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## VOLUME 9, ARTICLE 3

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AN INTRODUCTION TO A SET OF ARTICLES ON  
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ARTICLES ON JONAH**

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The first five contributions (articles 4–8 in this volume of *JHS*) included in this set of articles reflect issues hotly debated at the conference of the European Association of Biblical Studies at Lisbon in August 2008. The final essay (article 9 in this volume of *JHS*) is based on a paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature conference at Boston in November 2008.

Thomas Bolin could not be present at Lisbon, but his contribution sets the present discussion in the context of recent scholarship on the book of Jonah. Having published a volume that mounted one of the first challenges to the traditional reading of Jonah as a tract of universal divine love, Bolin presents the most significant works published on Jonah in the last decade. Bolin also offers some new thoughts on sacrifice in the book of Jonah.

The next two contributions argue over the meaning of the final verse of the book of Jonah. In “Jonah 4:11 and the metaphoric character of the book of Jonah”, Ehud Ben Zvi, who authored a monograph on Jonah singled out by Bolin as one of the most important contribution of the last decade, demonstrates the importance of reading the end of Jonah as both a rhetorical question and an affirmation, a double reading that provides a key for understanding prophetic literature.

Open-endedness renders a question at the end of Jonah redundant responds Philippe Guillaume to Ehud Ben Zvi. Acknowledging the validity of the double reading, he insists on the importance of the final affirmation of the destruction of Nineveh in Jonah 4:11.

After this first round, the next two contributions focus on the function of the book of Jonah in the formation of the Prophetic canon. Jakob Wöhrle’s “A prophetic reflection on divine forgiveness” is the most up-to-date proposal for the final stages of the formation of the Book of the Twelve. According to Wöhrle, the Book of Jonah was produced in two stages, the last one presented as part of a Grace-Corpus encompassing the entire Book of the Twelve.

To this, Klaas Spronk answers with a different model that views the book of Jonah as a unit produced in a single stage and in reaction to the books of Nahum and Joel.

Daniel Timmer closes this set of articles on Jonah with a post-colonial analysis that reveals the relevance of Jonah to our contemporary context. 'The Intertextual Israelite Jonah face à l'empire', relates the book of Jonah to Neo-Assyrian texts regarding their strategies of attributing identities to different groups.

The issues discussed here are not new, but they are brought to bear in ways that shatter the comfortable consensus that long prevailed concerning this little Biblical booklet. May these papers contribute to the recovery of the importance of the debate that took place under the qiqayon east of Nineveh.