SEMINAR PAPERS



SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

ANNUAL MEETING 1997

Scholars Press

SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

1997 Seminar Papers

Society of Biblical Literature
Seminar Papers Series

Number 36
Society of Biblical Literature
1997 Seminar Papers

Society of Biblical Literature
1997 Seminar Papers

One hundred Thirty-third Annual Meeting
November 22–25, 1997
San Francisco Hilton, Hotel Nikko, and Parc Fifty–five Hotel
San Francisco, California

Scholars Press
Atlanta, Georgia

Society of Biblical Literature
1997 Seminar Papers

© 1997
Society of Biblical Literature

Indexed in *Religion Index Two: Multi-Author Works*
published by the American Theological Library Association, Evanston, Illinois.
Indexing also available in the ATLA Religion Database
accessible through Dialog Information Services, Palo Alto, California.
Also available for compact-disk searching through ATLA.

ISBN: 0-7885-0391-X
ISSN: 0145-2711

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

S18 Not to Abolish the Text, but Displace It: The Repositioning of the Authorial Audience in Pasolini's *Il Vangelo seco Matteo*
Christopher C. Fuller 1

S25 Negative Theologies and Demiurgical Myths in Late Antiquity
Michael A. Williams 20

S32 Arguments and Audience(s) in the Gospel of Thomas (Part I)
Jon Ma. Asgeirsson 47

S32 Rhetorical Composition and Sources in the Gospel of Thomas
Vernon K. Robbins 86

S41 Key Jewish Texts on Blasphemy and Exaltation and the Jewish Examination of Jesus
Darrell L. Bock 115

S41 The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7:13 as a Test Case
Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis 161

S41 Biblical Hypostases and the Concept of God
Mara Schiffren 194

S43 Still More Signs of Unity in the Book of Isaiah: The Significance of Third Isaiah
Gregory J. Polan, OSB 224

S43 Isaiah LVI 1-8
D. W. Van Winkle 234

S45 Reading Matthew as Cultural Criticism
A. K. M. Adam 253

S48 Ancient Alexandria in the *Acts of Mark*
Birger A.Pearson 273

S69 Multivocality in Romans 4
Robert L. Brawley 285

S69 The Process of the Interpretation of Romans
Cristina Grenholm 306

S69 "God's Gifts and Call Are Irrevocable":
The Interpretation of Rom 11:29 and Its Uses
Joseph Sievers 337

S76 Towards an Ethical Reading of The Apocalypse:
Reflections on John's Use of Power, Violence, and Misogyny
David L. Barr 358

S76 The Politics of Praise: A Reading of Revelation 19:1-10
Jean-Pierre Ruiz 374

S88 The Production and Reading of the Book of the Twelve
Paul L. Redditt 394

S88 How to Read the Book of the Twelve as a Theological Unity
Rolf Rendtorff 420

S88 A Deuteronomistic Redaction in/among "The Twelve"?
A Contribution from the Standpoint of the Books of Micah,
Zephaniah and Obadiah
Ehud Ben Zvi 433

S116 Enslaving, Devouring, Exploring, Self-Exalting, and Striking:
2 Cor 11:19-20 and the Tyranny of Paul's Opponents
Scott B. Andrews 460

S116 Investigating Honor Discourse:
Guidelines from Classical Rhetoricians
David A. deSilva 491

S116 True Rhetoric: Amiguity, Cunning, and
Deception in Pauline Discourse
Mark D. Given 526

S116 Voices of Authority in the Sermon on the Mount
Russell B. Sisson 551

S116 Like Father, Like Son, Absolute Case, Mythic Authority:
Constructing Ideology in John 5:17-23
Mary R. Huie-Jolly 567

S116 The Rhetoric of Revelation
Robert M. Royalty Jr. 596

S130 "There's More in the Text than That": William Wells Brown's
Clotel, Slave Ideology and Pauline Hermeneutics
Abraham Smith 618

S161 Community Definition and Matthew's Gospel
Warren Carter 637

S197 An Early Non-Canonical Annunciation Story
George T. Zervos 664

S210 2 Timothy and Its Theology:
In Search of a Theological Pattern
James W. Aageson 692

S210 Studying Paul: 2 Timothy as Remembrance
Lewis R. Donelson 715

S210 Toward a Theology of 2 Timothy —
from a Pauline Perspective
Gordon D. Fee 732

Q Bibliography Supplement VIII: 1997
David M. Scholer 750

Not to Abolish the Text, but Displace It: The Repositioning of the Authorial Audience in Pasolini's *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo*

by Christopher C. Fuller

Pier Paolo Pasolini--Italian novelist, poet, theorist, filmmaker and cultural critic--is best known in academic film studies for his eclectic cinema. It includes the neorealist aesthetics of *Accatone*,[1] the "mythic" worlds of *Medea* and *Edipo re*,[2] the stylistic contaminations of *La trilogia della vita*,[3] and finally the inconsumable cinema of *Salò*.[4] In the midst of these productions he directed the film for which he is best known by popular audiences (particularly Christian audiences), *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel according to Matthew*).[5]

The First Gospel would seem to be an odd choice for Pasolini who was an atheist, a Communist and a homosexual. One would hardly associate these three characteristics with the desire to film an adaptation of one of the Gospels.[6] Yet, as paradoxical as this may sound, it is not surprising that he

---

[1] For a discussion of neorealism in Italian cinema, see P. Bondanella, *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present* (2d ed.; New York: Continuum, 1990) 31-102; M. Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) 3-117.

[2] N. Greene, *Pier Paolo Pasolini: Cinema as Heresy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 123-72.

[3] *La trilogia della vita* ("Trilogy of Life") is a series of three films that Pasolini directed in the early 1970s: *Il Decamerone* (1971), *I racconti di Canterbury* (1972), *Il fiore delle mille e una note* (1974). For a discussion of stylistic contamination in these films, see P. Rumble, *Allegories of Contamination: Pier Paolo Pasolini's Trilogy of Life* (Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

[4] N. Greene, "*Salò*: The Failure to Consume," *Pier Paolo Pasolini: Contemporary Perspectives* (ed. P. Rumble and B. Testa; Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press, 1994) 232-42.

[5] P. P. Pasolini, *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo* (Arco Film [Rome]/Lux Cie Cinématographie [Paris], 1964); 137 minutes. The title is usually rendered in English as *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*. However, Pasolini's Italian title does not include the word "saint" nor did Pasolini ever intend for the word to be included in the title.

[6] While Pasolini professed to be an atheist his entire life, he never denied the influence of Catholicism.

would identify with the crucified preacher from Galilee. Pasolini often felt persecuted for his work in literature and film.

His attraction to the First Gospel also extends to what can only be described as a prophetic call. Fueled by a reform-minded Pope, John XXIII, Pasolini described his response to reading the Gospels as "an immediate need to 'do something'--a terrible, almost physical energy."[7] This statement echoes Jeremiah who says that he cannot stop speaking in God's name because "in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones."[8] Pasolini also likened his experience to Paul's encounter of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus.[9] The result is what the *Catholic Film Newsletter* calls an "extraordinary translation of the Gospel to the screen" that is "intensely Christian."[10] It was subsequently awarded the International Catholic Film Office's grand prize in 1964 and placed by the Vatican on its elite list of classic films.

This short introduction surveys both Pasolini's background and the Catholic Church's response to *Il Vangelo* to deliberately highlight how a large number of Christians and film critics have affectionately embraced it as the "best life of Jesus ever placed on film and probably the finest religious film ever made as well."[11] Much of the affinity for the film rests on its fidelity to its source. In a letter to Lucio Caruso of the *Pro Civitate Christiana* in Assisi, Pasolini wrote that it was his intention to follow the First Gospel "point by point" with dialogue that was "strictly that of Saint Matthew, without even a single explanatory or connecting sentence."[12] Thus, "the film

---

[7] P. P. Pasolini, *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo* (Milan: Garzanti, 1964) 14. Sam Rohdie calls *Il Vangelo* "Pasolini's *Pacem in Terris* film (*The Passion of Pier Paolo Pasolini* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995] 161). *Pacem in Terris* was a 1963 encyclical by Pope John XXIII which signaled a new attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward the world.

[8] Jer 20:9.

[9] E. Siciliano, *Pasolini* (New York: Random House, 1982) 270.

[10] "Best of the New Films," *Catholic Film Newsletter* (26 February 1966) 1.

[11] R. Schickel, "A Stark, Astonishing Life of Christ," *Life* (11 March 1966) 10. See, also, J. R. Nelson, "Pasolini's Miracle," *Christian Century* (16 March 1966) 335; M. Walsh, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," *America* (26 February 1966) 307; R. Kiely, "One Catholic's View," *Jean-Luc Godard's Hail Mary: Women and the Sacred in Film* (ed. M. Locke and C. Warren; Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993) 81.

[12] Pasolini, *Il Vangelo*, 16.

constantly makes the viewer feel that what he sees is the way it must have been."[13]

Recently others have undertaken more detailed comparisons of the text of Matthew's Gospel with Pasolini's interpretation.[14] These studies reveal that while Pasolini does, in fact, use only the words and scenes from his source he does not use them in a manner that is entirely faithful to the order and structure of the First Evangelist's narrative. With this in mind, we shall track the movement of the "authorial audience" from its identity inscribed in Matthew's text to the one inscribed in Pasolini's filmic interpretation.

First, we shall briefly outline the role of the authorial audience and the narrator in the Gospel of Matthew as explicated by narrative scholars. Then we shall describe the differences in Pasolini's adaptation. We shall specifically discuss narrative absence, structural ruptures, and the implicatedness of Pasolini's filmic narrator in the story it tells.[15] Finally, we shall suggest what Pasolini's "faithful" adaptation means for the subjectivity of the believing authorial audience as it moves from the written text to the filmic text.

The Authorial Audience and Narrator in the Text of Matthew's Gospel

In narratological studies it is common to refer to the reader created by the communicative expectations of the text as the "implied reader." This term refers to a construction and not the historical reader or "real" reader. "The implied reader is one who actualizes the potential for meaning in a text, who

---

[13] "Best of the New Films," 1.

[14] See Z. G. Baranski, "The Texts of *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo*," *The Italienist* 5 (1985) 77-106; B. Testa, "To Film a Gospel ... and Advent of the Theoretical Stranger," *Pier Paolo Pasolini: Contemporary Perspectives*, 180-209; M. Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book: Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 111-35.

[15] For a discussion of "voice" of the narrative agent (human or not? male or female?), see S. Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) 118-27.

responds to it in ways consistent with the expectations that we may ascribe to its implied author."[16]

Thus far we have used the term "implied reader." However, film was designed for corporate reception as were the Gospels.[17] Thus, we shall use "authorial audience" to refer to the person (or people) assumed by narratives.[18] We refer to this audience as a "believing" audience because the Gospels were written for the purposes of teaching in the Christian communities.[19] This emphasis is further bolstered by Pasolini's intent to render the life Christ through the eyes of a believer.[20]

The other narrative device we shall examine is the narrator. The narrator is different from the "implied author" of a text. The implied author is the literary version of the real, historical author. The authorial audience comes to know the implied author through the process of encountering the story.[21] Like the authorial audience, the implied author is a construction based on the literary signals in the narrative. The narrator is the voice used by the implied author to tell the story.[22] Literary theorists distinguish between the implied author and the narrator because the reliability of the narrator can be called into question. A narrator can be unreliable which places it in opposition with the implied author. "This occurs when the narrator does not espouse the same system of ideas, values, or beliefs that sustains and informs the story."[23]

There are, of course, ongoing debates about the role of the authorial audience and the role of the narrator. It is not the intent of this study to engage in these discussions. The brief surveys contained here will suffice for our purposes.

---

[16] M. A. Powell, *God with Us: A Pastoral Theology of Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) 241.

[17] L. W. Hurtado, "Gospel (Genre)," *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (ed. J. B. Green, S. McKnight and I. H. Marshall; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992) 279.

[18] See W. Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996) 4-5.

[19] D. Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Gospel* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1987) 5; Hurtado, "Gospel (Genre)," 279.

[20] Greene, *Cinema as Heresy*, 74.

[21] J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 31.

[22] M. A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) 25.

[23] Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 31.

Narrative scholars argue that the narrator in Matthew's Gospel is reliable, omnipresent, and omniscient.[24] It is reliable because who it says Jesus is is exactly whom Jesus proves himself to be in the course of the story; he is God's royal son who has come to call Israel to repentance. One manner in which the authorial audience is convinced of the narrator's reliability is through a series of formulaic references which connect the prophetic voice of the Hebrew scriptures with the life of Jesus.[25] Each of these formulas is a variation of what appears in 1:22: "All this happened in order to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet."[26] Thus, what takes place in Jesus' birth, ministry and death confirms what was foretold in the authoritative voice of the people, their holy writings, about the messiah. "By explicitly pointing out the precise continuity between the OT and these events, the narrator gives the reader a further reason to accept the validity of his comments."[27]

Matthew's narrator is omnipresent because it can be any place at time in order to keep the audience informed about the story. "Not a character himself, he is the invisible speaker who is both above and beyond the story, since he is the one who tells it, also within the story, since there is no scene from which he is absent."[28] The audience encounters this ability of the narrator most convincingly in the scenes where Jesus is alone whether he is fending off the testing of the devil (4:1-11) or praying to God in the Garden of Gethsemane (26:36-46). The ability of the narrator to shift between scenes is highlighted in 26:58-74 where the it moves from Peter who is in the courtyard of the high priest (v. 58), to the Jewish trial of Jesus (vv. 59-68) and back to Peter's denial of Jesus (vv. 69-74).[29]

---

[24] M. Davies, *Matthew* (Readings; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 11, 22; Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 30-31.

[25] Matt 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:56; 27:9.

[26] All English translations from the Greek are mine unless otherwise noted.

[27] R. A. Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 13.

[28] Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 32.

[29] This scene of narrative intercalation also provides an opportunity for film theory to inform narrative studies. S. Eisenstein's theory of montage is of particular interest. See "Montage of Attractions, An Essay," *The Film Sense* (ed. and trans. J. Leyda; New York: Harvest, 1970) 230-33; "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram, *Film Form* (ed. and trans. J. Leyda; New York: Harvest, 1949) 28-44; "A Dialectical Approach to Film Form," *Film Form*, 45-63.

Finally, the narrator is said to be omniscient "for there is nothing in the world of this story of which he does not have full knowledge."[30] Thus, the narrator is able to know the thoughts of the scribes (9:3), the fear of Herod at the prospect of the birth of the king of the Jews (2:3) and that Jesus has compassion on the crowds that follow him (9:36). This ability allows the narrator to provide direct information to the audience that the characters in the story do not have. For instance, the genealogy of Jesus outlined in 1:1-17 provides important information which only the audience knows; the salvation history of Israel is one that has lead to the coming of Jesus and it has been directed by God.[31]

All of these narratological qualities establish a way of viewing the world which guides the authorial audience in its conclusions about Jesus. This is referred to as an ideological or evaluative point of view.[32] The narrator's reliable information about Jesus corresponds with God's scriptures. More importantly, it corresponds with God's own voice who identifies Jesus as royal son (3:17; 17:5). Therefore, the evaluative point of view established by the narrator is God's point of view.[33] This point of view is the "fundamental perspective of the gospel by which all characters, actions, words and values are assessed."[34]

The authorial audience assumed by the text of Matthew is one that rests in a privileged position.[35] It is better informed than all other characters in the story, save Jesus, and knows from the beginning who Jesus is and why he came. Any potential confusion over Jesus is reduced through repeated scenes throughout the text (the two blind men in 9:27-31 and 20:29-34; the sign of Jonah in 12:38-42 and 16:1-4; and the feedings of the multitudes in 14:13-21

---

[30] Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 32.

[31] A. Stock, *The Method and Message of Matthew* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994) 21-3; R. E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (ABRL 2d ed.; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 66-9; Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 45; Edwards, *Matthew's Story*, 12; Patte, *Matthew*, 18.

[32] B. Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition* (trans. V. Zavarin and S. Wittig; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) 8.

[33] Carter, *Matthew*, 146-47; Davies, *Matthew*, 23; Stock, *Method and Message*, 23; Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 34.

[34] Carter, *Matthew*, 123.

[35] Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 32-33; Stock, *Method and Message*, 21.

and 15:30-38 are some examples).[36] The belief in Jesus as the messiah and son of God is confirmed by the narrator who reliably identifies Jesus' life as rooted in the history of Israel, by Jesus who enacts God's promises to Israel in his ministry and death and resurrection, and most importantly by God who breaks into the story to identify Jesus explicitly as his son.

Absence, Disruption and the Narrator's Presence in Pasolini's *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo*

Here we will examine Pasolini's adaptation of Matthew's text. We will ascertain what the differences reveal about the subjectivity of the authorial audience moving from one narrative discourse to another. It is a given that any translation of a written text to the screen involves editing and rearrangement of certain materials in order to meet the needs of a different medium.[37] There is no doubt that Pasolini has edited his source material. However, as Z. Baranski has shown in his detailed comparison of the texts of Matthew and Pasolini, the effect of this editing is far greater than simply cosmetic. He correctly asserts that Pasolini "is adding to interpretations of the Gospel rather than restoring it to its original state."[38] Baranski concludes that Pasolini's changes to his source results in a structural unity that "gives the biblical narrative a feeling of cohesion which the original lacks."[39] This may be true when one considers only the structure of the film independent of its source.[40] However, our goal is to track the movement of the authorial audience from Matthew to Pasolini. This dialectic between the two texts highlights the structural displacement of Pasolini's Gospel. As we shall see, this displacement threatens the singular authority of Matthew's text.

The best manner to highlight the differences in Pasolini's Gospel is to view the film sequences along with the chapters and verses they represent.

---

[36] J. C. Anderson, "Double and Triple Stories, the Implied Reader, and Redundancy in Matthew," *Semeia* 31 (1985) 71-89. Anderson employs redundancy information theory to explain that one of the effects of the repeated stories in Matthew is to reduce alternative interpretations (84).

[37] For an illuminating discussion of filmic adaptation of literary works, see Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book*, 1-24.

[38] Baranski, "Texts," 81.

[39] Baranski, "Texts," 87.

[40] Baranski, "Texts," 86-87.

The following outline represents one derived by M. Viano with new additions and corrections which came to light after viewing the film alongside his outline. Where a passage from Matthew does not follow in numerical order, it has been italicized for emphasis.

Sequence	*Matthew*
1st	1:18-21
v.o. (voice over)	1:23 (prophecy)
2nd	2:1-8
3rd	2:9-12
4th	2:13-15
v.o.	2:15 (prophecy)
5th	2:16-17
v.o.	2:18 (Jeremiah's prophecy)
6th	2:19a
7th	2:19b-20
8th	3:1-16
v.o.	3:17b
9th	4:1-11
10th v.o.	4:16
11th	4:17-22
12th	*10:1-4*
	10:16-20
	10:22
	10:28-31
	10:34-37a
	10:39
13th	*8:2-4*
14th	*5:3-12*
	7:9-12
	5:17
	5:13-15
	6:19-20
	6:24
	6:3
	5:38-39
	5:43-45
	7:1-3

	6:7-13
	6:25-34
	7:13-14
	11:25-28
15th	11:28-30
	12:1-8
	12:10-13
	12:18-21
	12:14
16th	14:15-21
17th	14:22-31
18th	*11:2-6*
19th	11:7-23a
	12:23-24
20th	12:30-31
	12:38-42
	12:46
	12:43-45
	12:48-50
21st	No words/Pasolini's addition
22nd	13:54-47
23rd	19:16-24
	19:13-14
24th	*14:6-10*
25th	14:13
	8:21-22
	8:19-20
	Quote from Isa 14:31; 15:3 not in Matthew
26th	16:13-24
	17:22-23
	18:1-14
	18:21-22
	20:18-19
27th	21:1-3
28th	21:11-13
	21:15-17
29th	21:18-22

30th	21:23-44
	22:14
	22:16-39
31st	23:1-13
	23:15-39
	24:1-2
32nd	26:3-5
33rd	26:6-13
34th	26:14-15
35th	26:20-29
36th	26:30-42
	26:51-56
	26:49-50
37th	26:58-66
	26:69-74
38th	27:1-2
39th	27:3-8
40th	27:11-17
	27:21-26
41st	27:27-34
42nd	*13:14b-15 (black frame)*
43rd	27:45-49
44th	27:60-61
45th	28:5-8
46th	28:16-20[41]

What first comes to view is that there are a number of absences in Pasolini's presentation. In fact, Baranski estimates that Pasolini has left out approximately sixty percent of Matthew's text.[42] We may attribute several deletions to the necessities of adaptation. Furthermore, a complete analysis of every deletion is beyond the scope of this study. However, highlighting three absences helps us to see their significant impact on the authorial audience in relation to the one constructed by Matthew's text.

---

[41] M. Viano, *A Certain Realism: Making Use of Pasolini's Film Theory and Practice* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1993) pp. 331-33 n. 11.

[42] Baranski, "Texts," 82.

The first absence is immediately apparent; there is no genealogy in Pasolini's narrative. The purely textual nature of the genealogy makes it an obvious choice for cinematic deletion. Yet Pasolini's use of voice-over in certain sequences does allow for the possibility of its inclusion. The impact of its absence is magnified when we survey how literary biblical scholars have described its importance. We have already discussed how the genealogy provides an opportunity for the narrator to lay out Jesus' significance in relation to Israel's salvation history. It also allows the narrator to establish its credibility as a reliable source of information.[43] Thus, "the genealogy provides a temporal setting which is assumed in the rest of the narrative, and according to which the story of Jesus is to be understood."[44]

Furthermore, the genealogy provides an opportunity for the narrator to comfortably orient the reader into Matthew's narrative world.[45] This is achieved in one manner through the repeated use of the verb ἐγέννησεν. It occurs thirty-nine times in the first sixteen verses. Its repetition establishes a sense of familiarity for the audience. This familiarity lulls the audience and lays the foundation for the surprise in verse 16 where Joseph does not ἐγέννησεν Jesus. Instead, Jesus ἐγεννήθη to Mary.[46] This disruption causes the audience to take notice and helps move it successfully into Matthew's narrative world.

It is helpful to compare this introduction with the beginning of Pasolini's film. There are no words of introduction, not even a standard establishing shot to give the audience a sense of the scenery.[47] The shot is a close-up of a young woman who looks off in silence. The scene then proceeds with a series of four close-ups intercut between the woman and a man. No one is

---

[43] Stock, *Method and Message*, 23; Carter, *Matthew*, 121-22.

[44] D. R. Bauer, "The Literary Function of the Genealogy in Matthew's Gospel," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 1990* (ed. David J. Lull; Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1990) 467.

[45] Bauer, "Literary Function," 467.

[46] The weight of the textual evidence argues for this reading. See B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London & New York: United Bible Societies, 1975) 2-7; Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 61-64.

[47] "Generally a long shot that shows the audience the general location of the scene that follows, often providing essential information, and orienting the viewer" (J. Monaco, *How to Read a Film: The Art, Technology, Language, History and Theory of Film and Media* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1977] 406.). For a definition of a long shot, see note 58.

identified and, except for atmospheric noises, no major character says anything for the first two-and-a-half minutes of the film. This is a striking contrast with the grand historical sweep of Matthew's introduction and the immediate identification of Jesus, Joseph and Mary. Pasolini's authorial audience begins its narrative journey in confusion. There is no privilege of knowing more than the characters in the story and the startling nature of the first shot places the audience at a distance to the story world rather than transporting it into this world.

The second important absence is the omission of the eschatological discourse in chapters 24-25. This discourse and a new section of the narrative begin in 24:3.[48] It is significant then that Pasolini only includes 24:1-2 in his filmic text. In this discourse Jesus tells his disciples of the "birth pangs" of the coming end of the age (24:8). Though he cannot tell the disciples the time (24:36), he does lay out the signs that signal the end of the age (24:4-44) and his return as the Son of Man to bring final judgment. Jesus then follows this up with a series of parables that emphasize the importance of this final judgment. By omitting 24:3-50 and all of chapter 25 Pasolini considerably strips Jesus of his eschatological orientation--his promise of the future--and more firmly grounds him in the present.

The complete omission of chapter 25 brings to light a final important absence in Pasolini's Gospel, the exclusion of most of Jesus' parables. In Matthew's Gospel Jesus tells nineteen parables.[49] Pasolini retains three of them.[50] These absences are notable because the parables are those sayings that "best embody the speech of Jesus and which are most distinctive of him."[51] It is interesting that Pasolini was attracted to Matthew because he found it to be the most revolutionary Gospel. Yet, he excised a major part of Jesus' speech that was most distinctive about him.

---

[48] F. W. Burnett, "Prolegomenon to Reading Matthew's Eschatological Discourse: Redundancy and the Education of the Reader in Matthew," *Semeia* 31 (1985) 98; D. E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1993) 234.

[49] Matt 13:3-9; 13:18-23; 13:24-30, 36-43; 13:31-32; 13:33; 13:44; 13:45-46; 13:47-50; 18:12-14; 18:23-35; 20:1-16; 21:28-32; 21:33-45; 22:1-14; 24:32-33; 24:45-51; 25:1-13; 25:31-46; 25:14-30.

[50] Matt 18:12-14; 21:28-32; 21:33-45.

[51] J. R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable: Metaphor, Narrative, and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) 2.

W. Carter also notes that the parables serve as literary conventions by which Matthew's narrator sustains God's evaluative point of view throughout his narrative.[52] By excising most of the parables, Pasolini re-orients the evaluative point of view that governs the response of the authorial audience.

These absences signal to Pasolini's authorial audience that his filmic Jesus is someone different from the confines of Matthew's text. We get a better grasp of who he is by now giving some discussion to the structural disruptions in Pasolini's narrative.

The above outline shows that in at least seventeen instances Pasolini jumps forward or backward in defiance of the structure of his source. Six of these occurrences take place in sequence 14 which is the Sermon on the Mount. These occurrences also represent the most significant structural disruption in *Il Vangelo*. Matthew thoughtfully lays out the Sermon on the Mount in a manner that progresses from the beatitudes in 5:3-11 to the programmatic statement in 5:17 and the following "antitheses" in 5:21-48 to the discussion of the motivation for acts of piety and how to pray in 6:1-7:28. The structure of this section is organized around the theme of the "greater righteousness" (5:20).[53] It is this rhythmic flow which contributes to the majesty of what R. Brown calls the "Magna Carta of Christian life."[54]

It is important to note to whom Jesus addresses the sermon. J. Kingsbury and A. Stock note that the sermon does not seem to address the situation of the crowds who gather to hear Jesus speak. The content of 5:11-12 addresses a situation that is more immediate to the authorial audience rather than the crowds in the story. Therefore, the addressee of the sermon is the authorial audience.[55] D. Patte further argues that Matthew's redactional activity which has fashioned his sources into a single sermon creates a didactic discourse which signals to the authorial audience that Jesus' words are to be accepted as authoritative.[56]

This overview helps us to understand the structural disruption that Pasolini introduces by first including only 50 of the 111 verses in this section

---

[52] Carter, *Matthew*, 136-37.

[53] J. D. Kingsbury, "The Place, Structure and Meaning of the Sermon on the Mount Within Matthew," *Int* 41 (1987) 131-43; idem., *Matthew as Story*, 112; Stock, *Method and Message*, 69-70.

[54] R. E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984) 124-25.

[55] Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 107-11; Stock, *Method and Message*, 69.

[56] Patte, *Matthew*, 63.

and then jumbling their order in a manner that explodes the cohesion and unity of Matthew's text. Pasolini further emphasizes this disruption with his shot selection. He begins pastorally with the disciples gathering around Jesus as he preaches from the mount. However, after Jesus delivers the beatitudes, Pasolini shifts to a series of extreme close-ups with Jesus in various settings proclaiming the remainder of the Sermon. There is no more a sense of the crowds around him and there is a continual disjunction of setting which again deconstructs the cohesion and unity of Matthew's text.

Pasolini's camera work in this section of the film produces an address that bypasses the crowds in the film and speaks directly to the authorial audience. M. Marcus highlights this by noting the absence of any reaction shots in this sequence and the abstract relationship this absence creates with the film's dramatic context.[57] However, Pasolini's structural disruption of his source unravels the didactic authority of Matthew's text. The audience, having moved from the world of the text to the cinematic world, must engage the disordered remains of the text and make its own order and sense of Jesus' message.

B. Testa also notes another stylistic manner by which Pasolini disrupts his source. Where Matthew's text is compact and swift in its narration, Pasolini counters this immediacy by using long shots.[58] We encounter this in Jesus' trials before the Jewish leaders and Pilate. Both scenes are shot in cinéma vérité style[59] with long shots and are revealed through reverse shots to be the mediated views of Peter and Judas who are in the crowd at a distance. Because the camera represents their views, the authorial audience is also placed at a distance from the scene barely able to decipher what is being said. "Such a limited and remote perspective, so surprising in a film that otherwise abounds in close-ups, is agonizing in all the information that it withholds from the spectator."[60] The audience no longer finds itself in the midst of the trial as it does in Matthew's text. It becomes more reliant on the reverse shot close-ups of Judas and Peter to communicate more than the dialogue can. Here the contours of physiognomy displace text as primary referent.

---

[57] Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book*, 127.

[58] Testa, "To Film a Gospel," 194. "A long shot includes at least the full figures of the subjects, usually more" (Monaco, *How to Read a Film*, 415).

[59] "A word now often used loosely to refer to any kind of documentary technique" (Monaco, *How to Read a Film*, 401).

[60] Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book*, 133.

The final matter that we will give discussion to is the presence of the narrating agent in Pasolini's narrative. As we saw above the narrator in Matthew's text is said to be reliable, omnipresent and omniscient. However, we will see that the same cannot be said for the narrator in Pasolini's filmic text.

It is instructive to view the third sequence which portrays the visit of the Magi to Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. After they visit the family they encounter the angel which had informed Joseph about Jesus' birth in an earlier sequence. The scene begins with a master shot of the three Magi walking toward the camera. There is then a cut to a close-up of the angel. The next shot is a medium shot of one of the Magi looking toward the camera. This back and forth goes on for eight shots. What one begins to discern is that each shot represents the view of one character or characters toward another. We see another occurrence of this in the opening of the film discussed above. C. Orr suggests that this signals a seeming absence of the film's narrator.[61] S. Chatman successfully challenges this idea by noting that the absence of a human element in the storytelling does not signify the absence of the narrator. There is always an "organizational and sending agency" present in the discourse.[62] Thus we can say that there is a narrating presence in this scene. The matter for discussion is its relation to the telling of the story.

Orr plots a way forward by locating in this scene an example of what Pasolini calls "free indirect point of view." In his essay "The Cinema of Poetry" Pasolini predicates his discussion of free indirect point of view upon the literary convention of "free indirect discourse" which he defines as the "immersion of the filmmaker in the mind of his character and then the adoption on the part of the filmmaker not only of the psychology of his character but also his language."[63] Such filmmaking is more akin to the unlimited stylistic opportunities of poetry than the text-based structure of narrative. We encounter here in matters of style what is also achieved structurally in the sequence depicting the Sermon on the Mount; the explosion and dislocation of text.

---

[61] C. Orr, "The Politics of Film Form: Observations on Pasolini's Theory and Practice," *Film Criticism* 25/2 (Winter 1991) 44.

[62] Chatman, *Coming to Terms*, 127.

[63] P. P. Pasolini, *Heretical Empiricism* (ed. L. K. Barnett; trans. B. Lawton and L. K. Barnett; Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988) 175.

Finally, Orr correctly notes that such a style privileges the subjectivities of the characters in the story. It is the subjective which becomes the dominant point of view in Pasolini's narrative. This view implicates the narrating presence of *Il Vangelo* into the discourse of the narrative in a manner that is far less objective than that of Matthew's text. Thus the authorial audience is prompted to question the reliability of the narrator and its ability to be everywhere and know everything. The narrator's adoption of the characters' free indirect point of view also calls into question the consistency with which it aligns itself with God's evaluative point of view. The authorial audience is confronted with a variety of points of view that range from the divine to the subjective.[64] Furthermore, this subjectivity on the part of the narrator suggests that it has a particular agenda to communicate.

The Authorial Audience Moving between Discourses

The authorial audience as subject encounters a different kind of Jesus and narrator in Pasolini's text than the Jesus in Matthew. Rather than a drive toward narrative cohesion, as Baranski suggests, Pasolini's narrator and the Jesus he depicts become displacers rather than restorers of text. The text-based reliability of Matthew's narrator ("as it is written") gives way to the disruptions and absences of Pasolini's narrator.[65] In fact, the ability to speak the words "as it is written" is not only taken away from the privileging position of the narrator, it is stripped from the authorial audience which would like to say "as it is written" with reference to the source of Pasolini's narrative which is a written text.

Matthew's Gospel posits an authorial audience which rests comfortably and passively surrounded by a world of texts that provide the clues and keys to Jesus' identity. By displacing the textuality of its source, Pasolini's Gospel removes the privileged position of the authorial audience's view and situates it directly within a world of competing subjectivities.

---

[64] Marcus locates the divine point of view in Pasolini's use of aerial establishing shots (*Filmmaking by the Book*, 131).

[65] It is noticeable that when the Hebrew Bible is quoted in *Il Vangelo* it is either without the familiar introductory quote ("as it is written") when spoken by a disembodied voice over the story or by a character in the story who takes over the narrator's voice as John the Baptist does in sequence 8. Again, the reliable voice of the narrator is transformed into the subjectivity of the characters.

Baranski asserts that Pasolini has substituted himself for Matthew as the source of information about Jesus.[66] He is not entirely correct. Matthew's voice remains in Pasolini's Gospel. However, its pride of place as the sole authority about Jesus has been shifted to the side leaving room for other sources of information. The world of Pasolini's Gospel is one not only of words, but also of styles, absences, and disruptions all vying for the attention of the authorial audience as subject. As R. Gordon notes, "The subject is thus constructed within a temporal field of reading which is neither linear nor monovalent, but open to multiple dynamics of action and interaction."[67]

Another way that Pasolini calls forth the active participation of the authorial audience is through his use of stylistic pastiche or what he calls contamination. This refers to excessive stylistic use which calls attention to itself as a process and, therefore, interpolates the spectator into the process of making meaning. We encounter this in Pasolini's consistent use of different figural traditions. For example, visual sources for the iconography in *Il Vangelo* include Duccio, Giotto, Masaccio, Piero della Francesca, Mantegna, Pollaioulo, El Greco and Rouault. Pasolini also contaminates his films through the contrapuntal use of music with his visuals. *Il Vangelo* includes Bach's *Passion according to St. Matthew*, the Misa Luba and Odetta's "Motherless Child."[68]

The result is that the authorial audience can no longer remain passive. It must actively place itself in dialogue with the interplay of all these elements and construct a *new* text rather than what has already been written. Viano correctly concludes that "*Il Vangelo* revealed that the story of Christ the son of God, far from being the locus of absolute truth, is a quintessentially open text, a set of interpretive strategies which are left to the reader."[69]

American philosopher C. Schrag calls this new text "communicative praxis." "It is the prose and the poetry of the world as experienced, written in

---

[66] Baranski, "Texts," 87.

[67] R. S. Gordon, *Pasolini: Forms of Subjectivity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 243.

[68] For other discussions of Pasolini's use of contamination, see Gordon, *Forms of Subjectivity*, 216-22; Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book*, 115-20. For the contrapuntal use of sound and visuals, see S. Eisenstein, V. Pudovkin and G. Alexandrov, "Statement on Sound," *Film Form*, 257-60. Pasolini's creative use of music has yet to receive adequate scrutiny.

[69] Viano, *A Certain Realism*, 133.

the script of both thought and action."[70] Schrag describes this as a gathering of "the display of meanings within the text of everyday speech and the text of the written word, but it also encompasses the play and display of meanings within the field of perception and the fabric of human action."[71] In the world of communicative praxis the writing subject is dethroned but not discarded. Rather than existing as the foundation of communicative praxis, speaker, author and agent

> are rather implicates of it, emerging within its history and modified by its changing scenes. . . . The subject is not a *pre*-given entity; so also it is not a *post*-given entity, simply the sedimented result of an objective convergence of the historical forces within discourse and action. . . . Hence, when the subject is announced he appears not as the singular base, ground, or center of discourse and action but rather as a concrescence of multiple forms and facilities of communicative praxis.[72]

We have seen this process at work in Pasolini's adaptation of Matthew's Gospel and Schrag's insight is consistent with Pasolini's own contention that the "first and foremost of the human languages can be considered to be action itself."[73] The filmic narrator has become implicated in the narrative and its own agenda disrupts its source in a way that privileges the subjectivities of its characters over the reliability of Matthew's omnipresent and omniscient narrator. Pasolini's Jesus is not the messiah and son of God because he fulfills prescribed texts but because he displaces Matthew's prescribed text. He thereby frees himself for a new relationship with the authorial audience which encourages them to actively question the privileged place of written texts in solely defining who he is and his importance. The authorial audience becomes the discerner of authority in place of Matthew's narrator. For a church which predicates its influence on a central authoritative voice, as does the Roman Catholic Church, we can see the challenges posed by Pasolini's

---

[70] C. O. Schrag, *Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) 24.

[71] Schrag, *Communicative Praxis*, 30.

[72] Schrag, *Communicative Praxis*, 121.

[73] Pasolini, *HE*, 198.

Jesus. Indeed, we can see in his Jesus the attempt, as B. Schwartz describes it, to "rob the priests of their 'monopoly of the Good'."[74]

The inclusion of visual stylings as one of the loci for re-interpreting Jesus suggests an addition to Schrag's definition of communicative praxis. *Mise-en-scène* has a role to play as a "form" and "facility" when defining communicative praxis at work in film.[75] We can expand this further to include the physical surroundings within which praxis occurs when discussing communicative praxis in our non-filmic world.

It is also interesting to situate Pasolini's Jesus as a displacer of texts in historical context. *Il Vangelo* post-dates the rise to power of Pope John XXIII and slightly predates this Pope's surprise declaration that there would be world-wide council of the Church (what came to be known as Vatican II) to open the windows, as he described it, and let in some fresh air.[76] That council would irrevocably change the Church and its relations to the world. So drastic were some of the changes that one may see John XXIII himself as a certain displacer of prescribed texts. In this way we may see Pasolini's Jesus as "the peasant, obedient son of John XXIII."[77]

---

[74] B. D. Schwartz, *Pasolini Requiem* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) 446. Cf. Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book*, 128.

[75] "The term usually used to denote the part of the cinematic process that takes place on the set, as opposed to montage, which takes place afterwards. Literally, the 'putting-in-the-scene': the direction of actors, placements of cameras, choice of lenses, et cetera" (Monaco, *How to Read a Film*, 417).

[76] John XXIII was a person for whom Pasolini had great affection and to whom he dedicated the film.

[77] Sam Rohdie, *Passion,* 161. Cf. Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book*, 126.

Negative Theologies and Demiurgical Myths in Late Antiquity

Michael A. Williams
University of Washington (Seattle)

I. Introduction

Among the most famous examples of negative theological speculation from late antiquity are some of those sources customarily assigned to the category "gnosticism." In an insightful article surveying various ancient forms of negative theology and their emphases on the unknowability of the highest God or suprasensible reality, the late Richard Wallis suggested that "it is in Gnosticism . . . that we find the strongest pre-Neoplatonic affirmations of divine unknowability." And yet Wallis also observed that in spite of our greatly expanded information about such myths, due to the availability in the latter part of this century of new sources such as those from Nag Hammadi Coptic codices or the related Berlin Codex 8502, "the significance of Gnostic negative theology remains as controversial as ever."[1]

Drawing on certain pertinent results and implications of scholarly research on Nag Hammadi and related sources over the past several years, I would like in this paper to offer for consideration a set of four propositions: (1) Although "negative theology," or at least an insistence on the unknowability of the highest God, is often assumed to be one of the essential features of "gnostic" myth, this feature is in fact not ubiquitous among the myths normally viewed as "gnostic." And the number of such sources in which one encounters any significant amount of negative theological discourse is relatively limited. (2) In those sources in which we do find extended passages with negative theological discourse we also tend to find this language formulated with discernable patterns and structures that imply some interest in the usefulness of rational argument. Thus, contrary to the notion that "gnostic" revelation typically entailed a despair and abandonment of rationality, and that negative theology was the ultimate expression of this, it seems to be precisely in the sources where negative theology is most exploited that we can make the best case for the adaptation of philosophical argument. (3) In the analysis of the role of negative theology in these mythic sources, it is necessary not to restrict the focus too narrowly on the negation itself, the insistence on the absolute unknowability of God. Paradoxically, the exercise of negation is an important part, but only one part, of what is often a much larger more multi-faceted experience of "knowing God" that is attested in these myths. (4) In particular, narrow emphasis on formulas of negation in

[1] Wallis, "Spiritual Importance," 468 and 461.

such myths has frequently been one of the key building blocks in the characterization of an alleged "gnostic" worldview as so "anticosmic" that it could find no help from the visible cosmos in the quest for knowledge of the divine. By contrast, I will argue that exactly the sources with the most prominent examples of negative theology turn out also to provide some of the best evidence for appeals to forms of cosmological argument.

Recently I have argued at some length that the very category "gnosticism" is no longer serving us well as a tool for analysis.[2] In most of its constructions, it tends to suffer from a vagueness that has prevented real consensus about its meaning and application (i.e., there are too many cases where we seem not to be able to reach agreement about whether a source is to be classified in this category). And in any event, the category tends to be constructed out of clichés that too often turn out to be misrepresenting many of the supposedly "gnostic" sources. "Anticosmism" is one of the most common of such clichés, and, I have become more and more certain, it is one of the least enlightening and most problematic. I hope to have included in what follows some further illustration of why this verdict is justified.

The title of this paper self-consciously avoids the category "gnosticism," and mentions instead a general classification, "demiurgical myths." I use the term "demiurgical myth" to mean simply a myth in which a distinction is made between the highest God or ultimate principle and the entity or entities to whom is ascribed the initiative and responsibility for the fashioning of the material cosmos. As a matter of fact, this definition would include most of the myths conventionally classified under "gnosticism." But there are also other writers or traditions, such as philosophers like Numenius or Alcinous, who present at least "demiurgical" *doctrines*, even if they are not always framed in the form of more elaborate mythic narratives.[3]

The classification "demiurgical myth" is intended here as a category that is more neutral and less freighted than "gnosticism." I employ it as a heuristic category, hoping to "find out" things that such myths might and might not convey or imply. "Demiurgical myth" is not being used here as a label for a single religion or religious tradition, and I do not assume that I will find exactly the same results in every such myth. What do we find out about demiurgical myths and negative theology?

---

[2] Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism."*

[3] See Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*; Whittaker-Pierre, *Alcinoos*; Dillon, *Alcinous*.

II. Absence/Presence of Negative Theological Discourse

The first thing we note is that not all demiurgical myths seem to have a negative theology. A writing such as the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Adam*, for example, contains a demiurgical myth in which Adam and Eve are created by a lesser god,[4] and the author speaks fairly matter-of-factly about the higher, "eternal" or "living God," or "God of truth." While knowledge of the latter was lost by Adam and Eve (*Apoc. Adam* 65,10-11), it is restored by means of later revelations all down through history. In this text, the true God is not wrapped in alpha-privatives, and the myth is not about God's unknowability or incomprehensibility. To the contrary, the writing speaks straightforwardly of the importance of having true knowledge of this God.[5]

I mention an example such as this because precisely in discussions of the theme of divine transcendence or negative theology in late antique sources one can encounter generalizations such as: "The doctrine of the unknowability of God represents also a fundamental feature of the theology of Gnosticism." [6] These days, the demiurgical myth in the *Apocalypse of Adam* is always counted as an important representative of this category "gnosticism," and yet it hardly supports the assertion just quoted. Indeed, it would be fairly easy to produce a relatively long list of sources from Nag Hammadi and heresiological accounts of sectarian mythologies, in which there is no, or relatively little, actual use of negative theological labels or discourse. Admittedly, this absence in many instances may be a misleading silence, more a factor of an author's specific purposes at the moment than an indication of no interest at all in such discourse. But it is worth keeping in mind the fact that there is actually a rather limited number of cases where we *do* encounter explicit formulations of negative theological language in these myths.

A long-standing favorite illustration of radically negative theology is the account given by Hippolytus of Rome about the doctrines of the early second century C.E. Christian teacher Basilides. This source alleges Basilides to have taught a supreme God who was absolutely beyond any name or description whatsoever, a "non-existent God" prior to being itself (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 7.20.2-21.4). In his summaries of teachings of Valentinian Christians, Irenaeus of Lyons refers to their use of negative theological language (e.g., *Adv. haer.* 1.1.1), though certainly not a usage with the panache encountered in the doctrine ascribed to Basilides.

---

[4] *Apoc. Adam* 64,17-19, etc.; called "God almighty" (e.g., 69,4), or "Sakla" (e.g., 74,3), or "God of the powers" (e.g., 77,4-5).

[5] *Apoc. Adam* 64,13; 65,10f; 72,14; 82,21-23; 83,11-21; 84,10; 85,15.

[6] Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 219.

The discoveries of sources such as the Berlin Codex 8502 and the Nag Hammadi codices have provided a few important new examples of negative theology among demiurgical myths. The texts containing the most elaborate articulations of negative theology are: the *Apocryphon of John*; the *Letter of Eugnostos* (and a text that is likely dependent on it, the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*); *Allogenes*, and probably also the tractate *Zostrianos* (though the relevant passages in the latter are quite fragmentary); and the *Tripartite Tractate*. There are significant instances of negative theological jargon in other tractates as well, though the works just mentioned stand out by their inclusion of extended sections devoted to this topic. As Roelof van den Broek has commented, some of them contain "descriptions of the ineffable God which in length and elaborateness surpass all those known from Platonic or orthodox-Christian sources."[7]

III. Negative Theologies: Patterns

Among the demiurgical myths that do contain negative theological discourse in significant quantity, research has now demonstrated that we should be cautious not to mistake these instances as merely a kind of haphazard potluck of mystical-sounding or "numinous" jargon. Though there is increasing awareness of this among scholars, it is an important fact that has not always been appreciated: In an article several years ago, William Schoedel presented a convincing and important argument about monistic implications underlying the use in certain "gnostic" sources of a specific formula of "topological" theology—God as "containing" while being "uncontained." In developing his argument, Schoedel at one point justifiably contrasted the formula as strictly defined to other uses of the label "uncontained" (*achôrêtos*), where it appears without the other half of the formula ("containing"), as one term in a list of negative theological attributes. Then as an aside he added: "The language of negative theology in a Gnostic setting is 'numinous' language. The wonder of God's being is magnified without specific reference to precise theological formulation."[8] Now although this generalization probably does express what has been a widely held impression, it can no longer be defended. For contrary to the implication of such an assertion, we will see that some of the most extensive examples of negative theology among these sources actually seem to display some care in their employment of negations.

I quote one further example illustrating how this has not always been understood, this time from comments by the late Hans Jonas on the very

---

[7] Van den Broek, *Studies*, 43f.

[8] Schoedel, "'Topological' Theology," 91.

important instance of negative theology in the opening sections of the *Apocryphon of John*:

> Like all gnostic speculation, the revelation of the Apocryphon (the revelatory stage first having been set) starts with a dissertation on the ultra-transcendent First Principle; and here we meet with the kind of emphatic and pathetic verbosity which the "ineffable" seems to have incited in many of its professors: the over four pages of effusive description devoted to the very indescribability of the divine Absolute—expatiating on the theme of His purity, boundlessness, perfection, etc., being beyond measure, quality, quantity, and time; beyond comprehension, description, name, distinction; beyond life, beatitude, divinity, and even existence—are a typical example of the rising "negative theology," whose spokesmen did not tire for centuries of the self-defeating nature of their task. Justly more reticent, the Valentinians contented themselves on this point with a few telling symbols (as "Abyss", "Silence").[9]

Now in a section of his forthcoming book on the *Apocryphon of John*, Michael Waldstein has forcefully demonstrated how inadequate is such a characterization of the negative theological discourse in the *Apocryphon of John* as mere "pathetic verbosity" and "effusive description."[10] Rather, Waldstein contends that the long passage about the Invisible Spirit in *Ap. John* II 2,26-4,18 (= BG 22,17-26,14) is "a disciplined piece of writing which develops not only an account of the first principle, but, at the same time, an account of the different forms of argument and language by which it can be approached."[11] He shows that this portion of the *Apocryphon John* may be analyzed into discreet sections with recognizable organization and development, and manifesting continuity in both form and content with similar material from Middle-Platonic school tradition, especially Alcinous and the Christian apologist Aristides. I give here only outlines of some of Waldstein's analysis:[12]

After a brief opening list of attributes of the Invisible Spirit (BG 22,17-23,3 = II 2,26-32) there is a first series of assertions, each followed by a supporting clause introduced by *gar*, "for" (BG 23,3-14 = II 2,33-3,7):

> It is not right to think of him as God . . .
> for he is more than God,
> (He is) a principality (*archê*) over which nothing rules (*archei*),
> for there is nothing prior to him;

---

[9] Jonas, *Gnostic Religion,* 199; and the corresponding German version in Jonas, *Gnosis*, 393. Certainly the last comment about the parsimony of Valentinians in this regard is no longer tenable in light of such works at the *Tripartite Tractate* from Nag Hammadi Codex I (see below).

[10] I am grateful to Michael Waldstein for allowing me the opportunity of reading a 1995 draft of part of his book, and my citations here refer to pages in that draft.

[11] Waldstein, *Apocryphon of John*, 110.

[12] Cf. Tardieu, *Écrits gnostiques*, 248-53.

> Nor does he need them: he does not need life,
> for he is eternal;
> He does not need anything,
> for he cannot be completed as if he were lacking so as to be completed, but rather he is always entirely complete.

After this is a series of seven negations (II 3,7-15 par), all but one supported by a clause introduced, not by *gar*, but by the Coptic *ebol je* or *je*, "since" (= Greek *hoti*?). Rather than a full translation, I provide a somewhat more skeletal rendering that brings into relief the structure:

Illimitable	since no one prior to him to limit him
Unexaminable	since no one prior to him to examine him
Immeasurable	since no one prior to him to measure him
Invisible	since no one has seen him
Eternal	existing forever
Ineffable	since no one comprehended him to speak about him
Unnamable	since no one prior to him to name him

Waldstein points out that a *via negationis* argument with a similar structure and "rhythmical application of negation" is found in Aristides.[13] The next major section of the negative theology in the *Apocryphon of John* (II 3,20-28 par) is structured in still another way, with a *via eminentiae* pattern: "He is neither A nor B (nor C nor D), *but something better* than these." As is well-known, this section of the *Apocryphon of John* is closely paralleled by the text of *Allogenes* 62,27-63,14, indicating a literary relationship of some sort, perhaps a matter of a dependence on a common source. And finally, still a further clear pattern is found in II 4,3-10 par, where several positive attributes are applied to the Invisible Spirit, but in such a way as to underscore that the Invisible Spirit is *source* of all such things (once again, in a more skeletal rendering):

Eternal	the one who supplies eternity
Light	the one who supplies light
Life	the one who supplies life
Blessed	the one who supplies blessedness
Knowledge	the one who supplies knowledge
Good	the one who supplies good
Mercy	the one who supplies mercy
Grace	the one who supplies grace

The famous section of negative theology in Alcinous, *Didask.* 10.3-4 contains the same kind of argument about attributes of the "First God." The latter can be said to be the Good (*agathon*) since "he is the source (*aitios*) of all good"; he is Truth (*alêtheia*) since he is the origin (*archê*) of every truth (10.3).

---

[13] Waldstein, *Apocryphon of John*, 98; Aristides, *Apology* 1 (Harris, *Aristides*, 35-36).

I have outlined only a few key elements of Waldstein's analysis here, but his discussion presents a splendid case for treating the account of the Invisible Spirit in the *Apocryphon of John* as something much more than merely "numinous" language without any very precise theological formulation. What might seem at first glance to the reader to be a rambling stream of "pathetic verbosity" actually does have a structure and a certain level of precision in argumentation.

Perhaps part of the reason underlying dismissive characterizations such as that quoted from Jonas is that earlier generations of scholarship had been more inclined to view even some of the corresponding passages from more "professional" Middle Platonic figures, like that in Alcinous, *Didask.* 10, as theologically incoherent. For on the one hand, God is described by disallowing the validity of any predication whatsoever, while in virtually the next breath positive attributes are applied. Jaap Mansfeld has addressed this problem of how *via negationis*, *via eminentiae*, and *via analogiae* argumentation can seemingly coexist in a kind of "peaceful jumble."[14] He argues that such writers viewed these as "alternative modes of cognition, compatible albeit of unequal value." Alcinous, observes Mansfeld, "is most conscientious in informing us about the three modes of cognition; other surviving Middle Platonist authors seem to take them for granted and provide us with a clutter of epithets without being very clear about the justification for their procedure, although hints are occasionally provided."[15] And it is perhaps just such hints that we find through a close analysis of the structure of the description of the Invisible Spirit in the *Apocryphon of John*.

Both *Eugnostos* and the *Tripartite Tractate* also manifest in their sections that describe the highest God features which indicate some amount of care in the structure of the argument (*Eug.* III 71,13-73,3; *Tri. Trac.* 51,8-55,26).[16] Roelof van den Broek[17] has pointed out that much of the relevant section in *Eugnostos* may be analyzed as a series of four arguments each with three parts. *Eug.* III 71,18-72,13:

> He is immortal, eternal,
> (1) Having *no birth*,
> (2) for everyone who has birth will perish;
> (3) he is unbegotten;

[14] Mansfeld, "Compatible Alternatives," 92.

[15] Mansfeld, "Compatible Alternatives," 110-11.

[16] On the negative theological discourse in *Eugnostos* in general, see the very informative treatment by Trakatellis (*The Transcendent God*, especially, 35-65) who provides extensive discussion of parallels, though he does not comment on the patterns identified by van den Broek.

[17] Van den Broek, "Eugnostos and Aristides," 207.

(1) Having *no beginning* (*archê*),
(2) for everyone who has a beginning has an end;
(3) nothing rules (*archei*) over him.[18]
(1) Having *no name*,
(2) for whoever has a name is the creature of another;
(3) he is unnamable;
(1) He has *no human form*,
(2) for whoever has human form is the creation of another;
(3) he has his own form, not like the form that we have received or seen, but a strange form that surpasses all things and is better than the totalities. It looks to every side and sees itself from itself.

Moreover, van den Broek has noted the unquestionable parallel between the order of the four negations here and the same sequence in the same four negations in both Aristides and in the *Tripartite Tractate*. The section in the *Tripartite Tractate* is admittedly longer and more complex, but it cannot be accidental that the description of the Father in that text includes a sequence of sections treating the following themes:[19]

Not begotten (and not created)--51,28-52,6
No beginning (and no end)—52,6-53,5
Completeness (no defect)—53,5-54,1
No name—54,2-27
No face or form—54,27-55,14

One can see that the sequence of themes exactly matches that in the passage from *Eugnostos* cited above, with the exception of the inclusion in *Tripartite Tractate* 53,5-54,1 of a section on perfection/lack of defect. But van den Broek has noted that the same series of themes, including a section on perfection/lack of defect, is also found in the description of God in the Syriac version of the apology of Aristides:[20]

Not begotten, not made;
A constant nature, *without beginning* and without end;
Immortal, complete, and incomprehensible: and in saying that he is complete I mean this: that there is no deficiency in him . . .

---

[18] Van den Broek, "Eugnostos and Aristides," 207, suggests that the Coptic here was a mistranslation of the Greek *anarchos estin*, "he was without beginning." This may be, though there may also be simply a play on the multiple connotations of *archein*. See *Ap. John* BG 23,6-7 = II 2,36-3,1, and my discussion below.
[19] Cf. the extensive analysis of this section *Tripartite Tractate* in Thomassen-Painchaud, *Le Traité Tripartite*, 264-76. Thomassen subdivides the section in much the same way (though without the comparison to *Eugnostos* and Aristides), and provides important citation of parallels for individual elements from philosophical literature. On parallels for individual elements, see also Attridge, *Nag Hammadi Codex I,* 2:221-33.
[20] Van den Broek, "Eugnostos and Aristides," 217-18. Translation here from Harris, *Aristides*, 35.

> He has *no name*, for everything that has a name is associated with the created;
> He has *no likeness*, nor composition of members; for he who possesses this is associated with things fashioned . . .

Van den Broek suggests that all three authors have made use of some common source.[21]

Actually, it is possible to extend the comparison even further by noting that at least part of the above pattern of thematic progression might be isolated also in the *Apocryphon of John*:

> (He is) a principality (*archê*) over which nothing rules (*archei*), for there is nothing prior to him;
> Nor does he need them: he does not need life, for he is eternal; He does not need anything, for he *cannot be completed* as if he were lacking so as to be completed, but rather he is always entirely complete . . . (BG 23,6-14)
>
> the *unnamable* One, since there is no one prior to him to name him . . . (BG 24,4-6)
>
> For he is *not corporeal*; he is not incorporeal; he is not large; he is not small; he is not a quantity; for he is not a creature . . . (BG 24,15-19).

The fourth item here is not precisely parallel to the theme of form/likeness in the lists from *Eugnostos*, Aristides, and the *Tripartite Tractate*, though the connection with createdness[22] in all four is striking. And "unnamability" is one member of a long list of attributes at that point in *Apocryphon of John*, so perhaps it is merely accidental that its position comes at a point after a discussion of *archê* and "completeness" as in the other three sources. Nevertheless, there may be some amount of relationship in thematic order, rather than mere randomness.

In any event, it is clear from the above discussion that at least several of the most important examples of negative theological discourse from the Nag Hammadi codices (or from anywhere in so-called "gnostic" literature): the *Apocryphon of John*, *Eugnostos* (and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*), and the *Tripartite Tractate*, manifest intentional structures in the presentation of their arguments, rather than being merely a stream of alpha-privatives.[23]

---

[21] Van den Broek, "Eugnostos and Aristides," 205.

[22] At least in the shorter recension of *Apocryphon of John*. This element is absent in the longer recension.

[23] King, *Revelation*, 154-57, has shown how the important apophatic theology in *Allogenes* is also patterned in accordance with conventional and identifiable structures and formulas. That some of these structures involved interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides* has been recognized for some time (see, e.g., Turner, "Gnosticism and Platonism," 449-50).

IV. Negative Theologies and Knowledge of God

I mentioned above that the demiurgical myth in the *Apocalypse of Adam* lacks any negative theological discourse and contains straightforward references to the possibility of having knowledge of the God of Truth. But even the presence of significant negative theology does not always rule out a strong emphasis on seeking after knowledge of the Unknowable.

Some of the most striking examples of this are to be found in forms of Valentinian Christian myth. There is first of all the classic account that Irenaeus provides of the mythology of the Valentinian teacher Ptolemy (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.1.1-8.5). In this myth, the aeon Wisdom longs to comprehend the incomprehensible Father. This is referred to as "an impossible effort" (1.2.2), and of course the passion produced in this futile attempt resulted in the series of events leading to the material creation. However, even though it might be true to say that according to this myth, "[e]vil originates in the desire of Sophia (Wisdom) to comprehend the Father,"[24] that is not quite the same as saying that the desire to know the Father is evil.

Indeed, in Ptolemy's myth a wish to know the Father seems to be shared by *all* of the aeons in the realm of Perfection (1.2.1), not just Wisdom. Among the aeons, Only-begotten Mind (Nous) alone was actually able to behold and know the Father, yet even Mind *wished* to share knowledge with all the rest of the aeons. Interestingly, the knowledge that Mind wished to share with the others is described as essentially negative knowledge: that the Father is without beginning, incomprehensible and invisible. But by the Father's will, Mind was constrained by Silence from conveying any knowledge about the Father, and this left the remaining aeons still wishing for such (1.2.1). In other words, the highest God may be incomprehensible and ineffable, but *seeking after* knowledge of God is portrayed here as the most prominent and "natural" instinct among the aeons in the realm of divine Perfection.

Moreover, the course of Ptolemy's myth as a whole conveys the message that the Unknowable *wishes* to be known, though only through a knowledge mediated by Only-begotten Mind (1.2.1; 1.2.5). The very restraint of Mind by Silence seems to lead to Wisdom's attempt at comprehension. The latter does eventually have as part of its "fallout" the evils of the material realm. However, the process as a whole results, by divine providence, in the fullest possible distribution and attainment of knowledge of God.

---

[24] Wallis, "Spiritual Importance," 468.

The *Tripartite Tractate* is an example of a form of Valentinian myth that contains a very elaborate development of negative theological discourse, and yet somewhat paradoxically stresses that the unknowable Father wants very much to be known. Immediately following the lengthy negative theological discourse on the Father (*Tri.Trac.* 51,28-55,14) that I have mentioned above, we find the comment: "Now if this (Father) who is unknowable in his nature, and who possesses all of the majestic attributes that I have mentioned, wishes to provide knowledge so that they might know him, from the abundance of his sweetness, then he is able to do this" (55,27-34). And the remainder of the myth in this text reveals that this is precisely the Father's will. But this revelation is a gradual process, since the Father is so great that a sudden revelation would have overloaded the circuits, so to speak (64,28-37). The revelation is also not direct but mediated, through the Son, who is the "trace" (*ichnos*) of the Father (66,3), and is all of the Father's names,[25]

> the form of the formless,
> the body of the incorporeal,
> the face of the invisible,
> the expression of the ineffable,
> the mind of the inconceivable . . . (66,13-17).

This self-revelation, we are told, is intended to inspire a constant searching after the Father, even though the Father's primordial essence is unsearchable (71,15-20).[26] Thus, it is by the will of the Father that the Father is known, because he breathes a spirit into all things that creates in them the idea of seeking after the Unknowable, so that they are drawn to him as if by a sweet aroma (71,35-73,8).

The Wisdom figure in the *Tripartite Tractate* is the Logos, and like Wisdom in Ptolemy's myth, the Logos here attempts in vain to comprehend the incomprehensibility of the Father (75,17-19). But once again what I want to emphasize here is that the myth portrays this *quest* for knowledge as something good or well-intentioned (76,2-4), even though the futility of the Logos's attempt leads to defects and consequences that must be brought under control through the creation of the cosmos. But even all of these consequences, according to the author, happened completely in accordance with the will of the Father (76,13-77,11). The Logos's initial effort is a kind of necessary, programmed failure.

---

[25] On this, see Thomassen-Painchaud, *Le Traité Tripartite*, 307-310.

[26] The passage possibly assumes a "distinction between knowledge of the Father's existence and knowledge of his essence" (Attridge, *Nag Hammadi Codex I*, 2:285).

Not only is there a paradoxical relationship here between an elaborate negative theology that insists that the Father is completely beyond imagining, and a message of revelation that declares that the Father wants all things to seek after knowledge of him. It is also the case that this paradoxical tension appears to be quite integral to the theology here, and more specifically, it is integral to the theodicy. For the dynamics of the myth in this form of Valentinian speculation render precisely the highest values, love for and knowledge of God, as the unintentional sources of evil. The very aspiration that triggers the problem is at the same time a quest for that which is most highly valued. To appreciate the unique dynamic here, we might contrast this with a myth such as that offered by Origen of Alexandria. In Origen's theology, the source of evil is traced to the gradual turning away of rational souls from concentration on God, a version of the Platonic notion of evil-as-absence. Now the *Tripartite Tractate* (and Ptolemy, according to Irenaeus) handled the same basic Platonic notion in a different way. The Logos (or Wisdom) does not really turn *away* from God, but *toward* God—in an intense but futile reaching after God. The "absence" that becomes evil here is the failure of a well-intentioned effort, unlike Origen's "sinning" souls, who cannot be said to have been well-intentioned.

Now the particular dynamic I have just mentioned, where the origins of evil are, ironically, linked as intimately as possible to laudable aspirations for divine knowledge, is certainly not present in all demiurgical myths, and in fact, it may have been limited to certain forms of Valentinian speculation.[27] A somewhat analogous motif is found in the myth that Hippolytus ascribes to Justin "the pseudo-gnostic," though this myth as narrative is entirely different from the myth in the *Tripartite Tractate* or Ptolemy. Justin's myth has evil originate when the creator, Elohim, aspires to discovery of realities more transcendent than himself and in so doing ascends to "the Good," at the same time abandoning his previously contracted marriage relationship to Eden (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 5.26.21). Elohim's actions become paradigmatic for the human initiate, but his ascent is both the highest good and the cause of evil. Once again, while searching after knowledge of the highest God is the central value, it is also offered up as the solution to problems of theodicy. However, Justin's myth contains nothing like the elaborate negative theology found in the *Tripartite Tractate*, and therefore knowledge of "the Good" is not portrayed in the same way as epistemologically problematic or paradoxical.

Even though sources such as the *Apocryphon of John* or *Eugnostos* or *Allogenes* do not seem to capitalize on this theodicy-related potential in the paradoxical relationship between elaborate negative theological assertions

[27] Cf. Thomassen-Painchaud, *Le Traité Tripartite*, 329.

and the search for knowledge of God, their myths do in other ways embody tensions entailed in placing a premium on seeking knowledge of the Unknowable. One dimension of this involves sharply paradoxical formulations concerned with the mystical, "peak" experience. Many others have commented on the way the author of the tractate *Allogenes*, for example, distills the ultimate experience of knowledge of the Unknowable in the terminology of "*not*-knowing knowledge" or an "ignorance that sees" (e.g., *Allog.* 59,28-32; 60,8-12; 61,1-2; 64,10-14), and the author may have been among the earliest experimenters with this kind of formulation in the history of Western mysticism.[28]

However, there is another type of tension that I am more interested in exploring here, and that is the larger and somewhat more implicit one between on the one hand the assertion of divine unknowability, and on the other the assumption that knowledge about the divine can be gained from the visible cosmos.

V. Negative Theologies and Sensibility about the Cosmos

The classic study by A.-J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, distinguished two broad currents among religious and philosophical traditions in late antiquity, according to how the supreme Being was imagined: a type in which God's nature could be known in some measure through observation and contemplation of the visible cosmos, and a type in which God was understood to be hyper-cosmic, beyond any analogy in the visible world—i.e., the sort of God described in the more enthusiastically negative theologies. As Festugière put it, in the latter case knowledge of God is not aided by the visible world, "because it is a matter of reaching a Principle of which nothing here below offers an image, since It is, in essence, different from everything else."[29] Thus, the only way for such a God to be known is by means of revelation.

Now it has become commonplace that one of the ways in which "gnostic" negative theology is distinguished from "non-gnostic" Jewish, Christian or Platonist negative theologies in antiquity is by asserting that for "gnostics" the description-by-negation somehow went hand-in-hand with a complete absence of any faith in rational paths to knowledge or any sensibility for the material cosmic realm as revelatory of divine truth. As van den Broek has put it recently, in an introductory chapter to a collection of his essays:

---

[28] See Turner, "Gnosticism and Platonism," 448; King, *Revelation*, 19, 148-52, 169; Wallis, "Spiritual Importance," 470.

[29] Festugière, *La révélation*, 4:59.

> At first sight, the gnostic and hermetic doctrines of God have much in common, since both start from a theological concept which was wide-spread in the classical world. It is the idea that God is so transcendent that he can only be described in the terms of what we call "negative theology:" he is ineffable, invisible, incomprehensible, unbegotten, without beginning and without end, incorruptible, immeasurable, invariable, unnameable, etc. This view is found among pagan philosophers, Christian theologians, gnostics and hermetists. There is a difference, however, for the philosophers, and some early Christian theologians as well, said that, though it may be true that God is unknowable in his essence, he can nevertheless be comprehended by the human mind (*nous*), through philosophical reasoning and through contemplation of the cosmic order. This emphasis on the human *nous* as a useful, though imperfect, instrument for the knowledge of God is also found in the hermetic texts, but never in those of the gnostics: in their view, the supreme God was inaccessible to the human mind. However, like the platonic philosophers of their time, the gnostics felt no difficulty in combining this negative theology with positive qualifications of the ineffable God.[30]

Werner Foerster's introductory comments in his anthology of "gnostic" texts contain another good illustration of this common perception of the implications of negative theology in these myths. He notes that God in these traditions is "the unknown Father," and that frequently there is the attempt "to describe this unknown God with an array of negative expressions," or with the prefix "fore-" (Fore-Father, etc.), so that "all that can be said is simply this, that it lies before all that is visible and conceivable." "So," continues Foester, "God and the world stand apart and in opposition." [31] Similarly, in his general treatment of *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, Kurt Rudolph includes a section on "the unknown God," in which he covers, among others, the negative theologies of Basilides, the *Apocryphon of John*, *Eugnostos*, and the *Tripartite Tractate*. Rudolph then concludes:

> These examples, which could be extended without difficulty . . . show that the gnostic conception of God is dictated by a contrast to all previously existing conceptions and so has a thoroughly revolutionary character. Certainly the terminology is indebted to contemporary philosophy; also it is possible to note certain agreements in cosmology (Plotinus knew that very well), but the underlying world-denying tone cannot be mistaken.[32]

What I would like to argue here is that this widespread tendency to single out negative theology in "gnostic" texts as symptomatic of things like a peculiarly virulent anticosmism, or a rejection of any usefulness in human intellection or contemplation of cosmic order, runs up against the following embarrassments: (1) As we have seen, developed negative theological discourse is *not* ubiquitous among these demiurgical myths, and is in fact

[30] Van den Broek, *Studies*, 10.
[31] Foerster, *Gnosis*, 1:4-5.
[32] Rudolph, *Gnosis*, 64-65.

limited to a handful of them. (2) On the other hand, we have also observed that in most of the sources that do contain extensive negative theological discourse such language is not being employed haphazardly, but in patterns that may be understood as forms of rational argumentation. In other words, even though the invocation of *via negationis* or *via eminentiae* arguments in these demiurgical myths comes in the medium of a revelation, it seems fair to ask why the possibility of an openness to a role also for human intellection should be dismissed in *these* cases, any more than when such arguments are invoked in authors like, say, Gregory of Nazianzus.[33] (3) And finally, it is noteworthy that just those "gnostic" sources that contain the most remarkable instances of extended negative theological discourse happen also to be among the very sources where arguably the most positive--*not* most negative--relationship is depicted between true divinity and the material cosmos. This is exactly opposite from the general impression sometimes conveyed by treatments of "gnosticism," to the effect that "gnostic" negative theology is simply the ultimate expression of "gnostic" world-denial. I need to elaborate on this latter point.

For example, it has long been recognized that the *Tripartite Tractate* is among the examples of Christian demiurgical myth with the least evidence for animosity toward the demiurge or the material cosmos. The archon who is assigned the role of "beautifying"[34] and "working on" the things below is used "as a hand" by the Logos, to effect the divine purposes (*Tri. Trac.* 100,30-36). Because the creative activity of this lower demiurge is being guided, without his awareness, by inspiration from the divine spirit, the things that come into being from this agent are in the image of the spiritual realities (100,36-101,9). This notion that the lower demiurge is unwittingly operating under divine guidance from above is not unique to this tractate, but is found elsewhere in Valentinian myth.[35] I wish to underscore its presence because

---

[33] Gregory can speak at great length of the deep mystery of God's essence that is impossible for human reason to comprehend, and within the same oration also discourse on theological implications humans should see in the marvels of the visible cosmos (*Theological Oration* 2 [*Orat.* 28]).

[34] I follow Attridge (*Nag Hammadi Codex I*, 1.275) in using this translation of the Coptic: *tsaieô*, which could be a translation of some form of the Greek *kosmein*, which of course has connotations both of ordering and adornment, with order being a form of beauty. Thomassen-Painchaud (*Le Traité Tripartite*, 171) render *tsaieô* with "façonner." The English translation "beautify" provides an explicit and legitimate reminder that producers and readers of writings such as the *Tripartite Tractate* did indeed see beauty in the cosmos.

[35] E.g., Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1.5.1; and see the numerous parallels cited in the commentary sections in Attridige *Nag Hammadi Codex I*, and Thomassen-Painchaud, *Le Traité Tripartite*.

the obvious implication is that the physical creation is understood in such traditions as containing images and signs of divine realities.

Indeed, Irenaeus does apparently indicate that in support of their views his Valentinian Christian opponents would often appeal to this correspondence between patterns in the pleromatic realm and patterns in the visible cosmos. He says at one point (*Adv. haer.* 2.15.3) that when he engaged them in conversation they would question him as though he knew nothing about the creation. But when he, in turn, pressed them about details concerning *their* notions about the transcendent realm, or Pleroma, they would rely either on metaphors involving human emotions, or on language pertaining only to "that harmony that can be observed in creation." Irenaeus thinks he has them cornered here, since they must resort to discussions of patterns in secondary realities in order to explain their theories about the Pleroma. But for our purposes, the passage is enormously revealing, for what it tells us is that Valentinian Christians appealed to cosmological arguments in support of their transcendental theology.

The writing *Eugnostos* is another familiar example of a myth in which any anticosmism is less obvious.[36] I have mentioned earlier some of Roelof van den Broek's insightful analysis of patterns in the negative theology in *Eugnostos*. However, the way in which he frames those insights with respect to the "gnostic" character of *Eugnostos* illustrates how that category has become encumbered with presuppositions that may often obscure what is actually in the text. In the opening section of *Eugnostos* the author states that:

> Everyone born since the foundation of the world turns to dust. Though they seek after God—who he is and what he is like—they have not found him. Many of the wise among them have made likenesses of the truth based on the management (*dioikêsis*) of the cosmos, but the likeness has not attained to the truth. For the management is described in three ways by all the philosophers, so that the three accounts are in conflict. . . . (III 70,3-16).

The author then summarizes and rejects the three different theories: that the cosmos simply operates under its own direction, that it is guided by providence, or that it is ruled by fate (III 70,16-71,5). In the remainder of the work the author claims to be presenting the reader with the truth about God. Now based on the parallels in their negative theological discourse that I mentioned earlier, van den Broek suggests that both *Eugnostos* and the Christian apologist Aristides

---

[36] So much so that there has been debate as to whether the work should be classified as "gnostic." See, e.g., Parrott, "Eugnostos"; and the summary of views in Sumney, "Letter of Eugnostos."

> made use of a source which, in the traditional way, inferred from the orderly government of the universe that its Maker and Mover must be God, but at the same time asserted that, though we can see God's works it is impossible to know his nature, and then went on to develop an explicitly negative theology based on the opposition between the unbegotten and the begotten. Their dependence on a common sources explains the correspondences between Eugnostos and Aristides. The differences between them can be explained by Eugnostos' gnostic world-view, which forced him to reject the cosmological proof of God's existence with arguments developed in the Sceptical tradition.[37]

Commenting specifically on the reference to argument from *dioikêsis* that I quoted above, van den Broek asserts that

> Eugnostos starts his argument by referring to and then firmly rejecting the idea that God's existence and nature can be known from the *dioikêsis* of the cosmos. Though he does not explicitly say so, we may assume that he had to reject this view because, as a gnostic, he ascribed the origin of the world to a lower, most probably evil demiurge.[38]

Now the problem here is twofold: First, we really do *not* know precisely the shape of *Eugnostos*'s teaching about a demiurge. I would agree with van den Broek that the overall nature of the myth in this writing does make it probable that the author "ascribed the origin of the world to a lower . . . demiurge," and that therefore we likely have a demiurgical myth. But there is no justification for assuming that this demiurge is "most probably evil." Secondly, it is not in fact clear that the author of *Eugnostos* is rejecting the proposition that the *dioikêsis* of the cosmos has relevance for discerning the nature of God. What are rejected are three conflicting philosophical positions *derived* from such analogical argumentation. And in fact, later in the work the author seems to appeal precisely to cosmological argument in support of the truth of the assertions in the myth. After the negative theology in III 71,13-73,3 that I have discussed earlier, the author emphasizes the importance of understanding the distinction between the invisible and the visible, the imperishable and the perishable (III 73,3-74,7). Then the author says that if anyone wishes to trust the information set forth in the myth, that person should "search from what is hidden to the completion of what is visible, and this thought (*ennoia*) will teach him how belief in invisible things has been discovered from what is visible. It (= the belief) is a source of knowledge" (III 74,14-20). The remainder of *Eugnostos* does just this. Beginning with the highest God who had been described in the negative theological discourse, the author traces the various levels of emanation down just to the point of the appearance of the visible cosmos. Thus this author,

---

[37] Van den Broek, "Eugnostos and Aristides," 211.
[38] Van den Broek, "Eugnostos and Aristides," 209.

like the Valentinian traditions discussed above, assumes a congruence between the ordering of the visible cosmos and the supernal, invisible realities.[39] The author probably does reject the sufficiency of human reasoning alone in attaining the truth, and the author certainly asserts that the true nature of the highest divine source is beyond the grasp of human intellect. However, that does not rule out any role at all for intellection, as is indicated by the author's appeal to *ennoia*, "thought."[40] Nor in particular does revelation exclude a place for cosmological argument in gaining assurance concerning the truth about the divine realm. In fact, the author seems to view as fundamentally important that the reader think through the implications of correspondences between visible and invisible realms.

Now the *Apocryphon of John* unquestionably presents a much more negative portrait of the creator, Ialdabaoth. However, even in this work we find evidence that the material cosmos itself is not understood to be a repulsively grotesque and chaotic environment completely alien to, and unrevealing of, the nature of true divinity. For with respect to the creation of the earth and all the various heavens, the author says that Ialdabaoth

> put everything in order, in the likeness of the first aeons that had come into being, so as to create them in an incorruptible pattern--not that he himself had actually seen the incorruptible things; rather, it was the power within him (that did so), which he had received from his Mother, since she had begotten within him the likeness of the cosmos (II 12,34-13,5).

The short recension does not mention the role of the Mother here, but it does state that the arrangement of the various firmaments, heavens and aeons in the created realm corresponds to the image and pattern (*typos*) of the

---

[39] See also Dillon, "*Pleroma* and Noetic Cosmos," 107, who notes that *Eugnostos* "envisages quite an extensive parallelism between the noetic and physical worlds," although Dillon wonders "how coherent a theory of archetypes the Gnostic writers had." But, just as with any other writers from antiquity, that question should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Perkins, "Beauty," 285, rightly notes that *Eugnostos* "apparently proposes some form of contemplation of heavenly order as a key to the knowledge of the divine received by the Gnostics."

[40] Parrott, "Eugnostos," 161-62, feels compelled to take this "thought" as a reference to an aspect of the highest God who functions essentially as a revelatory being, "communicating with those who are open to it," rather than as a contemplative exercise in thought invited by the author. But I see nothing that requires such a reading of *ennoia* as a hypostasized being here. Trakatellis, *The Transcendent God*, 37, makes a similar mistake, in my view, in emphasizing that the prologue to *Eugnostos* "constitutes a radical rejection of the possibility to gain even a partial knowledge of God, either through the thinking processes or through research."

transcendent, incorruptible aeons (BG 44,5-9).[41] There must be a sensibility here to a level of order in the visible world that results from a corresponding beauty and order in the transcendent divine realm. Something about the structure of divinity *can* be observed in the visible cosmos, though a full understanding of the nature of the relationship depends on further revelation—as it did for many Jewish and Christian authors.[42]

Finally, we may comment about this matter with respect to texts such as *Allogenes* and *Zostrianos*, and the opponents of Plotinus whom the latter criticizes in *Enn.* 2.9. As I have mentioned, *Allogenes* contains some very striking negative theology, culminating in the affirmation that the Unknowable is so transcendent that it can actually only be "known" through a form of "unknowing." On the other hand, it is harder to say much about the nature of the relation between negative theology and cosmology in this case, since the writing (at least what survives of it) contains so little direct mention of the material realm. But the few passages that do seem to be pertinent indicate a less dualistic worldview that is often assumed for "gnosticism."[43] The Unknowable is the "source" (*pêgê*) for everything else, being related to things like matter, number, form, shape, only as immaterial matter, numberless number, shapeless shape, etc. (*Allog.* 48,21-32).[44] The related tractate *Zostrianos*, though also frustratingly fragmentary, contains more direct allusions to the relation between the transcendent realms and the material

---

[41] Waldstein has noted this passage (*Apocryphon of John*, 169), and rightly stresses the presence in *Ap. John* of what can be called a form of "cosmic piety" (165-68).

[42] In comparing Platonic notions of an intelligible, paradigmatic realm with "gnostic" notions of the Pleroma, Dillon has commented that "there are elements in the Pleroma, in both Valentinian and Sethian systems . . . which do seem to serve as paradigms" ("*Pleroma* and Noetic Cosmos," 106). However, the similarities should probably be pushed even further than Dillon mentions. For he suggests that one might object that: "the Pleroma is not really a model on which the physical world is based. The physical world is an error and an abortion for the Gnostics, and the Demiurge receives little or no guidance from above in creating it, nor has he access to the Pleroma as a model to work with" (106). Dillon cites the teachings of Marcus (Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1.17.2) as an exception to this general rule (109, n. 15). Yet certainly the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Tripartite Tractate*, and Ptolemy are other examples, and it may well be that this sense of a correspondence between order and beauty in the material cosmos and order and beauty in the aeonic realm was not uncommon among other demiurgical traditions.

[43] See Schoedel, "'Topological' Theology," 108; King, *Revelation*, 11, 105; Pearson, *Gnosticism*, 163.

[44] See King, *Revelation*, 97. Corrigan, "The Anonymous," 57, has suggested that both *Allogenes* and the *Tripartite Tractate* represent a "Speusippan-Stoic view of the origin of life (although in an ambiguous and probably much mitigated form)," so that the "embryonic *dynamis* of all future creation indwells primordially in the depth" of the first principle.

cosmos. Several passages seem to refer to the presence in certain levels of the transcendent realm of archetypal patterns for realities in the visible world--not only of people, but of the elements earth, water, air, and fire, and also of animals, trees, fruit, even weeds![45] As John Dillon has commented, "What we seem to have portrayed here is a comprehensive archetype of the physical world, right down to the tares among the wheat."[46]

The acquaintances whom Plotinus criticizes in *Enn.* 2.9 seem to have used writings such as *Allogenes* and *Zostrianos*, and we may therefore assume that they had some fondness for the negative theological discourse in such texts. The controversy between Plotinus and these opponents is often imagined to have involved sharply different positions about the role of cosmic piety in contemplation of the intelligible and supra-intelligible, and certainly it is true that Plotinus himself understood the difference partly in these terms. In *Enn.* 2.9.17,28 Plotinus says that these people "despise the beauty that is here." He implies that they speak of "another cosmos better than this one" (2.9.8,26-28; cf. 2.9.5,25), and we have seen evidence from texts such as *Zostrianos* for notions of a transcendent intelligible cosmos. But though there clearly were differences between Plotinus and his opponents about the relation between the material cosmic order and supra-material reality, we should be careful not to conclude too quickly that it was merely a matter of some blunt "gnostic" hatred of all matter and a lack of interest in, and even an inability to see any beauty in, the material realm. In fact, Plotinus himself seems to admit that his opponents do not deny the beauty in the cosmos, they just refuse to grant it the kind of interpretation and importance that he deems appropriate. He says that their arrogant sense of superiority is based precisely on their claim to have disdain for something they call "beautiful"—i.e., it would not have been so special to claim to despise something "ugly" (2.9.17,30-33). Thus it was not really an argument over whether there was visible beauty and order in the cosmos, but rather over the question of divinity in that beauty and order of the heavens and stars. Plotinus says that these people assert their own souls to be immortal and divine, but reject the notion that the heavens and stars share that divinity, and they do so even though on the one hand they see the order and beautiful form and arrangement in the heavens, while on the other they especially complain about the disorder here on earth (2.9.5,8-14). Such an argument would not be so effective if it were the case that these acquaintances of Plotinus somehow were denying any beauty or order in the heavens.

---

[45] *Zost.* 48,2-29; 55,15-25; 113,1-117,15.

[46] Dillon, "*Pleroma* and Noetic Cosmos," 104; cf. Corrigan, "The Anonynous," 72-73.

As a matter of fact, we do find what appears to be a positive exhortation to the contemplation of cosmic order in at least one tractate from Nag Hammadi, *Marsanes*, which also happens to be closely related to works such as *Allogenes* and *Zostrianos*. Birger Pearson has pointed out how *Marsanes* speaks of the salvation of the sense-perceptible world (*Marsanes* 5,17-26), and Pearson notes that a positive evaluation is given to cosmic contemplation on the fragmentary pages 41-42 of *Marsanes*: "Blessed is . . . whether he is gazing at the two (sun and moon) or is gazing at the seven planets or at the twelve signs of the Zodiac or the thirty-six Decans . . ."[47] Now Pearson is inclined to view such a passage as a deviation from "the usual Gnostic attitude toward the heavenly bodies," and he explains this as the result of influence on *Marsanes* from Platonism. The presence of Platonic influence is clear, though that is the case, at some level, with a great many "gnostic" sources. I would simply suggest that there may be no need to be labeling instances of openness to contemplation of the implications of cosmic order as exceptions or deviations from the "usual attitude" in these demiurgical myths.

The remark by Plotinus (*Enn.* 2.9.5,8-14) that I mentioned above, about his opponents complaining about disorder here on earth, is actually a clue to the real issue regarding disorder here. The focus of his opponents' criticism was not on ugliness in the structure of the heavens or what we would call the natural world, but rather on ugliness in the moral and social realm, the realm of motivations, attitudes and relationships, and the field of human fortunes. When Plotinus is most explicit about the complaints that these opponents have about the world, it is not about the ugliness of the heavens, but rather about social inequities such as wealth and poverty, the injustices that befall individuals in the great sports arena of life where there are winners and losers (2.9.9,1-28). Why is everyone not good and perfect, why is there evil (2.9.13,22-33)? They were concerned about disease, but in this area they evidently did not merely complain about human misfortune. They actually cured diseases through exorcisms—experiencing them not merely as "natural" calamities but as the work of demons with intentions (2.14.14,14-18). We can also see this concern with the issue of motivations in the fact that, according to Plotinus, they said that the demiurge created the cosmos out of a desire to be honored (2.9.4,14; 2.9.11,22).

In *Enn.* 2.9.6,30-33, Plotinus remarks that by their introduction of plurality (multitude of names, etc.) into the intelligible order, his opponents bring the intelligible nature into likeness with the perceptible and inferior realm. He naturally sees this as a flaw in their argument, since in his view

[47] See Pearson, *Gnosticism*, 163.

this amounts to dragging supernal realities down to the level of inferior models. However, what for him is a flawed approach may be read by us as another confirmation that these opponents were using a form of cosmological argument, extrapolating the nature of the wonderful levels of the transcendent realm partly from features in the visible cosmos. Of course, if we take texts such as *Allogenes* or *Zostrianos* as windows on some of their views, their negative theology exalted the ultimate Source of all things beyond the reach of such analogy. But the very nature of ascent visions such as those in *Allogenes* or *Zostrianos* seems to be that the "peak" experience of proximity to the Unknowable is only a fragile moment in the larger blissful experience of knowing divinity.

VI. Summary and Conclusions

I have argued here that much of the attention that has been given to the presence of negative theology in demiurgical myths such as those found among Nag Hammadi and related sources has frequently misread the timbres, implications, and functions of such language. Most often this misreading has been a function of larger assumptions about the values and worldviews expressed in such traditions--assumptions that, it seems to me, are becoming ever more difficult for us to entertain in light of the last few decades of scholarship on such materials. While relationships have long been recognized between negative theology encountered in such demiurgical myths and forms of negative theological discourse in other ancient sources such as Platonic philosophical literature or Christian theologians, these parallels tend to be routinely qualified in such a way that a peculiarly "gnostic" strain of negative theology is successfully isolated. "Gnosticism" has often been imagined as a form of piety that entails radical negative theology virtually by definition. Moreover, "gnostic" negative theology has been regarded as a key symptom of a general abandonment of any confidence in rationality, as the unsystematic heaping up of numinous attributes. The rather steep elevation in negative theological discourse in some of these sources has typically been understood as an expression of a singularly fierce sense of opposition between God and the cosmos, alleged to have been a defining characteristic of "gnosticism." There has often been the assumption that in "gnostic" sources negative theology and cosmological argument must stand in inverse proportion, so that there can hardly have been room left here for any positive sensibility about seeing images of the divine in the beauty and order of the cosmos.

I have argued that an analysis of negative theological discourse among the demiurgical myths conventionally classified as "gnostic" suggests that

most all of the above assumptions are false. Significant use of negative theological discourse is limited to a certain selection of these sources. Where it is found, in writings such as the *Apocryphon of John*, or *Eugnostos*, or the *Tripartite Tractate*, or *Allogenes*, its employment is far from being completely unsystematic, and in fact we find patterns and structures that reflect attempts to develop organized argument and presentation of theological position. And, ironically, contrary to the notion that negative theology is the quintessential expression of anticosmism, it would seem that the sources in which are found the most significant instances of negative theology are also among those where it is easiest to demonstrate more positive sensibilities with respect to the material cosmos, and even the employment of forms of cosmological argument.

In a paper on "Negative Theology in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism," Curtis Hancock primarily underscored the similarities between Plotinus and "gnostics" in the deployment of negative theological discourse. But he suggested that a notable difference was that "gnostics" often applied negation somewhat "farther down the hierarchy of realities," whereas Plotinus limited it to the One.[48] There may be some validity in this contrast,[49] but in my view much more interesting than locating some precise "cut off" mark in the application of negation is the recognition that in these demiurgical myths, as in most other instances of negative theology, a radical emphasis on the ultimate unknowability of God is paradoxically only one dimension of the larger experience of knowing God.

In his brilliant study of vision and imagination in medieval Jewish mysticism, Elliot Wolfson[50] has distinguished between two types of contemplative vision in the Western mysticism: (a) the "introvertive" type, influenced primarily by Neoplatonic notions of the transcendent One, where the goal is to strip away image and form through a *via negativa* and achieve an "imageless" vision "beyond differentiation and distinction," and where logically the approach "should culminate in an apophatic theology that assumes that statements about what God is not have more truth value than statements about what God is"; and (b) the "cognitive" type which "affirms

---

[48] Hancock, "Negative Theology," 176, 180.

[49] Though this contrast would not work if we move beyond Plotinus to other Neoplatonists. Wallis notes, for example, that also in Iamblichus's view, ineffability "extended much further down the metaphysical scale"; and Proclus imagines degrees of unknowability in the hierarchy of the transcendent (Wallis, "Spiritual Importance," 475-76).

[50] Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 58-67.

that supernatural or spiritual knowledge comes by way of revelation, intuition or illumination."[51]

Wolfson notes that proponents of the first type often "will, in the end, insist that things invisible must be pursued through visible reality, through the agency of imagination." However, there is still the claim in this type that seeing God is something beyond image. "Imagelessness thus overcomes image in the *visio mystica*, yielding the paradoxical situation that sensible or imaginative seeing is spiritual blindness."[52] But Wolfson's central concern is to argue that the second, cognitive type has been misunderstood in previous study, since scholars have traditionally explained the use of images in this second kind of mystical literature as "the translation of ineffable experience into communicable form," and have not always realized that "recourse to sensible images and symbols is part of the mystical experience itself."[53] In general contrast with the more "purely Neoplatonic vision," contemplative vision in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions is "not entirely free of concrete and sensible images":

> Seeing God—like seeing anything—is seeing God as something, that is, under certain aspects that are informed by some prior interpretative framework. The imaging of the divine, therefore, does not simply result from the mystic's desire to translate the ineffable experience into a communicable form, but is an intrinsic part of the experience itself.[54]

With some adaptation of these important insights, I would like to make a similar point about material I have discussed in this study. But rather than focusing on the twofold typology that Wolfson has sketched out, I am more interested in how elements of his discussion may help bring into relief the relation in some of these demiurgical traditions between negative theology and knowing God. It is a fundamental mistake, in Wolfson's view, to think of the "real" mystical visionary experience as being some ineffable moment, with all the imagery encountered in descriptions of it being relegated to the status of nonessential, and replaceable commentary. He insists that we pay more attention to how integral the agency of imagination can be even in the experience of what is often claimed by mystics to be unimaginable.

In a similar vein, I would argue that it is a mistake in the case of the sources I have discussed here to place narrow emphasis on negations stressing the ultimate unknowability of God, or focus only on a sharp polar tension between the abstract affirmation of the true God's absolute

---

[51] Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 58-60.
[52] Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 58, 59.
[53] Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 60.
[54] Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 66.

incomprehensibility and a consequent total dependence on some critical moment of divine revelation. It seems to me that an inclination toward this kind of reading of the significance of negative theology has been especially characteristic when it comes to negative theology in demiurgical myths such as those in the examples from Nag Hammadi. What needs to be seen is the far more protracted, more complex experience of knowing God that seems often implied in these myths—an experience stretched out over important and informative stages, levels, and media (e.g., the structure of the material cosmos) that are as integral to the total experience of knowing as is the realization of God's unknowability.

Bibliography

Attridge, Harold W., ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex): Introductions, Texts, Translations, Indices*. 2 vols. NHS, 22-23. Leiden: Brill, 1985.

Corrigan, Kevin. "The Anonymous Turin *Commentary on the Parmenides* and the Distinction between Essence and Existence in Middle Platonism, the Plotinian Circle, and Sethian Gnostic Texts." Paper for the SBL Gnosticism and Later Platonism Seminar, 1995 AAR/SBL Annual Meeting, Philadelphia.

Dillon, John M., tr. *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism*. Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press, 1993.

_____. "*Pleroma* and Noetic Cosmos: A Comparative Study." In Wallis-Bregman, 99-110.

_____. "The Knowledge of God in Origen." In van den Broek-Baarda-Mansfeld, 219-228.

_____. *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977.

Festugière, A.-J. *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*. 4 vols. Paris: Gabalda, 1949-54.

Foester, Werner, ed. *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*. 2 vols. Trans. by R. McL. Wilson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972-74.

Hancock, Curtis. "Negative Theology in Gnosticism and Neoplatonism." In Wallis-Bregman, 167-86.

Harris, J. Rendel, ed. and trans. *The Apology of Aristides*. Texts and Studies, 1.1. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893.

Jonas, Hans. *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*. Part 1. 3rd ed. FRLANT, 51. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964.

_____. *The Gnostic Religion*. 2nd ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.

King, Karen. *Revelation of the Unknowable God with Text, Translation, and Notes to NHC XI,3 Allogenes*. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 1995.

Lilla, Salvatore R. C. *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Manfeld, Jaap. "Compatible Alternatives: Middle Platonist Theology and the Xenophanes Reception." In van den Broek-Baarda-Mansfeld, 92-117.

Parrott, Douglas M. "Eugnostos and 'All the Philosophers.'" In *Religion im Erbe Ägyptens: Beiträge zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte zur Ehren von Alexander Böhlig*, edited by Manfred Görg, 153-67. Ägypten und Altes Testament, 14. Wiesbaden: Otto Haarassowitz, 1988.

Pearson, Birger. *Gnosticism, Judaism and Egyptian Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.

Perkins, Pheme. "Beauty, Number, and Loss of Order in the Gnostic Cosmos," in Wallis-Bregman, 277-296.

Rudolph, Kurt. *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*. Trans. by R. McL. Wilson. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.

Schoedel, William R. "'Topological' Theology and Some Monistic Tendencies in Gnosticism." In *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhlig*, edited by Martin Krause, 88-108. NHS, 3. Leiden: Brill, 1972.

Sumney, Jerry L. "The Letter of Eugnostos and the Origins of Gnosticism." *NovT* 31(1989): 172-81.

Tardieu, Michel. *Écrits gnostiques: Codex de Berlin*. Sources Gnostiques et Manichéennes, 1. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1984.

Thomassen, Einar, and Louis Painchaud, ed. and trans. *Le Traité Tripartite (NH I, 5)*. BCNH, Section "Textes," 19. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1989.

Trakatellis, Demetrios. *The Transcendent God of Eugnostos*. Trans. by Charles Sarelis. Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1991.

Turner, John. "Gnosticism and Platonism: The Platonizing Sethian Texts from Nag Hammadi and their Relation to Later Platonic Literature." In Wallis-Bregman, 425—59.

Van den Broek, Roelof. "Eugnostos and Aristides on the Ineffable God." In van den Broek-Baarda-Mansfeld, 202-218.

_____. *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity*. NHMS (=NHS), 39. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Van den Broek, R., T. Baarda, and J. Mansfeld, eds. *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World*. EPRO 112. Leiden: Brill, 1988.

van Unnik, W. C., "Die Gotteslehre bei Aristides und in gnostischen Schriften," *TZ* 17 (1961): 166-74.

Waldstein, Michael. *The Apocryphon of John: A Curious Eddy in the Stream of Hellenistic Judaism* (draft version).

Wallis, Richard T. "The Spiritual Importance of Not Knowing." In *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, edited by A. H. Armstrong, 460-80. World Spirituality, 15. New York: Crossroad, 1987.

Wallis, Richard T. and Jay Bregman, eds. *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism.* Studies in Neoplatonism: Ancient and Modern, 6. Albany: SUNY, 1992.

Whittaker, John, and Pierre Louis, ed. and trans. *Alcinoos: Enseignement des doctrines de Platon.* Paris: Belles lettres, 1990.

Williams, Michael Allen. *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Wolfson, Elliot R., *Through a Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Arguments and Audience(s) in the Gospel of Thomas (Part I)

Jon Ma. Asgeirsson
Institute for Antiquity and Christianity

Boudewijn Dehandschutter has recently summarized what he describes as the present stage of research into the *Gospel of Thomas*: A scenario of conflicting approaches, in his opinion, between treating the text as an "early collection of sayings" (and independent of the canonical gospels) or as a late "synoptic redaction" (and dependent on the canonical gospels as sources of the text). While Dehandschutter claims that further clarifications be needed in both instances (favoring the second approach himself), he falls short of defining the situation of research into the *Gospel of Thomas* as a status quo.[1]

It was in reaction to such claims that a new program unit on Thomas traditions was launched within the Society of Biblical Literature in 1993 in order to move research into the *Gospel of Thomas* and related traditions beyond the scene appropriately described by Dehandschutter as one dominating the field from its inception in the late fifties to the early nineties.[2] Among

[1] Vide his, "Recent Research on the Gospel of Thomas," in F. Van Segbroeck et al. eds., *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, BETL 100 (Leuven: Leuven University Press & Peeters, 1992) 2257-2262. The situation, according to Dehandschutter is, "a situation showing that the problems are (as they always have been): the concept of the GT as a *collection* of sayings; and the question about its 'sources,'" ibid., 2257.

[2] A Consultation on Thomas Traditions took place within the Society of Biblical Literature 1993-1995. The Consultation unit was replaced with the Thomas Traditions Group in 1996 (within the same organization) that continues exploring and experimenting with new approaches to the *Gospel of Thomas* and related traditions.

experimental approaches to the *Gospel of Thomas* introduced by members of this new program unit is the application of rhetorical criticism for the study of the compositional history of the Gospel text.[3]

For Dehandschutter the critical juncture of the conventional approach to the *Gospel of Thomas* consists of recognizing the nature of the Coptic text on the one hand and the trajectories of individual traditions on the other as he understands them. Says Dehandschutter:

> Literary criticism of the GT is evidently crucial here: aren't there so many traces of the artificial character of this 'collection' that it becomes difficult to maintain the view of an early collection that continues oral tradition?[4]

Rhetorical criticism challenges both the claim for a (random) "early collection" of sayings (the view challenged by Dehandschutter) as well as that of an "artificial" nature of the text (the view maintained by Dehandschutter) as it is known in its fourth century form. Indeed, rhetorical criticism based on insights from Hellenistic manuals on rhetoric provides an understanding into the manipulation of traditions as well as the very method of textual composition from the period of Late Antiquity. The doublets in the *Gospel of Thomas* constitute a curious example both with regard to the traditional problems identified by Dehandschutter as well as for the application and promises of rhetorical criticism. The first part of

---

[3] First presented by Jon Ma. Asgeirsson's, "Dicta Evnagelii Thomae Gemina" (Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Philadelphia, November 1995) and idem, "Components and Composition of the *Gospel of Thomas*" (Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, New Orleans, 1996).

[4] "Recent Research," 2259.

this paper focuses on establishing a redefinition of the doublets in Thomas, while the second looks into the question of the audience(s) behind the different rhetorical contexts of their components.

Doublets in the Gospel of Thomas

McArthur (1960)	Montefiore (1961)	Quispel (1967)
logia (3[a] and 113	3[a] and 113)	21[b] and 103
logia 6[a] and 14	10 and 16[a]	38 and 92
logia 39 and 102	21[b] and 103	39 and 102
logia (48 and 106[a-b]	48 and 106[a-b]	48 and 106[a-b])
logia 55 and 101	55 and 101	(51 and 113)
logia (56 and 80	56 and 80)	55 and 101
logia 74 and 75	87 and 112	68 and 69
logia 81 and 110		74 and 75
logia 87 and 112		

Vielhauer (1975)	Hedrick (1990)	Schenke (1991)
logia 5 and 6[c]	(3 and 113	3 and 113)
logia 21[b] and 103	5 and 6[c]	5 and 6[c]
logia (22[c] and 106[a])	6[a] and 14	6[a] and 14
logia 39 and 102	(48 and 106[b]	22[c] and 106[a])
logia 41 and 70	55 and 101	(48 and 106[b])
logia (51 and 113)	(56, 80 and 111[c])	55 and 101
logia (56 and 80)	87 and 112	(56, 80 and 111[c])
logia 81 and 110		87 and 112
logia 87 and 112		{104[a,c] and 104[b]}

Sigla: (x) = partial agreement (triplets); [x] = subverse; {x} = hypothetical

This table of the most commonly identified pairs of doublets in the *Gospel of Thomas* is arranged in numerical order with a harmonized subverse reference when applicable.

	Agreements 6/6	5/6	4/6	3/6	2/6	1/6
McArthur (9)	(1)	2(+3)	2(+3)	6(+1)	9	0
Montefiore (7)	(1)	2(+3)	2(+3)	5(+1)	6	1
Quispel (8)	(1)	1(+2)	1(+2)	4(+1)	6	2
Vielhauer (9)	(1)	1(+2)	1(+2)	5(+1)	8	1
Hedrick (7)	(1)	2(+3)	2(+3)	4(+3)	7	0
Schenke (9)	(1)	2(+3)	2(+3)	4(+3)	8	{1}

A comparison of these lists of doublets[5] in the *Gospel of Thomas* reveals a certain sense of hesitation as to what constitutes a

[5] Vide, Harvey K. McArthur, "The Gospel according to Thomas," in idem ed., *New Testament Sidelights: Essays in Honor of Alexander C. Purdy* (Hartford: The Hartford Seminary Foundation Press, 1960) 48-50; Hugh Montefiore, "A Comparison of the Parables of the Gospel according to Thomas and the Synoptic Gospels," in H.E.W. Turner and Hugh Montefiore, *Thomas and the Evangelists*, SBT (Naperville: Allenson, 1962) 42, n. 2 and 3 [originally published 1961]; Gilles Quispel, *Makarius, Das Thomasevangelium und das Lied von der Perle*, NovTSup XV (Leiden: Brill, 1967) 93; Philipp Vielhauer, "Das Thomasevangelium," in idem, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur. Einleitung in das Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die Apostolischen Väter*, de Gruyter Lehrbuch (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975) 624, n. 13 (listed as "examples" of doublets); [cf. Paul Schüngel, "Das Evangelium nach Thomas oder Die Worte Jesu über die königliche Herrschaft, die jeder in sich finden kann" (Thesis Manuscript, Bonn, 1994?) 12, Schüngel's list is identical with that of Vielhauer's (even though Vielhauer is not referred to), with the possible exception of the pair 5 and 6c which Schüngel claims to be "unproblematisch," ibid., 12]; Charles W. Hedrick, "Thomas and the Synoptics: Aiming at a Consensus," *SecCent* 7/1 (Spring 1989-1990) 51; Hans-Martin Schenke, "On the Compositional History of the Gospel of Thomas" (Paper Presented at the Fall Meeting of the Westar Institute's Jesus Seminar, Edmonton, Canada, 1991) 5-6, 19, and 31, n. 30; cf. Jon Ma. Asgeirsson, "Geminus Extra Ordinem: The Gospel of Thomas" in, G.A. Jonsson ed., *The New Testament in Its Hellenistic Context: Proceedings of a Nordic Conference of New*

doublet in the Gospel. This is attested in both the different number of doublets identified by each of the scholars listed, as well as, in the disparate pairs identified by some of the same. The tabulation demonstrates barely one doublet in common to all six lists. Logia 3, 51 and 113, are, indeed, possibly a triplet rather than a doublet and the disagreement consists of whether logion 3 or 51 is to be taken as a doublet with logion 113.[6] The ratio of agreement is significantly higher between any five and four lists in which the number of partial agreement is one pair higher in each instance. Here is found the pair of logia 48 and 106 that McArthur, Montefiore and Quispel treat as a doublet whereas Vielhauer, Hedrick and Schenke each treat logion 106a-b differently in context of logion 48. Vielhauer and Schenke by taking 106a with logion 22c (not listed by Hedrick) and Hedrick and Schenke by taking 106b with 48 (not listed by Vielhauer).[7] A comparison between any three lists reveals a

---

Testament Scholars Held in Skalholt [Iceland], Studia theologica islandica 10 (Reykjavik: Gudfrædistofnun/Skalholtsutgafan, 1996) 161-185, praesertim, 173-183.

[6] This one partial agreement becomes less tenable when Quispel later revises his pair of logia 51 (as from an encratite source) and 113 (as from a Jewish Christian source) and attributes logion 51 to the hand of the gospel's author, "The *Gospel of Thomas* Revisited," in, B. Barc ed., *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi (Québec, 22-25 août 1978)*, Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section "Études" 1 (Québec: Laval University Press, 1981) 265. Logion 3 is identified as from yet another source that Quispel here identifies as a Hermetic gnomologium but he does not consider it (as yet) a doublet with logion 113. Indeed, he considers it related to another logion attributed to the same source, logion 111b, ibid., 261-262. Attributing logion 51 to the hand of the author, contradicts his earlier definition of doublets as evincing different sources behind the Gospel, and thus eliminates the pair as such; cf. *Makarius*, 92-93.

[7] Quispel observes in an earlier study that logion 22c be derived from the *Gospel of the Egyptians*—it itself being a "recension made by the author of the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, who here, as so often, transposed the Semitic notions of his Jewish-Christian source into the 'existentialist' of gnosticizing Alexandrinism." Quispel considers the source of the logion to be the *Gospel of the Hebrews* preserved in logion 89 of the *Gospel of Thomas*. Vide his, "The

considerably higher ratio. Among these pairs is another possible triplet attested in logia 56 and 80 and 111c according to Hedrick and Schenke whereas others leave out reference to logion 111c.[8] Vielhauer and Schüngel do not consider logion 111c in this context and list the doublet as consisting of logia 56 and 80. Five pairs out of the total of nineteen [15(+4)] are identified without parallel in any of the other lists[9] leaving fifteen pairs identical between any two lists.[10]

Several other pairs of (possible) doublets have been proposed in various contexts of the study of the *Gospel of Thomas* such as logia 12 and 13 by H. E. W. Turner who claims that the two "give positions of prominence to James the Just and Thomas himself."[11] Frederick Markus Strickert even suggests that logion 77 be a doublet of logion 30—as attested in P. Oxy 1 (logion 30b)—and that the ending of logion 30 will have "dropped away" in the Coptic text.[12] To this appendix of

---

Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament," *VC* 11 (1957) 200. In a later study of his this doublet consisting of logia 22c and 89 has apparently lost its one half. Here, Quispel notes that logion 22c be a similar tradition as the one found in logion 106a both of which he considers derived from the *Gospel according to the Egyptians*, "Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas," *NTS* 5/4 (1959) 288. Logia 22c and 89 are not listed as a doublet in the list cited in *Makarius,* 93.

[8] Oscar Cullmann considers the triplet consist of logia 56 and 80+81 and 110—the last one combining logia 80-81, "Das Thomasevangelium und die Frage nach dem Alter der in ihm enthaltenen Tradition," *TLZ* 85/5 (May 1960) 328. Ernst Haenchen, on the contrary, argues that logion 110 continue the theme of the doublet consisting of logia 56 and 80, "Literatur zum Thomasevangelium," *TRu* n.F. 27[/3] (1961) 176, The similar motifs found in logia 110 and 111c will be discussed below.

[9] One of the pairs identified by Quispel, logia 74 (from an encratite source) and 75 (from a Jewish Christian source) is apparently later dissolved (like the pair consisting of logia 22c and 89; cf. note 7 above) when he attributes logion 75 to the author, "*Gospel of Thomas* Revisited," 265. Thus McArthur would be the only one left identifying this pair as a doublet.

[10] Cullmann lists one of these pairs as consisting of logia 80 and 110 rather than 81 and 110 (cf. McArthur and Vielhauer). Logion 56 is yet another doublet to logion 80, in his opinion, which would seemingly make logia 56, 80 (+81), and 110 a triplet if not a quadruplet, "Thomasevangelium," 328.

[11] "The Gospel of Thomas: Its History, Transmission and Sources," in H.E.W. Turner and Hugh Montefiore, *Thomas and the Evangelists*, 24.

[12] Vide his, "The Pronouncement Sayings in the Gospel of Thomas and the

ambiguous pairs belongs the stereotypical phrase or admonition, "Whoever has ears (to hear), let him hear," in logia 8, 21 (these two adding the words in parenthesis), 24, 63, 65, and 96.[13]

What Constitutes a Doublet?

The discrepancies between the lists of doublets call for a definition or criteria of what constitutes a doublet in the first place. The problem of identifying doublets in the canonical gospels is subject to ambiguity as well. However, the scholarly literature reveals a few basic criteria for what constitutes a doublet. John C. Hawkins notes that doublets basically occur in the synoptic sayings traditions (with only a few narrative examples found in Matthew). He defines doublets as "repetitions of the same or closely similar sentences in the same Gospel."[14] This implies a **verbatim similarity**

Synoptics" (Ph.D. diss., The Graduate College at The University of Iowa, 1988) 340-341.

[13] The admonition is treated as an independent attestation of an aphorism of the Jesus tradition by John Dominic Crossan who notes that it is used five times as a conclusion to a parable and once to introduce an aphorism (logion 24). Vide his, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983) 68-70. Anne-Marit Enroth-Voitila argues that the "hearing formula" may "point in the direction of dependence [on the synoptics]" which she supports by its earliest attestation as found in Mk 4:9 but more specifically by its shorter and longer forms in the *Gospel of Thomas* which also are attested in Mt 11:15, 13:9,43 and Lk 8:8, 14:35 respectively, "The Hearing Formula in the *Gospel of Thomas*" (Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Philadelphia, 1995) 7-8. Her observation is, however, inconclusive for the very fact that the phrase is applied to different contexts in the *Gospel of Thomas* as also Enroth-Voitila notes and with a "different function," ibid. 8. This diversity or discrepancy between its application in the synoptic Gospels and the *Gospel of Thomas*, as well as, its varying structure is, on the contrary, an indication of its independent origin. Crossan concludes that the phrase be, "a classic example of oral sensibility, of the triumph of structure over syntax," ibid., 73.

[14] *Horae Synopticae: Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*, 2nd revised ed. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1909) 80.

to a considerable extent between any one pair of sayings (or narrative materials) marked as a doublet and must serve as a basic criterion for identifying one. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J. applies the same criterion and emphasizes that the phenomenon of doublets be more or less limited to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, "where they appear in both the Triple and Double Traditions, or in one of these and in the special source-material as well." He adds that **re-occurences of motifs** within one gospel such as the feeding motif in Mk 6:35-44 and 8:1-9 not constitute a doublet, "since these occur within one tradition."[15] Consequently, doublets attest to the use of different sources by an evangelist (Luke in particular). Fitzmyer lists the admonition to heed to what one hears (Lk 8:8 and 14:35) as the single instance in Luke of a doublet that does not fit well his otherwise attested use of doublets "derived from the pre-Lucan sources."[16] This states that repeated motifs between any given pair of sayings or passages within a single tradition (source) cannot be used as a criterion for identifying a doublet proper. Where doublets appear, on the contrary, in two or more traditions, they **attest to distinct sources of origin**. Ulrich Luz separates the definition of doublets from the repeated use of certain admonitions and remarks such as the Immanuel motif in Mt 1:24 and 28:20 which he labels

---

[15] *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 28 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981) 81. Hawkins only lists Mk 9:35 and 10:43,44 as a doublet in Mark, *Horae Synopticae*, 99. Other possibilities such as Mk 9:23 and 11:23 or Mk 13:5,6 and 13:21-23 Hawkins considers "resemblances" and not doublets, ibid., 99. Likewise, the three predictions about the passion in Mk 8:31, 9:31; and 10:33 are not viewed as doublets by Hawkins but as expressions "assigned to three distinct occasions," ibid., 99, n. 3.

[16] Ibid., 81-82.

redactional insertions.[17] Luz emphasizes the difference of doublets that derive from separate sources such as Q and Mark in Matthew and Luke and doublets that are created by the author or redactor of a gospel (Matthew in particular). The latter type of doublets serve, in his opinion, several basic editorial objectives.[18] In this differentiation between doublets derived from sources in distinction from doublets derived from the hand of an author or redactor emerges yet another criterion of what constitutes doublets, they are either derived from certain sources or serve a given **redactional function** (or implicitly a combination of source and redaction) in the composition of any given text.[19]

As different criteria have been applied to doublets in the synoptic Gospels, the number of doublets in Matthew and Luke, respectively, identified in the secondary literature differs among scholars while considered by the same practically absent in Mark.[20] Matthew is generally thought to create doublets freely while at the same time adopting others from his different sources.[21] Luke, on the

---

[17] *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 1. Teilband, *Mt 1-7*, EKK (Zürich: Benzinger Verlag & Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985) 22.

[18] Ibid., 21-22.

[19] Questions about sources against redactional possibilities continue to be a matter of serious dispute even at the roots of the so-called synoptic problem—particularly in context of the triple tradition. For a recent discussion (in favor of the two source theory) vide e,g., Timothy A. Friedrichsen, "'Minor' and 'Major' Matthew-Luke Agreements Against Mk 4,30-32," in F. Van Segbroeck et al. eds, *The Four Gospels 1992*, 649-676.

[20] Cf. the lists in Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, 82-106, and, e.g., in G.D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1946) 84-93, and in Heinz Schürmann, "Die Dubletten im Lukasevangelium: Ein Beitrag zur Verdeutlichung des lukanischen Redaktionsverfahrens," in idem, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den synoptischen Evangelien: Beiträge*, Kommentare und Beiträge zum Alten und Neuen Testament (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1968) 272-278.

[21] Cf. Luz, *Matthäus*, 21-22. Luz identifies four different redactional functions of the sayings doublets created by Matthew: 1) those that function as a framework around certain passages (like, e.g., in Mt 4:23 and 9:35); 2) those

contrary, is considered in general to avoid doublets except when dependent on different sources, indeed, considered to make a serious effort to avoid them whenever possible.[22] It is worth noting that the ratio of doublets in the *Gospel of Thomas* is very much higher (even if the pairs identified prove to be far less than nineteen) in comparison to the sayings material in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke—considering the fact that the volume of sayings material in each of these canonical Gospels is about three times larger than the one found in Thomas.[23]

While it may be argued that criteria applied to doublets in the canonical gospels not readily bring to bear on the *Gospel of Thomas*, scholars have, indeed, utilized them for the latter as well. Obviously, 1) certain **common elements** must be in place within a saying (or a passage) in order for it to be recognized as a doublet of/to another one. Notably, the elements in common are verbal agreements rather than common motifs. 2) From where the components of a doublet are derived does not eliminate any pair as a doublet but relates to its **origin and/or function**. Here, characteristics of contents and

---

that function for the sake of emphasizing certain passages (like, e.g., in Mt 9:13 and 12:7); 3) those that function to view the same motifs from a different perspective (like, e.g., in Mt 10:17-22 and 24:9-13); 4) those that function for other specific purposes (like, e.g., in Mt 3:2 and 4:17 and 10:7), ibid.

[22] Cf. Schürmann, "Die Dublettenvermeidungen im Lukasevangelium: Ein Beitrag zur Verdeutlichung des lukanischen Redaktionsverfahrens," in idem, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, 279-289; Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 81-82. He lists 9 passages in Luke in which Luke has omitted a Markan parallel (doublet) to material derived from L and Q, ibid., 22. Note, however, what Luz claims in context of his discussion about Matthew's use of doublets from different sources: "Da Mt aber seine Quellen sehr genau übersieht (im Unterschied zu Lk!) und solche Dubletten mindestens bei größeren Textkomplexen vermeidet, muß man fragen, ob Mt quellenkritisch erklärbare Dubletten abschitlich zum Einprägen wichtiger Logien stehen läßt," *Matthäus*, 22, n. 24.

[23] Cf. Hawkins for a modest count but he lists 18 doublets in the sayings material in Matthew and 11 pairs in Luke, *Horae Synopticae*, 82-106.

typical vocabulary play a role in identifying origins as well as in shedding light on the purpose of a doublet in a different compositional context. 3) To these criteria derived from the secondary literature, must be added a criterion based on structure or **individual components** of any given chria or logion in Thomas: certain segments of a chria cannot be considered parallels to others as will be shown in the analyses to follow.

This distinction, however, becomes somewhat ambiguous in itself once it is observed that doublets constitute themselves an **integral part** in the very composition of texts as instructed in manuals on literary (rhetorical) composition from the late Hellenistic period. Once the genre of the *Gospel of Thomas* has been established as a chriae collection,[24] the characteristics and faculties of this most important component in Hellenistic transmission of traditions and textual composition disclose a new understanding of the Gospel at large as well as its very inner elements.

Viewed from this perspective the chriae of a doublet emerge as a typical device of rhetorical progression. It is itself subject to deconstruction—a qualification that enables it to be applied over (and over) again in a modified form. It can serve as an analogy, commentary, emphasis etc. in various contexts and locations as fits the application in each instance whether in an expanded or abbreviated form while at the same time being a possible source for

---

[24] On this, vide, Asgeirsson, "Towards a Rhetorical Approach to the *Gospel of Thomas,*" in R. Uro ed., *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinbourgh: T.&T. Clark, 1998), passim. Cf. Ron Cameron, in D.N. Freedman ed., *ABD* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) s.v. "Thomas, Gospel of" VI:535; Steven J. Patterson, "The Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptic Tradition: A Forschungsbericht and Critique," *Forum* 8/1-2 (1992) 63.

elaboration or itself a component part thereof. Indeed, a chriae collection is transparent enough to be labelled as sayings (cf. the incipit of Thomas) or Gospel (cf. the colophon of Thomas), lives (cf. *Demonax*), etc.[25]

This flexibility[26] of the chria makes it equally resistant to harmonization of a specific vision as to a vaulted depository of past glory. It is by its very nature an independent entity capable of breaking linkage with one con–text only to re–con–struct a text in a different setting. As such the *Gospel of Thomas* starts to unfold with a life on its own. It challenges any alleged status quo definition early or late in a demand for a voice in its own right. Yet, not in a solemn soliloquium but in an ongoing dialogue over issues as they appear in each and every instance: a find here, a corpse there.

The very rhetorical structure of even the smallest units in the Gospel promises at the same time to open up windows to the social reality in which the traditions had and continue to have life beyond the depository of the past and harmonizing hands from the early turn of the calender to the present.

Writing about Pre-Gospel traditions, Robbins notes how the Hellenistic manuals on rhetorical instructions offer new skills for the understanding of early Christian literature:

---

[25] Cf. Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, Vol. I, The *Progymnasmata*, TT 27, GRRS 9 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 3-60; Vernon K. Robbins, "Progymnastic Rhetorical Composition and Pre-Gospel Traditions: A New Approach," in C. Focant, ed., *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism*, BETL 110 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993) 111-131.

[26] Hock summarizes Theon's definition, categorizations and manipulative nature of the chria in, ibid., 66-74.

> If culture-transmitting tradition is argumentative, then individual traditions will be expanded and elaborated to make stronger, more explicit arguments. Certain traditions will be brought into the argumentation of other traditions as rationales, analogies, or authoritative statements to strengthen the argumentation.[27]

The Origins of Doublets in the Gospel of Thomas

Quispel has developed his list of doublets in Thomas over a period of several years of study. They serve, in his works, to explain the different sources that for him constitute the collections of sayings in the *Gospel of Thomas*. Quispel assigns roughly half of the sayings in Thomas to a Jewish Christian origin based on similarities of these sayings with such writings as the Pseudo-Clementines—both of which he traces to a Jewish Christian Gospel(s)—as well as the Western Text of the New Testament and versions of the Diatessaron. The remaining half Quispel originally assigns to a a source which he argues be later and characteristic of second century encratite thought.[28] Indeed, the one half of the doublets are explained by Quispel as "hellenistic, gnosticizing, syncretistic logia" from the *Gospel according to the Egyptians* of what Quispel considers their purer counterparts of "Palestinian origin" from the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.[29] In subsequent

---

[27] Ibid., 132.

[28] "Thomas and the New Testament," passim; "Some Remarks," passim, praesertim 286-287. The following logia of the doublets are, according to Quispel, from a Jewish-Christian source: 38, 39, 48, 55, 68, 75, 103, and 113; their counterparts derived from an encratite source in Quispel's understanding, being: 92, 102, 106, 101, 69, 74, 21b and 51, *Makarius*, 93.

[29] "Some Remarks," 287. Says Quispel: "When two different versions of the same saying are found in one writing, it is a safe principle to assume that the author of this writing used two sources. ... In fact he quotes elsewhere the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* and the *Gospel according to the Egyptians*. It would seem that the same is the case when he quotes doublets. One half of the

studies, Quispel has modified this basic idea culminating in a list of eight doublets to be later revised in view of yet another source (Hellenistic gnomologium) and an increased role assigned to the author or redactor.[30]

Montefiore, likewise, argues that the doublets be a sure indication of written sources behind the Gospel text. However, the seven pairs identified by him are not duplications of material found in the synoptic gospels. Two pairs have, in his analysis, no parallels in the synoptic Gospels and the remaining five reflect "some kinship" at best. A further indication that the synoptic Gospels not be the source behind the doublets or the *Gospel of Thomas* at large.[31] Montefiore suggests that the *Gospel to the Hebrews* may have been the main source used by Thomas but who would have used other sources as well.[32]

Attributing one half of the doublets to a redacted source is at the core of Cullmann's critique of Quispel's source analysis. Cullmann concedes that doublets imply the use of different sources but in the case of Thomas, he argues, the doublets attest to a source characterized as a redacted version of the original source behind Thomas. The Gospel makes use of both the original source and the

---

doublet he could take from the Hebrew Gospel, the other from the Egyptian Gospel. It is interesting to see that in that case the author of the Egyptian Gospel must have known the Jewish-Christian tradition, which he reinterpretes," ibid., 288-289.

[30] *Makarius*, praesertim 92-93; "*Gospel of Thomas* Revisited," praesertim, 234-266.

[31] "A Comparison of the Parables," 42. Says Montefiore: "If a compiler is citing sayings from memory, either at random or by word association, he is very unlikely to quote two different versions of the same saying. But if he is compiling a work from two or more written sources, he may either conflate two similar versions, prefer one to the other, or quote both," ibid., 42.

[32] Ibid., 45-46.

redacted version of it that, thus, precedes Thomas.[33] The redactional process shows an increasing tendency towards gnostic interests in Cullmann's opinion. As for the original source itself, Cullmann observes that it partially consist of synoptic like material, extra canonical sources and, finally, unknown sources.[34]

The doublets in Thomas—most of which appear towards the end of the Gospel—are indications of its compositional process rather than sources in the view of Haenchen. He argues that Thomas be most familiar with the synoptic Gospels. Yet, not in a written form of theirs but as circulating in oral tradition based on the written one in the given gnostic provenance of the author or compiler. The compositional process is further motivated by two main factors according to Haenchen: basic gnostic motives ("gnostische Hauptthemen") that characterize the inner context of the Gospel and catch word connections ("Stichwortmethode") that aim at giving the Gospel a formal (and outward) continuity. A characteristic that Haenchen attributes to an oral phase of the tradition.[35] While the process of composition in Thomas has the potential to grow,[36] a

---

[33] "Thomasevangelium," 328.

[34] Ibid., 326. Vielhauer, likewise, considers the doublets in Thomas derived from different collections of sayings, the sources of which partially consist of synoptic related material and partially of the special material in Thomas. In either case the question of dependency on or independency of the synoptic Gospels comes into question, *Geschichte*, 624-629.

[35] "Literatur zum Thomasevangelium (Fortsetzung)," *TRu* n.F. 27/4 (1961-1962) 314-315.

[36] Cf. R. McL. Wilson who says: "We have to reckon with the probability of growth, of the gradual enlarging of a small nucleus into the Gospel in its present form; we must consider the possibility of adaptation, of the re-interpretation of a saying, the possibility that sayings familiar to us in the context of our Gospels had for the Gnostic another meaning; we must take account of the interests of the final redactor and of the community which preserved and used the book," *Studies in the Gospel of Thomas* (London: Mowbray, 1960) 145.

process not limited by the death of Jesus, its real growth takes place in the repeated gnostic motifs throughout the Gospel that serve (to convert) without an end.[37]

Wolfgang Schrage describes Thomas as a collection of quotes—inaccurate as they may be—basically from the New Testament. Indeed, the doublets are, in his opinion, a clear manifestation of the lack of a conscious effort behind the compilation of the quotes despite the frequent application of catch word connections. A further proof of this is what Schrage describes as dependency on written redactional elements in the synoptic Gospel tradition.[38] While Schrage considers the possibility of oral tradition being present and having influenced Thomas (in the second century) along with the written sources of the New Testament, he explains the composition of the Coptic text of Thomas as one of gradual process in which several redactors add to the compilation(s) of their predecessors. He, thus,

---

[37] Haenchen considers it possible that in addition to sayings ultimately derived from the synoptics, Thomas may have known other sayings not derived from any known Gospels. However, the growing process is more or less limited by redactional efforts of earlier existing material as exemplified in the doublets. The core is, indeed, controlled by the source material, according to Haenchen, which concomitantly sets the *Gospel of Thomas* apart from sayings collections like the *Sentences of Sextus*. Occasional narrative settings in Thomas are, in his view, proof that Thomas be dependent on narrative Gospels, the synoptics in particular (in an oral tradition as he considers Thomas to know them), "Thomasevangelium (Fortsetzung)," 306-307, 314.

[38] *Das Verhältnis des Thomas-Evangeliums zur synoptischen Tradition und zu den koptischen Evangelienübersetzungen: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur gnostischen Synoptikerdeutung*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche, W. Eltester ed., 29 (Berlin: Töppelmann, 1964) 9-10. Schrage refers to McArthur in support of this conclusion. McArthur claims that doublets indicate more than often the combination of sources either at the oral or the written phase of a tradition. However, in the case of closely related doublets, he assumes a written background—canonical and extra-canonical. Says McArthur: "I find it slightly easier to think of an editor including both items because he was combining written sources. If the process occurred at the level of oral tradition I would have expected one member of the doublet to cancel the other, or else for the two to combine into a single saying," "Gospel according to Thomas," 50.

considers the doublets in Thomas to be the result of redactional activity (redaction of earlier material derived from the New Testament).[39]

In explaining the methodological procedure of Tatian's Gospel harmonizing in the *Diatessaron*, Tjitze Baarda observes that:

> One should, however, not overlook the fact that Tatian's procedure of combining did not totally avoid doublets; moreover, he seems to have added other material from either an extra-canonical Gospel or oral tradition. In short the savings were less than one might expect.[40]

Baarda has over the past decades offered some of the most detailed studies of a selected number of logia in the *Gospel of Thomas*. In his research Baarda has for the most part concentrated on either the source, i.e., history of tradition of a saying (its *origin*), or its setting in the *Gospel of Thomas* (its *function and meaning*)–separately or together.[41] While the occurrence of doublets in the *Gospel of Thomas* are for Quispel the most persuasive evidence for different sources behind the gospel,[42] Baarda's findings challenge both the emergence and nature (origin and function) of the same text. If by inference,

---

[39] Ibid., 10.

[40] "Διαφωνία–Συμφωνία: Factors in the Harmonization of the Gospels–Especially in the Diatessaron of Tatian," in idem, *Essays on the Diatessaron*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology, Tjitze Baarda et al. eds., 11 (Kampen: Pharos, 1994) 38 [originally published 1989].

[41] As an example of the vertical approach, vide e.g., his "'Choose' or 'Collected:' Concerning an Aramaism in Logion 8 of the *Gospel of Thomas* and the Question of Independence," *HTR* 84/4 (1991) 373-397; for the horizontal approach e.g., "'If You Do Not Sabbatize the Sabbath ... :' The Sabbath as God or World in Gnostic Understanding (*Ev. Thom.*, Log. 27)," in idem, *Essays on the Diatessaron*, 147-171; for a combined study e.g., "Jesus Said: Be Passers-By: On the Meaning and Origin of Logion 42 of the Gospel of Thomas," in idem, *Early Transmission of Words of Jesus: Thomas, Tatian and the Text of the New Testament*, J. Heldermann and S.J. Noorda, eds. (Amsterdam: VU Boek-handel/Uitgeverij, 1983) 179-205.

[42] Vide e.g., his, "*Gospel of Thomas* Revisited," 239-266.

one may assume from Baarda's observation about doublets in Tatian's Diatessaron, the doublets in the *Gospel of Thomas* must likewise be part of a harmonizing attempt. Thus, e.g., parallel logia like 56 and 80 complement each other as part of a harmonized picture of the world as a dead body.[43]

The doublets in Thomas remain an "enigmatic phenomenon" in the analysis of Schenke. Indeed, at the very base of a series of obscure instances in the *Gospel of Thomas* in which, he suggests, are imbedded the clues to the compositional history of the Gospel.[44] These obscurities lead Schenke to conclude that Thomas consist of "an excerpt of sayings of Jesus" from the works of Papias. A process undertaken to free "dominical sayings" from their present context in Papias—perhaps to make them available for new interpretation.[45]

Hedrick, finally, attributes the doublets in Thomas to a non-observant compiler whom Hedrick considers failing to "recognize these materials as variant forms of the same saying." He, thus, rejects the idea that the different components of a doublet serve a particular purpose.[46] The doublets do, however, show that the author used sources in addition to the synoptic Gospels or sources related to them according to Hedrick.[47]

---

[43] "Διαφωνία–Συμφωνία," 163-164.

[44] "Compositional History," 5-6.

[45] Ibid., 22.

[46] "Thomas and the Synoptics," 51-52. This implies that the doublets are more or less part of the original collection of the Gospel. Cf. Schüngel who claims that most of the doublets were part of the original text serving as a leitmotif, "Evengelium nach Thomas," 13.

[47] Ibid., 51,56. Hedrick adds that the source of each saying can only be identified through careful analysis and thus must be considered independent "until each saying can be shown to be dependent on the synoptic Gospels," ibid., 56.

If the doublets are, indeed, a channel to sources behind the *Gospel of Thomas*, it is not to be expected that those who argue that Thomas be derived from independent oral sayings collections pay much attention to this very phenomenon as the secondary literature reveals.[48] As to their origin by those who do see them as reflecting different sources behind the Gospel, there emerges a conflicting picture of different sources, their nature (independent or not), as well as, their possible redactional development or as an integral part of the original Gospel text. Issues that are all variably dealt with in view of the Greek fragments of the Gospel in relation to the later Coptic translation preserved from Nag Hammadi. Is there, yet, an alternative solution?

The Rhetoric of Real Doublets

One explanation may be suggested on the basis of different applications and argumentative contexts of the *dicta gemini* in the *Gospel of Thomas*. While Gospels and Gospel harmonies are based on the work of individuals skilled and trained in contemporary Hellenistic rhetorical methods,[49] rhetorical structures of individual sayings reveal themselves to be the product of sophisticated learning typical of educated men and women in Late Antiquity (and beyond).

