

use] of salt," interpreting the terminology in light of Lev 2:13, which requires the salting of sacrifices (449).

Levine labels a number of ritual activities, e.g. the ordeal of the suspected adulteress prescribed in Num 5:11-31, as "magical" (205, 208; cp. 422, 471, 490). However, nowhere in this volume does he define "magical." Such a definition would help the reader and would facilitate scholarly discussion as to whether or not the designation is appropriate in these and other instances. If "magic" is a kind of ritual dynamic, and if dynamics of a given ritual should be understood within its (the ritual's) ritual culture (including the conceptual system of that culture), it follows that comparative conclusions must proceed cautiously. For example: The fact that there are certain similarities between the ordeal of the suspected adulteress and activities outlined in the Assyrian *Maqlû* series, usually regarded as magical (208), does not by itself require the conclusion that the Israelite ritual is also magical.

The commentary is generally rich in precise detail and clarity. An exception could be pointed out in the discussion of Num 5:15, where Levine refers to "the Deuteronomic interpretation that the only basis for divorce was adultery or serious sexual misconduct (Deut 24:1)" (193). It is true that the basis for divorce in Deut 24:1 is a kind of sexual misconduct, perhaps "indecent exposure," but according to Deut 22:22, adultery results in death, not divorce.

Among the most important problems discussed in the commentary are those which concern Israelite history. Levine's approach to some of these is to answer a given question in a late historical context and then to regard the Numbers text which deals with the same issue as a late priestly invention intended to support the priestly agenda by retrojection into the wilderness period. For example, when did the internal stratification of the tribe of Levi occur? Interpreting Ezek 44:9-14 in light of 2 Kgs 23:8-9, Levine concludes that "the Levites of whom Numbers speaks in detail, as a group distinct from priests and subservient to them, ultimately owe their existence to the edicts of Josiah, subsequently endorsed in Ezek 44:9-14" (289). So Num 8, describing the dedication of the Levites during the wilderness period, is viewed as reflecting the near-exilic reorganization of the Judean priesthood. This kind of reconstruction is based upon the questionable assumption that the historicity of the cultic portions of Numbers is not to be taken seriously.

Levine may be commended for an outstanding contribution to the study of Numbers. Much of this work will undoubtedly stand the test of time, but hypothetical historical reconstructions are only as solid as the theories upon which they are based, no matter how carefully such theories are applied.

Andrews University

ROY GANE

Mack, Burton L. *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins*. San Francisco: Harper, 1993. 275 pp. \$22.00.

This book advances the following thesis: Distinguishable within Q are three strands, Q1, Q2, and Q3. Each of these strands corresponds to a different

stage in the historical development of the Q community. Q1 is built on a series of sayings of Jesus, which are very much like what one would expect of a Cynic Philosopher. Neither is this surprising, given the very cosmopolitan and Hellenized environment of Galilee. In Q1, though, these aphorisms, originally coined as a protest against conventional values and oppressive forms of government, are transformed into normative attitudes of a group of followers of Jesus.

With Q2 the Jesus movement takes on a prophetic voice, pronouncing judgment on a recalcitrant world, a world that has rejected them. Q3 marks a new phase of the community's existence, and is to be dated after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Surprisingly, at this stage there is a growing accommodation to Judaism, rather like the accommodation offered by the Jewish-Christian Gospel of Matthew.

Mack begins his book by warning the reader that this understanding of Q "upsets the conventional picture of the origins of Christianity" (5), and if his thesis is correct, that is certainly so. As he is at pains to point out, in his reconstruction the Q community is the earliest group of the followers of Jesus visible to us, and they could not really be called Christian. They have no concept of the salvific import of the death of Christ. Indeed, in Q1 there is no evidence that Jesus was understood in terms of the supramundane. It is only as the Q community and other first-century groups developed their mythologies to explain their social world, that these elements were introduced (at Q2); and even then, the community is really better described as belonging to a Jesus movement, rather than as a community of early Christians. "Myths" such as the cosmic importance of the death of Jesus are associated with groups of followers of the Christ cult, developed elsewhere, and represented in the NT by Paul's letters. Thus, according to Mack, the Christian myth's claim to represent history is a fabrication.

