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CONTENTS

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITORIAL

The editorial team for *Andrews University Seminary Studies* is happy to introduce to our readers the Fall 2020 issue of our journal. You will find here a selection of significant articles sharing scholarship on Text-historical Hermeneutics, Textual Criticism, and Archeology along with book reviews and abstracts of recent dissertations.

With regard to articles, first, Jonathan Campbell explores "Determining Textual Similarity: GA 2936 as a Test Case for the *Teststellen* Method." He concludes that this method is relatively simple and very effective for clarifying the history of Byzantine texts. It is the first time that the *Teststellen* method has been applied to GA 2936, a 13th century manuscript containing New Testament Pauline materials.

Second, Paul Ray's article, "Some Hermeneutical Principles for the Biblical Historian," provides an archaeologist's perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of text-historical and text-exclusive approaches to biblical interpretation followed by specific recommendations of important hermeneutical principles.

Third, Chang-Ho Ji and Aaron Schade present "Excavating a Monumental Stepped Stone Structure at Khirbat Ataruz: The 2016–17 Season of Fieldwork in Field G." They indicate that the steps connect with an Iron IIA temple and plaza and that later Moabite architectural remains are most likely Iron IIB.

Our book reviews introduce twenty-two recent publications; and six dissertation abstracts report recent research by doctoral candidates from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. We anticipate that you will find studies mentioned here that are relevant to your areas of interest.

In addition, we take this opportunity to thank members of our editorial team who have served *AUSS* with distinction and are now serving elsewhere. Our best wishes are with Carina Prestes (Circulation Manager), Jônatas Ferreira (Book Review Manager), and Natalie Dorland (Public Relations Manager) who have now taken on other academic and professional responsibilities.

We are also thankful for new colleagues who have recently joined and strengthened our editorial team—Krysten Thomas (our new Circulation and Public Relations Manager) and Rodrigo Galiza (our new Book Review Manager).

Finally, please note our call for scholarly articles on the subject of Theology and Interdisciplinary Dialogue. See the inside back cover of this issue of our journal. Your support of *AUSS* and interdisciplinary dialogue help us to be part of the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy that "many will go here and there to increase knowledge" (Dan 12:4, NIV).

MFH and *OMG*

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DETERMINING TEXTUAL SIMILARITY: GA 2936 AS A TEST CASE FOR THE *TESTSTELLEN* METHOD

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Abstract

An important task in the field of textual criticism is the determination of which manuscripts are more closely related to one another.[1] This, in turn, allows the text critic to come to a better understanding of the history of the text. The *Teststellen* method is one of the most influential methods currently being used to determine similarity with the Byzantine text type. This method, as practiced by the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, is examined with regard to its use in the *Editio Critica Maior* (*ECM*).[2] The brevity of the method is appealing, as it does not require the full collation of manuscripts to determine their textual character. I analyze Codex 2936 as a means to test whether the *Teststellen* accurately predicts its textual similarity with the Byzantine text. Because Codex 2936 has never been studied from a text-critical perspective, I first decribe the manuscript in detail. I then collate it against the Byzantine Text, along with manuscripts 01, 02, 03, 06, 010, 012, and 020, in Philippians and 1 Thessalonians. The results show that the *Teststellen* method accurately predicts the extent to which 2936 agrees with the Byzantine text.

Keywords: New Testament Textual Criticism, Text Types, Byzantine Manuscripts, Teststellen Method

Introduction

When conducting research on a manuscript, one of the text critic's primary aims is to establish its place in the transmission history. This is essential for New

[1] I would like to thank Dr. Daniel B. Wallace, both for his work establishing the CSNTM and for his help throughout my time analyzing GA 2936.

[2] B. Aland et al., eds., *Catholic Letters*, vol. 4 of *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013). H. Strutwolf et al., eds., *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 3 of *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2017). Additional volumes are forthcoming.

Testament textual criticism, as stated by Hort's famous maxim: "All trustworthy restoration of corrupted texts is founded on the study of their history."[3] The usefulness of text-types has recently been brought into question,[4] but an understanding of a manuscript's similarity with other manuscripts is nonetheless necessary for the twin goals of textual criticism: establishing an initial text and understanding that text's history. When seeking to establish the initial text of a textual tradition, relating manuscripts with one another assists the critic in determining the age and stability of readings.[5] This is arguably even more useful with regard to the second goal. Establishing a manuscript's place in the overall tradition helps one to come to a clearer understanding of the nature of the text in a given time and place.

One of the most important methods currently used for determining textual similarity in the field of New Testament textual criticism is the *Teststellen* Method. It has the advantage of being less labor intensive than other, more comprehensive methods. Yet, it runs the risk of being less accurate. Using the newly found manuscript GA 2936, this study seeks to test this method by comparing the results of the *Teststellen* method with a more comprehensive approach. After a description of the method and the manuscript, it will be shown that in the case of GA 2936, the *Teststellen* method accurately predicted its similarity to the Byzantine text.

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[3] B. F. Westcott and F. J.A. Hort, *Introduction [and]* Appendix, vol. 2 of *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1896), 40.

[4] David C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 165–174; Klaus Wachtel, "Towards a Redefinition of External Criteria: The Role of Coherence in Assessing the Origin of Variants," in *Textual Variation: Theological and Social Tendencies? Papers from the Fifth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, ed. David C. Parker and H. A. G. Houghton, Texts and Studies 3.6 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2008), 114.

[5] Michael W. Holmes, "New Testament Textual Criticism," in *Introducing New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Scot McKnight, Guides to New Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989), 53. While the quest for an "original text" has been questioned by the likes of Eldon Jay Epp, "The Multivalence of the Term 'Original Text' in New Testament Textual Criticism," *HTS* 92 (1999): 276–281; David C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 6–7, this has always been the goal of New Testament textual criticism. Cf. Michael W. Holmes, "From 'Original Text' to 'Initial Text': The Traditional Goal of New Testament Textual Criticism in Contemporary Discussion," in *Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*, ed. Bart D Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, 2nd ed., NTTSD 42 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 658–659; Stanley E. Porter, *How We Got the New Testament: Text, Translation, Transmission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 12–17.

The Teststellen Method

The best method for determining textual similarity would be concise yet accurate. As Parker puts it, "Sampling has to hit a balance between the best size of net and the time available for fishing."[6] Developed by the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF), the *Teststellen,* or test passages, are meant to provide a means by which a manuscript's textual similarity can be quickly deduced. The *Teststellen* are "carefully selected and are spread over the complete range of a book (or a corpus) of scripture like a net. These passages make it possible to evaluate the quality of a manuscript and determine whether it belongs to a certain type of text, that is, to the Byzantine or to another text type."[7] For example, the INTF's second *Teststelle* in Romans occurs in Rom 3:22, where the Nestle Aland 28ed.[8] (NA[28]) reads εις παντας τους πιστευοντας.[9] Byzantine manuscripts, which are always listed as reading 1 in the *Text und Textwert* series, read εις παντας και επι παντας τους πιστευοντας. Reading 2 is that which is published in NA,[28] and is what is postulated as the original (*ursprünglicher*) reading. Other variations not included in the Byzantine or "original" readings are given subsequent numbers. The locations of the test passages were chosen because they were known to represent divergences within the textual tradition. Thus, any manuscript could be checked at Romans 3:22 to see whether it agreed with reading 1 (Byzantine), 2 (original), or any other reading. If the manuscript agreed with one category here and in most other test passages, the scholar could be relatively confident about the character of the whole manuscript.

The INTF has compared nearly every known continuous-text manuscript in these test passages.[10] The results of these comparisons were published first

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[6] David C. Parker, "A Comparison Between the *Text und Textwert* and the Claremont Profile Method Analyses of Manuscripts in the Gospel of Luke," *NTS* 49 (2003): 135. Thus, while such comprehensive methods as those proposed by Joey McCollum, "Biclustering Readings and Manuscripts via Non-negative Matrix Factorization, with Application to the Text of Jude," *AUSS* 57.1 (2019): 61–89, are preferable, they require the full collation of hundreds of manuscripts. This initial step has as yet not been attempted for most of the books of the NT.

[7] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 318.

[8] Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th Edition. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

[9] Kurt Aland, Barbara Aland, and Klaus Wachtel, eds., *Die Paulinischen Briefe, Band 1: Allgemeines, Römerbrief und Ergänzungsliste*, vol. 2 of *Text und Textwert der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*, ANTF (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 328.

[10] Tommy Wasserman and Peter J. Gurry, *A New Approach to Textual Criticism: An Introduction to the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017), 37–38.

in *Text und Textwert* and now, gradually, in the *Editio Critica Maior* (*ECM*). When comparison with the *Teststellen* shows a manuscript to be Byzantine, it need not be separately included in a critical apparatus, because the collection of Byzantine manuscripts is so uniform that they can be studied as a group.[11] On the other hand, if a manuscript differs from the Byzantine text by 15 percent or more in the *Teststellen*, it is considered worth including.[12]

The *Teststellen* method attempts to distinguish textual similarity without going through the tedious process of collating and analyzing every single manuscript.[13] Parker has shown how the small number of *Teststellen* in the latter half of Matthew results in failure to detect the block mixtures present in manuscripts 118, 205, and 209.[14] Legitimate questions could also be asked regarding whether five test passages in 1 Thessalonians, five in 2 Timothy, or three in Titus are enough to accurately establish the nature of a given text in those books. The phenomena of block mixture within a given Gospel should give the textual critic pause before assuming that every Pauline manuscript will remain internally consistent.[15] Countering some of these concerns, Spencer, Wachtel, and Christopher showed how quantitative analysis using the *Teststel-*

[11] Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 237; cf. Parker, "Comparison," 108.

[12] Barbara Aland and Klaus Wachtel, "The Greek Minuscules of the New Testament," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, 2nd ed., NTTSD 42 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 82. *ECM*, 4.1, 22* shows that the initial breaking point for inclusion in the critical apparatus was 10 percent disagreement with the Byzantine text. This was changed because "experience teaches that this would unnecessarily burden the apparatus with readings derived from the Byzantine tradition" (Aland and Wachtel, "Greek Minuscules," 82n.48). Cf. *ECM*, 3.1.1, 19*.

[13] In describing putting together the *ECM* for manuscripts of the Catholic Epistles, Aland and Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, 318, stated, "There were 540, more than could possibly be examined by any of the traditional methods of textual criticism." For examples of a comprehensive approach that takes every manuscript into account, see M. B. Morrill, "A Complete Collation and Analysis of All Greek Manuscripts of John 18" (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2012); S. M. Solomon, "The Textual History of Philemon" (PhD diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014); Tommy Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, ConBNT 43 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006). It will be noted that these works focus on a relatively short amount of text.

[14] Parker, "Comparison," 135.

[15] For an important example of block mixture, see Gordon D. Fee, "Codex Sinaiticus in the Gospel of John: A Contribution to Methodology in Establishing Textual Relationships," in *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee, Studies and Documents 45 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 236–243.

len method was able to accurately identify members of the Harclensis group in the Catholic Epistles.[16] It is noteworthy, however that the Catholic Epistles, as a group, contain nearly twice as many *Teststellen* per chapter as the Pauline corpus.[17] To paraphrase Parker's quote from the introduction of this section, the goal is to find the fewest possible passages required to come to an accurate conclusion about a manuscript's genealogy. There are reasons to believe the *Teststellen* method has erred on the side of concision, especially in the Pauline corpus.

The *Teststellen* method is especially relevant for questioning, as the findings produced by this method directly influence the significant work being accomplished via the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM). In the *ECM: Catholic Letters*, for example, comparison was made in "all available text manuscripts of the Catholic Letters ... in 98 test passages."[18] This initial step is used to determine which manuscripts are worth further investigation. In the case of the Catholic Epistles, this amounted to 204 Greek manuscripts, with 348 others combined under the single title "Byzantine," due to their similarity with one another. For the 204 manuscripts that differ from the Byzantine text in at least 15 percent of the *Teststellen*, nearly every place of variation throughout the Catholic Epistles was noted, a total of 3,043 places of variation.[19] It is the initial step of determining similarity or dissimilarity from the Byzantine text that is relevant to our current study.

The CBGM goes beyond the task of other methodologies by not only grouping manuscripts together, but also showing a direction of transmission both inside and between the groups. This has brought minuscules and the Byzantine text-type back into favor, at least in a few instances where a minus-

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[16] Matthew Spencer, Klaus Wachtel, and Christopher J Howe, "The Greek Vorlage of the Syra Harclensis: A Comparative Study on Method in Exploring Textual Genealogy," *TC* 7 (2002): 6.

[17] According to calculations based on the *Teststellen* found in *Text und Textwert,* the average *Teststellen* per chapter is 5.2 in the Gospels, 3.7 in Acts, 2.5 in Paul's epistles, 4.7 in the Catholic Epistles, and 5.6 in Revelation. There are even discrepancies within corpora. While Mark and John are very well-represented, Matthew and Luke lag far behind in the *Teststellen*, averaging 2.28 *Teststellen* per chapter in Matthew and 2.25 in Luke.

[18] *ECM,* 4.1, 22*.

[19] *ECM,* 4.1, 26*–27*; Wasserman and Gurry, *New Approach*, 38n.3. Those variations that were not listed involved obvious scribal errors, moveable *nu* and *sigma*, most readings attested only by a Greek Father, and readings from secondary versions and non-Greek Fathers. See Daniel B. Wallace, "Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior" review of *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior: Die katholischen Briefe*, Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Gerd Mink, Holger Strutwolf, and Klaus Wachtel, *BSac* 171.684 (Oct–Dec 2014): 494.

cule is shown to be genealogically close to the initial text.[20] The CBGM serves as an important step forward in using computers for the task of textual criticism, but it still relies on the older *Teststellen* method. As pointed out above, 348 of the 552 manuscripts of the Catholic Epistles, or sixty-three percent, were never analyzed by the CBGM because the *Teststellen* method deemed them irrelevant due to their similarity with the Byzantine text. Similarly, 607 Greek manuscripts were analyzed in the *Teststellen* in Acts, but only 183 of them were cited in *ECM Acts*, meaning nearly 70 percent of the manuscripts containing the book of Acts were not fully considered.[21] The CBGM will likely become even more influential in the coming years, so the *Teststellen* method on which it relies is worth testing.

GA 2936

In January of 2016, the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (CSNTM) took high-resolution images of the manuscript Cod. Athen. 3139 in the National Library of Greece (NLG). This manuscript was given to the NLG in 1963 by the Greek Ministry of Education, Research, and Religious Affairs, but its provenance is otherwise unknown.[22] While this manuscript had been stored in the National Library since the 1960s, it was unknown to the world of New Testament textual criticism. Upon its rediscovery and subsequent photographing, the manuscript was given the Gregory-Aland number 2936. This minuscule Greek manuscript contains the writings of Paul interspersed by the commentary of Theophylact of Ochrid. While its thirteenth-century dating made it likely the manuscript exhibited a Byzantine text, the character of its contents was otherwise unknown.

Codex 2936 is a minuscule Pauline manuscript written on parchment. Page dimensions range from 20.2–21.4 cm wide and a height of 28.0–28.9 cm. The codex is 9.6 cm deep.[23] The manuscript typically has thirty-five lines per page in a single column, although it could range between thirty-four and forty-one. Non-biblical text at the end of the manuscript tends to have more lines than the biblical text.

There are 334 leaves extant of the biblical text of Codex 2936, and thirty-three additional leaves at the end of the manuscript containing the

[20] *ECM,* 4.1, 32*–33*; cf. Peter J. Gurry, *A Critical Examination of the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method in New Testament Textual Criticism*, NTTSD 55 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 67, who points to GA 307 as one manuscript garnering heightened interest as a result of the CBGM.

[21] *Text und Textwert* , 3.1, 3–21; *ECM*, 3.1.1, 19*.

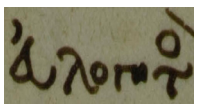
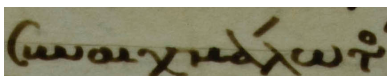
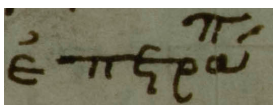
[22] Email (Dr. Antonis Chatzichristos), personal communication, 9 April, 2019.

[23] Physical descriptions taken from the preparatory document created by Daniel B. Wallace and accessible at http://www.csntm.org/manuscript/View/noGA_NLG_3139.

writings of Gregory Nazianzus.[24] Quires contain eight leaves, and the leaves are numbered at the top and bottom. The first three quires are no longer extant, resulting in lacunae from Rom 1:1–7:14. One leaf is missing in quire 6, which would have contained 1 Cor 5:7b–6:1. Two leaves are missing in quire 12, which would have contained 1 Cor 16:17–2 Cor 1:5. Finally, two further leaves are missing in quire 28, which would have included Col 4:12–1 Thess 1:3a. Leaves are numbered at the top throughout according to the foliation currently extant. Leaves are further numbered at the bottom, although these numbers begin to trail off in 2 Corinthians and onward, possibly due to erasure. Where present, the page numbers at the bottom of the leaf attest a count in which the four missing leaves in quires 12 and 28 were extant. This is instructive because these numbers do not account for the missing leaf in quire 6, meaning this leaf was lost prior to the others.

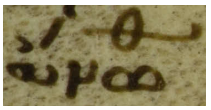
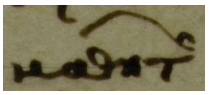
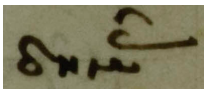
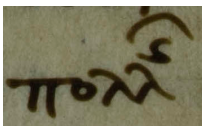
The scribal hand for Codex 2936 is generally characteristic of minuscule script in the thirteenth century. Ligatures are used with consistency throughout the manuscript, with many abbreviations occurring at the end of a line. Whenever a section of biblical text or commentary begins at the start of a line, the first word is capitalized and written in red ink. Perhaps the most distinctive abbreviation used by this scribe is the supralinear omicron as a shorthand for the ending -ος (see first two examples in Table 1).

Table 1. Abbreviated Endings in GA 2936[25]

Image	Transcription	Reference
	Ευλογητος	Eph 1:3 Fol. 152r
	συναιχμαλωτος	Phlm 23 Fol. 275r
	Επετραπη	Hebrews hypothesis Fol. 275v

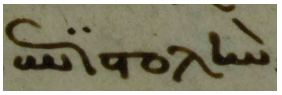
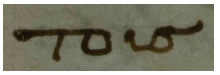
[24] The introduction for this later section attributes the writings to γρηγοριουτου θεολογου. In the preparatory document, Wallace noted that these final thirty-three leaves had been added later, as evidenced by the renumbering of the quires in this section.

[25] All photographs used with permission from the National Library of Greece and the Center for the Study of the New Testament Manuscripts (csntm.org), who digitized manuscript GA 2936.

	Ανωθεν	Eph 1:4 commentary Fol. 152v
	Μαθητων	Phlm 22 commentary Fol. 275r
	Εαυτοις	Gal 6:18 commentary Fol. 152r
	Δημας	Phlm 24 commentary Fol. 275r
	Πολλης	Ephesians hypothesis Fol. 152r

There is a noticeable shift in the script in the book of Hebrews. Word spacing becomes more clearly delineated, letters are more consistently limited to the notional lines, *nomina sacra* are treated differently (see below), and a new ligature is introduced (see third item in Table 2). The shift is such that it is likely a new scribe began to copy in Hebrews. No colophon is written to indicate this change, but the evidence of the hands leaves little other alternative.

Table 2. Additional Ligatures

Image	Transcription	Reference
	και	Eph 1:3 Fol. 152r
	επιστολην	Ephesians hypothesis Fol. 152r
	τους (only in Hebrews)	Hebrews hypothesis Fol. 275v

The scribe uses breathing and accent marks throughout. Acute, grave, and circumflex accents are all used regularly, as are diaereses. The Greek semicolon, comma, and question mark are all present in Codex 2936. Of special importance for this codex is the colon. The scribe used a colon followed by an elongated dash to indicate that the text was moving from biblical text to commentary, or vice versa.

Nomina sacra are used throughout Codex 2936. The following words and their derivatives are consistently abbreviated: θεος, ιησου, χριστος, κυριος, πνευμα, πατηρ, ανθρωπος, ουρανος, μητηρ.

As mentioned above, Hebrews proves to be an exception. The *nomen sacrum* is used for ιησου throughout the rest of the manuscript, but in Hebrews the name is spelled out six times.[26] While one can only speculate for the reason behind this deviation, it is possible that the scribe of Hebrews was used to copying commentaries and other non-biblical texts, in which the *nomina sacra* rarely appear. This is a tenuous suggestion, however, given that the scribe of Hebrews applies the *nomina sacra* to the other words listed above consistently. The fact that the name applies to Joshua in Heb 4:8 may have caused the scribe to be more cautious about applying the *nomen sacrum* to ιησου elsewhere in the epistle.

Due to the generally conscientious copying of the scribes of Codex 2936, there are relatively few corrections made to the manuscript. Three larger corrections give insight into Codex 2936's exemplar. First Corinthians 10:23, Phil 2:22, and Col 3:20 all exhibit omissions by the initial hand totaling three words or more. In each of these corrections, the omitted text is placed in the upper or lower margin of the page. The hand of these corrections is noticeably less elegant, indicating either a different hand or the hurried hand of the frustrated initial scribe. The latter seems to be more likely, as the ligatures match that of the main text. More importantly, all three of these corrected examples include commentary as well. In skipping one or more lines, the scribe missed both commentary and biblical text, and had to write both in the margins. This indicates the scribe was copying from another interspersed commentary.

Regarding the commentary, Theophylact was an 11th–12th century bishop of Ochrid in present-day Bulgaria. The text switches back and forth between biblical text and his commentary. The majority of Codex 2936 is thus taken up with the commentary, as multiple lines of commentary will often follow just a short phrase of biblical text. The scribe had two ways to assist the reader in distinguishing between biblical text and commentary—the use of colons with an elongated dash, as described above, and the following paratextual marker: 

[26] This is not counting Heb 4:8, in which the referent is Joshua, not Jesus.

Occurring numerous times on every page, this symbol is always written in red ink and appears in the left margin. The scribe wrote this marker next to every line which includes at least one word of biblical text. This would have given the reader a quick method for locating the biblical text in the midst of the Theophylact commentary. Furthermore, red ink and a capital letter are written when the first word of a line begins a section of biblical text or commentary.

The remaining paratextual features all occur between books. Most books end with a standard colophon written in red ink: τελος της προς _____ επιστολης.[27] Following this concluding phrase, a decorative headpiece separates one book from another, each drawn in red ink. Two sample headpieces are below:

Figure 1. Ephesians Headpiece

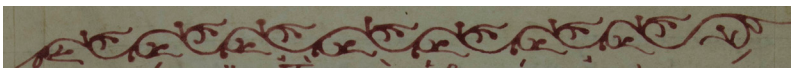


Figure 2. Hebrews Headpiece

The styles occasionally repeat, with the headpieces of Galatians and 2 Thessalonians being quite similar, as are those of Colossians and 1 Timothy. The headpieces of 2 Timothy and Hebrews exhibit the least amount of color, but notably they both occur at a page break. However, it is not the case that intricate headpieces occur only when placed between texts on the page. The Colossians headpiece occurs at the top of its page and is more akin to that of Ephesians.

Finally, before the next epistle begins, each epistle is introduced with a hypothesis introducing the letter. These hypotheses are begun by a standard title, written in red ink: υποθεσις εις την προς _____ επιστολην.

Aside from the headpieces, the only illumination to appear in the manuscript is on the final page. As mentioned above, the final thirty-three

[27] Of the epistles for which the ending is extant, all but Romans and Philippians have this ending colophon.

leaves, which contain the writings of Gregory Nazianzus, were most likely added to the codex after its initial binding. The final page of this addition attests an illustration of a single-mast ship, shown below:

The scribblings around the illustration appear to be from a later hand, indicating that this drawing may have been created after these leaves had already been copied and inserted into the codex. The image amounts to a doodle, or perhaps practice for a similar illustration in another manuscript.[28]

Analysis and Results

As mentioned in Part 2, the *Teststellen* method is the most concise method currently used to determine textual similarity. Having collated GA 2936, it was a simple matter for me to check it against the test passages found in the INTF's *Text und Textwert*.[29] This series lists 251 *Teststellen* in the Pauline corpus, of which 9 were lacunose in GA 2936.[30] Two hundred forty-two test passages remained, and for this study, all 242 were checked against the complete colla-

[28] The suspicion that this illustration is a later doodle was confirmed by Kathleen Maxwell, Professor of Art History at Santa Clara University. In personal communication on May 28th, 2019, she described the illustration as "a later ink drawing by an unskilled hand."

[29] *Die Paulinischen Briefe*, vol. 2 of *Text und Textwert,*

[30] Seven *Teststellen* were missing in Romans, one in 1 Corinthians, and one in 1 Thessalonians.

tion of the manuscript.[31] Table 3 shows the percentage of agreement with the Byzantine text (reading 1 in *TuT*) exhibited by GA 2936 in the *Teststellen*:

Table 3. GA 2936 Agreement with Byzantine Text in the *Teststellen*

Book	# of Agreements	Total *Teststellen*	% Agreement
Romans	35	40	88
1 Corinthians	54	58	93
2 Corinthians	23	26	88
Galatians	14	17	82
Ephesians	17	18	94
Philippians	9	11	82
Colossians	8	10	80
1 Thessalonians	3	4	75
2 Thessalonians	2	4	50
1 Timothy	7	9	78
2 Timothy	4	5	80
Titus	2	3	67
Philemon	2	4	50
Hebrews	29	33	88
Total	209	242	86

In order to be included in the CBGM calculations, a manuscript has to disagree with the Byzantine text at least 15 percent of the time in the *Teststellen*, meaning a maximum agreement with the Byzantine text of 85 percent. As is evident from the table, GA 2936 would not be included in the CBGM calculations, although it is very close. A peculiarity that arises from the table above involves the disparity between the % agreement in the longer and shorter epistles. In Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Hebrews, GA 2936 agrees with the Byzantine text in 90 percent of the *Teststellen* (141/157). On the other hand, the manuscript agrees with the Byzantine text in only 80 percent of the *Teststellen* (68/85) in the epistles from Galatians to Philemon.[32] This means that if more of the outer quires of GA 2936 had been lost—as

[31] See Appendix 1 for variants in 2936 that disagreed with the Byzantine text in the *Teststellen*.

[32] Ephesians is the only book in this group above 85 percent agreement with the Byzantine text in the *Teststellen*.

often happens with codices[33]—it could have been a candidate for inclusion in the CBGM! The contrast becomes even more stark when comparing 1 Corinthians and Ephesians with 1–2 Thessalonians, Titus and Philemon.

Two likely possibilities exist to explain the difference in agreement with the Byzantine text in the longer and shorter Pauline epistles. First, the discrepancy may be due to the shorter epistles being inadequately represented in the *Teststellen*. When a book has a small number of *Teststellen,* one aberrant reading could greatly impact the calculated agreement. Several of these smaller epistles have fewer than two *Teststellen* per chapter.[34] The difference in *Teststellen* results for the shorter and longer books may indicate that more test passages should be included in the shorter epistles than are currently being used.

Second, it is also possible that GA 2936 simply has more non-Byzantine readings in the shorter Pauline epistles. Textual corruption and block mixture are notoriously difficult textual phenomena to account for. One of the claims of the *Teststellen* method is its ability to detect block mixture better than other methodologies, because it selects test passages throughout a body of work.[35] However, in the end, it is only the total percentage agreement that is used to determine a manuscript's textual similarity. This philosophy could cause manuscripts with portions of early texts to be ignored because the overall agreement fails to fall below 85 percent.

The *Teststellen* has also provided reasons to assume the existence of a subset of Byzantine manuscripts influenced by the commentary of Theophylact. Initial inquiry reveals close similarities with 1973 and 2197, two manuscripts that both include interspersed Theophylact commentary. Of the 33 places where 2936 disagrees with the Byzantine text in the *Teststellen*, it agrees with 1973 in 28 of them, and 2197 in 31. It is likely more than a coincidence that the manuscripts closest to 2936 in the *Teststellen* are also manuscripts interspersed with Theophylact's commentary.

The *Teststellen* method has provided this study with a useful starting point, but its accuracy is yet unclear. It has been shown that the agreement in the *Teststellen* between GA 2936 and the Byzantine text varies from 94 percent in Ephesians to 50 percent in Philemon. Similar calculations would need to be conducted with more Pauline manuscripts to determine whether this is a common occurrence or an idiosyncrasy of 2936. Regarding GA 2936 itself, a closer look at a larger passage will help to determine whether the *Teststellen* method has accurately categorized this manuscript.

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[33] J. Harold Greenlee, *The Text of the New Testament: From Manuscript to Modern Edition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 15.

[34] 1.0 *Teststellen* per chapter in 1 Thessalonians and Titus, 1.25 in 2 Timothy, 1.33 in 2 Thessalonians, and 1.5 in 1 Timothy.

[35] Aland and Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, 318.

In order to determine which passages to analyze, rough estimates were generated by counting the number of variants GA 2936 attests against the Byzantine text,[36] and then dividing by the total number of verses in the epistle. Variants per verse is not an ideal statistical measurement, but it helps to provide a very rough snapshot of each book. This, in turn, can be used in determining which books to analyze further. Table 4 shows the ranking of the various epistles in GA 2936 by their agreement with the Byzantine text, as shown by the *Teststellen* method and by variants per verse. Based on these initial findings, Philippians and 1 Thessalonians were chosen for further study. Philippians falls near the median of % agreement with the Byzantine text in the *Teststellen,* yet exhibits one of the fewest variants from the Byzantine text per verse. On the other hand, 1 Thessalonians is near the bottom of agreement with the Byzantine text in both categories. It was deemed an adequate test of the *Teststellen* to analyze these differing epistles.

Table 4. Ranking of Each Epistles' Agreement with the Byzantine text (Byz)

Book	% Agreement with Byz in the *Teststellen*	Book	Variants from Byz per Verse
Ephesians	94	Ephesians	0.45
1 Corinthians	93	Philippians	0.49
2 Corinthians	89	Romans	0.50
Romans/Hebrews	88	1 Corinthians	0.54
Galatians/Philippians	82	Galatians	0.59
Colossians/2 Timothy	80	2 Thessalonians/ Philemon	0.60
1 Timothy	78	2 Corinthians	0.62
1 Thessalonians	75	Titus	0.63
Titus	67	Colossians/ 1 & 2 Timothy	0.65
2 Thessalonians/Philemon	50	Hebrews	0.67
		1 Thessalonians	0.72

[36] Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont, eds., *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform* (Nürnberg: VTR, 2018) was used for the purpose of a complete representation of the Byzantine text type in the Pauline corpus.

In order to determine whether the *Teststellen* were accurately representing the agreement between GA 2936 and the Byzantine text in the shorter epistles, I carried out quantitative analysis in Philippians and 1 Thessalonians. Manuscripts 01, 02, and 03 were collated as representatives of the Alexandrian tradition, 06, 010, and 012 for the Western tradition,[37] and 020 for the Byzantine.[38] While it is likely that 2936 would prove to be in high agreement with 1973 and 2197, the *Teststellen* method was not designed to identify sub-types within the Byzantine tradition. Because the goal of this study is to test the stated purpose of the *Teststellen* method, manuscripts were chosen to more broadly represent the major text-types. I compared the eight manuscripts with each other in every place where at least one of them significantly differed from the Byzantine text. Variants deemed insignificant for establishing textual similarity were omitted from the calculations. These variants include such differences as itacisms, moveable nu and sigma, and vowel elision. The following two tables show the agreement among the manuscripts in variant passages in Philippians (Table 5) and 1 Thessalonians (Table 6).

Table 5. % Agreement in Philippians Excluding Spelling Variants (total variants=247)

	2936	01	02	03	06	010	012	020
01	61							
02	65	84						
03	60	78	75					
06	50	59	60	59				
010	32	40	43	43	51			
012	35	45	48	47	56	86		
020	78	69	72	71	59	45	48	
Byz	80	73	78	76	62	49	52	94

[37] While D (06) has long been seen as the preeminent example of the Western text-type, Jeffrey J. Kloha, "A Textual Commentary on Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians" (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2006), 692, has shown that F (010) and G (012) are actually purer carriers of the Western text in Paul. He argues that D is much more mixed in the Pauline Corpus.

[38] Because Robinson-Pierpont's text is Byzantine, only one other Byzantine manuscript was deemed necessary. The argument could be made that 020 itself is part of the "Byzantine text." It was included in order to provide a comparison between 2936 and a more prototypically Byzantine manuscript.

Table 6. % Agreement in 1 Thessalonians Excluding Spelling Variants (total variants=222)

	2936	01	02	03	06	010	012	020
01	53							
02	59	71						
03	58	65	62					
06	59	64	64	69				
010	43	45	45	46	65			
012	46	48	49	49	68	92		
020	77	68	71	68	70	51	54	
Byz	78	70	74	71	73	54	58	95

The relatively small number of manuscripts used in the calculations account for the lower percentages of agreement across the spectrum of text-types. The more manuscripts that are considered, the higher the overall agreement will be. For this reason, it is counterproductive to try to establish a fixed level of agreement necessary to delineate a text-type. As Richards has noted, quantitative analysis works best when results are seen as relative.[39] To that end, the following charts show the ranking of agreement with the Byzantine text (Table 7) and Codex 2936 (Table 8).

Table 7. Ranking of Agreement with the Byzantine Text

MS.	% Agreement in Philippians	MS.	% Agreement in 1 Thessalonians	MS.	% Agreement-Combined
020	94	020	95	020	94
2936	80	2936	78	2936	79
02	78	02	74	02	76
03	76	06	73	03	74
01	73	03	71	01	72
06	62	01	70	06	67
012	52	012	58	012	55
010	49	010	54	010	51

[39] W. Larry Richards, *The Classification of the Greek Manuscripts of the Johannine Epistles*, Dissertation Series 35 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 54.

Table 8. Ranking of Agreement with 2936

MS.	% Agreement in Philippians	Ms.	% Agreement in 1 Thessalonians	MS.	% Agreement-Combined
Byz	80	Byz	78	Byz	79
020	78	020	77	020	78
02	65	02, 06	59	02	62
01	61	03	58	03	59
03	60	01	53	01	57
06	50	012	46	06	54
012	35	010	43	012	40
010	32			010	37

The quantitative analysis of GA 2936 is consistent with the findings of the *Teststellen* method. GA 2936 in Philippians was found to agree with the Byzantine text in 82 percent of the test passages, compared to the overall 80% agreement detected through further analysis. Similarly, it agreed with the Byzantine text in 75 percent of the *Teststellen* in 1 Thessalonians, compared with the 78 percentage agreement found through quantitative analysis. This indicates that the *Teststellen* method produced fairly accurate results, which is especially remarkable given the method's abbreviated format. With the margin for error for the agreement between Byzantine text and 2936 at 5.1 percent, quantitative analysis has confirmed the conclusions of the *Teststellen* method quite well.[40]

Conclusion

In analyzing the collation of GA 2936, it was shown with both the *Teststellen* method and a quantitative analysis of Philippians and 1 Thessalonians that it is primarily a Byzantine manuscript. The results of quantitative analysis supported the findings of the *Teststellen* method. It should be noted that a comparison of the percentage agreement discovered by these two methods is less important than the relative agreement found between manuscripts. As mentioned above, in a quantitative analysis approach, fewer manuscripts inevitably result in a lower percentage of agreement with each manuscript, and more manuscripts bring higher percentages of agreement. As the number of variants increases, so, too, does the likelihood that two manuscripts will

[40] This study uses the margin of error equation $s_p\sqrt{\frac{p\,(100-p)}{n-1}}\times t_{0.05n}$ where n = the number of variant passages, p = percentage agreement, and t = the T-score for a sample size of 247 at a 95% confidence level. This equation was found in Carl P. Cosaert, *The Text of the Gospels in Clement of Alexandria*, NTGF 9 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2008), 223–225.

agree at a given point of variation. Therefore, the comparison between the 79 percentage agreement between 2936 and the Byzantine text in Philippians and 1 Thessalonians and the 80 percentage agreement in those books in the *Teststellen*, while remarkably similar, is less important than the observation that both methods show 2936 to be moderately Byzantine. Relative to other manuscripts considered, only 020 was closer to the Byzantine text than 2936. However, the difference of agreements with the Byzantine text between 020 (94 percent) and 2936 (79 percent) seems to be significant. This qualified textual similarity with the Byzantine text is what one could have expected of a manuscript that agreed with the Byzantine text in 86 percent of the *Teststellen.*

This inquiry has provided three contributions to the field of New Testament textual criticism. First, it represents the first study of the newly discovered manuscript GA 2936. Second, it suggests the *Teststellen* method of determining textual similarity with the Byzantine text type is accurate. The results of quantitative analysis confirmed what had been predicted by this method. It also proved useful in identifying sub-types, such as those manuscripts influenced by Theophylact's commentary, although this is not its primary purpose. Finally, it may be reasonable to ask whether 15 percentage disagreement with the Byzantine text in the *Tesstellen* is too high of a bar. It has been shown that 2936 is Byzantine, yet it attests to hundreds of variants from the Byzantine tradition, many of which agree with earlier iterations of the text. Nominally Byzantine manuscripts like 2936 may prove to be quite helpful in reconstructing the history of the text of the Greek New Testament. Even if their distinctive readings came about quite late, they provide information on the way in which the text developed. For example, the similarity between the texts of 1973, 2197, and 2936 shows how a family within the Byzantine text type could be created through an influential commentary. Study should continue on the usefulness of individual Byzantine manuscripts for the goals of New Testament textual criticism.

APPENDIX

Variation from the Byzantine Text in the Teststellen in GA 2936

Passage	Teststellen#[41]	Variant
Rom 8:34	15	και[1]] OMIT[42]
Rom 13:3	23	αλλα των[2] κακων] OMIT
Rom 14:21	30	προσκοπτει η[1] σκανδαλιζεται] 3-2-1
Rom 15:29	36	οιδα δε οτι ερχομενος προς υμας εν πληρωματι ευλογιας του[1] ευαγγελιου του[2] χριστου ελευσομαι] OMIT
Rom 16:6	40	ημας] υμας
1 Cor 7:38	20	εκγαμιζων[1]] + την εαυτου παρθενον
1 Cor 9:18	29	μοι εστιν] OMIT
1 Cor 10:24	36	ετερου] πλησιον
1 Cor 13:4	45	η[3] αγαπη[3]] OMIT
2 Cor 2:17	8	λοιποι] πολλοι
2 Cor 5:17	12	καινα τα[2] παντα] 2-3-1
2 Cor 9:4	14	τη υποστασει ταυτη] 3-1-2
Gal 4:7	12	θεου δια χριστου] κληρονομος μεν θεου συγκληρονομος δε χριστου
Gal 4:14	13	μου[1]] OMIT
Gal 5:1	16	ημας ηλευθερωσεν] 2-1
Eph 5:22	13	τοις ιδιοις ανδρασιν υποτασσεσθε] 4-1-2-3
Phil 1:14	4	τον λογον λαλειν] 3-1-2
Phil 1:28	7	αυτοις μεν εστιν] 3-1-2
Col 3:21	8	ερεθιζετε] παροργιζετε
Col 3:23	9	τι] OMIT
1 Thess 5:27	5	αδελφοις] OMIT
2 Thess 2:4	7	ως θεον[2] καθισαι] 3-1-2
2 Thess 2:8	8	κυριος] + ιησους
1 Tim 3:3	3	μη[3] αισχροκερδη] OMIT
1 Tim 6:17	9	εν[2]] επι

[41] As listed in *Die Paulinischen Briefe,* vo*l. 2 of Text und Textwert*.

[42] The term "OMIT" refers to the Latin "omittere" and is used by textual critics to describe words that are "ommitted" in a given manuscript.

2 Tim 4:3	14	τας[1] επιθυμιας τας[2] ιδιας] 1-4-2
Titus 2:7	16	αφθαρσιαν] OMIT
Phlm 7	19	γαρ] OMIT
Phlm 20	21	κυριω[2]] χριστω
Heb 9:19	16	και[1] τραγων] OMIT
Heb 10:16	18	επι[1] καρδιας αυτων[1] και επι[2] των διανοιων] εις την διανοιαν αυτων και επι καρδιας
Heb 11:13	22	μη λαβοντες] κομισαμενοι
Heb 11:37	24	επειρασθησαν] OMIT

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SOME HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE BIBLICAL HISTORIAN

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Abstract

While the grammatical-historical method of interpretation, which focuses on the languages of the biblical text and its historical backgrounds to arrive at meaning, has long been the interpretive procedure of choice in many faith communities, modern methods of biblical study have tended to move away from text-historical, to text-exclusive or more reader-centered hermeneutics. Unfortunately, this trend has either basically removed history from the interpretive arena or left the field open to simplistic and sensationalistic historical explanations. Since one's view of biblical history is predicated on background matters such as conceptions of revelation, inspiration, the Bible, and even history itself, I explore these concerns first. Next, I deal with issues such as not overstating historical evidence and uniqueness, as well as the need for recognizing hyperbole, where it exists, after which I present ways that archaeology, geography, and the identification of cultural differences, are vital for a better understanding of biblical history. Finally, since the biblical text, in its current form, exhibits a long history of development and transmission, with language and scribal updates reflected therein, I submit that an honest and faithful interpretation of its historical contents, that upholds the integrity of the word of God, necessitates a balanced position that acknowledges text-critical issues, rather than ignoring or overemphasizing their existence.

Keywords: Hermeneutics, Archaeology, Geography, History, Textual Criticism, Oral Tradition, Inspiration of the Bible, Revelation

Introduction

The grammatical-historical method of interpretation, which focuses on the languages of the biblical text and its historical backgrounds to arrive at meaning,[1] has long been the basis for serious biblical exposition in faith

[1] A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963), 159–176.

communities which hold to a high view of Scripture. In this approach, hermeneutics (principles of interpretation) are used to arrive at the original meaning of the biblical text, which is then applied to the life of the believer today.

Modern biblical study, on the other hand, has tended to move away from a hermeneutic that focuses on the analysis of the biblical text within its historical context. One approach along these lines is "close reading" studies of Scripture, which—while they admirably pay careful attention to the literary forms and the structure of the text, focusing on patterns to develop its precise meaning and theology—tend to pay considerably less attention to history; instead placing the text "against" an assumed background, in which history ultimately takes a back seat.[2] In other words, the "close reading," while text-centered, pays mere lip service to history, the original partner of the grammatical-historical method of interpretation.

On the other end of the spectrum is reader-centered hermeneutics,[3] where interpreters attempt to understand the meaning of the text for their current situation, at times distorting its original intent. An example of this type of approach is reader-response criticism, which in at least some versions, assumes the unity of both the text and its reader, and allows considerable subjectivity in interpretation.[4] Here, the historical background of the biblical text is discounted completely, as is even the text itself, in some cases. Hermeneutical approaches, such as reader-response criticism, are typically associated with the ideological proclivities of reader-oriented faith communities. Nevertheless, although they have other positive characteristics, small groups—where appeals such as: "what do you think this text means?" and "what does this passage mean to you?" are often heard—have become quite popular[5] and suggest the extent that post-modern biblical studies have also been imbibed by the average church member, at the expense of the more in-depth approach.

While history, as yet, may have not completely met its demise, there are also other challenges to deal with in the way of questionable interpretations. In addition to interpreters with hermeneutical preferences such as those mentioned above, there is another spectrum of believers, who, although they

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[2] Michael A. Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York, NY: Schocken, 1979), xiii; J. Blake Couey and Elaine T. James, *Biblical Poetry and the Art of Close Reading* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1, 4–5. While comparison is often made to extra-biblical, ancient Near Eastern texts in this approach, the history behind these texts is, likewise, not considered.

[3] Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 366–371.

[4] Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral,* 377–380.

[5] Jim Egli and Dwight Marable, *Small Groups, Big Impact: Connecting People to God and One Another in Thriving Groups* (Lima, OH: CCS, 2014).

still appreciate and value history as the background of the biblical text, have either forgotten, or instead have chosen to ignore the time-honored hermeneutical principles for its proper use. In these faith communities, the gamut runs from (a) those who advocate a very simplistic view of history, presenting mere possibility as fact,[6] while sometimes adopting a "my way or the highway" approach to those who disagree with their conclusions, to (b) others who advocate naïve, sensationalistic approaches,[7] sometimes also suggesting conspiracy theories as to why the public is unaware of "the truth."

With the emphasis of the STEM disciplines and the prominence of the Bible as Literature classes in undergraduate education, as well as seminary biblical-exegesis classes, where historical backgrounds sometimes consist exclusively of the issues of authorship, one does not have to wonder what has happened to history and, more specifically, biblical history, in modern interpretive efforts, and why both public and written accounts, and, unfortunately, even some on a so-called "professional level," lean toward ahistorical surface meanings of the text or media-inspired sensationalism.

It is my contention that if we do not understand what the Bible meant in its original context, an endeavor which requires both grammar and history, it is questionable whether we can accurately arrive at what it means today, at least on more than its most basic level. In order to arrive at what the biblical text meant, in the current "crisis of meaning," the role of history must not only be recalibrated back into the grammatical-historical equation, it must also be employed in a hermeneutically-responsible manner.

The following study is an attempt to move in that direction. Among the hermeneutical principles dealt with here are: 1) not overstating the evidence; 2) not overstating claims to uniqueness; 3) a proper understanding of contexts in which the biblical writers used hyperbole; 4) recognizing both the uses and limitations of archaeological evidence in understanding biblical history; 4) the importance of knowledge of the physical and historical geography of the land of the Bible when referencing places mentioned therein; 5) appreciation of cultural differences reflected in the text; and 6) ascertaining the meaning of the original text (textual criticism).

While few, if any, of the hermeneutical principles presented here are new, most of the accompanying detailed and in-depth examples are—some of which are a response to biblical-historical interpretations the author has encountered both in the classroom, as well as in other oral and written sources.

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[6] E.g., Steven Collins and Latayne C. Scott, *Discovering the City of Sodom: The Fascinating True Account of the Discovery of the Old Testament's Most Famous City* (New York, NY: Howard, 2013).

[7] E.g., Howard Blum, *The Gold of Exodus: The Discovery of the True Mount Sinai* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

Background Issues

Any attempt to properly consider hermeneutical principles for the biblical historian requires first dealing with some prerequisite issues, such as conceptions about inspiration, revelation,[8] the Bible, and history. As important as these issues are, balance may be even more important. As noted by Mickelsen,[9] "The balanced interpreter is aware of all the elements that must be taken into account to interpret correctly," and also needs to "judge the importance of each these elements." The need for balance would also seem to suggest that one aspect, no matter how important, not be substituted for the whole, or given primary importance at the expense of the rest. The hermeneutical endeavor is "a profoundly complex interweaving of many factors."[10]

The Inspiration of the Bible

God is limitless, and Scripture itself indicates several ways that He used to inspire (or influence) human instruments, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit:[11]

While there are some sections within the Bible (e.g., Exod 20:2–17) where God's literal discourses were recorded word for word, the view that God dictated, and the human instrument mechanically recorded (as an amanuenses), as the only or main form of inspiration is not substantiated in Scripture,[12] and is an unbalanced position, leading to the idea of biblical inerrancy, which is a restrictive view, hard to maintain from the evidence.[13]

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[8] Richard M. Davidson, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Theological Seminary, 1995), 10.

[9] Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*, 375–376.

[10] Ibid., 376.

[11] Bernard E. Seton, "Interpretation of Biblical History, Wisdom and Poetry," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1974), 196–197.

[12] Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), 144; Davidson, *Principles*, 17, 19.

[13] The concept of inerrancy is not found in the Bible, cf. Richard Rice, *The Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology from a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1997), 36. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 1:19–22, likewise did not advocate biblical inerrancy. In addition, there are a few places in Scripture that potentially suggest error, see e.g., Job 42:1–9, where the discourses of Job, and particularly those of his friends, about God's character and His operation among humans, were considered by God as "not … *right*" (Heb. *Kwn*, firm, established, durable, lasting, permanent), hence, by implication, seemingly erroneous, which might suggest that at least parts of the speeches reflected in the book are also errone-

It also implies that God is limited, and had only one way of producing Scripture.

1. In verbal inspiration, the human instrument was verbally given information on issues and/or historical events, some of which happened long before their time (e.g., creation [Gen 1–4], the flood [Gen 6–9], patriarchal narratives [Gen 11–50]). Truth, as recorded here, was often presented in the form of historical narrative, with God's words paraphrased.
2. In thought inspiration, God's truth was presented in the words of the human instrument, sometimes in poetic form (e.g., Deuteronomy 32).
3. Visions and dreams reported direct audio-visual experiences, e.g., Gen 46:2–4; 28:12–14, and were often presented as a mixture of divine (or angelic) words, along with a description of the visual experience in the words of those who received these manifestations.
4. In addition, the human instrument occasionally made use of already existing sources, both verbal and/or written. While, by the use of these sources (e.g., Gen 10:1, 37:2–3; Num 21:14–15; 1 Kgs 11:41; 1 Chr 9:1; Luke 1:1–3), there is an implied lack of originality; nevertheless, originality is, apparently, not a test of inspiration. This type of inspiration was used most often in historical narrative and reflects aspects of God's truth known or recorded earlier, but, regardless, in non-revelatory sources. The re-use of sources was also directed by the Holy Spirit, who inspired all Scripture.

