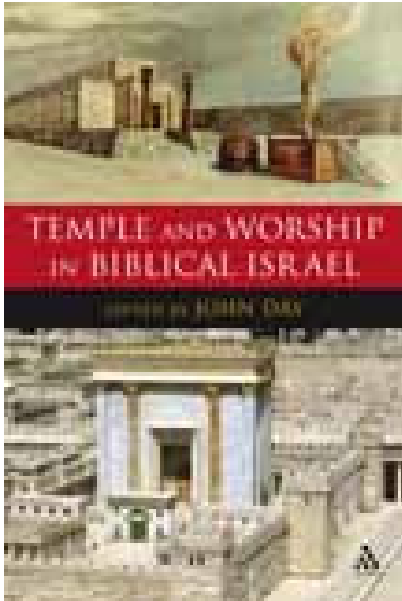


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Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar

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This volume, edited by John Day, is a collection of essays that are based on papers that were presented at the Oxford Old Testament Seminar meetings during the years 2001–2003. As in previous volumes on other topics in this series, the volume under review contains contributions dealing with a wide range of topics contained within the general heading “Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel.” Following a preface and lists of abbreviations and contributors, the book is divided into three parts.

Part 1, “Temples and High Places in Israel and the Canaanite World,” includes: (1) Mark S. Smith, “Like Deities, Like Temples (Like People)” (3–27); (2) Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, “*MASSEBOT* in the Israelite Cult: An Argument for Rendering Implicit Cultic Criteria Explicit” (28–39); and (3) Simcha Shalom-Brooks, “From Gibeon to Gibeah: High Places of the Kingdom” (40–59).

Part 2, “Temple and Worship in the Old Testament,” contains the following essays: (1) Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, “YHWH’s Exalted House: Aspects of the Design and Symbolism of Solomon’s Temple” (63–110); (2) John Barton, “The Prophets and the Cult” (111–22); (3) H. G. M. Williamson, “Temple and Worship in Isaiah 6” (123–44); (4) Paul M. Joyce, “Temple and Worship in Ezekiel 40–48” (145–63); (5) Jill Middlemas,

“Divine Reversal and the Role of the Temple in Trito-Isaiah” (164–87); (6) Anselm C. Hagedorn, “Placing (a) God: Central Place Theory in Deuteronomy 12 and at Delphi” (188–211); (7) Ian Wilson, “Merely a Container? The Ark in Deuteronomy” (212–49); (8) John Day, “Whatever Happened to the Ark of the Covenant?” (250–70); (9) Philip S. Johnston, “Ordeals in the Psalms?” (271–91); (10) Stuart Weeks, “Wisdom Psalms” (292–307); (11) Susan Gillingham, “The Zion Traditions and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter” (308–41); (12) Deborah W. Rooke, “The Day of Atonement as a Ritual of Validation for the High Priest” (342–64); and (13) John Jarick, “The Temple of David in the Book of Chronicles” (365–81).

Part 3, “The Temple in Late Second Temple Judaism and in the New Testament,” includes: (1) C. T. R. Hayward, “Understanding of the Temple Service in the Septuagint Pentateuch” (385–400); (2) Michael A. Knibb, “Temple and Cult in Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal Writings from before the Common Era” (401–16); (3) George J. Brooke, “The Ten Temples in the Dead Sea Scrolls” (417–34); (4) Molly M. Zahn, “New Voices, Ancient Words: The Temple Scroll’s Reuse of the Bible” (435–58); (5) Martin Goodman, “The Temple in First Century CE Judaism” (459–68); (6) Christopher Rowland, “The Temple in the New Testament” (469–83); (7) and Larry J. Kreitzer, “The Messianic Man of Peace as Temple Builder: Solomonic Imagery in Ephesians 2:13–22” (484–512). The book concludes with indexes of biblical and other references, and of authors.

Due to the limitations of space, I will not discuss all of the contributions but rather focus on several that appeared in my eyes to be of interest and/or importance or requiring comment.

