subordinates all familial relationships to a shared experience of “new birth” as children of God, while 4 Maccabees calls for perseverance in the ancestral faith and persistence of existing family structures. Stefan C. Reif (“The Fathership of God in Early Rabbinic Liturgy”) highlights that in some instances paternal metaphorical addresses to God alongside other appellations may reveal the merging of two pre-existing liturgical formulae, with the paternal component perhaps attributed to the increasing acceptance of mystic thought in liturgy. Luciana Pepi (“The Role of the Family in Traditional Judaism”) outlines how the family, more so than the synagogue or school, is the vital institution for transmitting and receiving Torah-centric teaching and traditions on moral, intellectual, and religious aspects of life. Bradley C. Gregory (“The Marriage of Tobias and Sarah in the Venerable Bede’s Commentary on Tobit”) unpacks how marriage and family in the book of Tobit are key to understanding the Venerable Bede’s typological interpretation of the book, since the union of Tobias and Sarah is taken to depict a culminating moment in salvation history: the integration of the Gentiles into the family of God within the church.

The articles in this volume provide a valuable impression of the questions and issues that the common theme of family engenders when studied across traditional (deutero)canonical boundaries.

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Hindy Najman

Hindy Najman is among the most prolific and succinct scholars in the current study of late Second Temple Jewish literature. In particular, she has been successful in applying novel approaches from the field of literature to Jewish texts that have not previously been exposed to such perspectives. In her recent book she explores the Syriac version of 4 Ezra in a theoretically innovative manner. Although parts of the content have been presented in previous articles, the book constitutes an important elaboration of Najman’s thinking about 4 Ezra and by implication of her general ideas concerning Scripture, pseudepigraphy, and transformation of authority in the late Second Temple period.

By means of the computer term “reboot” Najman metaphorically adopts the idea that 4 Ezra and similar texts are to be conceived of as instantiating a new
beginning. Since reboot technically denotes the restart of a computer at a point at which the computer is still active, the picture does not imply a radical reinvention or cessation of particular forms of thinking. Rather, it involves the idea of an unfreezing of time by recovery from an error or a re-initialisation of drivers or hardware, that is, within the framework of the metaphor the symbolic system of Judaism. By her method Najman distances herself from studies aimed to reconstruct the actual history of the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple during the Persian period as well as the exile (a history of events approach). Nor does she pose her question in terms of discontinuities: How and when did prophecy come to an end, and in what way was it replaced by other practices and traditions? Contrary to both approaches, Najman’s aim is to highlight that particular type of texts which not only returns to a previous point in history but also blatantly ignores depictions of subsequent developments in earlier and contemporaneous texts. 4 Ezra presumably flew against the face of its intended audience. It patently ignored the existence of the Second Temple and thus the entire Second Temple period but, thereby, it also defied the earlier Ezra-Nehemiah version of the story. According to Najman, this deliberate obliviousness was a way of coping with the trauma of loss by reimagining and thus recreating a different past. 4 Ezra’s deferral of the rebuilding of the Temple to the end of times was a reboot that enabled the intended audience to focus on the Torah as presently accessible Scripture, and perhaps more so as esoteric Scripture focused on matters pertaining to the end-time (17f.).

The book consists of five chapters, a bibliography, an index of names and subjects, and five beautiful and symbol-loaded colour reproductions of Cy Twombly’s rose paintings. In the first chapter Najman theoretically unfolds her idea of reboot with respect to 4 Ezra. She adds two important aspects to the idea of reboot relevant for the contemporary discussion of rewritten Scripture. First, she introduces the idea of precursors or traditions which she takes from Jorge Luis Borges and emphasises how traditions only become so in retrospect (18). Ezra became a source of authority by being instantiated in a past that according to 4 Ezra imbued the present with significance (the work of de Certeau could have cast additional light on this point). Second, by virtue of having obtained the status of tradition signs or constellations of signs may be used by subsequent writers in different manners that display a variety of possibilities from loyal overtaking at the one end of the spectrum to defiant reconstitution and deconstruction at the other end of the continuum.

In chapter two, Najman focuses on figure (Ezra) who must manage the anticipated or experienced destruction. The figure is simultaneously held before the audience as a model for emulation. If Ezra can cope with crisis, so the logic, the audience should be able to do so as well. The third chapter