The decade from 1969 to 1978 is characterized by immense activity in OT theology with a staggering volume of publications. E. Würthwein's review of relevant literature on the subject up to 1969 concluded in a sobering manner: »We are today further apart regarding an agreement on the content and method of OT theology than we were fifty years ago.«

The year 1969 presents itself as an appropriate terminus a quo because in the previous decade the only major OT theology to appear was the epoch-making work of G. von Rad which still exerts unprecedented stimulation, research and reaction, and because E. Würthwein's survey covered the previous fifty years up to 1969.

---


2 E. Würthwein, Theologie des AT, 188. Unfortunately the second article which Würthwein had promised has not yet appeared in TRu or any other place.


The decade under review brought forth no less than eleven different OT theologies, which is an output in a single decade that is unprecedented in the 200 years of the existence of the discipline and equal to that in NT theology. Yet other scholars have promised their own theologies. In view of the wealth of material it will not be our purpose to deal with every aspect to which dissertations or special studies have been devoted. It...
would also consume too much space to discuss in extenso OT theology within the horizon of biblical theology along the lines of the stimulating studies of H.-J. Kraus, W. Harrington, S. Terrien, and H. Gese, although this issue will not be overlooked entirely. We are also mindful of major OT dictionaries and the related »Biblical concept theology«. In this essay we attempt to restrict ourselves to (1) an analysis of various approaches of representative OT theologies with (2) the aim to let the variegated issues and problems emerge and (3) to present some prospective proposals. At the risk of oversimplifying complex issues, it may be advantageous to group together various approaches that seem to be more or less related to each other.

I. Dogmatic-Didactic Approach

The time-honored dogmatic-didactic approach of organizing OT theology along the Theology-Anthropology-Soteriology (God-Man-Salva-
168 Gerhard F. Hasel, A Decade of Old Testament Theology: Retrospect and Prospect

...schema and the like is as old as OT theology itself. It is eloquently defended by Robert C. Dentan and is still in use in our period.

The Spanish scholar M. García Cordero follows by and large the dogmatic-didactic approach in his »Theologia de la Biblia, I: Antiguo Testamento«, 1970. He begins with the OT concept of God (33-429) and follows it up with OT anthropology (469-536). Soteriology elucidates the hopes of the OT with emphasis on the Messianic expectation, the kingdom of God, and eschatology (535-582). Parts III and IV deal with soteriology by considering the cultus and its festivals, pardon, and redemption (583-730).

A much more modest book was produced by D. Hinson in 1976 with chapters on God, Other Spiritual Beings, Man, Fall, Salvation. New Life, the Ultimate Goal, and The Old Testament in the New Testament. W.T. Purkiser presents OT theology under the heading »Old Testament Foundations« in a multiauthor volume entitled »God, Man, Salvation: A Biblical Theology«, 1977. He treats God, man, sin, and salvation as they can be abstracted from the various parts of the OT literature in their historical progression. Surprisingly the wisdom theology is part of the chapter on »Old Testament Ethics«.

It has long been recognized that the dogmatic-didactic approach inherited in part Platonic conceptual thinking and in part Aristotelian logic which translated the sui generis thrust of biblical faith into an alien deductive idiom of didactic purpose. The legitimacy of this approach has thus been questioned by many interpreters. The biblical material is made to fit the dogmatic arrangement of God, man, sin, salvation, despite the fact that the biblical patterns of thought are never structured along these lines. The center of the OT (and NT) does not even become an issue, because it is predetermined: it is Theology-Anthropology-Soteriology or a variation thereof.

14 It was used first by G.L. Bauer (supra, n. 6) and was employed in the 19th century by W.L.M.de Wette (1813-16), E.W. Hengstenberg (1829-35), B. Bauer (1838-39), F.C. Baur (1847), J.C. von Hoffmann (1840-44), H. Schultz (1869). In our century it was employed by A.B. Davidson (1904), L. Köhler (1935), P. Heinisch (1955), P. van Imschoot (1954-56), and J.B. Payne (1962).
15 See his: Preface to OT Theology (supra n. 1) and his: The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel, 1968. See also R. de Vaux, Is it Possible to Write a »Theology of the Old Testament«, in: The Bible and the Ancient Near East, 1971, 61-62.
16 Four years later he published a NT theology. He perpetuates the separation of OT and NT theology started by G.L. Bauer (supra, n. 6).
21 W.T. Purkiser (God, Man, and Salvation, 28) put it succinctly as follows: »There is a
II. The Historical-Genetic Approach