Revelation

While revelation is often thought of only in terms of inscripturation (revelation in written form), it is actually more complex, being manifested in both General (through nature) and Special (supernatural self-disclosure) types, the former having two pre-sin sources: 1) within the moral and religious consciousness, and 2) without, in the works of nature (cf. Ps 19:1–6),[14] with

ous; Luke 16:19–31, which, rather than being just an illustrative parable of Jesus, would seem to reflect an actual erroneous Jewish view on *hades*, at the time of Christ, cf. Josephus, *Discourse Concerning Hades,* 3–4); as well as the "spirits in prison" in 1 Pet 3:18–20, the background of which suggests the pseudepigraphical book of 1 Enoch, chaps 12–13, where Enoch was charged with delivering a divine proclamation to the watchers in prison, during the time of Noah, with Christ, in this pericope, in 1 Peter 3, functioning as the antitype of Enoch.

[14] Gerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948), 19–22. Since mankind was made in the image of God (Gen 1:26–27), in their sinless state, they had an innate (i.e., from within) knowledge of God, and on the basis of that innate knowledge of God, they could also have been led to an adequate knowledge of God through His works in nature (i.e., from without).

the latter supplementing, more specifically, what general revelation could not provide.[15] With the entrance of sin, general (natural) revelation no longer, by itself, gave an adequate conception of God. Mankind's innate moral and religious sense of God became blunted by the noetic effects of sin on the mind. Nature from without became corrupted and subject to distortion and error. Special revelation was needed to fill the gap. It alone could bring equilibrium and normalcy to man's knowledge of God. It corrects man's faulty perceptions due to sin. Following the advent of sin, special revelation became redemptive in nature,[16] its content including: sin, death, and a knowledge of God's covenant promises (Gen 3:15–17; 4:1), which assure mankind that God still loves His creation and that through His seed, salvation would come, with sacrifice (Gen 3:21; 4:4–5) intimately connected with this future reality.

Oral Tradition

As noted above, not all special revelation was in written form. Modern Westerners, in general, tend to view the content of the Bible only in terms of its writings, collected altogether in a single place, with which they are intimately connected. However, in terms of ancient times, that was not the case. The content of both pre-redemptive (Gen 2:16–17), and post-sin special revelation (Gen 3:14–15, 21;4:5), was oral,[17] and came down orally from generation to generation, throughout the pre-Flood era, then being passed on to post-Flood peoples by the few individuals who survived the deluge (Gen 3:21; 4:4; 7:2, 8; 8:20; 12:7–8; Lev 11). The content of special revelation during the patriarchal period up to the time of Moses, which, in addition to what had already previously been known, was also oral, having been passed

[15] The content of the pre-redemptive special revelation included: everything was created by God (Gen 1), the Sabbath (Gen 2:1–3), that God wants a relationship with his creation (Gen 1–2), eternal life, as represented by the tree of life (Gen 2:9), a period of probation, as represented by the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:9, 16–17), with the possibilities of temptation and death (Gen 2:16–17).

[16] Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 161.

[17] The form-critical perspective of oral tradition assumes that nearly all ancient cultures had an accumulation of oral folklore a considerable time before they developed writing. In addition, these oral traditions developed in a fluid state, mutating, and ultimately appearing in a considerably different form than their original appearance, when they were finally recorded, cf. Gene M. Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1971), 7–8. However, evidence from the cultures of the ancient Near East, especially those with a Semitic background, would seem to indicate that their literary output, including the biblical literature, "had a short oral prehistory, and were transmitted conservatively," cf, Bruce K. Waltke, "Oral Tradition," in *A Tribute to Gleason Archer: Essays on the Old Testament*, ed. Walter C. Kaiser and Ronald F. Youngblood (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1986), 17–43.

on to later generations (see above), included an increased emphasis on substitutionary sacrifice (Gen 22), the covenant now promising a future nation through the descendants of Abraham, the sinner reckoned righteous on the basis of faith in God's promises (Gen 15:6), and obedience to some oral, pre-Mosaic law (Gen 26:5).

Even with the advent of written revelation,[18] starting with Moses, God's word was initially given, and usually at first presented orally (cf. Gen 49:1; Exod 6:6; Num 24:13–14; Deut 1:3; 4:5, 14; 5:30–31; 6:1). Later, after. being written down, the available copies of individual manuscript scrolls[19] were no doubt few, being housed with priests at the tabernacle (later the temple), and other sacred spaces. During the pre-exilic period, divine author-

[18] Instead of the cuneiform of Canaano-Akkadian, a hybrid dialect of Old Babylonian, such as in the Amarna Letters, cf. Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna Based on Collations of All Extant Tablets* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 10–14, or the hieroglyphics of Middle Egyptian, cf. Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, UK: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1982), 1; the Bible was written in a Semitic alphabet, developed during the early second millennium BCE, cf. Christopher A. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 11–16; known as Proto-Canaanite (or Proto-Sinaitic), which has been found at Wadi el-Hôl, in Egypt, cf. John C. Darnell, F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, Marilyn Lundberg, P. Kyle McCarter, and Bruce Zuckerman, *Two Early Alphabet Inscriptions from Wadi el-Hôl: New Evidence for the Origin of the Alphabet from the Western Desert of Egypt,* AASOR 59 (Boston, MA: Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research, 2005); in Palestine, at Gezer, Shechem, and Lachish, among other sites, during the Middle Bronze Age, cf. Benjamin Sass, *The Genesis of the Alphabet and Its Development in the Second Millennium B.C.,* ÄAT 13 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), 53–81; and in the region of Serabit el-khadem, in Sinai, cf. William M. F. Petrie, *Researches in Sinai* (London: John Murry, 1906), Alan Gardiner, "The Egyptian Origin of the Semitic Alphabet," *JEA* 3 (1916): 1–16; and William F. Albright, *The Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions and Their Decipherment*, HTS 22 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press); in proximity to where Moses spent much of his life, first as a nomadic shepherd, and later as God's appointed leader of the children of Israel, during their wanderings there.

[19] It should be pointed out that the dominant form of ancient manuscripts (books) was the individual scroll, made of papyrus, leather, or vellum. The advent of the folded-parchment, bound-page codex, in the first century CE, or slightly earlier, forms the background to modern books. Early Christians preferred the codex and popularized its use, but scrolls continued to be used throughout the Greco-Roman world until the sixth century CE, when they were completely replaced by the codex, cf. Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblica Hebraica* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 9–10; Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 75–76.

ity, which was based on the, by this time, written Law (Torah), functioned primarily, but not exclusively, through the orally based, or spoken, prophetic tradition (2 Sam 7:5–17; Isa 38:4–5; Jer 1:13, 16–17), which pointed back to it.[20] It would seem that it was not until toward the end of the post-exilic period, during the time of Nehemiah (cf. 8:1), that divine authority shifted from a predominately orally based delivery to a focus on the written word of God.[21] Later, during New Testament-period times, even with perhaps a greater number and availability of scribes and scribal schools, it would seem, that copies were still relatively few, available only at the Temple and with rabbis at synagogues, although it is possible that a few could also be found among affluent, mostly priestly, families who had the means of obtaining their own copies.

What is the Bible?

The "word of God" is God's word, being an inextricable union of the human and divine, just as Jesus Himself; and the incarnate word of God and the written Word, are inseparably bound together, although in different ways.[22]

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[20] This is as opposed to the literary-critical approach which views the book of Amos as the earliest written document of the Hebrew Bible. This book and those of other early writing prophets, such as Hosea, are thought to have been composed at or shortly after the time when the so-called "J" and "E" source documents, thought to be behind the Pentateuch, were being compiled. This position, therefore, suggests that the Prophets came before, not after, the Law, cf. Samuel R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1972), 123, 316–318. See Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction,* rev. ed. (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1974), 319–320, for arguments against this position, such as the book of Amos, also reflecting material from the so-called "D" and "P" sources, both supposedly written somewhat later. The Jahwist (J), Elohist (E), Deuteronomist (D), and the Priestly (P) sources refer to four hypothetical documents of the so-called documentary hypothesis; a theory that suggests that the Pentateuch is actually a compilation of four originally independent documents. This theory was popularized in the 1880s by Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh, UK: Black, 1885), but is still a widely accepted view on the development of the Pentateuch, cf. Richard E. Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View into the Five Books of Moses* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 2003).

[21] Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah*, SBLMS 36 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 41, 106–109; cf. Christie Goulart Chadwick, *Nehemiah* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, forthcoming). It should not be thought from these remarks that we are suggesting that there was no writing or preservation of divine revelation on scrolls until the post-exilic period. Rather, despite the existence and use of scrolls as a means of recording God's Word, revelation continued to be predominately orally-oriented until the post-exilic period, at which time writing became the new primary medium.

[22] Davidson, *Principles*, 17–18. However, Warfield, is correct, although not in

The Bible is God's word because God's words are in it, even though not all of the words were directly His, Scripture being both a divine and human product. At the same time, as mentioned above, the Bible originally consisted, not as a whole, as we have it today, but as orally delivered messages, progressively written down on individual scrolls. And while God, in His omnipotence, superintended things, sinful humans had a part in the production and preservation of these scrolls over a period of time, from ca. the mid-fifteenth century BCE to the early second century CE. In addition, while the final written form of some of these scrolls, such as Obadiah, Haggai, and Philemon, may have come about in a relatively short period of time, others such as Genesis, Deuteronomy, and Jeremiah, went through various stages and took considerably longer.

The stages of the composition of such scrolls[23] include: 1) an individual revelation being passed from God to the human author in oral form, 2) followed by its communication to God's people, also orally, 3) after which, at some point, the author (or their scribe) transcribed, in written form, the individual revelatory event, 4) with a narrative statement later attached to that transcription, 5) after which, the narrative and transcription were eventually compiled, together with transcriptions of other individual revelatory events, which 6) were later edited, organized, and arranged, sometimes with additional material from non-revelatory ancient sources (e.g., "is it not written in the book of Jashar?" Josh 10:13), in a literary structure, or multiple structures, often stitched together with summary statements, with 7) the complete work, finally given a name, which in Hebrew was often either its first or second word, or first major concept within the first few words.

As ancient scrolls were made out of perishable materials, additional scribal activities were called for as soon as a new copy became necessary. Changing times and circumstances required explanatory glosses (e.g., "he who is called a prophet now was formerly called a seer," in 1 Sam 9:9), name updates (e.g., Laish changed to Dan, in Gen 14:14), and summary statements (e.g., "the Jebusites live … in Jerusalem until this day," in Josh 15:63), in order to keep the material relevant for later readers. As time passed, the form of the language was also updated (from archaic, to classical to post-classical Hebrew)[24] and script

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all of the reasons he presents, that this analogy can be taken too far, in that "in both cases Divine and human factors are involved, though very differently" (*Inspiration and Authority*, 162). In one case, there is the union of the divine and human in the person of Jesus, while in the other there is a cooperation between the human and divine in the production of Scripture.

[23] Daniel I. Block, *The Triumph of Grace: Literary and Theological Studies in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Themes* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017), 37–45.

[24] See Joseph Lam and Dennis Pardee, "Standard/Classical Biblical Hebrew," in *A Handbook of Biblical Hebrew*, vol. 1, ed. W. Randall Garr and Steven E. Fassberg,

changes (from Hebrew to Aramaic) also became necessary. Scribal activities also included copying errors and deliberate alterations.[25] Scribal schools were formed, some with their preferred and possibly sometimes tendential readings. With the exile of the Hebrews in the late eighth-early sixth centuries BCE, biblical scrolls were brought into diaspora communities, in Babylon and Egypt, and along with those which remained in the land of Israel, were developed in isolation or semi-isolation, into divergent types (or groups) of MSS,[26] some of which were later translated into Greek (Egyptian LXX-type) and, even later, into Aramaic (Targums), Latin, and Syriac, all part of a long reception history,[27]

(Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns, 2016), 1–18; Agustinus Gianto, "Archaic Biblical Hebrew," in ibid., 19–29; Matthew Morgenstern, "Late Biblical Hebrew," ibid., 43–54. Archaic Biblical Hebrew is reflected in the poetic parts of the Pentateuch, early prophets and some of the Psalms; Standard/Classical is reflected in the prose parts of the Pentateuch, the Prophets and portions of the Writings, e.g., Ruth, Lamentations, Songs of Salomon, Ecclesiastes; and Late or Post-Classical Biblical Hebrew is reflected in comparatively late compositions in the Writings, with Aramaic or Aramaisms, e.g., Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah and 1–2 Chronicles. Despite the apparent unity within Biblical Hebrew, "distinctive linguistic innovations have left their mark on the development of the language." These changes did not appear all at once. It should be noted that if the HB was written when modern revisionists say it was, more or less at the same time, during the Persian, Hellenistic, or Roman period, it would only reflect the third (post-classical) period of ancient Biblical Hebrew, not all three, as reflected in reality, suggesting the flaws of this postmodern position, cf. Avi Hurvits, "How Biblical Hebrew Changed," *BAR* 42.5 (2016): 40.

[25] On textual or lower criticism, "the science of determining as close as possible what the original author wrote," cf. Mickelsen,*Interpreting the Bible,* 14–16; Davidson, *Principles*, 35–36. Ellen G. White also noted scribal activities in Scripture: "I saw that God had especially guarded the Bible; yet when copies of it were few, learned men had in some instances changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition. But I saw that the word of God, as a whole, is a perfect chain, one portion linking into and explaining another. True seekers for the truth need not err; for not only is the word of God plain and simple in declaring the way of life, but the Holy Spirit is given as a guide in understanding the way to life revealed" (*Early Writings* [Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945], 220–221).

[26] Frank M. Cross, "The Contribution of the Qumran Discoveries to the Study of the Biblical Text," *IEJ* 16 (1966): 81–95; Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Textual Study of the Bible – A New Outlook," in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, ed. Frank M. Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975): 321–400; and Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012), 107–111, 158–160.

[27] This indicates how the biblical text has been acquired, changed, transmitted, and translated, and its stories told, retold, and reworked, throughout the ages, in various communities. For a scholarly collection and discourse on this material, cf.

which continues in various forms to the present. Over time, these books, and their NT counterparts, were gradually accepted as authoritative canon,[28] and have been continually interpreted[29] in diverse ways by various faith communities.

Hans-Jospef Klauck, Constance Furey, Brian Matz, Steven L. McKenzie, Thomas Römer, Jens Schröter, Barry Dov Walfish, and Eric Ziolkowski, eds. *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, 30 projected vols. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009-).

[28] Such NT passages as Mark 7:12 and Luke 24:44, as well as Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 1.38–41) suggest an early two-fold (Law and Prophets) if not three-fold (Law, Prophets, and Writings) division of 22 authoritative books. Of these, some contemporary religious communities, such as the Samaritans and, arguably, the Sadducees (Origen, *Cels*. 1.49), accepted only the Law as valid. By at least the fourth century AD, early Christian communities had accepted the Hebrew Canon (cf. Melito of Sardis, Origen, cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl*. 4.26.12–14, 6.25.1–2; and Athanasius, *Ep. Fest*. 39), but in their codices, placed the Greek translations of these books in various arrangements, with some additional books (LXX$^{\aleph B}$, Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion). Already in the NT, passages such as 2 Pet 3:15–16 seem to give Paul's epistles the status of Scripture. Athanasius' Festal Letter 39 of 367 CE is the first source that lists the twenty seven NT books as canon. Canon 60, probably a later addition to the Council of Laodicea, in 363 CE, cf. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, Philip Schaff, and Henry Wace, eds., *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 14 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 158–160, closely follows Athanasius, but leaves out the book of Revelation. As with the OT canon, various faith communities, such as the Marcionites (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.13.1–14.4), accepted only a fraction of these books. On the long and complicated history and issues related to the canonicity of Scripture, both OT and NT, cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988); and Craig G. Bartholomew, Scott Hahn, Robin Parry, Christopher Seitz and Al Wolters, eds., *Canon and Biblical Interpretation,* vol. 7 of *Scripture and Hermeneutics Series*, eds. Craig G. Bartholomew and Anthony C. Thiselton (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006).

[29] In Judaism, early Rabbinic exegesis is preserved in the tannaitic texts in the Mishnah (ca. 10–200 CE), which traces its roots to the Zugot era (ca. 170 BCE to 30 CE), consisting of five successive pairs of religious teachers, ending with Hillel and Shammai, who as teachers (Tannaim), formed two separate schools with distinct interpretations of Jewish law, cf. Martin D. Goodman, *A History of Judaism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 160–170. Its supplement, the Tosefta, was compiled ca. 189 CE. Some early midrash, sometimes consisting of commentaries on biblical books such as Sifra (on Leviticus) and Sifre (on Numbers and Deuteronomy), also date to the period, prior to 200 CE. Later Rabbinic interpretation is beyond the purview of this paper. In the early (2nd–5th) centuries of the Christian era, there were two ancient schools of biblical interpretation. One of these was the literal school, located in Antioch, Syria. It tended to insist on historical reality, finding meaning through grammatical studies, and consisted of such well-known figures as Theophilus, John Chysostom, Diodores of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, cf. Robert M. Grant and David Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2005), 63–72. Its rival was the Allegorical School, located in Alexandria, Egypt. In this tradition, the literal, plain meaning of the text

The current form of the NT is based on Greek codices of the fourth and fifth centuries CE. The current Hebrew Bible is based on complete, or formerly complete, vowel-pointed, tenth and eleventh centuries CE MSS, following a long, several-hundred-year, conservative tradition of Masoretic scribal activities, yielding very little textual corruption,[30] ultimately resulting in the text becoming frozen[31] in its present form. Later, chapters and smaller units were added to these collections[32] for ease of reference.

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was reinterpreted allegorically if it contradicted common, contemporary thought, so was thus relegated in importance to its allegorical (spiritual) sense. Common in both Jewish and Christian circles, major figures of this school of interpretation included Philo, Clement, and Origen. This school eventually eclipsed the Antiochene school, becoming the method of interpretation of the ancient church, cf. Grant and Tracy, *A Short History*, 52–62; see also Henning G. Reventlow, *From the Old Testament to Origen*, vol. 1 of *History of Biblical Interpretation*, trans. Leo G. Perdue (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009); and idem., *From Late Antiquity to the End of the Middle Ages*, vol. 2 of *History of Biblical Interpretation*, trans. James O. Duke (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009). The later Reformation (Grammatical-Historical) and Renaissance (Historical-Critical) schools of interpretation, both of which still exist, and are used to the present, will be dealt with in more detail below. On these periods of interpretation, cf. idem., *Renaissance, Reformation, Humanism* vol. 3 of *History of Biblical Interpretation*, trans. James O. Duke (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010); and *From the Enlightenment to the Twentieth Century*, vol. 4 of *History of Biblical Interpretation*, trans. Leo G. Perdue (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010).

[30] Paul D. Wegner, "Current Trends in Old Testament Textual Criticism," *BBR* 23 (2013): 461–480.

[31] This was the result of a conscious effort to keep the text in its then current form, allowing only exact copies, with no more scribal accretions. Prior to the destruction of the Temple, in 70 CE, communities such as Qumran, who used a plurality of texts, coexisted with the Temple court, where the proto-MT was the preferred text tradition. It was only a "historical coincidence" that the proto-MT "became the accepted text" at a time when the preferences of its sponsoring group were either "embraced by all Israel or imposed upon them," cf. Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 174–190.

[32] While, historically, there were some content breaks in earlier MSS, it was not until ca. 1227 that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton, placed chapter divisions in the entire Bible (both OT and NT), with the Wycliffe English Bible of 1382 the first Bible to use this pattern. In ca. 1440, Rabbi Nathan divided the HB into verses, with Robert Estienne (Stephanus) dividing the NT into verses in 1551, for the most part using Rabbi Nathan's divisions for the OT (hence the differences between the HB and the OT). Starting with the Geneva Bible of 1599, his model has been used in most Bibles ever since, cf. George F. Moore, "The Vulgate Chapters and Verses in the Hebrew Bible," *JBL* 12 (1893): 73–78; Tov, *Textual Criticism*,49; and Bruce Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Origin, Transmission and Limitations* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1977).

Thus, it can be seen that, while the individual biblical books were indeed written by their original authors, relatively few named, not every word, as it appears in their current form, can be attributed to them. Such things as the occasional use of sources, explanatory glosses, summary statements, and updates of names and language, as well as scribal errors and intentional alterations, all indicate a long history of development and transmission of the text. While these types of scribal activities do not erode divine inspiration of the original text or its authors, it is nevertheless necessary for the modern interpreter to take them in account when interpreting Scripture.[33]

What is History?

It is generally recognized that the Bible contains historical material, and that a major emphasis of grammatical-historical interpretation is on the determination of the time, place, and circumstances of the authors of the biblical documents.[34] Unfortunately, the exact meaning of history and its application in Scripture has been the center of debate since the nineteenth century.

During the Enlightenment, Newtonian physics had envisaged things in cause-and-effect relationships. This proposition soon led to its application in other areas of knowledge.[35] Moving beyond the Empiricist view that experience (observation) was the most trustworthy, but not necessarily, the only source of knowledge, Auguste Comte (1798–1857) developed the epistemological philosophy of Positivism (between 1830–1842), which claimed that the only authentic knowledge is scientific, and that this knowledge could only be based on directly-observable phenomena (empirical examination of life to verify or establish positive facts, or knowledge), also denying any form of metaphysics (reality, or existence, beyond what is perceptible to the senses, outside the objective experience, including the supernatural).[36] About the same time, the German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) advocated

[33] Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 129–137; Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*, 14–16; Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Interpretation," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1974), 170–171; Gerhard F. Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation Today* (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, 1985), 105; Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 42–47; Davidson, *Principles,* 35–36.

[34] On the grammatical-historical method of interpretation, which focuses on the languages of the biblical text and its historical backgrounds to arrive at the meaning, cf. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 173, 203–205, 231–242; Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible,* 159–176.

[35] Ronald A. Wells, *History Through the Eyes of Faith* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1989), 120, 127–130.

[36] Wells, *History*, 196–197, cf. Iain W. Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 22.

viewing things realistically by examining "the facts" and submitting them in an objective way, without bias and presupposition. The historian's task was thought to be identical to that of science, allowing the facts (understood to be merely "out there") to have their own voice, thus permitting the formation of judgments about them afterwards.[37] As a discipline, history became a mere theoretical undertaking. Positivism was soon brought up against the Neo-Platonist Idealism of the time, which was viewed as only another traditional perspective of the order of the world that was unable to be demonstrated inductively.[38]

Applied to the Bible, the traditional view of the text was seen to be idealistic and prejudiced. Since its contents cannot be demonstrated inductively (and hence not considered probable, being based on faith), they were rejected on a scientific basis. The positivistic reconstruction of biblical history is deterministic, emphasizing general, analogous, and predictable phenomena; the "forces of history" not unique (Supernatural) or idiosyncratic (within the space-time continuum). History and tradition were now thought to be only tangentially related. History might be behind tradition (the biblical text), but it was assumed to be distorted in its present form. The goal of the historian was hence to reconstruct the past "as it actually happened," as opposed to the traditional claims of the text. History (as the study of actual past events) became a reconstruction of what might have happened, or a mere story (tale) with a possible historical kernel.[39]

An essay by Ernst Troeltsch, in 1889, formulated the principles of the historical-critical method, which consists of: 1) criticism (methodological doubt), 2) analogy (experience and probability), and 3) correlation (mutual interdependence or a closed continuum of cause and effect), which ultimately excludes the supernatural.[40] These principles are all based on doctrines of the enlightenment and early post-enlightenment, with biblical historians defining their task and methodology along these lines ever since.[41]

While we cannot agree with the higher-critical approach to the study of Scripture due to its anti-supernatural bias, its ultimate aim was, nevertheless:

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[37] For additional information, cf. Friedrich Jaeger and Jörn Rüsen, *Geschichte des Historismus: Eine Einführung* (München: Beck, 1992).

[38] Provan, Long, and Longman, *Biblical History*, 21–22.

[39] Ibid., 23–24.

[40] Edgar Krentz, *The Historical Critical Method* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), 55–61.

[41] J. Maxwell Miller, *The Old Testament and the Historian* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1976), 11–19; Mark Elliott, and Paul V. M. Flesher, "Introduction to the Old Testament and Its Character as Historical Evidence," in *The Old Testament in Archaeology and History*, ed. Jennie Ebling, J. Edward Wright, Mark Elliott, and Paul V. M. Flesher (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017), 62–80.

1) to recover actual historical events from the biblical texts, and 2) to reevaluate theological interpretations by doing exegesis. Hence, there was a basic recognition that the Bible was at least fundamentally historical. In Europe, and the US, to a certain extent, this approach is now passé, being replaced by a revisionist literary-critical approach that views the HB as literature only, its theological reflections based on a later, not "historical Israel," if one even existed. This "Israel" is seen as merely an intellectual construct, placed over an "imagined past" based on hundreds of years of thought by Jews and Christians.[42] As such, it has become fashionable for postmodern scholars to view biblical history as "not historical in any modern sense of the word, … not accounts 'of what really happened,' but stories that only offer a religious explanation,"[43] or as cultural memory (memnohistory) that is not true historically, but rather recalls or recreates "a past that is relevant for the present," functioning as the underpinning for collective identity and values, a fusion of past and present.[44]

Yet another perspective, unconnected with postmodern views above, is that the Bible is not necessarily needed to write a history of Israel, at least for events during the late Iron Age, but can be accomplished, completely, or at least primarily, on archaeological discoveries.[45]

It is my contention that if any or all of the above definitions or descriptions of history are what is recorded in the biblical text, then there can be no open-minded understanding of biblical history. Rather, history, both biblical and secular, is actually based on testimony, in story form, without which

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[42] Iain W. Provan, "Ideologies, Literal and Critical: Reflections on Recent Writing on the History of Israel," *JBL* 114 (1995): 585–606; William G. Dever, "Archaeology, Ideology, and the Quest for an 'Ancient' or 'Biblical' Israel," *NEA* 61 (1998): 40–42; idem., *What Did the Bible Writers Know, and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us About the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 4, 7, 10–12, 15, 25–27, 32, 45, 47, 52; Andrew G. Vaughn, "Can We Write a History of Israel Today?" in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 368–385.

[43] Mark Elliott, and J. Edward Wright, "The Book of Genesis and Israel's Ancestral Traditions," in *Old Testament in Archaeology and History*, 213.

[44] Ronald S. Hendel, "Culture, Memory and History: Reflections on Method in Biblical Studies," in *Historical Biblical Archaeology and the Future: The New Pragmatism*, ed. Thomas E. Levy (London: Equinox, 2010), 254–257; Jens B. Kofoed, "The Old Testament as Cultural Memory," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith?: A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 303–323; Mark Elliott, Paul V. M. Flesher and J. Edward Wright, "Israel in and out of Egypt," *Old Testament in Archaeology and History*, 271–272.

[45] William G. Dever, *Beyond the Texts: An Archaeological Portrait of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017), 1–36.

there is no objective knowledge about the past. In history, that testimony, or data in the modern sense, far from being a list of mere facts, is presented in narrative (or sometimes poetical) form, with its literary and artistic elements not detracting from reporting the past accurately. These elements are actually ways of communicating effectively. Ultimately, eyewitness accounts are essentially no better than those produced after the fact, as it has been found that traditional, non-literate societies exhibit strict controls over transmitting oral testimony, with "testimonial chains" proven accurate and unbroken for generations. While verification of history is difficult, if not impossible, it is reasonable belief that is important, rather than proof, considered innocent unless shown to be otherwise, as in a modern court of law.[46]

At the same time, the biblical authors did not really write like modern historians.[47] The Bible might more accurately be seen as a book of redemptive

[46] Provan, Long, and Longman, *Biblical History*, 37–70.

[47] As can be inferred from the above discussion, the modern historian writes from a historical-critical perspective, which is based on two types of criticism: 1) on the literature itself (lower or textual criticism), based on philology, and 2) higher criticism, which is a critique of the actions, views, and understandings of peoples who lived in the past, based on a scientific perspective thought to yield "true insights into human nature." Cf. Paul Schubert, "The Twentieth-Century West and the Ancient Neat East," in *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East,* ed. Robert C. Dentan, American Oriental Series 38 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press/American Oriental Society, 1955), 318–319. While faith communities, who hold to a high view of Scripture, have since ancient times (cf. e.g., Origen's Hexapla, ca. 240 CE and its seventh century translation, into Syriac), legitimately used lower or textual criticism, its use also advocated in this present paper as part of the grammatical-historical method of interpretation of Scripture, the use of higher criticism, involving an anti-supernatural hermeneutic imposed from outside of Scripture, which has produced its own philosophy of history, by substituting evolution for creation, the religious consciousness of mankind for Jesus, a humanized eschatology of gradual progress for the second advent of Christ, and the life force (élan vital) for the Holy Spirit (cf. Schubert, "Twentieth-Century," 317), cannot legitimately be expected to arrive at the original meaning of the biblical text, much less its appropriate application for modern readers.

History in ancient Israel was event-oriented, grounded in divine choice, and based on the acts of God in its history (G. Ernest Wright, *The God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital* [Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1952]), but just as important is its overall place in the history of the world (cf. Millar Burrows, "Ancient Israel," in *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near*, 111–112). The exodus, involving deliverance from bondage in Egypt, and their election as a people, was the pivotal divine act in Israel's history (Burrows, "Ancient Israel," 111; cf. James K. Hoffmeier, "'These Things Happened': Why a Historical Exodus is Essential for Theology," in *Do Historical Matters,* 128–132). Yahweh chose the people He delivered, binding them to Himself through a covenant (Vos, *Biblical Theology,* 109–114). The theme of Israel's exodus, their wanderings in the wilderness, and their movement toward the Promised Land, so prominent in the Pentateuch, runs well beyond it. While its initial fulfillment is found

history, in which its authors selectively chose stories that best illustrated the relationship between God and His people, and their relationship with those peoples who lived around them. And while generally placed in a continuous, but not always direct chronological sequence, the Bible is not a complete history, leaving out many details, of which its more reflective readers, ever since, would have liked to have obtained.

Due to the lack of detail, there are limitations on what the biblical historian can say about ancient times, and it is just as obvious that an exact reconstruction of what actually happened is impossible. The reality of archaeological and historical research is such that we are dealing with broken traditions of people long dead, and of which the researcher has, at best, only a remnant of the actual data needed for a more complete historical reconstruction in the modern sense. Furthermore, we are left with only empirical elements (arrived at from experience) from which to make inferences, and these inferences are based on degrees of probability, or various levels of evidence, running from least to greatest: possibility, plausibility, probability, and fact. While, as people of the Book, it seems reasonable for us to use faith to bridge the gap of knowledge, faith is nevertheless "beyond the boundaries and capabilities of historical research."[48] Although an absolute understanding of reality requires more than

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in the book of Joshua, it is not completely met through much of the early prophets. The theme is rehearsed in the Psalms and in the prophetic books, and recited at annual festivals, where it was recalled, perhaps re-enacted, and "made real and present to the worshipers," (Wright, *The God Who Acts*, 38; cf. Burrows, "Ancient Israel," 112). The potential loss and renewal of the land is threatened through much of the books of Kings and a number of the writing prophets, with its actual loss in the eight to sixth centuries BCE, and partial renewal, in the south, following the exile (Ezra-Nehemiah). Rehearsed again in the book of Acts in terms of Spiritual Israel, the full implications of the theme and its consummation is still being looked for in the book of Hebrews (4:8–11), toward the end of the NT, with its ultimate fulfillment in the new earth (Rev 21–22), when the wanderers finally reach a land which is indeed their own. From "center to periphery," the religion of Israel took the form of a theology of history, cf. Schubert, "Twentieth-Century," 343. On the *sense*, rather than *idea*, of history of the ancient mythological cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia (Ibid., 339), cf. Ludlow Bull, "Ancient Egypt," and Ephraim A. Speiser, "Ancient Mesopotamia," in *The Idea of History in the Ancient Neat East*, 1–34, and 35–76 (respectively).

[48] Bill T. Arnold, "The Genesis Narratives," in *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and Richard S. Hess (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 24–25. While it might appear that there is a yielding of ground to the historical-critical position here, on the contrary, it would seem that faith is actually an unspoken factor, in every position, for filling in gaps of knowledge. For example, to the person who has given it little thought, it still takes faith in a currently unseen "creator" to believe that the chair they sit on will actually bear their weight. To the atheist, it takes faith that they have empirically seen enough of the world, that they may "safely" rule God out of any reckoning. To the well-educated scientist, it

empirical data, the definite concepts or elements that are needed to complete the picture remain lacking due to the broken chain of tradition with the ancients, which the discipline of archaeology can only partially reconstruct, thus rendering a total understanding hidden, unrestorable, and unsolvable, in a finite world. Finite human beings are incapable of complete certainty of the now missing historical details, of which only omniscience can supply.[49]

Hermeneutical Principles for the Biblical Historian

On the basis of the above limitations, it would seem that a primary hermeneutic for the historical backgrounds of the Bible is not to overstate the evidence. For example, when dealing with the exodus, the only established, indisputable, historical *fact* is that the 18th-Dynasty Pharaohs reigned in Egypt from the sixteenth through the fourteenth centuries BCE. There are multiple lines of evidence, including contemporary reliefs and monuments, astronomical observations, and chronological synchronisms with other ancient peoples, that substantiate this dating,[50] which is generally agreed upon by scholars. While the Bible (in 1 Kgs 6:1) also places the exodus at this time, there are other interpretations of this datum, rendering it empiri-

takes faith to believe in a specific date for the half-life of long-lived elements, where the shorter lifespan of the investigator precludes empirical verification.

[49] Lacking a transposition where the researcher can be drawn into another historical time, perhaps by entering through a picture (Narnia-like, as in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*), cf. C. S. Lewis, "Transposition," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1980), 70, we are left with only empirical data from which to work.

[50] Edward F. Wente and Charles C. Van Siclen, "A Chronology of the New Kingdom," in *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes,* SAOC 39*,* ed. Janet H. Johnson and Edward F. Wente (Chicago, IL: The Oriental Institute, 1976), 217–261. Cf. the recent Carbon 14 analyses now supporting the high chronology such as: Christopher Bronk Ramsey, Michael Dee, J. M. Rowland, Thomas F. G. Higham, S. A. Harris, F. A. Brock, A. Quiles, Eva Maria Wild, E. S. Marcus, and A. J. Shortland, "Radiocarbon-based Chronology for Dynastic Egypt," *Science* 328 (2010): 1554–1557; Walter Kutschera, Manfred Bietak, Eva Maria Wild, Christopher Bronk Ramsey, Michael Dee, Robin Golser, Karin Kopetzky, Peter Stadler, Peter Steier, Ursula Thanheiser, and Franz Weninger "The Chronology of Tell el-Dab'a: A Crucial Meeting Point of ^{14}C Dating, Archaeology, and Egyptology in the 2nd Millennium BC.," *Radiocarbon* 54 (2012): 407–422; Felix Höflmayer, Jens Kamlah, Hélène Sadler, Michael W. Dee, Walter Kutschera, Eva Maria Wild, and Simeone Riehl, "New Evidence for Middle Bronze Age Chronology and Synchronisms in the Levant: Radiocarbon Dates from Tell el-Burak, Tell el-Dab'a, and Tel Ifshar Compared," *BASOR* 375 (2016): 53–76; Stuart W. Manning, "Events, Episodes and History: Chronology and Resolution of Historical Processes," in *An Age of Experiment: Classical Archaeology Transformed (1976–2014)*, ed. Lisa Nevett and James Whitley (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 119–137.

cally less than a fact. The name Moses was a common theophoric element in New Kingdom Egyptian names, and likely derived from the Egyptian word *msi* (to give birth), indicating that the Hebrew personage Moses had some kind of Egyptian connection.[51] Since there is more than one line of evidence, this premise is *probable*, or considered likely, but is still less than sufficient to convince everyone. Pharaoh Thutmose III died, according to the high chronology, in 1450 BCE, on the 30th day of the seventh month (*Peret*) of the Egyptian calendar,[52] which fell in the spring of the Hebrew calendar, in the month of Abib, and according to Scripture, at the time of the Passover. Hence an arguable case can be made that Thutmose III was the Pharaoh of the exodus.[53] With at least one line of evidence, this position is *plausible*, having reasonable credibility. Hatshepsut was an Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian princess during the late sixteenth century BCE, around the time when the Bible suggests that Moses was born, so it is possible that she was his adopted mother. Since there are no actual lines of evidence for this position, and there were at least two other early-Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian princesses[54] that might have fulfilled that role, the evidence for Hatshepsut is only *possible* (as it can be imagined or believed by rational human beings). However, while people with a high view of Scripture factor in God as a cause in history, and believe that He parted the sea, killed the Egyptians, and saved the Israelites, this position can only be considered a faith statement, as not only are there no lines of extra-biblical empirical evidence, but there is no way that historical research could ever comment on the supernatural aspects of such an event. Hence, ethically, this faith position should not be presented as possible, plausible, probable, or factual evidence for this event. As we have seen above, as finite humans, historians only have empirical data with which to work.[55]

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[51] James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997), 140–142.

[52] James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest,* 5 vols. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 2.234, section 592.

[53] William H. Shea, "Exodus, Date of the," *ISBE* 2:230–238.

[54] William M. F. Petrie, *A History of Egypt*, 5 vols. (London: Methuen, 1896), 2:55–71, 85.

[55] However, history is essential for faith. God revealed Himself "in His acts in history" (cf. 1 Cor 10:11; "these things happened"), and if "these things" did not happen, there would be no lesson or instruction for God's people, cf. Hoffmeier, "'These Things Happened'," in *Do Historical Matters*, 112, cf. also Alan Millard, "Story, History, and Theology," in *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context*, ed. Alan Millard, James K. Hoffmeier and David W. Baker (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 63–64.

Likewise, in terms of NT history, it is a known *fact* that Jesus existed as a historical personage, and was executed during the time when Pontius Pilate was prefect of Judea, as elaborated in the works of the Roman historians Josephus[56] and Tacitus,[57] as well as the Bible. Since Herod had already killed his wife, Mariamne, three of his sons, and a number of other people who were supposedly trying to usurp his throne,[58] the visit from the wise men *probably* motivated him to kill Jesus as well. Pilate, the prefect of Judea, and Caiaphas, the high priest of the Jews, *plausibly* supported each other throughout their time in office as both managed to retain their respective positions longer than any other like set of contemporary antagonists.[59] Jesus and His father, as carpenters, *possibly* helped build the new city of Sepphoris, a short distance to the northwest, from Nazareth.[60] However, that Jesus was born of Mary, who was a virgin, by the Holy Spirit, is a statement of *faith*, as there is no way that empirically based historical research could ever comment on such an event.[61]

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[56] Josephus, *Ant.* 18.63–64.

[57] Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44.

[58] Josephus, *J.W.* 1.438–444, 550–551, 644; *Ant.* 15.51–56, 64–87, 164–182, 218–243; *Ant.* 16.392–394; *Ant.* 17.187.

[59] H. R. Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation*, SNTSMS 100 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004); R. Steven Notely, "Pontius Pilate: Sadist or Saint?" *BAR* 43.4 (2017): 45–46; Nashon Szanton, Moran Hagbi, Joe Uziel and Donald T. Ariel, "Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem: The Monumental Street from the Siloam Pool to the Temple Mount," *TA* 46 (2019): 163.

[60] Shirley Jackson Case, *Jesus A New Biography* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 205–206; Idem., "Jesus and Sepphoris," *JBL* (1926): 210; Richard A. Batey, *Jesus and the Forgotten City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991).

[61] We are definitely not saying that miracles did not occur, or that biblical events were unaffected by God breaking into history, only that the historian has no way of adequately dealing with them empirically. According to C. S. Lewis *Miracles: How God Intervenes in Nature and Human* Affairs (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1960], 60), "The moment it (a miracle) enters her realm (nature), it obeys all her laws. … The divine art of miracle is not an art of suspending the pattern to which events conform, but the feeding of new events into the pattern. … A miracle is emphatically not an event without a cause or without results. Its cause is the activity of God; its results follow according to Natural Law. In its forward direction … it is interlocked with all Nature just like any other event. Its peculiarity is that it is not … interlocked backwards, … with the previous history of Nature." Following his logic here, A is a historical event, followed by A2 (a miracle), and B2 is its response, at which point, it is interlocked with B (new historical events). The historian can work empirically with the data connected with elements A and B, but not elements A2 and B2. However, while remaining in the realm of faith, elements A2 and B2 are still necessary to make complete sense of the story, which is part of biblical history.

Somewhat related to the above section, on the overstatement of historically related issues, are overstated claims of uniqueness. While the Bible is rightly considered unique on a number of levels, claims are sometimes also made regarding the uniqueness of some biblical specifics, such as its stories, aspects of religion, and laws that, from a historical standpoint are unsubstantiated. Archaeologists have found material culture of the same or similar kind among the nations that surrounded ancient Israel, including literary inscriptions of events sometimes thought to be uniquely specific to the Bible.

For example, the Flood story would appear to be unique to the HB. Yet, there are a number of such stories around the world, with those from areas geographically close to ancient Israel, specifically Sumer[62] and Babylon,[63] being the most comparable. These stories deal with a world deluge, some with details, such as the command to build the boat, storage of food, animals, and family being brought on board, the boat landing on a mountain, and birds sent out, that are similar to the biblical account, but also with some serious differences, such as the capriciousness of the gods and the reasons for the flood. Some scholars have assumed that the Hebrews borrowed the biblical tradition from these Flood stories.[64] However, it is just as possible that the stories had a common source[65] among the post-flood peoples. Noah and his family had lived through the flood, and would have been familiar with the actual details of the event, but as some of their descendants became polytheists, it is possible that the story was adapted for that audience, at first orally, and later in written form, by the Sumerians, and later the Babylonians. Despite the similarity of detail, it would seem that, in its present form, the actual uniqueness of the biblical flood story is not the remembrance of the circumstances of the event, but rather the messages of God's ethical motive for

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[62] *ANET* 42–44; *COS* 1.515.

[63] *ANET* 93–95, 104–106; *COS* 1.450–452, 458–460; Berossus, *Bab* 2.2.1–4.

[64] Samuel R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (London: Methuen, 1905) 107; A. H. Sayce, *The Early History of the Hebrews* (London: Rivingtons, 1897), 107, 125; A. T. Clay, *The Origin of Biblical Traditions: Hebrew Legends in Babylon and Israel* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1923), 75–78, 150–159; and Friedrich Delitzsch, *Babel und Bibel* (Leipzig: J. C. Heinrichs, 1903): 31. According to Gary A. Rendsburg, "The Biblical Flood Story in the Light of the Gilgameš Flood Account," in *Gilgameš and the World of Assyria: Proceedings of the Conference Held at Mandelbaum House, The University of Sydney, 21–23 July 2004,*.ANESSup 21, ed. Joseph Azize and Noel Weeks (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 115–127, unique "elements … of Israelite theology" were then added polemically to the biblical version.

[65] William G. Lambert, and Alan R. Millard, Atra-ḫasīs*: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1969); Jeffrey Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982); and Alexander Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 267, n. 90.

the Flood, due to moral depravity,[66] and His grace, by keeping His covenant, and saving a remnant of His people, and other creatures, thus perpetuating their posterity.

After the flood, Noah built an altar and sacrificed animals to Yahweh (Gen 8:20). It would seem that he and his family passed on God's pre-flood revelation (cf. Gen 4:4–5; 7:2, 8), on sacrifice, the type of animals required for sacrifice, and altars to post-Flood peoples (Gen 8:20; 12:7–8; Lev 11). Altars are sometimes found by archaeologists, occasionally even with the faunal remains of sacrificial animals, for the most part, the same type (sheep, goats and cattle) as those later stipulated in the Mosaic Law (Lev 1:5, 10, 14), among the peoples surrounding ancient Israel.[67] Again, it would seem that the uniqueness here is not the form of the altar or the animal, but the use that was made of them, that made the actions of individuals or people right or wrong, ethical or unethical. As noted above, God's will (and His Law) was originally revealed and passed down orally, long before Moses wrote the Torah, and it was kept by some post-Flood people and perverted by others, for example with Abraham's behavior approved ("Abraham kept … my laws"; cf. Gen 26:5), but that of the Amorites condemned (Gen 15:16; cf. Josh 10:11–12).

In the Bible, Israel's God, Yahweh, was recognized as its Theocratic king, the true ruler over His people, and whose laws were supreme. His will was sometimes intermediated by human surrogates (a Judge or King), and His laws interpreted by prophets and priests. He fought for His people when they did His will, and against them when they did not. However, theocracy, was not unique to Israel. Israel's neighbors likewise boasted of their "supreme" god, who fought both for and against them. In the Bible, it was Yahweh who selected places for His people to conquer: "Now Yahweh said to Joshua, ' … arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land'" (Josh 8:1). The same can be said elsewhere, e.g., "and Kemosh said to me, '"Go, take Nebo from Israel'" (Mesha Inscription, Line 14).[68] It was Yahweh who led His people into battle: "for Yahweh your God

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[66] Heidel, *Gilgament Epic,* 269.

[67] Adam Zertal, "Has Joshua's Altar Been Found on Mt. Ebal?" *BAR* 11.1 (1985): 31; Patrick E. McGovern, "The Baq'ah Valley Project 1987, Khirbet Umm Ad-Dananir and Al-Qesir" *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 33 (1989): 128; Amihai Mazar, *Excavations at Tell Qasile Part One, The Philistine Sanctuary: Architecture and Cult Objects,* Qedem 12 (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1980), 49, Table 6, no. 531, cf. fig. 50., in Area C, Square 75A1, Stratum X; Simon Davis, "The Large Mammal Bones" in *Excavations at Tell Qasile Part Two, The Philistine Sanctuary: Various Finds, the Pottery, Conclusions, Appendixes,* ed. Amihai Mazar, Qedem 20 (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1985), 148; Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001), 127, 200, 292, 311, n. 106.

[68] *ANET* 320; *COS* 2.138; Samuel Ahituv, *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 390–394,

is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" (Deut 20:4). Likewise, elsewhere: "at the command of Ashur I was a conqueror, from beyond the Lower Zab River to the Upper Sea (Tiglath-Pileser I, Foundation Inscription of the Anu-Adad Temple).[69] Yahweh provided strength to His earthly king: "For You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me. You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, and I destroyed those who hated me" (2 Sam 22:40–41), cf. "with the help of Ashur and Shamash, the great gods, my lords, I Tukultiapilesarra, King of Assyria … am a conqueror …" (Tiglath-Pileser I, Rock Inscription from Sebeneh-Su).[70] It was Yahweh who gave the victory: "For Yahweh has driven out great and strong nations from before you; and as for you, no man has stood before you to this day" (Josh 23:9), cf. "Kemosh drove him out from before me" (Mesha Inscription, line 19).[71] And when His people rebelled against Him, Yahweh became angry, and allowed their defeat: cf. "so Yahweh was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah" (2 Kgs 17:18), see also "Omri, king of Israel, oppressed Moab for many days, for Kemosh was angry with his land" (Mesha Inscription, line 5).[72] While from a biblical point of view, one may question the supernatural source behind this phenomenon outside of Israel, it is nevertheless undeniable that these concepts existed, basically in the same form, being part and parcel of ancient Near Eastern thought.

Archaeologists have also excavated contemporary temples in Syria, at 'Ain Dara[73] and Tell Tayinat,[74] quite similar to the one Solomon, with Phoenician help (cf. 1 Kgs 5:1–18), built in Jerusalem. While God specifically revealed His pattern (of the earlier tabernacle) to Moses (Exod 25:9), it does not necessarily preclude the possibility that He didn't even earlier reveal the pattern orally to others, among His people (outside Israel), who were still open in some way to doing His will (cf. Acts 17:23, 30; Rom 1:18–21), or

407–408.

[69] *ANET* 275.

[70] Ibid.

[71] *ANET* 320; *COS* 2.138; Ahituv, *Echoes from the Past,* 390–394, 411–412.

[72] *ANET* 320; *COS* 2.137; Ahituv, *Echoes from the Past,* 390–394, 398–400.

[73] John Monson, "The 'Ain Dara Temple: Closest Solomonic Parallel," *BAR* 26.3 (2000): 20–35, 67.

