

Cambridge University Press

0521401194 - Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach on Old Testament Studies

Mark G. Brett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The author of this book suggests that Old Testament scholars should strengthen their growing links with neighbouring disciplines and encourage a plurality of interpretative interests within biblical studies. Given such a pluralist context, Dr Brett's contention is that the new 'canonical' approach to Old Testament study will have a distinctive contribution to make to the discipline without necessarily displacing, as many scholars have assumed, other traditions of historical, social scientific and literary inquiry. The book offers a comprehensive critique of the canonical approach as developed by Brevard Childs, and places this in the setting of recent discussions in literary theory and 'postmodern' theology.

Cambridge University Press

0521401194 - Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach
on Old Testament Studies

Mark G. Brett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

BIBLICAL CRITICISM IN CRISIS?

Cambridge University Press

0521401194 - Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach on Old Testament Studies

Mark G. Brett

Frontmatter

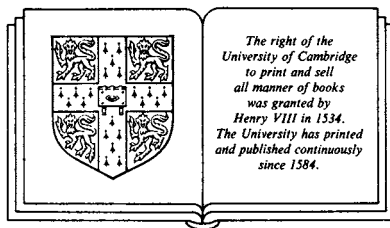
[More information](#)

BIBLICAL CRITICISM IN CRISIS?

*The impact of the canonical approach on
Old Testament studies*

MARK G. BRETT

*Lecturer in Old Testament,
Lincoln Theological College*



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

*Cambridge
New York Port Chester
Melbourne Sydney*

Cambridge University Press

0521401194 - Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach on Old Testament Studies

Mark G. Brett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521401197

© Cambridge University Press 1991

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1991

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Brett, Mark G.

Biblical criticism in crisis?: the impact of the canonical approach on Old Testament studies / Mark G. Brett.

p. cm.

Based on the author's thesis (doctoral) – University of Sheffield.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 40119 4

1. Bible. O.T. – Criticism, interpretation, etc. – History – 20th century.
2. Childs, Brevard S. I. Title. II. Title: Canonical approach on Old Testament studies.

BS1160.B68 1991

221.6'01 – dc20 90-40830 CIP

ISBN-13 978-0-521-40119-7 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-40119-4 hardback

Transferred to digital printing 2005

Cambridge University Press

0521401194 - Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach
on Old Testament Studies

Mark G. Brett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To
May Beatrice Brett
and
Edward Charles Brett

Cambridge University Press

0521401194 - Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach
on Old Testament Studies

Mark G. Brett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xii
Introduction: Setting the scene	i
1 Distinguishing interpretative interests	11
Childs versus Gottwald	11
Objectivity as time-conditioned	13
Emics and etics: native talk and talk about natives	15
Canonical criticism versus the canonical approach	19
Traditions, 'intentions' and texts	21
2 The development of canonical exegesis	27
Theory and practice	27
Childs's early monographs	28
Exodus: a 'canonical' commentary	38
3 'Introduction' and Old Testament theology	58
The discipline of introduction	58
Old Testament theology	71
4 Has Childs fallen into Gabler's ditch?	76
Historical particularity and biblical authority	76
A brief history of 'history'	82
The problem of 'background' in historical studies	100
What is synchronic interpretation?	104
5 Textual intentions and histories of reception	116
Redactors, reception and text in the work of Childs	116
Concepts of canon and the ideal eye witness	118

Cambridge University Press

0521401194 - Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach
on Old Testament Studies

Mark G. Brett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

Contents

From authors to texts: the model of progress in science	123
Reception aesthetics and the canonical process	127
Gadamer and the canonical approach	135
6 The future of the canonical approach	149
The critique of ideology	149
A theological critique of the canonical approach	156
<i>Notes</i>	168
<i>Bibliography</i>	201
<i>Bibliographical key to the works of Brevard S. Childs</i>	229
<i>Index of Old Testament references</i>	231
<i>Index of subjects</i>	233
<i>Index of authors</i>	235

Cambridge University Press

0521401194 - Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach
on Old Testament Studies

Mark G. Brett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

This book is based on doctoral research which was undertaken at the University of Sheffield in the Department of Biblical Studies. I gratefully acknowledge the funding that I received during that period from the University of Queensland, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the British Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. I am also deeply indebted to my wife Susan who supported my study both at Princeton and at the University of Tübingen.

A number of people have made helpful comments on the manuscript in various stages of its production, and I would particularly like to thank Gerald West, John Barton and Louise Foster. Nigel Gotteri kindly offered bibliographical assistance in the area of linguistics. John Rogerson has been a constant source of encouragement, both as a supervisor and since. I would also like to thank Stephen Fowl and Alan Winton for their critical solidarity and for the innumerable edifying conversations over the past six years which have no doubt shaped the following pages in ways that will not be evident from end-notes.

The book is dedicated to my first teachers.

Cambridge University Press
 0521401194 - Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach
 on Old Testament Studies

Mark G. Brett
 Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Abbreviations

<i>Am. Anthropol.</i>	<i>American Anthropologist</i>
<i>Am. Hist. Rev.</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
<i>Am. J. Theol.</i>	<i>American Journal of Theology</i>
<i>Am. Soc. Rev.</i>	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
<i>Ann. Rev. Anthropol.</i>	<i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BETL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium</i>
<i>BZAW</i>	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alt- testamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>Crit. Inqu.</i>	<i>Critical Inquiry</i>
<i>Cult. Herm.</i>	<i>Cultural Hermeneutics</i>
<i>Curr. Anthropol.</i>	<i>Current Anthropology</i>
<i>DVLG</i>	<i>Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literatur- wissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte</i>
<i>Ev. Th.</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>Expos. T.</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>Gesch. & Gesell.</i>	<i>Geschichte und Gesellschaft</i>
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons of Biblical Theology</i>
<i>Hist. & Th.</i>	<i>History and Theory</i>
<i>Hist. Zeit.</i>	<i>Historische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IDB Sup.</i>	<i>Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Interp.</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>

Cambridge University Press
 0521401194 - Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach
 on Old Testament Studies

Mark G. Brett
 Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Abbreviations

xiii

<i>JAAC</i>	<i>Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>J. Anthropol. Res.</i>	<i>Journal of Anthropological Research</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBT</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie</i>
<i>J. Hist. Ideas</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
<i>J. Ling.</i>	<i>Journal of Linguistics</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSO T</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTC</i>	<i>Journal for Theology and the Church</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>MLN</i>	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
<i>NLH</i>	<i>New Literary History</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>PAS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society</i>
<i>Philos. & Phenom. Res.</i>	<i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i>
<i>Philos. Quart.</i>	<i>Philosophical Quarterly</i>
<i>Philos. Rev.</i>	<i>Philosophical Review</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Modern Language Association</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>Relig. Stud.</i>	<i>Religious Studies</i>
<i>Relig. Stud. Rev.</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>Sth. J. Anthropol.</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Anthropology</i>
<i>Stud. Theol.</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>SVT</i>	<i>Supplements to Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>TT</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>