

Review of Mark Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher (eds), *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response*. Atlanta: SBL, 2012.

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This collection of essays takes its cue from Carleen Mandolfo's *Daughter Zion talks Back to the Prophets* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), in which Mandolfo critiques the prophetic portrayal of Daughter Zion, and argues that Zion protests against this portrayal in the book of Lamentations. While some of the contributors to the current volume touch on Mandolfo's work tangentially, using it as a springboard to deal with related concerns, others engage in extended conversation with her ideas, developing them in new directions. In keeping with the dialogic theology Mandolfo proposes, the volume includes essays from multiple, sometimes dissenting, perspectives, and Mandolfo then responds with a concluding reflection, in point-counterpoint fashion. The resulting volume is a vibrant collection at the forefront of the conversation around the figure of Zion, providing much fertile ground for future discussion.

In the first essay, Barbara Green takes Mandolfo's problematizing of God's authoring of Zion as her point of departure for discussion. Green inverts the question, asking whether readers have authored God responsibly by painting him as dastardly husband on the basis of the marriage metaphor. Employing cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor theory, she extends the scope of the marriage metaphor beyond the bounds of the husband-wife relationship such that the metaphor IDOLATRY is ADULTERY becomes YAHWISM UNDER THREAT is HOUSEHOLD UNDER STRESS (pp. 18-19). This shifts the focus (and blame) from the female figure to an entire household in disarray. Green's study of Jeremiah 2–3 demonstrates persuasively that there are multiple household images in play—vines, cisterns, and so on—such that a broader context for understanding the marriage metaphor is valid. By expanding the scope of the metaphor to the entire household, however, Green at least partially obscures the female figure, which also obscures the need to problematize and critique the gendered nature of the marriage metaphor. This is part of Green's stated intention to "reangle the gendered language" in order to "offer readings more healthy for believers who continue to draw on such biblical material as Sacred Scripture" (p. 12). But recognising a larger context does not excuse readers from having to face the troubling implications of the husband-wife image as one, and a fairly major one, among other images embedded in the bigger picture of a household under stress.

Jill Middlemas addresses the question of form "with particular attention to the interchange between Daughter Zion and the Dialogic Voice" (p. 42). She characterises the DV as a "third person eye-witness reporter" (p. 42) who "presents in factual detail the destruction" (p. 46), a characterisation which perhaps overreaches the bounds of poetry. Middlemas' analyses of this third person speaker's interactions with Zion, however, are well observed. She recounts the interchange of voices in Lamentations 1, noting that by "the conclusion of the chapter, the voice of Lady Jerusalem drowns out that of the narrator" (p. 47). She observes that this speaker "corroborates her viewpoint" at v. 17 (p. 47), and notes the increasing focus on YHWH as enemy in Lam 2, where the third person speaker's perspective coming more and more aligned with Zion's. Middlemas highlights the way various perspectives are held together in tension in Lamentations, and follows Mandolfo in utilising this phenomenon to argue for a dialogic theology. Middlemas rightly notes the prevalence of pain and of protest in Lamentations, but I would add that there is also an element of penitence to be observed in play in the interaction of perspectives.

Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer examines the dialogic interaction between Lamentations and Deutero-Isaiah. Where Mandolfo's dialogic concerns are literary and ideological, Tiemeyer's historical-critical approach leads her to identify the speaking voices in the reading drama with actual historical communities. For Tiemeyer, the community in which Lamentations arises (a Judahite remnant) is the same community in which Deutero-Isaiah originates and to whom it is addressed. Tiemeyer contends, then, that the Zion of 2 Isaiah is no "pathetic lonely mother, hijacked by the interests of the *golah* community" (pp. 55-56) but is rather "the outspoken representative of the people of Judah" (p. 56). She draws on Middlemas' five criteria for determining Judahite speech to demonstrate that the first person prophetic voice, Jacob-Israel, and Daughter Zion in 2 Isaiah all speak with a "Judahite timbre" (pp. 63-71). Further, she suggests the voice of God in 2 Isaiah is also Judahite, although of a different nature to the speech found in Lamentations. Tiemeyer concludes, then, that the "intended original audience of Isa 40-55, just like that of Lamentations, was the people of Judah. The lamenting Daughter Zion of Lamentations is thus not hijacked by the *golah* community and muted beyond recognition, as Mandolfo claims. Rather, she remains in Isa 40-55 the outspoken spokeswoman for the people of Judah." (p. 75). This is an important contribution to the argument that Deutero-Isaiah may be Judahite, but I remain unconvinced of Zion's outspokenness. Tiemeyer identifies only one clear instance where Zion speaks (49:14) with two further possibilities (49:24 and 55:1-3a), and a possible thought in 49:21. While her textual work is meticulous and her argument well reasoned, this is still only a small sample of speech from which to identify a Judahite timbre, even allowing for all possibilities to count. The Zion of 2 Isaiah—whether speaking on behalf of a Judahite remnant or the *golah* community—is hardly outspoken at all.

Stephen L. Cook takes Zion's barrenness as a lens for interpretation, disagreeing with Mandolfo at some fundamental points. First, Cook objects to Mandolfo's "abusive-God" theology (p. 80), instead upholding a traditional theodic reading of the prophets. That is, God desired to keep covenant relationship but was "frustrated at every turn," thereby having to send his covenant partner into exile (p. 80). Cook suggests Mandolfo has failed to recognise that judgement is God's grace: "[c]anonical shaping of the prophetic books insists on an understanding alternative to that of Mandolfo, that divine judgment is in fact gracious, aimed at opening up space for genuine dialogue, reconciliation, and human transformation" (p. 80). Yet the overall canonical shaping that allows interpreters to portray YHWH in this positive light is precisely the hegemonic perspective that Mandolfo seeks to resist by highlighting the *countervoice* of Zion in Lamentations. The dominant voice of the canonical collection is determinedly theodic, but attending to Zion's countervoice provides a necessary corrective, demonstrating the presence of other perspectives, however obscured. Second, Cook disagrees with Mandolfo's assumption that dialogue is the ethical priority. Rather than reifying dialogue and reciprocity, he argues for an asymmetric ethic. That is, God is amoral and we humans "must allow God a moral and ethical license inappropriate to mortals" (p. 84). Rather than dialogue, then, Cook contends that there is in 2 Isaiah "a reciprocal mode of interaction between God and Zion based on beauty and the appreciation of beauty" (p. 83). Zion perceives God in his beauty and thus achieves a new ethic or justice, with the effect that her barrenness is reversed and she becomes abundantly fertile (cf. Isa 49:21).

Mary L. Conway identifies three areas of Mandolfo's work to which to add new emphasis: the horizontal dialogue; the multivalent nature of metaphors; and the structure of Lamentations as a whole (p. 101). First, she observes that to examine the dialogic interaction between God and Zion, Mandolfo must go beyond Lamentations to the prophets, reading intertextually, as YHWH does not actually speak in Lamentations. Conway attends instead to the interpersonal dialogue between speakers within Lamentations itself: the "Speaker," Zion, the Geber, and the community (p. 102). Second, Conway notes Mandolfo's focus on the negative aspect of the female metaphor, the image of Zion the whore. Conway points out that multiple aspects of female sexuality are present in the multivalent metaphor, with positive images (mother, wife) evoking sympathy alongside the judgement invoked by the negative imagery (p. 102). Third, Conway observes that Mandolfo's

attention is limited to Lamentations 1 and 2, the chapters where Zion speaks. Conway expands this scope to examine dialogue throughout the book (p. 102). She provides a selective reading of aspects of the poetry and dialogue to argue that there is in Lamentations “a commutual interaction of genders, in which both Daughter Zion and the male personae (the Speaker and the Geber) play significant roles in leading the community through its suffering and along the first steps toward forgiveness and mercy” (p. 103). Conway discerns in Lamentations a “unified message that progresses meaningfully from judgment to pity, from detachment to empathy, from suffering to hope, and from the corporate through the individual back to the corporate perspective once more as the suffering community seeks a way forward” (p. 103). While there is certainly a progression from individual to communal (from chapter 3 onwards, at least), I am not convinced that the community is led, finally, to penitence and resolution. The penitent Geber of chapter 3 does not maintain a repentant stance throughout the chapter, and chapter 5 is by no means resolved.

