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OF ISRAELITE IDENTITY

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Contents

Shaping Biblical Books through Prayer

(Re)modeling Biblical Figures through Prayers

(Re-)constructing Identity in the Prayers of the Psalter

Abbreviations

1QH^a	1QHodayot^a
AASF	Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, David Noel, ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
AcBib	Academia Biblica
AG	*Amt und Gemeinde*
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
A.J.	Josephus, *Antiquitates judaicae*
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATS	Artscroll Tanach Series
b.	Babylonian Talmud
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BCESS	Bibliothèque des Centres d'Études Supérieures Spécialisés
BE	Biblische Enzyklopädie
Ber.	Berakot
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BEvT	Beiträge zur evangelische theologie
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
BibS(N)	Biblische Studien (Neukirchen, 1951–)
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament

BLS	Bible and Literature Series
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BRLJ	Brill Reference Library of Judaism
BThAT	Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments
BThSt	Biblisch-theologische Studien
BTZ	*Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
Chr	Chronicler
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
CurTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*
CV	*Communio Viatorum*
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
Dtr	Deuteronomist
DtrH	Deuteronomistic History
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
EP	*Ekklesiastikos Pharos*
ETS	Erfurter theologischen Studien
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FJTC	Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GBT	Gender and the Biblical Tradition
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HBS	History of Biblical Studies
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HFK	Historisk-Filosofisk Klasse
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTS	*Harvard Theological Studies*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*

HvTSt	*Hervormde teologiese studies*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
Int	*Interpretation*
JANESCU	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBTh	Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie
Jdt	Judith
JHebS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
KAI	Donner, Herbert, and Wolfgang Röllig. *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962–2002.
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
KST	Kohlhammer-Studienbücher Theologie
LAB	Pseudo-Philo, Liber antiquitatum biblicarum
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LASBF	*Liber Annuus Studii Biblici Fransciscani*
LBS	Library of Biblical Studies
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
LTK	Kasper, Walter, et al., eds. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche.* 3rd ed. 11 vols. Freiburg: Herder, 1993–2001.

LXX	Septuagint
MJT	Marburger Jahrbuch Theologie
MS B	Manuscript B of Ben Sira
MT	Masoretic Text
NCB	New Century Bible
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
Neot	Neotestamentica
NGTT	*Nederduitse gereformeerde teologiese tydskrif*
NIB	New Interpreter's Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTR	Old Testament Readings
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studien
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PFES	Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society
POuT	De Prediking van het Oude Testament
PSPR	*Personality and Social Psychology Review*
RHPR	*Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SC	Sources chrétiennes
ScEs	*Science et esprit*
SEÅ	*Svensk exegetisk årsbok*
Sem	*Semitica*
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SI	*Social Identities*
Siphrut	Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures
Sir	Ben Sira
SNVAO	Skrifter utgitt av det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo
SRA	Studies of Religion in Africa
SSEJC	Studies in Scriptures in Early Judaism and Christianity

SSH	Social Science History
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
STR	Studies in Theology and Religion
TDOT	Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 15 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006.
ThWAT	Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*. 10 vols. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970–2000.
T&K	*Texte & Kontexte*
TRE	Krause, Gerhard, and Gerhard Müller, eds. *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–
TW	Theologische Wissenschaft
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VetE	*Verbum et Ecclesia*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
y.	Jerusalem Talmud
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZKT	*Zeitschrift für katholische Theorie*
ZLG	*Zeitschrift der Luther-Gesellschaft*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

Introduction

Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher and Maria Häusl

The growing elaboration of prayers in postexilic biblical writings indicates that this genre, as well as its literary presentation, became increasingly important in this period.[1] During that time, a transformation took place: from short, individual prayers to longer theological and historical reflections, ritualized recitations, instructions reciting normative values and commandments, confirmations of hope, prophecy, and penitential prayers. These texts clearly show not only that prayers are a communication between the people and their deity but also that the community, who heard or repeated these prayers, must be considered as another important aspect of prayers and their communicative intentions.[2] In their prayers, people addressed God but also spoke about God, presenting their concerns to the deity and, simultaneously, addressing the community and encouraging a common reflection or action. In this way, prayers mirror challenges and needs, as well as hopes and fears, but also convictions, beliefs, and shared traditions. Prayers not only assume different functions; they are an entity of their own, presenting distinct and diverse anthropological and theological discourses. The prayers in the biblical texts are part of this development, which can also be observed in the numerous prayers from the Dead Sea Scrolls.[3]

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1. See Judith H. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, EJL 14 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999).

