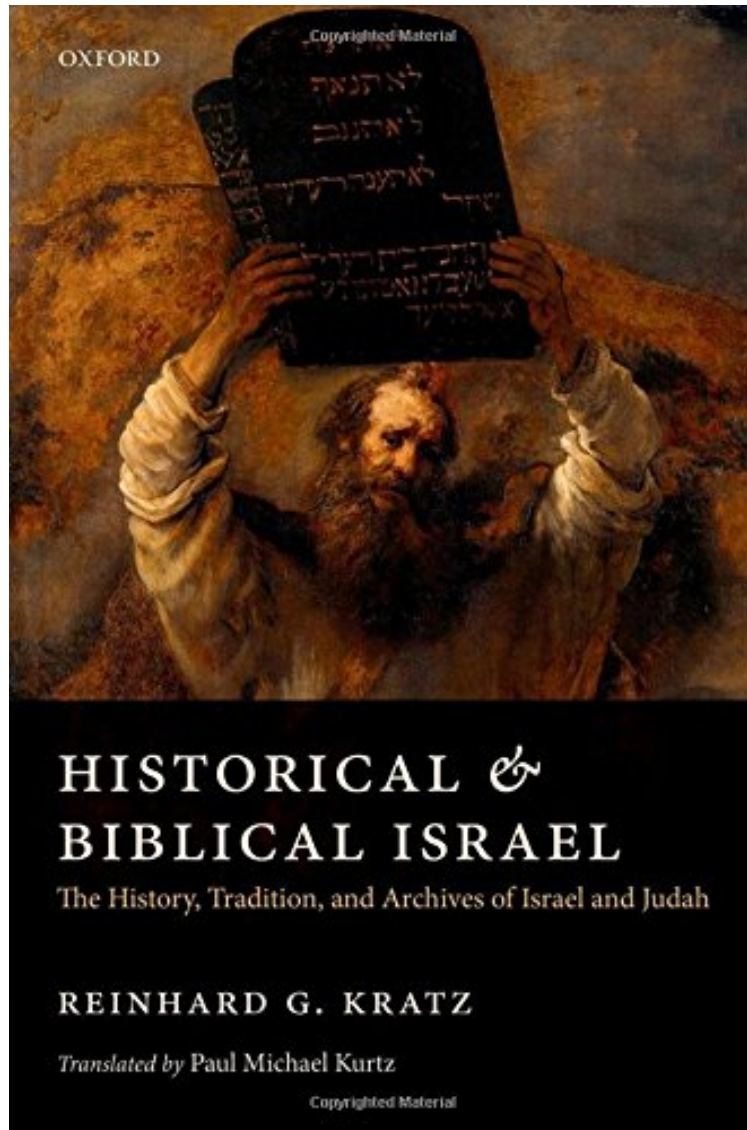


[Library ebook] Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah

Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah

Reinhard G. Kratz

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Reinhard G. Kratz : Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Volume for OT Students that is Well Worth the Investment! By sojtheo Reinhard G. Kratz is Professor of Old Testament at the University of Gttingen. Kratz previously served as an

assistant in the Department of Old Testament at the University of Zurich and held a Visiting Fellowship position in Christ Church College, Oxford. Kratz has studied literary history and theology of the Old Testament, Ancient Near Eastern prophecy, and Judaism in both the Persian and Hellenistic periods. He is the author of several scholarly books, including, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament and Law and Religion in the Eastern Mediterranean: From Antiquity to Early Islam* (with Anselm C. Hagedron). Most recently, with the assistance of Paul Michael Kurtz (translator), *Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah* was made available for the first time in the English-speaking world. *Historical and Biblical Israel* is a tour de force into the life and literature of the people of Israel. Kratz has divided the book into three major sections: (1) The History of Israel and Judah, (2) The Biblical Tradition, and (3) Jewish Archives. Depending on the interest or needs of the reader, these sections can be read individually or together. The first section depends primarily on the broader, external scope of politics, culture, and religion for its reconstruction of the history of Israel and Judah (p. 6). Kratz helpfully seeks to divorce this initial investigation from the biblical narrative and focus attention on the archeological . . . evidence and additional information that can be won from the biblical tradition by means of both critical analysis and historical analogy (p. 2). This section is packed with careful scholarship and reflection, and the reader is guided from the origins of Israel to the Herodian Kingdom. The second section of the book focuses attention on the biblical tradition of the Hebrew Bible. This includes a helpful chapter on the scribal culture, scribes and scribe schools, as well as writing and writing sources in the pre-biblical period. Kratz seeks to present a focused investigation on the transformation of the pre-biblical material into biblical tradition and then outlines the literary history of such through the forthcoming centuries. Kratz work here is especially helpful, but will undoubtedly be met with opposition from some readers. The final section of the book provides somewhat of a blended examination of the preceding methods, as Kratz seeks to broaden his investigation of historical and biblical Israel into the Jewish archives namely the Elephantine, Al-Yahudu, Qumran, Gerizim, Jerusalem, and Alexandrian archives. The book concludes with three appendices (Timeline, List of Kings and High Priests, and Glossary), a lengthy bibliography, and source index that will be useful for future consultation. *Historical and Biblical Israel* is a wealth of informed scholarly reflection. I found myself in disagreement with the presuppositions presented in this volume more than once, but the sheer usefulness of the approach taken therein outweighed such contention. Still, I think it may have the approach taken the divorced examination of historical and biblical Israel that made these presuppositions more evident. This is, of course, to the readers advantage, and I believe that the keen reader will likewise walk away with such observations. Nevertheless, even those entering into the conversation in disagreement with Kratz will learn much. Kratz is concise and direct in his presentation, and the reader will appreciate the scope of the investigation despite the apparent lack in page count. If you are looking for a book that will stimulate your present understanding (or misunderstanding) of the people of Israel, then *Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah* by Reinhard G. Kratz would be a volume well worth the investment. I received a review copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commissions 16 CFR, Part 255: Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising.

At the center of this book lies a fundamental yet unanswered question: under which historical and sociological conditions and in what manner the Hebrew Bible became an authoritative tradition, that is, holy scripture and the canon of Judaism as well as Christianity. Reinhard G. Kratz answers this very question by distinguishing between historical and biblical Israel. This foundational and, for the arrangement of the book, crucial distinction affirms that the Israel of biblical tradition, i.e. the sacred history (*historia sacra*) of the Hebrew Bible, cannot simply be equated with the history of Israel and Judah. Thus, Kratz provides a synthesis of both the Israelite and Judahite history and the genesis and development of biblical tradition in two separate chapters, though each area depends directly and inevitably upon the other. These two distinct perspectives on Israel are then confronted and correlated in a third chapter, which constitutes an area intimately connected with the former but generally overlooked apart from specialized inquiries: those places and "archives" that either yielded Jewish documents and manuscripts (Elephantine, Al-Yahudu, Qumran) or are associated conspicuously with the tradition of the Hebrew Bible (Mount Gerizim, Jerusalem, Alexandria). Here, the various epigraphic and literary evidence for the history of Israel and Judah comes to the fore. Such evidence sometimes represents Israel's history; at other times it reflects its traditions; at still others it reflects both simultaneously. The different sources point to different types of Judean or Jewish identity in Persian and Hellenistic times.

About the Author Reinhard G. Kratz is Professor of Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament at the University of Gottingen. Paul Michael Kurtz (translator) is Research Associate at the Institute of Hebrew Bible, University of Gottingen.