Brittany Kim takes up the marriage metaphor in Ezekiel 16, citing Mandolfo as one among others who raise feminist objections to the marriage metaphor imagery. Kim’s analysis of Ezekiel 16, and the marriage metaphor more broadly, depends on her delineation of multiple meanings of jealousy: straightforward envy, jealousy *of*, and jealousy *for* (pp. 130-137). She contends that while current readers might perceive jealousy negatively, it may have been considered positively or as morally neutral to the original audience of marriage metaphor texts. She asks: “If the original audience could hear and understand the feminist critique and even recognise the validity of some of its concerns, how might they response to its interpretation of these passages?” (p. 130). On the basis of her analysis of divine jealousy in the Hebrew Bible, Kim answers her own question by suggesting that “the original audience would respond to modern feminist interpreters by saying that, for Yhwh, jealousy is an appropriate response to Israel’s idolatry and may be justified on the basis of ‘mutually held *legitimate expectation*’ of exclusivity” (p. 139). For Kim, sexual jealousy is an appropriate response to infidelity, as it does “justice to the value of the relationship” (p. 139). Kim does then question the extremity of God’s violent response to his jealousy, as highlighted by feminist critique, but maintains that a distinction must be made between the “is” and “is not” of metaphor. That is, God’s violent response within the marriage metaphor does not give license to human husbands to treat their wives violently: there is no bidirectionality to the metaphor. Yet while Kim can argue that this is how the metaphor *should* be understood, there is still a need to recognise that it has not always been interpreted this way.

John F. Hobbins critiques Mandolfo for doing the reverse of what she sets out to do. That is, rather than letting Zion’s voice be heard, Hobbins contends that Mandolfo in fact suppresses Zion’s voice, by making her speak in Mandolfo’s own feminist postcolonial tones. Ironically, in making this critique and setting out to “seek to enable the return of Zion in her own colours” (p. 150), Hobbins, too, puts words in her mouth, likening her to a little shepherd girl that appears in a contemporary Israelite poem (pp. 151-55). In resisting Mandolfo’s reading of Zion’s voice in a feminist and postcolonial timbre, he dresses her in another guise. Hobbins does offer a necessary caution though, making an important point pertaining to the ethics of reading. He insists that no response or interpretation should come between Zion and the one to whom she complains, pointing out the problem of “a great deal of interpretation of the book of Eicha: *the bracketing out* of Zion, the mourners of Zion, and Zionsim, historically considered, in engagement with the text” (p. 158). He rightly notes that much “modern exegesis skillfully elides Jewish exegesis of Zion” (p. 159), ignoring the fact that the lament continues in *Eicha Rabbah*, the *Kinot*, and the *Tefilot* of Tisha b’Av, and so on. Rather than taking up her voice in dialogue, then, Hobbins argues persuasively that “the correct response to Zion’s lament is not to offer oneself as a substitute for the dialogue partner Zion has chosen” (p. 161).

Michael Floyd re-opens the grammatical question of the use of the appositional genitive in *bat-Zion*. Since Stinespring’s 1965 article arguing that *bat-Zion* and similar should be read as the