---

[48] Vide e.g., Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (London: SCM & Philadelphia: Trinity International Press, 1990) 75-128.

[49] Cf. Burton L. Mack and Vernon K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Sonoma: Polbridge Press, 1989), passim; Baarda, "Διαφωνία–Συμφωνία," 36-37, 39-46.

In other words: If not a random collection, do the pairs of doublets in Thomas show traces of harmonization in view of an overall objective by a redactor? Or do the individual logia prove themselves to be subject to and evidence of modifications—by social demand—where inner argumentation becomes the first clue to their function or objective?

A Modified List of Doublets in the Gospel of Thomas

A first task, however, must be to define more accurately the number of doublets in the *Gospel of Thomas*. McArthur makes the remark at the beginning of his discussion of the doublets that some have been identified on the basis of "similar thought" while others combine "phraseology" and content.[50] This is the apparent method of Montefiore, Quispel and Vielhauer as well. The more recent lists of Hedrick and Schenke seem, on the contrary, to be based more on the principle of verbatim similarity alone. That criterion complies with the findings of Fitzmyer and Luz who argue against using repetitive motifs in identifying any given pair of doublets (in the synoptic Gospels). Thus, doublets identified on the basis of contents without obvious verbatim characteristics will be excluded as such in what follows. Yet, nearly or purely identical sayings must further be evaluated on the basis of their function in any given context: do they constitute a saying or mere an admonition or a proverbial supplement to a saying? Finally, pairs identified through a hypothetical reconstruction of a given saying as having been part of

---

[50] "Gospel according to Thomas," 48.

a doublet will not be considered as such as their present function no longer constitutes a doublet but a remnant of one at best.

In identifying a new number of doublets in Thomas, the process must start with the most ambiguous pairs and those that are listed by one or two scholars only. Thus, logia 12 and 13 suggested by Turner (above) will not be considered a doublet because of the obvious lack of any verbal agreement between the two. The motifs of the identity of Jesus and his next in line are part of a larger rhetorical unit that as such has nothing to do with a doublet.[51] Strickert's suggestion offers an interesting alternative to the more traditional view of the relationship between logion 30 in P. Oxy 1 and the Coptic version of logia 30 and 77. A view that credits this discrepancy to different versions of the text of Thomas.[52] But even if Strickert were correct in proposing a doublet here, it must be noted that this conclusion to logion 30 in P. Oxy 1 and logion 77 in the Coptic text does not constitute a saying in its own right. Its function in each case is, indeed, that of a proverbial wisdom attributed to a saying proper and thus an attribute to a saying rather than a saying in its own right in these contexts. Such uses of a saying (used

---

[51] Vide Asgeirsson, "Components and Composition," praesertim 30-37.

[52] Cf. e.g., Fitzmyer, who suggests that, "this may be a clear case in which the Coptic offers us a different redaction [from P. Oxy 1], for the second part of the Greek saying is separated from the first in the Coptic version," vide his, "The Oxyrhynchus LOGOI of Jesus and the Coptic Gospel According to Thomas," *TS* 20/4 (December 1959) 540. Harold W. Attridge translates the conclusion of the saying in P. Oxy 1 so: "Lift up the stone, and you will find me there. Split the piece of wood, and I am there." The Coptic version is slightly different. Thomas O. Lambdin translates: "Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there," both in, B. Layton ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7: Together with XIII,2*, BRIT. LIB. OR.4926(1), and P.Oxy. 1, 654, 655*, Vol. I, *Gospel According to Thomas, Gospel According to Philip, Hypostasis of the Archons, and Indexes*, NHS 20, M. Krause et al. eds, The Coptic Gnostic Library, J.M. Robinson ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1989) 67, 83.

proverbially) or a proverb cannot be considered component part(s) of a doublet. Their functional nature excludes it. This is all the more apparent in the frequent application of the phrase, "Whoever has ears (to hear), let him hear," (logia 8, 21, 24, 63, 65, and 96). None of the lists includes this well known proverb as a doublet as it will be generally assumed (even though not always stated) that the phrase be what it is, i.e., an admonition applied to various contexts in Thomas.[53]

The conclusion to logia 5 and 6c is listed as a doublet by Vielhauer, Hedrick and Schenke. It will be proposed here, however, that these not constitute a doublet for the very fact that not the sayings of logia 5 and 6 constitute the (verbatim) material in common but the proverbial conclusions to the two. True, the phrase in P. Oxy 654, and the Coptic text, "for nothing hidden will not become manifest," is being expanded in logion 6cβ in the Coptic version (as is the same phrase in logion 5 in the P. Oxy 654 version (with a different phrase)).[54] Yet, whether the second half of the conclusion in logion 6 is explained as an independent tradition or a redactional expansion if not a mere rephrasing of the first part, the proverbial phrase does not constitute a doublet in itself.[55] The variations between the four versions in the Greek and Coptic

---

[53] Cf. Hawkins who does not consider the phrase a doublet where it appears in the synoptic Gospels. He notes exactly that, "being merely an adjunct to other sayings, this brief utterance was not included among the doublets [in the synoptic Gospels]. ... This was apparently a well-known proverbial phrase ... . This is the most frequently repeated of the complete sayings in the Gospels, as it occurs 7 times," *Horae Synopticae*, 106-107.

[54] Cf. Layton, *Nag Hammdi Codex II,2-7*, 54; translation by Lambdin, ibid., 55.

[55] Cf. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma: Polbridge Press, 1993) 33. He further considers 6c an independent "wisdom saying" that would have been "added to the chreia later," ibid., 147, n. 107.

versions are, thus, comparable to variations in the proverbial phrase of the "hearing formula." Vielhauer and Schenke divide logion 106 to build components of two different pairs of doublets: logia 22c and 106a and logia 48 and 106b (the second pair being listed by Hedrick as well). Exactly the same opening phrase appears in logion 22c as in 106a but whereas the former adds many images of two sides to merge into one, the latter readily offers the promise of such a process and then adds the proverbial phrase that is nearly identical to the one found in logion 48 (different conditional constructions). Yet, in logion 48 the concluding phrase is in direct continuation of the preceding saying or in a sense the object of what is accomplished by the merger of two into one. Again, here, it seems questionable to identify a doublet on the basis of a proverbial phrase alone. Thus, the pair consisting of logia 48 and 106b will be excluded from the list (cf. Vielhauer). When the abundant imagery in logion 22c is set a side, there appears a verbatim similarity and, indeed, a structure very much akin to logion 106 except for the proverbial conclusion—similarity justifiable to identify the two logia as a doublet. While logion 48a also contains the motif of "two" (persons) it is a mere resemblance to the motifs of logia 22c and 106 with a coincidental application of the same proverbial phrase as in logion 106.

Schenke's hypothetical reconstruction of logion 104 is an intriguing contribution to the tradition history of the logion. He considers it in its present form to be an obscure instance caused by "the separation of things which necessarily belong together."[56] The separating element is, in his opinion, the question Jesus asks in logion

---

[56] "Compositional History," 19.

104b. An element that Schenke suggests must originally have been introduced by another question. He, thus, ends up with two logia about "fasting" that he understands to have been a doublet later merged into the present form of a single saying in logion 104.[57] This reconstruction does, however, not place (at least) one of the two components of the proposed doublet (perhaps considered directly following the first one?) and will not be considered part of the doublets in Thomas due to its purely hypothetical nature. Furthermore, what if in logion 104 Jesus is seen as challenging the utterance by the first speakers as is customary in what Theon of Alexandria labels "double chriae?"[58]

Returning to doublets identified by a single scholar in the lists cited above, McArthur is the only one to list logia 74 and 75 as a doublet (once Quispel attributes logion 75 to the author). These, however, are clearly distinct sayings with only a common motif of "the many" which nowhere amounts to the basic criterion for a doublet. The two are at the same time component parts of a larger rhetorical unit.[59] Montefiore is the only one to identify logia 10 and 16a as a doublet. The reason would seem to be that a redactor would have separated sayings found together in Lk 12:49, 51-53 (par Mt 10:34-35), i.e., in Q. Patterson points out, however, that no apparent reason would cause a redactor to separate the sayings in logia 10 and 16 had they originally been joined together in the tradition Thomas

---

[57] The one part of the pair would then have consisted of the question of the "they" (or the disciples) and Jesus' answer in 104c; the other part of a question from the same such as "why do you not pray and why do you not fast?" followed by Jesus' answer in form of a question. Ibid., 19.

[58] Cf. Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, 31-32.

[59] Cf. Asgeirsson, Tomasargudspjall [The *Gospel of Thomas* in Icelandic translation] (forthcoming), note to saying 74.

is dependent on.[60] While the motif "to cast" something "upon the world/earth" is common to both, that resemblance is about the only thing connecting the two. Verbatim (and structural) similarities are too scanty in order to consider the pair a doublet. Again, these two logia are each part of a larger rhetorical unit in which both serve a certain argumentative function. The latter one may, indeed, be an elaborated chria modeled on logion 10.[61] In the case of logia 38 and 92 which Quispel considers a doublet, the relationship is based on related motifs about seeking and finding in due time. The lack of verbatim resemblance fails to meet this basic criterion for a doublet. The other pair identified by Quispel in distinction from the others is that of logia 68 and 69. Here, Quispel is triggered by the structural correspondence between any two makarisms but the verbatim similarity is absent as is the conceptual objective of the two. Non of the makarisms in the synoptic tradition are even considered in the context of doublets.[62] The doublet identified by Vielhauer and not any of the others is that of logia 41 and 70. Here, again, related motifs constitute the only relation between the two—the criterion of verbatim similarities is not met.[63]

---

[60] *The Gospel of Thomas*, 23-24. Klyne R. Snodgrass (following Schrage) maintains the opposite view (like Montefiore?), "The Gospel of Thomas: A Secondary Gospel," *SecCent* 7/1 (Spring 1989-1990) 31.

[61] On the function of logion 10 within a given rhetorical unit, vide Asgeirsson, "Components and Composition," 35-36.

[62] Cf. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, 80-106.

[63] Like Vielhauer, Robert M. Grant and David N. Freedman consider this pair a doublet. Logion 70 [in their numeration 71] is in their opinion a "Gnostic version of the synoptic saying already reproduced in Saying 42 [i.e., logion 40 in the conventional numeration]," *The Secret Sayings of Jesus*, With and English Translation of the *Gospel of Thomas* by William R. Schoedel (New York: Doubleday, 1960) 174; Turner considers the pair "more questionable," in comparison to logia 3, 51, and 113, 48 and 106, 55 and 101, 89 and 22 (identified by Quispel), "Gospel of Thomas," 24.

Three additional pairs of doublets identified in two or more of the lists are of doubtful character: That is the case with logia 6a and 14 identified as a doublet by McArthur, Vielhauer and Schenke. In this case Schenke maintains that "complexes" originally belonging together will have been disconnected by the redactor of Thomas. The detailed questions of the disciples in logion 6a, Schenke maintains, are answered in the same order in logion 14. As for the answer following the question in logion 6a, Schenke contends that it is a version of the Golden Rule having no conceptual connection with the preceding question.[64] Patterson argues that the question of the disciples in logion 6a be secondary added to the saying in order to make its content ("opposing hypocrisy," in his opinion,) subject also to "pious observance" in accordance with the motifs in logion 14a.[65] Regardless of these observations about the tradition history behind these two logia, the parallel elements do not constitute a doublet for the fact that one is an introductory question and the other a saying (or a part of a saying). Like proverbial phrases, rhetorical questions or introductions in form of a question do not constitute a doublet or a component part of a doublet. The pair consisting of logia 39 and 103 (listed by McArthur, Quispel and Vielhauer) has even less to recommend itself than some of the pairs dealt with above. The only common element between these two has to do with the mention of the "pharisees." The utter lack of verbal similarity and the obvious structural dissimilarity clearly argue against the inclusion of this pair in a list of doublets in Thomas. Logion 39 is a distinct saying about

---

64 "Compositional History," 18.
65 *The Gospel of Thomas*, 147, n. 107, 83-84.

scribes and pharisees complemented with a proverbial phrase at the end whereas logion 103 is formally a "woe" consisting of a woe to the pharisees and a commonly known proverbial phrase. The third pair is identified by McArthur and Vielhauer and consists of logia 81 and 110. The lack of verbal agreement between these two sayings leaves them with but a few common motifs that by themselves do not constitute a doublet.

The two pairs either identified as a doublet or a triplet need further clarification as well. Four of the lists cited identify logia 3 and 113 as a doublet whereas two (Quispel and Vielhauer) consider logia 51 and 113 as a doublet. Logion 51 shares important structural similarities with logion 113 (a question by the disciples and an answer by a person referred to in the third person singular in logion 51 (understood to be Jesus) like in logia 52 and 53; the reference to the person answering the disciples' question in logion 113 is missing but usually emended to read "Jesus said"). However, the verbatim resemblance is more or less missing between the two. While it may be argued that the concept of the "kingdom" in logion 113 encompass the meaning of the "repose of the dead" and "new world" order in logion 51, the fact that these key words do not appear in both logia excludes them from being a doublet as does further the distinct vocabulary of the two logia proving to have few words in common. In comparison, logion 3 lacks the structural affinity to logion 113. The logion is not introduced with a question as is logion 113 and instead of the short conclusion to logion 113 ("people do not realize it"), logion 3b adds another chria about learning to know oneself. But contrary to logion 51, the concept of the "kingdom" is central to both

sayings while the images describing its presence are very different. When the structural dissimilarities and lack of verbatim resemblance between logia 3 and 113 is observed, the two prove to be two variant sayings on the kingdom motif in which the one emphasizes different perceptions of the kingdom (between leaders and dissenting followers?) and the other its anticipation and present reality. Even if the two logia are derived from a related (common) tradition (which could account for them being doublets) their present independent forms are at the distortion of what constitutes a doublet.[66]

The second triplet identified by Hedrick and Schenke consists of logia 56, 80 and 111c.[67] While the pair of logia 56 and 80 is an ideal example of a doublet, the function of logion 111c is that of a conclusion to the saying of logion 111. Again, as such logion 111c is not an independent logion and, thus, not a third part of a triplet. It is here clearly a redactional addition by the author or redactor of Thomas as the words are put on the lips of Jesus and not in continuation of his own speech that begins in logion 111a. Schenke observes that a "new speaker" is met here in the Gospel, "a one who cites Jesus and therefore belongs to a second text level."[68] Logion 111c is an example of the making of a proverbial expression.

---

[66] Cullmann only states that logion 3 must be considered with logia 51 and 113 which he lists as a doublet, "Thomasevangelium," 328. Patterson notes, "With both Thom 3 and 113, we have to reckon with a common oral tradition shared at some level with Luke 17:20-21, but nothing more," *The Gospel of Thomas*, 72.

[67] Interestingly, Quispel considers them all derive from a Greek gnomologium which he identifies as the Hermetic source behind the Gospel, (Quispel does, however, contribute logion 111a to the author of the Gospel), "*Gospel of Thomas* Revisited," 259, 265; Baarda claims that these three sayings constitute part of the author's larger harmonization about a gnostic view of the world, "Διαφωνία–Συμφωνία," 163-164.

[68] "Compositional History," 13. Schenke takes the opening of logion 111c to

The remaining pairs of doublets prove themselves to be close enough in terms of verbal correspondence, structural components and conceptual completeness to establish themselves as doublets. Thus, a revised list of doublets in the *Gospel of Thomas* may be proposed. Curiously, the redefined pair of five doublets reveals the second component very much towards the end of the Gospel with a single exception.

Doublets in the Gospel of Thomas
Revised

In lower order	In higher order
Logia 21b and 103	Logia 80 and 56
Logia 22c and 106	Logia 101 and 55
Logia 55 and 101	Logia 103 and 21b
Logia 56 and 80	Logia 106 and 22c
Logia 87 and 112	Logia 112 and 87

The Rhetoric of Doublets in the Gospel of Thomas

The modified list of doublets in the *Gospel of Thomas* reveals the location of the first half of the pairs comprising the doublets before the middle of the Gospel (apart from one pair) and the second half of pairs towards the very end of the Gospel (apart from one pair). Within the first half of the first four pairs, the first and second

---

read, "Is it not the case that Jesus says," or a rhetorical question (with an elliptical construction) comparable to 1 Cor 6:4 while Layton and Lambdin consider the beginning possibly defect, *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7*, 92 and 93.

pair appear in a sequence of two logia (logia 21b and 22c) as do the third and fourth pair (logia 55 and 56). Within the second half of the last four pairs, the four components appear within twelve logia in the last section of the Gospel. The core motifs are as follows: 1. pair, the vigilant homeowner; 2. pair, the making of one out of two; 3. pair, the price of discipleship; 4. pair, the reward for understanding the world for what it is; 5. pair, the relation of soul to body.

Each component of the doublets is imbedded in a larger rhetorical structure in one way or the other as are the logia of Thomas at large. Once rhetorical units within the Gospel text are identified the claims for its "random" origin or "artificial" development no longer hold. Robbins describes the nature of "rhetorical culture" as one of oral and written interaction. It is a cultural phenomenon dominating the Mediterranean world far into the second century, according to Robbins, at which juncture scribal culture replaces the highly creative world of rhetorical composition.[69] Robbins contends that the cultural importance of rhetoric emerges in the role attributed to prominent individuals: their words and actions as a role model in a rhetorically based culture. The crucial means of communication is that of the chria—being argumentative by nature—which itself can consist of any of several genres as long as it is assigned to a specific person. Characteristically, the chria may be

---

[69] "Rhetorical Composition," 116. Says Robbins, "For this stage of transmission the prevailing literary-historical methods of analysis are highly informative. To impose such a scribal environment on the context in which the New Testament Gospels initially were written and re-written is a fundamental error," ibid. For a comprehensive discussion on culture and texts, vide Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996).

transmitted freely (with or without verbal accuracy)[70] and made subject to changes (by augmentation or condensation alike). Finally, Robbins explains the different levels of "elaborations" of the chria: in terms of simple "expansion" and complex "elaboration"[71] resulting in comprehensive argumentation.[72]

The four components of doublets towards the end of the *Gospel of Thomas* offer an intriguing insight into a rhetorical process in Thomas. A process that challenges as such both the search for definite sources behind the text as well as a unified redactional effort. A first comparison of the last four components within the second half (the ones numbered higher) of the doublets with their counterparts reveals a variation in affected changes between the two.

Logia 55 and 101 unfold with a close structural similarity. What is different is the replacement of certain stiches of logion 55 by others within logion 101, as well as, the now introduced contrast between hating and loving (true family members). The conceptualization of logion 101 is more elaborated and appears as a manipulation of logion 55. This kind of chria manipulation is described my Theon as "the opposite view,"[73] here, in terms of hate and love (of family members).

---

[70] Some of the doublets suggested in the above lists may be justified on the basis of this nature of the chriae. However, once they have lost their identical twin-marks, the definition of a doublet is lost and they stand out on their own as argued earlier in this section.

[71] For a schematic overview of the categories of condensed and amplified chriae as well as the two levels of elaboration, vide, Robbins, "Introduction: Using Rhetorical Discussions of the Chreia to Interpret Pronouncement Stories," in idem ed., *The Rhetoric of Pronouncement*: *Semeia* 64 (1993) xii-xiv.

[72] "Rhetorical Composition," 118-131. Cf., Mack, "Elaboration of the Chreia in the Hellenistic School," in idem and Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion*, 31-67.

[73] In Hock and O'Neil, *The* Chria *in Ancient Rhetoric*, 100/101.

Logia 21b and 103 are structurally close but imbalanced due to the more elaborated version of logion 21b. Crossan identifies logion 21 as an "aphoristic dialogue" which in his definition is an elaborated aphorism and a subgroup of chriae.[74] In comparison, logion 103 has been manipulated into a makarism explaining the advantage of being on guard against the enemies (invaders). This process is one of condensation of a chria "in the manner of an explanation," according to Theon,[75] here expressed in the form of a makarism.

Logia 22c and 106 reveal an identical development from an extensive form as in logion 21b[76] to a succinct explanation complemented by a (common) proverbial expression. Such "combinations" are also listed by Theon as a means of condensation.[77]

Logia 87 and 112 are structurally closest of these pairs (in terms of length or balance). However, two important differences prove themselves: in the shift of a key concept (soul for body in logion 112) and in the change of form. Logion 112 transforms a simple statement in logion 87 into a woe. Again, a manipulation as described in Theon's manual in terms of "opposite" and "expansion."[78]

Thus, these four components towards the end establish themselves as: an opposition (logion 101), as a makarism (logion 103), as a combination of an explanation and a proverb (logion 106), and as an opposition in form of a woe (logion 112). In contrast the doublet consisting of logia 56 and 80 is practically identical except for the commonly interchangeable concepts for "body" and "corpse"

---

[74] *In Fragments*, 249, 228-232 (on the chria).
[75] In Hock and O'Neil, *The* Chria *in Ancient Rhetoric*, 88/89.
[76] Crossan also lists logion 22b as an "aphoristic dialogue," *In Fragments*, 249.
[77] In Hock and O'Neil, *The Chria in Ancient Rhetoric*, 92/93.
[78] Ibid., 100/101.

and less relevant variations in expression and/or vocabulary. As such it belongs to a different category of chriae or what Theon defines as "recitation" of chriae.[79] This is not to deprive the pair of a rhetorical function in their respective contexts but the function is different from the rest of the doublets in Thomas. Notably both logia 56 and 80 follow sayings that have to deal with family relationships, and procreation—renouncing the world as in utter contempt over the issues described in the preceding sayings. Logia 56 and 80 are thus like parallel structures around parallel motifs.

That is not the case with the four components of the doublets towards the conclusion of the *Gospel of Thomas*. It is to be argued here that these four logia (101, 103, 106, and 112) are modifications of their earlier appearing counterparts in Thomas. As such they approach the application of scriptural allusions and quotations which is an established practice in such sources as Q and the New Testament Gospels[80] but otherwise absent in Thomas. The obvious difference is that in Thomas its own earlier traditions are the source of this practice.

The purpose (function) of these modifications are, however, neither class room exercises in chriae manipulation nor random reminiscences of common motifs in an act towards harmonization but constitute parts of an elaborated argument of preceding chriae. In

---

[79] Says Theon: "'Recitation' is obvious. For we try to the best of our ability to report the assigned chreia very clearly *in the same words or in others as well* [emphasis added]," in ibid., 95.

[80] Miriam Dean-Otting and Robbins have investigated the application of biblical quotes in New Testament pronouncement stories and the way they are manipulated and applied, "Biblical Sources for Pronouncement Stories in the Gospels," in Robbins, ed., *The Rhetoric of Pronouncement*, 95-115.

the context of these four logia the "first level"[81] elaboration pattern of chriae emerges as supportive arguments to their immediate contexts or a governing chria and patterned after its central *topoi*.[82]

Thus, logion 101 appears to address the absurd and immoral demand that followers of Jesus must turn away from their close ones in a hateful fashion by adding the stich about loving the same in his very fashion. The logion complements the same motif about family relations and discipleship set forth in logion 99 in which the same disposition emerges as in logion 55. The intervening logion (100) also appears as a supportive argument to logion 99 in that it expands on the question about what belongs to God and what to Caesar. A motif that logion 99 expresses in terms of the "will of my father."

Yet another ethical *topos* is at the center of logion 102. It denounces those who do not keep their vigil with a woe. Logion 103 praises the opposite vigilanti who keep their guard with a makarism. In this concise form (in comparison to logion 21b), it has been restructured to complement the underlying argument of logion 102 (that it is bad to sleep and be idle).

Logion 106 complements the division exemplified in logion 105 between the child of parents (the two) and offspring of the son of man in logion 106. Both of which may be seen as supplement to the

---

[81] Cf. Robbins, "Rhetorical Composition," 121-123; Robbins notes that, "'first-level elaboration' provides arguments for individual parts of a chreia. Theon indicates that this level of elaboration should use 'topics,' and it seems clear that these would be topics like the ones he lists for the refutation and the thesis," "Introduction," xiv.

[82] Hock groups the categories under the discussion of "refutation" into three subgroups, "those pertaining to matters of style (obscurity, pleonasm, ellipsis), of logic (impossibility, implausibility, untruth), and of ethics (inappropriateness, uselessness, shamefulness), *The* Chria *in Ancient Rhetoric*, 71.

apparently improper question (in which the *topos* consists) of the disciples in logion 104. Jesus has not been defeated! He is one and undivided and capable of moving mountains.

Finally, logion 112 rejects the dichotomy of flesh (body) and soul. Again, two entities must be united in one: the world (heavens and earth) must leave and the soul to become one. The woe complements the *topos* of incongruence underlying logion 110 that finding the world is loosing the soul. Logion 111a-b furthers this argument by stating that those who dedicate their lives to the "living one" shall live. The peculiar insertion of logion 111c attributes this accomplishment to finding oneself.

Scriptural quotations appear in sayings collections and narrative contexts alike. The elaboration of chriae in Thomas with chriae from the same text is a unique phenomenon of the same process to augment a given argument with an "authentic" quotation.[83]

Conclusion

This study has attempted at redefining the criteria for identifying doublets in the *Gospel of Thomas* resulting in a radically revised number of possible doublets in the text. The history of scholarship has been reviewed basically in order to put in contrast the contributions and promises of Hellenistic rhetorical insights over against traditional scholarship on the issue.

---

[83] While the creation of doublets in Matthew may eventually at times approach a function similar to the ones of these doublets in Thomas in terms of emphasis (cf. note 21), the manipulative (redactional) procedure is fundamentally different. Indeed, closer to the one in the case of logia 56 and 80, i.e., "recitational."

The components of the doublets focused on in the study reveal how they have been manipulated in accordance with the customary methods described in manual(s) on rhetoric from the first century CE. Furthermore, the study shows how the same components form part(s) of an elaboration pattern of certain sayings close to the end of the Gospel text.

The application and function of these components—based on their counterparts in the same tradition—are of particular interest for two reasons: An early development towards scriptural quotation may be detected in the process—a process that would seem to predate the same in the synoptic tradition based on citations from the Old Testament. The other factor relates to the re-writing of the tradition of Thomas attested in the application of these components of the doublets to other sayings at the end of the Gospel. In this process may be detected the emergence of another stratum in the *Gospel of Thomas* and, indeed, the best textually based evidence for any possible stratigraphy along with the editorial insertion in logion 111c.[84]

---

[84] This first part of paper, "Arguments and Audience(s) in the Gospel of Thomas," appears as, "The Doublets in the Gospel of Thomas," in R. Uro ed., *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinbourgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998).

Appendix

(The five doublets of Thomas in Lambdin's translation)[85]

Logion 21b

Therefore, I say, if the owner of a house knows that the thief is coming, he will begin his vigil before he comes and will not let him dig through into his house of his domain to carry away his goods. You, then, be on your guard against the world. Arm yourselves with great strength lest the robbers find a way to come to you, for the difficulty which you expect will (surely) materialize. Let there be among you a man of understanding. When the grain ripened, he came quickly with his sickle in his hand and reaped it. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.

&

Logion 103

Jesus said, "Fortunate is the man who knows where the brigands will enter, so that [he] may get up, muster his domain, and arm himself before they invade."

Logion 22c

Jesus said to them, "When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and you fashion eyes in place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness, then will you enter the [kingdom].

---

[85] *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7*, 63,73,75,83,85,89,91, and 93.

&

Logion 106

Jesus said, "When you make the two one, you will become the sons of man, and when you say, 'Mountain, move away,' it will move away."

Logion 55

Jesus said, "Whoever does not hate his father and his mother cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not hate his brothers and sisters and take up his cross in my way will not be worthy of me.

&

Logion 101

<Jesus said,> "Whoever does not hate his [father] and his mother as I do cannot become a [disciple] to me. And whoever does [not] love his [father and] his mother as I do cannot become a [disciple to] me. For my mother [. . .] but [my] true [mother] gave me life."

Logion 56

Jesus said, "Whoever has come to understand the world has found (only) a corpse, and whoever has found a corpse is superior to the world."

&

Logion 80

Jesus said, "He who has recognized the world has found the body, but he who has found the body is superior to the world."

Logion 87

Jesus said, "Wretched is the body that is dependent upon a body, and wretched is the soul that is dependent on these two."

&

Logion 112

Jesus said, "Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul; woe to the soul that depends on the flesh."

Rhetorical Composition and Sources in the Gospel of Thomas

Vernon K. Robbins

Emory University

For many scholars, the advent of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas (*Gos. Thom.*) in New Testament interpretation has substantively changed their view of the emergence and development of early Christian tradition.[1] The substantive reason is the unusual status of gospel tradition in this text. On the one hand, over half of the sayings in the *Gos. Thom.* are like sayings in the canonical gospels. On the other hand, in no case are versions of a pericope in the *Gos. Thom.* and any of the canonical gospels exactly alike.

For some scholars, the existence of the *Gos. Thom.* has only added a little supplemental information to our knowledge of early Christianity. For them, nothing substantive has changed. The *Gos. Thom.*, in their view, is the result of an alternative approach to the gospels by some Christians during the second century. Some of these scholars think this alternative approach was primarily a result of Jewish Christian influence, while others consider it to be an orientation toward revealed knowledge that is best called Gnosticism. These scholars are agreed, however, that the *Gos. Thom.* is a later, secondary and derivative gospel. There is, then, nothing substantively new here. Whether the *Gos. Thom.* is the result of a dramatically deconstructive use of the synoptic gospels (e.g., Grant and Freedman) or a collector of sayings from Jewish Christian and/or Gnostic gospels (Gärtner), the canonical gospels alone reveal the manner in which first century Christian tradition emerged, and the *Gos. Thom.* reveals what some Christians did with gospel tradition during the second century.

For other scholars, knowledge of the nature of gospel tradition in the *Gos. Thom.* has substantively changed their view of the emergence and development of first century Christian tradition. After early studies by Oscar Cullmann (1962a, 1962b) and R. McL. Wilson (1960) that suggested the need for a different way of conceptualizing the process that produced the tradition in the *Gos. Thom.*, studies by Hugh Montefiore (1960/61) and Claus-Hunno Hunziger (1960a, 1960b) created the context for a dramatically alternative approach. Montefiore observed that the parables in the *Gos. Thom.* do not contain aspects of the same tradition-historical development (like allegorization and addition of generalized comment at the end) as the synoptic gospels. Instead, the parables in the *Gos. Thom.* contain the same "kind" of tradition-historical development, but with different results (Patterson 1992: 67).

[1]I am deeply grateful to the following people for contributing to this paper, sometimes in ways they might not have known: Laurie Patton, Gordon D. Newby, Jon Ma Asgeirsson, J. D. H. Amador, James D. Hester, Bernard Combrink, L. Gregory Bloomquist, Anders Eriksson, Duane F. Watson, and David deSilva.

The possibility emerges, then, that the parables in the *Gos. Thom.* come out of an early pre-gospel stage of tradition that developed simultaneously in circles of Christianity alongside the circles that produced the synoptic gospels. When Hunziger showed that pericopes in the *Gos. Thom.* neither conjoin sayings in the manner in which Q tradition conjoins them nor adds the secondary elements present in Q tradition, the stage was set for the possibility that tradition in the *Gos. Thom.* had traveled from an early pre-gospel stage through different early Christian circles down to the point where it was written down toward the end of the first century alongside the canonical gospels.

Scholars who were envisioning an alternative mode of development of early Christian tradition needed a substantively different hypothesis for first century gospel tradition, and this emerged with the work of James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester (Robinson and Koester). Building on previous work on Q tradition, which features sayings of Jesus that do not include predictions or rehearsals of the death and resurrection of Jesus, Robinson posited the existence of a genre he called "sayings of the wise," which had a trajectory of existence from the Wisdom literature in the Hebrew Bible through Jewish and Hellenistic literature down into the Gnostic literature of the second and third centuries C.E. As this hypothesis has developed during the last two decades, the conclusion has been drawn by a growing number of scholars that the earliest sayings of Jesus contained an eschatological wisdom about the kingdom that did not contain substantive apocalyptic features. As the tradition developed, this eschatological wisdom was simultaneously apocalypticized and gnosticized by different circles within first century Christianity.

Within the last decade, the third quest of the historical Jesus has raised the issue of whether Jesus' eschatological wisdom concerning the Kingdom of God was truly apocalyptic, or whether it was an eschatological wisdom without apocalyptic features that was as open to gnostic development as it was to apocalyptic development. Within this new environment, the issue of orthodoxy versus heresy has returned in the form of apocalypticism versus wisdom. Stevan Davies has emphasized that the *Gos. Thom.* is not gnostic in any genuine sense of the term but has emerged naturally out of wisdom tradition that was in dialogue with an apocalyptic view of this world (1983). Another response has been to emphasize that the eschatological wisdom of Jesus is akin to Cynic perceptions of "royalty" that challenge conventions and institutions of daily life and society (Crossan 1991: 72-88, 421-426; Mack 1993: 191-205; Mack 1995: 39-41). For interpreters who continue to maintain a loyalty to the early twentieth century view that only an apocalyptic Jesus is an orthodox Jesus, these descriptions of wisdom tradition look like an inclusion of heresy in the earliest stages of the Christian tradition. For other interpreters, these descriptions are the logical result of careful investigation of the tradition with insights gained from data available at the end of the twentieth century that was not available at the end of the nineteenth century. In this context, Robinson appears to have parted ways with his colleague Helmut Koester by arguing that the apocalyptic teaching in the Q tradition is most fully akin to the teaching of the historical Jesus (Robinson 1993). For Robinson, then, most of the wisdom tradition in the *Gos. Thom.* is a gnosticizing, and thus a modifying, of the apocalyptic tradition of the historical Jesus, while others see an eschatological wisdom compatible with much in the *Gos. Thom.* at the earliest stages of first century Christian tradition.

In the context of the present debate and disagreement, the question arises whether the view toward "gnostic" wisdom that lies at the foundation of the Robinson/Koester hypothesis really gets at the heart of the development of gospel tradition in the *Gos. Thom.* (cf. Williams). It might help if there were another kind of conversation on the Thomas tradition than

the emphasis on wisdom-apocalyptic-gnostic terminology that has dominated most recent debates. My recommendation is to look at the inner nature of this tradition from a rhetorical approach with a social orientation. The question is if any new light might be shed on the *Gos. Thom.* by shifting away from a literary-historical approach to a socio-rhetorical approach (Robbins 1996a; Robbins 1996b). A socio-rhetorical approach builds on the insights of people like Helmut Koester, John Dominic Crossan, John H. Sieber, Stephen J. Patterson and others that there is no truly "scribal" relation between the *Gos. Thom.* and the canonical gospels. Detailed study of the traditions shows that the relation between the *Gos. Thom.* and the synoptic gospels is a relation of "oral intertexture" rather than "scribal intertexture" (Robbins 1996a: 97-108; Robbins 1996b: 40-58). It appears, moreover, that the relation of the *Gos. Thom.* to apocryphal gospels is as orally constituted as its relation to the synoptic gospels. Here, however, the situation becomes very complex. Extended Greek fragments of the *Gos. Thom.* show that it existed first in Greek, and the fourth century date of the Coptic text found at Nag Hammadi suggests that probably this text is a third, fourth, or fifth edition of one or more Coptic translations. The Coptic version available to us, then, has a thick scribal intertexture both with Greek fragments and with other Gospels written in Coptic. It is natural, then, if the fourth century version of the *Gos. Thom.* available to us contains both scribal variations among other versions of the text and scribal harmonization with other Coptic versions of gospels (cf. Sieber: 68-70). It is all the more remarkable, therefore, how the text has maintained its oral orientation. No scribe has gone through the text "scribalizing" gospel tradition in the manner in which the canonical gospels scribalize it.

Orality as a Social Location in the Gospel of Thomas

An amazing fact about the *Gos. Thom.* is its complete lack of appeal to written text. In contrast to the canonical gospels, the narrator never says, "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet" (Mark 1:1), "For so it is written by the prophet" (Matt 2:5), "As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet" (Luke 3:4), or "For these things took place that the writing might be fulfilled" (John 19:36). In addition, the narrator of the *Gos. Thom.* never attributes to Jesus a statement like "Have you never read what David did..." (Mark 2:25), "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone'" (Luke 4:4//Matt 4:4), "This is he of whom it is written ..." (Matt 11:10), "What is written in the law? How do you read?" (Luke 10:26), or "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God'" (John 6:45). All the canonical gospels contain an orientation toward "what is written" both at the level of the narration of the story and in speech attributed to Jesus.

Throughout the *Gos. Thom.* the only relation of the *Gos. Thom.* sayings to OT text is an oral relation. This is evident, for example, in *Gos. Thom.* 66: Jesus said, "Show me the stone that the builders rejected: that is the cornerstone." Mark 12:10-11, in contrast, reads:

> Have you not read this writing: "The stone, which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

In Mark (cf. Matt 21:42; Luke 20:17), Jesus refers to the written status of what he speaks, and comparison with Ps 118:22 shows extended scribal relation to that written text. In the *Gos. Thom.*, in contrast, Jesus does not refer to his speech as written text, and the recitation

embeds a brief word string of the biblical text in the manner of proverbial memory and performance. In other words, *Gos. Thom.* 66 makes no reference to the speech of Jesus as recitation of written text, and the recitation itself exhibits an oral proverbial manner of transmission. The *Gos. Thom.* version is free from "scribal" influence. The Markan version both attributes to Jesus an interest in its "written" status and the performance of it shows influence of scribal replication of written text.

Throughout the *Gos. Thom.*, this is the relation of the speech of Jesus to word strings in the OT text and other variations in the apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, Qumran, etc. In no instance does either the narrator or Jesus refer to any word string as "written" somewhere, and comparison of the wording in the *Gos. Thom.* shows a free, orally constituted relation to that wording. Another text closely related to written scripture in wording is *Gos. Thom.* 21:9: "When the crop ripened, that one came quickly with sickle in hand (and) he harvested it." Mark 4:29 has this in a variant form: "But when the crop ripens, quickly he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is ready." Joel 3:13 (LXX: 4:13) reads "Put in the sickle, because the harvest is ready." The Markan text has a close relation to the Joel text. Both are argumentative in nature, with a rationale that supports the reasoning at the beginning of the statement. The Markan version embellishes the Joel version to emphasize the quickness with which the man who planted the grain harvests it. The Thomas text is an oral variant of the Markan text that lacks the argumentative quality of a statement supported by a rationale. The Thomas version correlates the ripening and harvesting with the quick action with the sickle. Transmission of the topic of quickness, then, stands at the center of the Thomas version, rather than transmission of the rationale which stands at the center of the Joel version. The Thomas version, then, is a rhetorical variant of Mark 4:29 with no scribal investment either in the Joel or the Markan version. The Markan version is a scribal variant of the Thomas version, replicating verbatim wording from Joel concerning "putting in the sickle, because the harvest is ready."

No other wording in the *Gos. Thom.* comes as close to verbatim recitation of OT text as sayings *Gos. Thom.* 66 and 21:9, and in both instances there is no scribal influence on the *Gos. Thom.* version that exceeds or even equals a version in a synoptic gospel. Herein we see one of the remarkable differences between the inner texture of the *Gos. Thom.* and the canonical gospels. Each of the canonical gospels shows a scribal relationship at many points to OT text. This relationship may be "mediated," in the sense that the wording may be coming from some kind of Christian "pesher" or "testimonia" tradition. But in each instance there is an argumentative interest in ancient written testimony, and this interest manifests itself in "scribal" influence from OT text on wording in the text. There is no interest like this in the *Gos. Thom.* There is, to be sure, knowledge of the prophets, but all the emphasis is on "the speaking of the prophets" and never on "what is written." Thus *Gos. Thom.* 52:

> **52** [1]His disciples said to him, "Twenty-four prophets have spoken in Israel, and they all spoke of you." [2]He said to them, "You have disregarded the living one who is in your presence, and have spoken of the dead."

The twenty-four prophets undoubtedly would include Moses and David, from whom come the law and the psalms, but Jesus speaks of them as dead. In contrast, the synoptic gospels speak of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as living (Mark 12:27 par.). In a context where the disciples in the *Gos. Thom.* show an awareness of the prophets, they emphasize what the prophets have spoken rather than what anyone has written. Jesus' response, in turn,

emphasizes that the speech of the prophets is not a source of life. The prophets are dead. Only the voice of Jesus is a living voice through his sayings which people transmit orally. Only the sayings of the Jesus are "living" sayings — they alone transmit the wisdom of God that can serve as a vehicle for life for people living in this world. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 38:

> **38** [1]Jesus said, "Often you have desired to hear these sayings that I am speaking to you, and you have no one else from whom to hear them. [2]There will be days when you will seek me and you will not find me."

While the prophets spoke of Jesus, their sayings are not a vehicle for finding Jesus. The only way to find Jesus is through his sayings. Those who hear the sayings of Jesus, then are the agents for other people to find Jesus. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 33:

> **33** [1]Jesus said, "What you will hear in your ear, proclaim in the ear of the other from your rooftops.

Oral transmission of Jesus' sayings, then, is the means by which people can find life. But they do not find life simply by finding Jesus. Rather, each person must use the sayings of Jesus to come to knowledge of themselves. These sayings come through the speech of leaders to them. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 3:

> **3** [1]Jesus said, "If your leaders say to you, 'Behold, the kingdom is in heaven', then the birds of heaven will precede you. [2]If they say to you, It is in the sea', then the fish will precede you. [3]Rather, the kingdom is within you and it is outside you. [4]When you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will understand that you are children of the living Father. [5]But if you do not know yourselves, then you dwell in poverty, and you are the poverty.

When leaders speak to them, they need to reflect on what they themselves have heard for the purpose of coming to know themselves. What they must come to know, however, does not simply lie within themselves. It is both inside and outside (Davies 1983). A person must, indeed, understand what is inside, but one must "bring it forth" in order for it to bring life. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 70:

> **70** [1]Jesus said, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you have will save you. [2]If you do not have that within you, what you do not have within you [will] kill you."

But there is also knowledge about the outside that is important to bring into one's understanding. This knowledge is "public" knowledge — open for discussion and dialogue. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 50:

> **50** [1]Jesus said, "If they say to you, 'Where have you come from?' say to them, 'We have come from the light, from the place where the light came into being by itself, established [itself], and appeared in their image.' [2]If they say to you, 'Is it you?' say, 'We are its children, and we are the chosen of the living Father.' [3]If they say to you, 'What is the evidence of your Father in you?' say to them, 'It is motion and rest.'"

It is necessary to understand about a place outside oneself called a place of light. This is where light itself came into being, and this is the place from which every person has come. It is also important to know that one is a child of light, chosen by the living Father. The evidence for this lies in motion and rest, which lies both inside and outside. These topics are open for discussion and dialogue as public knowledge, but the sayings in the *Gos. Thom.* do not envision a public "debate" about these topics or any other topics. There is, in fact, no public with which Jesus debates in the *Gos. Thom.* There is an awareness of Pharisees and scribes in the *Gos. Thom.*, but the sayings are simply statements about them that describe their lack of understanding and ability to lead people into knowledge of life. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 39:

> **39** [1]Jesus said, "The Pharisees and the scribes have taken the keys of knowledge and have hidden them. [2]They have not entered, nor have they allowed those who want to enter to do so. [3]As for you, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

As a result of their inability to lead others, Jesus also pronounces a "Woe" on the Pharisees. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 102:

> **102** Jesus said, "Woe to the Pharisees, for they are like a dog sleeping in the manger of cattle, for it neither eats nor [lets] the cattle eat."

The Pharisees themselves, in the perspective of the *Gos. Thom.*, do not seek and find, nor do they help others seek and find. In fact, they do not "let" people seek and find. But Jesus does not engage in public debate with Pharisees and scribes, and there also is no implication that the disciples should or do engage in such debates. Thus, in the *Gos. Thom.* Pharisees do not bring issues to Jesus like they do in the canonical gospels. A key example of this is the Thomas version of the pericope about paying taxes to Caesar. In the *Gos. Thom.* this is not public debate but discussion within the Christian community. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 100:

> **100** [1]They [the disciples] showed Jesus a gold coin and said to him, "Caesar's people demand taxes from us." [2]He said to them, "Give Caesar the things that are Caesar's, [3]give God the things that are God's, [4]and give me what is mine."

The questions that are put to Jesus in the *Gos. Thom.* come from disciples, Mary, and Salome. In each instance, the questioners truly seek information. In other words, the questions are not "trick" questions designed to embarrass Jesus in public and to establish an advantage for some public group like Sadducees (who are never mentioned in the *Gos. Thom.*), Pharisees, or scribes. Rather, the disciples, Mary, and Salome present questions to Jesus for the purpose of finding Jesus and finding life. Many of their questions are misguided, of course, so Jesus' responses either reformulate their questions into right questions or direct them to topics that are the proper vehicles for seeking and finding life. Most often, therefore, Jesus does not simply give a "right answer." Rather, Jesus presents "things to think about," things to "seek" understanding about. Thus, in the *Gos. Thom.* Jesus is not actually "the teacher" of the disciples. They must use the questions and statements Jesus speaks as vehicles for seeking, finding, and understanding both what is inside and outside themselves. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 13:4-5:

> **13** [4]Thomas said to him, "Teacher, my mouth is utterly unable to say what you are like." [5]Jesus said, "I am not your teacher. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring that I have tended."

Jesus is not the teacher of disciples. Rather, Jesus introduces questions and statements, and this creates a context in which disciples "teach themselves" by "finding what is inside and outside themselves" and by "bringing this into their understanding." In this context, Jesus not only tells the disciples "about things," but he tells them what to ask themselves. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 88:

> **88** [1]Jesus said, "The messengers and the prophets will come to you and give you what is yours. [2]You, in turn, give them what you have, and say to yourselves, 'When will they come and take what is theirs?'"

In a context where Jesus tells the disciples what they must do, he tells them what "to say to themselves." In other words, one of the major goals of the sayings of Jesus in the *Gos. Thom.* is to teach the reader a form of internal dialogue in which to engage. They are to use the questions and sayings of Jesus as a "living" voice that speaks to them and asks them questions. This will lead them into an activity of seeking that holds the promise of finding life. In contrast to the Gospel of John, simply "believing" what one has seen and heard will not bring life. Rather, what one has seen and heard must become a living voice that engages one in seeking and finding life. The disciples must learn both what kinds of questions to ask themselves and what kinds of responses they must give to the questions they ask themselves. The responses they give themselves must not be direct. Rather, they must be the kinds of responses that hold the potential for changing the initial questions they ask.

One of the techniques that facilitates this process, finally, is to ask if Jesus has said something about a particular topic. It is important in the process of the internal dialogue to ask oneself what statement Jesus may have made that responds to the question one is asking. *Gos. Thom.* 111:3 exhibits this dimension in exemplary manner:

> **111** [3]Does not Jesus say, "Whoever has found oneself, of that person the world is not worthy"?

Disciples must acquire the habit of asking themselves, "Doesn't Jesus say something about this particular topic?" In other words, what they must find and bring forth is not simply something within them but something outside them. Through an oral process of questions and answers "outside" them, they learn an oral process of internal questioning and answering that brings forth both what is inside and what is outside them.

Internally, then, the *Gos. Thom.* has the nature of a manual for discussion, dialogue, and reflection. It is not a manual for debating a hostile public of any kind, like the canonical gospels. There is no "public" it envisions debating. Rather, it envisions "disciples" who will call forth questions and responses attributed to Jesus and use them in a context of "public" discussion and dialogue that nurtures "internal" discussion, dialogue, and reflection. This, then, can be a process of seeking and finding life.

Questions in the Gospel of Thomas

What kind of socio-rhetorical approach can enact these insights about the inner texture of the *Gos. Thom.* in the form of a full-fledged socio-rhetorical program of analysis and interpretation? At this point, the *Progymnasmata* of Aelius Theon of Alexandria and Hermogenes of Tarsus give remarkable assistance (Butts 1987; Hock and O'Neil 1986; Robbins 1993b). Analysis of these rhetorical treatises brings into prominence the interaction among questions, if-(then) statements, when-(then) statements, rationales, negatives, commands, authoritative testimony, and narrative story in traditions attributed to authoritative individuals in Late Antiquity. Questions arise in contexts of possibilities (if) and probabilities (when). Possibilities and probabilities need reasons (rationales, premises, presuppositions) to support them, and these reasons need to be clarified in contexts where people explore what does and does not seem to be the case and what a person should and should not do. Thus, negatives as well as positives, including negative and positive commands, are necessary to clarify what should and should not be thought and done. In the context of questions and responses that contain reasons, clarifications, and commands, people seek support in authoritative testimony both in the present and the past, and this invites stories both from the present and the past.

Rather than attempt to give a glimpse of analysis of each of the phenomena in the *Gos. Thom.* named above, it has seemed better to focus on one phenomenon only — questions. A focus on questions alone can exhibit important dimensions of the gospel tradition, as a recent paper by Jerome H. Neyrey that merges social-scientific and rhetorical insights has shown (Neyrey forthcoming). The purpose in this present essay is to begin a socio-rhetorical analysis of gospel tradition that includes the *Gos. Thom.* Analysis of questions is only an initial step, but it is a step into one of the prominent rhetorical features of the gospel tradition. Rhetorical treatises from Late Antiquity show us that questions are an important phenomenon in contexts where sayings and actions of authoritative individuals transmit specific cultural values, attitudes, and dispositions. When questions are present, they may take the form of (1) a rhetorical question that simply advances the assertions of the speaker; (2) a simple question that only requires a "yes" or "no," (3) an inquiry that seeks specific information, or (4) a question that calls for an explanation, a reason "why" (cf. Hock and O'Neil 1986: 85-87). The *Gos. Thom.* contains thirty simple or compound questions in twenty sayings (see Appendix 1). Jesus asks sixteen of the questions, disciples ask twelve questions, and Mary and Salome each ask one question. The nature of these questions and the responses to them are important indicators of the "culture" they transmit. Comparing the questions in the *Gos. Thom.* with the questions in the canonical Gospels is an important beginning point for identifying the "resources"[2] that played a role in the "cultural configuration" that was enacted in the environments where Gospels were written and portions of them were performed either "by memory" or "by reading aloud" in various contexts in early Christianity.

Five of the rhetorical questions in the *Gos. Thom.* are close variants of Q tradition (for all the questions and their parallels, see Appendix 1):

---

[2]It is important to change one's vocabulary from "sources" to "resources" when one is discussing orally transmitted tradition. I am grateful to J. D. H. Amador and James D. Hester for this insight.

78 [1]Jesus said, "Why have you come out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind? [2]And to see a person dressed in soft clothing, [like your] rulers and your powerful ones?
//Luke 7 [24] When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? [25] What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. [26] What then did you go out to see? A prophet?"
//Matt 11 [7] As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? [8] What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. [9] What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

89 [1]Jesus said, "Why do you wash the outside of the cup? [2]Do you not understand that the one who made the inside is also the one who made the outside?"
//Luke 11 [39] Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. [40] You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?"
//Matt 23 [25] Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. [26] You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.

Two rhetorical questions have a close relation to a statement that appears in a story that Luke has in a Q context:

72 [2] He [Jesus] said to the person, "Sir, who made me a divider?" [3] He turned to his disciples and said to them, "I am not a divider, am I?"
//Luke 12 [14] But he said to him [person in crowd], "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?"

Two rhetorical questions are related to Johannine topics:

104 [2] Jesus said, "What sin have I committed, or how have I been undone?"
//John 8 [46] Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

18 [2] Jesus said, "Have you discovered the beginning, then, that you are seeking after the end?
//John 1 [1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God.

Another rhetorical question concerns a fully Thomasine topic:

111 [1] Jesus said, ... [2] ... Does not Jesus say, "Whoever has found oneself, of that person the world is not worthy?"

Rhetorical questions in the *Gos. Thom.*, then, display a spectrum from Q tradition through Lukan and Johannine tradition to a fully Thomasine topic of interest. With this spectrum, one gets a glimpse into the making of Thomasine tradition. There is a close verbal relation only to material in a context of Matthew/Luke overlap. The relation to Johannine tradition is occasionally phrasal, but it is usually only topical and never close to the same wording for an entire sentence or two.

What, then, about questions that call for a yes or no answer? All three questions of this type in the *Gos. Thom.* feature fully canonical topics (see Appendix 1 for the parallels):

Do you want us to fast? (6:1; cf. Mark 2:18 par.)
Shall we give alms? (6:1; cf. Matt 6:2)
Then shall we enter the kingdom as babies? (22:3; cf. John 3:4)

These questions show that some Thomas tradition has a topical relation to common synoptic tradition (Matt/Mark/Luke). Once again, however, it shows a topical relation to Johannine tradition. None of the questions calling for a yes or no answer, however, represents a perpetuation of close but variant tradition. The only relation of these questions to canonical tradition is topical.

What, then, about questions asking for specific information? Six questions asking for information deal directly with topics in synoptic tradition:

How shall we pray? (6:1; cf. Luke 11:1)
When will the kingdom come? (113:1; cf. Luke 17:20)
When will you appear to us, and when shall we see you? (37:1; cf. Matt 24:3)

In this instance the questions have some noticeable relation to questions in synoptic tradition. In other words, the relationship is on the level of interrogative phrasing, and not simply on the topical level. But two other questions related to synoptic tradition are simply topical, rather than approximating questions disciples ask in the synoptic gospels:

What diet shall we observe? (6:1; cf. Mark 7:19)
Is circumcision useful or not? (53:1; cf. Luke 2:21)

In addition, there are questions asking for specific information that are closely related to Johannine tradition:

Where have you come from? (50:1; cf. John 6:42; 7:28; 19:9)
Who are you to say these things to us? (43:1; cf. John 8:25)
Who are you, sir? (61:2; cf. John 20:14)

These questions do not simply have a topical relation to tradition in the Gospel of John. Rather, someone in John asks a question similar to the question in the *Gos. Thom.* There are, however, a series of questions in the *Gos. Thom.* that have only a topical relation to Johannine tradition. And, in many of these instances, there is a fully Thomasine formulation of the topic:

When you are in the light, what will you do? (11:1; cf. John 12:35)
Who will be our leader? (12:1; cf. John 6:68; 16:28)
What is the evidence of your Father in you? (50:3; cf. John 15:15-16)

One of the questions is a Thomasine formulation of both synoptic and Johannine tradition (see Davies: 60):

When will the rest for the dead take place, and when will the new world come? (51:1; cf. Luke 17:20)

Then there are questions with fully Thomasine content:

But when you become two, what will you do? (11:1)
What did Jesus say to you? (13:7)
What are your disciples like? (21:1)
When will they come and take what is theirs? (88:2)

Questions asking for specific information, then, have a topical relation to all of the canonical gospels. But here one notices a special phenomenon: fifty percent of the questions asking for specific information (eight) are fully Thomasine in formulation and orientation. One of the characteristics of Thomas tradition, then, is that it has generated a substantive number of questions asking for specific information in a manner that is not featured in the canonical gospels.

Questions in the Gospel of Thomas and the Q Tradition

The section above shows that five rhetorical questions in three units of the *Gos. Thom.* have a close verbal relation to material in a Q context, while the relation of other questions is further removed from verbal replication. If one changes the investigation to analysis of Q tradition, analyzes all the questions in Q, and examines the relation of this Q material to the *Gos. Thom.*, there is a remarkable result. There are twenty-two units in the context of Q tradition that contain questions. In this material, the disciples of Jesus never ask a question. Rather, Jesus himself asks questions either to disciples or to crowds; and, in addition, four units feature John the Baptist, the Baptist's disciples, a rich man, God, and a nobleman each asking one question (see Appendix 2). The questions Jesus asks in the context of Q tradition are rhetorical, rather than inquiries for information. A rhetorical question, as we recall, is simply a way of making an assertion. Thus, a rhetorical question may be stated in a declarative as well as interrogative form. Among Matthew, Luke, and the *Gos. Thom.*, then, one or two may have a performance of the tradition in an interrogative form, or one or two may have a performance in a declarative form.

The remarkable result is that the *Gos. Thom.* contains some or most of the content of twelve of the eighteen Q-context units that have questions in them. In other words, sixty-six percent of Q-context tradition containing questions Jesus asks either disciples or crowds is present in full or partial form in the *Gos. Thom.* (for the full text of all the parallels, see Appendix 2).

The amount of content of the Q-context tradition present in the *Gos. Thom.* varies from one small item to the entire thought. This is one of the characteristics of oral transmission of

tradition. Five of the eight units of Q-context tradition in which Jesus directs questions to the disciples show this spectrum of relationship:

Q6:32-35 What credit is that to you...? (*Gos. Thom.* 95)
Q6:39 What happens if a blind man leads a blind man...? (*Gos. Thom.* 34)
Q6:41-42 Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye...? (*Gos. Thom.* 26)
Q12:23-29 Why do you worry...? (*Gos. Thom.* 36)
Q12:51 Do you think I bring peace...? (*Gos. Thom.* 16)

Only three of the eight units featuring questions by Jesus to the disciples in Q-context units are not perpetuated in the *Gos. Thom.*:

Q6:46 Why do you call me "Lord, Lord"...?
Q11:11-12 Will you give a snake, scorpion, or stone...?
Q12:6 Are not sparrows sold for a half-penny...?

In addition to the five units where Jesus questions disciples, seven of the ten units of Q-context tradition that direct questions to crowds are perpetuated in full or partial form in the *Gos. Thom.*:

Q7:24-26 What did you go out to see...? (*Gos. Thom.* 78)
Q11:21-22 How can one enter a strong man's house...? (*Gos. Thom.* 11:21)
Q11:39-40 Did not the one who made the inside make the outside...? (*Gos. Thom.* 89)
Q/Luke 12:14 Who made me a divider...? (*Gos. Thom.* 72)
Q12:56-57 Why do you not know how to interpret the sky...? (*Gos. Thom.* 91)
Q13:18//Mark 4:30 What is the kingdom of heaven like...? (*Gos. Thom.* 20)
QLuke 15:4 Does he not leave the ninety-nine sheep...? (*Gos. Thom.* 107)

Only three of the ten units are not perpetuated in the *Gos. Thom.*:

Q7:24-26 To what will I compare this generation?
Q11:18 If Satan is divided against himself...?
Q14:34 If salt has lost its taste...?

The amount of the question-material in Q-context that is perpetuated in the *Gos. Thom.* is remarkable. The manner in which it is perpetuated is also remarkable. Sometimes only one small item is present in the *Gos. Thom.* performance of the tradition; sometimes virtually the entire content is present. This is exactly the relationship a person should expect if the mode of transmission in the *Gos. Thom.* is oral.

Questions in the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of John

The relation of questions in the Gospel of John to tradition in the *Gos. Thom.* is very different from the relation of questions in Q tradition to the *Gos. Thom.* One will not expect a similar percentage of perpetuation of tradition, since the Gospel of John is a much longer account than the Q material. But one might expect one or two units with a sustained clausal

relationship. No such tradition exists in the *Gos. Thom.* To see all the questions Jesus asks disciples and Jews, and the questions disciples and Jews ask Jesus, in the Gospel of John, see Appendix 3. Some units in the *Gos. Thom.* contain phrases related to statements in the Gospel of John. Only a few of the questions are perpetuated in the *Gos. Thom.*, but most that are perpetuated are important topics in both the *Gos. Thom.* and the Gospel of John. Two minor similarities occur in the following questions:

> **John 8** 46 Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?
> //*Gos. Thom.* **104** 2 Jesus said, "What sin have I committed, or how have I been undone?"

> **John 6** 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go?"
> //*Gos. Thom.* **12** 1 The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you will leave us. Who is going to be our leader?"

In each instance, there is a similarity close enough to detect some kind of relationship in the tradition. In John 8:46 Jesus is responding to Jews rather than his disciples, as in *Gos. Thom.* 104:2, and in John 6:68 Peter asks the questions rather than his disciples. But these variations would not be unusual even if the relation were scribal.

When we look further into the questions in John, a phenomenon arises that is challenging to interpret but noticeable. In three instances at least where there is a relationship between questions Jesus asks in John and the *Gos. Thom.*, Jesus' response in the *Gos. Thom.* contains Q-context material. One instance concerns who Jesus is and occurs with John 8:25-26:

> **John 8** 25 They [the Jews] said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "What I have told you from the beginning." 26 I have much to say about you and much to condemn...."

In *Gos. Thom.* 43:1, Jesus' disciples rather than the Jews ask the question of Jesus. Jesus' response includes a variant version of Q-context material:

> *Gos. Thom.* **43** 1His disciples said to him, "Who are you to say these things to us?" 2"You do not understand who I am from what I say to you. 3Rather, you have become like the Jews, for they love the tree but hate its fruit, or they love the fruit but hate the tree."
> ///**Luke 6** 43 For no healthy tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a rotten tree bear good fruit; 44 for each tree is known by its own fruit.
> //**Matt 12** 33 Either think that the tree is healthy, and its fruit good; or suppose that the tree is rotten and its fruit bad; for by its fruit the tree is known. (cf. Matt 7:16-20)

The Q-context tradition shows variation both within itself and between itself and the *Gos. Thom.* There are various passages in John that refer to fruit (4:36; 12:24; 15:2, 4, 5, 8, 16) but none to the tree. In the *Gos. Thom.*, Jesus' response concerning who he is contains content that exhibits a relation to Q-context tradition.

Another instance concerns not who Jesus is, but where he is going. The Gospel of

John has three passages in which questions about where Jesus is going are either on Jesus' lips or on the lips of one of his disciples:

> **John 13** 36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward." 37 Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now?..."
> **John 14** 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"
> **John 16** 5 But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?"
> **John 16** 19 Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'?"

The *Gos. Thom.* has a variation of this topic which speaks either of how to find Jesus when he is no longer here or how to find the place where he is (now) (cf. Koester 1987: 103):

> *Gos. Thom.* **38** 1 Jesus said, "Often you have desired to hear these sayings that I am speaking to you, and you have no one else from whom to hear them. 2There will be days when you will seek me and you will not find me."
> ///**Luke 10** 23 Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it.
> //**Matt 13** 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. 17 Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

The *Gos. Thom.* contains a modulation of Q-context tradition into future tense, raising the issue of where Jesus will go. The Gospel of John moves beyond Thomas tradition specifically to the topic of "where Jesus will go," and this becomes a repetitive topic in Johannine discourse.

The *Gos. Thom.* contains a variant of this topic which speaks of seeking Jesus where he is, rather than where he will go:

> *Gos. Thom.* **24** 1 His disciples said, "Show us the place where you are, for we must seek it." 2He said to them, "Whoever has ears should hear. 3There is light within a person of light, and it shines on the whole world. If it does not shine, it is dark."

> ///**Luke 11** 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. 35 Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.
> //**Matt 6** 22 The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; 23 but if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness.

The remarkable thing is that whether the issue is finding Jesus when he is no longer here or seeking the place where Jesus now is, Thomas tradition has Jesus respond in words that are a close variant of Q-context tradition. With this topic, it appears as though the Thomas tradition stands in an intermediate position between the Q tradition and the Gospel of John. The *Gos. Thom.* has advanced the issue of "seek and you will find" in Q tradition both to "there will be a time when you will seek me and not find me" and "it is necessary to seek the place where I am." The Gospel of John has advanced these two topics to a repetitive theme that concerns "where Jesus is going."

Another similar relation among the *Gos. Thom.*, Q-context tradition, and John exists with the topic of where Jesus is from and who chose the twelve. The Gospel of John treats these as two separate topics:

> **John 7** [28] Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I am from?"
>
> **John 6** [70] Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve?"
> **John 13** [18] I know whom I have chosen....
> **John 15** [16] You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.... [16] ... I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

The *Gos. Thom.* merges these topics together in a passage that presents one of the most fully developed statements of Thomasine theology (De Conick: 64-96):

> *Gos. Thom.* **50** [1] Jesus said, "If they say to you, 'Where have you come from?' say to them, 'We have come from the light, from the place where the light came into being by itself, established [itself], and appeared in their image.' [2] If they say to you, 'Is it you?' say, 'We are its children, and we are the chosen of the living Father.' [3] If they say to you, 'What is the evidence of your Father in you?' say to them, 'It is motion and rest.'"

When the issue becomes the evidence of the Father in the disciples and the answer includes "rest," the well known Q-context passage in its Matthean version has a fascinating relation to the Thomasine tradition:

> **Matt 11** [27] All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. [28] Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (cf. Luke 10:21-22)

In this Q-context tradition, the result of the Son's revelation of the Father to the disciple is the presence of rest in the disciple. In the *Gos. Thom.*, the phenomenon of rest in the disciple is evidence of the Father in him or her. In this instance, it appears as though the Johannine and Thomasine traditions have developed independently from one another, rather than in any relation of dependence. In contrast to the *Gos. Thom.*, the Gospel of John makes

"becoming a child of light" directly dependent upon "belief":

> **John 12** 35 As you have the light, believe in the light so that you become sons of the light.

The *Gos. Thom.* formulates having the light in terms of seeking and finding it, rather than believing in it. The *Gos. Thom.* simply followed the line of reasoning laid out in "seek and you will find" from Q tradition, while the *Gos. Thom.* introduced the concept of finding it by believing in it.

The concept of belief in the Gospel of John takes one to the issue of confirmation of the truth of Jesus' sayings in written tradition:

> **5** 47 But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?

In John, belief rather than seeking is the key to finding the light, and what is written testifies to the truth that Jesus is the light. Again, the Gospel of John exhibits a mode of scribalizing the gospel tradition to confirm it, a step that is not present either in the early Q-context tradition or in the *Gos. Thom.* Neither in Q material nor in the *Gos. Thom.* does Jesus ask, "Do you believe what I say?" In contrast, this is a common phenomenon in the Gospel of John. In John, Jesus insists that written tradition verifies the truth of what he says. In contrast, the *Gos. Thom.* emphasizes that the words of Jesus are a vehicle for eternal life "on their own terms," namely, as words that invite additional questions, dialogue, and reflection, rather than words that are verified by written tradition.

Along with Jesus' emphasis in the Gospel of John that what is written confirms what he says, Jesus does not resist the title teacher like he does in the *Gos. Thom.* Rather, in John Jesus claims to be both teacher and Lord:

> **13** 12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am."

In John the issue of whether or not Jesus teaches the truth becomes an issue of whether written tradition confirms that he is God's Son:

> **10** 34 Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 If those to whom the word of God came were called 'gods' and the scripture cannot be annulled, 36 can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, 'I am God's Son'?"

In the Gospel of John, rhetorical questions by Jesus are embedded in a narrative context that portrays Jesus as God's Son — Teacher of truth and Lord to be worshipped. Thus, a repetitive theme in John is the question by Jesus, "Do you believe what I say?" The Gospel of John exhibits a step in the tradition where Jesus' rhetorical questions have become a vehicle for believing that Jesus speaks the truth about himself and the Father and for worshipping Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life." The *Gos. Thom.* does not take this step. Rather, Jesus' sayings are, in and of themselves, the vehicle for asking more questions and reflecting

for the purpose of seeking, finding, being disturbed, marvelling, and reigning (*Gos. Thom.* 2). The *Gos. Thom.* does not enter the domain or argument about written tradition that confirms the truth of what Jesus says. Rather, it has developed its insights into who Jesus is out of Q-context tradition that concerns seeking and finding.

In sum, the questions in the *Gos. Thom.* show substantive oral overlap with Q-context tradition, and they contain phrases and topics that overlap with Johannine tradition. The relationship between the *Gos. Thom.* and John covers a spectrum from a fragment of a thought to the same or very similar idea. There is never, however, a sustained overlap like one sees between the *Gos. Thom.* and Q-context tradition. The *Gos. Thom.* does not exhibit a process of "selecting" topics out of the Gospel of John. Rather, the relation of John to the *Gos. Thom.* is more like the relation of the *Gos. Thom.* to Q-context tradition. The Gospel of John does not perform phrases and clauses of the *Gos. Thom.* as closely as the *Gos. Thom.* performs phrases and clauses of Q-context tradition. But when topics in Johannine questions show a relation to Thomas material, the Thomas material often contains content related to Q-context tradition. It appears that the Gospel of John uses Q-tradition through an intermediate tradition like that found in the *Gos. Thom.* In the *Gos. Thom.*, the emphasis on the words of Jesus is perpetuated and developed without being modulated into a mode where they are verified by "written tradition." In contrast, the Gospel of John, like the fully developed Q Sayings Gospel and the synoptic gospels, scribalizes the gospel tradition. Only an exhibition of the expansion of if-statements, when-statements, rationales, negatives, and narrative story can show the manner in which the *Gos. Thom.* embellished early stages of Q, and possibly early stages of Johannine tradition, in an oral context that produced a mode of elaboration distinctly different from the canonical gospels. These are topics for other investigations.

Conclusion

In this essay it has been possible to present only an initial socio-rhetorical analysis of questions in the *Gos. Thom.* This analysis led to an investigation of all the questions in Q-context tradition and of some questions in the Gospel of John. The data analyzed in this essay suggests that the *Gos. Thom.* does not recite tradition in a scribal manner from first century written sources. Rather, the *Gos. Thom.* reveals a status of "orally transmitted resources." Q tradition and Matthew and Luke in the context of Q tradition function as special historical, social, cultural, and ideological resources for the traditions in the *Gos. Thom.* The closest relation is either with Matthew/Luke overlap tradition or Matthean or Lukan tradition in a context of overlap tradition. There is also some relation to Markan tradition. The relation to Johannine tradition is very complex, with a possibility that Thomasine tradition is an intermediate resource between Q tradition and the Gospel of John.

The challenge for socio-rhetorical analysis will be to describe the relation of other rhetorical phenomena like if-statements, when-statements, rationales, negatives, commands, ancient testimony, and narrative story to canonical tradition. One of the noticeable characteristics of the canonical gospels is that each, in its own way, relates these phenomena to "that which is written." The *Gos. Thom.* does not. The *Gos. Thom.* maintains a focus on speech and hearing rather than writing and written testimony. Another noticeable characteristic of the canonical gospels, which must be the topic of other investigations, is the manner in which each, in its own way, engages in inductive/deductive elaboration of the sayings tradition. The *Gos. Thom.* does not. Rather, it appears that questions introduce topics that give rise to

other topics until a new configuration of topics invites either new questions or a reformulation of the initial questions. Thus, in the *Gos. Thom.* the process of asking questions does not lead to definitive answers but to different questions.

A significant number of the Thomasine questions that are non-synoptic questions have a phrasal or topical relation to the Gospel of John. In contrast to Johannine tradition, Thomas tradition exhibits an environment in first century Christianity where followers of Jesus continued to generate questions through a process of oral transmission, rather than turning toward a process of "scribalizing" the tradition that focused on ancient written testimony. The Gospel of John refers to the disciples' memory of what is written (John 2:17), engages Jews over the meaning of what is written (e.g., John 5:39, 46-47), emphasizes how many aspects of Jesus' death fulfills what is written (John 19:24, 28, 36-37), and refers to many other signs performed by Jesus that "are not written in this book" (John 20:30). The *Gos. Thom.*, in contrast, maintains a persistent focus on that which was spoken by Jesus, that which disciples spoke to Jesus and to one another, and that which disciples are supposed to speak to others and to themselves. This focus has produced additional questions rather than "written citations" that attest to the truth of answers given to questions. Investigation of the relation among if-statements, when-statements, rationales, commands, citation of ancient testimony, and narrative story can shed yet further light on the manner in which the *Gos. Thom.* perpetuates in an oral manner portions of first century tradition that were "scribalized" in the Q Sayings Gospel, Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John.

Appendix 1: Questions in the Gospel of Thomas

6 [1] His disciples asked him and said to him, "Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?"
//**Mark 2** [18] Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" (cf. Matt 9:14//Luke 5:33; Matt 6:16-18)
//**Luke 11** [1] ... one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." (cf. Matt 6:5-9)
//**Matt 6** [2] Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you,... [3] But when you give alms, donot let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.
//**Mark 7** [19] He declared all foods clean.

11 [1] Jesus said,... [3] "When you are in the light, what will you do? [4] On the day when you were one, you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?"
//**John 12** [35] Walk as you have the light, that darkness may not overcome you. ... As you have the light, believe in the light so that you become sons of the light.

12 [1] The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you will leave us. Who will be our leader?"
//**John 16** [5] But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?"
//**John 16** [28] I have come out from the Father and I have come into the world. I am again leaving the world and return to the Father.
//**John 6** [68] Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; [69] and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

13 [7] When Thomas came back to his friends, they asked him, "What did Jesus say to you?" **(no canonical gospel)**

18 [2] Jesus said, "Have you discovered the beginning, then, that you are seeking after the end?
//**John 1** [1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God.

21 [1] Mary said to Jesus, "What are your disciples like?" **(no canonical gospel)**

22 [3] They said to him, "Then shall we enter the kingdom as babies?"
//**John 3** [4] Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?"

37 [1] His disciples said, "When will you appear to us, and when shall we see you?"
//**Matt 24** [3] As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when this will be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" (cf. Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7)
//**John 16** [19] Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, "A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me?"

43 [1] His disciples said to him, "Who are you to say these things to us?"
//**John 8** [25] They [the Jews] said to him, "Who are you?"

50 [1] Jesus said, "If they say to you, 'Where have you come from?' say to them, 'We have come from the light, from the place where the light came into being by itself, established [itself], and appeared in their image.' [2] If they say to you, 'Is it you?' say, 'We are its children, and we are the chosen of the living Father.' [3] If they say to you, 'What is the evidence of your Father in you?' say to them, 'It is motion and rest.'"
//**John 1** [9] The true light that enlightens every human being was coming into the world.
//**John 12** [35] As you have the light, believe in the light so that you become sons of the light.
//**John 6** [70] Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you,..."
//**John 13** [18] I know whom I have chosen....
//**John 15** [16] You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.... [16] ... I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.
//**Matt 11** [27] All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. [28] Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (cf. Luke 10:21-22)

51 [1] His disciples said to him, "When will the rest for the dead take place, and when will the new world come?" **(no canonical gospel)**

53 [1] His disciples said to him, "Is circumcision useful or not?" **(no canonical gospel)**

61 [2] Salome said, "Who are you, sir?"
//John 20 [14] Saying this, she [Mary] turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

72 [2] He [Jesus] said to the person, "Sir, who made me a divider?" [3] He turned to his disciples and said to them, "I am not a divider, am I?"
//Luke 12 [14] But he said to him [person in crowd], "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?"

78 [1] Jesus said, "Why have you come out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind? [2] And to see a person dressed in soft clothing, [like your] rulers and your leaders?
//Luke 7 [24] When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? [25] What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. [26] What then did you go out to see? A prophet?"
//Matt 11 [7] As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? [8] What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. [9] What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

88 [1] Jesus said, "The messengers and the prophets will come to you and give you what is yours. [2] You, in turn, give them what you have, and say to yourselves, 'When will they come and take what is theirs?'" **(no canonical gospel)**

89 [1] Jesus said, "Why do you wash the outside of the cup? [2] Do you not understand that the one who made the inside is also the one who made the outside?"
//Luke 11 [39] Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. [40] You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?"
//Matt 23 [25] Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. [26] You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.

104 [2] Jesus said, "What sin have I committed, or how have I been undone?"
//John 8 [46] [Jesus said to the Jews,] "Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?"

111 [1] Jesus said, ... [2] ... Does not Jesus say, "Whoever has found oneself, of that person the world is not worthy?" **(no canonical gospel)**

113 [1] His disciples said to him, "When will the kingdom come?"
//Luke 17 [20] Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom was coming, he answered them,...
//Luke 19 [11] As they [the crowd] heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

Appendix 2: Questions in Q, or Matthew or Luke in Q Context

Questions Jesus asks Disciples

Luke 6 32 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?
33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?
34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.
//Matt 5 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
***///Gos. Thom.* 95** 1[Jesus said], "If you have money, do not lend it at interest. 2Rather, give [it] to someone from whom you will not get it back."

Luke 6 39 He also told them a parable: Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit?
//Matt 15 14 Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.
***///Gos. Thom.* 34** Jesus said, "If a blind person leads a blind person, both of them will fall into a hole."

Luke 6 41 Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your brother, "Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye," when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
//Matt 7 3 Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," while the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
***///Gos. Thom.* 26** 1Jesus said, "You see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but you do not see the beam that is in your own eye. 2When you take the beam out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Luke 6 46 Why do you call me "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I tell you?
//Matt 7 21 Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?" 23 Then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers."
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 11 11 Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? 12 Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?
//Matt 7 9 Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? 10 Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake?
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 12 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?
//Matt 10 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 12 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.
24 Consider the ravens... Of how much more value are you than the birds!
25 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?
26 If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest?
28 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith!
29 And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying.
//Matt 6 25 Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?
26 Look at the birds of the air... Are you not of more value than they?
27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?
28 And why do you worry about clothing?
30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith?
31 Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?"
///*Gos. Thom.* 36 Jesus said, "Do not worry, from morning to evening and from evening to morning, about what you will wear."

Luke 12 51 Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth?
//Matt 10 34 Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth.
///*Gos. Thom.* 16 1Jesus said, "Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world. 2They do not know that I have come to cast conflicts upon the earth: fire, sword, war. 3For there will be five in a house: there will be three against two and two against three, father against son and son against father, 4and they will stand alone."

Questions Jesus asks Crowds

Luke 7 24 When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 25 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. 26 What then did you go out to see? A prophet?"
//Matt 11 7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet."
///*Gos. Thom.* 78 1Jesus said, "Why have you come out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind? 2And to see a person dressed in soft clothing, [like your] rulers and your powerful ones? 3They are dressed in soft clothing, and cannot understand truth."

Luke 7 31 To what then will I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?
//Matt 11 16 But to what will I compare this generation?
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 11 [18] If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? for you say that I cast out the demons by Beelzebul. [19] Now if I cast out the demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your exorcists cast them out?
//Matt 12 [26] If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? [27] If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists cast them out?
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 11 [21] When a strong man, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is safe. [22] But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his plunder.
//Matt 12 [29] Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man?
///*Gos. Thom.* 35 [1]Jesus said, "One cannot enter the house of the strong and take it by force without tying the person's hands. [2]Then one will loot the person's house."

Luke 11 [39] Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. [40] You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?"
//Matt 23 [25] Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. [26] You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.
///*Gos. Thom.* 89 [1]Jesus said, "Why do you wash the outside of the cup? [2]Do you not understand that the one who made the inside is also the one who made the outside?"

Luke 12 [14] But he said to him [person in crowd], "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?"
///*Gos. Thom.* 72 [1]A [person said] to him, "Tell my brothers to divide my father's possession with me." [2]He said to the person, "Sir, who made me a divider?" [3]He turned to his disciples and said to them, "I am not a divider, am I?"

Luke 12 [56] You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?
[57] And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?
//Matt 16 [3] You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.
///*Gos. Thom.* 91 [1]They said to him, "Tell us who you are so that we may believe in you." [2]He said to them, "You examine the face of heaven and earth, but you have not come to know the one who is in your presence, and you do not know how to examine this moment."

Luke 13 [18] He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it?"
//Matt 13 [31] He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like..."
//Mark 4 [30] And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it?"
///*Gos. Thom.* 20 [1]The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us what the kingdom of heaven is like."

Luke 14 34 Salt is good; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored?
//Matt 5 13 You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored?
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 15 4 Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?
//Matt 18 12 What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?
///*Gos. Thom.* 107 1Jesus said, "The kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. 1One of them, the largest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine and sought the one until he found it. 3After he had toiled, he said to the sheep, "I love you more than the ninety-nine.'"

Questions other People ask

Luke 3 7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
//Matt 3 7 But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 7 18 The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples 19 and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" 20 When the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?'"
//Matt 11 2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 12 17 And he [rich man] thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" 20 But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"
///*Gos. Thom.* 63 1Jesus said, "There was a rich person who had a great deal of money. 2He said, 'I shall invest my money so that I may sow, reap, plant, and fill my storehouses with produce, that I may lack nothing.' These were the things he was thinking in his heart, but that very night he died. 4Whoever has ears should hear."

Luke 19 23 [The nobleman said,] "Why then did you not put my money into the bank?"
//Matt 25 26 But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest."
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Appendix 3: Questions Jesus asks Disciples and Jews, and Disciples and Jews ask Jesus in the Gospel of John

Questions Jesus asks Disciples

1 [38] When Jesus turned and saw them [the two disciples] following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?"
4 [34] Jesus said to them [the disciples], "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. [35] Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'?"
6 [61] But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you? [62] Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?"
6 [67] So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?"
6 [70] Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve?"
11 [9] Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight?"
13 [12] After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? [13] You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am."
14 [9] Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? [10] Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"
16 [5] But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?"
16 [19] Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'?"
16 [31] Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe?"
18 [11] Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"
20 [29] Jesus said to him [Thomas], "Have you believed because you have seen me?"
21 [5] Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?"
21 [15] When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"
21 [16] A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"
21 [17] He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?"
21 [22] Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" [23] So the rumor spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"

Questions Jesus asks Jews

5 [44] How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God?
5 [47] But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?
7 [19] Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?

7 23 If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man's whole body on the sabbath?
7 28 Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I am from?"
8 25 ... Jesus said to them, "Why do I speak to you at all?"
8 42 Jesus said to them, "... 43 Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word."
8 46 Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?
10 32 Jesus replied, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?"
10 34 Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 If those to whom the word of God came were called 'gods' and the scripture cannot be annulled, 36 can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, 'I am God's Son'?"
18 4 Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?"
18 7 Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?"
18 19 Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. 20 Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. 21 Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said."
18 23 Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

Questions Disciples ask Jesus

1 38 They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?"
4 27 Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?"
6 9 There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?
6 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go?"
9 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"
11 8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?"
12 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?"
13 25 So while reclining next to Jesus, he [the beloved disciple] asked him, "Lord, who is it [who will betray you]?"
13 36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward." 37 Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." 38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me?"
14 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"
21 12 Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord.

21 [20] Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" [21] When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?"

Questions Jews ask Jesus

2 [18] The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this [disrupting the temple]?"
2 [20] The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?"
8 [5] [Scribes and Pharisees said,] "Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"
8 [19] Then they said to him, "Where is your Father?"
8 [25] They said to him, "Who are you?"
8 [33] They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, 'You will be made free'?"
8 [48] The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?"
8 [53] "Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?"
8 [57] Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"
10 [24] So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."
9 [40] Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?"
18 [22] When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

Bibliography

Butts, James R. (1987) *The "Progymnasmata" of Theon: A New Text with Translation and Commentary*. Ann Arbor, MI: University Films International.

Cameron, Ron (1990) "'What Have You Come Out To See?' Characterizations of John and Jesus in the Gospels," *Semeia* 49: 35-69.

Crossan, John Dominic (1991) *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.

Cullmann, Oscar (1962a) "The Gospel of Thomas and the Problem of the Age of the Tradition Contained Therein: A Survey," *Interpretation* 16: 418-28.

— (1962b) "The Gospel According to St. Thomas and Its Significance for Research into the Canonical Gospels," *Hibbert Journal* 60: 116-24.

Davies, Stevan L. (1983) *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*. New York: Seabury Press.

De Conick, April D. (1996) *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas*. VCSup 33. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Dehandschutter, Boudewijn (1982) "The Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptics: The Status Quaestionis." In *Studia Evangelica* 7, E. A. Livingstone (ed.), Texte und Untersuchungen 126. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, pp. 157-60.

Fallon, Francis T. and Cameron, Ron (1988) "The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis." In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 25.6, W. Haase and H. Temporini (eds.). Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, pp. 4213-24.

Gärtner, Bertil (1961) *The Theology of the Gospel According to Thomas*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Grant, R. M. and Freedman, D. N. (1960) *The Secret Sayings of Jesus*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Hock, Ronald F. and O'Neil, Edward N. (1986) *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric. Volume I. The Progymnasmata*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Hunzinger, Claus-Hunno (1960a) "Aussersynoptisches Traditionsgut im Thomas-Evangelium," *ThLZ* 85: 843-46.

— (1960b) "Unbekannte Gleichnisse Jesu aus dem Thomas-Evangelium." In W. Eltester (ed.), *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche: Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias*. BZNW 26. Berlin: Töpelmann, pp. 209-20.

Kloppenborg, John S. (1987) *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

— (1993) "The Sayings Gospel Q: Recent Opinion on the People behind the Document," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 1: 9-34.

Kloppenborg, John S.; Meyer, Marvin W.; Patterson, Stephen J.; Steinhauser, Michael G. (1990) *Q-Thomas Reader*. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press.

Koester, Helmut (1986) "Gnostic Sayings and Controversy Traditions in John 8:12-59" In Charles W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson, Jr. (eds.) *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, pp. 97-110.

— (1990a) *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development*. Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International.

— (1990b) "Q and Its Relatives." In James E. Goehring et al (eds.), *Gospel Origins & Christian Beginnings: In Honor of James M. Robinson*. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, pp. 49-63.

Layton, Bentley (1987) *The Gnostic Scriptures*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

— (1989) *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7*. Volume 1. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Mack, Burton L. (1993) *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q & Christian Origins*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

— (1995) *Who Wrote the New Testament? The Making of the Christian Myth*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

McLean, Bradley H. (1995) "On the Gospel of Thomas and Q." In Ronald A. Piper (ed.), *The Gospel Behind the Gospels: Current Studies on Q*. NovTSup 75. Leiden: E. J. Brill, pp. 321-45.

Montefiore, Hugh A. (1960/61) "A Comparison of the Parables of the Gospel According to Thomas and of the Synoptic Gospels," *New Testament Studies* 7: 220-48.

Neyrey, Jerome H. (forthcoming) "Questions, Chreiai and Honor Challenges: The Interface of Rhetoric and Culture in Mark's Gospel," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.

Patterson, Stephen J. (1992) "The Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptic Tradition," *Forum* 8.1/2: 45-97.

— (1993) *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press.

Riley, G. J. (1994) "The *Gospel of Thomas* in Recent Scholarship," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 2: 227-52.

Robbins, Vernon K. (1991) "Writing as a Rhetorical Act in Plutarch and the Gospels." In Duane F. Watson (ed.), *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, pp. 157-86.

— (1993b) "Progymnastic Rhetorical Composition and Pre-Gospel Traditions: A New Approach." In Camille Focant (ed.), *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism*. BETL 110. Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp. 111-47.
— (1996a) *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology*. London: Routledge.
— (1996b) *Exploring the Texture of Texts*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity International Press.
Robinson, James M. (1986) "On Bridging the Gulf from Q to the Gospel of Thomas (or Vice Versa)." In Charles W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson, Jr. (eds.) *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, pp. 127-75.
— (1993) "The Jesus of the Sayings Gospel Q." Occasional Papers 28. Claremont, CA: Institute for Antiquity and Christianity.
Robinson, James M. and Koester, Helmut (1971) *Trajectories through Early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
Sieber, John H. (1990) "The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament." In James E. Goehring et al (eds.), *Gospel Origins & Christian Beginnings: In Honor of James M. Robinson*. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, pp. 64-73.
Williams, Michael Allen (1996) *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Wilson, R. McL. (1960) *Studies in the Gospel of Thomas*. London: Mowbray.

Key Jewish Texts on Blasphemy and Exaltation and the Jewish Examination of Jesus

Darrell L. Bock
Dallas Theological Seminary

Surely one of the most discussed and important texts concerning the life of Jesus is Mark 14:53-65, where Jesus is brought before the Jewish leadership for examination. In fact, one could argue that this event, if it could be nailed down historically, would provide great insight into not only why Jesus was crucified but also into the nature of the controversy surrounding his ministry and mission. As a result, it is not surprising that much energy and ink has been expended on the careful analyis of this one scene.

A consideration of this text's history of the interpretation just in this century reveals that many questions swirl around the account.[1] In fact, a consideration of this passage demands that at least fifteen major questions be answered. 1) What was the nature of the blasphemy portrayed in this scene? 2) Was the meeting a trial or an examination? 3) Did the Jews have authority over capital cases? 4) Was there a Sanhedrin then? 5) What would the examination procedures have been? 6) Could there have been an evening examination so close to a feast day and as part of an investigation of a capital offense?; 7) Were there one or two trials (evening/morning)? 8) Where would it have met? 9) Who could have served as the transmission chain for what happened at such a meeting? 10) Would Jesus have made the Son of Man remark reported as given on the occasion? 11) Is the account Mark's creation or rooted in genuine tradition? 12) Does the temple to Messiah movement of the questioning make any sense? 13) What was the nature of the false testimony, if Jesus did discuss the fall and rebuilding of the temple? 14) What is the connection of the blasphemy verdict to the charges eventually brought before Pilate? 15) Does the major historical information for this scene, if it exists, come only from Mark's account?

Just reading the list of questions the passage raises is intimidating, since each question has its own set of additional sub-questions, some of which demand careful searching of ancient

---

[1]The first chapter of a planned monograph will chronicle this interpretive history, especially since Lietzmann's key essay, "Der Prozeß Jesu," SPAW 14 (1931).

materials that are not always full of detail about the secrets being pursued.

The goal of this essay is quite modest in the face of this array of queries. I want to isolate some of the key passages from Judaism on blasphemy and exaltation to see if they can help us understand the conceptual world which stands behind the account of the Jewish examination of Jesus as portrayed in Mark 14. This study summarizes a portion of the key, primary text findings of my work last year during a sabbatical at the University of Tübingen (while working with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung). Martin Hengel and Otto Betz served as my gracious hosts. I anticipate a full monograph on this work in about a year to eighteen months, treating most of the questions I have noted.

This essay, however, is more focused. What are some of the key concepts related to blasphemy and claims of exaltation in Judaism that might indicate what Mark was trying to identify as the cause for the Jewish rejection of Jesus at this examination? We move in four steps. First, we briefly consider the problem of this scene's claim that the leadership heard Jesus utter blasphemy at this examination. This problem centers around *m Sanh* 7.5, the key tractate that discusses blasphemy. Second, we quickly survey the key Jewish texts on blasphemy to see if blasphemy involved more than the narrow definition of *m Sanh* 7.5. Third, we look at a few texts that suggest that some Jews considered the possibility of the exaltation for a few selected individuals directly to God's side. But how would those who were not among such luminaries be seen, if they made such a claim, especially in a form like Mark presents? Finally, we discuss the elements of this survey that might help us explain the conceptual background of the examination scene itself. I argue that a careful treatment of the historical documents shows that Mark's portrayal fits nicely into the first century Jewish conception of blasphemy and exaltation.

One of the key Jewish texts on blasphemy is found in *m Sanh* 7.5. It begins, "'The blasphemer' is not culpable unless he pronounces the Name itself." Witnesses were to be questioned explicitly as to whether they heard the divine name. In his reflection on the charge of blasphemy in *m Sanh* 7.5--a text which prohibits the charge of blasphemy unless the divine name is uttered-- Donald Juel summarizes the current state of the discussion and presents our problem most succinctly:

> If this second-century conception of blasphemy is an appropriate reflection of early first-century legal standards, it is impossible that Jesus could have been legally condemned for this offence. In fact, his response to the question of the high priest contains clear indications of respectful avoidance of the name of God ("The right hand of power"). Most scholars insist, therefore, that the legal definition of blasphemy must have been considerably broader in the first century. The difficulty with such proposals is the lack of source material for reconstructing legal practice prior to A.D. 70. . . . Even if the broadest definition of blasphemy be accepted, however, the problem is far from solved. It is still unclear precisely what in the question of the high priest or Jesus' response would constitute a blasphemous statement or claim."[2]

Juel's remark is stated with care. What we lack are sources that give us details of the *legal* practice before 70 CE. However, what we do have is a significant amount of material that describes Jewish views of blasphemy in this period as a *cultural* matter, and with a consistency that suggests it was a widely held view. I have examined over a hundred and fifty Jewish texts extending into the rabbinic period on blasphemy. For this essay I will note only a few of the clearer examples as an indication of what the cultural view of blasphemy was. I would contend that this cultural background is pervasive enough to indicate what in Jesus' response "would constitute a blasphemous statement or claim" for his distinguished inquisitors. The question to consider is a simple one, "Did the Jewish concept of blasphemy extend beyond pronunication of the divine name?"

Blasphemy in Judaism: A Summary

A review of the Jewish concept of blasphemy reveals that there is more to this concept than what *m Sanh* 7.5 suggests. Much of the discussion surrounds key Torah texts like Exod 22:27 (22:28 Eng), Lev 24:10-23, and Num 15:30-31, as well as Sennacherib's "insult" as revelaed in 2 Kings 19=Isa 37, where the remarks of the foreign leader are read as blasphemous in light of the exhortation of Exod 22:27 not to insult God's appointed leaders.

---

[2]Donald Juel, *Messiah and the Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*, SBLDS 31 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 97-98.

In Jewish material, there is little discussion of formal judicial examples of blasphemy. Trials for blasphemy are not present in these texts, though *m Sanh* 7.5 does define a procedure for examining a charge and limits the offense to speaking the very Name of God. Lev 24:10-16 is the one passage that many of the later Jewish texts refer to as a central blasphemy text (note Josephus, *Ant* 4.202). However, it possessed ambiguities that made defining blasphemy, especially where euphemisms were used, a subject of some rabbinic debate. Num 15:30-31 is often cited as a similar situation to blasphemy with its Sabbath violation followed by a death penalty. To use the divine Name in an inappropriate way is certainly blasphemy and is punishable by death (Lev 24:10-16; *m Sanh* 6.4 and 7.5; Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.203-06). At the base of these ideas about blasphemy stood the command of Exod 22:27 not to revile God nor the leaders he appointed for the nation. These central ideas about blasphemy are clear and undisputed; but after this point, discussion begins.

Debate exists whether use of an alternative name for such an utterance is blasphemy, though some sentiment exists for including these examples (*m Schᵉb* 4.13; *b Schᵉb* 35a; *b Sanh* 55b-57a, 60a). Warnings were certainly issued in such cases where a range of euphemisms were used for utterances, but it does not appear, at least in the rabbinic period, to have carried an automatic death sentence.

What happened if a warning was ignored seems easy to determine, given the parallels with other warnings involving the cursing of the parents in *m Sanh* 6.4. An unheeded warning would lead to a liability on the second offence. The official rabbinic position is that the use of the divine Name constitutes the only clear case of capital blasphemy (*m Sanh* 7.5). One is even to avoid blaspheming foreign deities as a sign of respect for the name of God, texts that certainly reflect an apologetic stance taken with outsiders (Josephus, *Ant* 4.207; Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.205; *Special Laws* 1.53).

Yet beyond utterances of blasphemy involving the Name, there seems as well to be a whole category of acts of blasphemy, which move beyond mere utterance of the Name, though often including it. It is this category that is most relevant to us. Here one can start with the use of a range of substitute titles. But beyond these offensive, alternative utterances one can see discussed a whole range of actions offensive to God that would have been perceived by all as blasphemous, even if these actions were not specifically addressed by any formal, ideal legal statute. Acts of blasphemy seem to concentrate on idolatry or a show of arrogant disrespect toward God or his chosen leaders. Often those who blasphemed verbally

went further and acted on their feelings as well. God manages to judge such offenses one way or another. Examples in Jewish exposition are Sisera (Judg 4:3 and *NumR* 10.2; disrespect toward God's people), Goliath (1 Sam 17 and Josephus, *Ant* 6.183; disrespect towards God's people and worship of Dagon), Sennacherib (2 Kings 18-19=Isa 37:6, 23; disrespect for God's power), Belshazzar (Dan 3:29 Q [96] and Josephus, *Ant* 10.233, 242, disrespect for God's presence in the use of temple utensils at a party), Manasseh (acting against the Torah; *Sifre* § 112) and Titus (*b Giṭṭ* 56 and *ARN B* 7; entering, defaming the temple, slicing open the curtain and taking the utensils away). Acting against the temple is also blasphemous (1 Macc 2:6; Josephus, *Ant* 12.406). Most of these passages come from later texts, what of texts closer to the time of Jesus' ministry?

Significantly, comparing oneself to God is also blasphemous according to Philo and reflects an arrogance like that seen in other acts of blasphemy. Particularly important here are two texts from Philo,*On Dreams* 2.130-31 and *Decalogue* 13-14.61-64. For example, *On Dreams* 2.130-33 reads,

> (130) What then can we say that a man who says, or merely thinks such things as these, is? Is he not an evil of an extraordinary nature? He surely must be some foreign calamity, brought over from the sea, or from some other world, since he, a man in every respect miserable, has dared to compare himself to the all-blessed God. (131) We must likewise add, that he is daring here to utter blasphemies against the sun (*τοὺς ἄλλους ἀστέρας βλασφημεῖν*), and the moon, and the rest of the stars, whenever anything which has been looked for according to the seasons of the year, either does not happen at all, or is brought about with difficulty; if, for instance, the summer causes too much heat, or the winter too excessive a cold, or if spring or autumn were unseasonable, so that one were to become barren and unfruitful, and the other showed fertility in breeding diseases. (132) Therefore giving all imaginable license to an unbridled mouth and abusive tongue, such a man will reproach the stars as not bringing their customary tribute, all but claiming for the things of earth the reverence and adoration of the heavenly bodies, and for himself above them all, in proportion as he, as being a man, looks upon himself as superior to the other

> animals.(133) Such men are classed by us as the teachers of vain opinion.

One can easily sense Philo's sense of revulsion at such claims that put one in a position so much like the Creator.

The *Decalogue* 13-14 text is similar in tone:

> (61) As, therefore, if any one were to assign the honors of the great king to his satraps and viceroys, he would appear to be not only the most ignorant and senseless of men, but also the most fool-hardy, giving to slaves what belongs to the master; in the same manner, let the man who honors the Creator, with the same honors as those with which he regards the creature, know that he is of all men the most foolish and the most unjust, in giving equal things to unequal persons, and that too not in such a way as to do honor to the inferior, but only to take it from the superior.
>
> (62) There are again some who exceed in impiety, not giving the Creator and the creature even equal honor, but assigning to the latter all honor and respect, and reverence, and to the former nothing at all, not thinking him worthy of even the common respect for being recollected; for they forget him whom alone they should recollect, aiming, like demented and miserable men as they are, at attaining to an intentional forgetfulness. (63) Some men again are so possessed with an insolent and free-spoken madness, that they make an open display of impiety which dwells in their hearts, and venture to blaspheme the Deity (*προφέροντες βλασφημεῖν ἐπιχειροῦσι τὸ θεῖον*), whetting an evil speaking tongue, and desiring, at the same time, to vex the pious, who immediately feel an indescribable and irreconcilable affliction, which enters in at their ears and pervades the whole soul; for this is the great engine of impious men, by which alone they bridle those who love God, as they think it better at the moment to preserve silence, for the sake of not provoking their wickedness further.
>
> (64) Let us, therefore, reject all such impious dishonesty, and not worship those who are our brothers by nature, even though they may have received a purer and more immortal essence than ourselves (for all created things are brothers to one another inasmuch as they are created; since the Father of them all is one, the Creator of the Universe); but let us rather, with our mind and reason, and with all our strength, gird

> ourselves up vigorously and energetically to the service of that Being who is uncreated and everlasting, and the maker of the universe, never shrinking or turning aside from it, nor yielding to a desire of pleasing the multitude, by which even those who might be saved are often destroyed. (65) Let us, therefore, fix deeply in ourselves this first commandment as the most sacred of all commandments, to think that there is but one God, the most highest, and to honor him alone; and let not polytheistic doctrine ever even touch the ears of any man who is accustomed to seek for the truth with purity and sincerity of heart. . .

The explanation goes on to rank the sins of polytheists as those who worship the heavenly objects as being in lesser error than those who worship and fashion idols.

Philo's view reflects his commitment to the first commandment. There is no possibility of equal honor being given to creature and Creator.[3] As with other texts, the sense of deep offense is expressed openly. In fact, even one's ears are to be protected from anything that rings with polytheistic implications (65). Nothing is more fundamental than the unique position God occupies within his Creation. Humans are not able to breach the gulf that exists between their created nature and the unchangeable, eternal essence of God. Claims to do so are not only arrogant and vain; they are blasphemous. Though the *Decalogue* text makes this point in the most detail, this is a view that dominates the Philonic description of the implications of blasphemy. Philo's understanding of blasphemy is grounded explicitly in the theology of the first commandment. His concern is the tendency of rulers to demand that they be seen as divine, an act seen as a severe offense against the only true God.

At Qumran, unfaithfulness in moral action by those who pretend to lead the people (*CD* 5.12) or to speak against God's people (*1QpHab* 10.13) is blasphemous. In the Mishnah and Talmud, idolatry and blasphemy are seen as very similar, while in a few texts they are said to be virtually the same (*y Sanh* 7.25a). Still other examples treated more briefly in this rabbinic material are: Adam, the generation of the flood, Sodomites, Pharaoh, Naboth, Korah,

---

[3]There is dispute about how consistent Philo is here, given the language of exaltation and deity surrounding Moses in *Questions and Answers on Exodus* 2.40-45; however, my monograph shall argue that Philo's remarks can be read in a way that does not reflect inconsistency.

Amalek, Nebuchadnezzar, and Rome, as well as Tabor and Carmel as false locales of worship. Within Israel, the outstanding example is the golden calf incident (Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.159-66).

Blasphemy represents an offense against God and a violation of a fundamental principle of the faith. Sometimes God alone punishes the blasphemer (e.g., Pharaoh, Korah, Titus), while at other times there is a judgment to be carried out by the nation (the Israelite woman's son). But a second important level of blasphemy is attacking God's people verbally as Sennacherib or Goliath did. Here Exod 22:27 has a special role to play. Those who challenge the leadership God has put in place for his people attack God himself.

How the discussion of blasphemy relates to the examination of Jesus requires that the issue of a potentially arrogant self-claim of exaltation before God be examined more carefully. The Philonic texts raise a question which needs more careful attention. What were the Jewish views on one's the ability to go into God's presence and sit? How were claims of exaltation to the side of God seen in Judaism? Were such views tolerable?

Exaltation In Judaism: A Few Example Texts

For this overview I note three texts and one issue, the heavenly seating of angels. These are some of the more outstanding example texts. The section concludes with a summary of the issue of exaltation in Judaism.

Moses: Exagoge of Ezekiel 68-85

By far the most developed exalted human figure in Judaism is Moses.[4] This emphasis emerges from four causes.[5] First, no figure

---

[4]Only Enoch and possibly the Messiah come close.

[5]Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, SNovT14 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), esp. pp. 100-285; W. Hall Harris, III, *The Descent of Christ: Ephesians 4:7-11 and Traditional Hebrew Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Wayne A. Meeks, "Moses as God and King," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsell Goodenough*, ed. Jacob Neusner, SHR 14 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), pp. 354-71; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, pp. 56-63, and Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord*, pp. 111-44. For the*Exagoge* text: Howard Jacobson, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); adn two articles by

is more important to the nation's establishment or of its community of Law than Moses. Second, he encountered God at the bush (Exod 3). Third, his unique time on Sinai, face to face with God, leaves room for reflecting on what took place there (Exod 19—34, esp. 33:12-23). Fourth, his death was also shrouded in a degree of mystery as he passed away in a secluded place, alone (Deut 34).[6] As Deut 34:10 states, the belief was that Moses "knew the Lord face to face." No one else in the Hebrew Scriptures is like him in this regard. So a whole series of reflections about Moses' encounters with God developed, mostly around the two events of Sinai and Moses' death. Some treat him as a revelatory seer, just like other figures, while others give him an array of heavenly functions, from mediator to full vice regent.[7]

One of the most unusual texts is Moses's report of a dream found in the *Exagoge of Ezekiel.* But to set this passage in context, we must consider briefly a few other texts where Moses is an exalted figure.

How was Moses exalted? It is best to begin with Philo. In his *Life of Moses* from the early first century, he depicts Moses as a king and vice regent figure, who even bears the name god.[8] Several remarks in the passage stress how close Moses was to God. "For, since God judged him worthy to appear as a partner of His own possessions, He gave into his hand the whole world as a portion well fitted for his heir (1.155)." Given that they held things in common, Moses as "the prophet is called the friend of God (1.156)."

The next passage indicates just how exalted this view was. It is one of several Philonic texts on Moses that have stirred controversy:

Pieter W. van der Horst, *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity.* NTOA 14 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), pp. 63-93, entitled "Moses' Throne Vision in Ezekiel the Dramatist" and "Some Notes on the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel."

[6]The speculations were even discussed by Josephus, *Ant* 3.96-97 and 4.326.

[7]Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology,* pp. 100-75, notes Ruler, High Priest, Divine Man, Prophet-King, King, Prophet, Heavenly-Ascents, Intercessor, and "signs and wonders" as the broad categories contained in the speculations about his entire career.

[8]Citations of Philo are from the Loeb collection of Cohn-Wendland with only a few stylistic alterations.

> Again, was not the joy of his partnership with the Father and Maker of all magnified also by the honour of being deemed worthy to bear the same title? For he was named god and king of the whole nation and entered, we are told, into the darkness, where God was, that is into the unseen, invisible, incorporeal, and archetypal essence of existing things (1.158).

He also is the bearer of much wisdom and righteousness: "Perhaps, too, since he was destined to be a legislator, the providence of God which afterwards appointed him without his knowledge to that work, caused him long before that day to be the reasonable and living impersonation of the law (1.162)."

Just what is meant by the fact that he was called god shall be considered shortly as the remark has its roots in Exod 7:1. Moses is seen as a regal-like figure, a king-prophet who is given broad authority by God. This view is reinforced in Philo's portrait of Moses' death in *Life of Moses* 2.288-91, where "he had to make pilgrimage (*ἀποικίαν*) from earth to heaven, and leave this mortal life for immortality, summoned there by the Father Who resolved his twofold nature of soul and body into a single unity, transforming his whole being into mind, pure as sunlight (2.288)." Philo appears to see Moses as a figure who ascended to heaven "for when he was already being exalted and stood at the very barrier, ready at the signal to direct his upward flight to heaven, the divine spirit fell on him and he prophesied with discernment the story of his own death, told at the end how the end came; told how he was buried with none present, surely by no mortal hands but by immortal powers. . . (2.291)." Moses is the object of transformation and exaltation, and is buried by "immortal powers" [angels]. His earthly body is left in the grave, while his real soul and body emerge unified and glorified. Such is the story of "Moses, king, lawgiver, high priest, prophet (2.292)."

Though some of this language is ambiguous as to whether a translation took place, other Philonic texts seem to confirm it. The *Sacrifices of Abel and Cain* 8—10 speak of some God has trained to soar above "species and genus alike and stationed them beside himself . . . And so when Moses was about to die, we do not hear of him 'leaving' or 'being added' like those others. Nor is he connected with 'addition' or 'subtraction,' but through the 'Word' of the Supreme Cause he is translated (Deut 34:5), even through that Word by which also the whole universe was formed (§ 8)." The language of divinity appears yet again with this text from § 9:

> "And even when he sent him as a loan to the earthly sphere and suffered him to dwell therein, He gifted him with no ordinary excellence, such as that which kings and rulers have, wherewith to hold sway and sovereignty over the passions of the soul, but he appointed him as god, placing all the bodily region and the mind which rules it in subjection and slavery to him. 'I give thee,' he says, 'as god to Pharoah' (Exod 7:1); but God is not susceptible of addition or diminution, being fully and unchangably himself. And therefore we are told that no man knows his grave (Deut 34:6).

For Philo, the vice regency of Moses gave him a unique status among men and led to his exaltation into heaven. Philo gives no details about what Moses does in heaven, as the portrait emerges entirely from the events of his earthly career. In this sense Moses is unlike most other portraits of heavenly figures, whose key activity is in heaven, surely because Moses is the one figure who is portrayed as having seen God directly in this life without having been translated or without the aid of a vision.

This "divine" emphasis is not unique to Philo. *DeutR*, which dates from about 900 CE but has older tradition embedded in it, has an explanatory passage on how Moses was god. In 11.4, it covers the various ways that Moses was god, when he also is called a man. The answer to the dilemma is seen in the explanation that when river became blood, when Pharoah drowned, and when Moses was taken up into heaven and made like the angels not eating or drinking, "he was as God," a refrain repeated four times in the passage.[9] The rabbinic explanation is that Moses functioned with divine power and served, in effect, as god for Pharoah, being rewarded afterward with exaltation to heaven.

Philo would probably have agreed with this type of description of Moses's role. In his *Worse Attacks the Better* 160-62, he explains how Moses is deified in a figurative sense, saying "he did not become such in reality, but only by convention is supposed to be such." Later in the same text he comments that "the wise man is said to be god to

---

[9]*Midrash Deuteronomy*, H. Freedman and M. Simon, eds. (London: Soncino, 1983) pp. 175-76. For this date, see C. A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, pp. 133-34.

the foolish man."[10] In *Every Good Man Is Free* 43, he comments that Moses was one "having passed from a man into a god, though indeed, a god to men, not to the different parts of nature, thus leaving the Father of all the place of King and God of gods."

Only one text is slightly more ambiguous, but it needs to be understood in light of these other numerous references. It is *Questions on Exodus* 2.29. It reads,

> For when the prophetic mind becomes divinely inspired and filled with God, it becomes like the monad, not being at all mixed with any of those things that are associated with duality. But he who is resolved into the nature of unity, is said to have come near God in a kind of family relation, for having given up and left behind all mortal kinds, he is changed into the divine, so that such men become kin to God and truly divine.

Moses, as prophet, is brought so close to God *when he is inspired* that he can be said to be divine. The emphasis is mine and stresses where I think the emphasis lies in this passage. It is a way to explain how Moses' revelation has divine authority, because he becomes a thoroughly divine vessel when God fills him.[11] So "divinity" for Philo, as for most later Jews who comment on Exod 7:1, describes either the extensive ruling function and power Moses possesses or the way in which he is a vessel for divine revelation.

These Moses texts concentrate almost exclusively on his earthly career. Some texts that might suggest an ascension and are claimed to depict what happens there relate better to God's coming to Moses and revealing himself to the legislator on Mt. Sinai. The texts that do mention ascension simply note it took place at his death or upon his visit to the mountain to receive the law, though also one senses a conflation of the death scene with Exod 33:12-23 at points.

---

[10]Similar is his *On the Change of Names* 19, 24-26, 127-29, where he cites Exod 7:1, speaks of Moses benefiting from God's assistance, and reuses the wise-fool example.

[11]Similar is the later *Midrash Tanḥuma* on Num 10:1-2, an exposition mirrored in *NumR* 15.13. H. Bietenhard, *Midrasch Tanḥuma B* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1982) 2:263; J. T. Townsend, *Midrash Tanḥuma: Translated into English with Introduction, Indices, and Brief Notes (S. Buber Recension)*, vol. 1-Genesis (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1989), p. xii, and Freedman and Simon, *Numbers Midrash*, p. 654-55.

Four apparent examples of ascension exist: Philo's teaching, *Ps-Philo* 12:1 along side of 32:9; *2 Bar* 59, where the standard revelatory seer emphasis appears; and *b Shab* 88b, where Moses clings to God's throne to get protection from the angels.[12] These texts seem to assume a heavenly visit, but they still stay focused on the function of Moses *during his career and not at some later eschatological point.* All of this must be remembered as examination turns to the early second century BCE *Exagoge of Ezekiel.*[13]

The entire portrait of Moses needs careful attention, because this key text needs to be placed in context. Among the oldest of passages to be considered, *Exagoge* also gives Moses one of the most unusual, exalted roles of any ancient Jewish text. It is a controversial text, with a wide range of views being held concerning it. We know of this poetic, tragic drama only through Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria, and Pseudo-Eustathius as they record what Alexander Polyhistor passed on.[14] The key portion is lines 68-89. It is cited in full following mostly Robinson's *OTP* rendering.[15] Moses speaks in lines 68-82, while Moses' father-in-law, Raguel (Jethro) speaks from lines 83 on, a point noted by a break in the rendering.

> (68) On Sinai's peak I saw what seemed a throne
> so great in size it touched the clouds of heaven.
> (70) Upon it sat a noble man (Dan 7; Ezek 1),
> with a crown, and with a sceptre in the left hand
> while with the right hand he did beckon me.
> I made approach and stood before the throne.

---

[12]If one includes the Samaritan tradition, then a fifth clear example exists. In the second to fourth century *Memar Markah* 1.1-2, 6.6, mention is made of Moses' ascension. J. MacDonald, *Memar Marqah: The Teaching of Marqah* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1963), pp. 3-5, 12.

[13]For this work, see Jacobsen, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel* and R. G. Robinson, *OTP* 2:803-04, who discusses the date.

[14]Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9, 28-29; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.23.155-56; and Pseudo-Eustathius, *Commentaries in Hexaemeron* (for this, see PG 18, 729).

[15]I have compared the Robinson translation with the text from Jacobsen and the notes from van der Horst, "Some Notes on the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel,"in *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity*, pp. 81-87. Scriptural parallels are noted in parenthesis.

He handed over the sceptre and bade
(75) me mount the throne, and gave to me the crown;
then he himself withdrew from off of the thrones (Dan 7:9)[16].
I gazed upon the whole earth round about;
things under it, and high above the skies.
Then at my feet a multitude of stars
(80) fell down, and I reckoned their number (Ps 147:4).
They passed by me like armed ranks of men.
Then in terror I awakened from the dream.

(83) My friend, God gave you this as a sign for good.
Would that I might live to see these things transpire.
(85) for you shall cause a mighty throne to rise,
and you yourself shall rule and govern men.
As for beholding all the peopled earth,
and things below and things above God's heaven—
things present, past, and future you shall see.

The text involves an enthronement of Moses (lines 68-76) and, if one reads the beginning parallels to Dan 7 and Ezek 1 correctly, it is God who gives him the throne. The creation also give him honor at the end of the text. What does this scene mean?

Three views exist. (1) The first, advocated by Jacobson, is that it is actually a polemic against Moses's exaltation.[17] Key to this view is that the scene takes place as a dream, so it is an imaginary, visionary event. He appeals to Num 12:6-8 for support, where it is said that Moses was *not* spoken to in dreams. Jacobson argues that a revelation that comes by means of a dream is automatically suspect in light of Num 12. So what appears to be asserted about Moses is, in fact, rejected.

(2) The polemical reading is challenged by van der Horst, who takes a second and diametrically opposed view.[18] Van der Horst

---

[16]Here is one place where our rendering differs in a significant way. The term here is plural and recalls the language of Dan 7:9, recalling a scene like that involving the Son of Man. See William Horbury, "The Messianic Associations of 'the Son of Man'," JTS 36 (1985): 42-43.

[17]"Mysticism and Apocalyptic in Ezekiel the Tragedian," ICS 6 (1981):272-93, esp. 277.

[18]P. van der Horst, "Some Notes on the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel,"in *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity*, pp. 82-85. So also W. Hall Harris, *The*

argues that most of the audience, probably Greek, would not know, much less appreciate, a subtle reference to Numbers. Other problems with the first view also exist. For example, nothing in the context of the *Exagoge* indicates that this scene is a negative one. In addition, nothing about Num 12 makes the point that dreams in themselves are negative. The passage merely distinguishes between other revelation and the direct revelation Moses received at Sinai. So it is not clear that Numbers teaches that dreams in themselves are an inadequate means for revelation. For his part, van der Horst takes the vision in a more straight forward manner and argues that it is a throne-vision based on Ezek 1 with its human figure appearing on a divine throne.[19] Beyond this, van der Horst claims, that the "highest angel" in some circles of Judaism was allowed to share God's divinity and, further, a human hero could ascend to become one with this figure. He notes Enoch in this regard and sees Moses as the second example. As he says, "This scene is unique in early Jewish literature and certainly implies a deification of Moses."[20] The explicitness of a complete exchange on the throne is certainly unique among the texts we shall examine. But is deification the point?

(3) A third view is briefly stated by Martin Hengel.[21] Though he recognizes the text's uniqueness, Hengel argues that a deification of Moses and God's leaving the throne would "have as a consequence the 'abdication of God.'" This apparently would be unacceptable in any Jewish view. He also objects to van der Horst's bringing Exod 4:16 and 7:1 into the *Exagoge* discussion, when they are not mentioned in the work. For Hengel, Moses "appears as a — certainly unique— judge, ruler and recipient of divine revelation." So something less than a full deification is in view.

I favor this third option. One reason that shall become clear later in this survey is that it is not clear that the "angel of the Lord," who in this period would probably be equated with Michael, ever sits on his own by God. So van der Horst's description of angelic honor is

---

Descent of Christ: Ephesians 4:7-11 and Traditional Hebrew Imagery, and his discussion on *Exagoge*, pp. 123-27.

[19]On Jewish interpretation of Ezek 1, see David J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision*, TSAJ (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1988).

[20]P. van der Horst, "Moses' Throne Vision in Ezekiel the Dramatist,"in *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity*, p. 67.

[21]*Studies in Early Christianity*, pp. 190-91.

overdrawn. This highly exalted angelic figure may do God's bidding and share his name, but he is not seated by God. The only possible exception might be the very cryptic Son of Man figure in Dan 7:13-14, who some see as originally being an angelic figure, possibly Michael.[22] If so, any clear traces of such an explicit connection of seating in heaven to Michael are lacking in later Judaism as will be made clear. If one removes this implicit background, then the conclusion of a deification is weakened. There is no indication in this text that Moses becomes someone else or any indication of a transfiguration of Moses in this scene. I think it better to see Moses' enthronement, in terms of function, along the lines of Enoch's Son of Man, an exaltation to heavenly vice-regency. He serves as God's exalted right hand man, an image that suggests not only Dan 7 but also Ps 110:1. To put it another way, what Moses is pictured as becoming in heaven is what Moses is to be *in his ministry* on earth, namely, God's vice regent. Even creation's response is a figurative way to allude to its submission to him in the miracles that accompany the signs and wonders of Exodus.

Another point about this text needs attention. This image is not eschatological at all, but is a portrayal of Moses' work that summarizes his earthly career. The rest of the *Exagoge* depicts what Moses did in the Exodus. The forward looking perspective of the vision appears to be directed only toward those events. In this sense, the text is not like Dan 7 nor *1 En.* In other words, this glorification to vice regency can be read as a graphic description of the magnificent role Moses had when he led Israel into freedom. If this is correct, the portrait of Moses is not as comprehensive as the Enoch-Son of Man figure of *1 En.* It fits in rather more neatly with the other Mosaic portraits already surveyed. Here is a regal "god-like" figure, who exercises exceptional power on earth in his ministry. The image may be slightly less exceptional on closer examination than it originally appears once its scope is properly defined.[23]

---

[22]J. J. Collins, "The Son of Man in First Century Judaism," NTS 38 (1992): 450-51. For consideration of the view that the angel is Gabriel, see the Son of Man discussion below. The major obstacle to an identification with either angel in Daniel is that the author of this work is not hesitiant to name the angelic figures he discusses.

[23]It must be stressed that to say this of the early material does not mean this imagery was not capable of expansion and development in terms of later reflection. Our summary applies only to the bulk of the early material.

Moses is a highly exalted figure in Judaism. What is surprising is how little he actually does in heaven or from there. Most of the exaltation scenes relate directly to his ministry in leading Israel and receiving the Law. There is little actual future apocalyptic speculation surrounding him. But it must also be noted that taking a seat in heaven next to God, or even in his place, was metaphorically expressed in this text. Only a major luminary like Moses could be considered for such a task. Yet the other texts surrounding such claims, like those of Philo, indicate how careful and nervous some became with such claims.

Enoch as Son of Man in 1 Enoch 70-71

This figure may be the most significant image to be considered. The two titles represent the key descriptions used for the central figure of the *Book of the Similitudes* in *1 En* 37-71.[24] Many of the basic features of the Son of Man's authority in this section relate to his judginmg authority. But in 71:14, this figure is apparently identified with Enoch. Yet, in light of the dispute about this text, this identification needs defending.

1 En 71:14 has been a source of controversy for most of this century. The text reads:

> Then the angel came to me [Enoch as speaker] and greeted me and said to me, "You, son of man, who art born in righteousness and upon whom righteousness has dwelt, the righteousness of the Antecedent of Time will not forsake you."

---

[24]The distribution of these terms is traced by J. C. VanderKam, "Righteous One, Messiah, Chosen One, and Son of Man in 1 Enoch 37-71," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, James H. Charlesworth, ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), pp. 169-91. He carefully defends the view that Enoch and Son of Man are to be seen as identified on pp. 177-85. He notes Chosen One is in 39:6; 40:5; 45:3; 45:4; 48:6; 49:2, 4; 51:3, 5; 52:6, 9; 53:6; 55:4; 61:5, 8, 10; 62:1. After 62:1 only Son of Man appears. Son of Man is referred to in three variations that all translate similarly: *walda sabʿ* - 46:2, 3, 4; 48:2//*walda beʿsi*- 62:5; 69:29 [2x]; 71:14//*walda ʿegʷāla ʿemma-ḥeyāw*-62:7, 9, 14; 63:11; 69:26, 27; 70:1; 71:17. On these variations, see M. Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch*. SVTP 7 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), pp. 206-07.

The text goes on in vv. 16-17 to note that everyone shall follow in "your path." Together with him shall be "their dwelling places" and "their portion." They shall never be separated from him. It closes, "So there shall be length of days with that Son of Man and peace to the righteous ones; his path is upright for the righteous, in the name of the Lord of the Spirits forever."

The identification of a transcedant, and possibly pre-existent figure who sits by God with a human figure was so difficult for R. H. Charles that he amended the key text.[25] J. J. Collins has argued differently by making a distinction in the identification of Son of Man with Enoch.[26] He argues that Enoch is portrayed in the text, not as *the* Son of Man, but *a* Son of Man, a representative of the righteous who in turn the Son of Man also represents as a collective figure.[27] The major problem with this approach is that it totally underplays the mention of righteousness in v. 14 and the pronouns in vv. 16-17 that look back to that verse. The text gives the impression that the Son of Man figure present, who is Enoch, is also the focal point for the rest of the righteous. Thus we are confident that Enoch should be identified with the Son of Man in this text as Sjöberg argued long ago.[28]

As important as the identiy of this figure is, his portrait as a figure who comes to the rescue of the righteous, executes judgment from God's throne room, and sits on his throne, leads to a note of triumph for the righteous. The imagery suggests that both the seating and authority are shared between the Chosen One and the Lord of the Spirits [=God] (Chosen One-51:3; 55:4; 61:8; of the Lord of the Spirits-62:2; Enoch as Son of Man leading in the way of peace and praise- 71:8-17).[29]

---

[25]Charles, *The Apocrypha andPseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 2:237. This approach is categorically rejected today as too harsh a solution.

[26] J. J. Collins, "The Son of Man in the First Century," NTS 38 (1992):453-59.

[27]Collins cites and builds on the view of Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 442-43.

[28]Sjöberg goes on to argue in *Der Menschensohn im Äthiopischen Henochbuch*, pp. 159-72 how these chapters fit as a unit with *1 En* as we now have it. I also find these arguments compelling.

[29]For this summary, see Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, SJLA 25 (Leiden: E. J.

Two issues need careful attention from *1 En.* They are the vision of heaven and the character of this figure's authority. Both topics show the imagery's uniqueness. In the background, however, lies the problem of Dan 7:9-14, which must be briefly discussed first, as that scene stands behind some of this shared authority imagery.

The Dan 7 image of one riding the clouds who is given authority by the Ancient of Days has always been seen as a perplexing text for a religious faith committed to the idea of one God. Four approaches have been taken to this figure as he is presented in Daniel.

(1) He can be seen as originally angelic. For example, Collins argues for Michael as this key figure, probably because of the pre-eminent role this angel has in the angelic hierarchy.[30] Fossum opts for Gabriel, noting descriptions of this figure as a person in Dan 8:15ff. and 9:21.[31] The view has well known problems which Hartman and DiLella pointed out.[32] Daniel is so open to angelic authority, why be so cryptic here or why excise it? Where else is Son of Man called an angel?

(2) Appeals to traditional Christian exegesis often read the text as exclusively messianic. The problem with this approach is Dan 7:18, 27, where the reference has a collective force.

(3) The most common view is that Son of Man is a corporate reference to the saints. The view gained ascendency early in this century with articulation of the position like that by S. R. Driver, recently strongly affirmed by Black.[33] As attractive as it is, there are

---

Brill, 1977), p. 202. The texts mentioning the authority of the Chosen One seem to draw on concepts from Ps 110:1, 5-6 and Isa 11:4; see M. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christianity*, pp. 185-86.

30 J. J. Collins, "The Son of Man in the First Century," NTS 38 (1992): 451.

31 J. E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord*, p. 279, n. 61. So also Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, pp. 181-82.

32 L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*. AB 23 (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1978), pp. 85-102.

33 *The Book of Daniel*. CBSC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), p. 81. Black has argued that this is the one place in the Hebrew Scriptures where Israel is "deified." See his "The Throne-Theophany Prophetic Commission and the 'Son of Man': A Study in Tradition History." *Jews Greeks, and Christians: Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity: Essays in Honor of William David Davies*. ed R. Hamerton-Kelly and R. Scroggs. SJLA 21.

problems with stating the view this way. In Dan 7 there is a universally recognized identity between the four beasts and the kings of certain nations (e.g., the lion = Babylon-Nebuchadnezzar). Thus the imagery has regal-national overtones. The passage suggests worship for the figure in question with its use of פלח in Dan 7:14, a term Driver too softly rendered as "serve" to avoid the theological problem, but one which Black faced up to in seeing a deification here. But where do we have precedent anywhere for a nation worshipped? If this is the meaning, it stands as the one example.

(4) This leads into the view I find most likely. The "Son of Man" is an otherwise, unidentified representative head, just as the other "beast images" have dynastic-national overtones.[34] This keeps the imagery balanced with the other biological metaphors in the chapter. There is a corporate-individual interplay here, because the figure represents the nation. This intertwining can honor the corporate force of the text in vv. 18, 27 and yet honor the internal interplay within the imagery of kings-kingdoms.

This figure, who shares God's authority, is a regal-like representative for the nation who is given judging authority and divine prerogative, even though he is described in comparison to a human figure. This description is vague and is capable of being developed in many directions, which is precisely what happened in Judaism. He is a transcedent figure[35], which is why many are drawn to an angelic view of him. Yet at the same time this transcendant figure is likened to a person.[36]

Just as Dan 7 is unique, so are aspects of the visions in *1 En* 14:8-25 and 70—71, which build one another. In *1 En* 14, the prophet is brought up to heaven where he sees "a wall which was built of white marble and surrounded by tongues of fire (v. 9)." Unlike other

---

(Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), pp. 57-73, esp. pp. 60-63. The position is grounded in the correct observation that riding the clouds is something deity does (Exod 14:20; 34:5; Num 10:34; Ps 104:3; Isa 19:1).

[34]The term in Daniel is a description, not a formal title, so I have put Son of Man in quotes here. I see the image as a development of Dan 2:44-45 within the argument of the book and an extension of royal-kingdom theology to its theological limits.

[35]Driver's description of him as "supranatural" is quite apt.

[36]Actually one could read the background as either view (1), (3), or (4) and still make sense of what takes place in *1 Enoch* in this work's development of the imagery.

such ascents, there is no angelic escort for him on the ascent. This adds an element of uniqueness, though it may be nothing more than taking Gen 5:24 as is. He also sees a great house with a floor of crystal and a ceiling like stars and lightning surrounded by cherubim (v. 10; Ezek 1:22, 26). On entering the house, fear overcame him (v. 14).[37] Then Enoch sees a second house built with tongues of fire. It has greater glory than the first house he saw (v. 15). Here he sees a "lofty throne—its appearance was like crystal and its wheels like the shining sun (v. 18)." He sees "the Great Glory was sitting upon it—as for his gown, which was shining more brightly than the sun, it was whiter than any snow (v 20)." Enoch's honor is greater than any angel since:

> None of the angels was able to come in and see the face of the Excellent and Glorious One; and no one of flesh can see him—the flaming fire was round about him, and a great fire stood before him. No one could come near unto him from among those that surrounded the tens of millions that stood before him. He needed no council, but the most holy ones who are near him neither go far away at night nor move away from him (vv. 21-23).

Enoch is prostrate before God at this point, but is told to come, and so he approaches the gate head down (vv. 24-25).

It is clear that this scene is designed to show that angels do not draw near to God. Some see a contradiction within the verses that say no angel was able to go in and see his face and the reference to millions that stood before him, but this may be over-reading the text. What the glory and flames obscure is the face of God, which is still unseen. The angels that are near him may be seen to be at the gate, not in the house. In this sense the scene is unique, lacking the surrounding angelic hosts of a scene like Isa 6. What is important about *1 En* 14 for our concerns is that Enoch is seen as a unique figure and that, otherwise, God rules alone.[38] What makes Enoch unique is

---

[37]On this theme in such visions, see Johann Maier, "Das Gëfahrdungsmotiv bei der Himmelreise in der Jüdischen Apokalyptik und "Gnosis"," Kairos 5 (1963): 22-26.

[38]Other brief descriptions of heaven occur in 18:8-9, where a shapphire throne is said to be set on a mountain; 25:3, which mentions fire and a

the direct divine invitation to come in and see the God who flesh cannot see.

The vision of *1 En* 70—71 is equally impressive. In 70:1, Enoch is again seen as translated "before that Son of Man and to the Lord." It was his last day on earth. Here he saw the righteous of old (vv. 3-4). Taken up again in 71:1, Enoch falls before the Lord of Spirits only to be lifted up by Michael (vv. 2-3). After seeing secrets of the heavens, he is carried off again to the "heaven of heavens (vv. 4-5). Once again crystal and fire are present, including rivers of fire that are surrounded by seraphim, cherubm, and ophanim (vv. 6-7). Countless angels surrounded the house (v 8).

All the imagery up to this point is like *1 En* 14, but from here on differences emerge, including some detail that recalls Daniel 7. Four angels—Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, Phanuel—plus numerous others are said to go in and out of the house, a point quite different from the earlier vision (cf. 71:9 with 14:21-23). With them is the "Antecedent of Time: His head is white and pure like wool (Dan 7:9) and his garment is indescribable (v. 10)." In another unusual move, the deity comes to meet Enoch. The prophet does not go in. It is at this point that Enoch is transformed in spirit (v. 12) and in the presence of the angels (v. 13) is greeted with "You, Son of Man, who are born in righteousness and upon whom righteousness has dwelt, the righteousness of the Antecedent of Time will not forsake you (v. 14)." It is here that he is installed as one who:

> "Everyone that will come to exist and walk shall (follow) your path, since righteousness never forsakes you. Together with you shall be their dwelling places; and together with you shall be their portion. They shall not be separated from you forever and ever and ever." So there shall be length of days with that Son of Man and peace to the righteous ones; his path is upright for the righteous, in the name of the Lord of the Spirits forever and ever (vv. 16-17).

As different as some of the details are from *1 En* 14, it is clear that in this passage, Enoch becomes the focal point of peace and righteousness. It is the climactic reply of his visit to heaven retold because now the issue is not the detailed nature of the mysteries to be

---

mountain; 39:3-6, where Paradise and the righteous along with The Elect One are noted. See Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, pp. 32-42, for a good summary of these two visions.

revealed, but the revelation of the greatest mystery of all, the identity of the main figure, The Chosen One/Son of Man. He is the head and vindicator of a host of righteous. He is identified with the Son of Man before all the angels. It is the climactic revelation of the *Book of the Similitudes*.[39] The revelation makes clear why he is seen as such a unique figure, and why both his ascent in *1 En* 14 and his naming in the role with God's meeting him in *1 En* 71 are portrayed in unprecedented ways.

The identification with one who seemed distinct from him in 70:1 should not be seen as unlikely. The vision explains who the figure is with Enoch looking at it from the outside in 70:1, until the climactic transformation brings him into the scene more directly, making the identification as the literary imagery is shifted accordingly. Given all the unusual things that happen in apocalyptic portrayal, this kind of sudden shift of perspective should not been seen as problematic.

