

contradictory) ideologies of the Pentateuchal sources may have differed with regard to gender roles in sacrifice. Nevertheless, Ruane's accomplishments in this volume are considerable, and it will be an essential addition to the body of works on biblical sacrifice.

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### **Israel's Poetry of Resistance: Africana Perspectives on Early Hebrew Verse**

by *Hugh R. Page, Jr.*

Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013. 120 pp. \$32.00.  
ISBN 978-0-8006-6334-6.

HUGH PAGE HAS WRITTEN AN exploratory book. Readers who join him in exploration—if they do not seek “usual readings”—will appreciate connections he makes and personal stories he tells. His methodology, Africana biblical criticism, entails engagement with a wide range of Africana literary and historical realities as he reads the oldest of ancient Israel's poems. What, one might ask, has Zora Neale Hurston to do with Moses and Miriam and the ancient celebratory poem at the Reed Sea (Exod 15:1–21)? Page argues, persuasively, that when we read ancient Israel's poems, we are reading poetry of resistance.

Page's footnotes will delight biblical scholars; moreover, they are a treasure trove of possible songs to hear, books to read, and poems to experience for further reflection. While Hughes acquits himself as a scholar, the book is not weighted down with scholarly jargon or overly technical language. He finds a way to make each new concept accessible by providing a concrete example of it.

Page argues for poetry as a way to understand human longings, strivings, desires, and disappointments. Page believes that these ancient poems may be able to help Africana congregations evoke a community of resistance

and help readers discern a life worth living. He believes “the Bible's most ancient poems and the Africana world have important things to say to one another,” especially since “early Hebrew poems and the Africana world are the domain of powerful women, inscrutable tempests, signifiers and whisperers, conjurers, asymmetrical reversals, and esoteric mash-ups” (p. 120).

One should not assume that the book is “only for black people.” All readers will find that it evokes reflection on their own histories and consequent questions that shape their readings. The volume would serve well as a Bible study and an ethnographical study, helping congregants follow breadcrumbs left by ancient poets and contemporary artists and dig into the life of the congregation. Indeed, the book is a roadmap to reading as much as an elegy to poetry and a love song to survival.

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### **The Historical David: The Real Life of an Invented Hero**

by *Joel Baden*

New York: HarperOne, 2013. 310 pp. \$15.99.  
ISBN 978-0-06-218837-3.

IN *THE HISTORICAL DAVID*, JOEL Baden explores the figure of David, proposing that David's “real life” is obscured in the “invented hero” narrative of the Bible. He argues that the David narratives belong to the genre of apology, material written as “spin,” in this case, to legitimate a man who was a murdering usurper. The book's task is digging beneath this spin “to access the fundamental events of the past, and then trying to reconstruct the more likely story of what really happened” (p. 13). Beginning with the double introduction of David (1 Samuel 16–17), the book's chapters correlate to time periods of David's life as recorded in 1 Samuel 16–1 Kings 2. While delving into the life of David,