[74] Timothy P. Harrison, "West Syrian *Megaron* or Neo-Assyrian *Langraum*? The Shifting Form and Function of the Tell Ta'yīnāt (Kunulua) Temples," in *Temple Building and Temple Cult: Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2-1Mill. B.C.E.)*, ed. Jens Kamlah, ADPV 41 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 3–21.

that they independently arrived at a similar-type of cultic building,[75] there already being tripartite temple structures as early as the Middle Bronze Age,[76] if not earlier.[77]

Another feature of the Bible that is also considered unique is the law of Moses. There were however, in the ancient Near East, at least five ancient collections of laws, three originating in Sumer: the Laws of Urukagina[78] (ca. 2350 BCE), Ur-Nammu[79] (ca. 2112–2095 BCE), and Lipit-Ishtar[80] (ca.1934–1924 BCE), and two from Babylon: including the laws inscribed on two tablets found during the excavations of the city of Eshnunna[81] (ca. 1900 BCE), and the code of Hammurabi[82] (ca. 1792–1750 BCE), that were written earlier than the Bible, parts of which are quite similar to those found in the Mosaic law. There was a continuous literary tradition between these documents, and, with the exception of the Laws from Eshnunna, were written in the form of royal inscriptions. These collections were not a part of actual legal codes, in that they were not consistent or comprehensive. In addition, so far as is known, they were not referred to in the records of actual legal proceedings. Instead, these collections consisted of independent casuistic laws, or legal decrees, issued to deal with specific problems. They were continuously copied, added to, elaborated upon, and ultimately put into the form of royal inscriptions, as a boast by kings that their divine mission, to administer justice to their people, was fair.

A number of the case laws found in the Mosaic legislation are similar to laws found in these earlier collections. There are, for example, laws about runaway slaves and debt slavery in Deut 15:12–14; 23:15–16, that are similar to those in the Laws of Ur-Nammu (Law 14), Lipit-Ishtar (Laws 12–13), Eshnunna (Law 49), and Hammurabi (Law 117). Laws 196–200 of the Hammurabi Code also have parallels in Scripture (Exod 21:22–26; Lev 24:19–20; Deut 19:21; cf. Matt 5:38). Law 196 says: "If a man puts out

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[75] C. S. Lewis, in his essay "Is Theology Poetry?," in *The Weight of Glory*, 82–83, notes, while talking about the occasional coincidence within other religions, of themes, such as death and rebirth, found in Christian Theology, that "we should … expect to find in the imagination of great Pagan Teachers … some glimpse of that theme."

[76] Amihai Mazar, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age" in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel*, ed. Aharon Kempinski and Ronny Reich (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 163, nos. 4, 10, 12, 14.

[77] Aharon Kempinski, "Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age Temples" in *Architecture of Ancient Israel*, 55, no. 8.

[78] *COS* 2.407–408.

[79] Ibid., 2.408–410.

[80] *ANET* 159–161; *COS* 2.410–414.

[81] *ANET* 161–163; *COS* 2.332–335.

[82] *ANET* 163–180; *COS* 2.335–353.

the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out." Likewise, Law 200 says: "If a man has knocked out the tooth of another man (of his own rank), they shall knock out his tooth." There is a differentiation in the Hammurabi Code between members of society (cf. Law 201), where it only required a fine of a third of a mina of silver for the loss of a tooth of a person of "inferior" rank. Law 199 says: "if he puts out the eye of a man's slave, or breaks the bone of a man's slave, he shall pay one-half of its value" whereas in Exod 21:26, the slave was allowed to go free for the loss of an eye. As such, there is no socioeconomic difference made in the biblical versions of these laws, and it is therefore, more equitable.

There are both similarities and differences between the biblical and extra-biblical versions of these laws. When not basically the same, the biblical versions appear to have been more rigorous, but at the same time more equitable than their extra-biblical counterparts. Law is a response to specific needs of society which arise within human relationships. Similar responses can even be arrived at, in different societies, when dealing with similar circumstances (by way of independent invention). Hence, although ancient collections of laws were passed down from one generation to another, and from one dominating society to another (e.g., Sumerians to the Babylonians), it does not necessarily mean that Moses directly borrowed from or adapted these law collections in the Bible. Hence, despite their similarity, God (the ultimate author of all truth) can be seen as the inspiration for these laws in Scripture. Also, if Moses was a nomad[83] at the time that the Pentateuch was written, he may not have had access to these collections, or carried one or more copies in his possession.

In sum, God speaks to human beings in their own language, and although there are great similarities between laws and, as we have seen, above, places of worship (temples, high places), ritual (altars, ceremonies, offerings), and other aspects of religion, there are also enough differences to warrant a unique response to the one true God. Israel lived in a world that was very similar

[83] While it is not impossible that Moses could have come across copies of documents, such as the Gilgamesh Epic or some of the ancient law codes, written in Akkadian, which was the *lingua franca* of the second millennium BC, in the Egyptian court, perhaps later recalling some details, and/or polemically modifying their original intent, it seems less likely, given the necessity of traveling light, cf. Roger Cribb, *Nomads in Archaeology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 65–83, that one who spent much of his life as a nomad, living in Sinai, would have direct access to them. While a fragment of the Gilgamesh Epic, dating to the Late Bronze Age, has been found in Palestine, at Megiddo, copied on a locally made tablet by a scribe, perhaps from Gezer, cf. Yuval Goren, Hans Mommsen, Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman, "A Provenance Study of the Gilgamesh Fragment from Megiddo," *Archaeometry* 51 (2009): 763–773, to the knowledge of the present author, Akkadian documents of this type have not been found in Sinai. On the proto-Canaanite alphabet, plausibly used in the initial production of the Pentateuch, cf. n. 18, above.

to their neighbors, yet at the same time, their lives were somewhat different because of what Yahweh asked of them. Truth can be found in various quantities in all societies. God inspires truth even among those who don't count themselves among His people.

Likewise, in the NT, the parables of Jesus are sometimes considered unique. However, while there are about fourty parables in the Gospels, around 2000 early rabbinic parables are also known, and although most of them date after the time of Jesus, the widespread use of the parable as a teaching device had already begun in the first century BCE, the earliest on record attributed to the schools of Hillel and Shammai.[84] While the parables in the Gospels are specific to Jesus, it is probable that "both Jesus and the later Rabbis drew from a common stock of metaphors and symbols."[85] In addition, the ancestors of some of the rabbinic parables may have even been "circulating in the time of Jesus and … known by him;" contrast for example, the parable of the generous employer, in Matt 26:1–16, with the parable of the exceptional laborer in Sifra on Lev 26:9.[86] It is also known from the Gospels themselves that, while Jesus seemingly told specific parables in a particular context, the Gospel writers sometimes shifted their focus, modified the story, or placed them in a different setting[87] for purposes of presentation. Hence, while these parables have a specific setting in ancient Palestine, in the first century CE it was the use Jesus made of them, and the specific points He drew, that are unique, not the parable form itself.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure of speech that adds to the sense in such a way that it exaggerates, enlarges, or sometimes even diminishes the meaning, so that in order to broaden the sense, what is actually said is more than what is meant to be literally understood.[88] While hyperbole can be relatively easy for the interpreter to spot, when the metaphor is obvious; e.g., "Midianites … as numerous as locusts" (Judg 12:7) or "the world … would not contain the books" (John 21:25),[89] in passages dealing with history, it can be harder to

[84] Harvey K. McArthur and Robert M. Johnston, *They Also Taught in Parables: Rabbinic Parables from the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 7, 165–166. There are, of course, a number of even earlier parables in the HB, e.g., Jotham's parable of the trees making a king (Judg 9:8–15), the parable of the vineyard (Isa 5:1–7), and the parable of the eagles and the vine (Ezek 17:2–10).

[85] McArthur and Johnston, *They also Taught in Parables,* 181–182.

[86] Ibid.*,* 58, 173, 181.

[87] Ibid.*,* 172–173.

[88] E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (New York, NY: E. and J. B. Young, 1898; Repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968), 423.

[89] Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 253; Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*,193–194.

identify, and sometimes can only be verified by going beyond the immediate to ever wider contexts, or confirmed by information outside of the Bible itself by data derived from archaeological evidence.

From the formation of Israel as a nation, a theocracy was in existence, although, as seen above, other ancient societies also assumed this form. With God as Israel's actual leader, evil was able to be removed by human beings, under His direct guidance. Concurrently, from the exodus through the time of King Saul the concept of *ḥrm* functioned in ancient Israel.

To be put under the ban (*ḥrm*) meant that its object was excluded from the use or abuse of mankind and was irrevocably surrendered to God. Texts such as Exod 23:32–33; 34:12–16 and Deut 7:1–5; 20:15–18 mitigate against attempts to tone down the command to totally wipe out the whole population of the Canaanite nations, and Deut 9:4–5 indicates that God's choice of Israel wasn't because of their goodness, but because of His covenant with Abraham. Israel needed to respond with obedience to God or be driven out of the land, like the Canaanites. Far from ethnic cleansing, the destruction of the Canaanites was within the same principle as all God's judgments on people, both earlier (the flood; the cities of the Plain; pharaoh and his army) and in the future (Ananias and Sapphira; the end of the world at the second coming).

It is sometimes thought that the ban was only something that God tolerated, because the other nations, such as the Moabites, who were also theocratic, likewise used it (Mesha Inscription, line 17).[90] The fact that God asked His people to put the Canaanites to the ban, indicates that He did not merely tolerate it, but expected their cooperation in carrying out His judgment against evil. That God, speaking in the language of man, used a then-common means to carry out His purpose is no argument against the practice. The compulsory dedication of something to God for destruction (*ḥrm*) was done because its object was an impediment to His plan or displeasing to Him. It is the opposite of something holy (*qdš*), which is dedicated or set apart because it is pleasing to God.

Nevertheless, while the ban (*ḥrm*) was indeed carried out on occasion, e.g., against the city of Jericho, and the Amalekites (1 Sam 15), the same concept was also sometimes used in a non-literal, exaggerated sense, known as hyperbole, frequently also found elsewhere throughout the ancient Near East (cf. "Israel is laid waste, his seed is not," in the Merneptah Stela).[91] For

[90] *ANET* 320; *COS* 2.138; Ahituv, *Echoes from the Past,* 390–394, 411–412.

[91] *ANET* 378; *COS* 2.41; see also the Mesha Stele, where Mesha says: Israel utterly perished forever (line 7), I slew all the people of their city (Ataroth) (lines 11 and 12), I slew [its] whole population, 7000 male citizens and foreign men, female citizens, foreign women and female slaves (lines 16–17), and for (the god) Astar-Kemosh, I put them to the ban (line 17), *ANET* 320; *COS* 2.138; Ahituv, *Echoes from*

example, in Josh 10 and 11, the ban is used hyperbolically. Here, the Israelites are said to have utterly destroyed (*ḥrm*) the people of the towns of Makkedah (10:28), Eglon (10:35), Hebron (10:37), Debir (10:39), throughout the hill country, the Negev and the lowlands (10:40) and Hazor (11:11); struck down every person in Makkedah (10:28), Libnah (10:30), Lachish (10:32), Eglon (10:35), Hebron (10:37), Debir (10:39), throughout the hill country, Negev and the lowlands (10:40) and Hazor (11:11); left no survivor in Makkedah (10:28), Libnah (10:30), Gezer (10:33), Hebron (10:37), and Debir (10:39); and left none who breathed in the hill country, Negev and the lowlands (10:40) and Hazor (11:11). However, within a short period of time, most of these same towns (Gezer, cf. Judg 1:29; 1 Kgs 9:16; Hebron, cf. Josh 15:13; Debir, cf. Josh 15:15; Hazor, cf. Judg 4:2; and throughout the hill country, Negev and the lowlands, cf. Judg 1:9)[92] were again repopulated with Canaanites; the same people who were supposedly destroyed. So, while some of the Canaanite population of these towns were no doubt killed, that all of them were would appear to be an inappropriate conclusion. Here, it is necessary to look beyond the immediate, to the wider context for a complete understanding, as well as correct interpretation of the passage.

Moving to the NT, in Matt 24:2, Jesus told His disciples that when the Temple, in Jerusalem, would be destroyed; "not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down." This passage (and its parallels in the other Gospels) is likewise hyperbole,[93] but the interpreter is not able to

the Past, 390–394, 411–412. On the use of hyperbole in extra-biblical documents, see K. Lawson Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing,* JSOTSup 98 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990), 190–192, 216, 219, 223 n. 10, 228, 234, 243–245, 251, 253; cf. also William J. Webb and Gordon K. Oeste, *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric?: Wrestling with Troubling War Texts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019), 136–230.

[92] While not being specifically mentioned as being Canaanite again in the Bible, archaeologically, Lachish (Levels VII and VI) is thought to have been Canaanite, on the basis of its material culture, with the site not becoming Israelite until around the time of Solomon, or shortly after (Level V), cf. David Ussishkin, "Lachish," *NEAEHL* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 3:898–904.

[93] It is sometimes suggested that Jesus was only referring in this passage to the above-ground structure of the temple, cf. e.g., "What Does Mark 13:2 Mean?" http://bibleref.com (accessed Mar 26, 2021), "If Every Stone of the Temple was Thrown Down How is the Wailing Wall Still Standing?," http://christianity.stackexchange.com (accessed Mar 26, 2021), and Gary Manning, "No Stone Left Unturned: Solving a Minor Mystery," The Good Book Blog: Talbot School of Theology Blog, http://biola.edu (accessed Mar 26, 2021). Nevertheless, a building, any building, disconnected from its foundation is both illogical, and an unnecessary distinction, as Jesus Himself alludes to in Matt 12:25; Luke 6:46–49. Elsewhere in Scripture, the Temple and its foundation are intimately connected (cf. 1 Kgs 6:37; 7:10; Isa 44:28; Ezek 41:8; Zech 4:9; 8:9; Ezra 3:6–12; and 2 Chr 2:3). In addition, parts of the walls of the

know this by appealing to Scripture, or the necessary truthfulness of Jesus, in

temple enclosure (see above) are still in existence, with their upper courses added in later times, and these walls also include now-blocked entrances/gate structures, dating to the Second Temple period, the time of the NT. Furthermore, the Greek phrase *oikodomàs tou 'iepou* (buildings [plural] of the temple) in Matt 24:1 would seem to imply more than just the building that housed the holy and most holy places, located underneath the current Moslem Dome of the Rock shrine. One of those buildings, a basilica known as the Royal Stoa, was located on the southern end of the Temple Mount enclosure. It was the most spectacular of the many edifices built by Herod the Great, cf. Josephus, *Ant*. 15.412; and Ehud Netzer, *The Architecture of Herod the Great Builder* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 165–171, 271. It was built over a period of eight years (Josephus, *Ant*. 15.420), in contrast to the Temple itself, which was built in only six months (Josephus, *Ant*. 15.421). While the Temple was a Hebrew religious structure, built specifically by the priests (Josephus, *Ant*. 15.421), the basilica, built by Herod, was a Roman structure, typically used for banking, and commercial transactions, also functioning at times as a court of law. Indeed, ca. 30 CE, the Sanhedrin, who had formerly met in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, moved to the temple shops (ḥanûyôt), located in the Royal Stoa (*m. Sanh.* 41:2, and *'Abod. Zar* 8:2 cf. *b*. *Sanh*. 88b), the remains of an inscription referring to the elders (*zeqenîm*), found nearby, possibly referring to it, cf. Benjamin Mazar, *The Mountain of the Lord* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 126, 146–147. This building was also the likely location of the two cleansings of the Temple by Jesus (John 2:13–22 and Matt 21:12–17), the first occasion, possibly when this part of the temple was finally being completed (cf. John 2:20). The basilica was built on top of an artificial section of the platform of the temple, raised on arches, upon which were lined four rows of columns, forming three aisles. It was entered through a gate on the west, reached by a monumental staircase leading to an arched bridge, built across a street lined by shops, in the Tyropoeon Valley below, (Josephus, *Ant*. 15.410–418; cf. Netzer, *Architecture of Herod*, 128–131). The southernmost row of basilica columns were incorporated into and above the southern wall of the Temple Mount enclosure (Ibid., 165–171), below which were the double and triple-entranced Huldah Gates, entered by steps from a plaza below. Worshipers then passed through the gate corridors, and then up more steps, north to the temple compound. Remains of the arch below the western gate, named after Edward Robinson, who discovered it, the two southern gates (since blocked in), their entrance passageways, and the large storage area, popularly known as "Solomon's Stables," below the southeastern end of the Royal Stoa, are still, in some cases, almost completely extant. Large sections of wall courses (see above), as well as the remains of a number of connected structures, have also been found archaeologically, cf. Benjamin Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord,* 34–39, 204–222; and "Archaeological Excavations near the Temple Mount," in *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy City 1968–1974*, ed. Yigael Yadin and Ephriam Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1975), 25–32; Kathleen and Leen Ritmeyer, "Reconstructing Herod's Temple Mount in Jerusalem," *BAR* 15.6 (1989): 29–40; and "Reconstructing the Triple Gate," *BAR* 15.6 (1989): 49–53; Netzer, *Architecture of Herod,*128–131; and Dan Bahat, "The Herodian Temple," in *The Early Roman Period,* vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of Judaism,* eds. William Horbury, W. D. Davies, and John Sturdy (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 46.

general. One must go to archaeological data. Modern exploration, beginning with Charles Warren[94] in the 1860s, and more recent archaeological excavation by Benjamin Mazar, between 1968–1978,[95] have revealed that, although Herodian ashlar stones vary in size, between 1.0–3.0 meters in length, with a few longer ones reaching 12.0–14.5 meters, they tend to average 1.0–1.2 meters long, with the heaviest weighing from 100–400 tons.[96] The number of exposed Herodian ashlar stones also varies, depending on which side of the Temple Mount enclosure. In the western wall plaza, seven courses have been exposed, with another 19 below ground, known from Warren's shafts and more recent archaeological work.[97] At the southwest corner of the Temple Mount, near Robinson's arch, there are currently 14–17 exposed courses, with another 16 courses below ground.[98] Above a narrow street on the southern side of the Temple Mount, near the double Huldah Gate, there is a large 1.86-meter-high master course, with seven other courses exposed above it. This master course runs from there to the eastern angle of the Temple Mount, at which point there are seven exposed courses above it, and another 27 below, for a total of 35 courses.[99] The eastern side of the Temple Mount, north of the Golden Gate, has yielded 5–11 exposed above-ground courses, with another 25 or so below ground.[100] This evidence from archaeological exploration and excavation would seem to indicate that, while Jesus was speaking generally about the massive demolition that the Romans would make of the

[94] Charles Warren and Claude R. Conder, *The Survey of Western Palestine: Jerusalem* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1884), 117–216; Charles Wilson and Charles Warren, *The Recovery of Jerusalem: A Narrative of the Exploration and Discovery in the City and in the Holy Land* (New York, NY: Appleton, 1871), 58–158, 258–260.

[95] Benjamin Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, 106–152, 204–222, idem., "Archaeological Excavations," 25–41.

[96] Nahman Avigad, "The Architecture of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period," in, *Jerusalem Revealed*, 14; cf. Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, "Reconstructing Herod's Temple Mount," 42. For more recent archaeological work in the tunnel next to the western wall, see Dan Bahat, *The Jerusalem Western Wall Tunnel* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2013).

[97] Warren and Conder, *Jerusalem*, 120; Avigad, *Architecture of Jerusalem,* 16; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, "Reconstructing Herod's Temple Mount," 26–27; Bahat, *Jerusalem Western Wall*, 14–15, figs. 1.01s-t.

[98] Avigad, *Architecture of Jerusalem,* 16; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, "Reconstructing Herod's Temple Mount," 30–35.

[99] Avigad, *Architecture of Jerusalem,* 16; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, "Reconstructing Herod's Temple Mount," 36–42; Wilson and Warren, *Recovery of Jerusalem*, 92, foldout.

[100] Avigad, *Architecture of Jerusalem,* 17; Wilson and Warren, *Recovery of Jerusalem*, 92, foldout.

Temple buildings during the soon-coming destruction of Jerusalem, He was, nevertheless, not speaking literally about the actual configuration of the post-destruction architectural ruins.

Archaeology

It is generally agreed that, in addition to biblical and cognate languages, a knowledge of historical backgrounds, including information derived from archaeology, geography, and the customs and habits of the ancient cultures and peoples of the Middle East, are necessary for a proper biblical interpretation.[101] Unfortunately, there is a misconception of the role of archaeology in relation to the biblical text. It is often assumed that the role of archaeology is to *prove* the reliability of the Bible.

In actuality, due to their specific natures, archaeology and the Bible tend to interact infrequently. The Bible is the word of God, containing historically reliable stories, which were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and, while recorded by humans, provide presentations of real events in the past. However, the Bible only provides selective information about the redemptive history of YHWH and His people, with the goal of leading mankind to God, rather than a complete list of historical events. Archaeology, on the other hand, is a discipline that is part science, part art,[102] which attempts to understand the past by uncovering and interpreting ancient artifacts and literature. In terms of the Near East, it is the only means of generating new evidence for biblical backgrounds. The discipline, as practiced in this part of the world, provides information about the excavated material culture from biblical

[101] Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 154–156; Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*, 93; Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation,* 103–104; Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral,* 127–129; Davidson, *Principles*, 44–47.

[102] By which I mean creative activity. Methodologically speaking, archaeology is not a pure science, although science is used to both form testing hypotheses and to arrive at evidence. Nevertheless, that evidence must be interpreted. The researcher, like the interpreter of ancient literature, including the Bible, can thus, never be totally objective; historical arguments are both scientific and artistic, cf. Fredric Brandfon, "The Limits of Evidence: Archaeology and Objectivity," *Maarav* 4 (1987): 39–43. Archaeological evidence is both emic (categories devised by participants of the original culture), but also etic (categories devised by the modern observer); the latter with notions providing a historical reconstruction, i.e., theory placed upon the evidence from hindsight. Hence, theorists have long debated the proper academic home for archaeology as either being in the humanities (fine arts) or the sciences, or perhaps even the social sciences, since archaeology also deals with human behavior, cf. Kent V. Flannery, "Archaeology with a Capital S," in *Research and Theory in Current Archaeology*, ed. Charles L. Redman (New York, NY: Wiley, 1973), 47–53; G. Ernest Wright, "The 'New' Archaeology," *BA* 38 (1975): 114–115; and Giorgio Buccellati, *A Critique of Archaeological Reason: Structural, Digital, and Philosophical Aspects of the Excavated Record* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 349–350.

times. Bible and archaeology thus interact in the following meaningful ways: 1) in the redemptive (salvation) history, written in the Bible, references are made to things (ancient material cultural referents), such as houses, coins, and weapons, etc., mentioned in passing, that have archaeological correlates, i.e., to things (material culture) found in the ground, that are mutually, complimentary, or reciprocally related to things mentioned in the text, and 2) less frequently, this material culture sometimes contains the same type of documents that are found in neighboring ancient Near Eastern cultures, i.e., archival, commercial, literary, propagandistic, religious, and other texts that are similar, but not usually the exact equivalent, to those found in the Bible. Like the Bible, archaeology is an interpretive discipline. Ancient artifacts rarely tell us anything about themselves. They must be interpreted. Artifacts are evidence. What is said about them (including those that are textual in nature) is interpretation.

Seldom does an archaeological discovery bear directly on the biblical text so that it confirms an historical event. The Taylor Prism which describes Sennacherib's third campaign, that occurred in 701 BCE, the same event recorded in 2 Kgs 18–19; Isa 36–37; and 2 Chr 32, is one of a very few examples. The prism relates the Assyrian version of that event and tells how Sennacherib made Hezekiah "a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage,"[103] after which Hezekiah paid off the Assyrian king with a heavy tribute, the details of which overlap those mentioned in the Bible.

On the other hand, archaeological discoveries tend rather to illustrate aspects of daily life, filling in gaps on which the Bible is often silent. For example, Iron Age houses have been excavated archaeologically and indicate that the bottom floor was used for storage and to house animals, with the human inhabitants performing most of their household-related activities outside in the central (courtyard) section of the four-room sub-division of the lower floor, on the second floor, and on the roof.[104] The archaeological remains of Iron Age houses, with their lower floor being used to shelter animals (the usual sacrificial victims used for burnt offerings), suggest the possibility that Jephthah, in the story of Judg 11, might have expected an animal, rather than a human, to emerge from his house. In fact, the wording of his vow, in the Hebrew text (in Judg 11:31), is such that it can be translated "whatever," and hence does not require the "whoever," which might seem to follow, on the basis of the outcome of the story. In addition, other

[103] *ANET* 287–288; *COS* 2.302–303; Mordecai Cogan, *The Raging Torrent: Historical Inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia Relating to Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2015), 121–133.

[104] Ehud Netzer, "Domestic Architecture in the Iron Age," in *Architecture of Ancient Israel*, 193–201; and John Holladay, "House, Israelite," *ABD*, ed. David N. Freeman (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 3:308–318.

aspects of the story, such as the bewailing of the virginity of the daughter, the yearly commemoration of the event, and the general tenor of the attitude of Scripture regarding Jephthah's life, might speak against the blood sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter. The physical arrangement of these four-room house structures have also been seen as paralleling the structure of the biblical family (*bêt* ʾāb) in Iron Age Israel, as reflected in Josh 7:14–18.[105]

Likewise, New Testament-period houses have also been excavated, and are typically one- or two-story, single-room structures, with a beaten-earth floor and a flat roof,[106] sub-divided into two areas, one for humans, the other for animals,[107] the latter complete with feeding troughs, along with a courtyard either in front or behind it.[108] This background helps in correctly interpreting the story in Luke 2:7, where Jesus was born in the lower room of a house, and laid in a manger, because there was no room in the upper (guest) room (*kataluma*, cf. Luke 22:11; cf. Mark 14:14), not inn (*pandoxeion*, cf. Luke 10:35). The NT text also alludes to these one-room houses when it talks about a single lamp giving light to the whole house (Matt 5:15; Luke 15:8), and where the family ox or donkey was brought into the house at night and then led back outside early in the morning (Luke 13:15).

While, for the most part, the Pentateuch is currently written in a later, updated, Classical Biblical Hebrew, the text of Gen 12:6 not only has the potential, with the aid of archaeology, for narrowing down the time of the event described there, but also has implications for approximating when the larger document in which it is found was put together.

Archaeologically, the Early Bronze Age IV/Middle Bronze Age I (ca. 2500–1950 BCE) was basically a decentralized, rural, and somewhat nomadic time, following a long period of urban settlement (Early Bronze II–III, ca. 3100–2500 BCE), in Palestine. At that time, settlement shifted, for the most part, from the central hill country to more marginal areas in the Negev, Sinai,

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[105] Lawrence Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985): 1–35; and Schlomo Bunimovitz and Avraham Faust, "The Four-Room House, Embodying Iron Age Israelite Society," *NEA* 66 (2003): 22–31.

[106] James S. Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: 1999), 67–68; Eric M. Myers, "The Problem of Gendered Space in Syro-Palestinian Domestic Architecture: The Case for Roman-period Galilee," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 45, 58–60.

[107] Henri Daniel-Rops, *Daily Life in Palestine at the Time of Christ,* trans. Patrick O'Brian (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962; repr., London: Phoenix: 2002), 220.

[108] Lynn H. Cohick, "Women, Children, and Families in the Greco-Roman World," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee M. McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 180.

the Jordan Valley, and Transjordan.[109] The background of the text of Genesis 12, when Abraham entered the land of Canaan, also appears to have been during a nomadic phase, as he moved throughout the country, coming into contact with little in the way of urban settlement. In the biblical text, urban settlements are usually designated either by using the name of the site, or by the word "town" (*ʿîr*) plus the name of the site, but frequently use the word "place" (*māqôm*) for less specific locations, named or unnamed. In fact, Abraham's first encampment upon entering the land (Gen 12:6) was the "place" (*māqôm*) of Shechem, suggesting that it was unoccupied at the time. The site of Shechem had earlier been at least marginally inhabited during the Chalcolithic period and Early Bronze Age I (Strata XXIV and XXIII, prior to ca. 3100 BCE), but was afterward abandoned for over a millennium.[110] Abraham next encamped on a mountain, between Bethel (a later update for Luz, cf. Gen 28:19) and Ai (Gen 21:8), the former which was still settled at the time, the latter which was not. After going to and returning from Egypt, he came to this same place (*māqôm*, Gen 13:3), but then moved on to Hebron (Gen 13:18), and finally settled in the Negev (Gen 20:1). Earlier, the Negev, a steppe zone, had concentrated settlement until ca. 2900 BCE, at the end of the Early Bronze Age II, at which time the occupied sites there were abandoned. During the Early Bronze Age IV/Middle Bronze Age I (ca. 2500–1950 BCE) the Negev was once again inhabited, at which time, it would seem, Abraham and Isaac also lived there, but which afterwards was basically abandoned, except for nomads, for most of the next millennium. In Middle Bronze IIA (1950–1750 BCE) there was a return to urban settlement in the central hill country, at which time Shechem (Stratum XXII) was reoccupied for the first time in over 1,000 years and became a town (*ʿîr*). It was at that time that Jacob came to the town on his return from Aram and bought a piece of land nearby (Gen 33:18–19). From this point on (Strata XXII-I), with the exception of three shorter gaps in occupation, Shechem was occupied through the Late Hellenistic period (Stratum I),[111] after which (during the Early Roman period) the settlement moved off the mound, and occupied the area immediately to the west, and was renamed Neapolis/Sychar. During the ninth century BCE, when the so-called

[109] Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible 10,000–586 B.C.E.* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1990), 152–158; and Susan L. Cohen, "Continuity, Innovation and Change: The Intermediate Bronze Age in the Southern Levant," in *The Social Archaeology of the Levant From Prehistory to the Present*, ed. Assaf Yasur-Landau, and Eric H. Cline, and Yorke M. Rowen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 183–198.

[110] Edward F. Campbell, "Shechem," *NEAEHL* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 4:1345–1354.

[111] Campbell, *Shechem*, 1347.

"J" source was supposedly composed,[112] the Negev was once again settled, as was the case in other marginal areas such as Sinai, the Jordan Valley, and Transjordan. Likewise, the central hill country was a major area of urban settlement at this time, with Shechem a significant town (*ʿîr*). While nomads were always in existence, and Abraham could certainly have been viewed as one, the only time that Shechem was an unoccupied place (*māqôm*), not a town (*ʿîr*), during a major cycle of nomadism,[113] and at a low point of urban settlement in the central hill country, but with settlement shifted to the marginal areas, in the Negev, Sinai, the Jordan Valley, and Transjordan, was during the Early Bronze IV/Middle Bronze Age I.

One reason for the late dating of Gen 12 by historical critics is the notation at the end of v.6 that the Canaanites were in the land at that time,[114] a detail which is thought to necessitate an author writing at a time when these people were no longer there, or at least no longer a major entity. However, as noted above, a *Sitz im Leben* for this event, and by extension the authorship of the book of Genesis itself, in the ninth century BCE, would seem unlikely. Hence, the notation in Gen 12:6b, is plausibly a later gloss, placed there by a scribe, when a new copy of Genesis was required, and at which time the Canaanites were, indeed, no longer in the land, with the actual detail thought to be necessary information for those, then contemporary, and even later readers, to have a knowledge of when the events, described in the text, actually occurred. With this level of historical specificity, Moses himself would have had to have had a good, perhaps oral-traditional source for the setting of this event at the end of the Early Bronze Age.[115] However, it is questionable that a much later author/compiler, in Iron Age II, "writing a document," which is thought to be a collection of quasi-historical religious stories and poems,[116] would have been able

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[112] Driver, *Literature of the Old Testament*, 15, 123; and Elliott and Flesher, "Old Testament and Its Character," 66; cf. n. 20.

[113] Shechem was also unoccupied during the Late Bronze Age IA, at the beginning of yet another major period of nomadism. However, at that time, practically the entire country was decentralized, and at least partially depopulated, including the marginal regions, cf. Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land*, 239–241; Rivka Gonen, "Urban Canaan in the Late Bronze Age," *BASOR* 253 (1984): 61–73.

[114] Driver, *Literature of the Old Testament*, 124; Ephraim A. Speiser, *Genesis*, AB 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 87.

[115] This event would have actually occurred some 600–700 years before Moses, necessitating a source that reflects the *Sitz im Leben* of the time when it happened, as opposed to when he wrote Genesis, at which time, during the Late Bronze Age IB, Shechem and its surrounding villages was becoming a major city-state in the Central Hill Country.

[116] Elliott and Flesher, "Old Testament and Its Character," 66–67; Elliott and

to arrive at such an accurate background. It would seem, then, that clues within the biblical text itself, combined with archaeological evidence, can occasionally provide a solution to the time when at least some biblical events actually occurred, as well as narrowing down the approximate time when the documents were produced.

Geography

A knowledge of the physical and historical geography of the land of the Bible can also help in a correct interpretation of the biblical text. One such place is Joshua 10, which deals with the second of the two southern military campaigns in Canaan, following the entrance of the Israelites into the land. Contextually, this passage deals with a response to a Canaanite coalition coming against the Gibeonites, who had a treaty with Israel. Geographically, Gibeon is located toward the eastern end of the Central Hill Country of Israel, and Aijalon, to the west, on the edge of the Shephelah.[117] Since the sun rises in the east, and was at the time of the battle, over Gibeon, with the moon over the valley of Aijalon, in the west, the time of day would have been in the morning, prior to the noon hour.[118] The reason for Joshua's request of God, for the sun to remain where it was, would seem to have been related to military battle tactics.[119] At the time, the Israelites were chasing the fleeing Canaanites downhill, in a westward direction. When the latter stopped to defend themselves, they would have been facing uphill, with the sun behind their enemies, and shining in their own faces, partially blinding them. This would have given the Israelites a tactical advantage over the Canaanites. It is thus the geographical details, and the related positioning of the celestial bodies, that help to properly exegete this rather enigmatic passage.

Another passage where geography is useful for textual interpretation is Deut 34:1–4, where shortly before the death of Moses, God showed him (Hifil Imperfect, v.1 and Hifil Perfect, v.4), i.e., cause to see (*r'h*), i.e., a vision of the land. The physical geography bears this out, as while occasionally the top of Mount Hermon, at 2743 m (9101 ft) above sea level, can be seen, neither Dan,

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Wright, "Israel's Ancestral Traditions," 213.

[117] Anson F. Rainey and Steven S. Notely, *Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Bible* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 128 (Map).

[118] Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon, *Battles of the Bible* (New York, NY: Barnes and Noble, 1997), 56, suggest a time shortly after sunup. However, actual observation of this phenomenon indicates that the moon can remain visible in the western sky, with the sun shining high in the eastern sky, well into the late morning.

[119] On military tactics during the Late Bronze Age, see Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in the Biblical Lands in Light of Archaeological Discovery* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), 96–114; and Boyd Seevers, *Warfare in the Old Testament: The Organization, Weapons, and Tactics of Ancient Near Eastern Armies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2013), 66–76.

a later name update for Laish (Judg 18:7, 14, 27) at its foot, or most of Gilead, to the north, can be seen with the naked eye, as Jebel Osh'a (at 1,097 m, 3,600 ft) is higher in altitude than Mount Pisgah (at 710 m, 2329 ft). Likewise, the Western (or Mediterranean) Sea (in v.2) is not visible from Pisgah, as the Hill Country watershed of Cisjordan, around Jerusalem (at 792 m, 2,600 ft), to the west, hides the view from the observer.[120] In verse 3, Moses looked to the south (the Negev), which is also not visible to the naked eye, as the farthest one can see from this point is 'En Gedi (the spring at Nahal Arugot, being 722 m, 2,369 ft). Points farther south are obscured by higher mountains. Although not in the text, Mount Nebo (at 835 m, 2739 ft) to the east, is also higher in altitude than Pisgah. Hence, Moses, on Pisgah, was standing at a spot that is lower in altitude than the mountains in every direction around him, so he could therefore have only seen the places mentioned in the text by way of a vision. In terms of dating, this passage is supposedly from either "JE" or the "D" source.[121] However, it seems improbable that an author from the south, following the destruction of Israel in 722 BCE, would have been aware of specific features of the geography of Transjordan, which was formerly part of the northern kingdom, and at this point in time, likely under the control of the Ammonites and Arameans. Hence, a *Sitz im Leben* for this event, and by extension the book of Deuteronomy itself, in the seventh century BCE or later would seem unlikely. While the modern historical-critical position is correct that geography is not history, and that the associated events are usually not able to be verified,[122] that a late hypothetical document whose *Sitz im Leben* is now thought to be from any time between Iron Age II and the Roman period, could accurately reflect circumstances that purportedly took place in the Late Bronze Age, or that cultural memory[123] could correctly portray, much less recall, historical and geographically precise details, seems far less likely than from an author who lived contemporaneously with, or relatively soon after, the events described in the documents they produced.

Modern geographical and political names which share the same monikers as those in the Bible, do not always constitute the exact same physical area as their ancient counterparts. Hence, caution should be used in demarcating geography, in that ancient borders, outside of those confined by topogra-

[120] This observation was already made by the Conder/Mantell survey of Eastern Palestine in 1881, cf. Claude R. Conder, *Heth and Moab* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1892), 139; Claude R. Conder, *Palestine* (New York, NY: Dodd, n.d.), 158–161.

[121] Driver, *Literature of the Old Testament*, 72, 124; cf. n. 20.

[122] Elliott, Flesher and Wright, "Israel in an out of Egypt," 266.

[123] Ronald S, Hendel, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and the History of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005).

phy, are quite fluid,[124]and even those delimited by topography were often conceived in a different way in ancient times.

For example, the geographical name that appears for the body of water that the Israelites passed through when they left Egypt is known as the Red Sea in modern translations. This phrase, however, is a translation of the words (*eruthra thalassē*) in the LXX and the NT. The actual phrase in Hebrew is the *yām sûph*, literally, Sea of Reeds. The Hebrew word *sûph* is related to the Egyptian term *ṯwf(y)*, with the marsh lake, *p3 ṯwf(y)*, modern Lake Ballah on the eastern edge of the Delta in Egypt, the equivalent to the *yam sûph* in Hebrew, as reflected in the Egyptian Papyrus Anastasi 3.[125] In addition, after the Hebrews went through the *yām sûph* (Exod 15:22), they came to it again (Exod 15:27; cf. Num 33:10–11) on their way south, not long after they camped at Elim and, yet again, on the other side of the Sinai Peninsula, at the end of 40 years of wandering (Num 21:4; Deut 1:40).[126] Hence, this body of water, at that time, would seem to have been considered to be a larger entity than its modern counterpart of the same name. In addition, the Red Sea as used in LXX, and according to the Classical Greek historians, Herodotus (*Hist.* 1.1, 1.180, 2.11, 4.42), and Xenophon (*Cyr.* 8.6:20–21, 8.8:1), as well as other ancient sources, such as Jub. 8:21, 9:2 and the Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen XVII, 21), found at Qumran, also included the modern Arabian and Persian Gulfs, and the Indian Ocean. Likewise, the modern name, Arabia, refers to the majority of the Arabian Peninsula. However, already in the Persian period, the Arabian peoples could be found in a much wider region, with inscriptions of Geshem, the Arab (Neh 2:19; 6:1–2, 6) found not only at al-Ula, in Dedan, in the northwestern part of the Arabian peninsula, but at places as far distant as the eastern Delta of Egypt, where a silver bowl was found with an Aramaic inscription[127] that reads: "what Qaynu, the

[124] In addition, ancient boundaries, unlike their modern counterparts, were fluid, as tribal entities living more on the nomadic end of the sedentism-nomadism continuum engaged in a flexible network of alignments and cooperation, often with shared pastureland and watering places, over widespread areas; cf. Øystein S. LaBianca and Randall W. Younker, "The Kingdoms of Ammon, Moab, and Edom: The Archaeology of Society in Late Bronze/Iron Age Transjordan (ca. 1400–500 BCE)," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land,* ed. Thomas Levy (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 404.

[125] Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 210–211, 214–215.

[126] On the issue of the use of *eschátēs thalassēs* in the LXX of 1 Kgs 9:16, and rendering the Hebrew *yam sûph* as the "Ultimate Sea," or "Sea at the End of the World," on the basis of its root *sôp*, thus viewing the Gulf of Aqaba as an extension of the Indian Ocean, cf. Bernard F. Bato, "The Red Sea: Requiescat in Pace," *JBL* (1983): 27–35, and idem., "Red Sea or Reed Sea? How the Mistake Was Made and What Yam Sûp Really Means," *BAR* 10.4 (1984): 57–63; cf. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 205–206.

[127] Isaac Rabinowitz, "Aramaic Inscriptions of the Fifth Century B.C.E. from a

son of Geshem, the king of Kedar [cf. Ezek 27:31] brought (as an offering) to (the goddess) Han-'Ilat." In the LXX of Gen 46:34, produced during the Hellenistic period, it says: "in the land of Gesem [Goshen in the MT], of Arabia," indicating, it would seem, that the eastern part of the Delta, along with the Sinai Peninsula between, were also considered part of Arabia. During the Roman period, following the conquest of Egypt in 30 BCE, there was a significant increase in maritime trade between Rome and India, via the Red Sea. Rome soon sent Gaius Aelius Gallus, the prefect of Roman Egypt, on an expedition to the southwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula, in 26 BCE in order to gain control, if possible, of the incense route, and the port of Eudaemon (modern Aden).[128] The classical authors referred to Roman Arabia[129] in terms of three provinces: *Arabia Deserta* or *Magna* (which included the Syrian Desert and the interior of the Arabian peninsula), *Arabia Petraea* (including Sinai, the northwestern part of the Arabian peninsula, and the southern Levant, with the Nabataean kingdom, in Transjordan), and what the Greeks called *Arabia Felix* (the fertile lands in the southwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula). In the NT, Arabia is mentioned in Gal 1:17 and 4:24–25, the latter allegorically,[130] but as noted above, Arabia, during the Roman period, covered a considerably greater territory than its modern counterpart, which should not be used to delimit the ancient territory of the same name.

Cultural Differences Reflected in the Text

As mentioned above, during the time of the NT, the typical peasant house was a one- or two-story, single-room structure, with beaten-earth floors, a flat roof,[131] and a courtyard, either in front or behind it.[132] Other types of houses include the Courtyard House, adopted from Mesopotamian culture following the exile, with small rooms surrounding a central courtyard. It had the advantage of using shorter roof beams for the individual rooms, with the overall house shape lending itself to a cooler structure during the hot, summer, months.

North-Arab Shrine in Egypt," *JNES* 15 (1956): 2, 5–9, pls. 6, 7a–b.

[128] Strabo, *Geog.* 16.4.2–4, 18–19, 21–26; Pliny the Elder, *Nat*. 6.32, 7.28; Dio Cassius *Hist*. 53.29.3–8.

[129] Glen W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

[130] Unfortunately, there are a number of well-meaning, but hermeneutically and exegetically naïve people of faith, who believe, on the basis of this allegory, that Mount Sinai of the HB is actually located on the Arabian Peninsula.

[131] Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World,* 67–68; Myers, "The Problem of Gendered Space," in *Early Christian Families,* 45, 58–60; Daniel-Rops, *Daily Life*, 220.

[132] Cohick, *Families in the Greco-Roman World*, 180.

These types of buildings, probably belonging to craftsmen,[133] had flat roofs made of wattle and daub, which were reached by exterior stairways, from the courtyard below.[134] Yet, a third type of house belonged to the elite. These buildings were villas, or palatial mansions, which, in general, were similar to the Courtyard House, but were opulently ornamented, with plastered walls, painted with Pompeian-style frescos, mosaic floors, triclinia for reclined dining, with luxuriant glassware and imported *terra silgillata* wares, and sometimes even with private, Roman-style baths and/or Jewish *miqwaot* (ritual baths). The rooms were furnished with portable couches and marble tables. The roofs of these villas were covered with Greco-Roman style roof tiles.[135] A number of these elite villas have been excavated in Jerusalem.[136] The earliest use of roof tiles seems to have been ca. 700–650 BCE in Greece, with the rise of monumental architecture, as evidenced by the Temples of Apollo and Poseidon at Corinth, and spread quickly to the Eastern Mediterranean region, including western Asia Minor,[137] possibly with the Greek colonization of this region already in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.[138] It was later, in this same region, at Troas (Acts 16:8–10), that Luke, who may have been a resident of this city, joined Paul during his second missionary journey, and even later, on his third missionary journey, went with him to Jerusalem (Acts 21:15–18), and remained in Judea as his companion while he was awaiting his initial trial at Caesarea Maritima (Acts 23:23) before ultimately sailing with him for Rome (Acts 27:1–2). While it is of course possible that Luke traveled elsewhere in Judea during his time there, nevertheless it appears that he described (in Luke 5:19) the removal of the roof of "the house" in Capernaum, in terms of ceramic tiles, of which he had intimate knowledge from Asia Minor, and would have also seen on buildings in Jerusalem and Caesarea.

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[133] Daniel-Rops, *Daily Life*, 220, cf. the house plausibly accepted as the one belonging to Peter, in Capernaum, cf. John McRay, *Archaeology and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991), 81; Jack Finegan, *The Archaeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church*, rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 108–110; Eric M. Meyers and Mark A. Chancey, *Alexander to Constantine: Archaeology of the Land of the Bible 3* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 191–193.

[134] Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World,* 68; Daniel-Rops, *Daily Life*, 223.

[135] McRay, *Archaeology*, 76–80; Daniel-Rops, *Daily Life*, 222–223.

[136] Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 83–204.

[137] Örjan Wickander, *Acquarossa VI, Roof-tiles. Part 2: Typology and Technical Features* (Stockholm, Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Rom, 1993), 285–286; Pirjo Hamari, "Roman-period Roof Tiles in the Eastern Mediterranean: Towards Regional Typologies" (PhD diss., University of Helsinki, 2019), 32, 55.

[138] Hamari, "Roman-period Roof Tiles," 59.

Whereas Mark, who actually lived in Judea, in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12), and was acquainted with Peter, whose house it appears to have been,[139] described the roof (Mark 2:4) in terms of the traditional wattle and daub material found on all but elite and public buildings. While the authors of the texts mentioned here described the same roof differently, the historical focus should not pivot so much in terms of opposition, the one source being correct (Mark) and the other incorrect (Luke). Rather, the phenomena reflected here might better be viewed as two different contemporary authors describing things: one in terms of a more complete knowledge, the other in terms of partial knowledge, filling in the details on the basis of his own cultural experience.

Text-Critical Issues and Biblical History:

The hermeneutical endeavor also necessitates, so far as possible, ascertaining the original text.[140] While the main tendency of the ancient scribes, both biblical and in the ancient Near East, in general, appears to have been the preservation of the text, there was also a tendency to revise it[141] in order to keep it relevant for later readers, especially as the form of the language evolved. As we have already pointed out, place names and locations were typically updated by scribes to reflect their current designations (cf. e.g., Gen 14:2–3, 14; Josh 15:13, 15, 48, 60; Judg 1:22). Summaries and glosses are yet other phenomena used to update the text. The context of Ezra 6:1–15 deals with efforts by the returned exiles to rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem, which was finally completed in 516 BCE, in the sixth year of Darius I (Ezra 6:15). In verse 14, there is a summary statement that this building project was successful due to the prophesying of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, as well as the commandment of God, and the royal decrees of the Persian kings, Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes. However, there is a chronological issue here, dealing with last named king (Artaxerxes). Cuneiform evidence has established that the first year of Artaxerxes I began in 464 BCE,[142] and that he died in 424/423 BCE,[143] with a reign of at least fourty years. There is a period of ninety two years between the completion of the Temple of God (in 516/515 BCE) and

[139] The phrase "the house," throughout the Gospels is understood to be that of Peter's residence, in Capernaum (cf. Mark 1:29, 2:1).

[140] Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 129–130; Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*, 14–16; Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation,* 105; Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral,* 42–47; Davidson, *Principles*, 33, 35–36.

[141] Bruce K. Waltke, "The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament," in *Biblical Criticism: Historical, Literary and Textual*, ed. Roland K. Harrison, Bruce K. Waltke, Donald Guthrie and Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 48–52.

[142] Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.–A.D. 75* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1956), 17, 32.

[143] Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 18, 33.

the death of Artaxerxes I (in 424/423 BCE). Hence, even if Artaxerxes was alive when the Temple was built, he would have been, at the most, only a few years old, and certainly not associated (by royal decree or otherwise) with anything connected with its completion. Contextually, the name "Artaxerxes" in this verse should be seen as a gloss, inserted by a later scribe, on the basis of a subsequent royal decree found in Ezra 7:11, 21, dated to the seventh year of the king (Ezra 7:7), in 457 BCE, fifty nine years after the Temple was built. This decree allowed the return to Jerusalem of Ezra the scribe and those willing to go with him, together with additional provisions for the Temple of God. In addition to name updates, summaries, and glosses,[144] other textual issues that the biblical historian sometimes encounters are occasional mis-divisions of the text, "attaching one or more of the letters of one word to an adjacent word,"[145] e.g., in 2 Kgs 23:12, where the better reading might be "the king … smashed them (*wayy^{e}rraṣṣēm šam*, i.e., the altars earlier made by King Manasseh) there," with the afformative object (*ēm*) of the first word of the clause attached, instead, to the beginning of the following word (*mišš*am), yielding instead "the king … ran from there, (*wayyārrāṣ mišš*am)," which seems to make little sense in the immediate context. Similarly, in Ezra 4:12, there is a mis-division on clause "they are finishing the walls" (*w^{e}šûrrayyā' šaklilû*), with the Aramaic plural determinative (*ā'*), again attached to the following word.