So these visions with their absence of angelic aid to Enoch throughout and their portrayal God's uniqueness and unique greeting only serve to highlight the unusual nature of Enoch's honor and appointment. Important to note is that this figure is not angelic, but is distiguished from the other great angelic figures of heaven. Also significant is the extent of the exaltation. Here is a vice-regent of great exalted and judicial authority, exercised from heaven itself.

This is why various commentators in considering the character of this figure have described the nature of this portrait as not only unusual, but as representing a stretching of the limits of Jewish expectation, a synthesis of significant proportions. A few samples will show the impression this text has produced. Alan Segal summarizes about Enoch's Son of Man, "It seem clear that the figure has been human and becomes both divine and messianic, although his heavenly aspects are far better described than his earthly tasks."[40] The messianic connections emerge from two texts: 48:10 and 52:4. In 48:10, the judgment is said to fall because "they denied the Lord of Spirits and his Messiah." In 52:4, the explanation comes that "all these things which you have seen serve the authority of his

---

[39]Morna Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (London: S.P.C.K., 1967), p. 44, describes the conclusion as "like a writer of good detective fiction, he keeps them in suspense until the last page."

[40]Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, p. 203.

Messiah, so that he may be strong and powerful upon the earth." One result of this portrait is that, as Chester notes, "this composite figure is represented as heavenly, pre-existent, and 'transcedent'. Thus the 'Messiah', to the extent that he is caught up in this chain of developments, is not a Davidic, human figure related to the present world, but belongs to the heavenly realm and takes on a transcendant role."[41] Black summarizes this way, "It must have been a bold mind, perhaps one influenced by hellenisitic ideas, which elevated the immortalized patriarch Enoch to virtually angelic status, and invested him with the powers of the manlike one of Daniel's vision, the role of the Isaianic Servant and the destiny of the Davidic king."[42] So Segal, in introducing the discussion of this figure, says, "But we cannot altogether dismiss the possibility that some apocalyptic groups posited an independent power as early as the first century or that other groups, among them the predecessors of the rabbis, would have called them heretics."[43]

The significance of the Enoch-Son of Man portrait is two-fold. First, it represents an unusually high level of exaltation for the figures we have examined. Other humans who sit, like Adam, Abel, Abraham, or Moses, do not sit like Enoch-Son of Man does. Here is shared eschatological authority, not mere elevation into a role for a time or the mere receiving of a position of honor. Enoch is a special figure. What is granted to him is almost unique, and could be contemplated, perhaps, because he was so righteous that he was taken up by God and spared death. Only the greatest of luminaries could even be considered for such a role. However, to take his new role, he still needed to be transformed into a glorious being. And, of course, he required the direct invitation and direction of God to assume his position.

So, secondly, the very height of his portrayal is significant. Here is a figure who is thoroughly transcedent. What little is said

---

[41]This summary appears in Andrew Chester, "Jewish Messianic Expectations and Mediatorial Figures and Pauline Christianity," in *Paulus und das antike Judentum*, p. 31. To clarify, perhaps, his remark about David, later on that same page he says, "Here the Messiah is not restricted to Davidic categories, and terms such as 'Servant' and 'Son of Man' assume a messianic connotation, even if that is not their primary point of reference."

[42]*The Book of Enoch or I Enoch*, p. 189.

[43]*Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, p. 201.

about his earthly function is limited to brief remarks like 52:4. What becomes dominant in the imagery is the greatness, even uniqueness, of this figure and his role. So great was the portrait that others responded negatively to it, as Segal's study has noted. For some such a seating was too much.[44]

What *Exagoge* and *1 Enoch* show us is the willingness among some in Judaism to consider the existence of a highly exalted human figure who has the equivalent of direct divine authority. Such authority involves an angelic-like transformation and seating by God. However, it is also significant to note that in the case of the Son of Man, the distinction between him and angels is steadfastly maintained. It is this human-transcendant mix that makes the imagery so powerful, and controversial, as we shall see.

David: b Sanh 38b and b Ḥag 14a

Even though the next tradition we cite is late, coming from the Talmud, it is still important, because it claims to reflect the views of rabbi Akiba and because it shows how controversial a heavenly seating of a luminary was.

The talmudic *b Sanh* 38b is one version of a very famous text, where rabbi Akiba claims that the seat at the right hand of God belongs to David.[45] The context is a discussion of Rabbi Joḥanan's dictum that, "the Holy One, blessed be He, does nothing without consulting his heavenly court." The discussion turns to the phrase *till thrones were placed* from Dan 7:9-10. The views are then recorded:

> One was for Himself and one for David. Even as it has been taught: One was for Himself and one for David: this is Rabbi Akiba's (c 100 CE) view. Rabbi Jose (c 90 CE) protested to him: Akiba, how long will you profane (עושה שכינה) the Shekinah? Rather one for justice and the other for mercy. Did he accept this answer or not?—Come and hear! For it has been taught: One for justice and the other for charity; this is rabbi Akiba's view. Said Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah (c 100 CE) to him: Akiba who have you to do with *Haggadah*? Confine yourself to the

---

[44]The Son of Man portrait of *4 Ezra* 13 adds nothing to what is seen here.

[45]I. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Sanhedrin* (vol. 23), pp. 245-46.

> study of *Nega'im* and *Ohalot*.[46] But one was a throne, the other a footstool: a throne for a seat and a footstool in support of his feet.

This key text accuses Akiba of risking offense to God, of profaning the Shekinah, that is, blaspheming, by suggesting "a human being sits beside Him."[47] Now Akiba is not put at risk of suffering a penalty, because he is expressing an interpretive view and his motives are not seen as hostile. What he gets instead is a serious rabbinic warning. He takes the rebuke to heart and changes his view, but not to the satisfaction of a second rabbi, who issues an interpretation that even prevents, through an appeal to Isa 66:1, any type of personification as being the explanation. The entire discussion shows how God's honor was protected as unique. It also indicates that offense could emerge from a remark not using the Name of God and that the offense could be accompanied by a warning.[48] A view of exaltation like that expressed for Moses or the Son of Man was disturbing to many rabbis.

Do Angels Sit in Heaven?

Two issues need attention. The first involves one text that suggests that gabriel sat in heaven, while the second treats the theme as a whole.

2 En 24:1-2 is one of the few cases where an angel, Gabriel, is said to sit.[49] In a tantilizingly brief text, the following is said in

---

[46]These two sections are treatise names in the Seder Tohoroth, which was regarded as the most difficult of the Talmud. Akiba had a reputation for handling this material well, but his *Haggadic* rulings were often disputed. See Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Sanhedrin*, p.245, n. 8.

[47]Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Sanhedrin*, p.245, n. 7.

[48]This anecdote also appears in *b Ḥag* 14a in a virtually identical form; Alan Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*. SJLA 25, ed. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), pp. 47-51.

[49]In fact, in rabbinic tradition there is a tradition that angels cannot sit. See Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, pp. 66 and n. 137, and p.60 and n. 113. Gruenwald notes a text in *AscIsa* 7:21, where an angel is said to sit and argues this defies Jewish tradition. For this text, he could be correct, since this work is Christian in its current form. See nn. 47-49 below.

recension J: "And the Lord called me; and he said to me, "Enoch, sit to the left of me with Gabriel." The version of A merely summarizes: "And the Lord called me; and he placed me to the left of himself closer than Gabriel." Enoch is brought to God's side to record the events he sees. The human saint functions in this text as a revelatory seer, not like a judge as he does in the *1 En* 70-71 text. Now only the J version is clear in having Gabriel sit, while only A notes that Enoch is closer than the angel. This seating appears to be temporary and is related to the revelatory seer function of Enoch, with Gabriel, his escort, present to observe events with them. So it may well be the angelic seating, if there is one, is present because a human figure the angel is escorting is asked to sit. Little else is said including who might be on God's right.[50]

Another major angelic figure is Michael and the host of images that surround him, including the images of Melchizedek, Priest of Light and Heavenly Man. For many who study Jewish angelology, these figures all refer to the chief angelic figure and can be treated together.[51] A consideration of whether this highly exalted figure sits and of other texts about angelic seating yields interesting results.

In particular, Melchizedek looks to a figure who has a major function in the eschaton. But what is most interesting to note is that this greatest of angels is nowhere said explicitly to sit by God, whether the descriptions involve Michael or one of the possible alternate titles. As was suggested earlier, this detail may help us understand the Moses figure in *Exagoge* as not involving a deification, and it may have implications for the Son of Man

---

He sees the only exception as Metatron, and that is because of his connection to Enoch. See *b Ḥag*. 15a. He may overstate the case. For the tradition of no sitting, he cites one passage from *GenR* 65.21 (Theodor-Albeck ed., p. 738; Freedmann, ed., *Midrash Rabbah*, vol. 1:597-98) and from *y Ber* 2c. Both texts declare that angels have no joints, while the *GenR* text says that there is no sitting in heaven for angels. Whether these later texts can be projected back into this earlier period is quite uncertain. It is true, however, that angelic heavenly seating is rare, and this view was seen among the later rabbis as dangerous to assert, see Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, p. 60-67 on *b Ḥag* 15a.

[50]Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology*, p. 129, n. 208, notes how the right side is empty and wonders if a Christian redactor has handled the passage at this point.

[51]A defence of this claim appears in my longer study.

discussion and the portrait of the exalted Jacob as well.[52] The argument would be if the lead angel of the heavens does not sit with honor in heaven than any figure who sits by God must belong to some other category. It is not an angelic-like quality that allows them to sit. There is no clear evidence of a purely angelic figure like Michael permanently seated by God. In fact, it is something about the honor bestowed to exemplary humans that seem to be more important. Though transformmation comes with the seating, it is who the honoree originally was that is a key part of why they are exalted. The seatings of named transcendant figures inevitably involve figures who have been identified as having some human connection (Enoch-Son of Man, Enoch-Metatron). The honor, though great and contemplated as exceedingly rare, is directly bestowed by God and involves shared authority with him, but deification appears to say just a little too much about what is portrayed. What seems most prominent is the installation into a key funtion, usually regal, like the execution of judgment in defense of justice for God's people.

The issue of the seating of angels also needs some more attention. Three texts discuss seatings of angels. The first two examples involve unnamed angels. One example is from the *ApocZeph*, where each angel has a throne that shines brightly in the fifth heaven according to version A cited from the Christian writer Clement, *Stromata* 5.11.77.[53] This reading is corroborated in 3:9, where the angels who record the deeds of each person "sit" at the gate of heaven. The second example comes from the *AscIsa*. It is suspected that this portion of the *MartApocIsa* comes from Christian circles and is possibly of gnostic character.[54] In chapter 7 there is a reference to a throne in several of the heavens Isaiah visits. In 7:19, one sits on the throne and has a greater glory than the other angels. When Isaiah goes to worship this figure the angel leading him stops him. The same is said of the third, fourth, and fifth heavens (7:24, 29, 33), though here Isaiah make no attempt to worship the seated

---

[52]Jacob in the *Prayer of Joseph*, Fragments A and C, seems to be some form of an incarnated angelic figure. Though he is highly exalted and sees God, we are not told anything else about his heavenly activity. Nor are we told he sits, only that he serves before and sees God; *OTP* 2:713.

[53]Loren Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology*, p. 97, n. 129 appears to question if this fragment can be attributed to the *Apocalypse*.

[54]See M. A. Knibb, *OTP* 2:154.

figure.[55] These thrones seem to symbolize the one in charge of the heaven in question. There is no throne in the sixth heaven. What is interesting to note is that these texts are somewhat exceptional in mentioning angels (or thrones) who sit. Both citations come from sources of recognized conflated character. It means that these exceptions may be exceptional because their origin has roots in an angelology distinct from Judaism. Even if they are Jewish in origin, the fact that they involve unnamed angels shows that their seating is related to their "command" position in a sub-level of heaven and not to some role in close proximity to God. In fact, in both cases, the seated angels clearly are not in proximity to God.

One final example has already been noted in discussing Adam. It is *Life of Adam and Eve* 47:3. Here Adam sits on a throne originally occupied by his seducer. This appear to be the major Jewish exception to the rule that angels do not sit. What is interesting about this text is that an angel does not end up on the throne, as it was reserved in God's plan for a human. Where this throne is or what is done from it is not noted in the text.

These texts taken together, along with the example of Gabriel in 2 *En* 24, show how rare seating for angels is. The human factor in many of the key examples indicates that most expressions in Jewish theologies of exaltation included the idea that eventually some humans would receive greater honor and have a greater presence in heaven than any of the angels.[56] The observation is important to our topic, as the possibility of being seated by God seems to be reserved, in the rare cases it appears, for human luminaries.

Conclusion on Exaltation

As with the previous section, we now summarize our larger survey on exaltation, so that the texts we have focused upon can be given some context.

Early Jewish views of heavenly access to God show just how respected and unique the deity was. His presence radiates with a brilliant glory and his honor is protected by an elaborate structure of

---

[55]The discussion is made more complicated by the fact that "throne" might refer to a special class of angel. See M. A. Knibb, *OTP* 1:166 n. m, and Loren Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology*, p. 94 and n. 120.

[56]This brief survey indicates how the claim that angels do not sit needs some qualification. It is quite rare rather than prohibited. See n. 49 above.

restricted access, which only his sovereign direction breaks.[57] Though heaven is full of inhabitants who serve and praise him, only a few even get an intimate glimpse of his presence. Those who get to sit in his presence are directed to do so. The list is a select one, consisting either of the great luminaries of the past or of anticipated eschatological luminaries of the future who sometimes represent a mixing of transcedent-human qualities. When it comes to the angels, the absence of seating is the major surprise. Only Gabriel is said to sit next to God's presence, and that is merely as Enoch's escort (*2 En* 24:1-3). Another potential exception is the seducer, who was always destined to lose his seat to Adam (*Life of Adam and Eve* 47:3). In this second text, it is not clear where the seat is or how close to God it resided. Those angels who share in the heavenly council appear to function as a "first among equals" and are sent to carry out a judgment that God has authorized (*11QMelch* 2:9-11, 13-14). They are not portrayed as seated, and neither is Michael, the most natural candidate one might presuppose whould have such a seat. So Adam, Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, David, Job, the Messiah, Enoch-Son of Man, Enoch-Metatron, and Gabriel are said to sit. Enoch sits to receive revelation about the end (*Jub* 4:20;*TAbr* 11:3-8[B]; *2 En* 24:1-3). Adam and Abraham serve as witnesses to the judgment (*TAbr* 10—12). Adam is reinstated to the authority he had before the Fall (*Life of Adam and Eve* 47:3; *ApocMos* 39:2-3). Job, whose seating is disputed, argues he gets a seat as one of the righteous (*TJob* 34—38). In another text, Abraham also accompanies Messiah for his seating, with Abraham on the left and Messiah on the right (*MidrashPs* 18.29). It is a seating representing honor and reward. Messianic seating is also probably noted at Qumran, as the Messiah is given honor worthy of the deliverer seated as the first of kings among the righteous in heaven (*4Q491* 1.13-17). Another Qumranian text has David seated before God on Israel's throne, as an expression of honor to the head of the dynasty and as leader of the righteous (*4Q 504* frag. 2 IV.6). Here is great honor, but it seems to fall short of a vice regency, looking more like a reward for faithfulness. Still another Davidic text comes from a suggestion by Akiba that David sits by God in heaven. This is strongly rejected by another rabbi as a

---

[57]This survey has not even noted how access to God was also restricted by various barriers (fire, curtians, avaenging angels, heat and cold) put in the way of getting to heaven. A famous talmudic text on how difficult it is to get access to God appears in *b.Ḥag* 14b, 15b, where four rabbis attempt to see God and only one barely survives to tell the story (*t Ḥag* 2.3; *y Ḥag.* 77b).

major offense against God (*b Ḥag* 14a; *b Sanh* 38b). Abel exercises a temporary role as a judge in the end (*TAbr* 13:2). Moses is enthroned with great authority, but his role appears to be limited to a picture of his authority in establishing the nation (*Exagoge* 68-89). The references to his "deification" appear to be explained by his function as God's powerful agent, so he is "like a god before Pharoah" (Exod 7:1; Philo, *Life of Moses* 1.155-62; *The Worse Attacks the Better* 160-62; *Sacrifices of Abel and Cain* 9-10). Enoch-Metatron is given great authority over heavenly affairs, but he also is disciplined when that authority is misused in that might confuse him with God (*3 En* 3—16). Only Enoch-Son of Man is portrayed as the great eschatological judge of the end, seated next to God (*1 En* 45:3; 51:3; 61:8; 62:2-6; 70:27, especially 46:1-3 and 71:1-17). It is a remarkably unique picture. These final two portraits of the transformed Enoch are not without controversy, as these figures are also described in other passages in ways that show some nervousness about the extent of exaltation attributed to them (*TAbr* 11:3-8 [B]- for Enoch; *b Sanh* 38b- for Metatron).

It is clear that for some within Judaism, being seated by God was possible, but it was limited to very few and usually involved very limited circumstances. The highest forms of exaltation apparently also met with some strong opposition or clear qualification of such claims. When one places these few examples of seating around the numerous references to a wide array of other types of heavenly activity and the few texts disputing such claims, it is evident just how rare and privileged the honor is. It takes God's direct intervention and invitation to permit it, and all such authority is still derived authority. Some get close to God at his direction and as an expression of their significance in some key phase in God's plan. But candidates do not apply for the role nor do they claim it for themselves. Only God can direct such a seating.

So the question remains. How does this background help us to understand Jesus' examination by the Jewish authorities? We can now consider this final question.

Blasphemy and the Claim of Exaltation at the Jewish Examination of Jesus

Our goal here is modest. There is no attempt to assess the historicity of this scene in this study.[58] The goal is simply to place the presentation of Mark 14 into its cultural background as revealed by the key texts already presented. What is the exact nature of the Jewish charge of blasphemy against Jesus, if these texts adequately reflect the views of the first century? Does this background help to explain why *m Sanh* 7.5 may reflect too narrow a perspective to help us understand this scene?

There are three potential elements in the report of Mk 14:61-62 that could have led to the Jewish view that Jesus had blasphemed. As will be made clear, the second and third elements serve as the more likely sources of the evaluation against Jesus. The combination of these elements is important to note, as often the charge is seen to stem from a single factor alone. The result is a reply that challenges an array of Jewish cultural assumptions, making the remarks particularly offensive.

The first option appears in the discussion of Robert Gundry and Craig Evans. It is that Jesus pronounced the divine Name in violation of *m Sanh* 7:5 when he alluded to Ps 110:1, but that the citation was suppressed in the public reports of the scene so as not to repeat the blasphemy.[59] This precedure would reflect practice noted

---

[58]The consideration of this question is the burden of the fourth chapter of my larger study. But one brief point should be made. Some views argue that there were no available witnesses to pass on such a dialogue. Such a view is short sighted and ignores several historical realities about the event. At least Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea would have had access to information about this scene. Thus some members who would have been present or who knew people who were could be the source of such information. More importantly, the Annas-Caiaphas connection at the top of the Jewish leadership stood opposed to the Christians for over thirty years. In a real sense the battle was almost a family feud for this Jewish house. Their ongoing conflict would have been an issue of constant, major public debate in Jerusalem. It is hard to imagine that such a disruptive event as Jesus' crucifixion and its origin would not have been a matter of public record and discourse to which disciples would have had access in the public storm which followed.

[59]Robert Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, pp. 915-18; Craig Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries: Comparative Studies*, p. 412-13.

in the Mishnah, also in *m Sanh* 7.5, where report of the exact wording of the blasphemy is only repeated in the privacy of a hearing and not in a public report, so as to avoid repeating the sin. So Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Yahweh. . . ," but it was reported publically as "seated at the right hand of power" as Mk 14 has it.

This explanation is possibly an element of the background, but only with certain additional assumptions that are not at all a given. It must be noted that it was common for biblical texts to be pronounced with a substitute for the divine name, as also was the case for benedictions with the exception of a few specified cases. One of the situations with benedictions is noted in *m Sot* 7.6. This text describes how the common priestly benediction of Num 6:24-26 was given to the people. So here we have a scriptural text and a benediction. In the provinces, each verse was read by itself and the crowd would respond with an amen in each case, while at the Temple it was read as a whole and treated as a single verse. But the more important consideration for us comes next when the issue of the pronunciation of the Name is treated. The text reads, "in the temple they pronounced the Name as written, but in the provinces by a substituted word." So it is no guarantee that the presence of the divine Name in Scripture meant that it would be read.

Another important text on the pronunciation of the divine Name is *m Yom* 6.1. Here the note is the confession of the High Priest as atonement is made over the lamb for the nation's sins on the Day of Atonement. Included in the saying is the citation of Lev 16:30. This verse includes a reference to the divine Name, which the High priest did read, as the crowd would bow and fall on their faces when "the people which stood in the Temple court heard the Expressed name come forth from the mouth of the High Priest." In addition, they responded to the confession and the use of the Name with a euphemism, "Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom for ever and ever."[60]

Still a third example appears at Qumran, though it is not consistent.[61] In the Isaiah scroll יהיה is occasionally altered to אדני or reduced in the dual phrase Lord God (אדני יהיה) to only אדני (1QIs^{a} changes the name in 28:16; 30:15; 65:13; and reduces it in 49:22; 52:4;

---

[60]The command is also noted in exactly the same way in *m Yom* 3.8.

[61]Stephen Byington, "יהיה and אדני," *JBL* 76 (1957), pp. 57-58.

61:1).[62] In 1QIs[a] 50:5, it is replaced with אלוהים. The same occurs in other texts from Qumran as well.[63] Such changes show that some Jews were careful to avoid writing the divine Name in Scripture, which in turn would prevent it being pronounced as well.

What these examples mean is that it is not certain that even if Jesus cited Ps 110:1 that he would have read the divine Name as written, given this possible variations permitted within oral delivery. Regardless, it also is not certain that the reading of the Name itself from Scripture would have been considered uttering the name "unseasonably," which is a type of blasphemy noted by Philo as worthy of death (*Life of Moses* 2.38.206, 208). As Evans notes, "Uttering the Divine Name, especially in the context of quoting Scripture and if with all proper reverence, is not blasphemous."[64] Thus, this suggestion by itself is not likely, unless one can argue that what created the charge was a lack of "proper reverence" in the way it was cited. This explanation would require that other, more fundamental and conceptual grounds be raised that formed the essense of the blasphemy, which is possible for this scene as the following options will show.

Nonetheless, this option is important, because it raises the possibility that the circumlocution in the reply, "the power of the

---

[62]*Contra* Siegfried Schulz, "Maranatha und Kyrios Jesus," *ZNW* 53 (1962):133, there is evidence of this type of change in early material. See a shortened from of the divine Name (יהו) in the Elephantine papyri of the fifth century BCE (ιαω). The texts at Elephantine can be found in A. Cowley, *Aramaic Paypri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923). The passages where why appears are: 6.4, 6, 11; 22.1, 123; 25.6; 27.15, 30,6, 15, 24-27 (3x), 31.7, 24-25 (2x), 33.8, 38.1, 45.3-4, and 56.2. Care with regard to speaking the divine Name is also noted in Josephus, *Ant* 2.12. 4 §§ 275-76 and in Philo, *Life of Moses* 2.114. For evidence of a substitution of the name with Lord, one can note the LXX and the examples at Qumran, see next note below.

[63]Michael A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community*, pp. 134, 170, 232-33, 250, notes how the name is written in old script in *1QpHab* vi.14, while in 1QS VIII.14, the citation of Isa 40:3 leaves only four dots where the name YHWH appeared. Fitzmyer has critiqued Schulz at this point in "The Contribution of Qumran Aramaic to the Study of the New Testament," NTS 20 (1974): 386-91. For a probable other absolute use of the term Lord (מרי), see also *1QapGen* 20.12-13.

[64]Craig Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries: Comparative Studies*, p. 413.

blessed One," is sensitive to Jewish practice, whether it reflects a Marcan rendering, a pre-Marcan Christian tradition, a reflection of a Jewish report of the trial where the allusion to the Divine name is reported in an indirect way, or a report of Jesus' words. Someone was aware of potential Jewish sensitivities here.

The second option argues that the major feature of what was seen as blasphemous in the view of the leadership came within Jesus' reply about the Son of Man. After Jesus responds positively to the question whether he is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, he goes on to speak of the council seeing the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds. The key reply reads, "*ἐγώ εἰμι, καὶ ὄψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ ερχόμενον μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.*"[65] Now it is contextually plain that within the account the reference to the Son of Man is a self reference to Jesus.[66] The reply combines an allusion to the enthroned authority of a regal figure from Ps 110:1 with the authoritative figure of one like a Son of Man from Dan 7:13.

There has been some debate on what it is Jesus promises the council will see. Some argue that the entire remark is a description only of Jesus' exaltation, an allusion to resurrection to the right hand, a going to God.[67] Jesus promises that the council will see his vindication by God and the effects of his installment into authority. The case for this is grounded in the meaning of Dan 7:13, which portrays the action of the Son of Man as a "going to God." Matthew and Luke also highlight the instantaneous nature of the seeing with Matthew's *ἀπ 'ἄρτι* (26:64) and Luke's *ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν* (22:69). There also is the grammatical tightness of a verb controlling two participles, which one would normally expect to refer to simultaneous events.

---

[65]There are no major text critical problems here. A few manuscripts (Q, family 13, 565, 700) add "you say that" (*σὺ εἶπας ὅτι*) before the reply, while D omits *καὶ ερχόμενον*. Both these reading are clearly secondary.

[66]I treat only the issue of the passage's meaning here and the nature of the blasphemy charge in the account as it is presented. The discusson of authenticity is a major part of the final chapter of my larger study.

[67]T. F. Glasson, "The reply to Caiaphas (Mark XIV.62)," *NTS* 7 (1960/61): 88-93. This view is also vigorously defended by Morna Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (London: S.P.C.K., 1967), pp. 166-71.

However, it is unlikely that this is what is meant. Mk 14:28 shows that Mark is not hesitant about alluding directly to resurrection in reporting what Jesus says. What is amazing about this trial scene is the total absence of reference to resurrection. Only exaltation is mentioned. This suggests the presence of old tradition and that mention of exaltation alone is not the emphasis. In addition, the riding on the clouds is an image not of heavenly activity, but of a vindication that involves figures on earth, as even in Dan 7 where it is the saints on earth who benefit from the work of the Son of Man.[68] As Müller states of the Dan 7 scene,

> Dabei will bedacht sein, daß nirgends in der alttestamentlichen, frühjüdischen und talmudischen Literatur jemals "Wolken" eine Rolle spielen, solange es darum geht, den Verkehr und die Bewegung der Himmlischen untereinander im Raum ihrer den Augen der Menschen entzogenen Transzendenz ins Wort zu rücken. Erst wenn einer von ihnen aus deren Verborgenheit *heraustritt*, werden Epiphaniewolken und Wolkenvehikel bemüht. Diese Beobachtung legt es nahe, das anhand einer Partizipialkonstruktion pointierte "Kommen" des Menschensohnes als *Abstieg* vom Himmel *zur Erde* zu begreifen.[69]

Now it might be objected that Dan 7:9-13 itself is a heavenly scene, which if true, would indicate that Müller is wrong. But this fails to appreciate the fact that the reason for the heavenly installation of the Son of Man who is on the clouds is to vindicate the saints on earth (vv. 21-27). In other words, the reason one is given a glimpse of what is happening in heaven is because it impacts what will happen on earth. Seen in this light, Müller's remarks are appropriate. The allusion, then, anticipates a return to judge and vindicate the saints (in this case, Jesus is including himself as the vindicated!).

In fact, the claim to come on the clouds is a significant claim, not only alluding to Dan 7:13, but also using imagery that claims a

---

[68]G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 301; Karlheinz Müller, "Der Menschensohn im Danielzyklus," in *Jesus und der Menschenshohn: Fs. A. Vögtle* , eds. R. Pesch and R. Schnackenburg (Freiburg: Herder, 1975), pp. 37-80, esp. 45.

[69]Karlheinz Müller, "Der Menschensohn im Danielzyklus," p. 45. The emphasis is his.

right only deity possesses. Everywhere else in the OT only God or the gods ride the clouds (Exod 14:20; Num 10:34: Ps 104:3; Isa 19:1).[70] Thus comprehensive heavenly authority is present in the image. The picture is of a sovereign, divinely related exercise of power.

As for the claim that grammatically one would expect simultaneous events in a verb linked with two participles, it must be remembered that this is a prophetic allusion using metaphorical language, so that a combination of events can be placed in proximity that, in fact, may be quite distant from one another. In addition, the order of these events with seating first and then a mention of coming on the clouds speaks against a reference only to exaltation, as does the earlier allusion to Dan 7 in Mk 13:26, which clearly alludes to the parousia. If exaltation were meant and the clouds alluded to exaltation, then one would expect the ascension into the clouds to God to lead to the seating. The changes by Matthew and Luke only make explicit what this remark assumes, that a vindication of Jesus is the presupposition for his return, as evidence of his exaltation is seen not only in his return but in the activity among his people that precedes it. The redactional changes by the other evangelists only highlight this additional implied emphasis in the remark. Mark has not made the point quite strongly enough for them, so they develop the implications more fully. Thus the combined allusion is a declaration to total vindication by God that allows Jesus to share authority with God and return functioning with final judgment prerogatives on behalf of God's saints. When he returns it will be as eschatological judge, exercising the judicial power of God on behalf of the righteous. Among the vindiciated righteous is Jesus himself, who will render judgment against the leadership's action now being contemplated against him.

Now the problem the leadership would have seen with this remark is probably not that such a figure could exist. The portrait of Enoch's Son of Man shows such a category was contemplated within Judaism. To expect such a glorious figure in the future was possible. What would have caused the offense was that Jesus was making this identification with himself in a *self-claim* to share authority with God. He, as a Galilean preacher, or a wonder worker, or as an eschatological prophet, or even as one making a messianic claim, was extending the claim to the right to share in God's final judgment as the sent judge from heaven. It is the juxtaposition of seating and

---

[70] J. A. Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery," JTS n.s. 9 (1958): 225-42.

coming on the clouds that makes clear the transcendant function Jesus gives himself here, with the reference to clouds making it apparent that more than a pure human and earthly messianic claim is present. There is an implication in this remark as well. If they are contemplating judging him now, he will eventually judge them later.

The self-made claim to sit at the right hand and ride the clouds would be read as a blasphemous utterance, a false claim that equates Jesus in a unique way with God and that reflects an arrogant disrespect toward the one true God. As the earlier discussion on exaltation showed, a proximate seating next to God might be considered for a privileged few. Such candidates came from either a few univerally acknowledged "Greats" of the past or included the future eschatological figure of judgment. But such honor would never be contemplated by the leadership for a humble, rural Galilean, preacher like Jesus. And yet Jesus seems to claim even more. He will share the throne with the Shekinah and sit next to him at his right hand.[71] Jesus is not only near God and working with him, he is seated in a way that shares the highest honor with him. Only the figure of Enoch-Son of Man seems close to this imagery, and even his access to God in this way was controversial, despite his translation by God. Jesus' claim could have been seen as unprecedented in its expression of brash confidence. These remarks would have been read as blasphemous along the lines Philo described in *On Dreams* 2.130-31 or *Decalogue* 13-14.61-64.[72] In *On Dreams*, Philo had said that a man claiming the prerogatives of God is a person who possesses "evil of an extraordinary nature," "a man miserable in every respect," who "has dared to compare himself to the all-blessed God." Such a man utters blasphemies against the creation. In *Decalogue*, he argued that those who give creatures the same honors as those of the creator are "the most foolish and most unjust" of men. Those who think to ascribe to themselves honor like that given to God are possessed with "an insolent and free-spoken madness, as they "make an open display of the impiety which dwells in their hearts, and venture to blaspheme the deity, whetting an evil tongue, and desiring to vex the pious, who immediately feel an

---

[71] As M. Hengel has argued in *Studies in Early Christianity*, pp. 181-89, this claim was unique, though some exaltation imagery comes conceptually close to this. Jesus has chosen to state the point uniquely in the most emphatic way possible.

[72] These texts were noted above.

indescribable and irreconcilable affliction." Philo's attitude describes his perception of pagan arrogance, especially against any form of ruler cult. How much more the council would have been offended by Jesus' remarks, made as they were by a Jew. Philo's commentary could explain why the response to this remark was the priest's ripping of the clothes. Afflicted by what he had heard, he gave the clear sign that blasphemy had been uttered (Mk 14:63; *m Sanh* 7.5).

In Jewish perception what Jesus claims here is like, if not worse than, what other traditional blasphemers of Jewish lore said or did. What the actions of Sisera, Goliath, Sennacherib, Belshazzar, Manasseh, and Titus shared was a disregard for the unique power and honor of God. A study of blasphemy in Judaism shows how each of these figures was described and condemned. The midrashim supply particularly interesting additional examples when one considers how Isa 14:12-14 is handled by later rabbis. In these texts, Nebuchadnezzar becomes the illustration of arrogance, though in one major discussion he shares the stage with Pharoah, Hiram, Joash, king of Judah, and Sennacherib (*ExodR* 8.2). In this midrash, Hiram is condemned as Ezek 28:2 is related to him, while Isa 14 is applied to Nebuchadnezzar who "claimed deity." According to the text, Pharoah also made such a claim, as the midrash appeals to Ezek 29:3. Joash also fails because he received worship, with 2 Chron 24:17-25 being the key text supplying the evidence. The last example is Sennacherib, noting 2 Kings 19:35. In the midst of this developed exposition, comes this emotional note. In discussing Zech 4:10 the midrash says, "this refers, however, says R. Berekiah (c 340 CE), to the haughty who declare themselves to be gods, but whom God makes abominations in the world." Here we see a later rabbi's reactions to those who were perceived to have portrayed themselves as too much like God. One can also note, in addition, the tradition involving a son of man claim in *y Taan* 65b (Neusner 2.1). Here Rabbi Abbahu (c 300 CE) makes two statements, "If a man should tell you, 'I am God,' he is lying. If he says, 'I am the son of man,' in the end he will regret it: 'I will ascend to heaven,' he said it but he will not carry it out." This tradition is like what is seen in the rabbinic handling of Isa 14.[73] Such statements are to be rejected and subject one to judgment.

---

[73]Nebuchadnezzar is the example in reference to Isa 14:12-14 in several texts like *ExodR* 15.6 and 21.3; *LevR* 18.2; and *NumR* 9.24 and 20.1. In this last text, Solomon is contrasted with Nebuchadnezzar as "the former built the Temple and uttered numerous songs and supplications, while the latter destroyed it

The Jewish leadership believed that Jesus' remarks fell into this class. The consistency of these illustrative portraits of the blasphemer reveals a commonly held view of how blasphemy could be perceived in remarks or actions that appeared to reduce the stature of God. The Jewish reaction to a sense of violation of God's presence as seen in *Ant* 12.406 or in *1 Macc* 2:6 shows how important the protection of the uniquness of God's presence was. As a study of figures going into God's presence shows, respect for God's unique presence was jealously guarded. Those who enter gain access by his invitation only. When it is rarely contemplated as in the case of Moses or Enoch-Son of Man, it is by invitation only. Jesus' remarks possess a frankness that dissolves such formalities.

Some have argued for a type of precedent in these remarks in texts of the vindication of the righteous as this theme appears in *TJob* 33:2-4, *ApocElijah* 37:3-4, and *TBen* 10:5-6.[74] Here are descriptions of figures who receive thrones with imagery that mentions the right hand of God. However, these texts speak of honor coming *from* the right hand of God or of a privilege shared *with others*, so that the *TJob* text speaks of a throne from above whose "splendor and majesty are from the right hand," while the Coptic *ApocElijah* text speaks of a host of righteous Christian martyrs set "at God's right hand," rendering thanks for others as they conquer the Son of Iniquity, see the destruction of heaven and earth, and receive the thrones of glory and crowns. In the *TBen*, it is the patriarchs of Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who rise (not sit!) "on the right hand in gladness." But Jesus' claim is not to be among the righteous, but to lead them as God's vice regent, a ruling figure like that mentioned in Ps 110:1. There is more in his claim than what we see in these texts about the vindication of the righteous, though what these texts show is a background that parallels to a lesser

---

and reviled and blasphemed, saying, "I will ascend above the height of the clouds; I will be like the Most High (Isa 14:14)." If someone was perceived as having made a claim that brought one too close to God or made oneself to be too much like him, these texts help show how such a claim would have been viewed. These Isa 14 texts parallel what was seen in the blasphemy section as well. The views of the later rabbis are like those of Philo. The feeling is centuries old. On the Son of man text, J. Neusner, ed., *TLI* vol. 18, p. 183 or *S-B*, vol. 1, p. 486; M. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christianity*, p. 181 and n. 130.

[74]G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 297-98.

degree what Jesus claims. If such honor goes to the righteous, how much more honor can be contemplated for the one who brings their vindication. Perhaps this kind of expectation fueled the development of this view of Jesus.

Morna Hooker summarizes the basis for the blasphemy charge well, a charge that this study has attempted to ground solidly in the appropriate Jewish religious and cultural background. As she says, "*To claim for oneself* a seat at the right hand of power, however, is to claim a share in the authority of God; *to appropriate to oneself* such authority and *to bestow on oneself* this unique status in the sight of God and man would almost certainly have been regarded as blasphemy."[75] The dispute surrounding Jesus was a debate about his authority as it related to his person and mission. The Marcan text presents this as the essence of the dispute and the conviction.

The leadership handed Jesus over to Roman officials, because they saw in him a dangerous blasphemer and deceiver. But they presented the accusation in political terms, in a form that Pilate could understand and feel enough threatened by to act. Someone like Jesus with such a comprehensive view of his own authority could be portrayed not only as a threat to Israel, but as a potential serious problem for Rome as well. In addition, by subjecting Jesus to crucifixion, the Jewish leadership was making a additional public statement that turned Jesus' death explicitly into one cursed by God, as the current reading of Deut 21:23 would see a crucifixion in such terms.[76] In fact, God would be seen as the source of such a statement by permitting such an act to take place.

At the very least, this is how the church, as reflected by Mark, portrayed the dispute from the Jewish side. But it is significant to note that such a portrayal would be done at great risk to the church, when Mark's gospel emerged in Rome. To blame both the Jewish leadership and the Romans as having a role in Jesus' death meant that two major powerful forces in the early Christians' world would share responsibility for the death. To admit that Jesus was charged as a political subversive and was executed for such a crime put Rome on notice about the Christians, even though the church would have

---

[75]The emphasis in the quotation is mine; Morna Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark*, p. 173.

[76]On this first century view of crucifixion, see the discussion of the work of Otto Betz as noted below in the discussion of *11Q* 64:6-13, as well as nn. 96-98 there.

regarded the charge about Jesus as false. To present the account this way suggests that at its base must be roots that motivated such a broad sweep of responsibility. The story had to be told, even if there was risk for the church in who got blamed.

There is also a third option concerning the blasphemy that ought also to be noted, as it serves as a second blasphemous feature that adds to the sense of offense. Two elements of potential background illuminate this aspect of the blasphemy. First, when Jesus claims to be a judging figure and that the council will see this exercise of authority, he may well be appealing to martyrdom language background that has already been noted in the expectation of vindication. But the point here is more specific. The idea of "seeing" has been discussed as an allusion to Zech 12:10, "they will look upon (*ἐπιβλέψονται*) him whom they have pierced . . . and will mourn over him."[77] But there is really nothing in this context to suggest an allusion to this text.[78] There is no allusion to "piercing" nor to the need for repentance. Rather the idea of seeing from the martrydom tradition provides a more likely background. Three texts show the theme. *Wis* 5:2 reads, "When the unrighteous see (*ἰδοντες*) them, they will be shaken with dreadful fear and they will be amazed at the unexpected salvation of the righteous." *ApocElijah* 35:17 (= 5:28 in Charleworth, *OTP*) reads, "Then the sinners in torment will see the place of the righteous. And thus grace will occur." This is a composite text, mixing Jewish and Christian elements, but again in an eschatological context, those who see are those who are judged and what they see is the vindication of the righteous. A Christian text with a similar motif is Lk 16:23. The third text, *1 En 62:3-5*, is perhaps the most important.[79] It reads,

---

[77]Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (New York:Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 181-85.

[78]Correctly Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), pp. 166-67. The following discussion of martrydom background follows his treatment. See also R. Pesch, *Das Markusevengelium*, vol. 2, p. 438.

[79]This connection was made by F. H. Borsch, "Mark XIV.62 and 1 Enoch LXII.5," NTS 14 (1967-68): 565-67. See also M. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christianity*, pp. 185-89. He notes that the seating here is something a little less than being seated at the right hand.

> On the day of judgment, all the kings, governors, the high officials, and landlords, *shall see* and recognize him—how he sits on the throne of his glory and righteousness is judged before him . . .. They shall be terrified and dejected; and pain shall seize them when *they see* that Son of man sitting on the throne of glory."[80]

Not only does this text repeat the theme of the seeing of vindication, but it includes a reference to the seen Son of Man. As Borsch noted, the three themes (they see/Son of man/sitting) appear in the same order in both texts. The connections are "indications of the influence of older common conceptions."[81] The background means that Jesus challenges and warns his accusers that real judgement is not found in their council, but in the one Jesus will preside over one day. One day they will see who has the real authority.

Second, this aspect of the remark represents an attack on "divinely appointed" leadership of the nation, at least that would be how the leadership would have seen themselves. This attack would be read as a violation of Exod 22:27, which is one of the Torah's prominent blasphemy texts. This makes Jesus both a political and a religious threat. In the leader's view not only was Jesus making a false and religiously dangerous claim by evaporating the distance between himself and God, but he was also challenging the authority of those who had responsibility for the spiritual well being of the nation. As such, he raised the prospect of intense political-social unrest, as the temple incident had already suggested. Now anyone who threatened the well being of the people and its political stability before Rome was also subject to execution --in light of being the person who might cause the nation to fall into Gentile hands. This represented an offense which carried the penalty of death. Here the key text informing the cultural background is *11Q64:6-13*.[82] This text in the key vv. 7-9 reads,

---

[80]The emphasis is mine.

[81]Borsch, "Mark XIV.62 and 1 Enoch LXII.5," NTS 14 (1967-68), p. 567.

[82]Otto Betz, "Jesus and the Temple Scroll," in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, ABRL, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 80-81, 87-89. The allusion in the *Temple Scroll* is to Deut 21:22-23. The scroll appears to interpret treason as an example of defiling the land by defiling the people. On the background of this text in the Essene community, see Johann Maier, *The*

> (7) If a man slanders his [=God's] people and delivers his people up to a foreign nation and does evil to his people (8) you shall hang him on a tree, and he shall die. According to the mouth (=testimony) of two witnesses and the mouth of three witnesses (9) he shall be put to death, and they shall hang him on a tree.

Two features of the passage are important. The first is that slandering the people and putting them at risk is what leads to the sentence. Second, it is hanging by a tree, the first century cultural equivalent of which was crucifixion, that is mentioned here. The allusion is to Deut 21:22-23, which described the public display of an offender after he was executed on a tree, though in the first century, crucifixion was seen as an equivalent of this text.[83]

An important question is whether a text involving the Essenes could reflect the cultural view of those Sadducees and Pharisees in power in the Jewish leadership. If the *Temple Scroll* is an Essene document, then it reflects the view of the Torah held by a separatist, minority group. Is the connection of the scroll with the views of other Jewish parties inappropriate? However, it is quite plausibly that if a minority group hoped to hold onto power through a view of treason like the one expressed here, then those already in power would seem likely to adopt a similar view, especially when some evidence exists that this view of Deuteronomy existed beyond the Essenes.[84]

Temple Scroll: An Introduction, Translation & Commentary. JSOTSS 34 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), pp. 1-7.

[83]David J. Halperin, "Crucifixion, the Nahum Pesher, and the Rabbinic Penalty of Strangulation," JJS 32 (1981): 32-46.

[84]Maier, *The Temple Scroll*, pp. 133-34, alludes to traces of this view in the rabbinic material and cites a work in Hebrew by J. Heinemann, אגדות והולדותיהן (Jerusalem, 1974), which is unavailable to me. Maier notes Heinemann's work on pp. 148ff. and also refers to an inscription at En-Gedi from the sixth century BCE, which refers to a similar offence, a point that suggests other groups in Judaism have similar views. Among the crimes mentioned there are sowing discord between a colleague, denouncing the colleague to a Gentile, or revealing the secret of a town to a Gentile. The penalty is being uprooted from under the heaven. Finally one might note the argument of J. Massyngberde Ford, "'Crucify him, crucify him' and the Temple Scroll," ET 87

Jesus' remarks were a provocation of the strongest kind. The judges are being threatened with being judged by the accused while he functions as God's intimate representative. He is threatening the leadership with his claim to be eschatological judge and is suggesting that the council was unrighteous in having him stand before them. Both claims are seen as blasphemous at this second, social level. It seriously challenged their claims for divinely appointed leadership as well as their responsibility for Israel. This element of the charge provided the political grounds the leadership needed to take him to Rome and present him as a threat to public order. So Jesus' claims would not only have been perceived as false, a premise that could allow a very public and quick process as Strobel has noted; but such claims would also be viewed as potentially dangerous, and thus a reason to take him to Rome for the decisive verdict.[85] It is the combination of offence that caused the leadership to act.

Jesus' remark was perceived as blasphemous at two levels. First, his claim to be able to have the prerogative of final judgment and sit next to God in heaven represented a claim to comprehensive authority, a function that the leadership could never contemplate or accept for one of such a humble background. Such prerogatives, even when they were rarely contemplated, were strictly reserved for only the very unique. His direct claim to possess such a position would have been automatically offensive. Second, his claim was also an attack on the leadership, a violation in their view of the spirit of Exod 22:27. It was seen as an attitude that could put the social structure of the nation at risk before Rome. Jesus was different than a later object of messianic honor, Bar Kockba, as the latter figure at least had the support of some of the social-political leadership in the nation (eg., Akiba). So this difference placed Jesus in a quite different

---

(1975-76):275-78, who argues the Temple scroll helps to underscore the cultural appropriateness of the gospel portrait of the crucifixion. She notes two similar events from a Jewish perspective: Alexander Jannaeus's crucifixion of eight hundred Jewish opponents (Josephus, *War* 1.92-97 and *Ant* 13:376-83) and the slaying of the eighty women from Ashkelon for witchcraft (*y Hag* 77d-78a; *y Sanh* 23c;*b Sanh* 46a). Neither can one ignore the interpretation that Paul as a former Pharisee gives to the "cursed" significance of Jesus' execution in Gal. 3:13. The Essene reading seems not to be a uniquely sectarian perspective, but one held in broader Judaism of the time.

[85]August Strobel, *Die Stunde der Wahrheit*, WUNT 21 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1980), p. 85.

category than this later figure. Jesus' claim of authority went beyond political messianic claims in the view of the leadership, as it held them accountable for what they would do with him, even to the point of an eschatological threat and rejection of their leadership. Such a challenge would not go uncontested. Not only had Jesus made himself too close to God, he had also created a great, irreversable gap between himself and the leadership. At the least, this is how Mark portrays the event. What must be said about this saying is that much within it seems to fit well in the cultural thought world of first century Judaism.

The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7:13 as a Test Case

Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis
Oxford, England

The problems posed by Daniel chapter 7 and its vision of a "one like a son of man" (v. 13) are well-known. A final resolution of those problems will require extensive discussion: there are numerous sets of textual data, both biblical and extra-biblical, the latter stretching from second millennium B.C. Ugaritic to late intertestamental; intricate issues of a literary and a tradition-historical nature within Daniel 7 and its pivotal context in the book as a whole, and wider methodological questions, all of which must be addressed. As befits the genre of the present volume, what follows is a preliminary sketch of a thoroughgoing reappraisal of the issues and a new proposal. In places the sketch has been filled in with detail: in others only the pencil drawing shows the outline.

The *Status Quaestionis*: Towards a New Possibility

In the attempt to interpret our passage there are two overriding issues which have hampered the struggle for an interpretative consensus. These are, first, the search for the text's appropriate life setting and, secondly, the defining of the conceptual parameters within which a vision of heavenly and earthly realities should be read and understood.

History-of-Religions Context: Ancient Near Eastern Chaoskampf *and the Temple Cult*

Regarding the *Sitz im Leben* of Daniel 7 there are broadly two approaches. First, there are those since Gunkel who have emphasised a very specific history-of-religions background: the ancient Near

East's *Chaoskampf* tradition.[1] Secondly, there are those, particularly within the New Testament academy, who have resisted the importance of that background and simply read Daniel 7 within its own immediate literary context and the wider religio-political situation of the Antiochene crisis.[2] The former give due weight to the *back*ground, whilst the latter privilege the text's *fore*ground. The impasse will only be resolved if these two can be integrated.

The case for a background in ancient Near Eastern mythological traditions in which a god defeats the forces of chaos threatening social and cosmic stability is impressive and have recently been laid-out in detail by J. J. Collins.[3] First, the context of Daniel shares with that background the struggle for divine kingship in a time of religious and political conflict. Secondly, the beasts, representing the kings or kingdoms arise in 7:2ff from the sea, whence emerge the chaos monsters in Mesopotamian and Canaanite tradition. The pagan kings are thus viewed as the embodiment of the primeval power of chaos. Thirdly, within the broader ancient Near Eastern background the relationship between "one like a son of man" and the Ancient of Days specifically recalls that between Baal who is victorious in the defeat of the sea monster and El, the head of the Canaanite pantheon. Baal is known as the "rider of the clouds" and El, attended by his divine council (cf. Dan 7:10), is known as "Father of years."

There are, however, problems in supposing the importance of this background, which have led some to reject its relevance in determining the identity of "the one like a son of man". Chief amongst these is the use of traditions which are thoroughly polytheistic in a way which, taken to their logical conclusion implies that the "one like a son of man" is to the Ancient of Days, what Baal

---

1 H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895), 323-335, cf. e.g. J. A. Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery," *JTS* 9 (1958) 225-42; J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977) 95-106; J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). For a recent overview and rejection of other history-of-religions proposals see D. Bryan, *Cosmos, Chaos and the Kosher Mentality* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 218-228.

2 E.g. M. Casey, *Son of Man: The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7* (London: SPCK, 1979) 23, 35-8, cf. A. J. Ferch, *The Son of Man in Daniel Seven* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1979) 40-77.

3 "Stirring up the Great Sea: The Religio-Historical Background of Daniel 7," *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (ed. A. S. van der Woude; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993) 121-136, esp. 125-128 and his commentary *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) esp. 280-294.

is to El, i.e. a second deity. Off course, in the present scholarly climate, its leading proponents have to confess that "[t]his configuration has no precedent in the biblical tradition."[4]

Commentators in the Gunkel tradition such as John Day and John J. Collins have not left the identification of the "one like a son of man" with the Baal background, but have moved from that allusion to a primary reference to an angel.[5] Such a move is not unfounded given that the language at 7:13 is similar to that used elsewhere in Daniel of angels (cf. 8:15; 10:16, 18) and the fact that within the post-biblical period polytheistic traditions are transformed into a developed angelology: pagan gods have become Jewish angels. But the very specific leap from Baal (or Marduk) to an angel coming on the clouds of heaven is a big one. Nowhere else in contemporary texts do angels travel on or with the clouds and nowhere else is there any indication that Jewish angelology takes over the very specific traditions associated with the *Chaoskampf* or with the god Baal.[6]

So, whilst the ancient Near Eastern mythological material provides data which are indisputably in the *back*ground of Daniel 7, there is a significant gap between that background and the text's foreground. Collins, for one, is aware of that gap and only recently writes ".. for the present we must ... hope that some future textual discoveries will clarify the exact channels by which the material was transmitted."[7]

Older scholarship, for example that of Bentzen and Emerton argued that the means of transmission of this mythological pattern was the annual New Year enthronement festival.[8] The hypothesis that such a festival ever existed has been difficult to prove. Amongst those who maintain the importance of the Canaanite mythology there are many like J.J. Collins who have hesitated to see the cult as its means of transmission and have suggested instead its survival "either as folk tradition or in learned circles".[9]

---

[4] Collins, "Daniel," 290. Neither the objection on the grounds of historical distance from the Canaanite material nor the assumption that an "orthodox" in the Antiochene crisis would not draw on this material has any weight. Collins has ably responded to such criticisms ("Stirring up the Great Sea," 123, 127-132).

[5] They are ultimately indebted to N. Schmidt, "'The Son of Man' in the Book of Daniel," *JBL* 19 (1900) 22-28

[6] The role of Michael in the combat myth in Rev 12-13 may be a parallel, but the text is much later than Daniel 7.

[7] "Stirring up the Great Sea," 134.

[8] A. Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970) 64; Emerton, "Origin," 240-42.

[9] "Apocalyptic Vision," 102.

However, John Day remains convinced by much of the New Year festival hypothesis and has insisted that there is good evidence that the mythology was indeed passed on through the cult where it has been picked up in Daniel 7. From the wide spread of passages in Israel's Psalter which presuppose the *Chaoskampf* (see e.g. Psalms 24; 29; 65; 74; 89; 93; 104), the importance of God's kingship during the New Year liturgy in post-biblical tradition, the connection between these two in Zechariah 13-14 and other considerations a good case can be made for the endurance of a liturgical recollection of God's victory over the forces of chaos during the New Year festivities throughout the post-exilic period.[10] As a corollary of our discussion we will find new evidence for the importance of a post-exilic "enthronement" festival and the likelihood that Daniel 7 may be one of our best witnesses to that tradition. Whilst the nature of the Temple New Year festival can explain the transmission of this mythological material, as an adequate explanation of both *fore*ground and *back*ground it would need to explain the implicit "ditheism" which the mythology imposes on the vision's symbolic world.

Besides the general notion of an angelic "one like a son of man" commentators have traditionally turned to texts such as 11QMelchizedek where a similar pattern may be present. More recently P. Mosca has made the attractive suggestion that there is some anticipation of the Canaanite background to Dan 7:13 in one of Israel's kingship psalms.

Mosca argues that in Psalm 89 the king plays a similar role in the Israelite adoption of the *Chaoskampf* to that of the "one like a son of man" in Daniel. In vv. 9-10 [Eng. vv. 10-11] of that psalm Yahweh's cosmogonic power is celebrated with reference to his ruling the raging sea, stilling the waves and crushing the chaos monster Rahab. However, in v. 25 [Eng. v. 26] the fruits of this divine victory are shared with David whose "hand is set on the sea and ... right hand on the rivers." The pairing of sea and river reminds us of the two parallel names in the Baal epic Yamm and Nahar and this characterisation of David is set in the context of other reminiscences of the relationship between Baal and El: "David is in a sense invited

---

[10] For recent representatives of this view see e.g Day, "God's Conflict," 18-21, 34, 158, 165 etc..; T. D. N. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 92-122; J. Day, *Psalms* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990) 67-87; J. D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil. The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1994) esp. 31-2.

to play Baal to Yhwh's El".[11] Mosca's case is strong and it has been greeted with qualified approval by J. J. Collins.[12] This kingship reading has the support of the parallelism between the prerogatives given to the "one like a son of man" in Dan 7:14 and the sovereignty, glory and dominion given to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 2:37 and 5:18.[13]

However, Mosca's proposal suffers from a number of decisive weaknesses. For example, there is no real parallel in Psalm 89, nor the biblical kingship material in general, to the image of the "son of man" *coming with clouds*.[14] Secondly, apart from the reference to Daniel and his friends being drawn from the royal family in Dan 1:3 the book shows no real interest in the Davidic monarchy.[15] This is not surprising since the issue at stake during the Antiochene crisis was the threat to the Temple cult where the priesthood presided and where there was no real monarchic presence at this time.

The Apocalyptic Worldview and the Angelomorphic-Humanity Tradition

The second problem with which the interpreter of Daniel 7-12 in general and of Dan 7:13 in particular has had to contend is whether realities referred to are heavenly or earthly. The modern discussion has been a battle - of some hostility - between those who insist on a human (e.g. Israel) focused reference and those who take the "one like a son of man" to refer to a divine or angelic figure. This battle, it should be noted has been provoked and fuelled by the modern inability to hold together the earthly and heavenly, the divine and the human.

In another study I have appealed for a cease-fire in hostilities by proposing a new understanding of the text's apocalyptic conceptual parameters which removes the necessity to choose between one side or the other.[16] There is a significant tradition within Jewish texts of

---

11 "Ugarit and Daniel 7: A Missing Link," *Bib* 67 (1986) 496-517, (p. 512), cf. generally pp. 508-515.

12 *Daniel*, 293 and "Stirring up the Great Sea" 133.

13 Collins, *Daniel*, 311.

14 See Emerton, "Origin," 233; Bryan, *Cosmos*, 231-2. Mosca appeals to the reference to the "enduring witness in the cloud(s)" in Ps 89:37 [Eng. v. 38] ("Ugarit and Daniel 7," 514), but there their function is very different from that of Dan 7:13.

15 Collins, *Daniel*, 309.

16 Besides Lacocque's work my approach is anticipated somewhat by, e.g., M. Black, "Die Apotheose Israels: eine neue Interpretation des danielischen 'Menschensohn'," *Jesus und der Menschensohn: Für Anton Vögtle* (ed. R. Pesch and R. Schnackenburg; Freiburg: Herder, 1975) 92-99.

the period in which both human individuals and communities are regarded as angelomorphic: they possess an identity or function which is otherwise predicated of supra-human angels.[17] This angelomorphic-humanity tradition, which approximates to the belief in a "divine" humanity, is associated with the following; the pre-lapsarian Adam; Israel as a whole; specific communities within racial Israel, such as the Essenes; Israel's righteous patriarchs and heroes (e.g. Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Jacob, Moses) and particular offices within the divine economy amongst which kingship and the priesthood are the most prominent. Surveying that tradition, and bearing in mind that Adam, Israel, Enoch, the king and a high priest have all at some time been candidates for the role of the "one like a son of man" it at once becomes apparent that we may have here a justification for believing Dan 7:13 refers to a mediatorial figure who is very much human yet also deliberately described in terms reminiscent of the angels and even God himself.

This angelomorphic-humanity tradition is already enshrined in the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint (see e.g. Num 24:17; 2 Sam 14:17, 20; 19:27; Isa 9:5; Zech 12:8; Mal 2:7; Esther LXX 15:4-19), was evidently well established before the Maccabean crisis and was apparently well known to the author of Daniel (viz. Dan 12:3).[18] In a number of traditions the human figure concerned is not only raised to an angelic level of existence, (s)he is also described in ways otherwise reserved for God such that they receive worship and we are reminded of the contours of a later *Two Powers* "heresy".[19] Daniel 7 is, of course, a key text within that later tradition; the full divinity of the man-like figure may already be assumed in the Old Greek Septuagint tradition and is insinuated in the use of clouds as a means of transport.[20]

Whilst I believe this angelomorphic-humanity tradition and its centrality to the apocalyptic worldview means we no longer need to choose between one side or other in the argument over heaven and earthly perspectives, we are left with a need for clarification: if the "one like a son of man" is an angelomorphic human then who exactly

---

17 *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology* (WUNT 2.94; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1997) esp. 11-18, 109-215.

18 For Dan 12:3 as an eschatologisation of an intra-historical, this worldly angelomorphic belief pattern see my *Luke-Acts*, 138, 213.

19 See Hecataeus of Abdera (Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica* 40.3.5-6; *A History of the Visit to Jerusalem of Alexander the Great* (Josephus *Ant.* 11:331: see my *Luke-Acts*, 124-5 for discussion); *Life of Adam and Eve* 12-16; Ezekiel the Tragedian *Exagoge* 79-80; *Eth Enoch* 48:5; 62:9.

20 For Daniel 7 in the *Two Powers* debate see A. F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 33-36, 47-52, 122-3, 128-132, 149, 151.

is he? Which of the different characters or communities in the tradition I have plotted is in mind in Dan 7:13? Since P. Mosca has made a good case for the adoption of a Davidic tradition behind the Baal-like "one like a son of man", are we to think of the many biblical and post-biblical texts which speak of the king in angelomorphic terms?[21] Mosca's recourse to kingship traditions, which have their roots in the pre-exilic period, does not fit well in Daniel as a whole or the seventh chapter. What is needed is an angelomorphic figure who on other grounds we should judge at home amidst Daniel 7's visionary furniture: a figure who quite naturally comes with clouds before the divine throne, who is bound up very closely with the people of God and yet, to whom the characterisation of Baal could be applied.

Glancing at the *Curricula Vitae* of the candidates for the post described in Dan 7:13-4 the high priest is the front runner.[22] In the first place, since the high priest is a representative character some of the other figures are included in his candidature: the high priest wears on his breastplate and shoulder pieces the names of the twelve tribes and so represents Israel. To the extent that the arrival of the "one like a son of man" before the Ancient of Days is interpreted in 7:18, 22, 27 as the giving of the kingdom to Israel, the former must either represent, or be symbolic of, the people of God. The high priest is, at the very least, a representative of Israel, if not her concrete embodiment within the cultic drama.

As a number of scholars have recently demonstrated, the high priestly garments also associate him with Adam, which is only natural given the strongly Edenic symbolism of the Temple.[23] In Dan 7:2 the "four winds stirring up the great sea" reminds us of Gen 1:2 and the *Chaoskampf* mythology is firmly embedded in ancient Near Easter creation accounts so the vision quite naturally climaxes with the coming of a "one like a *human being*" just as does Gen 1:1-31. As we shall see, Enoch, with whom one tradition of Daniel interpretation identified the Son of Man, is none other than the archetypal priest.

---

21 For the texts see my *Luke-Acts*, 110-118.

22 For the angelomorphic (high) priest see e.g. *Ep. Aristeas* 99, Sirach 50:6; *Jub.* 31:13-15; 1QSb 4:25; 4Q511 35; 4Q545 17-18. To these texts and those discussed in my *Luke-Acts* (pp. 118-129, 186-196) should be added Wis 18:15-18, 21-24 where Aaron is set in antithetical parallelism to the λόγος, the Angel of the LORD.

23 Besides Ezek 28:12-19 and Sirach 49:16ff, see C. T. R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A non-biblical sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996) 44-7, 71-2 for the High Priest's garments as those of Adam in post-biblical literature.

In the second Temple period, under the political constraints of Persian and Hellenistic rule the high priest has also taken over many of the characteristics of the king.[24] In Daniel 7 verse 14 has been just cause for those who would see in v. 13 a messianic king, since there he is given "dominion, and glory and *kingship*". However, in Israel's pre-exilic period sacral kingship involved the king in a position tantamount to that of high priest and there was good scriptural warrant, upon which the Hasmoneans would capitalise, for a high priest with royal powers (esp. Psalm 110). In the case of Daniel 7:13-14 two passages are particularly pertinent in this respect. First, in the midst of Josephus' account of Alexander the Great's encounter with the high priest Jaddua (*Ant.* 11:326-339) the Jerusalem high priest is said (by Alexander!) to have the power to bestow upon the Macedonian leader the Persian empire (11:334). This predication of cosmocratic power to the high priest is immediately followed by a reference to Daniel as the scriptural prediction of Alexander's conquests (11:337). Secondly, in the *Testament of Moses* ch. 10 the coming of God's kingdom in the eschatological dénouement, is bound-up with the appointment of a heavenly warrior priest who will avenge Israel of her enemies (10:2f). George W.E. Nickelsburg has tied the tenth chapter of the *Testament of Moses* closely to Dan 12:1-3 and its author may also have had in mind Dan 7:9ff.[25]

Not only does the high priest have a strong candidacy since he is wedded so closely to other angelomorphic figures, he does so in that context (the Temple cult) which was evidently the most significant for the development of the human angelomorphic tradition. Time and again there are telling signs that it is the temple cult, its drama and costume, its holiness and the experience of worship in a time and space qualitatively other, which have contributed to a given literary angelomorphic characterisation.[26]

For there to be certainty that in Dan 7:13 there is described a high priest we will need to establish whether and in what context a high priest could be described as coming with the clouds before the Ancient of Days. Ideally we will also need evidence that the high priest could play Baal to Yahweh's El in the *Chaoskampf* complex. Before we achieve either of these aims, and with a view to bringing the text's cultic *Sitz im Leben* into sharper focus, it will be as well to

---

24 The best example close to Daniel being Sirach 50:1-4.

25 *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) 28-31, 82-4.

26 See my *Luke-Acts*, 118-129, 137, 142, 147, 155, 168-9, 172, 186-96, 199.

survey the evidence in support of a Temple and priestly centred reading of Daniel 7.

A Jerusalem Temple Setting in Daniel 7: Some Observations

Within Daniel 7, the work as a whole and its history of interpretation there are many considerations which point to a Temple setting for at least vv. 9-15 of chapter 7 and the importance of that setting within the cultic interests of the book as a whole. These considerations further help to clarify the symbolism of the vision.

The High Priest in the Temple in the History of Interpretation of Daniel 7

In his 1979 commentary André Lacocque proposed that "the vision in chapter 7 has the Temple as its framework", within which the "one like a son of man" coming on the clouds of heaven refers to an eschatological high priest who receives the eternal and irrevocable dominion.[27]

Regrettably Lacocque's interpretation has not received the attention it deserves.[28] This is probably because it lacks the necessary history-of-religions support for the possibility that the high priest could be characterised as the man-figure of 7:13-14. Initially Lacocque seems aware of this problem and comments that "[w]e must not allow ourselves therefore to be carried away by the heavenly decor of Dan. 7.13ff".[29] However, a little further on he jeopardises sympathy for his approach with the claim that not only is the "one like a son of man" a high priest, he is also Michael.[30] He is not able to produce any evidence to support the equation of the high priest with Michael and the implausibility of his interpretation is further compounded by his belief that the particular high priest in question is Judas Maccabeus.[31] There is some slight evidence that an identification of the "one like a son of man" with Judas was entertained in antiquity,

---

27 *The Book of Daniel* (London: SPCK) 124-5. Lacocque's view of the priestly nature of Daniel's apocalyptic *Sitz im Leben* is reiterated in his *Daniel in His Time* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988) 28-9 and "The Socio-Spiritual Formative Milieu of the Daniel Apocalypse," *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, (ed. A. S. van der Woude; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993) 315-343, 335-6.

28 It is summarily dismissed by Goldingay, *Daniel*, 196.

29 *Book of Daniel*, 125.

30 *Book of Daniel*, 133-4. He arrives at a similar conclusion in his interpretation of the "prince of the host" in Dan 10:11 (p. 162).

31 *Book of Daniel*, 125.

since Jerome was aware of the possibility in his contretemps with Porphyry.[32] However, aside from the common perception that the authorship of Daniel cannot easily be equated with the Maccabean party (in view, in particular, of the possibly slighting reference to the Maccabees in Dan 11:34), taking the man-figure to be a reference to Judas Maccabeus entails a dating of Daniel 7 after the temple's restoration, which is nigh impossible.[33]

Although the interpretation in Lacocque's commentary lacks methodological rigour, it is suggestive and can be reworked. Whilst we can disregard Lacocque's identification of the high priest with Michael, there is ample data from the period for a view of the high priest as heavenly.[34] Lacocque has not been the only commentator to insist on a priestly perspective for the work, and his approach can be substantiated by much else.[35]

The Temple-Cult focus in Daniel 7-12 and the Book's Implied Authorship

Daniel 1-6 is set in the Mesopotamian exile and chs. 2-6 come from either the Persian or Hellenistic periods. Daniel 7-12 is from the early second century B.C. and describes events during the crisis of Antiochus IV. That crisis was centred on a perceived threat to the Jerusalem Temple cult. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Temple is centre stage throughout chapters 8-12. The cult is not only that sacred space most threatened by Antiochus (8:10-14; 11:30-31; 12:10-13), the author(s) of the visions assume(s) that the time of salvation is when the Temple at last fulfils exilic prophecy (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10) and performs its atoning function (9:24-27; 12:30).[36] Although ch. 7 is linguistically and literarily bound to the preceding chapters, its setting in life and apocalyptic genre bind it to what follows and so we might expect that *it also* has a temple focus.

---

[32] For the text see G. Archer, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958) 89-81. Lacocque's interpretation is otherwise anticipated by H. Sahlin, "Antiochus IV Epiphanes und Judas Mackabäus," *ST* 23 (1969) 41-68 and G. W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews. Translation, Comment and Conclusions* (New York: Doubleday, 1972) 42-48.

[33] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 196.

[34] For the texts see n. 22 (above).

[35] Compare J. C. H. Lebram, "Apokalyptik und Hellenismus im Buche Daniel," *VT* 20 (1970) 503-24, 514-515; O. H. Steck, "Weltgeschehen und Gottesvolk im Buche Daniel," *Kirche. Festschrift für Günther Bornkamm* (ed. D. Lührmann and G. Strecker; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1980) 53-76, (p. 58).

[36] Cf. J. C. H. Lebram, "The Piety of the Jewish Apocalyptists," *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (ed. D. Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983) 171-210, 186.

Jürgen C. H. Lebram has noted that in the context of the ancient world the ascetic elements in the preparation of the seer's visions belong in the context of cultic ascesis (see 9:3; 10:2-3): "The connection between vision and cult is emphasised moreover in ch. 9 by the angel approaching the seer at the time of the evening sacrifice."[37] By the second century B.C. there was already a well-established tradition within Judaism of priestly visions and auditions closely associated with the Temple as the place where heaven and earth met. Within the (proto-)apocalyptic corpus we should recall the visionary activity of the priests Ezekiel (esp. chs. 8-11; 40-48) and Zechariah (chs. 1-6).[38]

There is perhaps some allusion to the priestly identity of the implied authorship of Daniel in the description of Daniel and his friends in 1:4. Though they are in part drawn from the Judaean royalty, they are also from the among "the nobility", which during the Hellenistic period would mean they were priests. It is therefore not surprising that they are to be "without blemish" and will become versed in the "literature and language of the Chaldaeans", the latter being a priestly caste within late Mesopotamian society.[39]

In the search for the identity of the book's author(s) commentators have rightly seized on the use of the word משכילים for the book's heroes (11:33; 12:3, 10). "The wise" are evidently set over against "the many": those who either act against the covenant (9:27) or are in need of instruction from the former. The role of the priests as the teachers in Israelite society was ingrained during this period, and Lebram is probably right to see in "the wise" and "the many" the priesthood and the laity.[40] Whilst this identification of the work's authorship is by no means necessary for the rest of our argument, it is worth noting that the appropriation of the division between the *maskilim* and the *rabbim* at Qumran, where the leadership was thoroughly priestly, accords well with this proposal.[41]

Outside of the canonical Daniel there is also some important evidence that the Israelite Daniel around whom various traditions were formed was regarded, by some at least, as a priest. In the opening paragraph of the Old Greek version of Bel and the Serpent

---

37 "Piety," 185, cf. 184-5.

38 Outside the biblical corpus see e.g. Josephus *Ant.* 11:326-7 (in context of a specific reference to Daniel (11:337)); 13:282-3.

39 See Lacocque, *Book of Daniel*, 27.

40 "Apokalyptik," 514. For priests as teachers see e.g. Lev 10:11; Deut 17:10; Hag 2:11-13; Mal 2:7; Deut 33:10.

41 See e.g. 1QS 3:13; 9:12, 21; 1QSb 1:1; 3:22; 5:20; 4Q510-11 *passim*; 4QShirShabb *passim*.

Daniel is said to be a priest. The absence of this identification from the Theodotian recension is perhaps due to a conformity of the latter to the canonical Daniel where no such identity is made explicit. In any case there is no need to see here a very "different strand of tradition" from that of our canonical Daniel and every reason to assume this Greek addition represents widespread opinion.[42]

Geographical Stage Markers: The Great Sea and the Chaoskampf

The vision opens in Dan 7:2 with the four winds stirring up the "great sea". Inside and outside of the biblical corpus this expression is always used of the Mediterranean.[43] However, this creates a problem, since it could not be said literally of the first, second and third beasts that they came from the Mediterranean because they symbolise Babylon, Media and Persia respectively. Only the fourth beast (Greece) can be thought to come from that direction. This has led some to dismiss the overwhelming linguistic significance of the phrase "great sea" and to opt instead for a mythological sea from which the forces of chaos arise.[44] As we have seen that mythology is essential to the proper understanding of the present chapter.

So how can this apparent tension be resolved? The choice of both the Mediterranean *and* the mythological *Chaosmeer* is, I suggest, deliberate because from the Israelite perspective the myth was already thoroughly bound up with Jerusalem, the Temple and Zion as the cosmic mountain. As it has long been suspected and has now been ably demonstrated by Jon D. Levenson the old ancient Near Eastern beliefs about temples and their mountains as the centre of the universe, the point at which creation takes place and the meeting point of heaven and earth, were axiomatic in biblical literature.[45] Those commentators, such as John Day and John Collins who emphasise the importance of the *Chaoskampf* in interpreting Daniel 7 do not actually take full cognizance of the fact that that tradition is fundamentally temple centred.[46] In the Mesopotamian literature (esp. *Anzu* and *Enuma Elish*) and also in the Ugaritic Baal material the

---

42 *Pace* Collins, *Daniel*, 419.

43 See BDB 410 and 1QapGen 21:16: Goldingay, *Daniel*, 160.

44 E.g. L. F. Hartman and A. A. DiLella, *The Book of Daniel* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978) 211; Collins, *Daniel*, 295.

45 J. D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985); *Creation, passim*, cf. R. J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972).

46 Goldingay sees the absence of the temple context in Daniel 7 as a point of contrast with the ancient Near East's *Chaoskampf* (*Daniel*, 153).

god's conflict with the forces of chaos, whether or not represented by the sea, is inseparable from the search for a temple in a situation where the cosmic stability provided by the cult is either absent or under threat. It is precisely that context in which Daniel was written and which, therefore, suggests that in Daniel 7 we have to do with a struggle centred on the Jerusalem cult.

We can be fairly sure that this mythology was assumed by the author of Daniel 7. Within the (proto-)apocalyptic stream of which his vision is an example Zion and the temple are everywhere assumed to have some kind of cosmological identity. We should note, for example, within Ezekiel 38-9 the importance of the *omphalos* myth in 38:12. With the importance of primeval stone and/or foundation stone imagery in Zech 4:7-10b and the image of living waters flowing from Jerusalem in Zech 14:8 this mythology is presumed in both first and second Zechariah.[47] Arguably, this is a defining element within the emergence of late biblical and post-biblical apocalyptic. Within Daniel 7, verse 25's reference to Antiochus' attempt to change "the sacred seasons" probably assumes the belief that Israel's cultic calendar is a perfect synchronisation of heavenly and earthly cosmologies, which we know so well from the apocalyptic *Jubilees*.

Within this constellation of ideas, where the chaos mythology has its home, Mount Zion is the epicentre of all cosmic conflict: it is where God's enemies are judged and destroyed (cf. Ezekiel 38-9; Joel 3 & Zechariah 14) and whence God's healing creative presence flows (e.g. Zech 14:8; Joel 3:18; Ezekiel 47).[48] The importance of these texts and the significance of their Temple focus was noted in J. A. Emerton's important 1958 article on the origin of the Son of Man imagery.[49] Emerton failed, unfortunately, to spell out their implications for the geographical location of the visual drama, and his observation has not been given adequate attention in subsequent discussion.

With these texts in mind, since the implied reader is somewhere in Israel, (s)he is meant to think of beasts arising out the Mediterranean, coming on to land and threatening the people of God as was the present experience under Antiochus IV.[50] I would suggest that the

---

47 On the former text see, for example, A. S. van der Woude, "Zion as Primeval Stone in Zechariah 3 and 4," *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F.C. Fensham* (ed. W. Claassen; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988) 237-248.

48 The classic expression of these motifs outside the Bible is the Babylonian *Epic of Creation*, but it is generally recognised that they are assumed and occasionally alluded to in the Ugaritic texts from Ras Shamra.

49 "Origin," 234.

50 So, e.g., Casey, "Son of Man,"18-19 and Goldingay, *Daniel*, 164-5.

vision then moves spatially in v. 9 from the pagan coastline to Jerusalem and the Temple as the site of God's earthly throne-room. With the fourth beast "committed to the burning fire" in v. 11 we are perhaps meant to think of Topheth or Gehenna, the place of burning punishment in the valley outside Jerusalem.[51]

We are still on earth, but with the eschatological judgement we have heaven on earth. This is entirely natural because in the microcosmic symbolism of the Jerusalem Temple the sanctuary, and in particular the holy of holies, is heaven - the site of God's throne. So, within Daniel 7 as a whole, literal, Jerusalem centred geography and mythological space are combined because that combination was a fundamental assumption for the author and one which was made all too real in the present conflict between paganism and the "orthodox" Temple cult: we do not need to choose between the Mediterranean and a mythological *Chaosmeer*. When, in Dan 11:45, Antiochus meets his end "between the sea and the glorious mountain" a later author in the apocalyptic Daniel tradition has quite rightly understood the topographical imagery of chapter 7.

The Literary Parallelism between Daniel 2 and Daniel 7

All the commentators agree that there is a deliberate parallelism between Daniel chapters 2 and 7. In both there is a dream vision of a four kingdom schema followed by the eschatological manifestation of God's kingdom in Israel. That parallelism functions within a wider set of resonances between chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, 6, 7 respectively, which create a chiastic structure within the Aramaic portion of the book.[52]

Taking such clear intratextuality seriously we are provided with further evidence that Daniel 7 is ultimately Temple centred. In chapter 2 the fourth kingdom of the statue is superseded by God's eternal kingdom symbolised by a rock cut from a mountain which becomes a huge mountain filling the earth (2:34-5, 44-5). The image clearly symbolises, not just the Israelite state, but Zion and her Temple. There are multiple echoes of biblical and post-biblical Zion/Temple-stone imagery here.[53] As the Collins notes, these have their home in the ancient Near East's cosmic mountain mythology.[54]

---

[51] Collins, *Daniel*, 304.

[52] See e.g. A. Lenglet, "La Structure littéraire de Daniel 2-7," *Bib* 53 (1972) 169-190 & Collins, *Apocalyptic Vision*, 11-14.

[53] See e.g. Zech 4:7-10; Isa 2:2-3 and compare the later *'eben shetiyah* tradition. The threshing floor image of 2:35 reminds us of Isa 41:12-16 but also 2 Sam 24.

[54] Collins, *Daniel*, 165 n. 128.

So, as another point of symmetry between chapters 2 and 7, this further confirms our argument that in chapter 7 the four kingdoms are succeeded by a shift to the cosmic mountain where God's judgement takes place.[55]

The Mischwesen *from the Sea and Jewish Purity Consciousness*

The source of the composite zoomorphic imagery for the beasts in Dan 7:4-8 has been the cause of much discussion. Various derivations from ancient Near Eastern animal imagery have been proposed, but none of these has been found entirely convincing.[56] David Bryan has now made the persuasive case that a primary concern in the creation of such imagery is the kosher mentality of purity conscious Judaism. The mixing of animal forms (e.g. lion and eagle) and the depiction of wild quadrupeds (lion, bear & leopard) evokes the Torah's judgement that such animals are unclean (Lev 11:27, 29, 41-42). The fact that the first beast looses his wings, and thus his hybrid form, and that he stands on two feet being given a human heart evokes the conversion and purification of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4. "The series of *Mischwesen* forms the perfect background for the emergence of the kingdom of God, represented by [the one who is like a "man",] the archetypal land creature who, according to P, was made in the image of God."[57] Drawing in particular on the work of Mary Douglas, Bryan demonstrates that here the combination of purity consciousness and monsters representing the forces of chaos is entirely fitting given the concern of biblical purity taboos with order and the threat of chaos. Because Leviathan - the principal expression of chaos in the older, Canaanite *Chaoskampf* mythology - would himself have been viewed as the "king of the unclean creatures", the substitution of the four monsters in Daniel 7, in dependence upon the four kingdoms schema, is entirely natural.[58]

All this does not demand that Daniel 7 be a Temple centred vision. Nor does it mean that Daniel 7 was necessarily written by a priest, since such purity consciousness and the centrality of the temple in that worldview was shared by all second Temple Jews. However, the impurity of the monsters in 7:4-8 suggests that we have here a conflict between pagan chaos and impurity against which the

---

55 The parallelism is appreciated by 4 Ezra 13 where the man from the sea of Daniel 7 carves out the mountain of Daniel 2.

56 Collins, *Daniel*, 295-6 and see Bryan's review of suggestions (*Cosmos*, 218-227).

57 Bryan, *Cosmos*, 238-9.

58 Bryan, *Cosmos*, 239-245.

cult in Zion and the enthroned Yahweh sets itself in vv. 9ff. There is then a spatial and ontological shift from the sea as the locus of pagan chaos in 7:4-8 to Zion as the source of true purity in vv. 9ff. Again this purity-versus-chaos dynamic reinforces the sense that we have here is essentially a second *Temple* version of the *Chaoskampf*.

Enoch, Melchizedek and the One Like a Son of Man

Dan 7:9-15 is one of the most developed throne-theophanies in a long biblical and post-biblical tradition of that genre. In the search to understand its peculiar details a number of scholars have turned to *1 Enoch* 14, which contains many parallels to the Danielic vision. There too there is a particular interest in the wheels of God's throne (*1 Enoch* 14:17, cf. Dan 7:9), whence there flow rivers of fire (*1 Enoch* 14:19, cf. Dan 7:10). Only here in the Hebrew Bible (v. 9) and in *1 Enoch* 14:20 in contemporary literature is God's raiment said to be snow white. Fourthly, and with particular significance for the identification of the man in figure Dan 7:13, in *1 Enoch* 14:8 it is the clouds which usher the human figure into God's presence. Because *1 Enoch* 14 is now universally recognised to be a pre-Maccabean portion of the Enochic corpus, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Dan 7:9-14 is in some way dependent on that extra-canonical heavenly ascent.[59]

However, the significance for the identity of the "one like a son of man" of the parallel with Enoch's cloud-ushered ascent into God's presence has remained obscure. In a later part of the Enochic tradition somebody came to the quite natural conclusion that Enoch was the "one like a son of man" of the Danielic vision (*Eth. Enoch* 37-71).[60] Yet there is nothing in Daniel 7 which points to such a conclusion and commentators have justifiably ignored the possibility that that was the author's original intention.

The literary similarity between the two texts, I believe, lies in the *tertium comparionis* that both the "one like a son of man" and Enoch are priests. In the Fall of the Watchers cycle, of which *1 Enoch* 14 is a

---

[59] See esp. T. F. Glasson, "The Son of Man Imagery: Enoch xiv and Daniel vii," *NTS* 23 (1976-7) 82-90.; H. S. Kvanvig, "Henoch und der Menschensohn," *ST* 38 (1984) 101-31, cf. Collins, *Daniel*, 300. That Daniel 7 is indeed a reworked scene from the Enoch material has been argued by Loren T. Stuckenbruck with respect to a passage from the Qumran Book of Giants ("The Throne-Theophany of the Book of Giants: Some New Light on the Background of Daniel 7," *forthcoming*, on 4Q30 ii 17-19).

[60] On this identification see my *Luke-Acts*, 149-153.

part, Enoch is called a "scribe of righteousness" (12:4). However, several commentators have rightly come to the conclusion that Enoch is also a priest.

Since the work of David Suter and George Nickelsburg the Fall of the Watchers cycle has been widely interpreted as a typological reference to the exogamy of priests who, like watchers in heaven have left their domain of cultic and racial purity by marrying non-Israelite women of the land.[61] On that basis , and drawing attention to the close parallels between Enoch's actions and those of Ezra, Helge Kvanvig has concluded that Enoch is the archetypal scribe and priest.[62] This view has been developed most fully by Martha Himmelfarb. She points to numerous temple and priestly details of *1 Enoch* 14; taking up the implications of the Suter/Nickelsburg interpretation, the watchers are priests; the tripartite heaven which Enoch enters is modelled on the tripartite division of the second Temple sanctuary; the language of Enoch's approach ("to draw near") is cultic; the Great Glory is himself dressed in priestly attire; the background to scribal and teaching activity is predominantly priestly, and Enoch's role as intercessor and the his right of access to God's presence is otherwise reserved for the high priest.[63]

As Himmelfarb and others have noted Enoch's priestly credentials were well-known and developed in later literature.[64] In *Jubilees* 4:25 Enoch makes the evening incense offering. In *2 Enoch* Enoch's angelomorphic transformation is expressed in terms of priestly investiture (22:8-10) and the concluding chapters (69-73) "are devoted to the succession of the priesthood after Enoch's ascension, clearly implying that Enoch himself served as a priest."[65] So too in the Hekhalot text *3 Enoch* Enoch's investiture is recognisably priestly (see. ch. 12).[66]

---

61 Nickelsburg, "Enoch, Levi, and Peter: Recipients of Revelation in Upper Galilee," *JBL* 100 (1981) 575-600 and Suter, "Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest: The Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch," *HUCA* 50 (1979) 115-135,

62 H. S. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and the Son of Man* (Neukirchener: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988) 99-103. Kvanvig thinks that the early Enoch tradition was developed by Levites who returned from Babylon in the fourth century (pp. 135-143, 157-8, 330-333).

63 *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 14-28.

64 *Ascent to Heaven*, 25-46.

65 *Ascent to Heaven*, 40.

66 For Enoch/Metatron's (high) priestly characterisation in Hekhalot and rabbinic literature see *3 Enoch* 15B:1 (*OTP* 1:303); *Num. Rab.* 12:12 and the *Alphabet of Metatron* (Alexander in *OTP* 1:265 n. 12a).

This accumulation of priestly data is impressive and could be developed with reference to other parts of the first Enochic corpus. Lest some remain unconvinced and in order to clarify the implications for Daniel 7, it will be worth identifying more exactly the *Sitz im Leben* of the Fall of the Watchers cycle.

Like most commentators Nickelsburg, Suter and Kvanvig have all judged *1 Enoch* 12-16 a repudiation of the allegedly corrupt Jerusalemite priesthood, which naturally implies a *sectarian* setting for this very early apocalyptic work.[67] However, whilst the exogamy typology is a convincing explanation of the myth, the conclusion that its authorship is estranged from the Jerusalemite priesthood is unnecessary. Certainly in the *Damascus Document* (2:16-19) and the *Testament of Levi* (14-16) it would be fair to conclude that the fall of the watchers is used as a sectarian rhetoric. However, the socio-religious make-up of Israelite society was very different after the Antiochene crisis (whence these two texts) by comparison with the pre-Maccabean period, whence the Book of Watchers. There is no direct and indisputable evidence for an anti-Jerusalemite sectarian group in the pre-Maccabean period.[68]

Unless, that is, one include in the definition of sectarian the Samaritans, who we know *did* set themselves over against the Jerusalem hierocracy. Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar has now made the attractive suggestion that *1 Enoch* 12-16 is originally *directed at* Samaritans, on the basis of a passage in Josephus' *Ant.* 11:306-12, which describes how Manasseh, the brother of the high priest Jaddua, married Nikaso, the daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria.[69] The marriage led to Manasseh's expulsion from the Jerusalem hierocracy and the founding of a temple on Mount Gerizim, which was supplied with priests and laity amongst Manasseh's supporters. Tigchelaar finds support for his proposal, not only in the closing chapters of Ezra, but also the combination of anti-Samaritan and anti-exogamy material in *Testament of Levi* 2-7 and *Jubilees* 30. If he is right, this means that in its present form the watchers cycle was composed *from the perspective* of the Jerusalem Temple Jewish community as a satire and moralistic aetiology of the behaviour of "heterodox"

---

67 Nickelsburg "Enoch, Levi, and Peter," 586; Suter, "Fallen Angel," 131, 134-5; Kvanvig, "*Roots*," e.g. p. 333.

68 The sectarian understanding of apocalyptic has now come under sharp criticism from S. L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism. The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1995). Compare Himmelfarb, *Ascent*, 26-8.

69 *Prophets of Old and the Day of the End. Zechariah, the Book of Watchers and Apocalyptic* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 198-203.

Samaritan Jews. In all probability it was written by a priest in the Ezra tradition whose hero, Enoch, is created in his own scribal image.

Tigchelaar's hypothesis can, I believe, be supported by two other texts. The first of these is the praise of Simon the Just in Sirach 50:1-21. This passage is framed by a polemic against "the foolish people that live in Shechem" (v. 26) and a statement of Enoch's superiority over Joseph, from whom the Samaritans claimed descent (e.g. Josephus *Ant.* 9.291; 11:341), in 49:14-15.[70] That frame interprets the hymn in praise of Simon as a glorification of the Jerusalem priesthood over against rival Samaritan hierocratic aspirations: Sirach knew that Enoch was a figure who could be used against rival Samaritan claims.

Secondly, David Bryan has now demonstrated that in a pre-Maccabean "*Original Testament of Naphtali*" underlying both the *Testament of Naphtali* and the *Hebrew Testament of Naphtali* visionary material is used as a Jerusalem based polemic against Samaritans who are represented by Joseph.[71] In that case it is highly significant that in the *Testament of Naphtali* this polemic (chs. 5-6) immediately follows a reference to the admonition "in the writing of the holy Enoch" (4:1) and the lesson to be learnt from "the Watchers [who] departed from nature's order" (3:5).

All this has two important results: *1 Enoch* 12-17 is best understood and was well known as a mythological satire against Samaritans. As such it is a mainstream Jerusalem Temple text.[72] In this context Enoch provides ideological support for the Jerusalem priesthood, over against other priestly communities. Just as *1 Enoch* 14 had recourse to the ascent to heaven of the archetypal priest during the threat posed by the Samaritan schism *within* the Jewish community, so too Daniel 7 created the vision of a priestly ascent to heaven during, what the author perceived to be a threat *from without* the Jewish community.

Besides the Samaritan exogamy allegory, the other widely acknowledged socio-religious referent in the Fall of the Watchers myth is the Day of Atonement ritual.[73] In the first instance this is evident in the similarity of the names of one of the two archangelic apostates (Azazel: *1 Enoch* 9:6; 10:4 etc..) and the destination of one of the two goats during the Day of Atonement ritual (Lev 16:8, 10, 26). As later Christian and Jewish texts make clear, the binding and

---

[70] On the opposition between Enoch and Joseph in this passage see my *Luke-Acts*, 148-9.

[71] *Cosmos*, 188-212.

[72] Cf. Tigchellaar, *Prophets of Old*, 203.

[73] Kvanvig, *Roots*, 100, 102.

detention of the fallen watchers (*1 Enoch* 10) was evidently modelled on the scapegoat's departure and death in the wilderness.[74] In that case it is highly significant that Enoch's heavenly ascent looks most like the high priest's annual visit to the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement. Only on that occasion does he come as close to God's presence as does Enoch.[75] During the Samaritan crisis, when priestly exogamy had defiled sacred space, it would be quite natural for the rite of purgation in Leviticus 16 to be used as the means by which such a archetypal sin was removed. So, once again, we find strong support for the conclusion that not only is the "one like a son of man" a priest, but his movement into God's presence surrounded by clouds is specifically parallel to another visionary text in which a high priestly figure's entry into the heavenly holy of holies is related to that of the annual Day of Atonement ceremony.

The same conclusion is reached if we reflect on the possible parallel to Dan 7:13 in the Melchizedek pseudepigraphon from Qumran (11QMelch). Many commentators have seized on this text, which predicates אלהים of Melchizedek (line 10).[76] Whilst this Melchizedek is normally regarded as a suprahuman angelic figure, a simultaneous identification with the earthly king-priest in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110 should not be ruled out.[77] Most important for our purposes is the fact that the eschatological appearance of this divine judge Melchizedek is described as the Day of Atonement on the tenth Jubilee (line 7 cf. line 2).

This Jubilee theology, which is inextricable from the Day of Atonement festival - the Jubilee being set for the tenth of Tishri (Lev 25:9) - was evidently familiar to the Danielic tradition. Even though Daniel 9 was certainly written after Daniel 7, it is not insignificant that there the interpretation of Jer 25:11-12; 29:10 is given an interpretation in terms of ten Jubilees (490 years). The echoes of an eschatological Day of Atonement that this interpretation might sound

---

74 For the texts see L. L. Grabbe, "The Scapegoat Ritual: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation," *JSJ* 18 (1987) 152-67.

75 Himmelfarb, *Ascent*, 18 has noted the similarity between God's garment in *1 Enoch* 14 and that of the high priest during the Yom Kippur ritual.

76 E.g. Goldingay, *Daniel*, 172; Collins, *Daniel*, 293.

77 See my *Luke-Acts*, 155, 196-7. Compare the use of אלוהים for Moses (from Exod 7:1) in 4Q374 2 ii 6, on which see my "4Q374: A Discourse on the Sinai Tradition: The Deification of Moses and Early Christology" *DSD* 3 (1996) 236-252.

chime in very well with the vision in Dan 7:9-14 if that too envisages a similar eschatological festival.[78]

The Day of Atonement as the Text's Life Setting: A Proposal

Thus far there is much to suggest that Daniel 7 not only belongs in a cultic context, but that it has in mind in particular the New Year festival. John Day has assumed the most relevant festival is Tabernacles. However, the New Year was divided in the second Temple period into three separate festivals - Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Atonement and Tabernacles. Whilst there was no doubt a creative interplay between the meaning of each it might be helpful to clarify whether one of these three in particular was in the author's mind.

Lacocque's conclusion that the Temple context best explained the vision was reached not simply from the cultic focus of the Antiochene reforms but the very specific defilement caused by the appointment of Jason as the high priest after the assassination of Onias III (Dan 9:26): this "new stain ... could only be erased by the coming of the ultimate high priest".[79] This insight that the coming of the one like a son of man is an act which would remove the impurity which has contaminated sacred space is perceptive and can now be supported by David Bryan's work on the impurity of the *Mischwesen*. Within the Pentateuchal laws governing the cult the means by which impurity which has contaminated the Temple is removed is the rite of purgation prescribed for the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16.

We have already seen that the parallel to *1 Enoch* 14 suggests Daniel 7 has a Day of Atonement focus. It is to a detailed consideration of this possibility that we now turn.

The Son of Man, the Day of Atonement and the Pharisees and Sadducees

Obviously the strongest point of connection between Dan 7:9-14 and the Day of Atonement is the image of God's appearance "on earth" and the movement of both the man-figure and the high priest into his presence. That this New Year festival is specifically in mind is confirmed, I believe, by the clouds motif.

---

78 The Day of Atonement echo in the Jubilee motif has been noted by Lacocque, *Book of Daniel*, 192, in commenting on the phrase לכפר עון at 9:24. Note also the division of history into Jubilees in 4QPseudo-Daniel (4Q243-5) line 14.

79 Lacocque, *Book of Daniel*, 125.

As J. A. Emerton rightly pointed out the association of the man-figure with the clouds means he receives a feature of nature which is otherwise only ever associated with God himself in the biblical tradition.[80] In some instances the biblical cloud theophany is of an apparently non-cultic, historical nature (e.g. Ps 19:1; Ezek 1:4). We are reminded of its role at the giving of the law in the Sinaitic revelation and the cloud leading the people in the wilderness which bears God's presence. However, in another set of texts the cloud is associated with God's presence in the Temple (e.g. 1 Kgs 8:11) and the Tabernacle (e.g. Exod 40:34-38; Num 9:15-22).

In the Day of Atonement text, Leviticus 16, it is stated that God "appears in the cloud above the mercy seat" (v. 2). We are reminded of the cloud of glory which descends upon the Tabernacle. In the context of Leviticus 16 we are probably meant to think of the "cloud of incense" which comes from the high priest's censer rising above the ark (v. 13).[81] Do we need to choose between these two?

In his recent monograph on *Incense in the Ancient Cult* Kjeld Nielsen has argued that we should hold together cultic descriptions of incense burning and the historical accounts of God appearing, for example at Sinai, in a cloud. Though not wishing to deny some pre-cultic historical or mythological tradition, he sees that tradition re-enacted in the cult through the use of incense to create a cloud.[82] This means that, whenever obviously associated with the divine presence, the use of incense in the cult would remind the participant of the theophanic cloud. In a visionary text, like Daniel 7 where there is good reason to see a cultic framework, this symbolism is quite naturally reversed: clouds are the cosmological equivalent of the Temple's incense smoke. In Leviticus 16 the cloud represents or shields the presence of God, so what are we to make of its association with a putative high priestly "son of man"?

There was, according to rabbinic texts, a heated debate between Pharisees and Sadducees over the interpretation and application of the incense instructions in Leviticus 16. The Sadducees believed that the incense should be applied to the coals at the altar in the courtyard, which means that when the high priest enters the sanctuary he is already accompanied by clouds of incense. The Pharisees vehemently rejected this interpretation and insisted that the

---

[80] Emerton, "Origin," 232.

[81] So, e.g., J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16* (New York: Doubleday, 1991) 1014-5. For the use of cloud language with respect to incense see e.g. Ezek 8:11; Sirach 50:6.

[82] (Leiden: Brill, 1986) 82ff.

high priest only place the incense upon the coals once inside the holy of holies.[83]

The relevant texts do not themselves explain why this issue was such a cause of contention and modern commentators have been hard pressed to supply a persuasive rationale.[84] It might be that the Sadducees were concerned lest the high priest enter the holy of holies unprotected from an unmediated vision of the deity or from demonic attack. But then it is difficult to see why the Pharisees did not share that concern. Hitherto little light has been shed on this argument from what else is known about post-biblical party strife and the issues at stake between the Pharisees and Sadducees.

It is frequently assumed that the scriptural text is clearly in support of the Pharisaic position.[85] However, LeMoyne has rightly noted that the matter is not clear cut and the Pharisees may not actually have the literal text squarely on their side.[86] If one reads the Hebrew (or LXX) of Lev 16:12-13 and assumes that it is once inside the holy of holies that Aaron is to place the incense upon the fire (so the Pharisees) then these verses present two problems. First, v. 12 literally reads, "And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire *from* the altar, *from before* the LORD (מלפני יהוה)". The second prepositional suffix מן is redundant and reads a little oddly.[87] Secondly, v. 12b refers to the filling of both hands (dual: חפניו) with incense: it strains logistical practicalities to imagine the high priest with two hands full of incense carrying at the same time a censer full of fire.[88]

With the Sadducean interpretation both these difficulties at once disappear. The Sadducees, it would appear, read verse 13 not as

---

83 See *t. Yoma* 1:8, 181; *b. Yoma* 19b; 53a ; *y. Yoma* 1:5, 39a; *Sipra* Lev 16:13 (68a).

84 See e.g. J. Z. Lauterbach, "A Significant Controversy between the Sadducees and the Pharisees," *HUCA* 4 (1927) 173-205; J. LeMoyne, *Les Sadducéens*, (Paris: Lecoffre, 1972) 249-263; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1028-31; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE - 66 CE* (London: SCM, 1992) 335, 395-7, 466 (where Sanders confuses the Sadducean with the Pharisaic position), 469.

85 Lauterbach, "Controversy," 173-4; Milgrom, "*Leviticus*," 1028; Sanders, *Judaism*, 335.

86 LeMoyne, *Sadducéens*, 249-50, 258, 262. R. Leszynsky, "Die Sadduzäer," (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1912) 61 thinks the biblical texts supports the Sadducees.

87 Milgrom's suggestions, *Leviticus*, 1025, do not fully alleviate the problem. He points out that "had the text read *lipnê*, the clauses might have been misread "from atop the altar to the presence of the Lord."" That would have suited the Pharisees very well.

88 Leszynsky, *Sadduzäer*, 62. The Mishnah (*Yoma* 5:1) has to introduce a ladle for the incense where there is none mentioned in the biblical text.

consecutive with v. 12c ("... and he shall bring it inside the curtain *and put the incense....*" (so NRSV)), but as a resumption of v. 12ab: "And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar, *from before the* LORD, (and he shall bring it inside the curtain). And he shall [also] put the incense on the fire *before the* LORD." The redundant "from (before the LORD)" in v. 12a (cf. v. 18) is deliberately included to be picked up in v. 13 where it alerts the reader to the fact that obtaining the coals and placing the burning of the incense both occur at the same place.[89] Elsewhere the phrase "before the LORD" quite clearly means the altar of the forecourt (e.g. Lev 1:5; 4:4).[90] No juggling act is intended: Aaron is to carry from the altar the incense upon the coals in the one censer into the inner sanctuary. Admittedly, the ritual prescription could have been less convoluted, but the Sadducees need not be embarrassed by the biblical text.[91]

As J. Z. Lauterbach wisely pointed out, "[h]ad the older practice been like the one advocated by their party or had there been an oral tradition favouring their opinion, the Pharisaic teachers certainly would have mentioned it." But in the extant accounts they do not. "It is therefore safe to assume... that in this case the Sadducees followed the traditional time-honoured practice, while the Pharisees were not advocates of an old oral tradition... but the innovators".[92]

This all suggests the Pharisaic hermeneutic had an ulterior motive. If the Pharisees, for whom eschatology was far more important than it was for the Sadducees, cherished Daniel 7 in the belief that God was going to send a future high priestly figure who would fulfil the action described in v. 13, then they would quite understandably resist Sadducean officiation which appeared to fulfil that passage. The Sadducee/Pharisee separation was evidently occasioned by disagreements over Hasmonean claims to the power of both high priesthood and kingship. In that context the Pharisees did not, as did the Sadducees, accept the realised eschatology of the

---

89 For resumption elsewhere in Leviticus 16 compare v. 11a with v. 6.

90 See esp. Num 16:17 where it is assumed that incense is to be placed on the coals according to the Sadducean practice.

91 The Sadducean desire to have the high priest surrounded by the incense is reminiscent of Moses' experience according to Exod 24:18. It may also have been shared by the Essenes if the fragmentary *Tongues of Fire* text (1Q29; 4Q376) refers to the high priest coming forth with the cloud from the sanctuary, (1Q29 1 3; 4Q376 1 ii 1). On the other side of 4Q376 (4Q377) there is a description of Moses covered by the cloud speaking as God's mouth piece "as though he were an angel" (line 11).

92 "Controversy," 176. According to LeMoyne, (*Sadducéens*, 259) Lauterbach's judgement is followed by "la plupart des auteurs", himself included (pp. 259-60).

Hasmonean priest-kings: they did not, I suggest, accept that any of the Hasmoneans fulfilled Dan 7:13. And during the closing decades of the second Temple period, when the Hasmoneans had all but disappeared from the political scene, they continued to insist, against any Sadducean pretensions to the contrary, that the Day of Atonement ritual could not be conducted such that it might look like a fulfilment of Day 7. They awaited some eschatological figure who would fulfil what the older Day of Atonement ideology believed was fulfilled by the high priest during that festival.

Whether or not the Sadducees desired consciously to fulfil Dan 7:13 remains to be seen. At any rate there is support for our supposition that they wished to continue the traditional manner of the liturgy. Already in the third century B.C. the Book of Watchers provided a model for the ideal priest who would ascend to the holy of holies surrounded by clouds. In Sirach, a book which is often related to Sadduceanism, and which climaxes, as we have already seen, with a description of the ideal high priest who is related closely to Enoch (49:14ff), we also have evidence of the pre-Maccabean dating of the Sadducee's incense policy. There, in ch. 50 v. 6, Simon ben Onias is said to be "like the morning star among the clouds" as he left the sanctuary. Though his *entry* is not described, the author clearly wants to associate a cloud, not simply with the presence of God, but with the person of the high priest. That there is an association specifically with the *incense* cloud may be corroborated by v. 9 where Simon is "like fire and incense in the censer". What is more the comparison between Simon and the morning star places his office quite firmly in the tradition of the angelomorphic humanity which, we have suggested, explains the divergent evidence for the identity of the "one like a son of man" in Dan 7:13.

My proposal can be corroborated by a detail of the rabbinic records concerning the disagreement. According to the Mishnah on the eve of the Day of Atonement a Sadducean high priest would have read to him various scriptures: "And from what did they read before him? Out of Job and Ezra and Chronicles. Zechariah b. Kabutal says: "Many times I read before him out of Daniel" (*m. Yoma* 1:6)." We are not told why these books were read. It is normally suggested that the reading of Daniel is due to the controversy surrounding the belief in the resurrection for which the Pharisees could find support in Dan 12:1-3.[93] That is possible and, given the connection between an angelomorphic high priest representing the righteous who therefore experience what he experiences, this is not incompatible with my

[93] See e.g. LeMoyne, *Sadducéens*, 261-2.

interpretation. However, I suggest, the Sadducean high priest was read Daniel, and particularly chapter 7, so that he knew why he was not to light the incense until he was in the holy of holies. Similarly, the reading of Ezra may have had in mind Ezra 2:63 which looks forward to an eschatological high priest (cf. Neh 7:65).

We are thus led to the conclusion that Dan 7:9-14 describes the eschatological Day of Atonement (perhaps a Jubilee) when the true high priest will come to the Ancient of Days surrounded by clouds of incense. In this very specific context it is worth noting ample evidence that on this day the high priest was angelomorphic. So, for example, in a tradition shared by Philo and the rabbis Lev "כל אדם לא יהיה באהל מועד בבאו" (Lev 16:17) is interpreted to mean that there is no mortal man in the holy of holies on the high priest's entry because the latter is actually an angel at this point.[94] Philo takes the linen garments of this ritual to be symbolic of an immortal identity (*De Somnis* 1:216-7). Jacob Milgrom has now concluded that it was the original intention of the biblical text for the high priest's simple attire to symbolise an angelic identity pertinent to his access to the heavenly assembly.[95]

The High Priest, Baal and the *Chaoskampf*

Our discussion thus far has, I believe, on the basis of the text's foreground - the Temple cult - and some considerations of the more immediate background (e.g. *1 Enoch* 14), established sufficient grounds for a high priestly man-figure in Dan 7:13. Because of the importance of the Baal allusions it is incumbent upon us to say something about the high priest and the *Chaoskampf*. That subject would merit extensive treatment in its own right. Given the confines of this study I can only flag up work in progress and give five reasons why I believe that prior to Daniel 7 the high priest had already taken on an identity mimicking that of Baal.

(1) First, whilst Mosca is right to draw attention to the way in which, for example in Ps 89, Baal motifs are transferred to the pre-exilic king, in the post-exilic period the prerogatives of kingship are transferred to priesthood. *A priori*, then, there is the possibility that the role of the king in the cult with respect to his authority over the

---

94 *Lev. Rab.* 21:12. Philo: *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres* 84; *De Somnis* 2:188-89; 2:231. See my *Luke-Acts*, 126.

95 *Leviticus*, 1016.

mythical forces of chaos should be transferred to the role of the high priest within the same sphere.

(2) Secondly, P. J. Kearney has argued that in Exod 25-31 the sevenfold division in the instructions for the building of the Tabernacle corresponds to the seven days of creation in the P account of Genesis 1.[96] This correspondence is transparent for the third and seventh sections where the building of the bronze laver (30:17--21: the "sea" of 1 Kgs 7:23) and the injunction to keep the Sabbath (31:12-17) correspond perfectly to the third and seventh days of creation in Gen 1:9-10; 2:2-3. Closer examination would, I believe, reveal a clear correlation between each of the other five sections and P's day's of creation.[97] The cumulative effect of this intratextuality is to place cosmogony in the context of liturgy and to define the Tabernacle as a microcosom of the universe.

For our purposes Kearney's suggestion is significant because it places the description of Aaron's garments and his ordination (Exod 28-29) in parallelism with the first day of creation (Gen 1:1-5) where, however muted, there are echoes of God's victory over the forces of creation in ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies.[98] Kearney himself saw a parallelism between God creating light (Gen 1:3-5) and Aaron tending the Tabernacle menorah, to which reference is made in Exod 27:20-21 and 30:7-8 - an inclusio around Exodus 28-9.[99] That, here, Aaron plays the role within the cult that God plays within creation is important because, as John Day has noted with specific reference to Gen 1:3-5, in the ancient Near East the defeat of the forces of chaos is commonly associated with the dawn, light in general and the sun god or goddess.[100]

---

96 "Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Exodus 25-40," *ZAW* 89 (1977) 375-87. Each section begins "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying..." (Exod 25:1; 30:11; 30:17; 30:22; 30:34; 31:1; 31:12).

97 Kearney has been partially taken up by, e.g., M. Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord, The Problem of the *Sitz-im-Leben* of Gen. 1:1-2:3," *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (ed. A. Caquot and M. Delcor; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981) 501-11, 502 n. 5, 507; Levenson, *Creation*, 82-3, though his central thesis has not received the attention it deserves. Weinfeld's own discussion (506-7) points to the correspondence between the luminaries of the fourth day of creation (Gen 1:14-19) and the consecration of Aaron's sons in God's fourth speech (Exod 30:22-33).

98 For those echoes see Day, *God's Conflict*, 49-3.

99 "Creation and Liturgy," 375. This relationship between Aaron, God and the creation of light can be correlated with Zech 2:8; 3:9; 4:14.

100 Day, *God's Conflict*, 102, 121-2. See e.g. Ps 46:6; Isa 14:12f; 17:14; Job 26:12-13; Hab 3:11 and esp. Ps 110:7 of the priest-king.

Similar conclusions are reached if we examine the details of Exodus 28-9 in their ancient Near Eastern history-of-religions context:

(3) The ephod (Exod 28:4f) has puzzled commentators. There is now general agreement that originally and in other contexts the biblical ephod was a garment that covered a statue of a god.[101] As such it was a biblical example of a widespread interest in the precious garments of the gods.[102] This symbolism is then assumed to have been lost when in P Aaron is given an ephod.

However, there are good reasons to think the Aaronic ephod retained its divine garment symbolism. In the post-biblical period Jewish tradition continues to interpret the ephod's symbolism in terms of divine clothing.[103] In the context of the cosmic symbolism of the Tabernacle it would make excellent sense to have Aaron wear such divine costume: "... not only do different parts of the Temple and its objects represent the heavenly abode, but even the priests ... represent the divine retinue, i.e. the angels" and so the high priest represents the presence of God Himself.[104]

Outside the Hebrew Bible there are several instances of a word apparently cognate with the biblical אפוד. In one of these the usage points to this garment being worn by the god victorious in the *Chaoskampf*. In a well-known passage from the Ugaritic Baal epic an *'ipd* is worn by Baal when he slays Leviathan.[105]

> Although you [Baal] defeated Lotanu, the fleeing serpent,
> destroyed the coiling serpent,
> the Tyrant with the seven heads,
> you were uncovered, the heaven came loose like the
> girdle of your cloak (*'ipdk*)! .....

---

101 See esp. Judg 17:5; 18:14-20; Hos 3:4, cf. 2 Kgs 23:7: ABD 2:550 "Ephod"; *HALAT* 1:77.

102 See esp. A. L. Oppenheim, "The Golden Garments of the Gods," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 8 (1949) 172-193.

103 In *Gen. Rab.* 38:8 the high priest wears God's garments (cf. *y. Yoma* 7:3, 44b; *Lev. Rab.* 21:11). In 4QShirShabb (4Q405 23 ii 5; 11QShirShabb 8-7 6) the ephodim are worn by the angelic priests of the heavenly realm. See also Josephus *Ant.* 3:180 in context, Aristeas 99, Rev 1:13-16 and the texts (below) which deal with the breastplate.

104 Extending the logic of Weinfeld's conclusion: "Sabbath, Temple," 506.

105 *CTA* 5.I.1-5 according to the translation of J. C. de Moor, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Leiden: Brill, 1988) 69-70. The translation of the difficult lines 4-5 has been disputed (by e.g. J. A. Emerton, "A difficult part of Mot's message to Baal in the Ugaritic texts," in *AJBA* 2 (1972) 50-71). However, the older view that we have in the *'ipd* a garment is confirmed by the sense of this word at *CTA* 5.V.2-4, 24.

The first two lines of this text are remarkably close to Isa 27:1 and they are frequently cited in the discussion of Daniel 7.[106] However, hitherto no notice has been taken of the reference in line 5 to an Ugaritic ephod and the implications this might have for Dan 7:13.

(4) Fourthly, the stones on the high priest's breastplate have several very specific and important symbolic functions. In the first place the parallels to Ezek 28:12ff and the Greek Addition to Esther D (15:6) clearly demonstrate that these are specifically attached to divine kingship.[107]

In the second place there are three considerations which point to the very specific symbolism of these stones as the property of the god or divine representative who has overcame the forces of chaos. First, in the cuneiform text *Lugal-e* the god Ninurta(/Ningirsu), with whom Marduk is elsewhere identified, and who in this text defeats the forces of chaos in the mountains, takes as his prize a collection of stones similar in number and configuration to those of the high priest's breast plate (esp. lines 498-545). Ninurta's stones are then set up in the cult as an object of worship (542-5).[108] Secondly, this taking of stones as the spoil of the *Chaoskampf* reminds us of the twelve stones taken from the river Jordan in Joshua 4. There too the stones are taken in the context of an event reminiscent of the defeat of the sea/river to be set up in the cult at Gilgal. Thirdly, almost a century ago W. Muss-Arnolt had good cause to compare the high priest's stones with the Tablet of Destinies, which are taken by Marduk from the vanquished Qingu to be worn during the god's ordering of the cosmos (*Enuma Elish* 4:121-2).[109] Both the Tablet of Destinies and Aaron's breastplate are worn over the breast. Support for Muss-Arnolt's hypothesis is perhaps provided by Ezek 28:13 where, in the

---

106 See e.g. Ferch, *Son of Man*, 62; Collins, *Daniel*, 287

107 Compare Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* 25:10-26:15 where the stones are related to those covering Amorite idols. Eschatologically, they will be set above the two cherubim over the ark (26:12).

108 In particular, the light-giving Hematite (the Truth stone) and Alabaster (498-523) are reminiscent of the Urim and Thummim, the δήλωσις and ἀλήθεια. For the *editio princeps* see J. van Dijk, *LUGAL UD ME-LÁM-bi NIR GÁL* (Leiden: Brill, 1983). An English translation is available in T. Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once.... : Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987) 260-262.

109 "The Urim and Thummim. A Suggestion as to Their Original Nature and Significance," *AJSL* 16 (1900) 211-219, where he sets out some of the similarities.

context of a description of the breastplate's stones, the otherwise obscure תְּפִיךָ is cognate with the Tablet (*tup*) of Destinies.[110]

(5) Finally, confirmation for the view that Aaron wears the garments of the God victorious in the *Chaoskampf* is provided by a remarkable passage in Josephus' *Antiquities* Book 3. In his extended account of the tabernacle and the priestly clothing Josephus comes to describe the sash with which the priests' robe is girded to the upper body:

> ... they gird [the robe] at the breast, winding to a little above the armpits the sash, which is of a breadth of about four fingers and has an open texture giving it the appearance of a serpent's skin. Therein are interwoven flowers of divers hues, of crimson and purple, blue and fine linen, but the warp is purely of fine linen. Having taken the end of the twisting across the breast and winding it around again,[111] it is tied and then hangs at length, sweeping to the ankles, that is so long as the priest has no task in hand, for so its beauty is displayed to the beholders' advantage; but when it behoves him to attend to the sacrifices and perform his ministry, in order that the movements of the sash may not impede his actions, he throws it back over his left shoulder. Moses gave it the name of ἀβανὴθ but we have learnt from the Babylonians to call it ἐμίαν, for so it is designated among them (3:154-6).

Why is the sash likened to a serpent (ὄφις) and does this have anything to do with Leviathan? The sash is referred to with the language of "twisting" (ἕλιξ), which is otherwise so characteristic of a snake's skin. This language is also reminiscent of that used of the "twisting" serpent in Isa 27:1-2 and the parallel passage in the Baal cycle (*CTA* 5.I.1-3) where, as we have seen there is a reference to an ephod. A little further on Josephus says of the High Priest in particular that

> .... by the sash, wherewith he encompassed [the robe] he (i.e. Moses) signified the ocean, which holds the whole in its embrace (3:185).

---

110 For this explanation of Ezekiel's expression see J. Weill, "Les mots ונקבך תפיך dans la complainte d'Ezéchiel sur le roi de Tyre (28:11-19)," *REJ* 42 (1901) 7-13.

111 I have departed from the Loeb translation ("wound a first time at the breast, after passing round it once again"), which obscures the fact that the sash

Clearly this suggests that it is not a land serpent that is meant, but a sea serpent: the sash represents both Yam or Tiamat and their monster Leviathan (Lotan) or Qingu. That this symbolic understanding goes back far into Israel's history is suggested by a likely connection with the etymology of the name Leviathan (לויתן). It is commonly assumed that this is related to the Hebrew noun לְוָיָה, which in Prov 1:9 & 4:9 is some kind of wreath or garland, not unlike our priest's sash.[112] In turn it is supposed that both nouns are derived from a hypothetical root לוה which would mean "to turn, twist, wind".[113] If some connection between this mythical beast and a sash embroidered in its image does in fact go back some way in biblical tradition this might explain the linguistic discrepancy between the biblical *lwytn* and the alternative spelling of the same creature's name in *CTA* 5.I.1 where its consonants are *ltn*: by the period of biblical transmission, if not before, this monster had become associated with a cultic item of symbolic dress, and the precise form of its name affected accordingly.

The express purpose of the sash's sea/chaos monster symbolism would require further examination. However, at this juncture there should be no doubt that the high priest wears a *vanquished* Leviathan: the sash hanging at his side evokes the image of a limp and defeated serpent in the hand of its conqueror.[114]

With these five points there is, I submit, good evidence that, within the cult at least, the high priest takes on the some of God's identity in the victory over the forces of chaos. Needless to say, whilst it would be over hasty to use the word "ditheism" of this material, the pattern is close to that of the relationship between the Ancient of Days and the 'one like a son of man' in Daniel 7.

Of course all this requires much fuller investigation: there is enough material here for an extensive history-of-religions

---

itself is described as possessing "twisting" (λαβοῦσα τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ἑλίξεως κατὰ στέρον).

112 BDB 531, cf. the לִיוֹת (sing. לְיָה) which decorate the stands of the basin in Solomon's temple, (1 Kgs 7: 20, 30, 36). Is it a mere coincidence that this basin was called "the Sea"?

113 See most recently John Emerton's discussion: "Leviathan and *Ltn:* The Vocalization of the Ugaritic Word for the Dragon," *VT* 32 (1982) 327-31.

114 It is worth comparing cylinder seal images of the god victorious in the Chaoskampf, where the god holds in his hand the limp serpent. See e.g. E. Williams-Forte, "The Snake and the Tree in the Iconography and Texts of Syria during the Bronze Age," *Ancient Seals and the Bible* (ed. L. Gorelick and E. Williams-Forte; Malibu, CA: Undena, 1983) 18-43, 39 (figs. 1, 2 & 4) for examples.

examination of the theology of priesthood in the Hebrew Bible in its own right. Within the constraints of the present context I simply offer these *prolegomena* to a fuller investigation in the belief that they provides the solution to the problem posed by the mythological imagery in Dan 7:13.

The High Priestly Son of Man in The New Testament

Besides the Enochic Son of Man in the Similitudes we would, I believe, find in a thoroughgoing reappraisal of the New Testament Son of Man material some significant support for my proposed rereading of Daniel 7. Passages such as Mark 2:10; 6:5; 10:45 where the Son of Man is specifically related to cultic concerns now come into clearer focus. In an earlier study I have drawn attention to the parallelism between the Son of Man logion in Luke 17:24-5 (cf. Matt 24:27) and a portion of the Qumran Aramaic Levi material which describes the eschatological high priest.[115]

In the absence of a detailed discussion attention should, in particular, be drawn to three New Testament passages. In Rev 1:13 the risen Christ is not only angelomorphic, he is also dressed in the high priest's garb.[116] In the final conflict between Jesus and the authorities, where Jesus openly reveals his claim to be the fulfilment of Dan 7:13 (Mark 14:62), the clash between his own claim to be the true, eschatological high priest and the self-perception of Caiaphas brings the nature of this otherwise puzzling passage into relief. Given the evidently well-known tradition that the Son of Man was to come "*as* the Ancient of Days" (OG, cf. Rev 1:13-16 and later *Two Powers* debates) and those texts where it is the (true) high priest who receives the people's worship, the charge of blasphemy in response to Jesus' claim to be the Son of Man now begins to make sense.[117]

---

115 *Luke-Acts*, 196, 232-3.

116 See T. Holtz, *Die Christologie der Apokalypse des Johannes* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962) 118-121.

117 For the worship of the high priest see Hecataeus of Abdera (Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica* 40.3.4-7) and Josephus *Ant.* 11:331 (see my *Luke-Acts*, 120-125). Both the worship of Adam in *Life of Adam and Eve* 12-16 (*Luke-Acts*, 142 n. 190) and the Enochic Son of Man in *Eth. Enoch* 48:5; 62:9 should now be given a high priestly context. To these texts should probably be added the *hymn in praise of* Simon in Sirach 50. As for the charge of blasphemy (cf. Luke 12:10) the argument between the Pharisees and Sadducees concerning the respect due to John Hyrcanus (Josephus *Ant.* 13:294) probably has some significance. There it is likely that the Sadducees were dependent upon a conflation of Exod 22:28 (You shall not revile God (אלהים) or curse a leader of your people) and Lev 24:13-16

Thirdly, the Son of Man title is particularly prominent during the discussion of Jesus' identity at Caesarea Phillipi (Mark 8:27-9:13). A good case could be made for the transfiguration as a revelation of Jesus as the true high priest - the Son of Man. Peter's confusion over the booths suggests we are meant to think of the New Year festival. The emphasis on self-*denial* in Jesus' teaching (Mark 8:34) fits well with the injunction in Lev 16:29 to "deny yourselves" on the Day of Atonement and these points of correspondence are developed in Matthew's version where the binding of the watchers and the role of Peter as the new stone of foundation (Shetiyah, cf. *m. Yoma* 5:2) are included (Matt 16:18-19).[118]

(treatment of blasphemy as a capital offence) in their demand for a death penalty for the Eleazar, the Pharisee who had slandered the high priest Hyrcanus.

118 The work of H. Riesenfeld, *Jésus transfiguré: L'Arrière-plan du récit évangelique de la transfiguration de Notre-Seigneur* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1947) and Nickelsburg, "Enoch, Levi, and Peter," on this material has not received the attention it deserves.

Biblical Hypostases and the Concept of God

The concept(s) of God in the biblical period underlie(s) the range of concepts that develop in the rabbinic age. In the paper that follows I will first present an analysis of three biblical traditions that are central to the understanding of God at three stages within the Hebrew Bible, namely the כָּבוֹד (the Glory or Presence of God), the Name of God and the figure of Wisdom. The intention of this analysis is to present a diachronic model of the development of certain phenomena whose history begins in the biblical period but which gains in significance in the rabbinic age.

Each of the biblical traditions I will examine amplifies the concept of God with a chief agent that is emblematic of the divine. So, too, each chief agent has a particular character. Historically, there has been much debate over establishing the meaning and function of each one of these expressions of the divine. These three are of interest, in particular, since each provides a counterpoint to its own particular concept of the divine, thus creating a dual or binary reference to the concept of God. I am using these two terms in a narrow sense and do not mean to suggest that the appearance of these "auxiliaries" automatically suggests that Judaism is dualistic.

The issue of a system of binary reference to God within Judaism is a considerable topic within scholarly literature. Some scholars have suggested that each of the chief agents that will be examined is an hypostasis. In this paper, we shall first delineate the original, philosophical meaning of the term "hypostasis" and determine whether the auxiliaries used to amplify the concept of God, within the three relevant tradition-complexes under discussion, are, indeed, hypostases.

From the biblical period up until the rabbinic period, there is a multiplicity of figures which have been labeled by certain scholars as hypostases due to the close, but, ambivalent relationships that they have to the divine within biblical and rabbinic literature; this list includes the Glory, the Name of God, the figure of Wisdom, the Torah, the Shekhinah, *Adam Kadmon,* who is the primordial form of man, and several angelic figures, including Metatron, Yahoel and

Michael. Furthermore, scholars have also claimed that hypostatic forms appear in Samaritanism, Gnosticism, and early Christianity. In order to discern whether this term is, indeed, applicable to the biblical phenomena, it is first necessary to examine the origin of the term hypostasis and then to explore the biblical traditions that some scholars have understood as hypostatic and which underlie later conceptions of God. Hence, the first part of this paper will provide a brief history of the term "hypostasis" and review its modern usage. Then, in the second part we will examine the biblical traditions that have been viewed by some as containing hypostases and analyze the data that appear within them. Finally, we will provide a model that gives some account as to how distinct elements of the biblical traditions later reappear in heavenly figures that emerge during the Second Temple and Rabbinic periods.

The term "hypostasis" has a long history within the annals of philosophical and theological thought. The noun corresponds to the middle and passive form of the verb ὑφίστημι, with the primary meaning to stand under (as a support). In its early usage, the noun can mean "support," "ambush," "deposit," "sediment" and "existence," or "reality."[1] Initially, it is used primarily within a scientific context. Within this context, it often has the meaning of "what settles."

> Along these lines, ὑπόστασις is what settles, what remains, the sediment, collection, deposit, or residue, in whatever form. A constituent part of the concept is that this is the part which can be seen, which manifests itself, which takes concrete shape.[2]

However, ὑπόστασις has a very different meaning within philosophical discourse. As a philosophical term, it appears first within Stoic philosophy, particularly in the work of Posidonius. Here, the term means actualized being and it is used in juxtaposition to "οὐσία," which means substance, being or existence; whereas "οὐσία" refers to ultimate being, hypostasis refers to being that has been actualized. Posidonius, however, concedes that the distinction between these

---

[1]Helmut Köster, "ὑπόστασις" in *The Dictionary of the New Testament,* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), p. 572.

[2]Helmut Köster, "ὑπόστασις" in *The Dictionary of the New Testament,* p. 574.

two is conceptual, since pure being exists only in thought.[1] Nevertheless, this conceptual distinction is very important and will be crucial to the definitions that are arrived at within this paper. Since hypostasis is being that has been actualized, it possesses a certain individuality. Therefore, hypostasis is not matter itself, either in a finite state or as an underlying substrate; rather, it is matter in a state of actualization.

Centuries later, the term hypostasis becomes important within the work of Plotinus. He devotes several tracts within the *Enneads* to the discussion of the Three Primary Hypostases, which he understands to be the One, νοῦς (mind or intellect) and the World Soul. According to Plotinus, the One generates νοῦς which in turn generates the World Soul. However, properly speaking, the One is not an hypostasis, but is rather prior to, or beyond, hypostasis since, by nature, it is alone and simple; like Aristotle's unmoved mover, it regards only itself.[2] Through this action, it generates νοῦς.

The term "hypostasis" is also used by Origen. Origen, who shared a teacher with Plotinus in Ammonius Saccus, also speaks of three primary hypostases; this time, however, the phrase refers to God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. According to Origen, while Jesus is of the same ultimate substance as God -- homoousias, -- his earthly expression, his realized being, his hypostasis differs from God, as does that of the Holy Spirit. Thus, while these three are of one substance, they have three different hypostases.[3] This language pioneered by Origen is retained in Greek trinitarian theology.[4]

Hypostasis is also used within the Septuagint and the New Testament. The word occurs approximately 20 times in the Septuagint, and is used to translate various terms. It also appears

---

[1]R. E. Witt, "ΥΠΟΣΤΑΣΙΣ" in *Amicitiae Corolla*, (London: University of London Press, 1933), p. 322, 325.

[2]Witt, ΥΠΟΣΤΑΣΙΣ, p. 336–337.

[3]Birger Pearson, "Hypostasis" in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 6, Mircea Eliade, ed, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 542-546, p. 544.

[4]Pearson, "Hypostasis," p. 544.

five times within the New Testament, two times in the writings of Paul and three times in Hebrews.[1] The term first appears in Hebrews 1:3 in a verse pertinent to the discussion in this paper. It will be analyzed briefly here and later, at the peroration of this paper, will be fit into a theological context in line with the themes developed herein.

> 1:3 ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ.
> 1:3 He [Jesus] is the effulgence of God's glory [כְּבוֹד] and the stamp of God's hypostasis.

In this passage, the translation for hypostasis is actualized being. Note the way the author has set up a parallelism between glory and hypostasis in his phraseology; he has created an equivalence or analogy between "the effulgence of God's glory" and "the stamp of God's actualized being." From a philosophical perspective, both God's glory and God's actualized being possess a reality which has been manifested in the world in contrast to both God's essence and God's οὐσία, or ultimate (but unactualized) being. The author removes Jesus a step further from God's essence by stating that he is the reflection of God's glory and the stamp of his actualized being. Thus, according to the author of Hebrews, metaphysically speaking, Jesus is two levels of remove from God's ultimate being. Furthermore, the language of this verse suggests that there is a direct equivalence between glory and hypostasis. They function as alternate terms for describing God's actual manifestation in this world.

Keeping in mind the Neo-Platonic background of hypostasis, the following definition is delineated by Helmut Köster in the *Dictionary of the New Testament.*

> ...ὑπόστασις is a reality which is brought forth by another and higher essentiality, and yet it is also clear that one must still insist on ascribing ultimate being to the hypostasis thus brought forth. Hypostasis, then, [i]s the manifestation of the one, which is dependent on true being and which is always at a lower stage... [2]

In this definition, Köster is specifically relying on Plotinus' formulation of the term "hypostasis." Although Plotinus' definition postdates the texts that we will examine in this

[1]Pearson, "Hypostasis," pp. 542-546.

[2]Helmut Köster, "ὑπόστασις" in *The Dictionary of the New Testament,* pp. 572-589.

paper, it is still relevant to the material we are discussing because neither the biblical texts nor the rabbis had a specific term to account for the phenomena that will be analyzed in the following pages. Accordingly, although this phenomenon was first conceptualized philosophically in the Hellenistic era by people trained in schools of Greek philosophy, its relevance to biblical Judaism is that it provides a conceptual model for a problem that also exists within the description of God in biblical and post-biblical Jewish texts. Yet, due, at least in part, to the lack of vocabulary to describe this "problem" or "conceptual difficulty," it mostly retained its veil of secrecy in Judaism, though it is later addressed by Saadia Goan, the Hasidei Ashkenaz and within mystical speculation.

The Neo-Platonic context of Köster's definition is what differentiates it from the two other types of definition that will follow immediately. In contrast, the two following types of definition will examine the concept of hypostasis within the context of the ancient Near East, abstracting them from representations of divinity that existed in those parts. These definitions are no longer theoretical, but are rather applied to particular phenomena, a consideration that has seriously impacted the modern connotations of hypostasis in the study of religion. The first set of definitions follow.

In *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* Mowinckel formulates hypostasis in the following manner.

> ... [O]ne understands hypostasis in the history of religions to be a divine being half-independent, half regarded as a form of revelation of a higher deity, which represents a personification of an attribute, an efficacy, a part, etc., of a higher god.[1]

G. Pfeiffer states that the term hypostasis describes an entity...

> ... which participates in the being of a deity who, in turn, operates in the world through that entity, without, however, its whole nature being exhausted in the activity of this hypostasis.[2]

---

[1]Sigmund Mowinckel, "Hypostasen" in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1958), column 2065.

[2]G. Pfeiffer, *Ursprung und Wesen der Hypostasenvorstellung im Judentum,* 1967, p. 15. This English translation is quoted from Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel,* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1972), p. 147, trans. James D. Martin.

Thus, an hypostasis is something that participates, in certain respects, in the divine substance. Yet, while it participates in the divine substance, by no means does it contain the whole of the divine substance or essence. It is the way in which an aspect of the divine is able to exist, or actualize itself in the world. Since the divine is only able to manifest itself, or actualize itself, in a partial manner, the part that is manifested or actualized is an aspect or personification of God. The function of this manifestation or actualization is to exist in an intermediary position between the divine and the human. Based on this analysis, it is possible to see that even though these latter definitions are applied to the ancient Near East, they still retain a certain philosophic continuity with the notion that developed in the Neo-Platonic era.

