As its refreshing simple and forthright title aptly conveys, the book under review is a Festschrift honoring noted biblical scholar Ehud Ben Zvi, professor emeritus at the University of Alberta. The editors, Ian Douglas Wilson, Ben Zvi’s former student, and Diana V. Edelman, a longtime colleague and collaborator, assembled thirty-one contributors. Their papers, after some creative regrouping by the editors, fall into three wide-ranging categories. Part 1, titled “History and Historiography,” includes twelve contributions. Yairah Amit writes on “Shechem in Deuteronomy: A Seemingly Hidden Polemic.” Bob Becking addresses Menahem’s atrocities at Tiphsah/Tappuah in 2 Kgs 15:16. Athalya Brenner-Idan provides a fascinating discussion of the biblical treatment of royals with foreign mothers in light of the clear emphasis for ethnically “appropriate” (wives and) mothers in selected texts. In her paper “Images of Tranquility in the Book of Judges,” Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher focuses much of her effort on Judg 17–18 and observes that the quest for lasting rest and stability remains unresolved and unanswered by the narrator. The narrator, in turn, soberly recounts, nearly without comment (although with implied concern), each of these often-troubling cyclical accounts. Gary Knoppers presents an essay on the relationship between Solomon and Huram (Hiram) of Tyre in Chronicles and the building of the temple. William Morrow searches for historical memories imbedded within Deut 2:10–23, primarily focused on the Ammonites,
Moabites, Edomites, and Philistines. Reinhard Müller evaluates the internal data from Kings that explain the failure of the Northern Kingdom from the perspective of the DtrH. Ben Zvi’s teacher, Nadav Na’amán, contributes his interpretation of the Barley Ostracon from Samaria, suggesting it functioned as a student exercise to properly express a blessing. Richard Nelson revisits an old crux, Solomon’s administrative district list (1 Kgs 4:7–19). He posits that “the list describes not an administrative system, but a strategy for maximizing Solomon’s influence with affiliated tribes and in associated territories, both of which remained beyond the direct control of Jerusalem” (112). While this ancient list certainly reflects deep rooted tribal concerns, perhaps it served both an administrative purpose and as a method to maintain internal control and security. T. R. Hobbs (“The ‘Fortresses of Rehoboam’: Another Look,” in Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in Memory of H. Neil Richardson, ed. L. M. Hopfe [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994], 41–64) speculated that the building and garrisoning of Rehoboam’s “cities of restraint” in 2 Chr 11:5–12 served a similar role. Frank Polak considers the social-cultural milieu of the books of Samuel and argues that the basic narrative better fits a context centuries before the supposed redacting activities of the late seventh century and later. Kenneth Ristau studies the characterization of Joab through the lens of the Chronicler and presents a persuasive case for the surprisingly prominent role of Joab as a gallant leader, military general, prophet and protector in Chronicles. This heroic role is exemplified by his presentation of הלע and היח as paradigms for the Chronicler’s initial post-exilic audience via the actions of Joab and the charge of Cyrus to “go up” (and repair) Jerusalem. Finally, Ian Wilson considers the relationship between Chronicles and utopia.

Part 2, “Prophecy and Prophetic Books,” comprises seven papers. Shifts in revelatory rhetoric in Zech 1:1–6 and chapters 7–8 are presented by Mark Boda. Philippe Guillaume attempts to discern how quickly social memory can displace written sources when presenting the identical historical episode, using Ezekiel as a test case. Louis Jonker argues that Haggai, acting as both a divine and political intermediary, encourages Yehud’s population in their obligatory role of providing economical support for the Persian Empire. Sonya Kostamo considers the Isa 39:8–40:1 “gap” in light of the discourse about the past among the early Second Temple Period community. According to Christoph Nihan, Ezekiel’s use of the term אישנ reflects a rather complex utopian memory that unites various imagined images of future royalty. James Nogalski writes on intertextually between Jeremiah and the Twelve, and Carey Walsh contributes an essay on “The Metaprophetic God of Jonah,” which builds upon Ben Zvi’s previous work.

Part 3, utilizing the more universal moniker of “Methods, Observations, (Re)Readings,” contains twelve studies. Rainer Albertz finds evidence for a Chronistic edition of Exod 19–20. Kåre Berge reflects on Ben Zvi’s “social memory” and Nora’s “sites of memory” paradigms, whether of material (observed) or of the mind (imagined), which include
ideas of utopian futures. Regarding the former, there is little doubt that the Chronicler viewed surviving monuments and structures as well as monumental inscriptions from the period of the monarchy in the vicinity of Jerusalem and incorporated them into his history. For example, the Aramaic tombstone of King Uzziah provides strong testimony for the existence of an earlier inscribed cenotaph familiar to the restoration community. In “The Jerusalem Literary Circle,” the late Philip Davies rightly laments the paucity of annalistic material from the Northern Kingdom and continues his volatile debate against his nemesis, William Dever, if only confined within a footnote. Diana Edelman discusses torah as a life-giving well in Deuteronomy. Michael Floyd writes on the ritual of reading and the dissemination of authoritative texts in Second Temple Judaism, citing Matt 2:1–6 as reflecting the way political authorities sought information from prophetic texts. Lester Grabbe’s fascinating essay uses the Alamo and the Masada complex as two examples of the nature, development, and manipulation, as well as the distortion, of cultural memory. With continual deference to Derrida, Levinas, and others, Francis Landy ponders a deconstructive, even a psychoanalysis-based, reading of selections from the “fabulous landscape of biblical narrative” (including, in his words, the abysses and terrifying desolations) in a quest to determine the setting and motivation of the writer. Addressing issues of purity and impurity found in Ezra–Nehemiah, Tim Langille attempts to demonstrate that memory and identity are flexible, multidirectional, and fluid. Christoph Levin recounts prophecy in the book of Judges. In his study of Ehud, a most appropriate topic for this Festschrift, Levin includes a suggested interpretation for the sequence and setting of Eglon’s murder. Consideration of B. Halpern’s earlier innovative and persuasive treatment (The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988], 39–75) here would perhaps further clarify some of the textual issues Levin addresses. James Linville writes on mythoprophecics, which unpacks as “the Prophetic corpus as reflecting a form of Judean mythology.” Scott Noegel contributes a paper titled “More Geminate Ballast and Clustering in Biblical Hebrew,” which is a continuation and expansion of an earlier study. Finally, P. J. Sabo examines a series of blurred geographic, sexual, moral, and ultimately national (Ammonite and Moabite) boundaries in the Lot story. Three indices complete the volume. Bibliographies are confined to their respective chapters, a wise editorial decision considering the scope of covered topics. The production work by Eisenbrauns, now part of Penn State University Press, is excellent.

It is a strength of this volume to offer the insights and suggestions found in studies dealing with the often-overlooked textual and epigraphic minutiae, the unsung “footnotes” of biblical history and theology, which appropriately reflect the honoree’s intensive interest in and expertise over a myriad of textual and historical details relating to the Hebrew Bible. The book serves as a useful reference and develops many of Ben Zvi’s earlier textual

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observations. It will undoubtedly find a well-deserved place on the library shelves of many students as well as biblical scholars.