The historical-genetic approach for OT theology is another time-honored method. This approach surfaces in Ch. K. Lehman's publication "Biblical Theology, Vol. I: Old Testament," 1971, in which he defines the "method of biblical theology" as being "determined in the main by the principle of historic progression." Here the influence of several scholars is at work together with the concept of "progressive revelation." Lehman sees "the lines of cleavage drawn by revelation itself," namely the various covenants of God with Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc., but on the other hand, he divides his work into three major parts that follow the division of the Hebrew canon: Pentateuch, Prophets, and Hagiography. In the case of the latter he presents the theology of the Hagiography in book-by-book sequence in total disregard of "the principle of historic progression." Evidently Lehman is unable to follow his own methodological proposals. The Hebrew canon does not provide a historical progression. Lehman is forced into mixing a tripartite canonical structure with a topical and book-by-book approach without any consistent historical progression. From the point of view of methodology this attempt at a historical-genetic approach has not been successful.

unity of theme throughout the Bible: God and man in salvation. He also stated it in the following way: "God and man in redemptive relationship is the theme of the Old Testament that extends into and throughout the New." (34).

Historical antecedents to the revival of the "historical-genetic method" in the decade under discussion are found in the last century, particularly by the greatest name in OT theology in the second half of the 19th century, G. F. Oehler, Prolegomena zur Theologie des Alten Testaments, 1845; idem, Theologie des Alten Testaments, 1873, Engl. trans. by G. E. Day, Old Testament Theology, 1883.

C. K. Lehman, Biblical Theology I: OT, 38.


C. K. Lehman, Biblical Theology I: OT, 12, where it is noted in M. S. Augsburger's introduction that C. K. Lehman sees the unfolding revelation with the NT at a higher level than the OT. See also D. L. Baker, Two Testaments: One Bible, 76-79.

C. K. Lehman, Biblical Theology I: OT, 38.

Ibid. 42-195.

Ibid. 197-407.

Ibid. 409-458.

The topical approach is evident in presenting such topics as "the God of Israel," election, covenant, sin, etc. as manifested in various books of various periods.

The book-by-book approach is carried through for Isa 40-66 (ibid. 304-328), Ps (409-441), Prov (442-445), Eccl (446-450) Cant (451-453), and Job (454-458).
III. The Cross-Section Approach

The cross-section approach was pioneered for OT theology in this century by W. Eichrodt\(^{32}\) by means of the covenant concept. He anticipated the revival of covenant studies in the 1950s\(^{33}\) which has entered into a heated debate, even as regards the very existence of the idea of »covenant« itself\(^{34}\). Eichrodt's cross-section approach to OT theology has found a recent defender in D.G. Spriggs\(^{35}\) and is used in a somewhat adjusted way by several other scholars to which we must now turn.

Th.C. Vriezen follows in his new edition of »An Outline of Old Testament Theology«, 1970, largely the cross-section approach but combined in with a squarely confessional interest\(^{36}\). He is indebted to both W. Eichrodt and O. Eissfeldt\(^{37}\), but chose the communion concept as the Mitte or

---


\(^{35}\) D. G. Spriggs, Two Old Testament Theologies, 101: »On the whole, I consider that Eichrodt's conception of an OT Theology is well able to withstand the shockwaves from von Rad's onslaught. His understanding of covenant certainly needs to be modified and I would not consider it the only organizing concept. As Eichrodt understands it – the God-Man relationship as revealed in the OT – it is both comprehensive enough and central enough to be useful.«

\(^{36}\) Th. C. Vriezen, Outline of OT Theology, 143–150.

center of the OT. From O. Eissfeldt he takes the idea that "both as to its object and its method Old Testament theology is and must be a Christian theological science" and in the structural cross-section he follows W. Eichrodt. Th. C. Vriezen has rewritten his whole work in reaction to G. von Rad's diachronic traditio-historical approach, in order to "stress more firmly the unity of the whole." Here the problem of the unity of the OT and the issue of the center of the OT has become central, namely whether there is a theme, concept or principle that is at the center of the OT and can serve for a coherent structure of an OT theology.

An unintimidated affirmation for this comes from W. C. Kaiser, Jr., who suggests that there is indeed "an inductively derived theme, key, or organizing pattern which successive writers of the Old Testament overtly recognized and consciously supplemented" and it is to be found in "the Promise theme." This "unifying but developing concept," i.e. "the inner center or plan to which each writer consciously contributed," is more recently defined as the "blessing-promise theme." It is said that "Scripture presents its own key of organization." On this key W. C. Kaiser builds his monograph "Toward an Old Testament Theology," 1978. The shape of the organization follows a longitudinal sequence of eleven historical periods which unfold a dynamic and growing "blessing-promise" cross-section under such catch words as provisions, people, place, king, life, day, servant, renewal, kingdom, and triumph of the promise.