Finally, a more rigorous definition of hypostasis, extrapolated from the Ancient Near Eastern context of biblical Israel, specifies that hypostasization occurs when a quality or function of a deity becomes a separate entity that is worshipped independently of the first deity. In this case, the hypostasis would then be considered to be a separate power, though most likely of a secondary status.[1]

In the section that follows, we will analyze the use of כָּבוֹד (the Glory, or presence of the Lord), the Name of the Lord and Wisdom in order to determine whether they can be classified as hypostases. Due, however, to the constraints of space, this analysis will be somewhat abbreviated.

The כָּבוֹד is the term for the Glory or presence of God that is associated with priestly texts. It appears in P in the following contexts: in the ceremony consecrating Aaron and his sons as priests; in the ceremony in which the tent of meeting and the altar are consecrated and when the laws establishing the daily sacrifice rituals are established; when the Torah is received at Sinai, which, it can be argued, is the consecration of the children of Israel as the holy people of God; and in moments when the children of Israel sin against God by murmuring against him, to wit, the murmuring against God which precedes the granting of the manna; the incident of the

[1]S. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel,* SBLMS, (Atlanta: Scholar's Press). See also, Larry Hurtado, *One God, One Lord,* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), pp. 36-37, 143-144.

spies, which results in the fact that the entire generation that was liberated, with the exception of Caleb, must die in the desert; the rebellion led by Korah; and the murmuring against God in the desert which results in Moses' striking the rock, the result of which is that he, too, must die before he is able to enter the land of Israel. The last remaining passage of the P strata in which the כָּבוֹד appears is the final passage in Exodus. It states that the children of Israel were free to travel when the cloud lifted from the tent of meeting, but when it covered the tent of meeting, the community remained stationary.

In sum, then, the כָּבוֹד appears in P in two sorts of situations, situations that are positive and situations that are negative. On the positive side, the כָּבוֹד appears in order to consecrate and to ordain; these are actions which establish order; as a result of these actions, the order of daily sacrifices is established and the relationship between God and the Israelites becomes ritualized and established in perpetuity. An example of this is the lifting of the cloud from the tabernacle in the desert. This action establishes the times at which traveling in the desert is permitted.

On the negative side, the כָּבוֹד appears in response to the sin of rebellion, and its coming signals the return to order. In *Exodus* and *Numbers*, with one exception, every well known rebellion against God's authority, or against the authority of Moses and Aaron, results in the appearance of the כָּבוֹד.[1] In his commentary to *Numbers* 1-20, Baruch Levine notes the parallelism within the responses to these incidents of rebellion.[2]

> The appearance of the כָּבוֹד 'glorious presence' at a moment of crisis is a recurrent phenomenon in the Priestly literatures of the Torah and is associated with a crisis of leadership or faith, the very occasions on which Moses and Aaron usually fell on their faces ... Falling on one's face before God was a sign of submission to his will ... the leaders fall on their faces in an appeal to God's rescue, and the divine כָּבוֹד appears in response.

Why, then, do the acts of ordination, consecration, and the establishing or re-establishing of order warrant a visual manifestation of God to appear? What is the function and nature of the

---

[1]The exception is the story of the golden calf.

[2]*Numbers 1-20,* The Anchor Bible Series, translation and commentary by Baruch A. Levine, (New York: Doubleday, 1993), p. 489.

כָּבוֹד that causes it to appear during these critical incidents both on the positive and the negative side? Based on the consistency of the situations in which the כָּבוֹד appears, theologically speaking, there is nothing random in these manifestations. It is fair to assume that the authors of P believed that the manifestations of the כָּבוֹד occurred based on determinate circumstances. Perhaps, we can stretch this formulation by stating that within the P strata, the כָּבוֹד has a specific function. Yet, if the כָּבוֹד has a specific function, does it naturally become manifest as a result of a certain set of circumstances, the way a law of nature comes into play after certain occurrences? Or does it only appear on a case by case basis, entirely dependent on the will of God? Determining the answer to this question will allow us to penetrate more deeply into the conception of the כָּבוֹד. Ultimately, it will allow us to determine whether the understanding of the כָּבוֹד in the P strata of the Torah can be understood as an hypostasis.

As outlined, the כָּבוֹד only appears in particular circumstances involving either consecration or rebellion. This fact, itself, implies that these two states, consecration and rebellion, can best be understood as opposites within the framework of Priestly holiness. This opposition makes sense when we recall that in biblical theology, the children of Israel are the servants of the Lord. Consecration comes about when the true relationship to the Lord is maintained. Rebellion is a violation of that relationship. Accordingly, when the כָּבוֹד appears in positive circumstances, it signifies that the true relationship between God and Israel is being maintained, that the world is in harmony. And when the כָּבוֹד appears in negative circumstances, it signifies that the relationship between God and Israel has been breached in some respect. In these circumstances, the appearance of the כָּבוֹד becomes a catalyst to reestablish the proper order. The כָּבוֹד, then, appears in circumstances where the true order of the world is either being upheld or breached. Thus, the aspect of God that is manifested through the כָּבוֹד is the correct order of the world and the spiritual elevation or harmony that occurs when that order is realized. These two latter terms are in fact modern expressions of what would be more correctly understood as sanctification within a biblical idiom.

It is difficult to conceive of the כָּבוֹד as independent of God, since, within the Priestly texts, it is a natural part of the Godhead that shows itself in this world. The כָּבוֹד does not appear to be associated with ordinary meteorological phenomena, but seems to operate according to its own set of laws, in constant conjunction with the Godhead. Thus, while concluding that the כָּבוֹד is not an independent force, it does consistently represent a particular aspect of God that is governed by absolute rules. Furthermore, although the כָּבוֹד represents a central aspect of God, it also retains qualities of being an intermediary. In moments of consecration and crisis, it is the aspect of God that is manifest, that reestablishes the proper interaction between Israel and the Divine. Yet, the experience of the כָּבוֹד does not encompass the experience of the Divine essence itself, for, as we have stated, it has particular functions and its particularity entails limitations.

The phrase, שֵׁם יהוה, the Name of the Lord, is associated particularly with Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomical school. In Deuteronomy, the Name of the Lord is present only within God's chosen place. The constant association of the Name of God with the place which God has chosen -- which is the temple -- acts to reconfirm the temple as the central place of worship in Israel. With the Name of God dwelling 'in the place chosen by God' at all times, this 'place' can be irrefutably claimed as the centralized place of worship throughout Israel. However, the fact of centralization alone is not enough to explain the usage of the term that emerges in Deuteronomy for the first time, a usage that points to a newly emerging characterization or conceptualization of God developing continuously throughout the Deuteronomic writings. Let us now turn our attention to some of the texts containing these passages.

As stated, in Deuteronomy, there is a new association of the שֵׁם יהוה with the 'place chosen by God,' which is the temple. This association occurs in nine verses in Deuteronomy.[1] In each one of these nine passages, one of the following two phrases are used to signal this new association: לְשַׁכֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם, that he will cause his name to dwell there or לָשׂוּם שְׁמוֹ שָׁם, that

[1]This association occurs in the following passages: 12: 5, 11, 21; 14: 23, 24; 16: 2, 6, 11; and 26: 2.

he will place his name there. However, in other books within the Deuteronomical writings, additional phrases are used to convey the relationship of God's name to the temple.

In the following passage from chapter 12 of Deuteronomy, we see an example of the new association of God's name with the temple in Deuteronomy. In this passage, verse 5 contains a phrase which 'conflates' the two expressions mentioned above.

ה כִּי אִם־אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם
אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִכָּל־שִׁבְטֵיכֶם לָשׂוּם אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁם
לְשִׁכְנוֹ תִדְרְשׁוּ וּבָאתָ שָּׁמָּה׃ [1] וְהֵבֵאתֶם שָׁמָּה עֹלֹתֵיכֶם
וְזִבְחֵיכֶם וְאֵת מַעְשְׂרֹתֵיכֶם וְאֵת תְּרוּמַת יֶדְכֶם וְנִדְרֵיכֶם
וְנִדְבֹתֵיכֶם וּבְכֹרֹת בְּקַרְכֶם וְצֹאנְכֶם׃

[5] But look only to the site that the Lord your God shall choose amidst all your tribes as His habitation to establish His name there. There you are to go,
[6] and there you are to bring your burnt offerings and other sacrifices, your tithes and other contributions, your votive and freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and flocks.[1]

In this couplet, we see the new association of the Name of the Lord and the context in which it occurs. The context is instructive. Each time the Name of the Lord is associated with God's chosen place in Deuteronomy, the context has to do with offerings of various sorts to the Lord. The one exception to this occurs in 12: 21, where the verse discusses אֲכִילַת חוּלִין, the permission to eat animal meat which has not been sacrificed; however, later in the passage, there is a reversion to the subject of bringing sacrifices to God's chosen place. Since all of these passages are concerned with the centralized place of worship, it can be argued that the association of the Name of the Lord with the bringing of offerings is not wholly surprising. Certainly, the association of God's Name with God's chosen place gives added weight to the prohibition not to offer sacrifices at local places of worship. In any case, the fact that the association occurs with regularity suggests a specific relation between the two and, therefore, a specific nuance within

[1] *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures,* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985). Unless otherwise stated, all biblical quotes are from this source.

the usage of this term within this text. Thus, within Deuteronomy, the term the Name of the Lord leads to a direct association with the temple, which is the place the Lord has chosen to bestow his Name, and at which the children of Israel are required to offer sacrifices, tithes, first fruits and sacred vows. The expression "the Name of the Lord" signals that these sorts of offerings are to be performed by the children of Israel at the temple. Accordingly, the relation of the Name of the Lord to the temple and to the children of Israel elevates these sorts of offerings above other rites of the cultus that were performed at the sanctuary. This three way axis is crucial to understanding the phrase שֵׁם יהוה.

One point this connection does raise is that since it is the Name of the Lord who now dwells in the temple, God himself becomes somewhat removed from the ritual of bringing sacrifices. The image of the sweet savor rising from the sacrifices, an image which recurs in all four of the previous books of the Torah, is absent from Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy, instead, the Name of the Lord is there to receive the sacrifices. This level of remove from the ritual serves to strengthen the anti-anthropomorphism inherent within the theological content of Deuteronomy and adds a level of abstraction to the entire process. God is no longer present in the temple in an immediate manner, enjoying the sacrifices in what is clearly an anthropomorphic, sensual fashion. Furthermore, Deuteronomy's understanding of the rationale for sacrifices differs from the Priestly view.

> Sacrifice, according to Deuteronomy, is not an institutional practice but a personal one, which has two principal objects; the first is humanitarian, to share the sacrificial repast with the poor ... ; and the second is private, to fulfill a religious obligation and express one's gratitude to the Deity by means of votive offerings. God has no need of the sacrifice itself; it is only an expression of gratitude to the Deity, and this constitutes its entire significance.[1]

Other anthropomorphic elements connected to the conception of God in the Priestly Torah specifically are no longer present. The idea of a visual image such as the one attributed to the כָּבוֹד within the Priestly writings is non-existent in the theology of Deuteronomy. Appearance theology does not exist in any form within Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomical writings.

[1]Moshe Weinfeld, "Introduction" in *Deuteronomy I-II, The Anchor Bible Series*, translation and commentary by Moshe Weinfeld, (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 41.

Instead, Deuteronomy polemicizes against an anthropomorphic understanding of God, offering its own conception of a more abstract God which becomes more important than any specific manifestation of the Lord.

On the issue of God's abode, the theology promulgated by Deuteronomy is specifically at odds with the Priestly tradition, which emphasized that since God lived amongst the people of Israel, purity had to be maintained at all times. God, who was dwelling in their midst, would be angered by any infractions. Instead, in Deuteronomy, the true abode of God is in heaven. We see this idea expressed explicitly in Chapter 26 of Deuteronomy.

יד ... שָׁמַעְתִּי בְקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהָי עָשִׂיתִי כְּכֹל
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָנִי׃ טו הַשְׁקִיפָה מִמְּעוֹן קָדְשְׁךָ מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבָרֵךְ
אֶת־עַמְּךָ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לָנוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לַאֲבֹתֵינוּ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חָלָב וּדְבָשׁ׃

[14]... I have obeyed the Lord my God; I have done just as You commanded me.
[15] Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel, and the soil You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers.

In other Deuteronomical writings, such as I Kings 8, the point that heaven is the true abode of God is made in a more decisive fashion.

כז כִּי הַאֻמְנָם יֵשֵׁב אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ הִנֵּה הַשָּׁמַיִם וּשְׁמֵי הַשָּׁמָיִם
לֹא יְכַלְכְּלוּךָ אַף כִּי־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בָּנִיתִי׃

[27] But will God really dwell on earth? Even the heavens to their uttermost reaches cannot contain You; how much less this House that I have built?

This verse specifically questions how the temple can be the dwelling place of God who cannot by contained by the entire heavenly sphere. In I Kings 8 alone, heaven is called the dwelling place of God seven times. In the verses which follow the one quoted above, we see that not only is heaven called the abode of God, but that God is exhorted to look down on the temple

from on high.

כח וּפָנִיתָ אֶל־תְּפִלַּת
עַבְדְּךָ וְאֶל־תְּחִנָּתוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהָי לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶל־הָרִנָּה וְאֶל־הַתְּפִלָּה
אֲשֶׁר עַבְדְּךָ מִתְפַּלֵּל לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם׃ כט לִהְיוֹת עֵינְךָ פְתֻחֹת
אֶל־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה לַיְלָה וְיוֹם אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתָּ יִהְיֶה שְׁמִי שָׁם
לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶל־הַתְּפִלָּה אֲשֶׁר יִתְפַּלֵּל עַבְדְּךָ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה׃ ל וְשָׁמַעְתָּ
אֶל־תְּחִנַּת עַבְדְּךָ וְעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יִתְפַּלְלוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה
וְאַתָּה תִּשְׁמַע אֶל־מְקוֹם שִׁבְתְּךָ אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַעְתָּ וְסָלָחְתָּ׃

[28] Yet turn, O Lord my God, to the prayer and supplication of Your servant, to hear the cry and prayer which Your servant offers before You today:
[29] May Your eyes open day and night towards this House, towards the place of which You have said, 'My name shall abide there:' May You heed the prayer which Your servant will offer toward this place.
[30] And when You heed the supplication which Your servant and Your people Israel will offer toward this place, give heed in Your heavenly abode, give heed and pardon.

This theology of God in the heaven above and the name of God residing in the temple below is more strongly developed in the Deuteronomical histories than in Deuteronomy itself. In I Kings, prayers are to be addressed to the temple, and God in heaven is asked to listen to them. This marks a theological current which has been strengthened in the interval between the composition of Deuteronomy itself and the historical writings. The exact interval cannot be stated with precision, but some scholars estimate that the book of Deuteronomy was written in the early seventh century BCE, whereas, the Deuteronomical histories were written in the late sixth century BCE.[1]

Furthermore, in the Deuteronomical histories, out of the entire set of passages which refer to the temple as being dedicated to the Name of the Lord, only three of them make reference to the bringing of sacrifices. The first exception is I Kings 3: 2.

ב רַק הָעָם מְזַבְּחִים בַּבָּמוֹת כִּי לֹא־נִבְנָה בַיִת לְשֵׁם יְהוָה עַד

[1]Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* p. 7.

הַיָּמִים הָהֵם׃

[2] The people, however, continued to offer sacrifices at the open shrines, because up until that time no house had been built for the Name of the Lord.

In this passage, the reference is historical. It is referring to the time before the temple was built, the time before the centralization of worship in the temple, before the anti-anthropomorphic innovations of Deuteronomy. In contrast, other passages in Kings that contain references to the Name of the Lord are written in the present tense and refer to what is going on currently. In these passages, God is addressed through prayer and supplication, not through sacrifices, tithes and other offerings.

The other three exceptions occur in Jeremiah. In each of these two passages, 7: 10, 30 and 32: 34, the offerings brought by the people are referred to as either תּוֹעֵבוֹת, in 7: 10 or שִׁקּוּצִים, in 7: 30 and 32: 34, in both cases as abominations or things which are unclean. They contain references to sacrifices gone awry.

It is fair to state that the three way axis between the Name of the Lord, the temple and the bringing of sacrifices that was carefully established in Deuteronomy is no longer present in the later Deuteronomical writings. This change marks more of a valuation on prayer and supplication as the proper way to address the Name of the Lord in the Temple than on sacrifice and other offerings. It also marks a stronger movement away from the anthropomorphism embedded in the earlier tradition. With that comes a development in the conception of God by the later Deuteronomical editor who portrays a God that now desires prayers and supplications above sacrifices and offerings.

Incidentally, in Deuteronomy, the shrines devoted to the other gods of the land were also understood as the repositories of the names of those other gods. The following passage occurs in Chapter 12 of Deuteronomy.

ב אַבֵּד תְּאַבְּדוּן אֶת־כָּל־הַמְּקֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר
עָבְדוּ־שָׁם הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם יֹרְשִׁים אֹתָם אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם
עַל־הֶהָרִים הָרָמִים וְעַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת וְתַחַת כָּל־עֵץ רַעֲנָן׃ ג וְנִתַּצְתֶּם

אֶת־מִזְבְּחֹתָם וְשִׁבַּרְתֶּם אֶת־מַצֵּבֹתָם וַאֲשֵׁרֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרְפוּן בָּאֵשׁ
וּפְסִילֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם תְּגַדֵּעוּן וְאִבַּדְתֶּם אֶת־שְׁמָם מִן־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא׃

> [2] You must destroy all the sites at which the nations you are to dispossess worshipped their gods, whether on lofty mountains and on hills or under any luxuriant tree:
> [3] Tear down their altars, smash their pillars, put their sacred posts to the fire, and cut down their images of their gods, obliterating their name from that site.

This formulation, however, does not contain either of the two verbs which consistently appear in the passages in Deuteronomy that link the Name of the Lord to the temple — לְשַׁכֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם and לָשׂוּם שְׁמוֹ שָׁם. It does, however, provide a clear link between the name of those gods and the particular places in which they are worshipped. Weinfeld notes that "[o]riginally [this sort of formulation] had nothing to do with an abstract notion of God." Rather, he states, it was used primarily in a secular context by kings who were interested in laying claim to certain territories and to sanctuaries they had dedicated and who formalized this action by erecting their name on stele.[1]

Throughout Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomical writings there is a consistent development in the conception of the Name of the Lord away from the anthropomorphism of the other sources of the Torah. The final concept of God that emerges in the Deuteronomist is far more abstract than were earlier conceptions of God. Some scholars have speculated that this strong Deuteronomical reaction against anthropomorphism came about as part of the religious movement in the North to combat idolatry and religious syncretism.

What, then, is the status of the Name of the Lord? Eichrodt argues that the Name of the Lord is an hypostasis.

> ...yet as far as the divine name was concerned, Israelite thought even reached the point of giving it a certain independence over against Yahweh himself, of bestowing on it an hypostatic character. This development grew to such a pitch that with the increasing importance of the cultic sites and of the invocation of the deity performed there the belief that it was possible to call God's presence to one by means of the Name *as occasion*

---

[1]Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* pp. 193-4.

> *demanded* changed into the assumption that *God as manifested in his Name was permanently present* at the holy place.[1]

For Fossum, the crucial element impelling the Name of God to be considered an hypostatic form is that there is now a partial differentiation of the Name of God which dwells in the temple from God who dwells in heaven. The two can now be disassociated in a way which was not the case prior to this.

> Deuteronomy even localizes the Name. It teaches that, whereas God himself dwells in heaven, he has chosen a place on earth as the abode for his Name; this dwelling-place of the Divine Name is the sanctuary, which was sited on Mt. Zion by the Jews ... Thus YHWH certainly inhabits the earthly temple, but not in person; he is present through the agency of his Name.[2]

We have understood this process as adding an element of abstraction to the notion of God that was not formerly present. In this case, is a more abstract conception of God tantamount to hypostatic status? One difference between the concepts of the כָּבוֹד and the Name of the Lord is that the Name of the Lord does not seem to act. Rather, it is contained within a certain locale, and it has a certain function, namely, that sacrifices and other offerings and prayers are addressed to it. It is a continual manifestation of God that is present at the chosen place. Unlike the כָּבוֹד, it is not called into play when a certain set of circumstances occur. It has more of the quality of being a receptacle that transmits what it has received. It represents the aspect of God that is inherent within the Temple Mount whose function is to receive the sacrifices and prayers of the people. So, we can state that it is an intermediary between the Israelites and God in a more definitive sense than the כָּבוֹד.

One element that was definitive in shaping the Name of the Lord as intermediary is that the Deuteronomist rejected the idea of angelic intermediaries. Thus, passages in earlier sources in which an angelic figure led the people forth have been replaced by God in Deuteronomy.[3]

> It seems that aversion to belief in angels as mediators is a characteristic feature of Deuteronomy.[4]

---

[1]Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament,* Vol . II, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p. 41.

[2]Jarl Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord,* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1985) pp. 86-87.

[3]Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy I-II,* p. 45, 215, 379.

[4]Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy I-II,* p. 45.

Thus, the nature of the Name of the Lord as an intermediary is that it does not possess any angelic qualities but, rather, is an aspect of the divine itself. This is an important distinction, for it is often claimed by modern scholars that one motivation for the development of the angelic realm within the second temple period is the result of the increasing distance between God and his people. Yet, in Deuteronomy, the Godhead, itself, has become more distant and more abstract; but, the Name of the Lord, as an aspect of God, is indwelling in the Temple, presenting a God who, in himself, during the first temple period, contains both immanent and transcendent aspects.

Finally, we come to the question that has driven the analysis I have engaged in from the beginning of this paper. Are these two dual methods of referring to God from the Priestly school and the Deuteronomical school in each case tantamount to a belief in God and an hypostasis? If not, why make use of a binary model for referring to God? Why give a separate name to a form through which God manifests himself?

The first definition presented in the introduction to this section specified that a divine hypostasis is an actualized expression of the divine, or an aspect of the divine that has been manifested. Contained within the original usage of the term (its pre-philosophic usage) is the notion that when an hypostasis is manifested or actualized, it has a higher level of visibility or density. This notion corresponds to the idea of the כָּבוֹד, which always appears in the Torah in tandem with a declined form of the verb ראה. Furthermore, amongst the myriad countenances of God, the כָּבוֹד is the symbol of that aspect of God that represents order, re-order and consecration. In other words, the כָּבוֹד represents the actualizing force of divine order and consecration that appears in the world. In some manner, its appearance is able to effect a transformation in whatever is actually occurring amongst the people of Israel subsequent to its arrival. Finally, the Israelites themselves were aware that each manifestation of God that appeared to them was only representative of specific aspects of God. It is for this reason that any one manifestation can only be a partial manifestation of God. Furthermore, any one manifestation of

God is both continuous and discontinuous with God. It is continuous in that it is participating in the divine nature, but it is discontinuous in that it is finite. Based on this analysis of the theology of the Priestly Torah, the כָּבוֹד is an hypostasis. But, it is an hypostasis only in this narrow, original, philosophical sense. It is by no means a personification or a being worshipped semi-independently.

> The glory is the presence, not the essence of God; an act rather than a quality; a process rather than a substance. Mainly the glory manifests itself as a power overwhelming the world.[1]

What, then, of the Name of the Lord? The nature and function of the Name of the Lord is very different from the nature and function of the כָּבוֹד. Its primary *raison d'être* is to be the central point linking the Jewish people with a specific locale at which they offer sacrifices, prayers and supplications to God. It is the axis point around which revolves two sets of dichotomies. These two sets of dichotomies are God and the Jewish people, on the one hand and on the other hand, the Temple and sacrifices. The Name of the Lord mediates between both of these sets of poles and as such it becomes the central axis point that links all four of them. Its function is to be the recipient of sacrifices, prayers and supplications and to transmit the intentionality behind them to heaven, which is the real dwelling place of God.

When understood in this manner, the Name of the Lord must be apprehended as that aspect of God that serves as a conduit between God in heaven and the children of Israel below. However, since Deuteronomy is anti-anthropomorphic, this relationship cannot occur through visual manifestations of God, but must, rather, be understood as God's capacity to receive and to transmit sacrifices, prayers and supplications. In the mind of the Deuteronomist, the relationship between God in heaven and the Jewish people below is actualized through the agency of the Name of the Lord. The actualized aspect of God hypostasized in the Name of the Lord is the faculty inherent within God that makes possible a relationship between God and humanity. In other words, it is the very force of actualization itself, because without it, there would be no possibility of maintaining a relationship between God, who dwells in heaven, and humanity,

---

[1]Abraham Heschel, *God in Search of Man,* (New York: Noonday, 1955), p. 82.

which dwells upon the earth. Hence, God would remain unknowable. Accordingly, the Name of the Lord is also an hypostasis, but an hypostasis that contains or embodies a very different aspect of God than does the כָּבוֹד. Finally, neither the כָּבוֹד nor the Name of the Lord are hypostases in the applied, modern sense of the term that contains the notion of personification.

Thirdly, we arrive at the concept of חָכְמָה, or Wisdom. In contrast to the first two examples that were analyzed, Wisdom is a relatively late tradition; the corpus of Wisdom texts postdate the Torah, though there are hints of the influence of Wisdom circles in Deuteronomy.

The word חָכְמָה appears seven times in Exodus, all of which are within Priestly segments of the text. In each of these occurrences, the word means technical skill which is utilized on behalf of the cult. On four occasions, the verse explicitly states that חָכְמָה is something given to individuals who are חַכְמֵי לֵב -- wise of heart -- directly by God.

חָכְמָה appears only two times in Deuteronomy and, it is already used differently than in Exodus. In Deuteronomy, the חָכְמָה of Israel is gauged by other nations through the fulfillment of God's commandments. Furthermore, in part, the wisdom of Israel is determined by the fact that God is close to the people of Israel whenever they call on him, presumably through prayer. This is an interesting formulation. It underlines the fact that in the mind of the Deuteronomist, God's closeness is dependent on being called upon, presumably from the place that God has chosen, rather than on the fact that God lives amongst the people of Israel. So, too, חָכְמָה is equated fairly explicitly with Torah. Finally, חָכְמָה is mediated through Moses, who has taught the people the statutes and commandments of God. This distinguishes it from its usage in the Priestly text in which it was granted directly from God. Within the usage of the term חָכְמָה in Deuteronomy, there is a substantial development of the term into something which possesses an abstract meaning. It is related to the statutes and commandments of God -- in other words, to the teaching of the Torah -- and it is mediated through Moses, God's intermediary, who has taught these statutes and commandments to the children of Israel. This Deuteronomic development will prove critical to the understanding of חָכְמָה in the Wisdom tradition.

In the majority of usages of חָכְמָה within the rest of the Hebrew Bible, an interesting pattern emerges. Firstly, we see that the idioms that are more common within the Priestly texts are utilized. That is, חָכְמָה is given directly from God, not through an intermediary, such as Moses. It seems that Moses' position as an intermediary of Wisdom is unique to the text of Deuteronomy. Secondly, חָכְמָה is given to those who are already חַכְמֵי לֵב, or wise of heart.

However, the meaning of חָכְמָה has changed from technical skill, associated with the Priestly texts, to the more abstract meaning associated with Deuteronomy. חָכְמָה is not limited to actions that concern the cult. When, in fact, חָכְמָה is used in a way that connects it to its cultic association, it stands out as a Priestly vestige.[1] Instead, חָכְמָה is consistently linked to knowledge and understanding, the fear of the Lord and justice. It is antiposed to folly.

As has often been noted, in Proverbs, Job and Ben Sira, חָכְמָה is further defined by the fact that certain passages speak in Wisdom's voice, addressing her as if she was the first born of God's creation.

The most extraordinary passage in which Wisdom speaks in the first person, Proverbs 8: 22-31, is well-known:

> [22] The LORD created me at the beginning of His course, the first of His works of old.
> [23] In the distant past I was fashioned, At the beginning, before the origin of the earth.
> [24] There was still no deep when I was brought forth ...
> [27] I was there when He set the heavens into place; When He fixed the horizon upon the deep; [28] When He made the heavens above firm, and the fountains of the deep gushed forth;
> [29] When He assigned the sea its limit, So that its waters never transgress His command; When He fixed the foundations of the earth,
> [30] I was with him as a confidant, a source of delight to him every day, Rejoicing before Him at all times,
> [31] Rejoicing in His inhabited word, Finding delight with mankind.

In a quite extraordinary manner, this text states that Wisdom is the primal element within the universe, the first creation of God. This passage, which goes against the anti-anthropomorphic tendency of Wisdom literature,[2] presents a striking picture of Wisdom as God's confidant,

---

[1]See for example I Kings 7: 14.

[2]See the following passage in Marmorstein, "Essays in Anthropomorphism," p. 57: "...whilst the writings

rejoicing by his side. The question it poses for us is whether this is a personification of a mythological image or is it a personification of an aspect of God and, as such, an hypostasis?

Before answering this question, let us examine another passage, Job 28: 20-28. Most scholars believe that this passage was an addition to the text of Job, by a different author, since it does not fit into the narrative sequence of Job. However, there is no consensus as to whether it is an ancient text, pre-dating the writing of Job, or whether it was written after the text of Job was completed.[1]

> 20 But whence does Wisdom come? Where is the source of understanding?
> 21 It is hidden from the eyes of all living, Concealed from the fowl of heaven.
> 22 Abaddon and death say, 'We have only a report of it.
> 23 GOD understands the way to it; He knows its source.
> 24 For He sees to the ends of the earth, Observes all that is beneath the heaven;
> 25 When he fixed the weight of the winds, Set the measure of the waters;
> 26 When He made a rule for the rain, and a course for the thunderstorms,
> 27 Then he saw it, and gauged it; He measured it and probed it.
> 28 He said to man, See! Fear of the LORD is Wisdom; To shun evil is understanding.

This passage has certain similarities to Proverbs 8: 21-32, since here Wisdom is presented as crucial to the process of creation. Wisdom is presented as exclusively the province of God. Only God can know Wisdom. The Wisdom of God differs from the Wisdom of humanity which is understood as the fear of the Lord; the wisdom that is appropriate for humanity does not comprehend the essence of Wisdom herself. Many scholars speculate that the last line of this poem was added on by a later editor who was unwilling to accept its otherwise pessimistic conclusion, that the essence of Wisdom, divine Wisdom, is unknowable and inaccessible to humanity.

Von Rad argues that the account of Wisdom given in this passage is not commensurate with the idea of Wisdom as an hypostasis. (In his argument, the term hypostasis is construed

---

of the wisdom literature are very poor in anthropomorphic passages, Psalmists and Prophets furnish a great abundance of such material, derived from old mythical reminiscences."

[1]Helmer Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom, Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East,* (Lund: Häkan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1947), p. 92. See also, Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel,*p. 148-149.

narrowly.[1]) Instead, he believes that this passage points to a sense of Wisdom immanent in the world, "implanted by God in creation, the divine mystery of creation."[2] For von Rad, Wisdom is both the order imposed upon the world by God at its creation and the order which God used to create the world. It is inherent within the fabric of the world. Although certain inroads may, perhaps, be made in the discovery of this order, in essence, it is something unknowable to human beings.

Von Rad is right in arguing that in Job 28, Wisdom is presented as being inherent within the fabric of the world. It is the component of creation which helps to establish order in the world.

> [23] GOD understands the way to it; He knows its source... [26] When He made a rule for the rain, and a course for the thunderstorms,
> [27] Then he saw it, and gauged it; He measured it and probed it.

God understands it and knows its place, he sees it, declares it, establishes it and searches it out. In this passage, God has a manifold relationship with Wisdom, and is not simply its creator and manipulator. Wisdom is presented as possessing a certain independence from God. Either Wisdom is a principle that God generated first for the purpose of creating the world (like Proverbs 8) or Wisdom was pre-existent and God made use of it in the creation of the world. Although Wisdom is not personified within this context, it is presented as being so abstract that it is almost esoteric. Even God must search for it. However, this conception of Wisdom does not play a role as an intermediary between humanity and God. It does not represent that aspect of God that enables a relationship between humanity and God to be possible. The particular conception of Wisdom in this passage distinguishes it both from the other conceptions of Wisdom examined in this section and from the two other binary conceptions of God investigated so far.

---

[1]Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p. 147. "The situation would be different if one were to decide to take the word 'hypostasis' very widely, as an objectification or personification of a concept. In that case it would be applicable... But since it has already become such a loaded term, we shall avoid it completely." In this paper, on the contrary, 'hypostasis' is understood in broader terms.

[2]Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel,* p. 148.

The final set of texts I will examine in which Wisdom is personified comes from Ben Sira; here, too, Wisdom speaks in the first person. Although this text falls outside the canon of the Hebrew Bible, it is an important text within Jewish tradition. The fact that it is later than all the other texts that we have considered adds to its interest, since Ben Sira is consciously attempting a synthesis of several supernal biblical themes in his presentation of Wisdom. The first text is Ben Sira 24: 1- 22.

> [1]Here the praise of Wisdom from her own mouth as she speaks with pride among her people,
> [2]before the assembly of the Most High and in the presence of the heavenly host:
> [3]I am the word which was spoken by the Most High; it was I who covered the earth like a mist.
> [4]My dwelling place was in high heaven; my throne was in a pillar of cloud...
> [10]Before time began he created me, and I shall remain for ever.
> [11]In the sacred tent I ministered in his presence, and so I came to be established in Zion....
> [19]'Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruit.
> [20]The memory of me is sweeter than syrup, the possession of me sweeter than honey dripping from the comb.
> [21]Whoever feeds on me will be hungry for more, and whoever drinks from me will thirst for more.
> [22]To obey me is to be safe from disgrace; those who work in Wisdom will not go astray.'[1]

We notice immediately that in depicting Wisdom, Ben Sira has borrowed extensively, not only from the imagery of creation, but also from the vocabulary which is used for the כָּבוֹד in the Priestly texts.

> [4]My throne was in a pillar of cloud... [11]In the sacred tent, I ministered to his presence.

By explicating Wisdom through the imagery of the Priestly texts, it is clear that Ben Sira believes that it was Wisdom which manifested itself as the כָּבוֹד earlier on within biblical history. He understands these terms as being interchangeable. This fact is an indication that the precise cultic meaning of the Priestly texts no longer existed clearly within Ben Sira's society. By the time that he wrote his work, the distinctions indicated by these various terms were no

[1]Ecclesiasticus 24: 1- 22, *The New English Bible with the Apocrypha,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

longer apparent to the cultural elite in Jerusalem. This is one reason that gives him license to compress the imagery associated with the כָּבוֹד into his composite sketch of Wisdom. In Ben Sira's mind, there is no gap between these two terms; thus, it was not problematic for him to dress the figure of Wisdom in Priestly garments. In addition, it indicates that for Ben Sira, Wisdom has subsumed piety.

The other justification for compressing these images together is the process of reasoning by analogy, a method that was common in the Hellenistic world. Accordimg to this method, once a formal equivalence between two sets of values is established, then the properties belonging to each become interchangeable. In Ben Sira, this process is assumed or innate. It is not explicated. It is simply a tacit part of Ben Sira's reasoning process. The equivalence assigned to the כָּבוֹד and Wisdom by Ben Sira shows that, in his mind, whatever value is placed on כָּבוֹד can also be ascribed to Wisdom and vice versa.

Ben Sira also promotes the conception of Wisdom found in Proverbs, that Wisdom was created by God before the rest of the universe to aid in its creation. However, there are many passages in Ben Sira, however, in which Wisdom is explicated, but not personified. In the following passage, which is the opening passage of the book, the interpretation of Wisdom is reminiscent of the discussion of Wisdom in Job. There is, however, this difference between the two passages. The capacity of human beings to receive the Lord's Wisdom is conceived of as greater in Ben Sira than in Job.

> 1:1 All Wisdom is from the Lord; Wisdom is with him for ever.
> 2 Who can count the sand of the sea, the drops of rain, or the days of unending time?
> 3 Who can measure the height of the sky, the breadth of the earth or the depth of the abyss?
> 4 Wisdom was first of all created things;
> 5 intelligent purpose has been there from the beginning.
> 6 Who has laid bare the root of Wisdom?
> 7 Who has understood her subtlety?
> 8 One alone is wise, the Lord most terrible, seated upon his throne.
> 9 It is he who created her, surveyed and measured her, and infused her into all his works.
> 10 To all mankind he has given her in some measure, but in plenty to those who love him.[1]

[1]Ecclesiasticus 1: 1-10, in *The New English Bible with the Apocrypha.*

In this passage, we see a development of two major themes concerning Wisdom. In the first and last lines, we see a return to an ancient, biblical theme that was discussed in the introduction to this section; Ben Sira notes that Wisdom is given to individual human beings as a gift from God. There is also a return to the theme of creation. Wisdom is the first thing created by God and is inherent within the rest of creation. Yet, Wisdom remains circumscribed by God and is completely knowable only to the divine.

In this speech, as well as in the first one we examined, we sense Ben Sira's conscious harmonization of diverse Wisdom themes that have appeared within the canonized tradition. His interpretation of Wisdom lacks the profundity of those other books since his voice is that of a harmonizer not of an original interpreter. This fact tacitly informs us that harmonization of disparate biblical themes was a normative practice in Judaism during the time in which he wrote. This practice epitomizes the intellectual and spiritual consciousness of a certain segment of society within Ben Sira's era.

Given the fact that Ben Sira incorporates all the various themes that pertain to Wisdom, it is difficult to assess whether the idea of the personification of Wisdom is truly important to him. Is it merely a mode in which Wisdom has appeared previously, or, does the fact that it has appeared previously canonize the idea for Ben Sira and necessitate its inclusion in his explication of Wisdom?

The portrayal of Wisdom differs from both of the two previous hypostases we have examined. Unlike the כָּבוֹד, which is a primary materialization of God, or the Name of the Lord, which is an abstract intermediary between God and humanity, Wisdom is a personification of an aspect or faculty of God. Of the three examples we have discussed, it has the most independence. Wisdom is portrayed somewhat independently from God in the texts we have analyzed. She is invariably portrayed as something that God possesses and that humanity seeks, sometimes fruitlessly, sometimes with success. While the original definitions of hypostasis appertain both to the כָּבוֹד and to the Name of the Lord in different senses, it is the definition of

hypostasis in an applied, modern sense that describes Wisdom. Wisdom can accurately be characterized as "a divine being, half independent ... which represents a personification of an attribute ... of a higher god."[1] According to this definition, an hypostasis is a personification of an attribute of God. This is a fitting description of the portrayal of Wisdom in the texts we have examined.

As a result of this conclusion, that the figure of Wisdom is an hypostasis, we can add another point to our analysis of the text of Ben Sira. Recall for a moment the equivalence that Ben Sira posed between the כָּבוֹד and the figure of Wisdom. One important consequence of this analogical maneuver is that the כָּבוֹד receives the same status that is placed on the figure of Wisdom. According to our analysis, the figure of Wisdom is an hypostasis in the modern sense of personification as utilized by scholars of the ancient Near East; so, too, the text of Ben Sira provides evidence that, at the time of its composition, there was at least one school of thought in Israel that understood the כָּבוֹד in this manner.[1] According to its original usage, the manner in which the כָּבוֹד can be considered an hypostasis is both more narrow and more subtle. The fact that Ben Sira felt free to interchange it so readily with the figure of Wisdom provides an eloquent argument that during the period in which he wrote, he had license to suggest that the כָּבוֹד was also a personification of God. Since Ben Sira's world view is in no way revolutionary, but, rather, is conservative, it is probable that this was an accepted interpretation of the כָּבוֹד, at least, from the time that he wrote, if not from before that date. Thus, the date of composition of Ben Sira is really the *terminus ad quem* for determining at what point re-interpretations of the כָּבוֹד began to take on the quality of personification.[2]

The theological currents that result from this conceptual evolution are fundamental

---

[1]Another key text within this sequence is the Aramaic Levi document which was composed just prior to Ben Sira, during the late third century BCE. It contains the statement, "[And they shall seat him upon a throne of glory, to] listen to the words of his wisdom. [A great richness of glory is wisdom for] whomever knows it, and a treasure [for all who acquire it], *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, Florentino García Martínez, ed.,p. 268. This is 1Q Aramaic Levi (1Q21 [1QTLevi ar]), Fragment 5:18.

[2]Sigmund Mowinckel, "Hypostasen," column 2065.

to developments within early rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity. It is a decisive occurrence. Beginning in the late second temple period and continuing into the rabbinic age, individual elements from distinct biblical conceptions of God which were projected into the various hypostases merge together to form composite figures. Thus, from the late Second Temple period onwards, the biblical forms that we have identified no longer remain pristine and determinate. The resulting figures cannot be said to be born of only one tradition, but, rather, contain components of several traditions. They are hybrid forms appearing with diverse traits from the disparate biblical hypostases. There are examples of this phenomenon within Judaism and in traditions that are dependent on Judaism yet outside its bounds, such as Samaritanism, Gnosticism, early Christianity and Magharianism. Let us here, briefly, consider two illustrations of this phenomenon.

One instance worth considering occurs in the Wisdom of Solomon, whose author was familiar with the text of Ben Sira.[1] As we have just seen, Ben Sira directly applied the imagery of the Glory to his articulation of Wisdom and in doing so made each of them equivalent forces. But, the author of the Wisdom of Solomon reconciles these two themes somewhat differently. Instead, he equates Wisdom not directly with the Glory, but with the emanation of the Glory.

> ...[K]αὶ ἀπόρροια τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος δόξης εἰλικρινής...
>
> ...[She is] a pure effluence from the glory of the Almighty...[2] [*Wisdom of Solomon* 7:25.]

It is not surprising that the author, who was familiar with middle Platonism, would understand Wisdom, to his mind an expression of intellect, as an effluence or emanation of the divine which is pure intelligence. Nor is this the sole occurence of such an apprehension within Judeo-Hellenistic thought. Other examples occur in Philo; but this quote in particular recalls the line from Hebrews noted in the preamble to this paper.[3]

---

[1]David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, The Anchor Bible Series, trans. by David Winston, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), pp. 3-63.

[2]*Wisdom of Solomon, The Anchor Bible*, trans. and comm. by David Winston, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1979), p. 184.

[3] It is likely that the author of Hebrews was aware of the Wisdom of Solomon, although a specific literary dependence is harder to establish. See, Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 7. Attridge believes that the

1:3 ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ.

1:3 He [Jesus] is the effulgence of God's Glory [Kabod] and the stamp of God's hypostasis.

It is interesting to note the similarity in language and imagery with which both authors express the relation of Wisdom and Jesus to God, respectively. Both Wisdom and Jesus are understood as related in a very similar way to the Glory of God, as its effluence or effulgence, underlining once again the importance of the Glory as a key to the understanding of God within the first century CE in the Jewish-Hellenistic community. Furthermore, in the latter quote, we can see clearly that Jesus has superseded the concept of Wisdom developed in the Wisdom of Solomon, so that properties formerly belonging to the Wisdom tradition are now accorded to Jesus. The concept of Jesus now encompasses the Wisdom tradition. He is also understood as a physical expression of the Glory of God. Thus, the figure of Jesus is able to create another manner of reconiliation between the Glory and Wisdom, originally disparate forms for expressing aspects of God.

Finally, the image presented within Hebrews, of Christ as the effulgence of God's glory and the physical stamp of God's actualized being, is related to the way the term "hypostasis" is later utilized within the history of religions. This image anticipates the understanding of both Adam Kadmon and Metatron as hypostases of God in early Jewish and Gnostic thought in so much as they are physicalized correlates to the essence of God who cannot himself be contained or fully represented.[1]

One salient, fifth century, Rabbinic example of this tendency can be seen in the angelic figure Metatron. To begin with, in the Babylonian Talmud, it is reported that Metatron bears the same name as God.

זהו מטטרון, ששמו כשם רבו, דכתיב (שמות כ"ג) כי שמי בקרבו.

---

quote from Hebrews is derived from *Wisdom of Solomon* possibly by means of a Christian hymn.

[1]Guy Stroumsa, "Forms of God" p. 270ff. See also, Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends,* p. 65ff.

> This is Metatron, whose name is like his Master's, as it is written [Exodus 23:21], "because My Name is in him." [TB Sanhedrin 38b]

First of all, then, we know that Metatron is linked to the Angel of the Lord. Gershom Scholem and others have suggested that originally Metatron was known as the angel Yahoel, whose name, indeed, closely resembles the name of God.[1]

In addition, Metatron is also mentioned in conjunction with Elisha Ben Abuya (Acher) in TB Hagiga 15a. In this well known passage, whilst in heaven Acher sees Metatron sitting and writing the merits of Israel.

> אחר קיצץ בנטיעות.
> עליו הכתוב אומר (קהלת ה') אל תתן את פיך לחטיא את בשרך.
> מאי היא? חזא מיטטרון דאתיהבא ליה רשותא למיתב למיכתב
> זכוותא דישראל, אמר: גמירא דלמעלה לא הוי לא ישיבה ולא
> תחרות ולא עורף ולא עיפוי, שמא חס ושלום שתי רשויות הן.
>
> Acher cut down the shoots. About him it is written, (Koheleth 5) "Do not allow your mouth to cause your flesh to sin." What happened to him? He saw Metatron who had been given permission to sit and to write the merits of Israel. He said, "We learned that up above there was no sitting and no contention, no division[2], and no weariness. Perhaps, God forbid, there are two powers in heaven." [TB Hagiga 15a]

This portrayal of Metatron is interesting for several reasons. To begin with, Metatron is portrayed as sitting; yet, sitting in heaven immediately conjures up the idea of God's throne. No other chair is ever mentioned in the context of heaven. And, the heavenly throne is primarily associated with the כָּבוֹד. Additionally, the one person who is famous for writing in heaven is Enoch;[3] thus, this reference to Metatron's writing implies a connection between Metatron and

---

[1]Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), p. 68. "We also find Yahoel as the first in the various lists of the "Seventy Names of Metatron" compiled in the Gaonic period (seventh to eleventh centuries).

[2]Rashi's translation of this word is "no back" instead of "no division", by which he means that everything is in sight.

[3]Hurtado identifies Enoch as belonging to the group of exalted patriarchs that act as divine agents. This classification is one of the three groups of divine agents that existed beginning in Second Temple Judaism, which also includes personified divine attributes and angels. *One God, One Lord,* p. 53-56.

Enoch.[1] Finally, Metatron is an angelic being. This point creates a continuity between Metatron and the tradition of the Angel of God in Exodus, while also providing a criterion to distinguish Metatron from the tradition-complex of the כָּבוֹד, since the כָּבוֹד is never understood as an angelic being. This tension over the correct classification of Metatron lays bare a central, theological ambiguity in the Acher story. Metatron must be an angel, for otherwise the margin by which Acher's claim can be considered heretical is much reduced. Yet, as an angel, Metatron has appropriated some of the fixtures that had formerly belonged exclusively to an important aspect of God.

The figure of Metatron is composed of what were originally independent components from different hypostatic and intermediary traditions. At some point during the Second Temple period, most likely in the third century BCE, but not later than the first quarter of the second century, it became acceptable to create identifications between what were originally distinct hypostatic and intermediary traditions, resulting in the conflation of these traditions. This step can only take place once the boundaries that originally distinguished these traditions have begun to erode. The final step in this process occurs when discrete elements in distinct traditions evolve into new figures. I believe that this model can account for the development of not only Metatron, but also *Adam Kadmon*, the *Shi'ur Komah,* the Gnostic demiurge, the angel of the Magharians and other forms in which we see a variety of tradition components intermingled.

---

[1]Scholem remarks that this identification between Enoch and Metatron most likely developed during the second century CE, and not before. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* p. 68.

Still More Signs of Unity in the Book of Isaiah: The Significance of Third Isaiah

Gregory J. Polan, OSB
Conception Seminary College
Conception, MO 64433-0502

The monumental commentary of Bernhard Duhm[1] has directed the reading of the Book of Isaiah over the last century. Not everyone adheres strictly to Duhm's division into three distinct sections, but many follow his lead, allowing for nuances and refinements of his theory.[2] Much subsequent study of Isaiah demonstrates links among the sixty-six chapters that form a wonderfully complex prophetic vision. Growing interest in Hebrew literary style has uncovered a host of rhetorical elements that show just how carefully the written text of Isaiah's vision is structured.

Over a decade ago, while writing my dissertation, I discovered a pattern which in Isa 56:1 introduces Duhm's final section of the Book of Isaiah, Third Isaiah.[3] At that time, it was sufficient to point out the pattern with a promise to return to the question it poses, "what is its function?" That question is the subject of this paper and leads to further considerations.

Following the messenger formula of Isa 56:1aa, the nouns of v 1 form an ABCB pattern: (A) *mišpāṭ*, (B) *ṣĕdāqâ*, (C) *yēšû'āṯî*, (D) *wĕṣidqāṯey*. Several studies have shown the use of this pattern in biblical literature.[4] To consider the function of the ABCB pattern, we first

---

[1] B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia* (5th ed.; HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1968).

[2] M. A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39 with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996) 41-48. In these pages, Sweeney brings together a number of theories, including his own, which show how scholarship has built on the conjectures of Duhm but also gone beyond them with significant insights showing the intricate lines of connection throughout the Book of Isaiah.

[3] G. J. Polan, *In the Ways of Justice Toward Salvation: A Rhetorical Analysis of Isaiah 56-59* (American University Studies. Series VII, Theology and Religion; vol. 13; New York/Berne: Peter Lang, 1986) 55-61.

[4] S. Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) 43-44; J. Kselman, "The ABCB Pattern: Further Examples," *VT* 32 (1982) 224-

consider its constitutive elements in their literary context.

In Isa 56:1, elements (A) and (B) form an exhortation: "Maintain justice, and do what is right." The (C) and repeated (B) elements announce a forthcoming act of salvation: "soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed." The repetition of *ṣdqh* in the (B) elements links the two motifs of exhortation to righteous living and the arrival of salvation: the practice of righteousness is motivated by the divine oath of deliverance. The pattern of exhortation-salvation is repeated soon in Isa 56:4-5, where the exhortation to the eunuchs is followed by redemptive promises, and then in 56:6-7: counsel to the foreigners and the subsequent divine assurance of incorporation as covenant people. Thus we see the ABCB pattern at the outset of Isa 56:1, a pattern of exhortation-salvation announcement echoed twice in 56:4-5 and 56:6-7.

The importance of the ABCB pattern in Isa 56:1 extends beyond the opening literary unit of 56:1-8. The words of the ABCB pattern form a pattern through several chapters of Isaiah 56-66. What is distinctive is that they recur in pairs: *mišpāṭ* with *ṣĕdāqâ*, (A) - (B); *yēšaʿ* with *ṣĕdāqâ*, (C) - (B). The following diagram demonstrates the movement of these patterns through Isaiah 56-66.

I. *mišpāṭ // ṣĕdāqâ*, (A) - (B)
56:1a - *mišpāṭ // ṣĕdāqâ*
58:2b - *ṣĕdāqâ // ûmišpāṭ*
58:2c - *mišpĕṭê-ṣedeq*
59:4a - *bĕṣedeq // nišpāṭ*
59:9a - *mišpāṭ // ṣĕdāqâ*
59:14a - *mišpāṭ // ûṣdāqâ*

II. *yēšaʿ // ṣĕdāqâ*, (C) - (B)
56:1b - *yēšûʿātî // wĕṣidqātey*
59:16b - *watôšaʿ // wĕṣidqātô*
59:17a - *ṣĕdāqâ // yĕšûʿâ*
61:10b - *yešaʿ // ṣĕdāqâ*
62:1b - *ṣidqâ // wîšûʿātâ*
63:1c - *biṣdāqâ // lĕhôšîaʿ*

29; B. Porten and U. Rappaport, "Poetic Structure in Genesis IX:7," *VT* 21 (1971) 363-69; W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 186-87.

A few observations can be made regarding the patterns discerned in this diagram. First, the ABCB pattern in 56:1 appears to function as introductory, inaugurating key themes that appear later as parallel pairs in Third Isaiah. Second, in the movement of the text, the exhortation terminology of (A) and (B) precedes the salvation language of (C) and (B) imitating the ABCB pattern of Isa 56:1. Third, five repetitions of the (A) and (B) parallel pairs are followed by five repetitions of the (C) and (B) pairs. And fourth, the first two repetitions of (A) and (B) in Isa 58:2b and 58:2c, and the first two repetitions of (C) and (B) in Isa 59:16b and 59:17a form a chiastic structure:

58:2b	(A) *ṣĕdāqâ*		59:16b	(A) *watôšaʿ*
	(B) *ûmišpāṭ*			(B) *wĕṣidqātô*
58:2c	(B) *mišpĕṭê*		59:17a	(B) *ṣĕdāqâ*
	(A) *ṣedeq*			(A) *yĕšûʿâ*.

Such patterns in literary style suggest careful editorial work to highlight the themes presented at the outset of Third Isaiah, and then to recall them at certain points later in the text.

In other sections of the Isaian corpus, it is noteworthy that Isaiah 1-39 follows a similar sequence of ordering of the (A) - (B) elements, and Isaiah 40-55 of the (C) - (B) elements. Consider the diagram below.

I. *mišpāṭ // ṣĕdāqâ*, (A) - (B)	II. *yēšaʿ // ṣĕdāqâ*, (C) - (B)
Isa 1:21b - *mišpāṭ // ṣedeq*	
1:27 - *bĕmišpāṭ // biṣdāqâ*	
5:7c - *lĕmišpāṭ // liṣdāqâ*	
5:16 - *bammišpaṭ // biṣdāqâ*	
9:6d - *bĕmišpāṭ // ûbiṣdāqâ*	
16:5b - *mišpāṭ // ṣedeq*	
26:9b - *mišpāṭeykā // ṣedeq*	
28:17a - *mišpāṭ // ûṣdāqâ*	
32:1a - *lĕṣedeq // lĕmišpāṭ*	
32:16 - *mišpāṭ // ûṣdāqâ*	
33:5 - *mišpāṭ // ûṣdāqâ*	
	Isa 45:8b-c - *yešaʿ // ûṣdāqâ*
	45:21d - *ṣaddîq // ûmôšîaʿ*
	46:13a - *ṣidqātî // ûtšûʿātî*
	51:5a - *ṣidqî // yišʿî*

51:6c - *wîšûʿātî // wĕṣidqātî*
51:8b - *wĕṣidqātî // wîšûʿātî*

It is important to see that there are no examples of the (A) - (B) pairs in Isaiah 40-55 and none of the (C) - (B) pairs in Isaiah 1-39. The (A) - (B) pairs are confined to Isaiah 1-39 and the (C) - (B) pairs to Isaiah 40-55. The series of (A) - (B) pairs in Isaiah 1-39 followed by the series of (C) - (B) pairs in Isaiah 40-55 resemble the pattern found in Isaiah 56-66. Could this indicate a direction for the reading of Isaiah 56-66 in light of the patterns found in Isaiah 1-39 and 40-55? Was Isaiah 56-66 conceived by its final editors as a "paradigm" or "miniature" of Isaiah 1-55?

The (A) - (B) elements of Third Isaiah explicate contexts of exhortation and pronouncement of judgment. In Isa 58:2, the chiastic use of the (A) - (B) elements presents a striking example of irony as the description of the just and righteous nation in v 2b moves then to describe an unrighteous nation asking for justice. Then in 59:4,9,14, the (A) - (B) elements appear to be strategically placed at the outset of each strophe, highlighting the absence of justice and righteousness in the lives of the people under scrutiny.[5] Descriptions of the departure of justice and righteousness from the scene are like a refrain which keeps lamenting the paucity of divine virtue.

There are some similarities between the uses of the (A) - (B) elements in Isaiah 56-66 and those in Isaiah 1-39. First, as the (A) - (B) pair appears at the outset of Third Isaiah in 56:1, the same pair recurs twice in the opening chapter of the Book of Isaiah. In that opening chapter, setting the stage for the whole prophecy to follow, the (A) - (B) pair appears twice; both occurrences tell of the need for Zion to embrace the ways of justice and righteousness. In Isa 1:21, Zion is described as possessing *mišpāṭ* and *ṣĕdāqâ* at her moment of faithfulness, but now she is acting the whore and murderer. In Isa 1:27, Zion's hope for redemption lies in her willingness to repent which will lead her to justice and righteousness. Here is an echo of that opening exhortation in Isa 56:1, "maintain justice, and do what is right."

In Isa 5:7, the conclusion of the "Song of the Vineyard" ends the allegory with the divine hope that Israel and Judah would practice justice

---

[5] Polan, *In the Ways*, 249-250.

and righteousness; instead their behavior has brought bloodshed and wailing. Then in Isa 5:17, the (A) - (B) pair follows a word of judgment against Jerusalem describing her downward movement toward Sheol, while an upward and exalted depiction of God characterizes the Holy One of Israel as just and righteous. There is a similarity here with Isa 58:2, which tells of the nation feigning just behavior but demonstrating wicked deeds (Isa 58:3-4).

In Isa 9:6d and 16:5, the (A) - (B) pair describes the actions of the hoped-for Davidic monarch in what may be a song from an enthronement ceremony. The establishment of the messianic figure in Isa 9:6 will bring lasting justice and righteousness. The context of Isa 16:5 is a lament over Moab who is facing an invasion; yet in that moment of anticipated destruction, it is again a Davidic ruler who will seek justice and right to reverse a terrible situation. These two examples witness a new use of the (A) - (B) pair: to tell of the coming for God's anointed one, the one to establish the commands of God for *mišpāṭ* and *ṣĕdāqâ*.

The next two examples of the (A) - (B) pair, in Isa 26:9 and 28:17, appear in reference to Judah and Jerusalem. As elsewhere, the prophetic voice of Isa 26:9 issues a threat to the well-being of Jerusalem should she be found lacking in righteous judgments.[6] At the same time, the speaker affirms the Lord's righteousness by contrasting divine goodness with human wickedness.[7] In Isa 28:17, the context is a word of warning to the rulers in Jerusalem. God is the speaker making it clear that both divine command and divine actions will establish the way of justice and righteousness; thus will Zion be made whole only by divine power.

The next three examples of the (A) - (B) pairs deliver the consistent message seen thus far in First Isaiah. The passage in Isa 32:1 is introduced strongly with the particle *hen*, confirming the belief that God's anointed will establish a rule founded on *mišpāṭ* and *ṣĕdāqâ*. In 32:16, there is a clear echo of the kind of rule that will be established, but now it is God, not the king, who will bring it about. And finally in Isa 33:5, Zion is described as full of justice and righteousness. As Marvin Sweeney notes

---

[6] In Isa 26:7-8, there are several more uses of *mišpāṭ* and *ṣĕdāqâ* which appear in clusters; since the terms are not strictly a parallel pair, they have not been discussed here.

[7] Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 339.

in his consideration of these three passages, there is a sense here of looking ahead to the second major division in the Isaian corpus.[8] From the outset of the Isaian prophecy in Chapter One, God has been calling for justice and righteousness to be "the order of the day." Now the establishment of *mišpāṭ* and *ṣĕdāqâ* will be the signs that point to a "new order" of salvific proportions, which Divine Goodness will accomplish. The advent of right judgment upon the earth reveals the redemption at hand.

Our study of the (A) - (B) pairs demonstrates a consistent message of the divine call to just and right living, accomplished in whatever way possible. Whether it be through a Davidic ruler, repentance by the people, or divine intervention, justice and righteousness must be the order of the day.

We now turn our attention to the (C) - (B) pairs in Third Isaiah, Chapters 56-66. The first example in Isa 59:16b-17a follows the same pattern of Isa 58:2, with the (C) - (B) in a chiastic structure. The context describes God as a Divine Warrior, clothed and armed with the garments and weapons of salvation and deliverance (*yĕšaʿ* and *ṣĕdāqâ*) to bring about redemption. The text describes this act as accomplished by God alone. In 61:10b, the prophet speaks of God bestowing upon him the garments of salvation and the mantle of deliverance. There is a connection here with the previous passage relating salvation to clothing, first to the Divine Warrior and then to the prophet. In Isa 62:1b, the prophet is again speaking; here he asserts that he will not stop announcing the condition of Zion and her need for divine assistance until her redemption is accomplished. And finally, in Isa 63:1c, the context is again that of the Divine Warrior, this time coming from Edom, again having accomplished the task of vengeance and liberation. Note that the Divine Warrior imagery serves as bookends enclosing Isaiah 60-62, a text abounding in descriptions of Zion as God's beloved spouse, rescued from darkness and abandonment.

In the (C) - (B) pairs in Second Isaiah, the initial pair is in the form of an ABA pattern in Isa 45:8.

---

[8] Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 420, 432.

(A) *ṣedeq*
(B) *yešaʿ*
(A) *ûṣdāqâ*

It is clear that (B) *yešaʿ* and (A) *ûṣdāqâ* form the parallel pair here; but the first use of *ṣedeq* is linked to its repetition later in the verse. The skies that rain down righteousness cause divine deliverance to sprout up. The elements of a universal salvation are made clear in this context by the merism of heaven and earth. Later in 45:21d, the text is frequently translated, "a righteous God (*ṣaddîq*) and a Savior." But, considering the parallel structure of *ṣaddîq* // *ûmôšîaʿ*, it might better be translated "a Deliverer and a Savior."[9] The literary context suggests vindication and victory, and is followed by the divine invitation to turn and be saved by the One; there is no other. The next example, Isa 46:12-13 presents the pattern twice in an AABB pattern.

(A) *miṣṣĕdāqâ* (v 12ab)
(A) *ṣidqātî* (v 13aa)
(B) *ûtšûʿātî* (v 13ab)
(B) *tĕšûʿâ* (v 13ba)

Deliverance is far from those who are stubborn; yet for Zion there is salvation, which God, called Savior in 45:21, brings with dispatch.

In Isa 51:5-6, there is another chiasm to heighten the description of the salvific experience.

(A) *ṣidqî* (v 5a)
(B) *yišʿî* (v 5ab)
(B) *wîšûʿātî* (v 6c)
(A) *wĕṣidqātî* (v 6c)

The chiasm functions to show a reversal from a situation of languishing earth and a dying-like-gnats, to eternal salvation and unending deliverance. It is worth noting that the verb with *ṣidqî* in v 5a (*qārôb*) is the same found in Isa 56:1b, announcing the nearness of salvation. Then, just a few verses later, the parallel pair (C) - (B) appears again in 51:8. Here v 8 forms a

---

[9] J. Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66," in *IB* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1956) 533.

climactic contrast with what has been developed earlier in the strophe.[10] The imagery developed in the preceding verses tells of a world disintegrating and decaying, yet the intervention of God will bring a reversal in those horrifying events and replace them with an act of deliverance that will continue to succeeding generations.

The (C) - (B) elements from Isaiah 40-55, in sum, tell of divine righteousness that brings salvation and deliverance for Zion. The action of God comes as a mighty deed enacting wonderful blessings, in contrast to the horrible events which affect the wicked and unjust. The salvation offered is everlasting and gives Zion a share in divine victory. Like the (C) - (B) elements in Third Isaiah, these deeds of deliverance rest only within the power of God.

What might be conjectured in an examination of the elements of the ABCB pattern of Isa 56:1 through the whole of the Isaian corpus? In light of the (A) - (B) pairs in Isaiah 1-39 and the (C) - (B) pairs in Isaiah 40-55, I suggest that Third Isaiah may be a miniature model of the basic teaching of Isaiah for a new age, the post-exilic community. At the very outset, in Isa 56:1, it lays the groundwork for key thematic teaching in the tradition of the great Jerusalem prophet, Isaiah.

> Thus says the Lord;
> Maintain *justice*, and do what is *right*,
> For soon my *salvation* will come,
> And my *deliverance* be revealed. (Isa 56:1)

There stands the prophetic message of Isaiah as found in 1-55. But then, the prophet will go on to talk about the foreigner and the eunuch who seek entrance into the covenant community of Israel (Isa 56:3-7); the prophet addresses questions of justice and salvation in a new era when the effects of two generations of exiles bring forth new issues for the people of God. In Isa 58:2, Isaiah's teaching on justice and righteousness is applied to a people appearing to suffer the spiritual ills of previous generations. Going through the motions of the ritual associated with fasting has not yielded results expected by the prophetic teaching. Instead of the fruits of justice, there has been an increase of wickedness, and the prophet condemns it. In Isa 59:4,9,14, this same community is depicted in a forcefully expressed

---

[10] Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah," 595.

communal lament over the absence of justice and righteousness; their deplorable situation is openly confessed:

> We wait for *justice*, but there is none;
> For *salvation*, but it is far from us.
> For our transgressions before you are many,
> And our sins testify against us.
> Our transgressions indeed are with us,
> And we know our iniquities. (Isa 59:11b-12)

But this tragic situation gives way to the only possible hope: a divine intervention. In Isa 59:16-17, the Divine Warrior clothes and arms himself with salvation and deliverance for the people, accomplishing their liberation without the assistance of another. The prophet then praises the divine intervention of God in bringing salvation and deliverance in Isa 61:10-11. He refuses to be silent until such blessings come upon Zion (Isa 62:1).

After the elements of the ABCB pattern in Third Isaiah, the book of the prophet Isaiah is brought to a close. Scholars have shown how Chapters 65-66 form an inclusion with Chapter One, bringing to fulfillment the words initiated by the prophet at the outset of the vision.[11] The vision of a universal salvation is described in those last chapters where the reader finds the judgment of First Isaiah (Isa 66:5-6), the salvific comfort and universal deliverance of Second Isaiah (Isa 66:7-11), and the issues of participation in the covenant community in Third Isaiah (Isa 66:18-21).

No one would deny the significance of the words of the ABCB pattern in Isa 56:1 as constituting key thematic elements in the Isaian teaching. The word *mišpāṭ* occurs in the Book of Isaiah 42 times, and a form of *ṣĕdāqâ* 72 times. The very name of the prophet Isaiah, itself a form of *yēšaʿ*, tells the reader that at the heart of this prophecy is a message of salvation. The placement of these words in a rhetorical pattern at the outset of Third Isaiah shows the direction of the message to follow. Third Isaiah distills the prophetic message of the Isaian tradition at a time

---

[11] R. Lack, *La Symbolique du Livre d'Isaïe. Essai sur l'image littéraire comme élément de structuration*. (AnBib 59; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1973) 139-40; L. J. Liebreich, "The Compilation of the Book of Isaiah," *JQR* 46 (1955-56) 276; 47 (1956-57) 127.

when the whole message of both judgment and salvation needed to be explained to a new audience in a new era. For that reason, Third Isaiah bears many of the similar elements in both First and especially Second Isaiah. Third Isaiah is intimately and integrally connected to the rest of the Isaian corpus through vocabulary, thematic development, imagery, and figures of speech. But it must also be noted that Third Isaiah has distinct elements distinguishing it from the other parts of the Isaian prophecy. For example, even as Third Isaiah uses the message and precise vocabulary of Second Isaiah, the text evidences a new twist in Chapters 56-66 in the way vocabulary and imagery are employed.[12]

The ABCB pattern of Isa 56:1 does not answer all questions that arise in the rich and complex text of Third Isaiah, but it certainly provides a key for understanding aspects of the message of Third Isaiah and other parts of the Isaian corpus. As a rhetorical device at the outset of Third Isaiah it poses the question, "what is its function?" This paper has shown how the ABCB structure of Isa 56:1 develops in Third Isaiah, and how its elements are found in sections of both First and Second Isaiah, and follow a consistent pattern of repetition. The ABCB pattern functions as a signpost for traditional Isaian teaching and announces what follows in subsequent texts. It aligns the message of Third Isaiah with the preceding Isaian message and gives it authority. And importantly, the divine teaching about justice and salvation, righteousness and deliverance, proclaimed in the Isaian tradition, remain constant for a new age with new challenges to upright living before God and neighbor.

---

[12] P. Hanson notes examples of where Third Isaiah uses material of Second Isaiah, but consistently changes it in some manner. See *The Dawn of Apocalyptic. The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) 44-45.

Isaiah LVI 1-8

by
D.W. Van Winkle
Seattle Pacific University

Introduction

Isa. lvi 1-8 paints a picture of God's acceptance of all people who keep the covenant. Eunuchs are assured that they will receive a *yād wāšēm* which is better than sons and daughters. Foreigners are described as ministering to God, loving the name of God, and becoming God's servants. God will bring these to his holy mountain, make them joyful in his house of prayer and will accept their sacrifices and burnt offerings. This picture seems to clash with the more nationalistic portrayal of Isa. lx-lxii and it raises the question as to how it accords with the rest of Isaiah. Furthermore, how does this passage fit with the reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra, with the confinement of the priesthood to the sons of Aaron found in Num. xviii and Ezek. xliv, and Dtn. xxiii which excludes eunuchs and certain Gentiles from inclusion in the assembly of Yahweh? This paper will attempt to answer these questions by providing an exposition of Isa. lvi 1-8 and by examining its relationship to these other texts.

Unity of Isa. lvi 1-8

Isa. lv 13 concludes the message of Deutero-Isaiah and Isa. lvi 9 with its summons to the beasts of the field, marks the beginning of a new unit. Isa. lvi 1-8 appears to be a complex unit although there are changes of speaker. Verse 1 contains Yahweh's direct address and in *v.* 2 the prophet comments upon God's words. In *v.* 3 the prophet quotes the lament of the eunuchs and foreigners. God responds to the eunuchs in verses 4-5 and to the foreigners in verses 6-7. In the response to the foreigners, there is a shift of speakers between God and the prophet. In *v.* 6, the shift from prophet as speaker to Yahweh as speaker is indicated by the phrase "my covenant". God is the speaker once more in *v.* 7 and the speakers are mixed again in *v.* 8 as indicated by "I will gather yet others to him". Such change of speakers is characteristic of Isa. xl-lxvi (S. Meier, p. 258). While *v.* 8 may have originally been an independent unit, it provides a fitting conclusion to 1-8. As G.J. Polan (p. 44) points out there are several terms which are repeated

throughout this oracle.[1] For the purpose of this paper, I will treat 1-8 as an original unit.[2] If readers disagree, they can take the results as a reference to the final form of the text and make the necessary adjustments.

Exposition of Isa. lvi 1-8

Isa. lvi 1 applies Deutero-Isaiah's promise of salvation in Isa. xlvi 13 and Isa. li 5 to a new situation. As R. Rendtorff (pp. 183-85) points out, the two different concepts of *ṣĕdāqâ* are united in Isa. lvi 1. *ṣĕdāqâ* and *mišpāṭ* accentuate the righteousness which has to be kept and done. This is characteristic of Isaiah 1-39. *ṣĕdāqâ* and *yĕšû'â* emphasize God's own *ṣĕdāqâ* whose coming is announced and whose character will be *yĕšû'â*. This is typical of Isaiah xl-lv.

B. Duhm (p. 419) claims that this verse reflects works righteousness. J. Blenkinsopp (p. 94-95) alleges that the underlying idea is that fidelity can advance and sin retard the advent of salvation (cf. also lix 1-2), and that it is expressed here for the first time and taken up in early Christianity. B. Schramm (p. 118) maintains that the relationship between the two parts of this verse which are expressed by the conjunction *kî* is not to be understood in a conditional but rather in a causative sense. As L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner (p.470-71) indicate *kî* may be either causal or conditional.

---

[1] YHWH is used in 56:1, 3 *twice*, 4, 6 *twice*, 8, *šāmar* in 1, 2, 4, 6, *'āśâ* in 1, 2 *twice*, *ḥāzaq* in 2, 4, 6, and *šabbāt* in 2, 4, and 6.

[2] I do not agree with W. Lau, O.H. Steck and R. Wells that the author of Isa. 56:1-8 is a scribal prophet. In "Proselytes in Isaiah xl-lv?" I argue that it is difficult to evaluate claims of inner-biblical exegesis since unless there is a quotation formula, judgment is based on probability. In order to evaluate assertions of inner-biblical exegesis when the context does not explicitly suggest such a relationship, it is important to determine whether the similarities between passages are coincidental or intentional. In order to accomplish this, we need to attend to the significant terms used in common between passages which are claimed to be related and to take note of the terms which are not common. I assume particles and pronominal suffixes are insignificant unless evidence indicates otherwise. The more terms there are in common, the more likely the inner-biblical exegesis. It also seems important to demonstrate that the vocabulary is not the normal vocabulary of an author but instead results from inner-biblical exegesis. The more the vocabulary differs from that of the author the more likely the inner-biblical exegesis. Also the less frequent a shared term is in the Hebrew Bible the more likely the inner-biblical exegesis. Finally, terms which share a common root and synonyms need to be considered since these may verify inner-biblical exegesis. Once this relationship has been established, it is necessary to determine which text is older, how the author might have had access to this text, and to rule out the possibility of both texts dependence upon a third source.

However a conditional understanding of *kî* does not make sense. If *kî* introduces a conditional clause the verse should be translated something like "Keep justice, and do righteousness, if my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed" which does not construe. The conjunction *kî* may introduce a final clause but this is usually in response to an interrogative (W. Gesenius and E. Kautzsch §166b and B.K. Waltke and M. O'Conner §38.3b).The final *kî* is much rarer than the causal *kî*. Duhm's and Blenkinsopp's interpretations need for *kî* to introduce a purpose clause. However, *kî* is not used to introduce a purpose clause in the Hebrew Bible. If the author wanted to express that fidelity can advance and sin retard the advent of salvation, he could have used *l^{e}ma'am*, *ba'^{a}bûd*, or *'^{a}šer* to introduce the second part of this verse, or he could have introduced the first part of the verse with *kî* or *'im* and the second part with *'āz*. Therefore, it is likely that the community is commanded to keep justice and do righteousness because God's salvation and righteousness are about to be revealed. Finally, even if the second part of this verse indicates that fidelity can advance and sin retard the advent of salvation, it is doubtful that this is the first time this is expressed in the Hebrew Bible. Surely Ps. xcv 7b-11 and the narrative of the unsuccessful conquest of the land of Canaan in Num. xiii-xiv make this point, and Blenkinsopp has not demonstrated that these passages are later than Isa. lvi 1-8.

In *v.* 2 the prophet proclaims that the person who does this and holds it fast, who keeps from profaning the sabbath and keeps his hand from doing evil is fortunate. The expression *'ašrê* probably indicates that the prophet is speaking instead of God since God never pronounces some one to be *'ašrê*. If God were the speaker, the author could have used *b^{e}rākâ*. The universality of the proclamation is stressed by the terms *'ĕnôš* and *ben-'ādām*. There is some question as to what *ya'ăśeh-zzō't* and *yaḥăzîq bāh* refer. K. Koenen (p. 11) and Schramm (p. 119) believe that *zō't* and *bāh* connect *v.* 2 directly with *v.* 1 since keeping the sabbath and refraining from doing evil explicate what it means to keep justice and do righteousness. W. Lau (p.266) declares such a view unlikely since *v.* 2 and following begin a new theme, since demonstrative pronouns as a rule refer to the following, and since the pronouns refer to adherence to the covenant in 4b and 6bβ. The substantive claim is that demonstrative pronouns as a rule refer to what follows since it is questionable that *v.* 2 introduces a new theme and therefore these pronouns refer to "adherence to the covenant".

There are occasions when the expression *'āśâ* with *zo't* where *zo't* means this thing as opposed to modifying an immediately preceding noun such as this law (Dtn. vi 25), or this abomination (xiii 5) and it is clear whether *zo't* refers to what precedes or follows 13 times it refers to what precedes (Gen. iii 14, xx 5, 6,xxix 28, xliv 17, Judg. xv 6, 7, 2 Kgs.xix 31= Isa. xxxvii 32, Isa. ix 6, xli 20, Amos ix 12, 2 Chr. xxv 16) and to what follows four times (Lev. xxvi 16, Dtn. vi 25, Ps. vii 4, Prov. vi 3). Clearly the majority of usages demonstrate that it usually refers to what precedes so that at least the use of this expression constitutes an exception to Lau's rule. The usage of the expression *ḥāzaq* in the hiphil with *bāh* as its object is not helpful for determining the referent in Isa. lvi 2.[3] It is likely that *zō't* and *bāh* connect v. 2 directly with v. 1 since most often *'āśâ* with *zo't* where *zo't* means this thing refers to what precedes it and since it fits the context well. Polan (p. 53) also points out that *šmr* and *'āśâ* in verses 1 and 2 form an inclusion. In any case this verse demonstrates how important sabbath keeping was in the post-exilic community since it could be paired with "keeps his hand from doing any evil".

The speakers in verse 3 question the universality of the blessing proclaimed in verse 2. Foreigners wonder if Yahweh will separate them from his people and the eunuchs worry that they are a dry tree. The foreigners are described as *ben-hannēkār* instead of *gēr*. *gēr* is seldom used in prophetic literature (D. Kellermann, p. 447) and is never used in Isaiah xl-lxvi. It is possible that in verse 3 the foreigners are not called *gēr* since their status is questionable. A *gēr* was allowed to participate in the Passover (Num. ix 14), the day of atonement (Lev. xvi 29), the Feast of Booths (Dtn. xvi 14), and was singled out for special protection in Deuteronomy (xiv 29; xvi 11, 14; etc.). *ben- hannēkār* were forbidden from partaking of the passover (Ex. xii 43). According to Dtn. xiv 21 while an Israelite was forbidden from eating an animal who died, the animal could be given to a *gēr* and sold to a *ben- hannēkār*. Lev. xxii 25 prohibits an animal belonging to a *hannēkār* from being offered as sacrifice while Num. xv 29 allowed for the sin offering of a *gēr*. It is also possible that *ben-hannēkār* and *gēr* are synonymous for the author of Isa. lvi 1-8. The term *gēr* is used to refer to a foreigner who joins and cleaves to the house of Jacob in Isa. xiv 1. This passage probably depends upon either Deutero-Isaiah (H.G.M. Williamson, pp. 165-66) or Trito-Isaiah (M.A. Sweeney, pp.231-32). As Isa. xiv 2

[3] In Dtn. xxii 25 and 2 Sam. xiii 11 it refers to a man's seizing a woman and to someone seizing Dame wisdom in Prov. iii 18.

indicates, Israel will posses the foreigners (*gēr*) as male and female slaves and will rule over those who oppressed them. In this passage a *gēr* does not seem to enjoy a higher social status than a *ben-hannēkār*.

The verb *bādal* is the same verb that is used in Nehemiah and Ezra to refer to the Israelites' separating themselves from foreigners. While it is tempting to identify the reform of Nehemiah and Ezra as the backdrop for Isa. lvi 1-8, such temptation should be avoided. Neither Nehemiah nor Ezra seem to be concerned with the foreigners who cling to Yahweh and keep the covenant. Other passages such as in Lev. xx 24, 26, Num. xvi 9 and 1 Kgs viii 53 use *bādal* to describe Yahweh's setting Israel apart from the foreign nations. Finally we do not know enough about the history of Israel to be certain that it was only during Nehemiah's and Ezra's reforms that Israel sought to separate itself from the foreign nations. It seems that the context of lvi 1-8 is a reform movement which demanded the exclusion of proselytes. O.H. Steck (p.246-47), Schramm (p. 123) and P.A. Smith (pp.54-57) agree that it is difficult to relate this oracle to the reform of Nehemiah and Ezra.

The eunuch's lament employs a metaphor likening himself to a dry tree in that both are incapable of bearing fruit. The term *sārîs* refers to those who underwent involuntary castration in order to serve their masters. It is important to note that the eunuch does not lament his exclusion from Yahweh's people since this may be important for understanding the meaning of *yād wāšēm* in Isa. lvi 5 and the relationship of this passage to Dtn. xxiii.

In verses 4-5 God promises the eunuchs who keep the Sabbath, choose the things that please God and hold fast to God's covenant a *yād wāšēm* within God's house and within God's walls, which is better than sons and daughters, and an everlasting name which shall not be cut off. The characteristics of the eunuchs who receive God's promises are listed in verse 4. Again the importance of keeping the Sabbath is emphasized. Neither the things that please God nor the identity of the covenant is precisely identified. From the context of verse 1 the things that please God are preserving justice and doing righteousness. Since the context refers to the keeping of the Sabbath, the verse probably makes reference to the Mosaic covenant. In verse 5 God promises to give these eunuchs within God's house and walls a *yād wāšēm* which is better than sons or daughters and an everlasting name which will not be cut off. Blenkinsopp (p. 102) and Schramm (p. 124) correctly note the sexual pun in this last promise.

The meaning of the phrase *yād wāšēm* is much debated. In a forthcoming note (Van Winkle, "The Meaning of *yād wāšēm*") I argue that it means a "memorial stele". The immediate context favors this interpretation since a memorial stele is better than sons and daughters in that it endures longer. Endurance is stressed in this passage since the latter part of the verse emphasizes that the name is an everlasting name which will not be cut off and since the eunuch laments his lack of progeny using the figure of a dried up tree. This interpretation is favored by usage since in several passages *yād* means "monument" (1 Sam. xv 12 , 2 Sam.xviii 18, 1 Chr.xviii 3) or signpost (Ezek. xxi 24), the term *šēm* means monument in Isa. 55 13, and Zeph. iii 20 provides an example where *nātan* is used with *šēm* to refer to the spread of one's fame and reputation. Finally archeology supports such an interpretation since a steele at Hazor portrays two hands stretched upward, the Khirbet El-Qom stele has a figure of a hand which is approximately the size of a small human hand, and Punic inscriptions as found at Carthage in the last period often portray hands on steles. While the figures on these steles are subject to diverse interpretations, there seems to be an association with hands and steles.

In verses 6-7 the author addresses the concerns of the foreigners. As verse 4 lists the characteristics of the eunuchs who receive God's promises, verse 6 lists the attributes of foreigners who are recipients of God's pledges. According to verse 6, the promise is made to foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, every one who keeps from profaning the sabbath and holds fast God's covenant. These qualifications are expressed with participles. In the midst of these participles are three infinitive constructs with a *l*^{e}perposition (*lĕšārĕtô*, *lĕ'ahăbâ*, *lihyôt*). These infinitive constructs express either purpose or are epexegetical. In the context where they seem to be used interchangably with participles in apposition to foreigners, it seems best to view them as epexegetical. However one understands the syntactical function of these infinitive constructs, one must determine what each of these infinitive construct clauses mean.

The meaning of *lĕšārĕtô* is contested. Several scholars think it refers to cultic service so that the foreigners serve Yahweh as priests (for example, Blenkinsopp, p. 102, M. Fishbane p. 128, P.D. Hanson p. 195, Koenen p. 29, Schramm, p. 121); others deny that it refers to cultic service (for example W.A.M. Beuken [1989], p. 30, G. Fohrer p. 189, K. Marti p. 118, H. Odeberg p. 52, Smith p. 58, R.N. Whybray, p. 198, C. Westermann, [1979] cols. 1020-21). Since most scholars view Isa. lvi 1-8 as a later addition to the

message of Third Isaiah, I will pay special attention to the way these terms are used in Third Isaiah.

The verb *šārat* is used four times in Isaiah and *c.* 97 times in the Hebrew Bible. In addition to Isa. lvi 6, *šārat* is used in Isa. lxi 6 with humans as subjects and God as the object. Isa. lxi 5-6 draws a contrast between the foreigners who will do menial labor and the Israelites who will be called priests and ministers of Yahweh. Israel will eat the wealth of nations and boast in their riches. In Isa. lxi 6 *kōhănê YHWH* is synonymously parallel to *měšārětê 'ĕlōhênû*. In addition to this occurrence in Isaiah, *šārat* is employed with humans as the subject and God as the explicit object 23 times in the Hebrew Bible (Dtn. x 8, xvii 12,xviii 5, 7, xxi 5, 1 Sam. ii 11,18, iii 1, Jer. xxxiii 21, 22, Ezek. xl 46, xliii 19, xliv 15, 16, xlv 4, Joel i 9, 13, ii 17, Ps. ci 6 1 Chr. xv 2, xxiii 13, 2 Chr. xiii 10, xxiii 6,xxix 11 [twice]). In each of these occurrences it refers to cultic service, except for Ps. ci 6 which states that the faithful in the land and the one who walks blamelessly shall dwell with God and will minister to God. In Isa. lx 7 *šārat* is utilized in a unique way to refer to animals serving God by becoming cultic sacrifices. *šārat* is used to refer to humans in an inferior social position giving service to someone in a superior social position in Isa. lx 10 and elsewhere 24 times (Gen. xli 4, xl 4, Ex. xxiv 13, xxxiii 11, Num. xi 28, Josh. i 1, 2 Sam. xiii 17, 18, 1 Kgs. i 4, 15, x 5,xix 21, 2 Kgs. iv 43, vi 15, Prov.xxix 12, Est. i 10, ii 2, vi 3, 1 Chr. xxvii 1, xxviii 1, 2 Chr. ix 4, xvii 19, xxii 8). In the remainder of the Hebrew Bible *šārat* is employed with humans as the subject and God as the implied object 25 times (Ex. xxviii 35, 43,xxix 30, xxx 20, Num. iii 31, 1 Kgs. viii 11, Ezek. xliv 11 [*twice*], 17, 19, 27, xlv 4, 5, xlvi 24, Joel i 13, Ezra viii 17, Neh. x 37, x 40, 1 Chr. vi 17, xvi 4, 37, xxvi 12, 2 Chr. v 14, viii 14, xxxi 2). In each of these instances, *šārat* refers to cultic service. *šārat* is employed three times to refer to Levites serving the sons of Aaron in a cultic capacity (Num. iii 6, viii 26,xviii 2), and it is used once in Ezek. xx 3 to refer to explicit cultic service to foreign gods.

Usage of *šārat* demonstrates that most often when humans are the subject and God is either the explicit or implicit object the term refers to cultic service. Does this mean that Isa. lvi 6 envisages the foreign nations as priests of Yahweh? The other uses of *šārat* in Isaiah lead me to doubt this. In Isa. lxi 5-6 the Israelites are metaphorically priest and ministers of Yahweh for the nations. Even as the laity are subservient to the priests so too will the nations be subservient to Israel. They will do the menial labor while Israel will worship God. Isa. lxi 5-6 does not democratize the priesthood so that all

Israelites are qualified to be priests (contra Fishbane, p.128 who takes the statement literally as indicating that all Israelites were qualified to be priests). When the author describes foreigners as ministers of God, he asserts that their status is equal to that of the Israelites. If the author wanted to indicate that the foreigners were qualified to be priests, this promise would culminate the promises made to the foreigners. In its present position it is anti-climactic. Regardless of how one understands the meaning of this term, Isa. lvi 7, which permits the foreigner's sacrifices to be offered with God's approval, shows that the author of Isa. lvi 1-8 did not agree with the impression of the author of Isa. lx-lxii with regard to the relationship of the nations toYahweh and Israel.

The expression "love the name of Yahweh" occurs three other times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in each of these examples Israelites are described as loving God's name (Ps. v 12, lxix 37, cxix 132). The expression "to love Yahweh" is more frequent and in all these occurrences Israel or an Israelite is the subject. In addition, there are two occurrences where Israelites are described as loving God's salvation (Ps. xl 16, lxx 4), an example where Israelites are described as loving God's commandment (Ps cxix 48), and an example where an Israelite is said to love the habitation of Yahweh's house (Ps. xxvi 8). "Name", "salvation", "commandment" and "habitation" are metonymies for God. Just as the statement of Gentiles' ministering to Yahweh is unparalleled, so too the statement that Gentiles love God's name is without precedent.

The expression *lihyôt lô la'ăbādîm* also gives the foreigners an honored position. In the lament of Isa. lxiii 17, the speakers use "tribes of your heritage" in apposition to "servants". In Isa. lxv 8 God assures Israel that for the sake of his servants he will not destroy all of Israel. Isa. lxv 9 identifies the servants as "God's chosen", "descendants from Jacob" and "inheritors of God's mountains". Unlike Deutero-Isaiah who identifies the entire nation as God's servant and God's chosen, the remainder of Isa. lvi-lxvi limits this to the faithful individuals within the nation. Isa. lxv 13 proclaims that the apostates will be hungry, thirsty and shamed but God's servants shall eat, drink and rejoice. According to Isa. lxv 14, God's servants will sing for gladness of heart but the apostates will cry out for pain of heart and shall wail for anguish of spirit. Isa. lxv 15 adds that the name of the apostates will be invoked in a curse but the name of God's servants will be invoked as a blessing. Finally according to Isa. lxvi 14 the servants' hearts shall rejoice and their bones will flourish like the grass because God's hand is

with the servants but the apostates will receive God's indignation. To be God's servants in Isa. lvi-lxvi is to partake of a high calling. By identifying foreigners as God's servants, the author of Isa. lvi 1-8 does away with the privileged position of Israel.

In Isa. lvi 7 God promises that he will bring the foreigners to his holy mountain and will make them joyful in his house of prayer. He will accept the foreigners' sacrifices upon his altar because his house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Deutero-Isaiah promised the return of the exiles to their land. Often he associated this with a nationalistic theme of the nations' bringing the exiles back. According to Isa. il 22-23, God will lift his hand to the nations and they shall bring the exiles' sons and daughters, and kings will be their foster fathers and queens their nursing mothers. The nations will bow down to them and lick the dust of their feet. Trito-Isaiah picks up this theme. According to Isa. lx 3-6 and 9-11 the nations will bring their wealth and the exiles back to the promised land. Furthermore, according to Isa. lx 12, the nation which will not serve Israel will perish (this is similar to Isa. il 24-26). Isa. lvi 7 revises this theme. Not only are the foreign nations brought to Zion, but also it is God who brings them back. Beuken ([1989], p. 31) points out that this expression is all the more striking, because nowhere does Trito-Isaiah use *bô'* to refer to God's carrying Israel back. Beuken also notes that the number of places in the Hebrew Bible where God brings back (*bô'* hif'il) his people to Zion is remarkably scant (Ex. xv 17; Jer. iii 14; Ps. lxxviii 53f.; Neh.i 9). He rightly concludes that the promise from Isa. lvi 7 is a unique, radical extending of expectations so that the foreigner here is promised admission to Zion in terms which are infrequently used only for Israel in order to highlight that they receive equal opportunity as the old chosen people.

In Isa. li 3 Deutero-Isaiah promises that God will comfort Zion and that joy (*śimḥâ*) and gladness will be found in her, and in li 11 he promises the exiles that everlasting joy (*śimḥâ*) shall be upon their heads. In Isa. lxi 7, Trito-Isaiah reaffirms Deutero-Isaiah's promises by pledging to those who have returned that they will have everlasting joy (*śimḥâ*). This promise occurs in a context in which Israel is promised that they will serve as priests while foreign nations do their menial labor. Isa. lvi 7 enlarges this vision since God will make the nations joyful in his house of prayer. The term house of prayer (*bêt tĕpillātî bêt-tĕpillâ*) occurs twice in this verse and nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible. In the last part of this verse it states that the Temple will be called a house of prayer for all of the people. It is

commonly observed that this term links this passage with the prayer of Solomon where he requests that God answer the prayer of a foreigner. Isa. lvi 7 promises that God will hear the prayers of all people, both from the Israelites and from the nations. This of course would include the eunuchs whose lament was answered earlier.

God declares that the foreigners' burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted upon his altar. Smith detects an inner-biblical relationship between this phrase and Isa. lx 7. He points out that not only will the nations' animals be used for sacrifice, but they themselves will take full part in sacrificial worship. Smith notes that the phrase *lĕrāṣôn ʿal-mizbĕḥî* occurs only in Isa. lvi 7 and Isa. lx 7, and that in Isa. lx 7 the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth are gathered to serve (*šārat*) Israel while in Isa. lvi 6 the nations serve (*šārat*) God. Even if one does not accept Smith's emendation, verbal similarities make it probable that there is an inner-biblical relationship between these two passages. Isa. lvi 6-8 and Isa. lx 7 use the following words in common: *šārat, kōh, rāṣôn, mizbē^{a}ḥ, bayit* (referring to the Temple of Yahweh), the root *ʿlâ* (nominal in one passage but verbal in another), and *qābaṣ* (three times in 56:8 and once in 60:7). The uses of *šārat, rāṣôn, mizbē^{a}ḥ* and *qābaṣ* are significant since each occurs 98 times, 54 times, 403 times, and 128 times in the Hebrew Bible and 4 times, 6 times, 8 times, and 20 times in Isaiah respectively. The rarity of their usage argues for an inner-Biblical relationship.[5]

In Isa. lvi 8 God promises to gather to him others besides those already gathered. This passage is introduced as the direct speech of God with the phrase *nĕʾum ʾădōnāy YHWH*. This phrase usually concludes an oracle but is occasionally used elsewhere to introduce divine speech (e. g. Isa. i 24; Ps. cx 1; and Zech. xii 1). As K. Pauritsch (pp. 37-38) observes when *nādaḥ* is coupled with *qābaṣ*, it refers exclusively to words of salvation. In Isa. xliii 9, Deutero-Isaiah promises that God will gather Israel's offspring from the east and the west. In Isa. il 18 God commands Zion to lift up her eyes round about and see; they all gather, they come to her, and he promises that she shall put them all on as an ornament and bind them on as a bride does. Trito-Isaiah picks up this promise in Isa. lx 4 when he commands Israel

---

[4] Smith p. 59 emends the MT to read *yʿlw lrṣn ʿl mzbḥy* on the basis of 1QIs^{a}, the LXX, the Syriac and the Targum. It should be noted that 1QIs^{b} agrees with the MT. Unfortunately, Smith does not make use of this manuscript.

[5] The terms which occur in Isa. 60:7 but not in 56:6-8 are ṣōʾn, qēdār, ʾayil, nĕbāyôt, tipʾeret, and , pāʾar.

to lift up her eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to her; her sons shall come from far, and her daughters shall be carried in the nations' arms. lvi 8 expands this promise since both the Israelites and the nations are promised that they will be gathered by God.

Isa. lxvi 18-22

Scholars (Hanson *Dawn,* pp. 388-389, Polan, p. 80, S. Sekine, p. 57) have pointed out the verbal similarities between Isa. lvi 1-8 and Isa. lxvi 18-22. In both of these passages God gathers together the foreign nations. Unlike Isa. lvi, in chapter lxvi the foreign nations gather the Israelites. Perhaps building upon Isa. lvi 6, the author of Isa. lxvi 21 declares that God will take some of the foreigners as priests and Levites. The expression *mēhem* refers to Gentiles since if it referred to Jews it would be redundant. Blenkinsopp (p.98) claims that Isa. lxvi 18 places the events described in the context of the end time, and therefore parallels Isa 56.1-8. G.I. Davies (p. 117) is more likely correct when he points out that Isa. lvi 1-8 is concerned with the here and now, who may be admitted to worship in the rebuilt temple, and with the treatment of individuals, while the latter embodies a future expectation and a visionary program for the end of time which applies to Israelite and Gentile communities.

Isa. lx-lxii

Isa. lvi 1-8 seeks to offset the nationalism of Isa. lx-lxii. The latter envisages Israel's exaltation over the foreigners. Isa. lx 10 promises Israel that *bĕnê-nēkār* shall build up its walls, and their kings shall minister (*šārat*) to them. Isa. lxi 5-6 assures Israel that aliens (*zārîm*) shall stand and feed its flocks, foreigners (*bĕnê-nēkār*) shall be its plowmen and vinedressers, while Israel will be their priests and ministers of God (*mĕšārĕtê 'ĕlōhênû*) and will eat the wealth of nations and glory in their riches. Isa. lxii 8 equates enemies and foreigners when it states that God will not again give Israel's grain to be food for its enemies (*'ōyēb*), and foreigners (*bĕnê-nēkār*) shall not drink its wine for which it has labored. According to Isa. lx 3-6 and 9-11 the nations will bring their wealth and the exiles back to the promised land. Isa. lvi states that the foreigners minister directly to Yahweh, love the name of Yahweh, and are God's servants. In Isa. lvi 7 God promises that he will bring the foreigners to his holy mountain and will make them joyful in his house of prayer. He will accept the

foreigners' sacrifices upon his altar because his house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

Isa. lv

In a previous article which summarized my dissertation (Van Winkle, [1985]), I have argued that Deutero-Isaiah conceives that the nations will be saved but they must submit to Israel. I continue to believe this is the case. Due to the limitations of space, I can consider only a few passages from Deutero-Isaiah. Even though Lau (p. 263) recognizes only the repetition of *qārôb* in lv 6 and *qĕrôbâ* lvi 1 as a "*Stichwortanschluß*" and remarks that there is no literary evidence linking 55 and 56, most scholars perceive more significant bonds. Beuken ("Isa. 56:9-57:13", p. 50-52) notes that Isa. lvi develops themes from Isa. 55. Isa. lvi 1-8 explains where the abundance of bread, wine and milk described in Isa. lv 1-5 are to be found. The importance of appropriate ethical behavior is stressed in both Isa. lv 7 and Isa. lvi 1-2, 4, 6. Davies (p. 118) observes that both chapters make explicit reference to a covenant (Isa. lv 3 and Isa. lvi 4,5,6), to rejoicing (Isa. lv 12, lvi 7) and that "for all peoples" in Isa. lvi 7 takes up the thought of Isa. lv 4-5. Davies also suggests that it is possible to see the "everyone" of Isa. lv 1 as having sparked off the explicitly "open" exegesis in Isa. lvi 3-7.

Davies does not clarify how Isa. lv 1 could have sparked off the "open" exegesis of Isa. lvi. I propose that Isa. lvi 1-8 seeks to correct the nationalism of Isa. lv 1-5 (contra Beuken [1989] p. 22 who denies that the author of Isa. lvi 1-8 seeks to correct the meaning of Deutero-Isaiah). This raises the question about the proper interpretation of Isa. lv 1-5. Most modern scholars agree that Isa. lv 1-5 democratizes the Davidic covenant since what is promised to David is transferred to all Israelites (for example O. Eissfeldt [pp. 186 ff.], Westermann [p. 229] and Whybray [pp. 191-92]). Scholars question what exactly is transferred from David to Israel. Is it a spiritual witness which excludes dominion over the nations or is it more nationalistic?

In support of a universalistic interpretation, P. Volz (p. 139) remarks that since *ʿēd* comes first in the series of titles describing David's relationship to the nations, it should determine the meaning of the other titles. Furthermore, since it is employed to describe Israel's spiritual witness, it is arbitrary to alter the meaning of the word in order to bring forth a political meaning. In response to Volz's arguments, however, it could just as well be argued that the parallel terms *nāgîd* and *mĕṣawwēh* must determine the

meaning of *ʿēd* rather than the other way around. Furthermore, even if *ʿēd* is employed in Deutero-Isaiah to refer to Israel's "spiritual witness", it does not follow that this term should have the same meaning when applied to David. Since there is a democratization of the davidic covenant, we should understand Israel's witness as analogous to David's. This raises the larger question as to how David functioned as a witness to the people and how he was their leader and commander.

J.H. Eaton (pp. 25-40) detects three shades of meaning for the term *ʿēd*. It may describe one who exhorts or admonishes, one who testifies to Yahweh as the incomparable God, or one who is an evidential sign speaking by his very presence. He proposes that the davidic king functions in the first sense in Ps. ii 10-12 and in the third sense in Ps. lxxi 7-8 although the king's primary function as Yahweh's witness is to testify to Yahweh's incomparability (the second sense). In support of this, he notes that the king would testify before an audience that is worldwide (Ps. xviii 50) that Yahweh alone is God (Ps. xviii 32), and this is in keeping with the meaning of *ʿēd* in Deutero-Isaiah. Furthermore, he notes that this definition suits the context of Isa. lv 1-5, that the Psalms illustrate this aspect in the greatest abundance, and that such a role has parallels in Mesopotamia. Westermann ([1966], p. 229), however, affirms that the only possible meaning of this phrase is that David's victories and conquests gave evidence of the God of Israel and his espousing of his chosen people's cause. Ps. xviii 44-51, Ex. xv 14-16, and Josh. 2ii 9-11 support the argument that the conquest of the nations constituted a witness to them of the power of Yahweh. Both of these ideas about the witness of David are correct. The king bore witness not only in his military victories but also in his psalms which exalt Yahweh for his victories. The king's claims for the incomparability of Yahweh were substantiated by his military victories.

The terms *nāgîd* and *mĕṣawwēh* also favor a political rather than spiritual understanding of the witness of David. The title *nāgîd* (leader) was applied to David in 1 Sam. xiii 14, xxv 30; 2 Sam. v 2, vi 21; etc. Saul, Solomon, Jeroboam I, and Baasha also were given this title. When applied to the king, it denotes the leadership of the Israelites. Yet in the context of Isa. lv 1-5, it refers to non-Israelites. Even though *mĕṣawwēh* does not occur elsewhere as a title, *ṣawâ* is a common verb used to refer to a superior giving a command to an inferior so that the title undoubtedly means "commander".

While Westermann agrees that Isa. lv 4 refers to David's witness through his conquests and a political leader over the nations, he does not agree that a political dominion over the nations is envisaged for Israel. In spite of Westermann's assertions to the contrary, there does not appear to be anything in this oracle which indicates that Deutero-Isaiah intends to indicate a contrast between the political leadership of David and the spiritual leadership of Israel. If anything, this oracle implies that just as David was the witness, leader, and commander of the nations, so too, will Israel be. This is confirmed by the similarity between Ps. xviii 44 and Isa. lv 4-5.

In Ps. xviii 44-45 David proclaims, "You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me head over the nations; a people whom I have not known serve me. As soon as they hear of me, they obey me". This passage is similar to Isa. lv 4-5 in that God made David leader of foreign nations. The similarity of expressions *'am lō'-yāda'tî* ('people I do not know') in Ps. xviii 44 and *gôy lō'-tēda'* ('nations you do not know') in Isa. lv 5 is striking. Deutero-Isaiah may have substituted *gôy* for *'am* since he seems to prefer the singular *'am* for Israel (Isa. xl 7, xlii 5 and 6 may provide exceptions). In Ps. xviii 44 the king summons the nations while in Isa. lv 5 Israel summons the nations. In view of these allusions and the other arguments presented, it is probable that the prophet implies that just as David was exalted and the nations were subject to him, so too, will Israel be exalted and the nations be subject to it.

Unlike Isa. lv 1-5 which focuses upon the Davidic covenant, Isa. lvi 1-8 focus on the Mosaic covenant with its emphasis on Sabbath keeping. Unlike Isa. lv 1-5 which conceives of the exaltation of Israel over the foreign nations, Isa. lvi 1-8 envisages the equality of Jews and Gentiles who keep the covenant. Foreigners like Jews who keep the covenant are God's servants, minister to God, love the name of God, are gathered by God and their sacrifices are accepted by God.

Isa. xliv 5

Although most modern scholars think that Isa. xliv 5 refers to the conversion of individual proselytes, I argue in a forthcoming article (Van Winkle, "Proselytes in Deutero-Isaiah?") that this verse most likely refers to Israelites. I argue that this conclusion is supported by the context and none of the arguments for the identification of those to whom reference is made in this

verse with individual proselytes is adequate. If I am correct, there is no substantial relationship between Isa. xliv 5 and Isa. lvi 1-8.

Isa. xlv 18-25

Isa. lvi 1-8 is more universalistic than Isa. xlv 18-25. The latter envisages both the salvation of the foreign nations and their submission to Israel. Attempts to blunt the universal offer of salvation are unconvincing. The argument that "survivors of the nations" refers to Israelites scattered among the nations (R. Martin-Achard pp. 16-7, N.H. Snaith, p. 185, D.E. Hollenberg p. 32, P.A.H. de Boer pp. 89-90, A. Schoors p. 236) ignores the form critical distinction between a trail speech between God and the nations and a trail speech between God and Israel.[6] Whybray's argument that "be saved" means that the nations will watch Israel be saved is feeble. The niphal of *yāšâ* means participation in salvation and not mere observation of someone else's salvation.

Attempts to tone down the exaltation of Israel over the foreign nations do not accord with Isa. xlv 24-25's contrast between the nations who are ashamed and Israel which is exalted. Beuken's ([1974], p. 354) attempt to identify all the seed of Israel with those who have acknowledged Yahweh and those who will be ashamed with those who turn aside from God's invitation is no more justified than Hollenberg's redefinition of "nations" and "Israelites". According to Hollenberg, "nations" refer to "Israelites dispersed among the nations" when texts refer to the nations' salvation and to "the foreign nations" when the text refers to their submission. The fact that one could use the same method of redefinition of terms to come to the opposite conclusions indicates the weakness of this method. These terms should retain their normal meaning unless the context demands otherwise. Isa. xlv 16-17 and Isa. il 23 also present the contrast between the nations' shame and Israel's exaltation. It is only because both Beuken and Hollenberg define salvation as excluding submission that they feel the need to redefine "nations" and "Israel". This raises the question as to how the nations can be saved and shamed at the

[6] As in the other trial speeches between Yahweh and the nations, Yahweh's opponents are summoned to trial (Isa. xli 21, xliii 8-9a, xlv 20, xlviii 14), the question under discussion is introduced by kî, and there is a first person statement by Yahweh in the self-praise style (xli 4, xliii 11-13, xlv 21). The characteristics of the trial speeches against Israel, which include a reply to an accusation against Yahweh that he has abandoned his people and the retort that he has been forced to do so because of Israel's sins, are notably absent from this oracle.

same time. This quandary is compounded by the realization that *bôš* means "'to lose face" or "to come to nothing" and does not have the mild sense of "experience discomfort" (see F. Stolz, p. 272; M.A. Klopfenstein, pp. 50ff). The tension between those two can be resolved by understanding the nations' salvation. Their salvation consists of their conversion to monotheistic Yahweh worship (Isa. xlv 24) and their living in a world in which Yahweh's justice is manifest. Their shame consists of their submission to Israel. This interpretation seems to account for the universalistic and nationalistic elements within this oracle and within Deutero-Isaiah (see Van Winkle, [1985]). Unlike Isa. xlv 18-15, lvi 1-8 does not sound the note of the submission of foreigners to Israel.

Isa. i-xxxix

I must confess that I am uncertain if and how Isa. lvi 1-8 influenced Isa. 1-39. Isa. xi 10-16 and Isa. xiv 1-2 await God's restoration of the exiles which may be dependent upon either Deutero-Isaiah or Trito-Isaiah. However, since they do not mention God's gathering of Gentiles and since they present a more nationalistic vision, they are probably independent of Isa. lvi 1-8. Isa.xix 19-25 reflects a universalism which is similar to lvi 1-8 but the lack of verbal correspondence and the independence of themes make it unlikely that this depends upon lvi 1-8 (see W. Gross).

Ezra and Neh.

The reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah seem to be unrelated since neither Ezra nor Nehemiah were concerned with foreigners who kept the covenant. It is possible that those who attempted to exclude the covenant keeping foreigners were the misguided followers of Ezra or Nehemiah but there simply is not sufficient evidence to render this plausible.

Num. xviii and Ezek.xliv

Those who have interpreted *šārat* as a reference to cultic service have seen a conflict between the broadness of Isa. lvi 1-8 and the narrowness of both Num. xviii and Ezek. xliv since the latter passages restrict the priesthood to the sons of Aaron or Zaddok and since Ezek. xliv excludes foreigners from admission to the Temple (see for example Fishbane, p. 142). There are certain conflicts between Ezek. xliv and Isa. lvi 1-8 although these texts do not deal with the same groups. The foreigners who are excluded in Ezekiel are those who are uncircumcised in heart and flesh. The foreigners in Isa. lvi 1-8 are certainly circumcised in their hearts and perhaps even their flesh. Although Isa. lvi 1-8 is vocal about the importance of keeping Sabbath, it is silent about circumcision. This may be because the foreigners with which this oracle is concerned were already circumcised or it may be that the author of Isa. lvi 1-8 did not think circumcision was important. On balance, the former seems more likely. In any case there is a conflict between Ezek. xliv and Isa. lvi since for Ezekiel it seems that all foreigners are uncircumcised in heart and flesh and therefore disqualified from admission to the Temple (Zimmerli, pp. 1124-25). However since *šārat* does not refer to cultic service in Isa. lvi 1-8, there is not a conflict between these passages over priestly qualifications.

Dtn. xxiii

Although Isa. lvi 1-8 contradicts Dtn. xxiii, it does not seem to have this law in mind (contra H. Donner, etc.). There is a lack of verbal correspondence but the significance of this observation is diminished since these passages exhibit different genres. Isa. lvi 1-8 does treat the two cases united in Dtn. xxiii but the eunuchs worry about their lack of progeny rather than exclusion from the community. It is true that Isa. lvi 1-8 stresses the importance of the choices an agent makes rather than choices made by others for the agent, be it emasculation or ancestor's inhospitable treatment of the Israelites during the wilderness wandering period. What do we make of a prophet's contradiction of the law since according to Dtn. 13 and 1 Kgs. 13 the message of a prophet of Yahweh cannot contradict the law (Van Winkle [1989])? It may be that the author of Isa. lvi 1-8 does not agree with this exaltation of the law or it may be that he does not see his message in fundamental conflict with the law. Both Joshua's sparing of Rahab even though she was a Canaanite, and Isa. lvi 1-8's comfort for the eunuch and acceptance for the foreigner may be taken to demonstrate the importance of obedience to the spirit rather than the letter of the law.

Conclusion

The author of Isa. lvi 1-8 declares that God accepts all people who keep the Mosaic covenant. Eunuchs will receive a memorial stele which endures longer than sons and daughters. God will bring foreigners to his holy mountain who minister to God, who love the name of God, and who become God's servants. He will make them joyful in his house of prayer and will accept their sacrifices and burnt offerings. The author has a more universalistic perspective than both Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah, but not quite as universalistic as Isa. lxvi 18-22 since this passage states that some of the foreigners will become priests. Isa. lvi 1-8 is unrelated to the reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra, and the confinement of the priesthood to the sons of Aaron found in Num. xviii and Ezek. xliv. Although Isa. lvi 1-8 contradicts the letter of the law in Dtn. xxiii, it accords with the spirit of the law. Furthermore, it does not appear that Isa. lvi seeks to abrogate Dtn. xxiii.

Works Cited

W.A.M. Beuken, "Isa. 56:9-57:13 - An Example of the Isaianic Legacy of Trito-Isaiah", trans. W. van Ufford, in J. W. Van Henton, et. al. (ed.), *Tradition and Reinterpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honour of Jürgen C. H. Lebram*, (Leiden, 1986) pp. 48-64; and *Jesaja deel IIIA* [56:1-63:6] (Nijkerk, 1989); and "The Confession of God's Exclusivity", *Bijdragen* 35 (1974), pp. 309-334; J. Blenkinsopp, "Second Isaiah -Prophet of Universalism", *JSOT* 41(1988), pp. 83-103; G. I. Davies, "The Destiny of the Nations in the Book of Isaiah" in J. Vermeylen (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah* (Leuven, 1989), pp. 93-120; P. A. H. de Boer, *Second Isaiah's Message* OTS 11 (Leiden, 1956); H. Donner, "Jesaja lvi 1-7: Ein Abrogationsfall innerhalb des Kanons - Implikation und Konsequenzen" in J. A. Emerton (ed.) *Congress Volume. Salamanca 1983*, SVT 36 (Leiden, 1985) pp.81-96; B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia* (4th edn. Göttingen, 1892); J.H. Eaton, "The King as God's Witness", *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 7 (1968-69) pp. 25-40; O. Eissfeldt, "Promises of Grace to David in Isaiah 55:1-5", in B.W. Anderson and W. Harrelson (ed.), *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, (London, 1962) pp. 196-207; M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1985); G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja* 3 (Zürich, 1964); W. Gesenius and E. Kautzsch *Hebräsches Grammatik*, 28th edn (Leipzig, 1910); W. Gross, "Israel und die Völker:Die Krise des YHWH Volk Konzepts im Jesajabuch", in E. Zenger (ed.) *Der neue Bund im Alten: Studien zur Bundestheologie der beiden Testamente*, (Freiburg,Basel, and Viena, 1993); 149-167; P.D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*. rev. ed. (Philadelphia, 1979); and *Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville, Kentucky, 1995); D.E. Hollenberg, "Nationalism and 'the Nations' in Isaiah xl-lv", *VT* 19 (1969) pp. 23-36; D. Kellermann "גּוּר *gûr*; גֵּר *gēr*; גֵּרוּת *gērûth*, מְגוּרִים *měghûrîm*. TDOT (1977), pp. 439-49; M.A. Klopfenstein, *Scham und Schande nach dem Alten Testament* (Zürich, 1972); L Koehler

and W. Baumgartner, rev. W. Baumgartner and J.J. Stamm, trans. and ed. M.E.J. Richardson *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, 1995); K. Koenen, *Ethik und Eschatologie im Tritojesajabuch WMANT* 62. (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1990); W. Lau *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie in Jesaja 56-66 BZAW* 225 (Berlin and New York, 1994); K. Marti, *Das Buch des Jesaja* (Tübingen, 1900); R. Martin-Achard, *Israël et les nation* (Neuchâtel, 1959); S. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking: Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible*, SVT 46 (Leiden: 1992); H. Odeberg, *Trito-Isaiah (Isaiah 56-66)* Uppsala, 1931); K. Pauritsch, *Die neue Gemeinde: Gott sammelt Ausgestossene und Arme,* AnBib. 47 (Rome, 1971); G.J. Polan, *In the Ways of Justice Toward Salvation* (New York, 1986); R. Rendtorff, *Canon and Theology* trans. and ed. M. Kohl (Minneapolis, 1993); A. Schoors, *I am God Your Saviour: A Form-Critical Study of the Main Genres in Isa. xl-lv*, SVT 24 (Leiden, 1973); B. Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah: Reconstructing the Cultic History of the Restoration*, JSOT 193 (Sheffield, 1995); S. Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung (Jes 56-66) redacktiongeschichlich untersucht BZAW* 175 (Berlin, 1989); P.A. Smith, *Rhetoric and Redaction in Trito-Isaiah* SVT 62 (Leiden, 1995); N.H. Snaith, "Isaiah 40-66: A Study of the Teaching of the Second Isaiah and its Consequences", in H.M. Orlinsky and N. H. Snaith, *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah*, SVT 14 (Leiden, 1967); O.H. Steck, *Studien zu Tritojesaja BZAW* 203 (Berlin, 1991); F. Stolz "בּוֹשׁ" *THAT* 1, 1978 cols 269-72; M.A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39* FOTL 16, (Grand Rapids, 1996); D. W. Van Winkle, "I Kings XIII: True and False Prophecy". *VT* 29 (1989) pp 31-43; and "The Meaning of *yād wāšēm*" accepted for publication by *VT*; and "Proselytes in Isaiah xl-lv? A Study of Isa. xliv:1-5" accepted for publication by *VT;* and "The Relationship of the Nations to Yahweh and to Israel in Isaiah 40-55" *VT* 25 (1985) pp. 446-458; P. Volz, *Das Buch Jesaia II* (Leipzig, 1932); B.K. Waltke and M. O'Conner, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Indiana, 1990); R. D. Wells, Jr., "'Isaiah'as an Exponent of Torah: Isaiah 56:1-8" in R. F. Melugin and M. A. Sweeny (eds.), *New Visions of Isaiah* (Sheffield, 1996) pp. 140-55; C. Westermann, Das Buch Jesaja: Kapitel 40-66 (Göttingen, 1966); C. Westermann, "שׂרת" *THAT* 2 (1979) cols 1019-22; R.N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66* (Grand Rapids, 1975); H. G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in the Composition and Redaction* (Oxford, 1994) W. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel 25-48* (Neukirchen, 1969).

Reading Matthew as Cultural Criticism[1]

A. K. M. Adam
Princeton Theological Seminary

Imagine a Matthew.[2] Imagine someone–whom we will call, for heuristic if not historical reasons, "Matthew"–who once took the considerable trouble to transcribe the long, urgent text we know as the Gospel of Matthew. Why? Whatever other motivations may have impelled him, we may plausibly suppose that a Matthew who bothered to compile this discursive narrative hoped to contest the ways in which his dominant culture defined certain notions, to dissuade his audience from particular beliefs and practices, and to propose a persuasive alternate view of reality. This heuristic, fictive Matthew wanted to change his audience's minds about God, about Judaism, about Jesus, about how they ought to live together and about how they ought to engage the social and political forces that impinge on them.

In other words, this Matthew produced this gospel as something of an exercise in cultural criticism.[3] Now, be it admitted that "cultural

[1] This paper–an inital probe toward a forthcoming book–is offered with thanksgiving for the various congregations and friends who have challenged me to make my work accountable to them. I am particularly thankful to the cordial and patient people of St. James Church, Tampa, who held my interpretive feet to the fire of their life as Gentiles in a Matthean church, and to students in my Gospel of Matthew course who have cajoled me into refining the arguments I present here.

[2] I invite readers to imagine *a* Matthew, though some will prefer to *determine* the historical identity of the true author, and others will want to read the text unencumbered even by hypothetical authors, and still others will imagine a stateroom full of mutually-contesting Matthews. The point is not to make far-reaching claims about the Truth (at least not at the start), but to furnish the imagination for a particular way of reading Matthew.

[3] The domain of cultural criticism is vast and (appropriately) constantly in flux; Rather than offering an exhaustive survey of the field, I propose the following litany of names as a set of signifiers of where one might look for exemplary cultural criticism: Adorno, Althusser, Appiah, Aronowitz, Barthes, Baudrillard, Benjamin,

criticism" is an elusive category; many of the ordinary articles in the field read a particular cultural artefact in the broad context of its culture of origin (with a more pronounced emphasis on politics, economics, cultural conflict, and so on, than modern critical predecessors), while most of the pioneering work defies summary or categorization. What has Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* to do with "*The Small House at Allingham:* Trollope and the Revolutions of 1848"? The broad façade of cultural criticism embraces both, but that façade conceals as much as it reveals about the two modes of cultural criticism.

To start this particular exercise, let us with Stephen Greenblatt take culture as "the ensemble of beliefs and practices that [by forming a given culture] function as a pervasive technology of control, a set of limits within which social behavior must be contained, a repertoire of models to which individuals must conform."[4] Cultural criticism, then, entails

Benhabib, Berman, Bhabha, Bourdieu, Butler, Chomsky, de Beauvoir, Deleuze & Guattari, Derrida (of course), Eagleton, Eco, Foucault, Fraser, Freud, Gates, Goldmann, Gramsci, Greenblatt, Habermas, Haraway, Harding, Herrnstein Smith, hooks, Hutcheson, Irigaray, Jameson, Kolodny, Kristeva, Lacan, Lévinas, Lyotard, Macherey, Marcuse, McLuhan, Marx, Moufe, Norris, Rich, Rorty, Said, Sartre, Sedgwick, Sinfield, Spivak, Steiner, Thompson, Todorov, West, White, Williams, Wittig, Woolf, and _____ (insert your favorite cultural critic's name here). For convenient introduction, cf. *The Cultural Studies Reader,* ed. Simon During (London: Routledge, 1993).

[4] Stephen Greenblatt, "Culture," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study,* ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (2nd ed.; Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995), 225-232. For a sustained discussion of "culture" cf. the work of Raymond Williams: *Culture and Society 1870-1950* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1983), *Keywords* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), *The Long Revolution* (rpt. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1984), and *The Sociology of Culture* (rpt. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995). Especially in the context of this essay, however, Williams's work should be read alongside Paul Gilroy's *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). In a sympathetic article, Aronowitz points out that although Williams' exposition of the term "culture" is not always crystalline, his exemplary work in cultural criticism provides a useful point of orientation for subsequent critics who aim "to empower ordinary people to take control over their own lives by, among other means, fully appropriating cultural things," exercising their full capacity for critically appropriating and using for their own purposes both "ordinary" and canonical cultural artefacts ("Between Criticism and Ethnography: Raymond Williams and the Intervention of Cultural Studies," *Dead Artists and Live Theories* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 186.

the interrogation of dominant cultural beliefs, practices, controls, and models. Some sorts of cultural-critical work help their readers recognize hitherto-overlooked collocations of cultural force (as when Foucault correlates power relations in penal technology, education, and the liberal state); other essays demonstrate more detailed connections among specific æsthetic artefacts and social phenomena. Alert readers may already have noted that contemporary cultural criticism, with its unbounded spheres of interest and its keen attention not only to artistic endeavors but also to manners and mores, politics and society, has progressed so far as to catch up with the shape of "criticism" as it has been practiced by Baudelaire, Burke, Johnson, de la Bruyère, Horace and Lucian. Of course these precursors of cultural criticism lacked the jazzy modifier that today's critics sport.[5]

Cultural critics frequently operate adversarially in the name of an explicit alternate cultural formation (actual or theoretical), as when Marxian critics in the U.S. and Europe decry the pernicious effects of late capitalism.[6] Critics may also rebuke their dominant culture more sympathetically, urging their audience to reinvigorate their culture by hewing more closely to the ideals to which they ostensibly aspire. This constitutes an especially common sort of cultural criticism in liberal democracies (since relatively few critics envision an attractive political alternative to liberal democracy). These two examples do not, of course, exhaust the spectrum of cultural criticisms; there are innumerable possible variations on and middle terms between these two sorts of cultural criticism.

My Matthew inclines more toward the second type of these criticisms. He urges on his audience a radical commitment to a sort of Judaism with which they are hitherto unacquainted, but which he

[5] Indeed, as Williams's study shows, the earlier critics would not have recognized our use of "culture"/"cultural" at all: Culture in the contemporary sense of the word, as a cover term for the complex social forms and practices or for the "highest" expressions of those practices, first appears in the late eighteenth century and is still relatively rare before the mid-nineteenth century (*Keywords,* 87-93).

[6] Edward Said has stipulated that true intellectuals are necessarily oppositional in the lectures published as *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage, 1996). Said's account in *Representations* seems insufficiently nuanced (even for popular lectures); is it not possible that the intellectual need not be perpetually *contrary*, but vigilantly *critical?*

nonetheless characterizes in thorough continuity with the written and practiced traditions of Judaism. This way of life, which (at least as far as my Matthew is concerned) represents the truest understanding of Judaism, professes non-violence, egalitarianism, inclusivity, ethical rigorism balanced with generous mercy, and reverence for the Scriptures and the God of Israel. At the same time, however, it vilifies all the rival constructions of Judaism–particularly Pharisaic Judaism, which Matthean Christianity so closely resembles.[7]

One of the constellations of belief and practice that Matthew addresses is the status of Gentiles relative to this reconfigured Judaism.[8] My Matthew's position helpfully illustrates the cultural-critical cast of the First Gospel and also reveals how profoundly Matthew is entangled in the cultural definitions of his Judaism. In both these respects, Matthew's treatment of Gentile identity provides much grist for the cultural-critical reader.

My Matthew reflects no single unambiguously familiar position in early Christian and Judaic arguments about the theological status of Gentiles. Matthew is silent on what was the paradigmatic dimension of the Gentile problem for Paul–that is, circumcision. Matthew's Jesus does not take up the question of table-fellowship, nor does he set "Jews" and "Gentiles" in comparison at any point; indeed, Matthew mentions the Ἰουδαῖοι only in the phrase βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων at 2:2, 27:11, 29, 37, and in a reference to the rumor of grave-robbing in

[7] I am quite sympathetic to the Matthew that Anthony Saldarini sketches in his various works on this topic, particularly "The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict," in *Social History of the Matthean Community,* ed. David Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 38-61, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), and "Boundaries and Polemics in the Gospel of Matthew," *Biblical Interpretation* 3 (1995) 239-265.

[8] The outstanding treatment of this topic is Amy-Jill Levine's *The Social and Ethnic Dimensions of Matthean Social History* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988). Her conclusion that the primary distinction in Matthew's Gospel is that which separates those who enter the Kingdom from those who are cast into the outer darkness–rather than the distinction between "Jew" and Gentile, or Jew/Gentile/church–is especially important. David C. Sim has treated the issue recently in "The Gospel of Matthew and the Gentiles," *JSNT* 57 (1995) 19-48; Sim's case for a Matthew who accepted Gentiles only on the condition that they accept all the Law is provocative, but not quite convincing–yet.

28:15. The complexity of Matthew's account of the Gentiles is plagued at various points by the lexical ambiguity of ἔθνη, which may be understood either as "Gentiles" or as "nations." Where Matthew does touch on markers for acceptance or rejection of Gentiles, he treats them haphazardly.

Thus it comes as no surprise that scholars have arrived at widely varying views of Matthew's relation to Gentiles. John Meier, for instance, argues that Matthew is himself a Gentile because he shows insufficient awareness of the characteristics of the Sadducees and also because of the over-literalism of Matthew's use of Zechariah 9:9.[9] Georg Strecker grounds his expectation that Matthew was a Gentile in redaction-critical considerations of Matthean style, in Matthew's use of the Old Testament, and in Matthew's usage of the terms ἐθνικός and ἔθνη.[10] Michael Cook–while distancing himself from the positive conclusion that Matthew was a Gentile–argues that the apparently "pro-Jewish" passages function only as a literary device to further Matthew's fundamental antagonism to Judaism.[11] These interpreters and many others (Kenneth Clark, Poul Nepper-Christensen, Wolfgang Trilling, Rolf Walker, Sjef van Tilborg, Wilhelm Pesch, Hubert Frankenmölle, and Lloyd Gaston[12]) find it incredible that the First Gospel was written by an author positively identified with Judaism.

Whether Matthew is Jewish or Gentile, there is certainly ample evidence to suggest that he is quite favorably disposed toward the inclusion of Gentile believers in the people of God. A number of uniquely Matthean passages express approval of Gentiles, sometimes at

[9] *The Vision of Matthew* (NY: Paulist Press, 1979) 17-23.

[10] *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit* (3rd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971) 15-35.

[11] "Interpreting 'Pro-Jewish' Passages in Matthew," *HUCA* 54 (1983) 142.

[12] Clark, "The Gentile Bias in Matthew," *JBL* 66 (1947); Nepper-Christensen, *Das Matthäusevangelium. Ein juden-christliches Evangelium?* (Aarhus: Universitets-forlaget, 1958); Trilling, *Das wahre Israel. Studien zur Theologie des Matthäusevangeliums,* 3rd ed. (Munich: Kosel-Verlag, 1975); Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967); Pesch, *Matthäus der Seelsorger,* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1966); van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); Frankenmölle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi,* (Münster: Aschendorf, 1974); Gaston, "The Messiah of Israel as Teacher of the Gentiles," *Interpretation* 29 (1975) 25-40.

the expense of the people of Israel. Matthew also shares several pro-Gentile pericopes with Mark and Luke. The cumulative force of these texts amounts to a compelling mandate that Gentiles be incorporated into Matthean congregations.

To begin with passages that are distinctively Matthean: Matthew incorporates a heavy emphasis on Gentiles in the infancy narratives. One perspective on the women who appear in the opening genealogy supposes that Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and "the wife of Uriah" (Bathsheba is not mentioned by name) were Gentiles[13]; even though these women do not appear in the genealogy always on the basis of ethnic identity, they *are* exemplars of people who "demonstrate faith when the men with whom they are associated in the Hebrew narratives did not."[14] In the story of the magi (2:1ff), Gentile seers come from far away and *worship* Jesus, recognizing him as the one "born king of the Judeans" (1:2), while contrariwise the one who had been *appointed* King of the Judeans tries to murder him.[15] The gifts of the magi allude to the gifts that Sheba, Midian, and Ephah bring to Zion, in a passage that explicitly proclaims the union of these Gentile peoples with the worship of the God of Israel: "They shall bring gold and frankincense. . . they shall be acceptable on my altar, and I will glorify my glorious house" (Is 60:6, 7; LXX "my house of prayer will be glorified").[16] Matthew alone identifies

[13] Mary is sometimes included among the supposedly-Gentile women in the genealogy, but her Judaic identity is strongly confirmed in the broader tradition; it would be difficult to mount a convincing case for a Gentile Miriam. Cf. Levine, 73-74, and Sim, 22-23.

[14] Levine, 86.

[15] Josephus applies the title "King of the Judeans" to Herod in *Antiquities* 14.1.3 (Ἡρώδῃ τῷ παιδὶ αὐτοῦ, βασιλεῖ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐκ τύχης τινὸς γενόμενῳ....); likewise to David at 7.4.1 (ὁ δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων βασιλεύς....). For carefully nuanced arguments about the use of the word Ἰουδαῖος, cf. Shaye J. D. Cohen, "Religion, Ethnicity, and 'Hellenism' in the Emergence of Jewish Identity in Maccabean Palestine," *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom,* ed. Per Bilde, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, Lise Hannestad, and Jan Zahle (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1990) 204-223, and "Ioudaios: 'Judean' and 'Jew' in Susanna, First Maccabees, and Second Maccabees," *Geschichte-Tradition-Reflexion,* ed. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, Peter Schäfer, vol. 1 (FS Martin Hengel; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996) 211-220.

[16] This echo of Isaiah underlines the extent to which Matthew reads Isaiah as a prophet of precisely the sort of Gentile-inclusive community that Matthew proposes.

Jesus' home province as Galilee *of the Gentiles* (4:15), once again drawing on a Gentile-inclusive passage (Is 9:1-2/8:23-9:1 LXX: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness–on them light has shined." The LXX gives "People who walk in darkness–Look! A great light! Dwellers in the country and shadow of death, a light will shine on you"). Matthew alone draws an extended quotation and paraphrase from Isaiah 42; according to Matthew, Jesus healed people and commanded them not to tell anyone, in order to fulfill the saying,

> Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
> my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
> I will put my Spirit upon him,
> and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
> He will not wrangle or cry aloud,
> nor will any one hear his voice in the streets;
> he will not break a bruised reed
> or quench a smoldering wick,
> till he brings justice to victory;
> and in his name will the Gentiles hope. (12:18ff)

Here it is not clear whether Matthew is making a rather tendentious translation of the Hebrew (the second "Gentiles" has no corresponding גּוֹיִם in the MT of Isaiah available to us) or quoting the LXX (which does use ἔθνη at this point) or another Greek rendition, but in any case Matthew finds another opportunity to bring the Gentiles into his story of Jesus here.[17] In the parable of the weeds and the wheat, which offers a comparison between a grainfield and the inclusiveness of the church, Jesus observes that the field is *the world*, which presumably includes the Gentiles. Matthew's Jesus concludes the parable of the rebellious sharecroppers (in Matthew, they really are "wicked tenants") by observing that "the kingdom of God will be taken away from you," that is, the chief priests and Pharisees, "and given to a people (ἔθνει) that produces the fruits of the kingdom" (21:43). This verse, like the

Matthew's distinctive attraction to Isaiah frequently demonstrates just this Gentile-centeredness.

[17] Graham Stanton's chapter on "Matthew's Use of the Old Testament" is a useful overview of the issue; *A Gospel for a New People* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993) 346-363.

equation of "the field" with "the world" in the parable of the wheat and tares, is not specifically *pro-Gentile;* it is much more directed *against* the chief priests and Pharisees, especially since the parable in 21:33-41 alludes to Isaiah 5, a text that threatens Israel with ruin and destruction. One might argue that the word ἔθνει does not carry the semantic weight of a specifically *gentile* nation here (especially since the singular for ἔθνος generally denotes "a nation" rather than "a [singular] Gentile," for which ἔθνικος is the more common locution; cf. Mt 24:7, ἐγερθήσεται γὰρ ἔθνος ἐπὶ ἔθνος, as opposed to Mt 18:17, ἔστω σοι ὥσπερ ὁ ἐθνικος).[18] In this context, the term seems simply to indicate "a cultural entity other than Israel."[19] In the context of Matthew's Gospel, however, the transfer of the vineyard is necessarily a Gentile-inclusive gesture. It seems most likely that the ἔθνος that will receive the kingdom is the mixed body of Judeans and Gentiles in the congregation of Jesus' followers (not, *pace* Meier, a "*tertia gens,*" but a *gens* that undermines this kind of differentiating taxonomy).[20]

Most important, the risen Jesus instructs his followers to go make disciples of all nations–or all the *Gentiles*. (Though exegetical debate swirls about this text–are we, with Meier, [21] to evangelize all the *nations* or, with Hare and Harrington,[22] are we sent only to all the *Gentiles*?–we can note that this controversy does not call into question the Gentile dimension of the mission, but only stresses the question of

[18] Hare and Harrington, "Make Disciples of All the Gentiles (Matthew 28:19)," *CBQ* 37 (1975) 361, and Meier, "Nations or Gentiles in Matthew 28:19?" *CBQ* 39 [1977]).