Another issue is the confusion of letters, where e.g., "*d*" and "*r*," which resemble one another, "in the scripts of most periods,"[146] cause occasional confusion with the political entities Aram and Edom.[147] For example, in 2 Kgs 16:6, the context would seem to indicate that Aram rather than Edom is the correct reading, even though Elath, a site potentially located within the traditional borders of Edom, might suggest otherwise, as control of the long-distance trade networks suggests an appropriate reason for both Judahite and Aramean interest[148] in the site. A similar instance, with the same Hebrew letters, can be seen in Gen 10:4, where both the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch, along with the parallel, in 1 Chr 1:7, would indicate Rhodanim (Rhodes) as the more likely reading, as opposed to "Dodanim" in the MT.[149]

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[144] P. Kyle McCarter, *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1986), 32–36.

[145] Ibid., 49.

[146] Ibid., 45.

[147] Ibid., 46; Ralph W. Kline, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: The Septuagint After Qumran* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1974), 76.

[148] John S. Holladay, "Hezekiah's Tribute, Long-Distance Trade, and the Wealth of Nations ca. 1000–600 B.C.," in *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever*, ed. Seymour Gitin, J. Edward Wright and J. P. Dessel (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 325–328, and n. 48.

[149] McCarter, *Textual Criticism*, 46; Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 16–17.

The pre-exilic sections of the biblical text, in their current form, are written in Classical Biblical Hebrew script.[150] This fact, along with various textual difficulties, have generally caused historical critics to claim that these issues are indicative of a relatively late date (the 8th century BCE at the earliest) for the production of the biblical text. Unfortunately, sometimes the response of people with a high view of Scripture has been to go to the opposite extreme, suggesting that the text, as we have it, being God's word, is, instead, more or less as it was originally written. Hence, evidence for compositional elements and scribal activities, reflected in the text and noted in text-critical analysis, are ignored or deemphasized. The reality is that the biblical text, as it exists today, reflects a long history of production and transmission. While there is evidence of early aspects, such as remnants of Archaic Biblical Hebrew, in the text of former prophets, the poetic sections of the Pentateuch, and some of the Psalms, where there are also parallels with the Ugaritic texts of the Late Bronze Age,[151] there are also scribal and language updates, reflecting later revision of the text. A balanced position acknowledges both the early and late aspects of the text, without undermining the Bible as the word of God. Whereas an unbalanced approach to these text-critical aspects of the Bible from either perspective is counterproductive and can lead to a misunderstanding of God's word.

Conclusion

In considering hermeneutical principles for the biblical historian, we have emphasized the need for balance, including grappling with conceptions of revelation, inspiration, and the Bible, including its earlier oral stage. We have suggested that no aspect, no matter how important, be substituted for the whole, or given primary importance at the expense of the rest. In terms of history, rather than accepting any of the more radical views of the last few centuries, it should be seen as testimony, whether through eyewitness accounts or testimonial chains, with verification based upon reasonable belief, and considered innocent unless shown to be otherwise.

Furthermore, the Bible should be viewed as a redemptive history, with selectively chosen stories that best illustrated the relationship between God and His people, and those who lived around them, rather than a complete history, in direct chronological sequence. Here, such issues as not overstating the evidence, including uniqueness, and hyperbole have been dealt with. In

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[150] On the other hand, the post-exilic books, such as Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1–2 Chronicles, are comparatively late compositions, found in the Writings section of the HB. These books contain Aramaic or Aramaisms and, in their current form, are written in Post-Classical Biblical Hebrew.

[151] Waltke, "The Textual Criticism," 50, 59. Ugarit was destroyed in ca. 1180 BC, with Ugaritic, as a language, becoming extinct at that point in time.

addition, we have suggested ways that archaeology and geography, including acknowledging cultural differences, can be useful for a better understanding of biblical history.

Finally, it has been seen that the biblical text, in its current form, exhibits a long history of development and transmission, with language and scribal updates being reflected in the text. Rather than ignoring or overemphasizing either the early or later aspects in the biblical text, an honest and faithful interpretation of its historical contents necessitates a balanced position that acknowledges both of these elements. Such a balanced position both upholds the integrity of the word of God and provides us with the best approach to understanding it.

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EXCAVATING A MONUMENTAL STEPPED STONE STRUCTURE AT KHIRBAT ATARUZ: THE 2016–2017 SEASON OF FIELDWORK IN FIELD G

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of the 2016–2017 excavations of Field G at Khirbat Ataruz, an area corresponding to the southeast slope of the site that includes a large-scale stepped stone structure. According to our preliminary assessment, the remains would have been stairs ascending the eastern side of the site, which provided an access system to the Iron IIA temple on the acropolis. At the top of the steps, we have what may at some point have been a plaza paved with flat paving stones, possibly contemporaneous with the temple on the acropolis. Field G also includes Moabite architectural remains dated later than the stepped structure, most likely Iron IIB. These remains cut significantly into and removed a large part of the earlier staircase and other materials in the building area. The presence of a possible outdoor monumental staircase at Ataruz is noteworthy, especially for the region and period in which it was constructed.

Keywords: Iron Age Archaeology, Khirbet Ataruz, Biblical Archaeology, Monumental Staircase, Ancient Moab

Introduction

Khirbat Ataruz lies on a ridge east of the Dead Sea, about 24 km south of the city of Madaba and 15 km northwest of the town of Dhiban (**Fig. 1**). The references to Ataruz appearing in the Book of Numbers (32:3 and 34) and the Mesha Inscription (lines 10–13) describe the city as granted to the Gadites by Moses and later conquered by King Mesha of Moab who slaughtered its residents for cultic reasons.[1] Archaeologically, the site came into prominence

[1] J. Andrew Dearman, "Historical Reconstruction and the Mesha Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. J. A. Dearman (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 155–210; Chang-Ho Ji and Robert Bates, "Khirbat 'Ataruz 2011–2012: A Preliminary Report," *AUSS* 52 (2014): 47–91; Aaron Schade, "RYT or HYT in Line

in the late Iron IIA era (9th century BCE) through the construction of a large-scale temple on the acropolis, which exhibits characteristics of Omride architecture.[2] The temple was destroyed by Mesha and the Moabites during the second half of the century. Following this destruction, the city continued to function as a Moabite residential town through the Iron IIB period. During the Iron II period, Ataruz stood at a crossroads where the ancient roads coming from the Dead Sea, the Wadi Sayl Hadan, the city of Madaba, and the town of Dhiban met, facilitating defensive strategies, trade, and commerce.[3] After an extended period of abandonment, the site was re-inhabited in the late Hellenistic, early Roman, and mid-Islamic periods (**Fig. 2**).

In 2000, La Sierra University began an excavation of the acropolis at the site. Since then, the Khirbat Ataruz Regional Project has developed into a consortium research project consisting of La Sierra University, Brigham Young University, Andrews University, and the Versacare Foundation, along with support from the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. The results of the excavations for the first 15 years have been published through different venues that have described the late Iron IIA temple and Iron IIB residential buildings within the acropolis area (Fields A, E, and F) and the Iron II defense wall, late Hellenistic ritual bath, and mid-Islamic domestic houses on the western, southern, and northern slopes of the site (Fields B, C, and D).[4]

For Field G, the 2016–17 project team started the excavation of the area east of the acropolis by opening seven 6 x 6 m squares over the southeastern slope of the site (**Fig. 3**). Excavations also concurrently took place in the

12 of the Mesha Inscription: A New Examination of the Stele and the Squeeze, and the Syntactic, Literary, and Cultic Implications of the Reading," *BASOR* 378 (2017): 145–162.

[2] Chang-Ho Ji, "Khirbat ʻAtaruz: An Interim Overview of the 10 Years of Archaeological Architectural Findings," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 55 (2011), 561–579; Chang-Ho Ji, "The Early Iron Age II Temple at Hirbet ʻAtarus and its Architecture and Selected Cultic Objects," in *Temple Building and Temple Cultic: Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.-1. Mill. B.C.E.)*, ed. J. Kamlah (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 203–211; Ji and Bates, "Khirbat ʻAtaruz 2011–12," 48–49; Israel Finkelstine and Oded Lipschits, "Omride Architecture in Moab: Jahaz and Ataroth," *Zietschrift des Deutschen Palastina-Vereins* 126 (2010): 29–42.

[3] Chang-Ho Ji, "One Tale, Two ʻAtaruz: Investigating Rujm ʻAtaruz and its Association with Khirbat ʻAtaruz," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 12 (2016): 211–222; "A Moabite Sanctuary at Khirbat Ataruz, Jordan: Stratigraphy, Findings, and Archaeological Implications," *Levant* 50 (2018): 173–210; "The Ancient Road in Wadi Zarqa Main, North of Khirbat Ataruz," S*tudies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 13 (2019): 143–157.

[4] Ji, "Khirbat ʻAtaruz: An Interim Overview, " 563–578.; "Early Iron Age II Temple"; Ji and Bates, "Khirbat ʻAtaruz 2011–12," 204–210.

acropolis area (Fields A and E) during these years, but the present report is limited to the findings from Field G. Central to Field G is the curious existence of a massive stone sequence ascending westward up the hill toward the temple complex's roughly east-west orientation. The primary intent of the two seasons in Field G was thus to investigate the nature and date of this stone structure. Another objective was to explore what relationship, if any, the stonework had with the various phases of the temple's expansion during the late Iron IIA period.

The following sections are a summary of the excavation results and an interim interpretation of the discovered structures from Field G. During these field seasons, Chang-ho Ji (La Sierra University) was the director, and Aaron Schade (Brigham Young University) was the co-director. Team members included students from Brigham Young University, La Sierra University, Korean Sahmyook University, and volunteers from the United States. Local workers also assisted in the excavation project.[5] The 2016–2017 project was primarily sponsored by La Sierra University in concert with Brigham Young University.[6]

Survey of Field G

Field G is set along the main east-west axis of the site map, down the eastern slope from the acropolis to the edge of the site. In 2015, a surface architectural survey took place in this area. On the west side of the slope, several wall foundations were exposed up to a few courses high, but they were heavily damaged and in poor condition to the point of constituting piles of rubble in some locations. Toward the eastern side of the area, however, significant stepped stonework and architectural remains were detected on the surface (**Fig. 4**). Additionally, exposed boulders and stones offered some indication of a walled architectural feature running in an east to west (and slightly south to north) direction. Due to the volume of the extant remains, one working hypothesis was that we were witnessing the remnants of a city wall. Alternative interpretations concerning the nature of the stone formation included possible terraced agricultural footings, landscape steps, stone courses used for defensive purposes, or steps or stairs ascending to the temple complex (see below).

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[5] The authors would like to thank the square supervisors who participated in the 2016–2017 excavations: Junghun Choi, Michael L. Duval, Rebecca Freeman, Jessica M. Hudson, Choong Ryeol Lee, Jared W. Ludlow, Christopher L. Morey, Steven E. Moulton, Brian C. Passantino, Brand S. Pritchard, and Jessica B. Smith. The Department of Antiquities was represented by Mr. Asem Asfour (2016) and Mr. Abdullah al Darweeda (2017) who provided valuable support and assistance during the fieldwork.

[6] We express our appreciation to the Religious Studies Center and the Department of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University for their generous financial support during the 2016–2017 field seasons.

In this context, Field G was opened in the Spring of 2016, an exploration comprised of four squares labeled G1–G4. Squares G1–G3 ran on an east-to-west orientation, along a stone spine that ascended the eastern side of the site, while Square G4 was situated just to the north of Square G1. The 2017 excavations of Field G consisted of five squares (G1 and G4–G7) running along the eastern side of the field. Squares G1 and G4 were re-opened from work started in 2016; Squares G5 to G7 were new squares opened in the 2017 season (**Fig. 5**).

Results of Excavations

Square G1

Square G1 is located on the southwestern-most side of Field G. It is architecturally complex, consisting of multiple mid-Islamic and Iron Age features. Much of the existing architecture suffered significant damage, and the detectable surfaces were filled with large quantities of a tumble.

At the center of Square G1 was Wall 4, running in a north-south direction (**Fig. 6**). This wall, along with Wall 10, divided the square roughly into two large areas. Between the two walls was an opening that was probably used as an entrance into a room. Both walls were about 1 m thick and stood three to five courses high, depending on the section of the wall. To the west of Wall 4, we found two layers of beaten-earth floors. The later floor produced sherds characteristic of mid-Islamic pottery; the date of the earlier floor, due to a lack of diagnostic pieces that could confirm its dating, remains somewhat undecided. However, existing Iron II pottery fragments on the surface may indicate a date in the Iron II period. Wall 4 is contemporaneous with or earlier than the earlier floor.

Immediately inside the entrance mentioned above was a small leveled area connected to the southwest corner of the square. Here we observed varied steps and levels leading into the area on the south, one lined with flat paving stones. Above this pavement was a hard beaten-earth floor with mid-Islamic sherds. Under the first stone pavement was a second stone pavement that currently remains unexcavated. In some places, these stone-paved areas were extremely well-preserved, and door hinge sockets were still discernible at an entry point (**Fig. 7**). The surface of the pavements was associated with a few Iron II sherds, which might attribute the stone pavement to the Iron II period.

In eastern G1 was an architectural feature (G1:L24) made of large (at times, enormous) flat stones and boulders. In 2016, we ended the fieldwork in Square G1 with the possibility that these large boulders might have formed a defensive wall line. However, in 2017, the boulders were found to be only two courses deep, and their surfaces were significantly larger than all the other materials used to construct other walls in the area. It now seems that the stones would have formed a plaza as several other large, flat stones were found on the surface of the area.

Work on the area between Wall 4 and Installation 24 revealed another possible stone floor that had been badly disturbed by later Islamic activities in the area. Adjacent to the floor and Wall 4 were a stone installation and a pit where we could extract several charcoal and ash samples for analysis. The pit seems to have been dug for cooking purposes, probably by the mid-Islamic residents. On the northern side of Square G1, we also encountered what we believed were additional Islamic installations that were built over earlier Iron II wall or stone-paved surfaces. We could not excavate this area during the 2016–2017 seasons. Future excavations will provide clearer answers.

Square G4

Square G4 is located immediately north of Square G1. Most conspicuous in Square G4 was a rectangular room formed by Walls 5, 13, 7, 39, 38, moving clockwise starting from the east. An entrance to this room was on the east side located within Wall 5 (**Fig. 8**).

Inside this room in 2016, we discovered two phases of mid-Islamic use, as demonstrated by two beaten-earth floors (Loci 18 and 20). The 2017 excavations revealed three additional earlier beaten-earth floors (Loci 24, 30, and 36) under these later floors. A well-preserved tabun was found on the northern side at the level of Locus 24 (**Fig. 9**), one dug down to the level of the earlier floor (Locus 30) in the room. Above and underneath the earliest floor (Locus 36) were several mid-Islamic Hand-Made Geometric Painted (HMGP) wares, along with a cooking pot fragment (see **Fig. 10:20–23**). The Locus 30 floor was evenly divided into two rectangular sections by one row of five medium-size stone blocks. The exact nature of this installation is unclear. However, most likely the stones were used to create two distinct spaces that had different functions. This interpretation is supported by the discovery of a small tabun on the eastern half of the room and a small stone bin next to it, one filled with bones and ashes. This eastern section appears to have been separated for cooking and food processing.

Quite different from this finding was the stratigraphy of the area west of Wall 7, the westernmost section of the square (see **Fig. 5**). Here we encountered three layers of floors or compact surfaces, and after removing a couple of soil and rock-tumble layers, we discovered mixed material consisting of Iron II and mid-Islamic sherds. The pottery from the floor at the lowest level (Floor 40 in **Fig. 11**) was limited in quantity. Yet, it was consistently Iron IIA and IIB. This fact would assign the original construction of Wall 7 to the Iron IIA–IIB period, along with Wall 9 that runs about 1 m from the western balk in the northwest-southeast direction.

Square G6

Square G6, located to the north of Square G4, shows the characteristics of a major wall that spans the length of the square, running in a roughly east-

to-west orientation. Wall 3 is a two-row wall (*ca*. 1.2 m) with a current height of 1.5 m on average, solidly constructed of medium to large boulders (**Fig. 12**). To the south of this wall, and comprising the majority of the square, a sequence of possible hard surfaces emerged with Iron II storage jars, plates, craters, bowls, and lamps, along with dressed grinding stones on the surfaces (see **Fig. 10:4–19**). Identifying these surfaces with floors is tentative at this point because they were all badly disturbed by a mass of fallen rock from above. One exception was the beaten-earth floor at the lowest level. It was ostensibly designed as a three-tier floor due to the downward slope of the bedrock. Each tier was roughly 30 cm high. To build each floor, the builders appear to have placed one course of large rocks in one or two rows in a shallow trench, filled in the other side with rocks and soil, and then tamped down the dirt to keep it level.

Excavations at the southwestern corner of the square revealed a rectangular platform (G6:L11; *ca*. 1.5 x 2.5 m) built using field stones in boulder-and-chink formation with walls that included stone pillars. The use of pillared walls was widespread in Transjordan during Iron I and II as demonstrated at Lehun and Jawa in central Jordan.[7] The platform was raised about 1 m above the aforementioned middle-tier floor. Its overall shape and building technique were reminiscent of a storage bin found at al-Mudayna al-Aliya on a tributary of the Wadi Mujib.[8]

In the central section of the square, south of Wall 3, a rectangular stone installation (G6:L29 and L34) was unearthed (**Fig. 13**). It was formed by three deliberately constructed stone sides, forming a rectangular enclosure (65 x 180 cm) abutting Wall 3 on its south side. The installation included a flat, rectangular basalt stone partially covering its compacted surface. Found within the earth loci affiliated with and covering this installation, were fragments of an Iron II jar, bowls, a basalt grinding stone, as well as bones and fine ash deposits. The southeast corner of this installation was flanked by what appeared to be a possible large standing stone, although this could have been part of a series of large monoliths that were intermittently used to construct walls or roofs.

The southeastern section of Square G6 was particularly difficult to assess as it showed signs of significant damage and tumble that interrupted the stratigraphy. Compact beaten floors, as well as stone architecture discernable in surrounding and adjacent loci, were disturbed and almost undetectable at

[7] P. M. Michele Daviau et al., *Excavations at Tall Jawa, Jordan, Vol. II The Iron Age Artefacts* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 1–18; Denyse Homes-Fredericq, "Excavating the First Pillar House at Lehun (Jordan)," in *The Archaeology of Jordan and Beyond: Essays in Honor James A. Sauer*, ed. L. E. Stager, J. A. Greene, and M. D. Coogan (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 180–195; Ingrid M. Swinnen, "The Iron I Settlement and its Residential Houses at al-Lahun in Moab, Jordan," *BASOR* 354 (2009): 29–53.

[8] Bruce E. Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity, Archaeology* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 103 and Fig. 5.9.

times amidst the rubble and fallen tumble. There was some evidence that a paved floor had perhaps existed at one time (multiple deliberately arranged flat stones were found *in situ*), but because of the extensive damage suffered by the tumble, it was difficult to reconstruct the original state of these surfaces with confidence.

We reached bedrock on the majority of the southern portion of the square, an area south of Wall 3. On the east part of the square, we had what looked like a filled-in entryway in Wall 3, flanked on both sides of the entry by large, standing-type stones. In Iron Age central Jordan, large standing stone type boulders often served as lintels and doorframes like those found at Mudaybi and al-Mudayna al-'Aliya.[9] We uncovered at least four of these large monoliths situated in the square, scattered around the areas that were at one point possible entryways.

Located on the northern side of Square G6 was a massive ashlar (Wall 46) used in deliberate construction, abutting Wall 3 to the south (**Fig. 14**). As the stone is partially buried in the northern balk, however, we cannot currently ascertain its complete size or function. To the southeast of this ashlar, we uncovered the remains of a possible door socket. It is unclear at this stage if the ashlar and door socket are to be stratigraphically linked with one another or what their relationship might have been.

As for discovered objects, one of the important finds in Square G6 was a terracotta lion paw, presumably from a larger cultic object to which it was once originally attached (**Fig. 15**). The artifact was discovered just west of and at a similar elevation to the aforementioned stone installation at the center of the square.[10] This object may remind us of the paws of guardian lions from temples at Hazor, Tell 'Ahmar, and several other sites in the region.[11] Also,

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[9] Paul E. Dion and P. M. Michele Daviau, "The Moabites," in *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception*, eds. A. Lemaire and B. Halpern (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Bruce E. Routledge, "Seeing through Walls: Interpreting Iron Age I Architecture at Khirbat al-Mudayna al- 'Aliya," *BASOR* 319 (2000): 132–148.

[10] The lion paw measures approximately 5 cm high, 8 cm wide, and 10 cm long. Should it be indeed part of a lion statue, we may propose the overall size of the statue was ca. 20 cm high, 18 cm wide, and 58 cm long, based on the statues from Tell Beit Mirsim and Tell Tayinat, in which paw-to-whole statue ratio is seemingly 1:4, 1:2.25, and 1:5.75 for height, width, and length, respectively. cf. Ruth Amiran, "The Lion Statue and the Libation Tray from Tell Beit Mirsim," *BASOR* 222 (1976), fig. 4; Ekram Akurgal, Orient und Okzidem. *Die Geburt der griechischen Kunst* (Baden-Baden: Holle, 1965), fig. 26.

[11] Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), figs. 165 and 166; William E. Mierse, *Temples and Sanctuaries from the Early Iron Age Levant: Recovery after Collapse* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), fig. 41; "Hazor," *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Vol. 2,* 598; Silvia Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/ Israels und der Alte Oient, Band 4*,

the Ataruz lion paw may be reflective of religious cult, as are other recently discovered lion figurines found in Iron Age II Judah. For instance, "two limestone objects from Tell Beit Mirsim — statue (50 cm long) and a libation tray — depict lions," and it has been suggested that "the statue was part of a pair of standing lions."[12] While additional fragments indicating the presence of a second statue have not been discovered at Ataruz, the discovery of lion statuary near the eastern axis of the cultic complex on the slopes of the acropolis may strengthen the argument of the stairs as an ascent route to the temple. It is interesting also that references to the site in the Mesha Inscription may hold ties to lions in reference to cultic activity.[13] What may provide other possible links to the lion at Ataruz are two other cultic objects discovered within the temple proper, which may include leonine animals. One entails a cultic stand with a male figure holding an animal.[14] The second object was found in previous fieldwork seasons and is currently under examination for publication. The object appears to be a terracotta lion figurine and was unearthed from a cultic room in the temple courtyard.

Die Eisenzeit bis zum Beginn der achämenidishchen Herrschaft (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2018), figs. 1325, 1327; 1641–1642, 1644. Although the lion paw of Ataruz was not discovered from the temple proper, lion iconography in the region has been associated with cultic practice. For examples, see Raz Kletter, Irit Ziffer and Wolfgang Zwickel, *Yavneh I. The Excavation of the "Temple Hill" Repository and the Cult Stands* (Fribourg: Fribourg Academic Press, 2010), pls. 8:1; 9:2; 50–52; 98:3; 155: 1–2; Brent A. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2005); Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 186–191.

[12] Raz Kletter, Katri Saarelainen, and Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah, "Recently Discovered Iron Age Lion Figurines from Jerusalem," *Antiguo Oriente* 12 (2014): 47; Amiran, "The Lion Statue," 29–40.

[13] Line 12 in the Mesha Inscription mentions the ʾrʾl. dwdh. Some see the root "lion" in ʾrʾl. See for example, Nadav Na'aman, "King Mesah and the Foundation of the Moabite Monarch," *IEJ* 47 (1997): 88; Gerald Mattingly, "Moabite Religion and the Meshaʿ Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. J. A. Dearman (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 236. Regardless of how one interprets the enigmatic dwdh, the majority of studies links this phrase to cultic activity. See Schade, 159.

[14] See Ji, "The Early Iron Age II Temple at Hirbet ʿAtarus and its Architecture and Selected Cultic Objects," pl. 47. The animal that the right-hand male figure holds appears to be a leonine creature, even though it has also been suggested that it is a sheep. For the discussion of this animal figure, see Stefanie P. Elkins, "Ceramic Architectural Models from the Madaba Plains Region: A Selected Art Historical Analysis (PhD diss., Andrews University)," 2018, 265–268 (https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2953&context=dissertations).

Additionally, what seems significant in Square G6 is the emergence of Pinkish/Orange-Band-on-Creamy (POBC) ware within the Iron II jar assemblage (**Figs. 16; 10:12, 15**). The external wall of this ceramic corpus is decorated with one or two broad, horizontal orange- or pinkish-color bands on the white-creamy-slipped body. This type of ware is similar in decoration to what has been found through archaeological surface surveys in the eastern part of the Dhiban Plateau, especially in the region of Khirbat Saliya.[15] It seems to be absent in the Amman region and the northern Madaba Plains but seemingly ubiquitous at Moabite sites such as Jalul, Mudayna ath-Thamad, and possibly Balua (personal communication with Larry G. Herr, Randall Younker, Margreet Steiner, and Friedbert Ninow). Although speculative at this time, we might be witnessing the development of a new pottery tradition at Ataruz during the mid-Iron II period, along with the construction of the buildings in Square G6 in the subsequent decades following Mesha's conquest, which is possibly linked with eastern portions of Moab and the Dhiban Plateau.

Squares G2 and G3

Excavations of Square G2, east of Square G1, revealed a sloping wall (G2:L8 in **Fig. 5**) oriented in a northwest-southeast direction toward the acropolis. It was 1.1 m wide and stood 30 cm high. The wall was abutted by at least a couple of fairly, intact rows of stone blocs that looked like stairs or steps ascending the eastern side of the site. These rows were situated in a roughly north-south direction and displayed similarities with the stepped stone surface uncovered further north in Square G7 (see below). The stones were positioned atop the surface of a compact, beaten-earth layer. On the surface of this structure, we discovered mostly Iron II pottery with some mid-Islamic material in the mix, probably due to the shallow depth of the excavated material just below the surface soil, caused by the steep decline and runoff of material from upper portions of the site (Squares G1 and G4), where an Islamic presence was detected.

Of potential interest in Square G2 was the discovery of a circular rock installation (*ca*. 65 cm in diameter; Locus 9), constructed on a beaten-earth surface, which seemed to have supported a large Iron II storage jar. Nearby, we found a murex shell, two polished stones, a proliferation of pottery, and evidence of food consumption (including tabun fragments, a grinding stone,

[15] Cf. Chang-Ho Ji and Taysir 'Attiyat, "Archaeological Survey of the Dhiban Plateau, 1996: A Preliminary Report," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 41 (1997): 115–128; Chang-Ho Ji and Jong K. Lee, "A Preliminary Report on the Dhiban Plateau Survey Project, 1999: The Versacare Expedition," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 44 (2000): 493–506. At Ataruz, the same type of pottery was also unearthed in abundance during the excavations of Square B1 in 2001. These sherds were associated with the Iron II stone pavement floor found in the square.

and animal bones). Much of the pottery remains from the installation locus were attributed to the Iron II period. This rock installation would be dated to later than the stepped structure because it was stratigraphically connected with the compact dirt layer, roughly 10–15 cm thick, above the structure.

Immediately east of Square G2 is Square G3, which consists of what looks like at least six rows of stairs running across the entire length of the square in a south-to-north direction (**Fig. 17**). These structures all began to emerge within a depth of 10–20 cm of excavation. At the eastern portion of the square, the stone rows were larger and more pronounced. As the rows climbed to the northwest, the size of the stones forming the rows decreased in their average height but maintained a deliberate pattern of flat-faced stones situated in a running line from south to north. As in Square G2, the stones forming these rows sat on top of compact, beaten-earth floors. All diagnostic pottery pieces collected from Square G3 were from the Iron II period.

Squares G5 and G7

Square G5 was newly opened in 2017 attempting to trace a connection with, or continuation of the stepped stone structures in Square G2. However, Square G5 had suffered significant damage and was very poorly preserved in many places. This was due in large measure to the disturbances caused by the construction of mid-Islamic installations within the square. There were some signs of the continuation of the steps running in a north-south direction in the eastern portion of Square G5. This was exceptional and far from conclusive, however.

Specifically, a large circular fire pit (G5:L6–L7 in **Fig. 5**) cut through the entire half of the western side of the square, in which the remains of mid-Islamic pottery, tabun fragments, and animal bones were found. This area was apparently used in the mid-Islamic period for cooking. The disruption this installation caused to the earlier sequences made it difficult to assess surrounding architectural remains. Apart from this fire pit, there was a potential curvilinear wall (G5:L2 in **Fig. 5**) running roughly in an east-west direction, which appeared to be from the mid-Islamic period. As in Square G4, the construction of this wall dug out earlier Iron II material, which was badly destroyed in the process. By removing a section of the accumulation connecting Squares G5 and G7, we could see the completion of another possible wall line. We found a few Iron II and mid-Islamic sherds during the cleanup of this wall. Overall, Square G5 seems to continue the trajectory we found in the adjacent Square G4, and a domestic scenario of mid-Islamic use and occupation that was built upon Iron II structures seems apparent.

Square G7 is directly east of Square G6 and north of Square G5. The findings from Square G7 consisted of multiple flat surface stones that were exposed in the shallow ground after a 10–20 cm cleanup. As for Squares G2 and G3, these stones were deliberately arranged in what appeared to be rows (**Figs. 18–19**). The rows were once again situated on top of beaten-earth, and

the stones were flat and generally modest in length, width, and height. Even though the square was cut through in the center by an undetermined feature that disrupted the stone sequences, we were able to detect at least 11 stone rows ascending the hill from east to west towards the acropolis area. Except for one miscellaneous mid-Islamic and one possible Hellenistic sherd, the relatively small amount of pottery yielded from Square G7 was all dated to the Iron II period.

Put together, from top to bottom within Squares G2, G3, and G7, we came upon what seems to be deliberate rows of flat stones running in a south-north direction. Each row sits upon and is separated by a surface of beaten earth. The stone rows thus seem to have been situated in a calculated manner creating a surface. In all, up to now, approximately 20 clear architectural loci have been assigned to these rows (with three or four other possible partially preserved rows at various other locations within the squares), and we preliminarily label the sum of these loci as a stepped stone structure or staircase. In our assessment, we have only included rows that are not thoroughly damaged and that can be identified with some degree of confidence. In 2016, due to the damage and erosion to this surface caused by rainwater runoff and significant tumble, we were reserved in calling them a series of steps. However, at present that seems to be the best working hypothesis (see below).

Stratigraphy and Dating

The preceding report identified four field phases in Field G, their time stretching from the early Iron II to modern times, though the major periods are late Iron IIA, Iron IIB, and mid-Islamic periods (see **Fig. 10** for pottery samples). Field Phase 1 is a layer of topsoil containing soil and rock debris sporadically mixed with Iron II and mid-Islamic potsherds.

Field Phase 2 is dated to the mid-Islamic period.[16] Evidence for this phase has come from Squares G1, G4, and G5. In Square G1, the upper beaten-

[16] Based on the sherds collected from the excavations, we assign this field phase to the early Mamluk period, the late 13th – early 15th centuries CE. As shown in **Fig. 10:20–23**, the Hand-Made Geometric Painted (HMGP) wares form the largest pottery group in our mid-Islamic corpus, followed by coarse cooking pot and storage jar wares. The ceramic assemblage lacks of hand-made, red-painted coarse wares of the 12th – early 13th centuries CE, which lends further support to the proposed dating (cf. Robin M. Brown. "Summary Report of the 1986 Excavations: Late Islamic Shobak." *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 32 (1988]: 225–245; Alan Walmsley, "Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Jordan and Crusader Interlude," in *The Archaeology of Jordan*, eds. B. MacDonald, R. Adams, and P. Bienkowski (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001])], 515–560; Bethany Walker, "The Islamic Period," in *Ceramic Finds: Typological and Technological Studies of the Pottery Remains from Tell Hesban and Vicinity*, eds. J. A. Sauers and L. G. Herr (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2012), 507–596.

earth floor west of Wall 4 is assigned to this phase, along with the fire pit and stone installation on the other side of the wall. The fire pit in Square G5 is also attributed to Field Phase 2.

Square G4 poses a unique contrast with Squares G1 and G5. It is characterized by a rectangular building with beaten-earth floors containing mid-Islamic pottery finds. The mid-Islamic evidence in Square G4 emerges past the depths of one meter, significantly deeper than the adjacent mid-Islamic materials to the north (Square G1) and east (Square G5). An intensive and repeated use of the room is confirmed by a sequence of compact floors inside the room and its blocked and reconstructed doorway. The structure was thus clearly used over multiple times during the mid-Islamic era.

A long gap in occupation is indicated between the Islamic period and the next lower materials of Field Phase 3. This phase is provisionally attributed to the Iron IIB period (*ca*. late 9th – early 7th centuries BCE).[17] The evidence posits that the circular rock installation in Square G2 was also created sometime during this period after the partial dismantlement of the stepped structure and then kept in use throughout that phase period.

This settlement phase, however, is best represented by the remains that consist of Wall 3 and a couple of stone installations in Square G6. Wall 3 passes through the center of the square west to east and associates with a series of potential beaten-earth floors. The earliest floor of this phase includes a pillared-wall platform and rectangular stone installation. At this point, the building appears to have been constructed as a semi-underground structure that was built into the hillside to a depth to cover the side and back walls of the building.[18] The front of the building was probably left open to the air, facing the east and south to get the natural heat and light provided by the sun. There are several semi-underground houses still visible on the ground at Ataruz, dotting the southeastern slope of the hill. They are all ancient, looking as if they have been inserted into

[17] This field phase is likely to be associated with the Moabite settlement phases (Field Phases A5 and E4–E3) on the acropolis, which included a Moabite sanctuary and domestic building remains (cf. Ji, "A Moabite Sanctuary at Khirbat Ataruz," 173–180). The presence of multiple floor layers in Square G4 indicates that as in Field E, the Iron IIB phase of Field G is comprised of two or more sub-phases. But this suggestion would remain provisional at this point, awaiting further excavations of Field G, given that the late phases of Square G4 were all badly disturbed by a mass of fallen rock from above.

[18] Margreet L. Steiner, "Iron Age Cultic Sites in Transjordan," *Religions* 10 (2019): 145–158. In this article, the author discusses various cultic structures, their construction type and cultic purpose. We are unsure if the area under discussion was used for such cultic purposes, however, as described above concerning the architecture and the objects found therein, there are some indications that this could have been the case.

the mouth of a cave. This type of elevational-style building is generally the least difficult type of earth-sheltered structure to construct on a hillside. At Ataruz, to construct such houses, the builders would have dealt with the stepped structures and slope walls from the earlier settlement. The earlier structures were excavated, and stones were likely reused to build the walls and installations of the building. With its upper hillside location, the G6 building would have offered good views of surrounding vistas, as supported by the absence of other visible houses farther down the slope of the hill.

As reported above, in Field G the remains of what seemed to be a staircase-like structure came to the attention of the project team during the 2015 field season. Consequently, much effort was exerted during the seasons of 2016–2017 to establish the date for the structure and check the stratigraphy of this structure with that of the Iron II and mid-Islamic remains in Squares G1, G4, and G6. By the end of the 2017 season, these two objectives seem to have been achieved, at least for a tentative suggestion. We now may assign the stepped structure to Field Phase 4 and suggest it to possibly be dated to late Iron IIA (*ca*. 9th century BCE) and contemporaneous with the temple on the acropolis.

In Square G7 we were able to discover what appear to be very clear remnants of stone rows ascending toward the direction of the temple complex. Likewise, Squares G2 and G3 contain five separate single-stone courses running nearly five to six meters in a south-to-north orientation across the large part of each square in most instances.

Portions of at least three or four additional rows of the stone surface were also detected in Square G2, despite the damage by later activities. This damage was largely due to a rock installation on two or three of the step courses, which was used to prop up a storage jar. In 2002, a similar type of installation was discovered in the inner sanctuary of the temple. It was used to support a Bull Storage Jar.[19] The storage jar we discovered on the installation in Square G2, unlike the Bull Storage Jar, lacks any significant stylistic decorations. This installation must be chronologically later than the stepped structure because it was located on a compact soil layer higher in elevation than the stepped course. As stated above, further to the east we unearthed some artifacts including one murex shell, two polished stones, and fine grinding stones with a heavy concentration of Iron II pottery. It is unclear whether these objects are associated with the rock installation or related to the stepped structure. While they do not definitively establish a cultic setting, such objects have also been uncovered within the temple complex during previous work in Fields A, E, and F. We are thus unsure why these objects are situated in these locations, even though the murex

[19] Cf. Ji, "The Early Iron Age II Temple," Tafel 44.B.

shell and polished stones perhaps suggest some cultic or public functions in relation to Field G during the Iron II period.[20]

During the fieldwork of 2016, a small probing trench (1 x 1.2 m) was dug below the two lowest steps at the southeastern corner of Square G3 in order to obtain stratigraphic data of the stepped structure, as well as to collect samples of pottery to help establish a chronology. The foundation of these steps reached a depth of about one meter. The foundation of the structure seemingly consisted of four layers. First, the footings were installed above an irregular bedrock and terra rosa surface using small to medium stones, and then the soil was properly compacted above the footings. On top of this lift layer of beaten earth was a rather deep stratum of medium to large unhewn boulders, which was covered by another layer of compacted soil. Lastly, the steps were constructed upon this beaten-earth layer using semi-trimmed rectangular boulders, chink stone and possibly mud mortar. The probe unearthed several diagnostic pottery sherds, all attributable to the periods of late Iron IIA and IIB (see **Fig. 10:1–3** for the pottery from the probing trench).

Function of the Stepped Structure

The stepped stone structure spans the entirety of Squares G2, G3, and G7 from east to west. Here we explore different options as to what function this architecture may have served. Several working hypotheses surfaced and were discussed before and during the excavations of Field G.

A first suggestion is an agricultural usage for the stepped stone structure. However, we have thus far found no seeds or other evidence of such an endeavor. Further, there is generally not enough space in between each row to support significant crops and growth. The average width of intact rows in Squares G2, G3, and G7 was measured as only 45 cm with the range of 40–75 cm. Furthermore, the step stones were situated on a floor of beaten earth. In antiquity, building agricultural terraces first required the clearing away of the rocks from the slope to the edges of the natural rock terraces.[21] These rocks were then used to construct retaining walls that held in place the layer of soil they usually brought from elsewhere. The principal aim of this groundwork was to construct leveled surfaces behind the walls; another goal was to procure a good depth of decomposing organic material and nutrient-rich soil on the terrace beds, one carried downward from upslope by storm runoff. The fill behind the retaining walls usually consisted of several parallel layers of gravel

[20] For a description of some of the characteristics witnessed in Transjordan cultic sites and practices, including murex shells, see Steiner, "Iron Age Cultic Sites," 145.

[21] David Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan: Agricultural Life in the Early Iron Age* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 173–176.

and soil blanketed one upon another in an alternating manner.[22] As stated earlier, our excavations of the stepped stones in Square G3 have yielded a different pattern of layering. The sequence is as follows: 1. a layer of small to large coarse stones; 2. a layer of beaten earth; 3. a layer of large boulders; 4. another layer of beaten earth; 5. surfaces were covered with natural flat or semi-dressed rectangular stones. This is an inappropriate filling method for agriculture. Moreover, we have measured the height of the steps that remain intact in Squares G3 and G7, which produced a mean height of about 20 cm (see below). The stones were too low to function as a retaining wall holding back heavy soil and rocks. For these reasons, agricultural usage of the stepped structure in Field G seems doubtful.

A second possible explanation was that the structure might have to do with slope-stepping for erosion control. A builder can reduce the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff by breaking up the slope length.[23] Typically, this landscaping technique is formed of a sequence of benches, mostly between 1.5:1 and 3:1 for the ratio of vertical rise to horizontal distance. Architecturally, however, stepped slopes may not have been practical for rocky soil like that at Ataruz, and such preventative measures are normally recommended for cut slopes only. At Ataruz, the stepped structure is located downhill from the ancient city, not above any landscape or architectural remains. More importantly, stepped areas promote vegetative cover by capturing and retaining loose soil materials, which is critical to reducing stormwater runoff. For this reason, stepped cuts must mainly consist of earth or soil, not stones or stone blocks, as is the case at Ataruz.

A third possible explanation was that the stonework may have supported a larger structure located further towards the acropolis. Perhaps in similar fashion to the stepped stone structure found in Area G in the City of David in Jerusalem,[24] our structure could have been a type of supportive terrace. Up

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[22] Gershon Edelstein and Shimon Gibson, "Ancient Jerusalem's Rural Food Basket," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 8:4 (1982): 46–54; Ghattas J. Sayej, "The Origin of Terraces in the Central Hills of Palestine: Theories and Explanations," in *The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal Poetry*, eds. I. Abu-Lughod, R. Heacock, and K. Nashef (Birzeit: Birzeit University, 1999): 201–209.

[23] Barry Starke and John O. Simonds, *Landscape Architecture: A Manual of Environmental Planning and Design* (Delhi: McGraw-Hill, 2013): 350–385.

[24] Cf. Daniel D. Pioske, "David's Jerusalem: A Sense of Place," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 76 (2013): fig. 1; Yigal Shiloh, *Excavations at the City of David I, 1978–1982, Qedem 19* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1984), fig. 26:2; for Area G, also see discussions in Yigal Shiloh, "Jerusalem," in *The New Encyclopedia of the Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Volume 2,* ed. E. Stern (Jerusalem: Carta, 1993), 702–704; Klaus Bieberstein, *A Brief History of Jerusalem: From the Earliest Settlement to the Destruction of the City in AD 70* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 43–46; Margreet Steiner, in *Excavations by Kathleen M. Kenyon in Jerusalem 1961–1967, III:*

to this point, however, we have not uncovered any massive foundation to the west that would have required such support. In fact, Squares G1, G4, and G6, just to the west of the top line of these stepping stones in Squares G2, G3, and G7, constitute a series of retrofitted domestic rooms scattered with Iron Age and mid-Islamic period wares and pottery. There does not seem to have been a massive structure in need of architectural support during the late Iron IIA period.

A fourth proposal suggested that the layout of the incline could have acted as the foundation for a defensive structure on the southeastern slope. After conducting a probe in the northern section of Square G3, however, we determined that the rows of stepping-stones were rather shallow, were generally flat on the surface, and exhibited relatively little depth. In our assessment, there is no clear evidence for any larger defensive structure under which this series of stone rows could have acted as a foundation, nor would it have offered much stability for larger, taller fortifications. Further, the probe in Square G3 failed to reveal any solid, continuous layers of stones built on top of one another: the majority of the large stones running in a south-north orientation were situated on beaten earth with some fill to secure them. The steps appearing on beaten earth seem to have been situated intentionally to create stairs, which would be counterintuitive for defensive fortification. For these reasons, we are not convinced the stepped structure was constructed for defensive purposes.

Finally, the structure might constitute the remains of a large-scale staircase ascending the east-west access to the temple complex. This is our leading, albeit provisional hypothesis, for the purpose of this stepped stone structure. Certain features have led us in this interpretive direction for the time being. These features include the smooth, flat nature of the exposed surface of the stones, the beaten earth under them, their fairly regular paving intervals, and their east-west orientation aligning almost exactly with the east-west orientation of the temple complex towards which they seem to ascend.

For the construction of the stepped structure in Field G, the builders seem to have used a simple but effective building method. As previously stated, they first shaped the ground for steps, and the structure was then constructed with the combination of rocks and soil laid underneath it, with the stone blocks situated on the top and exterior. The exterior blocks were at best semi-dressed, and followed a course of somewhat uneven dimensions, but that resulted in its overall structural stability. In general, blocks at the middle and upper sections of the Field G slopes (e.g., Squares G2 and G7) are small to medium in size, which made the steps low and narrow; notwith-

The Settlement in the Bronze and Iron Ages (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 39 and 113, described the possibility of the stepped stone structure as used in preventing erosion.

standing, they were more or less evenly spaced, and at right angles to the long lines. Yet, the lower section, as observed in Square G3, used larger stone slabs for an obvious reason: it functioned as a base for the entire stepped structure and had to hold greater amounts of soil and rock. This masonry certainly has further increased the stability of the overall stepped structure system.

Our surface survey shows that the stone rows in Square G2 are likely to extend further to the north, possibly continuing up the eastern side of the site. Square G5 was heavily damaged and was cut by several later architectural features, but we found the stone steps in Squares G3 and G7. Additionally, the stepped structure levels out at the western edge of Square G2 and appears to open up into what may have been a flagstone paved plaza or viewing platform, although damage here is severe in places, and older surfaces and architectures are cut by later mid-Islamic structures. Also, some objects were found on the surface of the steps such as potsherds, polished pebbles, and a murex shell. This may suggest that the stepped stone structure was a traffic area frequented by individuals and used for ascent.

Significance of the Findings

The presence of a possible outdoor monumental staircase at Ataruz is noteworthy, especially for the region and period in which it was apparently constructed. The use of staircases as a form or means of ascent to holy places is prevalent throughout the ancient Near East, Anatolia, Greece, and Egypt in various time periods. From the famous Ziggurat at Ur in ancient Mesopotamia,[25] the large monumental staircase reportedly connected to three Middle Bronze temples at Megiddo,[26] the Assyrian period staircase leading to the temple at Tayinat,[27] the Persian period grand staircase called "Stairs of All Nations" in Persepolis,[28] the Roman period Great Temple at Petra, which had two grand staircases leading to the lower and upper sacred precincts,[29] the

[25] Cf. Keel, "*The Symbolism of the Biblical World,"* fig. 150; Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 127, 191–198.

[26] Matthew J. Adams, "Part III: The Main Sector of Area J," in *Megiddo V: The 2004–2008 Seasons, Volume 1,* eds. I. Finkelstein, D. Ussishkin, and E. H. Cline (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 47–118; Gordon Loud, *Megiddo II. Seasons of 1935–39* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), fig. 394.

[27] Timothy P. Harrison and James F. Osborne, "Building XVI and the Neo-Assyrian Sacred Precinct at Tell Tayinat," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 64 (2012): 125–143.

[28] John Boardman, *Persia and the West* (London: Thames & Hudson), fig. 2.25; A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pl. XXXI.).

[29] Martha S. Joukowsky, "Exploring the Great Temple at Petra: The Brown University Excavations, 1993–1996," in *The Archaeology of Jordan and Beyond: Essays*

Hellenistic monumental staircase at Mount Gerizim,[30] to the southern staircase leading into the Jerusalem temple in the Herodian period,[31] stairways have been used to ascend sacred space. However, Iron Age I and II examples are very rare in Israel and Jordan. Should our identification of the stepped structure in Field G as a stairway turn out to be correct, it would be a rare Iron Age monumental-scale stairway discovered in Israel and Jordan from this time period. In light of our surface survey of Field G, the area appears to continue the possible trajectory of the stone stairways further northeast from Squares G3 and G7, suggesting that the width of these stairs was perhaps more than 30 m, covering a large portion of the southeastern slope. The staircase was probably composed of at least 30 steps given the number of uncovered steps from Squares G2, G3, and G7.

For more knowledge, we have measured the rise (vertical) and run (horizontal) of the 14 intact steps in Squares G3 and G7. The mean rise of the steps is 19 cm, while the run averages 55 cm. That is, the rise itself is reasonable to support a comfortable ascent.[32] On the other hand, stair runs are generally 35 cm wide or so to make a comfortable transition up and down along the stairway. Accordingly, those using these wide steps would have experienced the luxury of a deeper run per step as they ascended the staircase toward the temple. Perhaps this layout was to automatically force the users to proceed in a slow and dignified manner.[33] The wide runs would also have provided comfortable places for people to sit and rest. It is, as yet, unclear that the Ataruz stairway also included landings, but two steps (Loci 8 and 14) in Square G3 are probably much wider than the others. Their run was measured at 80 cm and 1.4 m, respectively. It is not impossible that they were originally designed to function as landings allowing the users a place to rest or make preparations to enter the temple precinct.

At present, the stepped structure is likely to have functioned as a primary means of ascent to the temple complex on the acropolis. It was built along the

in Honor James A. Sauer, ed. L. E. Stager, J. A. Greene, and M. D. Coogan (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 221–234 and fig. 3. .

[30] Yitzhak Magen "Gerizim, Mount," in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Vol. 2,* ed. E. Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2008), 24–36.

[31] David M. Jacobson and Shimon Gibson, "A Monumental Stairway on the Temple Mount," *IEJ* 45 (1995): 162–170.

