question of J is, "Why were the Egyptian firstborn killed?" The question illustrates how Schmidt interprets the plague sequence of J in connection with the death of the Egyptian firstborn in Exod 12:29ff., with the focus being on Pharaoh and his refusal to let Israel leave. The presentation of Yahweh in J contrasts sharply from later tradition, because plagues are neither signs nor wonders, but natural indirect processes aimed at forcing Pharaoh to release Israel (*Erzwingungswunder*). (3) The plagues are a literary invention of J, tied directly to the death of the Egyptian firstborn. Schmidt opposes the late dating of this tradition to the exile (J. Van Seters) or to late deuteronomic tradition (H. H. Schmid), and tentatively suggests the Solomonic period (see n. 258), because of the "Egyptian flavor" of the stories.

Second, the Jehowist. (1) The Jehowist expands J to a six-plague cycle by adding hail and death of cattle, with the result that the death of the Egyptian firstborn is the seventh event. The transformation of J can be summarized as follows: the pollution of the Nile is redacted to the changing of water into blood (7:15b, 16b, 17a, 17b*, 20aa, 20ab, g, b), the plague of frogs is redacted to become a plague that more directly affects the Egyptian people and the servants of Pharaoh (7:28*, 8:5a*, 5b, 6bb, g, 7a*), the motif concerning the separation of Egyptians and Israelites and the recognition formula are added to flies (8:18–19), the death of cattle is added (Exod 9:1–3aa, 4–7), hail is added (9:13, 17–21, 23aa*, b, 24b–30, 33*, 34), the motif of the destruction of plant life in Egypt is added to locusts (10:1b, 5b, 14bb, g, 15aa), and the announcement of the death of the Egyptian firstborn is added to the final plague (11:1, 4–8a). (2) The



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