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J. William Whedbee
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This study explores in a comprehensive and provocative way the presence of comedy in the Hebrew Scriptures. Apart from the occasional recognition of comic forms or motifs in biblical dress, the vast majority of interpreters have usually discounted or even disdained the possibility of the Bible having any significant place for the comic vision. This book attempts to make amends for this short-sighted, prejudicial perspective. Using a broad, eclectic view of comedy, it offers an in-depth analysis of such richly diverse biblical texts as Genesis, Exodus, Esther, Jonah, Job, and the Song of Songs. Showing how comedy oscillates between the poles of attack and affirmation, critique and celebration, this exploration brings to light the biblical appropriation of the comic vision as a vital strategy to overcome death and despair and to revel in life and laughter.

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J. WILLIAM WHEDBEE

Pomona College



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Acknowledgments

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Note on translation and transliteration

Translations of the biblical texts are predominantly taken from the *Revised Standard Version* or the *New Revised Standard Version* unless otherwise noted. There are two major exceptions to this general practice: first, in chapter five (“The Comedy of Job”) I typically use the translation of Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1965); second, in chapter six (“Paradox and Parody in the Song of Solomon”) I generally use the *Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (The Jewish Publication Society, 1985). In translating the name of Israel’s God, I use Yahweh (not LORD). In transliterating the Hebrew, I have omitted the diacritical marks in order to be as “reader-friendly” as possible. I have transliterated mainly to highlight word-plays in the Hebrew which are germane to the argument.