Does such a broadly conceived "blessing-promise theme" unite all the multi-faceted faith of the OT? W. C. Kaiser himself was forced to admit that his supposedly all-encompassing theme involves a principle of selectivity, because certain pieces of OT information that bear on "religious..."
history or practice ... ought to be relegated to other parts of the body of
theology« 47. Of course, this is not to be meant to invite the principle of a
»canon within the canon«. An investigation of what is left out of consider-
atation by W.C. Kaiser reveals that among other things he found no real
place for the cultus of ancient Israel. But the cultus is certainly not margin-
al in OT faith! Creation theology hardly figures in his OT theology.
H.H. Schmid, for example, argues forcefully that creation theology, that is
»faith that God has created man and maintains the world with its mani-
fold orders is not a marginal theme of biblical theology, but its basic
theme as such« 48. The issue here is not whether W. Eichrodt, Th.C. Vrie-
zen, W.C. Kaiser, H.H. Schmid, or someone else is correct as to what the
basic theme for a structure of an OT (or biblical) theology should be, but
does not the choice inevitably lead to making other parts marginal or even
relegating them to some other parts of the body of theology?

The magnum opus of Samuel Terrien 49 appeared under the title »The
Elusive Presence. Toward a New Biblical Theology«, 1978. It is based on
the programmatic thesis that »the reality of the presence of God stands at
the center of biblical faith« 50. He argues that »the motif of [divine] pre-

cence is primary« 51, as Th.C. Vriezen had argued for the communion
concept 52, and that »the rite and ideology of covenant are dependent upon
the prior reality of presence« 53. S. Terrien puts it succinctly as follows: »It
is the Hebraic theology of presence ... that constitutes the field of forces
which link the fathers of Israel, the reforming prophets, the priests of
Jerusalem, the psalmists of Zion, the Jobian poet, and the bearers of the
gospel.« 54 This means that the »motif of divine presence« 55 is seen as a
dynamic »principle of coherence« 56 or of continuity and unity within the
OT and between the Testaments. The presence of God is certainly not
static and fixed but »elusive and unpredictable« 57 and manifests »growth
and transformation« 58. S. Terrien conceives his »new biblical theology« as
»a prolegomenon to an ecumenical theology of the Bible« 59, because the
unifying and yet dynamic principle of the presence of God »unifies
Hebraism and large aspects of Judaism with nascent Christianity« 60.

47 Ibid. 15.
49 Among his preliminary studies are S. Terrien, Towards a New Theology of Presence,
USQR 24 (1968/69), 227–237; idem, The Recovery of Transcendence, in: New Theology,
No. 7 (ed. M.E. Marty and D.G. Peermann), 1970, 137–151; idem, Amos and Wisdom,
in: Israel's Prophetic Heritage, Festschrift James Muilenburg (ed. W. Harrelson and
50 S. Terrien, The Elusive Presence, xxvii. 51 Ibid. 3.
52 Th.C. Vriezen, An Outline of OT Theology, 351.
54 Ibid. 31. 55 Ibid. 3. 56 Ibid. 5. 57 Ibid. 27.
58 Ibid. 31. 59 Ibid. 475. 60 Ibid. 476.
S. Terrien has provided the first one-volume biblical theology in the post-von Rad era that moves from the OT directly on to the New. He has achieved a cross-section through the NT in but sixty pages whereas the theology of the OT devours six times as much space. The theology of the patriarchal traditions about Abraham and Jacob are followed by the Sinai theophanies and the presence in the temple. Then follow chapters on the prophetic vision, the psalmody of presence, and wisdom theology. The final epiphany covers the Sabbath, day of atonement and the day of Yahweh. Two chapters are devoted to the NT, treating "Presence as the Word" with emphasis on annunciation, transfiguration, and resurrection and "The Name and the Glory".

S. Terrien's argument is forceful and his achievement is significant. Yet one wonders why the prepatriarchal traditions of the beginnings, the so-called primeval history, are totally left out of consideration. No treatment is accorded to creation theology. Theology of the writing prophets is almost totally limited to the visions of their call, because in it they were confronted with the sudden discovery of a presence. This selectivity truly indicates that S. Terrien touched upon only a few high points of the literary deposit of biblical faith. What about the other high points of biblical faith? Apparently the principle of the elusive presence of God is not dynamic enough to permit the inclusion of other high points and materials of biblical faith. This stricture does not wish to diminish Terrien's achievement. But it is again the achievement of a cross-section approach of the Bible with the limitations of such an approach.