[19] Saldarini observes that ἔθνος may also be used for a (non-national) group ("Boundaries and Polemics," 247 n. 19).

[20] "Nations or Gentiles," 98.

[21] "Nations or Gentiles," 94-102.

[22] "Make Disciples," 359-369; Note, however, that even if the πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ought to be translated "all the Gentiles," Matthew's Jesus does *not* say, "and no longer making disciples among Judeans." Ἔθνος can, after all, be applied to Judea (1 Mac 8:23, 8:27, 11:30, 11:33, 12:3, 13:36, 15:2; 3 Mac 5:6); Hare and Harrington themselves adduce such usages in Tobit, 4 Macabee, Philo, and Josephus. Readers ought to consider the possibility that the choice between "Gentiles" and "nations" may be a false dichotomy; though Matthew is not the most subtle of stylists, he may well have chosen the word ἔθνη to stretch or redefine its semantic range.

whether Judea is included among the ἔθνη). This collection of distinctively Matthean passages presents a very positive perspective on the role of Gentiles in the economy of salvation.

These passages may, of course, reflect unaltered pre-Matthean traditions whose theology conflicts with Matthew's own (as various redaction critics assert). Such claims assume a very different version of Matthew from my own, and they trade on evasive redaction-critical sleights-of-hand. What reason suffices to give a convincing explanation of why a Gentile Matthew who is (*ex hypothesi*) hostile to Jews would preserve such pre-Matthean pericopes?

Moreover, Matthew likewise shares with Luke and Mark several stories that present the Gentiles in a favorable light: at the healing of the Centurion's servant, Jesus observes that "not even in Israel" had he found faith such as that the centurion shows (8:10). The gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon are more responsive to Jesus' message than Capernaum and Chorazin (11:20-24), and the people of Nineveh and the Queen of the South will be the judges of this generation (12:41-42). A Gentile woman–whom Matthew alone identifies as a *Canaanite* woman, identifying her here with the ancient people whom Israel displaced when they took over the land–a Gentile woman insists that Jesus heal her daughter, despite his rebuttal that he was sent only to Israel, and not to dogs like her; and she prevails over Jesus.[23] This interaction is all the more important since the Canaanite woman and the centurion of chapter 8 constitute the only instances in the gospel in which anyone successfully challenges Jesus.[24]

Texts like these, along with other characteristics discussed above, have convinced a number of contemporary critics that Matthew was written

[23] J. Martin C. Scott's recent article on this pericope perhaps overstates the Gentile woman's importance in the development of Jesus' character, but is in many other respects a helpful reading of the Canaanite woman's story; "Matthew 15.21-28: A Test-Case for Jesus' Manners," *JSNT* 63 (1996) 21-44.

[24] Though the NRSV and RSV construe Jesus' response in 8:7 as positive ("I will come and heal him,"), we may better read the conversation with the centurion in 8:5-13 as adversarial, expecting a negative response (following Levine, 111-12, and the sources she cites). The emphatic use of ἐγώ in Jesus' response works best as a marker of surprised reluctance ("Am *I* to come and heal him?"), which the centurion then hastens to alleviate by assuring Jesus that he didn't expect him to come under his roof, but only to speak a word.

by a Gentile Christian, for Gentile Christians. They point out that the author of Matthew has Graecized or eliminated a number of Aramaic phrases (*korban*, Bartimaeus, *Rabboni*, Boanerges, Iscarioth [which Matthew renders "Iscariotes"], "*Talitha qumi*") and he feels obliged to explain the meanings of "Jesus" and "Emmanuel."[25] Some interpreters allege that the Matthean version of the virgin birth narrative reflects a Hellenistic ambiance,[26] and Matthew's story of the triumphal entry–which features Jesus riding into Jerusalem on *both* an ass and a colt–is said to show that Matthew didn't understand the imagery in Zechariah.[27] Matthew's frequent reference to the synagogues Jesus encounters as "*their* synagogues" supposedly indicates Jesus' separation from Judaism.[28] For all these reasons, the gentile-Matthew scholars take this Gospel as an essentially anti-Jewish, pro-Gentile document.

At the same time, Gentiles manifestly do constitute a problem for Matthew. A number of the apparently positive references to Gentiles depend on the notion that you wouldn't *expect* Gentiles to be righteous or responsive ("not even in Israel," 8:10[29]; "Tyre and Sidon," 11:20-

[25] Clark, "Gentile Bias," 171; Strecker, *Weg,* 20-21.

[26] Davies and Allison ascribe this position to Clark, "Gentile Bias," though Clark offers only a passing allusion to the virgin birth (165). Davies and Allison suggest that this is because "there are no parallels [to a virgin birth] in Judaism, [though] there are in pagan literature" (*The Gospel According to Saint Matthew,* vol. 1 [International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988] 21). Davies and Allison adduce evidence to differentiate the Matthean virgin birth from typical Hellenistic divine-paternity narratives. One might have thought that this point rested upon Matthew's reading the LXX's παρθένος for the עַלְמָה of Is 7:14, the assumption being that a Gentile would simply see the LXX as stipulating that the mother be a virgin, whereas a Jewish reader would know that the mother would simply be a young woman. Of course, the situation is far more complicated than this, since Matthew does not follow the LXX predictably, and likewise a literate Gentile would know that a παρθένος need not be a virgin.

[27] Strecker, *Weg,* 18 ("Unrabbinisch und unjüdisch"); Meier, *The Vision of Matthew,* 22.

[28] Though this feature is cited by almost all sources, this chestnut of Matthean scholarship is long overdue for rejection. Since Jesus and the disciples were not identified with the local synagogue congregations, how else *would* Matthew have characterized these gatherings? Levine suggests that "[the use of αὐτῶν] signals that the synagogue is the place of worship of the immobile townspeople, not of the wandering Jesus" (156-57).

[29] While Davies and Allison (*St. Matthew* vol. 2, 225-29) construe 8:10 as a

24). Matthew regards Judaism as the chosen people of God, an assumption reflected in Matthew's use of "my people" or "the people" for the cultural sphere of Judaism.[30] Likewise, Jesus sends out his disciples only to the lost sheep *of the house of Israel,* specifically stipulating that they go no way in the paths of the Gentiles (10:5).[31] He rebuffs the Canaanite woman's first request for help on the ground that she is a dog (15:26).[32] He contrasts the disciples with the Gentiles; the Gentiles observe a sort of minimal baseline morality, whereas the disciples are to be *better* than the Gentiles: "even the Gentiles [greet their brothers and sisters]" (5:47), but disciples ought to love their enemies. Likewise the Gentiles pray wrong: "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words" (6:7) whereas disciples ought to use the shorter Lord's Prayer (6:9-13). The Gentiles worry about whether they'll have enough to eat or drink, whereas the disciples

strictly geographical reference, "Israel" more fitly designates the cultural entity commonly associated with the area in question (cf. Saldarini's note: "'Israel' is the Jewish community's name for itself. 'Jew' and 'Judaism' are terms inposed by outsiders, though they were sometimes used by Jews in the Greco-Roman period," "Boundaries and Polemics," 243 n. 11). The claim for a narrower reference demands especially strong warrants; though Davies and Allison offer a cornucopia of reasons for reading this verse in a geographic sense, their arguments fail to convince Hagner (*Matthew 1-13* [WBC; Dallas, Word Books, 1993] 205), Overman (*Church and Community in Crisis,* [The New Testament in Context; Valley Forge: Trinity Press Iternational, 1996] 188), Menninger (*Israel and the Church in the Gospel of Matthew*, American University Studies Series VII, vol. 162; New York: Peter Lang, 1994) 43, Luz (*The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew,* [New Testament Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995] 72-73), and Margaret Davies (*Matthew*, [Readings; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993] 71) among others.

[30] Cf. 1:21, 2:4, 2:6, 4:23, 13:15 (=Is 6:10 LXX), 15:8 (very close to the LXX), 21:23, 26:3, 26:5, 26:47, 27:1, 27:25, 27:64. The sole exception to this pattern is in the quotation at 4:16, which in this case seems to agree with (but not to follow) the LXX.

[31] Note that Matthew seems to construe "Israel" itself as a neutral-to-positive term; it is far from clear that (as, for instance, Kathleen Weber has suggested in "Plot and Matthew," *SBL 1996 Seminar Papers,* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996] *passim*) "Israel" rejects Jesus, and that Jesus turns away from "Israel."

[32] Jesus' response to the centurion may constitute another example of a sharp reply to a Gentile (as above, n. 16).

are supposed to trust that God will take care of them (6:32). In Matthew, Jesus' passion predictions (and his predictions of his disciples' sufferings) invoke the complicity of the Gentiles (10:18; 20:19). In the most revealing example, Matthew's Jesus instructs the disciples to shun a wayward member with the words, "let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector" (18:17); Sim mildly observes that this punishment constitutes "a fate to be avoided."[33] Though Matthew's Jesus has numerous positive things to say about Gentiles, he never affirms their Gentile identity in and of itself. In short, Matthew evidently thinks it would be insulting to be called a Gentile, all the more so since the Gentiles are identified with the church's persecutors, with bare-minimum morality, rotten prayer life, anxiety, and dogs.

It is impossible for me to regard a text with this perspective on Gentile identity to be a by-and-for Gentile text. The derogation of Gentiles appears too persistently, and in too off-hand a manner; the Gospel's rhetoric takes it for granted that one would not object to such characterizations of Gentiles. The fictive Matthew of my imagination would recoil in horror, for instance, at the prospect of Gentiles displacing any of the elements of the Judaic theological world (by relativizing the importance of the Law, for instance) in favor of a more comfortably Gentile mode of living.[34] This Gospel may, of course, have been produced by a Gentile who had internalized a derogatory social and theological view of his own identity, but to the extent that we are obliged to posit Gentile self-hatred as a context for the Gospel of Matthew we may as well acknowledge that the Matthean atmosphere accepts Judaic norms.[35] The culture that Matthew represents and

[33] "Matthew and the Gentiles," 27. One might observe that the association of Gentiles with the universally-detested tax-collectors further emphasizes the negative cast of 18:17's Gentile; cf. Overman, 126-127.

[34] Matthew's Jesus does not "declare all foods clean," as Mark's Jesus does (Mt 15:1-20, especially 15:17; Mk 7:1-23, especially 7:19).

[35] Advocates of a Gentile Matthew have occasionally adduced a mirror-image argument against Judaic authorship and audience of the First Gospel; they argue that a text that utterly rejects Jews and Judaism cannot have been written by a Jewish author. This critique follows from the prior argument that Matthew does in fact consign all Jews to perdition, and that he envisions "the church" as an alternative institutional entity separate from Judaism. These assumptions are, of course, vigorously contested; much depends on the "Matthew" one imagines at the outset.

promotes is a thoroughly Judaic culture, and its cultural criticism–its interrogation of dominant cultural beliefs, practices, controls, and models–tends to underwrite a perspective that consigns people from outside the socially-dominant class to a naturalized (literary) role at the margins.[36]

Finally, there are a number of texts that are relevant to the cultural-critical dimension of Matthew's Gospel, but which are not explicitly about Gentiles. We should note that Matthew's Jesus associates with drunks, prostitutes, tax collectors, women, children, lepers, blind people, demoniacs, paralytics, and lunatics. Matthew's Jesus manifests an unswerving commitment to solidarity with the oppressed–the "little ones," the "least of these," the ones who are like children, those who are persecuted and flogged and handed over to be tortured and executed at the hands of the Gentiles. Matthew's sympathy for these cultural outsiders has provided consolation for countless disciples who have likewise felt hunger and thirst for righteousness. Though this theme is not specifically pro-Gentile–indeed, the sayings on persecution seem explicitly to stigmatize Gentiles–Jesus' anti-hierarchical, de-centering identification with cultural outsiders has tremendous value for those who are working together for just relations among people of conflicting cultural allegiances.[37]

I would summarize all this by proposing that Matthew's explicit rhetoric of inclusion represents the reflective theological judgment of the Matthean congregation–but the persistent undercurrent of disrespect for Gentiles reflects the chronic prejudices that haunt Matthew's background.[38] Matthew–as is often the case among liberal reformers–

[36] Here I do not intend to dispute Levine's argument (that "replacing the Temple with his own abiding presence in the community, [the Matthean Jesus] eliminates the formation of a new spatial center which would, necessarily, require peripheries"; 274), but to argue that Matthew does not *attain* his theological goal comprehensively. Whereas Matthew aims at de-centering and de-hierarchializing the βασιλεία community, his rhetoric serves to perpetuate some of the problematic cultural distinctions.

[37] This version of Matthean theology is thus (somewhat oddly) similar to Boyarin's version of Paul in *A Radical Jew* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994). My Matthew, like Boyarin's Paul, is not so much repudiating Judaism but moving toward a social construct in which *difference* does not provide a basis for *distinction.*

[38] Thus, whereas Meier indicates that he could "live with" a Jewish-Christian Matthew who had "overcome his particularistic prejudices" (*Vision,* 23), my point is

has a "you people" rhetoric of inclusion. When dealing with Gentiles in the abstract, in theory, Matthew is in favor of recognizing them as sharers in the heritage of the people of God. Some of Matthew's best friends are Gentiles. On the other hand, Matthew gives evidence of regarding Gentiles as very far from being equal to the people of Israel. Gentiles may be all right, so long as they keep in their place. They are acceptable to God not *as* Gentiles, but *despite* being Gentiles. Gentiles, to Matthew, are not "us." My fictive Matthew sets out to argue that the people whom God calls into the βασιλεία should not be hierarchically differentiated by cultural allegiance, but should eschew distinction in order to share in inheriting God's favor. This Matthean cultural critic finds that the Judaisms with which he disagrees (such as Pharisaism, which is evidently most prominent in the cultural sphere he encounters) resemble his own understanding of allegiance to God very closely; but Matthew sees his rivals investing heavily in certain markers of social distinction that he finds contrary to the gospel of the βασιλεία that Jesus taught.

At this point in my discussion, I pause to situate my work on Matthew with respect to other scholars working in the field (and in order to observe the constraints of circumstance, I will generalize grossly). Just at this point, many of my colleagues will begin their exploration of the religious geography and chronology of the first-century Mediterranean basin. Where would a community have existed that could sustain this semi-acceptance of Gentiles? in Syria? in Egypt? Galilee? When would the development of the church have reached this point of tepid toleration of Gentile outsiders? in 75 BCE? 80? 90? Matthew's perspective on the Gentiles, for many critics, serves principally as a clue for locating where and when the text came together.

Others among my colleagues will take up this theme as an indication of Matthew's personal identity and characteristics as they search for the historical Matthew. Was Matthew a converted rabbi, or the actual apostolic tax-collector of 9:9, the scribe trained for the kingdom of heaven in 13:52, or a sympathetic Gentile? Others may regard the

that Matthew can easily be "sympathetic to a universal mission to the Gentiles" while at the same time *harboring* old prejudices (I would prefer not to use the word "particularistic" in this context, inasmuch as "particularism" is often used as one component of Christian anti-Judaic rhetoric).

Gentiles as a test case for Matthean redaction–how does Matthew's treatment of Gentiles differ from Mark's, or Luke's (and how does our "knowledge" that Matthew has rejected the Jews help us to identify Matthean redaction)? Or we may analyze these sayings about Gentiles to determine precisely which go back to Jesus himself.

Each of these lines of research has its particular importance and inflection. Most of us engage all these questions at various times, sometimes with more lively appreciation than others. These are not, however, the questions in which my interest ultimately lies. The question that most piques my interest is the cultural-critical challenge, "What are we to do with a text like this?"–what are *we* to do with it, and what are we to *do* with it.[39] Does the Gospel of Matthew, for instance, provide any useful reference points for contemporary tensions among people with conflicting cultural identities and with disparate degrees of cultural capital? As the contemporary rhetoric of racial reconciliation recapitulates (at a new intensity, in a very different social location) Matthew's well-intentioned liberal gestures at inclusiveness, the relation of theoretical characterizations of Matthew's cultural criticism to feet-on-the-ground biblical theology looms ever more urgent.

What then shall we say? We may in the first instance opt to set Matthew aside; we may regard the social circumstances of Matthew's origin as the privileged context for interpretation, and therefore feel obliged to discard it as ineradicably contaminated with exclusivist ideology. But that is just not an option for many of my students, or for most of the people I've served in churches, or for almost all my forerunners in the theological tradition with which I am affiliated, whom I aspire to emulate. Those who are not so strongly identified with Christian communities will have a different assessment of this option, but the Bible–Matthew included–is simply not a matter of choice for most Christians. Even if it *were* optional, many of us would firmly assert our commitment to working with this unwieldy text in one way or another.

Do I then urge us to *submit* to the text? Is mine a docile hermeneutics of *sogenannten* consent? By no means! That way leads to

[39] This portion of the paper expresses an approach sympathetic to that of Brian Blount in *Cultural Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), and to Daniel Patte in *Ethics of Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995), though in each case significant theoretical differences separate us as well.

slavery, whether to the literal chattel slavery tolerated by Paul (must we consent to that?), or a metaphorical slavery to the letter, a translated letter at that, a translated, interpreted, enacted, and socially-enforced letter. A hermeneutics of consent cannot successfully challenge a *status quo* that defines the very terms of our "consenting" and sets "consent" as a precondition for true understanding. One can't afford to lie down and roll over when working with the Bible, at least in part because it is never the Bible itself to which we would be submitting, but rather to the version of the Bible that the culturally dominant forces have established. A hermeneutics of consent communicates to readers whose social positions are congruent with those of the Gentiles in Matthew's Gospel that their inclusion in the βασιλεία comes by way of concession. That alternative is no more acceptable to them than simply rejecting Matthew would be.

Let me sketch my own proposal this way. At the beginning, I referred to "reading Matthew as cultural criticism," and the opening parts of this essay generated an implicit picture of an ancient Matthew criticizing the culture around him. This picture shows a Matthew who resists a culture that keeps Gentiles outside, that (as far as he is concerned) inappropriately relegates Gentiles to theological second-class citizenship. The catch is that this Matthew himself is not immune to the prejudice that he is criticizing. There is another way of pronouncing my title, though: *Reading* Matthew as cultural criticism, that is, picking up, taking up this Gospel and reading it as an act of cultural criticism. With *this* inflection, I suggest that the Gospel's culturally-privileged position supplies a means of access to social power for marginal interpreters. This gesture would put into the practice the cultural-critical axiom that any hegemonic cultural formation will always, by necessity, leave a social space for resistance and counterinterpretation.[40] Such a counter-interpretation depends for some (not all) of its tactical value on fissures in the dominant cultural structures themselves; in this case, the

[40] "However dominant a social system may be, the very meaning of its domination involves a limitation or selection of the activities it covers, so that by definition it cannot exhaust all social experience, which therefore always potentially contains space for alternative acts and alternative intentions which are not yet articulated as a social institution or even project," Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters* (London: New Left Books, 1979) 252.

dimensions of Matthew's Gospel that the dominant culture has assimilated also accord resistant interpreters a niche within which to propound their unsettling expositions. To this extent, I concede that reading Matthew is a potentially risky business; but then, it's the *in*siders who can afford to make only the safe moves. The readers who already enjoy significant social privilege and who have much at stake in the *status quo* can't take a chance in criticism. For those who have been relegated to the margins, however, reading Matthew as a criticism of the dominant culture may offer significant hermeneutical leverage.

In the aftermath of Michel Foucault, we recognize that *all* power moves are ambivalent, that *all* power is risky, no power is innocent (including the power with which the intellectual admonishes us to beware the uses of power). That's true of the way Matthew appropriates the Old Testament traditions toward the goal of developing an inclusive vision of God's family, God's realm; it's true of the way Matthew shaped the Jesus traditions he knew so as to enlist Jesus as a sponsor of pro-Gentile Christianity.[41] And it will be true when we invoke Matthew as a warrant in struggles for inclusion and–more than inclusion–for a mutual respect grounded in love of God and neighbor.

What are the risks? First, there is the risk that using this ambivalent text will backfire on us. This is a tactical risk with at least two dimensions to it. On one hand, readers of Matthew may become accustomed to the exclusionary gestures Matthew makes and accept such behavior as natural or appropriate. They might assimilate the impulse to include others only on a second-class basis (in a Caribbean-American congregation, for instance, one might observe fissures between dominant English-speakers and marginal Spanish-speakers, or hierarchical distinctions based on skin tone). Obviously one can not do much about such readers so long as one is not in contact with them, but once one raises the issue of Gentile marginality these readers are obliged either to defend their dominant-culture in-group reading of Matthew or to

[41] Richard Martin raises this issue in "Ideology, Deviance, and Authority: The Political Functioning of Performative Writing," *Literature & Theology* 10 (1996) 20-32. Martin does well to observe the political effects of Matthew's rhetoric, but when he highlights the "silence" of first-century Judaism, he elides the distinction between Judaic "silence" (a claim that would erase the writings of a number of first-century Jews) and the lack of an explicit Judaic response to Matthew's Gospel–a rather less surprising or melodramatic phenomenon.

concede that the status of Gentiles is at least a problem–and with that concession the culture-critical reading gets its traction. The second risk is that some readers might self-consciously use the sub-rhetoric of Gentile marginality as an excuse to exercise continuing subordination of contemporary Others (on the basis that Scripture institutes and authorizes this Jim Crow approach to inclusiveness). Some ideological critics will submit that these two alternatives are not merely hypothetical risks, but that in one form or another they are the necessary results of tangling with an ideologically malignant text; since I do not know of any ideologically *innocent* texts, however, the claim that Matthew's Gospel inevitably undermines equitable social relations entails more rhetorical panache than practical guidance.[42]

Another risk that inheres in the sort of reading I propose is that critical interpreters will accuse me of anachronism, of reading the struggles of oppressed groups in the twentieth-century into a first-century text that knows nothing of those struggles. My response to this objection is more complex. First, I would argue that anachronism is an interpretive weakness only for reading formations that already regard time and history as an absolute horizon for interpretive legitimacy. Most contemporary academics have internalized the anti-anachronistic imperative so thoroughly that they can hardly imagine tolerating anachronism; nonetheless, plenty of situations render academic

[42] One cannot simply "avoid co-optation" if one wants to engage dominant cultural forces; there is not an interpretive high ground that immunizes the reader from ideological contamination. The question is not "Are you tainted from having taken up a politically problematic text?" but "How successfully do you resist succumbing to the ideological pitfalls?" The latter question should be answered not on a theoretical basis–that, after all, is more an academic than a *diesseitig* question–but on the practical basis. Or, as Matthew might say, "You will know them by their fruits" (Mt 7:16, 20). On cooptation, see, Gerald Graff, "Cooptation," in *The New Historicism*, ed. Aram Veeser (New York: Routledge, 1989) 168-181.

In an example from the non-academic world, the anarchist band Chumbawamba recently sign a recording contract with music industry monolith EMI. The band issued an explanation of this apparent contradiction, including their grave misgivings about such a step; their letter concluded, "We realise that some people are going to be unhappy about our choices, but it's not our job to placate people with false distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' bosses. Our job is to spread propaganda, throw up debate and argument, cause some trouble, and carry on making music which goes against the grain of these shallow times. We reckon all these things deserve to reach a bigger audience" (message to Chumbawamba mailing list, June 16, 1997).

judgments about history relatively less important than economic pressure, discrimination, ostracization, and survival. Where interpreters are struggling to hold their heads up in a hostile society, history may be less important for interpretation than are these other more immediate criteria. Or–to put this the other way round–social groups that posit history as the exclusive basis for legitimate interpretation are themselves usually already well-fed and socially secure, or are striving to attain those conditions on the dominant class's own terms.[43] Moreover, accusations of anachronism often function pre-emptively, as though the accusation itself immediately invalidates any conclusions the anachronistic arguments put forward. The conclusion does not follow from the accusation, however; an anachronistic interpretation of Matthew, one that tried to bring Matthew's discourse on Gentiles to bear on contemporary racial tensions, might nonetheless illuminate the conflict in ways that strictly historical perspectives do not. The anachronistic interpretation may encourage its audiences to pursue more healthy relations with people from whom social markers separate them. There are many courts of legitimacy, only a few of which exclude anachronistic argument.[44] By the same token, readers who undertake deliberately anachronistic interpretations of Matthew will have to face the likelihood that their interventions will not readily be accepted into an anti-anachronistic mainstream of biblical studies.

On the other hand, if we deliberately take up the venture of reading Matthew as cultural criticism, we have at the outset to subordinate the historical criticism of Matthew to the cultural interests we are exploring. We can't afford to exempt historical criticism from our cultural critique;

[43] H. J. Bernard Combrink's article on "The Reception of Matthew in Africa" (*Scriptura* 58 [1996] 285-303) undertakes the task of seeking out the role of Matthew's Gospel in contemporary African communities. His essay catalogues traces of the relation of Matthew to inculturation, poverty, marriage–though not race relations (save when quoting Cain Felder to the effect that "the Bible is the best handbook for multiculturalism, racial tolerance, and pluralism," 286, citing "Afrocentrism and Biblical Authority," *Theology Today* 49 [1992] 357-366).

[44] Since the discipline of academic biblical studies generally adheres to historical-critical adjudication of questions about legitimacy, a willfully anachronistic interpreter can expect little approval from the Society of Biblical Literature. Rather than appealing to a plenary session of the corporate whole, however, such interpreters might seek out an especially open-minded audience of venturesome critics for a sense of their proposals' soundness.

and one dimension of historical criticism that we may probe for analysis is the social setting of that interpretive practice. The question is, which social formation holds the authority for our interpretive practices: the historical academy or the prophetic congregation of disciples in the streets? The fictive Matthew whom I have been imagining for these pages would have little hesitation identifying the relevant judges of interpretive legitimacy. He would possibly pose the question in typically Matthean terms: with whom do we want to be found when we encounter the Son of Humanity–with professors (like me) or with oppressed outsiders, whom the dominant class regards as dogs?

ANCIENT ALEXANDRIA IN THE *ACTS OF MARK*

Birger A. Pearson
University of California, Santa Barbara (Emeritus)

It can safely be assumed that many thousands of travelers visited the great city of Alexandria during the first century of the Common Era.[1] It can also safely be assumed that these visitors were greatly impressed by the city's beautiful setting, its well-planned streets, and its imposing architectural monuments.[2] Among those first-century travelers was, according to Christian tradition, St. Mark the Evangelist, the first in the traditional line of patriarchs of the Egyptian church. According to the same tradition St. Mark met his death in this city and was buried there.[3]

One of the chief sources for the Mark tradition is the fourth-century *Acts of Mark,* a text which is also of interest for its references to the topography of ancient Alexandria. The topographical references are such that one must attribute the *Acts* to an author who was familiar with the city and its geography, and who can be assumed to have based his account on local Christian tradition. Unfortunately, we do not know who that author was. And, of course, it must also be admitted that the authenticity of the topographical references in the account is not *ipso facto* a guarantee of the historical accuracy of the events narrated. But that is not our concern here.

---

[1] I have had the good fortune to be numbered among the modern travelers to Alexandria. My own sojourns in the city were made all the more pleasant and profitable by my visits with the late Professor Emeritus Daoud Abdu Daoud, to whom the original version of this article was dedicated. See "The *Acts of Mark* and the Topography of Ancient Alexandria," *Société archéologique d'Alexandrie Bulletin* 45: *Alexandrian Studies in Memoriam Daoud Abdu Daoud*, ed. by Nabil Swelim (Alexandria: Archaeological Society of Alexandria, 1993) 239-46.

[2] One of the more exuberant of the reactions to the city's beauty recorded in antiquity is found at the beginning of Book 5 of Achilles Tatius' novel, *Clitophon and Leucippe* (2nd century).

[3] The earliest extant source that mentions Mark's Sojourn in Alexandria is a fragmentary letter attributed to Clement of Alexandria (d. ca. 215), published in 1973. According to this letter, Mark came to Alexandria from Rome alter Peter's martyrdom and expanded his earlier Gospel into a "more spiritual gospel" for use in the Alexandrian church. See Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973). Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (first ed. ca. 311), reports that Mark was the first missionary to Egypt and the first to establish churches in Alexandria (2.16). He later adds that, in the eighth year of the reign of Nero (A.D. 62), Annianus became the first after Mark to receive charge of the diocese of Alexandria (2.24). Neither Clement nor Eusebius says anything about Mark's death.

The Greek text of the *Acts of Mark* (*Martyrium Marci*) has been published in two Greek recensions, represented respectively by manuscripts in Paris and the Vatican.[4] It was translated into a number of other languages, and also underwent considerable expansion.[5] The narrative can be summarized as follows, using the Paris recension *(PG)* as a basis:

When the apostles were sent out to evangelize the world Mark received as his lot the country of Egypt and the surrounding territory (ch. 1). After a sojourn in Cyrene of the Pentapolis (now part of Libya), he received a vision that he should go by sea to Pharos in Alexandria (ch. 2).[6] Disembarking in Alexandria he came to a place called "Mendion."[7] As he was entering the gate of the city the strap of his sandal broke and he went to a cobbler to have it repaired. The cobbler injured his left hand while working on the sandal and Mark healed it in the name of Jesus Christ. The cobbler, whose name was Ananias,[8] invited Mark to his home. As a result of Mark's preaching, Ananias was converted, together with his household and many others (chs. 3-4).

Eventually the city's pagan populace sought to kill Mark. Mark ordained Ananias as bishop, and others he ordained as presbyters and deacons; he then returned to the Pentapolis. He came back to Alexandria two years later and found the community flourishing, a church having been built in a place called Boukolou near the seashore (ch. 5). But the pagan people were angry at Mark for his mighty works and the threat that he posed to their idolatry. On the occasion of a paschal celebration, which

---

[4] The Paris manuscript is printed in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 115, cols. 164-69; the Vatican ms. is printed in the *Acta Sanctorum* (rev. ed. Paris: Palmé, 1863-1940) 12: April, 3, pp. xxxviii-xl. There are other mss. as well, including one in Leiden, on which see T. Baarda, "Het martyrium van Marcus," *Benedictijns Tijdschrift* 52 (1991) 168-77. Baarda is preparing a critical edition of the *Acts of Mark.*

[5] For particulars, with references, see my article, "Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Some Observations," in B.A. Pearson and J.E. Goehring, eds., *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity 1; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986)132-59, esp. 140. See also Aurelio de Santos Otero's discussion in *NTApoc* 2:461-65.

[6] The Leiden ms. has simply "Alexandria" (Baarda, "Het martyrium," 171).

[7] So also the Leiden ms. (Baarda, "Het martyrium," 171). The other recension has "Bennidion." See below for discussion.

[8] The other recension has "Anianus," the more common form of the name. An(n)ianus is the successor or St. Mark in the traditional list of Alexandrian bishops (cf. n. 3). "Anianus" is apparently a variant of the name "Ananias," which is the Graecized form of the Hebrew name "Hananiah."

coincided with a festival honoring the god Sarapis, the pagans seized Mark at the service, dragged him in the streets with a rope around his neck, and threw him into prison (chs. 6-7). During the night he was visited by Christ, who strengthened him with words of encouragement (ch. 8).

The next morning the pagan crowd dragged Mark again in the same fashion and Mark died. The mob built a fire in the place called Angeloi and put Mark's body on it. But a storm arose and the pagans fled in terror (ch. 9). Pious men came and brought Mark's remains to where the brethren were worshiping. They prepared the body according to custom and placed it in a stone tomb located in the eastern part of the city. Mark's martyrdom took place on Pharmouthi 30 (=April 25), when Gaius Tiberius Caesar was Emperor (ch. 10).[9]

Our interest in this account is focused on its topographical references. As we shall see, the places mentioned happen to be located in the northwestern and northeastern parts of Alexandria, areas which, in the first century, were predominantly Jewish in population. (See the appended map.) Is this a matter of mere chance? One would expect the topographical references in a fourth-century text to reflect a fourth-century situation. And so they do, but it is important to point out here that, by the third century, the center of Alexandrian Christianity, dominated by the episcopate and the catechetical school, was located in the main Greek area of the city, then called Bruchium.[10] In the fourth century the most important churches, the cathedral church Caesarea (built on the site of the Caesareum) and the church of Alexander dedicated to St. Michael (a converted temple of Saturn), were in the same general vicinity, i.e. in Bruchium.[11] This situation is not reflected at all in the *Acts of Mark.*

Let us now consider the sites mentioned in the *Acts.* The first place mentioned is Pharos (ch. 2), the site of the famous lighthouse and the first sight of Alexandria that would greet the eyes of a traveler arriving by sea.

---

[9] The Latin version of Surianus *(PG* 115, col. 170) has, more plausibly, "Claudius Nero Caesar" (=Nero Claudius Caesar, Emperor 54-68 C.E.).

[10] See Carl Andresen's important article, "'Siegreiche Kirche' in Aufstieg des Christentums: Untersuchungen zu Eusebius von Caesarea und Dionysios von Alexandrien," in *ANRW* 2:23:2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979) 387-495, esp. 428-52.

[11] On the churches of Alexandria see H. Leclerq, "Alexandria (Archéologie)," in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1907) vol.1, cols. 1098-1182, esp. 1107-25. See also the important works by Calderini and Adriani (cit. n. 13).

In the text, Mark is said to have had a revelation from the Holy Spirit to go to Pharos, although he is not reported to have spent any time on that island. Why Pharos is mentioned at all is not clear, but it is perhaps not irrelevant to mention here that Pharos was the traditional site of the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek (the Septuagint). Philo Judaeus, who flourished in the early first century, reports that the Alexandrian Jews celebrated an annual festival on Pharos in commemoration of the translators' achievement.[12]

The next place mentioned in the text is Mendion (Bennidion), where Mark is said to have met the cobbler Ananias (ch. 3). The place in question was named after a temple, and the variations in the form of the name reflected in the ancient sources indicate some uncertainty as to whether the deity associated with this temple was the Thracian goddess Bendis or the Egyptian god Mendes. The temple is usually referred to in modern discussions as the Bendideion,[13] and, during the fourth century it was converted into a church by St. Athanasius.[14] After the Arab conquest this church was rebuilt as the Mosque of the Souq al-Attarin. While there is some confusion in the sources as to the exact location of the ancient Bendideion, and disagreement among scholars, I accept the location proposed by A. Adriani,[15] i.e. in the northwestern sector of the city not far from the Heptastadion (the "seven-stade" mole connecting the island of Pharos with the mainland, long since silted over). The area in question was part of the "Delta" quarter in the first century (see below).

The Bendideion temple itself would not likely be meant as the site of Mark's encounter with the cobbler Ananias; rather, the text can be construed in such a way as to indicate that the meeting took place between the gate of the city (i.e. the gate leading into the city from the Hepstastadion) and the dominant temple in the area, the Bendideion. One would expect such a meeting to take place in or near a marketplace, an agora. Indeed, an unpublished Coptic text in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York recounts Mark's encounter with the cobbler Ananias and situates it in the agora.[16] The agora in question was the western agora,

---

[12] Philo *De Vita Mosis* 2.35-42.

[13] See esp. A. Calderini, *Dizionario dei nomi geografici e topografici dell'Egitta greco-romano*, vol. 1, fasc. 1: ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑ (Milano: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1935) 101; A. Adriani, *Repetorio d'arte dell'Egitto greco-romana;* series C (Palermo: Fondazione "Ignazio Mormino" del Banco di Sicilia, 1966) vol. 1, p. 220.

[14] It is referred to by Epiphanius as the church "of Mendidion" (*Panarion* 69.2).

[15] Adriani (loc. cit.) vs. Calderini (loc. cit.).

[16] M 606, p.39 of the ms., part of an encomium on Sts. Peter and Paul attributed to

located near the entrance to the Heptastadion.[17]

The next site mentioned in the *Acts* is the most important of all, the church in Boukolou (ch. 4) and the site of Mark's memorial (chs. 7, 10), i.e. the *martyrium* of St. Mark, first attested (after the *Acts of Mark*) in the fifth-century *Lausiac History* of Palladius.[18] This church was evidently also the church in which, according to Epiphanius, Arius served as a presbyter, before he was declared a heretic. Epiphanius refers to it as "the church of *Baukalis*," which I assume is a corruption, or variant, of *Boukolos*.[19]

The place is referred to (in the plural) as τὰ Βουκόλου, "the (places) of (the) cowherd" (ἐν τοῖς καλουμένοις Βουκόλου), and can be interpreted as equivalent to τὰ βουκόλια, "the cow pastures."[20] There can be no doubt as to its location, according to the account in the *Acts of Mark*: "in the eastern district" (εἰς τὸ ἀνατολικὸν μέρος), "beside the sea, beneath the cliffs" (τοῖς παραθαλασσίοις, ὑποκάτω κρημνῶν) (chs. 10 and 5). But since some confusion on this point has been introduced by the recent work of a Spanish scholar, Jorge Juan Fernández Sangrador,[21] it is useful to take up his arguments in light of the ancient evidence. Fernández acknowledges that the *Martyrium* of St. Mark was located in the northeastern section of the city, but argues that the earliest seat of the Alexandrian community, the area of Boukolou, was located in the Rhakotis district in the southeastern section, near the ancient Serapeum. He finds support for this in a reference in Strabo's *Geography* (17.1.6) which refers to "herdsmen" (*boukoloi*) living on the outskirts of the pre-Alexandrian village of Rhakotis. He also argues that the early Alexandrian Christians had a syncretistic brand of Christianity which took advantage of

---

Severianus of Gabala.

[17] Adriani, 204, 210, 216.

[18] *H. Laus.* 45, reporting a visit to the shrine of Mark in Alexandria by Philoromus of Galatia. The location of the μαρτύριον is not given.

[19] Epiphanius *Panarion* 69.1-2; cf. 68.4. The Greek word βαύκαλις refers to a particular kind of vessel used for cooling water or wine (LSJ 311b). The list of Alexandrian churches given by Epiphanius (69.2) does not specify any related to Mark.

[20] The word βουκόλος is also used for a religious functionary in the cult of Dionysos. See my discussion in "Earliest Christianity," 153.

[21] Fernández Sangrador, *Los orígenes de la communidad cristiana de Alejandría* (Plenitudo Temporis 1; Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia, 1994). Unfortunately, this work was unavailable to me. My knowledge of it is solely dependent upon the review of it by D. Jeffrey Bingham, in *JECS* 4 (1996) 567-68.

the proximity of the Serapeum to spread their religion.[22] Strabo's reference to "herdsmen" is of no use, however, for Strabo mentions βουκόλοι in connection with other areas of Alexandria and the Delta as well.[23] And a connection between early Alexandrian Christianity and Sarapis worship can hardly be made on the basis of any reliable evidence, least of all the *Acts of Mark*! Indeed, the *Acts* account quite clearly equates the church in Boukolou with the memorial to Mark.

One other piece of evidence can be adduced here, namely, the *Martyrdom of St. Peter* (*Acta* or *Passio Sancti Petri*). There are several versions of the story of the martyrdom of the "Last Martyr" Peter, Bishop of Alexandria (d. 311), and various assessments have been made as to the story's historical worth.[24] What is of interest to us here is the connection made between Peter and the *martyrion* of St. Mark in the story. The two published Greek versions[25] agree in providing the following details that are relevant to our discussion:

The tribunes take Peter out of his prison to "the place called Boukolou" (τὰ τοῦ Βουκόλου), where St. Mark had been martyred (11). With permission of the tribunes, Peter goes down into the tomb (τὸν τάφον) of Mark, and addresses the holy evangelist, asking for his intercession, that he might enter martyrdom joyously (12). Rising from the tomb (ἐκ τοῦ μνήματος) of Mark, Peter offers up a prayer to Jesus Christ. A holy virgin, who has a monastery (ἀσκητήριον) in a suburban house near the resting place (κοιμητήριον) of St. Mark, experiences a vision and an audition from heaven, "Peter (was) the first (ἀρχή) of the Apostles; Peter is the last (τέλος) of the martyrs" (13). Peter then presents himself to the tribunes, who station him to the south of the martyr-chapel (μαρτυρίου), in a depression where there are tombs (μνημεῖα), and there he is beheaded (14). The people, who have been waiting outside of Peter's prison, realize that he has been taken away, and finally arrive at the place

---

[22] For this he relies on the spurious letter of Hadrian to the Consul Servianus, on which see W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (trans. R. Kraft et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971) 46-47.

[23] See e.g. Strabo 17.1.19, which refers to βουκόλοι active around Pharos who were also pirates. Cf. the article, "Βουκόλοι," in PW 3.1:1013-17.

[24] For a very useful discussion see Tim Vivian, *St. Peter of Alexandria: Bishop and Martyr* (SAC 3; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) 40-50, 64-86.

[25] J. Viteau, *Passions des Saints Ecaterine et Pierre d'Alexandrie* (Paris: É. Bouillon, 1897) (=*BHG*^{3} 1502); P. Devos, "Une passion grecque inédite de s. Pierre d'Alexandrie," AnBoll 83 (1965) 157-87 (=*BHG*^{3} 1502a). The latter is essentially an expanded version of the former. Devos supplies the numbered sections of the text used here. An English translation of Devos' edition is given in Vivian, *St. Peter of Alexandria*, 70-78.

of Peter's martyrdom (15). Some want to take the body to the Church of Theonas, but others spirit him away in a ship, for the place was near the sea (ἦν γὰρ ἐγγὺς ἡ θάλασσα). Sailing around Pharos, they arrive at the cemetery which Peter himself had established in a suburban area to the west of the city (εἰς τὸ δυτικὸν τῆς πόλεως μέρος ἐν τοῖς προαστείοις) (16). There he is finally buried (18).

It can readily be seen that the topographical references in this account match those of the *Acts of Mark*, with additional amplifications. It is specified that τὰ βουκόλου, where the *martyrion* of Mark was located, is a suburban area, but also near the sea. There are also tombs in that area. The tombs in question are clearly those now known as the Shatby Necropolis (4th-3rd centuries BCE), part of the eastern necropolis which had been covered over and no longer in use by the first century, during the city's expansion eastward. The body of St. Peter is taken by sea around Pharos to a Christian cemetery that is, no doubt, part of the western necropolis. The exact location is not known, but it would probably be somewhere in or near what is now the Gabbary district of Alexandria, where Christian tombs have been found (and also a synagogue inscription).[26]

Thus, there can be no doubt as to the location of the area our texts refer to as τὰ βουκόλου. By the fourth century, after massive destructions suffered by the city in the second and third centuries, this area was a suburb, located well outside of the city. It could very well have been used for "cow pastures" (if that is what τὰ Βουκόλου means). The "cliffs" referred to in the *Acts of Mark* are probably to be taken as referring to one of the hillocks that rose inland from the sea-coast east of the city in the area around Shatby, long since obliterated by the cutting and filling associated with construction projects in the modern city of Alexandria, but known from old maps.[27]

The church that was associated with the tomb of Mark was probably abandoned in the fifth century and replaced by another church dedicated to St. Mark which was closer to the center of the city.[28] No trace of the

---

[26] See the appended map. Cf. also Pearson, "Alexandria," in *ABD* 1:152-57.

[27] See the maps collected in M. G. Jondet, *Atlas historique de la ville et des ports d'Alexandrie* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Francais, 1921). Especially interesting is a pictorial map of 1686, plate VII in vol. 2.

[28] M. Chaine, "L'eglise de Saint-Marc à Alexandrie construite par le patriarche Jean de Samanoud," *Revue de l'oriente chrétien* 24 (1924) 372-86, esp. 378.

church in Boukolou remains, nor can its exact location be known, but it was probably located at or near the site of the present College of St. Mark, built in the 1920s by the Christian Brothers order of the Roman Catholic Church.

One other site is mentioned in the *Acts,* "the so-called Angeloi" (ch. 9), where the mob tried to burn Mark's body. If there was such a place, it can be assumed that it was located near Boukolou.[29] But the Bollandist editors of the *Acts* are likely correct in their suggestion that there is a corruption at this point in the Greek text. The text reads, in both recensions --the corruption thus goes back to a common source used by both-- εἰς τοὺς καλουμένους ἀγγέλους.[30] The reading suggested by the editors is εἰς τὸν αἰγιαλόν ("to the seashore").[31] I would tentatively suggest, instead, εἰς τοὺς αἰγιαλούς, the plural form (which means essentially the same) corresponding more closely to the plural occurring in the corrupted text of the *Acts*. The corruption in the transmission of the text would have taken place under the influence of the name given to a sixth-century church in Alexandria, the *Angelion*,[32] and also probably under the influence of the reference in the text to the worship of the god Sarapis. The mistake would have had to be made by someone who was ignorant of the geography of fourth-century Alexandria. The *Angelion* church, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, was built on the site of the great Serapeum (sacked by a mob led by Bishop Theophilus in 391) in the Rhakotis district of Alexandria, in the southwest part of the city.

Thus, the place-name Angeloi having disappeared from our text, we read instead that the mob ignited a fire "on the beaches" near Boukolou, and there attempted to burn the martyr's body. It is an interesting coincidence that the same phrase, εἰς (τοὺς) αἰγιαλούς, occurs in an important passage in Philo's treatise *Against Flaccus,* in the context of a report on a vicious pogrom perpetrated by the Alexandrian Greeks against the Jews of Alexandria in 37-38 C.E. The passage in Philo is also of great interest because it incidentally gives us information on the centers of Jewish population in the city during the first century. It reads as follows:

> The city has five quarters named after the first letters of the alphabet, two of these are called Jewish because most of the

---

[29] See Calderini, 88; Adriani, 206.

[30] The same reading occurs in the Leiden ms. (Baarda, "Het martyrium," 175).

[31] See the commentary in *Acta Sanctorum* 12, p. 352.

[32] Calderini, 166; Adriani, 216.

> Jews inhabit them, though in the rest also there are not a few Jews scattered ahout. So then what did they do? From the four letters they ejected the Jews and drove them to herd in a very small part of one. The Jews were so numerous that they poured out over beaches (εἰς αἰγιαλούς), dunghills and tombs, robbed of their belongings.[33]

I suggest that the quarter in which the Alexandrian Jews were gathered was the one in the eastern part of the city, i.e. the main Jewish quarter in antiquity where the Jews first settled during the Ptolemaic period. This area is described by Josephus as follows: "by a sea without a harbour, close beside the spot where the waves break on the beach," Alexandria's "finest residential quarter," located "near the palaces."[34] The beach in question corresponds to the modern Shatby Beach, just east of the promontory Silsileh (ancient Lochias).

I suggest, further, that the beach(es) referred to by Philo and by the author of the *Acts of Mark* are the very same location. That is to say, the place referred to in the fourth century as Boukolou, then situated outside of the city, was in the first century the very heart of the most prominent Jewish neighborhood in Alexandria, which Josephus describes in such glowing terms. The topographical reference in the *Acts of Mark* reflects, in my judgment, a continuity of tradition between the first century and the fourth century of Christian activity in that place. Its first-century location situates the earliest Christians of Alexandria within the Jewish community of that time and, in effect, corroborates the intuitive observation of Eusebius regarding the "apostolic men" of the earliest Christian presence in Alexandria: They "were, it appears, of Hebrew origin, and thus still preserved most of the ancient customs in a strictly Jewish manner."[35] Thus, the earliest Christians of Alexandria were an integral part of the larger Jewish community there.

Philo, as we saw, refers to the division of the city into five quarters, named after the first five letters of the alphabet. The only ancient information we have as to which letters corresponded to the two predominantly Jewish quarters also mentioned by Philo is found in a passage in Josephus, where he reports on actions taken against the Jews in 66 C.E. by Roman troops let loose by the Prefect Tiberius Alexander (Philo's apostate nephew!) against rioting Jews: The soldiers are said to

---

[33] *In Flaccum* 55-56, trans. Colson (LCL edition).

[34] Josephus *Against Apion* 2.33-36, trans. Thackeray (LCL ed.).

[35] Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 2.16, trans. Lake (LCL ed.)

have "rushed to the quarter of the city called 'Delta,' where the Jews were concentrated, and executed their orders".[36] It is often assumed that this "Delta" quarter was the residential area mentioned by Josephus in the other passage already cited, i.e. the northeastern quarter of the city.[37] But the incontrovertible evidence of a papyrus document of 13 B.C.E. situates the Kibotos harbor "in Delta."[38] The Kibotos harbor was an inner harbor located within the large *Western* harbor, Eunostos.[39] The adjacent neighborhood, called "Delta," was thus the section referred to by Josephus in the passage quoted and must also have been one of the two predominantly Jewish quarters mentioned by Philo.[40]

It remains now only to point out that the activities of St. Mark depicted in the early chapters of the *Acts,* discussed above, are situated by the text in this northwestern part of the city, which constituted one of the two Jewish neighborhoods. We see, again, a continuity of tradition between the first century and the fourth century in terms of the location of Christian activity in the city. It can also be added that on-going Christian activity in this "Delta" quarter is also reflected in the location of the very earliest church of which we have recorded evidence, the church of St. Theonas (Bishop of Alexandria 282-300), which was located near the western wall.[41]

Thus, to conclude, we can see reflected in the fourth-century *Acts of Mark*, whatever we might think about the reliability of the narrative itself, authentic topographical information on first-century Alexandrian Christianity. This information corroborates what could also be argued on other grounds, namely, that the earliest Christians in Alexandria constituted a part of the Jewish population of Alexandria, the most important and sizeable Jewish community of the Diaspora. It was probably not until after the war of 115-117,[42] when the Jewish community was virtually

---

[36] Josephus *Bell. Jud.* 2.495 (LCL ed.).

[37] So now also Dorothy Sly, *Philo's Alexandria* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996) 43.

[38] BGU 1151, lines 40-41.

[39] Strabo makes this clear in the famous description of the city in his *Geography* (17.1.10).

[40] So also Adriani, 239.

[41] Calderini, 169-70; Adriani, 217.

[42] On this war and its consequences see esp. Victor Tcherikover's discussion in the *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* vol. 1 (ed. Tcherikover et al.; Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1957) 85-93. One monument destroyed by the Jews during that revolt was the Nemeseion, built by Julius Caesar for the head of Pompey (Appian *Bell. Civ.* 2.380), a

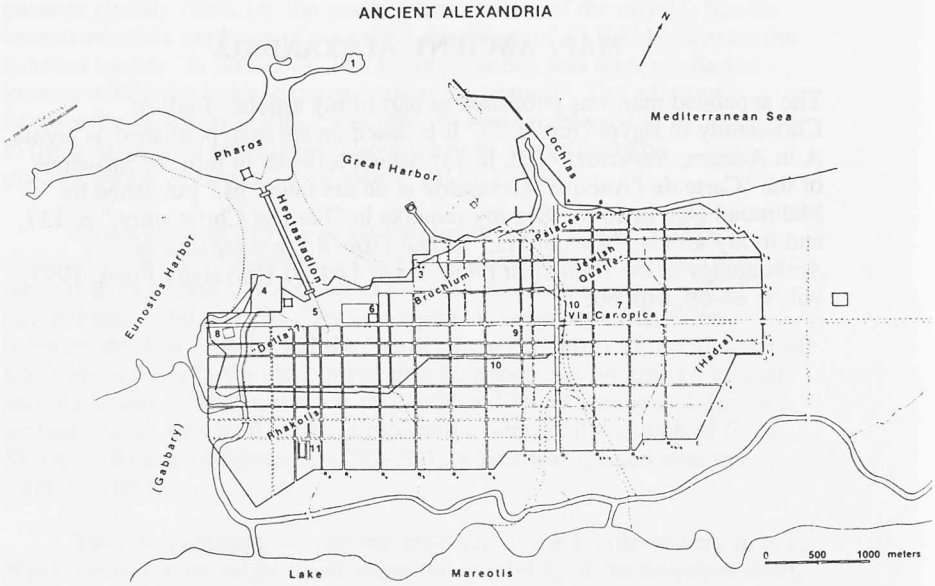
annihilated, that the Christians assumed a distinct identity of their own.

MAP: ANCIENT ALEXANDRIA

The appended map was published as part of my article, "Earliest Christianity in Egypt" (cit. n. 5). It is based on the map published as tavola A in Adriani, *Repertorio* (cit. n. 13), which reflects, in turn the influence of the "Carte de l'Antique Alexandrie et de ses fauborgs," published by Mahmoud Bey in 1866. See my remarks in "Earliest Christianity," p. 157, and in my article, "Alexandria," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) vol. 1, 65-69, esp. 66.

---

structure which has sometimes been identified with the famous "Alabaster Tomb" located in what is now the Latin Cemetery.



Key:

1. Pharos Lighthouse
2. Martyrium of St. Mark in Boukolou
3. Caesarium
4. Kibotos Harbor
5. Western Agora
6. Bendideion, St. Athanasius Church
7. Alabaster Tomb
8. St. Theonas Church
9. Gymnasium
10. Arab Wall
11. Serapeum

Multivocality in Romans 4

Robert L. Brawley
McCormick Theological Seminary

From the beginning of its history of reception, Romans speaks with multiple voices. In the derivation of its language and rhetoric from a repertoire, readers can recognize an indeterminate intertextuality that already represents a host of voices.[1] On a discernible level, readers have access to multiple voices that give the text deep and rich textures. Layers of voices create patterns of reiteration in which the voices reinforce, redirect, elaborate, or contest one another.[2] Voices that reinforce one another contribute to determination of a univocal meaning. Voices that redirect or elaborate one another contribute to revision of readers' anticipations in the progressive discovery of what is true in the discourse. Voices that correct one another contribute to ambiguity and rivalry, that is, the voices create possibilities for both distinct readings and internal debate within Romans.[3] This paper attempts to listen to a variety of the voices by means of two methods. One is literary characterization inasmuch as some of the voices are overtly characterized.[4] Characterization occurs through systems of epithets, relationships, actions, and evaluation that reiterate one another as they cross over proper names or designations of inanimate voices (such as scripture). The second is intertextuality inasmuch as there are both explicit and implicit repetitions of and variations on textual patterns from the cultural repertoire.[5] By intertextuality I mean an interplay of precursor and successor texts that offers readers a new perception beyond what the precursor

---

[1]J. Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980) 36-37, 64-66; R. Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977) 146-48.

[2]On repetition see S. Suleiman, "Redundancy and the 'Readable' Text," *Poetics Today* 13 (1980) 119-42; G. Savaran, *Telling and Retelling: Quotation in Biblical Narrative* (Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

[3]M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Theory and history of Literature 8; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) 106; Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 36-37, 66, 69.

[4]On methods of characterization see R. Brawley, *Centering on God: Method and Message in Luke-Acts* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990) 107-58; J. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992).

[5]On methods for intertextuality in relation to allusions and citations see R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); R. Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech: Voices of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

and successor offer in their independent voices. Both methods are intricate and a complete account of them would be extraordinarily tedious. Therefore, this paper offers highlights of each. Because characterization is cumulative, I begin with progressive characterization in Rom 1:1-3:31 from which the voices in Romans 4 trace their genealogy.

The Authorial Voice

The authorial voice accumulates characterization by concretizing itself in the proper name Paul and locating itself in a triadic and mutually interactive relationship with God and the authorial audience. The authorial voice expresses a relationship to the authorial audience by giving thanks for and remembering the authorial audience; the same thanksgiving and memory express a relationship to God through Jesus Christ; and the God to whom the authorial voice prays responds to the authorial audience as a witness of Paul's beneficence on their behalf.[6]

A mutual benefit for the authorial voice and the authorial audience is a part of Paul's commission to proclaim good news to Gentiles. The claim not to be ashamed of the gospel implies opponents who engage the authorial voice in an honor/shame contest. In the honor/shame contest, none less than God authenticates the authorial voice because the good news (1:15-16) is nothing less than the power of God.

At 1:18 the authorial voice becomes an unobtrusive narrator of a drama of divine wrath against wickedness.[7] This voice shifts in the diatribe of 2:1-29 as the authorial voice takes on the character of a debater engaging an imaginary interlocutor.[8] The situation is ambiguous at 3:1: "Then what is the advantage of the Jew?" Though likely part of the diatribe, the rhetorical question does not permit distinguishing between an address to an imaginary interlocutor[9] or to the authorial audience or simply third person discourse. According to Stanley Stowers, readers deduce from the diatribe style that the first person plural in 3:5

---

[6]S. Stowers describes the relationship between Paul and the authorial audience as a relationship of "confidence, authority, and benevolence" (*A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994] 44).

[7]For the traditional understanding of 1:18-3:20 as God's wrath against humanity see U. Wilckens, "Zu Römer 3,21-4,25: Antwort an G. Klein" *EvT* 24 (1964) 590; idem, "Was heisst bei Paulus: 'Aus Werken des Gesetzes wird kein Mensch gerecht,'" EKKNT, *Vorbereiten* 1 (ed. E. Schweizer et al; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969) 52.

[8]S. Stowers, *The diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (SBLDS 57; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981) 95-96 and *passim*.

[9]Stowers, *Diatribe*, 119-54.

encompasses Paul and his imaginary Jewish interlocutor.[10] But the divine judgment of the world in 3:6 and the power of sin over everyone in 3:9-19 tip the scales toward construing "our" in 3:5 as universal. At 3:7 the discourse shifts to the first person singular. This too can be speech-in-character in the diatribe.[11] On the other hand, it can be a concrete instance of the universal predicament. But this is complicated by a reference to opponents through which readers can detect a voice that evaluates the authorial voice negatively. The evaluation is, however, reciprocal. The authorial voice accuses the opponents of slander, and thus the two voices contest each other.

Romans 3:27 raises the ambiguity of whether the rhetorical questions are focalized through third person narration or constitute an address of the authorial voice, either to the authorial audience or to an imaginary interlocutor.[12] The ambiguity is resolved slightly in favor of an address to the authorial audience by the use of the first person plural in 3:28. For Stowers, "we hold that a person is justified by faith" is a mutual agreement between a character in the diatribe and an interlocutor. But certainly there is agreement with the authorial audience. The same ambiguity and the same degree of resolution apply to the rhetorical questions in 3:29 and the recurrence of the first person plural in 3:31.

The Authorial Audience

The progressive characterization of the authorial audience is relatively simple. They are Gentiles specifically located at Rome (1:5-6). They too are in a triadic relationship with God and Paul They are beloved by God and the object of Paul's divinely given commission (1:10-15).

At 1:18 the authorial audience appears to become spectators of a drama of God's wrath against wickedness. The authorial audience views those who crush the truth by their injustice as actors on a stage before them. But the authorial audience is the dupe of a virtually unavoidable sting, the diatribe style notwithstanding. The second person singular in 2:1 sets up a situation in which passing judgment on the behavior of others renders the one who judges inexcusable. What is unavoidable is not hypocrisy on the first level. Readers may easily be tolerant of people whose behavior is the same as theirs. But they can hardly be tolerant of the hypocrites who judge others. They inevitably judge the hypocrites and thereby judge themselves. Even the authorial voice

---

[10]Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 180-81.

[11]Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 16-20. Because 3:1-8 ends with direct characterization of the authorial voice in a genuine contest with opponents, the section does not appear to be a pure diatribe. See E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 18, 20.

[12]So Stowers, *Rereading Romans*, 205.

covers itself with the same blanket. Therefore, readers then join the actors on the stage in the drama of God's wrath against wickedness.[13]

Romans 2:17 does not unambiguously identify the authorial audience as Jewish. In the first place, in the diatribe the one who hypothetically claims to be a Jew is an imaginary interlocutor. Further, everything in 2:17-23, 25 is either conditional or interrogative so that the addressee in the second person singular cannot be defined strictly.[14] Even the allusion to Isa 52:5 in Rom 2:24 does not establish the authorial audience as Jewish because it could apply equally to Gentiles, who rely on the law but violate it. The sense could be that on account of such Gentiles, God's name is blasphemed among other Gentiles.[15]

In 3:21 a drama of God's justice that contrasts with the drama of God's wrath begins also as a third person description with readers as potential spectators. But because of the way readers have become participants in a drama of God's wrath, they suspect that they also participate in the drama of God's justice. This drama is universal, but with a qualification: "For all who believe" (3:22). Readers are included among those who participate in faith. Further, they have a faith that enables Paul to anticipate reciprocal benefits of faith in harmony with the authorial audience. Therefore, the "we" of 3:31 implicates the authorial audience as people of faith.

Jesus

Though Jesus does not appear in Romans 4 until v. 24, and though I detect no voice of Jesus in Romans 4, his progressive characterization is pertinent because he figures prominently in other characterizations. Further, he is present by implication, particularly in the links between 3:21-31 and chap. 4. When he first appears on stage, he is characterized virtually simultaneously by a relationship and by an epithet. He is the one of whom Paul is a servant, and

---

[13]Stowers uses Greco-Roman examples of diatribe to argue that 2:1-5 is addressed to an imaginary interlocutor and does not characterize the authorial audience (*Diatribe*, 85-96). But he fails to note that readers of Rom 2:1-5 inevitably judge hypocrites who judge others. None of the examples that Stowers educes as parallels function to dupe the reader the way Rom 2:1-5 does.

[14]If 2:17 addresses only an imaginary interlocutor, it is irrelevant in the characterization of the authorial audience except that they should be able to identify with the imaginary interlocutor. See Stowers, *Diatribe*, 85-96, and *Rereading of Romans*, 31, 44, 143-75: "One should not confuse depicting a Jew with encoding a Jewish audience" (44).

[15]Notably, the allusion preserves the plural δι' ὑμᾶς rather than the second person singular in the remainder of Rom 2:17-23. For Stowers, this is directed only at imaginary pretentious Jewish teachers who are unfaithful to God's promise to Gentiles and seek rather to teach the law to Gentiles (*Rereading of Romans*, 150-51). On the use of plot as a criterion for intertextual interplay, see Brawley, *Text to Text*, 13 and *passim*.

he is designated Christ. It is conventional to speak of Christ in the Pauline Epistles as a second name for Jesus. But this is inadequate in 1:1-6.[16] Readers quickly learn that the gospel is about God's son. Natural descent from David also characterizes Jesus. Readers likely construe ὁρισθέντος in 1:4 as the validation of Jesus by God's power that raised him from the dead. Thus, descent from David according to the flesh stands in antithesis to the resurrection from the dead.[17] The epithet "lord" also characterizes Jesus, and it places him in relationship with people of faith who belong to him.

Ambiguity appears in 1:9 where under the name of God's "son" Jesus is theoretically either the source of the gospel or its content. The genitive here is likely objective--an iterative thematization of the son as the content of the gospel in 1:3. After 1:9 Jesus vanishes from explicit view until 3:22, though he is the content of the gospel mentioned in 1:15-16.

Jesus and the epithet Christ reappear strikingly at 3:22, but with weighty ambiguity. God's justice is modified by διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The genitive can be either subjective (the faith Jesus Christ has)[18] or objective (faith that others have in Jesus). But especially because readers encounter this in a sequence following previous references that characterize Jesus as one who mediates (e.g., 1:9), readers can construe Jesus as one who mediates the disclosure of God's justice.[19] Alternatively, faith in Jesus can be the means of the disclosure God's justice. In this case Jesus is characterized as the object of faith.

Similar ambiguity surrounds the redemption that is in Christ Jesus in 3:24. In fact, the syntax is closely parallel to v. 22 as in evident in the following parallels:

διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (v. 22)
διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (v. 24).

---

[16]See also Rom 9:5. See N. Dahl, "Die Messianität Jesu bei Paulus," *Studia Paulina: In honorem Johannis de Zwann* (ed. J. Sevenster & W. Unnik; Haarlem: Bohn, 1953) 86-87, 91-92.

[17]Dahl, "Messianität Jesu," 90.

[18]R. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ* (SBLDS 56; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983) 157-74.

[19]G. Klein ("Römer 4 und die Idee der Heilsgeschichte," *EvT* 23 [1963] 424-47; "Exegetische Probleme in Röm 3,21-4,25" *EvT* 24 [1964] 676-83) and Wilckens ("Zu Römer 3,21-4,25," 586-610) have engaged in a debate on whether God's act in Jesus breaks continuity with (Klein) or stand in continuity with *Heilsgeschichte* (Wilckens). See J. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 97-104.

All who believe may be justified because Jesus mediates redemption or because redemption is located in him. A relationship with God is reiterated in that God provides Christ Jesus as ἱλαστήριον. Ἱλαστήριον is more mysterious than ambiguous but likely characterizes Jesus' death as atonement. The atonement echoes Jesus' relationships both with God and with all who believe (vv. 22-24). Διὰ πίστεως, however, also modifies ἱλαστήριον with ambiguity. It may refer to the faith of all who believe or to the faithfulness of Christ Jesus.[20]

Jesus' characterization through the dual relationship with God and with all who believe is reiterated in 3:26. Here again ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ raises ambiguity. Does God justify the one who has faith in Jesus or the one who has faith(fulness) like the faith(fulness) of Jesus?

God

God not only appears in Romans but is presupposed beyond its horizon as Israel's God of the ages. This God is a promise maker of the past who spoke through the prophets of Israel and is the source of good news both as a promise of the past and as a reality for the present (Rom 1:1-3). God is characterized by the action of raising Jesus from the dead, and the resurrection is an act of God's power by which God discloses that Jesus is God's son. It is difficult for readers to discern whether πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης (1:4) is an epithet for God or a qualification for Jesus. Because of the parallel with κατὰ σάρκα in 1:5, it is possible to construe the Greek as referring to Jesus in his spiritual nature.[21] But if the prepositional phrase modifies ἐν δυνάμει it can be an epithet for God. God is also characterized by a relationship with Jesus. But because Jesus mediates relationships with Paul and the authorial audience, these mediated relationships also characterize God. Romans characterizes God as the one who calls Paul and sets him apart (1:1) and as one who bears witness to Paul (1:9). Therefore, God legitimates the epistle itself, and consequently the voice of God speaks in the entirety of Romans.

God is further characterized by God's power for salvation (1:16). This power not only indicates God's activity but also a particular relationship with everyone who has faith. Through faith, God stands in a relationship to both Jews and Gentiles as the God of their salvation.

God is directly characterized by the advent of δικαιοσύνη (Rom 1:17). But this raises again the problem of the objective/subjective genitive. Is justice a divine attribute or divinely attributed? According to the progressive

---

[20]Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 172-73; Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 201, 214, 240-41.

[21]So E. Schweizer, "πνεῦμα," *TDNT* 6. 417.

development of what is true in the discourse, the answer may be closely related to the advent of God's wrath in 1:18. Fitzmyer judges that the contrast with the wrath of God makes justice an attribute of God.[22] But wrath is not merely a divine attribute in 1:18-3:20 because it invades human existence. Justice and wrath characterize God by implied actions toward humanity. Reiteration thematizes character, and three times Romans 1 repeats God's act of handing human beings over to themselves (1:24, 26, 28).[23] This portrays God as one who gives up undiscerning human beings to themselves. In an implied chronology, the advent of God's wrath has both priority and simultaneity with God's justice. The simultaneity of God's wrath and justice is that God's power and divinity are perceptible but not perceived. Therefore, the advent of God's wrath breaks into history with a kind of chronological priority over the advent of God's justice.

Characterization of God as rich in kindness, forebearance, and patience both stands in tension with and contributes to God as judge (2:4). According to the implied chronology, God is first kind and patient in order to evoke repentance. But in the absence of repentance, the forebearance reinforces all the more God's just judgment. God is related to humanity with one of two faces--goodness or wrath, but is also related to humanity with one face--impartially (2:11).

Readers learn in the progressive discovery of what is true in the discourse that a relationship with God's law is distinct from a relationship with God. Three honor/shame contests are under scrutiny here--in 2:17 a hypothetical interlocutor boasts in God in a contest for acquired and ascribed honor, in 2:24 nothing other than God's honor is at stake, and in 2:27 people for whom circumcision is a matter of the heart acquire honor. The interlocutor in 2:17 depends on the law, and boasts in God only to discover that God is not an agent of social vindication in the honor/shame contest implied by boasting.[24] On the

---

[22]J. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 257. Vv. 17 and 18 are contrasting parallels. Käsemann, *Romans*, 35.

[23]Stowers claims Rom 1:18-2:16 does not include everyone but is an account of the Gentiles collectively (*Rereading of Romans*, 113). But he fails to consider Gentile idolaters as focal instances of something that has gone wrong for all humanity.

[24]On ascribed and acquired honor see B. Malina and J. Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean Word," *The social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. J. Neyrey; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991) 27-36. See also B. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981) 30-33; D. Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy and Friend: Portraits of the Pharisees in Luke and Acts* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991) 16-17. On determining social deviance or legitimacy in honor/shame contests, and on the function of social regulators and agents, see B. Malina and J. Neyrey, *Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew*

contrary, in the second contest it is possible for those who boast in God's law to transgress the same and thereby in effect label God a social deviant. That is, they dishonor God, and the audience for the social confirmation of the honor/shame contest is the Gentiles.

In the third case, God stands in the place of a social evaluation of the contest. By an implied antithesis, those who boast in God but transgress the law may receive a social evaluation of praise from human beings. But those for whom circumcision is a matter of the heart receive no positive social evaluation from human beings. Rather, God's praise confirms them as authentic winners of the honor/shame contest (2:29).

In the progressive development of what is true in the discourse, God is characterized next by entrusting τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ to the Jews (3:2). When in spite of τὰ λόγια human beings are unfaithful, God's response is God's fidelity. The authorial voice negates even the possibility that a human response annuls God fidelity and evaluates God as truthful in contrast to the falsehood of every human being. On the basis of sheer assertion, therefore, God is just (3:4, 6).

In addition, the voice of scripture evaluates God. Readers hear this voice underlying the authorial voice, and the multiplicity of voices reiterates and thematizes God's justice. This leads to an extended reiterated characterization of God in contrast to human beings in 3:10-20. This also appeals to and clarifies the content of 1:18-3:8. A series of antitheses points to the characterization of God in contrast to culpable human beings: just/unjust, benevolent/malevolent, truthful/deceptive, nourishing/poisonous, blessing/cursing, sweetness/bitterness, saving life/shedding blood, preserving/ruining, blessing/misery, peace/conflict.

God's wrath and justice are simultaneous but also successive. Therefore, all of the characterization of God in 1:18-3:20 falls under the canopy of God's wrath. Even God's justice in 3:1-8 justifies God's wrath. But God's justice achieves a preeminence with νυνὶ δέ in 3:21. Thereafter the characterization of God falls under the canopy of God's justice.

God's grace qualifies God's character as just in relation to humanity. Grace characterizes God as one who now does function as an agent in an honor/shame contest to vindicate all who believe. Moreover, the ἱλαστήριον in Christ that God puts forth, qualifies grace because it is a demonstration of God's justice in passing over former transgressions. But further ambiguity also invades readers. Does the ἱλαστήριον become effective through faith in the *blood* of Christ Jesus? Does the ἱλαστήριον in the blood of Christ Jesus become effective through faith? Does the ἱλαστήριον in the blood of Christ

---

(FFNT; Sonoma: Polebridge, 1988) 35-36.

Jesus become effective through Jesus' faithfulness? Interpretation has tended to make the ἱλαστήριον a heavenly place of transaction between God and Jesus. But it is also possible to understand the blood of Christ Jesus as a reference to the crucifixion. God's passing over former sins, then, is concretized in forgiving the sin manifest in the crucifixion of Jesus.[25] Consequently God is characterized as just and a justifier.

God's relationship to humanity that rests on the foundation of faith is itself grounded in a further feature of God's character. God is one (3:30). This both reinforces and develops God's trait of impartiality (2:11; 3:22). Readers are thus in a position to infer that radical monotheism is fundamental to God's character as both judge and justifier.

The Scriptures and the Prophets

Romans 1:2 appeals not to the scriptures in their entirety but to a specific function of mediating a divine promise through the prophets. The voice of God is embedded in the voices of prophets that are in turn embedded in the voice of scripture. At this stage the phenomenon of the embedding of voices is imprecise, but it becomes quite specific in 1:17. The scriptural voice is concealed in the verb γέγραπται. But readers who know the cultural repertoire can identify the voice of Habakkuk. But voices of ambiguity accompany the citation of Habakkuk. Ἐκ πίστεως can denote either having faith or being faithful, and the phrase can modify either δίκαιος or ζήσεται.

Voices of scripture are also embedded in the authorial voice as allusions. A case in point is Rom 2:6, which strongly echoes the language of Ps 61:13 LXX and Prov 24:12. Readers who know the cultural repertoire hear the voices of scripture under the authorial voice.

Romans 2:12 introduces "law" (νόμος). Romans 2:14 specifies that the law is a Jewish possession in contrast to the Gentiles.[26] There is no necessity to consider law as scripture except that 2:15 contrasts an external written form of the law with an internal reality. At least the work of the law is γραπτόν and therefore γραφή.

The characterization of the law is intricate. On the one hand, it may be equated with what is written (τὸν διὰ γράμματος, 2:27).[27] On the other, it may be the laws contained in what is written--such as prohibitions against stealing, adultery, and idolatry (2:22). Thus, Rom 2:26 speaks of τὰ

---

[25]See Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 37-38.

[26]In spite of the attempts of many to interpret "law" in multiple fashion, Stowers claims that it refers to the Pentateuch (*Rereading of Romans*, 117).

[27]In reference to scripture, γράμμα always has a pejorative connotation in Paul. See G. Schrenk, "γράμμα," *TDNT* 1. 746, 763-69; Käsemann, *Romans*, 76-77.

δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου as just decrees that pertain to the law. This reiterates the language of 1:32, and readers are now in a position to deduce that at least one way to know God's δικαίωμα is through scripture. But another part of the intricacy is that in the midst of a discussion *about* scripture, 2:24 cites a passage *from* scripture, namely, Isa 52:5 LXX.

In Isa 52:5 God's name is blasphemed because gentile enemies of Jerusalem have taken away God's people. But Rom 2:24 implies that transgressors of the law cause God's name to be blasphemed among Gentiles. This may appear to be a manipulative prooftext. But readers who know the cultural repertoire may take it as intertextual interplay. Such readers hear two voices reverberating back and forth--the authorial voice and the prophetic voice-over. When readers hear the two voices in interplay, they also hear the irony that Romans makes Jews and Gentiles swap the places they occupy in Isaiah, and that very plot plays out in the argument of the discourse.[28]

Readers may be genuinely perplexed about whether the term τὰ λόγια (3:2) means scripture or not.[29] But two associations make it likely. One is the association of τὰ λόγια with circumcision in 3:1 as a part of τὸν διὰ γράμματος in 2:27. The other is the association of τὰ λόγια with God's fidelity, presumably God's fidelity to promises in scripture. Further, 3:4 appeals to scripture by citing Ps 51:4 (Ps 50:6 LXX), which readers who know the cultural repertoire may recognize is attributed to David. So the voice of David is embedded in a voice of scripture that is embedded in the authorial voice. The context makes it apparent that the citation is construed so as to show God's fidelity. This divine fidelity reinforces the thematization of the gospel as a scriptural promise that first appears in 1:1-2.

Another appeal to scripture corroborates human infidelity in contrast to

---

[28]On the use of plot as a criterion for intertextual interplay, see Brawley, *Text to Text*, 13 and *passim*. By playing off of Isa 52:5 in its own context, and hence preserving a reference to the context (*contra* Käsemann, *Romans*, 71; O. Kuss, *Der Römerbrief: Übersetzt und erklärt* [Regensburg: Pustet, 1957] 1. 182), the allusion may imply an ironic analogy between the authorial audience and the people of Israel so that the roles of the Jews and the Gentiles are reversed.

[29]On the basis of philological studies and the context, especially Rom 4:13, J. Doeve gives a convincing argument that τὰ λόγια refer to God's revelation in scripture with emphasis on God's promises ("Some Notes with Reference to τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ in Romans III 2," *Studia Paulina: In honorem Johannis de Zwann* [ed. J. Sevenster and W. van Unnik; Haarlem: Bohn, 1953] 111-23). See also T. Manson, "LOGIA," *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962) 87-104, and S. Williams, "The Righteousness of God in Romans," *JBL* 99 (1980) 241-90. Williams takes τὰ λόγια especially as God's promise to Abraham to bless all the families of the earth. Stowers allows that the term may be God's promises in general, but the deficiency for Paul's interlocutor is the Abrahamic promise (*Rereading of Romans*, 167).

divine fidelity (3:10-18). Not only is the appeal a composite of texts, voices are embedded in voices.[30] When readers hear the authorial voice in this catena of texts, they hear multiple voices of scripture. But the multiple voices of scripture speak in the authorial voice.

In Rom 3:19 ὁ νόμος possesses the quality of saying and speaking, and it renders all humanity accountable to God. In the following verse its role is to mediate recognition of sin. This function contrasts sharply with the promising of 1:1-3 and the thematization of God's fidelity to τὰ λόγια in 3:2. Again, in speaking about ὁ νόμος Paul makes a strong allusion to scripture with a virtual citation of Ps 142:2 LXX. For readers who know the cultural repertoire there is irony because the first half of the sentence from which the allusion comes is a supplication against God's judgment. The psalm beseeches God (1) on the basis of the common guilt of everyone who lives ("everybody does it") (2) not to judge. But it is as if Paul takes the logic of the psalm as skipping a step. (1) On the basis of common guilt (2) God judges everyone who lives (3) so that the only way God does not judge is to have mercy. Therefore, the allusion to Ps 142:2 can be taken as the negative counterpart to the promise of divine mercy for all. Here again the argument of the discourse plays out the plot of the psalm.

Romans 3:31 claims that the faith it espouses upholds the law. Doubtless this refers backward to πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. But in anticipation of the case of Abraham, it forms a bridge to Romans 4. God's justice for Abraham upholds the νόμος with the paradox that the νόμος will demonstrate that justification does not come from the νόμος.[31]

Romans 4

Is the authorial audience included in the "we" in 4:1? According to Stowers, readers still hear the interlocutor of the diatribe. This interlocutor supposedly raises a false objection to which the example of Abraham is the response. Though Stowers defends this position by alleged Hellenistic parallels, the text lacks clues for readers to shift back and forth from one voice to another.[32] Nevertheless, Stowers obviously demonstrates a way of reading

---

[30]Not only is Psalm 9 LXX cited in the catena of texts but its thematic development is reflected in Romans 1-3. See Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 120-22.

[31]H. Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984) 53. On possible interpretations of law in 3:31 see U. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis Paulus* (München: C. Kaiser, 1968) 171.

[32]Stowers, *Diatribe*, 136; Hays, "Have We Found Abraham," 79 n. 13; Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 232. Richard Hays kindly allowed me access to a pre-publication copy of a review article on Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, forthcoming in *CR*. There too he notes the lack of methodological controls for identifying different speakers in a diatribe.

Romans 4 such that one hears the voice of a character who answers an interlocutor's question over the authorial voice, and in this case the "we" indicates a "dialogical" we. But in the progressive development of the discourse, do readers gain insight for a more precise determination of the first person plural in Romans 4? An answer awaits development of what is true in the discourse.

For readers who do not ferret out dialogue partners so astutely as Stowers, naming Abraham "our progenitor" may mean that Abraham is (1) Paul's ancestor, (2) the ancestor of the Jewish people excluding the authorial audience, or (3) the ancestor of the Jewish people including the authorial audience, a kind of confessional "we." If κατὰ σάρκα designates Abraham as the physical progenitor of the Jews,[33] the third alternative would characterize the authorial audience as Jewish. This is problematic because they have already been characterized as Gentiles. But does κατὰ σάρκα designate Abraham as the physical progenitor of the Jewish people only? Romans 4:18 recalls a divine promise that Abraham will be ancestor of πολλῶν ἐθνῶν ("of many nations [Gentiles]"). Further, in Romans 4 κατὰ σάρκα in the first instance refers to Abraham before he was circumcised, and apparently in Rom 9:8 τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκός from Abraham are not the descendants of Isaac but of Ishmael. Does Paul view Abraham as a kind of Adamic progenitor--the father of many nations? Not entirely in the literal sense of genealogy. Rather, Abraham as progenitor is qualified by the heirs of his faith and by the faith of his heirs.[34]

In addition, the initial reference to Abraham contains grammatical and syntactical ambiguity that allows for multiple readings of Rom 4:1. (1) What did Abraham our ancestor discover with respect to the flesh?[35] (2) What did Abraham our ancestor according to the flesh discover?[36] (3) Have we found

---

[33]*Contra* L. Keck, "Introduction and Annotations, Romans," HarperCollins Study Bible on Rom 4:1 (ed. W. Meeks; San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993) 2121; L. Cerfaux, *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux: Études d' exégèse et d'histoire religieuse* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1954) 2. 335; Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought*, 118; J. Lambrecht, *Pauline Studies: Collected Essays* (Leuven: University Press, 1994) 5, 19.

[34]Klein makes this point with the following exaggeration: "Abraham is no one's father--he becomes father in and through faith" ("Römer 4," 436, see also 433-35). See the critique and emphasis on God's act of justification from Wilckens ("Zu Römer 3,21-4,25," 599-600). See also K. Kertelge, *'Rechfertigung' bei Paulus: Studien zur Struktur und zum Bedeutungsgehalt des paulinischen Rechfertigungsbegriffs* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1967) 194.

[35]J. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC 38a; Dallas: Word, 1988) 198.

[36]There are variant readings supporting different construals. One variant omits εὑρηκέναι so that the verse is about Abraham according to the flesh. Whereas the Nestle-Aland 26th edition accepts MSS that place εὑρηκέναι before Ἀβραάμ, the majority group of manuscripts places εὑρηκέναι after προπάτορα and before κατὰ σάρκα, a syntax that

Abraham to be our ancestor according to the flesh?[37] In this last case, the discourse would insinuate that the answer is, "No." Therefore, "we" in v. 1 can include the author and authorial audience in a confessional "we," or can denote the authorial voice overlaid with the dialogical voices of speech-in-character of a teacher and an interlocutor, or can indicate Jewish compatriots of the authorial voice, or can redefine Abraham's relationship with the authorial audience beyond a Jewish identity. In face of this indeterminacy, the progressive discovery of what is true in the discourse may enable readers to gain some clarity.

In retelling Abraham's story, Romans 4 implies that it is an intertextual interplay with a cultural repertoire that embraces scripture and tradition. This interplay further insinuates that the retelling of Abraham's story will be revisionary. Käsemann avers that Paul's argument from scripture is ineffectual for modern readers because it disregards the historical meaning of the text.[38] But he fails to consider the way intertextuality is in fact a revisionary interplay between a precursor and successor text.[39] Readers catch revisionary irony only as the successor transforms the precursor. Thus, Abraham's story is repeated from a cultural repertoire that includes scripture and tradition, but with a twist.

Even readers who are not familiar with the cultural repertoire can overhear something of the hypogram of the tradition.[40] For example, Abraham occupies a position of ascribed honor as a venerable ancestor and of acquired honor as a heroic protagonist. Abraham stands in a relationship with God so that none other than God is the agent who pronounces the verdict ascribing honor to him. Moreover, his relationship with God is distinguished by a divine promise that the authorial voice presumes as a shared datum of the cultural repertoire. One indication that it is a shared presumption is that at its first mention it is already designated with the definite article as "the promise" (4:13).

More explicitly, the voice of scripture speaks through the citation of Gen 15:6, which forms the backbone of Romans 4.[41] In addition, scripture speaks

---

more strongly supports construing the phrase with the infinitive. J. Bain has suggested such a construal (*ExpTim* 5 [1893-94] 430). Fitzmyer judges this to be inconsistent with Paul (*Romans*, 371). But this paper shows that it is consistent with Romans 4, and I suggest also with Romans 9. See Kuss, *Römerbrief*, 1. 180.

[37]R. Hays, "Have We Found Abraham to Be Our Forefather According to the Flesh? A Reconsideration of Rom 4:1," *NovT* 27 (1985) 251-70.

[38]Käsemann, *Romans*, 115.

[39]See Brawley, *Text to Text*, 5-13.

[40]M. Riffaterre calls the precursor in an intertextual relationship the hypogram, that is, that which the successor text presupposes and engages in interplay (*Semiotics of Poetry* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978] 12-13 and *passim*).

[41]F. Hahn, "Genesis 15:6 im Neuen Testament," *Probleme biblischer Theologie: Gerhard von Rad zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H. Wolff; München: Chr. Kaiser, 1971) 100-101.

in tandem so that it is possible to take Ps 31:1-2 LXX as an explication of the blessedness Abraham received according to Genesis.[42] Further, the discourse in Romans 4 implies the details of Psalm 31 LXX beyond the citation so that readers who know the cultural repertoire can hear further reaches of the psalm.

But scripture also speaks with competing voices in Romans 4. The citation of Gen 15:6 and Ps 31:1-2 LXX and the whole story of Abraham reflect a positive voice of scripture, so that in harmony with 3:21 readers can understand that the law attests the justice of God.[43] On the other hand, law is not the means through which the promise came to Abraham (4:13). Günter Klein hears primarily a polemical voice in the revisionary reiteration of Abraham's story because he hears a Jewish version that Romans contradicts. Ulrich Wilckens hears rather a more positive voice in the emphasis in the Pauline version on God's grace in relation to Abraham's justification.[44] Further, the law speaks with the voice of wrath by identifying what is a violation of the law (4:15).[45] This doubled voice of scripture, positive and pejorative, is a reiteration and therefore thematization of 3:21 where though the law attests the justice of God, the disclosure of God's justice is apart from law. It is in this sense that 3:31 claims to uphold the law against the supposition that the argument overthrows the law.

Abraham's voice in Romans 4 corresponds largely to prophetic voices in scripture, but it is also distinct in that Abraham is a protagonist in a narrative. In Romans 4 his voice is never overt, but readers can hear a clear, though concealed, voice of Abraham. Under the third person discourse readers can hear Abraham say, "I believe." His belief is reiterated in Rom 4:17, 18, and 20-21. Romans 4:18 makes a direct allusion to scripture, under which readers can hear Abraham say, "I believe that I shall be the father of many nations (Gentiles)."

Abraham's embedded voice speaks differently, however, in 4:17 and 20-21. In the case of 4:17, voices are mixed with voices. Under the third person discourse readers can hear Abraham say, "I believe in the God who makes the dead alive and calls into existence things that do not exist." There are grounds

---

[42]A. Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* (London: SPCK, 1974) 53-58.

[43]As "testimony" to God's fidelity scripture has a positive function. U. Wilckens, "Die Rechfertigung Abrahams nach Römer 4," *Studien zur Theologie der altestamentlichen Überlieferungen* (ed. R. Rendtorff & K. Koch; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961) 120-21; idem, "Zu Römer 3,21-4,25," 589-91. Dunn takes ἀνομία in Psalm 31 LXX as characterizing those outside God's covenant, hence Gentiles (*Romans*, 1. 206).

[44]Klein, "Römer 4"; Wilckens, "Zu Römer 3,21-4,25." Klein makes a distinction between God's justice and the revelation of God's righteousness in Christ. The latter is for him apocalyptic and the former *heilsgeschichtlich* ("Exegetische Probleme," 676-83).

[45]See Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought*, 79-80.

to deduce that in this hypogram underlying the discourse, Abraham's voice from scripture is mediated by way of the cultural repertoire. Obviously Abraham's belief in the God who calls into existence things that do not exist recalls creation in Genesis 1. But Genesis 1 LXX takes a retrospective view toward God's creative speech so that the verbs are in the aorist. God's act of calling into existence in Romans 4 is in the present tense and is expressed with the verb καλέω in harmony with the present tense of the same verb in Isa 48:12-13 LXX (cf. Wis 11:15). Though Isa 48:13 LXX has reference to creation, it even employs καλέω also in the future. Καλέω is also reminiscent of Philo: "τὰ γὰρ μὴ ὄντα ἐκάλεσεν εἰς τὸ εἶναι (*On Special Laws* 4. 187; cf. *On the Creation* 81; *Allegorical Interpretation* 3. 10; *On the Change of Names* 46; *Joseph and Asenath* 8:2, 9; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 21:4; 48:8).[46] Further, parallel use of καλέω in Hellenistic religions may extend the cultural repertoire.[47] Abraham's belief in God the creator is mediated through the voice of the cultural repertoire.

Abraham's belief according to Rom 4:17 has strong parallels in the Eighteen Benedictions: "Yhwh who makes the dead alive." If 4:17 takes over this textual pattern, then readers who know the cultural repertoire hear Abraham's voice embedded in yet another voice.[48] Of course, all of these voices are finally embedded in the authorial voice, and perhaps in 4:20-21 readers can hear the hypogram of Abrahams' belief embedded only in the authorial voice, that is, related only to an indeterminate cultural repertoire: "I am convinced that God is able to accomplish what is promised."

Not only does Abraham's voice speak through the cultural repertoire, it is also mediated through the notion that God has acted in the death and resurrection of Jesus. In light of the developing voices in Romans 1-3, the absence of Jesus until v. 24 is conspicuous. But Jesus is not completely out of sight. For one thing, parallels between 3:21-31 and chap. 4 induce readers to view Abraham's story through messianist lenses. According to 3:25, God displayed Jesus publicly as a demonstration of God's justice in the remission of former transgressions. This line of thought has strong parallels in chap. 4 where God justifies the ungodly (4:5). Abraham then becomes a concrete case of the macarism in 4:7-8, a case in point of those whose sins are forgiven.[49] But 3:25 views God's dealings with former sins through God's act in Christ Jesus, and so Romans 4 nuances Abraham's story from a christological perspective. As a

---

[46]See G. Delling,"Partizipale Gottesprädikationen in den Briefen des Neuen Testaments," *ST* 17 (1963) 31 n. 3. Fitzmyer takes the calling into being as an allusion to the change of Abraham's name in Gen 17:5 (*Romans*, 372).

[47]K. Schmidt, "καλέω," *TDNT* 3. 490.

[48]See Käsemann, *Romans*, 121.

[49]Hanson, Studies, 52-66; Wilckens, "Rechfertigung Abrahams," 112; Dunn, Romans, 1. 229. In contrast see Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 375.

consequence, Abraham's belief in the face of his own impotence (as good as dead) and Sarah's barrenness (not to mention that she was post-menopausal in the superlative degree) can be equivalent to resurrection faith.[50] His belief in the God who gives life to the dead certainly refers to life from his impotent body and Sarah's barren womb.[51] But it is not without overtones of the resurrection of Jesus either.

For a second thing, because of the messianist perspective, the authorial voice also represses Abraham's scriptural voice. Although he is capable of boasting about heroic works, the authorial voice silences his voice from such boasting. Further, the authorial voice silences Abraham's vacillation in Genesis so that in this discourse he does not waver in his faith (4:20).[52]

Corresponding with Abraham's voice, the voice of Abraham's descendants also emerges in references to their belief. But a startling inversion occurs in identifying Abraham's descendants in 4:11-12. Romans 1:16 establishes a pattern of "the Jew first and also the Greek." It occurs first with respect to God's power for salvation. But reiteration revises expectations that the pattern means the priority of Jews over Gentiles. Romans 2:9 repeats the pattern in 2:9 but with an ironic reversal. This time the priority has to do with God's wrath. In spite of this ironic reversal, readers likely maintain expectations, in keeping with cultural presumptions, of the priority of Israel as Abraham's descendants. But Rom 4:11-12 forces such readers to revise expectations. Abraham is not first of all ancestor of the people of Israel but of Gentiles who believe. The purpose of his circumcision then is that he might

---

[50]Käsemann, *Romans*, 123. For Käsemann, Abraham's faith anticipates the fulfillment of the promise and is identical with Christian faith (*Paulinischen Perspectiven* [Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1969] 140, 148, 173. See also P. Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965) 227; Hahn, "Genesis 15,6," 105; Kertelge, *Rechfertigung*, 193-95; Lambrecht, *Pauline Studies*, 15. For Boers the connection between Abraham's faith and Christian faith lies in Abraham's belief in the same God, though making alive the dead makes Abraham's faith a type of Christian faith (*Theology Out of the Ghetto: A New Testament Exegetical Study Concerning Religious Exclusiveness* [Leiden: Brill, 1971] 84, 96-98). See A. Guerra, "Romans 4 as Apologetic Theology," *HTR* (1988) 264-69. Against a direct connection between Abraham's faith and Christian faith see M. Cranford, "Abraham in Romans 4: The Father of All Who Believe," *NTS* (1995) 87-88. For Lloyd Gaston, giving life to the dead means the creation of a church that includes Gentiles ("Abraham and the Righteousness of God," *HBT* 2 (1980) 57.

[51]For Dunn, God's act rather Abraham's ability to father children is in point (*Romans*, 1. 220). See also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 386.

[52]Boers makes an anachronistic distinction between Genesis as non-Christian and Paul's assumption of it as Christian (*Theology*, 103-104).

also be the ancestor of the people of Israel who believe.[53] In this case, the Gentiles are not added on to Israel. Rather, Israel is added on to the Gentiles.[54] Because of this startling inversion, readers can hear in amplified volume voices of both Gentiles and Jews: "I follow in the footsteps of Abraham."

In this fashion Abraham becomes "the father of us all" (4:16). To return momentarily to the question of the identity of "we" in the chapter, Abraham's paternity is a part of the progressive development of what is true in the discourse that gives readers a retrospective clarification of the identity of "we" from 4:1 on. The "all" who have Abraham as father in 4:16 can hardly be confined to Stowers's dialogical "we" of a diatribe because they are further associated with many nations (or Gentiles) (4:17). Further development in 4:23 reinforces this identity when the authorial voice claims that Gen 15:6 "was written not for Abraham's account alone" but also for "our account." The first person plural is further defined as "those who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (4:24-25). The implication that the first person plural includes all those who so believe, and even those who are going to believe, makes it extremely unlikely that the first person plural in 4:1 can be confined to a dialogical "we" in a diatribe.[55]

Readers can also overhear God's voice even when God does not speak

---

[53]See Klein: "The history of Israel is radically desacralized and paganized" ("Römer 4," 436). Cf. Wilckens, "Zu Römer 3,21-4,25" 596-600. But Wilckens is mistaken when he speaks of the physical mediation of Abraham's offspring through Judaism (600). See Klein, "Exegetische Probleme," 683. Fitzmyer also misses the point of the inversion (*Romans*, 381). Paul does not take advantage of Abraham as Israel's ancestor (*contra* Kuss, *Römerbrief*, 1. 178, 185-86). Rather, he makes him the ancestor first of believing Gentiles. James Swetnam radicalizes the reversal of Gentile and Jew even more by an exact grammatical and syntactical argument with respect to Rom 4:12, which he construes as referring to Abraham as ancestor of the (spiritually) circumcised including some from the literally circumcised but more pointedly including Gentiles who have faith like Abraham ("The Curious Crux at Romans 4,12," *Bib* 61 (1980) 110-15. See Cerfaux, "Abraham," 333-38.

[54]Abraham is thus more than a figure who unties Jewish and Gentile Christians (*contra* W. Campbell, "The Freedom and Faithfulness of God in Relation to Israel," *JSNT* 13 [1981] 39). Rather, he is a figure that gives a new perspective on the place of Gentiles and Israel in relation to each other.

[55]But Stowers is correct to identify a dialogical "we" because the first person plural does conceal the voice of opponents. Paul's argument against Abraham's boast in works stands in antithesis to a presumption of his works as a basis for his justification. For documentation of Abraham as a Jewish hero see *Jub.* 16:28; 17:15-18; 18:16; 19:8; 23:10; 24:11; 1 Macc 2:50-52; Sir 44:19-20; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 57:1-12; CD 3.2. Further, Jas 2:20-23 demonstrates an antithesis to the interpretation of Gen 15:6 in Romans 4.

overtly.[56] I have already suggested that Paul's relationship with God in 1:1, 9 implies divine legitimacy for the entire epistle. Similarly, the commendatory voice of scripture can be presumed to be the voice of God, so that God speaks through the narration of Abraham's story. At another level, as the agent who pronounces the verdict of Abraham's honor, God speaks even when the text ascribes no direct word to God. At yet another level, God's voice, concealed in the divine passive ἐλογίσθη in 4:3 (see 4:5, 9-10, 11), declares Abraham justified. Simultaneously, the authorial voice hears God's voice declaring that Abraham is not justified by works.[57] God's voice underlies the divine passives in the citation from Ps 32:2 (Ps 31:2 LXX) in vv. 7-8 and is reiterated in a repetition of ἐλογίσθη in 4:22. In this case, however, God's voice speaks not only to Abraham but also to those identified as "we." Therefore, the divine voice in 4:23-24 declares those who believe justified.[58] Voices here, however, come in cascading layers. Readers hear the voice of scripture, David's voice in the attribution of the psalm, and God's voice. All these voices, however, also speak in the authorial voice.

In the hypogram of Rom 4:13, God's voice makes a promise. The promise raises questions concerning both (1) its recipients and (2) its contents. (1) The promise is addressed to Abraham and τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ. On the one hand, σπέρμα is singular; on the other, its meaning can be collective. Paul takes it as a literal singular in Gal 3:16, and therefore interprets it christologically. Does he do the same here? Hardly. Verses 11-12 make Abraham the ancestor of all who have faith like Abraham's, and v. 16 makes certain that it is collective (παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι, πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν).[59] (2) The content of the promise is complex. On the one hand, it is the promise of ancestry and progeny, so that in the voice of scripture God's voice declares: "I have made you the father of many nations (Gentiles)" (4:17). On the other, God's voice promises an inheritance--astounding in its claims. God promises

---

[56]Gen 15:4 LXX mentions the "voice" of God in contrast to the "word" of God in the MT.

[57]Wilckens, "Was heisst bei Paulus," 65.

[58]Gaston reads Gen 15:6 in relation to Romans 4 as a progressive fulfillment of God's gift of righteousness to Abraham and to his heirs, including especially the Gentiles ("Abraham," 39-68).

[59]See Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought*, 53; Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 96. This speaks entirely against Paul Hammer's thesis that the promise for Paul is christological and therefore oriented only toward the past ("A Comparison of *KLĒRONOMIA* in Paul and Ephesians," *JBL* 79 [1960] 269-72). See Klein, "Römer 4," 438; Boers, *Theology*, 83,96. But Paul's eschatology also speaks against the notion of a present relation of believers to the ecosystem (*contra* K. Bailey, "St. Paul's Understanding of the Territorial Promise of God to Abraham: Romans 4:13 in Its Historical and Theological Context," *Near East School of Theology Theological Review* 15 [1994] 68).

Abraham and his descendants nothing less than the world (4:13).[60]

This promise comes not only through the righteousness of faith, as the text says, but also through the voice of the cultural repertoire. Clearly, the authorial voice alludes overtly to God's promises to make Abraham the ancestor of many nations and to make Abraham's descendants numerous (Gen 17:5;15:5; Rom 4:17-18). But through the cultural repertoire, 4:13 also alludes to God's promise of (1) land and (2) blessing for all the families of the earth.

My claim that 4:13 alludes to the promise of blessing for all the families of the earth may require some defense. According to Richard Hays's criteria for allusions,[61] the volume of verbal repetition of the promise is so low as to be inaudible. My claim fares better according to the criteria of (1) availability and (2) recurrence. (1) The appearance of the promised blessing of all the families of the earth in Sir 44:21 and Acts 3:25 as well as Gal 3:8 confirms its availability in the cultural repertoire. (2) Galatians 3:8 demonstrates that it recurs elsewhere in Paul.

According to Gal 3:8, Abraham received the gospel beforehand as God's promise to bless all the nations (Gentiles) in him. Thus, not only does Gal 3:8 represent a recurrence, it also serves as a definition of the gospel that Abraham received as a promise. Romans 1:1-2 uses strong parallels to Gal 3:8 when it speaks of God's gospel promised beforehand, so that if the definition of the gospel in Gal 3:8 transfers to Rom 1:1-2, it is possible to understand the hypogram of the gospel in Rom 1:1-2 as God's promise to Abraham to bless all the nations (Gentiles) in him.[62]

To return to the criterion of volume, Hays works only on the level of verbatim repetition. But repetition may also occur on the level of plot. This is precisely the case in Romans 4. The evidence that the inheritance in 4:13 includes the blessing of all nations is not so much in the verbatim repetition as in the argument that plays out in the discourse. That is, Romans 4 argues for the blessing of all nations through Abraham.

What is more, the explicit citations from Gen 15:5 and 17:5 have parallels in Gen 22:17-18. Genesis 22:17-18 reiterates the promise of numerous descendants and makes a promise of a future inheritance for Abraham's σπέρμα. Incidentally, the noun κληρονόμος in Rom 4:13 reiterates the verb κληρονομήσει in Gen 22:17. Just at the point in Romans 4 where the parallels between Gen 22:17-18 and 15:5 and 17:5 break off, Gen 22:18 LXX continues:

---

[60]W. D. Davies takes Paul's use of the Abrahamic promise as deterritorializing the promise and locating it in people of faith as the way Paul universalizes the promise (*The Gospel and the Land* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974] 179).

[61]Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 29-32.

[62]So also Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 171. See Käsemann, *Romans*, 118. I use Galatians to define Romans only with caution. See Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 94-95.

"And all the nations (Gentiles) of the earth shall be blessed in your descendants (σπέρμα)." The suppression of verbal elements at the point where the precursor continues and the playing out of the plot of the precursor in the argument of the successor are inducements for readers who know the cultural repertoire to fill in a gap by recalling, "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in your descendants."

But to reiterate, the allusion to the promise in Rom 4:13 speaks through the voice of a cultural repertoire. God's promise of blessing in Gen 12:3 is ambiguous. It can mean that Abraham will be a channel of universal blessing or that all the families of the earth will seek to be blessed the way God blesses Abraham. In favor of the first, Gen 12:1-3 emphasizes blessing five times in contrast to the universal curse in Genesis 1-11, and the Yahwist emphasizes God's blessing elsewhere.[63] Further, the Septuagint translates Gen 12:3 unambiguously: "And in you all the nations (αἱ φυλαί; τὰ ἔθνη in Gen 22:18) of the earth shall be blessed."

Moreover, the voice of the cultural repertoire also speaks with respect to the content of the promise as the inheritance of the world. According to a trajectory in the tradition, the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan was not a fulfillment that rendered the promises to Abraham obsolete.[64] Further, 12:1-3 associates the promise of land with universal blessing. Evolving tradition pushed the promises into the future and expanded them universally. This development took God's promise of ארץ or γῆ ("land," "earth") to Abraham as a promise of the whole world.[65] Thus, in the divine promises in Romans 4, readers hear not only an authorial voice but also the voice of God and the voices of scripture and the cultural repertoire.

Implications

This sample of the multivocality in Romans has two quite diametrically opposed implications for interpretation. On the one hand, when voices reinforce

---

[63]N. Lohfink, *Die Landverheissung als Eid: Eine Studie zu Gn 15* (SBS 28; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1967) 83;. G. von Rad, *Genesis* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 156.

[64]G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2, *The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) 319-28; W. Foerster, "κληρονόμος," *TDNT* 3. 779.

[65]So Sir 44:19-21; *Jub.* 17:3; 19:21; 22:14; 32:18-19; Rom 4:13; 1 Cor 6:2; Heb 2:5; cf. Matt 5:5; Jas 2:5; Philo, *Life of Moses* 1.155; *Mek. Exod* 14:31. According to *Sipre* on Deut 34:1-4, on Mt. Nebo God showed Moses the whole earth. Bailey shows how the Abrahamic promises were universalized and spiritualized in the two centuries before the New Testament ("St Paul's Understanding,"59-69).

one another in their reiteration, they have a capacity to control readings. Such reiteration of voices replicates systems of determining meanings, and the multiplicity of determinations controls a "correct" reading. Thus a reiteration of the authorial voice in prophetic voices, Abraham's voice in particular, scriptural voices, a divine voice, and the voice of a confessional "we" that includes the authorial audience forcefully determines that the just one is the justifier, and that just one is God. On the other hand, the multiplicity of voices has a capacity to thwart the determination of meaning. Ambiguity and voices that correct one another mean that the texts speaks with a non-reductive plurality of voices. Further, embedded voices also speak in internal dialogue even to the point of opposition. In the development of Romans through chap. 4, there is an indeterminacy about the meaning and function of law. The νόμος is upheld as νόμος when it shows that Abraham is not justified by νόμος but by God. But there is also a third implication between the two diametrically opposite ones. That is, the multiplicity of voices has a capacity to revise meaning. In the progressive development of the discourse, voices that redirect earlier voices induce readers to revise their anticipations of what is true in the discourse. A case in point is the subversion of readers' anticipations of the priority of Israel as Abraham's offspring and therefore heirs of *the* promise in the ironic reversal that Israel and the Gentiles swap places.

Cristina Grenholm

THE PROCESS OF THE INTERPRETATION OF ROMANS

The philosophical development from modernism to post-modernism has entailed a new focus on hermeneutical issues in several fields. One of its characteristics in the new awareness of the importance of the context of the interpreter. Within systematic theology so called contextual theologies have caught the attention of scholars. Such theologies have not only become important objects of analysis; they have also brought about an awareness of the contextuality of the theologian. The contextual aspects which have been highlighted, are class, culture and gender. Thus we have theologies of liberation, Asian Theologies, feminist theologies etc.

Biblical exegesis is one of the original *loci* of hermeneutics, law being the other.[1] Although there are vivid discussions among exegetes concerning the principles of hermeneutics, these discussions have not yet reached many of the biblical commentaries.[2] In this article I shall discuss some recent commentaries on Paul´s Epistle to the Romans, none of which reveal an awareness of the general hermeneutical discussions.[3]

My purpose is twofold. First, I shall present an analytical tool which allows the reader to detect several hermeneutical aspects of the commentaries. Second, I shall apply this analytical tool and show its usefulness for a better understanding of the process of the interpretation of Romans

We shall begin by making a distinction between two kinds of interpretations. With reference to results from my earlier work, the complexity of the interpretive process will begin to emerge. The analytical tool is further developed by an addition of a third category and a suggestion of how to map the process of biblical interpretation. Finally, six criteria for acceptable contemporary biblical interpretations are stipulated.

The second part of the article is an application of the map of the interpretive process on three recent commentaries on Romans. Examples are given of how the stipulated criteria are handled. Special attention is given to the perspectives of the commentaries.

Finally the results are summed up and the criteria are reaffirmed. Hopefully the reader is provided with a more subtle understanding of what is going on in a biblical commentary. The article ends in a short discussion of whether other commentaries are needed or not for the purpose of mastering the process of the interpretation of Romans.

Why do we need to ask what is going on in biblical commentaries? As already mentioned, the commentaries do not explicitly address hermeneutical issues. This may be explained by the fact that they are "standard" commentaries belonging to established commentary-series which already have an outline of how to approach the biblical text.

Another possible explanation, related to the first, is that the genre of biblical commentaries has established conventions which make it difficult to discuss the importance of the context of the interpreter. They rarely contain a methodological introduction. Instead they present what can be characterized as preliminary or general remarks on the biblical book in question. In the case of Romans, one generally comments on the purpose of Romans, the character of the

Roman congregation, the composition of the epistle etc. It would seem to be implied that the question of what kind of interpretation the author intends to offer, is superfluous. What follows is solid exegetical work. The reader is assumed to know the implications of this point of departure.

Critical and creative interpretations

A close-reading of biblical commentaries clarifies the complexity of the interpretive process. In my dissertation, *Romans Interpreted* (1990), I presented a comparative analysis of four commentaries on Romans, namely those of Karl Barth, Anders Nygren, Charles E.B. Cranfield and Ulrich Wilckens.[4] The purpose of the study was to describe and analyse the different interpretations of Romans given by four twentieth century scholars and to examine whether those differences could be explained, and if so, how.[5] The selection of the commentaries was made in order to question the common view of the differences between the theological commentaries by Barth and Nygren, on the one hand, and the exegetical commentaries of Cranfield and Wilckens, on the other.[6] Although this characterization holds good in many respects, it also conceals the similarities. None of the commentaries is strictly of one kind. They contain theological as well as exegetical aspects.[7]

One explanation of the different interpretations of Romans was to be found in the interpreters´ blends of kinds of interpretations. First, we should notice that exegetical methods are legion. In the commentaries analysed at least six different kinds of exegetically accepted arguments were identified: philological, contextual, historical, intentional, natural and consistency-arguments. We shall not develop this typology here. The point is that there is a variety of possibilities available for the exegete.[8] A verse which is interpreted with reference to philological arguments can acquire a different meaning from the same verse interpreted with reference to the intention of Paul. In fact, Paul´s formulation can be held to explicitly contradict a common usage of certain words.

In addition, the same kind of arguments can differ in content. Contextual arguments can refer to different texts in Romans, *corpus Paulinum*, the New Testament or the whole Bible. Historical arguments can refer to the situation of Paul, the Romans, the Jewish communities, etc.

I think most theologians will agree that there is a difference between exegetical and theological interpretations of biblical texts. Still, it is not easily clarified. The following suggestion is meant as an analytical tool for analysing the process of interpretation in biblical commentaries.

When interpretations are made with reference to the six kinds of arguments mentioned above, one can say that the interpreter aims at a *critical* interpretation of the text. It serves the purposes of *describing, analysing and explaining* biblical texts. When the theological aspects of the texts are explicated, the interpreter aims at a *creative* interpretation of the text. It serves the purpose of *relating biblical texts to religious faith.*[9]

This distinction between critical and creative interpretations has at least three aspects: While critical interpretations are descriptive, historically oriented and have a lower degree of systematization, creative interpretations are assertive, contemporary and more systematized.[10]

In my analysis of the commentaries by Barth, Nygren, Cranfield and Wilckens I found that all of them pursue both critical and creative purposes.[11] This is by no means a mistake, according to my view. It cannot be avoided. One should aim at both kinds of interpretation.[12] The problem is that none of these commentators clarified the relation between the two kinds of interpretation.[13] Furthermore, what was actually done in the commentaries was not in accordance with the explicitly stated purpose.[14] Cranfield aims at staying clear of creative interpretations:

> Judging the proper function of the introduction to a commentary to be to furnish the reader with such information as will enable him to approach the detailed exegesis efficiently but with a still open mind rather than to present him with the commentator's ready-made answers to all important questions (in our view an illegitimate procedure...), we have decided to place both our general discussion of the theology of Romans and also our discussion of the difficult question of Paul's purpose or purposes in writing it not in the introduction but in volume two at the end of the exegetical notes.[15]

Thus Cranfield does not even want his view of Paul's purpose in writing Romans to guide the reader of the commentary and the discussion of the theology of Romans has to be left until the commentary is written. It is implied that the comments are not meant to present a theology. This is an ideal which is hard to achieve, considering that Paul is writing a *theological* text which Cranfield and others want to interpret.

It is not surprising that Cranfield cannot refrain from using theological arguments in his interpretation, for example, in the case of how to relate the old and new covenants to each other. According to him, they both have the purpose of faith and obedience.[16] Concerning 10:4 Cranfield concludes:

> ...but we are convinced that there is no statement in any of Paul's epistles which, *rightly understood*, implies that Christ has abolished the law.[17] (My italics.)

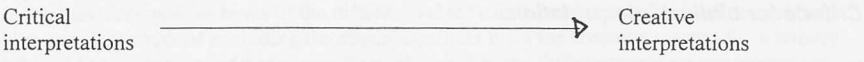
How does Cranfield know that he has understood Romans correctly? My analysis shows that he is guided by the conviction that the relation between God and human beings is primarily moral. Consequently one cannot understand Romans correctly without letting this be a part of the interpretation of details. We need not presuppose that the view of the divine-human realtionship reflects Cranfield's personal conviction. It is, however, a view which he ascribes to the theology of Paul and which he allows to affect his comments.[18] The discrepancy between stated purposes and those actually pursued was found also in the commentaries by Nygren and Wilckens. Barth, however, actually does what he claims to be doing.[19]

We can conclude that interpreting Romans is a complicated process which involves the two categories of critical and creative interpretations.

Mapping the process of biblical interpretation

As the first quotation from Cranfield's commentary shows, there exists an ideal among commentary writers that theological or creative issues should be left aside. It is not uncommon that we find expressions of the exegete handing over his (more rarely her) work to the systematic theologian.[20]

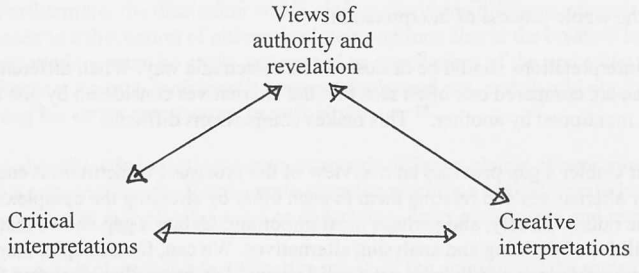
An early exponent of the view was Johann Philipp Gabler. In his famous inaugural address "On the Proper Discrimination between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology and the Specific Objective of Each" he focused on the distinction between - in our terminology - critical and creative interpretations.[21] I have called this view of the relation between critical and creative interpretations *Gabler´s gap*.[22] In his well-known article "Biblical Theology. Contemporary" Krister Stendahl also indicates the importance of making the distinction between what a text meant and what it means.[23] This distinction can be graphically illustrated:



If, however, critical purposes are also pursued within biblical commentaries, theology cannot be left out until the critical work is done. Consequently, the distinction cannot be regarded as absolute. Rather than understanding the interpretive process as moving from one step to another, we must do justice to its complexity. I suggest that we focus on the process involving the critical and creative interpretations, that is to say on the gap itself. It constitutes a significant field for research.

Are there other categories which should be taken into account? I think we need to take account of fundamental issues such as those of authority and revelation. It makes a difference whether we regard Paul as one of the greatest theologians or as an exponent of patriarchy. If he is held in high esteem it is difficult even to pose the question whether he could be wrong on some point. Different evaluations of the relevance of contemporary remarks depend on whether we regard God´s revelation to be fully contained within the Bible or regard it as being in a state of continuous development. They are either to be submitted to biblical revelation or allowed to guide the interpretation.

Another illustration of the process of biblical interpretation is to focus on the relations between the three categories of critical and creative interpretations respectively, and underlying issues such as those of authority and revelation. This results in the following revised diagram of Gabler´s gap:



The three categories are regarded as interactive in the process of interpretation. It is implied, on the one hand, that they cannot be isolated from each other and, on the other, that they should not be mixed.

We began this article with some reflections on the lack of awareness about the role of the perspective of the interpreter in exegetical commentaries. Where do these fit into the diagram of Gabler´s gap? I include them in the creative interpretations. They can be cultural or philosophical or express church affiliation or other kinds of theological starting points. An important result from my book *The Old Testament, Christianity and Pluralism* is that not only the explicit feminist and liberation theology perspectives affect the process of interpretation, but also the implicit perspectives of scholars such as von Rad.[24]

Criteria for biblical interpretation

The revised map of Gabler´s gap is a result of my further work on biblical interpretation. As in my doctoral dissertation on Romans, I have continued to analyse biblical commentaries, but I have focused on Christian interpretation of the Old Testament.[25] I think that the results from *The Old Testament, Christianity and Pluralism* admit more general application and are relevant for biblical interpretation in a more general sense.

By focusing on the problems which the six scholars analysed tend to overlook I put forth six criteria for acceptable contemporary interpretations of the Old Testament.[26] The point of departure in the unresolved issues highlights some weak spots of contemporary biblical interpretation. The criteria point towards possible solutions of these problems. Gabler´s gap understood as a map of the interpretive process provides a tool for meeting with these criteria. The criteria, when applied to biblical interpreation in general, are the following:

1. We should consider the whole process of interpretation, including both critical and creative purposes, in order to give a proper account of the role of different perspectives at the same time as we keep the distinction between the different purposes clear.

This criterion makes it clear that the distinction between different kinds of purpose is important, but at the same time encourages the interpreter to become aware of how they interact in the interpretive process. It is met by the revised image of Gabler´s gap itself, including the view that the process is complicated, with a multitude of possible realtions between its constituent parts.

2. We should aim at analysing relevant competing interpretations which should be discussed throughout the whole process of interpretation.

Alternative interpretations should be discussed in a systematic way. When different commentaries are compared one often sees that the alternatives considered by one interpreter are not even mentioned by another.[27] This makes comparisons difficult.

The image of Gabler´s gap provides an overview of the process. Furthermore it encourages searching for alternatives and relating them to each other by stressing the complexity of the process at the outset. Finally, and perhaps most important, Gabler´s gap shows that there are good possibilities of defining and analysing alternatives. We can, for example, map two alternative interpretations and thereby get a solid ground for rationally comparing them. Do they differ with respect to critical or creative issues or both? Do they agree concerning the view of revelation? etc. The risk of simply piling different alternatives on top of each other without really analysing them is lessened and so is the risk of simply picking the alternatives at random.

3. We should take the value problems and ethical conflicts into account throughout the whole process of interpretation. This criterion is based on the observation that although a variety of themes can be discussed by biblical interpreters, they are less inclined to deal with the variety of proposed values. The awareness of the importance of the perspectives of the interpreter makes the moral implications of the interpretations central.

Here too the image of Gabler´s gap helps in the process of defining and analysing value conflicts. Ethical conflicts within the biblical texts can, at least for the sake of analysis, be kept apart from the ethical conflicts between, for example, different Christian traditions. The textual and interpretive bases of the different values can be analysed and related to each other. One avoids the risk of excluding the ethical conflicts from the common ground for scholarly biblical interpretation and restricting their relevance to the different creative interpretations. The image of Gabler´s gap enables one to confront the pluralism of values present in the biblical texts as well as among the interpreters. Instead of ignoring the conflicting values proposed by the text or simply pushing them to the creative side, regarding the gap as a working field implies that one can deal with conflicting values also at the critical level, however, without ignoring the moral convictions of the interpreter. The image of Gabler´s gap thus challlenges the view of morally neutral critical interpretations of biblical texts.

4. We should allow for a critique of Christian theology in its different forms. This criterion reflects the tendency to leave theological issues aside. The result is often that a specific theological point of view is allowed to guide the interpretation without being critically discussed. Cranfield´s interpretation, which presupposes a moral understanding of the relationship between God and human beings, is a good example of this mechanism.

Gabler´s gap helps clarify and explain the pluralism of Christian traditions and interpretations. Since there is a complicated interaction between the critical and creative interpreatations, the same text can be related to different Christian contexts. This does not imply that every Christian tradition is as good as any other. On the contrary, Gabler´s gap helps describe the different interpretations by clarifying the means by which the gap has been bridged. These can of course be evaluated in turn.

Regarding Gabler´s gap as a field of research provides interpreters with an arena for critical discussions of theological interpretations which need not be confined to the arena of creative interpretations alone, where the religious concerns of the interpreters tend to limit the discussion. Furthermore, the discussion which aims at clarifying different interpretations necessarily leads to a discussion of alternative interpretations also at the creative level. Creative interpretations must be partly understood as conclusions of the preceding critical discussion. Respect for each individual´s personal faith need not, and should not, prevent us from discussing her or his convictions, in my opinion.

5. We should also allow for a critical distance towards different claims of revelation and authority. This criterion like the fourth emphasizes the need for a critical discussion but this time with regard to the more fundamental or underlying views of authority and revelation.

Gabler´s gap makes it clear that it is difficult to speak of the authority of the texts themselves other than in a very formalized way. Scripture has authority, but what does it say? One creative tradition or point of view cannot simply claim its own authority at the expense of other views. The arguments have to be stated. Why should one creative interpretation be favoured rather than another? The gap shows that the issue of authority cannot be

automatically settled by stating one view or the other. It fits in best with the view of the biblical interpreter as a conversation partner rather than as an obedient listener, and it provides a scene for that conversation.

In relation to Gabler´s gap, it has to be admitted that the contents of biblical revelation is hard to determine once and for all. The role of reason in trying to decide about these matters has to be acknowledged. Still, Gabler´s gap does not only allow for one concept of revelation. For example, neither the question of the location of revelation in the text or in experience, nor the issue of whether revelation continues or not is settled by the image in itself. Gabler´s gap makes it possible to analyse in what ways either view affects the interpretation of biblical texts. Further discussion is promoted by such analyses.

6. We should take religious pluralism as well as the pluralism of different perspectives into account throughout the whole process of interpretation. The last criterion encourages the interpreter to make her or his perspective explicit and to compare it with other approaches. It expresses the conviction that political, feminist, androcentric, Jewish etc. perspectives form a crucial part of the process of interpretation. Interpretive perspectives are not similar to spices added just before serving the dish.

My study, *The Old Testament, Christianity and Pluralism* has shown the relevance of different perspectives throughout the whole process, not only concerning Trible and Croatto, who programatically claim the relevance of their feminist and liberation theology perspectives for the whole process. It can also be seen concerning, for example, von Rad´s interpretation, where the perspective is not clearly stated, but nevertheless exists. Gabler´s gap does not allow for leaving these issues aside. Again, different views can be defined and analysed and the discussion is thereby given a rational base.

A discussion is indeed needed concerning this criterion of religious pluralism and perspectivism, since there is a clear tendency in the material analysed in *The Old Testament, Christianity and Pluralism* to regard alternative religious interpretations or perspectives simply as complementary and thereby to avoid a mututally critical discussion of these religious interpretations and perspectives. Levenson´s work is an exception in this respect. He brings up the problem of the relation between a Jewish and a Christian interpretation of the *aqedah* (Genesis 22), for example.[28] Still, Levenson does not really enter into any mutually critical discussion, but rather stops after indicating the problem.[29] In my opinion, the resources for a fruitful discussion of these complicated matters found within the field of biblical research have not been used. They offer a promising possibility for interreligious discussions as well as discussions between, for example, feminist and androcentric interpreters.

Religious pluralism as well as the pluralism of perspectives are inevitable and call for people both to listen to each other and to take stands on the common issues with which the critical and creative work of the interpreters confront them. When moved on to the creative level alone, there is not much chance for anything except trying to understand each other. Gabler´s gap instead demands that consequences are drawn from gained understandings and mutual criticism.

A text about a text about a text

Writing on biblical interpretation puts the author in a delicate third-level position. I explore a text written by Paul in the first century of the common era by means of texts about that text

from the twentieth century, myself providing a new text largely written from a perspective which need not coincide with that expressed in the secondary texts of the commentators. We shall not reflect on this problem here, but it has to be noticed.

Any commentary could be analysed with reference to Gabler´s gap and the six criteria. I have chosen three recent commentaries on Romans which are regarded as important, even as major contributions, to the interpretation of a central source for Christian thinking: James D.G. Dunn´s *Romans* in two volumes, Joseph Fitzmyer´s *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, and Peter Stuhlmacher´s *Paul´s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*.[30] They represent different contexts: British, American and German, Protestant and Roman Catholic.

The limits of an article does not allow for as thorough an analysis of these commentaries as they deserve. It is in fact not claimed that it provides an analysis of them. It has, for example, not been possible to discuss exegetical details. On the whole, the article is limited to the analysis of the introductions and other kinds of general remarks. Concerning Dunn´s commentary, a selection of his "Explanation" sections have been analysed. Since they comment on the text, verse by verse, covering several hundred pages, it was neither possible, nor necessary to analyse all of them for the purposes of the article. Fitzmyer´s commentary has a large section on "Pauline Teaching in Romans" in the introduction which contains material comparable to the contents of the selection of Dunn and to Stuhlmacher´s excursuses spread out in his book. In addition, the detailed comments on Romans 1:18-32 have been analysed.

The concentration on the introductions and closely related sections of the same general character is motivated by the fact mentioned above that the commentaries lack explicit methodological discussions. Still, as will be shown, the hermeneutical strategies of the interpreters are revealed in these sections. Gabler´s gap is helpful in bringing them to the fore.

Given these limits, it is better to characterize the following as an application of the map of Gabler´s gap using three recent commentaries on Romans as examples of how the stipulated criteria can be handled. The results from this application cannot be generalized to all commentaries on Romans, but I hope that they are relevant also to other commentaries, providing the reader with a more subtle understanding of what is going on in a biblical commentary.

Perspectives

Assuming that it is justified to analyse biblical commentaries using the map of Gabler´s gap and the six criteria proposed above, where should we start? The criteria need not be taken in a special order. Since this SBL-consultation will have one of its focuses on the contexts of the commentaries of Romans and I have been asked to reflect some of the contextual issues, we shall reverse the order of the criteria. Thus we start with the perspective of the commentaries.

As has already been stated, perspectives ought to be taken into account throughout the whole process of interpretation. How should the relation between, for example, the critical interpretations and the perspectives of the interpreters be understood? Can the interpretations be explained with reference to the interpreter´s perspective? That seems to be a dangerous path to follow. It is not unlikely that the interpretations are just explained away or not taken seriously if it is argued that they have been guided by, for example, a Lutheran perspective.

Again, the complexity of the process of interpretation needs to be stressed. A certain perspective neither implies that the interpretation is irrelevant to those who do not share it, nor that the perspective is the strongest argument for the interpretation. It may serve as a less important aspect for the possible consideration of the reader. Thus, when we start with the perspectives of the commentaries, it is not implied that they *determine* the results, but that they may *influence* the interpretations in various ways, explicitly or implicitly.

Liberation theologians and feminist theologians, for example, have strongly emphasized the question of who is interpreting the Bible. Is it those in power or the marginalized? Is it men or women? Soon the question of culture emerged. Variables other than class and gender are important. This is why we can find quite elaborate descriptions of the position of a feminist. Elizabeth A. Johnson, for example, writes in the introduction to her *She Who Is*:

> The ecumenical, interracial, and international spectrum of women's theological voices ensures that the ways of speaking about God are many. Within this symphony of voices, sharply discordant at times, my own stance is inevitably shaped by my social location as a white, middle-class, educated and hence privileged citizen of a wealthy North American country. It is further specified by my intellectual formation and participation in the Catholic community, augmented by vast instruction gained from the ecumenical conversation of present-day Christian theology and the even wider discourse of feminism...[31]

Other scholars have discovered their own positions by means of this kind of explicit awareness of the importance of the context of the interpreter. The exegete Daniel Patte has written a book which is a testimony to the process of becoming aware of one's context and its influence on the professional work of a biblical interpreter, *Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: A Reevaluation*. After a presentation of his commitment to critical exegesis, he writes:

> Yet I am conscious of the fact that my interpretations, including my critical readings, reflect and are marked by the perspective from which I interpret. For instance, since I am a male raised and educated in Europe and North America, my interpretations are *either* "androcentric" and "Eurocentric" (terms I use for designating interpretations by male "European-Americans" who *are not* self-conscious about the contextual character of their interpretations) *or* "androcritical" (a term I use for designating interpretations by male European-Americans who *are* self-conscious about the contextual character of their interpretations). /.../ I want to underscore that we, male European-American critical exegetes, *must assume responsibility* for the effect of our work upon various groups of people, especially when this effect is quite negative.[32]

According to Patte, there is no escape from being affected by a perspective. He explicitly rejects the opposite view. There are at least two questions which need to be posed: Which is the perspective of the interpreter? And is the interpreter aware of his or her perspective?

In addition, the perspective has moral implications. Patte points to an important aspect of acceptable contemporary biblical interpretations: the interpreter should assume responsibility for the effects of their work. This is not the case if the interpreter is claiming to be "objective" while simultaneously presupposing an androcentric or Eurocentric perspective. Such an interpretation risks becoming suppressive.

A perspective can thus include gender, culture and class. These are implied in the quotation from Patte. Therefore it is better to speak of perspectives in a plural form. In these commentaries there is at least one other relevant perspective: church affiliation.

> Although this commentary will always be recognized as one written by a Roman Catholic, I hope that my background will not show up too boldly.[33]

This quotation from the preface of Fitzmyer´s commentary includes a declaration of the interpreter´s church affiliation. It is a piece of information which the author apparantly regards to be relevant and important, on the one hand, and irrelevant, on the other, since he hopes that it will not have any consequences in the commentary. The tension in worth exploring.

First, it is my overall impression that the church affiliation of commentary writers is not generally exposed in such a clear way. Cf. the commentaries of Dunn or Stuhlmacher. Why is it so clearly put forth by Fitzmyer? One explanation is that there are not many commentaries on Romans written by Roman Catholics. According to Fitzmyer´s own preface, the last one "written by an English-speaking Roman Catholic was published in 1934".[34] One example from the German-speaking milieu is Heinrich Schlier´s commentary from 1977.[35] Even the commentary on Romans in the Evangelish-Katholischer Kommentar series is written by a Lutheran, Ulrich Wilckens.[36] The lack of commentaries written by Roman Catholics provides a good reason for pointing it out.

Second, the commentary has been given the official Roman Catholic declarations *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur*. Thes concepts are explained on the flyleaf:

> The *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the *nihil obstat* and the *imprimatur* agree with the content, opinions and statements expressed.

Fitzmyer´s commentary is not only written by a scholar who also happens to be a Roman Catholic, it is also officially declared to be free of doctrinal and moral errors from a Roman Catholic point of view.

Considering the moral aspect of interpretation pointed out by Patte, this declaration is questionable. If understood in a moderate sense, it affirms the awareness of the context of the interpreter. It implies that the interpretation does not contradict certain given convictions. Still, we can ask whether the interpreter has assumed responsibility in relation to readers who do not share this point of departure.

Thus, Fitzmyer has good reasons for pointing out his being a Roman Catholic. It is unusual in this context and it belongs to the official character of the commentary. How is it that he hopes that this will not show? It is not easy to find a clear answer to that question. As we shall see, Fitzmyer does not seek to stay clear of modern theological constructions.[37] Still, he seems to think that theological interpretations can also be given without the church affiliation of the interpreter showing up "too boldly".[38]

Has Fitzmyer succeeded? He is right in the assumption that the commentary seems to be "recognized as one written by a Roman Catholic".[39] Several reviewers mention this fact, confirming Fitzmyer´s expectation.[40] However, they differ concerning whether it shows or not. John Ziesler holds that it does not show:

> One naturally asks how far Fitzmyer´s commentary is distinctively Roman Catholic, and how far it is a work by an erudite scholar who happens to be a Roman Catholic. /…/ It is difficult (impossible?) to think of instances where confessional positions have crucially affected exegetical decisions. Therefore, while a book like this must be given a warm welcome as a *Roman Catholic contribution* to the study of Romans, its main interest lies in its *scholarship pure* and (not so) simple.[41] (My italics.)

The same tension is expressed here as the one we noted in Fitzmyer´s preface. On the one hand, the confession does not show; on the other, it makes the commentary valuable. Confession and scholarship are separated. Perhaps this is also what Fitzmyer wants to affirm. He hopes that his church affiliation has not affected his scholarly work in an improper way. Another presentation which Fitzmyer gives of himself is that he is a Professor Emeritus in Biblical Studies from the Catholic University of America.[42] Perhaps this is what is regarded as most important by Fitzmyer.

The importance of scholarly career is also pointed out in Stuhlmacher´s commentary. He is not introduced by reference to his confessional belonging, but in terms of being Professor of the New Testament at The University of Tübingen during 20 years and by listing several of his other books.[43] It seems to be implied that the scholar should not let himself be guided by his church affiliation.

Not all reviewers share the view that Fitzmyer has successfully stayed clear of revealing his confession. Robert Jewett says:

> The theological perspective is middle of the road, *reflecting some traditional concerns of Roman Catholic theology*, but not in a defensive manner.[44] (My italics.)

The Roman Catholicism is there, but what seems to be important is, again, that it does not show in an improper way. The same judgment is shared by, for example, P.R. Rogers.[45]

Improper or not, it shows. We shall look at two examples which are distinctive of Fitzmyer´s commentary as compared with those of Dunn and Stuhlmacher. We shall, however, refrain from attempting to judge whether this affects the interpretation in an improper way or not.