appositional genitive, scholars have tended to default to reading “Daughter Zion” rather than “Daughter of Zion” (William Franklin Stinespring, “No Daughter of Zion: A Study of the Appositional Genitive in Hebrew Grammar,” *Encounter* 26, no. 2 (1965): 133–41). Floyd challenged this assumption in a 2008 essay (Michael H. Floyd, “Welcome Back, Daughter of Zion!” *CBQ* 70. 3 (2008): 484–504), arguing for a return to reading “Daughter of Zion.” His essay in the present volume reads as a rebuttal of Andrew Dearman’s critique of this 2008 essay (J. Andrew Dearman, “Daughter Zion and Her Place in God’s Household,” *HBT* 31.2 (2009): 144–59). Floyd argues first, that while the appositional genitive may be employed geographically (the “city of New York”), it is never employed in familial relationships. Second, he contends that the term *bat-Zion* refers to a figure personifying the female portion of the population, the “Daughter of Zion” as a kind of short hand for the “daughters of Jerusalem,” and third, that the cultural role of women in leading mourning is suggestive for reading the Daughter of Zion as the one who mourns, consoling Zion in her grief. He proposes, then, that there are *two* female figures in Lamentations 1 and 2 – the city Jerusalem, and her Daughter – the poetic representation of the female inhabitants of the city, who comforts the city. Floyd’s demonstration that there is no precedent for reading the appositional genitive in familial relationships is convincing, suggesting that the convention of defaulting to “Daughter Zion” will need to be re-evaluated (see further Magnar Kartveit, *Rejoice, Dear Zion!: Hebrew Construct Phrases with “Daughter” and “Virgin” as Nomen Regens*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013). But grammar aside, I wonder if attempting to pin down precise identities for two separate female figures is perhaps an overreading of the poetic, figurative language. As Floyd himself rightly points out, Zion language is poetic and metaphorical. Multiple female images adhere to the language of Zion and Jerusalem, and while there may be different emphases, trying to identify two separate female figures seems to be teasing out the poetry a little too literally.

Mignon Jacobs examines Ezekiel 16, reading it as a “shared cultural memory,” in which male authors female (p. 201). She observes that there are “competing perspectives (counterclaims) regarding the relationship and the identity of the characters” (p. 201) within the chapter, such that the text is dialogic and “both affirms and challenges the dominant perspective within Ezek 16” (p. 201). Thus while Mandolfo’s work teases out the dialogic interaction between the prophets and Lamentations, Jacobs demonstrates that readers need look no further than a single text to find a dialogue – there may already be multiple perspectives at play. While Jacobs’ exhibition piece is Ezekiel 16, the same could also be said of the book of Lamentations, and indeed, of each chapter within the book. In her study of the relational dynamics at play in Ezekiel 16, Jacobs identifies and elucidates three dualities: honour/shame, protection/exposure, and commitment/abuse. This identification of competing perspectives within a single chapter adds an important nuancing to Mandolfo’s dialogic theology: while Mandolfo was at pains to demonstrate that Zion, in Lamentations, resists the way she is portrayed in the prophets, Jacobs demonstrates that a single prophetic text may already be resisting itself.

Christl M. Maier’s essay examines Isaiah 66:7-14 with spatial theory. She draws on Henri Lefebvre’s threefold typology (perceived, conceived, and lived space) to assert that “any space described in biblical texts is not only classifiable as conceived space produced by metaphor and ideology, but comprises all three dimensions of space: its materiality/topography, its ideology, and the experience of living in it” (p. 227). Maier also employs feminist ethicist Paula M. Cooley’s theory of the body as a cultural artefact that is both site and sign (p. 227). Drawing these concepts together when considering the personification of Zion “allows the creation of relationships between the city, its population and the Deity; it also allows these viewing these relations from different angles” (p. 228). Maier locates Isaiah 56-66 in the context of postexilic Yehud and the question of the true identity of the people of God, the children of Zion. Utilising the concept of lived space, she suggests Isaiah 66:7-14 reflects a conflict between a marginalised group in the city identified with the “servants of YHWH” and a group identified with the “enemies” of YHWH (pp. 236-37). Observing the imagery of the female body as mother, she suggests that while this imagery may be used either

universally or particularly, in Isaiah 66:7-14 “its current context limits Zion's nourishment to one group of followers of Yhwh who rely on the divine word more than on the temple cult” (p. 240). That is, a marginalised group are claiming the mother's milk for themselves. In terms of the dialogue Mandolfo sets up between “Zion” and “the prophets,” then, Maier demonstrates that “the dominant voice is not one and the same in all prophetic writings and that within one single book there is already a dialogue between different voices” (p. 241). Again, like some of the other contributors in this volume, this is an important development of Mandolfo's dialogism—that dialogue may already be happening within texts, not just between texts; and further, that there may not be one single “prophetic” view. Setting up a straightforward dialogue between the prophetic voice and Daughter Zion does not sufficiently take into account the already existent dialogism within the prophetic books themselves.