A comparison of Th.C. Vriezen, W.C. Kaiser, and S. Terrien is almost impossible. Among the common elements are (1) their "centered" cross-section approach, (2) their interest in biblical theology, best realized by S. Terrien, and (3) their move away from a static to a more dynamic principle of continuity. The usage of the centers of communion (Th.C. Vriezen), blessing-promise (W.C. Kaiser), and the presence of God (S. Terrien) raises the question once again and in a most penetrating manner whether or to what degree a center can capture the totality of the literature of OT and biblical faith and its rich content.

IV. Topical-Thematic Approach


---

61 Ibid. 410–470.  
62 Ibid. 63–105.  
63 Ibid. 106–160.  
64 Ibid. 161–226.  
65 Ibid. 227–277.  
66 Ibid. 278–349.  
67 Ibid. 350–389.  
68 Ibid. 390–409.  
69 Ibid. 410–447.  
70 See here particularly G. M. Landes, Creation and Liberation, USQR 33 (1978), 79–89.  
71 S. Terrien, The Elusive Presence, 236.  
72 Ibid. 470.
approach as such — that he »wrote the theology of the Old Testament as if the New Testament did not exist«. In this respect his position is virtually unique among most OT theologies published in the decade under discussion but particularly so in view of the approaches of B.S. Childs and H. Gese with their respective but vastly differing approaches to biblical theology.

The »inner unity« of the OT is linked in J.L. McKenzie’s view with the »ways Israel... experienced Yahweh«. »The totality of experience« expressed in the God-talk of the OT »shows the reality of Yahweh with a clarity which particular books and passages do not have«. On the basis of the quantitative totality of Israel’s experience, J.L. McKenzie departs from all previous structures of OT theology in placing the cult first. This is followed by chapters on Revelation, History, Nature, Wisdom, Political and Social Institutions, and the Future of Israel.

Here is a pioneering effort in methodology for OT theology. We may test this topical-thematic approach on the basis of consistency and selectivity. J.L. McKenzie has been fairly consistent but felt forced to depart from his topical-thematic structure in the section on The Message of the Prophets which provides »a very general summary of topics which can each be discussed on the scale of the book«, i.e. he moves on to a book-by-book approach rather than a strictly topical-thematic one. Selectivity is also practiced because not everything is »of equal profundity« and the principle on the basis of which profundity is determined is the »most frequent manner in which the Israelite experienced Yahweh«. The principle of selectivity is obviously quantitative in nature, the frequency of divine experience. This seems to serve as norm for topical selection, if not even for topical sequence. The inevitable issue that emerges is whether the quantitative communal experience of Yahweh (so J.L. McKenzie) is to

73 J.L. McKenzie, Theology of the OT, 319.
77 J.L. McKenzie, Theology of the OT, 32.
78 Ibid. 35.
79 Ibid. 37–63.
80 Ibid. 102–126.
81 Ibid. 102.
82 Even here no consistency is evident. Joel and Zech 9–14 are treated in only two pages in a later section (ibid. 302–304) whereas Nahum and Obadiah are said to be dealt with later also but do not appear anymore aside from a mentioning of their names (ibid. 171).
83 Ibid. 35.
84 Ibid. 32.
have priority over a qualitative (individual) experience of the presence of Yahweh (so S. Terrien). Or to put it differently, is there »equal profundity« in repeated cultic experiences of Yahweh as compared to the unique individual experiences of Yahweh by Moses, Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, etc.? Is a quantitative »totality of experience« in itself an adequate means for selectivity and arrangement of topics?

At this juncture we need to turn our attention to a giant of OT scholarship, G. Fohrer who presented in 1972 his »Theologische Grundstrukturen des Alten Testaments«. He affirms a broader center of the OT than most recent scholars in the »dual concept« of »the rule of God and the communion between God and man«. He avoids the dogmatic-didactic, historical-genetic, and cross-section methods by refraining from employing this dual concept as the material principle for structuring the OT materials into an OT theology. He pioneers in methodology by joining a structural-topical approach that is descriptive in nature with an attempt to translate its meaning for the present. He is bridging the gap between reconstruction and interpretation or between »what it meant« and »what it means«. This shows his theological concern.

The first three chapters of G. Fohrer’s stimulating work build towards his central theological concern which seems to come to expression in Chapter 4 »Die Einheit in der Vielfalt«. Chapter 5 forms a kind of parenthesis, indicating the power and capacity of adaptation and change, whereas the last two chapters on developments and adaptations set out to describe what was developed and how it applies for modern man.