There are several matters which will naturally occur to most readers of this book. First is a question as to the nature of the intended audience, which appears to be a wider audience than the scholarly community. The book is written in a semipopular style. There is an easy flow of words in the text, which does not eschew colloquial expressions. For example, the attitude to wider society implicit in the instructions in Q1 is summed up as follows: "It is a jungle out there and the behavior enjoined is risky" (113). The garb and possessions of Cynic philosophers are described thus: "Their props were a setup for a little game of gotcha with the citizens of the town" (116). None of this distracts from the flow of the argument of the book. Indeed, it goes a long way to make it more readable. Furthermore, the book is lightly referenced, using an in-text method. Again, like the style, this is perfectly appropriate for a book aimed at a broader readership. There are some places, though, which just cry out for a little more scholarly justification. His assumption of a second-century date for Luke (186) would hardly go unchallenged in NT circles. Neither would his assumption that Mark used Q (172, 177-79), or the thought that the canonical order of the OT adopted by Christians was attributable to Christian bishops, and not to the translators of the LXX (243).

Second, this book embodies an emphatically liberal approach to the Gospels. This is evident from the very first words in the book: "Once upon a time . . ." (1). It continuously uses the term "myth" in both its technical sense—something which communities develop to make sense of the cosmos—and its popular sense, as something which is historically untrue. For Mack, the myths of Christianity are the products of the early Christian communities, and have only the slightest historical base. As he says, ". . . authorship was not understood as we moderns understand it. In the modern sense of the term, the Jesus people were the authors of the sayings they attributed to Jesus" (202; cf. the reference to "collective thinking" on 163). He describes the "myth" of the accounts in the four Gospels as "fantastic" (225), and the later elaboration of it such as is found in the book of Hebrews as "an even more preposterous elaboration of the Christ myth" (221). The Gospel of Mark achieved a very successful "fiction" by joining the Jesus of Q with the Christ Myth (178). These "fictions" and "myths" include such Gospel accounts as the baptism of Jesus, his conflict with the Jewish authorities and their desire to kill him, Jesus' transfiguration, the last supper, his trial and crucifixion as king of the Jews, and the resurrection (247).

A third issue which will occur to most readers is that of methodology. The book is based on the assumption that the contents of Q are known well enough to distinguish within them a literary history embodied in three distinct strata. These are revealed by such features as "seams" and "thematic shifts" (107). Even laying aside the vehement debate current in scholarly circles as to the very existence of Q, it is to be wondered how confident it is possible to be about the exact extent of Q and about the "seams." Q has been reconstructed out of Matthew and Luke, which are assumed to have quoted from it, but how exact is that reconstruction? Q appears to begin with an account of the baptism of Jesus, but how can any modern reader know whether it included an account of the death of Jesus? Moreover, if Mark used Q, as Mack thinks, on what basis is the triple tradition excluded from Q? If either the crucifixion or parts of the triple tradition were in fact in Q, then much of what Mack says about its theology would need radical revision.

Mack has attempted to push back the frontiers of theoretical possibility on the basis of conclusions that have been reached in the research associated with the SBL Q seminar. One should not dismiss this attempt, but neither should one expect all his readers to share his conclusions.

Avondale College
Cooranbong, NSW 2265, Australia

ROBERT K. McIVER

Mandell, Sara, and David Noel Freedman. *The Relationship Between Herodotus' History and Primary History*. South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, no. 60. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993. xiii + 204 pp. \$44.95.

Cicero called Herodotus the "father of history," and indeed his *Histories* was the primary exemplar for classical historians. The term Primary History