2. See, e.g., Andreas Wagner, "Strukturen des Gebets im Alten Testament," in *Orakel und Gebete: Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Sprache der Religion in Ägypten, Vorderasien und Griechenland in hellenistischer Zeit*, ed. Markus Witte and Johannes F. Diehl, FAT 2/38 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 197–215.

3. For an overview, see Eileen Schuller, "Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers in Late Second Temple Judaism," in *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple*

Due to the increased presence of elaborated prayers, it is reasonable to assume that prayers also participate in discourses on identity—on an individual level, but also on a collective level. Prayers play an important role for the identity of a group, as they evoke a sense of belonging to specific groups (e.g., the righteous, the pious, the poor, Israel) and add emotional significance to this affiliation.[4] Furthermore, they confirm common values, encourage joint actions, and offer a view on the past, justifying these attitudes and perspectives.[5] Such constructions of identity can confirm already existing concepts, or they may initiate a change. Not only can membership loyalties be revised or the meaning given to social categories be modified, but identity constructions also need to be adapted as social, political, or economical situations change or as the identity of a group is challenged by rival groups.[6] For biblical prayers, such challenges occur especially in exilic and postexilic times. On a national level, Israel has to reconstruct its identity without a king and a monarchy of its own.[7] This is

Period, ed. Mika S. Pajunen and Jeremy Penner, BZAW 486 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 5–23.

4. According to Henri Tajfel, these are the basic elements of identity: "Identity is that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (*Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 255).

5. Marc Zvi Brettler recently used the sociopsychological conception of collective identity of David Ohad and Daniel Bar-Tal. Their schema of generic features and content-based features offers a helpful pattern for analyzing the construction of collective identity in biblical prayers (Brettler, "Those Who Pray Together Stay Together: The Role of Late Psalms in Creating Identity," in Pajunen and Penner, *Functions of Psalms and Prayers*, 277–304; Ohad and Bar-Tal, "A Sociopsychological Conception of Collective Identity: The Case of National Identity as an Example," *PSPR* 13 [2009]: 354–79).

6. See Anna de Fina, "Group Identity, Narrative and Self Representations," in *Discourse and Identity*, ed. Anna de Fina, Deborah Schiffrin, and Michael Bamberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 351–75; Denis-Constant Martin, "The Choices of Identity," *SI* 1 (1995): 5–20.

7. See Hans-Peter Mathys, "Israel und die Völker in der Achämenidenzeit: Bekanntes und weniger Bekanntes," in *Die Identität Israels: Entwicklungen und Kontroversen in alttestamentlicher Zeit*, ed. Hubert Irsigler, Herders biblische Studien 56 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2009), 145–56; John W. Rogerson, "Die Neubesinnung auf die Identität Israels in der exilischen Epoche," in *Die Identität Israels: Entwicklungen und Kontroversen in alttestamentlicher Zeit*, ed. Hubert Irsigler, HBS 56 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2009), 101–9.

not, however, a uniform process; quite the contrary: competing groups try to reconstruct and solidify an Israelite identity.[8] It is therefore not one but a "patchwork of concepts that make up the chequered history of ideas."[9] The biblical prayers collected, edited, or written during this period often show traces of such different identity constructions.