Cheryl Kirk-Duggan brings the problem of the marriage metaphor in contemporary society to the fore. She takes a womanist perspective, defined as seeking “to juxtapose and problematize traditional, postcolonial, and liberationist readings of texts toward new readings that expose all manner of oppression” (p. 244). Kirk-Duggan rehearses the all-too-familiar litany of violence against women, in the United States and the world over, before turning to Hosea and drawing on contemporary literary parallels to demonstrate how the metaphor can continue to reinscribe violence. Kirk-Duggan reminds us that we (readers) must not forget actual victims of domestic violence, and resist letting sacred texts reverse the metaphor into reality: “When sacred texts and metaphors that implicitly support such violence and readers may not be conscious of the metaphor's role in that text, have we sealed the fate of the vulnerable and are we complicit in that violence?” (p. 249). She concludes with a potential sermon outline on Hosea.

Kim Lan Nguyen's essay also addresses the crucial task of distinguishing the metaphor from actual people, in this case the people of Judah circa 587 BCE. She resists equating “Zion” with “current inhabitants of Jerusalem,” instead making a persuasive case for reading “Zion” as a personification of the entire historical story of Jerusalem, distinct from the Judean population in 587 BCE. Nguyen begins by challenging Mandolfo's reading that the “narrator” of Lamentations is not really interesting in sin, asking: “Is it true that mention of Zion's transgression is an aside in the book of Lamentations, and is the identification of Zion with the survivors after the fall of Jerusalem correct?” (p. 269). She provides compelling evidence to answer both questions in the negative. First, she demonstrates that vagueness about sin is part of the lament genre, rather than indicative of an “authorial” protest against God's authoring of Zion. Indeed, there is *more* specificity in the accusation of sin and admission of guilt in Lamentations than in other biblical laments. Second, she distinguishes between the sins of the people of Zion past, and the potential innocence of (at least some) of the current generation. She argues against equating Zion with the current populace, which cannot absorb the full weight of the accusation of sin. Third, she notes Gottwald's identification of the theological crisis prompted by the fall of Jerusalem, which, in light of the Josianic reform, saw a mismatch between history and the deuteronomic paradigm. A new theological paradigm was required, as the deuteronomic tradition could not explain the suffering of innocents. For Nguyen, then, Lamentations is “the author's effort to deal with or at the very least acknowledge, the discrepancy - the presence of innocent suffering” (p. 282). Nguyen suggests that “the vague nature of Zion's identity and sin is the author's strategy to suggest a new theological paradigm that justifies the city's destruction and exonerates the common survivors at the same time” (p. 270). The destruction of the city for past inhabitants' sin is justified, while innocent victims in the current Judean population (particularly the children) are vindicated. While I am uncomfortable with the rhetoric that reinscribes a sense that such overwhelming suffering was in some way deserved, Nguyen presents a strong challenge to some of Mandolfo's presuppositions, contending that “the assumptions that the narrator's allusion to Zion's transgressions is an aside, that he speaks against the divine interest, and that Zion is identical with the survivors are basically incorrect and require further revision” (p. 291).