[32] Andrew Hunt, *The Advanced Decking Steps & Stairs Manual* (New York, NY: Power Business Publishing, 2012), 7–10.

[33] Hershel Shanks, *Jerusalem: An Archaeological Biography* (New York, NY: Random House, 1995), 141–151. Shanks suggested that the steps at the southern entry into Herod's temple complex were constructed in such a manner—although Ataruz may have had staggered proportions as a result of the natural topography.

east-west orientation of the temple, affirming an accurate alignment with the temple. Utilitarian functions aside, architecturally the grand staircase would also have sometimes provided a momentous setting for religious processions, marked off the boundary of the holy precinct, lent grandeur and a sense of stability to the temple, and even catered to particular kinesthetic experiences for visiting devotees. The construction of a possible monumental staircase further elucidates the significance of Ataruz and its temple on the acropolis during the late Iron IIA period in central Jordan. Its architects had resources to build an extensive temple complex at the site. As part of this project, they seem to have constructed a broad staircase to provide devotees access to, as well as to highlight the grandiosity of the temple. Ataruz was a prominent cultic site with considerable social and political weight during the period. This perspective finds additional support from the present discovery of a potential monumental staircase at the southeastern slope of the site. The discovery of a lion paw, if connected to a larger statue that existed at some point at the eastern entry way into the temple complex on the acropolis, may further accentuate this prominence.

Summary

This paper has summarized the results of the 2016–2017 excavations of Field G at Ataruz, an area corresponding to the southwest slope of the site that includes a large-scale stepped stone structure. At present, our best assessment of the architectural loci are stairs ascending the eastern side of the site, which appear to have provided a primary access system to the temple on the acropolis. In addition to Squares G2 and G3 from 2016, which revealed a total of possible nine rows of steps, Square G7 allowed us to identify 12 other rows of undisturbed steps, possibly associated with a northern continuation of those found in Squares G2 and G3. At the top of those steps, we have what may at some point have been a plaza paved with flat paving stones. The staircase and plaza are attributed to the late Iron IIA period, possibly contemporaneous with the temple complex on the acropolis.

Likewise, much of the currently exposed structural material in Square G6 can be attributed to the Iron II period. The G6 architectural remains, however, would be dated slightly later than the stepped structure, most likely to Iron IIB. These remains are perhaps part of a semi-underground building that cut significantly into and removed all the earlier staircase and other materials in the building area. Whoever built them also seems to have been responsible for setting up a small circular structure in Square G2. Differently, in Squares G1, G4 and G5, we have what seems to indicate mid-Islamic use of the area: a well-preserved mid-Islamic rectangular building, multiple areas consisting of beaten earth floors, tabun fragments, pits, and stone installations. The area of Field G thus appears to have originally developed in the late Iron IIA period and was later intensively reused for domestic or public

purposes by Iron IIB and mid-Islamic people.

As in previous seasons, the walls and installations excavated in 2016–2017 were temporarily preserved with cement for maintenance and protection until full-scale preservation and conservation can take place. The project team is planning to return to Khirbat Ataruz for future archaeological excavations at the site and continue work in Field G. Future excavation efforts will enable us to establish the relationship between the G6 walls and installations and the staircase in Squares G2, G3, and G7. They may also reveal the full extent of the staircase system and help us more clearly understand the architectural and stratigraphic connection between the stepped structure and the late Iron IIA temple on the acropolis.

Figures

Figure 1. Map of the Ataruz Region

Figure 2. Aerial Photo of Ataruz (Courtesy of APAAME_20181014_MND-0049)

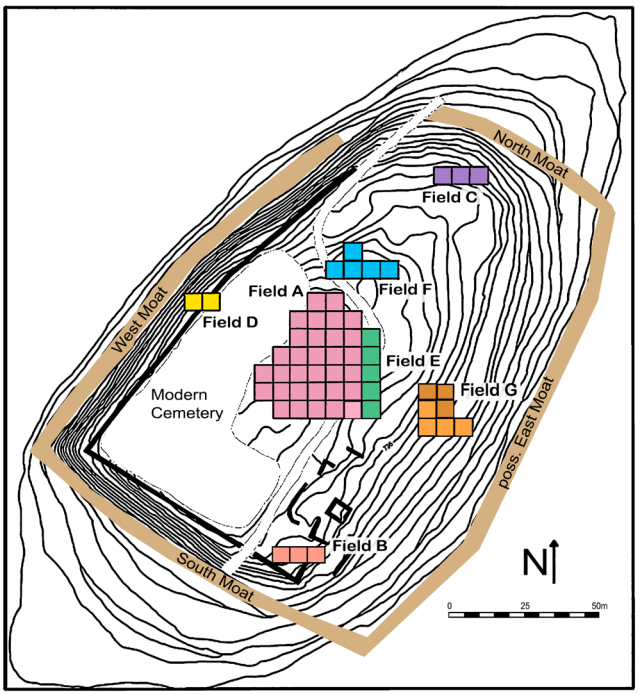

Figure 3. Contour Map of Ataruz and Excavations (as of 2017)

Figure 4. Southeast Slope of Ataruz before Excavation (2015)

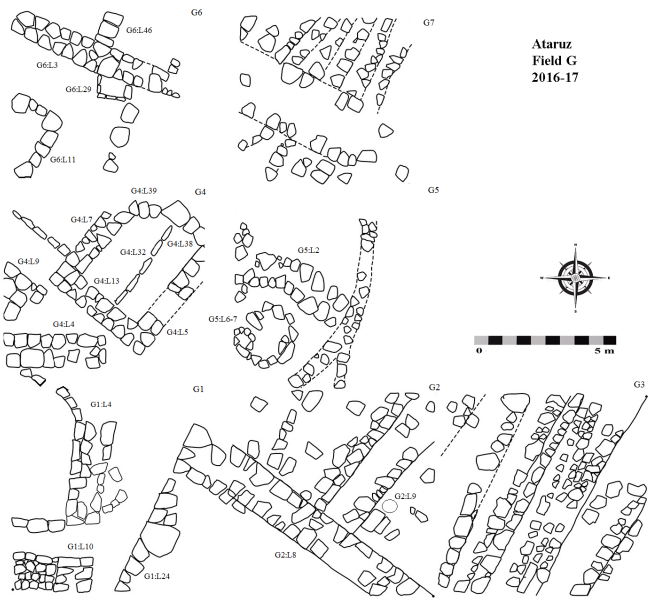

Figure 5. Field G Top Plans (2016-2017)

Figure 6. Field G Square 1 (2017)

Figure 7. Iron Age Stone Pavement in Square G1

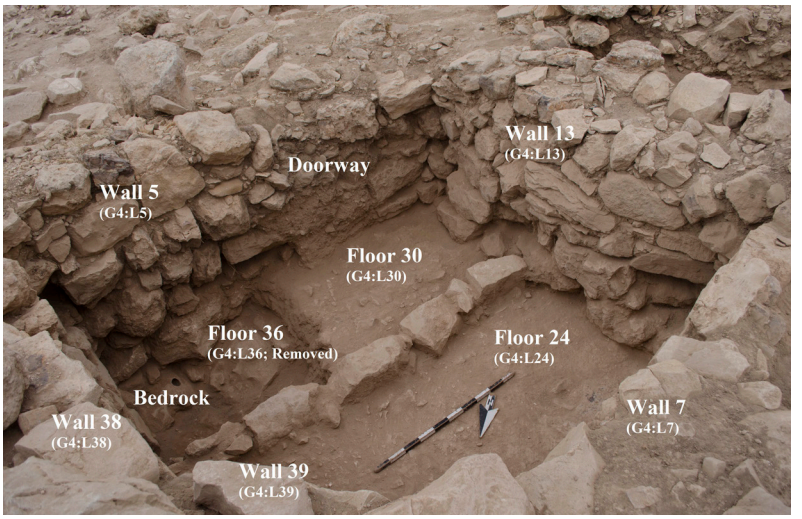

Figure 8. Excavating Three Islamic Floors in Square G4 (2017)

Figure 9. Mid Islamic Tabun from the Building in Square G1

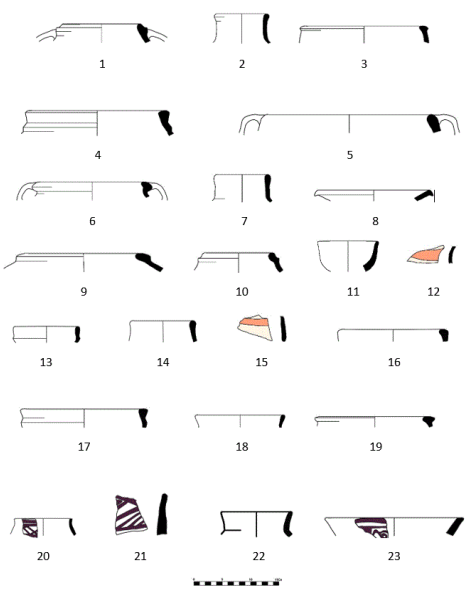

Figure 10. Selected Pottery from Squares G3, G4, and G6 (#1-#3: Phase 4 (Iron IIA) Pottery from Square G3 Deep Probing; #4-#19: Phase 3 (Iron IIB) Pottery from Square G6 Excavation; #20-#23: Phase 2 (Mamluk) Pottery from Square G4 Excavation)

Figure 11. Possible Iron II Floor in the Northwest Corner of Square G4 (2017)

Figure 12. Field G Square 6 (2017)

Figure 13. Rectangular Stone Installation in Square G6

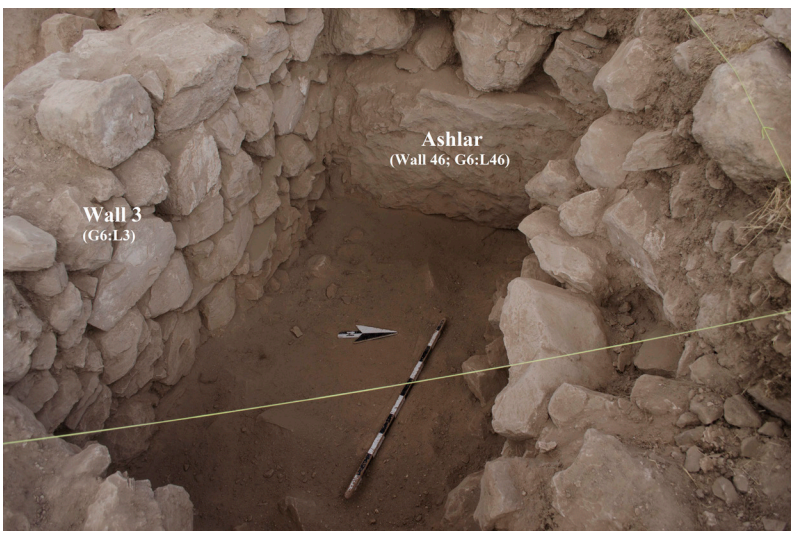

Figure 14. Ashlar in Square G6

Figure 15. Terracotta Lion Paw from Square G6

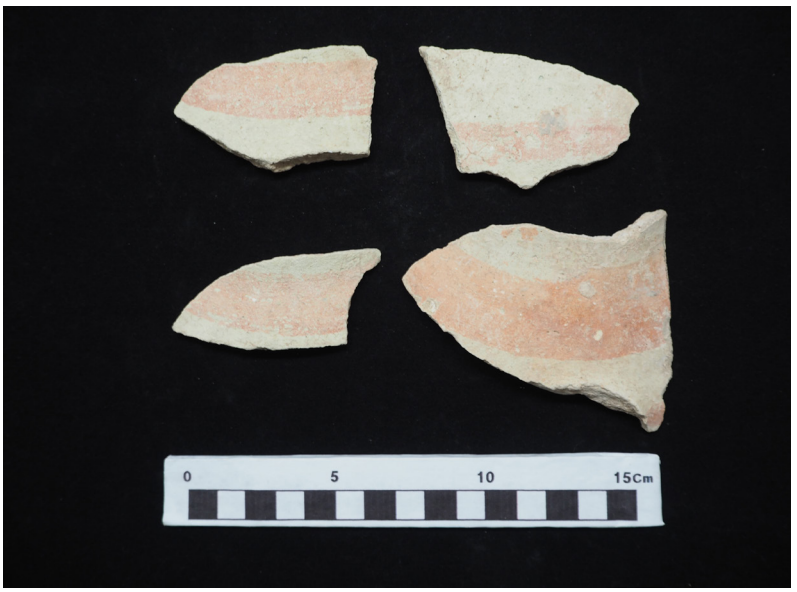

Figure 16. Pinkish/Orange-Band-on-Creamy Wares from the Iron IIB House in Square G6

Figure 17. Stairs in Square G3

Figure 18. Stairs in the Eastern Section of Square G7

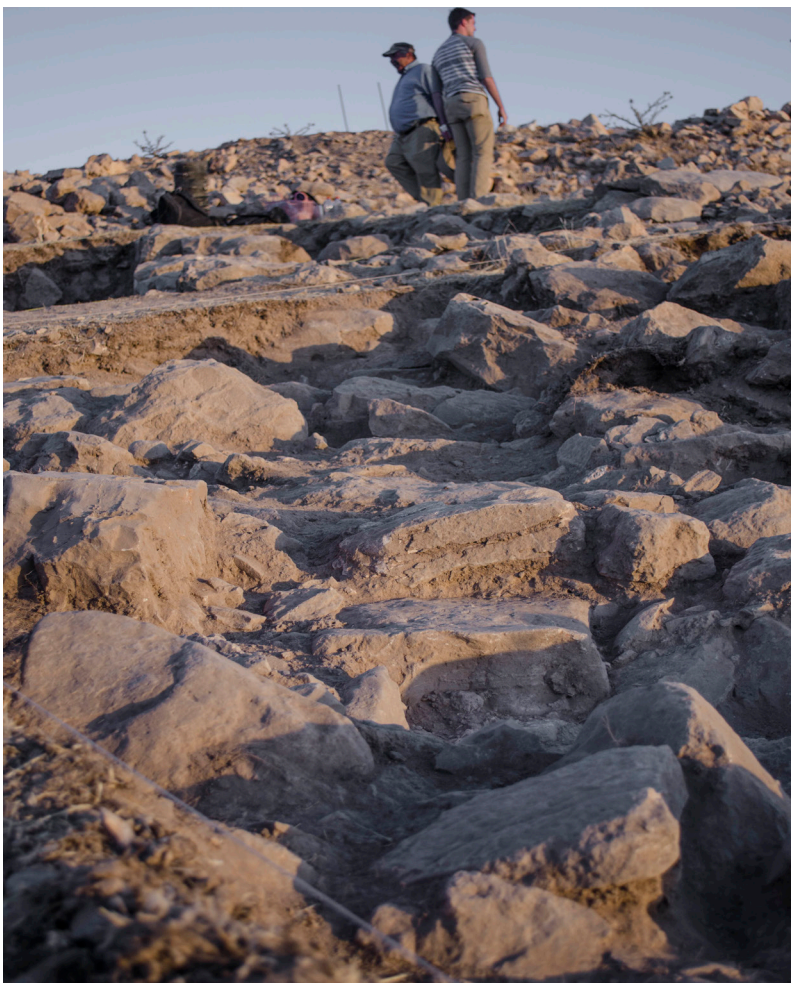

Figure 19. Stairs in the Western Section of Square G7

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

A STUDY OF NONES IN BRAZIL AND THE USA IN LIGHT OF SECULARIZATION THEORY WITH MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Name of researcher: Jolivê R. Chavez
Name of faculty adviser: Gorden R. Doss, PhD
Date completed: November, 2020

The growth of those who declare themselves to be Nones, or religiously unaffiliated, in Brazil and the USA has been continuously higher than that of the general population. In Brazil, they are the third-largest group in the religious field, behind only Catholics, and Pentecostal evangelicals. In the USA, they are the second largest group, after Protestants as a whole. The Nones, in their diverse groups, are more represented among the youth in both cultures, and reflect the modern and postmodern influences of contemporary secularism, being a product of the process of changing human thought.

This work studies the Nones, in both countries, based on selected elements that characterize the theories of secularization used within the sociology of religion. In the absence of a direct biblical text related to the Nones, as they are a phenomenon much later than the biblical period, a suggested biblical framework for mission with the group was chosen based on biblical narratives describing the *missio Dei* among what the Bible calls foreigners.

In the fifth chapter, the study proposes eight areas considered sensitive for the missional relationship with the Nones in both Brazil and America: The Identity of God, The Bible as the Source of Truth, Institutionalized Religion, Need for Relationships and Community, The Social Role of Religion, Cross-Cultural Barriers, Cultural and Religious Plurality, and Mass Communication/Technology. Some of these can be considered critical, and others as an opportunity for mission. The characteristics of Nones related to each area were presented, and then, missiological and sociological principles were suggested to fill the gaps in the respective areas, forming a bridge of contact with the Nones.

A HERMENEUTIC FOR THE *AQEDAH* TEST: A WAY BEYOND JON LEVENSON'S AND TERENCE FRETHEIM'S MODELS

Name of researcher: Arlyn Sunshine Drew
Name of faculty adviser: Martin Hanna, PhD
Date completed: March, 2020

The works of Jon Levenson and Terence Fretheim highlight the problem of determining which interpretations of the biblical worlds of meaning around the text are congruent with the text of the *Aqedah* (also known as the Sacrifice of Isaac, Gen 22:1–19) and which should be disclaimed. A hermeneutical model is needed for Abraham's test that provides a text-based paradigm for sound interpretation of the narrative world (in the text), the historical world (behind the text), the theistic world (above the text), the cosmological world (below the text), and the present world (in front of the text). A tri-level (micro-meso-macro) spiral hermeneutical model was created that integrated the biblical text as the long central axis of the model and related the five biblical worlds of meaning to the text. The tri-level Axial Model reveals the *Aqedah* test narrative holds higher moral consistency and rational complexity than has been traditionally assumed. Most importantly, the Covenant Hypothesis demonstrates that the enigmatic *Aqedah* text is fully capable of unbinding itself by making sense of its own parts. In conclusion, the Axial Model appears to be a text-normed hermeneutical model that can unearth deeper understanding of biblical texts.

A RE-EXAMINATION OF PENTATEUCHAL HAMARTIOLOGY AND ATONEMENT AS A HERMENEUTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETING THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

Name of researcher: Slavisa Milodar Jankovic
Name of faculty adviser: Richard M. Davidson, PhD
Date completed: October, 2020

The ritual gesture of laying on of hands in Scripture has generated significant interest among theologians from rabbinic times until now. Still today, scholars assign various meanings to the ritual. In the second half of the 20th century, the fresh interest that put forward new meanings for this gesture came primarily through the introduction of the new sub-discipline of Ritualistics within Old Testament studies. This relatively new discipline is not founded upon premises found in biblical texts, but rather, upon those found in various secular social, philosophical sciences, and other disciplines such as sociology, philosophy, anthropology, literary criticism, and the study of religion. These disciplines often reject major presuppositions found in biblical texts, and scholarly studies based on these approaches have produced multiple proposals regarding the meaning of this gesture. Such proposals generally offer incomplete, limited insights into the biblical meaning conveyed by laying on of hands. I have sought to avoid this interpretative misstep in the context of identifying the meaning of laying on of hands by (1) adopting premises found in the biblical text, especially concerning the nature of human beings and the concepts of sin and atonement, and (2) conducting a reading of the biblical text that applies a terminological/contextual/intertextual approach. The traditional meaning of laying on of hands in cultic contexts has been that of transfer, with various qualities transferred such as sin, guilt, authority, general human sinfulness, and others. Very often the idea of substitution is included in the meaning of the ritual. Through a fresh study of the concepts of sin and atonement, and building upon biblical premises concerning the nature of human beings, I conclude that the meaning of transfer emerges from the biblical texts more than any other, and constitutes the foundational meaning of this ritual.

THE FUNCTION OF MILITARY LANGUAGE IN THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND NARRATIVE (MARK 6:30–44): A NARRATIVE-COGNITIVE STUDY

Name of researcher: Oleg Kostuyk
Name of faculty adviser: Thomas R. Shepherd, PhD
Date completed: August, 2020

Some scholars argue that Jesus was a revolutionary messiah and he was no different than other Jewish revolutionaries who opposed imperial Rome. Others argue that Jesus was a pacifist and he was calling his contemporaries to repent from their nationalistic ambitions and warned them against putting their trust in their own military power. Surprisingly, the majority of proponents of both approaches do not detect military language in the feeding of the five thousand narrative. This study argues that in Mark the feeding of the five thousand narrative (Mark 6:30–44) and its immediate context contain military language and present Jesus as a "warrior" leader but with a radical new twist. Jesus appears to be a "warrior" leader who mobilizes an army. But instead of leading his "soldiers" into war, he sends them out into a "battle" that is characterized by compassion. This study utilizes methodologies of narrative criticism and cognitive study, specifically the study of emotions, to determine the function of military language in the narrative. I combine the theories of Lisa Barrett and Martha Nussbaum and operate on the assumption that emotions are constructed evaluative judgments. I assert that the narrative-cognitive approach makes visible what Mark was trying to achieve by his use of military and emotive language in the narrative. This methodology brings to the fore a counter-cultural presentation of Jesus. This study reveals that the text contains Kulturkampf that subversively critiques concepts of power and suggests new means of "warfare." The feeding of the five thousand narrative in Mark is written against the backdrop of the Greco-Roman and Jewish literary contexts. Jewish literature testifies about the anticipation of the warrior-leader, the Messiah, who would restore the glory of Israel and put an end to war by means of military conquest. Most notable voices of Greco-Roman literature, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and particularly the *Aeneid*, are also war-centered and present warrior heroes on their quests. Homer and Virgil present their heroes as shepherds, but they are strong and often hard-hearted. Mark, on the other hand, presents Jesus as a compassionate shepherd-leader. Mark's presentation of Jesus is countercultural (a social construct) and it leads the reader of the narrative to an emotional response (an evaluative judgment)—compassion for people. The narrative prompts the reader to emulate the compassionate ministry of Jesus.

FUNCTION AND NATURE OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY/ TEMPLE AND ITS EARTHLY COUNTERPARTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPELS, ACTS, AND THE EPISTLES: A MOTIF STUDY OF MAJOR PASSAGES

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The present dissertation examines the function and nature of the heavenly sanctuary/temple and its relationship to the earthly counterparts in the major passages of the New Testament (NT) Gospels, Acts, Pauline and General Epistles where the sanctuary/temple motif is found (a total of twenty-two passages). After the introductory chapter, chapters 2, 3, and 4 are devoted to the exegetical analysis of these major passages following canonical order and divisions of the NT. This exegetical analysis has detected the relevance of the heavenly sanctuary/temple motif for NT studies, i.e., how its function, nature, and relationship to the earthly counterparts influence the understanding of important themes of the NT such as salvation, intercession, spiritual gifts, love, holiness, eradication of evil, among others. This investigation has identified that the heavenly sanctuary/temple in the NT function as God's dwelling place. It is a place for reunion, reconciliation, and sending of the Holy Spirit, from where every spiritual blessing is bestowed upon the believers. In the heavenly sanctuary/temple Jesus is enthroned to exercise authority, power, sovereignty, and rulership; it is where judgment and vindication are made, the new covenant is ratified. It is a place to present praise and worship to God, celebrating Christ's victory over evil. The heavenly sanctuary/temple is where Christ presents His once-for-all sacrifice, "obtains eternal redemption," and intercedes in our behalf, giving assurance that God's salvific purpose and the heirs' hope will be fulfilled. The heavenly sanctuary/temple also functions as the motivation and ground for holy living, the driving force for sacrificial service and endurance of suffering for Christ. The heavenly sanctuary/temple is also the final destination of the Christian journey where all believers will gather together with the godhead and the angels in a festal assembly. Regarding the nature of the heavenly sanctuary/temple in the NT, the passages surveyed show that architecture is not the main concern of the NT writers. However, in tune with the Old Testament (OT), they describe the heavenly sanctuary/temple in terms of a spatiotemporal reality where the corporeal resurrected Jesus is at work and the bodily resurrected believers will live. This NT ontological perspective safeguards the actuality of the heavenly sanctuary's/temple's many functions. The spatiotemporal nature of the heavenly sanctuary/temple is strengthened when one looks at its relationship to the earthly counterparts. The NT passages examined demonstrate

that there is structural and functional correspondence between OT and NT heavenly and earthly counterparts within a typological framework, as well as dynamic interaction among them. Chapter 5 offers a theological synthesis of the heavenly sanctuary/temple motif presented in the previous chapters. A summary of the findings is first provided followed by inferences of theological implications in the three main areas of this dissertation (function, nature, and relationship). After these concluding remarks, an appendix is provided with a brief treatment of twenty-five NT passages not dealt with in the main text (including thirteen passages in the book of Revelation) in order to give the reader a more comprehensive perspective of the pervasiveness of the heavenly sanctuary/temple motif in the NT. In conclusion, the study of the heavenly sanctuary/temple motif in the NT seems to be needed in order to have a sound and balanced understanding of NT theology.

A STRATIGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE FROM THE TELL TAANACH EXCAVATIONS IN 1963, '66 AND '68

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One of the most troubling issues for Near Eastern Archaeology is the lack of published excavation reports. Part of the problem is that archaeologists love to dig, but dislike writing publication reports. As a result, final reports are lacking for a substantial number of archaeological excavations. Without a final report, the results of an archaeologist's season and new information is lost forever. Dr. Paul Lapp of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary lead excavations at Tell Ta'anach in the West Bank, Palestine in 1963, '66 and '68. At the end of each season, he wrote and published preliminary reports. Preliminary reports provide an overall summary of a season, but a full report is necessary. Due to his untimely death, the final reports for Lapp's excavations were never completed. On the basis of data culled from the personal diaries, field notes, manuals, drawings and unpublished manuscripts, a relative chronology for the Middle Bronze stratigraphy at Tell Ta'anach was determined. Gathering the data was gathered involved photocopying every page from the field books of every square; some field books are kept at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and some are stored at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, Palestine. Reviewing and coordinating the Middle Bronze loci in each square enabled a reconstruction of the Middle Bronze Age stratigraphy in each square, which facilitated the forming of an outline of the entire site. From the evidence accumulated from Tell Ta'anach indicates two well defined Middle Bronze IIC strata. There is also evidence of a modest early MB IIB campsite/occupation and a third MB IIC strata in some squares. The method and consistency of buildings and construction and the ceramic assemblage all indicate a socially stable community in the MB IIC phase. It concludes that the occupation story in the Middle Bronze Age at Ta'anach included no permanent habitation in the MB AI, some campsite dwelling in the MB IIB and a thriving community in the MB IIC Phase which transitioned peacefully into the Late Bronze Age.The ceramic evidence indicates a smooth transition from Middle Bronze to Late Bronze pottery in the middle of the sixteenth century BCE.

BOOK REVIEWS

Almond, Philip C. *Antichrist: A New Biography*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020. xvi + 323 pp. Hardcover. USD 39.99.

Studies on the development of the antichrist biblical motif either focus on the antecedents and early Christian interpretations (e.g. Gregory Jenks, Lambertus Peerbolte), or its broad history from the Apostolic Fathers to the present time (e.g. LeRoy Froom, Bernard McGinn, Stephen Vicchio). Almond's *Antichrist* adds to the latest group of fine studies on this topic. Although the examples of specific interpretations on the identity of the antichrist from the second to the twenty-first century presented by Philip Almond are found elsewhere, his organization is concise and to the point.

This is a great work of scholarship, impressive in its breadth at the same time that it is clear and succinct in its presentation. A good history for sure, full of dates, names, and details. Almond's historical analysis reads smoothly and covers a lot of ground, like other works of its kind. And though careful attention is given to the presentation of details of a subject that already begs patience by the non-specialist, readers will not find the minutia cumbersome, but quite entertaining. To add colors to his nicely constructed narrative, Almond also includes the inimical eschatological figure of the Jews (Armilus), and Muslims (Al-Dajjal), and a few recent secular applications of the name antichrist as a comparison.

Unlike the modern critical commentaries on important biblical passages (mainly Dan 7; 2 Thess 2; Rev 11–13, 17), used historically as indicative of the identity of the antichrist figure(s), this history gives little attention to figures from the time of the NT writers. Just looking at the index, it is clear that Antiochus Epiphanes (for Daniel) or Nero (for Revelation) are minor figures in this story of biblical interpretation. Meanwhile, a future Jew, the papacy, and Islam looms large on the horizon of Christian interpreters' identification of the final Satanic animosity against the people of God. Instead of an explicit pagan, idolatrous, and antagonistic force of the past, most Christian interpreters throughout history have identified the spirit of the antichrist closer to home and in the future of the biblical authors. The reason for this is simply based on interpretative commitments. Most ancient readers of the Bible believed that the prophetic antichrist would be a figure of the end-times, and not a dead character of the past, a hermeneutical choice negated by most biblical scholars today.

But among believers in the eschatological thrust of the biblical material, not one contour of the eschatological enemy was widely agreed about, as this

biography makes it clear. The author highlights the important characteristics of the antichrist motif and suggests a synthesis of the identity of this literary figure which is quite helpful. Almond distinguishes two major ideological poles around which many characteristics attributed to the antichrist would gravitate (2–4), although he repeats some of them. The main polarized views about the identity of the antichrist as understood by most interpreters are (A) a tyrannical antichrist from outside the church and (B) a deceiver and apostate from within the church.

Methodologically, Almond's *Antichrist*, as most studies on the antichrist I am familiar with, follows Irenaeus's application of the term antichrist. Philip Almond recognizes and explains that the word antichrist, first used by John (1–2 John), does not identify an eschatological figure but many members of the Christian communities that were professing unorthodox doctrines. Irenaeus in the second century already, who does not even refer to 1 John in this context, chose the Johannine term antichrist as the label of choice for the "final eschatological opponent" of God (41), though this literary figure is prominent in apocalyptic prophecies such as Dan 7, 2 Thess 2, and Rev 13, not in Johannine correspondences. Almond rightly observes that this eschatological application of the language from 1 John created a tension that would persist in the history of this motif, mainly based on the temporality of the appearance of the antichrist(s)—in the distant future or currently present. Thus, a terrible persecutor of Christians would also be characterized as a pious follower of Jesus, at least in appearance. He would be both a teacher of Scriptures and a denier of its teachings; an apostate, and a deceiver. And with this catch-all word, almost anything against someone's religious or even political perspective has been identified as *an* antichrist. But as I point out below, one major element of this eschatological motif from Scriptures is its desecrating presence in the sanctuary of God. The locus of activity of the antichrist is a good reference point against which different interpretations could be measured. Philip Almond's book of course is not trying to evaluate the exegetical coherence of the interpretations he explains.

These polarities (outsider idolater or pagan tyrant versus a pseudo-Christian deceiver) framed the discussion on the antichrist since Irenaeus set the interpretative parameters in the second century, mainly the vocabulary and the temporal application of the prophecies. The antichrist from within was seen both as one professed Christian individual influential in the church who would appear in the future; and corporately (many) present in the church, frequently seen as a spiritual force of evil even inside of the believer. Springing from the epistles of John, trickling down to Origen, Tyconius to later interpreters such as Pope Gregory I, Joachim of Fiore, and many Reformers, the major idea in this view of the antichrist from within is that Christians should look inward for the epitome manifestation of evil. The specific identification of course would vary from oneself to the pope, to the Greek patriarch, and some heretics.

To others, however, the antichrist was an anti-Christian force, thus it could not be a Christian in any form or shape. Maybe a Jew (an early and very influential view), or a pagan king. In this view, the antichrist could not be identified in the present, until of course, its appearance. These elements are mainly extracted from Daniel's and Revelation's persecuting beasts and arguably Hippolytus of Rome is its main influencer. Almond highlights Fiore (11th CE) and Adso (9th CE), respectively, as the main historical interpreters of the two kinds of antichrists.

Fiore and Adso are good representations, but readers should be aware that the seminal ideas of the antichrist within or without, are not original in them. That the antichrist would be a Jew from Babylon living in the land of Israel persecuting Christians (Adso) was proposed earlier by Andrew of Caesarea in the seventh century; that it could be a Jew or a Christian springing inside of the church was already proposed by Pope Gregory I. Certainly, the interpretations of the antichrist motif cannot be neatly isolated into these two camps, but they become helpful heuristic tools, and Almond's bifurcation highlights important elements of the development of the antichrist in Christianity. Similar to the multiple characterizations of the Messiah in ancient Jewish interpretation (e.g. a priest, a prophet, son of David, son of Joseph, son of Levi), Christian views on the anti-messiah would combine diverging or apparent antagonistic elements found in Scriptures. Many Christian interpreters would mix both elements of a pagan persecuting power, and/or a pretense Christ, to the point of even seeing two eschatological antichrists working simultaneously. Like in the Reformation period, Luther labeled both the Papacy and the Muslims as the manifestations of antichrist. Following the concept from I John, in this view what is called antichrist is a spirit of antagonism toward Jesus, manifested in different entities.

Back to Almond's presentation, I expected the author to give historical trajectories of the motif towards its conclusion, based on his perceptive interpretative concepts laid out in the introduction. Since he didn't do it, I point out a few of them below, which are already pointed out by LeRoy Froom, whose work is cited only in Almond's description of the Reformation. So, most of the time, the antichrist from within (1 John), would be mainly characterized as an apostate influence on other Christians. This concept was taken from the reference in 2 Thess 2 that before the man of sin (antichrist) would arrive (future), there would be an apostasy (departure) from the church. Although the term lends to a view of a specific previous believer, thus a false Christian, some would generalize the term as anything that is against the interpreters' (Christian) view of God (e.g. Muslims, heretics, Jews). As Almond's biography shows, the identified antichrist reveals a lot about the interpreter's perspective on what God is not like.

Another related interpretative crux often seen in the examples discussed by Almond is the time of the antichrist's appearance. Two biblical passages were influential in this matter, 2 Thess 2 and its "restrainer" before the antichrist; and

Rev 20 and the millennium to the destruction of the antichrist. Taken together they were used to form a chronology of the antichrist, for example (not the only one), starting its activities after the fall of the Roman empire (understood differently), and ending after Jesus's reign of a thousand years (also applied differently in history). One could add to the chronological discussions of the power of antichrist the 1260 days, or forty-two months, or three years and a half from Dan 7, 12, and Rev 11–13. Often these times (1000, and 1260 years) were combined to point to the end of the antichrist and the return of Jesus, creating a conflict with the teachings of Jesus that no one knows exactly this time (Matt 24:36; Acts 1:7). Therefore, most interpreters involved in the specific application of these prophetic numbers in history hesitated to say exactly when they would end. A few tried, but as Almond indicates, the disappointment would just vindicate the allegorical and non-specific reading of prophetic time from Origen and Augustine.

Besides the reference to time, I found that the location of the antichrist has been an important interpretative marker in identifying the antichrist. Mainly based on 2 Thess 2:4, where is pointed out that the man of sin will sit in the "sanctuary of God." Almond's copious examples, as found also elsewhere, show that when the temple in Jerusalem was the proposed location, the antichrist was not identified as an apostate Christian, but most often a Jew. When the "sanctuary of God" was identified as the church, suddenly, Christian teachers like the pope become suitable candidates for the antichrist. In my opinion, this is an important marker that has not been adequately explored. The potential here for understanding the interpretative process of this motif is that it allows researchers to see how one element could govern other elements in a given interpretative theory on the so-called antichrist story. I find this marker relevant because it gives priority to the biblical characterization of the eschatological enemy, since it is a repeated motif in Scriptures, unlike other purported characteristics of the antichrist later inferred by interpreters. Interpreters who see two historical antichrists at the same time almost ignore this description from Dan 8 and 2 Thess 2.

Another trend I could see in Almond's account is the increased interest in the identification of the number of the beast, the 666 of Rev 13. Many would use gematria (numerical values to letters) and apply them to currently perceived enemies as a good fit for the antichrist. Good examples of how this was wildly used can be found in ch 7, where one can also see how some interpreters identified Napoleon Bonaparte as the antichrist, based on the connection between the name Apollyon in Rev 9:11 and the allegedly Corsican version of it, n'appolione (257). Those familiar with the Seventh-day Adventist views on the 666 (*vicarius filii dei*; and a human number from Dan 3) will find in Almond's account many interesting parallels and context to these views as thoroughly discussed in Edwin de Kock's *The Truth about 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy* (Edinburg, TX: Edwin de Kock, 2011). For the Seventh-day Adventists, the

examples found in Almond's *Antichrist* illuminate with historical parallels, many Adventist eschatological scenarios, like the interpretations on Dan 11 mainly divided between the seminal ideas of James White (Spiritual), and Uriah Smith (Papacy and Ottomans-Islam). From the examples in Almond's book, one can evaluate hermeneutically the origins of current Adventist proposals, an exercise I found valuable.

The examples of history can also illuminate the eschatology of dispensationalist evangelicals, and its ambiguous view about Jerusalem in prophecy. Unfortunately, Almond has nothing to say about Seventh-day Adventist eschatology, and just a brief mention of evangelical dispensationalism (270, 274, 278). This I found to be a major gap in a great historical work. Not only because I am a Seventh-day Adventist, but because these two views of prophecy are highly influential today and were forged in the nineteenth century, the period covered by Almond. Instead, one can find a quite extensive description of Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyev's eschatology, which sounds a lot like the famous series of the theological fiction *Left Behind*, by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, which he labels as "Nietzsche's 'superman' (*Ubermensch*) gone Adsonian apocalyptic" (280). Well stated.

I also missed a summary conclusion with trends. Almond could have briefly built a timeline of the two views (inside – Fiore, outside – Adso), similar to Edwin Froom's charts in *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* that would add to its usefulness. But instead, he decided to write an ethical appeal, leaning to the immanent and spiritual reading of the antichrist, which is okay. At last, in the spirit of a teacher and researcher, I was disappointed to not find a Scriptural index to help me find what particular passages were used by which interpreters. One could argue that the book is a historical biography, not one on biblical studies. However, I still think, based on the biblical nature of the subject that it deserved an index since the interpretation of particular passages is central in the development of this story, which is masterfully told, as readers expect from Philip Almond's books. He has written great stories on demonic possessions and witchcraft (2004, 2011, 2012), *The Devil* (Cornell University Press, 2014), and *God* (Tauris, 2018), setting a high standard to any future history on these subjects. Some are good researchers, others, great storytellers. I found him to be both. Therefore, I congratulate Philip Almond for another helpful account of an important religious subject.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Rodrigo Galiza

Avis, Paul, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 672 pp. Hardcover. USD 150.00.

Now well-recognized and appreciated, the *Oxford Handbook* series stands out for its authoritative and critical examination of a vast range of topics

and perspectives. Leading an international team of highly knowledgeable and recognized scholars, Paul Avis, editor-in-chief of the journal *Ecclesiology*, presents in this handbook an exceptional scholarly resource on the biblical foundation, history, and modern developments of the Christian church. At the heart of the ecumenical movement, the doctrine of the church and its manifold themes (origin, structure, authority, governance, sacraments, unity and diversity, and mission), has been the focus of numerous studies and dialogues. While significant areas of consensus and convergence have been achieved in the last century, much remains unresolved. Yet, the conversations and dialogues continue. This book covers four areas of interest in this long tradition of ecclesiological and ecumenical studies, adding an outstanding contribution to these studies.

In his introduction to the volume, Paul Avis provides a helpful "overview of the theological discipline of ecclesiology and a basic orientation to its questions and methods" (1). Beyond introducing the broad aspects of the study of ecclesiology, Avis also introduces the perennial questions in ecclesiology: Did Jesus found the church?; Can God's church be imperfect?; What do we make of divisions in the church?; and, How is the local church related to the universal church?

The first major part of the *Handbook* addresses questions and difficulties related to the biblical foundations to ecclesiology, and this is the scholarly area that readers of *AUSS* may be most interested in. Since the publication of Raymond Brown's *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (Paulist Press, 1984) there has been little hesitation over the apparent diversity of ecclesial models and patterns of leadership in the New Testament. Different biblical authors appear to understand the church in different ways. The long-held belief that the New Testament teaches a single ecclesial model as taught by Jesus to his apostles now holds little sway. Five chapters in this first section offer a survey and explanation of the issues related to these various ecclesiologies. R. W. L. Moberly begins this biblical foundation section by discussing the ecclesiology of the people of God as presented in the Hebrew Bible. Setting aside the traditional discussion of continuity versus replacement theology, he maintains more fittingly that "a Christian refusal to see God's covenant with the Jews as revoked, whatever their failures, gives grounds for the churches also to hope that, whatever their failures," God will "yet have a future for them in his service" (53).

In chapter 3, Loveday Alexander studies the church in the Synoptic Gospels and the book of Acts and maintains that although these books "contain very few explicit statements on the nature of the *ekklēsia* ... their underlying narrative shape both reflects and creates a profoundly ecclesiological sub-structure" (55). After a careful reflection on these synoptic narratives about Jesus and the early community of believers, he concludes that "we can say with a degree of historical confidence that the foundation of the

church lies in the messianic community founded by Jesus as 'sign, instrument and foretaste' of the kingdom of God" (95). Most helpful in this chapter is Alexander's analysis of one of the most contentious passages in the gospel of Matthew (16:18–19) and its relationship to various interpretations of the foundation of the Christian church (75–78). Andrew Lincoln presents in chapter 4 the Johannine vision of the church in its dialectic between the identity and mission of Jesus the Messiah and the community of believers. This community is recognized by its discipleship of following the Messiah and remaining in him, and by the solidarity of its family relationships, with its embodying witness of love, service, and unity.

In chapter 5, Edward Adams discusses the difficult and intensely researched subject of the shape of the Pauline churches and seeks to present the consensus of contemporary scholarship on several questions related to their social formation (How were they formed?), composition (Of what kind of people were they composed?), identity (How does Paul define the identity of his communities?), governance (How were they governed?), rituals (What do we know about their rituals and meetings?), and meeting places (In what kinds of places did they meet?). The discussion of these questions is remarkably well done, guiding the reader through the diversity of scholarly approaches and conclusions. Adams's critique, through the chapter, of the dominant household church model is appropriate and offers some possibilities for other "modes of ecclesial formation and other physical settings for gatherings" (141).

In the last chapter of this first part, Gerald O'Collins surveys the diversity of church life in the General Epistles. This diversity, however, is not without a few common themes: a concern with the healthy and unified life of individual Christian communities facing suffering, maintaining community, and an ecclesiology based on Scripture (159). O'Collins sums up the significant elements of these epistles by saying that "the church should be wise (James), priestly (1 Peter), worshipping (Hebrews), faithful (Jude), and both Petrine and Pauline (2 Peter)" (159).

Part 2 addresses resources from the Christian traditions after the New Testament and looks at the various ecclesiologies that have arisen through the centuries. In chapter 7, Mark Edwards summarizes the major steps in the development of early ecclesiology in the West from the time of the apostles to the time of Charlemagne, while Andrew Louth surveys the contribution of the Eastern Orthodox tradition in the following chapter. In chapter 9, Norman Tanner reviews developments during the Middle Ages with a particular focus on the conciliar movement, while the ecclesiology of the Magisterial Reformers is reviewed by Dorothea Wendebourg in chapter 10, where she focuses first on Martin Luther to whom she then compares points of agreement and differences with Melanchthon and Calvin's views. The next chapters in this section cover the ecclesiologies of denominational families:

Anglican ecclesiology (Paul Avis), Roman Catholic ecclesiology from Trent to Vatican II (Ormond Rush), Baptist ecclesiology (Paul Fiddes), Methodism (David Chapman), and finally, Pentecostal ecclesiologies (Amos Yong). Each of these chapters attempts to share insights into their major themes, sources, and heritage, as well as current challenges. While other Protestant denominational traditions could have been presented, these cover very well the essential diversity within Protestantism.

Moving on to part 3, the *Handbook* reviews eight major modern ecclesiologists who have made significant contributions to the doctrine of the church in the twentieth century, and include one Reformed theologian, Karl Barth (by Kimlin Bender); four Roman Catholic theologians, Yves Congar (Gabriel Flynn), Henri de Lubac (Gabriel Flynn), Karl Rahner (Richard Lennan), and Joseph Ratzinger, before becoming Pope Benedict XVI (Theodor Dieter); one Orthodox theologian, John Zizioulas (Paul McPartlan); one Lutheran theologian, Wolfhart Pannenberg (Friederike Nüssel); and finally one Anglican theologian, Rowan Williams (Mike Higton). All eight of these figures made major contributions to the ecumenical conversation on ecclesiology and remain, decades later, prominent thinkers with immensely valuable insights into ecclesiological questions. Perhaps to this impressive list, one could have added two other Catholic voices, Hans Küng and Avery Dulles, and those of Miroslav Volf and Leslie Newbigin.

The last part of the *Handbook* addresses contemporary movements in ecclesiology. In five brief chapters, the authors survey the feminist critiques, visions, and models of the church (Elaine Graham), the social science and ideological critiques of ecclesiology (Neil Ormerod), liberation ecclesiologies, especially in Latin American (Michelle Gonzalez), Asian ecclesiologies (Simon Chan), and finally, African ecclesiologies (Stan Chu Ilo). As the majority of Christianity moves beyond and away from the developed and Euro-centric western world, marginalized and once-colonized populations are reshaping how the church is conceived and lived. The challenges facing Christianity in the twenty-first century necessitate a careful look at these forms of ecclesiologies and the contributions they make to the larger Christian church. In this section as well, other movements could have been addressed, many of them as sub-movements of liberation theologies, such as the church as a new movement among marginalized or LGBTQ populations. Of interest would also be a reflection on the church in secular and post-Christian societies.

The richness of the articles in this volume adds a tremendous contribution to the current issues in ecclesiological and ecumenical studies. Also to be noted for their scholarly value are the bibliographies and suggested lists of reading at the end of each chapter. Like all *Oxford Handbooks*, this one is no exception in its breadth and scholarly discussion of the subject, and its ability to explore a subject beyond a mere introductory treatment. Any student of the doctrine of the church will greatly benefit from both the summary and

survey of these various aspects of ecclesiology as well as the discussion of the numerous questions and challenges still being raised.

It is difficult to summarize and critique a volume of this kind given the diversity of topics and authors. But one common thread easily emerges out of the summaries and reviews of the various denominational ecclesiologies, major theologians, and contemporary movements of the twentieth century it presents. Modern ecclesiologies have moved away from primarily discussing issues of form, governance, and authority, to emphasize the nature of the church as the people of God and the community of believers in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, commissioned to witness in the power of the Holy Spirit to the world of the gracious and saving love of God. While an ecumenical consensus on the doctrine of the church and its multitude of questions and concerns is far from being reached, this emphasis on the church as a community is perhaps one of its greatest and most helpful achievements.

Andrews University Denis Fortin

Black, David Alan, and Benjamin L. Merkle, eds. *Linguistics and New Testament Greek: Key Issues in the Current Debate*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020. xi + 276 pp. Softcover. USD 29.99.

Scholars working in the field of biblical exegesis have at times struggled to incorporate current linguistic theories into their use of biblical languages. To begin addressing this lacuna, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary held a symposium about it on April 26–27 of 2019. The title of the meeting became the title of the current book, since the papers delivered at the conference have now been collected, with a preface and postscript offered by the editors. The volume is concluded with a glossary, biographies of the contributors, and an index. With this volume, David Black writes, "students of Greek [will] think more linguistically about the language they are studying" (3). Each essay represents a summary of a way in which linguistic theory can affect the teaching and interpretation of New Testament Greek.

In chapter 1 Stanley Porter introduces the reader to various linguistic schools. He divides the schools into "traditional," "formal," "cognitive," and "functional." The reader will not grasp all of the nuances of each linguistic school based solely on this chapter. The explanation for Systemic Functional Linguistics—perhaps the most important school for future study on Koine Greek—comprises a single paragraph. This dearth of explanation is mitigated somewhat by numerous references to New Testament studies that make use of the various linguistic schools. The next three chapters focus on the Greek verb. In chapter 2, Constantine Campbell discusses advances in understanding the Greek verbal aspect, including the question of whether temporality is encoded in tense morphology. Michael Aubrey follows with a discussion

about the form of the Greek perfect tense. Both of these chapters are distilled from their authors' research emphases. Campbell wrote on the verbal aspect for his doctoral dissertation at Macquarie University, a dissertation that was subsequently published by Peter Lang. Aubrey's interest in the perfect tense stems from his Master's thesis, completed at Trinity Western University. In chapter 4, Jonathan Pennington writes on the middle voice and its implication in exegesis. He argues that a proper understanding of middle-voice semantics will eliminate the need to speak of certain Greek verbs as "deponent." More specifically, he suggests Greek middle morphology decreases the transitivity of the verb and marks the verb for subject-affectedness. Of these two proposals, the latter is more convincing. In the New Testament, examples abound of intransitive active verbs and transitive middle verbs. In the case where middle forms are chosen in lieu of active ones, it is often difficult to see how a loss of transitivity could be the deciding factor in choosing one form over another. On the other hand, subject-affectedness is likely the key to understanding the Greek middle. It is instructive that when Pennington offers examples of exegesis, his two texts (Jas 4:2–3; Mark 6:22–25) illustrate the middle form's emphasis on subject-affectedness, but not loss of transitivity.