The collected essays of this book provide exemplary insights into various identity discourses reflected in the biblical prayers of postexilic times. They explore the role and function of various prayers from different biblical books as impetus for and as expression of identity discourses of this era.[10]

The first section of the book compiles four essays studying prayers that play a key role for an entire biblical book and its (re)construction of the people's history and identity. Michael D. Matlock focuses on the function of prayers in the books of Chronicles in his chapter, "Rhetorically and Ideologically Shaping the Narrative through Direct and Indirect Prayer Speech in Chronicles." Using a synchronic narrative-critical examination of the numerous recorded and reported prayers in 1–2 Chronicles, he shows how the content, location, and integration into the narrative of each prayer largely determine the forceful rhetorical function of prayer within the narrative contexts of 1–2 Chronicles. In this way, this chapter illustrates the important role prayers have in the Chronicler's reshaping of the new Israel for the colonial, exilic, and liturgical realities of the late Persian-period Yehudite community.

The next chapter, "Prayers in the Book of Jonah: Reflections on Different 'Israelite' Identities?," by Dirk J. Human, examines different prayers in the book of Jonah in order to reconstruct aspects of Israelite or Hebrew identity. Not only the prayers of Jonah (2:3–10; 4:2–3, 9) but also the prayers and allusion to prayer by the foreign sailors (1:14) or Assyrians

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8. For an overview of different approaches to defining Israelite identity, see Jon L. Berquist, "Constructions of Identity in Postcolonial Yehud," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 53–66; see also Brettler, "Those Who Pray," 85.

9. Stefan C. Reif, "The Place of Prayer in Early Judaism," in *Ancient Jewish Prayers and Emotions*, ed. Stefan Reif and Renate Egger-Wenzel, DCLS 26 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 13.

10. The collected essays are based on papers presented in the research group "Israel and the Production and Reception of Authoritative Books in the Persian and Hellenistic Period" at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the European Association of Biblical Studies in Cordoba.

(1:8) are thereby read in the context of the whole book. Through the perspectives of these prayers, different Israelite identities become visible, pointing to two quite different postexilic communities. The prayers in the book of Jonah thus provide stimulating indicators for understanding and reconstructing the discourse(s) on an Israelite identity.

Maria Häusl deals with the different prayers in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah in "'So I Prayed to the God of Heaven' (Neh 2:4): Praying and Prayers in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah." Besides the three penitential prayers in Ezra 9 and Neh 1:5–11 and 9, she also focuses on Nehemiah's short formulaic prayers (Neh 3:36–37; 5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31) and several narrated acts of praying (e.g., Ezra 3:11–12; 8:21, 23; Neh 2:4–5; 4:3). She describes the specific function of these prayers in the context of the narration and emphasizes how these prayers became the decisive form of communication between God and Israel in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Her analysis points out that people not only express their concerns in prayers, but they also try to reveal God's will and intention in prayers.

The fourth contribution, by Ndikho Mtshiselwa, continues with the book of Nehemiah and focuses on the penitential prayer in Neh 9. In his chapter, "Identity and Social Justice in Postexilic Yehud: Reading Nehemiah 9 in an African Liberationist Perspective," he uses an African liberationist approach to highlight the oppressive ideologies of the dominant social class at the time of the production and transmission of the prayer Neh 9:6–37. He argues that remembering Israel's history in this prayer not only serves the purpose of raising concerns for social justice in postexilic Yehud but also advances a (re)construction of the Judeans' identity.

The second part of the book addresses the question of how biblical figures are remodeled by their prayers. By adding prayers to the characters in a narration, their own internal viewpoints—their opinions, beliefs, hopes, or fears—can be introduced. In this way, new, sometimes even contradictory discourses on identity emerge, mirroring the changing historical, social, and cultural backgrounds. Three chapters offer exemplary insights into this aspect.

Christo Lombaard's "Testing Tales: Genesis 22 and Daniel 3 and 6" takes a close look at the function of prayers in these texts. The verses widely, though not universally, accepted as additions to Gen 22—namely, 22:1b and 15–18—show interesting parallels to Dan 3 and 6 on the concept of a God who tests the faith of heroes. According to this theological development in Hellenistic Israel, God did in some instances deliberately examine the depth of these figures' faith. Although the idea of God testing

faith is known from other Hebrew Bible texts, the idea is strongly narrativized in the texts of Gen 22 and Dan 3 and 6. Thus the image of a God who tests is underlined by the context of prayer.