For a full appreciation of G. Fohrer’s OT theology one needs to understand clearly his discussion of man’s various attitudes of existences in

---

85 In the case of J. L. McKenzie apparently not because he departed from the topical-thematic structure in the case of the Writing Prophets.


87 G. Fohrer, Das AT und das Thema »Christologie«, 295.

88 G. Fohrer, Der Mittelpunkt einer Theologie des AT, 163 (italics his).

89 See particularly O. Merk, Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments in ihrer Anfangszeit, 1972, 260–262.

90 K. Stendahl, Biblical Theology, Contemporary, IDB I (1962), 418–432. On the varieties of meanings this distinction may carry, see G. F. Hasel, NT Theology, 136–139.

91 It is difficult to agree with M. Saeboe (Nyere bidrag til den gesammeltestamentlige teologi, TTKi 1, 1978, 41–61) who argues that in this work G. Fohrer is more a historian than a theologian.


93 Ibid. 133–384.
Chapter 3. Six attitudes of existence are depicted of which five are but temporary and judged as negative, i.e. magic, cult, law, national election, and wisdom. The only positive and supratemporal one is the »prophetic attitude of existence«. The former are rejected because they reflect a human striving for security without communion with God, while the latter is »in its core existence in believing submission and obedient service on the basis of communion with God«.

Is the dual concept of the rulership of God and communion between God and man typical of all six attitudes of existence in the OT, although five, including the cult, are found wanting and are considered temporal and thus non-relevant? C. Westermann has argued that the dual center is derived from all six attitudes of existence and charged G. Fohrer with a merging of two originally independent methods, namely one built on the attitudes of existences and one built upon the dual center of the OT. This writer is inclined to disagree with this assessment. In G. Fohrer's conception the center is reflective of the one genuine attitude of existence and the traditions that reflect it. If our understanding is correct, then the charge of a merging of methods and methodological inconsistency is ill-founded. But another matter emerges. The center of OT theology is in this instance not identical with the totality of biblical faith and significant parts of Israelite faith are not even marginal but ruled inadequate on the basis of the center. The center becomes a means of content criticism and we enter the arena of »a canon within the canon« or an »authoritative core« within the OT in the words of E.G. Wright. This issue is known at least since the Reformation and exercises much biblical scholarship today. It brings to mind the contemporary discussion of a canonical biblical theology championed by B.S. Childs, the »canonical criticism« called for by James A. Sanders, and J. Blenkinsopp's thesis that the Hebrew Bible is basically prophetic.
W. Zimmerli has presented the ripe fruit of a lifetime of OT study\textsuperscript{105} in his »Old Testament Theology in Outline«, 1978. This English translation is based upon the German original\textsuperscript{106} with slight expansions here and there and a total rewriting of the section on apocalypticism. The dust jacket informs the reader that »the material is conveniently organized by topic« and that »theological themes« are emphasized.

The task of OT theology is basically a descriptive one, but it is grounded in the view that OT theology must present »what the Old Testament says about God in a coherent whole«\textsuperscript{107}. The means for presenting the inner connection of the OT or the dynamic continuity is found in the center\textsuperscript{108} of »the sameness of the God it [faith] knows by the name of Yahweh«\textsuperscript{109}. One of the two major foci in his structure is the first part which sets out the »Fundamentals«\textsuperscript{110} of Yahweh in the Pentateuch from 1977. Here G. Fohrer's reaction to new trends in the interpretation of the Israelite prophets is noteworthy. See his: Remarks on Modern Interpretation of the Prophets, JBL 80 (1961), 309–319, esp. 316: »The prophets were neither mere reformers nor revolutionaries nor evolutionists. They were not dependent upon old traditions, did not create anything wholly new without basis in the religion of Israel, and did not complete a development already begun.«


\textsuperscript{106} W. Zimmerli, Grundriß der alttestamentlichen Theologie, 1972 (hereafter cited as GATT).

\textsuperscript{107} W. Zimmerli, OT Theology 'n Outline, 12 (hereafter cited as OTTO); GATT 9.