Like the others, Fitzmyer holds that the origin of the Christian community in Rome is unclear, but he is the only one who brings up the issue of the traditional view of its being founded by Paul and Peter. Although he admits its legendary character, he holds that it mirrors the facts that

> …both of them eventually worked there and suffered martyrdom there (or in its immediate environs), and /…/ their mortal remains were in the possession of the Roman church…[46]

Fitzmyer´s official connection with Rome may make it natural to bring up this tradition. As a scholar he cannot accept the legends as historical facts, but he gives a reasonable interpretation of the tradition. From reading the letter, however, it seems obvious that Paul was not the founder of the Roman Christian community. This contradiction is not discussed by Fitzmyer. Maybe it is because it would have to lead him to the conclusion that the claim

that Paul is in some way connected with the founding of the church in Rome is false. Such a conclusion might lead in the direction of undermining the authority of papacy, at least at a metaphorical or symbolical level. As a Lutheran, I am perhaps more inclined to discuss this issue, but I will refrain from it. The point is rather that Fitzmyer´s interpretation does not stand free from the bonds between interpretation and power.

The second example of Fitzmyer´s Roman Catholic affiliation is his remark that Romans is not complete in the sense that it is not a summary of Pauline doctrine:

> For some characteristic Pauline tenets are missing from Romans: his teaching on the church, the eucharist, or eschatology (save for fletching remarks).[47]

Although neither Dunn, nor Stuhlmacher, would oppose to the view that there are other things written by Paul in other letters, they do not put any emphasis on this kind of remark. They rather stress the fulfilled character of the epistle, as will be shown below. It does not seem coincidental that Fitzmyer mentions the church and the sacraments as examples of what is missing in Romans. First, it is true. Second, ecclesiology and sacramentology are more important to Roman Catholic theology than to Protestant contexts.

I have chosen to highlight Fitzmyer´s perspective since it is explicitly brought to the fore in an ambiguous way and also frequently noted by reviewers. Concerning the church affiliations of Dunn and Stuhlmacher the personal presentations are less prominent, on the one hand, and less ambiguous, on the other.

In the editor´s preface in the commentary of Dunn it is written about all authors in the series that they

> ...can rightly be called evangelical, and this term is to be understood in its positive, historic sense of a commitment to Scripture as divine revelation, and to the truth and power of the Christian gospel.[48]

This declaration does not refer only to Dunn and his church affiliation is not specified. It also differs from the characterization of Fitzmyer in being explicitly limited to accepting the Bible as divine revelation and holding the gospel to be true. There are probably not many commentary writers who would not agree to that. Still, this formulation gives associations to Evangelical theology of the kind where belief in the Bible is regarded as more important than any tradition. Dunn´s commentary is remarkably concentrated on the biblical text itself. According to his preface, he began by writing the sections called "Explanation" with the aim of providing comments

> ...determined more by the questions arising from the text itself than by the history of its interpretation and the debates which have marked that history.[49]

The only tools used were

> ...concordances, lexica and the Kittel - Friedrich *Wörterbuch*, following up all cross-references and possible parallels of language and thought in other sources of the period...[50]

This approach fits well in with the interpretation of the declaration just made. As in the case of Fitzmyer, Dunn´s Evangelicalism affects the way he deals with the text of Romans,

although clearer in his methodological approach than in what can be seen in the parts analysed here. It is also a characteristic of Evangelicalism understood in a general sense, to try to understand the text in itself.

Stuhlmacher does not position himself explicitly. He does not even have an author´s preface. His scholarly affiliations are declared by the translator, as was seen above. It is also emphasized by the dedication of the book to D. Gerhard Friedrich whom he describes as his "fatherly mentor". Friedrich was one of the editors of Das Neue Testament Deutsch series in which the commentary was originally published. He intended to write the commentary on Romans himself, but eventually gave the task to Stuhlmacher.[51] Stuhlmacher´s hermeneutical position is presented in *Vom Verstehen des Neuen Testaments: Eine Hermeneutik*.[52] The reader is not likely to be surprised by the quotation from Luther´s preface to Romans already on the first page:

> This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament, and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul.[53]

Although the Lutheran affiliation is clear, Stuhlmacher does not think that there is any significant difference between Catholic and Protestant interpretations of Romans today.[54] Although people may argue whether this is actually true, it is the view held by both Stuhlmacher and Fitzmyer. First, they seem to agree that their church affiliation does not illegitimately affect their interpretations. Second, they actually give similar interpretations, for example, concerning the interpretation of the concept of faith.[55]

Gender perspectives

Confessional affiliation is thus a perspective which is made more or less explicit in these commentaries. It does not, however, correspond to the general concept of perspectives as used in theology. One usually singles out gender, culture and class. Reading these commentaries generously, the scholarly and church affiliation perspectives can be said to refer to the cultural aspect, although it does not by any means cover the whole field. We shall concentrate on the issue of gender and only mention culture and class briefly in this section.

According to Patte, there are either androcentric or androcritical interpretations.[56] There is no neutral position with reference to gender issues. From the many feminist works on biblical interpretation, I will just give a couple of examples from *The Women´s Bible Commentary* which reveal some important consequences of an awareness of gender perspectives.[57]

First, the feminist perspective reveals what the androcentric texts and interpretations have taken for granted and lifts up those who have been marginalized by androcentrism:

> ...the literary legacy of the biblical authors does include female characters and introduce issues of special concern to women´s lives. To ask about those is to open up the text itself and to make visible the invisible (and often unconscious) values and assumptions of its author. Such a reading is part of the process of "unmasking" the dominant culture and its particular talent of persons who live on its margins.[58]

Second, it reveals new aspects of the text. As a consequence, aslo familiar themes from androcentric interpretations carry other nuances. Romans is commented on by Beverly Roberts Gaventa in *The Women´s Bible Commentary*. The epistle is said not only to have been interpreted by men, but also to contain very little on women. Women are marginalized in biblical interpretation. This causes an interpreter involved in gender issues considerable problems. Still, there are themes which can constitute structures which are useful for feminist theology, according to Gaventa. Although they were not originally put forth in that way, they provide tools for interpreting Romans from a feminist perspective. The interpretation has clear connections with the text and does not need to be considered as altogether external.[59] The reader is reminded of Rosemary Radford Ruether´s prophetic principle.[60] The themes put forward by Gaventa are the following:

1. God as impartial and caring for all people.
2. The universality of human sin, making way for finding other examples, e.g. low self-esteem.
3. The radical nature of God´s grace.
4. The solidarity of humankind with the remainder of creation.[61]

Let us briefly compare these themes with the interpretations given by Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher. The impartiality of God is pointed out also by them. They do not, however, point directly to the wider implications of this idea, but place it in the context of the conflicts between Gentile Christians, Jewish Christians and Jews.[62] Gaventa by starting from the marginalization of women gives a special nuance to her interpretation of God´s impartiality.

There is also a similarity concerning the second theme in the stress on the universality of sin. Dunn, for example, does not apprehend homosexual behaviour as especially sinful, although it is explicitly noted by Paul:

> The daily envy, deceit, whispering behind backs, heartlessness, ruthlessness, and so on, manifest human corruption quite as much, if not more than homosexual acts. Such homely, everyday vices which poison human relationships are as much a sign of man´s loss of God as any sexual perversion.[63]

He does not, however, draw any further conclusions concerning other possible sins. Of course, this can be explained by his comments being strictly historical in the sense that he is not asking for the application of Romans 1:29-31 today. It is this split between the interpreter´s context and that of Paul which is bridged by Gaventa in order to make the text relevant to contemporary women. Using the idea of universal sin for identifying new aspects of it as low self-esteem (in contrast to the sin of *hybris* which really is a sin only for the privileged).

The third theme of the radicality of God´s grace is, of course, confirmed by all interpreters. It is rather the application of this belief which is special for Gaventa. The fourth theme of the consequences for the ecological understanding of nature for theology is characteristic of much feminist theology and is not highlighted by Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher. The feminist critique of the hierarchical understanding of the world (placing God at the top, followed by men, women, animals and nature) implies closer realtions between the different parts of creation.[64]

These examples indicate that Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher place themselves within an androcentric perspective, although it is not made explicit. It seems as though gender is not even a relevant category for these commentators. They are presented first and foremost as

scholars. The single other variable of relevance seems to be that of being a Roman Catholic. It is interesting to notice that this affirmation of the church affiliation of one commentary writer brings up the issue of church affiliation not made as explicit by the others as can be seen from the reviews. In this sense being a Roman Catholic commenting on Romans is similar to being a woman doing the same thing. It has to be pointed out, since it does not fit into the generally assumed image of the interpreter of Romans. One important difference is that while Gaventa holds her perspective to be relevant for the interpretation of Paul´s text, Fitzmyer hopes that his church affiliation will not affect the interpretation in an inappropriate way. To put it in another way: Fitzmyer does not want to use his perspective as a resource for interpreting Romans, while Gaventa finds it necessary.

None of these commentators, including Gaventa, explicitly comment on the variable of culture. According to the distinctions made by Patte, they are all Eurocentric.[65] We will not go further on this theme here. It deserves an article of its own.

Neither do these commentators address the topic of class. Nevertheless it is spelled out in different ways that Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher are well educated, successful scholars with considerable experience in their field. Even considering the possibility that these men come from the working class, they in fact now belong to the establishment of academic scholars who generally must be regarded as upper class, at least in a cultural sense. The notion of an upper class Jesuit although not contradictory, would appear to be not quite suitable. Still, one cannot ignore the fact that also Fitzmyer belongs to the elite not only of the academy, but of society in general.

We shall continue to see how the other stipulated criteria can be handled. Many aspects of the criteria could have been highlighted which are left out in this article. The purpose is not to give full-scale analyses, but rather to pay attention to some aspects of how these criteria can actually be dealt with.

Views of authority

A rough distinction can be made between whether a biblical interpreter is regarded as a listener or as a partner. In the first case, anyone holding the Bible as authoritative is supposed to receive the biblical message without calling it into question. When questions arise, the listener should try to adjust to what the authoritative Bible says rather than to let those questions lead to an evaluation of the text. Asking questions is regarded as a way of calling the authority of the Bible into question. In the second case, a two-way communication is presupposed. Questions should be asked and may lead to a critical evaluation of the biblical texts. The kind of authority that the Bible has, does not exclude its being obsolete or even wrong at certain points. Asking questions does not necessarily imply that biblical authority is undermined, simply that the Bible is approached as a serious conversation partner and not kept at a distance.[66]

Exegetical work implies asking questions. In this sense one must adopt a partner-view of authority when entering this field. Still, the conversation can be restricted in several ways. Here I shall briefly describe the interpreters´ relation to Paul as one important aspect of the authority of the text of Romans. I shall also briefly comment on the other partners brought in by the commentators as far as exegetical colleagues are concerned.

Paul is held in very high esteem by Dunn and Stuhlmacher. Dunn calls Paul "one of the most creative theological minds of all time from the most creative period of Christian thought".[67] Stuhlmacher is even more admiring. He locates revelation in the person and history of Jesus and then in the testimony of the apostles.[68] Stuhlmacher then depicts Paul as a historical witness to revelation, although he was not an original apostle. Instead, he was sent by the congregation in Antioch, which makes Paul´s mission historically based, according to Stuhlmacher. He is also regarded as the most successful witness:

> The church and theology remain founded on this original witness and are thereby at the same time instructed that there were original historical witnesses to the gospel who cannot be replaced. Among them is Paul, who was the most effective of these witnesses both in terms of his mission and (through his letters) literarily.[69]

Paul is further closely connected with the message of Jesus. When commenting on 8:2-11, Stuhlmacher says that Paul does not separate law and gospel, but rather searches for the appropriate relationship between them.[70] In this Paul is considered to be "very close in content to the preaching of Jesus", something which cannot be said of Paul´s critics.[71]

With this view of the excellence of Paul, it is not surprising that Stuhlmacher is unwillig to see any tensions in Paul´s thinking. Rather, he takes a listener´s position. For instance, he asks whether Paul does not in fact contradict himself concerning the law, but he concludes that he "...is merely formulating his position in a *highly dialectical* manner and in a way which is by no means absurd!"[72] (My italics.)

Let me mention by way of contrast of Krister Stendahl´s short, but impressive, commentary on Romans, *Final Account*. Stendahl writes that Paul was not always so good in providing arguments. The beginning of chapter 7 is one example.[73] This accords well with Stendahl´s view of the Bible. He means that one should not regard the Bible to be deep. We tend to think it is ten times as deep as it actually is, according to him.[74] With such a view of Paul, which by no means excludes his texts being authoritative, there is no need to save Paul from the judgment of contradicting himself. But how could the most effective witness of revelation be contradicting himself?

Another example of the high esteem in which Stuhlmacher holds Paul is the interpretation of his martyrdom in Rome. Paul then becomes a solemn sign of his gospel:

> In Rome, Paul was martyred during the reign of Nero. In the end, the "wrath" that he kindled among the Jews and their "jealousy" over the Gentiles cost Paul his life. Hence, he was not only an apostle to the Gentiles, but also became a martyr of the faith for the sake of Israel.[75]

One should notice the shift of focus as compared with Fitzmyer. Stuhlmacher connects Paul´s death with his being the most effective witness to the universal gospel, whereas Fitzmyer refers to it in connection with the tradition of Paul as one of the founders of the Roman church, as mentioned above.[76]

Fitzmyer does not display the same admiration for Paul as Dunn and Stuhlmacher. An indication of this is that Fitzmyer rather points to the didactic and situation-bound character of the epistle than to any dogmatic content independent of the historical context:

> Paul´s letter is not an abstract, dogmatic treatise or a dialogue with Jews who do not accept his gospel; it is rather a didactic and hortatory letter, intended for the discussion by the Jewish and Gentile Christians of Rome, for their understanding and for their conduct.[77]

Rather than focusing on the distinctiveness of Paul´s contribution to theology, Fitzmyer seems to presuppose a respectful rather than admiring view of Paul as a person. He does not accept such a close connection between Paul and Jesus as Stuhlmacher does. For example, Fitzmyer holds that the Romans were already acquainted with Jesus, but not with Paul´s "*personal* way of presenting Jesus Christ and his message".[78] (My italics.) Paul is seen as one of the theologians of the church rather than as *the* theologian praised by Dunn and Stuhlmacher.

Another issue of authority concerns "scholarly colleagues" through history. First, I need to return once more to Stuhlmacher´s relation to Martin Luther. The Luther-quotation which is found at the very beginning of his commentary, connects with Stuhlmacher´s high estimation of Paul. It is not only that Luther considers Romans to be "the chief part of the New Testament" and "the purest gospel".[79] Stuhlmacher formulates himself in the same manner:

> Nowhere in the entirety of Holy Scripture is the nature of the gospel more clearly and exactly worked out than in the letter to the Romans. This is precisely what constitutes the theological significance of this letter.[80]

Concerning Stuhlmacher´s colleagues it is natural to ask what function Martin Luther has in his commentary? Is he also an unquestionable authority? The answer is no. For example, concerning the interpretation of "I" in 7:7-25 Stuhlmacher sees a conflict between Luther´s interpretation and that of "the majority of the interpreters".[81] These verses are not best interpreted in terms of righteousness and sin belonging to Christian life simultaneously, but in terms of the Christian being "...righteous and open to temptation at the same time".[82] Luther is thus an important authority for the interpreation of Romans, but the interpreter is more like a partner than a listener in relation to him. The following quotation concerning the interpretation of the whole epistle illustrates this view:

> This comprehensive interpretive perspective includes that of Luther´s within it, but also goes far beyond it.[83]

Stuhlmacher´s interpretation of Luther cannot be discussed here, but it is clear that Paul has more authority than Luther in Stuhlmacher´s commentary and that modern scholarship is allowed to correct Luther.

Fitzmyer does not single out any historical interpreter as Stuhlmacher does. It is characteristic of his commentary, however, that it has rich references to commentators from all historical periods. It has rightly been praised for its comprehensive bibliographies.

The commentary of Dunn does not contain many references to other interpreters. As has already been mentioned, he explicitly disregards the history of interpretation in the Explanation-sections.[84] A quick glance at the detailed Comment-sections gives the same impression.

Concerning modern scholarship Stuhlmacher´s connection to Gerhard Friedrich has already been mentioned. The bookcover also points out another of his teachers, Ernst Käsemann. A thorough analysis of Stuhlmacher´s scholarly conversation partners would undoubtedly lead to

interesting results. In this article, however, I can merely make general comments on an obvious difference between the commentaries of Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher.

These commentators differ in the extent to which other modern scholars are brought into discussion. Stuhlmacher often refers to a limited selection of commentators. Dunn has references to scriptural passages and early Jewish sources and does not often get involved in explicit discussions with contemporary scholars.

Fitzmyer´s commentary is the opposite of Dunn´s in this respect. The impressive bibliographies are praised by reviewers. The general bibliography covers 51 pages and, for example, the additional bibliography to chapter 8 includes works in at least seven languages. Fitzmyer obviously aspires to be comprehensive, not leaving any relevant commentator out. In discussing each verse a wide variety of interpretations from different scholars are presented. They are, however, generally not discussed. The reader is rather left with the impression of going through a kind of catalogue. It is not always easy to find out which interpretation Fitzmyer prefers himself, although one gains a lot of information about the text.[85]

Further exploration of these differences concerning the authority of Paul and the authority of other scholars is not possible here. For our purpose, however, it suffices to point out that the three commentaries of Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher differ concerning authority-issues.

Critique of Christian Theology

There are at least two kinds of critique of Christian theology. The first is negative, dismissing certain theological or creative interpretations. Stuhlmacher, for example, rejects the distinction between forensic justification and sanctification as "an unbiblical abstraction".[86] The second is implicit, favouring one creative interpretation although not discussing the alternatives. Fitzmyer provides an example of this second kind of critique, holding God to be responsible for both good and evil, but not entering into the difficult issue of the problem of evil.[87]

The first kind of critique is less problematic than the second. It highlights the gap between critical and creative interpretations and lets the critical interpretations provide a critique of creative theological issues. This is indeed an important task for critical exegesis. It is, however, necessary to note the limits of such a critique. All that is said in Stuhlmacher´s critique of the distinction between justification and sanctification is that it is not biblical. This observation fits in well with the distinction made in relation to Gabler´s gap between the critical and creative interpretations. The latter are more systematized than the former. The proper conclusion is that the distinction can be given biblical support, but it has to be based also on other kinds of argument.

The second kind of critique concerns the level of creative interpretation. Even if Fitzmyer is actually discussing the view of Paul, and not which solution of the problem of evil one should accept, the issue is of a complex nature and requires such a high degree of systematization that it becomes a creative interpretation.

A third kind of critique can be seen as a mixture of the other two. We shall choose an example from Dunn this time, although it is not implied that the three kinds of critique are characteristic for the three different commentaries. It is more correct to say that each commentary is vulnerable to each kind of critique.

Dunn delivers the first kind of critique arguing against a Lutheran pre-understanding of the relation between Paul and the law in the view of "the new perspective on Paul" from Sanders and others.[88] Dunn is also critical of Sanders' theory, however, since it presupposes that there was a leap for Paul from Judaism to Christianity.[89] In this connection Dunn provides a sociological view of the concept of the law:

> The law thus became a basic expression of Israel's *distinctiveness* as the people especially chosen by (the one) God to be his people. In sociological terms the law functioned as an "identity marker" and "boundary", reinforcing Israel's sense of distinctiveness and distinguishing Israel from the surrounding nations.[90]

According to Dunn, the problem which Paul is addressing in Romans is that the Jews have misunderstood this distinctiveness in an exclusivist way.[91] Let us just acknowledge the fact that Sanders puts forward another view which is also based on the biblical text. It obviously allows for these two interpretations. Thus, a critical reading of the text can lead to different results. Such a difference can be explained by reference to the different kinds of critical arguments which Dunn and Sanders put forward. An analysis of their contextual arguments is likely to come to the result that they did not refer to the same biblical passages or parallels from Jewish sources. It is not unlikely, however, that creative arguments such as the view of the relation between Judaism and Christianity today have also in fact supported the interpretations. In addition, on a philosophical level, a theory of the relation between the sociological and ideological dimensions of religion is presupposed.

To a systematic theologian it is frustrating that the Lutheran view of the concept of law is replaced and another presupposition suggested without any discussion of the alternatives from a creative point of view.The same difficulty is connected with a suggestion to keep the Lutheran two-regime doctrine (see below) and, of course, with such a difficult idea as that God should be held responsible for evil. Theologians of all time have systematized Christian beliefs using biblical support as one criterion. Although the biblical commentators referred to in this article do not regularly enter into creative interpretations, they cannot refrain from it. Considering the process of the interpretation of Romans and using the map of Gabler's gap implies that creative perspectives are necessary. The problem is that commentators allow themselves to make creative interpretations without discussing the alternatives. Thus, this kind of critique of Christian theology is one-sided. The critique at least implicitly condemns alternative positions. Since these are not discussed, the suggested interpretations are not critically explored on a creative level. This lack of critical distance towards a result in a scholarly biblical interpretation is not convincing.

We shall consider a last example from Stuhlmacher's commentary. It is unusual in explicitly discussing a contemporary theological example, but it is not unique. When Stuhlmacher comments on Romans 13:1-7 under the heading of "Christian Life Under the Power of the State" he suddenly addresses contemporary theology. He holds that we should keep the two-regime doctrine as it is expressed in the Barmen declaration and maintain the difference between the church and the civil community.[92]

This position is merely suggested. Neither the different clarifications of this view, nor the problems implied in the two-regime doctrine are discussed. Which purpose does such a suggestion serve? Does it help us to make up our minds about how the power of the church to resist should be exercised in difficult political situations? Does it provide a convincing interpretation of Paul's view? The way Stuhlmacher puts forward his suggestion is not much help in any of these respects. More than anything else it presents Stuhlmacher's personal

opinion. It is valuable for those interested in the person behind the commentary. Those who look up Stuhlmacher´s comments on Romans 13 in order to find out what kind of biblical support the two-regime doctrine has are, however, not provided with any tools for evaluating Stuhlmacher´s interpretation.

Value pluralism

Romans touches upon perhaps the most inflammable issue of contemporary church life: the attitude towards same-sex relationships.[93] This is done in 1:18-32 as the beginning of a long section on the universality of sin. Although it is quite in order to wish simply to clarify Paul´s view on this matter in a commentary on Romans, a reader is justified in exploring the ethical implications of the commentary. We leave aside the important issue of the moral responsibility of the author and concentrate on the texts of the commentaries and their readers.

The value conflict we concentrate on is not a value conflict in the text of Romans. It is quite clear that it does not approve of same-sex relations. The conflict is instead found between the value proposed by the text and the contemporary reader who can also find support for accepting homosexual life from a Christian perspective.[94] What guidance does a contemporary commentary reader get?

Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher all relate Paul´s condemnation of same-sex behavior to the prevalent view of what Stuhlmacher calls the "recognized high Jewish ethic of the ancient world".[95] If Paul expresses something which was generally accepted then, it seems hard for contemporary Jewish and Christian readers not to accept that view.

The interpretations conform with the terminology of Paul´s text. The interpretations of Dunn and Stuhlmacher of 1:24 show this:

> For what this vaunted liberty consisted in was nothing other than freedom to indulge in immorality which insulted themselves and their bodies. The desire to be independent of God in achieving its end showed itself to be nothing higher than the desire for a *degrading impurity*.[96] (My italics.)

> The everyday scenery of the Gentile way of life becomes the place of the divine judgment, but only those who believe recognize that the Gentiles are left to profane themselves with their *perverted* sexual lusts.[97] (My italics.)

When we add the observation made above concerning the authority of Paul on the part of Dunn and Stuhlmacher it seems almost impossible for a reader to personally reject Paul´s negative view of same-sex relationships. Fitzmyer uses the same vocabulary, although his commentary does not hold Paul in such a high esteem as Dunn and Stuhlmacher do.

> Paul sees homosexual conduct as a symbol of the *perversion* stemming from idolatry.[98] (My italics.)

Are we justified in supposing that Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher lead the reader towards sharing Paul´s negative view of homosexuality? That is still difficult to say, since it has to be discussed partly with reference to what is implicit in the text and partly with reference to what is not said.

First, we need to elaborate what is implied in the historical remark that this was the common view in Paul´s time. On one hand, it can be read as providing a nuance of self-evidence to the common view. On the other hand, it offers an opportunity for a historical and theological relativization of it. If Paul´s negative attitude is context-bound, it need not be accepted in another context. Furthermore, what is understood as belonging to the common sense of that time, can be seen as not being firmly connected with Paul´s theology, and thus not of central importance when judging same-sex realtionships today. We shall soon return to Stuhlmacher´s interpretation of this issue. The other two commentaries, however, make this conclusion difficult. Dunn and Fitzmyer do not explicitly allow for any historical or theological relativism.

Second, the commentators treat the universality aspect of sin in relation to homosexuality in slightly different ways. This is also of importance when trying to analyse in which direction the reader is led. Dunn stresses that homosexuality is not considered to be worse than any other sin listed in 1:29-32. Dunn was quoted above as saying that "such homely, everyday vices which poison human relationships are as much a sign of man´s loss of God as any sexual perversion".[99] Fitzmyer seems more inclined to single out the sin of same-sex relationships, holding that Paul means that idolatry has led to "moral perversion, sexual excess (1:24, 26a) and homosexual activity (1:26b-27)".[100] Fitzmyer´s comment is more likely to lead the reader to condemn homosexuality than Dunn´s, although none of them leads the reader towards accepting same-sex relationships.

Only Stuhlmacher explicitly addresses the contemporary reader when commenting on 1:25.

> What the Gentiles do is contrary to creation and characteristic of their fallen state of guilt. In the context of his general judgment speech, Paul had no occasion to go into detail or to be concerned with the problem of homosexuality from the perspective of the gospel. But now that in the course of the history of the church Paul´s general formulations have led simply to excommunicating homosexuals, instead of getting to the root of their distinct behavior, accepting them, and helping them, there does exist for us today a reason not to repeat Paul´s statement without reflection![101]

Stuhlmacher mentions three things of importance for our discussion. First, he makes a distinction between viewing homosexuality from the perspective of the law or of the gospel. His conclusion is that Paul does not provide guidance for the gospel to homosexuals. Second, Stuhlmacher places himself in the position of historical relativism.[102] Third, he recognizes the consequences of this text, leading to excommunication of homosexuals, and judges them to be unjustified when seen from a theory about the character of homosexuality. The theory is not worked out and cannot be specified, but it seems to lead the reader to a behavioristic theory, acknowledging both that homosexual behavior is a problem and that it can be solved.

This brings us back to the remark above on theological points of view as presupposed rather than discussed. The implicit theory of homosexuality can be related to other theories. Whereas the one implicitly accepted by Stuhlmacher distinguishes between behavior and personality, they can also be treated as one. In addition the individual perspective on gays and lesbians can be exchanged for a perspective focusing on relationships.

Two feminist interpreters provide material for comparison. Beverly Roberts Gaventa also stresses the universality of sin and adds that critical and creative interpretations should be kept apart. Her interpretation is thus similar to Stuhlmacher´s in these respects. She does not,

however, presuppose any particular theory of homosexuality. When addressing the consequences of the text her comments make it possible for the reader to accept homosexuals without the ambition to help them:

> To use this passage [1:26f.] to justify the exclusion of persons who are homosexual would be the grossest distortion of Romans and its claims about God´s radical and universal grace.[103]

Gaventa´s position is, however, not essentially different from Stuhlmacher´s in its basic acceptance of Paul´s argument. A different interpretation is offered by another feminist scholar, Elizabeth A. Castelli in her comments on Romans in *Searching the Scriptures*. She explicitly criticizes Gaventa for shifting perspective from homosexuality to universal judgment and grace.[104] She also criticizes the position of historical relativism.[105] What is the alternative?

Instead of presupposing a majority perspective, Castelli takes the position of the marginalized as a point of departure. She asks how Romans can help concerning theories of power, solidarity and resistance about gender, ethniticity, race and class. It is important for her to read Romans from this perspective, since these issues dominate cultural thinking today.[106] This reading allows for accepting same-sex relationships.

Paul is discussing morals in different cultural contexts: Greek and Jewish. He focuses on differences in content. We need not question the prevalence of different attitudes towards same-sex relationships. We can, however, raise the factual issue of what the situations of gays and lesbians were in the two cultural settings. The fact that it was officially recognized that Jews did not accept homosexual behavior the way Greeks did, does not contradict the possibility that there were homosexuals also among the Jews and early Christians. For one thing, the cultures were mixed. If the reader accepts that critical and creative interpretations should be related to each other and that Paul´s views should not simply be repeated, learning from the reception history of Romans concerning excommunication of homosexuals, she or he has at least the two distinct possibilities for dealing with Pauls´s text presented by Stuhlmacher and Castelli.

We can conclude that the commentaries of Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher seem to lead the readers in the direction of rejecting rather than accepting same-sex realtionships. There is a difference of degree. While Stuhlmacher explicitly warns against repeating Paul´s view, Dunn holds that homosexuality is not any worse than "homely, everyday vices".[107] Fitzmyer does not relativize Paul´s view on homosexuality.

Alternative interpretations

The criterion is not only concerned with the fact that biblical interpreters should take different alternatives into account, but that they should take different *relevant* alternatives into account. The weaker form of the criterion is fulfilled in the genre of scholarly biblical commentaries. The problem rather concerns the selection of alternatives discussed.

In this section I will refer back to the earlier conclusions derived from the discussion of the application of the criteria exemplified by the commentaries of Dunn, Fitzmyer and

Stuhlmacher. The variety of possible interpretations and points of reference has been a recurring theme.

The *perspectives* of the commentators presumably provide criteria for deciding which alternatives are considered relevant. We can list some examples. From a Roman Catholic point of view, the tradition of biblical interpretation arises quite naturally. The Lutheran commentator has an ongoing discussion with Luther. The Evangelical perspective focuses instead on the original sources. It is, however, important to say that the perspectives do not determine the alternatives discussed. Rather, they provide patterns for certain characteristic aspects of the commentaries.

The androcentric perspective shared by these interpreters also has consequences for which alternatives are considered relevant. None of them adopts a critical perspective on Paul, assuming that his androcentrism might have led him to misunderstandings. A more careful analysis is needed for us to provide convincing support for drawing wider conclusions. Nevertheless I regard it as a plausible hypothesis that Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher have not searched for alternative interpretations which do not share Paul´s androcentric views which assume the division of power in hierarchical systems where gender is a constitutive factor.

The *views of authority* also play a role when deciding which alternatives should be raised in the discussion. We have seen a difference concerning Dunn´s and Stuhlmacher´s interpretations, on the one hand, and Fitzmyer´s, on the other. While Paul is held in very high esteem by the former interpreters, his authority is slightly relativized by Fitzmyer. It is however not easy to pinpoint the consequences of this difference. This is partly explained by the fact that Fitzmyer´s commentary is exceptional in its comprehensiveness and that the author´s preferences are not always clearly explicit. This in its turn shows another aspect of the views of authority which concerns the discussion partners. Fitzmyer´s commentary is not designed for a particular scholarly tradition. Stuhlmacher is more clearly related to his own academic tradition. Dunn´s commentary is not as explicit about the scholarly discussion partners. They seem to be subordinated the authority of the text itself.

The analysis of the different kinds of *critique of Christian theology* indicated the lack of alternative creative interpretations in the commentaries. Provided that theological points of view are placed in the creative corner of Gabler´s gap and thus included in the process of biblical interpretation also at the critical level, this shows a remarkable weakness in these commentaries as far as the relevant alternative interpretations are concerned. It is remarkable, since it reveals that the interpretations are not critical when it comes to theological presuppositions. Even if creative interpretations are not explicitly discussed by the commentators, they cannot avoid them. If alternative theological presuppositions were discussed, I am convinced that it would add to the quality of other aspects of the interpretations by providing better tools for sorting out relevant alternatives to be discussed at the critical level as well.

The *value pluralism*, exemplified by the inflammable issue of homosexual relations, drew attention to another resource which has not been sufficiently used. The comparison between Dunn´s, Fitzmyer´s and Stuhlmacher´s commentaries, on the one hand, and Castelli´s, on the other, clarified a homogenity in the former interpretations. The example chosen may be too controversial to be able to indicate the resources hidden in value pluralism. Consider in a broader perspective, however, the different evaluations within the Bible of, for example, family life in the Old Testament and asceticism in the New, or the different views of the

importance of certain rules among Christians presented by Paul and Peter. Other examples of value conflicts between text and contemporary readers are the views of slavery or war. Regardless of whether interpreters have to deal with a biblical value conflict or a conflict concerning ancient and modern values, it would undoubtedly help them to cope with the criterion of taking relevant alternatives into consideration.

The process of interpretation

One aspect of Gabler´s gap is that theological presuppositions which many readers understand to be a natural, but not decisive, ingredient in critical biblical commentaries, are seen as more important factors. They actually guide the process of interpretation.[108] Before concluding the application of Gabler´s gap to the commentaries of Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher, we shall finally turn to their own descriptions of the relationship between critical and creative interpretations and discuss whether they manage to keep the distinction clear on a general level.

All three interpreters insist on the distinction between critical and creative purposes. Dunn does it to the extent that he hopes to present another book on the theological consequences for today.[109] We can notice that he does not leave the creative task to systematic theologians, but acknowledges both his own capacity to write that book and the possibility of refraining from the creative interpretation within the commentary.

There seems to be a bridge, however, between the two activities. According to Dunn, the reason why Romans has been so influential is that it was written in a situation of cultural transition and thus has been useful in other similar situations: Augustine wrote in the period of the disintegration of the Roman empire, Luther at the collapse (sic!) of the medieval Christendom and Barth after the shock of the war 1914-1918.[110] Both at a personal and a social level the text has a capacity to let the receivers "begin to hear him [God] speaking to our own situations of transition and of confusion".[111] The theological message is communicated through God revealing himself when Romans is received as addressing the contemporary situation.

Both Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher deal separately with the issues of Paul´s theology. When presenting the "Pauline Teaching in Romans" in the introduction, Fitzmyer tries

> ...to synthesize these teachings as a means to the proper understanding of Romans as a whole and to the interpretation of individual passages in it. But any synthetic summary is *a modern construct*, it is no substitute for Paul´s own expression of such teachings or for the reading and exegetical study of the letter itself.[112] (My italics.)

Since Fitzmyer acknowledges this part of his interpretation as depending on modern constructions and includes it in the introduction as a preparation for the detailed exegesis, one must conclude that the creative interpretation, although in the limited sense of clarifying Paul´s theology, forms part of his commentary.

Stuhlmacher presents his view of Paul´s theology in the digressions spread throughout the commentary. According to the translator, the commentary is unusual in style, since "Stuhlmacher presents Paul´s train of thought in an ongoing essay style that traces and *restates* Paul´s thinking *in an expanded form*" (my italics).[113] Although this is not Stuhlmacher´s own

words, one can see a potential conflict between the aim of simply restating what Paul says and of expanding on what he says.

There is also a tension between the explicit distinction between the comments on Romans and the digressions, on the one hand, and the fact that the digressions accompany the comments. If Fitzmyer is right, and I think he is, one must regard the clarifications of Paul´s theology as depending on modern constructions, or more specifically on systematizations which are likely to be informed also by contemporary theology.

Stuhlmacher explicitly intends to hold on to the distinction between historical issues and the enduring significance of Romans.[114] When related to Gabler´s gap, the question is rather how these two categories of historical issues and what is regarded as continuously important are related to each other in the interpretive process. That problem is not directly addressed in any of these commentaries.

Concluding remarks

In this article we have taken our point of departure in a theoretical discussion of how to understand what is going on in a biblical commentary. We have stressed that it is necessary to question a too simple distinction between critical and creative interpretations. The distinction was referred to as Gabler´s gap. The indicated reference to the history of the distinction underlines the fact that it has been on the agenda of biblical interpreters for more than two centuries.

We affirmed the complexity of the interpretive process by presenting a revised image of Gabler´s gap. It focuses on the interdependence between critical and creative interpretations. It also adds a third category of more fundamental or philosophical character, including concepts of authority and revelation.

The revised image of Gabler´s gap assists the reader of biblical commentaries in providing a description of the process of biblical interpretation. It also helps stipulating criteria for acceptable contemporary interpretations of biblical texts, by clarifying the difficulties in the process. Further reflection on these difficulties which takes its point of departure in the implications of the revised image of Gabler´s gap, leads toward possible solutions.

What conclusions can be drawn about how the stipulated criteria for acceptable contemporary interpretation of the Bible were dealt with in the commentaries by Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher? What do the examples show?

Although the analysis did not claim to be comprehensive, we can perceive certain tendencies. The perspectives of the commentators are primarily of main stream character. Comparisons with marginal perspectives clarified this fact. Furthermore, neither church affiliation, nor cultural affinity, is discussed at length or allowed to affect the interpretations.

The authority of Romans and its author is strongly affirmed at least by Dunn and Stuhlmacher. Perhaps the potential of Fitzmyer´s commentary to relate Romans to other biblical texts and to tradition could have been stressed explicitly as a healthy corrective to the attitude of critical scholars toward their object of analysis.

Theological beliefs are generally suggested rather than discussed. Although it is possible to see this weakness as indicating a legitimate division of labour between exegetes and systematic theologians, this is not really adequate. It reveals a discrepancy between a critical approach to exegesis and a less critical approach to theological beliefs. Undoubtedly the reverse can be said of the use of the Bible among systematic theologians!

The value conflict highlighted in this article did not concern conflicting values in the text, but concerned a conflict between Paul´s criticism of same-sex relationships, on the one hand, and its acceptance by Christian ethicists, on the other. With the exception of Stuhlmacher, the issue was not raised and even Stuhlmacher did not confront, for example, the important issue of a theory of homosexuality.

Many of the results were summed up in the discussion of criteria for the relevance of different alternatives. It was noted that if the former criteria for acceptable contemporary interpretations of the Bible are satisfied, they would help considering relevant alternatives.

Finally, we could see the same tendency in all commentaries namely, on the one hand, keeping critical and creative interpretations apart and, on the other, failing to keep the distinction clear. It must be asked whether a focus on the relation between the two kinds of interpretation - that is Gabler´s gap - would not provide a better point of departure.

Once more the stipulated criteria are seen to be useful. The perspectives should be regarded as constitutive parts and valuable resources for the task of interpreting Romans. The view of authority should not silence the interpreters, but allow them to argue with Paul just as he argued with his critics. Theological beliefs and value conflicts ought to be brought to the fore in such a critical discussion. Alternatives should be proved relevant with reference to specified criteria. Finally, the relation between critical and creative interpretations should be confronted and related to fundamental issues of authority and revelation.

Is it unjust to the authors of the commentaries to measure their works by standards they did not intend to meet? Francis Watson raises this question in a review of Dunn´s commentary on Romans:

> In his "Author´s Preface" Dunn expresses the hope that his commentary "will be judged in relation to the objectives he set in writing it, and not in terms of what he refrained from attempting" (p. xviii), and I have perhaps done him an injustice in raising controversial hermeneutical issues about which he has little directly to say./.../ I have tried to show, however, that the hermeneutical issue of the relation between author, text and interpreter cannot ultimately be divorced from the practice of exegesis, since the direction of exegesis is always determined not just by the desire to reproduce the original as faithfully as possible but by prior hermeneutical decisions.[115]

I share this view of biblical commentaries being unable to escape hermeneutical issues in a wider sense. They are often said to provide a tool for other interpreters. For example, the editor of the World Biblical Commentary series says in the editorial preface to Dunn´s commentary that it is intended to be useful to

> ...the fledgling student, the working minister, and colleagues in the guild of professional scholars and teachers as well.[116]

This implies that the exegete sees his or her work in the wider perspective of contemporary preaching as well. How are we supposed to use the exegetical information and why should we choose this commentary and not another? Often biblical scholars hold that different commentaries should be consulted when ministers prepare a sermon. How are they to choose between the alternative interpretations? The contents of the commentaries cannot have a wider range of application, including preaching, if they are not read with a hermeneutical perspective which permits the questions of whether Paul is really the best theologian of all time, the text cannot be understood better by reference to another context, the context of the exegete is relevant to the text of Romans and to the text of the preacher etc.

It is not unjust to the exegetical commentaries to explicate their hermeneutical implications. On the contrary, it is necessary in order to make them function as the tools they were intended to be.

Biblical exegesis is not a subject where we can remain neutral and uninvolved. Biblical interpretation can be much more exciting. Still another question needs to be asked however: Can this be done in conventional biblical commentaries? Or does a fulfilment of the criteria require another type of commentaries? Let us conclude with a more speculative note.

On one hand, writing commentaries on Romans seems a limited task. On the other, it is a huge, perhaps even impossible, project. The limit of the task is obvious from the size of the text. In an ordinary Bible it only takes up about 15 pages. Considering the reception of the text, however, this text takes us into a discussion of an immense number of theological writers and themes. An interpretation which takes seriously the criteria stipulated with the assistance of Gabler´s gap may not even allow for commenting on the whole text of Romans.

Do long commentaries such as those of Dunn, Fitzmyer and Stuhlmacher actually provide any guidance for the understanding of the epistle? They certainly give an impressive amount of information concerning a great number of aspects of Romans. But do they actually make the readers understand the short text of the epistle? Most readers use the commentaries as encyclopedias. They look up the comments on the text which will be read in the Bible study or preached on in the Sunday service. Although one purpose of commentary writing is to comment on the whole letter, they are seldom read from the first page to the last.

Let us make a distinction between interpreting a text and explaining it. To interpret a text is to clarify its meaning. The task is text-internal. To explain a text is rather a text-external task providing relevant information concerning the historical and cultural context, the personality of the author etc. Biblical commentaries seem to be a mixture of interpretations and explanations, maybe even with an emphasis on explanation rather than interpretation. From this perspective the process of the interpretation of Romans cannot be studied with references only to biblical commentaries.

If we shift perspective and focus on the usage of biblical commentaries, we can ask whether they are used with the aim of interpreting Romans or applying parts of it to a certain situation. If the latter is the case, it is rather the situation than the biblical text which is interpreted. Since the use of biblical passages is often related to a wider context than the biblical text itself, it may be the case that the interpretation of Romans is not a common activity at all.[117]

If this view of the use of biblical passages is plausible we need to acquire a critical understanding of the common presupposition that biblical interpretation is a foundation for theological reflection. The map of Gabler´s gap allows for the alternative view, which sets

biblical interpretation in relation to creative aspects. These aspects should perhaps not primarily be thought of as creative interpretations of the Bible, but rather as creative interpretations of life.

What kind of books on Romans would be most suitable for understanding the meaning of life from a Christian point of view? Maybe we could say that we have the conventional commentaries we need. What we lack are books written from a conscious perspective, focusing on some theological issues which are critically explored and commenting on relevant parts of Romans. Those interpretations of Romans within a broader perspective of learning something about life itself, can never replace the standard commentaries but they would provide an important complement to them. Paul´s epistle to the Romans deserves more daring, vivid and commited treatment than it usually is given by contemporary scholars, exegetes and systematic theologians.

Notes

[1] JEANROND, WERNER G. *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance* (New York: Crossroad, 1991) pp. 3f.
[2] For a recent overview, see COURT, JOHN M. *Reading the New Testament* (New Testament Readings; London, New York: Routledge, 1997).
[3] This article deals with some commentaries on Romans. References to particular commentaries are given by the name of the scholar concerned.
[4] GRENHOLM, CRISTINA. *Romans Interpreted: A Comparative Analysis of the Commentaries of Barth, Nygren, Cranfield and Wilckens on Paul´s Epistle to the Romans* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis: Studia Doctrinae Christianae Upsaliensia 30; Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1990).
[5] GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* p. 10.
[6] GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* pp. 12f.
[7] GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* pp. 80f.
[8] For definitions see GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* pp. 72f.
[9] GRENHOLM, CRISTINA. *The Old Testament, Christianity and Pluralism* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese 33; Tübingen: Mohr - Siebeck, 1996) pp. 5f.
[10] GRENHOLM. *The Old Testament* p. 6.
[11] GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* pp. 80f, 102f. In that book I use the terminology of *critical* and *constructive* purposes.
[12] I no longer hold the position that it is even possible to write a purely critical commentary. Cf. GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* p. 139, where I still thought that was possible.
[13] GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* p. 111.
[14] GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* pp. 111-125.
[15] CRANFIELD, CHARLES E.B. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Vol. I: Introduction and Commentary on Romans I-VIII*, 5th ed. (The International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh: T & T Clarke Ltd, 1985) p. 1. Cf. GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* p. 105.
[16] CRANFIELD. *Romans I* pp. 81f.
[17] CRANFIELD, CHARLES E.B. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Vol II: Commentary on Romans IX-XVI and Essays*, 4th ed. (The International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh: T & T Clarke Ltd, 1986) p. 519.
[18] GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* pp. 112f.
[19] GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* pp. 123-125. Se also 111-123.
[20] See, for example MORGAN, ROBERT - BARTON, JOHN. *Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford Bible series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) p. 16: "It is for theologians to decide how to use the Bible; biblical scholars simply say what it means. That at least is a commonly held view."
[21] GABLER, JOHANN PHILIPP. "On the Proper Discrimination between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology and the Specific Objective of Each" (De justo discrimine theologiae biblicae et dogmaticae regundisque recte utriusque finibus), *Scottish Journal of Theology* 33 (1980) pp. 133-158. [Original 1787.]
[22] GRENHOLM. *The Old Testament* pp. 265-268.

[23] STENDAHL, KRISTER. "Biblical Theology. Contemporary", *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. I* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962) pp. 418-432.
[24] GRENHOLM. *The Old Testament* pp. 261-263. See also the comparative analysis of Gerhard von Rad's and Phyllis Trible's interpretations of the stories of Hagar, 187-200. The other scholars analysed are James Barr, J. Severino Croatto, Jon D. Levenson and Brevard S. Childs.
[25] The term "the Old Testament" is chosen in order to explicate the Christian perspective, although the interpretations of a Jewish scholar, Jon D. Levenson, is also included in the study. When writing about his books I refer to the same set of texts as the Hebrew Bible. The following section is further developed in GRENHOLM. *The Old Testament* p. 269-272.
[26] GRENHOLM. *The Old Testament* pp. 233-263. I use the term "acceptable", since I do not hold that interpretations can be true or false, although some interpretations are better than others.
[27] GRENHOLM. *Romans Interpreted* pp. 75-81 provides an example concerning Rom. 7:7-25.
[28] LEVENSON, JON D. *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1993), especially pp. 200-219. GRENHOLM. *The Old Testament* pp. 208-210.
[29] GRENHOLM. *The Old Testament* pp. 249-251.
[30] DUNN. JAMES D.G. *Romans 1-8 and 9-16* (World Biblical Commentary 38A and B; Dallas: Word Books, 1988 and 1989), FITZMYER, JOSEPH. *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible 33; New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland; Doubleday, 1993), STUHLMACHER, PETER. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (eng. transl. Scott J Hafemann; Louiseville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994) [German orig: *Der Brief an Die Römer übersetzt und erklärt von Peter Stuhlmacher* (Das Neue Testament Deutsch 6; Göttingen, Zürich: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).]
[31] JOHNSON, ELIZABETH A. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1994) p. 11.
[32] PATTE, DANIEL. *Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: A Reevaluation* (Louiseville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995) pp. 1f.
[33] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. xiv.
[34] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. xii.
[35] SCHLIER, HEINRICH. *Der Römerbrief* (Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Band VI; Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1977).
[36] WILCKENS, ULRICH. *Der Brief an die Römer*. Vols. 1-3 (Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar VI; Zürich, Einsiedeln, Köln: Benziger and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978, 1980, 1982).
[37] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. 103.
[38] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. xiv. Cf. note 33.
[39] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. xiv. Cf. notes 33, 38.
[40] See for example JEWETT, ROBERT. "Review of Fitzmyer: Romans", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114 (1995) pp. 745-747, RODGERS, P.R. "Review of Fitzmyer: Romans", *Novum Testamentum* XXXVII:2 (1995) pp. 202-204 and ZIESLER, JOHN. "Review of Fitzmyer: Romans", *Ecumenical Review* 47 (1995) pp. 232f.
[41] ZIESLER. "Review" p. 233.
[42] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. xiv. Cf. notes 33, 38, 39.
[43] STUHLMACHER. *Romans*, "Translator's Preface" p. xi.
[44] JEWETT. "Review" p. 746.
[45] ROGERS. "Review" p. 204: "The creativity of Fitzmyer's magisterial commentary springs from his soundness and sureness in handling the text of Romans. He never allows himself to be swayed by current fashions or contemporary agendas (as at 1:26-27). *He stands firmly within the tradition as a Roman Catholic*, and this informs rather than obscures his vision..." (My italics.)
[46] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. 30.
[47] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. 103.
[48] DUNN. *Romans* p. xii.
[49] DUNN. *Romans* p. xiv.
[50] DUNN. *Romans* p. xiv.
[51] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* pp. 11f.
[52] STUHLMACHER, PETER. *Vom Verstehen des Neuen testaments: Eine Hermeneutik*, 2nd ed. (Grundrisse zum Neuen Testament. Das Neue Testament Deutsch, Ergänzungsreihe 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).
[53] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p.1. The quotation is from Luther's Works vol. 35 (1960) p. 365.
[54] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 3: "Today, Catholics and Protestants no longer dispute the fact, but rather hold in common, as Paul develops it in his letter to the Romans, that the gospel is the message of God's righteousness in and through Jesus Christ."
[55] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* pp. 9f., 31. FITZMYER. *Romans* p. 137.
[56] PATTE. *Ethics* pp.1f. Cf. note 32 above.

[57] NEWSOM, CAROL A. - RINGE, SHARON H. (eds.) *The Women´s Bible Commentary* (London: SPCK, Louiseville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992)
[58] RINGE, SHARON H. "When Women Interpret the Bible", *The Women´s Bible Commentary*, eds. Newsom - Ringe p.2.
[59] GAVENTA, BEVERLY ROBERTS. "Romans", *The Women´s Bible Commentary*, eds. Newsom - Ringe pp. 315f.
[60] RUETHER. "A Method of Correlation", *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Russell, Letty (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985) pp. 116-124.
[61] GAVENTA. "Romans" pp. 315f.
[62] See Dunn´s, Fitzmyer´s and Stuhlmacher´s comments on ch. 2.
[63] DUNN. *Romans* p. 76.
[64] See, for example, RUETHER. *Sexism* ch. 3: Woman, Body and Nature: Sexism and the Theology of Creation, pp. 72-92. See also pp. 93-99 on patriarchal anthropology. Several books have been published by feminists who originally did not emphasize the ecological perspective: RUETHER, ROSEMARY RADFORD. *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), McFAGUE, SALLIE. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).
[65] PATTE. *Ethics* pp. 1 f. Cf. notes 32, 56.
[66] For a further elaboration of this distinction see GRENHOLM. *The Old Testament* pp. 137-140. Cf. also JEANROND. *Theological Hermeneutics* p. 90, where a distinction is made between instructions and literature.
[67] DUNN. *Romans* p. xiii.
[68] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 3: "...the biblical gospel, which comes from God, first took on its immistakeable historical form in the person and history of Jesus from Nazareth, and then, after Easter, in the testimony to Jesus through the apostles."
[69] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 22, see also pp. 20f.
[70] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 123.
[71] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 123.
[72] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 125.
[73] STENDAHL, KRISTER. *Final Account: Paul´s Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) p. 27.
[74] STENDAHL, KRISTER. *Final Account* p. 13.
[75] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 184.
[76] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. 30. Cf. above note 46.
[77] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. 79.
[78] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. 110.
[79] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 1. The quotation is from Luther´s Works vol. 35 (1960) p. 365. Cf. above note 53.
[80] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 10.
[81] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* pp. 114f.
[82] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 116.
[83] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 32.
[84] DUNN. *Romans* p. xiv. Cf. above note 50.
[85] See, for example, FITZMYER. *Romans* pp. 118f. concerning the concept of justification. Fitzmyer says that both the patristic sources and modern interpreters view it also in a "transformationist" way, but he does not take sides.
[86] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* pp. 63f.
[87] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. 168.
[88] DUNN. *Romans* pp. lxiv f.
[89] DUNN. *Romans* pp. lxiv f.
[90] DUNN. *Romans* p. lxix.
[91] DUNN. *Romans* p. lxxii, commenting on ch. 2, continuing with the following comment on the text 12:1-15:6 which "can be seen as Paul´s attempt to provide a basic guideline for social living, the law redefined for the eschatological people of God in place of the the law misunderstood in too distinctively Jewish terms."
[92] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* pp. 207f.
[93] The Norwegian Lutheran church, for example, is preparing (late spring 1997) a document on church unity and homosexuality, which will be discussed in the church synod.
[94] See, for example, COLEMAN, PETER. *Gay Christians: A Moral Dilemma* (London: SCM Press, Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989).
[95] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 35. See also DUNN. *Romans* p. 73 and FITZMYER. *Romans* p. 275.
[96] DUNN. *Romans* p. 73.
[97] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* pp. 36f.
[98] FITZMYER. *Romans* p.276.

[99] DUNN. *Romans* p. 76. Cf. above note 63.
[100] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. 271.
[101] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. 37.
[102] "Historical relativism" is here understood in a weak sense, allowing for the possibility that views put forward in one historical context need not be reaffirmed in another context.
[103] GAVENTA. "Romans" p. 317.
[104] CASTELLI, ELIZABETH A. "Romans", *Searching the Scriptures.* Vol 2: *A Feminist Commentary*, ed. Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schüssler (London: SCM Press, 1994) p. 281 and n. 25.
[105] CASTELLI. "Romans" p. 281.
[106] CASTELLI. "Romans" p. 296.
[107] DUNN. *Romans* p. 76. Cf. notes 63, 99.
[108] See, for example, CASTELLI. "Romans" pp. 272-276 for this kind of critique of commentaries as genre and the general view of them as reliable sources of information.
[109] DUNN. *Romans* p. xvii.
[110] DUNN. *Romans* p. xvi.
[111] DUNN. *Romans* p. xvi.
[112] FITZMYER. *Romans* p. xi.
[113] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* p. xi.
[114] STUHLMACHER. *Romans* pp. 3f.
[115] WATSON, FRANCIS. "Review of Dunn, James D.G. Romans 1-8 and 9-16" *Journal of Theological Studies* 42 (1991) p. 252.
[116] DUNN. *Romans* p. xii.
[117] I am grateful to professor Kari Syreeni, Uppsala, and professor David Jasper, Glasgow, for drawing my attention to this problem.

"GOD'S GIFTS AND CALL ARE IRREVOCABLE":

THE INTERPRETATION OF ROM 11:29 AND ITS USES[1]

Joseph Sievers
Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome

1. Rom 11:29 in Its Pauline and Modern Context

To study a single verse of such a central and theologically complex document as Paul's Epistle to the Romans, is problematic, to say the least. Taking a statement out of its context, one risks not understanding it, or worse, misunderstanding its intended meaning. When it comes to the Letter to the Romans, and especially to a part of chapters 9-11, the problems become especially grave. In this passage, Paul is struggling with extremely difficult theological questions, to which he had no immediate or established answer. Attempts to interpret these chapters accordingly have not been easy and the areas of scholarly consensus are limited.

The enormous literature on Romans is well reflected in Fitzmyer's magisterial Anchor Bible volume which lists close to 700 commentaries on the letter, over 450 of which were written in the past two centuries. There is a similar abundance of studies on Romans 9-11.[2] If then I limit myself to one brief verse, it is in part out of necessity to keep this essay within reasonable limits. Yet the passage in question was not chosen arbitrarily. In recent statements and discussions on Christian-Jewish relations, Rom 11:28b-29 appears to be the most frequently cited biblical passage. In particular, Vatican II's Declaration *Nostra Aetate* and a 1980 statement by Pope John Paul II about the covenant that has never been revoked have given authoritative backing to the use of this passage with reference to present-day Judaism.[3] On

[1]A more complete exposition of the research on which this paper is based, including a history of the exegesis of Rom 11:29 from the patristic period to the present may be found under the title "A history of the Interpretation of Romans 11:29" in *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 14,2 (1997) (forthcoming).

[2]H. Räisänen, "Römer 9-11: Analyse eines geistigen Ringens," *ANRW* 2.25.4 (1987) 2936-39; *id.*, "Paul, God, and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research," *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism. FS H. C. Kee* (ed. J.Neusner et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 178-206.

[3]R. Rendtorff and H. H. Henrix, *Die Kirchen und das Judentum: Dokumente von 1945 bis 1985* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1988) 75.

the other hand, exegetes warn against using Romans (9-)11 uncritically for the definition of Christian views of Judaism.[4]

Within this text segment our verse represents part of the elaboration of the argument, or, in the words of one recent commentator "11:29, if not 11:28 and 11:29 constitutes the apostolic summary applicable to all three chapters."[5] Already Kühl had noted that "Es ist die unsere ganzen Kapitel beherrschende Gottesanschauung des Apostels, die hier zu klarem Ausdruck kommt; am deutlichsten in V. 29."[6] According to Karl Barth, Rom 9-10 is to be understood in light of 11:29.[7] Holtzmann, without elaborating further, called v 29 "die scharfe Formel . . ., auf der die ganze Rechtfertigungslehre des Paulus sich aufbaut."[8] Others see such a summing up in v 32, which however closely corresponds to v 29.[9] The centrality of v 29 appears beyond doubt if, in Räisänen's words, "it is now generally agreed that his (Paul's) real concern (in Rom 9-11) is the question of the *trustworthiness of God* as regards his promises to Israel."[10] Kuss considers one of Paul's principal questions in Rom 9-11: "Hat Gott=Jahwe seine Gnadengaben und seine Berufung 'bereut' und also zurückgezogen?" He calls 11:29 "d(ie) Grunderkenntnis jüdisch-paulinischen Gottesverständnisses."[11] Gaston goes a step further and declares that "Romans as a whole can be understood to centre on the theme of the faithfulness (. . .) of God."[12] His views have been found challenging and revolutionary, but have not attracted a wide following.

When one examines in detail how these conclusions are applied, however, one is in for a surprise: V 29 has received comparatively little attention. Among the most influential theological commentaries, Nygren and especially Brunner pay hardly any attention to it. Similarly, exegetical commentaries do not devote much space to it. Althaus, Bruce, and others skip

---

[4]W. G. Kümmel, "Die Probleme von Römer 9-11," *Die Israelfrage nach Röm 9-11* (ed L. De Lorenzi; Monographische Reihe von "Benedictina." Bibl.-ökum. Abt. 3; Roma: Abtei von St Paul vor den Mauern, 1977) 32-33; E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (London: SCM, 1983) 197.

[5]S. Schatzmann, *A Pauline Theology of Charismata* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987) 18.

[6]E. Kühl, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1913) 394.

[7]*Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* (II/2; Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag Zollikon, 1942) 332.

[8]O. Holtzmann, "Der Römerbrief," *Das Neue Testament nach dem Stuttgarter griechischen Text übersetzt und erklärt* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1926) 2.663.

[9]C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: Black, 1957) 224; P. Stuhlmacher, "Zur Interpretation von Römer 11:25-32," *Probleme biblischer Theologie. FS G. von Rad* (ed. H. W. Wolff; München: Kaiser 1971) 558, 567.

[10]H. Räisänen, Paul, God, and Israel, 178 (emphasis in original).

[11]O. Kuss, *Der Römerbrief* Dritte Lieferung *Röm 8,19 bis 11,36* (Regensburg: Pustet 1978) 663, 809.

[12]L. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1987) 60.

v 29 entirely or merely paraphrase it.[13] Even patristic literature has comparatively little to say about this verse. None of the Latin Church Fathers *stricto sensu* (i.e., not counting Ambrosiaster and Pelagius) comments on this part of Romans. Only Augustine, though not in his unfinished commentary on Romans, refers to Rom 11:29 several times in connection with his teaching on grace and predestination.[14] Sedulius Scotus (d. c. 858) and many other commentators skip 11:29 entirely. Similarly, according to the scriptural index in Denzinger, v 29 appears only in two documents of Vatican II (*Lumen Gentium* 16 and *Nostra Aetate* 4).[15] Therefore it seems that it was not cited in any doctrinal document of the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church. Thomas Aquinas' commentary on Romans, written toward the end of his life, probably between 1269 and 1273, remains to this day among the most extensive treatments of our verse.[16] Among more recent studies, Refoulé's work on Rom 11:25-32 is the most thorough.[17] The situation is aptly summarized by Spicq in the only scholarly article I have been able to find that is devoted primarily to Rom 11:29: "L'importance théologique de cet axiome frappe l'esprit, et l'on n'en est que davantage surpris de voir ce verset négligé par les

---

[13]Elsewhere, Althaus argues that in terms of salvation history Israel has been replaced by the Church (P. Althaus, *Die letzten Dinge*, 7th ed. 1957, 313; cited in B. Klappert, *Israel und die Kirche: Erwägungen zur Israellehre Karl Barths*, München: Kaiser, 1980, 16). A. Jülicher *(Der Brief an die Römer,* Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments ed. by J. Weiss. Vol. 2. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd ed. 1908, 300) briefly comments on 11:28-29, but suggests that the affirmation of v 29 is basically redundant. He does add a remark that "das christusmörderische Judentum (spielt) eine traurige Rolle," but acknowledges that even so God's love and election will prevail.

[14]P. Platz, *Der Römerbrief in der Gnadenlehre Augustins* (Würzburg, 1937) 197 n. 2.

[15]H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum. Kompendium der Glaubensbekenntnisse und kirchlichen Lehrentscheidungen. Lateinisch-Deutsch* (ed. P. Hünermann; Freiburg/B: Herder, 37th ed. 1991) 1654.

[16]Thomas Aquinas, *Super epistolas S. Pauli lectura* (ed. R. Cai; vol. 1, 8th ed.; Torino/Roma Marietti, 1953) 924-929; cf. T. Domanyi, *Der Römerbriefkommentar des Thomas von Aquin: Ein Beitrag zur Untersuchung seiner Auslegungsmethoden* (Bern: P. Lang, 1979) 39-40.

[17]*". . . et ainsi tout Israël sera sauvé": Romains 11,25-32* (LD 117; Paris: Cerf, 1984). F. Refoulé, the former director of the École Biblique in Jerusalem, displays enormous erudition and acquaintance with the literature of past centuries as well as with most of the recent scholarly discussion. Unfortunately his work includes many errors in detail, too numerous to mention. Names are frequently misspelled: Bulltman (153 n. 48) for Bultmann, both Liddele and Liddel on the same page (33 n. 17) for Liddell, Moxmes (147 n. 32) for Moxnes. It is somewhat annoying when one finds ten typographical errors in one short footnote (27 n. 8). The situation becomes distressing when meanings are changed. Refoulé indicates "Et si (should be *sic*!) omnis Israel salvus fieret" as the beginning of the title of an essay by Caudet-Iturbe (278), writes of "le salut d'Isaïe" (instead of *Israël*) (59 n. 85), misquotes Mal 1:2-3 "J'ai aimé Jacob et j'ai haï Isaïe" (instead of *Ésaü*) (205), and dates a collection of recent documents on Christian-Jewish relations to 1918-1938 instead of 1948-1978 (211 n. 28).

grands commentateurs ou glosé seulement par quelques mots."[18] This neglect has changed, largely however only in documents concerned with Christian-Jewish relations.

2. Rom 11:29 in the Context of Christian-Jewish Relations

As I have amply documented elsewhere, Rom 11:29 has been interpreted by exegetes and theologians to refer to God's faithfulness and to the reliability of his gifts and promises.[19] Yet, until recently, few have asked how this might apply to contemporary Jews and Judaism. Generally, it was thought that the gifts and call had either passed entirely to the Christian Church or that these benefits had been put on hold for the Jews, until in the end they too, or at least a more or less large and representative number of them, would be converted to Christ.

However, some authors even in past centuries referred to Romans 11:29 in the context of relations with contemporary Jews. Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1676) seems to be a lonely and controversial voice in the baroque period. He belonged to a well-to-do Calvinist family from Bordeaux, plausibly of Marrano origin.[20] In his *Du rappel des Juifs*, published anonymously in 1643, he comments on Rom 11, including v 29, suggesting that the Jews will be called again by God, after being temporarily rejected. Their renewed call will lead to acceptance of Christ as well as to a return to the Holy Land, under the guidance of a king of France.

Léon Bloy (1846-1917) took up the issue most forcefully, at first in his essay *Le Salut par les Juifs*, originally published in 1892. It was judged, hyperbolically, to be a paraphrase of Rom 11 and Bloy himself considered it "le témoignage chrétien le plus énergique et le plus pressant en faveur de la Race Aînée, depuis le onzième chapitre de saint Paul aux Romains."[21] This pathbreaking essay has justifiably been criticized for its violently polemical tone.[22] Bloy was used to express himself in extremes, which gained him some followers and many enemies. Later he took up the topic in more specific terms. After quoting Rom 11:29 he comments on it "Cela est dans l'Absolu et terriblement formel. Donc les Juifs sont toujours le Peuple de Dieu et tout leur est promis."[23] Raïssa and Jacques Maritain were profoundly influenced by

[18]C. Spicq, "ΑΜΕΤΑΜΕΛΗΤΟΣ dans Rom. XI,29," *RB* 67 (1960) 210.

[19]See my "A history of the Interpretation of Romans 11:29" in *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 14,2 (1997) (forthcoming).

[20]R.H. Popkin (*Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1676): His Life, Work, and Influence*, Leiden: Brill, 1987, 22-25) discusses the inconclusive evidence for his Jewish origin.

[21]See preface to 2nd ed. 1905, p. 7.

[22]For a friendly but trenchant critique see R. Maritain, "Léon Bloy et Israël," *Bilan Juif. Confluences: Revue des Lettres et des Arts* 7 (1948) 305-16.

[23]Cited in R. Maritain, "Léon Bloy et Israël," 315.

Léon Bloy through whom they both converted to Catholicism in 1906. Certainly because of the Jewish origin of his wife Raïssa, but perhaps also through the earlier contact with Bloy, Jacques Maritain took up the fight against antisemitism in various publications, as early as 1926 in a response to Jean Cocteau.[24] In it he cites Rom 11, especially v 28, as a prohibition against antisemitism. Also in a published address of February 1938 in which he dealt on a very practical level with the growing dangers of antisemitism he cited not only statistics of the Jewish population in Rumania but also quoted Rom 11 including v 29 to show that antisemitism is incompatible with Christian teachings.[25] Similarly, he opened a 1937 essay originally entitled "L'impossible antisémitisme" and later reedited as "Le mystère d'Israël" by suggesting that in order to understand antisemitism, one has to evoke the entire question of the Jewish diaspora. And in this he sees "un mystère d'ordre sacré," which has been treated in its principal elements in Rom 9-11 of which he proceeds to quote ample portions, including 11:29.[26]

A strong influence of Bloy and of the Maritains may be detected in the work of the Swiss theologian and later Cardinal Charles Journet (1891-1975). As early as 1935 and especially in his book *Destinées d'Israël* he wrestled with an interpretation of Rom 9-11 in light of his theological outlook as well as in response to Nazi antisemitism.[27] Journet quotes Rom 11:29 in a broader discussion of Rom 11, yet he insists that the Old Covenant has to finally die for the New to flourish.[28] In subsequent publications he seems to have modified this view.[29] In fact, he struggled to explain theologically the present reality of the Jewish people and affirmed that Israel's religious mission remains unique and distinguishes it irrevocably from all the other peoples.[30]

---

[24]J. Maritain, *Le mystère d'Israël et autres essais* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1965) 13.

[25]J. Maritain, *Le mystère d'Israël*, 81.

[26]J. Maritain, *Le mystère d'Israël*, 24.

[27]C. Journet, *Destinées d'Israël: A propos du Salut par les Juifs* (Paris: Egloff, 1945). The book appeared in print in March, 1945, but its preface is dated in part to September 30, 1943, in part to July 22, 1944. A Protestant reviewer, Jean-Louis Leuba, took Journet to task for not referring to Barth's *Kirchliche Dogmatik* II/2 and to the theology of Israel expressed in it (*Judaica* 2 [1946] 159). For a bibliography of Journet's writings concerning Christian-Jewish relations see L. Kamykowski, *Izrael i Kosciól wedlug Charlesa Journeta (Israel et l'eglise d'après Charles Journet)* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Papieskiej Akademii Teologicznej, 1993) 336-37.

[28]Journet, *Destinées d'Israël*, 326, 343.

[29]See C. Journet, "The Mysterious Destinies of Israel," *The Bridge: A Yearbook of Judaeo-Christian Studies* (ed. J. M. Oesterreicher; New York: Pantheon, Vol. 2, 1956) 83.

[30]C. Journet, *L'Eglise du Verbe incarné. III. Essai de théologie de l'histoire du salut* (Paris, 1969) 454; cf. L. Kamykowski, "Qu'est-ce qu'Israel? Examen de l'approche de Charles Journet," *Analecta Cracoviensia* 26 (1994) 206.

2.1 The Contribution of Karl Barth

While the work of the above-mentioned authors remains important, Karl Barth (1886-1968) was the most influential systematic theologian to connect Rom 9-11 organically not only to Israel's past and eschatological future but also to its present. In his commentary on Romans (2nd. ed. 1922) we find Barth almost at the antipodes of such a step. For him at that time Paul was addressing the Church. His chapter headings reveal this ecclesiological point of view. Rom 9: "Die Not der Kirche," Rom 10: "Die Schuld der Kirche," Rom 11: "Die Hoffnung der Kirche."[31] Thus in his interpretation of 11:29, Barth concentrated his attention on the Church: God remains faithful, in spite of all the churches' failings: "unveräusserlich bleibt das Anliegen der Menschheit, das in jeder Kirche seinen Ausdruck sucht und wenn, wie es tatsächlich der Fall ist, alle Kirchen diesem Anliegen gegenüber versagen sollten. Unwiderruflich ist die Sendung. . .."[32] It must be noted that Barth does not here simply attribute to the Church the gifts once given to Israel, but he interprets Rom 9-11 as a critique of the church ("kirchenkritisch") and not of Israel ("israelkritisch"). Thus at a deeper level there is at least implicitly a solidarity between the Church and Israel, just as Barth interprets Rom 9:1-5 as a declaration of solidarity with that Church that causes unspeakable pain to any sincere proclaimer of the Gospel.[33] A similar identification, that here has supersessionist overtones, is still found in his *Church Dogmatics* where he simply speaks of the people of God, called Israel in the Old and Church in the New Testament.[34] In the same volume, however, published in 1942, he develops his doctrine of Israel in a detailed theological commentary on Rom 9-11. This chapter (§34) covers over one hundred tightly printed pages and has been the subject of several monographs.[35] It cannot be our purpose here to deal with it in its entirety, though it is especially hazardous to take one small part of Barth's dogmatics out of its context.

---

[31] K. Barth, *Der Römerbrief* (2nd ed; München, 1922) 405.: Kaiser, 1922) IV; Engl. transl. by E. C. Hoskyns, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1933) XX: "The Tribulation of the Church," "The Guilt of the Church," "The Hope of the Church."

[32]Barth, *Römerbrief* 405; *Romans* 419: "In every Church the inalienable longing of mankind is concentrated, and in every Church this longing is doomed to remain unsatisfied. Inseparable from the conscious recognition of this longing is the irrevocable sense of mission . . . ."

[33]Barth, *Römerbrief*, 316-19.

[34]"Volk Gottes, das im Alten Testament Israel und im Neuen Testament die Kirche heisst" (*Kirchliche Dogmatik*, II/2.89).

[35]F. W. Marquardt, *Die Entdeckung des Judentums für die christliche Theologie: Israel im Denken Karl Barths* (München: Kaiser, 1967); B. Klappert, *Israel und die Kirche: Erwägungen zur Israellehre Karl Barths* (München: Kaiser, 1980); K. A. Sonderegger, *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew: Karl Barth's "Doctrine of Israel"* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Univ. Pr., 1992).

First of all, it is possible to discover at least some glimpses of Barth's process of rethinking since the second edition of his commentary on Romans. On December 10, 1933, he was invited to preach at the University of Bonn on Romans 15:5-13. It is here, at the end of the first fateful year of National-Socialist rule that Barth for the first time points out the theological significance of present-day Jews and Judaism and their special relationship to Jesus: "*Dieses* Volkes Blut war in seinen Adern das Blut des Sohnes Gottes."[36] As Takeda observes "Gerade die ontologische Unterscheidung von Juden und Nicht-Juden eröffnet Barth 1933 eine wirkliche streng christologisch begründete Solidarität mit den Juden als solchen."[37] This form of argumentation finds its fullest expression in *Kirchliche Dogmatik* II/2 of 1942. Marquardt emphasizes how Barth was breaking new ground in this area by giving a strictly theological qualification not only to Israel in general but to postbiblical Judaism in particular: ". . .auf der Spitze der Barthschen Beweisführung (kommt es) zu einer streng theologischen Qualifikation nicht nur Israels, sondern gerade des nachchristlichen Judentums. Das ist ein absolutes Novum. . .."[38] Baumbach concurs: "Ohne *Karl Barths* Entdeckung von Röm 9-11 für eine Lehre von Gottes Gnadenwahl wäre der geschichtliche Prozess undenkbar gewesen, der sich im Blick auf die deutschen kirchlichen Verlautbarungen zum christlich-jüdischen Dialog seit 1950 ereignet hat."[39]

Barth's views of Judaism were not without problems and without a heavy debt to earlier teachings in which Judaism served only as a negative foil for Christianity. Such an indebtedness is evident even in the subheading of his chapter on communal election. He speaks of one single community in two different expressions: Israel and the Church. However, Israel for him is a sign of God's judgment, whereas the Church is a sign of God's mercy: "Diese eine Gemeinde Gottes hat in ihrer Gestalt als Israel der Darstellung des göttlichen *Gerichtes,* in ihrer Gestalt als Kirche der Darstellung des göttlichen *Erbarmens* zu dienen."[40] Barth's complex attitude toward Judaism has been

---

[36]*Theologische Existenz heute* 5 (1933) 14: "*This* people's blood was in his veins the blood of the Son of God."

[37]T. Takeda, *Israel und die Völker: Die Israel-Lehre des Völkerapostels Paulus in seiner Bedeutung für uns gojim/ethne - Christen. Ein Weg zur Rezeption Israels als ein Weg zur biblischen Theologie* (Diss. Berlin: Freie Universität, 1981) 118: "It is precisely the ontological distinction between Jews and Gentiles which opens for Barth in 1933 a strictly christologically grounded solidarity with the Jews as such."

[38]Marquardt, *Entdeckung*, 15.

[39]G. Baumbach, "Bedeutung und Deutung der Hileigen [*sic*] Schrift in deutschen kirchlichen Verlautbarungen zum christlich-jüdischen Gespräch seit 1950," *Die Bibel in jüdischer und christlicher Tradition. FS J. Maier* (ed. H. Merklein, et al.; BBB 88; Frankfurt: A. Hain, 1993) 552-53.

[40] *Kirchliche Dogmatik* II/2 §34 p. 215 emphasis in original. Engl. transl. *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957) 195: "This one community of God in its form

scrutinized and at times severely criticized by his own students and their students as well as by others.[41] Here a fresh general evaluation is not our task. Instead, we would like to concentrate on Barth's ample treatment of Rom 11:29 in the context of his comments on Romans 9-11 in the chapter on the election of the people of God.

Barth suggests that 11:29 is a key to understanding Rom 9-10 in that our verse underscores the unshakable foundation of God's love for and election of Israel. He emphasizes that this axiom is neither a philosophical statement about divine *immutabilitas* nor an expression of a stubborn affirmation of Jewish prerogatives. Instead, Barth sees it as an affirmation of Christian hope in the unshakable character of God's mercy demonstrated in Jesus' resurrection.[42] If God is faithful, then this faithfulness has to extend to Israel's past, present, and future. Barth emphasizes that v 28b ("beloved for the sake of the fathers") finds its strongest confirmation and motivation in v 29, and that this affirmation refers to each and every member of the Jewish people at all times.[43] For him, vv 30-32 offer a development ("Entfaltung") of v 29 and here again the present reality of God's mercy which extends to Jews and Gentile Christians is unmistakably emphasized: "Es ist (wer Ohren hat, zu hören, der höre!) das Abschieben der Judenfrage in die Eschatologie, das dem christlichen Antisemitismus gerade durch dieses auffallende zweite νῦν [Rom

---

as Israel has to serve the representation of the divine judgment, in its form as the Church the representation of the divine mercy."

[41]Marquardt, *Entdeckung*; Klappert, *Israel und die Kirche*; Takeda, *Israel und die Völker*.

[42]"Der Satz v 29 ist nicht der Satz einer eigenmächtigen Philosophie von der *immutabilitas* des höchsten Wesens, . . . Der Satz v 29 ist aber auch nicht der Satz eines verzweifelnden jüdischen Trotzes auf eine Treue, die Gott seinem Volk um dessen besonderen Blutes oder um dessen Gesetzestreue willen schuldig wäre. Sondern er ist das Bekenntnis der christlichen Hoffnung, die die Unerschütterlichkeit des göttlichen Erbarmens in der Auferweckung Jesu von den Toten vor Augen und zum Gegenstand hat, die Gott in dieser seiner Tat als dem ewig treuen Gott begegnet ist und Rechenschaft gibt" (*Kirchliche Dogmatik* II/2.332-33 emphasis in original).

[43]"Geliebte! Das ist unter allen Umständen das letzte Wort, das im Blick auf Israels Geschichte von ihren Anfängen bis in *jede* vorstellbare oder unvorstellbare Zukunft, in *jeder* Gegenwart im Gedanken an *jedes* Glied dieses Volkes zu bedenken ist. . . . Das is also auch hinsichtlich der Gegenwart der *ungläubigen* Juden das letzte Wort: sie sind Geliebte Gottes, . . . der immer *zuerst* liebt, der auch da liebt, wo er *nicht wieder* geliebt wird" (*Kirchliche Dogmatik* II/2.333 emphasis in original). Translation: "Beloved! This is the last word which in every present and in respect of every member of this people has to be taken into account in relation to Israel's history from its beginnings into every conceivable or inconceivable future. . . . But this is also the last word even in relation to the present state of the unbelieving Jews. . . . they are beloved of God . . . who always loves *first*, who loves even where He is not loved in return" (*Church Dogmatics* II.2.303).

11:31b] unmöglich gemacht wird."[44] Such a strictly theological argumentation for the present relevance of the Jewish people may be considered one of the unique achievements of Karl Barth. Rosato singles it out as the first of three elements in Barthian thought that have been most influential in Catholic theology.[45]

While it is impossible to demonstrate Barth's direct influence in this particular instance, the rethinking of Christian-Jewish relations that occurred at Vatican II may owe something also to his innovative interpretation of Rom 9-11. In fact, John M. Oesterreicher, who authored the first draft of the document that later became Vatican II's declaration *Nostra Aetate*, adopted a Barthian expression "Bogen des einen Bundes" (*Kirchliche Dogmatik* II/2.220) for the title of his discussion of covenant and people of God and developed the idea further in the direction suggested by Barth. He also cited several other passages of the *Church Dogmatics*.[46] Oesterreicher published this article after the Council but it is not unlikely that he and other members of the committee that drafted and redrafted the document on the Church's relations with non-Christian religions were familiar with Barth's *Church Dogmatics* during their work for the Council. What influence Barth's work might have exerted directly or indirectly appears difficult if not impossible to establish.

2.2 Allusions and Citations in Church Documents

In two statements of the Confessing Church in Germany, dated December 12, 1938, and October 17, 1943, respectively, Rom 9-11 was alluded to, but only in the context of references to baptized Jews.[47] The earliest direct citation of 11:29 seems to have occurred in the Declaration of the World Council of Churches issued in Amsterdam in 1948: "For many the continued existence of a Jewish people which does not acknowledge Christ is

---

[44] (*Kirchliche Dogmatik* II/2.335). "What this striking second νῦν makes quite impossible for Christian anti-semitism (he that has ears to hear, let him hear) is the relegation of the Jewish question into the realm of eschatology" (*Church Dogmatics* II.2.305).

[45]P. J. Rosato, "The Influence of Karl Barth on Catholic Theology," *Gregorianum* 67 (1986) 661-67.

[46]J. M. Oesterreicher, "Unter dem Bogen des einen Bundes - Das Volk Gottes: Seine Zweigestalt und Einheit," *Judentum und Kirche: Volk Gottes* (Zürich/Köln: Benziger, 1969) 27, 29, 39.

[47]R. M. Heydenreich, "Erklärungen aus der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands und der Ökumene zur Judenfrage 1932-1961," *Der ungekündigte Bund: Neue Begegnung von Juden und christlicher Gemeinde*, (ed. D. Goldschmidt and H. J. Kraus; Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag, 1962) 235, 247. The title of this volume evidently draws on Rom 11:29, but the topic is never addressed directly. The Hebrew University's copy of the book bears a personal dedication by Helmut Gollwitzer to Martin Buber.

a divine mystery which finds its only sufficient explanation in the purpose of God's unchanging faithfulness and mercy (Rom 11:25-29)."[48] This statement is made in a context that calls for an intensified but sensitive Christian mission among Jews and declares antisemitism a "sin against God and man." This has remained the only primarily theological statement concerning Christian-Jewish relations made by the World Council of Churches, although there have been later condemnations of antisemitism that also touch on theological issues. Rendtorff comments "Ein mit der Erklärung 'Nostra Aetate' des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils vergleichbarer Impuls ist bisher ausgeblieben."[49]

On a national level, on May 21, 1949, the Dutch Reformed Church issued a position paper concerning its confessional foundations and perspectives. The document opens its reflections on Israel's present and future with a reference to Rom 11:29. On the one hand it is affirmed that the people Israel is not rejected or abandoned by God. On the other hand, the Jewish people is seen, in a traditional formulation used also by Karl Barth, as a sign and a mirror of God's judgment.[50]

The Synod of the "Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland," gathered in Berlin-Weissensee in 1950, issued a brief statement on "the Jewish question" that showed a similar openness to the continued validity of God's election. Taking Rom 11:32 as its motto, it stated among other points: "Wir glauben, dass Gottes Verheissung über dem von ihm erwählten Volk Israel auch nach der Kreuzigung Jesu Christi in Kraft geblieben ist."[51] Even though v 29 is not cited, it clearly is at the basis of such an affirmation.[52] This declaration has been considered pathbreaking in that it overcomes the centuries-old traditional church teaching of substitution or "supersessionism."[53] It should however be noted that the Dutch document of the previous year had pointed in the same direction and that the Amsterdam declaration of the World Council of Churches had at least opened a window toward such an understanding.

While there have been many declarations of Protestant as well as Catholic church authorities on issues connected with Christian-Jewish relations, theological reflection on the relations between Christianity and Judaism found hardly any further expression before the Second Vatican Council.[54]

---

[48]H. Croner, *Stepping Stones to Further Jewish-Christian Relations: An Unabridged Collection of Christian Documents* (London & New York: Stimulus Books, 1977) 70.
[49]Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 323.
[50]Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 445.
[51]Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 549.
[52]Baumbach, *Bedeutung*, 536.
[53]"Damit wird hier faktisch die seit Jahrhunderten die Kirche bestimmende Tradition der Enterbungs-(Substitutions-)Theorie verworfen. . ." (Baumbach, *ibid.*).
[54]Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 231-242, 527-554.

Rom 11:29 was never cited in official Catholic pronouncements before Vatican II. At the Council, the first reference to our verse is found in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* in the context of the Church's relations with non-Christians. Rom 9:4-5 and 11:28b-29 are quoted here in support of the thesis that the Jewish people due to its original election and the irrevocability of God's gifts and call is in a very special way linked to the people of God: "Finally, those who have not yet received the Gospel are related to the People of God in various ways. There is, first, that people to which the covenants and promises were made, and from which Christ was born according to the flesh: in view of the divine choice, they are a people most dear for the sake of the fathers, for the gifts of God are without repentance."[55] Here the term "people of God" is applied to the Church (but not limited to its institutional expressions) and not to the Jewish people.[56]

Similar language is used in *Nostra Aetate*, where however these ideas are developed further: Despite the fact that a majority of Jews did not accept the Gospel and even opposed its spreading (Rom 11:28a is cited here), they remain beloved by God: "Nihilominus, secundum Apostolum, Iudaei Deo, cuius dona et vocatio sine paenitentia sunt, adhuc carissimi manent propter Patres."[57] This affirmation is followed by the expression of the firm hope for the day known only to God "when all peoples will call on God with one voice and 'serve him shoulder to shoulder' (Zeph 3:9)."

Among various possible criticisms regarding the inadequacy of *Nostra Aetate* it may be noted that reference to present-day Jewry is almost completely lacking, except in a recommendation to foster mutual knowledge and understanding and in a generic warning against antisemitism. While such criticisms are understandable, they do not take into account the special context of this conciliar statement. They also do not pay sufficient attention to the role of the citation of Rom 11:28b-29, which here forms a link between the past and the eschatological future, expressed in decidedly theological and not christological terms through the quote from the prophet Zephaniah.

As is evident now, over thirty years later, the importance of *Nostra Aetate* consists not only in what it affirms, but is found especially in the consequences it has had. While implementation of its recommendations has

---

[55] *Lumen Gentium* 16. Engl. transl. A. Flannery, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1975) 367.

[56] Such language is also found in *Nostra Aetate* 4: "It is true that the Church is the new people of God, yet the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture" (Transl. Flannery, *Vatican II*, 741). Later documents do not address the question of Old vs. New People of God, a problem perhaps wrongly posed to begin with (cf. Oesterreicher, *Bogen*).

[57] *Nostra Aetate* 4: "Even so, the apostle Paul maintains that the Jews remain very dear to God, for the sake of the patriarchs, since God does not take back the gifts he bestowed or the choice he made" (Transl. Flannery, *Vatican II*, 741).

been less than universal, it has had an impact that has found expression in many later documents, and not only those emanating from Catholic sources. Indeed, *Nostra Aetate* has been instrumental in bringing about a radical paradigm shift in Christian-Jewish relations.

After the Council, the Holy See's Secretariat (now "Pontifical Council") for Promoting Christian Unity with its Office for Catholic-Jewish Relations as well as many bishops, synods, and episcopal conferences, primarily in the United States but also in Europe and to a lesser extent in Latin America, issued statements regarding Catholic-Jewish relations. They offer various suggestions on how to apply the teachings of *Nostra Aetate* in the various local situations. Many of these documents allude to or cite Rom 11:29.[58]

---

[58]To cite only a few:
- "Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations," U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, March 1967 (Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 20; original citation mistakenly refers to Rom 9:29);
- "Guidelines for the Advancement of Catholic-Jewish Relations in the Archdiocese of New York, Diocese of Rockville Centre, Diocese of Brooklyn," November 18, 1969 (Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 21, 26); quotes *Lumen Gentium* 16 which cites our verse; original citation mistakenly refers to Rom 9:29;
- "Introduction to the Discussions of the Plenary Session of Bishop Members of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity," November 1969 (Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 3);
- "Reflections and Suggestions for the Application of the Directives of *Nostra Aetate* (n. 4)" Working Document prepared for the Holy See's Office for Catholic-Jewish Relations, December 1969. This working paper, which cites Rom 11:29 in a section on "Education" (Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 9), became the basis for the 1974 "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (n.4)" (Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 11-16). In that document explicit reference to Rom 11:29 has been eliminated. Though the working paper in itself was not an official Vatican document, it was quoted in extenso in guidelines for the Diocese of Albany and cited in directives for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.
- "Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations in the Diocese of Albany, New York," 1970 (generally following the model of the dioceses of the New York Metropolitan area, but adds the Holy See's working paper as an appendix; Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 139; cf. Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 9);
- "Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati," October 1971 (Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 144); - "Statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations by the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops," November 1975 (Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 33).
- Statement by the Archbishop of Paderborn, Johannes Joachim Degenhardt, on the occasion of the 40. anniversary of "Reichskristallnacht," November 9, 1978 (Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 249) cites Rom 11:29 in a summary of *Nostra Aetate*;
- "Declaration of the West German Bishops' Conference about relations between the Church and Judaism," April 28, 1980 (Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 269; cf. 271); in explicit continuity with *Nostra Aetate*, cites Rom 11:29 as one of the basic New Testament statements about Christian-Jewish relations.

An important yet very controversial document was issued on April 16, 1973, by the French (Catholic) Bishops' Committee for Relations with Judaism.[59] It was meant to offer pastoral orientations concerning Christian attitudes toward Judaism, taking its cue from the basic insights of *Nostra Aetate.* It rightly considered the Council declaration a beginning rather than a point of arrival. As scriptural basis for its section on the permanent vocation of the Jewish people it indicated the passage on God's "eternal covenant" with Abraham (Gen 17:7) and Rom 11:29. In one sense, this is a small step from *Nostra Aetate*'s citation of Rom 11:28-29. Yet here the connection between the irrevocable character of God's call and present-day Jews, implicit in *Nostra Aetate* 4, is made explicit. In a comment by the Chief Rabbinate of France it is noted that here for the first time in an official Catholic document the permanent vocation of the Jewish people is affirmed.[60] This conclusion is not entirely correct since already the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops had spoken of, perhaps somewhat awkwardly, "an acknowledgment by Catholic scholars of the living and complex reality of Judaism after Christ and the permanent election of Israel, alluded to by St. Paul (Rom 9:29 [should be 11:29]), and incorporation of the results into Catholic teaching."[61] It should not be too surprising that the connection between the teachings of *Nostra Aetate* and the Jewish people of today was first developed by the episcopates of two Western countries with large Jewish populations with whom Catholics would be in constant contact. Reactions to the French document were quite animated. Some will be discussed below.

A new impulse for the application of Rom 11:29 came from Pope John Paul II in an address to Jewish leaders in Mainz, Germany, on November 17, 1980. In a frequently quoted statement he remarked: "Die erste Dimension dieses Dialoges, nämlich die Begegnung zwischen dem Gottesvolk des von Gott nie gekündigten Alten Bundes und dem des Neuen Bundes, ist zugleich ein Dialog innerhalb unserer Kirche, gleichsam zwischen dem ersten und zweiten Teil ihrer Bibel."[62] The Pope's affirmation that the Old Covenant has

---

- Statements by the Pastoral Council of the Netherlands (April 8, 1970) and by the Synod of the Archdiocese of Vienna (October 23, 1970) cite Rom 11:28b (Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 134, 141).

[59]"L'attitude des chrétiens a l'égard du judaïsme: Orientations pastorales du Comité épiscopal français pour les relations avec le judaïsme," *Documentation Catholique* 1631 (May 6, 1973) 419-422; English translation in Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 60-65.

[60]*Documentation Catholique* 1631 (May 6, 1973) 422.

[61]Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 20.

[62]Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 75. "The first dimension of this dialogue, i.e. the encounter between the people of God of the Old Covenant, never revoked by God, and that of the New Covenant is at the same time a dialogue within our church, as it were between the first and the second part of her Bible."

never been revoked is only partly based on Rom 11:29 because Paul there does not directly address the question of covenant. Most exegetes, however, connect the gifts of 11:29 with the privileges listed in Rom 9:4-5 among whom Paul includes "the covenants" (several ancient mss. use the singular). The use of the phrase by the Pope has caused and continues to generate ample discussion.[63]

In and of itself it may be considered merely a logical continuation of the line of interpretation initiated by Karl Barth, given brief expression in *Nostra Aetate* 4, developed in documents of the American, French, and German episcopates.[64] Yet, it presents also a radical novelty because it clearly overcomes the still widespread doctrine of supersessionism which considers the role of Israel entirely superseded by that of the Church.

The brief remark by Pope John Paul II has frequently been cited. The "Notes on the correct way to present the Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church" issued on June 24, 1985, by the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews formulate as follows: "The Holy Father has stated this permanent reality of the Jewish people in a remarkable theological formula . . . 'the people of God of the Old Covenant, which has never been revoked. . .'."[65] The use of Rom 11:29 as a key text for a better understanding of Christian-Jewish relations is thus reaffirmed. This teaching finds expression also in the recent *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which states that the privileges mentioned in Rom 9:4-5 belong (present tense) to the Jewish people, because of the affirmation in Rom 11:29 (§839). Similarly, the Pontifical Biblical Commission's document "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church" quotes Rom 11:29 in its discussion of the limits of the actualization of biblical texts: "The tragic events of the past must . . . impel all to keep unceasingly in mind that, according to the New

---

[63]N. Lohfink, *Der niemals gekündigte Bund: Exegetische Gedanken zum christlich-jüdischen Dialog* (Freiburg: Herder, 1989) 91-92; A. Vanhoye, "Salut universel par le Christ et validité de l'Ancienne Alliance," *NRT* 116 (1994) 815-35 (See also the author's "Rectification," *NRT* 118 [1996] 66). An abridged version of the article appeared in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 3467 (December 3, 1994) 433-45; E. Main, "Ancienne et Nouvelle Alliances dans le dessein de Dieu: à propos d'un article récent," *NRT* 118 (1996) 34-58.

[64]The phrase used by the Pope is itself not entirely new as the title *Der ungekündigte Bund* of the proceedings of an earlier "Evangelischer Kirchentag" shows (ed. D. Goldschmidt and H. J. Kraus, Stuttgart Kreuz-Verlag, 1962). Cf. also the expression "pacta Dei sunt irrevocabilia" in Johannes Brenz's commentary on Romans written around 1538 (J. Brenz, *Explicatio Epistolae Pauli ad Romanos*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1986, 365.33-35).

[65]International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, *Fifteen Years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue 1970-1985*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1988, 307. The Italian original (*L'Osservatore Romano*, June 24-25, 1985) reads: "Il santo padre ha presentato questa realtà permanente del popolo ebraico con una formula teologica particolarmente felice . . . 'il popolo ebraico dell'antica alleanza, che non è mai stata revocata. . .'."

Testament, the Jews remain 'beloved' of God, 'since the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable' (Rom 11:28-29)."[66]

2.3 Questions Concerning the Applicability of Rom 11:29

The use of Rom 11 in general and 11:29 in particular by Bloy, Barth, Maritain, and others for the sake of a new biblically and theologically grounded evaluation of the relationship between Christians and Jews did not remain uncontested. Several voices were raised especially in response to Vatican II's declaration *Nostra Aetate* and its various drafts. Denise Judant draws very negative conclusions for current theology from her reading of some of the Church Fathers. She claims: "Il est évident, dans une perspective chrétienne, que les dons de Dieu ne sont pas restés au peuple juif: ils ont passé à l'Eglise."[67] This interpretation certainly is not self-evident today but also in the past it has not been as widespread as Judant argues:

> Nous avons vu que la pensée unanime des Pères a été d'affirmer que le peuple juif infidèle est privé de ses privilèges et que ceux-ci ont passé à l'Eglise. Dans cette perspective, il est évidemment 'stupide' (pour reprendre le terme de S. Augustin), d'appliquer à l'Israël infidèle le verset concernant l'appel et les dons de Dieu sans repentance.[68]

Aside from the inappropriate reference to Augustine,[69] this view does not reflect the teaching of Origen or of other patristic authors.[70] It is significant that Bishop Luigi Carli, the most vociferous opponent of *Nostra Aetate* among the Council Fathers, wrote a laudatory preface to Judant's book.[71] Carli himself commented after the presentation of the third draft of the declaration which quoted Rom 11:29: "I doni di Dio sono 'senza pentimento', cioè rimangono sempre tali per parte sua; ma per parte di chi li rifiuta o non li utilizza a tempo debito, si trasformano in titoli di condanna."[72] He did not adduce any exegetical or theological justification for this view.

Slightly earlier Vaccari concludes an article that although it has Rom 11:29 in its title deals almost exclusively with Old Testament passages regarding divine fidelity: "Comunque si voglia pensare, la profetica sentenza

---

[66]Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993, 117.

[67]D. Judant, *Judaïsme et Christianisme: Dossier patristique* (Paris: Cèdre, 1969) 261-62.

[68]*Ibid.*, 270.

[69]Augustine does not use this terminology regarding Rom 11:29 but only regarding those who think that 'enemies' and 'beloved' in Rom 11:28 refer to the same persons.

[70] For a detailed treatment of the patristic and medieval commentaries see the extended version of this paper in *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* (forthcoming)

[71]Judant, *Judaïsme et Christianisme*, 1969, 7-10.

[72]L. M. Carli, "La questione giudaica davanti al Concilio Vaticano II," *Palestra del Clero* 44,4 (1965) 201 ("God's gifts are 'without repentance,' that is, they remain such on his part; but on the part of the one who refuses them or does not utilize them in due time, they turn into causes of condemnation"); *id.*, "Chiesa e Sinagoga," *Palestra del Clero* 45 (1966) 344.

di S. Paolo [Rom 11:29] è certamente l'ultimo dei passi biblici in cui possa presentarsi la questione della irrevocabilità dei favori divini."[73] This judgment is not based on a study of Rom 11 and seems to be a deliberate polemic against ideas connected with the draft versions of *Nostra Aetate*.

In response to the French bishops' 1973 statement, several voices were raised to criticize their affirmation of the permanent vocation of the Jewish people. Forty Jesuits working in Lebanon, while taking exception especially to the treatment of the situation in the Middle East, also contested the use of Rom 11:29. They suggested that it must be read in light of the discussion of the Covenants in the Epistle to the Hebrews (8:7, 13; 13:20) where the first covenant is described as "antiquated and near its end."[74] Similarly, the Catholic bishops of Egypt in a letter to the French bishops offer a detailed criticism of the use of Rom 11:29. They affirm: "*L'irrévocabilité de ces dons ne porte pas sur leur durée dans le temps*, comme s'ils devaient rester en permanence, *mais plutôt sur la place qu'ils occupent dans le dessein de salut*. . . . les dons irrévocables de Dieu au peuple juif étaient *en vue de la bénédiction de toutes les nations dans la descendance d'Abraham*."[75]

Also Cardinal Jean Danielou took a similar position, stating "Il est faux de parler encore aujourd'hui d'une élection particulière du peuple juif. . . . Parler de Nouvelle Alliance, c'est dire que l'Ancienne est dépassée."[76] A. Feuillet wrote an article to the same effect in *L'Osservatore Romano*. Citing the Epistle to the Hebrews he stated "l'ancienne alliance est désormais périmée: elle a été remplacée aux yeux des chrétiens par la nouvelle alliance."[77] Alongside these critical voices there were others who supported the bishops' use of Rom 11:29. For example, Yves Congar saw in the affirmation of the continuing theological significance of Judaism one of the principal contributions of the document: "Un des apports, peut-être l'apport principal du document épiscopal, consiste précisément dans la reconnaissance d'une valeur positive profonde au judaïsme après la venue de celui que nous confessons comme Christ." With reference to Rom 11:29 he remarked: "l'élection d'Israël a introduit dans l'histoire une structure dont saint Paul constate la permanence dans le temps de l'Eglise, tant que la plénitude n'est pas atteinte."[78]

---

[73]A. Vaccari, "Irrevocabilità dei favori divini: Nota a commento di Rom XI,29" *Mélanges E. Tisserant* (Vol. 1. Vatican, 1964) 442.

[74]*Documentation Catholique* 1635 (July 1, 1973) 619.

[75]*Documentation Catholique* 1638 (September 9-23, 1973) 786-787 (emphasis original).

[76]*Documentation Catholique* 1635 (July 1, 1973) 621.

[77]*L'Osservatore Romano*, June 15, 1973, cited in *Documentation Catholique* 1635 (July 1, 1973) 621.

[78]La Croix June 16, 1973, cited in *Documentation Catholique* 1635 (July 1, 1973) 622-623.

As stated above, Pope John Paul II's reference to the "people of God of the Old Covenant never revoked by God" has caused ample reactions. In an article on the universality of salvation in Christ and the validity of the Old Covenant, Albert Vanhoye proposes that the covenant with Abraham has never been revoked but that the Sinai covenant has been effectively terminated: "L'alliance du Sinaï, a donc été révoquée par Dieu, mais au moment même de la rupture, Dieu a promis de la remplacer par une nouvelle alliance, différente."[79] He further argues that in accordance with Gal 3:15-18,29 *post Christum* the only way to enter into God's covenant with Abraham is by adhering to Christ. Vanhoye summarizes Paul's thought "la seule façon d'avoir vraiment une relation d'alliance avec Dieu consiste à accueillir la justification que Dieu donne par la foi au Christ et non par la Loi du Sinaï."[80] Nevertheless he leaves open a slight possibility that non-Christian Jews can still be in a covenant relationship with God.[81]

Vanhoye makes several explicit references to the Pope's remark but tends to interpret it in a sense that would restrict the never revoked covenant to Christians. He submits that "On peut . . . se demander s'il y a identité ou distinction entre 'le peuple de Dieu de la vieille alliance jamais dénoncée par Dieu' mentionné pour la première dimension du dialogue, et 'le peuple actuel de l'alliance conclue avec Moïse', mentionné pour la deuxième dimension."[82] Further on, Vanhoye answers this question for himself by stating that the Pope's phrase cited at the opening of this paper, if read in the perspective of Gal 3:15-18,29 "concerne effectivement 'un dialogue à l'intérieur de notre Église', car il se rapporte alors à la rencontre des deux composantes de l'Église, la judéo-chrétienne et l'ethnico-chrétienne." Vanhoye affirms that the Pope's phrase suggests such an interpretation but admits that the word "zugleich" ("at the same time") "semble impliquer l'existence simultanée d'une autre idée, non exprimée explicitement."[83]

Vanhoye's article has caused such reaction that the editors decided to print two responses plus a rectification by the author.[84] Emmanuelle Main points out that Vanhoye does not provide any credible proof for the revocation of the Sinai covenant.[85] To the contrary, she asserts, "La Nouvelle Alliance ne prend donc sens que dans la mesure où l'alliance du Sinaï est toujours valide."[86]

---

[79]Vanhoye, "Salut universel," 831.
[80]Vanhoye, "Salut universel," 823.
[81]Vanhoye, "Salut universel," 826 n.14.
[82]Vanhoye, "Salut universel," 816 n. 2.
[83]Vanhoye, "Salut universel," 821 n. 8.
[84]Main, "Ancienne et Nouvelle Alliances"; V. Martin, *L'ancien et le nouveau*, *NRT* 118 (1996) 59-65.
[85]Main, "Ancienne et Nouvelle Alliances," 34, 38-40, 50.
[86]Main, "Ancienne et Nouvelle Alliances," 56.

Without entering into the questions raised by Vanhoye's biblical exegesis (which does not concern itself with Rom 11:29), we might raise doubts about his interpretation of the Pope's statement as referring primarily or exclusively to intra-ecclesial relations. First of all, Vanhoye himself suggests that the word "zugleich" points to another reality, which he considers undefined. Yet, the Pope's primary concern in this address is interreligious dialogue: "Dabei geht es . . . vor allem um den Dialog zwischen den zwei Religionen."[87] When he says in the next sentence "Die erste Dimension dieses Dialoges, nämlich die Begegnung zwischen dem Gottesvolk des von Gott nie gekündigten Alten Bundes und dem des Neuen Bundes, ist zugleich ein Dialog innerhalb unserer Kirche" (*ibid.*), then it is clear that the primary reference is *not* to the intra-ecclesial dimension although this is important and deserves attention. When the Pope further refers to "dem heutigen Volk des mit Mose geschlossenen Bundes"[88] it does not seem possible to infer that he refers to the people of a Sinai covenant that has been cancelled.

Vanhoye also does not seem to pay sufficient attention to the context. The Pope was speaking to Jewish leaders. Is it conceivable that he came to tell them that God's irrevocable covenant is no longer theirs? Apparently no one understood him to mean that and the further use of this phrase in the above-cited statement by the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews seems to preclude such an understanding. Similarly, already the text of the Good Friday prayer for the Jews according to the *Missale Romanum* of 1970 formulates thus: "Oremus et pro Iudaeis, ut . . . Dominus Deus noster eis tribuat . . . in sui foederis fidelitate proficere."[89] This formulation presupposes the idea of a continuing covenant relationship that is put in question by Vanhoye.

2.4 Developments Evidenced in Church Documents

In Catholic documents concerning relations with Jews, beginning with *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate*, Rom 11:29 is one of the most frequently cited passages. It is taken as the main basis for the affirmation of God's fidelity that extends not only to individuals but in mysterious ways also to the Jewish people as such. Protestant documents since World War II occasionally do refer to Rom 11:29[90] but more often speak of God's faithfulness in

---

[87]Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 75.

[88]Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 76.

[89]Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 57 ("Let us pray for the Jewish people . . . that they may continue to grow . . . in faithfulness to his covenant").

[90]Goldschmidt and Kraus, *Der ungekündigte Bund*; Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 70; Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 445.

connection with 11:1-2,32 or other biblical texts or without specific scriptural reference.[91]

Documents by different member churches of the World Council of Churches or their various organs of course evidence a great variety of theological and practical approaches. A recent document of the Southern Baptist Convention which encourages efforts to convert Jews certainly represents one extreme of this spectrum. Yet on the whole one may observe, as in Catholic documents, a progressive overcoming of supersessionism and a growing acceptance of a continuing theological significance of Judaism and the Jewish people.

3. Conclusions

The history of the interpretation of Rom 11:29 is long and intricate. The verse, perhaps the most concise statement of God's fidelity, has long been neglected or caused difficulties. For, on the basis of a Christian reading of other Biblical texts it seemed inconceivable that Jews who did not accept Jesus as the Christ could still be in a positive relationship with God. Thus it was frequently argued that God's gifts and call had either passed entirely to the Christian Church or had been put on hold until the Jews' conversion.

Paul certainly struggled tremendously with the question of Israel's destiny. His answers are almost as complex as the question and it has recently been argued that Romans 11 in effect says: "To read me rightly, you must deliberate with *me* about what *you* want the identity and destiny of carnal Israel to be."[92] It must be acknowledged that Romans 11 has been read in a great variety of ways. Ruether claims that "contemporary ecumenists who use Romans 11 to argue that Paul does not believe that God has rejected the people of the Mosaic covenant speak out of good intentions, but inaccurate exegesis."[93] On the other hand, Daniel Harrington, a distinguished exegete, after a careful analysis of Rom 11:29 and its context concludes: "What is clear . . . is Paul's endorsement of the continuing nature of God's election of Israel, even of those Israelites who have refused to accept the gospel."[94] Perhaps then we do not have to be as pessimistic as Cosgrove about the possibility to evince Paul's intended meaning.

---

[91]Croner, *Stepping Stones*, 78; Rendtorff and Henrix, *Dokumente*, 471, 494, 561, 594-595 and *passim*.

[92]C. H. Cosgrove, "Rhetorical Suspense in Romans 9-11: A Study in Polyvalence and Hermeneutical Election," *JBL* 115 (1996) 287.

[93]R. R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury, 1974) 106.

[94]D. J. Harrington, *Paul on the Mystery of Israel* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992) 64.

One element that has, I believe, had hermeneutical importance is the "new" encounter between Christians and Jews, as human beings, as religious persons, and as people who live after the *Shoah*, the attempted extermination of the Jewish people. Whereas Christian theology has often dealt with the question of the continued existence of the Jewish people by ignoring it or by triumphalism, other ways have been sought especially in the past fifty years. When in a historic dialogue session in January 1933 Martin Buber claimed that "der Bund ist mir nicht aufgekündigt worden," his dialogue partner, the prominent Protestant theologian Karl Ludwig Schmidt, and Protestant and Catholic theology with him, did not have any response.[95] In some way a response, and this time from a very authoritative source, came almost fifty years later in the words of Pope John Paul II in Mainz about the "von Gott nie gekündigten Alten Bund."

Only under the impact of the onslaught of antisemitism in this century were eyes of Christian theologians, writers, exegetes and church leaders opened to the possibility that our text, in the context of Rom (9-) 11, rather than e.g. Heb 8 might provide a hermeneutical key to better understand the Jewish people's relations with God and with the Church. The Catholic Church's teaching since Vatican II, developed further through the efforts of many exegetes, theologians and bishops but above all through the pronouncements of John Paul II, has taken decisive steps in a direction of a better understanding of and relations with Jews and Judaism.

If Catholic (and Protestant) theologians have come to a more positive appreciation of Judaism (and of other religions) then this should not be interpreted as a caving in to political or other pressures ("semantischer Einschüchterungsversuch"),[96] nor as a "theologischer Besitzverzicht," as it has sometimes been labeled.[97] It does not necessarily militate against the Christian belief in the universality of salvation in Jesus Christ, as Vanhoye and others seem to fear. Instead, it is perhaps one of the most remarkable ways in which the Catholic church and other churches come to grips with "the responsibility of reading the signs of the time and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (*Gaudium et Spes* 4; cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4).

In this light, intensive study of Rom 11 in general and of 11:29 in particular can open one's eyes to the mystery (Rom 11:25) of God's faithfulness. This has of course direct consequences for the question of

[95]M. Buber, "Kirche, Staat, Volk, Judentum: Zwiegespräch im Jüdischen Lehrhaus in Stuttgart am 14. Januar 1933," *Theologische Blätter* 12,9 (September 1933) 273. The German is difficult to render in English but means approximately "I have not been notified that my covenant has been revoked."

[96]G. Klein, "'Christlicher Antijudaismus': Bemerkungen zu einem semantischen Einschüchterungsversuch," *ZTK* 79 (1982) 411.

[97]E. Grässer, *Der alte Bund im Neuen: Exegetische Studien zur Israelfrage im Neuen Testament* (WUNT 35; Tübingen: Mohr, 1985) 286.

Christian-Jewish relations and for a Christian theology of Judaism. But God's faithfulness to the Jewish people is also paradigmatic: For Gentile Christians, too, it can serve as a sign of the permanence of God's love. Indeed this paradigm may be helpful for a Christian theology of vocation.

Also in other directions our study of one verse of the Letter to the Romans may point beyond itself. As one very small test case it evidences the intimate though at times dialectical relationship between Scripture and tradition (cf. *Dei Verbum* 9; 10.3).

Ambrosiaster's misinterpretation of Rom 11:29, based on a simple error or on a somewhat forced theology of baptism, exerted its influence for over one thousand years, even beyond the time of the Protestant Reformation. Erasmus and others corrected this error on the basis of exegetical considerations. Similarly, Augustine's teaching on grace and predestination which made extensive use of our verse has had an enduring influence on Protestant and Catholic theology, yet modern exegesis has shown that Paul's main concern here is not predestination. On the other hand, Karl Barth's theological approach, which grew out of his practical experience, has helped to frame the question of the meaning of Rom 11:29 in a new way, also for exegetes. Finally, important impulses for further exegetical and theological reflection have come through the teachings of Vatican II and of Pope John Paul II. Thus in some small way we may see here the complex and delicate, yet often fruitful mutual interaction between exegesis, theology, church teachings, and praxis.[98]

[98]I am grateful to Professors Jared Wicks, SJ, and Jean-Noël Aletti, SJ, for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this essay.

Towards an Ethical Reading of The Apocalypse: Reflections on John's Use of Power, Violence, and Misogyny

David L. Barr
Wright State University

The Apocalypse of John, on the usual reading, tells the story of Jesus' return from Heaven--waging triumphant war over the powers of evil and establishing God's rule on earth. And who cannot but long for such a triumph? Still, the morality of this story can be, and has been, questioned on a number of fronts. D. H. Lawrence called it "a rather repulsive work" not content till the whole world be destroyed, except that lake of fire in which those who fail to get in line might suffer eternally.[1] The American philosopher C. S. Pierce lamented about the Bible:

> But little by little the bitterness increases until in the last book of the New Testament, its poor distracted author represents that all the time Christ was talking about having come to save the world, the secret design was to catch the entire human race, with the exception of a paltry 144,000, and souse them all in brimstone lake, and as the smoke of their torment went up for ever and ever, to turn and remark, 'There is no curse any more.' Would it be an insensible smirk or a fiendish grin that should accompany such and utterance? I wish I could believe St. John did not write it...."[2]

And more recently the feminist writer Tina Pippin has lamented:

> The irony of the grotesque burning of the Whore is that the Christian utopia is itself an oppressive world (for women). .... But in the Apocalypse narrative, gender oppression is left untouched by the sword of God.[3]

She goes so far as to call it an "misogynist fantasy" and to conclude: "The Apocalypse means death to women" (86).

---

[1]D. H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse* (Penguin Books, 1976:103).

[2]Charles S. Peirce, "Evolutionary Love," *The Essential Peirce: selected Philosophical Writings.* Vol 1 (1867-1893), Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel, eds. Indiana University Press, 1992: 365-66.

[3]Tina Pippin, *Death and Desire: The Rhetoric of Gender in the Apocalypse of John.* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992:105).

What these and countless other readers share is their revulsion to the images of violence and coercion in this story. We decry the Beast's vicious destruction of the Whore (17:16); God's ultimate consignment of humanity to the Lake of Fire (20:15); the Warrior's defeat of the armies of the nations with its gory feast where the birds of prey are invited to "gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of the mighty, the flesh of horses and their riders--flesh of all, both free and slave, both small and great." (19:17). The ultimate value in this story seems to be power, power exercised ruthlessly. One even has the sense that God is willing to engage in torture in an effort to induce humanity to repent. Notice how John describes the final torments:

> The fourth angel poured his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch them with fire; they were scorched by the fierce heat, but they cursed the name of God, who had authority over these plagues, and they did not repent and give him glory. The fifth angel poured his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness; people gnawed their tongues in agony, and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and they did not repent of their deeds (16:9, 11; see also 9:21).

Suffering does not lead to repentance, so it seems inevitably to lead to destruction. There can be no question that this is a war story and that John uses the conventions of war, with all their repulsive details. This is disconcerting, but the moral problem goes deeper.

The traditional reading of the Apocalypse is morally objectionable on two general grounds. First, if God triumphs over evil only because God has more power than evil, then power--not love or goodness or truth--is the ultimate value of the universe. Second, if God has the power to quell evil and end suffering and plans one day to use that power, then by what logic can God allow innocent suffering to continue? John seems to recognize this second issue in the telling of the story, for just this question is raised by the martyrs whose lives have been poured out on the altar:

> "Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" (6:10).

That such an issues is raised within the story suggests that the author is not unaware of these moral concerns. A narrative reading of John's Apocalypse will allow us to see new ways to address both the issue of coercion and domination by power and the issue of God's failure to act to end innocent

suffering in the interim. While a narrative reading does not solve all the moral problems of this work, it does give us a new perspective on them, even raising other concerns. The paper considers two moral issues raised by a narrative reading (the issue of immoral means to moral ends and the issue of human passiveness in the face of divine control).

Does God Overcome Evil by Superior Power? (The Morality of Domination)

Narrative analysis discovers meaning in the dialectical interaction between the words of the text and the scenarios of the reader.[4] Meaning is a cooperative venture of author and audience; different audiences with different experiences and different concerns will discover different meanings in a work of literature. That is what we expect. Now some have gotten carried away with this observation on the role of the reader and declare all readings valid. I reject this view, for the text constrains our readings.[5] Let me illustrate this point by giving two quick readings of the scene in Revelation 5.

In that scene John is perplexed that no one can be found to open the sealed scroll; he is so distressed he cries:

> Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." Then I saw ... among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth (5:5-6).

There could not be a more stark symbolic contrast between the figure announced by the angel and the character actually seen by John: conquering lion/slaughtered lamb. Now on one level this is a portrayal of early Christian experience: they had

---

[4]For a beginning introduction, see Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*? (Fortress Press, 1991). For a more advanced analysis and demonstration of the interaction between narrative and other criticisms see, Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, *Mark and Method: New Approaches to Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992). For an application see David M. Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story*: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel (Fortress Press, 1982).

[5]For a careful articulation of this viewpoint see Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974) and especially *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

heard that the messiah would come with justice and vengeance, but what they actually saw in Jesus was quite the contrary.

But we must not miss the narrative force of this symbolic shift. There are three major characterizations of Jesus in the Apocalypse: The majestic, human-like figure of chapters 1-3; the slaughtered-standing Lamb of chapters 4-11; and the heavenly warrior of chapters 12-22. These fit their stories, for the story of the last section is one of cosmic war; the story of the middle section is one of worship in the heavenly sanctuary (where the lamb's sacrificial significance is clear); and the story of the first section is one of issuing imperial decrees (the so-called seven letters). If these characterizations remained constant the traditional reading might be defensible; but they do not. Once introduced, the Lamb dominates the rest of the action. It is the Lamb who gathers the 144,000 holy warriors on Mt Zion (14:1); it is the Lamb on whom the armies of evil make war (17:14); it is even the Lamb who marries and rules after the war (19:7: 22:3). My point is that this symbolic inversion is also a narrative inversion and that the narrative inversion is also a moral inversion: in this story evil only appears to be conquered by power. In this story, evil is conquered by the death of the Lamb.

This is seen clearly in the miniature scene in chapter 12 where we are told the story of a war in heaven:

> And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven (12:7-8).

This is the traditional language of holy war; but the language, story, and moral situation are inverted by John's coda to the story:

> But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death (12:11).

It is poor reading to overlook this inversion and to read as if the Lamb has not replaced the Lion in this story. Similar inversions occur at every point in the story--even in the climactic scene in which the heaven Warrior kills all his enemies, for his conquest is by means of a sword that comes from his mouth, not by the power of his arm (19:21). Surely this story is built on the mythology of Holy War (and that itself may be ethically problematic), but just as surely John consistently demythologizes the war--or perhaps more accurately, remythologizes the warrior with the image of the suffering savior so that the death of the warrior and not some later battle is the crucial event. At every juncture in

this story where good triumphs over evil a close examination will show that the victory is finally attributed to the death of Jesus.[6]

When Does God Act? (The Morality of Justice)

This leads to a second and related point. The actions of the Apocalypse are never arbitrary, never do they rest on simple power. There is a logic of judgment finally articulated by the angel of the waters when the third bowl causes the earth's water to turn to blood:

> because they shed the blood of saints and prophets, you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!" (16:6).

Notice both the appropriateness/justice of the retribution (blood because of blood) and also the inevitability of the retribution. This same logic undergirds our own ecological consciousness. If our waters are polluted it is not because God is exercising some tyrannical power over us; it is because we foul our own streams. This is the same logic of justice that undergirded Amos' visions of Israel's destruction because of social injustice. Amos first saw a vision of locusts, but when he prayed God stopped the locusts. Amos then saw a vision of fire, but when he prayed God stopped the fire. Amos then saw a vision of a crooked wall, and Amos could not pray for relief. For crooked walls--and unjust societies--fall. (See Amos 7:1-9).

So in our story the martyrs have to wait till their "number would be complete" (6:11). This is not because God awaits in some dispassionate indifference to the suffering of the innocent, but because in John's story God acts <u>through</u> the process of suffering. There comes a time in every oppression when the amount of coercion needed to maintain a system will itself destroy the system, as we ourselves have seen in Russia and South Africa. So the great Whore has become drunk with the blood of the saints (17:6); Rome's very act of killing becomes her own death. Such is John's vision.

My first argument, then, is that a narrative reading of the Apocalypse puts quite a different construction on the story and, in fact, contradicts the traditional reading. A narrative reading shows that in this story evil is overcome by suffering love not by superior power and that the apparent delay in judgment of the wicked is not due to divine indifference but to John's basic understanding that human acts cause human downfall. This does not, of course, solve all the moral problems of the Apocalypse.

---

[6]For a consistent reading of Revelation as narrative see my forthcoming *EndStory: A Narrative Commentary on John's Apocalypse* (Polebridge Press).

I will now consider issues raised by two recent interpreters of the Apocalypse, both well-acquainted with narrative readings: Tina Pippin and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. Both are concerned with the political significance of reading Revelation, though in different ways. Pippin raises especially the issue of the morality of the means to a new world; Schüssler Fiorenza raises especially the issue of the morality of reading Revelation as a religious tract and ignoring its social consequence.

How Should We Read John's Images? (The Morality of Violent Means)

Surely many of us, myself included, are not comfortable with John's violent images, with the easy equation of blood and wine, with the intolerable depiction of a lake of fire. But ancient sensibilities are not the same as modern; and war stories are not polite reading. This story is profoundly disturbing; the question is does the use of such conventions and imagery result in an immoral story?

I will focus this question by looking at the specific challenge leveled by Tina Pippin in the work referred to above.[7] First let me note the broad agreements between Pippin and me: we both engage in narrative readings; we are both feminists; we both are deeply disturbed by the rhetorical violence of the story. Within these broad agreements we disagree almost completely on the moral implications of this story. I cannot hope to do justice to her whole critique, so let me concentrate on her analysis of the destruction of the Whore of Babylon (told in Rev 17 and interpreted in 18 & 19). After a dramatic scene of the woman clothed in scarlet riding on a great beast and accompanied by ten kings, John is told:

> they and the beast will hate the whore; they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire (17:16).

Pippin interprets this scene thus:

> The object of desire is made the object of death. The Whore/ Goddess/Queen/ Babylon is murdered (a sexual murder) and eaten and burned. This grotesquely exaggerated vision of death and desire accentuates the hatred of the imperial power--and of women. This story of death and desire is the most vividly misogynist

---

[7] *Death and Desire*.

> passage in the New Testament. The Apocalypse is cathartic on many levels, but in terms of an ideology of gender, both women characters in the narrative and women readers are victimized.[8]

I see three issues here. First, there is the issue of contemporary reading and what such a story does to its readers. Second, there is the issue of how one should read the gender inscriptions of such a text. And third, there is the broader issue of how one should interpret the violence of this text. These are all three issues of interpretation--that is they become moral issues when we offer interpretations of the text. The third--the images of violence--is also a textual issues, that is, a moral issue whatever interpretation we might offer.

As to contemporary readers, Pippin is absolutely right to confront the way women are portrayed in this text. Contemporary men can justify their mistreatment of women by such ancient texts; contemporary women draw self-images from such stories. No one can be allowed to feel that what happens to John's whore in this story could ever be justified for any woman. It is dangerous that John used a human image here. We must challenge the text at this point (as we must challenge its comfort with violence generally). The question is how to challenge it, which I will return to in my third point below.

Second, I strongly disagree with the way Pippin reads the gender inscriptions of the text. I believe she makes three errors: she literalizes the images rather than grappling with their ambiguity; she minimizes the role of the feminine in the story; and she misconstrues the relationship between the violence and the final resolution.

Pippin quotes Tilde Sankovitch's claim that it is the focus on sex (rather than intellect, imagination, or feeling) that makes women subservient to men (84), but I wonder if Pippin is not doing something similar. There seems far more sex in her book than in John's. I would guess that a bride in John's world had far more social and economic significance than sexual, but we hear nothing of these. Instead we hear of the 144,000 entering the New Jerusalem as an image of "mass intercourse" (80). It's a city. Entering a city is not the same thing as having intercourse, at least for me. Only absolutizing the gender inscription of the city-as-woman allows one to misconstrue the text so completely.[9]

---

[8]*Death and Desire*, 58.

[9]The whore is certainly a sexual figure and her fornication is highlighted, but John's amazement--judging from the angel's response to it--relates to her power and wealth not her sexuality. But we hear little of these. Nor do I see any evidence that *thaumadzo* has erotic connotations. It means to marvel or wonder and it is an aorist indicating that it was an initial reaction not a present longing. This is only one example of where I find Pippin forcing the text into a unified interpretation in spite of her desire not to do so (88).

Pippin's reading strategy causes her to absolutize the gender inscriptions of the text rather than to challenge them or to explore their ambiguity.[10] The Whore may be imaged as a woman, but in the story it is also a city--and not just any city. The Whore is the Great City that rules over the cities of the world. Admitting this ambiguity changes the moral equation that comes from the Whore's destruction.

So, too, the moral equation shifts when we recognize the positive valuation that the story gives to women. I agree with Pippin that "the female in this story does not get enough credit" (76), but I see this is as much the reader's fault as the author's. Most readers--Pippin included--virtually ignore the positive characterizations of women and never seem to notice that in each instance the evil woman is paired with an evil man: Jezebel/Balaam; Whore/Beast. In fact masculine evil characters predominate and positive portrayals of women are important. Both the women in chapter twelve, the Queen of Heaven and Gaia, act independently, both prevail over the Dragon's attack, neither is weak or subservient. It is woman supported by woman, as Gaia opens her mouth and swallows the river from the serpent (12:16). It may not be as satisfying as if she had cut off the serpent's head, but it is not a negligible victory.

Still Pippin claims:

> The Apocalypse falls short of complete subversion of the social order. The female is still absent, even though she is represented in both powerful and powerless modes of being and acting. The female is still other, still marginalized, and still banished to the edge of the text. (72)

But surely the New Jerusalem is a central image--probably one of only three images that most people remember from the story (I'd guess the four horsemen and 666 are the other two.). Far more attention is given to describing the bride and her significance than is given to the groom. In fact, I find it striking that this community that can image itself as a convent of celibate, virgin males (14:4) can also image itself as a bride. In this story the male becomes the female, hardly a marginal image.

So I argue that John's story is not so misogynistic as Pippin suggests, that her deliberate reading "as a woman" (53) too easily reifies negative feminine imagery and too easily overlooks positive feminine imagery. But this is not the heart of the problem; the crucial problem is the violence with which women and

---

[10]See the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World* (Fortress, 1991, esp. 12-15) , and the theoretical basis in "The Will to Choose or to Reject: Continuing our Critical Work," *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, L. M. Russell, ed. (Westminster, 1985, 125-36).

men are treated in this story. How should we understand the violence portrayed in this story?

Two issues need to be considered separately here: John's use of violent images and the structural role of violence in the story. I have already argued that this story regularly inverts the images of violence, so that what at first appears to coercive power (Jesus slays all his enemies) turns out on closer examination to be something else (he slays them with the sword of his mouth). Those who see nothing but contradictions between John's story and the Gospel story of Jesus engage in too literal a reading of these images.

This does not, in my mind, justify them. I find them repulsive and morally inadequate; but I suspect that is because I read from the perspective of an educated Western person in a secure social and economic situation. John and his situation were quite different. While I do not wish to excuse John by saying he was a man of his time, nor do I wish to judge him by the standards of our time. It seems to me that these images of violence remain morally problematic whatever interpretation we might offer for them. Still, careful reading is called for.

Thus in the scene of the destruction of the Whore of Babylon that Pippin highlights, it is human brutality that is portrayed. The Ten Kings and the Beast destroy her. Even so, this is because "God has put it into their hearts to carry out God's purpose" (17:17). Thus in some way God must be held accountable for all the violence in the world, even human violence, for God is responsible for creation. But this is surely morally different than imagining divine violence. In fact, John signals this dialectical tension by immediately adding, "The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth" (17:18). Those who seek to dominate others will themselves by devoured by the process; it is, John says, what God has ordained. While the image of violence is problematic for me, the understanding of violence is not.

This leads to a second consideration, to what degree does this story portray violence as the means to renew the earth? Pippin sees war and disasters as the means whereby the reign of God comes (96-103). I see the reverse: wars and calamities are human endeavors to avoid God's new world. In the vision of the Seven Seals, for example, John is clear on the cause of war, famine, and death (seals two, three and four); it is the human conqueror of the first seal (6:1-8). These are not the means to heavenly city but obstacles on the way. Seal five then shows the innocent lives under the altar crying out for justice but being comforted and told to wait "until the number would be complete." Then follows seal six, complete with all the traditional apocalyptic signs (black sun, bloody moon, falling stars, etc), and the terrible cry to the rocks and mountains:

> "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (6:16-17).

It is easy to imagine divine violence here, but it is important to see that none is portrayed. Instead we have a vision of the preservation of those who receive the mark of God. Renewal comes after violence but not through violence.

Were violence a means to renewal, the story would advocate such violence, but such is not the case. Even Pippin recognizes that this story advocates non-violent resistance (99) and sees the danger of a literal interpretation of the details of violence (100). She just does not give these factors any weight in her interpretation. For me they are crucial.

Pippin and I both want to challenge the violence of this text. She does this by taking the violence at face value and condemning it. I choose another strategy, for I read the text as a story that transforms the traditional images of sacred violence into images of suffering, faithfulness, and consistent resistance to evil. Still I regret the violence and wish the story were not so easy to read as accepting of violence.

I do not deny that the Apocalypse can be read as a misogynist fantasy; Pippin has done such a reading. But I do not find it convincing, any more than I find the traditional reading that sees the story as one of conquest by power and coercion. Both readings fail to give adequate weight to the narrative strategy by which John utilizes and transforms the ancient story of Holy War by means of his community's experience of Jesus. Only when we read the story in the light of this transformation can we deem the story moral.

But it is precisely this reading of the story as the story of Jesus that raises one further moral point. Does the Apocalypse stand against real world oppression in the everyday lives of its audience or should we read it theologically. In other words, is God's rule in the Apocalypse a spiritual rule?

Is God in Control? (The Moral Danger of Spirituality)

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has done much to call the guild of biblical scholarship to ethical accountability.[11] My own effort to address these issues grows out of her challenge. But it was only in an exchange with her at the 1996 Annual Meeting that I finally grasped one of her major concerns with my interpretation of the Apocalypse. A little background.

---

[11]See her SBL Presidential Address, published as "The Ethics of Interpretation: De-centering Biblical Scholarship," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 1988:3-17. But one finds these concerns address throughout her extensive writings on the Apocalypse.

My own narrative reading of the Apocalypse focuses on its fictional setting within a worship service. I see the ending as an invitation to the Eucharist, wherein Jesus truly does come to the gathered community. In fact, I argue that all the events of the apocalyptic narrative have already occurred in the death and resurrection of Jesus. When John has the loud voices in heaven declare:

> The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever. (11:15)

I take both the saying and its tenses seriously. The transformation of the cosmos has already occurred.

But of course it has not occurred. Rome still dominates the world and the lives of John's followers. It is just here that my argument takes a dangerous ethical turn, as I now understand, for I argue that the overthrow of evil occurs within the liturgical setting. The consistent theme of Revelation is "worship God" (19:10; 22:8-9; see 4:10; 5:14; 7:11, 15; 11:16; 14:7; 15:4; 19:4; 20:4 and contrast 9:20; 13:4,8, 14-15; 14:9; 16:2; 19:20). Those who worship God do by that very act enact the reign of God, thus to worship God is to experience God's kingdom, as I argued long ago.[12] All the action of Revelation occurs whenever God's people gather in God's service. This interpretation entails two ethical dangers: the danger of viewing John's story as a spiritual story unconnected to the actual lives of oppressed people and the danger of viewing the world as already transformed and therefore trustworthy.

What I saw for the first time last year was that the narrative reading of Revelation that I propose could easily be understood as a spiritual reading, that is, as a reading that locates both the problem and the solution in the theological rather than the sociological sphere. Now this is quite shocking and, it seems to me, a serious misreading of both John's story and my interpretation. To argue, as I do, that "In the present worship of the church, God's reign is already realized here and now on earth"[13] need not mean that God's reign is only spiritual. And it is the "only" that is the problem.[14]

---

[12]David L. Barr, "The Apocalypse as a Symbolic Transformation of the World: A Literary Analysis," *Interpretation* 38 1984:47.

[13]Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991:126).

[14]I owe a good bit also to Neil Elliott, whose book, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), helped me think through some of these issues.

Perhaps the danger of this view can be seen most clearly in the Pauline tradition of Ephesians, when the writer declares:

> For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (6:12)

The danger here is not the last part of the declaration but the first. The denial of a "blood and flesh" embodiment of evil is nearly the opposite of what John's story portrays, for in John's story the cosmic powers are vividly embodied in the blood and flesh of the Roman empire. John's story stands firmly against real economic and social oppression not just against some theological idea of idolatry, as the dirge of chapter 18 makes plain. The dirge shows the lament of the political and economic leaders, including their inventory of the cargo of the ships of the great city:

> gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple cloth and silk and scarlet and all kinds of scented wood and all sorts of ivory vessels and all sorts of expensive wooden vessels and copper and iron and marble and cinnamon and spice and incense and myrrh and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep and horses and chariots and bodies and lives of humans 18:12-13

These are the luxury items of the ruling elite, trafficking in human life. John sees the hand of the dragon in the ordinary commerce of his day and his call to worship God is a call to resist such commerce (see 13:16-18). This leads to a second, related point. How can John affirm both that the Roman empire and Roman culture are corrupt and demonic and that "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord...?" Is the world redeemed or not or does redemption come only in the church?

