Concluding remarks about analogical analysis present the strengths and weaknesses of comparative analysis. Such analysis of Exod 12:21-23 helped to identify fossilized remains of ancestral cult practices grounded in early Israelite family religion. Steinberg alone among the contributors reflects explicitly on social-science method and how to use it appropriately with biblical materials.

Cook develops a comparative model from traditional African societies to illuminate the problem of death and the hereafter in biblical Israel. Death is already God’s enemy from the time of family-based, lineage-based culture. Family is key to resisting death. Being gathered to one’s people, to the ancestors, is part of the struggle against Sheol. Bench tombs interconnected the generations and created a tight-knit family. In Israel, hsd preserved one’s Shade in the bundle of the living dead under the care of the LORD. From early on, Israel believed in a-mortality and struggled against Sheol. Finally, in the shortest chapter of the book, Bloch-Smith examines cave/chamber and arcosolia/bench tombs of the highland population to gain an understanding ancient Israelite society. Archaeological interpretive methodology uses a social-science–informed interpretation. Twelfth- and eleventh-century highland settlers buried their dead in caves and rock-cut tombs. Tenth-century populations incorporated foreign features and focused on tomb execution and provisioning. Burials indicate that the Assyrian invasion likely hastened but did not initiate dramatic social change in Judah. Multiple family burials, perpetuating the lineage and patrimonial claim, continued throughout the period of the kingdoms. The tenth century was a formative period of Israel’s cultural and social identity.

One irritating feature of the book is the frequent use of the word “sociology/sociological,” which is a species of the genus, which is social sciences. Sociology is an inappropriate social science tool for analyzing the Middle Eastern culture of the Bible. Anthropology/anthropologies are better suited. The book thus serves as a progress report on scholars using the social sciences in the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

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This collection of essays is written not to celebrate Finkelstein’s sixtieth birthday but to honor him as a teacher; the twelve essays are written by his former graduate students. In an introduction, the editors laud Finkelstein’s devotion to teaching in the midst of all his other responsibilities related to research, publication, and organization of the Megiddo project. The editors point out that some of the authors in the volume disagree with Finkelstein in various respects, but they note that “it is a tribute to his integrity that Israel takes pride in the fact that some of his students’ views are overtly opposed to his own” (p. xv). They explain that this lack of consensus “is the best imaginable way to pay tribute to two of our teacher’s guiding principles: intellectual honesty and a healthy skepticism of communis opinio.” Indeed, the articles gathered in this festschrift treat a variety of topics with a variety of opinions.

Although many of the articles deserve attention, I highlight three in order to illustrate the diversity of views contained in the festschrift. Franklin agrees with her teacher’s reconstructed low chronology of Iron Age Israel, and her chapter will be of interest to those concerned with the ongoing debate over this subject. She compares the monumental Palace 1723 of Megiddo with the palace of Samaria I and argues that the style of ashlar masonry, the masonry marks, and the use of the short cubit of 0.45 m all establish the contemporaneity of the two structures. Consequently, one must either lower the date of the Megiddo structure so that it corresponds to the ninth-century date of the Samaria palace, or one must raise the date of the Samaria palace to the tenth century so that it corresponds to that of the Megiddo structure. Readers will want to compare Franklin’s arguments with the recent rebuttal by Daniel A. Frese and David Noel Freedman (“Samaria I as a Chronological Anchor of Finkelstein’s Low Chronology: An Appraisal,” in Ephraim Stern Volume [ed. Joseph Aviram et al.; ErIsr 29; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2009] 36*-44*), which, in my view, successfully demonstrates that Franklin’s comparisons do not have the kind of chronological exactitude for making a substantive case in support of the low chronology.

Gadot utilizes the longue durée approach, so often championed by Finkelstein, in his study of continuity and change in the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age in Israel’s central coastal plain. Gadot illustrates the vacuum created by the decline of the Egyptian empire and demonstrates that, once the empire had come to an end, the area was marginalized so that no single group controlled the land. He concludes that the initiation of a new social order in this region was typically brought about by an external political power taking advantage of fragmented local social groups in order to exploit the region economically. Gazit contradicts his teacher by adhering to the traditional chronology in his comparative study of settlement activity in Iron Age IB and the Byzantine period.

At the end of their introduction, the editors note that the inclusion of papers from twelve students is symbolic, but they represent only a fraction of Finkelstein’s many students. Indeed, Finkelstein has been at the forefront of archaeological fieldwork and debate about its interpretation for many years, and this festschrift is certainly a worthy tribute to his impact on the discipline. This book will be of interest to archaeologists who concentrate on Israel in the Bronze and Iron Ages, and it may also appeal to those working in biblical
or ancient Near Eastern studies who seek to incorporate the results of archaeological work into their own research.

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This collection comprises presentations in the “ProPsalm (Project Psalms)” project at the University of Pretoria, August 25-26, 2005. The seminar’s goal was “to promote the study of the Psalms in general, but also to stimulate the encounter between African and European scholarly paradigms” (p. vii). The book admirably reflects the project’s diversity, including the work of scholars from a rich variety of academic fields and backgrounds. Most of the essays are rooted in the interpretation of particular psalms; some offer interdisciplinary perspectives on particular features of Israelite mythology. Many seem to defend the idea that “mythology” is a valid category in biblical research, a question that for many readers will seem to have been settled in the affirmative long ago.

In a short preface, editor Dirk J. Human explains the organization of the book and introduces each essay in turn. Human’s perspective lends the volume a sense of cohesiveness, albeit loose, that it would otherwise lack. An index to biblical and extrabiblical references and an index of authors cited are provided.

The first two contributors, Flip Schutte (“Myth as a Paradigm to Read a Text”) and Alphonso Groenewald (“From Myth to Theological Language”) introduce “myth and mythology” and the application of this category to the OT and the psalms (p. vii). Both scholars perceive myth as a means of encounter with the divine more than as merely an explanation of some previous encounter.

The next two articles treat ethical and philosophical issues raised by mythology in the Bible and the psalms. Eckart Otto (“Myth and Hebrew Ethics in the Psalms”) rightly argues that the psalms are an important source for knowledge of Israelite ethics, though the specific use to which he puts mythology in the psalms is considerably narrower than the title implies. Jaco W. Gericke (“YHWH Unlimited: Theo-Mythology in the Psalms and Realism vs. Non-Realism in Philosophy of Religion”) examines scholarly traditions relating to the supposition that the God portrayed in biblical descriptions (“theo-mythology”) corresponds to an external reality. This provocative essay deserves attention in future discussions about mythology in the Bible.

Eight contributors discuss mythic motifs in particular exegetical settings. Phil J. Botha (“Intertextuality and the Interpretation of Psalm 1”) examines the widespread assertion that Torah in Psalm 1 refers to the Book of Psalms. Emmanuel O. Usue (“Theological-Mythological Viewpoints on Divine Sonship in Genesis 6 and Psalm 2”) interprets the myth of the “sons of God” in Genesis 6 as an instance of the rebellion of human kings against God, as seen in Psalm 2. Usue makes surprisingly uncritical assertions (e.g., the serpent in Genesis 3 was “a fallen angel who disguised himself as a serpent” [p. 85]; the fact that the description of the divine son in Psalm 2 does not correspond to a historical moment means,