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A Symposium on the Legacy of Frank Moore Cross

Introduction

WALTER E. AUFRECHT AND SIDNIE WHITE CRAWFORD

The papers following these remarks were presented in November 2013 at a symposium jointly sponsored by the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Schools of Oriental Research.¹ Frank Cross was a president of both of these organizations, and so it seemed desirable to conduct a retrospective of his scholarly work under their aegis.

Cross's life and career was superbly highlighted in this journal by Peter Machinist (2013), and they need no further rehearsal here. Rather, our goal is to begin the evaluation of his work and its influence on the scholarly world.

At the end of his life, Cross was immensely proud of the fact that all of his books were still in print. His second book, *The Ancient Library of Qumrân and Modern Biblical Studies*, came out in 1958, and has gone through several revisions and editions (1961; 1967; 1980; and 1995).²

¹ We wish to thank Charles Haws of the Society of Biblical Literature and Andrew Vaughn of the American Schools of Oriental Research for their enthusiastic support; and to James Weinstein, coeditor of *BASOR*, for encouraging and facilitating this project.

² His first book was coauthored with David Noel Freeman (1952).

That is something to be proud of. Nearly 20 years later, he produced what some have called his magnum opus, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (1973). If one checks the footnotes of any recent biblical journal, one is likely to see references to that work, now 51 years later. That is considerable influence for a work that has been accused of not "reaching for newer horizons."³ After 1973, Cross authored or coauthored 8 books and 138 articles, and edited another 13 books.⁴ Whatever else one may think of his publications, one would have to admit that Cross was clearly not resting on his "magnum."

He remained an active scholar until shortly before his death in 2012 at the age of 91. After his retirement from Harvard in 1992, he published three major volumes: *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (1998); *Leaves from an Epigrapher's Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Paleography and Epigraphy* (2003); and (with coauthors) *Qumran Cave 4, XII: 1–2 Samuel* (2005); as well as 56 new articles.⁵ Thus, his influence has remained strong for three generations, a legacy few scholars can claim and one that is indicative of his stature in the field.

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³ <http://mcarasik.wordpress.com/2013/12/02/frank-moore-cross-and-his-place-in-the-history-of-bible-scholarship/>

⁴ His bibliography comprises 337 items and 4 *Festschriften* (Hackett and Aufrecht 2014: xxi–xli).

⁵ After his retirement, he also continued to supervise doctoral candidates who had been assigned to him.

Not everyone who was asked to participate in this symposium was able to do so. For that reason, this collection of papers does not cover every aspect of his scholarship (for example, his work on the origins of the alphabet). In spite of that fact, the tremendous breadth of Cross's scholarship is evident, the kind of breadth that was rare a generation ago and is nonexistent today. There is no scholar in the field today who could claim expertise in Northwest Semitic epigraphy, Syro-Palestinian archaeology, Mesopotamian studies, Ugaritic, Semitic philology, the history and religion of the Israelites, and Dead Sea Scrolls studies; yet Cross's expertise in all those areas was acknowledged and sought after.⁶

⁶ We list here only the disciplines in which he published. The fact is, he had a profound knowledge and understanding of other fields such as anthropology, history, horticulture, and theology.

The authors chosen here to discuss his work are all former students of Cross and all experts in the areas on which they were asked to prepare remarks. One will note absolute affection for the man and some criticism of his work. This is as it should be. He encouraged his students to think for themselves, and evidence of that is found in these papers. They illustrate, in our opinion, Cross's most important legacy, which he often stated: his students.

For those who knew Frank Moore Cross, we hope these papers will be a reminder of his depth and breadth of scholarship and his impact on the field for over 60 years. For those who did not, we hope that these articles will lead to the study of his publications, so that his scholarship and its impact can be discovered and appreciated anew.

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