\textsuperscript{108} Earlier W. Zimmerli has argued that with the sentence »I am Yahweh, your God« (Ex 20:2) »an actual foundation of everything following is given« (Altestamentliche Traditionsgeschichte und Theologie 639) and that with the confessional response »You ... Yahweh« has »come to view a center which is uniquely held on to in the entire Old Testament history of tradition and interpretation« (ibid. 640). In later publications the impression is left by W. Zimmerli that he moves to a broader understanding of the center of the OT in his emphasis on the name of Yahweh. »If an OT theology proceeds from the name of Yahweh which is the center of all OT speaking about God, then it will keep itself strictly to the self-interpretation of the OT and remain conscious that it meets in the name of Yahweh the one who speaks and who refuses to give up his freedom in such speaking- (Erwägungen zur Gestalt einer atl. Theologie 84). It appears that in his article: Zum Problem der »Mitte des Alten Testaments«, EvT 35 (1975), 97–118, the center is Yahweh as Lord. If our observations are correct, then Zimmerli moves from a more narrowly defined conception of the center of the OT to a broader and more inclusive one which covers also the wisdom materials (Zum Problem 104–109) which still pose special problems in his OT theology (OTTO 155–166; GATT 136–146).

\textsuperscript{109} OTTO 14; GATT 10.

\textsuperscript{110} OTTO 16–58; GATT 12–48.
the Mosaic era onward. The Pentateuchal picture of Yahweh is the foundation, while the second focus is in Part V, "Crisis and Hope" 111, which climaxes in OT prophecy, emphasizing the theology of the writing prophets in book-by-book fashion. Parts II and III are related to each other as "Gift" and "Task" (Gabe-Aufgabe) 112. The title of Part IV "Life before God" 113 brings to mind G. von Rad's chapter "Israel before Yahweh" 114 and treats much the same topics with a spartan section on wisdom theology 115. Methodologically W. Zimmerli's procedure is confusing. It manifests inconsistency and lacks cohesion.

The OT theologies of J. L. McKenzie, G. Fohrer, and W. Zimmerli share more or less a topical-thematic approach, but they are methodologically so diverse that they can hardly be compared. Each of them makes a distinct contribution but they differ vastly in their respective (1) starting-points, (2) structures of their materials, (3) selection of topics, themes, or structures, (4) sequence of presentation, (5) centers of OT theology, (6) emphases and evaluations of OT materials, and (7) consistency in their own individual presentations.

V. Diachronic Approach

The diachronic approach to OT theology is uniquely related and dependent upon traditio-historical research as it emerged in the first half of our century 116. It is beyond the purview of this study to rehearse G. von Rad's contribution to OT theology, his stimulation of fresh thought and research together with the vigorous debate that it caused 117. His work is the only fullfledged diachronic OT theology published so far. But there are noteworthy studies on the theology of the Yahwist 118, of Deuteronomy

111 OTTO 167-240; GATT 147-207.
112 OTTO 59-140; GATT 49-122.
113 OTTO 141-166; GATT 123-146.
114 G. von Rad, OT Theology, I 333-439.
and the Deuteronomist\textsuperscript{119} and the Priestly writers\textsuperscript{120}. Various writers treat a variety of issues of the adaptation of tradition\textsuperscript{121} and reexamine some theological implications of traditio-historical research\textsuperscript{122}.

There are two developments that deserve special attention. The first is concerned with a radical questioning of the tenth century date of the »so-called Yahwist« and his unity. H.H. Schmid argues for the proximity of the »so-called Yahwist« with that of the Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic formation of tradition\textsuperscript{123}. R. Rendtorff raises questions about the Yahwist as theologian and dismisses the idea of a Yahwist theology altogether, giving only restrained support for a »Priestly« theological stratum\textsuperscript{124}. This has issued in a lively interchange of international scholarly opinion\textsuperscript{125} in which even the whole traditio-historical enterprise is under attack\textsuperscript{126}. Whatever the final outcome of these stirrings in these troubled waters may be, it is clear already that the consensus of traditio-historical research is severely shaken and that the consequences for a diachronic traditio-historical OT theology are potentially immense\textsuperscript{127}.


\textsuperscript{120} For example, S.E. McEvenue, The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, 1971.


\textsuperscript{122} D.A. Knight, ed., Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament, 1977, with thirteen contributors of international standing.

\textsuperscript{123} H.H. Schmid, Der sogenannte Jahwist, Beobachtungen und Fragen zur Pentateuchforschung, 1976.


\textsuperscript{126} J. van Seters, Abraham in History and Tradition, 1975, 139–148; idem, Form-Criticism in the Pentateuch: A Crisis in Methodology. Paper presented on Nov. 21, 1978, Annual Meeting of SBL, New Orleans, USA.

