

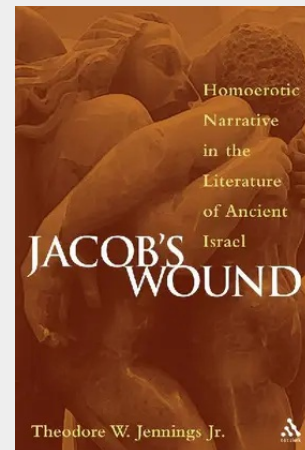
Jennings

Jacob's Wound

Homoerotic Narrative in the Literature of Ancient Israel

The author of *The Man Jesus Loved: Homoerotic Narratives from the New Testament* opens the door to the astonishing diversity of material in the Hebrew Bible that lends itself to homoerotic interpretation. He examines the complex connections between David, Saul and Jonathan, as well as presenting Samuel, Saul, Elijah and Elisha as persons whose sacral power is also erotic power. Then he explores the trans-gendering of Israel by several prophets who use this device to explore the adultery and promiscuity that they wish to attribute to Israel, as well as the story of Joseph.

The very suggestion that there may be homoeroticism in Hebrew narrative may seem odd given the supposition that the religion and culture of ancient Israel resolutely opposed same sex erotic relationships. The apparent prohibition of homosexuality in Leviticus and the story of Sodom from Genesis have been made to speak for the whole Hebrew Bible. The oddity of this situation has not been lost on some interpreters who have recognized that the story of Sodom tells us no more about attitudes toward what we call homosexuality than the story of the rape of Dina tells us about attitudes toward heterosexuality. Prof. Jennings says that the well-known eroticism of the Hebrew Bible is not confined to heterosexuality but also includes an astonishing diversity of material that lends itself to homoerotic interpretation. In Part one, Jennings examines saga materials associated with David. It is no innovation to detect in the David and Jonathan GQÖs relationship at least the outline of a remarkable love story between two men. What becomes clear, however, is that the tale is far more complex than this since it involves Saul and is set within a context of a warrior society that takes for granted that male heroes will be accompanied by younger or lower status males.



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