LeAnn Snow Flesher continues in Mandolfo's dialogic spirit, beginning with the universal questions of "extreme suffering and injustice as well as questions related to God's role in participation in such events" (p. 293). She set out to track "with Mandolfo, the dialogue between Daughter Zion, God, and the prophets" (p. 294), summarising dialogic reading à la Buber, Bakhtin, Mandolfo, Newsom, and Brueggemann and identifying Lamentations 2:20-22, Hosea 2, Jeremiah 2-3, Ezekiel 16, 23, and Isaiah 49, as passages of interest for following the conversation. Flesher's key observation is the distinction between negative views of Daughter Zion and positive views of male servant. She suggests that Daughter Zion is gradually phased out, giving way to a male remnant: "second Isaiah personifies Jerusalem as servant and as Daughter Zion, and those who are reconciled to Yhwh are in alliance with the Servant (use of masculine pronouns, but Daughter Zion is never reconciled (use of feminine pronouns) to Yhwh" (p. 301). Flesher examines correspondences between Isaiah 63:7—64:11 (Eng. 12) and Isaiah 65—66 to demonstrate that the complaints of the community represented by Daughter Zion in the former are answered by God in the latter. She suggests there is a refusal to let Zion—the community represented in Lamentations by those left behind – to be reconciled, in favour of a remnant of "servants." Her parting shot, then, is the question "Is the voice of the community that laments in 63:7—64:11 (Eng. 12), the community that Daughter Zion represents, the voice of a faithless remnant? Or does she represent a faith-filled community that understood God in new and different ways, with the result that she was ostracized by an elitist, dominant group?" (p. 320).

Carol J. Dempsey's essay begins with the universal question "Who or what is God?" (p. 343) and asks if the prophetic portrayal is "truly God, or is it the creation of an author, editor, or redactor who may have had a literary or theological agenda that came into play when the Bible was being shaped into its present canonical form?" (p. 343). She commends Mandolfo for deconstructing the prophetic portrait of God, and wishes to go further than Mandolfo by doing away with biblical authority entirely, suggesting that the God portrayed in the Bible is no true representation of the divine. She rightly notes that human imagery and language employed to describe God are necessarily limited, criticising the notion of the Bible as the "word of God" as anthropocentric (p. 345) and following Sandra Schneiders in taking a metaphorical view. Dempsey declares that "the God of the text, especially the God of the prophetic texts, is a metaphorical construction that can be challenged and deconstructed, not to undermine the authority of the text but to allow the community of readers and believers to search for a new understanding of God that goes beyond the biblical tradition" (p. 352). While Dempsey is right to observe that all human writing and speaking about God is limited, grasping at metaphor to attempt to grasp the ineffable, it remains the case that human speaking and writing, including that recorded in the Bible, are precisely the sources and tools we have for our ongoing speaking and writing about God. Indeed, in searching for a new understanding of God that goes beyond the Bible, Dempsey suggests a cosmological understanding of the divine as "Spirit, as light, as love" (p. 354)—thoroughly biblical images, captured in human writing.

The final essay is a response from Carleen Mandolfo, in which she organises the responses to her work into two loose categories: author centred (Boda, Floyd, Green, Hobbins, Kim, Maier, Nguyen, Tiemeyer), and reader centred (Conway, Cook, Dempsey, Jacobs, Kirk-Duggan, Middlema, Flesher). She observes that the more author-centred responses tend to be less in agreement with her, sometimes, she suspects, because of faith commitments. These are no different from any other ideological commitments, however, and the whole exercise of drawing together many different voices from different perspectives serves to demonstrate once again how ideological commitments shape reading and interpretation. There is, as ever, a "deep personal commitment" in an interpretive approach, as Mandolfo acknowledges (p. 355). Mandolfo engages with Yvonne Sherwood and Stephen Moore's *The Invention of the Biblical Scholar* as a foil for identifying her own hermeneutic commitments, which she describes as "moral-critical" (p. 358), along with taking a Ricoeurian narrative theological approach, albeit one that is "more interested in offering a reading for marginalised voices than for the church, or even for God" (p. 360). Mandolfo is generous in

recognising where contributors hold different ideological and intellectual commitments from her own, and acknowledges where these lead to disagreements as well as new insights. This volume is a fascinating exercise in dialogic discussion and the individual essays, as well as the whole conversation, brings important new voices to the dialogue.



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