The following two chapters deal with the promising field of discourse analysis. In chapter 5, Stephen Levinsohn introduces the topic by applying discourse analysis to Galatians. Beginning with large thematic boundaries and moving to smaller functional markers, Levinsohn demonstrates well how functional grammar and discourse analysis can be applied to New Testament books from both a macro- and micro-perspective. In chapter 6, Steven Runge applies the methodology of discourse analysis more specifically to word, phrase, and clause ordering. Runge expands on concepts found in his *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), a volume that has already become a standard in its field. Runge includes several helpful examples from the Gospel of John to illustrate how emphasis can be deduced from the order of constituents in one or more clauses.

The final five chapters focus on issues of language acquisition and pedagogy. In chapter 7, T. Michael Halcomb charts the trajectory of language pedagogy from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century. He is especially inclined toward "Living Language" approaches to teaching, as exemplified by the "Lingua Latina" series. In a passionate conclusion, Halcomb calls on Greek teachers to be willing to rethink their methods to accommodate a changing world. On the importance of learning Greek through pronunciation, Randall Buth makes the case in chapter 8 that oral language learning has more to do with reading comprehension than had previously been thought. He follows this argument with a demonstration of how scholars can come to a reasonable approximation of the spoken Koine Greek dialect through spelling variations attested in ancient letters, manuscripts, and inscriptions. His suggestions fall between Modern and Erasmian pronunciation systems,

which is sure to make educators on both sides of the debate uncomfortable. Thomas Hudgins's chapter (9) on "Electronic Tools and New Testament Greek" describes numerous resources available online covering the topics of language acquisition, textual criticism, lexical analysis, and syntactic analysis. He admits that "a chapter on electronic tools and New Testament Greek is almost futile" due to the ever-changing nature of technology and resource access (195). Nevertheless, his chapter will be useful for at least the near future. Chapter 10, by Robert Plummer, is a short imaginative exposition of what an "ideal beginning Greek grammar" would look like. For those who do not see themselves embarking on the task of creating such a grammar, Plummer also includes resources to supplement the teaching of beginning Greek. The last chapter, by Nicholas Ellis, lays out how linguistic theory has affected biblical exegesis over the last hundred years, with some significant overlap with the history told by Porter (ch 1). Ellis, however, focuses more on lexical studies. He concludes with a few notes on how linguistic theory can continue impacting biblical exegesis. Following these essays, editor Benjamin Merkle offers a postscript, in which he asks "Where do we go from here?" (247). Summarizing much of what was discussed in the book, Merkle spends special attention on the studies on verbs.

Linguistics and New Testament Greek represents a promising trend in the biblical scholarship of incorporating broader linguistic theory into exegesis and pedagogy. Rather than viewing biblical Greek as a code that needs to be cracked, the contributors to this volume encourage the reader to view Koine Greek as a language spoken by real people. Insights gained from modern languages can thus assist us in understanding what the biblical authors were communicating long ago. The topics covered in this volume are by no means simple nor settled. The book should be viewed as a starting point toward further research since most chapters leave the reader with more questions than answers. The authors give helpful references that will assist the reader to dig deeper into a chosen topic. Linguistic theory has come a long way since the hay-days of Noam Chomsky. Best practices in second-language acquisition have developed greatly from the rote memorization of previous centuries. Such a jumping-off point is needed, given the weight of tradition that hangs upon Greek exegesis and pedagogy. Change does not come easy, but *Linguistics and New Testament Greek* offers reasons to challenge long-held assumptions regarding the teaching and use of Koine Greek in biblical studies. Teachers of the Greek New Testament would do well to accept some of its proposals.

Dallas, Texas Jonathan A. Campbell

Blackwell, Ben C., John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston, eds. *Reading Revelation in Context: John's Apocalypse and Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019. 208 pp. Softcover. USD 21.99.

Reading Revelation in Context is the third volume in the Reading in Context series by Zondervan Academic following *Reading Romans in Context* (2015) and *Reading Mark in Context* (2018). The editors of all three volumes are PhD graduates from Durham University whose work revolves around the Second Temple Jewish literature. Goodrich teaches at Moody Bible Institute whereas both Blackwell and Maston are associate professors at Houston Baptist University. This current volume follows its predecessors and presents thematic similarities between various passages in John's Apocalypse and the contemporaneous Jewish sources. The driving purpose behind the book is to offer an interpretive option in the studies of Revelation. Authors note the scholarly overemphasis of the sociopolitical milieu of the Greco-Roman world in the understanding of Revelation (26), while extra-biblical Jewish backgrounds remain largely neglected. Thus, *Reading Revelation in Context* provides a unique opportunity to establish relationships between the Jewish apocalyptic texts of the Second Temple period and the book of Revelation.

The book features twenty essays by prominent scholars of the New Testament and early Judaism. The list of articles systematically follows the text of the Apocalypse which makes it easy to navigate. Each chapter is about seven pages long and follows the standard pattern: (a) a brief introduction into the Revelation passage under study, (b) a discourse into the comparative writing from the Second Temple Jewish texts, and (c) the analysis of the Apocalypse's passage in light of the Jewish comparative text (28). The comparison includes not only parallels but also contrasts illuminating the unique differences of John's Apocalypse from the common Jewish apocalyptic thought. Each chapter conveniently concludes with the list of materials for further research from primary and secondary sources. The readers will also appreciate the glossary of key terms as well as the author, subject, and passage indexes at the end of the book. Another reader-oriented feature of this volume is a succinct historical overview of the Second Temple period and a survey of various types of early Jewish literature. By doing this overview the editors laid the solid background in which the Jewish apocalypticism should be read and understood.

Evaluating the collection of essays as a whole is not always an easy or even a fair task. No wholistic approach would give justice to individual researches. Nevertheless, it would be appropriate to note that all essays focus on thematic or conceptual connections between the Apocalypse and its Jewish background. Apart from Elizabeth E. Shively's verbal, thematic, and structural parallels (161) and Ronald Herm's (73–79) thematic and verbal correlations, the majority of the arguments are on thematic similarities

between passages. Based on Jon Paulien's criteria for measuring the strength of allusions ("Elusive Allusions: The Problematic Use of the Old Testament in Revelation," *BR* 33 [1988]: 37–53), thematic connections present only a possible background or could be classified as "echoes" or ideas "in the air." In other words, it would be more appropriate to conclude that John drew concepts from the pool of Jewish apocalyptic thought rather than had precise sources in mind.

For instance, Ian Paul's discussion on martyrdom in Rev 6 and 2 Maccabees (66–72) portrays general Jewish views on faithfulness to God, patient endurance, and anticipated reward. It would be far-reaching to insist that John had 2 Maccabees in mind while writing Rev 6 or that 2 Maccabees provides answers regarding the slain souls under the altar in Rev 6:9–11. In the same way, Mark D. Matthew (45–51) and Cynthia Long Westfall (146–152) provide general Jewish attitudes on riches, power, wealth, injustice, and oppression. Similar attitudes could be found in the Hebrew Bible, Greco-Roman culture, and early Christian teachings. Although chosen Second Temple texts provide a possible background alternative, they do not always offer strong enough evidence for removing all other sources from consideration. Also, many thematic connections brought significant differences. To mention a few, Garrick V. Allen states that "the relationship between 4 Ezra and Revelation 11 is not direct, as their many differences indicate" (106). Similarly, Edith M. Humphrey comparing Babylon in Rev 17 with Aseneth from *Joseph and Aseneth* states, "We cannot claim that John intended a contrast between his villainous woman and Aseneth" (138). Humphrey is right in her assessment that both works depict common Jewish outlooks on humility, purity, corruption, and arrogance. The use of symbolic women in ancient writings was employed far and wide, as the author notes (142–143). Even though the contrast given fascinates imagination, one needs to admit that these female figures are not necessarily linked nor provide interpretive clues for each other. Instead, they appeal to the common ancient imagery of a feminine figure (virtuous or wicked) personifying a group.

The allocated length of essays, at times, felt like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it presented topics in a laconic manner which many will appreciate. On the other hand, it did not allow contributors to dig deeper, expand the topic, and fully develop their ideas. The essays seem like only the starting point of any particular study and not its end. The sources at the end of each chapter, then, become significant for those who choose to explore the topic further. The editors's attempt to provide the non-biblical Jewish background for every chapter in Revelation is noteworthy. The reader might ask, though, if every vision in Revelation indeed springs from other Jewish apocalyptic writing. The book could improve if the number of essays was reduced to those with the strongest connections and the contributors got more space to develop their views.

The book seems to be neutral to modern hermeneutical approaches to Revelation (preterist, futurist, historicist, and idealist). Only once it warns against hasty interpretations which the historicist and the futurist schools had at times (21). Consequently, a few statements favoring the preterist and the idealist views were mentioned by the contributors (120–121). In general, the chosen methodology safeguards against reckless interpretations by aiming to establish John's intentions in communicating his visions. The book masterfully evaluates the Apocalypse through the prism of the Second Temple Jewish literature allowing readers to see firsthand how it is similar to and yet different from its contemporaneous writings. The editors are to be commended for compiling a nontechnical introductory resource on the connections between John's Apocalypse and other Jewish writings. Readers not familiar with the larger Jewish corpus of Second Temple literature will certainly be intrigued by the similarities with the Bible and hopefully will be interested in studying these ancient texts.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Stanislav Kondrat

Cartledge, Mark J., Sarah L. B. Dunlop, Heather Buckingham, and Sophie Bremner. *Megachurches and Social Engagement: Public Theology in Practice*. Leiden: Brill, 2019. xiv + 391 pp. Paperback. USD 80.00.

The British Arts and Humanities Research Council funded this research project that later became a book. Mark J. Cartledge was the principal investigator (practical theology and Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies) and later book project leader. All empirical data was collected by Sophie Bremner (anthropology) and Sarah L. B. Dunlop (practical theology) joined by Heather Buckingham (sociology and social policy) to work on the impact side of the project. Cartledge and his associates have developed this project using empirical data gathered by Bremner, and Dunlop. The sociological impact of the theme is contributed by Buckingham. It should be noted that some of the content of this book has been published in theological journals. Even though there is an increase of megachurch material being published, this is the first book on megachurches from the United Kingdom and it is particularly interesting in its explanation of their contribution to wider society and social engagement.

The first part presents a theoretical context for the study of the megachurch phenomenon in different parts of the world and then in Europe and the United Kingdom, focusing on Evangelicalism and Charismatic Renewal in the Church of England, and African Pentecostalism in Britain. This is followed by an introduction to public theology, social theory, and megachurch practice of social engagement, which undergirds this work methodologically. The second part of the book also has two chapters presenting two empirical case studies.

The first case study is on the Church of England, more specifically Holy Trinity Church from Brompton and All Souls Church in Langham Place. The authors describe how its history, theology, evangelism strategies, and social engagement impacted the communities of these churches. The second case study describes the influence of African diaspora Pentecostalism through Kingsway International Christian Centre, Jesus House of All Nations, and New Wine Church. In this section, the authors present a brief history of these congregations, their most important ministries, and how they have impacted the city of London.

In part three of the book, containing three chapters and a separate conclusion, the authors "reflect on the empirical data in the light of the earlier theoretical literature, providing insights into how these megachurches function in terms of social engagement and what kind of significance their practices have for public theology today" (36). It also describes a series of explanations regarding theological motivations, globalization, social engagements, and the implications for church and society. The conclusion presents a summary of the study findings, answers key questions presented at the beginning of the research, and informs an ecclesiology of social engagement; as well as the significance of the study for future research.

This book is important as the first book-length study on megachurches in the United Kingdom with a particular interest in how these "large churches contribute to wider society by means of their social engagement" (1). The basis to study the megachurch phenomenon in the United Kingdom comprises five congregations in London, two from the Church of England tradition, and three from the African-led Pentecostal Churches. The standard definition of megachurch used by them is a Protestant church "where more than 2000 people attend for the purposes of worship per week" (43). There are some commonalities among these megachurches. The book mentions Stephen Ellingson research ("New Research on Megachurches Non-denominationalism and Sectarianism," in *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Bryan S. Turner [Oxford, NY: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010], 247–266) stating that usually they are non-denominational, and mostly "theologically conservative, largely Evangelical, use media technology, offer multiple worship services and other types of services, such as consumer goods, thus employing 'consumer logic' and tend to be located in urban and suburban contexts" (44). Architecturally, they use very large and functional facilities to accommodate the members with lots of space for parking and other activities. Their evangelistic efforts focus on conversion using little Christian symbolism to be relevant to the unchurched. Another ministry commonly used in megachurches is the use of small groups, which some think has been a major factor for the "the growth and health of megachurches" (46).

The profile of these congregations is as follows: one Conservative Evangelical, one Charismatic Evangelical, and three African diaspora Pentecostal

churches (4). These churches have been more successful among immigrants, especially African descendants, providing places of worship and community for non-native people, "helping them to overcome their alienation and even hostility in the workplace" (17). Many of them were "established by migrants who have initiated the church and then attracted a crowd, or in this case a very large crowd" (306). The attraction of these churches could be attributed to the lack of vitality and power, as seen by Pentecostal Christians, in many traditional churches in the United Kingdom.

The research process was mostly qualitative using the case-study approach, but also included a limited amount of counting. The methodology was primarily participant-observation, noting the number and demographics of the congregants; and identifying social engagement activities the Christian community was involved in. The selected churches provide several examples of socially engaged ministries including counseling and support for youth, elderly, homeless, and those struggling with poverty or mental health. The authors present a relevant description of megachurches and a detailed narrative of these very large churches in London. They present appropriate information about their ministries and how they are impacting urban London with resources to support and finance projects. The churches participating in the study saw most of their growth among immigrants and minorities. It is worth noting also the importance of how Pentecostalism affected the process of bringing a missionary ideology (reverse mission). Differently than the Pentecostal communities, the more conservative Evangelical church of the Holy Trinity focuses its effort "on process evangelism and the development of an existing discipleship course into an evangelistic one" (12). Not much affected by charismatic ideologies, its approach to mission "is much more rooted in its own British tradition of Evangelical spirituality, seeking to be faithful to its understanding of the gospel message and how to proclaim it afresh in the global city of London" (14).

Seeing both demonstrations of significant growth is unsurprising in a global city like London. However, it is remarkable to see the success of Pentecostals among African descendants, especially Caribbeans. The main reason for the large numbers and adherents among these immigrants was the feeling of alienation from the white denominations and British society. These churches offered ethnic community-enhancing solidarity and create a retreat from wider British society. The churches in the United Kingdom, in the perspective of these Christians, appeared to lack energy and power, so important for the Caribbean and African spirituality. In addition to that, cultural differences such as English individualism and a sort of racism could also have played a role in the formation of these communities. Interestingly, Caribbean Pentecostals can be seen as exclusive and schismatic, since they import their preachers in an attempt to protect the congregation from the influence of "cold" English culture (16–17).

No doubt that these large churches have generated resources playing an important role in society, and the social engagement and impact might be the most important contribution. The resources generated and the utilization of these resources might be their most important contribution. These large congregations have many valuable lessons to teach smaller churches and even benefit them by offering an option for those who are not attracted to the megachurch style. "However, for congregations that are very similar to the megachurch in ethos and tradition, then their similarity is a disadvantage because of the economy of scale compare to the megachurch" (52).

This book explains some unique opportunities megachurches can offer by "generating human capital (leadership, volunteering), social capital (networks of trust), physical capital (buildings for community use) and funds to finance projects." (2) According to the authors, megachurches are a growing religious phenomenon increasing their influence locally and globally. On the other hand, there is a trend of megachurches moving into multisite facilities, which facilitates outreach and fosters new growth. In North America, the number of multisite churches has almost doubled in recent years (Warren Bird, "Big News- Multisite Churches Now Number More Than 5,000," *Leadership Network*, accessed in https://leadnet.org/big-news-multisite-churches-more-than-5000/). There is a large number of megachurches in Africa, and it may be no wonder the London megachurches selected by the authors are composed of its majority of African descendants or African-led congregations. Besides using multiple locations, they are also hosting an increasing number of online worships, which is indispensable during a pandemic. This trend will most probably bring a permanent change in the way the church exists and does ministry. Will megachurches benefit from it? We will have to wait and see.

Besides all these positive characteristics, it is somewhat debatable how much of an impact megachurches have on the expansion of Christianity. Talking about absolute numbers, Thumma and Travis (Scott Thumma and Dave Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths* [San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007].) present extensive research questioning the assumption of many that megachurches bring absolute overall growth while highlighting the diversity within the megachurch phenomenon. Another assumption they questioned is the idea that megachurches extinguish small communities as Wal-Mart does with smaller competitors. Thumma and Travis suggest that Christianity comes in many packages of different sizes or forms and that the market for religion can and should offer appeal through a variety of outlets.

It is interesting to take note that despite the growth of megachurches, the overall population growth rate has surpassed church growth rates (David T. Olson*, The American Church in Crisis: Groundbreaking Research based on a National Database of over 200,000 Churches* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008]). In the case of the United Kingdom, the area of focus in *Megachurches and Social Engagement*, the Census data of 2001–2011 indicates the growth

of those self-identified as 'no religion' (from 15 to 25 percent), while during the same period, people self-identified as Christians dropped from 72 to 59 percent (93). So it seems to me that the megachurch movement is creating a false impression that Christianity is growing, with the appearance of large congregations, while small congregations are struggling and the actual percentage of the population attending church is declining.

Possibly one of the most important contributions of this research is to highlight the significance of spiritual growth and the social activism of this type of congregation. The five congregations represented in this study see community work as an integral part of their mission. Regarding the high level of social engagement of these large communities of believers, the authors suggest "the main motivating factor from a theological perspective is that individuals and churches engage in social ministry because they are motivated out of love and compassion for their neighbors" (332). This is a good sign of the health of its members, one can say. However, the percentage of volunteers in relation to its total membership is low. Despite how one feels about the positive influence of megachurches in Christianity, this study contributes to our understanding of how effectively some large congregations in a major city of the globe can thrive and benefit their locality through social engagement. In this context, size does matter, for a large congregation has more human capital than a smaller one. This study also provides examples of leadership development and volunteer mobilization that are admirable.

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Gerson Santos

Chou, Abner. *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2018. 251 pp. Softcover. USD 23.99.

Dr. Abner Chou (ThD, The Master's University) serves as the John F. MacArthur Endowed Fellow at The Master's University in Santa Clarita, California, where he teaches biblical studies. Besides authoring numerous articles, his works include a commentary on Lamentations and *I Saw the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Vision* (Wipf and Stock, 2013). In the present volume, Chao begins from the premise that God requires an accurate interpretation of His Word (Acts 17:11; 1 Tim 4:13–15; 2 Tim 2:15; 1 Pet 2:2). To achieve this Chou proposes we study the intertextual hermeneutics of the biblical authors themselves. The readers' job then is to align their thoughts after them (the authors) to properly discern and apply their method of knowing the truth.

The book is divided into seven chapters and a final two-page conclusion. Chapter one begins by establishing the literal-historical-grammatical method as the one used by the authors of Scripture. Chou also posits Scripture's dual authorship—God and human author (2 Pet 1:20–21)—a concept requiring

the centrality of authorial intent over against a postmodern text-centered hermeneutic or reader-response approach. Chou's thesis is that the Old Testament inner-textual hermeneutic is the same hermeneutic the apostles applied. And as later readers apply this method, they too are engaged in a "hermeneutic of obedience."

Chapter two unpacks Chou's presuppositions and method. He first notes that the presupposition inherent in postmodern deconstructionism essentially breaks down the line of communication between author→ text→ reader. Consequently, if the author's intent is truly unknowable, the reader will be left with any number of subjective, and most likely erroneous, messages. However, if Scripture claims that God himself spoke through the prophets (2 Pet 1:21; Acts 28:25), the text becomes inextricably linked to its Author, providing the reader with a meaning that cannot be broken (John 10:35). As such, "readers do not have hermeneutical freedom, but hermeneutical accountability" (28). Thus Chou's first presupposition is to discern the intent of the dual authors, a process that requires the guidance and sanctification of the Spirit who inspired the writing. Chou's second presupposition takes us from the text's meaning (author's intent) to the text's significance—this includes the text's ramifications, implications, and applications. The third presupposition is the reality of intertextuality. Chou notes that approximately one in twenty New Testament verses quotes the OT. This interconnectedness of the Scriptures is present not only in ancient Jewish writings but in the internal evidence of Scripture itself.

Chapter three explores the prophet as an exegete and theologian. On a prescriptive level, Chou notes how the authors of the OT use various introductory formulae to establish the authority of Scripture. On a descriptive level, the prophets are interconnected by referencing each other's ideas. Chou notes these main ideas as overarching concepts—such as covenant, law, and creation—which guide the flow of Israel's story. Regarding particular details, Chou notes the intertextual use of specific terminologies or motifs such as seed, remnant, and eagle. Chou then presents three examples of prophetic exegesis. First is Jeremiah and Ezekiel's use of Exodus (Jer 31:28–29; Ezek 18:2–3; cf. Exod 20:5, Deut 5:9). Here Chou notes that rather than misinterpreting Moses (believing children must be punished for their parent's sins) the prophets are correcting Israel's misunderstanding of the second commandment, which indicates punishment only for those children who actively partake in their parent's hatred of God.

In the second section—the prophet as a theologian—Chou looks at the intertextuality of the Davidic covenant and the *protoevangelium* of Gen 3:15. Regarding the first, Chou notes that the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants are intertwined with, and converge in, the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7), "the covenants converge into this covenant—making the one who fulfills the Davidic covenant the one who completes the covenantal promises of God" (76). This convergence of the covenants is likewise noted in 1 Kgs 4:20–5:6. This is picked

up by Amos (9:11) who moves past the fall of the Davidic dynasty to God planting Israel in the land (v.15). Hosea then builds on this framework adding "the nation will return to [a second] David their king (3:5). Finally, Micah adds that the Messiah will come from the birthplace of David (5:2). Thus, the prophets do not just reiterate similar motifs, like the vine or Messiah, but build on each other to advance theology with new revelation. Finally, Chou treats the intertextuality of Gen 3:15 providing five reasons that show Moses understood it as encapsulating a messianic component. The *protoevangelium* is then expanded in Ruth, 2 Sam 7:12; Pss 8:6; 72; 110:1; Mic 7:17; and Isa 27:1. Thus the prophets not only reiterated prior prophetic themes but encouraged the nation by expanding these theologies.

Chapter four discusses the directionality and intentionality of the prophets. Chou argues that the prophets did not speak better than they knew, but better than we give them credit for. In other words, the prophets not only spoke to their time and contemporaries but also intentionally set up future prophets with fodder for subsequent revelation. Chou begins by looking at Moses, whose writings set up a framework for how the nation should live after his death (Deut 3:23–39). Asaph then continues by reiterating much from Moses, recording Israel's subsequent infidelity (Deut 1:18–32; Ps 78:8, 22). Solomon's prayer continues what Moses and Asaph began (1 Kgs 8:1–62), and in Daniel's prayer are echoes of Solomon's emphasis on God's grace, forgiveness, and restoration based on the temple (Dan 9:16–17). Finally, Nehemiah repeats Israel's history with similar wording (9:1–38). In this trajectory we note both prophetic directionality and intentionality; for not only do they affirm past prophecy, but they also point forward by claiming their writings as profitable for future generations (Ps 119:89; cf. 22:30–31; 78:6; 103:7), their law as binding to future generations (Deut 4:10; 25–30; 5:3), and their poetry to be sung by subsequent generations (Deut 31:19; Ps 4:1; Hab 3:19). Finally, the very nature of prophecy and promises likewise indicates the future focus and application of the prophets' words.

In the second part of chapter four, Chou looks at three case studies regarding the intentionality of the prophets; the most notable concerns Matthew's use of Hos 11:1, "Out of Egypt I called my son." Chou addresses the question of whether Hosea intended to look to the future, particularly to the coming Messiah. He believes Hosea meant to point to the Messiah since the king is also God's son (Pss 2:7; 116:16), thus God's son Israel and God's son the Davidic king are equated. Next Chou explores Paul's statement that the rock guiding Israel was Christ (1 Cor 10:4), noting Moses's testimony of Yahweh as a rock (Deut 32:4, 12, 18), and sees evidence of Christ in the association of the Angel of God with the pillar of cloud (Exod 14:19; 13:21; cf. Exod 23:20–23). Finally, Chou looks at Matthew's use of Isaiah 7:14 regarding the virgin birth, showing that the context indicates this child as the Son who will conquer the exile (9:6) and ultimately restore the world (11:1–12).

Chapter five explores the apostolic continuity of the prophetic hermeneutic. First, Chou notes the apostolic introductory formulae, stating he found nearly two hundred instances where the apostles point back to the OT, thereby claiming the prophetic precedent as authoritative, intentional, and foundational for their apostolic writings. Second, he notes that the apostles call themselves prophets and servants, terms used for the prophets. Third, the apostles refer to their writings as scripture (Mark 1:16; 16:7) and claim them as not only on par with OT writings (John 20:31) but as the continuation of the prophetic inspiration (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10; 1 Thess 5:20; Rev 1:3). Fourth, Chou notes that the NT is replete with intertextual usage of the Old, spanning from Matthew—who continues the storyline begun by Moses—to Revelation, "a masterpiece" of OT intertextuality. In short, "if the apostles claim to build upon the prophets' intent and logic, if they depict themselves as the prophets continued, and if they read the Scriptures intertextually like the prophets, then most likely they continue the prophetic hermeneutic" (131).

In the second half of chapter five Chou addresses some objections to continuity. First is the apostles' use of the term "fulfilled," which some argue implies a prior prophecy; yet fulfillment also has the broader meaning of working out prior revelation. Next Chou briefly resolves the difficult passages introduced in chapter four—such as Matthew's reference to Jesus as the new David (Matt 2:15; cf. Hos 11:1), Paul's reference to Jesus as the rock (1 Cor 10:4), and Paul's use of Christ as the seed (Gal 3:16)—and then tackles seven additional intertextual passages, one involving John's use of the psalms in John 19. Did David intend these psalms to point to the Messiah? Chou argues David wrote certain psalms cognizant that they pointed to the Messiah's fulfillment of the Davidic covenant (e.g. Ps 110:1–3; cf. 2:7; 72:1–20). A second intertextual example is Peter's use of Ps 16:10 (cf. Acts 2:26–28; 13:35) as a prophecy that Christ would resurrect. Is David speaking better than he knew or better than we give him credit for? Chou argues for the latter. Being "abandoned to Sheol" would mean being left in the grave, and "not being abandoned" would imply the resurrection. Additionally, Ps 16 speaks of "God's holy one" which refers only to the Messiah (1 Sam 2:9–10). Finally, he looks at parallel language in Pss 16, 22, and 86:13 to confirm that Ps 16 deals with eschatological resurrection. In conclusion, Chou distinguishes between new revelation (Christ's life and teachings) and the apostles' careful reading and application of the OT Scriptures. While we cannot claim new revelation, we can and should follow their careful reading and intertextual hermeneutics to draw fuller meaning from the Scriptures.

Chapter six focuses on the specific modus operandi of the apostles. In a statement that could well apply to the whole book, Chao admits that the topic of this chapter could fill volumes. Chou's conservative approach is to look at how the NT authors see (1) the big picture of redemptive history and

(2) its application of OT passages relating to Christology, ecclesiology (Adam/humanity motif), soteriology, and morality/law. Chou first explores Christ, the Gospels, and Acts, noting they all view redemption history in harmony with the OT storyline: beginning with creation/genealogies/seed (John 1:1, Matt 1 cf. Ruth 4:13–22) and climaxing in Christ, the new David. Christologically, Jesus identifies himself as the stone of Ps 118:22 and Isa 28:16 (cf. Matt 21:41), which Peter affirms in Acts 4:11. The title of suffering Servant is in the Gospels and continues into Acts. Furthermore, Christ affirms He is the "my Lord" of Ps 110 (Matt 22:44), and in Acts, Peter likewise identifies Jesus as the one indicated by this Psalm (2:34–35). Ecclesiologically, Christ refers to himself as the "Son of Man" fulfilling the messianic prophecy of Daniel 7. In Acts, Stephen identifies Christ as "the Son of Man," standing in heaven. And Paul's Damascus road experience likewise affirms Christ as the Son of Man/second Adam, thus providing a new head for the church. Soteriologically, Christ quotes from Lev 18:5 (Luke 10:27–28) to indicate the necessity of covenant obedience to gain life. Morally/legally, Christ's sermon on the mount becomes a new Sinai experience, where Christ explains the spirit behind the law.

Next Chou looks at Paul's writings where the big picture of redemptive history views the church as God's precious possession (reflecting and advancing Exod 19:6 via Titus 2:14), now also with the inclusion of the Gentiles, a prophecy that is fulfilled by Paul's own calling to minister to the Gentiles (Gal 1:16). Christologically, Paul alludes to Ps 110:1 where Christ is seated at God's right hand (Eph 1:20–22), Jesus is also the stone of salvation (Rom 9:31–33; cf. Isa 28:16; Ps 118:22) and the suffering Servant (Phil 2:7; cf. Isa 53:3) who secures justification (Rom 4:25; cf. Isa 53:11) and makes peace through His death (Col 1:20; cf. Isa 53:5). Ecclesiologically, Christ is the New Adam (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:45) providing a new headship for the church. He is the cornerstone of the new temple (Eph 2:20; Ps 118:22; Isa 28:16) in which we are being built. Soteriologically, Paul uses Isaiah 53 to underscore that Christ bore our sin (1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4; Eph 5:2; Phil 2:7–8; Titus 2:14) and God's wrath (Rom 3:25–26) on our behalf. Hebrews, James, Jude, and the writings of John are each explored in this manner, with Chou noting how each author adheres to the same overarching plan of redemption and works it out intertextually in their various passages.

In chapter seven Chou affirms that while the traditional hermeneutic of Christianity has been correct, his study can supplement traditional hermeneutics in the following ways. First, we must understand the author's historical context by grasping the redemptive-historical situation of a book and its significance for a certain passage. Second, we must collect all the dots (interconnected texts) via concordances and commentaries and then begin to connect them. And third, we should focus on the precise nuance of a term which will often provide a connective theme. Chou concludes by stating

that the intertextual approach helps us (1) worship God for His mighty acts and the beauty of His revelation; (2) understand theology through Scripture's revelation of God's character and Christ's supremacy; (3) morally respond to cultural issues in ways that harmonize with biblical guidelines; and (4) adopt a worldview and lifestyle consistent with redemptive history. For, in the end, God will not ask whether the Bible was relevant to us, but whether we were relevant to the Bible (225).

There is much in Chou's book that I value. His task—to demonstrate the inner- and intra-textual cohesiveness of the Scriptures and create a hermeneutical paradigm for the Bible student—is massive and laudable. Considering that few scholars have engaged such a study—among these Kaiser, Beale, and Davidson—Chou is to be commended and, I would suggest, modeled. Additionally, I appreciated Chou's transparency in noting his presuppositions and his consistency in their application. Finally, I heartily agree with his thesis: that today's reader, guided by the Holy Spirit (and armed with a good concordance or commentary), can interpret Scripture using the same method—intertextuality—as the biblical authors, helping reap a more bountiful harvest as God continues to lead His church into greater light and unity.

One potential weakness I noticed in Chou's articulation is on hermeneutics. While Chou mentions macro and micro levels about major themes and specific texts or motifs (219–220), it would have been helpful had he presented the three levels of hermeneutical interpretation: micro (textual/exegetical), meso (doctrinal/systematic), and macro (philosophical presuppositions). The importance of unearthing biblical philosophical presuppositions, such as the ontology of anthropology, is evident in Chao's study of how Christ uses Exod 3:6 (Luke 20:37). Chao rightly notes that "the God of" is a covenant declaration pointing to God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant promises to the patriarchs. He then notes that Moses makes a distinction between being "gathered to his people" (Gen 25:8) and actual burial (47:30). However, Chou then concludes that "Moses implies the patriarchs are not dead and gone but alive and awaiting the future promise" (42). This presupposition—of the soul's immortality either in heaven or hell—goes counter to Chou's method of a truly literal and exhaustive intertextual study. While Scripture reveals the macro-hermeneutical presupposition regarding human ontology (soul sleep/conditional immortality), unless this is identified and affirmed, the predominant nonbiblical presupposition (which assumes human immortality) will prevail and ultimately subvert the hermeneutical task.

Furthermore, Chou says his book does not treat systematic theology because "the issue of the New Testament's use of the Old revolves primarily around biblical theology" (71). However, I would argue that much of what Chou does in this volume is systematic in that he portrays the authors of Scripture not only as exegetes who look at the details but as theologians who connect

those details to overarching patterns or systems embedded in Scripture. It is precisely these overarching patterns that comprise the systematic effort.

In conclusion, I believe Chou's *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers* is a compelling and much-needed work in the area of hermeneutics. Thankfully it is also an easy and enjoyable read, accessible for all lovers of Scripture—whether layperson, pastor, seminary student, or seasoned scholar. And while the reading is at times not seamless (Chou humbly admits he is not the greatest writer), he more than makes up for any lack in that area by providing the reader an exhilarating and interactive experience, where the sheer volume of texts analyzed will require reading with Scripture close at hand, ready to record the many wonderful insights gleaned.

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Fink, Sebastian, and Robert Rollinger, eds. *Conceptualizing Past, Present, and Future: Proceedings of the Ninth Symposium of the Melammu Project Held in Helsinki / Tartu, May 18–24, 2015. Melammu Symposia 9*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2018. viii + 659 pp. Hardcover. USD 180.00.

Conceptualizing Past, Present and Future represents a broad treatment of issues concerning the historiographical representation of past, present, and future in pre-modern literature. The book, edited by Sebastian Fink and Robert Rollinger, brings to the public the general proceedings of the Ninth Symposium of the Melammu Project held in Helsinki on May 18–24, 2015. The volume is comprehensive in its reproduction of all the presentations of that symposium, having forty-two specific presentations adapted into chapters. It is to be placed among studies organizing and exploring nuances of Mesopotamian historiography (e.g. Mario Liverani, *Myth and Politics in Ancient Near Eastern Historiography*, Studies in Egyptology and the Ancient Near East [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004]) and that of Greek compositions (e.g. Carmine Catenacci, *Il tiranno e l'eroe: storia e mito nella Grecia antica*, Lingue e letterature Carocci 145 [Roma: Carocci editore, 2012]). Unlike most of its predecessors, however, the volume brings together studies dealing with temporal perceptions of cultures spanning from five thousand year-old Sumerian documents to the Greek historiography of the seventh century BCE.

The volume is divided into eight parts, each of which contains an introduction, chapters developing the topic under discussion, and a final response to them. Such an arrangement seems to reflect the particular disposition of the conference underlying the composition of the book itself. The first section of the book (9–74) elaborates on the role of narratives for conceptualizing the past in pre-modern compositions. In the introduction to the section, John Marincola observes presentations of this section are particularly informed

by the perspective that ancient historiographies demonstrate a concern with impacting the audience by dealing with history seeking something with "a greater applicability" (10–11). Accordingly, Carolyn Dewald explores Herodotus's attention to Babylon as an important historical pivot for political and power displacement and consequent imperial shift (13–30). Emily Baragwanath elaborates on Xenophon's *Hellenica*'s operative framework as connected to a complex perception of history, one that does not allow for closed circularity but emphasizes the lack of simple historiographical answers. Jared L. Miller's interesting chapter analyzes the literary dynamics connected to the use of quoted speech structures in Hittite historiographical narratives. Miller demonstrates the clear authorial intention in these documents to convey the sense of a well-thought and accurate textual composition for its audience. The use of quoted speech structures for referring to the Hittite kings' mental emulation of what foreign rulers would have thought of them is especially intriguing. This literary device, when combined with a genuine quotation, leaves in the reader the sense that the king had supernatural access to the thoughts of his enemies. As a result, such power could be used to justify military incursions onto their territories as endorsed by their deity.

The book's two-chapter second section deals with Neo-Assyrian examples of literary structuring of the past (75–124). In its first chapter, Shigeo Yamada keenly observes the use of Neo-Assyrian eponym lists to integrate a view of temporality attending to pragmatic purposes. Accordingly, he shows that short spans of few years were used in connection to legal issues, while longer periods were correlated to a "chronological record of kings' reigns and Assyrian dynastic history" (93). Yamada's chapter is particularly suggestive in its observation of the intrinsic difference in ideology between Neo-Assyrian eponym chronicles and royal annals, the first being freer from the typical royal propaganda that the latter heavily displays. Simonetta Ponchia adds to Yamada's discussion by demonstrating how ancient Sumero-Akkadian and Early Babylonian history were of interest in later Assyria and Babylonia possibly due to "the paradigmatic value of ancient kings' experiences" (114). He convincingly demonstrates how chronological thought functioned as a structural backbone for the reappropriation of ancient history already in Antiquity. I find this perspective valuable to the study of history in connection with other historical material such as the Hebrew Bible, for it suggests careful maintenance of conservative and modificative tendencies in tension for the casting of new texts.

The third part specifically elaborates on the junction point where the past meets the present (125–232). I find this section an important development on the book's overall argument, for it explores the limits of temporal reasoning as that which was regarded as past reached the time of a specific composition and/or group of authors. As a result, the choice of heroic deeds of an important royal figure of the past is shown by Hannes D. Galter (131–143)

as a paradigmatic concern of new royal figures in Assyria. Galter's paper uncovers the apparent motivations for casting monumental royal inscriptions and, therefore, suggestively supports the idea of a careful selectivity on the depiction of royal figures in ancient Assyria. Seth Richardson elaborates on such use of the past by demonstrating "how 17th century Babylon in the north invoked the 19th and 18th century south-Mesopotamian past" (145). As a consequence, 17th-century Babylonian scribes developed a textual cache comprised of Sumerian motifs, terminology, and specific ideologies to battle a competing ideological influence over parts of the Babylonian territory. The importance of the concept to which such demonstration points cannot be overestimated in the study of how the past is reused in ancient texts. Often in ancient texts, archaization breeds legitimacy, communicating a sense of trust and continuity that are fundamental to the establishment and maintenance of ancient royal dynasties. The book also explores such dynamics in connection with Roman (187–206) and Greek compositions (207–228).

It is to the problem of generic distinction in ancient literature that the fourth part of the book turns. This section explores an important issue in the study of the literary treatment of time in Ancient compositions, for it deals with the question of how the literary representation of time intersects the notion of genre. Thus, Greeks and Romans are shown by John Marincola (239–260) as not using as much authorial energy to categorize the types of histories as modern scholars do. In connection to such differences in taxonomy Jason M. Silverman demonstrates how the same specific text can be repeated in different generic mediums (261–278). Silverman's observation raises the question of categorization of texts in connection to the way they are recorded altogether with their wording. The relevance of this observation resides in the fact that texts represented differently in Antiquity could be considered concomitantly as a different and a common genre, thus exerting an equally common communicative strategy. Specifically, Martti Nissinen's perspective (279–299) keenly approaches different technically defined genres as conceptual keyholes into the larger social phenomenon of prophecy in Antiquity. I find Nissinen's conclusions important for the process of making the needed distinctions between literary time representation and pragmatic time perceptions in everyday society, for it allows the reader to understand specific genres as windows to selected features of a given social phenomenon.

The fifth section deals with questions concerning the relationship between author and audience (309–362). Three essays discuss related topics such as the authorship of king lists in Ancient Mesopotamia (319–333), the authorship and audience of the Babylonian chronicles (334–346), and the historiographic capacity of Roman compositions in the fifth century CE (347–360). These essays are insightful, leading the reader to apprehend the relatively scarce emphasis on the identification of the author in Antiquity, especially, in the Mesopotamian king lists and Babylonian chronicles. Accordingly, Nicole

Brisch suggests a collaborative conceptualization of authorship (329), noting that authors would be mentioned in Ancient Mesopotamia only rarely. I concur with the need for a more nuanced perspective on authorial intentionality for ancient documents defended by the author and also find suggestive Caroline Waerzeggers's observation that specific copies of given texts must be brought to their specific productive milieu before any analysis is done (344). I find it equally important, however, to observe that more elaborate theories about textual conflation must be carefully considered in face of the remarkably stable process of copying attested by several documents in Mesopotamia. The phenomenon of textual reappropriation does not necessarily breed total literary transformation but intentionally brings an aura of antiquity to a given discourse due to specific purposes as shown in the texts studied in the section. Thus, conservation plays an important role in the archaization process, for it allows the needed pattern recognition the reader needs to make sense of such literary resources, as the interchangeability between Sumerian and Akkadian in Mesopotamian cuneiform texts demonstrates.

The relation between Ancient cosmogonies and literary expression of reality is explored in the seventh part of the book. Among the papers comprising the section, Marc Van Mieroop's contribution caught my attention with its keen observations on the titulary section occupying the last 200 lines of the *Enuma Elish* epic (381–390). The paper explores the connection between that portion of the text and Babylonian lexical texts, demonstrating that Marduk's title is tied to a rich web of meanings intended to be read in all their polyvalent force. Such insistency on utilizing symbols as a programmatic filter of observable reality is at the root of ancient literary reuse. Thus, one is led to observe that, for the author of the *Enuma Elish*, empiricism towards the created world is connected to the divine multivalent literary representation of the deity's qualities, an essential feature of several other ancient texts.

The last two parts of the book are respectively represented by the general section (441–550) and the young researchers' workshop (551–608) of the ninth Melammu project conference. Together these sections are comprised of papers exploring the conference's overall topic from various angles and reinforce the weighty contribution it represents. Therefore, *Conceptualizing Past, Present, and Future* is both a broad assessment of a cutting-edge scholarship and a wide introduction on issues related to time and history representation in Ancient literature. The reader will find in it an invaluable tool for the study of the past in Antiquity, as well as an introduction to the rich cache of documents studied by the fields of Assyriology and Classical Literature.

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Gane, Roy E. *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017. 464 pp. Paperback. USD 38.00.

I am pleased to give a positive review of this book by my friend and colleague Roy Gane. There is much to applaud in this book. He breaks his discussion up into four main parts. In the first part, he discusses "getting into the Old Testament Law," starting with its relevance for New Covenant Christians, focusing on the approach to the Law that Jesus and Paul took in their lives and ministries, and, accordingly, introducing its relevance to us today. He continues with a basic introduction to the Law in the Old Testament, its nature, and its authority as a source of divine principles and values. He ends this part with the purposes of the Law, which he proposes to be: a revelation of God's character, the terms for accepting God's grace, the wisdom for living our lives well, and a model for a society that can be a light for the nations.

The second part of the book takes a good look at the Law itself, beginning with where it is to be found in the Hebrew Bible, and the various kinds of laws that are found in it. From there he moves into how it inculcates values into the lives of people, positive and negative formulations of the Law, motivational elements, and how the legal historical culture of ancient Israel in its ancient Near Eastern cultural context illuminates the Law. The third part of the book comes directly to the issue of how the Law does and does not apply to the Christian life. He reviews various approaches to continuity and discontinuity and makes a good attempt at adjudicating between them. He focuses his attention on the side of continuity, of course, but also recognizes some of the discontinuities along the way (see his helpful summary on 161). I especially appreciate his view of the way the Law functioned in the Sinaitic covenant. Indeed, we do not find the law cited in court cases in the Hebrew Bible, as is also true for other law collections from elsewhere in the Ancient Near East, such as the laws of Hammurabi. It is also true that the law is not a complete law that covers everything, but no such set of laws exists even up to today. Nevertheless, according to Deut 17:18–20, when the king came to the throne he was to write his copy of the law under the supervision of the Levitical priests, who were the custodians of the law, and learn from it to revere the Lord and to live and rule according to the laws and decrees.

Similarly, in 1 Kgs 2:1–4, David reiterated this on his death bed in his charge to his son and successor, Solomon. Yes, this belongs to the category of "wisdom" to rule as we see from the next chapter where Solomon prays and is granted such wisdom. Thus, when the two women come with only one live baby, he knows how to discern the truth of the situation. Again, in Josh 1:8, Joshua was to meditate on the Law of Moses day and night so he would know how to rule well. See the same also in Ps 1:2 as a charge to all

the Israelites in the way they live their life day by day. Based on examples such as these, Gane proposes a model of "progressive moral wisdom" (ch 9, 197–218).

He expounds an example (219–235) of this progressive moral wisdom from Exod 23:4, "If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it" (NIV). He fleshes out the story behind such a law. He shows that it is a natural extension from the eighth commandment, "You shall not steal" (Exod 20:15), and how its reinforcement of moral wisdom applies even when it has to do with one's enemy. He shows how some similar concerns appear also in extra-biblical Ancient Near Eastern laws, but they do not consider it from the point of how one treats their enemy. The New Testament applies the principle in terms of learning to love even one's enemy and overcoming evil with good.

The fourth part of the book goes on to deal in some detail with the moral values found in the Law and shows how they are relevant to our lives today. Gane devotes two full chapters to a very helpful treatment of the Ten Commandments and the principles of life that they call us to. He brings other laws from elsewhere into a relationship with these Ten Commandments, showing how the Ten are the basic principles of Law in the Torah. He then moves on to issues of social justice, how we should handle laws that seem overly severe, and laws that do not seem to apply to us today. He then turns to the ritual law in one chapter, and suggests some values for current readers in the realm of the liturgy (how we should approach God in worship), personal spirituality (place God at the center of our lives), and notions of salvation (how sin is removed, assurance of reconciliation, and the call to become holy). See more on this below.

In his conclusion to the book, Gane emphasizes the importance of obedience to God. He starts with the point that freedom in Christ is freedom from slavery to sin, not freedom to just go ahead and live sinfully. In his view, the New Testament teaching of freedom in Christ is found in living in obedience to God's law of love. This has been an important point of emphasis throughout the book, and rightly so. He has captured it well. One could quibble with certain details of his argument, but he helpfully keeps obedience to the Law connected with the law of love. As for the "law of Christ" in the New Testament, in my view, this refers to the way Jesus mediates the law to believers in Him as Christ. It begins with the Sermon on the Mount, the two great commandments, and goes on from there into all sorts of matters of the Christian life.

I have objections to some of the ways Gane brings some of the laws through into the New Testament. For example, he takes the regulations in the Acts 15:20–21, 28–29 (cf. 21:25) letter to the gentile churches, which includes not eating meat with the blood in it as a witness to the Jews, and uses it to argue that, ideally, we should not eat meat because Gen 1 ends with a plant-based diet (180–181, 350–358). He has a certain point here, and one

expects him to reflect his Seventh-day Adventist commitments in his discussion. The text in Acts, however, does not prohibit the eating of meat, and the law itself regulates the eating of meat, as Gane himself explains. The regulations of Leviticus 11 show that the issue of eating meat had to do primarily with not eating the meat of animals that eat meat, e.g., limiting eating to pastoral animals that have a split hoof and chew the cud, and therefore, such animals that eat only fodder. Similarly, the scavenger birds are eliminated from the diet, and so on.

Leviticus 20:22–26 adds another important application of the clean and unclean animal regulations when it applies them to keep the Israelites separate from the nations around them so that they do not fall into their sinful practices. Through Jesus Christ, in the New Testament God has broken down the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2), so we cannot enforce such dietary regulations in the church (Gal 2). On the one hand, Paul regards these kinds of restrictions as reflections of weak faith (Rom 14:1–9, v.2 "eats only vegetables"; cf. Col 2:16–17). On the other hand, in the same context, he is concerned that no one coerces or influence such a person to violate their conscience, which would be for them to sin against the Lord in their conscience. I am concerned, however, that such kinds of restrictions only build up another wall between believers in the church, undermining our unity as believers in Christ. Nevertheless, one must respect those with a weak conscience, and I do.

I would apply the same to other issues such as the Sabbath (248–255). Gane has a wonderful section detailing the regulations of the fourth commandment and rightly ties it back to Gen 2. His Seventh-day Adventist commitments, of course, cause him to suggest that we must worship on the seventh day of the week, Saturday, rather than on Sunday, which others call "the Lord's Day" because it was the day of Jesus's resurrection from the grave. In this and other regards, I am surprised that Gane does not do more with "the Law written on the heart" in the New Covenant (Jer 31:33, briefly on 170 and in a few other places). In my view, Jesus brought the Sabbath to bear on the heart of the New Covenant believer in the passage of Matt 11:28–29 (Richard E. Averbeck, "A Rest for the Soul," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 11.1 [2018]: 5–22). It is significant that right after that, at the beginning of Matt 12, we come to the Sabbath controversy. Jesus summarily refutes the way some Jews were trying to apply the Sabbath regulations, making it burdensome. The point of the move from Matt 11 to 12 is that in Christ we have a Sabbath rest all day every day, a "rest for the soul." This is the writing of the Sabbath on the heart of the believer, which is so important to how the new covenant brings the Law into our walk with the Lord today, as noted above.

