Elihu speeches are misplaced. While his argument is reasonable, the reader may also wonder if such juggling of the extant text is actually necessary!

The last chapter, "My Main Proposals for Interpreting Job," is a new paper which conveniently summarises Clines's own view as to the major contributions he has made to Job studies. Of these it is perhaps the analysis of the distinctive features in the arguments of Job's friends which is most compelling. Whatever the reader's response to these and others of Clines's distinctive contributions to Joban studies, they are sure to come away provoked, stimulated, and more knowledgeable about the book of Job.

The breadth of this volume provides something for every student of the Book of Job to learn from, disagree with, and simply enjoy. Taken in conjunction with his *magnum opus*, the three-volume commentary which occupied some decades of his life, these two works embody a comprehensive and essential resource for any student of the Book of Job. Furthermore, Sheffield Phoenix's pricing for the volume—with the offer of half price to scholars—makes it surprisingly affordable in a world where academic publishing so often puts books out of the reach of individuals.

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ISAAC KALIMI, *The Book of Esther between Judaism and Christianity: The Biblical Story, Self-identification, and Antisemitic Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023). Pp. xvii + 410. Hardback. AU$188.95.

At first glance, this monograph is about the reception of the book of Esther in the Christian and Jewish traditions. It is that, but Kalimi covers a wide array of topics beyond what the title might imply: literary (especially stylistic) approaches to Esther, the question of its historicity, the book's absence from Qumran. Thus, Kalimi touches on many areas of interest in contemporary Esther scholarship.

The first part of the book is wide-ranging. However, its backbone is Kalimi's argument that the central purpose of Esther to respond to the fear of total annihilation, and that its primary theological idea is that God stands with Israel. In chapter 4, Kalimi connects this theological idea with its Biblical precedents (especially Deuteronomy 31–32). Later, Kalimi connects the fear of total annihilation to the anti-Semitic topos that the Jews have their own laws (chapter 6). He compares Haman's accusation in Esth 3:8 not only with Daniel, but several Greek and Roman historical sources. Thus, Kalimi presents Esther as responding to a well-attested historical scenario.

In this vein, Kalimi also discusses the historicity of Esther. Although he is critical of a naïve defence of the book's historicity (84–86), he also rejects

completely fictionalising the book. Chapter 5 reanalyses the well-known historical difficulties. As one interesting example, Kalimi defends the threatened annihilation of the Jews as plausible, with ancient and modern parallels. Although Kalimi does not solve every issue, he concludes that the book is a "novelistic history" (130), reversing the more common "historical novella."

Kalimi discusses some early translations of Esther in chapter 2 (LXX and AT). However, the absence of the Old Latin, among others, is striking. Kalimi's interest is in establishing that the Masoretic Text is the closest to the Urtext (27–28). On this point, he does not engage with recent defenders of the priority of AT (e.g. Macchi), nor with the most current research of those who view AT as a redaction of LXX (e.g., de Troyer). While Kalimi does mention the translations elsewhere, more might be made of them as the first stages of the book's reception.

Part 2 discusses the Jewish reception of Esther. On the question of its absence from Qumran, Kalimi advances the theory that it is rejected because of Esther's transgressions of Torah (particularly her marriage to a gentile and her fasting on Passover). This is possible, but Kalimi does not explore the other explanations that exist, e.g., that it is because Purim was unacceptable to the community.

Kalimi stresses the idiosyncrasy of the Qumran community (163), which he presents as the exception to the enthusiastic reception of Esther among Jewish readers. Yet it is not clear to me that Qumran was the only ancient exception: the discussion in the Talmud presupposes some early Rabbinic opposition (b. Megillah 7a). Thus, Kalimi perhaps understates the extent of early Jewish opposition to the book. Where there are later Jewish readers that buck the trend, Kalimi attributes this only to the pressure to assimilate: "Probably, their eagerness to integrate/assimilate with the larger Christian society or at least to become similar to it, caused them to overlook the anti-Jewish lines of the Christian scholars regarding the book of Esther" (196). It seems possible to me that some rejected the book for, say, similar reasons to the Qumran community.

Nevertheless, no-one would dispute that Esther has enjoyed a great deal of success for centuries among Jewish readers. Kalimi attributes this success to the book's central purpose (in his view, an affirmation of God's allegiance to Israel in the face of the fear of annihilation), which allows the events of the book to be recapitulated in any similar circumstance (183–84). This leads to one of the most interesting sections of the book, chapter 9, in which Kalimi details several "new Purims" throughout European/Mediterranean history. This adaptation of Purim to new circumstances is reminiscent of the reuse of new exodus/Passover motifs throughout the Bible.

After a brief discussion of early Christian interpretation (mostly Rhabanus), Kalimi dedicates chapter 11 to Luther's well-known anti-Semitic critiques of the book. Kalimi's analysis of Luther is even-handed, fully cognizant of the contradictions within Luther's attitudes to Esther. In chapter 12, he identifies dozens of scholars repeating the same anti-Semitic accusations that Luther levelled

against the book: that it has no religious worth, should/could be ignored, that it is bloodthirsty and vengeful, and even that it is "too Jewish." Many of these scholars are Protestant, writing in the nineteenth–early twentieth century, and German (the significance of the latter points is not lost on Kalimi, 305). Particularly sobering for the modern guild is the presence of many highly-influential early Biblical scholars (de Wette, Driver, Paton, Gunkel, Eissfeldt).

In chapter 13, Kalimi identifies several Christian commentators who defend the book of Esther. However, he paints these authors as the minority "who swim against the stream of general hostility" (333). Yet while Kalimi's survey does cover many hostile authors (26, by my count), the number of defenders of Esther is also not insignificant (12). As Kalimi notes, the reception was much worse in Germany than in the Anglosphere (333). While Christian opposition to the book is a proved phenomenon, generalising that opposition too much would be inaccurate.

While this book might primarily attract scholars interested in Esther, there is much that is worth the attention of all biblical scholars. Although Kalimi's book is ostensibly dedicated to the book of Esther, he frequently raises questions that force modern biblical scholars to confront inconvenient facts about the origins of our field. It is interesting not only as an analysis of Esther but as a history of the field of Biblical studies. Kalimi shows that commentary on the book of Esther tends to bring anti-Semitism into the open, where in other parts of the field it might only be latent.

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TAMARA COHN ESKENAZI, *Ezra: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2023). Pp. xix + 504. Hardcover. US$85.

Tamara Cohn Eskenazi's commentary on Ezra represents a highly anticipated scholarly work that is sure to impress any serious student of Ezra-Nehemiah. This commentary serves as a replacement for Jacob M. Myers's commentary published in The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries series from 1965, with an initial release on Ezra and another on Nehemiah which will be released in the near future. Eskenazi's contribution comes at a pivotal moment in the field, as research on Ezra-Nehemiah and its relation to the Achaemenid empire is experience significant growth.

Eskenazi is no stranger to the book of Ezra. As a scholar who has published extensively and influenced the reading of Ezra-Nehemiah, this commentary offers a diverse range of approaches and perspectives, making it a valuable resource for all researchers. The commentary begins with an introduction to