The next chapter turns to King Solomon's prayer. In "Glory and Remorse: Transitions in Solomon's Prayer (1 Kgs 8)," Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher focuses on the transformation of Solomon's royal image and the reinterpretation of the temple through the perspective of his prayer in 1 Kgs 8. While the narration depicts a splendid king at the height of his reign, the prayer presents him as a prudent man speaking of sin and asking for forgiveness. At the grand finale of the temple building, the royal prayer looks ahead and already anticipates further developments in the time of the exile and beyond. Solomon's prayer points to several transitions—in the concept of the temple, the importance of prayer, and the characterization of the king—that are important for the changing identity discourses of postexilic times.

Hannes Bezzel's contribution takes Hannah's prayer as an example that shows how the reworking of a prayer may change a figure and his or her effect as a role model. In "Hannah's Prayer(s) in 1 Samuel 1–2 and in Pseudo-Philo's Liber antiquitatum biblicarum," he first focuses on the diachronic development of Hannah and her prayer in the biblical text and then demonstrates how her prayer—although it seemingly was left aside in Pseudo-Philo's rewritten Bible, the Liber antiquitatum biblicarum—has been transformed into a narrative in order to fit into Pseudo-Philo's neo-Deuteronomistic interpretation of Israel's history.

The third part, finally, addresses the Psalms. The three exemplary studies in this section point out different ways in which psalms from postexilic times shape, reflect, and modify discourses on identity.

In "Psalm 37 and the Devotionalization of Instruction in the Postexilic Period," Scott C. Jones argues that this psalm can be read as an exercise in identity construction through reflection but also through pious praxis. He substantiates this thesis in three ways. First, he shows that the term "the poor" in Ps 37 is not so much a marker of group identity as it is an ethical term for those who strive to conform their lives to God's will through righteous living. Second, he analyzes the hopes of the poor—namely, the hope for justice and possession of the land—and, in connection with these hopes, the psalm's focus on the fate of one's descendants. Third, he points out that Ps 37 is a practical wisdom instruction that views justice as being socially embedded. In this way, Ps 37 offers a guideline for everyday life in the postexilic community.

In "To Sanction and to Subvert: The Reuses of Psalm 132 in the Hebrew Bible," Melody Knowles focuses on Ps 132, which has been adapted twice into biblical texts from the Persian and Hellenistic periods. Ancient editors included it in the collection of Psalms of Ascent (Pss 120–134), and the Chronicler employed a version of Ps 132:8–10 to conclude Solomon's dedicatory prayer (2 Chr 6:41–42). Strikingly, even as they hold some values in common, these receptions of Ps 132 also promote very different programs of communal identity. In the Psalms of Ascent, the text gives a rare account of how David and Jerusalem were chosen by God and valorizes the prayer of the human community as having an active influence on divine activity. In the Chronicler's work, the text also promotes the city and its temple as the center of God's rule on earth and the people's identity. Yet even as it sanctions a similar program of religious practice and community identity, the reuse in Chronicles also subverts aspects of Ps 132.

Nancy Rahn's "Aspects of Dynamic Remembering and Constructing in Psalm 145: A Contribution to the Study of Prayer in Persian and Hellenistic Times" explores Ps 145 in depth, analyzing the ways in which theological and anthropological insights are offered in form of a prayer. The chapter first focuses on different aspects of prayer, paying special attention to the psalm's superscription, תהלה, which reveals a perspective focused on praise without ignoring lament. It then moves on to the construction of images of God and humanity, human and divine power, emphasizing the unique concept of God's kingdom in Ps 145. The detailed study of the different aspects of this psalm shows how its theological work is aimed at the reassessment of well-known traditions by remembering and (re)constructing them in a prayer.

These studies both individually and collectively show through selected examples that prayers play an essential part in the various discourses on identity. They frequently offer new theological and anthropological reflections or anticipate developments relevant for the construction of Israelite identity. In this way, prayers not only introduce new discourses but are also used to (re)shape biblical characters and even entire books in the light of current identity discourses in postexilic times.

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