In my view, it is difficult to understand how the Law of the Old Covenant applies to believers in Jesus without engaging more fully with the relationship

between the Law and the Spirit. Gane mentions the Holy Spirit along the way, in passing, as the powerful force behind the life of the believer, but says little of substance about it. He deals only very briefly with the key passage in Rom 7–8 (401–403). The Law has always been and still is good, holy, and even spiritual, but it is also weak because it cannot take control of my "flesh." The Holy Spirit can! The power for the Christian life comes from the Holy Spirit, who himself enables us to live according to the principles and patterns in the Law, which he inspired (Rom 8:5–8). The Holy Spirit is on both ends of the process: he inspired the writing of it in the first place, and he is dwelling and working within us to bring it to bear in New Covenant ways.

I am also concerned about the limitations Gane puts on the so-called "ceremonial (or 'ritual') law." The division between moral, civil, and ceremonial law in the Mosaic Law does not work well in the Hebrew Bible and it is certainly not the way the New Testament writers talk about the application of the Law in their present. The fact of that matter is that the New Testament writers put a lot of emphasis on how the tabernacle/temple and sacrificial regulations are mediated to us as believers in Jesus Christ. According to Paul, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, individually and corporately, as the body of Christ (e.g. Eph 2:19–22; 1 Cor 6:18–20). Similarly, Peter names us as the stones in the temple and as the priests who offer sacrifices (1 Pet 2:4–5), and he even applies Isa 53 to the life of the believer (1 Pet 2:18–25). If we are going to be like Christ, we need to be willing to suffer silently as he did too. Much more could and should be said about this. Despite these misgivings, I believe Roy Gane has developed in this book a very good survey of the Old Testament Law overall and some helpful patterns and examples for bringing the Law over into the New Testament for the life of the church and the believer. I learned a lot from this book and will continue to use it in my teaching and writing on this very topic. I congratulate him for a work well done.

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Grafius, Brandon R. *Reading the Bible with Horror*. Lanham, MD: Fortress Academic, 2020. xi + 175 pp. Hardcover. USD 90.00.

Brandon R. Grafius, assistant professor of biblical studies at Ecumenical Theological Seminary, with his PhD in Bible, culture, and hermeneutics, has delved into the topic of horror and the Bible before. Building on previous works he produces this book where the movie genre of horror is used as a template to examine the biblical narratives. The book addresses the Bible's ability to speak to humanity's craving to be artificially made afraid by its stories. The purpose of the book, as stated by Grafius, is to look "at biblical texts and horror films and ... to see what can be gained from reading these two texts together" (16).

Grafius introduces his book with a personal anecdote explaining why he finds the horror genre so fascinating and allows him to address his fears. Grafius then explores different theories on why the horror genre gives its enthusiasts the satisfaction it does. One of the best ways it achieves this gratification is when horror can reveal that which is concealed and to articulate for those without a voice. The fact that horror causes us to view situations that make us afraid, angry, disturbed, and discomforted is linked to the Bible, especially the Hebrew Bible. If the Hebrew Bible is read honestly, he suggests that some of its stories will cause fear, anger, disruptions, and discomfort. The horror genre also is very connected with the Bible because a significant motif in numerous horror films is religion, especially elements taught by the Judeo-Christian tradition. Thus, horror talks about the Bible, and the Bible has horrific stories.

The first chapter explains how one may use horror as a "particular lens through which to view the text" (15). Using the genre of horror can illuminate features and associations that would remain hidden or misunderstood. Grafius also states that he will not merely critique horror films with the Bible but also allow the movies to critique preconceived theological claims superimposed on the text. He talks about monsters as a metaphor, horror as anxiety, and the psychological and social approaches in the rest of the chapter. Monster theory is discussed in the second chapter, where Grafius points out that films first used monsters as representations of the "threatening Other," but in the late 1960's it became not so simple (30). That the monster started to become "truths about ourselves that we are reluctant to admit" (31). Grafius states that the book of Job has an example of where the monster and the hero have their lines blurred. The Leviathan and Job are first contrasted but then compared. In comparison, Job appears to be more monstrous than first thought and the Leviathan less.

The third and fourth chapters deal with haunting spirits or places, like haunted houses. The main idea here is that these hauntings point to unsolved past injustices. Chapter three references the story of the ghost of Samuel speaking to Saul, and in chapter four, the house of David is explained as a haunted place. The fifth chapter deals with monsters or threats found inside the community. Here women are laid out to be the Hebrew Bible's threat from the inside. Grafius states that "the persistent and unique power of women to threaten the male ego is attested by the attention they are given in these legal texts. And the inability of the texts to decide on their relationship to Israelite women—whether they are subject or object—moves women further into the category of the monstrous" (117). Thus, the patriarchal society doesn't know what to do with women but creates legislative boundaries around their threat.

YHWH being monstrous is the topic of chapter six. Here God is demonstrated not to be exclusively described as benevolent in the Hebrew Bible, but the author sees God as threatening as well. The description of God as both

someone to ground our hopes, and one who causes dread, fits a paradoxical or somewhat hybrid understanding of God's character. In his conclusion, Grafius mentions the idea of the cycles of horror. Cycles of horror are the ebb and flow of the popularity of the horror genre related to the anxieties found in individuals and society. Religion understands these below the surface anxieties, which are addressed in the Hebrew Bible. There is a lot of darkness in the Bible, which points to society's understanding of their current fears. The fact that the Bible includes dark stories demonstrates that "horror has been with us, in one form or another, for as long as people have been telling stories" (144). Grafius points out that "horror is one way that we can think through and process the deep, abiding struggles that are a part of everyday life" (145). The Bible did not sanitize its dark stories of the past. This lack of sterilization is essential because these stories let us know that when we face dark times of our own, "we can walk out the other side of it because our faith ancestors and our horror stories have shown us how" (145).

I think Grafius achieved what he aimed to do, which is to examine biblical texts in dialog with horror movies. He looked at different subgenres of horror movies and discussed their use in the Bible. Grafius's methodology is somewhat based on the postmodern reader response. Some of his biblical arguments have been based on the documentary hypothesis. These two methodologies would make someone with a higher view of Scripture uneasy. However, I found his dialog with Scripture and horror movies refreshing. I think many Christians (especially in the West) have been immersed in a sanitized and safe religion. The fact that horror movies thrive as a cultural phenomenon in the West shows that many anxieties are not adequately addressed. The rise of xenophobia, exclusion, and hate in our religious culture merely indicates that a sanitized, prosperous, and safe view of God has not influenced positively the behavior of many. In *Reading the Bible with Horror,* Grafius allows God to be like C. S. Lewis's lion, Aslan (Lewis's version of Jesus in the *Chronicles of Narnia*). Mr. Beaver in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,* says about Aslan, "Safe? … Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good."

Berrien Springs, Michigan Nathaniel Gibbs

Höschele, Stefan, and Chigemezi N. Wogu, ed., *Contours of European Adventism: Issues in the History of the Denomination on the Old Continent*. Möckern-Friedensau, Germany: Friedensau Adventist University, 2020. 402 pp. Paperback. USD 36.00.

Stefan Höschele and Chigemezi Wogu, theologians and historians at Friedensau Adventist University, have weaved the contribution of twenty-two Adventist scholars, and gifted to students of Adventist history and theology this

readable and immensely valuable work on the origin and development of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Europe. The scholars who know their faith and have experienced its history have given to the Adventist world a scholarly understanding of Adventist history and mission in the Old Continent in a compilation that consists of three main parts: "Mission and Diversity of Adventism in Europe"; "European Adventism Facing Violence" (with particular emphasis on martyrdom); and "European Adventists, the Public, and the Christian Other." The fourth and final part includes a conclusion and a comprehensive 67-page bibliography that covers Seventh-day Adventism in the European continent as a whole, key historical personalities, references for the largest offshoot group in Europe (the Reform Adventist Movement), and bibliographic resources for the various countries in Europe. The bibliography is a treasure trove for future research.

Denis Fortin opens the first part to remind us of the uniqueness of Adventism in Europe. Although small, the denomination developed in a particular set of existing Christian values and authorities in Europe. For that reason, Adventism needed relevancy and complementarity in proclaiming the message with other Christians. Nevertheless, Adventism needed to be a prophetic voice in Europe. Gilbert Valentine's chapter on J. N. Andrews portrays the challenge the church's first overseas missionary faced as he tried to comprehend the uniqueness of the missionary approach in Europe. Other contributions in the first part of the book deal with how Adventism tried to reach people of different cultures and faiths in Europe. Petr Činčala's approach to mission outreach by need-oriented evangelism and Ronald Lawson's piece on the impact of immigration in the development of Adventist mission in Europe are especially noteworthy.

The second part of the book deals primarily with the supreme sacrifice that European Adventists paid to sustain and advance the Church's mission. The situation was critical, especially in Romania (described in chapters by Adrian Neagu and Gheorghe Modoran) and the Soviet Union (recounted by Eugene Zaitsev). Paradoxically, the Church grew the most in the areas where the persecution was severe. The stories of Adventist heroes of faith are heartbreaking but encouraging at the same time.

The final part of the volume deals with how the church and its forward-thinking leadership approached ministry and mission with cultural and spiritual sensitivity, ever keeping in perspective growth, advancement, and pastoral nurture with a contextual approach to mission and witness. Michael Pearson's "Geography of the Heart" deserves special attention. He explores how spiritual identity develops in response to the geographical place that has shaped the person, that physical place called 'home." Belonging to a "global family" is part of proclaiming the gospel to every nation, but it can also lead to a sense of rootlessness. Europe's sense of spiritual belonging can be further strained by the fact that principal events in the Adventist narrative have taken

place, and continue to take place elsewhere, be they historical narratives of the pioneers in America or mission stories about growth in South America and Africa. Pearson offers a helpful list of the significant steps Adventists in Europe should undertake to project a local image and a global face to create and maintain a specific European Adventist approach to mission and pastoral vision (261–262). Other articles in the section look at issues European Adventists face in the Netherlands, Italy, France, etc. Höschele offers a study on the evolution of ecumenical understanding by Adventist members and leaders in Europe, including their stance toward the wider church and ecumenical movement. The helpful chart on page 312 depicts types of unity concepts and interchurch relations at different levels.

The concluding chapter by Rolf Pöhler deals with the issue of church growth. Pöhler points out that Adventists in Europe "comprise less than 2% of the total [world] membership of the Seventh-Day [sic] Adventist Church" (315), and offers some possible reasons for such slow growth. Many readers, along with me, can recognize Pöhler's argument for the slowness of numerical membership growth in Europe. Lack of cultural and spiritual sensitivity towards historic Christianity's local expressions can be one, making the Adventist Church seem to be irrelevant. Another can be the typical Adventist evangelistic "crusade" and its follow-up programs: they are helpful only if they are accompanied by the development of the sense of belonging to the rich European cultural heritage. It is evident that Adventism in Europe needs spiritual and missionary reform to reach the secular and indifferent masses towards religion or the Protestant faith's specific form.

Certainly, in the search for such an effective model, we should go back to the Christian faith's origins. Jesus was extremely sensitive towards the contextual expressions of religion and culture He encountered. The disciples continued this process of contextualization, especially as Paul proceeded toward West Asia and Europe. This contextualized and loving approach to the critical task of evangelism, filled with the Spirit of God's extraordinary power, can awaken, heal, and redirect people's lives towards God's love, contributing to a new revival of the biblical Protestant faith in Europe.

Columbia, Maryland Aleksandar S. Santrac

Imes, Carmen Joy. Foreword by J. H. Wright. *Bearing God's Name: Why Sinai Still Matters*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019. 240 pp, Softcover. USD 20.00.

This book is a popularized version of Carmen Joy Imes's published dissertation, *Bearing YHWH's Name at Sinai: A Reexamination of the Name Command of the Decalogue*, *BBRSup* for Biblical Research Supplements 19 (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2017). In that book, one finds the thorough exegetical

work which undergirds the content of her present book, now written in a less technical style. *Bearing God's Name* contains ten chapters, each with an engaging title such as, "Leaving Egypt: Deliverance as Grace;" "Surprised at Sinai: Law as Gift;" "Major Deal: Covenant as Vocation;" and "Ready to Roll: Prepared for the Promised Land." At the end of each chapter, Imes provides other resources for further study on the discussed topic. After the book's conclusion, she provides a series of discussion questions for each of the chapters, plus a helpful appendix of resources that can be accessed even by apps.

Imes traces the history of ancient Israel's escape from Egyptian slavery to Mount Sinai, where the former slaves entered into a covenant relationship with YHWH, their Deliverer. The Decalogue is the primary covenant document and its principles are then surveyed in both the Old and New Testaments. Imes, in my opinion, rightly upholds continuity between the two Testaments, subtly counteracting some Christian traditions that believe the Old Testament has been replaced by the New. At Sinai, Israel covenanted to live amid the nations as a people who would bear the name of YHWH which meant reflecting His character as they walked in His ways. Describing that scene, Imes pays attention to the details of the Exodus narrative, elaborating on the dramatic divine presentation of the Ten Words. She writes, "At Sinai, the Hebrews discover who they are and more importantly whose they are" (28). Even the timing of receiving the Law instructs about God's grace: He first redeems Israel from slavery and then gives them the Decalogue.

In her discussion of the Decalogue, Imes focuses particularly on the third commandment which deals with God's name, arguing that this commandment about taking the Lord's name in vain needs further attention. She contends that the original language suggests it is principally about "bearing God's name," a theme she then traces elsewhere in Scripture. Imes renders a rich interpretation of what it means to be a covenant people of YHWH, a people called to bear His name among the nations. She also notes what was at stake if Israel should carry that name in vain, insisting that the third commandment involves much more than matters of speech, much more than misusing YHWH's name in false oaths, irreverent worship, spiritualist practices, cursing, false teaching. Furthermore, as Imes does this she impressively highlights the often-neglected link between Sinai and the mercy and grace of Jesus.

Various analogies of Israel's Exodus from Egypt are drawn by Imes from her life experiences as a student, professor, daughter, wife, and mother. One analogy regarding the name command, that Imes mentions a couple of times, is that of being tattooed. She compares the obvious sign in the body of a tattoo, with the Christian notion of the believer having a clear mark of Jesus's name in their life (181). Having an inked tattoo indelibly traced on one's body today is becoming more and more widespread, but some still find this

practice unappealing, including its history of being forced on Jewish prisoners by the Nazis. It is hoped that a less controversial analogy could be used in future editions of this book.

Overall, the book is an inspiring study of the Exodus narrative reminding how it permeates the rest of Scripture, providing meaningful insights for those who choose to bear God's name. As she concludes, Imes summarizes:

> As we pay attention to Sinai and its ripple effects through the rest of the biblical story, we discover that faith is not just private and salvation is not just personal. The benefits of our salvation are not only interior; they are conspicuous and corporate. Yahweh does not transform individuals at Sinai and send them their separate ways. He creates a nation. He does it with us too. As Peter says, You are ... a holy nation (1 Pet 2:9).... You are who you are because of who he is and who he says you are. You become your truest self as part of this extraordinary community of men and women who are being transformed from the inside out who are becoming and living as his people (187).

The author of this book rightly insists that what happened at Sinai still matters. For those interested in a fresh look at the Sinai covenant and the third commandment specifically, it is well worth checking it.

Andrews University Jo Ann Davidson

Kaiser, Denis. *Trust and Doubt: Perceptions of Divine Inspiration in Seventh-day Adventist History*. St. Peter am Hart, Austria: Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen, 2019. 453 pp. Hardcover €29.90 / PDF €26.90.

Denis Kaiser, a native of Germany, holds a BTh from the Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen (Austria) and a MA and a PhD in Adventist Studies and Historical Theology from Andrews University (Michigan, USA). Currently, he works on the campus of that same university as Assistant Professor of Church History at the Theological Seminary; Interim Director for Outreach and External Affairs of the Center for Adventist Research (CAR); and Research and Annotation Editor for the Ellen G. White Estate. Kaiser is a prolific writer, with several academic and popular articles in different periodicals as well as in the *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (Review and Herald, 2015). He is also a co-editor of the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Seventh-day Adventists*. On January 18, 2017, he defended his PhD dissertation entitled, "Trust and Doubt: Perceptions of Divine Inspiration in Seventh-day Adventist History (1880–1930)," with Merlin D. Burt as his faculty adviser. The book under consideration is the published version of that dissertation.

After surveying other studies on the development of the Adventist understanding of divine inspiration, Kaiser realized that biographical approaches were quite limited to the views of just one individual; that systematic approaches usually ignored not only "the historical and literary contexts" of

the original statements but also "possible developments or changes in that individual's views"; and that historical approaches either were limited to a short time frame or lacked "a comprehensive in-depth treatment of the historical data." This perception convinced him of the need for "a study of the affirmations, objections, and reasons for the views of major Adventist thinkers within their historical contexts as well as of the interaction between several of these thinkers over a period of time" (17–18). Kaiser's book supplies that need in an in-depth and masterful way.

The book is well organized into four main chapters presented in a chronological sequence. Chapter 1 surveys "The Historical, Theological, and Socio-Cultural Background to Adventist Perceptions of Divine Inspiration." It begins with a brief overview of the various theories of inspiration in nineteenth-century America and then highlights the predominant understandings of inspiration within Wesleyan Methodism, Restorationism, and Millerism, recognized as the main religious antecedents of Seventh-day Adventism. With this background in place, Kaiser discusses the Seventh-day Adventist perspectives of inspiration, with special focus on early Adventist's indebtedness to other Protestant authors on the inspiration of Scripture, as well as on the inspiration of Ellen White as perceived by herself and by other supportive and critical authors. The chapter ends with a short exposition of the increasing scientific, theological, and socio-cultural challenges that impacted the understanding of divine inspiration.

The following three chapters deal with "Perceptions of Divine Inspiration in Seventh-day Adventist Theology" from 1880 to 1930. Each chapter covers a specific segment of that larger timespan, highlighting the views of four of its respective church leaders. In chapter 2 (1880–1895), the views of Uriah Smith are insightfully qualified as "doubts and confidence"; of George I. Butler, as "balancing extremes"; of Dudley M. Canright, as "enthusiasm and depression"; and of Ellen White, as "specifying particulars." In chapter 3 (1895–1915), the notions of A. T. Jones are defined as "from endorsement to antipathy"; of W. W. Prescott, as "from active to passive loyalty"; of S. N. Haskell, as "reliance and resilience"; and of Ellen G. White as "recapitulation and refinement." And in chapter 4 (1915–1930), the perspectives of Arthur G. Daniels are stated as "navigating through extremes"; of Judson S. Washburn, as "evangelistic zeal and militance"; of F. M. Wilcox, as "honesty and encouragement"; and of W. C. White, as "talking from experience."

Glimpsing through the sources referred to in the book, one gets the impression that the author left no stone unturned. The whole study is well grounded on both published and unpublished primary sources and much enriched by a helpful critical dialogue with the main secondary sources produced up to 2016 when the research was completed. One of the most remarkable contributions of the book is its thorough assessment of the private correspondence of several of those church leaders. This allowed the author to

provide us with an overall more precise approach, to display many primary sources unreferred to in previous studies, and to correct superficial and even distorted conclusions from other authors. All future studies on this important subject should take into consideration the valuable sources mentioned in the extensive footnotes and final bibliography.

Even with an impressive level of precision and carefulness, there are a few editorial oversights that need correction. For example, spaces should be added to the expressions "INSPIRATIONIN" (6) and "Militance:Judson" (8). Ellen White's residence in Australia as having been "from 1891 to 1901" (285) needs to be corrected to "from 1891 to 1900." Elsewhere (295), the author quotes her statement that the *Testimonies* should never "take the place of the Bible" (quoted in *GC Bulletin,* April 3, 1901, 25), and then he adds, "She stated therefore that the words of Scripture alone were to 'be heard from the pulpit'" (*The Captivity and Restoration of Israel,* 626). Isolated from its original context (as the author did), this last sentence can easily be understood as suggesting that, for a sermon to be biblical, the preacher should only read the Bible without ever commenting on it or quoting from another source (including Ellen White). So, this matter deserves further clarification.

Trust and Doubt unfolds very well the human interplay within the overall historical narrative. The shifting views of certain individuals, especially D. M. Canright and A. T. Jones, confirm that often "our philosophy becomes the history of our own heart and life; and according to what we ourselves are, do we conceive of man and his vocation" (Johann G. Fichte, *The Vocation of Man*, transl. by William Smith [Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1931], 146). But while very much is said in the book about the inspiration of Ellen White, very little is mentioned about the inspiration of the Bible. This raises some significant questions: Were the Adventist thought leaders under consideration more concerned about shaping their understandings of inspiration from Ellen White's experience and writings than from the Bible itself? Or could it be that Kaiser's research was more focused on how those leaders dealt with Ellen White's inspiration than with the Bible's? From his bibliographical research, he concluded that during that period (1880–1930) "some statements concerned the inspiration of the Bible, but it seems that its inspiration was never really a matter of discussion. The majority of the discussions concerned the inspiration of Ellen White and her literary work" (410). But even this being the case, Kaiser's analysis could have profited from giving more attention to how those very same leaders dealt with the prophetic inspiration within the biblical canon.

In 1999 I pointed out that "many controversies over inspiration occur because of a tendency to regard inspired writings as the product of a specific 'monophonic' theory of inspiration that disregards the contributions of all other inspiration theories" (Alberto R. Timm, "Understanding Inspiration: The Symphonic and Wholistic Nature of Scripture," *Ministry*, August 1999,

12). In his book, Kaiser argues likewise that the classic theories of inspiration are "all too limited to sufficiently encapsulate Ellen White's incarnational, integrated, and wholistic view and experience of inspiration" (68). Therefore, "instead of referring to the phenomenon that Ellen White experienced as 'thought inspiration,' as Adventist scholars have frequently done, it would be more fitting to describe that experience as a dynamic, incarnational, multifaceted divine inspiration" (411). And the same is also true about the experiences of biblical prophets.

The rigorous academic nature of the content of *Trust and Doubt* makes it not the easiest reading for more superficial readers. But church historians, scholars, as well as those who desire to gain a better understanding of how early Adventists understood and dealt with the issue of inspiration will most certainly value this book as an extremely rich mine of reliable information. I highly recommend this insightful and very helpful work!

Ellen G. White Estate, Inc. Alberto R. Timm

Koet, Bart J. *The Go-Between: Augustine on Deacons*. Leiden: Brill, 2019. xvi + 169 pp. USD 119.00.

Bart Koet is a Professor of New Testament and early Christian literature at Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, and he has researched how the early church incorporated biblical traditions, and lately, he has focused on leadership in the early church. He has also published on the relationship of the interpretation of Scripture with the interpretation of dreams.

The aim of this book, as stated by the author, is "to examine the information on deacons contained in the works of Augustine" (2). Koet explains that his desired outcome is to set "a profile of his [Augustine's] conception of the ministry of the deacon. Such a profile would be a limited local profile on one particular fourth-century Church, nothing more and nothing less" (2). Although Koet suggests a historically limited understanding of the role of deacons, I think this work might benefit those interested in ecclesiastical management and leadership, since Koet talks about the popularity of the concept of servant leadership, as he discusses the etymology of the Greek word for deacon (*diakon*) which has a meaning of serving. Koet suggests, however, that this limited notion of the word *diakonia* (servant) is insufficient to encompass the actual work of the ecclesiastical deacon. Because of its popularity though, it has caused the ecclesiastical deacon's role to be merely a humble servant to the poor. He shows how this understanding of the Greek influenced the German *Diakonie* movement, which then affected the prescribed ministry of the deacon in the Catholic Church. In his view, the early Christian understanding of the role of a deacon went beyond charity work, and also included liturgical functions. Thus, the limited definition has

caused scholarship to skip over and neglect the deacon's specific characteristics in the early church. Koet hopes in this book to illuminate this debate from Augustine's perspective of what he thinks was a more robust view of the role of the deacon.

After these remarks, Koet explains why Augustine of Hippo is a good reference in the Christian understanding of the role of the deacon. He finishes the first chapter with an outline of the following chapters. Before digging into the writings of Augustine, however, the author gives his linguistic and historical analysis of the Greek family of words from the stem *diakon-* in both classical and biblical literature, including Greek philosophers, and the Septuagint. He concludes that "recent results of philological and exegetical studies" are pertinent for a better evaluation of *diakonia* in the early church (7). This is followed by a similar study of *diakon-* in the New Testament and other Christian writings before Augustine. In chapters four to seven, readers will find Koet's study on Augustine and the role of the ecclesiastical deacons. First, Koet covers some relevant details about Augustine's career and his view of the ministries of the church. In chapter five, he demonstrates that Augustine's deacon functioned as a messenger. The deacons delivered letters and were the envoys of the bishops in Augustine's time. Sometimes they even accompanied the bishop on trips. In chapter six, Koet examines how Augustine saw deacons as evangelists and preachers alongside the bishop, a connection he continues to explore in the following chapter. For Augustine, explains Koet, deacons were holy ministers of the church. Using some illustrations from the Christian tradition, he shows a close connection of the bishop with the deacons. This connection has its roots in Acts 6 and it continues in the time of Augustine, he argues. One good historical example of this partnership is pope Sixtus II and deacon Lawrence of Rome. Koet notes three 'deacons' that Augustine especially preached about: Saint Stephen, Saint Lawrence, and Saint Vincent.

In chapter eight, the author summarizes the main points of his study of Augustine's deacons. These were co-workers with the bishop, assisting the bishop in different capacities like treasury, liturgy, and catechesis (instruction). They also function as intermediaries, or as Koet calls them, the "go-between" the bishop and the church members. He also indicates the necessity of comparing Augustine's description with those of Cyprian, Jerome, and John Chrysostom. In his epilogue, Koet ventures into applying the past to the present role of the deacons. He again stresses that in the early church and Augustine, the deacons were not social workers dealing solely with the poor. This was the work of the whole Christian community including the bishops. Since this book is intended to be an exposition on Catholic theology, Koet also refers to how Vatican II sees the deacons as serving in the task of sanctifying (liturgy), the task of preaching Scriptures, and the task of pastoring (charity). Although the Vatican's view about the role of the deacons is helpful, Koet thinks that

these functions have not been implemented locally, though the last task, of pastoring, is often emphasized by priests. Based on his study of Augustine's writings, Koet calls for a restoration of the communicative role of the deacons in evangelism, especially in this digital age.

The Go-Between is a fine work of scholarship. Koet has analyzed and summarized well the writings of Augustine on the topic and presented a better image of the deacon's role in the Church at large. The background chapters help the reader understand his evaluation of Augustine's deacons and strengthens his main thesis. Even though the author comes with a Catholic agenda, I recommend this book to all those who are interested in ecclesiology and more practically to those involved in the ministries of their local church. Church administrators, for example, would especially benefit from the historical lessons on the role of the deacons, and maybe find the motivation to improve their role in various denominations. For my fellow Seventh-day Adventists, *The Go-Between: Augustine on Deacons* may be seen as a useful resource in our attempt to overcome the deep divisions on the particular functions of specific ecclesiastical functionaries.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Nathaniel Gibbs

Kulik, Alexander, ed. *A Guide to Early Jewish Texts and Traditions in Christian Transmission.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019. 543 pp. USD 150.00.

Assisted by Gabriele Boccaccini, Lorenzo DiTommaso, David Hamidović, and Michael Stone, Kulik has put together a great guide to the extant literature presumably produced by Jews in antiquity. I see it as a necessary complement to modern collections of the ancient literature of the Jews (e.g. James Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* 2 vols. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010]), and to books that summarize these texts (e.g. George Nickelsburg's *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 2nd ed. [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2011]).

Besides the introduction, the book contains twenty-six chapters divided into four sections, (A) Traditions, (B) Corpora, (C) Comparative Perspective: Alternative Modes of Transmission, and (D) Trajectories of Traditions. This last section has only two chapters. The one by James Charlesworth provides a good overview of the Jewish material preserved by Christians in each area discussed in section (A), with his reflection on the impact of these texts in Christianity and a suggestive template of how to create a taxonomy of Jewish traditions altered by Christians. The other chapter in section (D), by Lorenzo DiTommaso, is a thematic bibliography of recent works on the history of tradition about figures from the Hebrew Bible or Jewish tradition organized alphabetically from Abraham to Susanna.

Section (A) brings a collection of eleven chapters discussing the transmission of Jewish traditions in different geographies/languages. It starts with William Adler's summary of the Greek literature, followed by the Latin (Robert Kraft), Ethiopic (Pierluigi Piovanelli), Slavonic (Alexander Kulik), Coptic (Jacques van der Vliet), Syriac (Sergey Minov), Armenian (Michael Stone), Georgian (Jost Gippert), Christian Arabic (John Reeves), Irish (Martin McNamara), and ending with the Germanic tradition (Brian Murdoch). In this section, one can understand the particular trajectories of transmission of Jewish texts in each language. But if one wants to understand the types of literature transmitted by Christians, section (B) provides a collection of nine chapters on particular groups of texts. Thus, section (A) is complemented by (B) and vice versa. However, not all bodies of literature found in (B) are discussed in (A).

Section (B), starts with an insightful historical overview of the modern Christian perception of non-canonical writings related to the Bible. DiTommaso provides the much-needed background of scholarly discussions about the taxonomy of texts that though preserved and used by many Christians and Jews throughout history, eventually were not included in the Masoretic Bible and the Protestant Old Testament. Many of the methodological questions raised by DiTommaso, about the status of these works as Jewish, Christian, canonical, authoritative or not, are also addressed briefly by other authors throughout the book. Thus, I would start the reading of this volume with this chapter (12). The rest of section (B) contains a description of the usage of the writings of Flavius Josephus (Michael Tuval), of Philo of Alexandria (Gregory Sterling), Armenian Philonic Corpus (Abraham Terian), Minor Jewish Hellenistic Authors, Early Jewish Liturgical Texts (both are adaptations of parts of Folker Siegert's book *Einleitung in die hellenistisch-jüdische Literatur. Apokrypha, Pseudepigrapha und Fragmente verlorener Autorenwerke* [Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2016]), Qumran Texts (David Hamidović), Enochic Tradition (Gabriele Boccaccini), and it ends with The Jewish Calendar and Jewish Sciences (Jonathan Ben-Dov) which is a demonstration of how the calendar of the book of Enoch influenced Christianity, mainly in Ethiopia. Although in the same section, the chapters here are not uniform in their presentation. Some of them are manuscript history (ch. 19), others are only descriptions of what has been preserved (chs. 15–17), and still, others are select forays on the continuity of early Jewish ideas in later religious communities (chs. 18, 20).

The third section (C) of the book brings four reflections on non-orthodox Christian modes of transmission of ancient Jewish traditions: Rabbinic and Post-Rabbinic Jewish (Martha Himmelfarb), Gnostic (Dylan M. Burns), Manichean, and Islamic (both by John Reeves). This collection complements the picture of the vitality of Hebrew traditions throughout history.

Most chapters end and start similarly. They start with a list of works discussed by the author (exceptions are chs. 2, 12, 14, 16, with nothing in the beginning), and finish with a suggested bibliography. Regarding the bibliogra-

phy, I expected the list of reference works distinguished by primary ancient texts (with translations if available), and commentaries on the works discussed in the chapter. However, there is no standardization on this matter and not all lists can be used as a quick reference (or a guide, as the title suggests), in case someone is looking for a table with all the early Jewish texts preserved in Greek, or in the Dead Sea Scrolls, for example. At first, I thought the list of ancient works, at the beginning of the chapters, was of all the ancient Jewish texts preserved by Christians in that given locality or language (for section A), or the texts extant from a given author or community (e.g., Philo, Qumran). But this is not the case. The lists are not necessarily of the ancient texts, but also include texts that refer to early Jewish texts (e.g. Eusebius of Caesarea). So while in ch 21 one finds a list of ancient Jewish texts present in rabbinic texts as discussed by Himmelfarb, the following chapter (22) lists the Gnostic works and not the ancient Jewish texts present in the Nag Hammadi codices. If these lists were standardized, apparently a minor detail, they would have been a great feature that would add to the purpose and usability of this reference work as a guide.

The best example of an ideal list in both ends (the lists of preserved early Jewish texts, and a bibliography), is found in Abraham Terian's chapter on the Armenian Philonic Corpus. His bibliography contains the modern works with the text of Philo in Armenian, translations, and commentaries which contain the primary text discussed; followed by a list of secondary works on Philo. In his list at the beginning of the chapter, Terian apparently mentions all the works of Philo currently known to be extant in Armenian, and even distinguishes them by their preservation elsewhere (Complete Philonic works extant in Armenian only; Incomplete Philonic works extant mostly in Armenian, Philonic works extant in both Greek and Armenian). I should also add from section A the chapter on the Latin tradition (ch. 2, by Kraft), in which readers will find in the first paragraph a list of all the presumably Jewish works from antiquity found in Latin. Kulik's chapter on the Syriac tradition (ch. 6), contains a summary of all the Jewish ancient texts divided into sections (Undoubtedly Jewish Works, Works of Uncertain Origin, and Lost Works Only Partially Preserved in Syriac); and in section B, Siegert's description of Jewish liturgical texts (ch. 16), brings a detailed report of each of the Greek fragments of Jewish texts preserved in the church fathers Eusebius of Caesarea, and Clement of Alexandria. However, one will not find a list of these texts in the beginning as in most chapters. Uniquely, Siegert's chapter also provides the bibliographical references with the primary texts and with translations, not at the end of the chapter but at the beginning of his discussion of each fragment, which I think was effective.

On another note, although the chapters can be read apart from each other, together they give the reader a reliable picture of the history of the transmission of biblical traditions (stories related to the Hebrew Bible), thus, a great companion or introduction to the fascinating world of the development of biblical (and para-biblical, or extra-biblical, or rewritten scriptures) traditions. For those

not acquitted with these writings, I would start with section B, which gives an overview of the major group of Jewish texts preserved mostly by Christians. Then, I would proceed to section A which describes the transmission from a geographic and linguistic perspective. Following this, I would consult section C with the presentations on other modes of transmission besides the orthodox Christian venues. As a teacher of the history of biblical interpretation, I see how chapters in this book could be used as introductory readings on a particular corpus or areas of Christian literary production.

So, for those not familiar with the content of these Jewish traditions, I summarize a few take aways from the overview chapters of this book. Most of these ancient Jewish traditions preserved by Christians are extant only from late medieval manuscripts. Although not all authors bring this information. This data highlights the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls as a kind of standard reference since it is the oldest manuscript collection available in Hebrew. Although extremely important for a sound methodology on how to see the transmission of ancient Jewish texts elsewhere, this fact, unfortunately, is not discussed or mentioned in ch. 18 on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Another point I would like to highlight from the overview provided in this book is that these ancient Jewish traditions are expansions of biblical stories, mainly figures of the book of Genesis. They served to supplement historical details not found in the biblical texts, and sometimes as explanations of them. Texts perceived as somewhat incomplete or lacking in details, not surprisingly, became the favorites of these biblical expansions, like the figure of Enoch from Gen 5, which is arguably the most prominent figure in ancient Jewish traditions preserved by Christians, as can be perceived by the frequent appearance of Enoch in the list of works discussed in most chapters of this book. Enochic traditions were a strong influence for example in the calendrical computations of both the Dead Sea Scrolls' community and Christianity (chs. 19, 20). Readers of the *Guide to Early Jewish Texts and Traditions* will also notice the importance of the book of Genesis in the Christian articulation of a history of the world from a biblical perspective to rival the religious historiography of the pagans, mainly Egyptian and Greek (see 61, and ch. 16).

This book is also valuable for the study of biblical transmission because it highlights the methodological challenges of categorizing ancient Jewish literature as canonical or not. While the title of the book avoids such categorization (*Early Jewish Texts and Traditions*) throughout the book, it is clear that we are dealing here with the now-familiar non-canonical books from the perspective of the Masoretic and somewhat Protestant collection of sacred writings. It is important to acknowledge that some of the works mentioned here were and are considered canonical (Bible) by some Christian groups. I recognize that any book engaged with explaining this body (or bodies) of influential literature in the Judeo-Christian and Muslim tradition is open to the criticism of which literature is included or excluded. As DiTommaso clearly explains in his histori-

cal overview of the scholarly debate over the nature of these books (ch 12), there are the minimalists, who tried to keep to a minimum the collection of ancient Jewish scriptures, and the maximalists who tried to see any work resembling the Hebrew Bible as Jewish. I think that the authors of each chapter in section A could at least have given a brief description of the transmission of the texts considered biblical in each locality to situate the "other" early Jewish traditions, as Kraft and McNamara do, albeit briefly.

Here I would like to raise two questions related to the title of the work that will help me frame the methodological challenges in a work such as this. First, the book should be *A Guide to Early Jewish Texts*. But how Jewish? Scholars of Second Temple Judaism are well familiar with the complexities of identifying what is Jewish or not in the period. The answer to this question has to deal with another particularly important one addressed by Charlesworth's taxonomical solution of distinguishing Christian meddling in ancient Jewish traditions. Although in some cases it is easy to spot the Christian scribe at work, most often what many scholars have considered "sectarian" or "Christian" elements in such texts, has been found to be quite common in the complex Judaism of the past, as suggested by new manuscript evidence found in unexpected places. The authors of this volume recognize that these ancient traditions were widespread, and, in most of the occurrences, the direction of transmission is unclear. Thus we should be open to any possible kind of relationship between so-called Jewish and Christian traditions throughout history.

And second, about the title *A Guide to Early Jewish Texts*, how early should one go? Here I have in mind the texts of what became the Bible and Rabbinics. If a book is concerned with the history of the transmission of Jewish texts in Christianity, it is advised to explain what type of Jewish texts we are talking about. Some rabbinic traditions are early, before the common era. And, it is now known that Christians refer to traditions found in rabbinic texts and vice versa, while these are not found in any extant ancient manuscript apart from these two corpora. If so, should rabbinic texts not be considered as a repository of early Jewish traditions that influenced early Christianity? But where to draw the line of time (of antiquity), and tradition (distinctly Jewish, or distinctly Christian) is hard to know.

As Alexander Kulik insightfully indicated in his introduction, quoting a passage from the book of Genesis (27:22), "the voice is the voice of Jacob [Israel], yet the hands are the hands of Esau." Like the blind Isaac encountering Jacob as Esau, modern readers of these texts have to realize that appearances can be deceptive, but familiarity with them over time will help us distinguish, even if we can't understand how the voice is of one while the hand is of another. [Here I include the pages where I encountered typos in case the publisher plans another edition (54, 334, 359, 369, 394, 418, 445, 454).]

Berrien Springs, Michigan Rodrigo Galiza

Lundbom, Jack R., Craig A. Evans, and Bradford A. Anderson, eds. *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*. Leiden: Brill, 2018. 545 pp. Hardcover. USD 178.00.

With the 178th edition of the Supplements to Vetus Testamentum (VTSup), readers receive a volume that brings them up to date with the latest research on historical, text-critical, reception-historical, and in parts theological matters of the book of Jeremiah. This is the eighth volume in the Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature (FIOTL) series. Much has been experimented with in new interpretive approaches to the Book of Jeremiah in recent years. In particular, trauma studies and the analysis of the textualized violent fantasies and emotions of the prophet and YHWH have diverged from the otherwise dominant classical historical-critical research objectives. These approaches have encouraged breaking away from seemingly deadlocked research discussions by exploring new methodological avenues. But if modernist historical-critical research has often been accused of basing its interpretive models too heavily on historiographical speculation, then a very similar standard of judgment must be applied to the postmodernist-oriented research of recent years, where text-external interpretive categories are given a strong weighting. And so, our research situation calls for a return as un-ideological as possible to empirical stocktaking. This is precisely the focus of this volume. It is not the evaluation of the various interpretative approaches that is sought, but rather a turn to the textual and historical data situation. In this way, the volume encourages a fresh orientation to the empirical data in the study of the various aspects of the book of Jeremiah (literary criticism, rhetorical criticism, historical criticism, reception analysis, theological interpretation).

The volume has twenty-four chapters, followed by an author index (499–502) and a reference index to biblical and extra-biblical sources from ancient times (508–545). The book is divided into four parts. The quality of the twenty-four chapters is ensured by an ensemble of first-class and world-renowned Jeremiah scholars. Each chapter is filled with an extensive bibliography, which allows the reader to quickly find her way into more in-depth research. The first, short part of the book deals with general topics. The second part contains nine chapters covering interpretive insights from recent years. The third part, with nine additional chapters, focuses on data description in such a way that interpretive perspectives on textual transmission and reception can be opened. The fourth and final part of the volume is again short, with three chapters, and presents theological themes.

In the first part, three topics are discussed. Mark Leuchter's contribution, "The Pen of the Scribes: Writing, Textuality, and the Book of Jeremiah" (3–25), discusses scribal culture for the exilic-postexilic period and suggests that Jeremiah should not be seen as an archive of prophetic and interpreta-

tive texts, but as a "surrogate sanctuary" (22). The book sought to become a substitute for the destroyed temple. Leuchter writes, "entering sacred sanctuary space was replaced by an entry into the texts … that modeled how revelation could be facilitated in the absence of temple structures and faculties" (23). In the second chapter, Marvin A. Sweeny elaborates on Jeremiah's prophetic interlocutors (26–44). Here, attention is drawn to the intra-biblical dialogue that is repeatedly interspersed with Jeremiah's soliloquies. The apparent contradictions with fellow prophets such as Isaiah are pointed out. But also, the inner-biblical, post-Jeremiah reception among the biblical prophets of the Persian period is critically reviewed. The first part is then concluded with the third chapter by Georg Fischer. In "Jeremiah – 'The Prophet like Moses'?" (45–66), Fischer summarizes and deepens with new insights the connections the book establishes between Moses and Jeremiah.

The second section, entitled "Issues in Interpretation," discusses various aspects relevant to an overall interpretation of the book. The first chapter in this section (chapter four) is Jeffrey R Zorn's "Jeremiah at Mizpah of Benjamin (Tell en-Naṣbeh): The Archaeological Setting" (69–92). In the fifth chapter, Bob Becking traces messianic expectation in "Messianic Expectations in the Book of Jeremiah? The Productive Memory of David" (93–112). In the relatively short sixth chapter, "Sagacious Divine Judgment: Jeremiah's Use of Proverbs to Construct an Ethos and Ethics of Divine Epistemology" (113–125), Samuel E. Balentine analyzes the language and argumentation contained in the judgment oracles to trace the process of divine thought and thereby make plausible the rational basis of divine judgment. Catharine Sze Wing So presents new insights for the function and interpretation of the confessions in the seventh chapter, "Structure in the Confessions of Jeremiah" (126–148). The eighth and ninth chapters are devoted to the New Covenant and its announcement. Magnar Karveit, in "Reconsidering the 'New Covenant' in Jeremiah 31:31–3" (149–169), is primarily concerned with examining the ברית concept in a new linguistic way. In doing so, she interrogates whether the translation of "treaty" actually captures the meaning of ברית in Jer 31. She argues that a linguistically more sound translation would be "proclamation." Authors Amanda R. Morrow and John F. Quant, on the other hand, in their chapter "Yet Another New Covenant: Jeremiah's Use of Deuteronomy and שוב,שבית/שבות in the Book of Consolation" (170–190), examine with fresh eyes what the newness in the "new covenant" is about. The Rechabites and their historical background is the topic in "The Rechabites in the Book of Jeremiah and Their Historical Roots in Israel" (191–210). The final two chapters in this part of the volume make the oracles against the foreign nations the subject matter. Jack R. Lundbom skillfully examines the rhetoric of the oracles in "Language and Rhetoric in Jeremiah's Foreign Nation Oracles" (211–229), and Paul R. Raabe proposes in "What is Israel's God Up To among the Nations? Jeremiah 46, 48 and 49" (230–252)

that the promise of restoration for the nations (with few exceptions) aims to recalibrate the relationships among the nations with each other and with Israel so that the new relational network is of benefit for all people.

The first two chapters of the third section (chs. 13 and 14) deal with text-historical transmission issues. Andrew G. Shead brings the reader up to date on the latest insights on the relationships between the MT and LXX in "The Text of Jeremiah (MT and LXX)" (255–279). Armin Lange does the same with the versions of the MT and DSS in "Texts of Jeremiah in the Qumran Library" (280–302). He offers a precise description of the text-critical facts and concludes in a nuanced manner. The remaining chapters in this section are concerned primarily with reception history. Craig A. Evans traces how Jeremiah was received in the NT (303–319); Robert Hayward in the Targum (320–339); Gillian Greenberg in the Peshitta (340–358); Sean A. Adams within the Greek Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (359–378); Michael Avioz in Josephus (379–393); David L. Everson in Latin texts (394–413), who concludes that the Vetus Latina is generally closer to the LXX version of the Book of Jeremiah, while the Vulgate follows the MT tradition; and Joy A. Schroeder describes Jeremiah in Christianity during the Middle Ages (414–434).

The final and fourth section is devoted to Jeremiah's theology. Here Jack R. Lundbom contributes to this volume with a second chapter (ch. 22). In "Jeremiah as Mediator of the Covenant" (437–454), Lundbom rehashes the unpublished notes of James Muilenberg and demonstrates how Muilenberg not only shaped the understanding of Moses as the mediator of the covenant but also elaborated important insights on Jeremiah as a mediator in the tradition of Moses. In the penultimate chapter "Jeremiah's God Has a Past, a Present, and a Future" (455–475), Terence E. Fretheim explains that Jeremiah's God is not conceived beyond time and space but, on the contrary, "God has so bound himself in relationship to the world that God and world move through time together" (473). Where Fretheim discusses YHWH's relationship to time, in the last chapter, "God and Place in Jeremiah" (476–497), David Reimer works on YHWH's relationship to space. In it, Reimer proposes a theology of space that, much like with time, enables the relationship between God and people.

In summary, it can only be emphasized that this volume, with its focus on historical and linguistic data analysis, is a necessary contribution for advancing Jeremiah studies. On the most important issues in Jeremiah-studies, the reader is brought up to date with the current state of knowledge. For every biblical scholar who is seriously engaged in the interpretation of the longest and arguably most difficult book of the Bible, this VTSupp volume should become part of their library.

Andrews University Oliver Glanz

Nogalski, James D. *Introduction to the Hebrew Prophets*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2018. 288pp. Softcover. USD 29.99.

Abingdon Press's new introduction to the Hebrew prophets is written by James Nogalski, a leading expert on the twelve prophets (*dodekaprophe-ton*). His expertise is evident throughout the book and particularly in his introductions to the Minor Prophets. This introduction was designed as a textbook for college students and should be evaluated as such. The structure of the book turns out as expected for an introduction to the Old Testament prophets. However, it is important to note that this introduction does not cover the prophets from the Masoretic collection, the *Nevi'im*, but focuses instead on the major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) and the book of the Twelve (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). Therefore, this introduction omits the discussion of the so-called earlier prophets in the Jewish Bible (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings).

After a preface that clearly and concisely describes the most important introductory issues, Nogalski covers all the prophets in six chapters, covering 216 pages. Towards the end the book brings a helpful glossary, compiled by Will Briggs, explaining in four pages important terms like allusive, deuteronomist history, holiness code, and *vorlage*. The bibliography is "For Further Reading," thus, brief (1 ½ page). At the end of the book, sixty-five pages (223–288) of not infrequently detailed endnotes can be found for each chapter. This material is very helpful and shows that Nogalski is an expert in his field and has a good overview of the academic discussion. I, therefore, consider it inconvenient that these notes are processed as endnotes and not as footnotes by the publisher. It would be much easier for students to take along the important in-depth discussions in the reading and learning process without the cumbersome turning of pages. The book is introductory and, therefore, does not cover the various approaches to the prophetic books. This is evident in the section on redaction-history. For example, only the works of David Carr (*Writing on the Tablet of the Heart* [Oxford University Press, 2008]), Konrad Schmid (*The Old Testament: A Literary History* [Fortress Press, 2012]), and Van der Toorn (*Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* [Harvard University Press, 2009]) are listed. There is no doubt that these three works must be considered standard reference works. But for a textbook, I expected that the author would also encourage the reader and college student to access the scholarly debate with its various approaches. For example, the work of John Van Seters (*The Edited Bible* [Eisenbrauns, 2006]) should equally be listed if a more broad debate on the matter of redaction-critique is to be opened. That Nogalski chooses a decidedly redaction-critical approach for his work is not problematic in itself, but unfortunately, the author chooses to exclude

other important interpretive approaches. Other important works on the prophets I found missing were the rich work of Brueggeman (*The Prophetic Imagination* [Fortress, 1979]), and the classic work of Abraham Heschel (*The Prophets* [Harper & Row, 1962]).