Another trend takes its stimulation from G. von Rad and aims at a diachronic traditio-historical biblical theology. At the forefront is H. Gese from the field of OT studies and P. Stuhlmacher from the field of NT studies. H. Gese suggests that OT theology «must be understood essentially as an historical process of development. Only in this way does a theology achieve unity, and only then can the question of its relationship to the New Testament be raised.» His program of «theology as formation of tradition» claims that «there is neither a Christian nor a Jewish theology of the OT, but one theology of the OT realized by means of the OT formation of tradition». The programmatic thesis is that the NT forms the conclusion of the formation of tradition begun in the OT, so that «the NT brings about the OT … [and] brings the so-called OT to an end». These conceptions bring G. von Rad’s position to a logical conclusion.

Reactions to the proposals of H. Gese’s traditio-historical biblical theology come from a variety of quarters. D. A. Knight concludes that the «traditio-historical method cannot be used to explain the essential relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament». The process of growth comes to an end within the OT and what follows is «Auslegungsgeschichte» or a post-history of the text. H.-J. Kraus charges H. Gese with transforming «theology into a phenomenology of tradition history» built upon an evolutionary model with an entirely new ontology. The reinterpretation of the vertical dimension into the horizontal level remains a problematical core issue. Since H. Gese’s proposals are part and parcel of the theory of the late closing of the canon at Jamnia and the supposition of an extensive reduction of material in the process of canonization, an earlier closing of the canon by the time of

---

128 On H. Gese, see supra, n. 8. P. Stuhlmacher, Schriftauslegung auf dem Wege zur bibli- schen Theologie, 1975, the central part of which appears as: Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture, 1978; idem, Zum Thema: Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments, in: Biblische Theologie heute (ed. K. Haacker), 1977, 23–60.
129 H. Gese, Tradition and Biblical Theology, 303.
130 H. Gese, Vom Sinai zum Zion, 18.
131 Ibid. 17.
132 H. Gese, Zur biblischen Theologie, 11.
133 D. A. Knight, Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel, 1973, 139.
134 Ibid. 139 n. 110.
135 J.D. Crossan, Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Biblical Criticism, BR 22 (1977), 44.
136 H.-J. Kraus, Theologie als Traditionsbildung?, in: Biblische Theologie heute, 66.
138 H. Gese, Tradition and Biblical Theology, 323; idem, Zur biblischen Theologie, 11–13; idem, Vom Sinai zum Zion, 16–17.
Christ\textsuperscript{139} or even as early as the second century B.C. as strongly argued by S. Z. Leiman\textsuperscript{140} may be devastating for this central argument of H. Gese.

Without having touched on all the details and issues in the decade from 1969 to 1978 as they bear on OT theology, it can be concluded that the issues of method, scope, purpose, function, and context of OT theology reveal unprecedented complexity. Although more OT theologies were published in this decade than in any other decade in the two centuries of the existence of the discipline, there is less agreement today on basic issues than in any other period in this century. This is true even without giving any consideration to the synchronic approach of structuralism\textsuperscript{141} and its call for a »literary theology« in which biblical theology uses »the Bible as its creative matrix« for both »structural and historical axes simultaneously«\textsuperscript{142}. If there is any trend, then one may suggest greater sensitivity for OT theology as part of biblical theology and the relationship of the OT to the New.

VI. Multiplex Approach

Without attempting to be all-inclusive, we wish to sketch some prospective proposals for a multiplex approach to OT theology which hopefully avoid some of the dangers noted before and which seek to be fully sensitive to the biblical text in all its variegated richness:

1. The content of OT theology is indicated beforehand inasmuch as this enterprise is a theology of the OT and not just parts thereof. OT theology must not be insensitive to the stepchildren of the discipline such as wisdom theology, creation theology, or the theology of such writings as the historical books of the OT, or even Ruth and Esther.

2. The task of OT theology consists of providing summary explanations and interpretation of the final form\textsuperscript{143} of the individual OT docu-

\textsuperscript{139} D. A. Knight, Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel, 140.


\textsuperscript{142} J. D. Crossan, Waking the Bible, 281.

\textsuperscript{143} H.-J. Kraus (Die Biblische Theologie 365) insists that the »final form is in need of being presented by interpretation and summary« in fulfilling the actual task of Biblical theology. J. Blenkinsopp (Prophecy and Canon 139) insists that »if biblical theology means a theology of the Bible it must take account of the Bible in its final form and what that form means for theology«. From different perspectives B. S. Childs suggests that the final canonical form is the context for biblical theology (Biblical Theology in Crisis 99–122)
ments or blocks of writings with a view to let their various themes, motifs, and concepts emerge and indicates their dynamic interrelationship. This task distinguishes OT theology from the religion of ancient Israel \textsuperscript{144} and the religions of the ancient Near East \textsuperscript{145} as well as a history of the transmission of tradition.