It is a false choice. For the submission to the divine will evident in the service of worship brings the characters of this story into direct opposition to the dominating powers of class and culture and their stand against such domination is understood to entail even their lives (12:11). Rather than understanding the church in our modern sense as a separate social institution, we must explore the ancient situation wherein religion was embedded in politics and the family. Here Walter Wink's distinction between the outer and inner form of the Powers is useful.

Wink has done more than any other scholar to articulate a sophisticated and compelling modern understanding of the ancient view of the "principalities

and powers of this age" that were an essential part of the ancient--and especially the apocalyptic--worldview.[15] Rather than speak in a dualistic fashion of spiritual forces and human institutions, Wink speaks of the inner and outer reality of all powers. To use a completely modern example, we must say that the power of international business today is both a concrete physical thing (with buildings, employees, and fax machines) and a spiritual presence (a corporate culture, a way of doing business). So too was the Roman empire.

Understood this way, it makes no sense to ask whether the reign of God imagined in the Apocalypse is spiritual or social; the answer must be both. How then are we to understand John's bold declaration that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of God?

First it is John's clear conviction that the slaughtered-standing lamb has power over the powers; he alone can open the scroll (5:2-6). While the imagined mechanism for this power is debated, Jesus' death seems to represent for John the defeat of Satan (12:11).

Second it is clear that John thinks that all who join their testimony to that of Jesus, even to the point of dying like him, share in that power (12:11; 6:10; 17:6). Further, each of the letters to the seven churches contains a promise for those who conquer, so such conquest is both possible and necessary. And there is the paradox. Victory is won. Victory remains to be won.

A similar paradox exists in Paul's thought. In a convoluted argument about the nature and reality of the resurrection, Paul embraces two contradictory points: Christ reigns; the powers still reign:

> But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 1 Cor 15:20-26

Christ is reigning, according to Paul, and will do so until all enemies are defeated (thus they are still in power). The reign of Christ must eventually destroy all the

---

[15]Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984). *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces That Determine Human Existence* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986). *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a world of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

powers. Those who swear allegiance to Jesus' kingdom stand opposed to the rule of those powers.

In John's Apocalypse, those powers are incarnate as the beast of Roman rule (13:1-18) and a central part of John's purpose in writing is to persuade the audience to resist those powers. To worship God alone. To imagine that God alone will one day end injustice in the world is to ignore our own duty to change the world we live in.

No doubt the Apocalypse of John is an ethically problematic text. Many thoughtful people have found it wanting. The traditional interpretation merely substitutes domination by God for the domination of Rome; and not content merely to propound another totalitarianism it adds divine indifference and delay. A narrative reading shows how ill-founded such an interpretation is, but a narrative reading reveals other moral issues: the issue of violence (and especially violence against women) and the issue of spiritualizing the text, cutting it off from its situation of social oppression. I have shown that these are not necessary failings of a narrative reading. In fact, a narrative reading informed by social understanding reveals John's text to be a call for resistance against the powers of domination in the specific social and economic circumstances of Roman Asia Minor.

Perhaps we can see this situation more clearly if we return to one of John's opening sentences by which he introduces himself to the audience. In explaining his presence on Patmos he uses two family metaphors to relate to the audience:

ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν καὶ συγκοινωνὸς

As brother and partner, John claims the strongest possible relationship with the audience, but the surprising turn comes next when he gives the terms of the partnership:

ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ βασιλείᾳ καὶ ὑπομονῇ ἐν Ἰησοῦ

θλῖψις belongs to the language domain of trouble and suffering; Louw and Nida suggest "that which causes pain" (22.2).[16] It is regularly used to refer to the period of tribulation imagined to come at the end of the age (e.g., Matt 24:21). βασιλεία, by contrast, belongs to the domain of power and rule--nearly the antithesis of θλῖψις. Then to this oxymoronic pair, John adds a third. ὑπομονή is usually translated endurance; Louw and Nida suggest the ability to

[16]Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, editors, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies 1989).

bear up under difficult circumstances. It is, for John I think, a more active quality of standing up to evil; it is one of the *works* of the faithful (2:19).

Now the pairing of ὑπομονή and θλῖψις makes perfectly good sense, but what of βασιλεία? Only an apocalypse can show life as simultaneously θλῖψις and βασιλεία, for an apocalypse allows the audience to look behind the veil of ordinary experience (an unredeemed world) and see the true order of life (God's rule). John's audience is imagined to live in two worlds, corresponding to the basic dualism of John's world. But this is not a dualism of spirit and flesh or even of secular and spiritual, for the way to live in both is ὑπομονή. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that life in the βασιλεία provides power to live the resistance to evil (ὑπομονή) that is necessary in the time of θλῖψις. (See 2:2-3; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12.) Let me try to clarify this further by considering the implied audience of this work, or more specifically, the naratee.

I see John's story moving at three basic narrative levels, each with its own narrator and naratee. The three levels of narration are the telling of the whole work by a public reader (1:3); the telling of the stories by John on Patmos (1:9); and the telling of things by characters in these stories (for example, the voice addresses the souls under the altar in 6:11). To whom does the narrator speak at each level; who are the narratees?

At the outermost level the narrator is the reader and the narratee is the audience gathered to hear the reading (1:3). This narratee corresponds most closely to the implied audience of the work, but we know almost nothing about it. The story leaves this narratee largely undefined.

The second-level narratee, however, is carefully defined, for that is the listener to whom John narrates his vision of the risen Christ. This narratee is explicitly named as the seven churches and extensively characterized in the messages to the churches (chapters 2-3). This narratee is a complex group, both rich and poor, both zealous and lax, both loving and cold. They are carefully distinguished from the people John calls Jezebel and Balaam, precisely because they are folk who might be tempted to follow such accommodating leaders.[17]

At the third narrative level, the narratees are the people addressed in the stories told to these second-level narratees--that is, the saints and martyrs who struggle to conquer the beast (see 6:10, 15:2, and the constant references to saints and servants). They are characterized as suffering and oppressed. These saints and martyrs are the focal points of the story and both the second and first level narratees are encouraged to identify with them, leading one narrative critic

[17]I do not regard Jezebel and Balaam as part of the intended naratee because John's characterization of them is through insult and name-calling, devices designed to make them appear as outsiders. See Adela Yarbro Collins, "Vilification and Self-Definition in the Book of Revelation," *HTR* 79 1986:308-20.

to assert that ideal audience takes on the role of the martyr.[18] This is something of a poetical exaggeration, but it is clear that by telling the story through the point of view of those abused by Roman power, the discourse persuades the audience to resist such power.

The purpose of the Apocalypse is to remind these people of the vile things Rome has done and is doing. It was Roman power, after all, that crucified Jesus; it is Roman power that constitutes the totalitarian state in which they now live. If, as the saying goes, politics makes strange bedfellows, John wanted his audience to know just whom they were getting in bed with. John's apocalypse is a revelation of the true nature of Roman power and Roman culture. Seeing Rome in this light could lead to despair, but it is a measure of John's achievement that he has created a story that both reveals the mistake of accommodating to Rome and provides a rationale for resistance. For the prayers, the patience, the persistent resistance of the saints overthrow the powers of evil and bring God's kingdom into reality.

Let me conclude with a personal anecdote. I grew up with and internalized the popular reading of the Apocalypse. But of course I did not regard this as "a reading" but simply as the what the Book of Revelation taught. As I eventually found that understanding of life untenable, I simply stopped paying any attention to this book--a time-honored strategy. But in the early years of my teaching students would pester me to teach it. I taught special courses on just about everything else in the New Testament, but ignored Revelation. Finally, after several years of teaching, I relented. Much to my surprise, when I applied the historical, social, and (especially) literary methods that worked so well with the gospels to the Book of Revelation, an exciting and sophisticated story emerged. The book had been transformed because the way I approached it had been transformed.

A narrative reading, intersecting with a social reading, turns the popular American understanding of the Apocalypse on its head. For in the popular imagination, God conquers by power and the violence of holy war is justified because it leads to a good end. In popular thought the end comes only as the work of God and in God's own time. I have tried to show that each of these ethically tenuous positions can be rejected on the basis of a narrative and social reading of John's story. John's story stands firmly against violence and domination and calls the audience to active resistance to the powers of Rome.

---

[18]See the excellent, if technical, discussion of the reader as martyr in chapter four of Michael A. Harris. 1989. "The Literary Function of the Hymns in the Apocalypse." Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 227-301.

The Politics of Praise: A Reading of Revelation 19:1-10

Jean-Pierre Ruiz
St. John's University
Jamaica, NY

Introduction

Permit me to orient what follows by supplying what amounts to an academic genealogy of the approach I will be following in this paper. My attention to this particular portion of the Revelation to John builds on a larger work I devoted to Revelation 16:17-19:10,[1] and it revisits 19:1-10 from a different direction than that which I pursued in a study of the use of the Apocalypse in Roman Catholic worship subsequent to the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council.[2] Methodologically, this paper represents a further step in the development of an approach to the Apocalypse that I first suggested in an essay entitled "Betwixt and Between on the Lord's Day: Liturgy and the Apocalypse."[3] In that study I turned to social scientific ritual theory to begin the process of teasing out the implications of Revelation 1:3, the macarism pronounced on the lector and the hearers, and of 1:10, which locates the inaugural vision "on the Lord's day," for the interpretation of the book. I paid particular attention to anthropologist Victor Turner's understanding of liminality, "a betwixt-and-between condition often involving seclusion from the everyday scene,"[4] to

---

[1]Jean-Pierre Ruiz, *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse: The Transformation of Prophetic Language in Revelation 16,17-19,10* (European University Studies 23, 376; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989) 482-516.

[2]Idem, "The Apocalypse of John and Contemporary Roman Catholic Liturgy," *Worship* 68, 6 (November 1994) 482-504.

[3]Idem, *1992 SBLSP*, 654-72.

[4]Victor Turner, "Liminality and the Performative Genres," in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance* (ed. John J. McAloon; Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984) 21.

propose that hearing the Apocalypse within the ritual liminality of their assembly for worship afforded the book's earliest audiences among the seven churches of Asia with the opportunity for critical reflection on their everyday experience.[5] That is because, according to Bruce Kapferer, ritual enables individuals and groups "to objectify their action and experience in the context of the rite, and to stand back or distance themselves from their action within the rite so they can reflect upon their own and others' actions and understandings."[6]

My investigations along these lines continued in a study of Revelation 21, "No Temple in the City: The Place of Worship in the Apocalypse of John."[7] There I concluded that the Apocalypse substantially

> redefines what worship involves. As the characteristic activity of the churches, worship is not simply and exclusively a matter of prayer either public or private. Understood in this light as a stance rather than particular ritual activity circumscribed spatially and temporally, worship serves as a way of describing *every* activity, both cultic and otherwise, by which the *ekklēsia* expresses its exclusive and uncompromising commitment to God and to the Lamb.

By way of more proximate introduction to the present study, which re-examines this conclusion in the light of Revelation 19:1-10, recall that Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's theo-ethical rhetorical approach to the Apocalypse challenges interpreters to recognize that while the book's prophetic rhetoric "is replete with cultic language and imagery, its social

---

[5]See U. Vanni, "L'assemblea ecclesiale 'soggetto interpretante' dell'Apocalisse," *RasT* 23 (1982) 497-513.

[6]"The Ritual Process and the Problem of Reflexivity in Sinhalese Demon Exorcisms," in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle*, 180-81.

[7]In *Humanizing the City: Politics, Religion and the Arts in Critical Conversation* (ed. Patrick Primeaux; San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, forthcoming).

location and theological goal are not liturgical but political."[8] By reconsidering the place and purpose of cultic language in the Apocalypse, this study will suggest that the liturgical maxim, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, finds its extension in *lex agendi*. Thus both the cosmic imperative of 19:5, "Praise our God, all you his servants, and all who fear him, small and great," and the command in 19:9, "Worship God," constituted prophetic challenges to the book's earliest audiences.

Set within a document designed to be read aloud during their gatherings for worship, Revelation 19:1-10 issued a twofold challenge to the Christians of the seven churches of Asia. They were called upon, first, to discern the appropriate object of their worship. Second, they were challenged to consider just what activities constituted authentic worship. I will suggest that Revelation 19:1-10 further facilitated this task of recognition and redefinition in hymnic terms. Ritual liminality provided the visionary vantage point from which the churches could both celebrate the victory of divine justice (19:1-4) and anticipate the eschatological banquet of the Lamb (19:5-8) as they clothed themselves in their present with the fine linen of righteous deeds.

Listening to the Choir: The Hymns of the Apocalypse

19:1-10 is the last in a series of texts in the Apocalypse that are generally identified as hymns or doxologies, a series that also includes 4:9-11; 5:9-14; 7:10-17; 11:15-19; 12:10-12; 15:2-4; 16:5-7.[9] Interspersed at irregular intervals throughout the Apocalypse within its visions and auditions, these doxologies are so frequent that they led Klaus Peter Jörns to

---

[8]*Revelation: Vision of a Just World* (Proclamation Commentaries; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 103.

[9]Michael A. Harris considers a variety of criteria for designating material in the Apocalypse as hymic in his "The Literary Function of Hymns in the Apocalypse of John," (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, 1988) 4-16. On the distribution of liturgical language in the Apocalypse, see Leonard L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 56-57.

entitle his monographic treatment of this material *Das hymnische Evangelium*.[10]

In two instances, the Apocalypse itself refers to such utterances as songs. Revelation 5:9 introduces what follows in vv. 9-14 as a "new song" (ᾄδουσιν ᾠδὴν καινὴν), an expression that echoes such biblical precedents as Pss 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; Isa 42:10, and which is repeated in Rev 14:3. Revelation 15:3 presents what follows in vv. 3-4 as "the song of God's servant Moses and the song of the Lamb" (ᾄδουσιν τὴν ᾠδὴν Μωϋσέως τοῦ δούλου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ᾠδὴν τοῦ ἀρνίου), combining an allusion to Exodus 15 with an instance of the Apocalypse's preferred metaphoric reference to Jesus as the Lamb. In several cases, the hymn singing is accompanied by corresponding ritual prostrations (προσκυνέω: 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4, 10), and in one instance (15:4) prostration in worship is mentioned in the hymn itself.

Stepping back from the hymns themselves for a moment, it may be useful to identify both the object(s) of worship and those who are engaged in worship in the Apocalypse. Of the twenty-four occurrences of προσκυνέω in the Apocalypse, ten refer to the worship of God and/or Jesus the Lamb (4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:1, 16; 14:7; 15:4; 19:4, 10; 22:9); eleven refer to the worship of some fiendish figure, such the Dragon, the Beast, or the image of the Beast (9:20; 13:4 [2x], 8, 12, 15; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4); two refer to the seer's attempt to worship an angel (19:10; 22:9); and in one instance (3:9) it refers to submissive prostration of human beings before other human beings rather than to the veneration of some deity.

Turning to consider those who are involved in worship, only the attendants at the heavenly throne and those human beings whose martyrdom has gained them entry into heaven arrived are explicitly identified as engaged in the worship of God either in word or gesture: the twenty-four elders (4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4) and the four living creatures (7:11; 19:4). The hymnic announcement in 15:4 that all nations will come to worship God is sung by "those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name." 14:2-3 specifies of the new song sung by those who have the name of the Lamb and of his father written on their

---

[10](Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1971).

foreheads that "no one could learn that song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth."

On the other hand, 13:3-4 indicates that "the whole earth" is engaged in the worship of the Beast, and, according to 13:8, "all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it," a group more narrowly designated as "everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain." Several texts suggest the dire consequences that await those who worship the Beast and its ilk: they will drink the wine of God's wrath (14:9); there is to be no rest for them either day or night (14:11); they are to be defeated and captured by the rider on the white horse and the heavenly armies, killed by the sword that comes from his mouth, and then devoured by the birds summoned to the "great supper of God" (19:17-21).

With its frequent references to worship taking place around God's heavenly throne, and with "all the inhabitants of the earth" engaged in worship of the Beast and its image, it seems somewhat peculiar that the Apocalypse makes no mention of any worship of God actually taking place on earth, aside from the enigmatic reference in 11:1 to the measurement of the temple and of those who worship there. Even so, in three instances angels issue commands to worship God. The first of these is uttered by the angelic bearer of the "eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth--to every nation and tribe and language and people," who commands, "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water" (14:6-7). The second and third angelic commands to worship (19:10; 22:9: *τῷ θεῷ προσκυνήσον*) respond to the seer's attempt to worship the angel, refocusing John's misdirected effort toward the only proper object of reverence.

These imperatives themselves give rise to a dilemma. If the only examples the Apocalypse offers of worship directed towards its appropriate object are set in heaven and are performed either by the heavenly court or by those human beings whose deaths have won them a place before God's heavenly throne, then how are the angelic imperatives to be obeyed, imperatives that call for worship of God by "every nation and tribe and language and people" in 14:7 and by the seer himself in 19:10 and 22:9? The dilemma is amplified by the Apocalypse's repeated references to the idolatrous worship that is taking place on earth, worship of the Beast and its allies in which "all the inhabitants of the earth" (13:8) are said to be

engaged, and by the dire consequences of such inappropriate worship. If no one can learn the "new song" except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth, then how could the seven churches of Asia obey the imperative issued by the angelic herald of the eternal gospel in 14:7, an imperative they heard as they listened to the reading of the Apocalypse in their own liturgical gatherings?

In his thorough study of the literary function of the hymns in the Apocalypse, Michael Harris invites is to consider them as instances of epideictic rhetoric, citing the explanation in Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* that:

> This form of oratory is directed in the main to the praise of gods and men, but may occasionally be applied to the praise of animals or even inanimate objects. In praising the gods our first step will be to express our veneration of the majesty of their nature in general terms. Next we shall proceed to praise the special power of the individual god and the discoveries whereby he has benefitted the human race. For example, in the case of Jupiter, we shall extol his power as manifested in the governance of all things, with Mars we shall praise his powers in war, with Neptune his power over the sea. . . . next we must record their exploits as handed down from antiquity. Even gods may derive honour from their descent. . . . Some may again be praised because they were born immortal, others because they won immortality by their valour, a theme which the piety of our sovereign has made the glory even of these present times.[11]

Harris contends that, as for the Apocalypse, "In the rhetorical structure of the hymns there is an implicit reaction against the types of praise offered to the gods and emperors. While cast in a hymnic form, the hymns reflect a similar rhetorical pattern."[12] As for the rhetorical function

---

[11]*Institutio Oratoria* I.3.vii:6b-9 (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), cited by Harris, "The Literary Function," 276.

[12]"The Literary Function," 277.

of the hymns, Harris argues that "The narratees are to imitate the action of praising God and the Lamb, and the hymns educate the narratees concerning the meaning of the events."[13] According to Menander, "The two greatest things in human life are piety [*εὐσέβεια*] towards the divine and honour [*τιμὴ*] to emperors; these therefore, we should honour [*θαυμάζειν*] and hymn [*ὑμνεῖν*] to the best of our ability."[14] If the Apocalypse labels such worship as idolatrous, with what alternative did it supply the Christians of the seven churches of Asia, to whom knowledge of the new song had not yet been granted? What were they expected to do in the meantime? Perhaps the Apocalypse's final doxology might supply a clue or two.

Praise & Politics: The Rhetorical Function of Revelation 19:1-10

Schüssler Fiorenza contends that "John's prophetic-apocalyptic rhetoric employs conventional cultic vocabulary . . . not for the sake of persuading his audience to participate in the daily or weekly liturgy. Rather, he uses such cultic language . . . for the sake of moving his audience to political resistance. He seeks to motivate them either to give obeisance to the power and empire of God and the Lamb or to the dominion of Babylon/Rome."[15] Her argument that the Apocalypse's social location and theological goal are political and not liturgical draws what I consider too neat and too artificial a distinction between first century politics and first century liturgy, for it seriously underestimates the pervasive sociopolitical significance of ritual in the province of Asia. Steven Friesen's work on the cult of the Sebastoi gives clear evidence of the ways in which ritual provided important and pervasive expressions of obeisance to the Flavian imperial family in Ephesus and throughout the province of

---

[13]Ibid., 241.

[14]*Concerning Epideictic*, Treatise II (ed. & trans. by D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) 77.

[15]*Vision of a Just World*, 103.

Asia.[16] Domitian's approval of the establishment of the cult of the Sebastoi in Ephesus "served as a confirmation and enhancement of the relationship that existed between the city and the imperial center. It provided the appropriate ritual context by which Ephesus could express reverence for the emperor, and affirmed the city's preeminence in the province through powerful symbolic language."[17] The imperial cult generated broad appeal over the population of Ephesus and the region under its direct and indirect influence for, as Friesen points out

> The cult symbolized significant facets of life in Roman Asia in the late first century CE: the benefits of imperial authority, gratitude toward and dependence upon the emperors, the ordering of the cities of the province, and the role of the elite in the mediation of imperial influence. The Cult of the Sebastoi likewise provided regular opportunities for entertainment, travel, social intercourse, and extra economic activity. Finally, this particular provincial cult affirmed local religious traditions and the larger heritage of the Greek world as a mode of life in the period of Roman supremacy.[18]

By taking such ritual mediation seriously, by drawing upon cultic vocabulary both from Israelite traditions and from Roman imperial practices, the Apocalypse confronted the cult of the Sebastoi on its own terms.[19] Worship was more than merely the setting within which the Apocalypse was destined for reception by its audiences in the seven churches of Asia. It was the staging area from which and on the basis of which John mounted his minority counterattack against the convincing claims of the cognitive majority. Drawing on the work of sociologist Peter Berger,

---

[16]*Twice Neokoros: Ephesus, Asia and the Cult of the Flavian Imperial Family* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 116; Leiden: Brill, 1993).

[17]Ibid., 159.

[18]Ibid., 164.

[19]"The Influence of Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial on the Apocalypse of John," *BR* 26 (1983) 5-26.

Leonard Thompson explains that "In comparison to the public knowledge embodied in the empire, John reveals a deviant knowledge, that is, one that deviates from public knowledge taken for granted in everyday Roman life."[20] Sidestepping the temptation to offer a parallel ritual system in which the members of the seven churches could engage, the Apocalypse reckoned seriously with the ritual mediation of knowledge in the cult of the Sebastoi by labeling it as idolatrous. Besides that, and beyond vigorously warning Asian Christians against participating in this cult, the Apocalypse appealed to alternative ritual to mediate an alternative knowledge. Rather than mounting opposing the cult of the Beast on its own terms on the earthly plane, an effort that would have had to contend with the pervasive influence and the massive institutional and even architectural presence of its opposition, the Apocalypse changes the venue of the contest of powers, taking the symbolic higher ground. The ritual on which the Apocalypse relies to mediate its alternative knowledge takes place in heaven, before the throne of the only sovereign worthy of reverence. From *lex orandi, lex credendi*, the connection between ritual and conviction, there followed *lex agendi*.

Within the framework of this enhanced understanding of the rhetorical function of ritual elements in the Apocalypse, we turn to 19:1-8 to ponder its specific place in the argument John set before the seven churches of Asia. We now concern ourselves with how this doxology, heard by the Apocalypse's earliest audiences during their gatherings for worship, functioned ritually to enable them "to objectify their action and experience in the context of the rite, and to stand back or distance themselves from their action within the rite so they can reflect upon their own and others' actions and understandings."[21]

In its immediate context, the book's final doxology can be understood as a response to the call for jubilation issued in 18:20, "Rejoice over her, O heaven, you saints and apostles and prophets! For God has given judgment for you against her!" The woes of ritual dirge found in chap. 18 yield to the Hallelujahs of biblical hymnody in chapter 19. 19:1-4 reprises the language of chapters 17-18 in a new key, celebrating the

---

[20]*Apocalypse and Empire*, 193.

[21]Kapferer, "The Ritual Process," 180-81.

accomplishment of divine vengeance against Babylon, yet the doxology does not limit itself to recapitulating the events of these chapters. Instead, in vv. 5-8 it looks ahead to the wedding feast of the Lamb, an instance of the *Heilszeit als Hochzeit* motif that is a frequent vehicle for the expression of apocalyptic eschatology and which the Apocalypse develops further in 21:2, 9.[22] The two portions of the doxology present a careful balance of correspondences and contrasts in five parts: (1) acclamations; (2) general indication of the motives for praise; (3) specification of the motives; (4) description of the activities of female figures (prostitute and bride); (5) divine responses to the activities of the female figures:

Revelation 19:1-2 and 19:6-8:
Some Correspondences and Contrasts

1. Acclamation:
   - v. 1: Hallelujah
   - v. 6: Hallelujah

2. General Motive for Praise:
   - v. 2: For true and righteous are his judgments
   - v. 6: For the Lord our God the Almighty has established his reign

3. Specification of the Motive:
   - v. 2: For he has judged the Great Whore
   - v. 7: For the wedding of the Lamb has begun

4. Activity of the Female Figure:
   - v. 2: who corrupted the earth with her fornication
   - v. 7: his bride has made herself ready

5. Divine Response to the Female Figure's Activity:
   - v. 2: he has avenged on her the blood of his servants
   - v. 8: to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure

---

[22]See Jan Fekkes, "His Bride has Prepared Herself: Revelation 19-21 and Isaian Nuptial Imagery," *JBL* 109 (1990) 269-87. On the imagery of *Heilszeit als Hochzeit* here, see Ruiz, *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse*, 498-504, as well as Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (HDR 9; Missoula: Scholars

It is significant that this careful articulation frames the exhortation pronounced by a voice from the throne in v. 5: *αἰνεῖτε τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν πάντες οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ [καί] οἱ φοβούμενοι αὐτόν οἱ μικροὶ καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι*, "Praise our God, all his servants, all who fear him, both small and great." This invitation by the attendants around the divine throne to join in praise of "our God" is situated between their celebrations of divine vengeance against Babylon and their anticipation of the wedding feast of the Lamb.

What this participation in praise by all God's servants might involve is left unspecified until v. 8: *καὶ ἐδόθη ἵνα περιβάληται βύσσινον λαμπρὸν καθαρόν· τὸ γὰρ βύσσινον τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν*, "to her it was granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure--for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints." While some commentators find the explanation of the bride's attire a superfluous explanatory afterthought on the part of the narrator, it may be well more fruitful to treat this gloss as a clue to just how all God's servants in the churches of Asia were to participate in the choruses of heavenly praise. They were called upon to do so not simply by singing along, not through cultic activity, but by their righteous conduct.

This identification of the bride's fine linen as the righteous deeds of the saints is a crucial statement about how God's servants in the seven churches of Asia were to carry out the exhortation to accompany the heavenly chorus. If Menander's priorities are kept in mind, "The two greatest things in human life are piety towards the divine and honour to emperors; these therefore, we should honour and hymn to the best of our ability," then participation and nonparticipation in liturgical activity had profound political implications. The decision about whether or not to take part in activities the Apocalypse labeled as worship of the Beast had serious social and economic repercussions for the book's earliest audiences: according to Rev 13:7, "no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name."[23]

Press, 1976) 230-31.

[23]Friesen presents several examples of Ephesian coins depicting the temple of the Sebastoi (*Twice Neokoros*, 65-66, plates VIII and IX).

Failure to worship the beast was risky business, yet the Apocalypse urged God's servants in the seven churches to resist at any cost. 19:1-8 reinforced this ethic of resistance by setting the exhortation to praise God, the only worthy recipient of worship,[24] between the hymnic reassurance of the victory of divine justice (vv. 1-4) and the hymnic anticipation of the eschatological consummation (vv. 6-8).

Curiously enough, John's argument does not conclude with the end of the audition / vision in 19:8. It continues in vv. 9-10. Formally and rhetorically, 19:9-10 does double duty. Formally, these verses bring to a close the literary unit that began in 17:1, where one of the seven bowl angels introduces the vision of the judgment of Babylon. With 19:9-10 the Apocalypse's audience once again becomes aware of the frame that surrounds the visionary narrative 17:1-19:8 and of the narrator's presence as a fellow spectator. With respect to 19:1-8 in particular, John hears the voices of the heavenly multitude singing their Hallelujahs in vv. 1-3. He sees the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fall down in worship of God and hears their assenting "Amen, Hallelujah" in v. 4, and then both the exhortation from the throne attendants and the cosmic response in vv. 5-8.

The angel's[25] words in 19:9 make explicit reference to the audition, establishing the relationship between the doxology and John, and between the doxology and John's audience. John is ordered to write, and the words he is commanded to inscribe make specific reference to the doxology: *γράψον· μακάριοι οἱ εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τοῦ γάμου τοῦ ἀρνίου κεκλημένοι*, "Write: 'blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb'." The command itself and the words John is to write establish the relationship between the doxology of vv.1-8, the prophet who witnesses the heavenly chorus and the audiences for whose sake the prophet testifies to what he sees and hears. John Sweet wonders, "Why is

---

[24]On the significance of *ἄξιος* in the doxologies of the Apocalypse, see Willem Cornelis Van Unnik, "'Worthy is the Lamb'. The Background of Apoc 5," In *Mélanges Bibliques en hommage au R. P. Béda Rigaux* (eds. Albert Descamps & André de Halleux; Gembloux: Duculot, 1970) 445-61.

[25]While the speaker is not explicitly identified in 19:9, the direct address to the visionary recalls 17:1, where the one who addresses the seer is explicitly identified as one of the seven bowl-bearing angels from chaps. 15-16.

John told to *write* down this rather obvious 'beatitude'?" and concludes that it is because "a beatitude is a call to self-examination, a threat as well as a promise. *Those who have been invited* is perfect participle--'those who are the invited guests'; not simply 'those who have received an invitation' . . . but those who have validated it by coming, properly dressed (cf. Matt. 22:11-14)."[26]

The angelic authentication, "These are God's true words,"[27] invite both seer and audience to evaluate the doxology just concluded. Here it is instructive to note what Harris has to say about the audience as a participant in epideictic rhetoric. "In contrast to forensic and oratory rhetoric," Harris notes, "it has been argued that the audience in epideictic discourse is not called upon to judge the discourse but merely to view it. This position is argued because of the occasional and ceremonial roots of the genre."[28] Relying on Christine Oravec's analysis of the function of observation in Aristotle's theory of epideictic, Harris disputes that view, maintaining that there was more to the audience's role

> than just the passive experience of a theatre-like oratorical performance. The judgment of the speaker's ability and the content of his/her speech was subject to the critical facilities of the auditors. Epideictic discourse involves speakers and auditors in a reciprocal relationship in which the listener actively supplies materials for discourse and judges the speaker's ability to transmit new insights, or a new acceptance of traditional values.[29]

Rev 19:9-10 calls attention to this aspect of the audience's responsibility and active involvement first by calling attention to John's

---

[26]*Revelation* (TPI New Testament Commentaries; London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1979, reprinted 1990) 280.

[27]Commentators note that this authentication applies to all of 17:1-19:8, not only to the concluding doxology.

[28]"The Literary Function of Hymns," 271.

[29]Ibid., 272-73. See Christine Oravec, "'Observation' in Aristotle's Theory of Epideictic," *PR* 9 (1976) 162-73.

own role as seer and auditor. Neither John nor the Asian audiences for whose sake he sets the words of heavenly hymnody in writing were participants in the choruses of 19:1-8, but both the angelic authentication of this material as "God's true words" and the beatitude challenge the Apocalypse's audience to reconsider their condition and their conduct in the light of the worldview that 19:1-8 celebrates. Thus 19:6 declares, ἐβασίλευσεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ὁ παντοκράτωρ, "the Lord our God has established his reign,"[30] and the beatitude in 19:9 challenged the audience to conduct themselves in a way that would find them suitably attired (19:8) for the eschatological banquet.

The question of appropriate and inappropriate conduct surfaces yet again in 19:10, with John's misdirected reverence towards the *angelus interpres*. The angelic refusal of worship here and in Rev 22:8-9 has most recently received attention from Loren T. Stuckenbrook, who recalls a number of other instances of this motif in Jewish, Jewish-Christian and Christian texts (e.g., Tobit 12:16-22; Apocalypse of Zephaniah 6:11-15; Ascension of Isaiah 7:18-23; 8:1-10, 15; 2 Enoch 1:4-8; 3 Enoch 1:7).[31] Stuckenbrook concludes that the Apocalypse employs this motif

> to communicate something about each link in the chain of Revelation (1:1): the angel may not be worshipped; the seer, the prophets and faithful readers are 'fellow servants' with the angelic mediator; God is to be worshipped; and Christ who, as

---

[30]On this expression and its background in Pss 93:1; 97:1; 99:1, see Ruiz, *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse*, 497.

[31]"An Angelic Refusal of Worship: The Tradition and Its Function in the Apocalypse of John," *1994 SBLSP*, 679-96. Stuckenbrook identifies five form-critical elements in these visionary texts: (1) an angelophanic contaxt; (2) the seer's revering posture; (3) a rejection of such reverence by the angelic figure; (4) the angel's self-demotion to the level of the seer; (5) the explicit redirection of the seer's reverence towards God (Ibid., 681-82). Stuckenbrook develops his argument in dialogue with Richard Bauckham's, "The Worship of Jesus in Apocalyptic Christianity," *NTS* 27 (1980-81) 322-41, an article also available in Bauckham's *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993) 118-49.

an angelomorphic being superior to the angels, does not refuse worship, is worthy of worship as the Lamb.[32]

Addressing himself to the connections between the angelic refusals of worship and their contexts, Stuckenbrook takes note of the extreme peculiarity of the seer's response. These two prostrations before an angel follow the vision of the destruction of Babylon (17:1-19:8) and of the establishment of the new Jerusalem (21:9-22:5). While the visions themselves might have provided sufficient cause for awe-struck reverence on the part of the visionary, there seems to be nothing either about the angel's appearance or about the angel's utterances to draw forth John's reverent attention.[33]

On the other hand, what we have just said about epideictic rhetoric makes it possible to understand both John's misdirected worship and the angelic deflection and redirection of that reverence towards its only appropriate object in the same rhetorical key. John's deliberate report of John's own (mis)conduct can therefore be read as a salutary warning to his own audience. They were to listen closely, to observe carefully, and to decide deliberately just how they were expected to obey the exhortation uttered from the throne in 19:5.

Excursus: The Ethics of Metaphor

Strangely, the more closely we attend to the Hallelujahs of Revelation 19, the more unsettling they become, as we come to recognize that no responsible Christian congregation today could sing Revelation 19:1-8 as it now stands with a clear conscience, for these verses celebrate violence and rejoice over bloodthirsty vengeance against opponents who are depicted in misogynistic metaphors drawn from among the deadliest in the Bible's prophetic literature.

As Edith McEwan Humphrey has sagely observed, the book of Revelation

---

[32]"An Angelic Refusal," 696.

[33]Ibid., 692.

> because of its patent use of gender codes, invites the discussion of how such symbolism may shape reality. If our concerns rest solely with finding our own voice, then it is likely that the symbols in the text will be exploited, rather than heard or experienced. Such exploitation can take the form of resisting the text's own cues as to which symbols are interrelated, or that of going far beyond the bounds of the text in a search for more palatable images to transform the pictures of the Apocalypse itself. That is, the critic is faced with Scylla and Charybdis: she or he can flatten the polyvalence, or read it idiosyncratically, or even engage in a combination of such actions.[34]

How can readers today ever reconcile the violent language of 19:1-4 with the claim of the *angelus interpres* in 19:9, "These are true words of God"? Among the several approaches that recognize the danger of such metaphors rather than ignoring, suppressing or denying their danger, I would like to focus on two--one liturgical and another feminist.

The liturgical approach adopted by those who prepared biblical texts for use in the revision of the Divine Office, the Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Hours, after the Second Vatican Council, involved the excision of potentially offensive material. The liturgical edition of Revelation 19:1-8 presented for use as an evening prayer canticle omits most of v. 2, retaining the general motive for praise ("for true and righteous are his judgments") while omitting the specification of the motive ("for he has judged the great whore who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants"). Such editing is based on a cautious understanding of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, one that seeks to short circuit the likelihood that liturgical assemblies would prolong the harmful careers of such metaphors.

Feminist critical approaches to biblical metaphors that involve the objectification of female sexuality have attended both to the deployment of such metaphors not only in the Apocalypse but also in the biblical texts which provide a significant portion of the Apocalypse's metaphorical

---

[34]*The Ladies and the Cities: Transformation and Apocalyptic Identity in Joseph and Aseneth, 4 Ezra, the Apocalypse and the Shepherd of Hermas* (JSPS 17; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 116.

palette. For instance, T. Drorah Setel's "Prophets and Pornography: Female Sexual Imagery in Hosea,"[35] Katheryn Pfisterer Darr's "Ezekiel's Justification of God: Teaching Troubling Texts,"[36] and Fokkelien Van Dijk-Hemmes' "The Metaphorization of Woman in Prophetic Speech,"[37] expose such language as both androcentric and pornographic, metaphorizations that constitute violent speech acts.[38]

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza points out that feminist scholars have approached the Apocalypse of John according to two main strategies. The first of these

> takes the androcentric, linguistic-cultural, sex/gender system as a self-contained, closed system signifying reality. Insofar as this reading strategy accepts this self-contained and naturalized sex/gender categorization itself, its critical task consists either in tracing its inscription in the text of Revelation or in revalorizing female/feminine over and against male/masculine. . . . By focusing on the androcentric linguistic medium, this first feminist reading strategy critiques Revelation's symbolic construction of evil as "gendered" and takes issue with its stark oppositional dualism. Women are symbolized in male terms either as "the whore" or as "the good woman." Both the image of "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations" (Rev 17:5) and the celebration of her destruction express male desire and hatred for the whore, whereas the image of the "Bride, the Wife of the Lamb" (21:9) signifies the utopia of controlled male desires.[39]

---

[35]in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Letty M. Russell; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985. 86-95.

[36]*JSOT* 55 (1992) 97-117.

[37]*VT* 43 (1993) 162-70.

[38]Ibid., 169.

[39]*Vision of a Just World*, 13.

Tina Pippin's work on the Apocalypse furnishes one instance of this first feminist reading strategy at work.[40] She concludes: "I am saying that Revelation is not liberating for women readers. . . . I find in Revelation only negative and male-dominated images of women. This biblical text of the end of time is so misogynist that I continue to be shocked by its blatant voice."[41] For Pippin, both the whore of 19:2 and the bride of 19:7 are unacceptable images.[42]

A second feminist strategy, according to which Schüssler Fiorenza herself reads the Apocalypse,

> understands language as a convention or tool that enables readers to negotiate and create meanings in specific contexts and situations. It therefore consciously asserts the interpreter's agency, subjecthood, contextuality, particularity, stance and perspective when reading Revelation. Conversely, it rejects sexist assumptions such as centricity (male as central, female as peripheral), exclusivity (male as focal point, female as marginal), isolation (male as self, female as other), and subjectification (male as agent and subject, female as passive object).[43]

As undertaken by those who read as members of churches that affirm the normativity and authority of the New Testament, a nuanced and

---

[40]See her *Death and Desire: The Rhetoric of Gender in the Apocalypse of John* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster / John Knox, 1992).

[41]"The Revelation to John," in *Searching the Scriptures: Volume 2: A Feminist Commentary* (ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; New York: Crossroad, 1994) 119.

[42]C. H. Talbert takes issue with Pippin's reading, arguing that "The Apocalypse is dealing with a religious issue (First-Commandment faithfulness), not with sociology (men's and women's roles). The first is argued; the second is assumed (as part of the scandal of particularity) in order to communicate with people who, like us, were culturally conditioned" (*The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Revelation of John* [Louisville: Westminster / John Knox, 1994] 87).

[43]*Vision of a Just World*, 13.

responsible approach to the difficult metaphors of Revelation 19:1-10 seeks to incorporate attention to the liturgical contexts within which this text served its original audiences and within which it continues to function in Christian liturgical settings. At the same time, it calls for careful attention to the use of language in Revelation 19 "as a convention or tool that enables readers to negotiate and create meanings in specific contexts and situations."[44] The contrast between 19:1-8 and 19:9-10 provides a convenient opening for such an approach, since 19:9-10 extends an invitation to audiences that have attended to the Hallelujahs of vv. 1-8 to step back and consider how they are to respond. Warned against idolatry throughout the Apocalypse, they are warned by the example of the seer's misdirected worship to be judicious about the direction of their own reverence. For those who continue to acknowledge the authority of the Apocalypse as "God's true words," the book continues to issue its uncompromising challenge: "Worship God." As Schüssler Fiorenza rightly cautions, "Revelation's call to worship would be misconstrued if it were merely understood in a spiritualized, liturgical, or pietistic sense."[45] It is by the righteousness of their deeds (19:8) and not by the perfection of their prayers that the faithful gain admission to eschatological beatitude. It is no accident that the only humans who participate in the Apocalypse's heavenly worship are those who have defeated the Beast by their witness unto death (Rev 7:14; 15:2-3).

The uncompromising righteousness to which the Apocalypse calls its audiences is a salutary self-critical call to avoid any sort of idolatry that exalts the messenger at the expense of the message, the metaphoric vehicle at the expense of the tenor. The Apocalypse's audiences are challenged to enact the strategy of heroic resistance against injustice even in their own reappropriations of the Apocalypse itself. Revelation 13:9-10 urges: "Let anyone who has an ear listen: If you are to be taken captive, into captivity you go; if you kill with the sword, with the sword you must be killed. Here is a call for the endurance of the faith of the saints." This book, which testifies that words can be sharper than swords (Cf. Rev

---

[44]Ibid.

[45]*Vision of a Just World*, 103.

19:15), warns that metaphors too can kill, even the metaphors found within its own pages.

Conclusion: *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Agendi*

Scholars of Christian liturgy often cite the fifth century maxim, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, "the rule of prayer is the rule of faith," as they speak of the power of ritual to shape perception, conviction and religious commitment.[46] In this study of Revelation 19:1-10, I have sought to call attention to the ways in which the Apocalypse employs the language of liturgical hymnody in an active way, to map out an alternative worldview for Christians in the seven churches. By celebrating the victory of divine justice and the onset of God's eschatological reign, Revelation 19:1-10 vigorously contested the competing claims of Babylon and the Beast, claims that were powerfully validated in the everyday commerce of the province of Asia. Faced with the competing claims of the Beast and the Lamb, of Babylon and Jerusalem, the Christians of the seven churches of Asia were called upon to discern the appropriate recipient of their reverence. Second, they were challenged to consider just what activities, cultic or otherwise, constituted authentic worship.

I have also suggested that neither the hymnic form of 19:1-10 nor the liturgical setting within which the Apocalypse was destined to be received by its first audiences were incidental to the articulation of this twofold strategy. In effect, I have argued that, as applied to the Apocalypse of John the maxim *lex orandi, lex credendi* extends to *lex agendi*, insofar as the mediation of meaning through ritual worked to shape a strategy of resistance. In their heroic witness to the power of the sovereign that Apocalypse's heavenly choirs identified as "our God," such resistance promised Christians of the seven churches of Asia the sort of share in the slaughtered Lamb's paradoxical victory that would gain them admission to the chorus of those who sing praise around God's throne.

---

[46]See Ruiz, "The Apocalypse of John and Contemporary Roman Catholic Liturgy," 483.

The Production and Reading of the Book of the Twelve

Paul L. Redditt
Georgetown College
Georgetown, Kentucky 40324

As of the time of this writing, D. J. A. Clines has authored two articles under the heading "Why Is There a ... and What Does It Do to You If You Read It?"[1] Recent research on the Book of the Twelve suggests that Clines' questions are appropriate for it also. Typically scholars have acknowledged that the Twelve is reckoned as one book in the Hebrew Bible, but have continued to treat each of the minor prophets as a separate book or -- especially in the case of Zechariah -- as a collection in and of itself.

Recently three doctoral students challenged that treatment with their dissertations. D. A. Schneider delineated four stages of growth for the Twelve: Hosea, Amos, and Micah were assembled first, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah were added, then Joel, Obadiah, and Jonah, and finally Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. He also saw that many redactional comments within the Twelve belonged together as part of a systematic arrangement of the diverse traditions.[2] A. Y. Lee investigated the salvation passages in the Twelve for their insight into the overall understanding of the collection.[3] (More recently, Erich Bosshard completed his dissertation on parallels among Jsiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve, but his work has not been available for review here.[4])

Next, P. R. House studied the genre, structure, plot, use of characters, and point of view of the Twelve, concluding that the

---

[1] D. J. A. Clines, "Why Is There a Song of Songs, and What Does It Do to You If You Read It?" Jian Dao: A Journal of Bible and Theology 1 (1994) 3-27, and "Why Is There a Book of Job, and What Does It Do to You If You Read It?" in The Book of Job, (ed. W. A. M. Beuken; BETL 114; Leuven: University Press, 1994) 1-20.

[2] D. A. Schneider, "Unity of the Book of the Twelve," (Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 1979).

[3] A. Y. Lee, "Canonical Unity of the Minor Prophets," (Ph. D. diss., Baylor University, 1985).

[4] Erich Bosshard, "Jesaja und das Zwölfprophetenbuch in exilischer und frühnachexilischer Zeit: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur literarischen Vernetzung der Prophetenbücher," (Ph. D. diss., Zürich, 1995).

collection could and should be read as a single, literary construction.[5] O. H. Steck then compared the history of the redaction of the Twelve and of the book of Isaiah, arguing that at least by the final compilation of the Twelve the books should no longer be read in isolation, but as a redacted composition.[6]

More recently, James Nogalski published a two volume work[7] that (1) shows consistent editorial activity by means of catchwords inserted in passages at the beginnings and endings of the individual books; (2) points to two precursors of the Twelve, namely a "Deuteronomistic" collection consisting of Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah, and the post-exilic collection of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8;[8] (3) posits the addition of a group of books related to Joel, including Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Malachi, which were merged into the previously exiting corpora to form what might be called a "Book of the Eleven" (this author's title, not Nogalski's);[9] and (4) finds the conclusion of the process in the additions of Jonah and Zechariah 9-14.

Two scholars have attempted to refine some of Nogalski's conclusions. B. A. Jones argued that the Twelve originally ended

---

[5] Paul R. House, The Unity of the Twelve (JSOTSup 97; Sheffield: Almond, 1990).

[6] O. H. Steck, Der Abschluss der Prophetie im Alten Testament; Ein Versuch zur Frage der Vorgeschichte des Kanons (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991).

[7] James Nogalski, Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve (BZAW 217; Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), and Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve (BZAW 218; Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993).

[8] Aaron Schart ("The Combination of Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah on a Single Scroll: Unifying Devices and Redactional Intentions," a presentation to the Formation of the Book of the Twelve Consultation of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1996) questioned whether the term "Deuteronomistic" should be used here, while agreeing the four belonged to a corpus, which well might be called Deuteronomic.

[9] This aspect of Nogalski's reconstruction is unconvincing. It would seem more likely that Jonah was incorporated at the time of the Joel-related layer, forming a book of the Twelve. If, as seems likely, Zechariah 9-14 was the latest addition, it came into a previously existing "Twelve" as an addition to Zechariah rather than as a thirteenth book. See Paul L. Redditt, "Zechariah 9-14, Malachi, and The Redaction of the Book of the Twelve," Forming Prophetic Literature, 258-261.

with the book of Jonah, an ending preserved by 4QXII[a].[10] Aaron Schart traced a total of seven stages in the growth of the Twelve, two prior to Nogalski's Deuteronomistic stage, a Deuteronomic corpus, and four subsequent stages: one adding Nahum and Habakkuk, another adding Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 (and possibly much of Zechariah 9-13), a third adding Joel and Obadiah (along with Zechariah 14), and a fourth completing the Twelve with the addition of Jonah and Malachi.[11]

These studies offer ample evidence that the Twelve underwent a series of redactions, culminating in a collection of prophetic voices, some well known, some not, that spanned centuries.[12] This series of redactions appears to have been as deliberate as that of the Isaiah corpus, alongside of which and in dialogue with which O. H. Steck and Erich Bosshard show it was shaped.[13]

In light of this research, this paper, modelled after Clines' two studies, will address the Book of the Twelve as a redacted work by asking two questions: (1) why is there a Book of the Twelve, and (2) how has the Book of the Twelve been read? In answer to the first question, this paper will argue that the Twelve was produced for a readership of educated, literate purveyors of prophetic voices by male editors influenced by Deuteronomy, Joel, and cultic language. They had connections to the upper class and centered their hopes for the future around Jerusalem, but gave

---

[10] B. A. Jones, The Formation of the Book of the Twelve (SBLDS 149; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 7. On the text of the Twelve at Qumran and its fluidity, see Russell Fuller, "The Form and Formation of the Book of the Twelve: The Evidence from the Judaean Desert," Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts (JSOTSup 235; ed. J. W. Watts and P. R. House; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 86-101.

[11] Aaron Schart, "Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs: Neubearbeitungen von Amos im Rahmen schriftenübergreifender Redaktionsprozesse," (Habilitationsschrift, Philipps-Universität Marburg, 1996), Appendix 1.

[12] Not all scholars are convinced of this point, of course. The case that the books coincided only an anthology placed together for convenience has been made by Ehud Ben Zvi ("Twelve Prophetic Books or 'The Twelve': A Few Preliminary Considerations," Forming Prophetic Literature, 125-156.

[13] Steck (Abschluss der Prophetie) and Erich Bosshard ("Beobachtungen zum Zwölfprophetenbuch," BN 40 [1987] 36). Nogalski's Joel-related layer also exhibits knowledge of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but those traditions do not impact the Twelve in a substantial way. See Nogalski, Redactional Processes, 280.

little thought to how government might properly function. As the custodians of the authentic voice of God through earlier prophets, they were suspicious of the prophets of their own time. In answer to the second question, the article will review selected readers showing diverse reading agenda, but nowhere uncovering an interest in reading the Twelve as a connected discourse. The article will conclude by giving three reasons for adopting that very reading strategy.

I. Why Is There a Book of the Twelve?

A. The Implied Circumstances of the Text's Production

1. The text. Despite the modern convention, especially in connection with the Christian Old Testament, of speaking of twelve Minor Prophets, the Book of the Twelve has been recognized as a single volume as far back as 200 BCE, when Jesus Ben Sira mentioned the Twelve (Sir 49:10) in connection with the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The oldest manuscripts of the Twelve, from Qumran, show them collected into one scroll. In addition, 4 Ezra 14 and apparently Josephus also reckon the Twelve as a single volume.[14] Likewise, in the Babylonian Talmud, B. Bat. 14b cites the Twelve as one book.[15]

The Twelve, however, was made up from a number of previously existing books, which were crafted into a whole. One of the techniques of the editors of the Twelve was to modify the endings of individual books and the beginnings of the following books to make them fit together, as Nogalski has shown. That overall conclusion holds, even if one does not accept all of his examples.[16] The most obvious transitions include those between Hos 14:5-10 (Engl. 4-9) and Joel 1:2, Joel 4:16 and Amos 1:2, the emphasis on Edom in Amos 9:11-15 and Obadiah, Mic 8:8-20 and Nah 1:2-8, Nah 3:15-17 and Hab 3:17 (by means of

---

[14] Josephus (Ag. Ap. 1§40) speaks of Moses and the prophets, who wrote thirteen books, apparently the five books of Torah, the four Former Prophets and the four Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve) familiar from the Hebrew Bible.

[15] Nogalski, Literary Precursors, 2-3. Cf. Jones, Formation, 2-13; Schart, "Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs," 8-10.

[16] The passages are studied in Nogalski, Literary Precursors, pp. 20-57.

allusions to Joel 1:4 and 2:25), Zeph 3:18-20 (that time) to Haggai 1 (the time has come), and Zechariah 8:9-23 and Mal 1:1-14.

Other techniques of production are also apparent. First is the use of thematic transitions between books as in the transition between Mic 7:18-19 (the destruction of Assyria) and Habakkuk (the coming of Babylon). Second, one finds echoes of striking verses reoccurring in the Twelve, such the phrase "depths of the Sea," which appears only in Jon 2:4 and Mic 7:19 in the entire Hebrew Bible. A second example is the use of Exod 34:6-7 in Joel 2:12-14 and 18, Jon 3:9, 4:2, Mic 7:18-19, and Nah 1:3.[17] This last-mentioned verse is part of an addition disrupting the alphabetical acrostic in 1:2-8 between letters aleph and beth and provides almost indisputable evidence of redactional linking between Mic 7:8-20 and Nah 1:1-8.[18]

Schart argues that several passages long viewed as additions to their contexts can be explained as additions made during the growth of the corpus. Included among these additions are the hymns in Amos (added along with Nahum and Habakkuk), Amos 9:11-15 and Micah 4 and 5 (added along with Haggai and Zechariah 1-8), Zechariah 14 and Zeph 3:8-10 (added along with Joel and Obadiah), and Mal 3:22-24 (Engl. 4:4-6) to conclude the Twelve.[19]

---

[17] R. C. Van Leeuwen, "Scribal Wisdom and Theodicy in the Book of the Twelve," In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie (eds. L. G. Perdue, B. Scott, and W. Wiseman; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993) 39-46.

[18] Indeed, Nogalski (Redactional Processes, 104) points to a total of four irregularities in the half-acrostic with which Nahum opens, all of which tie directly to Micah 7. He expanded this work in "The Role of Nahum 1 in the Redaction of the Book of the Twelve, Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure (ed. Philip Davies and David D. J. Clines; JSOTSup 144; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 197-202.

[19] Schart, "Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs," 195-205, 210-215, 232, 248-253.

Katrina A. J. Larkin, in a study of Second Zechariah, points out that the Twelve opens with eschatological notes in Hosea 2:2, 16-17 and 3:4-5 from the prophet himself. Other eschatological passages, often in the form of additions, include Joel 3 and 4; Amos 9:11-15; Obad 15-21; Mic 4:1-4; 4:6-8; 5:1-5; Hab 3:3-13; Zeph 3:14-17, 18-20; Hag 2:20-23; Zech 8:20-23; much of Zechariah 9-14; and Mal 3:19-21, 22-24.[20] Either Nogalski or Schart or both tie all but the verses in Hosea and Hag 2:20-23 to the redaction of the Twelve. For example, Nogalski shows that Obad 15a, 16-21 was composed to set the earlier Edom prophecy (1-14, 15b) in the larger redactional context of nations that had committed crimes against Jerusalem and Judah.[21] The oft-noted connection between Obad 17 and Joel 3:5 (Engl. 2:32) suggests that Larkin was correct to include Joel 3:1-5 (Engl. 2:28-32).[22] O. H. Steck also plausibly adds to these passages Zeph 3:(8), 14-19, and Mal 2:10-12.[23]

In view of this redactional work, it is appropriate to raise Clines' first question: why was the Book of the Twelve produced? Clines reminds us that texts are public products, composed to be copied (i. e. published) and circulated. We may properly assume then that the Twelve was produced for a readership, likely consisting of people who already agreed with the point of view of the redacted whole, or who might be persuaded to agree with it.

2. The public. What might that readership look like? Again Clines is helpful at this point. Its readers would have belonged to the literate minority in ancient Israel. They would have been wealthy enough at least to have the leisure time to read and ponder what they read. They also would have been voluntary readers; no ecclesial or political structure enforced reading, let alone adhering to, the traditions incorporated in the Twelve.

---

[20] Katrina J. A. Larkin, The Eschatology of Second Zechariah: A Study of the Formation of a Mantological Wisdom Anthology (Kampen, the Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1994) 218-9.

[21] Nogalski, Redactional Processes, 89-92.

[22] See Paul L. Redditt, "The Book of Joel and Peripheral Prophecy," CBQ 48 (1986) 230-231, where the argument is made that 3:1-5 constitutes the latest passage in Joel except for 4:4-8.

[23] Steck, Abschluss, 37 and 196-8. Cf. E. Bosshard and R. G. Kratz, "Maleachi im Zwölfprophetenbuch," BN 52 (1990) 29, who also add 1:14a.

Hence, the Book might suggest a readership that valued prophetic voices. On the other hand, the production of the book might imply that the redactors feared this prophetic community might abandon its heritage.[24]

3. The authors/editors. This study is concerned with the redactors of the Twelve and the implications of their work. In particular the study focuses on those editors whose work resulted in the collection of the Twelve as opposed to the individual books themselves. Even on that point, however, one must be cautious, since one can not rule out the possibility that one or more of the books (e. g. Joel, Obadiah) was composed for its position in the Twelve by adapting existing material.[25] Nor will this study focus on the work of the Deuteronomistic editor[26] postulated by both Nogalski and Schart or the editor of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8, both of whose works were precursors to the Twelve. As far as possible, this study will limit itself to the work of redactors who brought those corpora together and increased their number to twelve. The number and actual identity of those redactors will remain unknown, of course, but five matrices of their thought and work will be explored here.

a. The theological matrix. Three influences upon the theology of the redactors can be inferred from what they included. First, the inclusion of the Deuteronomistic corpus suggests a heavy Deuteronomistic influence. That inference is bolstered by

---

[24] Rüdiger Lux (Jona: Prophet zwischen 'Verweigerung' und 'Gehorsam'; Eine erzählanalytische Studie [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994] 208-209) concludes that the book of Jonah was written for a prophetic group and their sympathizers who saw prophecy in crisis and doubted their own commission. Such a motivation could also underlie the collection of the Twelve itself.

[25] See Nogalski, Redactional Processes, 276; so also Schart, "Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuch," 256.

[26] The distinction is simple. Since the books of Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah are scattered from first to ninth among the Twelve, editorial additions in the seems between the books as they now stand were added subsequently to the composition of the Deuteronomistic corpus and belong to this study.

their inclusion as well of the book of Malachi, the product of Levites influenced by Deuteronomy.[27]

A second influence is cultic language, the clearest example of which is the confession in Exodus 34:6-7 used by Joel 2:13, Jon 4:2, Mic 7:18, and Nah 1:2-3a.[28] Not surprisingly, the redactors also betray a serious interest in Jerusalem, a theme to be explored in more detail later.

The third discernable influence is the theology of the book of Joel. Nogalski argues that the book may well have been compiled by a redactor for its place in the Twelve. If so, the entire book is evidence of his theology. Even if that is not so, however, the book exerted strong influence on the redactors of the Twelve. Nogalski notes, for example, that in Nahum and Habakkuk the redactors interpret the locust plagues of Joel as the armies of Assyria and Babylon, and they see the reconstruction of the temple described in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 as the beginning of the restoration of Yahweh's blessing.[29]

These three influences come together in the eschatology of the redactors of the Twelve. The strong note of judgment from both the Deuteronomistic and cultic pieces combines with the post-exilic hope for a better day as promised by the prophets. Redactional additions from Amos 9:12a through Mal 3:22-24 promise that new day, which will yet come if Israel will only heed God's word.

b. The gender matrix. One should probably concede that from beginning to end the redactors (as well as the readers) of the Twelve were male. They may have exhibited less gender-bias than the materials they inherited, however. A few examples of their differences must suffice. The book of Hosea opens with its depiction of the prophet's marriage to Gomer and her harlotry. To

---

[27] See Paul L. Redditt, "The Book of Malachi in Its Social Setting," CBQ 56 (1994) 240-255, especially 251-254. R. F. Person (Second Zechariah and the Deuteronomic School [JSOTSup 167; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993] 36, chaps 3 and 4) argues that Second Zechariah was "Deuteronomic", though by a later disillusioned group that distanced itself from the power structure (pp. 167-8) and copied the Deuteronomic style. If so, that is one more part of the Twelve with Deuteronomic leanings.

[28] Van Leeuwen, "Scribal Wisdom and Theodicy in the Book of the Twelve," 31-49, especially 39-48.

[29] Nogalski, Redactional Processes, 276.

be sure her behavior is condemned less than Israel's idolatry, and Hosea even has God decline to punish the women for harlotry and adultery on the grounds that the men committed the same sins (4:14). Even so, Hosea and God are both portrayed as wronged males. Next, Amos spoke contemptuously of the women of Samaria, calling them "cows of Bashan" (4:1). Punishment for Amaziah's opposing Amos would include Amaziah's death and his wife's becoming a prostitute (7:17). Nahum 3:4-6 depicts the city Nineveh metaphorically as a prostitute, whose skirt God will lift up to expose her to all peoples, after which he would throw filth at her. Finally, Zechariah's seventh vision (5:5-8) portrays wickedness as a woman in a basket like a genie in a bottle.

One need only contrast these passages with Mal 2:10-16, which Steck derives from a redactor of the Twelve. There men are accused of infidelity to God and to their wives without denigrating women. Even if, as some scholars claim, the whole passage dealt with idolatry and not adultery at all, its difference from Hosea is still marked.[30]

In Joel 3:1-2 (Engl. 2:28-29), a passage Larkin attributes to the editors of the Twelve, one actually encounters an agenda for the future in which both women and men, young and old, servant and master alike receive God's charisma and have the same roles. That view, however, seems exceptional in the Twelve and may belong to an earlier stage in the growth of Joel.[31]

c. <u>The class matrix</u>. As noted above, one may assume that the Twelve emerged from a class with sufficient leisure to follow intellectual pursuits. Its readers, thus, would have had connections to the upper class and in some cases would have been wealthy. The Twelve never addresses the poor, who for the most part would have been illiterate anyway. Even the depiction in Zeph 3:11-13 of Jerusalemites as lowly and humble people who would one day "pasture and lie down" smacks more of the

---

[30] Even so, Mal 3:23 (Engl. 4:6) exhibits the use of male-gendered terms characteristic of the Bible: God "will turn the heart of the fathers with respect to the sons, and the heart of the sons with respect to the fathers."

[31] Paul L. Redditt, "The Book of Joel and Peripheral Prophecy," 231-233.

wealthy person's idealization of pastoral life than of the day by day labor and drudgery associated with it.[32]

The individual books among the Twelve arise from different types of social groups. Joel, Zechariah 9-14, and Malachi at least appear to have originated among groups that moved to the periphery of Israelite life from positions within or close to the power structure.[33] On the other hand, Nah, Haggai, and Zechariah 1-8 appear to have emerged from the power structure and even to have supported it, though only Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 among them hitched their hopes directly to the temple and the house of David. While these observations do not allow one to say more about the class matrix of the redactors of the Twelve, they do raise the issue of their political aspirations.

d. The political matrix. Given the extensive criticism of kings (e. g., Hos 5:1; Amos 7:10), rulers (e. g., Mic 3:1-3, 9-11), priests (e. g., Hos 4:4-10; Mal 1:6-14), prophets (e. g., Mic 3:5-7; Zech 13:3-6), and other members of the power structure (e. g., Amos 6:1-7 Zeph 3:1-4) in the books making up the Twelve, however, one should admit the possibility that the Twelve was collected by people who either wished to correct the perceived shortcomings of Judah's leaders or perhaps even aspired to leadership in the post-exilic community, but were not actually part of the ruling structure, either politically or religiously.[34]

---

[32] Nogalski, Literary Precursors, 203, n. 77, argues for a date well into the Persian period for these verses. While they did not derive from the same redactor as 3:18-20, with its connections to Mic 4:4-6 and Hag 1, they postdate the Deuteronomistic corpus.

[33] See Paul L. Redditt, "The Book of Joel and Peripheral Prophecy," 225-240; "Israel's Shepherds: Hope and Pessimism in Zechariah 9-14," CBQ 51 (1989) 631-642; "The Two Shepherds in Zechariah 11:4-17," CBQ 55 (1993) 676-686; and "The Book of Malachi in Its Social Setting," CBQ 56 (1994) 240-255.

[34] Person (Second Zechariah and the Deuteronomic School, 154) called such dichotomization "simplistic," and indeed it would be if one supposed that there were only two groups in post-exilic Judah, one ruling and the other opposing. In fact, there seem to have been a number of peripheral groups producing literature in opposition to the religious and/or political elite. Person himself agrees that Second Zechariah was an eschatological response of a disillusioned group distancing itself from the hierarchy in light of unmet expectations. Further, one must reckon with the possibility that the power structure itself was not always united. The redac-

Of the passages Nogalski studies for catchwords linking the individual books of the Twelve, only Amos 9:11-15 makes any reference to the Davidic king. Amos 9:11, 12b, 13aa, 14-15 (reflecting the hopes of returning exiles) form part of a pro-Jerusalem addition to the Deuteronomistic edition of Amos, but are not part of the work of the redactors of the Twelve, who added 9:12a to anticipate Obad 17-21 and 9:13 employing the language of Joel.[35]

It is instructive to notice the difference between Amos 9:11 and 9:12a. Amos 9:11 (from returning exiles) looks forward to raising up the fallen booth of David, while 9:12a (from the redactors of the Twelve) looks forward to the political domination of Jerusalem over Edom and others. Hence, the redactors are pro-Jerusalem, but the Davidic house seems no longer to have been an issue.[36] In fact, one finds little indication how the redactors thought government might function, implying perhaps a willingness to accept the prevailing arrangement, provided the rulers in Jerusalem paid more attention to God's word as expressed through past prophets.

If that is so, it raises the question of their view of the foreign power holding hegemony over Judah at that time. When was that? Nogalski argues that "the formative work on this larger corpus took place in the latter part of the Persian period, while the subsequent additions (Jonah, Zech 9-14) did not enter the corpus until after 332."[37] His dates are based on his view that Joel dates from the late Persian period, while Jonah and Zechariah 9-14 come from the Greek period. It is, however, possible to date Joel between 515 and 445[38] and the redaction of Zechariah 9-

---

tors of the Twelve showed no interest in a restored Davidic king, even though some of the futuristic passages in the Twelve from the early years after the Exile certainly did (e. g. Amos 9:11, 14-15 and Zech 9:1-10).

[35] Nogalski, Literary Precursors, 121-122.

[36] K. E. Pomykala (The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism; Its History and Significance for Messianism [SBLEJL 7; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995] 270) argues that early Judaism exhibited no continuous, widespread, or dominant expectation of a Davidic Messiah. Rather, such an expectation can be dated only from the middle of the first century B. C. E.

[37] Nogalski, Redactional Processes, 280.

[38] Redditt, "Joel and Peripheral Prophecy," 233-235.

14 soon after the career of Nehemiah, perhaps by 400.[39] Nor does the existence of Greek parallels to the sea episode in Jonah necessitate a date during the Greek period for Jonah since Wolff adduces parallels from the Greek singer Arion, who flourished ca. 620.[40] Thus, the addition of the Joel-related layer (including Jonah, contra Nogalski) could have come in the late fifth century and the addition of Zechariah 9-14 any time after ca. 400.

Relations between Persia and Palestine were probably not always smooth, though one would not know that from the Hebrew Bible, which reports only positive events like the Edict of Cyrus, the rebuilding of the temple and the repair of Jerusalem's wall with Persian permission, and Ezra's mission. Difficulties within the community typically are blamed on people in Samaria as late as the first year of Xerxes (Ezra 4:6). Both Ezra and Nehemiah claim to have come to Jerusalem under Persian appointment, and it seems likely that rebuilding the wall signalled Persian plans to elevate the status of Jerusalem as a commercial and/or political center, which Samaria and her Judean sympathizers would naturally oppose. No later than the time of Nehemiah, Judah had its own governor, appointed by the Persians.[41]

One may infer that the redactors of the Twelve had no fundamental objection to that arrangement. A similar attitude is observable in narratives from the Diaspora during the reign of Xerxes and later. The book of Esther and especially the court narratives of Daniel 1-6 show that while things could go badly wrong for Jews in the Diaspora, some educated Jews considered it possible not only to get along but even to prosper.[42]

Finally, one should recognize that among literati the ability to read and write is a form of power. The redactors of the Twelve, then, may have been satisfied with the opportunity to compile,

---

[39] Paul L. Redditt, "Nehemiah's First Mission and the Date of Zechariah 9-14," CBQ 56 (1994) 675-677.

[40] H. W. Wolff, Dodekapropheten 3: Obadja und Jona (BK 14/3; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1977) 86.

[41] On the issue of governors before Nehemiah, see the opposing views of S. E. McEvenue, "The Political Structure in Judah from Cyrus to Nehemiah," CBQ 43 (1981) 353-364 and C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1-8 (AB 25B; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1987) 13-17.

[42] J. J. Collins, Daniel (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993) 194, 273.

edit, and "publish" their prophetic traditions along side those of Isaiah. Their work as curators of those traditions, which granted them the power to influence the thinking and behavior of other people, may have seemed a congenial or even superior alternative to the powers of procurators.

e. The Jerusalem matrix. The overwhelming interest in Jerusalem among most of the latest books among the Twelve (e. g., Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, Joel, Malachi, and Zechariah 9-14) and in redactional seams between the books suggests that the Twelve was edited there. Again a search of the passages in those seams is the place to study the redactors' view of Jerusalem. The first seam to address the issue is that of Joel 4:16a and Amos 1:2a, in which the redactor of the Twelve drew upon Amos 1:2a:

> "The Lord roars from Zion,
> and utters his voice from Jerusalem,... (NRSV)

Jerusalem and the temple function here as the holy city and sanctuary (Joel 4:17),[43] the abode of God on earth, i. e. as Judah's version of the center or navel of the earth, the place from which God administers both blessing (4:18) and punishment (4:19). This idea is neither new nor unique to the redactors of the Twelve; it continues the temple tradition in a post-monarchical time. The monarchy, in both the north and the south, may have failed, resulting in subjugation to foreign kingdoms and even exile, but God would avenge the destruction of Jerusalem, become a refuge for his people, and both Jerusalem and Judah would be reinhabited (Joel 4:16, 20-21). In Amos the same roar of Yahweh that would mean life and blessing to the people of post-exilic Jerusalem/Zion had meant punishment to pre-exilic Israel, for reasons Amos 1:3-9:10 would make perfectly clear.

Obad 15-21 takes up again the Zion motif. In contrast with Edom, which God would punish for its actions during the sack of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, a holy remnant of exiles would survive (Obad 17) and go up to Jerusalem, from which they would rule Mt. Esau (Obad 21).[44] Two other texts in particular

---

[43] Jon 2:3, 5 also refers to the temple as holy, but Nogalski's catchwords between Jonah and other texts are not as clear as here.

[44] These sentiments may have been superimposed over older, somewhat conflicting traditions. One tradition (Obad 18) saw the Joseph tribes capturing Esau, while a second (Obad 19) saw Judaeans in the Negeb capturing Esau, as

work with the alternative fates of Jerusalem/Judah and Edom. The first is Joel 3:5 [Engl. 2:32], which cites Obad 17. The difference between them was that Obad 17-21 thought in terms of returnees from the exile, whereas Joel 3:5, presumably written later, focused instead on a group that called upon the Lord. They would be numbered among the survivors. The second text to explore this issue is Mal 1:2-5,[45] in which the steps toward recovery made by Judah are contrasted with the present and future destitution of Esau as evidence of God's continued love for Jacob/Judah and God's power beyond the borders of Judah. The extent to which the redactors of the Twelve reworked this passage may be left open; its content resonated with theirs.

As mentioned earlier the emphasis on "time" in Zephaniah 3 and Haggai 1 connects those two books. In other words the temple was essential to the fruition of God's promises to his people. When, however, it was completed, the new day anticipated in Zechariah 8 did not dawn, and the book of Malachi was added to Haggai/Zechariah 1-8 to show why: the priests and the people alike had defiled the sanctuary and broken their covenant with God. The new day must wait for the rectification of those wrongs. The redactor of the book of Malachi anticipated God's coming to the temple to purge it (Mal 3:1-4), while the redactors of the Twelve looked for God to send back Elijah to rectify matters lest God put his people under the ban once again (Mal 3:23-24, Engl. 4:5-6).

In view of this interest in Jerusalem and the temple, it is surprising that the redactors of the Twelve did not have more to say about temple personnel. How should one read that phenomenon? Since the collection obviously implies a group interested in prophets and prophecy, a lack of interest in assuming priestly

---

well as the Shephelah, Ephraim, and Samaria, while Benjamin captured Gilead. Yet a third (Obad 20) envisioned some northern Israelites (obscurity in the text precludes saying who) taking possession of much Phoenicia, while exiles from Jerusalem in Sepharad (location uncertain) repossess the Negeb.

[45] These verses also presuppose a later time period than the book of Obadiah, in that Edom appears still to have been standing in Obadiah, but to have fallen already in Malachi. This sequence seems to corroborate the general consensus that Obadiah was composed in the sixth century not long after the destruction of Jerusalem, while Malachi was written in the fifth century. Julia M. O'Brien (Priest and Levite in Malachi [SBLDS 121; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990] 113-133) disagrees with this conventional date for Malachi. Even if she is correct, the conclusions drawn here about the redaction of the Twelve would not be affected.

prerogatives or functions might not be surprising. Possessing God's word, they did not need further instruction; they needed to obey the teaching they had instead of repeating the mistakes of their predecessors (cf. Mal 3:16, 18). Further, the subsequent inclusion of Zechariah 9-14 implies that the redactors perhaps shared the mistrust of contemporary prophecy voiced in Zech 13:2-5. If so, they would scarcely have desired to hold a prophetic office either, if such an office even still existed. Instead, the redactors of the Twelve served as curators of the Word of God through the line of prophets showcased in the Twelve.

4. The question of canon. Two passages in particular raise the question of canon. The first is Zech 13:2-5, which recasts Amos 7:14, where Amos denies that he is a prophet. Zech 13:5 reiterates Amos's denial with the intention of showing that prophetic contemporaries of his time were illegitimate, presumably because authentic prophecy had been vouchsafed to the faithful. This redactor echoes the sentiment of the redactor of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8, who said (Zech 1:5-6) that while neither the fathers nor the prophets had survived, the word of God that came to the fathers through the prophets had survived and would continue to guide God's people if they would obey. The redactors of the Twelve would have had no difficulty agreeing with these sentiments and seeing themselves as the custodians of the words of the prophets.

The second passage was Mal 3:22-24 (Engl. 4:4-6), penned by the redactors of the Twelve.[46] Those verses indeed look forward to a new Elijah, who would come before the Day of the Lord, but for all their optimism about a future Elijah, they say nothing about present prophets. More importantly, they had in view Moses and the original Elijah, representatives of the Law and the prophets. In other words, those verses presuppose a canon including at least Deuteronomy (if not the whole Pentateuch), the

---

[46] This point has been adequately argued elsewhere. See Wilhelm Rudolph, Haggai--Sacharja 1-8--Sacharja 9-14--Maleachi (KAT 13/4; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1976) 291. On the other hand, Joyce Baldwin (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi [Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; London: Tyndale, 1972] 251), Beth Glazier-McDonald (Malachi, The Divine Messenger [SBLDS 98; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987] 245, 262, 267), and Pieter A. Verhof (The Books of Haggai and Malachi [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978] 163, 337) argue that the verses are authentic. Either way, the point being made here is that the redactor was looking elsewhere than the book of Malachi.

Former Prophets including Elijah (in other words the Deuteronomistic History), and the Twelve. Until Elijah should return, the word of God was available to be read.

B. The Implied Psychological or Inner Circumstances of the Text's Production

Clines advocates sifting a text for the implied inner conflicts of the author of a text. To do so one could ask such questions as the following: What does the author seem to fear? What does he wish for? What inner needs does writing this text meet? Clearly, these are not the questions of a clinical psychologist working with a patient, but questions for further explorations of a piece of literature in an attempt to articulate motives for its production. This study of the Twelve will now turn briefly to this new topic.

One would surmise that the redactors of the Twelve, these curators of the collected word of God, might well fear new prophetic voices. T. W. Overholt observes that the genuineness of prophecy lies in the eye of the beholder. That is, prophecy did not die out in the fifth or fourth century B. C. E.; rather, Israelite society ceased "at least for the moment, to credit (authorize) specific incidences of prophetic behavior."[47] Zech 13:2-5 is evidence that people still styled themselves as prophets, and the passage cautioned its readers against heeding them. Perhaps the redactors of the Twelve shared that fear.

It might be worth venturing a couple of guesses about the nature of challenges from the new prophets. Perhaps they advocated acceding to Persian directives the redactors deemed counter to Israelite faith or practice. Or perhaps they advocated novel "messages from God" that were theologically unacceptable to the redactors. In other words, perhaps the redactors feared that the community as a whole, or even their readers, would seek other authorities than themselves and the prophets they so treasured.

Whatever the precise nature of their fear might have been, the act of collecting the Twelve would seem to have met their need and their perception of the larger community's need for an authoritative voice from God that stood above competing voices. People typically fear new ideas if they perceive themselves to be

---

[47] T. W. Overholt, "The End of Prophecy: No Players without a Program," JSOT 42 (1988) 112. Compare F. E. Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased," JBL 108 (1989) 42-47.

holding their own or improving in areas of life that matter to them, or if they fear the new ideas will threaten them. In either situation, they seek support for their interests in their received traditions and values.

Judging by the eschatological tone of their work, the redactors thought the future could be better than the present. Judging by the tone of warning in Mal 3:23-24 (Engl. 4:5-6, cf. Mal 3:16, 18 again), they feared the ruin of the Israelite community if it did not mend its ways and avoid the mistakes of earlier generations that had failed to live as God had directed through Moses and the prophets. By publishing the Book of the Twelve, they meant to aid in averting God's wrath in the future.

II. How Has the Book of the Twelve Been Read?

Up until now this paper has dealt with the redactors of the Twelve, who were themselves readers and shapers of the written text. Now it turns to generations of other people who have read the Book of the Twelve to focus on some of those readers with this question in mind: what happens to you if you read the Book of the Twelve? Lest this paper become a multi-volume book, it will be possible to survey only a few readers and merely suggest their reading strategies and results. What is clear is that historically readers have approached the Twelve as independent works, not as a collected whole.

A. The Earliest Readers

1. The readers implied by the Book of the Twelve. House points to three differences between the redactors and their readers. (1) The norms of the reader are not always those of the various authors. In the Twelve, he notes, Israel never repents, never changes, and never follows Yahweh. In Jonah Nineveh does, but in Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Zephaniah Israel and Judah do not. Even in Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, it is not clear whether the post-exilic community embraced God's ways as set forth by the twelve prophets. (2) Unlike the prophets and redactors, the people behaved as if the nation had no future. They failed to understand the ramifications of the Day of Yahweh and live accordingly, and they never understood that they (or at least part of them) were the remnant God would restore (Mal 3:16-18). (3) The readers also failed to grasp the significance of their own

history. All they could see was their present. In the Post-Exilic period, they had lost sight of God's historical covenant with Israel (Mal 1:2-5), the sanctity of temple worship (1:6-14), and their obligation to keep the commandments (2:10-16; cf. Zech 1:1-6; 7:1).[48]

2. Sirach. The earliest external witness to the Twelve is Sir 49:10, which reads: "May the bones of the Twelve Prophets send forth new life from where they lie, for they comforted the people of Jacob and delivered them with confident hope" (NRSV). Not only does that passage treat the prophets as a group, it also emphasizes what House called the U-shaped comic framework for the collection, which ends on a note of triumph.[49] What should happen to readers of the Twelve, according to Sirach, is that they should take hope from God's message to the people.

3. The biblical commentaries among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Another early identifiable group to read the Twelve is the author(s) of a series of biblical commentaries among the Dead Sea Scrolls. They include commentaries on four books among the Twelve, specifically Hosea (4Q166-7), Micah (1Q14), Nahum (4Q169), and Habakkuk (1QpHab), and exhibit a common concern with the earlier history of their own group. Their reading strategy consisted of finding key terms or catchwords they could use to apply a passage under discussion to the past or future of Israel in general or of their own movement in particular.

One example must suffice. Habakkuk 1:6a, in which God promised Habakkuk he would send the Chaldeans to Judah, became a prediction of the coming of the Kittim (or Romans). In the succeeding verses of Habakkuk 1, the commentator scoured the text for correspondences between the two peoples, in particular their prowess in war, their haughtiness, even a metaphor about eagles. Indeed, the point of sending the Chaldeans, namely to punish the wicked in Israel, became lost in the Habakkuk Commentary, which interpreted 1:12-13a to mean that God would punish the nations through the hand of the community itself. This example shows that the text lost its rootedness in the past struggles between Israelites or between Israelites and non-Israelites

---

[48] House, The Unity of the Twelve, 238-9.

[49] Ibid., 123.

and informed the author's community about its own struggle for identity and bolstered their struggle for survival.

B. Selected Early Christian Writers

1. Readings from the New Testament. New Testament authors, naturally, read the Twelve from a different perspective, namely in light of the experience of the early church. Three books, Matthew, Romans, and Revelation, will be reviewed here for their authors' reading strategy and use of the Twelve. A few examples from each must suffice.

The gospel of Matthew had as one of its special interests to show that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah promised in the Hebrew Scriptures. The author of Matthew read the Twelve from that perspective, and used several verses to help make that point.[50] In the birth narrative, Matt 2:6 cites Mic 5:2 as proof not only that Jesus descended from David, but also that the messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Next, Matt 2:15 says that the return of the infant Jesus and his family from Egypt fulfilled Hos 11:1, a verse that reminded Israel about the Exodus. Last, Matt 21:5 says that Jesus' triumphal entry fulfilled Zech 9:9.

The gospel of Matthew also portrayed Jesus as a teacher. In doing so, it twice had Jesus quote the Twelve to make a point. In 9:13 (cf. 12:7) he directs the Pharisees who had criticized him for eating with sinners to learn the true meaning of Hos 6:6: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice". Likewise in 11:10 Jesus says that John the Baptist was the messenger predicted in Mal 3:1, and in 11:14 he equates that messenger with Elijah in Mal 4:5 (MT 3:23). These references to the Twelve show the concern of the author of Matthew to present Jesus as the one who fulfilled and taught scripture, but they give little insight into how the evangelist viewed of the Book of the Twelve itself.

In various places in the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul drew upon the Twelve. Probably the most famous instance was his use of Hab 2:4 in Rom 1:17 (cf. Gal 3:11): "The one who is righteous will live by faith." In doing so, Paul makes the verse say something quite different than other Jewish readers might have been willing to say. Anders Nygren may overstate the

---

[50] Scholars long have questioned the historicity of several of the events that will be discussed here. The issue in this paper is not whether the events happened, but how the gospel of Matthew used the Twelve.

difference between Paul and the Synagogue on the issue of faith and works, but he expresses Paul's use of the text succinctly: "He takes it out of the hands of the representatives of the righteousness of the law and makes it the motto and crowning expression of a view which is the direct opposite, of the righteousness of faith."[51] In 10:13 Paul also used Joel 2:32 ("Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved") as evidence that faith in God was sufficient for salvation.

In Romans 9, Paul used three different passages from the Twelve in dealing with the issue of Israel's refusal to accept Christian faith. In 9:13 he quotes Mal 1:2b-3a ("I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated") as evidence that the chronological priority of Israel was no evidence that Jews were God's elect. In 9:25 he quotes Hos 2:23 ("and I will say to Lo-ammi 'You are my people'"), words addressed by God to Israel, to the effect that God called Gentiles to be among his people. In 9:26 he used Hos 1:10 to the same effect. Other examples could be cited, but these will suffice. As with the author of Matthew, Paul's treatment of texts from the Twelve gives little indication of how he viewed the collection.

If the gospel of Matthew and the Apostle Paul used the Twelve as evidence for their claims vis-a-vis Judaism, the book of Revelation used the Twelve in a more congenial fashion. Revelation 1-4 employees in its imagery the motif of the golden candlestick with seven lamps from Zechariah 4, although it modified the candlestick for its new context into seven candlesticks, one for the "angel" of each of the seven churches. Similarly, Rev 5:6 lifts the motif of seven eyes from Zech 4:10, and the four horsemen of Rev 6:1-8 derive from Zech 1:8. The description of results of opening the sixth seal (Rev 6:12) include catastrophes to the sun and moon similar to those described in Joel 3:31. Talk of the "great day of ... wrath" in Rev 6:17 is borrowed from Zeph 1:14-5. These examples show the author of Revelation drawing upon prophetic and proto-apocalyptic imagery of the Twelve in developing its own symbolism, but do not reflect either a systematic reading of the Twelve or a treatment of it as one volume.

2. Jerome and John Chrysostom. Among the early Christian theologians, Jerome and John Chrysostom may be taken as

---

[51] Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1949) 82-3.

typical. In his Preface to the Twelve Minor Prophets, Jerome at least notes that Jews count the Twelve as one book. John Chrysostom, in his extant works, comments on all of the Twelve except Obadiah, but only in a piecemeal fashion. The Twelve are cited about half as often as Isaiah, about as frequently as Jeremiah and far more often than Ezekiel.[52] Typical is his use of passages from Habakkuk, Haggai, Hosea, Malachi, and Micah as proof texts for Jesus' second coming.[53]

C. Readings from the Talmud

The rabbis recognized that a late hand redacted the Twelve, and they ascribed the book (along with Ezekiel, Daniel, and Esther) to the Men of the Great Assembly, but they never seemed to base their reading strategies on that observation.[54] One place they might have done so was at the beginning of Hosea. Indeed, they read Hos 1:2 to the effect that Hosea was the first (and thus the greatest) prophet with whom God spoke, and asked why the book of Hosea did not come first in the prophetic corpus, i. e. in front of Isaiah (B. Bat. 14b). Their answer was that such a small book might well have gotten lost that way. By implication so might all of the others. Hence, the rabbis concluded that the Twelve were joined together to prevent their being lost (Pesah. 87b).

If one looked elsewhere for a discussion of the Twelve as a whole, its conclusion in Mal 3:22-24 (Engl. 4:4-6), with its retrospective look at Moses and Elijah, might fit the bill. Such was not the case, however. ʿEd. 8, Mishnah 7 simply observes that 3:23-24 predicts that Elijah will return to bring peace to the world. ʿErub. 43b cites v. 23 in connection with the subject of whether one should drink wine on the Sabbath! Sabb. 89a, commenting on v. 22, observes that the Law was named after Moses because he disparaged himself. Comments on the verses immediately preceding vv. 22-24 yield similar findings. Ros Has. 17a applied v. 21 to sinners who go to Gehinnom; their body will be consumed, their soul burnt, and the wind will scatter their

---

[52] See R. A. Krupp, Saint John Chrysostom: A Scripture Index (New York, London, Lanham: University Press of America, 1984) 89-94.

[53] See John Chrysostom, Manual of Christian Doctrine (Philadelphia: John Joseph McVey, 1906) 64-67.

[54] B. Bat. 15a

remains. ʿAbod. Zar. 4a applies 3:21 to the future world, and Ned. 8b relates 3:19 to the profanation of the name of God. In short, the Talmud records only interpretation of individual verses, not comments on the Twelve as a whole.

In other places, the Talmud cites verses from the Twelve as proof texts for various doctrines. A glance at two texts important to Christian interpreters will illustrate typical rabbinical readings of the Twelve. Sanh. 99a gives Zech 9:9 a messianic interpretation, but Bek. 56b relates that verse to dreams by saying that if one dreams of a donkey one may hope for salvation. Sanh. 98b interprets Mic 5:2 as a reference to Roman power over Israel, which was necessary before the son of David could return. Sukk. 52b names the seven shepherds of Mic 5:4: David will stand in the middle with the pre-Israelite figures Adam, Seth, and Methuselah on his right and the Israelite heroes Abraham, Jacob, and Moses on his left. The eight princes of Mic 5:4 are identified as Jesse, Saul, Samuel, Amos, Zephaniah, Zedekiah, Messiah, and Elijah. While such interpretations reflect their obvious mastery of Torah and Nebiim, they give no indication that the rabbis read the Twelve as a single book. Indeed, the topical structure of the Talmud precludes their treating any book straight through as a connected whole.

On the other hand, Schart points to the non-Talmudic Pirke Eliezer 43 as one place where he can show a rabbi reading two books among the Twelve in canonical order. In Jon 3:4 the prophet predicts the destruction of Nineveh in forty days, but that disaster was averted by the penance of its inhabitants. Nahum 2 and 3 likewise predict the overthrow of Nineveh, a prediction which exercised Eliezer in light of God's decision to spare the city, as reported in Jon 3:10. In other words, his reading of Jonah created a problem in reading Nahum, two books later. His solution, by the way, was to posit a period of forty years (derived from Jonah's mention of forty days) between the career of Jonah and that of Nahum, during which time the inhabitants of Nineveh had backslidden.[55]

D. The reformers Luther and Calvin

Both Martin Luther and Jean Calvin lectured on the books of the Bible, including the Twelve. Neither reformer, however, read

---

[55] Schart, "Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs," 26.

the Twelve as an integrated compilation. Their reading strategies can be reviewed quickly.

1. Martin Luther. In his lectures on the Minor Prophets, Luther claimed that "All the prophets have one and the same message, for this is their one aim; they are all looking toward the coming of Christ or to the coming kingdom of Christ. All their prophecies look to this, and we must relate them to nothing else."[56] Not everything in a prophetic book constituted prophecy, of course, and Luther thought some prophecies dealt with events leading up to Jesus. Even so, every prophetic message in some way pointed to Jesus. His handling of the book of Joel will make his reading strategy clear. Luther understood Joel 1 to refer to the events of the prophet's own time. With Joel 2, however, prophecy began, in this case the prophecy of a locust plague upon the Jews. At 2:28 (MT 3:1) the words no longer applied to ancient Israel; rather the prophet spoke of the Holy Spirit. The final chapter applied to the kingdom of Christ.[57] By this unabashedly Christian reading of the text, Luther found a common thread through the prophetic corpus, but he was unconcerned with the issue of the relationships among the Twelve.

2. Jean Calvin. Calvin's lectures on the Minor Prophets, committed to writing by his students, open with these words: "[The Twelve Minor Prophets] have been long ago joined together, and their writings have been reduced to one volume; and for this reason, lest by being extant singly in our hands, they should, as often happens, disappear in the course of time on account of their brevity."[58] Calvin was simply reiterating -- knowingly or not -- the opinion voiced in B. Bat. 14b about the preservation of the Twelve. In the lectures Calvin introduced each of the Twelve, but never as part of a continuing plot. He adopted a reading strategy common to that which he employed in the Major Prophets also in which he spoke of the Jewish community as a church, and of-

---

[56] Martin Luther, Luther's Works: 18 Lectures on the Minor Prophets, 1 (ed. Hilton C. Oswald; St. Louis: Concordia, 1975) 79.

[57] Ibid., 405-6.

[58] Jean Calvin, Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets, 1. Hosea (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950) 35.

fered Christological interpretations of the passages predominantly used by the Christian church as predictions of Jesus.[59]

E. Representative modern scholars

The readers surveyed up to this point preceded the rise of critical scholarship. Modern scholars, however, have until very recently paid as little attention as their predecessors to the redaction of the Twelve for hermeneutical purposes. Julius Wellhausen may be taken as fairly representative. He paid so little attention to the canonical order of the Twelve that his commentary dealt with the prophets by and large in chronological order: Amos, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Obadiah, Joel, and Jonah.[60] What is more, he saw no single thread running through them as Luther had. Rather, he saw the great pre-exilic prophets as the heart of the Hebrew scriptures. He found the Torah to be without light,[61] and the cultus

---

[59] In connection with Isaiah, Calvin (Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah [5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948] 1.247-8) translates almah in 7:14 as "virgin" and understands "Immanuel" as Christ. In 9:6-7, the child born "unto us" is Jesus (1.306-317); in 11:1-12 the Branch is Christ (1.372). Verse 11 is understood to deal with the future glory of the church (1.389), and the "dispersions of Judah" were taken to be Christians (1.391). The one mentioned in Isaiah 53:8 as stricken for the transgression of his people was Jesus (4.120-2).

Other prophets were treated similarly. The Branch in Jer 23:5 was seen as Jesus (Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations [5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950] 3.136-7), and Calvin often equated Israel with the church. The description of God as one having "the likeness of the appearance of a man" in Ezekiel's call vision led Calvin to read the passage in trinitarian terms and write: "the prophet saw God only in the person of Christ" (Commentaries on the First Twenty Chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel [2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948] 1.98). The fourth kingdom in Daniel 2 was Roman (Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel [2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948] 1.162), and the son of Man in 7:14 was Christ when he returns at the end of time as judge (2.44).

[60] Julius Wellhausen, Die Kleinen Propheten; übersetzt und erklärt (4th ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963).

[61] Julius Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Israel (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1895) 3.

to be "heathen" (in what he called a non-pejorative sense of the term heathen!).[62]

This reading of the history of Israel left little room to appreciate works like Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, and Malachi, precisely because of their involvement with the cultus, and no real interest in pursuing the late, scribal editing of the book that included them. Amos and Hosea were read in their "purity", without recourse to their meaning in their larger, canonical position.

While most scholars today would disagree with Wellhausen about the relative worthlessness of Torah, their preference for the pre-exilic prophets matches his. Many still denigrate Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 at least for hitching their hopes for the future to the second temple, and most continue to read the Twelve as individual books rather than as a redacted whole. Indeed, B. S. Childs concludes his remarks under the heading "Introduction to the Latter Prophets" with this comment: "... the order of the prophetic books within the collection of the Latter Prophets assumed no great canonical significance and thus differed from the attitude shown to the order within the Pentateuch."[63]

III. What Benefits Accrue from Reading the Twelve as a Whole?

If readers from antiquity until the present have read the Twelve individually, why then should people today follow the lead of scholars like House, Nogalski, Steck and Schart and reread it as a redacted whole? Three reasons come to mind readily. First, reading the Twelve as a book forces one to recognize the pervasiveness of the redactional processes in the Twelve. Redaction occurred not just at the level of the individual books themselves, but at the level of the Twelve as a whole and at intermediate stages in between. Reading the Twelve this way reminds the reader of the various persons who molded and shaped the materials between their earliest, typically oral stage and the final stage seen in the text.

Second, such a reading is a canonical reading, which offers glimpses into the canonical process. The Twelve may well have been redacted with Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History

---

[62] Ibid., 422-3.

[63] B. S. Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 309-310.

in view as a conclusion to the Law and the Prophets. Further, the Twelve may have been redacted quite consciously alongside the emerging Isaiah corpus, as Steck and Bosshard have shown.

Third, such a reading shows that in the case of the Twelve as in many other cases the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Read as a continuous narrative it offers a prophetic critique of history that parallels the Deuteronomistic History and the history of the Chronicler plus Ezra and Nehemiah, offering along the way prophetic explanations for the sweep of events from the eighth through the fifth centuries.

How to Read the Book of the Twelve as a Theological Unity

Rolf Rendtorff
University of Heidelberg

I am glad to be invited to participate in the Formation of the Book of the Twelve Seminar. Actually, it is the third time that I have the opportunity to participate in a SBL seminar on the formation of a complex part of the canon of the Hebrew Bible: first on the Pentateuch, then on the Book of Isaiah, and now on the Book of the Twelve. In addition, in the 1994 SBL International Meeting I was involved in the discussion on the formation of the Book of Psalms.[1] In my view it is a very important and promising development in biblical studies, not to be satisfied with more and more sophisticated analyses of biblical texts but to try to understand the texts in their given form and to find out what intention and message they would have in this very shape.

It has often been noted that the Book of the Twelve has been taken as one book from the earliest time of the formation of the canon of the Hebrew Bible.[2] But only recently have scholars begun to study the formation of this book.[3] Most of them are concerned with the development of the book in its different stages through a certain period of time up to the final shape. In this paper I shall try to do the next step,

---

[1]My involvement in this topic is also demonstrated by the doctoral thesis of my student Matthias Millard, *Die Komposition des Psalters. Ein formgeschichtlicher Ansatz* (FAT 9; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1994).

[2]See in particular Sir 48: 10; Baba batra 14b/15a.

[3]See P.R. House, *The Unity of the Book of the Twelve* JSOTSup 97; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Terence Collins, *The Mantle of Elijah: The Redaction Criticism of the Prophetical Books* (The Biblical Seminar 20; Sheffield: JSOT Press), 1993, ch.3; R.C. van Leeuwen, "Scribal Wisdom and Theodicy in the Book of the Twelve", *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G.Gammie* (ed. L.G. Perdue, et al; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox) 1993, p. 31-49; J.D. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 217; Berlin, et al: de Gruyter) 1993; id., *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 218; Berlin, et al: de Gruyter) 1993; R.J. Coggins, "The Minor Prophets-—One Book or Twelve," *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder* (Biblical Interpretation Series 8; ed. S.E. Porter, et al; Leiden, et al: Brill) 1994, p. 57-68; A.Schart, *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs: Neubearbeitungen von Amos im Rahmen schriftenübergreifender Redaktionsprozesse* (Habilitationsschrift Philipps-Universität Marburg) 1995.

namely to read the Book of the Twelve as a unity taking such development for granted.[4]

I

Nevertheless, at the beginning we will have to look at some obvious elements of shaping that have been left to the reader to give him a certain access to the book. First of all, the superscriptions of the different parts of the book, or "writings",[5] obviously serve particular functions. First, they preserve a certain identity for each particular writing. This is, by the way, one of the basic differences between the Book of the Twelve and the Book of Isaiah. In the latter no other name of a prophet except that of Isaiah is mentioned. Of course, even in the Book of Isaiah the reader is confronted with a number of hints to obvious differences in time and circumstances within the book; but these are not linked to different prophetic personae.

This is the second point: The superscriptions give the Book of the Twelve an explicit chronological framework. A number of writings are precisely dated, and by that they are closely linked to certain historical and political periods. It begins in the period when the kingdom of Israel still exists, and two of the prophets, Hosea and Amos, were acting in this framework. The third of those prophets whose writings are dated, Micah, was active at the same time in the kingdom of Judah. Thus, the three of them cover one period, more or less the same as Isaiah does. The next prophet with a dated superscription, Zephaniah, acted during the last decades of the kingdom of Judah. In this case the dating is of particular relevance because immediately after Zephaniah there is the great chasm between the end of the independent Israelite or Judean political existence and the life under Persian rule including the Babylonian Exile. Nothing of that is mentioned in the texts, but the reader understands it when the next two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, are dated according to the Persian king Darius. And the reader will be confronted with certain new problems.

But what about the writings that are not dated? Of course, it would be too simple to say that those who put the individual writings together had no information about the

---

[4]This is explicitly also the approach of E.W.Conrad, "The End of Prophecy and the Appearance of Angels/Messengers in the Book of the Twelve", *JSOT* 73 (1997) 6579.

[5]In this paper I will use the expression "book" only for the Book of the Twelve while calling the individual "writings" by the name of the prophet associated with that work (e.g., Hosea, Joel, etc.). When it is necessary to refer to the prophet, as opposed to the literary product, I will indicate this specifically (e.g., "the prophet Hosea," "the prophet Joel," etc.).

time of the activity of these prophets. From that point of view the question would be even more urgent why the undated writings have been put just at the places where they now stand. Seemingly in most cases there were no particular chronological reasons. But what other reasons could there have been?

Only recently have scholars begun to ask these kinds of questions. It is obvious that some of the writings are dealing with central topics that do not at all appear in certain other writings. One of these topics is the "day of the LORD." This day is once mentioned in Amos (5:18-20). Here the reader gets the impression that it is well known to Amos' audience what kind of day this would be. But from where do they know? The present reader of the Book of the Twelve knows it from the writing that precedes Amos, from Joel, where the "day of the LORD" is the main and central topic. But then it is again the central topic in the writing that follows after Amos: Obadiah. That means that these three, Joel, Amos and Obadiah, form a group of writings in which the "day of the LORD" is of central importance. Now, Joel as well as Obadiah are undated. They could have been put at any place where they would fit for other than chronological reasons. Therefore it would make sense to see their actual position based on the common topic of the "day of the LORD." Since Amos' position in the book is given by its dating, Joel and Obadiah might have been incorporated to surround, or even to frame, Amos.[6] But now from this group of writings almost at the beginning of the Book of the Twelve the theme of the "day of the LORD" has a strong impact on the whole book up to its very end (Mal 3:23[4:5]). Below I will discuss this question in detail.

Let us continue to ask the question of the position of the other undated writings within the Book of the Twelve. Why does Jonah follow Obadiah? Some scholars see it from a chronological point of view because of the assumed identification of the Jonah of the Twelve with the one of 2 Kgs 14:25. But if the authors (or "redactors" or whoever) of the final text wanted to emphasize this identification and wanted to use it as an argument for Jonah's placement, why did they not say it explicitly? The reader cannot find on his own any relationship between the actions and the message of the two Jonahs. But are there any relationships between Jonah and Obadiah? The main topic of Jonah is the question whether rescue from the divine judgment is possible. This is also one of the central questions of Joel with regard to the "day of the LORD." But for Obadiah this is not a problem because for him only Judah will

---

[6]This idea is to be found in A. Schart (see note 3), chap. 8: "Die Rahmung der Amosschrift durch Joel und Obadja."

be saved. In opposition to that, Jonah's message says: On the contrary, even Nineveh can be saved if it really will repent.

Related to this question is the next one: What about the position of Nahum? How is the relation between Jonah and Nahum to be understood? Their common theme is the fate of Nineveh. Now the reader might ask: Did Nineveh repent or not? These questions will also have to be discussed below. Together with this, we have to ask about the position of Habakkuk. In this case a rather clear chronological reason seems to be obvious. Habakkuk speaks about the enemy that only appeared in the last period of Israel's or Judah's pre-exilic history: the Chaldeans, i.e. Babylon. This brings Habakkuk close to Zephaniah which is dated into that period. Finally, Malachi belongs quite obviously in the post-exilic era and could not have been put anywhere else.

II

Before following certain main lines that run through the Book of the Twelve some remarks of caution are in order. Even if we hope to understand something of the internal coherence of the different writings which are assembled in this book we have to be aware that the individual writings have preserved their specific profiles. In one case or the other we might find explicit quotations or references between different writings, but the coherence will mainly be recognizable by certain interrelations in themes and terminology. We have to imagine that those responsible for the given composition of the Book of the Twelve assume that the reader has read what is written in the preceding writings and relates it to what he or she reads later.

In this respect, let us follow the first main line that runs almost through the whole Book of the Twelve: the "day of the LORD."[7] Joel, where this topic appears first, is something of a collection of different views of that day. At first the "day of the LORD" befalls Israel (chs. 1-2), at the end it is a divine judgment against Israel's enemies (ch.4[3]) where Israel is just a bystander, and in between a great cosmic event affects "all flesh" (ch.3 [2:28-32]). Of particular importance is the question how Israel, or any human being, might escape the threatening danger of this day. At the peak of the events in the first description of the coming of the LORD' s day God's voice is heard: "Yet even now, turn back to me (*šubû ʾăday*) with all your hearts" (2:12). There is a chance to turn, to repent—even now! The prophet adds, quoting

[7]See also my article "Alas for the day! The 'Day of the LORD' in the Book of the Twelve" (forthcoming in a *Festschrift*).

one of the most fundamental confessions of God's grace and mercy: "For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in kindness" (2:13, cf Exod 34:6). But the prophet knows that there will be no guarantee that God himself will turn away (*yāšûb*) from his plans; there can only be a fearful hope: *mî yôdēa'* "Who knows?" (v.14). But when the people assemble and the priests pray: "Spare your people, O LORD!" (vv.16-17), God hears the prayer. He gives the people back what they had lost, makes the country fruitfiu1 and assures them of peace and joy (vv.19-26). For the people this is not only the end of the disaster but more than that: "You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD, your God, and there is no other' (v.27).

In the following chapter the appearance of the "day of the LORD" is quite different. It is an eschatological event in a rather strict sense. It will happen "after that" (3:1[2:28]) which obviously means "at the end of the days" or the like.[8] Neither Israel nor its enemies are mentioned, but the events will affect "all flesh." Portents of different kinds will occur which will also have dangerous sides, like blood and darkness, and the "day of the LORD" is called "the great and terrible" day (vv. 3-4[30-31]). Therefore again the question must arise, "Who will be saved?." This time the prophet answers: "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (v.5[321). This is not too far from the first answer that there must be return, or repentance, to be saved. Just at this point it becomes clear that all this will not happen in a vacuum far from any reality, "for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be the assembly of those who escape(*pĕlêṭa*)." All this is insolubly connected with God's relation to all mankind that has its center in Zion. And even more: God himself will call those who survive.[9] This expresses a very important interrelation between "to call on (*qārā'*) the name of the LORD" and the LORD's "calling (*qārā'*)" the survivors, the latter appearing as a kind of divine reaction to the first. If I understand this passage correctly, it announces the existence of a very limited group of survivors after the "day of the LORD", a group not exclusively comprised of Israelites, but all those who, under the impact of the divine spirit (v.1-2[28-29]), will call on his name in the days of need. They are also the ones whom he will call into the group of survivors.

---

[8]In Acts 2:17 this text is quoted: *kai estai en tais eschatais hemerais*.

[9]Some commentators have difficulties with the last words of this verse; also the JPS Bible says: "Meaning of Heb. uncertain."

The last chapter of Joel (ch.4[3]) again shows a different view of the "day of the LORD." Now Israel's (or Judah's) enemies are punished by God. Israel is not affected. And even when "the sun and the moon are darkened and the stars withdraw their shining" (v.15) and "the LORD roars from Zion" (v.16) he will be a "refuge" and a "stronghold" for his people. They shall know that he dwells in Zion and that Jerusalem shall be holy (v.17). This depiction of the "day of the LORD" seems to be incompatible with the two foregoing views in several respects. In particular the question "Who will be saved?" does not arise here, because "God's people" (v.16) seems to remain untouched. But this is not the message of Joel as a whole. At the beginning of the first appearance of the LORD's day (chs. 1-2) Israel was far from being saved and had deeply to repent in order to escape the threatening events.

Joel shows that the "day of the LORD" can be experienced under quite different aspects. In some cases Israel itself feels threatened by that day, and therefore the question of escape and survival will be in the center. In other cases Israel is just looking at events that happen to other people without being affected itself. Finally Israel is involved in the events of that day being a part of the whole mankind ("all flesh"). Here, only individuals can survive, no matter whether Israelites or not. Therefore we have to read Joel not as one consistent message of one prophet but as a kind of collection of different and in certain respects divergent views of what could be meant by the term "the day of the LORD." When studying the Book of the Twelve in its continuation we have to keep in mind that the potential reader is aware of these different aspects of the "day of the LORD."

III

Turning to Amos, the reader is confronted again and again with descriptions of disastrous events in which the LORD himself is acting. When it is told that "the LORD roars from Zion" (Am 1:2) the reader will be reminded of the last chapter in Joel where this threatening sound does not endanger Israel but only its enemies (Joel 4:16[3:161). Indeed, in Amos, a series of words of divine judgment against Israel's neighbors follows immediately, and the LORD's acting is described as "day of battle" (Am 1:14). But then it becomes clear that Israel will be included in the divine judgment as well (2:4-5, 6-16). At the last point of the disaster when even the most courageous of the warriors flees away naked it is said that this will happen "on that day" (2:16). This is not too far from the expression "the day of the LORD." Later the LORD's punitive action is announced by "on the day of my punishing Israel" (3:14). In these cases the reader coming from Joel cannot hear the word "day" as simply indicating a certain point in time. It is the day when the LORD acts.

When it comes to the explicit discussion about the "day of the LORD" (5:18-20) the reader is fully aware of the context of this expression. The people whom Amos is addressing like the view of this important future day as explained in the last chapter of Joel (4[3]) as God's punishment of Israel's enemies. They might even have understood —or rather misunderstood—Amos' repeating the words from Joel (Am 1:2=Joel 4:16 [3:16]) in that sense. But now Amos warns them of the other side of the "day of the LORD" that is also explained in Joel: that it is darkness and not light. In Joel this is particularly threatening where the "day of the LORD" affects Israel itself (Joel 2:2). This is actually the difference between Amos' audience and Amos himself in their respective expectations with regard to the "day of the LORD." Amos can only expect this day to come as a judgment over Israel.

Immediately before this discussion Amos has sharply criticized the social and legal behavior of his audience (Am 5:7-12) and has named the present time an "evil time" (v.13). He called his audience to turn around, to do the opposite of what they have done before: "Seek good and not evil...Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate", and he added: "Perhaps (*ʾûlay*) the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph" (vv.14-15). This recalls again Joel where at the peak of the endangering events of the "day of the LORD" God himself called the people to return, and the prophet added: "Who knows but he may turn and relent" (Joel 2:12-14). Amos' *ʾûlay* comes quite close to Joel's *mî yôdēaʿ*. And then Amos begins to describe a situation of wailing and mourning culminating in the words "Then I pass through your midst, says the LORD" (vv.16-17). All these are signs of a coming of God to judgment and punishment of his people. Therefore, if this really would be the "day of the LORD" it would obviously be directed against Israel, and the only chance to escape would be to turn away from evil and repent.

Reading Amos that way, the passage about the "day of the LORD" would not at all be as isolated in its context as some commentators see it. The preceding description of God's coming to judge Israel as well as the call to "seek good and not evil", i.e. to turn and repent, belong to the context of the "day of the LORD" in Joel and establish the wider context for Amos. One could add some other points. In the long poem in Amos 4 the prophet describes several ways by which God punished his people, always ending with "yet you did not return to me, says the LORD" (v.6, 8, 9, 10, 11). One of God's punishments are the locusts (v.9). The reader will remember that in Joel just in the case of a locust plague the people *did* return and were saved and restituted (Joel 2:15-27). So the Joel text can serve as a contrast to the bad situation Amos has to criticize. And when God is "forming locusts" (Am 7:1) it would again remind the reader of Joel. Another point might be the mention

of Zion in Am 6:1. Are those "who are at ease in Zion" again those who took the wrong conclusions from Joel where at the end it is said that God dwells on Zion (Joel 4:17, 21[3:17, 21]), and already earlier that on Zion "there shall be those who escape (*pĕlêṭa*)" (3:5[2:32])?

When read sequentially to Joel, the features of the "day of the LORD" are present almost everywhere in Amos.[10] But then the reader continues to Obadiah. Again the "day of the LORD" is the central topic. But this time this day is expected only to come over Israel's (or Judah's) closest enemy: Edom/Esau. This reminds of Joel 4[3] where also only Israel's enemies are the target of the divine punishment on that day. Also the extension of the day to "all nations" (Ob 15) is in accordance with Joel. Finally the expectation that on Mount Zion "there shall be those who escape (*pĕlêṭâ*)" (v.17) sounds like a quotation from Joel 3:5[2:32]). But there is one remarkable difference: In Joel the remnant will consist of the believers from all nations who called the name of the LORD and whom he himself calls. In Obadiah it is only the house of Jacob (or house of Joseph), who shall rule from Mount Zion over their enemies, and there will be no survivor of the house of Esau (Ob 18). But the reader still remembers Amos' words: "Why do you want the day of the LORD? It is darkness, not light" (Am 5:18). Therefore the reader has to read Obadiah with this critical question in mind. And when finally it is said: "The kingdom shall be the LORD's" (Ob 21) it makes it clear that the ultimate rulership is with God and not with humans, be it Israel or anyone else. Anyhow, Obadiah is best read in the critical light of Amos.

Continuing to Jonah with these questions in mind the reader will be confronted with an almost contradictory message. Obadiah seems to say that only Judah will be saved. Jonah explains that on the contrary also the gentiles have a chance to be saved when they turn back and repent. Read that way Jonah is another critical warning towards the position of Obadiah—and, of course, not only toward Obadiah but also toward this kind of thinking among people in Judah and among the potential readers of the Book of the Twelve. There is always a chance to be saved, for every human—if they turn back. The people in Nineveh did, and God reacted to their behavior (Jonah 3). They did what, according to Amos, the Israelites did not (Am

[10]It would be worthwhile to study the use of the term "day" in such a wider sense because the studies on the "day of the LORD" tend to be too technical under "formula critical" aspects. In this context it would be interesting to study the term "on that day" (*bayyôm hāhû'*), cf. e.g., Amos 2:16; 8:3, 9, 13. Of course, this formula can also express a positive expectation as e.g. in Amos 9:11. But how is that related to the complexity of the idea of the "day of the LORD"?

4). At the decisive point the king of Nineveh speaks like the prophet did in Joel 2:14: "Who knows (*mî yôdēa*ʿ) but God may turn and relent." Above we have compared this with Amos' "perhaps (*ʾûlay*)." Here again it can be seen that the different aspects of turning back, of repentance, are among those elements running through the Book of the Twelve and opening different views on prophetic preaching within this book.

IV

Before following up the further development of the topic of the "day of the LORD" we meet another interrelation within the Book of the Twelve. In Nahum, Nineveh appears again (Nah 1:1 etc.), but this time not as a repentant city like in Jonah but as one that is terribly punished by God. The city or its representative are said to do (or to be) *bĕliyyaʿal* "wickedness" (or "a wicked one" 1:11; 2:1), and nothing is to be heard about a willingness or a chance to repent. The end of Nineveh will be a cause for joy for Nahum's audience (2:1[1: 15]). How can this be related to the message of Jonah?

In my view, Jonah does not portray Nineveh as a real political power. Nineveh is not primarily seen as a danger for Israel and Judah but as the prime example of a gentile city which is particularly sinful on the one hand (thus deserving divine judgment). On the other hand, in spite of its sinful nature, it has the chance to repent and to survive. Neither Israel nor Judah appears at all in all of Jonah. There is just the prophet Jonah who has to explain in narrative form a theological problem, namely whether God's grace will also embrace repentant gentiles.[11] The message is, that even an extraordinary sinful gentile city like "Nineveh" can repent and be saved. Nahum, however, is much closer to the experience Judah had with the real Nineveh. They felt it to be a dangerous and not at all a God-fearing power which is acting in a way that does not show any signs of repentance. Reading Nahum after Jonah the message can only be: "Nineveh" as the representative of gentile powers would have had a chance to repent and to be saved, yet the real Nineveh did not seize this chance but on the contrary acted like a "city of bloodshed" (Nah 3:1). Therefore it will be punished by God.

The divergence or even contradiction between Jonah and Nahum is in a sense comparable with the relation between Joel and Obadiah. Nahum as well as Obadiah

---

[11]There is an additional problem involved: that of the 'false prophet' whose predictions will not be fulfilled; but this does not touch our present discussion.

show a very one-sided view being seemingly untroubled by any idea of Israel's or Judah's sins. As shown above, in the case of Obadiah the reader of the Book of the Twelve is served with several other views that can help him to correct Obadiah's view by putting it into a wider framework. Habakkuk follows Nahum. Habakkuk is basically concerned with the lack of justice within his own people. The Chaldeans appear as the successors of the Assyrians (i.e., of Nineveh) as the leading power of the world surrounding Israel. They come to punish Israel, and only later does the tide turn so that the Chaldeans are judged by God as well. In Zephaniah Nineveh is mentioned again as being destroyed by God (2:13), but after that Jerusalem is punished as well (3:1-8). Judah's and Jerusalem's sins are one of the main themes of Zephaniah. Thus both, Habakkuk and Zephaniah are offering a framework to counteract Nahum's one-sidedness.

In Zephaniah the topic of the "day of the LORD" is again the dominating theme. The day is coming over the whole world and humankind, but first of all over Judah (1:4-6). Yet there is one characteristic difference between Zephaniah and all the former writings dealing with the "day of the LORD." At the very beginning Zephaniah names the reason why this disaster is coming: because of Judah's sins, in particular in the cultic field but also in the exploitation of their neighbors (v.11-13). This is not only another counterbalance to Nahum but its effect is also tied back to Obadiah. It adds a specific element to the whole theme of the "day of the LORD." When it comes upon Israel it is the divine reaction to Israel's sins. Even Joel did not say this explicitly. But now, looking back from the end of the series of prophetic writings about the "day of the LORD," it is evident that the judgment for Israel's sins is one of the decisive reasons for the coming of that disaster.[12]

Another important point is the prophet's call to gather and "Seek the LORD..., seek righteousness, seek humility...!" with its continuation: "Perhaps you will find shelter on the day of the LORD's wrath" (2:1-3). These wordings are close to Amos 5:14-15: "Seek" (*biqqĕšû*, Amos: *diršû*), and then the hopeful *ʾûlay* looking forward to a gracious divine reaction. As mentioned above, these words of Amos again are close to those of Joel where God himself calls the people to return (*šubû ʿaday*), and the prophet adds: "Who knows (*mî yôdēaʿ*) whether he may turn and relent" (Joel

[12]Zephaniah has his own terminology. Alongside the term *yôm yhwh* (1:7, 14; 2:2, 3) he uses the expanded terms *yôm ʿebrat yhwh* (1:18) end *yôm ʾap-yhwh* (2:2, 3), he calls the day *gādôl, mar, yôm ṣārāh ûmĕṣûqāh, yôm šoʾāh ûmĕšoʾāh, yôm hošek waʾăpēlāh, yôm ʿānān waʿărpel, yôm šôpar ûtĕrûʿāh* (1:15-16). This kind of expressions should be included in a broader study of the terminology of the "day of the LORD" (see note 11).

2:12-14). When reading the Book of the Twelve in its continuity the reader will realize that these three prophets—Joel, Amos and Zephaniah—are very close to each other in relating the "day of the LORD" to the call to repent or to "seek" and in expressing a very reticent and even fearful hope that God might listen and react to a change in the behavior of the people. This is important for the understanding of the Book of the Twelve as a whole, because these three prophets cover the entire span within which the topic of the "day of the LORD" appears, except Malachi (see below). Thus, in a certain way, they mark the message of the whole book.

V

The last chapter of the Book of the Twelve[13] speaks again of the "day of the LORD." The full title *yôm yhwh* is only mentioned at the very end (Mal 3:23[4:5]) where the day is called again "the great and terrible day of the LORD." But that day is announced already at the beginning of this chapter. God will send his messenger, "but who can endure the day of his coming?" (3:1-2) This recalls the first appearance of the "day of the LORD" in the Book of the Twelve where the same question was asked (Joel 2:11). It seems to be a kind of an inclusio between the first and the last appearance of this term: The question "who can endure?" is always to be presumed present when the "day of the LORD" is near.

This time the "day of the LORD" will first be a time of internal scrutiny within Israel, a refinement and judgment with regard to cultic and social behavior (Mal 3:2b-5). But then God will write in a book those who fear him and value his name, and "on the day that I am preparing" they will be his special possession (*sĕgullâ*) (v.16-17). Again the reverence for the name of the LORD plays an important role like previously in Joel 3:5[2:23] and Zeph 3:9, 12. Finally the day will come "burning like an oven" and will burn all the evildoers like straw (Mal 3:19[4:1]). In Obadiah 18 the house of Esau was the straw and the house of Jacob the flame, but now in Malachi the judgment is based upon an internal distinction: The evildoers will burn like straw, while for those who revere the name of the LORD, the sun of righteousness shall rise (3:20[4:2]); and they shall tread down the wicked under their feet (v.21[3]).

The last verses of Malachi (3:22-24[4:4-6]) are simultaneously the last paragraph of the *nĕbî îm*. Here the "day of the LORD" appears in a remarkable context. The naming of Moses at the end of the collection of prophetical writings alongside Elijah

---

[13]In the Hebrew Bible Mal 3 is the last chapter, including ch.4 in the English Bible.

obviously serves the function of connecting the first two main parts of the canon of the Hebrew Bible, Torah and *nĕbî'îm*, to each other.[14] The second coming of Elijah will happen "before the day of the LORD comes." This wording recalls Joel 3:45[2:31-32]. But what is the meaning of the last verse Mal 3:24[4:6]? God "will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents." That means he will bring reconciliation among those who are split in several respects according to the discussions previously reflected in Malachi. This reconciliation will be necessary in order to avoid the eschatological judgment. Again, this recalls Joel where it is said that those who call on the name of the LORD shall escape. The parallelism is obvious: Certain fundamental elements of behavior in the face of God are essential to be blessed with eschatological salvation.

VI

Just a brief summary. In this first attempt I tried to find out whether there are definable lines running through the Book of the Twelve indicating certain common themes or conceptions. It is obvious that the topic of the "day of the LORD" is one of the dominating themes in the book. The question is, whether there are deliberate interrelations between the different writings that deal with this theme within the Book of the Twelve. Here, the observation about the compositional relationships of the three writings of Joel, Amos, and Obadiah has proven to be very fruitful.[15] In following the insights gained by the study of the highly complex interrelationships of these writings, many more common elements appeared throughout the book. I mention in particular the whole complex of repentance and salvation in the face of the "day of the LORD." I think that those observations should not be limited to certain terms but should rather pay attention to similar ideas expressed by different words as e.g. *šûb*, *biqqeš*, *dāraš* etc., and, of course, *ʾûlay* and *mî yôdēaʿ*. The same is true with regard to the term "day of the LORD" itself. It is my impression that in many cases where the term "day" appears, be it alone or in certain combinations, the reader of the Book of the Twelve should associate something like the "day of the LORD." Of course, the outcome is far from being unified. On the contrary, in the Book of the Twelve we find a number of controversies, and even contradictions, that are characteristic for the Hebrew Bible in general.

---

[14]See J.Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press) 1977, 120-123.

[15]See note 6.

Finally I want to point out that in studying the Book of the Twelve as a whole there cannot be a simple alternative between "diachronic" and "synchronic" reading. The diachronic features are not only obvious but are explicitly marked by the different datings of a number of writings within the book. On the other hand those who put the different writings together in their given shape (however we want to call them) obviously want the reader to read the writings in their continuity and to reflect upon their different messages. I think it is a challenging and fascinating exegetical task to follow their advice.

A Deuteronomistic Redaction in/among "The Twelve"?

A Contribution from the Standpoint of the books of Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah

Ehud Ben Zvi
University of Alberta

1. Introduction

A renewed interest in the claim that the prophetic books underwent a substantial deuteronomistic redaction/s is obvious in the last years. The works of Coggins, Nogalski and Alvarez Barredo,[1] to mention a few, as well as the vivid discussions on this topic in the sessions of the 1996 Deuteronomistic History Section of the SBL (as well as some of the papers in the 1996 meeting of the Consultation on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve[2]) clearly attest to this development.[3]

The reasons for this renewed interest are multiple. It is due in part to the implications that this position has (or may have) regarding the scholarly understanding of the composition and redaction of the prophetic books in general and the present debate about the redactional unity (or lack thereof) of "The Twelve" (or a proto-Twelve corpus). From a larger perspective, the attention given to these issues reflects the clear intertwining between the debate about possible deuteronomistic redactions (/redaction) or influence in these prophetic books and that about the scope, nature and even existence of a deuteronomistic corpus (or corpora) elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, and in particular with that regarding the "deuteronomistic" character of the

---

[1] R. J. Coggins, "What Does 'Deuteronomist' Mean?," *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed. Essays in Honour of John F. A. Sawyer* (eds. J. Davies, G. Harvey and W.G.E. Watson; JSOTS 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 135-48; M. Alvarez Barredo, *Relecturas Deuteronomisticas de Amós, Miqueas y Jeremías* (Publicaciones del Instituto Teológico Franciscano 10; Murcia: 1993); J. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 217; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993); and cf. A. Schart, *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs* (Habilitationsschrift; Phillips-Universität Marburg, 1995).

[2] E.g., A. Schart, "The Combination of Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah on a Single Scroll: Unifying Devices and Redactional Intentions."

[3] Almost opposite sides of the spectrum of ideas and approaches were represented by (1) R. Kugler, "Prophets and Pan-deuteronomism" and (2) S. L. Cook, "Micah's Deuteronomistic Redaction and the Deuteronomists' Identity." Papers related to this debate were presented also at the 1996 session of the "Formation of the Book of the Twelve."

(so-called) Deuteronomistic History. In turn, these debates are deeply related to those regarding the (historical) existence or lack thereof of a deuteronomistic movement or movements in ancient Israel. It goes without saying that the last of these issues has profound implications for the reconstruction of the history of ideas in ancient Israel, in particular and its history in general.

It is obvious that a full discussion of these issues requires a lengthy monograph or a series of monographs. However, it is the contention of this study that despite its inherent genre limitations, a paper may still shed some light on these issues, provided that it approaches them from a relatively narrow focus, such as the question of potential deuteronomistic redaction(s) and influences upon a few prophetic books. This study will focus on the books of Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah.[4] The conclusions arrived through this focused study will then be tentatively set within the larger frames within which the debate is carried.

2. General Considerations and the Basic Ground of the Hypotheses of Dtr. Redaction/s.

There is ample support in modern research for the claim that the prophetic books (i.e., those later included in the "Latter Prophets" section of the HB) in general and those included in "The Twelve" (e.g., Micah, Zephaniah) in particular underwent deuteronomistic redaction/s or, that they have been edited under the influence of (or even by) the/a deuteronomistic movement. This claim is based, in the main, on:

(a) the construction of a deuteronomic/deuteronomistic corpus of literature (namely, Deuteronomy-Kings + the "deuteronomic [or deuteronomistic] prose sermons of Jeremiah") that is set as a standard for "deuteronomisticity" against which other corpora (or individual biblical books, or textual subunits within a book) may be compared;

(b) the position that there was in ancient Israel a deuteronomistic movement/school or deuteronomistic group/s (or tradents) that were clearly differentiated from all other contemporaneous groups/movements/schools by a distinctive set of language and ideas, i.e., by the creation and development of a particular sociolect and theological discourse;

(c) the claim that some theological ideas that are considered to be central in dtr. thought are expressed in the relevant prophetic book;

(d) the observation that some words or expressions appear in both the dtr. corpus and in the text of the relevant prophetic book (i.e., the one that is

---

[4] Two of these books (Micah and Zephaniah) are often associated with a dtr. redaction or redactions.

claimed to have been edited/redacted by a dtr. group or under the influence of dtr. thought); and

(e) the adoption of a set of redactional-critical hypotheses in regards to the formation of the relevant prophetic book, and of their necessary presuppositions.

This being so, this paper proceeds with a critical examination of each of the mentioned "bases" on which the claim for a dtr. redaction/edition rests.[5] This examination will begin with the general redactional issues (i.e., point "e" above), then it will address the more particular issues referred to as points "c" and "d." It will focus then on the more general historical and methodological issues that are involved in the (a-b) construction. The analysis of the latter, within the contexts of the conclusions reached by studying the former, will set the grounds for an alternative approach to these issues, within a larger frame (see section "6").[6]

3. Redactional Issues: Some Considerations

Since point (e) above raises critical questions that I have addressed in several other occasions,[7] it would suffice here to stress the following:

(1) A claim for a deuteronomistic redaction implies by necessity not only that there was a text that existed before the redaction but that this text and the textual additions and transformations that came about due to the redaction can be reconstructed (at least, in the main) and, accordingly characterized (or even "classified") in terms of, among other things,

---

[5] At least for the purposes and scope of this paper this approach seems preferable to the sequential and separate analysis of each textual unit or subunit that has been associated with the dtr. movement or dtr. redaction/s.

[6] It is worth mentioning already at this stage that points (a) and (b) are closely related since the proposed existence of dtr. groups/schools is an inference made mainly on the basis of the literary corpus referred to in (a). This becomes clear once one recognizes that had Deuteronomy-Kings been lost, no one would have advanced the idea of deuteronomistic groups.

[7] See E. Ben Zvi, *A Historical-Critical Study of the Book of Obadiah* (BZAW 242; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996); *idem*, "Twelve Prophetic Books or 'The Twelve.' A few Preliminary Considerations," *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (eds. P. House and J. W. Watts; JSOTS 235, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996), 125-156; *idem*, "Studying Prophetic Texts against their Original Backgrounds: Pre-Ordained Scripts and Alternative Horizons of Research," *Prophets and Paradigms. Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker* (ed. S. R. Reid, JSOTS 229; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 124-35.
This is one of several issues that I have recently discussed and that are relevant to the present discussion. In all these cases, only a short reference (or summary) will be included in this paper. Of course, full bibliographic references will be provided.

sociolect, authorship/redactionship, theology/ideology. This claim is (at least) debatable, and particularly so given the following two considerations.

(2) Redactional claims tend to create and control their own "textual evidence." In other words, they tend to strongly govern the way in which data is interpreted.[8] Thus, for instance, if a book such as the book of Zephaniah contains, as it does, a relatively lengthy section that resembles a text in the book of Ezekiel (see Zeph 3:3-4 and cf. Ezek 22:25,27,28,26,29) this data will not be considered as strong evidence that an Ezekielian group/"movement" (i.e., a particular social group characterized by its use of Ezekielian language) redacted (or authored) the present book of Zephaniah, nor does the relation between Zeph 2:15 and Isa 47:8 suggest to most scholars that (in addition to others, also) a (Deutero)Isaianic group redacted (or authored) Zephaniah. Yet the mentioned textual relations are clearly much closer than the alleged relations between texts in the standard dtr. corpus and the books and Zephaniah and Micah (e.g., the use of לקח מוסר in Zeph 3:2, 7 or פדה מבית עבדים in Mic 6:4; on these and other examples see below).

Likewise the presence in the book of Zephaniah of a number of themes and precise language that appear in Psalms or Proverbs[9] is usually not interpreted in the same manner than the presence of similar features if the latter are associated with deuteronomistic characteristics (for examples, see below), nor is the presence of the former weighted against that of the latter (see below) when claims about a deuteronomistic (as opposed to a "Psalmic" or "wisdom") redaction/influence are advanced.

Moreover, if a postexilic date for the books of Micah, Obadiah and Zephaniah is accepted—and accordingly one assumes that much of the dtr. corpus was known to the authors of the text—then it seems reasonable to assume that both (a) the lack of significant typical deuteronomistic phraseology at places where it could have been easily used—see esp. section "6"—and (b) the obvious preference for a unique language outweighs the presence of a few words that do appear in deuteronomistic texts.[10] Yet if one assumes a dtr. redactional model, one may consider the same evidence as pointing to a social and historical process in which an earlier text that

---

[8] To the point that "textual evidence" is created or controlled by the assumptions that this "evidence" is meant to support, the entire argument suffers from circularity.

[9] See, for instance, the situation in Zeph 1:15; 2:3, 11; 3:9 which I have discussed elsewhere (see Ben Zvi, *A Historical Critical Study of the Book of Zephaniah* (BZAW 198, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991) 122-23; 144-49, 174-75, 225-26.

[10] See, for instance, Zeph 1:4-5 whose main "idolatrous" terms (i.e., Baal, host of heaven and priestlings) are found in 2 Kings 23, but whose text is unequivocally different from that in 2 Kings 23 (or any of its subunits) and nowhere seems to imitate this text (cf. Ben Zvi, *Zephaniah,* 78-79). Mic 6:16 which is discussed below presents a similar case.

included no dtr. elements was edited by a deuteronomistic group, and then by a post-deuteronomistic group.[11]

(3) Many of the redactional reconstructions on which proposed dtr. redactions are often based on a set of questionable premises. Thus, for instance, according to Jörg Jeremias:

> The books of Amos and Hosea have much in common. This fact is not surprising but is to be expected since both prophets spoke in the northern kingdom which would soon come to an end. Naturally, they shared common convictions, and they condemned similar guilt and crime, and of course, the younger one, Hosea, knew the older one.
>
> ... I can understand these literary connections on different levels [between the books of Hosea and Amos] only if the pupils of Amos and the pupils of Hosea who handed down the message of the prophets . . .[12]

It goes without saying that Jeremias's analysis assumes (a) the existence of two social groups, namely the pupils of Amos and those of Hosea; and (b) that both books were written by the relevant pupils on the grounds of the message of the prophet whom they have heard and followed. Clearly if any of these two premises is wrong, then his analysis will fall apart. But is the claim that Amos and Hosea had "pupils" well supported by the evidence[13]? Moreover, even if for the sake of the argument one grants that each of them had a group of disciples/pupils, is there any evidence that these groups continue to exist as separate social groups quite long after the death of their prophet/teacher[14]? Furthermore, even if one grants this

---

[11] The inconsistency in the application of principles that was pointed out in this section is usually due to some basic assumptions about the redactional history of the prophetic books. These assumptions govern the interpretation of the "bare data," and thus, create or control what is seen as "textual evidence." See above.