Each book of the prophets is generally discussed in four sections. The first includes an introduction and summary of the historical facts ("Historical Backdrops"). This is followed by "Introductory Issues," where the research questions raised by each book are presented. Here the author concentrates primarily on questions of redaction-criticism and source-criticism. A description of the literary structure of each book follows under "The Structure and Contents." An overview of the book's composition is provided. Each of these sections is succinctly summarized in terms of its content. Fourth and last, under "Important Themes," the author discusses the major themes contained in each book and traces the main line of thought for each book. It is noticeable that the emphasis is not on the theological-existential evaluation of the book's contents. The one who expects content-extractions a la Walter Brueggemann or Georg Fischer must look elsewhere. That this publication is designed to be used as a textbook is visible through the helpful charts and summaries of important historical dates it contains. Questions are found at the end of each chapter discussion. These are designed to be used as assignments by teachers and learners.

Whether this introduction to the prophetic books is suitable as a workbook or textbook depends on several factors. If one is looking for an introductory work for the *Nevi'im*, Nogalski's book is not recommended. However, if only the major and minor prophets are to be discussed, the book can be recommended under certain conditions. If one wants to approach the prophets primarily with questions of redaction-criticism and source-criticism, Nogalski's work is a good introduction that represents well the current state of research. However, those who seek a canonical approach, or who wish to delve more deeply into the theological-existential and socio-critical aspects of these prophetic books, will have to choose other introductory works. This is sometimes also true where one looks for a dedicated historical-critical approach to the prophets, but wants to evaluate the redaction-critical conclusions theologically. For example, the influence of the early prophets (especially Proto-Isaiah and Amos) on the formation of the Book of the Covenant (Exod 20–23) and the Law of Holiness (Lev 17–26) is not discussed. This is especially striking since from the standpoint of redaction-criticism and compositional history—on which Nogalski focuses—historical-critical scholarship has largely reached an agreement (cf. Schmid, 101–104).

It should also be noted that the discussion of the *Dodekapropheton*, at 120 pages, receives more attention than the introduction to the major prophets (slightly under 100 pages). This is probably since Nogalski's research has been

focused particularly on them. As described, the book has its clear strength in its redaction-critical approach. There is probably no better introduction available that addresses these issues properly and efficiently. Denomination-based seminars or readers and students looking for an introduction with a thematic and theological focus will make a different choice of literature.

Andrews University Oliver Glanz

Rice, Richard. *The Future of Open Theism: From Antecedents to Opportunities.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020. Softcover. 254 pp. USD 26.00.

In *The Future of Open Theism,* Richard Rice surveys the history of a contemporary theological movement (in which he is a significant influence) and makes suggestions for the further development of its central contribution—that God and the world are "open" for "interchange" and "give-and-take" (1). Unfortunately, there has been "no smooth transition from the 'traditional' view" (4) to this "novel perspective" (2). Instead, there is a stark contrast reminiscent of the "radical … incommensurability" described in Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (4).

Using words by Pears, Rice expresses regret about the resistance by many to open theism: "How is [it] that when a man of God shifts his opinion it proves the weakness of his views, and when a man of science does so it demonstrates the value of his method?" (6). In this review, I reflect on what Rice identifies as a "persistent" reason for resistance: open theism's "revisionist view of divine foreknowledge" (76). (See also my "Review of Wm. Curtis Holtzen's *The God who Trusts*" in *AUSS* 58.1 [Spr 2020]: 113–117).

In the first part of his book, Rice describes the history of open theism. Chapter 1 traces views of foreknowledge by Arminius, Clarke, McCabe, Lequyer, Olson, and Elseth (11–26). Chapter 2 surveys books (1980 to 2001) by Rice, Pinnock, Saunders, Hasker, Basinger, and Boyd (27–46); and briefly discusses Bible texts that appear problematic for open theism (46–48). Chapter 3 records how open theism triggered an intensely "dismaying" and "disillusioning" "firestorm" of "controversy" and "open hostility" (51). Fortunately, conflicts in the Evangelical Theological Society (52–58) and other criticisms (59–71) have softened into productive conversation (71–78).

Chapter 4 documents how—in the words of Rhoda—open theism is now "embraced by a sizable and growing" number of theistic philosophers and is "recognized as a major player" (79). Issues surveyed by Rice include foreknowledge (80–89), providence (89–96), and responsible risk (96–100). Chapter 5 points out how open theists disagree about the nature of the God-world interactions they affirm (101). For example, there are different views on evil (103–108), creation (108–110), and kenotic love (110–118).

While the issue of foreknowledge is not "the most important aspect of their view of God, no facet of the open view ... has stimulated more discussion" (80). This is because open theists conclude that "if the future is causally open" (88) to free choices among contingent options (123, 166–169), it must also be "epistemically open," and "it cannot be infallibly known" (88). Here, I suggest, while rightly questioning the biblical accuracy of the traditional view of foreknowledge, open theism may have more work to do in re-examining the biblical view. (On the traditional view, see Feinberg's *No one Like Him: The Doctrine of God* [Crossway, 2001], 305).

Concerning the nature of foreknowledge, Rice gives attention to "the status of propositions that certain events 'will' or 'will not' happen" (82); but does not mention Geach's view on changing truth values for propositions about "what will happen" (cf. Patrick Todd, "Geacheanism," pages 222–252 in *Oxford Studies in Philosophy and Religion* 3, ed. Jonathan L. Kvanvig [Oxford University Press, 2011]). It seems to me that Geach's view is more compatible with biblical foreknowledge whereby God warns David about what *will* happen, and David acts so that it *will not* happen (1 Sam 23:11–13).

Building on the history of open theism, in the second part of his book, Rice makes suggestions for further open theist articulations of Christian doctrines (121). Chapter 6, "Does Open Theism Limit God?", is in my opinion the most important chapter in this section, as implied in the following quotation.

> Unless we set aside a familiar way of characterizing open theism, it will be next to impossible to give the perspective it provides adequate attention. There is a pervasive tendency on the part of both supporters and critics to refer to open theism as presenting a "limited" view of God.... Any mention of God as having limited power, or limited foreknowledge, invites just the sort of objections that have absorbed so much of the discussion.... Accordingly, I believe that open theists should avoid "limit" language altogether (124).

Rice gives five reasons why "open theists can make their points effectively without ... the notion of limits" (127). First, "the connotations of 'limit' language" are "negative," implying that God is "restricted" and "hampered," and that the open view is "inferior" (127). However, "far from limiting" God, "a dynamic, interactive view" "enhances our picture of God" (124–125).

Second, the "most prevalent description" of open theism may be "the least accurate: the idea that it limits God's knowledge" (127) of future free choices. However, these choices are not real until they occur, so (according to Rice) there is nothing for God to foreknow. Consequently, while, omniscience "includes every possible object of knowledge" (129), "the future is open to God—and therefore not exhaustively foreknowable" (108).

Third, while "limit language ... denotes nothing distinctive" since it "applies just as well to other views of God" (130), "open theists should avoid

[it] altogether" (124). Fourth, God's sharing power "is often expressed as a self-limitation," presupposing "a zero-sum distribution of power" (131). However, a world where creatures have power "involves a greater display of divine power than one in which God determines everything"; "exerting power" is less powerful than "empowering others" (132).

Fifth, the "biblical emphasis" on "divine sensitivity" in time (134) and "the traditional view of foreknowledge" are incompatible because "the latter ... collapses any distinction between anticipation and realization" (135). Foreknowledge is not "exhaustive" of "every aspect of his response to what will occur," since that would mean that "God's experience already includes all" and "actual occurrences contribute nothing new" (Ibid).

In response to these points, I encourage open theists to consider that the biblical perspective may indicate or allow the following. (1) A dynamic God implies a dynamic foreknowledge; (2) knowledge of possibilities may be part of foreknowledge; so that (3) causal openness to free choices may not limit foreknowledge; (4) interactive foreknowledge may be more powerful than unilateral foreknowledge; and (5) may not preclude experiential knowledge. (See my "Foreknowledge and the Freedom of Salvation," in *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology* [Andrews University Press, 2018], 33–59).

In chapter 7, Rice argues that God's triune "interaction" with the world is "dynamic" (138) and temporal (141–151). He affirms Ogden's view that "God's eternity is not sheer timelessness, but an infinite fullness of time" (150). However, he disagrees with Ogden's process theist view that "the ultimate metaphysical fact is God-and-world, not just God" (150). At the same time, Rice's choice of words may give the impression of a more rigid application of Rahner's rule—that God-and-world is the same as God-without-world (137)—so that (in the words of LaCugna) "there is no hidden God" (140). In contrast, hiddenness led the apostle Paul to end his discussion of foreknowledge (Rom 8:29; 11:2) with the exclamation: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable ...!" (11:33). At the same time (in harmony with Rahner's rule), since God has truly revealed his foreknowledge, we are responsible to understand it as best we can (cf. Fred Sanders, *The Image of the Immanent Trinity: Rahner's Rule and the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* [Peter Lang, 2005]).

In chapter 8, Rice highlights our libertarian freedom to do otherwise than we choose to do while acknowledging that our freedom is limited by sin (123, 166–169). This libertarian freedom is what requires a "revisionary concept of divine foreknowledge" (172). Like Rice, I reject the traditional static view of foreknowledge. Besides, I suggest that the Bible indicates or allows that exhaustive foreknowledge is dynamically refocused as free choices are actualized. (See my "Foreknowledge and the Freedom of Salvation," 33).

In chapter 9, Rice discusses salvation in Christ, who is the definitive revelation of God's love (123), so that "the forces of evil were decisively

defeated" (174). Christ was truly tempted; his victory was not "a foregone conclusion" (124), "assured in advance" (181), but "a genuine achievement" (181). Yet, "the chances of Christ's failure" "were minimal, perhaps minuscule," compared with "the tremendous benefits ... they made possible" (182). At the same time, Rice seems to imply that Christ's victory was not foreknown from the beginning because it was not certain and definite (or settled) in advance (181–182).

Here Rice may be responding to the traditional view of God's free knowledge of free choices (which is certain and definite because it results from God's choice of which "world" of free choices he will create). Contrary to the traditional view (and many open theists), I propose that the biblical view of God's foreknowledge does not indicate that the future is already certain and definite (See again 1 Sam 23:11–13). Instead, God uses his certain (confident) and definite (detailed) foreknowledge in deliberating about Creator-creation interactions that are open. (See my "Foreknowledge and the Freedom of Salvation," 37, n.13).

In Chapter 10, Rice indicates that the doctrine of the church affirms "the interconnectedness between individual and community" (212) in "a new communal consciousness" (195). This "eventually, dramatically, and permanently transformed the prevailing perspective on the human in western civilization" (199). Nevertheless, the transformation is incomplete since the problem of individualism continues (204–213). Rice's valuable emphasis on interconnectedness triggers in my mind reflections on God's foreknowledge of all possible relations of humans with the entire creation and with God.

In Chapter 11, Rice proposes that God has a plan beyond death, not for a timeless moment, but for "ongoing ... experiences" (221). This is not a risk-free plan, but a "higher" providence (229) guided by the knowledge that "the likelihood is practically remote" that no one would sin or that no one would be saved (231). Rice mentions that, according to Boyd, God "sees all possibilities ... and eliminates those in which his ultimate purposes are not fulfilled" (232). God also "knows all ... variables" for how human choices cause "an ever-closing window of opportunity" since we are "becoming the decisions we make" (Ibid) as "libertarian freedom dissolves into freedom of spontaneity" (233). Again, it seems to me that biblical foreknowledge includes all the variables that are considered in God's dynamic plan.

In conclusion, I enthusiastically recommend *The Future of Open Theism* as an essential introduction to the past, present, and future of this fascinating theological movement. Rice states that "the God who moves, risks, and trusts is our companion through all of life's experiences, fully aware of and deeply affected by all that we undergo, providing us constant encouragement and help. This ... is the enduring appeal of the openness of God" (237). I too have sensed the allure of open theism, though I affirm that God's foreknowledge of free choices is exhaustive (comprehensive),

certain (confident), definite (detailed), and dynamic (interactive). Further study is needed to explore whether this view of biblical foreknowledge is a helpful response to the suggestion by Rice that open theists should avoid using limit-language to refer to God.

Andrews University Martin F. Hanna

Rubenstein, Jay. *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream: The Crusades, Apocalyptic Prophecy, and the End of History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. xxi + 280 pp, 16 color plates, 3 maps, and 10 tables. USD 31.95.

Jay Rubenstein is a professor of history at the University of Southern California and a prolific historian specializing in the High Middle Ages, the crusades, and biblical exegesis. He previously published two works covering roughly the same period: *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for Apocalypse* (Basic Books, 2011) and *The First Crusade: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015). The present tome, however, as the culmination of fifteen years of research and reflection, is narrower in scope, but far denser.

What lies at the end of Rubenstein's long pilgrimage—escorted by fabled warriors, jongleurs, artists, and monks—is a remarkable tale of court intrigue, political monkeyshines, and ecclesiastical politics. The book begins with sixteen color plates showcasing medieval religious art, opening a window into the apocalypse as seen through the eyes of medieval Christians. The collection was carefully curated from the Apocalypse cycle contained in the still extant autograph of the *Liber Floridus* (1120 CE, lit. "Book of Flowers")—a general encyclopedia written by Lambert, canon of Saint-Omer (ca. 1061–1150), as well as drawings by Otto of Freising, Hildegard of Bingen, and Joachim of Fiore.

The book is divided into four parts comprising twelve chapters, and covering sequential historical periods. Each period highlights specific players and how they interact, overlap, or overshadow each other. Rubenstein begins with the admission that his original premise that "the Apocalypse and the crusades had nothing to do with one another" (xvii), did not hold water in light of the complex web of apocalyptical eschatology that dominated the eleventh and twelve centuries. To this end, he surveys the "building blocks of the apocalypse" as present in the Tyconian-Augustinian tradition of biblical interpretation influential at the time (ch 3). The book then zeroes in on the apocalyptic "illusion" that sparked the First Crusade and the "disillusionment" that followed it. This task dominates Part 1.

One of Rubenstein's greatest achievements is to demonstrate how medieval exegetes such as Guibert of Nogent (ca. 1060–1125) reshaped the biblical text to make it fit contemporary perceptions of how the apocalypse would unfold. Beginning with the first apocalyptic text, the book of Daniel

and the vision of Nebuchadnezzar's statue with its sequence of earthly kingdoms—a prediction that continues to defy a definitive interpretation (Rubenstein proposes a final bifurcation of Greek kingdoms [5])—theologians adapted the dream around temporally relevant readings. It seemed clear that ancient Rome, now but a memory, had failed to trigger the Last Days as long thought. An example of this is self-proclaimed First-Crusade hero Bohemond of Antioch (ca. 1054–1111), who departed from the biblical text and read the dream's metals as iron, clay, silver, bronze, and gold as symbolizing the Persians, Egyptians, Chaldeans and Arabs, who had been simultaneously defeated by the Franks. Conveniently, Bohemond himself was the rock that shattered the statue, even though he quit the First Crusade before it even reached Jerusalem.

If Bohemond of Antioch saw in Nebuchadnezzar's dream a sketch for his own dreams of the end, the apocalypse of John of Patmos provided a scaffold which others used to paint a frieze of the Last Days, soaked in blood and terrorized by outlandish creatures. In his *Liber Floridus,* Lambert of Saint-Omer sought to organize Bohemond's history of the world under the prism of the First Crusade, driving his message home with dramatic pictures and diagrams conflating biblical historiography, apocalyptic fervor, and local fables about the arrival of a mythological Antichrist.

Part 2 is dedicated to the aftermath of the celebrated First Crusade and the "monumental disaster" that was the Second. Throughout the twelfth century, crusading Christians were displaying the same impatience, a fatigued *stenuitas patrum* with the end-times that their ancestors felt. By now, the sword had replaced love and charity in establishing God's earthly kingdom; the First Crusade had shattered Nebuchadnezzar's statue, giving birth to the Latin church bound to cover the whole earth. Rubenstein clearly articulates how the success of imperial eschatology became a presuppositional lens through which theologians of the period viewed the apocalypse and the end of history. The gory expeditions, however, took a toll on the faithful. As the apocalypse slowly receded into the horizon with the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin in 1187 and the failed Second Crusade, there were signs of the equivalent of a medieval "clickbait"; after all, trying to consolidate God's earthly kingdom through violence, plundering and bloodshed never got the crusaders a sense of redemption as promised by Urban II's indulgences.

Central to the book's central premise of shifting apocalyptic sentiment is the discussion of *translatio imperii* (ch. 9), which explores how Jerusalem ceased to be essential to Christendom's imperial aspirations, replaced by Rome. Rubenstein explores how the same apocalyptic impetus that inspired the successful First Crusade also underpinned the Second, especially in the way its supporters sought to justify it. Foremost among the justifications for holy war was the concession of indulgences to all who fought. The way the most repulsive characters could find redemption in heaven for past and future

sins was by helping God destroy his enemies on earth, led as they were by Antichrist, a mutating creature with effeminate, grotesque features. "[T]o win is victory on earth; to die, victory in Christ," they argued (77). The atrocities of that Christian war—an oxymoron, if ever there was one—gave rise to the more principled Templars and new justifications for fighting God's battles. The rationale for turning pilgrimage into holy war became more convoluted and suspect, with the usual promises of redemption giving room to the "angelic replacement" theory (originated in Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*), and repurposed by Abbot John, who in vision saw Paul and John explain that those who died in the Second Crusade were now replacing the fallen angels in heaven (120).

An intriguing character in the book is Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux—canonized in the Catholic tradition—who played a central role in spurring the Second Crusade. Bernard provided not only the theological framework and the political savoir-faire for the doomed enterprise, but he also spiced it up with miracles—"fakes" avers Rubenstein—which rubberstamped calls that "God wills it." His campaign was briefly joined by Otto of Freising, who after the crusade's defeat, removed Jerusalem from his end-times charts and doubted prophetic certainty, bemoaning that "even the spirit of prophecy does not always reside with the prophets" (126). Part 3 explores the players tasked with rethinking the apocalyptic underpinnings of the crusades and envisioning a new, "homegrown" apocalypse. Enter Gerhoh of Reichersberg (1093–1169) who recanted Last World Emperor eschatology partly because the crusades to liberate Jerusalem were based on shoddy intelligence: the city had never been in real danger. Worse, there was evidence of an elaborate Ponzi scheme: Holy Land Christians had used the Western church to enrich its coffers at the expense of life and limb. With Christianity's focus now shifting to internal problems such as heresy and corruption by prelates, Jerusalem was doomed to become a storehouse of memory and relics (161).

To negotiate the shift, Gerhoh developed a system of prophetic interpretation based on "types", i.e., specific prophetic fulfilments, and "tropes," i.e., ambiguous meanings based on the multivalence of divine language which needed to be interpreted allegorically. Applying this to the view of a Jewish Antichrist, Gerhoh invalidated the millenarian tradition, stating that Jacob's son Dan was never the Antichrist's ancestor, he only needed to retain Dan's "snakelike" features, not necessarily be a Jew. Gerhoh did the same with the Antichrist's birthplace, Babylon: it could well be Rome. Likewise, he saw recurring fulfilments of Daniel's "abomination of the desolation," starting with Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 167 BCE, then Herod Agrippa in 44 CE, and Caligula in 70 CE. Gerhoh's ideas opened the way to contemporary mystic Hildegard of Bingen, whose visions further galvanized the view that, from the looks of things, the Antichrist could well rise from within the

church itself. In one of her visionary experiences, Hildegard saw Antichrist as a monster being birthed by a woman, symbolizing the church (fig. 13).

Part 4 explores the final shift in the apocalyptic ethos surrounding the crusades. This was a time of shifting prophetic centers; victories in wars were fickle and short-lived, Constantinople had once replaced Jerusalem as the ecclesiastical holy grail, the First Crusade restored the Holy Land to its rightful place, only to have prophetic interest move west to Rome. An entire chapter is dedicated to Joachim of Fiore (ca. 1135–1202), whose ideas remain influential. The failure of the Second Crusade proved to Joachim and others that these expeditions belonged in the dustbin of history—written records were revised and the voyages barely made into book margins. That is, until Jerusalem fell to Saladin in 1187, causing Joachim to incorporate the growing threat posed by Islam into his prophetic charts (table 10). Islam, in his view symbolized by the iron legs of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, was the church's archenemy to be fought in perpetuity.

As Rubenstein puts it, "[a]fter a thousand years of apocalyptic algebra, Joachim of Fiore invented calculus" (182–183). Living under the shockwaves of the eschatological hysteria surrounding the First Crusade, Joachim built his "spiritual arithmetic" on Augustine's division of history in six ages, but augmented it with his system of prophetic interpretation around a "law of doubles" (*concordia duorum testamentorum*) in which every character and event in the Hebrew Bible had its *Doppelgänger* in the New. This led to the development of his "trinitarian" schematics that divided history into three *status* (*concordia trium operum*) about the manifestation of each person of the Trinity in specific, but overlapping periods of history—the Old Testament was God's playground, the New Testament birthed Jesus, and the church age belonged to the Holy Spirit. Joachim replaced the old Augustinian tradition that located the end after 6,000 years of human history with his rule of "ages" or "generations" lasting 30 years each (based on Jesus's age at baptism). Thus, for example, the 1260 days of Rev 12 symbolize 42 "ages" of 30 years each, beginning with the birth of Christ. Incidentally, then, the approaching year 1260 CE would usher in the third *tempus* of his trinitarian model, a time of peace dominated by the Holy Spirit and led by "Spiritual Men."

Joachim's mathematical approach to prophecy seemed plausible to explain past fulfilments, and had even yielded a few predictions, albeit, it seems, by mere chance. Joachim saw the persecution of Christians under Mohammad in the fourth seal of Revelation being mirrored in that of Saladin, which fulfilled the sixth seal. "All of this," Joachim would write, "we see happening in the world today" (193). However, as Rubenstein warns, "[t]here can be a fine line between being a prophet and simply keeping up with the news" (189). Saladin was also the "one is," the sixth king of Rev 17:10, a passage that Joachim used to "prophesy" that Richard Lionheart would

defeat Saladin. But when Joachim's prophecy failed to materialize, his focus shifted to Rome, where a future papal Antichrist was just a lad (202).

Despite Joachim's penchant for discontinuity with old ideas, his historiography was a confirmation of the tradition that "a great, anti-Christian enemy would be defeated in the East" (200). As Rubenstein observes, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, when it comes to the interpretation of biblical prophecy, the proof is *not* in the pudding, because "prophecies are easier to interpret after the fact" (218). When confronted with past failures exposed by later revisions, "prophetic hope springs eternal" (214). Indeed, the Protestant Reformation would see a renewed interest in the Antichrist, and the Papacy would move straight to the center of the target board.

The conclusion titled "The Ongoing Madness of Antichrist" provides a synoptic view between the apocalyptic outlook of the turn of the first millennium CE and those currently at work in Christendom. Rubenstein ponders "just how closely allied twelfth- and twenty-first-century passions are" (217), and the parallels he draws illuminate both periods. In a discussion of how Judeo-Christian values continue to shape American policy abroad, he quotes American Lieutenant General Boykin, who framed America's War on Terror as a war between Satan and "us a Christian army" (217). As it was for medieval warriors, the blood of Christ offering penitence and redemption continues to be mingled with the blood of holy war. As of old, the Last Days continue to be tinged blood red. Are America's holy wars also a quest for redemption? The answer may have to wait for the advent of a modern-day Joachim of Fiore.

In a volume of incisive and insightful analysis, readers will hardly find a flaw. The plot can at times get as thick as hand-to-hand combat, laden with unrelenting, often salacious details, and readers should be prepared to thumb back through sections to reconnect the wandering threads. Still, the presentation is impeccable and effortless, at times reading like a mystery novel, at others, like a horror movie script. Persnickety grammarians will find little in terms of proofreading in a myriad of words and characters. Rubenstein shows command and passion for the subject; a better chronicler could scarcely accompany the reader. One of the author's endearing qualities is that, for a work about epochal events encompassing vast geographical swaths, Rubenstein shows sensibility for personal tragedy and misery, such as the harrowing tale of lady Corba of Thorigné—abused, abandoned, and ultimately gone missing, or the demons harassing Thomas of Marle, for whose savagery no redemption could be procured.

Perhaps Rubenstein could have thrown his net farther out as it pertains to the sixth-century Byzantine origins of imperial eschatology still at work in the twelfth century (see, for example, Stephen Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire: Imperial Eschatology in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* [University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018]). Readers would have benefited from a survey of similar ideas churning in the interlocking religious cultures of Byzantium,

which provided a blueprint for subsequent imperial eschatologies, including the apocalyptic imperialism dominating Islam in the twelfth century.

Rubenstein's latest work is fascinating and commendable. As a historian, he has shown the tenacity of a first crusader; as hermeneut, the restraint of a Templar. His parting wish is that readers leave "with a deeper respect for the sophistication, the attractiveness, and the sheer staying power of apocalyptic ideas" (217). In this pilgrimage, Rubenstein has been resoundingly successful.

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Scholtus, Silvia C. *Women in Leadership in the Beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America*. Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos: Editorial UAP, 2019. 108 pp. eBook. USD 7.99.

The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America has been widely explored in books published in Spanish and Portuguese. It has been recounted by some works in English also, including Floyd Greenleaf's book *A Land of Hope: The Growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America* (Casa Publicadora Brasileira, 2011) and Juan Carlos Viera's doctoral thesis: "Seventh-day Adventists in Latin America: Their Beginnings, Their Growth, Their Challenges" (PhD Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1993). Nonetheless, the lives and work of female workers and leaders have been mostly overlooked. Silvia C. Scholtus, emeritus professor at the Universidad Adventista del Plata in Argentina, and former Director of the Centro Histórico Adventista (Adventist Heritage Center), has produced the first biographic account of female Seventh-day Adventist pioneers in South America. Scholtus fills a gap in Adventist historiography in documenting the lives and deeds of eight courageous women who were at the battlefront of missionary activity in the continent.

To explain the objective of the book, the first chapter is devoted to highlighting the importance of recounting stories and preserving them for the future. A general outline of the book is presented in the second chapter, which is titled "Introduction," while the next chapter provides a concise historical framework for the work of the pioneers in South America, describing the societal norms and traditions concerning women in that period. Chapters four to eleven are devoted each to the life of a woman pioneer. Every chapter is structured in four sections. First, the author provides a general background of the selected woman for that chapter, including family history. Later she describes the missionary activities accomplished by each pioneer. The last two sections of these chapters are usually called "Her last days," narrating their retirement years, and "Her legacy," which summarizes the achievements of each woman with an inspirational tone.

The first pioneer is Mary Thurston-Westphal (1860–1931), whose husband, Frank Westphal, was the first ordained minister to be sent by the Seventh-day Adventist church to South America. She served as a treasurer for the East Coast Mission, the administrative organization of the church then encompassing the countries of Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil. Later she headed the Sabbath School and Home Missionary department for the entire field of South America. Those posts allowed her to pen several articles, recounting missionary stories and the progress of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the countries she served. Silvia uses them profusely along with other first-hand accounts published in denominational magazines and books. This constant dependence on primary sources not only makes the book historically reliable but colorful and vivid as well.

The fifth chapter focuses on Lucy Post (1845–1937), a successful Bible worker that planted the first church in Uruguay. Next comes Sadie R. Graham Town (1869–1966), who was instrumental in the development of the Colegio Adventista del Plata, now the Universidad Adventista del Plata (River Plate Adventist University), and also an effective missionary along with her husband, Nelson Town. The life of Luisa Post-Everist (1879–1957), niece of Lucy Post, is addressed in the seventh chapter. Among other achievements, she was the first director of the Adventist Youth department in Argentina, which led along with the Home Missionary and Sabbath-School departments. Previously she had been the secretary of the Sabbath School Department for the entire South-American continent. The next chapter covers the life of Lydia Green-Oppegard (1875–1960), who was one of the first editors of denominational magazines in South America and also headed the Sabbath School Department of the newly created South American Division since 1916, succeeding Luisa Post-Everist in that post. Chapters nine and ten deal with the lives of Elvira Deggeller (1885–1958) and her sister Cecilia Deggeller (1880–1973) respectively. The former's work as a literature evangelist was instrumental in the planting of numerous churches, while the latter traveled through South America as a Bible worker with equally fruitful results. The last biography, in the eleventh chapter, belongs to Meda Kerr (1879–1933), a brilliant nurse who pioneered health evangelism in Uruguay and Argentina.

In the concluding chapter, Silvia recapitulates the lives and deeds of women missionaries and recommends some lines of research for future works on the same topic. A book of this nature was certainly long due. This is the first attempt to provide a history of the women who played a fundamental role in the beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America, and as such the author's endeavor must be highly commended. The author constructed the stories using a wide variety of primary sources and first-hand accounts, including articles in denominational magazines from that time, autobiographies, and interviews with living relatives. The

dependence on reliable sources makes the book historically trustworthy and reveals the careful historical research that produced it.

Since most of these stories have been overlooked by previous historical works, readers will be struck by the important and significant positions filled by women during the first years of the Adventist Church in South America. In many cases, current ecclesiastical policies prevent women from occupying these positions today, which signals a contemporary lack of understanding of the essential role that women play in the mission and leadership of the Adventist church. Despite the great significance of this book, a couple of points should be mentioned.

The current edition is a revised and expanded version of a book published in Spanish in 2012 by the same University Press. Chapters one, two, three, and twelve were not present in the first Spanish edition. The remaining chapters were slightly revised and updated. The decision to publish a new edition in English provides a wider international audience for these stories. Nonetheless, in some cases, the translation is guilty of awkwardness caused by an overly literal translation. Perhaps a more flexible translation could have rendered better results. Further details on the geographical or historical background of some places and institutions could have been beneficial for readers lacking knowledge of South American Adventist territory and history. Another point worth mentioning is the title of ch 2 ("Introduction") which may be misleading for inattentive readers. Although the title matches the content of the chapter, which provides a general outline for the book, it is unusual for a second chapter. Perhaps would have been better to merge chapters one and two.

Despite the minor issues that were mentioned, I highly recommend this book. The author vividly describes the daily struggles and victories of these warriors for Christ in their tireless fight to spread the Adventist message in unreached lands. It is informative and inspiring at the same time. Concluding, I must say that this book is a must-read for anyone interested in a more profound and inclusive understanding of the beginnings of the Adventist movement in South America as reflected in the lives of some of its more outstanding female pioneers. Missiologists will also find valuable information in the study of female involvement in Christian missions.

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Thiessen, Matthew. *Jesus and the Forces of Death: The Gospels' Portrayal of Ritual Impurity within First-Century Judaism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020. xii + 241 pp. Hardcover. USD 27.99.

This review is an abridged form of an invited review paper presented in a Synoptic Gospels and Ritual in the Biblical World joint session of the Society of Biblical Literature on December 9, 2020.

Thiessen's assessment of the Gospels' portrayal of Jesus's approach to ritual impurity convincingly cuts through the fat of centuries of Christian misrepresentation. It contributes to countering anti-Semitism by showing an important way in which Jesus maintained, rather than repudiated, his Jewish roots in the Hebrew Bible. Following a brief introduction, seven chapters of *Jesus and the Forces of Death* discuss (1) holy, pure, profane, and impure categories in the Bible; (2) purity and purification in Jesus's family and early years; (3) Jesus healing impure skin disease (*lepra*), and (4) an impure genital discharge; (5) raising the dead (impure corpses) to life, (6) exorcising impure demons; and finally (7) healing on the Sabbath. A conclusion is followed by an appendix on Jesus's approach to the dietary laws; a bibliography; and indexes of authors, scriptures and ancient writings, and subjects.

Thiessen's analyses of the relevant New Testament texts are grounded in a thorough understanding of their backgrounds in the Israelite ritual impurity system as prescribed in the Pentateuch. His study is strengthened and enriched by references to a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, not only in and relating to the Old and New Testaments, but also ancient Near Eastern, Dead Sea Scrolls, classical, and rabbinic sources. Especially helpful and impressive is the detailed way in which he corrects the common misunderstanding that biblical *lepra* (Hebrew *ṣara'at*) is the same as modern leprosy, i.e. Hansen's disease (43–51). Hyam Maccoby's *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and its Place in Judaism* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), cited by Thiessen, quite precisely identifies the common denominator among the Israelite physical ritual impurities as the birth-to-death cycle of mortality (60). Thus, Thiessen is on target when he observes: "What is holy must be the antithesis of death and mortality: life" (17). This concept is foundational to his convincing explanations of positive ways in which Jesus interacted with impurities by healing sources of impurity, thereby restoring life by divine holy power. Biblical passages such as Gen 3 and Rom 5:12 and 6:23 indicate that the cycle of mortality, which generates physical ritual impurities, originated from sinful actions by the first humans. So it is not surprising that both physical conditions and sins, i.e., moral faults, could be regarded as "impure" in the Bible and also in the ancient Near East. Thiessen points out that Jesus's ministry did not abolish the ritual system, which was compassionate in that it protected people from negative consequences of bringing impurities in contact with holy things. Rather, Jesus overcame the sources of impurity themselves, thereby pointing to a future restoration from sin and mortality that would render the ritual system unnecessary (72, 180–185).

Thiessen uses the term "ritual impurity" only concerning physical impurities, but it would seem more clear and precise to call them "physical ritual impurities." As I explained elsewhere ("Purification Offerings and Paradoxical Pollution of the Holy," in *Writing a Commentary on Leviticus: Hermeneutics – Methodology – Themes*, ed. Christian A. Eberhart and Thomas

Hieke, FRLANT 276 [Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019], 121–122), this is because defilements from some moral faults could also be removed by Israelite rituals, as in Lev 6:20 (Eng. v. 27) when a purification offering removes defilement resulting from a violation of a divine commandment and in 16:21–22, 26 when sins carried by Azazel's goat cause impurity. Thiessen observes that sometimes ritual and moral impurity "bleed into each other. When a person does not remove a ritual impurity using the prescribed method at the prescribed time, it can lead to moral impurity—sin. Consequently, I think it helps to map these two categories in a way that reflects that these impurities form a spectrum and are not always mutually exclusive" (13). It is true that these categories of impurity are closely related, as especially shown by the fact that purification offerings remedy both categories. However, failure to follow a divine instruction regarding impurity on time is like failure to follow a divine command regarding anything else; it is a moral fault (e.g. Lev 5:2–3; 7: 20–21; Num 19:13, 20), so I do not see how the two categories of physical ritual impurity and moral impurity overlap or form a spectrum.

Regarding postpartum ritual impurity, Thiessen makes an excellent case for the probable implicit impurity of the baby as well as the mother in Lev 12 (30–33). He applies this background to Luke 2:22, suggesting that the purification of baby Jesus, along with Mary, was completed through sacrifices at the temple, following the instruction in Lev 12:8 for a mother who cannot afford a lamb (Luke 2:24). This raises a question regarding the nature of Christ: If he had to be purified, does this mean that he was susceptible to physical ritual impurity, even though he was the holy "Son of God" from birth, according to Luke 1:35? Or did Jesus undergo ritual purification as he underwent baptism, which he did not need for religious conversion, in order "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt 3:15 NRSV) as an example for others who needed it?

Thiessen observes that priestly writings do not refer to demonic impurity (14, 123–124). However, Lev 19:31, in the so-called "Holiness Code," commands: "Do not turn to the spirits of the dead and do not seek familiar spirits to become unclean by them" (NET Bible). Here these spirits are not identified as demonic, but they are occult entities causing impurity that is akin to demonic impurity in the New Testament.

Thiessen finds that "Jesus rescues people and restores them to wholeness of life during holy time, the Sabbath," (173) which "serves as a foretaste of all that the kingdom will bring" (176). This makes good sense in light of the function of the seventh-day Sabbath to commemorate God's ideal Creation (Exod 20:11; 31:17; cf. Gen 2:2–3), which is to be restored in God's coming kingdom (e.g. Rev 21–22).

Thiessen points out regarding Peter's vision in Acts 10: "this vision, as Luke painstakingly makes clear, has nothing to do with a change in the Jewish dietary system ..." (195). Supporting this interpretation, we can add that in

verse 15, "it is the extrabiblical 'common' category that is to be regarded as 'clean' here (with ESV); the biblical 'impure' category is unaffected" (see Roy E. Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application* [Baker, 2017], 357). On the "common" category, see Colin House, "Defilement by Association: Some Insights from the Usage of Κοινός/Κοινόω in Acts 10 and 11," *AUSS* 21 [1983]: 143–153).

Thiessen suggests regarding Mark 7:19b, which is commonly mistranslated to say that Jesus thereby declared all foods clean: "it is conceivable that the point here is that food goes to the stomach and then to the bowels (and ultimately latrine) and that this process purges or purifies the body of all foods" (193, n. 26). Indeed, this seems to be the best interpretation (Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians*, 356). Eike Mueller has demonstrated that in Mark 7 Jesus did not terminate the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" meats, but he opposed extrabiblical traditions that went beyond the biblical requirements ("Cleansing the Common: A Narrative-Intertextual Study of Mark 7:1–23" [PhD diss., Andrews University, 2015]). Thiessen finds that the pentateuchal prohibitions against eating "unclean/unfit" species of animals (Lev 11; Deut 14) do not concern ritual impurity (188). So should Christians keep these laws today? Nothing in the New Testament abrogates the basic distinctions between "clean" and "unclean" animal species, which were known in some form to Noah, long before the formation of the Israelite nation (Gen 7:2–3, 8–9; 8:20). Therefore, it would seem that these distinctions still apply to the dietary practices of non-Jews (Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians*, 352–358).

Thiessen concludes that the hope, expressed by prophets such as Isaiah and Daniel, that God will someday overcome human mortality "implies that the ritual impurity inevitably endured by mortal people will one day come to an end, making the ritual purity laws unnecessary" (182). Indeed, modern Christians often incur ritual impurities because we continue to be mortal, but does Thiessen mean to say that the ritual purity laws are necessary for us in the sense that we should be observing them today? If so, how is this possible, given that we cannot offer sacrifices of purification at an authorized and functioning temple of God on earth? Would it not be more accurate to say that we are all ritually impure and it no longer matters because there is no danger that we can contact *sancta* on earth in an impure state? After all, the only temple for Christians is in heaven, according to the book of Hebrews.

In Thiessen's conclusion, he agrees with Christine Hayes regarding the divinely created future ideal condition of human beings that is prophesied by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These prophets predict that God will write His law on the hearts of his people (Jer 31:33; 38:33 LXX) and will give them a new heart and put his Spirit within them so that they will obey his laws (Ezek 36:25–27). Thiessen (181 n.8) quotes this comment by Christine Hayes: "Insofar as Jeremiah and Ezekiel assume that perfect Torah observance will require a future redesign of human nature and elimination of moral freedom

that only God can effect, they reinforce the general biblical narrative—perfect Torah obedience is neither expected nor required of human beings as they are" (*What's Divine about Divine Law: Early Perspectives* [Princeton University Press, 2015], 49).

Is this what the prophets predict? As Gregory A. Boyd has emphasized, without freedom of choice it is impossible to love (Gregory A. Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy* [IVP Academic, 2001], 50–84). According to Jesus, love is the essence of God's law (Matt 22:37–40). So how could elimination of moral freedom, which would end love, result in obedience to God's law? It appears that Jeremiah and Ezekiel are saying that God will enable the right choices of his people to serve him, rather than making moral robots out of them. If people with free choice can't obey God, it is difficult to explain the exhortation of Moses when he told the Israelites that his command to keep the Lord's commandments and statutes "is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach … No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it" (Deut 30:11–14 NJPS).

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Tonstad, Sigve K. *Revelation. Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019. 398 pp. Softcover. USD 35.00.

Revelation by Sigve Tonstad is the refreshingly original, thought-provoking, consensus challenging, and boldly out-of-the-ordinary commentary on the Apocalypse. This newest addition to the Paideia commentaries will challenge readers to reframe their perception of the book of Revelation. Built on ancient backgrounds and conversant with a modern scholarship, this commentary centers on a theological reading of the text and the extraction of practical applications for contemporary readers. Sigve Tonstad is a research professor at Loma Linda University and a well-established scholar with numerous publications on theodicy, ecological hermeneutics, and biblical ethics. In this commentary, he offers a unique non-violent, non-punitive view of God and the judgment, the view which challenges the status quo of the majority of interpretations.

Similar to other commentaries on Revelation, the author offers essential introductory material where he sets the focus of the commentary and provides interpretive lenses. Besides touching common introductory questions, the hermeneutical approaches (preterist, historicist, futurist), and relations between Roman history and Revelation's visions, the author emphasizes the book as a revelation: the open door, the exposé, the ultimate means which unmasks the works of the father of all lies, the devil. The book

conveniently follows the text of John's Apocalypse. Each chapter contains three sections: "(1) introductory matters; (2) tracing the train of thought or narrative or rhetorical flow of the argument; and (3) theological issues raised by the text that is of interest to the contemporary Christian" (x). In the theological section, Tonstad delivers practical remarks on present-time issues. Diving deep into the works of Dostoevsky, Solzhenitsyn, and others, this section reveals the author's devotional passion behind his scholarship. The book also features a lengthy bibliography with old and recent works as well as the indexes of subjects, modern authors, scriptures, and ancient resources which readers will appreciate.

Beyond the audible perception of the Revelation, which is somewhat linear, Tonstad introduces a "re-reader" approach to the book. He argues that only "a re-reader will have an awareness of the whole that is necessary for understanding the parts" (39, cf. 132, 147). Time and again the author elevates above particular passages to observe the visionary fabric of the Apocalypse from above and to connect various pieces of the revelatory puzzle. Tonstad argues that the Revelation's "hub of the wheel," chapter 12, is the key to understanding the cosmic scale of all the book's visions (37). For him, the first-century Roman background is too small and inadequate in comparison to the universal and timeless conflict the book aims to address. The author is not shy to claim that John's Apocalypse deals with greater matters than Nero: "what is not on their minds is the emperor Nero and the Roman imperial cult" (111); "nothing less than a global or cosmic stage will suffice" (166); the myth of Nero's return is questioned (189–190); "an imperial referent is too parochial" (196); "the story is compromised by a small screen, Roman frame of reference" (214); "Nero is a mismatch" (246).

Aside from critiquing popular preterist interpretations, Tonstad also stays away from all historical applications to the visions (against historicists and futurists). Instead, he offers the idealist reading of the Revelation arguing for the timeless significance of the prophecies. His commentary anchors on values, not events; it is God-centered more than time-centered (29). Tonstad's arguments for the cosmic proportions seem convincing, yet the complete avoidance of the historical meaning creates a lacuna. On the one hand, the author masterfully identifies the main characters in each scene; on the other, what does this knowledge bring to the reader? Often one may desire to go from abstract concepts to concrete realities but that information is absent. Although Tonstad admits that Revelation is built on Daniel's "historical phenomena" (188), he excludes such discussions from his commentary. He does not talk in tangible terms about any prophetic period, a discussion which readers would most likely value. Instead, he makes a courageous statement by ruling out 1,260 days and its variants (Rev 11:2–3; 12:6, 14; 13:5) as literal days (163). Besides this innovative take on the mainstream interpretation, Tonstad also challenges the status

quo in his view of Armageddon and the millennium. For him, contrary to popular views, the millennium reign is going to take place in heaven, not on earth (291), views all too familiar to Seventh-day Adventists, the affiliation of Tonstad. Similarly, the Armageddon is not a specific place in the Near East but a cosmic mount of assembly from Isa 14:12–13 (231). Although this idea is plausible, the author did not show linguistically how he arrived at "*har-mo'ed*" from "*har-magedon.*"

Yet perhaps the most unconventional but truly remarkable feature of the commentary is Tonstad's main thesis to present God as non-violent and non-revengeful. God is represented in the Lamb which is the victim of violence (Rev 5:6) but He is non-retributive. His weapons are revelation and witness (xii, 57, 164). The word is superior to the sword (213). Jesus, the slain Lamb, is the Revealer who discloses what the other party wants to hide (128). Non-violence exposes and conquers Satan, the Deceiver (173). Tonstad questions the common view that God stands behind all actions in the Revelation (151, 213–214). Instead of accepting passive verbs as the "divine passive," he introduces the "diabolic passive" and argues that Satan stands behind all the horrors in the Apocalypse (125; cf. 194). The key concept for Tonstad's thesis is to view God as the Restrainer who gradually removes his protection, allowing the other side to operate without restraint. God's wrath then is understood as the withdrawal of the divine protection (208). Satanic activity, thus, self exposes its true nature all the way until the final battle when God's enemies self-destroy themselves "outside of the city" (213–214).

All in all, the *Revelation* by Sigve Tonstad captivates by its originality. The commentary calls readers to a deeper analysis of the text seasoned with unconventional thinking. No doubt some may occasionally disagree with the author on particularities, yet his original thinking alone outweighs all possible shortcomings. This commentary is a valuable contribution to scholarship and it has the potential to guide its readers into new explorations. Any Bible student, be they scholars, pastors, teachers, or none of those, will benefit from its pages – it is a must-read.

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Wolter, Michael. *Der Brief an die Römer.* 2 vols. EKKNT 6. Ostfildern: Patmos; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014/2019. 559 pp./511 pp. Softcover. EUR 75.99/69.99.

Michael Wolter's impressive professional career includes being a professor for Biblical Theology at the University of Bayreuth (Germany) from 1988–1993 and a Professor of New Testament at the University of Bonn (Germany) from 1993–2016. He also served as editor of the *Theologischen*

Realenzyklopädie (*TRE*) from 1983–1988 and as editor of the *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche* (*ZNW*) in 1998–2013. Besides, he was president of the *Colloquium Oecumenicum Paulinum* in Rome (Italy) from 2002–2004 and president of the *Society for New Testament Studies* in 2017–2018.

Wolter's list of publications justifies his impressive professional career. It includes, among many others, his dissertation, *Rechtfertigung und zukünftiges Heil: Untersuchungen zu Römer 5,1–11*, BZNW 43 (de Gruyter, 1978) and his habilitation, *Die Pastoralbreife als Paulustradition*, FRLANT 164 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988). He authored commentaries on Colossians and Philemon (*Der Brief and die Kolosser*. *Der Brief and Philemon*, ÖTK 12 [Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1993]) on Luke (*Das Lukasevangelium*, HNT 5 [Mohr Siebeck, 2008]), and several books like *Paulus: Ein Grundriss seiner Theologie.* 3rd ed. (Neukirchener Verlag, 2019), and most recently *Jesus von Nazareth,* Theologische Bibliothek 6 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019). Some works by Wolter has recently been translated into English such as his commentary on Luke and his book on Pauline theology entitled *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (Baylor, 2015).

Wolter published his two-volume commentary on Romans as the sixth volume of the German *Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*. It adds to Ulrich Wilckens's three-volume Romans commentary that was published between 1978 and 1982. The commentaries appear in softcover. It is worthwhile to note that the quality of the binding has significantly improved compared to previous volumes of the series. Even after extensive use of the commentary, the binding remains solid and unbroken. The series editors claim that Michael Wolter provides the first German-speaking commentary on Romans, which interprets Romans on the one hand in the framework of the *New Perspective on Paul* and, on the other hand, as part of the separating process between Christians and Jews (back cover).

Wolter's commentary follows the typical format of the series. He first provides a short bibliography for the discussed paragraph, followed by the paragraph's translation in bold print. After the translation, Wolter discusses contextual, structural, and thematic issues related to the discussed paragraph in the analysis part. An explanation section follows in which Wolter interprets the text in a verse-by-verse exegesis. As part of this explanation section, Wolter occasionally pays special attention to debated phrases or theological concepts. A summary section concludes the discussion on each paragraph. For better orientation, the commentary layout has the parts, the references of the discussed verses, and the discussion on debated phrases and theological concepts indicated in the margin. This feature helps the reader to locate the relevant content quickly.

Among the hundreds of commentaries on Romans, Wolter's commentary is simply unrivaled. Wolter is very apt in unlocking Paul's text by

efficiently applying the exegetical set of keys. The grammatical, syntactical, and semantic discussions of the Greek are delivered in a comprehensible manner. The interpretative and theological implications he draws from the detailed linguistic analyses are impressive and in nature comparable to Cranfield's *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed. 2 vols., ICC 31 (T&T Clark, 1975/1979). The organization and the readability of the discussed material are outstanding. The historical analyses contain interactions with relevant non-Jewish Greco-Roman primary sources, canonical material, and extra-canonical material from the Second Temple period. Through these interactions, Wolter guides the reader through the cultural and social environment of the original recipients of Paul's epistle so that Paul's intentions with Romans become alive and understandable. The extensive footnotes reveal that Wolter's analysis is in dialog with the major contemporary interpreters and those of the past in German and English scholarship.

There is no way around Wolter's Romans commentary for serious scholarship on Romans. The quality of Wolter's commentary turns him into an inevitable dialog partner for any scholar seeking to make a contribution to the study of Romans. This fact raises the question about the accessibility of Wolter's material due to being published in German. Therefore, I hope that Wolter's commentary on Romans will be translated soon as has been the case with other publications by Wolter.

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