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Bernard M. Levinson, Ph.D.

Berman Family Professor of Jewish Studies and Hebrew Bible

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Born in 1952 in South Porcupine, Ontario, Canada

Studied Religious Studies at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University, Mass.

PROJECT

Revelation and Redaction: Rethinking Biblical Studies and Its Intellectual Models

The role of ancient Israel's authors and editors in creating a corpus of law attributed to divine revelation forms the focus of this study. Four classical texts, each with a long history of research, will provide test cases to challenge the prevailing binary model that views "revelation" and "redaction" as if they were antithetical. The disciplinary conventions of academic biblical studies have prevented recognition of the full intellectual, legal, and literary sophistication of this material. The comparative evidence of cuneiform literature, on the one hand, and Jewish literature of the Second Temple period (including the Dead Sea Scrolls), on the other, provides a richer range of options for thinking about how authors and redactors created new literary works in antiquity. The larger argument, whose force is cumulative, is that revelation is a redactional creation that claims the authority of divine revelation. The sustained consideration of authorship, originality, and the impact of a textual canon upon subsequent authors opens out to other disciplines in the humanities.

Recommended Reading

Levinson, Bernard M. *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Second printing, paperback, 2002.

Levinson, Bernard M. "The First Constitution: Rethinking the Origins of Rule of Law and Separation of Powers in Light of Deuteronomy." *Cardozo Law Review* 27, 4 (2006): 1853-1888.
(<http://www.law.umn.edu/facultyprofiles/levinsonb.htm>)

Levinson, Bernard M. "'Du sollst nichts hinzufügen und nichts wegnehmen' (Dtn 13,1): Rechtsreform und Hermeneutik in der Hebräischen Bibel." *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 102 (2006): 157-183.

Levinson, Bernard M. "The Right Chorale": *Studies in Biblical Law and Interpretation*. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, forthcoming. (Forschungen zum Alten Testament.)

COLLOQUIUM, 30.10.2007

"You may neither add to it nor take away from it" (Deut 13:1). Legal Revision and Hermeneutics in the Hebrew Bible

Cultures having a tradition of prestigious or authoritative texts must inevitably confront the problem of literary and legal innovation. Ancient Israel's development of the idea of divine revelation of law creates a cluster of constraints that one would expect to impede legal revision or amendment. As a test-case, the article examines the doctrine of transgenerational punishment: the notion that God punishes sinners vicariously and extends the punishment due them to three or four generations of their progeny. A series of inner-biblical and post-biblical responses to the rule demonstrates, however, that later writers were able to criticize, reject, and replace it with the alternative notion of individual retribution. It emerges that the formative canon itself fosters critical reflection upon the textual tradition and sponsors intellectual freedom.

PUBLICATIONS FROM THE FELLOW LIBRARY

Levinson, Bernard M. (2009)

"You may neither add to it nor take away from it" (Deu. 13:1) : legal revision and hermeneutics in the Hebrew Bible

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670716995>

Levinson, Bernard M. (2008)

Reading the Bible in Nazi Germany : Gerhard von Rad's attempt to reclaim the Old Testament for the church

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=164607324X>

Levinson, Bernard M. (Los Angeles, Calif. [u.a.],2008)

Reading the Bible in Nazi Germany : Gerhard von Rad's Attempt to reclaim the Old Testament for the church

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=769083986>

Levinson, Bernard M. (Cambridge [u.a.],2008)

Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=562034358>

Levinson, Bernard M. (Tübingen,2008)

"The Right Chorale" : studies in biblical law and interpretation

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=53088724X>

Forschungen zum Alten Testament ; 54

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=53088724X>

Levinson, Bernard M. (2006)

The first constitution : rethinking the origins of rule of law and separation of powers in the light of Deuteronomy

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=769083536>

Levinson, Bernard M. (2006)

"Du sollst nichts hinzufügen und nichts wegnehmen" (Dtn 13,1) : Rechtsreform und Hermeneutik in der Hebräischen Bibel

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=769083072>

Levinson, Bernard M. (2005)

Deuteronomy's conception of law as an "ideal type": a missing chapter in the history of constitutional law

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670707724>

Levinson, Bernard M. (Münster,2004)

Recht und Ethik im Alten Testament : Beiträge des Symposiums "Das Alte Testament und die Kultur der Moderne" anlässlich des 100. Geburtstags Gerhard von Rads (1901 - 1971), Heidelberg, 18. - 21. Oktober 2001 ; [Beiträge des Kolloquiums "Recht und Ethik im Alten Testament" ... am 20. und 21. Oktober 2001]

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=342938487>

Altes Testament und Moderne ; 13

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=342938487>

Levinson, Bernard M. (2003)

You must not add anything to what I command you : paradoxes of canon and authorship in ancient Israel

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=769084362>