



Hezekiah and the Dialogue of Memory (Emerging Scholars)

By Song-Mi Suzie Park

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Hezekiah is a critical figure in the Hebrew Bible, which credits him with major political, social, and religious reforms in Judah's history and the weathering of a major crisis in the invasion of the Assyrians under their emperor, Sennacherib. Examining the different accounts of Hezekiah's reign in 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah, Song-Mi Suzie Park describes a "Hezekiah complex" that developed over a long time, in which the figure of Hezekiah served as a symbol for the vicissitudes of Judah's history. The king could be understood as a positive reformer of the "pagan" ways of the country, or as a sinner, at least partly responsible for the threats and disasters that befell Judah, from Sennacherib's invasion through the Babylonian exile more than a century later. By showing how the stories about Hezekiah developed over time through a process of response and counterresponse, forming at the end a dialogue of memory, Park elucidates the ways in which biblical stories in general function as loci of continual dialogue, dispute, and discussion.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Through the deft blending of historical and narrative methods of analysis, Dr. Park traces the character development of King Hezekiah through multiple levels of interpretation. Though the data is complex and explanations are often elusive, her understanding of the growth of tradition in terms of each generation's struggle with theological questions left unanswered by an earlier generation produces a trajectory that is both exegetically convincing and hermeneutically suggestive." --Paul D. Hanson, Harvard University

"This exceptionally clear and careful study sheds valuable light not only on the history of ancient Israel but also on the evolution of its theological thinking. It has much to offer to a wide range of readers—laypeople interested in the Bible, members of the clergy (Jewish or Christian), and scholars of the Hebrew Bible alike." --Jon D. Levenson, Harvard University

About the Author

Song-Mi Suzie Park is assistant professor of Old Testament at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Austin, Texas. This volume is based on a dissertation completed in the Near Eastern languages and civilizations department at Harvard University under the direction of Peter Machinist.

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