E. Bloch-Smith discusses the archaeological evidence for *maṣṣebot* in the Israelite cult. Basing her discussion on Renfrew’s classification of cult in *The Archaeology of Cult* (1985), she attempts to examine various *maṣṣebot* that have been identified at various Israelite sites to see whether they meet the required criteria of actually being of cultic connotations—rather than being more a figment of the excavator’s imagination. While justifiably being rather skeptical of some of the very common identifications of *maṣṣebot* in the archaeological record, I feel that she is overly “deconstructive,” leading to denying a cultic significance to many objects that can be identified as *maṣṣebot* and justifiably be connected to cult.

Shalom-Brooks’s discussion of the cultic role of Gibeah is a rather antiquated and outdated foray into Albrightian style biblical archaeology of the type that gave this profession a bad name in many circles. The essay is replete with inaccuracies and does not contain up-to-date information or demonstrate familiarity with contemporary Iron Age archaeology.

V. A. Hurwitz's contribution is perhaps the most significant in the volume. Hurwitz majestically surveys the symbolism, design, and textual and archaeological parallels to just about every aspect of the "First" Temple in Jerusalem, impressively covering an enormous amount of literature, dealing with the most up-to-date studies on this issue. This study is a "must" for anyone interested in studying the temple in Jerusalem during the biblical period or, for that matter, any aspect related to the cult in Iron Age Israel.

J. Barton's study is a very well thought out assessment of the supposed dichotomy between the temple ritual and antiritualistic tendencies of the prophets. While much of recent research has questioned whether this dichotomy existed, suggesting that it in fact may be a creation of modern (mainly Protestant) research, Barton cautions that one can recognize such dichotomies in ancient societies such as Israel and that this might be a very important socioreligious facet of ancient Israelite society: the tension between ritualistic and antiritualistic sentiments.

A. C. Hagedorn writes a very interesting piece in which he discusses the role of "Central Place Theory" in understanding the locations and roles of the Israelite sanctuaries and compares them to ancient Greek sanctuaries. He suggests that one can identify a strong change in the "sacred landscape" of Israel, between a noncentralized cult in pre-Deuteronomic texts and the very Jerusalem-centered cult of Deuteronomy. While this is very interesting, I believe he has missed some important studies that are relevant for this, such as my "Does Size Count? Urban and Cultic Perspectives on the Rural Landscape During the Middle Bronze Age II" (in *The Rural Landscape of Ancient Israel* [ed. A. Maeir, S. Dar, and Z. Safrai; British Archaeological Reports International Series 1121; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2003], 61–69) and A. Faust's "The Canaanite Village: Social Structure of Middle Bronze Age Rural Communities" (*Levant* 37 [2005]: 105–25), both discussions of the role of the rural temple in Middle Bronze Age Canaan that are very relevant for his study, as well as S. Alcock's study of the "sacred landscape" of ancient Greece in *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

J. Day, the editor of the volume, provides one of the most interesting studies in the volume. He attempts to summarize and assess what is known about what happened to the ark of the covenant. Due to the fact that this topic has not been dealt with in a comprehensive manner by any scholar, but has been extensively discussed in various popular and even "crackpot" forums, the study provides a very well thought out assessment of what is known. Although many very interesting explanations have been raised (such as the ark being taken by the Queen of Sheba or by Shishak), Day concludes that it most likely disappeared around the time of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem

in 586 B.C.E. and was then simply melted down, a thought that may be rather disconcerting for many who still hope to find it somewhere!

G. J. Brooke provides a very nice survey of the role and significance of the temple(s) in the Dead Sea Scrolls literature, attempting to assess the tension between actual temple in Jerusalem in the late Second Temple period and the theoretical temple(s) that the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls envisioned.

C. Rowland summarizes the view of the temple in Jerusalem in the New Testament, focusing on the theological role, whether positive or negative, that the temple played in early Christianity, stressing nuances between the different parts of the New Testament.

All told, this volume contains a very varied and wide-ranging group of studies on topics relating to cult and worship in ancient Israel. While not all of the studies are of the same caliber, the volume does make an important contribution in bringing together some very important studies in this field.