3. The \textit{structure} of OT theology follows the two-pronged multiplex approach that presents in a first step the theologies of the various OT books and blocks of writings which stand next to each other in all their variety and diversity and then proceeds to the second step of a multitrack presentation of the longitudinal themes as they emerged from the individual theologies. This procedure allows all voices of the OT to be heard and frees the theologian from the \textit{tour de force} of a unilinear structuring concept or principle.

4. The \textit{purpose} of the multiplex approach of OT theology is to recognize the variegated theologies and multifaceted longitudinal themes in all their richness with a view to perceive the dynamic unity that binds the OT together and to explicate their intrinsic interrelationship wherever it becomes transparent. The patterns of unity appear to be polychromatic and can hardly be exhausted by a single theme, principle, or center.

5. The final \textit{aim} of the multiplex approach for the Christian theologian engaged in OT theology points beyond the OT inasmuch as it is part of the larger whole of the Bible of both Testaments. An integral OT theology is part of biblical theology of which the other part is NT theology. The multiplex approach has the inherent capacity to overcome an atomistic approach to the study of Scripture, is sensitive and open to the total canon, indicates continuity and change as well as old and new. It urges the rediscovery of the significance of the OT (and the NT) for the religious thinking of modern man.

These proposals of a multiplex approach for OT theology \textsuperscript{146} seek to take seriously the rich theological variety of the OT texts without forcing them into one single mold. Our affirmation that God is the center of the

\textit{and that -the significance of the final form of the biblical literature is that it alone bears witness to the full history of revelation} (The Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature 47).

\textsuperscript{144} An approach that conceives OT theology in terms of the history of religion should be called \textit{history of Israelite religion}. W. Zimmerli (Erwägungen zur Gestalt einer atl. Theologie 87–90) argues for a distinction of OT theology and a history of Israelite religion. The following provided volumes on both OT theology and the religion of Israel: W. Eichrodt, Religionsgeschichte Israels, 1969; Th. C. Vriezen, The Religion of Ancient Israel, 1967; G. Fohrer, Geschichte der israelitischen Religion, 1969.

\textsuperscript{145} J. Barr (Biblical Theology, IDBSup 1976, 110) would like to see a close relationship between both and OT theology, but runs the danger of reverting back to a history-oriented approach of an earlier period of OT theology.

\textsuperscript{146} For a more detailed exposition for OT theology, see G. F. Hasel, OT Theology, 129–143, and for NT theology, see G. F. Hasel, NT Theology, 204–220.
OT does not isolate it in a static way for a structure of an OT theology. The center of the OT is the dynamic self-revealing God whose presence is everywhere either directly or indirectly, but beyond the reach of a principle. The multiplex approach is not easy to follow. Ultimately it plays its own key role in the quest for an authentically "biblical" theology. The challenge of the multiplex approach may be of the kind that will gain victory over any temptation that seeks easier paths of which there are many.

The decade from 1969 to 1978 is one of the richest in the field of OT theology. Six major approaches are used by scholars: (1) The dogmatic-didactic approach (M. García Cordero, W. T. Purkiser) follows the God-Man-Salvation division of systematic theology. (2) The historical-genetic approach (C. K. Lehman) attempts to combine "progressive revelation" with a canonical sequence. (3) The cross-section approach (W. Eichrodt, T. C. Vriezen, W. C. Kaiser, S. Terrien) employs a center for a cross-section through the OT. (4) The topical-thematic approach (J. L. McKenzie, G. Fohrer, W. Zimmerli) is variegated. (5) The diachronic approach (G. von Rad) has developed into a traditio-historical biblical theology (H. Gese). (6) The multiplex approach (G. F. Hasel) seeks to overcome the weaknesses of the former approaches with a two-pronged attempt to present the various theologies of the OT documents and the multitrack longitudinal themes.

The Formula X-ָּּ and X-ָּּ: Some Characteristics of Historiographical Writing in Israel

By Gershon Brin

(Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv)

In the Bible the forms X-ָּּ ("on the day of") and X-ָּּ ("in the days of") are used as definitions of time and are of great importance for the study of the ways in which terms of historiographic writing crystallized in the Bible. We shall discuss below those writings in which these phrases appear, how they are used, as well as their function in the framework in which they are used.

149 The OT theologies of C. Westermann, Theologie des Alten Testaments in Grundzügen, 1978, and R. E. Clements, Old Testament Theology: A Fresh Approach, 1978, appeared after this essay was in the hands of the printers. For detailed discussions of these approaches, see the forthcoming 3rd edition of G. F. Hasel, OT Theology, 1982.