[12] J. Jeremias, "The Interrelationship between Amos and Hosea," *Forming Prophetic Literature,* 171.

[13] To be sure, Jeremias's proposal of "pupils" is similar to the common references to "tradents" if the latter are constructed as tradents of only one particular tradition, i.e., "Isaianic tradents," "Jeremianic tradents," and the like.
(It is worth noting also that the concept of tradent is most often associated with the idea that the first forerunner of the prophetic book is to be found in the actual words/proclamation of a historical prophet rather than on a literary construction of a prophet of the past and of YHWH's word as associated with him, and whose resemblance to a historical character is at best of secondary importance. On pre-ordained scripts governing research and their horizons of research see Ben Zvi, "Studying.")

[14] It goes without saying that the existence of the text itself is no proof for the existence of such a group. The reference to "teacher" in the pair "prophet/teacher" follows the use

assumption, is there any reason to assume that these groups consisted of the kind of literati necessary for the production of the books attributed to them, i.e., books such as Amos and Hosea that imply a high level of literacy both regarding readership and authorship? Finally, are Amos and Hosea basically (a) two literary characters who are created and shaped within the world of their respective books and to whom the (re)readership of the books has access through their (re)reading of the relevant texts, but whose resemblance to historical figures who lived in the northern kingdom is largely unknown, or are they (b) two historical prophets about whom so much is known that we may use their life, words and circumstances as the starting point for an *historical* analysis of the history of ideas and the production of literary texts in monarchic Israel?

It goes without saying that a full discussion of these issues is impossible within the frame of this paper. It is worth stressing for the purpose of this paper, however, that much of the claim about deuteronomistic redaction/s in the prophetic books is grounded on a set of particular redactional-critical constructions that rest on (at least) questionable grounds.

Thus, for instance, texts in Micah and Zephaniah that refer to the destruction of Jerusalem/Judah, the "exile" and restoration are often considered secondary (or redactional) and therefore some of them (the hopeful passages are usually excluded[15]) are at least potential candidates for a deuteronomistic redaction—on the basis that either (a) an historical prophet who lived several decades before the events could not have foreseen them or (b) these references are unlikely to be part of the books of Micah and Zephaniah that existed during the monarchic period. But if these two books were composed (as opposed to redacted)[16] in the postmonarchic period, then the mentioned reasons are irrelevant, and this being so, any argument about the "redactional" or "editorial" character of these texts that is based on these grounds falls apart.[17] If there is no convincing reason to

---

of the term "pupils" by Jeremias.

[15] They are often considered later than the dtr. redaction (e.g., Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 88). It is worth noting, however, that Deuteronomy itself contains references to the restoration that will come after the exile. In fact, its most bright promises refer to the situation that will obtain *after* the exile (see Deut 30:1-10; and cf. Deut 4:25-31). As Deurloo maintains, "according to its setting, Deuteronomy is a book of restoration," see K. A. Deurloo, "The One God and All Israel," *Studies in Deuteronomy in Honour of C. J. Labuschange* (eds. F. García Martínez, A. Hilhorst, J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, and A.S. van der Woude; SVT 53; Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1994) 31-46, quotation form p. 33.

[16] Composition may involve sources—even written sources—but it is a very different activity than redacting or editing a received book. Thus, for instance, Chronicles is never considered a redacted/edited version of the books of Samuel and Kings, but a book in its own right. I discussed these issues in Ben Zvi, *Obadiah*.

[17] Significantly, since the text of these books is postmonarchic and since it shows textual

assume that a certain text must be redactional, then there is no reason to assume that it must be part of a dtr. redaction. There is no dtr. redaction if there is no redaction.

An additional example, Nogalski's analysis of the composition of the book of the Twelve not only assumes the existence of such a book, but also sets his reconstruction of the putative stages of this corpus as the governing interpretative key for his textual analysis in general, and of the three books mentioned in the title of this paper, namely Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah. Again, there is no need to reiterate my recent critique of his approach,[18] yet it is worth stressing that (at least) debatable claims such as that the Book of the Twelve and its hypothetical forerunners were treated (and redacted) as one unit do govern the range of allowed interpretations.[19]

In sum, claims that the book of Micah, Zephaniah or Obadiah underwent a dtr. redaction/s are necessarily based on redactional hypotheses that are at least questionable.

---

coherence, then it seems that the burden of proof falls on those who claim earlier dates. Yet in many cases, the whole interpretation of the book, or at least of some significant sections, rests on a default position that associates any text in the book with the figure and time of the personage identified in the superscription, unless proven otherwise. I criticized this approach in E. Ben Zvi,

[18] See E. Ben Zvi, "Twelve Prophetic Books." It may be mentioned that Nogalski, Jeremias and other scholars who maintain the existence of a dtr. redaction/s in these books follow what I characterized in that paper as a "Writer/Redactor or Production Centered Approach" as opposed to an "Audience or Reception Centered Approach." Regarding Obadiah, see also Ben Zvi, *Obadiah*, passim.

[19] For instance, Nogalski states: "The mention of Samaria in Mic 1:5,6f clearly does not *depend* upon traditions in Ezekiel and Obadiah. *The question remains* whether the use of Samaria in Micah lies closer to the other 8th century prophets Hosea and Amos, or whether this usage falls nearer the Deuteronomistic polemic" (Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 133; emphasis mine). True there is no reason to assume that the text of Mic 1:5-7 depends upon any text in Ezekiel or Obadiah (nor vice versa), but if this is so do the two alternatives that Nogalski proposes comprise the entire range of possibilities? Probably yes, if one accepts Nogalski's reconstruction of the redactional processes and texts and his hypothesis regarding the book of the Twelve. (For a critique, see Ben Zvi, "Twelve.")

(Incidentally, one may also notice that the following positions are taken for granted: [a] we know substantially about the eighth century prophets as historical personages; [b] there existed "the [not "a"] Deuteronomistic polemic" against Samaria. Both claims are questionable. Significantly, the first one reflects certainty about the historicity of a certain shaping of the proposed historical figures that is based on a supposedly original [and likely oral] text, or better series of texts that are "recovered" by scholars from admittedly much later texts.)

4. Shared Words and Expressions

4.1 Introduction

Points "c" and "d" (see above; section 2) concern certain textual observations. The issue addressed in point "d" relates to words or expressions that appear in both the literature usually accepted as dtr. and prophetic books or certain sections of them, whereas that in point "c" with shared ideas, though not necessarily expressed by the same language. Of course, these "raw" observations provide "data;" the question of whether this data provides convincing evidence for a deuteronomistic redaction of prophetic books depends on the criteria used to analyze these data.

4.2 Citations or "Closely Related Texts"

Actual citations or the presence of closely related texts spanning for several versets are the best diagnostic tool for some form of direct textual relation among texts.[20] As it is known, the books of Micah, Obadiah and Zephaniah neither quote any portion of Deuteronomy-Kings nor show any single verse that appears in a closely related, textual form within that corpus.[21] In sharp contrast, each of these prophetic books contain texts that are closely related to other texts in prophetic books (see Mic 4:1-3 and cf. Isa 2:2-4; Zeph 3:3-4 and cf. Ezek 22:25,27,28,26,29; Zeph 2:15 and cf. Isa 47:8; Obad 1-7 and Jer 49:7, 14, 16, 9, 10). Moreover, texts in the Deuteronomy-Kings corpus are quoted elsewhere, both within that corpus (see 2 Kgs 14:6 and cf. Deut 24:16) and outside it as in Chronicles. Incidentally, the last example clearly shows that from the citation of deuteronomistic texts it does not necessarily follow that the texts were written or redacted by a deuteronomistic group. In any case, the lack of citation of deuteronomistic texts along with the non-existence of closely related texts of any significant length is certainly *not* suggestive of a deuteronomistic redaction.

---

[20] This relation may take the form of one text depending on the other, or both depending on a common written source.

[21] Some connections may be seen, however, between the books of Jeremiah and Zephaniah. The best example is that of Zeph 3:2 and Jer 7:28, but their relationship should not be interpreted in a void, it is to be contextualized by the presence of similar or stronger textual connections between Zeph 3:1-5 (and its subunits) and other texts. On these verses, see Ben Zvi, *Zephaniah*, 184-213, 315-17.

4.3 Typical Deuteronomistic Phraseology

Aside from citations or closely related texts, the best possible evidence for some form of relationship between the prophetic books discussed here and a deuteronomistic group of writers that is predicated on a particular language would be the presence of "classical deuteronomistic phraseology." This being so, the present analysis has to address the amount of overlap (or lack thereof) between an inventory of "classical deuteronomistic phraseology" that was not prepared with the books of Micah, Obadiah and Zephaniah in mind[22] and the actual language present in these prophetic books.[23]

There is probably no better comprehensive inventory than the one compiled by M. Weinfeld for these purposes.[24] This inventory includes 316 main entries. Significantly, none of these 316 main entries—along with all their subentries—is to be found in Obadiah. Only one is present in the book of Zephaniah, and two out of these 316 in the book of Micah. Moreover, the only entry that occurs both in Weinfeld's list and the book of Zephaniah is לקח מוסר which (a) is not a clear marker of deuteronomistic redaction/influence,[25] and (b) occurs within subunits that show no particular dtr style, nor seem to consist of "redactional" (as opposed to compositional) material.[26] Furthermore the two entries found in the text of Micah are in fact

---

[22] So as to avoid ad hoc hypotheses and circular thinking.

[23] Needless to say, should some overlap be found, this study should take into account not only mere occurrence of expressions but also the meaning/s that they convey in their literary context. According to Weinfeld "what makes a phrase deuteronomic is not its mere occurrence in Deuteronomy, but its meaning within the framework of deuteronomic theology." See M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 1-2; cf. M. Vervenne, "The Question of 'Deuteronomic' Elements in Genesis to Numbers," *Studies in Deuteronomy in Honour of C. J. Labuschange* (eds. F. García Martínez, A. Hilhorst, J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, and A.S. van der Woude; SVT 53; Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1994) 244-68; esp. p. 268.
One should note, however, that there is not one, single deuteronomistic theology. Cf. R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (ET, Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1994) II: 382-83, and *passim*; E. A. Knauf, "L'"Historiographie deutéronomiste" (DTRG) existe-t-elle?," *Israël construit son histoire* (eds. A. de Pury, T. Römer, Jean-Daniel Macchi; Genève: Labor et Fides, 1996) 410. On these issues see below.

[24] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, esp. 398-404.

[25] See below.

[26] לקח מוסר also occurs once in Zeph 3:2 and there within a unit (Zeph 3:1-5) that (a) is textually coherent with its literary environment and (b) its closest affinities are not with deuteronomistic literature. See Ben Zvi, *Zephaniah*, 184-213; 315-17. The second occurrence of לקח מוסר is also within a context (Zeph 3:6-7) that is not necessarily or even likely deuteronomistic (see Ben Zvi, *Zephaniah*, 213-19 and esp. 318).

only one, פדה מבית עבדים (Mic 6:4) which creates two "hits" in Weinfeld's inventory because the latter includes both פדה מבית עבדים and בית עבדים.[27]

Granted that some may tend to include among the "shared hits" three additional expressions in Micah and one in Zephaniah that come close to those included in Weinfeld's inventory of deuteronomistic phraseology, though their relevance is quite debatable.[28] But even if for the sake of the case one accepts these as "hits," the fact remains that about 99% of the typical deuteronomistic phraseology compiled by Weinfeld is absent in Micah and Zephaniah, and 100% of it is absent in Obadiah.[29]

---

[27] See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 326, 399, 403. (Perhaps it is worth mentioning that there is one instance of שחח in the hiphil in Zeph 3:7, but Weinfeld's list includes this verbal form only when it is intransitive which is not the case in Zeph 3:7. See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 340, 400 the examples there).

[28] The expressions in Micah are:

(1) מעשׂה ידיך referring to "idols" occurs in Mic 5:12 and in similar forms in dtr. texts (see Deut 4:28; 2 Kgs 19:18//Isa 37:19) but see also Isa 2:8; Pss 115:4; 135:15 (see above). Moreover, it may appear in works that are not deuteronomistic, but are aware of deuteronomistic works, see 2 Chr 32:19 (not directly paralleled in either Kings or Isaiah).

(2) באף ובחמה rather than באף ובחמה ובקצף גדול (see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 116, 348, 398) appears in Mic 5:14. Still, caution is warranted since the pair באף ובחמה is not necessarily a deuteronomistic marker (see, for instance, Ezek 5:15; 22:20; Pss 6:2; 90:7; cf. Ezek 25:14, and the pair חמה - אף is relatively common; e.g., Nah 1:6; Prov 21:14; 22:24; 29:22); moreover, the third term that in Mic 5:14 occurs along the other two (i.e., נקמ/ה) is found in Ezek 25:14, but not as a member of this triad in dtr. literature.

(3) נתן לשׁרקה וחרפה appear in Mic 6:16 (cf. Weinfeld, idem, 348, 402). The closest to the idiom in Micah is in Jer 29:18, but the differences are clear. Moreover, the choice of words in Mic 6:16 seems to point to a strong tendency to use unusual combinations (defamiliarize?) within a familiar territory. Thus one may note the rare occurrence of שׁמר חק/ה with שׁמר in the hitpael (rather than qal), and the choice of terms such as חקת עמרי and מעשׂה בית אחאב that do not occur elsewhere.

The expression in Zephaniah is כל עובר עליה ישׁרק (Zeph 2:15; cf. Weinfeld, idem, 402 which refers to 1 Kgs 9:8; Jer 19:8; 49:17; 50:13), and yet all the mentioned expressions (except that in Zeph 2:15) include ישׁם in the middle (as recognized by Weinfeld). A similar expression without ישׁם occurs in Lam 2:15 and, more important the text in Zeph 2:15 is closer to that in Isa 47:8 than to any dtr. text.

[29] Given the conclusions reached here and in 4.2, it is not surprising that when a scholar as sensible to literary style as A. Berlin refers to the "language and style of Zephaniah," she does mention the presence of unusual turns of phrase and uncommon terms (cf. section 6, below), but never a word about dtr. terminology or phraseology. A. Berlin, *Zephaniah* [AB 25A; New York: Doubleday, 1994] 11-13.

Of course, these data do not support the idea that a group that is identified by the use of deuteronomistic phraseology is responsible for these books. Moreover, from these data one has to infer that these books do not show a wording that may lead its rereaders[30] to closely associate them with the works included in the (standard) deuteronomistic corpus.[31] Moreover, the ease with which typical dtr. language can be reused and imitated[32] makes

---

[30] I am using the term "rereaders" rather than "readers" to draw attention to the fact that most of the reading of these texts was actually "rereading." The process of "rereading" is not identical to that of "reading" for the first time. Texts written so as to be continuously reread are much more likely to develop polisemy, potential and actual ambiguities and the like. On rereading from a (contemporaneous) literary perspective, see M. Calinescu, *Rereading* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1993); from that of empirical studies see, for instance, P. Dixon, M. Bortolussi, L. C. Twilley and A. Leung, "Literary Processing and Interpretation; Towards Empirical Foundations," *Poetics* 22 (1993) 5-33; and in relation to HB studies, see Ben Zvi, Obadiah, 4 and passim; and idem, "Micah 1.2-16. A Few Observations and its Possible Implications," JSOT (forthcoming).

[31] In other and less exact words, the books of Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah do not have the "feeling" of the books (later) included in the corpus Deuteronomy-King nor that of the prose sermons of Jeremiah. Cf. Berlin's comments on "the language and style of Zephaniah" (Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 11-13).

For a discussion of the "Audience or Reception Centered Approach" that is assumed here, see Ben Zvi, "Twelve Prophetic Books."

This approach is significant in many levels of the discussion about dtr. redaction/s of the relevant prophetic texts. For instance, van der Woude has proposed that the present book of Micah represents a deuteronomistic and Josianic combination of the writings of two prophets, namely Micah of Moresheth and another prophet whose name "may have been Micah as well," and who was from the northern kingdom of Israel and contemporaneous with Micah of Moreshet. Van der Woude attributes to the northern prophet—Deutero-Micah—chapters six and seven. See A. S. Van der Woude, "Three Classical Prophets: Amos, Hosea and Micah," *Israel's Prophetic Tradition. Essays in Honour of P. R. Ackroyd* (eds. R. Coggins, A. Phillips and M. Knibb; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 50-51; cf. Schökel-Sicre Díaz, *Prophets* (Madrid: Cristiandad, 1980) II, 1033-35, and F. C. Burkitt, "Micah 6 and 7: A Northern Prophecy," *JBL* 45 (1926) 159-61.

Leaving aside for the sake of the argument all the problems that this thesis faces, it is obvious that Mic 1:1 does not tell its rereaders that such is the case; to the contrary, Mic 1:1 asks the intended rereader to associate the entire book with the figure of Micah the Morashtite, which is to be expected since there is no prophetic book that is associated with more than one central prophetic figure (see Ben Zvi, "Twelve Prophetic Books.") So even if one were to grant the likelihood of this hypothesis, it will tell us nothing (or close to nothing) about the message of the book of Micah to its intended audience, not about the social role/s and influences that the repeated reading and study of this book could have had. Needless to say, the latter are the most likely reason that led to the composition of the book of Micah.

[32] Cf. Daniel 9. See T. Römer, "Y a t-il une rédaction deutéronomiste dans le livre de Jérémie?," *Israël construit son histoire,* 423-24 and the examples and bibliography

it impossible to explain its lack in the books of Obadiah, Micah and Zephaniah in terms of supposed ("technical") difficulties. It is most reasonable to assume that the absence of dtr. typical phraseology is neither the result of blind chance nor a necessity of their genre (i.e., prophetic book vis à vis historical narrative or the like) as clearly proven by the case of the book of Jeremiah.[33] In other words, it is not an "accident" that the books of Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah do not have the "feeling" of the books (later) included in the corpus Deuteronomy-Kings, but do possess their own feel. Possible explanations for this feature are advanced in section "6" below, but at this stage in the argument, other data regarding the wording of the books of Micah, Obadiah and Zephaniah and its relevance to the issue at stake should be examined.

4.4 Randomly Chosen Shared Words and Short Expressions

From the simple fact that a word appears both in a prophetic book and in the standard dtr. corpus it does not follow that the prophetic book underwent a dtr. redaction, nor that the particular unit in which the word appears represents a dtr. addition. In fact, it does not follow from this observation per se that the prophetic text (or section thereof) is necessarily closer (or communicates a sense of particular closeness) to the dtr. corpus than to other literary works that were later included in the HB. It is not only that the (Hebrew) biblical vocabulary is relatively circumscribed, but also Deuteronomy-Kings represents a very large section of the HB. By one count, Deuteronomy-Kings contains 83,682 words which is more than 27% of the total words in the Hebrew Bible (305,498) and far more than Genesis-Numbers (65,689), the books of Psalms (19,586), Proverbs (6,915), Isaiah (16,933), and Jeremiah (21,835) to mention a few.[34] Thus if there was a completely random choice of words then it is about twelve times more likely that a word appearing in one of the prophetic books would also occur in Deuteronomy-Kings than in Proverbs, or about four times more likely than in Psalms. In other words, under these conditions, twelve shared occurrences between Deuteronomy-Kings and Micah[35] weigh as much as one between Proverbs and the relevant prophetic book. Significantly, since

---

mentioned there.

[33] These observations are central to the argument that will be developed in section 6, below.

[34] F. I. Andersen and A. Dean Forbes, "What Did the Scribes Count?," *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography* (eds. D. N. Freedman, A. D. Forbes, F. I. Andersen; Biblical and Judaic Studies 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 309. The count mentioned above is that of Andersen and Forbes. The slight differences between this and the other counts mentioned is irrelevant for the purpose of the argument advanced here.

[35] Or, of course, between Deuteronomy-Kings and Zephaniah; or Deuteronomy-Kings and Obadiah.

the standard dtr. corpus is larger than Deuteronomy-Kings,[36] even the mentioned "ratios" tend to exaggerate deuteronomistic influence. If one were to restrict the reference group to Deuteronomy alone (14,294 words), which is not the usual practice, then still the likelihood of sharing occurrences with Deuteronomy will be larger than with Proverbs and about the same size than with the book of Isaiah (16,933).

In addition, given the sheer volume of the dtr. standard corpus (i.e., Deuteronomy-Kings + dtr. Jeremiah) it is to be expected that several words and expressions would appear in a prophetic book and also occur one or two times in that vast corpus, but not elsewhere.[37] Thus the requirements for potentially "diagnostic" repetitions must include more than the simple observation of one (or a very few) shared occurrences.

It is obvious that by these standards, the data does not point to a particularly close relation between the books of Micah, Zephaniah, and Obadiah on the one hand and the standard dtr. corpus on the other.[38]

---

[36] It includes also the (deuteronomistic) prose sermons in the book of Jeremiah.

[37] E.g., the occurrences of (a) שארית נחלה in 2 Kgs 21:14 and Mic 7:18, and (b) אתנן זונה in Deut 23:19 and Mic 1:7, but nowhere else in the HB.
Incidentally, similar instances with much smaller corpora of comparison do occur. For instance, the expression עשה על שפם appears only in Lev 13:45 and Mic 3:7. (For other potential "similarities" between the books of Micah and Leviticus, see Mic 2:2 and cf. Lev 19:13; Mic 4:14 and cf. Lev 26:26; Mic 7:13 and cf. Lev 26:32; of course, none of them should be reasonable used to claim a "Leviticus's [mini]redaction of Micah.")
Also one may mention that in the book of Micah, as well as that of Zephaniah, one may find an idiom that is not rare in the Hebrew Bible, but never occurs in Deuteronomy-Kings despite its size, namely מלא חמס (see Mic 6:12 and Zeph 1:9; and cf. Gen 6:11; 13; Ezek 7:23; 8:17; 12:9; 28:16; Ps 74:20.). What can be learned from this observation?

[38] Significantly, this holds true even if one uncritically focuses mainly or even only on the instances in which words or even short expressions do occur in both the prophetic book and the dtr. corpus and disregard other expressions that are present in the text and which by the same standards would point to the closeness of other corpora (on these issues see below).

To illustrate, the expression לקח מוסר occurs in Zeph 3:2, 7 and also in Jer 5:3; 7:28; 17:23; 32:33; 35:13 and Prov 1:3; 8:10; Prov 24:32. According to the set of parameters set above, nothing can be learned from this distribution about the dtr. character of the book of Zephaniah, or even the text of Zeph 3:2,7 on the basis of this expression.
Similarly, the expression בטח בה' (which encapsulates one of the theological tenets usually associated with the deuteronomistic movement) occurs in 2 Kgs 18:5, 19:10 (//Isa 37:10) and in Zeph 3:2; but it appears also in Ps 9:11; 21:8; 22:5,6; 25:2; 26:1; 28:7; 32:10; 37:3; 40:4; 55:24; 56:5,12; 62:9; 84:13; 91:2; 112:7; 115:9,10,11; 125:1; 143:8 and in Isa 26:3,4; Jer 17:7; 39:18; Prov 16:20, 29:25; 1 Chr 5:20. Likewise the theologically significant
לקרא בשם ה' in Zeph 3:9 occurs in 2 Kgs 5:11 (cf. 1 Kgs 18:24), but also in Gen 4:26,

4.5 Shared "Clusters" or "Expressions"

It might be claimed that although the relevant prophetic books show no citations of dtr. texts nor closely related texts of any significant length, nor any significant amount of "typical" dtr. phraseology, nor is the data from more or less randomly chosen words and short expression supportive in any way of a particular textual relation between these books and the dtr. corpus, one may still demonstrate dependence on dtr. texts by pointing to a

---

12:8, 13:4, 21:33, 26:25; Exod 33:19, 34:5; Joel 3:5; and Ps 116:4,13,17.

The book of Micah provides additional examples. For instance, "calls to hear," expressed by imperative forms of שמע not only appear in Mic 1:2; 3:1 and 6:1,2 but may mark the main structural or discursive sections in the book (cf. D. G. Hagstrom, *The Coherence of the Book of Micah* (SBLDS 89, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 11-27). They also appear in the standard dtr. corpus, but not only there (see Deut 6:4; Judg 5:3; 2 Kgs 7:1; Isa 1:2; 7:13; 48:1; Jer 10:1; Am 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; Mic 3:1; Prov 4:1; Job 34:2; and cf. the "atypical" case of Lam 1:18). In another example, the expression וישבו איש תחת גפנו ותחת תאנתו appears in 1 Kgs 5:5 (cf. 2 Kgs 18:31 // Isa 36:16) and Mic 4:4, but it also occurs in Zech 3:10 and it is not unexpected given that גפן and תאנה constitute a common word-pair (e.g., Isa 34:4; Jer 8:13; Hag 2:19; Ps 105:33).

Finally, the same holds true for the book of Obadiah, and see, for instance, ביום צרה that occurs in Obad 12 and in 2 Kgs 19:3 (//Isa 37:3) but also in Prov 25:19; Pss 20:2; 50:15; 77:3; 86:7 among many other texts, or ביום אידם that is found in Deut 32:35; 2 Sam 22:19; Jer 18:17; 46:21; Obad 13; Ps 18:19; Prov 27:10; Job 21:30).

Of course, there are also a few cases like the idiom "X-לאבת (where X stands for a pronominal suffix) + שבע the niphal which is found in Mic 7:20 and appears in most of its occurrences in the HB in Deuteronomy-Kings, but still see Num 11:12; 14:23 (cf. Exod 32:13) and compare the size of the Deuteronomy-Kings corpus with Numbers. It should be stressed, however, that even if one grants for the sake of the argument that the presence of the idiom in Mic 7:20 may reflect an awareness of its use in dtr. material, it still does not mean that v 20 is a deuteronomistic verse, nor that it must have been written by a member of a particular dtr. movement (as opposed to other movements) nor that its intended rereaders were supposed to relate the verse. Regarding the statement in the last clause, it is worth noting that even a cursory analysis of the language of Mic 7:20 shows in addition to the mentioned observation the following: (a) נתן אמת and נתן חסד occur only in Mic 7:20 (the closest expressions to these are found in Josh 2:12; Isa 61:8; Pss 115:1; Neh 9:13); (b) אמת ליעקב is found in Mic 7:20 and nowhere else in the HB, (c) חסד לאברהם occurs in Mic 7:20 and nowhere else in the HB; and finally (d) the pair יעקב-אברהם (in that order) is very rare and appears elsewhere only once, in Isa 41:8 (and cf. Isa 21:22); and (d) ימי קדם is found besides Mic 7:20 in 2 Kgs 19:25; Isa 23:7; 37:26; 51:9; Jer 46:26; Ps 44:2; Lam 1:7; 2:17 and is by no means a dtr. expression. Significantly, the books of Micah, Obadiah and Zephaniah all contain numerous expressions that are unique to each of these books.

On the importance of weighing all the data and not only "selected" items see above.

substantial number of clusters of words or idioms that are clearly *peculiar* to the standard dtr. corpus—though they may not fully qualify as "typical deuteronomistic phraseology—and which appear also in either Micah, Obadiah or Zephaniah.

Leaving aside the issue of "dependence" that presuppose a direction and relative dates, it is possible (and probably heuristically correct) to assume that if two written texts show both a substantial number of potentially "diagnostic" clusters of words, it *may be* that the two texts were interrelated in some way or another, even if the other features mentioned above are absent, and therefore, this study should address the issue of clusters and their possible meaning.

This study should open with a few methodological qualifications: The authors/redactors wrote in biblical Hebrew, and they (as well as their rereadership) were conversant with the relevant religious literature and the literary (and theological) discourse/s of their time. Thus one must not necessarily assume that every repetition of a single cluster must be the result of a conscious effort from the part of the authors/editors, because such a repetition may be due to the simple fact that the authors/redactors used biblical Hebrew and were surely able to activate linguistic expressions in their language according to grammar, genre, stylistic conventions and the general discourse (and world of knowledge) within which they lived.[39] Therefore, whereas from a certain perspective one may correctly claim that most texts produced within a certain discourse show some degree of intertextuality, not much can be learned from that observation beyond the obvious that these people shared in the main a common language (which includes a common lexical register), symbolic system, literary repertoire, and world of knowledge.[40] Most if not all the examples discussed in sections

---

[39] Of course, some of these conventions may have a long history and may appear in texts written in ANE languages other than Hebrew. For instance, the introductory phrase in Qoh 1:12 is similar to the opening of several royal inscriptions (e.g., Kilamu(wa), Kil 1, Karatepe A I, 1 Mesha 1; on these issues see M. V. Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions* [JSOTS 71, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989] 174). This resemblance does *not* suggest that there ever was a Kilamu(wa)n (or the like) redaction of Qohelet, nor a specific influence of the language of the Mesha Inscription (or any other of the mentioned inscriptions) on Qohelet, nor even that the author of Qohelet had to be aware of any of these inscriptions in particular.

[40] Significantly most (if not all) of the biblical books that are discussed here were written at least in their final form in postmonarchic times and probably in Achaemenid Yehud. In any case, the number of literati who constituted both the authorship and rereadership of these books was strongly limited, and so its capacity of developing significantly different literary repertoires and worlds of knowledge. I discussed these issues in Ben Zvi, "The Urban Center of Jerusalem and the Development of the Literature of the Hebrew Bible" *Aspects of Urbanism in Antiquity* (eds. W.G.Aufrecht, N.A.Mirau and S.W.Gauley; JSOTS 244, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), and cf. Ben Zvi, *Obadiah*, 260-67. On the possible implications of these considerations on the issues discussed in

4.3 and 4.4 (and esp. in the relevant footnotes) can be explained in this way, and do not require one to assume the existence of a particular social and intellectual group of writers distinct from all others, nor any hypothetical redactional history for any text.[41]

Thus our analysis of these additional clusters and idioms[42] should aim at potentially more rewarding conclusions. Since the issue at stake is whether a deuteronomistic group—which is known only by the written works attributed to it—redacted some prophetic books or not, then the main questions are:

(a) Is there convincing support for the proposal that the case of double occurrence was necessarily due to writers consciously copying or imitating a deuteronomistic written source at hand, rather than by using the lexical repertoire that they possessed within their world of knowledge? A significant observation in this regard is that people tend to associate certain lexical items with particular realms of discourse and, accordingly caution is required when two writers activate a similar set of terms when they refer to similar events, stories, traditions and the like.[43]

(b) Is there evidence that suggests that the text was written so as to draw the attention of the intended rereaders to a direct and interpretatively significant intertextuality between the text in the prophetic book and a particular section in one of the written works that are included in the standard dtr. corpus, as opposed to simply assuming a rereadership that is aware of certain traditions, shares some basic theological tenets and a certain construction/(hi)story of their own past[44]?

---

this paper, see esp. section 6, below.

[41] Notice also that whereas the reference to פדה מבית עבדים in Mic 6:4 may well be explained in terms of lexical items associated with the Exodus myth, and perhaps may reflect even some awareness of written representations of this myth in forms similar or identical to those in Deuteronomy, its presence does not require a the hypothesis of a dtr. redaction, anymore than in similar instances of shared expressions with other texts (see above), nor does possible knowledge of a text included in the dtr corpus demand an explanation in terms of a dtr. redaction (cf. with the case of Chronicles).

[42] That is, additional to those already addressed in sections 4.3. and 4.4

[43] To illustrate with a simple and contemporaneous example, it is not difficult to imagine a Jewish child today who has never read the Hebrew Bible (in any language), but who, after Passover, may be required to write a composition for school in which the basic story of Passover is to be retold. Such a composition is likely to contain lexical terms that are not commonly activated by the child in other school compositions. Of course, the only thing that will be proved in this case is that this child access certain terms when s/he has to deal with certain topics.

Significantly, the situation would not be substantially different if a pastor, priest, rabbi or critical scholar is asked to retell the story of the Exodus.

[44] For instance, the tradition of the brotherhood of Esau and Jacob and the association of both with Edom and Israel are assumed to belong to the world of knowledge of the

If one accepts a relatively minimalist definition of a cluster as three (or more) words (not including particles) in close proximity,[45] then our analysis should deal with (a) whether such clusters appear in any of the three prophetic books discussed here (i.e., Micah, Obadiah and Zephaniah) and are also peculiar to, and widely found in the standard deuteronomistic corpus (regarding single occurrences, see above); (b) whether the presence of these shared clusters is more likely due to a process of copy or imitation of the dtr. literature that was carried out by deuteronomistic groups than to any other literary process; and (c) whether the intended rereadership of prophetic books is asked to understand their text in relation to a particular text in the standard dtr. corpus rather than against their concepts and images within their general world of knowledge.

Before turning to the study of these questions it is worth stressing that the analysis of some texts may result (e.g., Daniel 9)[46] in positive answers to some of these questions, but this is not the case in regards to Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah. In fact, the task here is easier than expected, because the corpus of potential clusters to begin with is very reduced, as the study of Kugler and others have shown.[47] In fact, Kugler's analysis concludes that none is present in Obadiah, and that a case can be made only for the superscription in Zephaniah and Micah.[48] Yet Kugler may be less cautious than usual here.

For most scholars the crux of the matter in these cases seems not to be the reference to the written text of the book of Micah or Zephaniah as דבר ה' (i.e., YHWH's word).[49] After all Joel shows a title of the form

---

intended rereadership of the book of Obadiah, the exodus from Egypt by that of the book of Micah, the concept of YHWH as the God of Israel, the idea that wrongful behavior leads (or may lead) to divine punishment, the particular role of Zion in the divine economy are all implied knowledge of the intended rereadership of Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah.

[45]Cf. Kugler, "Prophets and Pan-deuteronomism," paper presented at the 1996 meeting of the Deuteronomistic History Section of the SBL. Revised versions of this and other papers presented at that section are forthcoming in a volume edited by L. S. Schearing and S. L. McKenzie. Cf. A. Aejmelaus, "Der Prophet als Klageliedsänger. Zur Funktion des Psalms Jes 63,7 - 64,11 in Tritojesaja," *ZAW* 107 (1995) 32.

[46] See footnote 32, above.

[47] See Kugler, "Prophets and Pan-deuteronomism." Regarding Zephaniah one may consult also the quite extensive lists of "parallel" expressions in M. Bolle, ספר צפניה (תרי עשר ב' עם פירוש דעת מקרא; Jerusalem: Mosad HaRab Kuk, 1970) 7-9; significantly, none of these expressions points to a cluster peculiar to the dtr. corpus. (Potentially relevant expressions in the book of Micah were discussed above.)

[48]Cf., among others, Coggins, "What Does 'Deuteronomistic' Mean?," 141-42.

[49] דבר ה' is included in the title of these two books; it characterizes the ensuing text. On titles of prophetic books, and the importance of superscriptions, I wrote elsewhere, see

X-אל היה אשר ה' דבר and is not considered an integral member of the proposed system of "typical deuteronomistic" superscriptions that includes Hos 1:1; Am 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1.[50] The real crucial issue seems to be the temporal reference.

To be sure the superscriptions instruct the intended rereadership of these books to approach them from a perspective that is temporally-cued; that is, they are anchored in the circumstances that obtained at some time in the past of the rereadership as reconstructed/imagined by this rereadership. The temporal references are presented as usual in vague and general terms that stand in contrast with the more precise temporal references that tend to appear in books that ask their intended rereadership to associate them with the circumstances of monarchic Judah on the eve of its fall or in the period that followed it.[51] There is nothing peculiar in organizing the past according to general regnal periods, and particularly so if no precise date is given. In fact, the precise expression in these superscriptions, that is X בימי (X being the name of the ruler and accordingly, in relation to the monarchic period, the name of the king) is only to be expected (cf. Gen 14:1; 26:1; Judg 5:6; 1 Sam 17:2; 1 Kgs 10:21; Isa 1:1; 7:1; Jer 1:2,3; Zech 14:5; Esther 1:1; Ezra 4:7; 1 Chr 4:41, among others).[52] Neither the organization of time, nor the particular reference to it in terms of X בימי required the assumption that Mic 1:1 and Zeph 1:1 were written by a deuteronomistic group or groups, nor that a deuteronomistic redaction has taken place, in fact, there is no strong reason to assume that these verses were added to the books at a later stage.[53]

Ben Zvi, "Studying," and idem, *Obadiah*, 10-13.

It is usually proposed that the title X-אל היה אשר ה' דבר belongs to one of the earliest stages of the redactional history of the book. See, for instance, Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 127-28, but for a different approach, see H. W. Wolff, *Micah* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1990) 33-34.

[50] See, Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 76-78, 84-89, 127-28, 176-78, 181-87; cf. paper presented in the 1996 annual meeting of this group by A. Schart, "The Combination of Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah on a Single Scroll: Unifying Devices and Redactional Intentions."

[51] Cf. E. W. Conrad, "The End of Prophecy and the Appearance of Angels/Messenger in the Book of the Twelve," *JSOT* 73 (1997) 65-79, and esp. 67-69.

[52] Significantly, these four books are not the only prophetic books whose superscription includes a temporal reference of this type (see Isa 1:1 and cf. Jer 1:2), nor are prophetic books the only books in which the intended rereadeship is asked to understand the world of the text in relation to a period described at the very outset of the book as X בימי (see references above).

[53] From the fact that these superscriptions do not display a syntagmatic relation to the ensuing text it does not follow that they are later additions. First, titles (as opposed to incipits) do not tend to show such a relation (e.g., Obad 1; Prov 1:1), and second, lack of syntagmatic relation per se is not a strong argument for redactional character in any case.

It is to be granted, however, that these superscriptions assume and actually require the intended rereadership to activate their prior knowledge of the periods under discussion. Given that the books of Zephaniah, Micah (and Obadiah) are post-monarchic, then it is likely that the world of knowledge of their rereaders included a construction of their past that either resembled, or was based on that expressed and shaped by the books of Kings.[54] It is in this regard, one may say that both the writers of these books

---

It is true that these superscriptions look at the prophetic characters as in the past of the rereading community, but this observation may serve as grounds for a redactional character only if one assumes that the books of Micah and Zephaniah were actually written by the historical prophets, which is at the very least a very questionable premise. On the other hand, one cannot avoid the impression that there is nothing in the books of Micah and Zephaniah that may lead a later redactor to associate them with those figures, nor one can disregard the role of these superscriptions as textually inscribed, and most significant interpretative keys for the community/ies that is supposed to read and reread these books. (See Ben Zvi, "Studying;" cf., idem, *Obadiah*, 10-43.)

It is worth mentioning also that Mic 1:1 show no synchronism between the kings of Judah and Israel (unlike Hos 1:1, Am 1:1, but like Isa 1:1). If such a synchronism is considered a dtr. feature, then it is not applicable here. (Zeph 1:1 cannot show such a synchronism, because its associates the figure of Zephaniah with a time that follows the fall of the northern kingdom). Moreover, if the exact choice of language is conducive to conclusions about the dtr. character of Mic 1:1 (and the related superscription), then one must take into account that (a) the name יחזקיה in reference to the king of Judah appears only in Hos 1:1 and Mic 1:1 (referring to another person in Ezra 2:16); and (b) the closely related form יחזקיהו, which is found in the temporal clause in Isa 1:1, is the typical Chronicler's rendition of the name of the king consistently called חזקיה/ו in the book of Kings (except once, in 2 Kgs 20:10). (On these issues but from a different perspective, see Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 186).

Finally, the proposed dtr. emphasis on the positive figures of Hezekiah and Josiah in books of Micah and Zephaniah is simply not present in the text, but is a secondary theoretical construction based on a particular reading of Hos 1:1, Am 1:1, Mic 1:1 and Zeph 1:1 in the light of the hypothesis of a dtr. prophetic corpus comprising the relevant books and a proposed redaction history of the book of the Twelve. Nowhere in the book of Micah is there a clear reference to Hezekiah (contrast with the book of Isaiah) nor is there any indication in the world of the text that YHWH's word (as presented by the text) is to be more associated with the period of Hezekiah than with those of Jotham and Ahaz. As for the book of Zephaniah, it is obvious that the circumstances that the text associates with the kingship of Josiah are not positive. In fact, the question of how this image of the period may square with that in Kings (and Chronicles) has been the focus of much debate (for one type of proposal, see J.J.M. Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* [OTL, Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1991] 163; and see the discussion in A. Berlin, *Zephaniah*,43-47, 68-69. For a different approach, see, for instance, Nogalski,*Literary Precursors*, 87; and Schart, "Combination."

[54] The writer/s of Obadiah likely knew either the book of Kings or sections thereof. The writer/s and rereadership of this book are also aware of the construction of a time in the

and their rereadership were likely influenced by texts included in the deuteronomistic corpus, but so were those of Chronicles and Ruth (cf. Acts 7, Stephen's speech). In other words, it is likely that their world of knowledge was likely to include a version of their own (hi)story about themselves in terms similar to those in Deuteronomy-Kings. This, of course, does not mean that either the writers or the primary rereaders for whom these texts were written had to be members of a deuteronomistic group (cf. the case of Chronicles and Ruth).

In sum, the mentioned superscriptions do not require one to hypothesize deuteronomistic redactor/s. These superscriptions alert the intended rereadership of the said prophetic books that they should reread them in a way that is informed by their construction of the past. It is likely that this image of the past was at least partially based on, or that it reflected texts in Deuteronomy-Kings.[55] Still it is important to recognize that the "informed" rereading required by the superscription leads to the creation of a *tapestry of images* of the past (rather than simply mirroring the "deuteronomistic" portrayal in Kings).[56] This tapestry involves the interweaving of the images of the past evoked by the prophetic book itself and those suggested by other texts in the world of knowledge of the rereadership, including (or perhaps mainly including) those associated with Deuteronomy-Kings. In any case, from these considerations, it does not follow that the mentioned prophetic books underwent a dtr. redaction, nor that the superscription or its temporal clause are a redactional addition written by a member of a "deuteronomistic movement" or who was active in a separate "deuteronomistic group."

5. A Common Theology?

The discussion above has demonstrated that (a) the language of the books of Micah, Obadiah and Zephaniah does not support the idea that they were composed or redacted by members of a deuteronomistic groups or of a dtr. movement (which is characterized by the style of its written works; on this see below); and (b) the texts were not written so as to convey a sense of textual coherence or particular affinity with the works included in Deuteronomy-Kings.[57]

---

past of the community that is associated with the period of the Judges. See Ben Zvi, *Obadiah,* 17-19, 220-21, 223-29.

[55] I explicitly advanced this claim regarding the books of Obadiah, Jonah, Zephaniah and Micah (see, for instance, Ben Zvi, *Obadiah*, 14-19).

[56] For significant differences in the portrayal of the past, see above.

[57] By "particular affinity" I mean an affinity that is stronger with the works in Deuteronomy-Kings than with other biblical corpora.

Yet the hypothesis of a dtr. redaction of prophetic books is also based on claims of a shared theological approach. Redactions and dating/s based only on ideas are questionable because it is a well-known fact that one may find similar (or at least, comparable) ideas at different times. It may be argued, however, that if there is an unequivocal, one to one relation between the theology of the dtr. corpus and that in the prophetic books, or sections thereof, one would be able to advance the said claim even if it is not supported by the language of the prophetic text.

But there is not such a relation. To begin with the basic theological ideas that are expressed in the prophetic books and that can be correlated with similar or identical positions in the dtr. corpus are not unique to the latter. This is clearly the case regarding the protection of the rights of the powerless in society and the assumption that the actions of people carry effects and a system of retribution is in place (though not consistently implemented).[58] It is also true in regards to the unique role of Zion/Jerusalem in the divine economy, the explanation of the fall of Jerusalem in terms of wrongdoing (mainly of the monarchic elite), the explanation of the fall of Samaria in terms of its sinful behavior, along with comparisons between the northern kingdom/Samaria and Judah/Jerusalem, as well as the basic repertoire of sinful behavior (i.e., wrongful worship, disregard for the rights of the powerless, the violence of the ruling elite and the like). Whereas all of the references to them in prophetic literature are consistent with what is usually characterized as dtr. theology,[59] none of them requires the acceptance of a separate and distinctive deuteronomistic theology that could not be shared by many other literati within whom one is to locate both authorship and rereadership of prophetic books such as Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah, and particularly (but not only) so in the post-

---

[58] The dtr. history does not implement or communicate a consistent (and simplistic) system of reward and punishment. For instance, no wrong was assigned to Josiah, and yet not only was he killed by Necho, but Judah lost—within the world of the narrative—the independence that it achieved in the days of Hezekiah. Chronicles "solves" this problem, but also does not communicate a consistent (and simplistic) system. (I discussed this issue in Ben Zvi, "A Sense of Proportion: An Aspect of the Theology of the Chronicler," *SJOT* 9 [1995] 37-51.) As for Proverbs, see, for instance, Prov 16:19; 28:6; and regarding wisdom literature in general, see Fox, *Qohelet*, 132-50. The simplistic and naive system of recompense that is sometime associated with dtr., "conventional wisdom" literature or Chronicles is more of a caricature based on a reading of particular units within books that does not take into account that these units are integral to the larger discursive frame (/space) created within each of these books.

[59] This includes, of course, passages such as Zeph 1:8-9 (which shows no clear deuteronomic/dtr. language; cf. Ben Zvi, *Zephaniah*, 278-82) and Mic 1:7 (which again as a whole is not written so as to directly evoke the style of Deuteronomy or Kings; despite the vague resemblance of a section of it with a portion of Deut 7:25).

monarchic communities in which they were likely composed.[60] Albertz's position that all (official) Yhwhistic theology/ies was/were influenced by the deuteronomistic thought in the time that followed the fall of the monarchy reflects the same evidence, though from a different perspective.[61]

Moreover, whereas theological ideas that are commonly expressed in dtr. language within the standard dtr. corpus appear elsewhere, there is no single, consistent and encompassing deuteronomistic theology. In fact, to speak of "*the* deuteronomistic theology" is misleading. Thus, for instance, while the dtr. corpus points to the "choice of the people" as an important theological construct (Deut 30:19 cf. Jos 24:15-16, 22), Deut 30:6 points to a glorious future in which YHWH will take away the possibility of choice, so that people will be ("biologically") conditioned to "love" YHWH (cf. Jer 31: 31-34).[62] Von Rad, among others, observed differences in the theology (and the actual "method of presentation") between Kings and Judges, and Albertz refers to "the Deuteronomists of the time of the exile and the early post-exilic period" as comprised of "very different groupings," and stresses the differences between JerD and those reworking the historical traditions.[63] Römer distinguishes between Jer dtr1 and Jer dtr2,[64] and two or three different groups of deuteronomists are often associated with the (so called) deuteronomistic history (dtr1 and dtr2; dtrG, dtrP and dtrN). In fact, if one accepts that the production of texts in dtr. style took place for likely a few centuries, then one has to expect some significant differences.

The implications of the last considerations go beyond rejecting the claim that members of the dtr. movement redacted or composed prophetic

---

[60] Notice that the three books refer to the exile, dispersion, and express hope for restoration. The book of Micah also contains an explicit reference to Babylon (Mic 4:10; which there is no reason to "emend," unless one assumes beforehand that the text *must* have been composed in the eighth century BCE) and implies the "loss of the land" such as the hope of a new beginning such as the one under Joshua (see Mic 2:4-5); the perspective of the speakers in book of Obadiah is from the time after the destruction of Jerusalem; and on the book of Zephaniah I wrote at length in Ben Zvi, *Zephaniah*. I discussed some general methodological issues that have bearing on these questions in Ben Zvi, "Studying."

[61] See R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (OTL; Louisville, KY; Westminster/J. Knox, 1994) II, 382 and passim. Whether one agrees or disagrees with Albertz's reconstruction of the intellectual history of the monarchic period has no bearing on his observation that dtr. theological thought is ubiquitous at that period.

[62] See M. Z. Brettler, "Predestination in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Deuteronomy 30:1-10," paper presented in the 1996 sessions of the Deuteronomistic History section of the SBL that were devoted to "pan-deuteronomism." This paper will be published in the said volume edited by Schearing and McKenzie.

[63] R. Albertz, *History*, II, 382-83 and passim; idem, "Le milieu des deutéronomistes," *Israël construit son histoire* (eds. A. de Pury, T. Römer, Jean-Daniel Macchi; Genève: Labor et Fides, 1996) 377-407.

[64] See Römer, "Y a t-il une rédaction deutéronomiste dans le livre de Jérémie?," 419-41.

books such as Micah or Zephaniah. If (a) there was not one deuteronomistic theology; (b) much of what is usually considered to be consistent with deuteronomistic theology is in fact shared by many of the religious thinkers in postmonarchic Israel (even if they did not necessarily expressed or communicate it in dtr. language);[65] (c) there is no reference in the HB to the existence of a multi-generational group of literati that kept itself separate from other groups and that can be associated with the proposed social entity called the "the deuteronomistic movement;" and (d) no particular socio-political objective can be associated with this proposed movement through all the centuries of its claimed existence, then it follows that (e) the only potential support for the proposal that there was a separate social group, i.e., the deuteronomistic "movement" to whom one may ascribe postmonarchic texts (such as the books of Obadiah, Micah, Zephaniah as well as Deuteronomy and Kings) is the presence of some form of shared style—notwithstanding the differences that exist within the dtr. corpus—or better, the presence of some conveyed sense of textual coherence or affinity within the literary corpus usually assigned to the dtr. movement. But the mentioned coherence or affinity points only to a rhetorical stance taken by the implied author of these books; literary style by itself does not provide sufficient grounds to postulate the historical existence of a separate "movement" for generations.[66]

The discussion to this point has led to "negative" assessments such as:

(a) The redactional models and the textual reconstructions that are necessary to claim that there was a dtr. redaction of books such as Micah and Zephaniah are questionable, hypothetical and tend to fall into circular thinking by proving what is assumed from the outset;

(b) In any case, the language of the books of Obadiah, Micah and Zephaniah supports neither the idea that they were redacted (or composed) by members of the deuteronomistic movement (or that there was a dtr. redaction) nor the position that these books were written so that their rereaders would associate them particularly and uniquely with those included in the proposed dtr. corpus.

(c) Considerations based on the theology/ies communicated by these prophetic books and by that of the dtr. corpus provide no convincing basis for positing that these books were redacted (or authored) by deuteronomistic groups or by "the deuteromomistic movement."

(d) There is no convincing evidence that there ever was a separate social entity, "the deuteronomistic movement" to whom one may ascribe the

---

[65] On these and related issues, see E. A. Knauf, "L'"Historiographie deutéronomiste" (DTRG) existe-t-elle?," 410.

[66] Cf. N. Lohfink, "Gab is eine deuteronomische Bewegung?," *Jeremia und die "deuteronomisch Bewegung"* (W. Groß [ed.], Tübingen: Beltz, 1995) 313-82; E. A. Knauf, "L'"Historiographie deutéronomiste" (DTRG) existe-t-elle?;" R. Coggins, "What does 'Deuteronomistic" mean?," 143

standard and postmonarchic dtr-corpus (i.e., Deuteronomy-Kings + dtr. Jeremiah), not to say the prophetic books discussed here.[67]

But the observation regarding style in the prophetic books and its use for communicating a sense of textual coherence opens the door to the development of a "positive" approach.

6. The Significance of the Presence and Absence of dtr. Style or from "Movement" to Associations and Messages Conveyed to an Intended Readership.[68]

Whereas the conspicuous presence of deuteronomistic phraseology in Joshua-Kings does not point to an independent and distinctive "deuteronomistic movement," it clearly links together the books from Joshua to Kings—despite the different ways in which these deuteronomistic elements appear in each of these books— but also, and more importantly, it closely binds them to Deuteronomy. In fact, the entire deuteronomistic history hypothesis is based on that sense of strong coherence.[69]

Yet to say that these books are deuteronomistic, is to say that they are written so as to convey a "Mosaic" flavor; their intended rereaders are reminded by textually inscribed markers that the texts in front of them are in the tradition of Moses who is the main character (and speaker) in Deuteronomy.

Of course, Moses is also the anchor that keeps Exodus-Deuteronomy together, and indirectly the entire Pentateuch.[70] This is the same Moses with whom the concept of the divine Torah is associated (cf. Deut 4:4; 33:4; Josh 1:7; 8:31, 32; 23:6; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 23:25; Mal 3:22; Ezra 3:2; 7:6; Neh 8:1; 2 Chr 23:18; 25:4; 30:16; 34:14). It is reasonable to assume that if a series of books is written so as to be read as "Mosaic-like," then it

---

[67] Whether there was a deuteronomic movement that supported Josiah's reform in his days depends much upon one's reconstruction of the historical events during Josiah's reign. In any case, the dtr. corpus cannot be assigned to that group, because both the books included in the standard dtr. corpus and the books of Micah, Zephaniah and Obadiah posdate not only only the reign of Josiah but also 586 BCE. See above.

[68] Some of the issues discussed here were advanced in my paper, "Looking at the Primary (Hi)Story and the Prophetic Books as Literary/Theological Units within the frame of the Early Second Temple: Some Considerations," presented at the 1997 annual meeting of the PN AAR/SBL, Langley, BC.

[69] Needless to say, this hypothesis is based on the mentioned textual coherence per se, but also on the implications that have been argued about actual authorship—as opposed to the authorial voice suggested by the text—on the grounds of this sense of strong, textual coherence.

[70] I discussed the way in which Genesis is linked to Exodus-Deuteronomy, in my paper "Looking."

connotes—among other things— a claim to authority and social legitimacy; that is, it attempts to spread upon itself some of the legitimacy and the authority of the Mosaic tradition. Such a claim is consistent with ubiquitous (explicit and implicit) calls to observe and learn the Torah of Moses, that characterizes the dtr. historical narratives as a whole, just as the Pentateuch as a whole.

If so, it is the *absence* of dtr. phraseology in the prophetic books that is most noteworthy, and the more so since it is likely that in their present form, at least, both dtr. writings and the mentioned prophetic books are to be associated with (more or less) the same general period and social group (i.e., the postmonarchic, Jerusalem-centered literati).[71] It is reasonable to assume that this absence of dtr. language is not accidental and that it conveys to the intended rereaders that these texts are not written in the "Mosaic voice" but in that of other prophets (i.e., Micah, Obadiah, and Zephaniah). Each of these prophets were "minor" to Moses,[72] but each had his own voice, and a text characterized as דבר ה' associated with each of them. (On דבר ה' and divine Torah, see Isa 2:3; Mic 4:2; cf. Isa 1:10 and Zech 7:12). This position is strongly supported by the pervading tendency to show a Zephanic flavor in the book of Zephaniah, an Obadianic in Obadiah, and Mican in Micah, even in cases in which one can reasonable maintain that the writers of these books used some written sources to which they have access.[73] This position is also consistent with the presence of textually inscribed markers that request the intended rereadership of each of the twelve prophetic books that were later included in the Twelve to understand each prophetic character and each prophetic book as clearly distinct from the others.[74]

These tendencies are all the more remarkable because it is not only that these texts (in their present form) existed within relatively similar social and cultural backgrounds, but also because they come from the very modest number of the literati who comprised both the authorship and primary rereadership of the biblical books that (in their present form) are usually assigned to the postmonarchic period. In other words, if there was no deuteronomistic (or Zephanic, Mican, Obadianic, Isaianic and the like for the sake of the case) movements, schools, or socially separate groups,[75] then much effort had to be placed not only to shape these books each according to its distinctive style (and language), but to avoid the use of deuteronomistic expressions in these books.[76] The fact that one finds even some degree of

---

71 See Ben Zvi, "Urban;" cf. Ben Zvi, *Obadiah*, 260-67.

72 See Num 12:6-8; Deut 34:10 and cf. Deut 18:15.

73 See Ben Zvi, *Zephaniah*; 197-205; idem, *Obadiah*, 99-114.

74 See Ben Zvi, "Twelve," esp. 149-56.

75 See Ben Zvi, "Urban."

76 Of course, one may wonder why the book of Jeremiah is so different, for surely there is dtr. language there. It is worth stressing, however, that even the "sermons" in Jeremiah

synchronic linguistic variation (cf. Haggai with Isaiah 40-66/56-66; see also Ezekiel) among the prophetic books associated with more or less the same general period is another testimony to that (literary and theological) effort.[77]

Yet, if this is the case, some overriding ideas (some of which are usually characterized as dtr.), some basic traditions and some understandings of the past are bound to be expressed in more than one of the books written (or redacted) at that time. After all, if these texts are associated with a similar cultural space that is produced—at least in part—by a small number of postmonarchic literati, then some degree of intertextuality (if defined in these terms) is to be expected.[78] It is perhaps in this light that some of the

---

(i.e., the often called source "C") contain a very substantial number of "deuteronomic clichés" that either never or rarely occur in Deuteronomy and/or Joshua-Kings (see M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 352-54. So even when the book of Jeremiah is written so as to convey to its (re)readers a clear association between this book and Deuteronomy and the collection Joshua-Kings, it also communicates an individual characterization of the main personage in this book, Jeremiah. The clearly evoked association between Jeremiah and Kings, which is emphasized by the similarities between 2 Kings 25 and Jeremiah 52 (cf. also 2 Kgs 25:1-12, 23-24 and Jer 39:1-10; 40: 7-9), indicates that some form of intertextual (re)reading of Jeremiah and Kings was suggested by the choice of language and text in Jeremiah. This in turn, and from a larger frame perspective may be seen as suggesting a link between the collections that were later called "Former" and "Latter Prophets," or may be related to the characterization of Jeremiah as a prophet "like Moses." (Cf. C. R. Seitz, "The Prophet Moses and the Canonical Shape of Jeremiah," *ZAW* 101 [1989] 3-27; R. E. Clements, "Jeremiah 1-25 and the Deuteronomistic History," *Understanding Poets and Prophets. Essays in Honour of George W. Anderson* [ed. A.G. Auld; JSOTS 152, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993] 94-113). These issues are, of course, beyond the purview of the paper.

It is worth stressing, however, that the unique (among the prophetic books) "Jeremianic" feature of showing a significant number dtr. expressions is found also in the pluses of the edition II (MT) over the edition I (the Hebrew Vorlage of LXX Jeremiah; see E. Tov, "The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in the Light of Its Textual History," *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* [J. H. Tigay (ed.); Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985] 220, 233). From this observation does not follow that editor II was a member of the deuteronomistic movement/school, rather than this editor was aware that the presence of deuteronomistic expressions is one of the characteristic features of the book of Jeremiah (and of the Jeremianic voice created by the book) and, edited accordingly. Had the same editor reworked another prophetic book, it is unlikely that deuteronomistic expressions would have been used. (Compare this approach with E. Tov, "Literary History," 220).

[77] In this regard, whether this (more or less) synchronic linguistic variation was based on some diachronic linguistic variation or not is immaterial.

[78] An issue that I have addressed among others in "Twelve," "Urban" and "Inclusion in and Exclusion from Israel as Conveyed by the Use of the Term 'Israel' in Postmonarchic Biblical Texts," *The Pitcher is Broken. Memorial Essays for Gosta. W. Ahlström* (eds. S. W. Holloway and L. K. Handy, JSOTS 190, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 95-149.

textual relations between the books of Obadiah, Micah and Zephaniah and Deuteronomy-Kings, as well as those between these prophetic books and other prophetic books, Psalms, and Proverbs, may be studied.[79]

[79] My reference to the "tapestry" of images of the past (see above), and to multivocality among and within texts in some of the works mentioned in the preceding footnote, may suggest some of the ways in which these issues may be addressed. My thanks are due to Prof. Robert A. Kugler (Gonzaga University) for reading and commenting on a draft of this paper.

ENSLAVING, DEVOURING, EXPLOITING, SELF-EXALTING, AND STRIKING: 2 COR 11:19-20 AND THE TYRANNY OF PAUL'S OPPONENTS

Scott B. Andrews

In the letter now contained in 2 Cor 10-13, the apostle Paul responds to attacks from the Corinthian church regarding his leadership.[1] Some unnamed rivals of Paul have arrived in Corinth and persuaded at least some members of the Christian community that Paul is not a creditable apostle. The identity of the opponents in 2 Cor 10-13 has been an issue of disagreement over the past two centuries.[2] Until the 1970's, the focus was on identifying the adversaries in terms of their theology or origin.[3] Over the past two decades, debates concerning the opponents have centered on determining their status or social location in Greco-Roman society. A consensus is developing in which Paul's opponents are believed to model and advocate upper-class ideals of the philosopher and cultured man.[4] Hence, the controversy between Paul

---

[1]For arguments on the literary integrity of 2 Corinthians, see Margaret E. Thrall, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (ICC, 2 vol.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994) 2-49 and R. Bieringer and J. Lambrecht, Studies on 2 Corinthians (BETL 112; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994) 67-130.

[2]A detailed survey and critique of views on Paul's adversaries since F. C. Baur can be found in Jerry L. Sumney, Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians (JSNTSup 40; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990).

[3]Victor Paul Furnish sums up the major scholarly proposals in regard to doctrine or origin under three headings: the opponents are (1) Judaizers (e.g. J. J. Gunther), (2) gnostics (e.g. Walter Schmithals), and (3) Christian propagandists of Hellenistic-Jewish origin (e.g. Dieter Georgi). See Furnish's II Corinthians (AB 32A; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1984) 49.

[4]For works leading in this direction, see Abraham J. Malherbe, "Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War" HTR 76 (1983) 143-73, now found in and cited from the edition in Paul and the Popular Philosophers (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 91-119; Christopher Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise, and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of

and his opponents centers on who is more virtuous or worthy to lead the Corinthians.

The aim of this study is to investigate Paul's attack upon the virtue and worthiness of the opponents in light of literary representations of tyrants throughout the Greco-Roman world. The work proceeds in three steps. First, depictions of the tyrannical figure in antiquity are examined. Through philosophical descriptions, historical portrayals, fictitious dialogues, and political attacks, ancient writers construct the "tyrant" as an unjust and lawless leader. Second, Paul's portrayal of the opponents as foolish tyrants in 11:19-20 is analyzed. In these two verses, the evil power, deception, haughtiness, and violence of the adversaries' despotic rule is made manifest. Third, the entire comparison of Paul with the opponents in 10:12-12:18 is interpreted according to characteristic depictions of the tyrant. Throughout the comparison, Paul implies that the opponents usurp, abuse, steal, deceive, and boast in the manner of typical despots. By drawing upon common political rhetoric of his day, Paul hopes that the Corinthian Christians will come to see his adversaries as ruthless rulers and reject their leadership in favor of his governing authority.

THE TYRANNICAL FIGURE

Philosophical Description

The proper way to rule and the best and worst forms of governments were popular topics in ancient

---

Hellenistic Rhetoric" NTS 32 (1986) 1-30; Peter Marshall, Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians (WUNT 2.23; Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1987); Stephen M. Pogoloff, Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians (SBLDS 134; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992); Furnish, II Corinthians; Scott B. Andrews, "Too Weak Not to Lead: The Form and Function of 2 Cor 11.23b-33" NTS 41 (1995) 263-76; and Ben Witherington III, Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 2 Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1995).

philosophical literature. Philosophers categorized and evaluated governments according to the number of persons ruling (e.g. one, a few, or many) and the nature of their rule (e.g. good versus evil). For example, Dio Chrysostom argues that beneficial governments exist whenever leaders rule based on the principles of law and justice whether by means of kingship (the rule of one), aristocracy (the rule of a few nobles), or democracy (the rule of the masses). On the other hand, evil governments consist of lawless and unjust leaders, whether there is one ruler as in tyranny, a few as in oligarchy, or many as in mass rule (Or. 3.45-49).[5]

At the two extremes in the evaluation of governments lie the good king and the evil tyrant.[6] Whenever power in the state is concentrated in the hands of one solitary figure, that person has the potential to do the best good or worst harm (cf. Pl., Stat. 303B). As the worst form of government, tyranny becomes a separate topic unto itself, and the tyrant becomes a stock figure in philosophical and political treatises.[7]

---

[5]While following the categorization and evaluation of Aristotle, Dio replaces Aristotle's "timocracy" (**τιμοκρατία**) with the title "democracy" (**δημοκρατία**) and uses "mass rule" (**φορὰ πλήθους**) in place of his predecessor's "democracy" (**δημοκρατία**). Cf. Arist., Eth. Nic. 8.10.1-3, Pol. 1279a22-1279b10. Similar categories can also be found in Xen., Mem. 4.6.12 and Cic., Rep. 1.42-44.

[6]Those extolling lawful monarchy as the highest form of government and/or tyranny as the most evil include Pliny, Pan. 80, 24.4, 14.4, 35.5; Dio Chrys., Or. 1.37, 1.59, 4.20; Plut., Mor. 779-82; Philost., V. Apol. 5.31; and Cas. Dio, Rom. Hist. 52.14, 47.39, 53.19. Cf. also Lester K. Born, "The Perfect Prince according to the Latin Panegyrists" AJP 55 (1934) 20-35, at 21-23; Ray Barraclough, "Philo's Politics. Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism" ANRW 21.1 (1984) 417-553, at 518-33; and L. de Blois, "The Perception of Politics in Plutarch's Roman 'Lives'" ANRW 33.6 (1992) 4568-4615, at 4600-4611.

For ancient arguments that the best political system is democracy or some mixed form of government, see Poly., Hist. 6.11-12; Cic., Rep. 1.42-4, 2.39; Ael. Arist., Or. 90; and Stephen Stertz, "Aelius Aristides' Political Ideas" ANRW 34.2 (1994) 1248-1270, at 1252-54.

[7]In his **προγυμνάσματα**, Aphthonius uses the arguments

The impetus for the tyrant's evil lies in his insatiable greed and overwhelming desire (Cic., Fin. 1.59; Dio Chrys., Or. 62.2). The most evil leader seeks to take control of all possessions of the state in order to satisfy his pleasures. He confiscates the property of citizens and spends the accumulated treasures of the state to fight wars, build structures, and put on dinners (Pl., Rep. 566D-568A; Dio Chrys., Or. 3.39-44). He uses women and boys for his own sexual pleasures (Dio Chrys., Or. 47.24). His goal is wealth, power, pleasure, and self-preservation (Arist., Pol. 3.5.1-4, 4.8.3, 5.8.6-7, Nic. Eth. 8.10.2). The tyrant resembles lions, bears, and eagles who pursue and overtake their prey for their own stomachs' sake (Dio Chrys., Or. 2.67-69).

Due to the way the tyrant treats citizens, he is said to be overflowing in hubris.[8] He considers himself more noble and worthy than anyone he governs and believes himself to be above the laws to such an extent that anarchy, lawlessness, and injustice are said to rule (Pl., Rep. 575A; Arist., Nic. Eth. 8.11.6-8; Dio Chrys., Or. 3.48-49; Luc., Tyr. 5). For his haughty disregard of justice, dishonor and shame eventually await the tyrant (cf. ταπεινός and αἰσχύνη in Dio Chrys., Or. 2.75-76).

In order to acquire wealth and maintain pleasure, the tyrant rules by compulsion. While the good king is able to rely upon the goodwill of citizens who follow his orders, the tyrant uses

---

against tyrants in an example of a commonplace and disparages the despot Philip to illustrate an invective. Cf. Rhetores Graeci (ed. Leonhard von Spengel; Leipzig: Teubner, 1894) 11.7, 11.9. Philip of Macedon was disparaged as despotic during his lifetime by Demosthenes in the Philippics. Centuries later, Cicero's tirades against Marcus Antonius were so scathing as to be called Philippics. For the specific charge of **tyrannus**, see, for example, Cic., Phil. 13.18. A useful study of accusations of tyranny in the late Republic is found in Joseph Roger Dunkle, "Study of the Rhetorical Tyrant in Rome of the First Century B. C." (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1965).

[8]On ὕβρις and tyranny, see Arist., Pol. 5.8.8, 5.8.21; Philo, V. Mos. 1.324, Cher. 63; Dio Chrys., Or. 2.73-74; and Luc., Cat. 26.

military force and the threat of violence to compel his subjects into submission (Pl., Stat. 276D-E; Xen., Mem. 4.6.12). The state and even free people are said to be enslaved to the evil ruler (Pl., Rep. 568E-569C; Cic., Rep. 1.50; Philo, Prob. 45; Dio Chrys., Or. 3.39-41). He steals from homes and temples, strips people of clothes, and creates wars and internal conflicts so that his "slaves" will have neither the time nor the means to rebel (Pl., Rep. 566D-568A; Arist., Pol. 5.9.1-6).

As slaves of the tyrant, the people of the state are treated with severe cruelty.[9] The tyrant is a contemptible and harsh master, doling out severe punishments with joy (Dio Chrys., Or. 2.73-74; Sen., Clem. 1.12.1-4). Imprisonments, tortures, exiles, and executions are common (Pl., Rep. 565C-566A; Sen., Clem. 1.12.1-2; Dio Chrys., Or. 47.24). Even friends, kinspeople, and the best citizens are not immune from his slanderous and murderous wrath (Arist., Pol. 5.8.3, 5.9.1; Sen., Clem. 1.26.4-5). The cruelty of the tyrant results in a state totally immersed in fear. On the one hand, the people fear the harsh rule of one who harms and steals without regard to status, virtue, or friendship (Sen., Clem. 1.12.2-3; Plut., Mor. 166C-D). On the other hand, the tyrant fears the people of the state because they hate his rule and continually seek to overthrow him (Cic., Off. 1.7.25-26; Plut., Mor. 781E). Therefore, the tyrant has no friends, for he can trust no one to support him, not even his own guards (Cic., Off. 3.6.32; Sen., Clem. 1.26.1-2; Dio Chrys., Or. 3.116-117). Cicero even claims that to kill a tyrant is a noble deed (Off. 3.4.19).

Historical Portrayals

Greco-Roman historians depict numerous leaders in the ancient world as tyrants who decimate

---

[9]On cruelty as a standard epithet of the tyrant, see Dunkle, "Study of the Rhetorical Tyrant," 22, 69 (n. 45) and his list regarding Cicero's accusations of cruelty found in Verr. 2.1.82, 2.4.73, 2.5.143, 2.5.145; Phil. 13.18, Cat. 2.14, Dom. 75, 94; Rep. 1.44.

cities, states, empires, and peoples. Through the portrayals, the authors reveal their partiality for or against particular governments and rulers. For the purposes of this study, the historical depictions reveal typical imagery and language used to disparage despots.

Early historians portray the pre-classical period of Greece as rampant with tyrants. Cities such as Corinth and Athens were supposedly overrun with unjust and evil rulers during this "golden age of tyranny."[10] The Corinthian leader Cypselus of the seventh century was portrayed by Herodotus as banishing and robbing many citizens and slaying anyone who could be considered a rival (5.92, cf. Diod. Sic. 7.93 and Arist., Pol. 5.8.4.). Likewise, Thucydides writes that the sixth-century rulers Hippias and Hipparchus continued the tyranny of their father Pisistratus in Athens. The two were violent, harsh, and lawless men who slaughtered hundreds of citizens after a failed coup against them (6.59.2-4, cf. Diod. Sic. 10.17).

An infamous government in classical Athens consisted of the reign of the "thirty tyrants" in 404 BCE. Even though the leaders numbered thirty instead of one, the government was called a tyranny because of the selfish and ruthless manner in which the leaders ruled (Xen., Hell. 2.3.16). According to later portrayals, their sole purpose was to gain as much power and as many possessions as possible. Ignoring the precepts of Athenian law, the thirty tyrants slew personal enemies, seized the property of landowners, and treated the free masses as slaves (Diod. Sic. 14.4, 14.5; Xen., Hell. 2.3.14-15, 2.3.21). The severity of the tyrants' rule was marked by one observer who claimed that "the thirty" had killed more Athenians than had the Peloponesians in the famous war (Xen., Hell. 2.4.20-21).

In the historical writings of the ancient Greco-Roman world, tyrants were portrayed as fools and maniacs. Their evil acts and uncontrollable

---

[10]For an illuminating study of tyranny in early Greece, cf. James F. McGlew, Tyranny and Political Culture in Ancient Greece (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

passion were said to cause harm for all who were under their power. For example, Plutarch reveals what can happen when a maniac has gained power over one city (Tim. 4.2-5). In the fourth century BCE, the Greek ruler Timoleon placed his brother Timophanes in charge of 400 mercenaries in Corinth to quell potential uprisings. Instead of keeping order in the city, Timophanes was said to rule Corinth without regard for what is good (καλός) or just (δίκαιος). He brought chaos to the city by killing its leading citizens and declaring himself a tyrant. When Timoleon found out about the ruthless deeds of his brother, he visited Corinth in order to persuade Timophanes to renounce his mania (μανία), passion, and tyranny. In response, Timophanes mocked his sane brother and became so violent that Timoleon ordered the guards to kill him.

During the first century of the common era, several emperors were accused of mad, tyrannical acts. Josephus details numerous deeds that he attributes to the foolishness and madness of Gaius. One of the acts which caused a great scandal among the Jews and revealed the μανία of Gaius consisted of the emperor's attempt to place a statue of himself in the Temple of Jerusalem. Josephus claims that if Gaius had succeeded in his wish, war would have broken out in Judea (Ant. 18.273-78). On another occasion, Gaius attempted to humiliate the Jews by forcing them to call him "god." This madness (παραφροσύνη) almost caused another serious revolt (Ant. 19.284-85).

According to Josephus, the actions of Gaius toward the leading citizens of Rome were no less maniacal than those toward the Jews. The rash emperor bestowed no special favors on Rome, harassed the senators in the city, and confiscated the wealth of the equites and expelled them from Rome. He even, complains Josephus, allowed masters to be taken to court by their slaves. Other evils of Gaius grew out of his greed and pride: he called himself a god, robbed the riches of leading citizens, and spent extravagantly on his residences throughout Italy (Ant. 19.1-16; cf. Suet., G. Cal.

22, 26, 33-34). Due to Gaius' heavy-handed practices in Rome, he became a prime target for an assassination attempt. The foolishness (ἀφροσύνη) which led him to evil also clouded his judgment about the danger. On the day of his death, Gaius still could not foresee his assassination at the hands of the Roman elite (Ant. 19.109).

Finally, Suetonius presents Nero as a mad tyrant whose strong desires produced an evil rule. To satisfy his odd pleasures, the depraved leader spent his nights roaming the streets and robbing shops along the way. Whenever he encountered a man returning home from dinner, Nero beat the man for no reason and stabbed him if any resistance was given (Nero 26). Nero's evils grew in number and intensity during his years as emperor. He forced wealthy citizens to fund his extravagant dinners, ravaged boys and freeborn women to quench his sexual appetites, stripped temples of their precious treasures, executed citizens by burning them alive, and, according to many accounts, set the city of Rome on fire (Nero 27-38).

Fictitious Scenes

The stock figure of tyrant is commonly used by philosophers in imaginary and fanciful scenes in order to malign evil governments. These authors present unfavorable depictions of the vicious despot who suffers in his rule or pays a penalty in the afterlife. By emphasizing the negative aspects of tyranny in fictitious writings, the philosophers hope to persuade leaders to rule justly and lawfully.

Xenophon alerts rulers to the hardships of tyranny in his imaginary dialogue between King Hiero of Syracuse and the poet Simonides (Hiero).[11] Their conversation focuses on the difference in benefits and pleasures between a tyrant and an

[11]Syracuse was infamous for its tyrants in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (e.g. Agathocles, Dionysius I, Dionysius the Younger). See Diod. Sic. 13.96.2, 4; 15.7.2-4; 19.1; Dion. Hal. 20.7.2-3; Cic., Tusc. Disp. 5.57-63; and Plut., Tim. 1.2-3.

ordinary citizen. Simonides takes the position that tyrants live a happy life since they have the means to fulfill all desires. Hiero, a notorious tyrant himself, seeks to correct this false notion. He tells Simonides that the tyrant has fewer pleasures and more problems than the typical citizen (1.8). For the length of his rule, the tyrant is in constant battle with the citizens of the land with no favorable outcome possible (2.11-12). Whenever people are executed for treason, the evil ruler cannot rejoice because he has lost subjects; yet if citizens comply with his commands, the tyrant can never be certain whether they act out of love or compulsion (1.37-38, 2.17). Xenophon's satirical view of tyranny is a warning to present and future rulers concerning the nature of wretched leadership. Far from being able to enjoy the pleasures of power, cruelty, and desire, the tyrant suffers.

The undesirability of tyranny is also recounted in a Heraclean tale of Dio Chrysostom (Or. 1.58-84). Heracles is given a tour of a mountain peak ruled by the personified Tyranny and her attendants Cruelty, Pride, Lawlessness, and Faction. The pathway to the peak was narrow and crooked which had caused many unjust rulers desiring Tyranny to fail to reach the top. Once in sight of Tyranny, Heracles saw that her throne was never secure in its foundation but continually shook. Beauty was also missing from Tyranny as she kept a forbidding scowl. The result of the tour is that Heracles abhors the unstable, unsightly Tyranny and vows to destroy evil leaders throughout the earth.

Lucian also produces imaginary and farcical scenes in which tyrants are exposed for their evil deeds. In The Downward Journey, a lawyer named Cyniscus prosecutes the tyrant Megapenthes before the dead ruler makes his way into Hades (Cat. 25-27). Cyniscus accuses Megapenthes of executing thousands of people without a trial, confiscating their property, ravishing women and boys, inventing cruel and torturous punishments, and displaying hubris (ὕβρις) and haughtiness (φρύαγμα). In his own weak defense, Megapenthes admits to the murders and confiscations but not to the excesses of

pleasure. Therefore, the lawyer calls the bed and lamp of Megapenthes to stand as witnesses against the evil ruler. These two inanimate objects speak and confirm the tyrant's sexual excesses.

A tyrant gains the chance to defend his extravagant and cruel practices in Lucian's portrayal of Phalaris of Sicily (cf. Phal.).[12] In the fictitious account, the despot Phalaris sends messengers with a gift to the temple of Apollo at Delphi. The purpose is to squelch "false rumors" concerning the severity of Phalaris' rule. The messengers claim that Phalaris took full power only when some citizens began to plot his death. The ruler had to make use of executions, exiles, and impressments in order to save himself and the city. To the charges of cruelty in his method of execution, Phalaris simply replies that he should be praised for punishing the impious so harshly. While Phalaris attempts to persuade the Delphians that his actions were justified, the gift presented to the Temple of Apollo reveals the severity of his punishments. The offering consists of a torturing device made in the form of a metallic bull in which persons were roasted alive.

Political Attacks

In the rhetorical handbooks, students were advised to use the accusation of tyranny against their opponent in declamations. The writer of the Rhetorica ad Herennium notes that it is an effective device for a prosecutor to label a crime as tyrannical (tyrannicus, 2.30.49). Cicero adds that the indignation of judges can be aroused by calling someone a tyrant (Inv. 1.53.102). In another work on rhetoric sometimes attributed to Quintilian, the writer provides a sample declamation of a man seeking to become a tyrant over a state that he has recently conquered. The would-be despot foolishly asks if his request seems greedy (**avarus**) or lustful (**libidinosus**), for he

---

[12]Phalaris was also used by Cicero as an example of an evil and cruel ruler. Cf. Tusc. Disp. 2.17-18, 5.75, Rep. 1.44, and Off. 3.29.

wants to be cruel toward the soldiers he has captured (Decl. Min. 293).

The accusation of tyranny against adversaries is common in the writings of Cicero.[13] He portrays his enemies as ruthless and ravenous rulers in order to bring about their downfall. For example, while prosecuting Verres, Cicero compares the former proconsul of Sicily to the ancient, notorious tyrants of that land (Verr. 2.4.145, 2.5.117).[14] Cicero claims that Verres uses the very quarries as prisons for Roman citizens that the ancient Sicilian tyrants used for their political enemies (Verr. 2.5.143). Verres even exceeds the evil of his tyrannical predecessors: far from enriching sanctuaries, he actually confiscates temple funds (Verr. 2.4.123). Furthermore, he takes property from landowners, uses force to accomplish his will, and orders savagely cruel punishments (Verr. 2.5.31). His arrogance and violence are seen in his decision to kill all naval leaders under his command in order to conceal his own mistakes in battle (Verr. 2.4.123). The greed associated with his leadership is displayed through the enormous tax burden he places upon conquered peoples (Verr. 2.3.25).

Cicero denounces Clodius as a tyrant who gains power by deception.[15] Clodius was a patrician in the first century BCE who designated himself as a plebeian so that he might be elected tribune. As tribune of the plebs, Clodius promulgates a law banishing all persons associated with the execution of the Catilline conspirators. Although Cicero left before being exiled, he claims that he was driven out of Rome by Clodius and that his house was destroyed by this master (Dom. 68, 110). Moreover, Cicero portrays Clodius as full of pride, cruel to subordinates, violent and insane (**furiosus**) in his actions, and lustful ever since

---

[13]In addition to the examples below, see the outline of Cicero's "thesis" on tyranny in Att. 9.4.3.

[14]On Cicero's portrayal of Verres, see Dunkle, "Study of the Rhetorical Tyrant" 24-29.

[15]On Cicero's attack of Clodius, see Dunkle, "Study of the Rhetorical Tyrant" 32-35.

his days as a young man (Dom. 55, 140-41, Har. Resp. 42-43).

After returning to Rome from his "exile," Cicero gladly defends the man who killed Clodius. Part of his defense strategy is to portray Clodius as ruthless, overbearing, and tyrannical. Cicero argues before a law court that no one could maintain or control property as long as Clodius was alive (Milo 78). By removing Clodius from power, Milo prevented the evil man from imposing his lust on the wives and children of Roman citizens (Milo 76). Cicero asserts that if Clodius were still in power, he would have gained full control over the government and destroyed the entire Republic (Milo 89).

Summary

According to ancient writers, a tyranny exists whenever a leader sees himself superior to free citizens to such a degree that the laws of the state do not pertain to him. In the eyes of the tyrant, the "law" is the aggregate of his commands, and "justice" is manifested by his actions. However, from the viewpoint of those under his power, the tyrant embodies lawlessness, injustice, and pride. Fear maintains the wide gulf between the tyrant and his citizens, for the people dread his violence and wanton desires, and he fears a coup.

Tyranny is also presented by philosophers as the domination of vice over virtue in the political arena. The tyrannical ruler is unable to control his desire for power and pleasure. His evil character, lack of self-control, foolish extravagance, and mad actions bring harm to everyone under his rule. The tyrant will attack, kill, exile, torture, steal, and confiscate in order to satisfy his desire for possessions. He even enjoys being violent and cruel to his enemies since these actions serve to curtail future uprisings against his authority.

The tyrannical state is built on the model of slavery. As the one, all-powerful master of the people (including noble persons), the tyrant

expects and forces the citizenry to obey his commands. Men are compelled to fight his battles against internal and external enemies. Women and children exist to fulfill his sexual desires. All persons are expected to offer their allegiance and relinquish their possessions according to his demands.

The stock figure of the tyrant provides authors and orators of Greco-Roman society with a weapon against powerful, wealthy, ruling enemies. In order to bring down foes, a charge of tyranny along with its corollaries--lawlessness, pride, and cruelty--is used. Writers and orators assert that their enemies treat people as slaves. Their hope is that the "citizenry" will reject the tyrannical rule, release themselves from power of the despot through a revolt, and offer their loyalty to just and lawful leaders.

A MODEL OF TYRANNY IN 2 COR 11:19-20

> For you gladly endure fools, being wise yourselves. For you endure it if someone enslaves you, devours you, exploits you, exalts themselves before you, and strikes you in the face. (2 Cor 11:19-20)

In 2 Cor 11:16-21a, Paul strives to justify his own apostleship by denouncing his opponents as foolish tyrants. Paul begins by pleading with the Corinthians to accept him as a "fool" (ἄφρων) in order that he may boast of what he has accomplished in his missionary work (11:16). Paul's ironical rationale for claiming to be foolish consists of the pleasure that the "wise" (φρόνιμοι) Corinthians have found in the boasting and foolishness of the opponents (11:17-19). In other words, since the believers in Corinth accept the foolishness of the opponents, they should be willing to endure the same quality found in his apostleship. Yet while claiming to share the title of "fool" with his adversaries, Paul insists that the manifestations of their respective "foolishnesses" are quite different. The opponents are fools like tyrants;

they enslave, devour, exploit, exalt themselves over, and slap the Corinthians (11:20). Paul professes that he and his fellow-workers do not have the strength to harm the believers in Corinth so greatly (11:21a).

Foolish Despotism (11:19)

The portrayal of the opponents in 11:19 signals a significant movement in Paul's argument against the opponents. Here, Paul calls the opponents "fools" for the first and only time. The label "fool" evokes numerous, negative perceptions from ancient literature. Foolishness is the great incendiary for other vices such as desire, pleasure, fear, insolence, pride, and a lack of control (Arist., Virt. et Vit. 1250b43-1251a2; Cic., Tusc. Disp. 3.11.24-25; Sen., Vita Beata 10.2-3). Furthermore, the opponents, as fools, lack the rational, decision-making capabilities necessary for differentiating between good and evil (Arist., Rhet. 1.10.4, 2.1.6; Epict., Dis. 2.11.13-18).

With regard to the political arena, ancient writers depict the leaders of corrupt governments as extremely foolish and maniacal (Jos., Ant. 18.273-78, 19.284-85; Cic. Dom. 55). The opponents of Paul are foolish because tyranny is as unprofitable and undesirable for the ruler as the evil government is for the subjects. As Hiero makes known in the imaginary dialogue with Simonides, the tyrant is most unhappy since his reign is always based upon fear. Citizens dread the harsh rule of an evil master, and the tyrant fears the possibility of a coup. Therefore, friendship is impossible for the tyrant, for everyone must be regarded as a potential enemy (cf. Xen., Hiero 3.7-9, 4.4-7, 6.14). The estrangement from and battle with all persons under his rule make the tyrant unable to enjoy his many possessions (Hiero 1.8). By calling the opponents "fools," Paul depicts the relationship between the opponents and the Corinthians as one of enmity. The apostle hopes that the Corinthians will thus overthrow the despotism of the opponents.

Direct Attacks (11:20)

The key term that manifests the tyranny of the opponents in 11:19-20 consists of **καταδουλόω**. Forcing citizens into slavery is an action specifically and consistently attributed to tyrants who abuse their power and seek absolute control over free persons.[16] By claiming that opponents enslave their subjects, Paul implies that they force the Corinthians to perform deeds and to hold beliefs against their will and below their position in the community of faith. The Corinthians must obey the commandments and teachings of the opponents or suffer punishment (e.g. blows to the face, noted later in 11:20). They are mere chattel to be used and discarded after they outlive their utility. Once the topos on tyranny has been initiated through a reference to enslavement, the acts of devouring, exploiting, self-exalting, and beating in 11:20 all contribute to painting the picture of the opponents as evil rulers.[17]

In their despotic rule, the opponents are said to devour (**κατεσθίω**) the Corinthians.[18] As noted above, tyrants are compared to ravenous creatures

---

[16]Various terms connoting enslavement in antiquity include **δουλοσύνη**, **δουλεία**, **δοῦλος**, **δουλόω**, **καταδούλωσις**, **καταδουλόω**, **servitus**, and **servus**. For instances where these terms are associated with tyranny, see Herod. 3.21; Pl., Rep. 563E, 569B-C, 577C-D; Arist., Nic. Eth. 8.10.1-6, 8.11.1-3; Diod. Sic. 19.1, 14.3; Cic., Rep. 1.33.50, 1.44.68; Philo, Prob. 45, Spec. Leg. 1.90; Epict., Dis. 1.19.7-10; Dio Chrys., Or. 3.39-41; and Luc., Tyr. 4.

[17]This political reading is meant to supplement and not replace interpretations of 11:20 which reveal the actions of the opponents to be those of abusive sophists. Cf. Witherington, Conflict and Community 449-50 and Bruce W. Winter, "Are Philo and Paul among the Sophists? A Hellenistic Jewish and Christian Response to a First Century Movement" (dissertation, MacQuarrie University, 1988) 243ff.

[18]The term **κατεσθίω** is not routinely used in the portrayal of tyrants but the related acts of confiscating, plundering, and destroying are prevalent. Cf. **ἀφαιρέω**, **διαρπάζω**, **φθείρω**, **ἀπόλλυμι** in Pl., Rep. 567A; Diod. Sic. 14.4; Dio Chrys., Or. 3.41, 6.50; and Luc., Cat. 26.

such as eagles and bears who pursue and kill their prey in order to satisfy their bellies (Dio Chrys., Or. 2.67-69). Paul imagines his adversaries as these voracious beasts. He implies they cannot get enough possessions, wealth, territory, or sexual favors to appease their appetites. The "devouring" or "eating up" also connotes that the adversaries "use up" whatever they grasp from the Corinthians. Therefore, the evil leaders are constantly in need of feeding their insatiable desires. Christians in Corinth are to beware: property, women, and life itself are all at stake when the stomach of a tyrant rumbles.

Closely related to the opponents' voracious appetite in regard to the Corinthians stands the subsequent claim that the opponents "take," or "seize" (λαμβάνω) the believers in Corinth. The use of λαμβάνω in 11:20 has caused problems for interpreters since one would expect to read that the opponents "take from" their subjects rather than "take" the Corinthians themselves. Moreover, in the depictions of tyrants, the object of λαμβάνω is commonly the possessions of the people rather than the subjects themselves (Arist., Pol. 5.9.11; Dio Chrys., Or. 62.2-3). Yet understanding λαμβάνω as signifying "taking advantage of" or "exploiting" relieves the difficulty of interpretation.[19] The adversaries take advantage of the Corinthians precisely by taking possessions from them and exploiting them sexually.[20] Included in this rendering of λαμβάνω is the connotation of deception, for the opponents are not able to deliver what has been promised to their subjects. They confiscate money and possessions but fail to "give" their slaves a gospel which brings salvation (cf. 11:3-4, 7-11).

---

[19]Cf. Witherington, Conflict and Community 449.

[20]Ralph Martin argues that λαμβάνω may have the sexual connotation of "violate" or "deflower" (2 Corinthians [WBC 40; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986] 364-65). Such violations of the opponents have already been depicted by Paul in 11:2-4.

Paul further characterizes the opponents as leaders who exalt (ἐπαίρω) themselves before the Corinthians (cf. 10:5).[21] The adversaries have an inflated view of their rule, for they forget that the source of their authority and power is God and not themselves (cf. 10:11-17). Associated with the evil of self-exaltation is the act of despising other noble persons and deeming them inferior to oneself which is signified by ὑβρίζω and its cognates.[22] The opponents despise both Paul and the Corinthians; they fail to give Paul the honor he deserves as an apostle of the Lord (cf. 10:10, 11:6) and refuse to treat the Corinthians as "free citizens" within the Christian community (cf. 11:19-20).

Paul concludes the foolish portrayal of his adversaries in 11:20 by claiming that they strike (δέρω) the Corinthians in the face.[23] Beating and maltreating free men in public are specific acts associated with tyrants (Dio Chrys., Or. 47.24). Cleomenes was said to hit any Spartan he passed by on the face with his staff, and Nero was known for beating free citizens on their way home from dinner (cf. Herod. 6.75; Suet., Nero 26.2 respectively). Yet all people living under tyrannies are constantly subject to physical abuse, torture, and the threat of violence and cruelty.[24] Furthermore,

---

[21]For the connection between evil leadership and self-exaltation as signified by ἐπαίρω, see Dio Chrys., Or. 43.33, 61.12, 64.19. In other contexts, ἐπαίρω can have a positive connotation which reveals appropriate joy over something virtuous (e.g. Epict., Dis. 2.11.22).

[22]The terms ἐπαίρω and ὕβρις are used together in reference to the evil of Achilles and Agamemnon in Dio Chrys., Or. 57.6-7. Both leaders have such a high view of themselves and wish to rule over the other that they refuse to join forces against a common enemy. See also Or. 18.2 for another connection between the terms.

[23]Wile the term δέρω is not commonly used in tyrannical depictions, words with similar connotations in relevant portrayals include τύπτω in Arist., Pol. 5.8.13 and Dio Chrys., Or. 47.24 and βία in Philo, Prov. 2.2 and Luc., Phal. 2.6.

[24]Dio Chrysostom compares the tyrant to a butcher who

due to their evil character, wicked rulers enjoy watching their subjects cringe in pain.[25] By claiming that the opponents strike the Corinthians in the face, Paul leads the believers to view their punishment and discipline at the hands of the false apostles as violent and cruel acts. The adversaries are portrayed as beating the Corinthians in order to display their apostolic powerand to scare the believers into submission.

Overall, through the imagery of 11:20, Paul creates monstrous tyrants out of the opponents who have gained a following among the Corinthian Christians. While the opponents may not have legally enslaved the Corinthians, actually confiscated their property, or physically struck them in the face, Paul paints such repulsive pictures of the adversaries by drawing upon the ancient topos on tyranny. Paul's hope is that the Corinthians will see the tyranny that lies before them and attempt to cast off the mantle that restrains their faithful obedience to his fellow-workers and himself. Paul assures the Corinthians that enslavement, confiscations, and torture will not occur under his rule, for he and his fellow-workers are "too weak" to force such evil upon the Christian community (11:21a).

IMPLIED ACCUSATIONS IN 2 COR 10:12-12:18

Reading Paul's depiction of the opponents in 11:19-20 as an attack on tyrants invites a new perspective on Paul's arguments throughout 2 Cor 10:12-12:18. The opponents can now be seen as usurping tyrants who exploit the citizens of the Christian community in Corinth. The beginning of the tyrannical portrayal is found in 10:12 where Paul claims to avoid comparing himself with the adversaries. The denial of comparability is a

---

slaughters and skins sheep. Cf. Or. 4.44-45 and the use of the term δέρω to denote the act of "skinning."

[25]In typically ironical fashion, Lucian portrays Phalaris as not enjoying the suffering of tortured citizens (Phal. 1.8).

rhetorical technique used to accentuate the vast difference between two separate entities.[26] Actually, Paul is constantly contrasting his actions as a leader of the Corinthians with those of his opponents through 12:18. In other words, throughout 10:12-12:18, Paul uses the tyranny or "false apostleship" of the opponents as a foil for the presentation of his work as a true apostle to the Corinthian community.[27]

Exuding Lawlessness/Usurping Control (10:12-18)

Paul begins the tyrannical portrayal of the opponents in 10:12 by stating that they commend themselves, measure themselves against themselves, and compare themselves with themselves. The adversaries have no external gauge or outside criterion by which to evaluate their apostleship. In political terms, the opponents lack an external law or measure of justice which can form the basis of their rule.[28] As argued above, ancient philosophers specifically define tyranny as a state in which lawlessness and injustice abound. In Paul's view, the Corinthians have accepted the opponents' claims to leadership without evaluating their acts in terms of the "measure" of justice for apostleship created by God.

The different standards of leadership become manifest in 10:13-18 where Paul presents Corinth as a foreign land ready to be conquered.[29] Paul and

---

[26]For example, in the midst of explaining to the people of Rhodes how the expenses of the city in earlier periods were far greater than similar costs in the present era, Dio Chrysostom states three times that such expenses cannot be compared (Or. 31.102-05). Like Dio, Paul compares what he calls incomparable.

[27]Prior to the comparison, Paul concentrates on a defending his own apostleship before the Corinthians (10:1-11). After the comparison, the apostle warns the Corinthians what will happen when he returns, exhorts them to faithful living, and extends final greetings (12:19-13:13).

[28]Cf. the implied reference to the "limitless measure" (τα ἄμετρα) of the opponents in 10:13.

[29]The invective against the opponents is implied, for

his fellow-workers are the first ones to "reach" or "attain" (φθάνω) the city (10:14b). As the first ones to overtake Corinth, Paul and his fellow-workers were due military honors and the reward of land within the city.[30] God, their supreme ruler and military commander, had previously distributed to Paul and his soldiers their respective portions (10:13).[31] Paul had hoped to use this land as a command post for seizing new territory for the sake of the gospel (10:16).

The adversaries ruin Paul's plans by arriving in Corinth and confiscating the land which belonged to Paul and his fellow-workers. They have ignored the apostolic law requiring one to subdue an unevangelized land rather than "reconquering" a territory previously infiltrated with the gospel (10:13-14). In their military endeavors, the opponents have overextended themselves (10:14a) like a tyrant who desires to increase his territory and possessions at all costs.[32] Furthermore, the

---

Paul uses the third person (cf. 10:18) and does not name the opponents. Yet the connection between "commending themselves" in 10:12 and "the one commending himself" in 10:18 reveals that the opponents' actions are in view. For the non-naming device in Greco-Roman invectives and Paul's use of it, cf. Marshall, Enmity in Corinth 341-48.

[30]On the Roman military award for being the first soldier over the wall of an enemy city, the **corona muralis**, see Valerie A. Maxfield, The Military Decorations of the Roman Army (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) 76-79. Judge understands Paul to be using a reversal of the military imagery in 2 Cor 11:32-33 where the apostle escapes down a wall in cowardice instead of assailing the wall like a brave soldier ("The Conflict of Educational Aims in N.T. Thought," Journal of Christian Education 9 [1966] 32-45, esp. 44-45). In 10:13-16, Paul's bravery stands out as the apostle and his workers are the first ones to reach Corinth. Note Malherbe's argument that military imagery is already prevalent in 10:3-6 in his "Antisthenes and Odysseus, and Paul at War."

[31]On the term κανών connoting a territorial area of service or jurisdiction, see Witherington, Conflict & Community 440 and James F. Strange, "2 Corinthians 10:13-16 Illuminated by a Recently Published Inscription" BA 46 (1983) 167-68. Here, the land is a gift from the commander God and is to be used for divine service.

[32]Cf. Herodotus who portrays the ancient tyrant

usurpers take credit for the benefits brought to Corinth through the labor of Paul and his fellow-soldiers (10:15-16).[33] Overall, the law/authority of God, their ostensible commander, has been disregarded by the disobedient soldiers. They act like the local tyrant Timophanes of ancient Corinth who forsook his commander's orders and was eventually killed for refusing to relinquish his rule (Plut., Tim. 4.2-5). Since the opponents have gone beyond their jurisdiction in assailing Corinth and remaining there, they will receive no commendation from the Lord (10:18).

Violating the Virgin Community (11:2-4)

The tyranny of the opponents becomes more evident as Paul switches to familial imagery in 11:2-4. Paul declares that he originally betrothed the Corinthian community as a pure bride to Christ and feels a "divine jealousy" for them since the opponents have overtaken Corinth (11:2). In claiming to be the agent of betrothal, Paul insists that he is the legitimate father of the Corinthians. He has lawful authority to present his chaste daughter, the Corinthian community, for marriage.[34]

Cambyses as pushing his troops through Egypt and into Ethiopia even though he did not have the means to secure the territory (3.25).

[33]James McGlew has shown that the struggle between the "founder" of a city and the usurping "tyrant" is a common, literary theme from ancient Greece to the early Empire (Tyranny and Political Culture 14-51).

[34]Furnish emphasizes that the betrothal imagery in 11:2 conforms to Jewish customs of marriage. A Jewish father has the duty of keeping his daughter "pure" until marriage (II Corinthians 499). The precepts of Roman law are likewise not very different from the imagery used here. In a Roman family, an unwed female is by law under the **potestas** of the father (or **paterfamilias**) and needs his **consensus** to marry. Cf. Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 136-37 and Beryl Rawson, "The Roman Family," The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives (ed. Beryl Rawson; Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986) 1-57, at 21.

By cunning deception, the opponents persuade the Corinthians to submit to (or to marry) another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel (11:3-4). They usurp Paul's rightful place as **paterfamilias** of the Corinthians by leading his "children" into "adultery." In other words, the opponents violate the virginal bride of Christ! Further reference to violation is found in the reference to Eve's deception by the serpent which is often interpreted as sexual seduction in Jewish texts (b. Yebam. 103b and b. Sabb. 146a).[35] One of the marks of tyrannical rule in the traditional topos is the use of women and children to satisfy the sexual desires of the evil ruler. Typically, the tyrant himself is the one who defiles virgins and children (Suet., Nero 28.1; Plut., Mor. 781E; Luc., Cat. 26). In the case of the Corinthian community, the rule of opponents creates a situation where the believers are enticed into illicit sexual relations. The opponents can be compared to Phalaris who is presented as having allowed the violation of women and boys to exist throughout his rule (Luc., Phal. 1.3).[36]

Robbing the Citizens (11:7-12)

The issue of financial support is the subject of contrast between Paul and the opponents in 11:7-12. While Paul refuses to accept aid from the Corinthians, the opponents cannot boast of working on similar terms (11:7, 12). The practices of Paul and the opponents can be evaluated from several different perspectives. In terms of the support given to philosophers, the opponents accept fees for their services and/or take up residence with the Corinthians, who would thus be seen as their "patrons." The believers in Corinth take Paul's refusal of their money as a rejection of such a

---

[35]Cf. Witherington, Conflict & Community 445 and Martin, 2 Corinthians 333.

[36]Of course, the messengers in the dialogue deny that sexual misdeeds occurred during his rule. For the sons of tyrants who are reputed to have violated virgins, see Cic., Rep. 2.45 and Luc., Tyr. 5.

relationship while the opponents' acceptance has secured their place as "clients" of the Corinthians.[37]

In a similar manner, the controversy over monetary aid can also be assessed in regard to the customs of friendship in the ancient Greco-Roman world.[38] Once again, by declining financial support, Paul makes a grievous error. Since the Corinthians understand Paul's rejection of support as a refusal to enter into a pact of "friendship" with them, they claim that Paul does not love them or pay them with respect (cf. 11:11). Hence, Paul's rejection of the money is apparently seen as an attempt to place himself above the Corinthians in terms of status. Paul is the lofty apostle who is too noble and worthy to receive support from lowly Corinthians. In contrast, the opponents cement the pact of friendship by accepting aid from the Corinthians.

In order to present himself favorably and his opponents adversely, Paul struggles for a different interpretation of his refusal of financial support. Rather than being haughty, Paul humbled himself and exalted the Corinthians by preaching the gospel to them without cost (11:7).[39] He supported himself by "robbing" or "plundering" (cf. συλάω) other

---

[37]On Paul's disavowal of financial support because the Corinthians would become his patrons, see Witherington Conflict & Community 341-42, 414-19 and Furnish, II Corinthians 507-08.

[38]Marshall interprets the Corinthians' offer of support and Paul's rejection of their aid in terms of the convention of "friendship" whereby the receiver is under obligation to repay the giver (Enmity in Corinth 173-258).

[39]Furnish refers to Paul's work as an artisan in Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 4:12, Acts 18:1-3) as an example of his abasement in 11:7-11 (II Corinthians 506-07). Manual labor was viewed as demeaning by the upper classes in the ancient world. See Ronald F. Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking and the Problem of his Social Class" JBL 97 (1978) 555-64 and Ramsey MacMullen, Roman Social Relations 50 B.C. to A.D. 284 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) 114-15. While the humble status of artisans gives validity to Paul's lowly position in the Corinthian community, the apostle does not name his tentmaking as the reason for his abasement in 11:7-11. Here, Paul emphasizes robbery, not manual labor.

churches in order to serve the Corinthians (11:8).[40] In addition, the "brothers from Macedonia" continue to bring him "tribute" in order to provide for his needs (11:9).[41] Therefore, the Corinthians are to interpret the money or "provisions" (cf. ὀψώνιον) he receives from other churches as spoils from a conquest rather than as support for a philosopher-client or an offer of friendship (11:8).[42] According to Paul's portrayal, the believers in Corinth receive the benefit of this booty since they do not have to fund Paul's ministry.

By portraying the acceptance of financial support from Macedonia as robbery or plunder, Paul presents the adversaries, not as resident philosophers or friends, but as tyrannical conquerors who confiscate the goods of their Corinthian subjects. The "superapostles" supposedly place a burden and heavy weight upon the Christians in Corinth by taking resources (cf. 11:9, 12). The churches are forced to sacrifice their needs in order to ensure that the desires of the opponent apostles may be fulfilled. By means of a clever reversal, Paul's adversaries are now the ones who are pictured in a similar manner as Suetonius portrayed Nero: confiscating property, stealing wealth, and exacting heavy taxes from

---

[40]The term συλάω is often used to denote the taking of an enemy's arms after battle and the pillaging of a conquered city (Furnish, II Corinthians 492). Such robbery and plunder is depicted as evil and is shunned by the good and noble leader. See Herod. 6.101; Pl., Rep. 469D; and Dio Chrys., Or. 3.53.

[41]The depiction of himself as pillaging and exacting tribute from Christian communities outside Corinth does not mean that Paul and his fellow-workers literally used physical or military force to obtain resources. Rather, Paul is using the image of a robber plundering a city in order to explain how he demeaned himself before the Corinthians. While he could ravage their community of supplies, he humbles himself by taking nothing.

[42]For ὀψώνιον as connoting "provisions," see Hock, The Social Context 92 and C. Caragounis, "ΟΨΩΝΙΟΝ: A Reconsideration of its Meaning," NovT 16 (1974) 37-57, esp. 52-53.

constituents in order to fulifill tyrannical desires (Suet., Nero 26-38). Since the Corinthians receive little benefit from such enslaving practices, Paul hopes that they will accept his view of the adversaries, cast out the tyrants, and return under the care of his leadership.[43]

Disguising Injustice (11:13-15)

Paul continues the portrayal of the opponents as tyrants in 11:13-15 by referring to their false apostleship, deceitful work, and disguise as apostles of Christ. The adversaries deceive the Corinthians and portray their deeds as acts of righteousness in order to persuade the Corinthians to continue allegiance and not to rebel.[44] Paul maintains that since Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, the Corinthians should not be surprised to see the opponents masquerading as servants of righteousness or justice (δικαιοσύνη) (11:14-15a). In the final judgment, the tyrannical opponents will be punished for their deeds of injustice (11:15b).[45]

---

[43]Quintilian reveals that the tyrant is typically "punished" by removing his dead body from the city. See Decl. Min. 274 and the relevant discussion in McGlew, Tyranny and Political Culture 14-17.

[44]In writing on how to perpetuate a tyranny, Aristotle suggests that the despot make himself appear as a good king. The tyrant should pretend to make decrees with the consent of citizens, fake being a good steward of the state by giving a (false) account of finances, act like punishments inflicted upon citizens are given in a paternal manner, and avoid insolent behavior (Pol. 5.10-20). In Paul's portrayal, the opponents disguise themselves as righteous leaders and therefore, appear to follow Aristotle's advice on how to save a tyranny.

[45]In a dialogue of Lucian, the tyrant Megapenthes receives severe punishment in the afterlife for his previous murders, confiscations, and sexual misdeeds (Cat. 28-29). The despot is placed in chains and prevented from drinking the water of Lethe which would remove a grievous remembrance of the past. The punishment forces Megapenthes to contemplate the power and wealth he had in the flesh while he suffers helplessly in his present, harsh existence.

The opponents' "disguise" of righteousness may be compared to the self-defense of Phalaris in Lucian's imaginary work. The tyrant Phalaris of Sicily justifies his ruthless practices before the Delphians by claiming that he did solely what was necessary to preserve order. The confiscations, exiles, and killings were supposedly handed out only to traitors of the state. Phalaris claims that he should be honored for curtailing corruption instead of being criticized for severe punishments. The Delphians appropriately question the justice of Phalaris' punishments and extortions. In a similar manner, Paul denies the opponents' claims to righteousness. The taking of money and possessions is not deserved support (cf. 11:7-12). The acts of enslaving, exploiting, and striking in the face are not done to preserve order or to inflict just punishments (cf. 11:20). Through his portrayal of the opponents as deceitful leaders, Paul hopes that the Corinthians will join him in rejecting their apostleship.

Glorying in Achievements (11:16-12:10)

The most prevalent example of the opponents' despotic nature consists of their boasting (καύχησις) which is brought to the forefront once again in 11:16-21a.[46] Here, Paul emphasizes the self-glory of their apostleship as he vows to match the opponents at their own criteria for apostleship: while Paul typically boasts of things that are important to the Lord (11:17), he now pledges to measure himself according the standards set by "humans" (cf. σάρξ, 11:18). The eventual outcome of the "fleshly" comparison is revealed early on when Paul claims to be too weak to match the tyrannical deeds of the opponents (11:20-21a).

The first subject of contrast in Paul's foolish boasting consists of apostolic hardships in 11:23b-33. On the one hand, Paul cites a long list of

---

[46]Paul has previously mentioned that the opponents gloat over their labors in Corinth (10:15-17) and their status as apostles (11:12).

difficulties in order to humiliate himself according to human standards. The humiliation results from his becoming weak (11:29) and fleeing Damascus like a coward (11:32-33).[47] On the other hand, the opponents revel in their worldly worthiness. They list numerous misfortunes that they have overcome in order to assert their human strength.[48] Greco-Roman rhetoricians lauded the ability to thrive under difficult circumstances (Cic., Orat. 2.343-46, Part. Orat. 77; Quint., Inst. Orat. 3.7.12; and Rhet. Alex. 1426a12-15). The opponents boast of endurance so that the Corinthians would praise their strength and offer them the loyalty due brave, powerful leaders. Paul implies that this boasting of the opponents displays not only their "fleshly" strength but also the prideful arrogance of tyrants.

In 12:1-10, Paul suddenly shifts the focus of the comparison with his opponents to visions and revelations. The apostle reveals his own ascension into the heavenly realm by disguising the experience as that of another person (12:2-5). Yet regardless of who experienced this vision, Paul asserts that he will not boast in things which the Corinthians cannot see or hear for themselves (12:6). The statement is subtle critique of the opponents who boast of heavenly visions. According to Paul, such revelations are not seen or experienced by other people and therefore, should not be used as a measure of apostleship. The opponents have evidently used them to praise themselves and to persuade the Corinthians that they are worthy leaders of God. The result of glorying in revelations is that people exalt themselves too highly (cf. ὑπεραίρομαι, 12:7). While Paul avoids the self-exaltation through the experience of the "thorn in the flesh" (12:7-8), the opponents do not shun the haughty boast in revelations. Paul later calls the adversaries

---

[47]On Paul's use of catalogues of hardships in 11:23b-33, see Andrews, "Too Weak Not to Lead," 263-73.

[48]Cf. Paul's claim to have more labors, imprisonments, and floggings in 11:23--i.e., more than his adversaries.

"super-apostles" because they think so highly of themselves (12:11, cf. 11:5).

Overall, the opponents' gloat over worldly achievements reveals the extreme arrogance associated with tyranny.[49] The stock figure of the tyrant in ancient philosophical writings is notorious for embodying the vice of hubris (ὕβρις). One of the four attendants of the personified Tyranny in Dio Chrysostom's Heraclean tale, noted above, consists of ὕβρις. The arrogant ways of Tyranny disgust Heracles to such a degree that he pledges to destroy all tyrannical governments throughout the earth (Or. 1.82-84). In Lucian's depiction of the dead making their way into Hades, the infamous ruler Lampichus is told to shed ὕβρις from his soul. Retaining insolence will weigh down his soul so that he will not be able to cross the river Styx (Dial. Mort. 365-66). Finally, Aristotle simply claims that evil monarchies are attacked most often not because of injustice, fear, and contempt but due to the ὕβρις of the leader (Pol. 5.8.8). Paul hopes that by portraying the opponents as arrogant tyrants, the Corinthians will likewise cast off the evil government. If the believers do come to reject their leadership, then Paul will be able to retain his position as true apostle and leader of the Corinthian community.

Forsaking a Fatherly Role (12:13-18)

In the final section of the comparison found in 12:13-18, Paul once again takes up the issue of financial support. The apostle claims that in his upcoming visit he will continue the practice of refusing aid from the Corinthians. His rationale is that children ought not to "lay up" (treasures) for their parents but parents for their children

---

[49]For the connection between boasting and hubris, see Pogoloff, Logos and Sophia 226-31. One of the main conclusions of Marshall's work is that the opponents of Paul might properly be called "hybrists." Without using the word ὕβρις, Paul denigrates the opponents in regard to their social status by claiming that they "boast beyond measure" (Enmity in Corinth 364-81, 403-04).

(12:14). As the parent, Paul is the social superior. In the ideology of the upper-class ancients, money and other forms of material support flow down the social ladder. Therefore, Paul will gladly "spend" and "be spent" for their souls (cf. δαπανάω, 12:15a). The duty of the Corinthians is to return the love first shown to them by accepting him as an apostle (12:15b).[50]

By claiming the role of the dutiful father (as he also did in 11:2-4), Paul sets himself up as the good leader or king and implies that the opponents forsake honorable roles in father-son and leader-subject relationships.[51] Instead of supporting their children with resources and gifts, the tyrannical opponents burden the Corinthians by accepting support (cf. 11:13-14, 16). They are evil fathers who reverse the flow of material support and confiscate the goods of weak children. In other words, the community led by the opponents more closely resembles a master-slave relationship which is a sign that a tyranny exists.

CONCLUSION

In ancient political and historical writings, the stock figure of the "tyrant" exudes insolence, greed, desire, and cruelty. The wicked leader's hubris allows him to believe that the laws of the state do not apply to his actions. Greed moves the tyrant to steal the possessions of wealthy citizens and to lead an army in pursuit of foreign territory. Furthermore, the tyrant's uncontrollable desire propels the leader to exploit

---

[50]For a discussion of the social significance of the parent-child relationship in regard to 12:14-15, see Marshall, Enmity in Corinth 247-51.

[51]For the "father" as a virtuous leader over against the evil "tyrant," see Pl., Laws 859A and Philo, Prov. 2.3-6, Spec. Leg. 4.184-85. Caesar and the early emperors commonly use paternal imagery in order to gain loyalty from their subjects. Cf. Eva Maria Lassen, "The Use of the Father Image in Imperial Propaganda and 1 Corinthians 4:14-21" TynBul 42.1 (1991) 127-36, esp. 131-33.

women and children sexually. Violence and cruelty also mark the rule of a despot who rapes, tortures, exiles, and kills his own citizens. Overall, injustice reigns as the tyrant enslaves the citizens of the state so that they may bring about his every wish and whim. Greco-Roman authors and orators draw upon the stock figure of the tyrant in order to malign persons in power and to persuade the citizenry to overthrow rival leaders.

The apostle Paul utilizes the depiction of a "tyrant" in order to denounce his Corinthian opponents as ruthless leaders in 2 Cor 10-13. The most poignant expression of the opponents' tyranny is found in 11:19-20 where the adversaries are called fools who enslave, devour, exploit, humiliate, and slap the Corinthians. The opponents' rule is foolish because tyrants are friendless and their government unstable. The reference to enslavement is the key element in the tyrannical portrayal of the opponents. Only those with despotic power can enslave free citizens against their will. The devouring of the Corinthians signals tyrannical confiscation of property and goods. The opponents' exploitation of the believers in Corinth reveals a despot's deceptive practice of taking possessions and support. Haughtiness also characterizes the tyranny of the adversaries who consider themselves above the laws of the state. Finally, striking the Corinthian believers in the face exposes the violence and cruelty of the opponents' despotism.

Understanding 11:19-20 as a portrayal of tyrannical leadership invites a new reading of Paul's comparison with the opponents in 10:12-12:18. Throughout the comparison, the foolish despotism of the adversaries serves as a foil to Paul's own leadership and apostleship. Paul marks the opponents as tyrants by claiming that they exemplify lawlessness and usurp the authority of God (10:13-18), violate the pure, chaste Corinthian community (11:1-4), rob the wealth of their subjects (11:7-12), deceive the Corinthians concerning justice (11:13-15), glory in their ability to overcome hardships and experience revelations (11:23b-33. 12:1-10), and forsake their

duty as father to the Corinthians (12:13-18). By portraying the opponents as despots, Paul hopes that the Christian community in Corinth will loathe their current leaders, revoke the tyranny that is present, and turn back to him so that he may be their true and faithful apostle and ruler.

INVESTIGATING HONOR DISCOURSE: GUIDELINES FROM CLASSICAL RHETORICIANS

David A. deSilva
Ashland Theological Seminary

Socio-rhetorical criticism -- a strategy of interpretation which combines literary, rhetorical, and social-scientific approaches into an integrated and mutually-informing method -- has raised our awareness of the importance of the cultural values which shape the ancient Mediterranean world, while calling us to methodological clarity in applying these insights to exegesis. This paper seeks to contribute to increasing that methodological clarity specifically with regard to the analysis of honor discourse in ancient texts. Robbins acknowledges the contribution of the "Context Group"[1] to

---

[1] Seminal studies on honor and shame in the Mediterranean appeared in J. G. Peristiany, (ed.), *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1966). Most noteworthy among these is Julian Pitt-Rivers' essay, "Honour and Social Status" (Peristiany, *Honour and Shame*, 22-70). B. Malina capitalized largely on the insights of Pitt-Rivers, suggesting that New Testament documents be read against such a cultural background (see especially Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993 (1981)]; B. Malina and J. H. Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World," in J. H. Neyrey [ed.], *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991] 26-65); B. Malina and R. Rohrbaugh. *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992]). Halvor Moxnes has also produced a series of articles on honor, and his work on Romans takes analysis of honor discourse forward in a number of important respects, not least of which is an analysis of the way honor discourse reinforces group boundaries and preserves a group's culture within a dominant culture (see Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," *BTB* 23 [1993] 167-176; *idem*, "Honor, Shame, and the Outside World in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in J. Neusner, P. Borgen, E. S. Frerichs, and R. Horsley [eds.], *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988]; *idem.*, "Honour and Righteousness in Romans," *JSNT* 32 [1988] 61-77). A number of important studies on honor in the ancient Greek world have been published by classical scholars. A. W. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1960), introduces the importance of honor and dyadic personality in Homeric stories, and appears to have exercised significant influence on members of the Context Group. Another significant work has recently appeared to challenge the absolute claims made by Adkins (and his pupils) concern dyadic or group-oriented personality. Bernard Williams (*Shame and Necessity* [Berkeley: University of California, 1993]) finds from his study of classical Greek tragedy that self-respect and

the resources which the New Testament interpreter can bring to bear on the exegetical task, particularly with regard to "social and cultural phenomena that anthropological and sociological theory perceive to be common to all people in Mediterranean society."[2] Indeed, without their work we would never have asked the question: what is the role of honor in persuasion, community formation, or community maintenance? The close exploration of texts, particularly within a framework which considers itself to be "rhetorical," calls us to move beyond the models which help us see considerations of honor at work in the text to a model for discerning how an author uses honor discourse as part of an orchestrated strategy of persuasion, as a tool for forming and maintaining social bodies. Now that we are aware of the importance of honor, we need to anchor the investigation in ancient texts and allow ancient informants to shape our perception of how honor discourse works to effect persuasion.

This study, then, seeks mainly to contribute to connecting social and cultural texture (the social and cultural contexts and location of the group which produces a text) with inner-texture (the argumentative and literary patterning of a text),[3] with a view to just one aspect of that social and cultural texture -- honor discourse. The first step in this direction involves a close examination of how classical rhetorical theorists lead us to expect honor discourse to be used within the art of persuasion, and in what ways considerations of honor persuade. This takes us into argumentative texture (a subset of Robbins' inner-texture)[4] from a distinctly cultural perspective. The second step involves the exploration of how authors from different social locations (the layers of culture in the Greco-Roman world, e.g.,

---

approval by a group are not co-terminous.

[2] V. K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 159-160. Robbins' *Exploring the Texture of Texts* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996), 76-77 provides a summary of Malina's discussion of honor and begins to show how honor scripts are at work in Mark 15.

[3] Robbins' framework intentionally seeks out and facilitates such integration, as statements such as the following suggest: "One of the most important results of these insights into the argumentative texture of texts has been the awareness of social and cultural presuppositions and networks of reasoning that interpreters can investigate in New Testament literature. In other words, analysis and interpretation of the argumentative nature of New Testament texts is revealing significantly new insights about the participation of early Christian discourse in Mediterranean society and culture" (*Tapestry*, 64).

[4] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 59-64; *Exploring*, 21-29.

majority culture, dominant culture, subcultures, countercultures)[5] use considerations of honor to construct or reinforce group boundaries and commitment to the distinctive values or definitions of values within the group. This takes us back into social and cultural texture, and into the ways in which a text can create or shape a group and its response to the world.

I. Honor Discourse within Argumentative Texture

Rhetorical criticism has frequently taken as its starting point the rhetorical handbooks preserved from the classical Greek and Roman periods -- Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*, the *Rhetorica ad Herrenium*, Quintilian's *Institutes*, and so forth. Returning to these rhetorical handbooks for the present investigation is more than an intuitive choice. These are books about how to persuade, and as such they operate on a meta-level, one step removed from taken-for-grantedness, and reflecting on how taken-for-granted values may be harnassed for the task of persuasion. They will not explain why honor is an important consideration, but they will provide guidance for how a Greco-Roman communicator might effectively tap in to the hearers' concern for honor -- their own honor and the honor due others -- to impel them to choose one course of action over another. These handbooks represent the observations of native informants, and as such offer a solid base for investigating honor discourse. As Aristotle organizes appeals into three types, so this discussion will treat, in turn, the ways in which considerations of honor fuel appeals to *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*.

A. Honor and Appeals to Logos

It is often said that epideictic rhetoric deals with topics of honor while deliberative rhetoric deals with the topic of the expedient or advantageous and forensic rhetoric with the topic of the just (cf. Aristotle *Rh.* 1.3.5). It is true that epideictic rhetoric, which seeks to praise or blame (hence hold up for public honor or disapproval) is most explicitly concerned with honor, but considerations of honor are also quite central to deliberative rhetoric.

---

[5] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 168-170; *Exploring*, 86-89. The term majority culture derives from a discussion with Dr. Robbins concerning the precise definition of "dominant" culture as the culture of the empowered -- those who can maintain and propagate their culture through the exercise of power and other resources. The dominant elite, however, do not always speak for the majority. One finds in Aristotle, who as tutor to Alexander speaks with the voice of the dominant culture, repeated attempts to distinguish between the values of the cultivated elite and the "masses." Indications such as these point to the existence of a majority culture alongside a dominant culture, perhaps with the latter reinforcing their elite status specifically through drawing distinctions between themselves and the "many."

Both Aristotle and Quintilian bear witness to the intimate relationship between these two genres:

> Praise and counsels have a common aspect; for what you might suggest in counselling becomes encomium by a change in the phrase....Accordingly, if you desire to praise, look what you would suggest; if you desire to suggest, look what you would praise (Aristotle, *Rh.* 1.9.35-36).

> But panegyric is akin to deliberative oratory inasmuch as the same things are usually praised in the former as are advised in the latter (Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.7.28).

Aristotle correctly speaks of the scope of deliberative rhetoric as the "expedient" or the "harmful" (*Rh.* 1.3.5), since he recognizes that a number of considerations move people to take action.[6] It is noteworthy, however, that he later specifically points the counsellor to considerations of honor when pondering what advice should be offered. Since the orator's addressees would desire what was praiseworthy, the successful advisor should point to the honorable course -- precisely that course which would be praised in retrospect.[7]

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* speaks of the aim of deliberative oratory as "advantage." This is in keeping with the Aristotelian classification of deliberative oratory as concerned with the "expedient," but here, too, the textbook writer depicts the intimate relationship of "advantage" and honor by considering "advantage" as being comprised of two subcategories -- security and honor (*Rhet. ad Her.* 3.2.3). Security, or safety, is also a central value, to be sure, but even in cases where considerations of safety outweigh considerations of honor, the orator could never admit that the proposed course is dishonorable (*Rhet. ad Her.* 3.5.8-9).

Seeing how the promise of honor would undergird an exhortation to a specific course of action, how would the orator bring in topics of honor into his or her speech? The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* instructs us that honor discourse is present even when words related to honor or dishonor are not. Chiefly, discussion of the virtues of wisdom, justice, temperance, and

---

[6] "Motives of choice are the noble, beneficial, and pleasant (καλοῦ συμφέροντος ἡδέος); motives of avoidance are the shameful, harmful, and painful" (αἰσχροῦ βλαβεροῦ λυπηροῦ: *Nic. Eth.* 2.3.7); these motives are reduced to two in *Nic. Eth.* 3.1.11: "Pleasure and nobility (τὰ ἡδέα καὶ τὰ καλά) between them supply the motives of all actions whatsoever."

[7] Quintilian goes so far as to declare that the province of deliberative rhetoric is not properly the "expedient" but truly the "honorable," since nothing dishonorable could be truly expedient (*Inst.* 3.8.1).

courage all relate to honor, since the possession of these virtues is a component of honor (*Rhet. ad Her.* 3.2.3). He also provides definitions of the realms of discourse belonging to each of these virtues:

> We shall be using the topics of Wisdom in our discourse if we compare advantages and disadvantages, counselling the pursuit of the one and the avoidance of the other;[8]...or if we recommend some policy in a matter whose history we can recall either from direct experience or hearsay -- in this instance we can easily persuade our hearers to the course we wish by adducing the precedent. (3.3.4)

> We shall be using the topics of Justice ...if we show that it is proper to repay the well-deserving with gratitude;...if we urge that faith (*fidem*) ought zealously to be kept;...if we contend that alliances and friendships should scrupulously be honored; if we make it clear that the duty imposed by nature towards parents, gods, and the fatherland (*in parentes, deos, patriam*) must be religiously observed; if we maintain that ties of hospitality, clientage,[9] kinship, and relationship by marriage must inviolably be cherished; if we show that neither reward nor favour nor peril nor animosity ought to lead us astray from the right path. (3.3.4)

> When we invoke as motive for a course of action steadfastness in Courage, we shall make it clear that...from an honorable act no peril or toil, however great, should divert us; death ought to be preferred to disgrace; no pain should force abandonment of duty;...for country (*patria*), for parents, guest-friends, intimates, and for the things justice commands us to respect, it behooves us to brave any peril and endure any toil. (3.3.5)

> We shall be using the topics of Temperance if we censure the inordinate desire for office, money, or the like. (3.3.5)

These virtues, popularized by Plato and by Stoic ethical philosophy, were the subject and cause of praise; those who displayed them were recognized by their peers as honorable people, and the thought of gaining honor made the pursuit of these virtues desirable.[10] Where we find a course of action

---

[8] It is at this juncture that an orator might place his considerations of security within the guise of considerations of honor, thus giving his advice the respectability needed for persuasion (*Rhet. ad Her.* 3.3.5-9).

[9] Cf. *Rhet. ad Alex.* 1421b36-40, which also includes honoring of parents, benefitting one's friends, and returning good to one's benefactors as topics of justice.

[10] Cf. Aristotle, *On Virtue and Vice* 1.1-2: "the virtues are objects of praise, and also the causes of the virtues are objects of praise, and the things that accompany the virtues and that result from them, and their works, while the opposite are the objects of blame." Aristotle shows that the four cardinal virtues were just representative of the

being described as just, courageous, or pious, the author is harnessing strong sanctions in favor of that course.

This discussion of the topics associated with the cardinal virtues opens up the ways in which New Testament authors may be appealing to these same virtues, and hence demonstrating that the course they recommend is the course which leads to honor (advantage). It is clear that an author may never mention these four virtues explicitly and still be introducing them into the discourse through their associated topics. The author of Hebrews, for example, uses topics associated with all four virtues. He urges temperance in 13:4-6, where he cautions against the love of money. He uses topics of wisdom in numerous ways. First, he himself compares advantages and disadvantages, concluding that loyalty to Christ, despite temporary disadvantages, is ultimately more advantageous than desertion. Thus, for example, enduring "discipline" (12:7) is more advantage than rejecting God's gift of adoption (10:26-31). He supports this by "adducing the precedent," particularly in his discussion of the disadvantages which accrued to the wilderness generation (3:7-4:11), the foolish evaluation of advantage and disadvantage conducted by Esau (12:16-17), and in his inclusion of positive precedents (Abraham in 6:15; the community's own past decisions in 10:32-34; the correct evaluations of advantage by Abraham, Moses, and Christ in 11:13-16, 25-27; 12:1-2).

The author of Hebrews is especially fond of topics of justice and courage. He instruces the members of the community to maintain the obligations of kinship toward one another (13:1, 3) -- obligations which they assumed when they became part of the "household of God" (10:21; cf. 3:6). Similarly, he urges the continued fulfillment of the obligations of hospitality (13:2) and the marital covenant (13:4). The primary obligation which must be maintained, however, is that of clientage. Jesus has been presented as the believers' patron (2:9-18), who has given them among other gifts access to God as their personal Patron (4:14-16; 10:19-21). It would be unjust to show disloyalty, dishonoring this selfless benefactor and spurning his gifts -- an injustice not without severe consequences (disadvantage) for the addressees (6:4-8; 10:24-31). He urges rather that steadfastness and gratitude be preserved toward the community's Benefactor (10:23; 12:28). Moreover, since perils await the one who would remain faithful, the author uses topics of courage to urge them not to allow the threats of temporary hardship and pain divert them from the honorable course. They are now to be cowards who shrink back from the contest, but persevere in loyalty (10:36-39), just as their benefactor did not shrink back from shame and pain

---

sorts of characteristics and manners of action which would lead to praise (adding such virtues as gentleness, great-spiritedness, and liberality to the list himself).

on their behalf (12:1-3). They are to match his loyalty and courage with their own (13:12-14).

The overall effect of his discourse, then, will be to affirm the honor of the Christian group based on their dedication to these virtues. Their continuation in their Christian walk is not a strike against their honor, as their neighbors would have them believe, but is in fact the only way they can preserve their honor and gain the greater honor which God has promised them. Most strongly, the author urges that desertion from the community amounts to disloyalty to God -- a base show of ingratitude, which is an injustice leading to everlasting disgrace.

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* also highlights the "praiseworthy" as a component of honor, not because it is different from the "right" (the virtues), but because it often happens that the results of pursuing the "right" have to be underscored. The promise of praise and an honorable remembrance, that is, must often be made directly. Epideictic rhetoric may here take on an ancillary role in deliberations.[11] Figures of past or present history may be held up as exemplifying a particular virtue or praiseworthy accomplishment. The accumulation of such figures in example lists may be used to reinforce the impression that an honorable and long-lasting remembrance does indeed attach to the sort of action or virtuous behavior which is being advised. This would motivate the hearers to emulate the exemplar in an attempt to attain similar recognition for themselves. Such lists of honorable examples appear in Sir 44:1-50:24; *4 Macc* 16:18-23; and Heb 11:1-12:3. These passages show the readers/hearers what course of action gains a lasting, honorable reputation, and so recommends that course strongly for their consideration.

The socio-cultural texture of honor, then, intersects with argumentative texture first where authors seek to demonstrate that a certain course is indeed the path to preserving or augmenting the honor of the addressees, often in terms of exemplifying a mutually-recognized virtue. We may look for indications that a particular course of action is linked with the expression of a particular virtue by enthymematic reasoning. Dio Chrysostom affords us examples of this strategy at work, as in his appeal for civic unity on the occasion of the new governor's arrival:

> If ever a quarrel arises and your adversaries taunt you with having wicked citizens, with dissension, are you not put to shame? (48.5)

---

[11] Cf. *Rhet. Her.* 3.8.15: "And if epideictic is only seldom employed by itself independently, still in judicial and deliberative causes extensive sections are often devoted to praise or censure"; Quintilian (*Inst. Orat.* 3.4.16.); S. J. Kraftchick, "Ethos and Pathos Appeals in Galatians Five and Six: A Rhetorical Analysis" (Ph.D. Diss., Emory University, 1985), 99.

> Is it not disgraceful that bees are of one mind and no one has ever seen a swarm that is factious and fights against itself, but, on the contrary, they both work and live together.... Is it not disgraceful, then, that human beings should be more unintelligent than wild creatures which are so tiny and unintelligent? (48.15-16)

In the first argument, Dio reasons from common experience: civic disunity does indeed lead to rival cities' taunts and jeers. In the second, Dio uses an enthymeme to drive his case home (the unstated premise being that human beings are superior to insects).

We may also look for indications that an author is commending a course as praiseworthy by holding up an honored figure of the recent or distant past who achieved good repute by following a similar course (example, or inductive reasoning), or warning against a course by holding up examples of those who have come to dishonor and lasting disrepute by following a similar course. The use of examples in the New Testament frequently serves the purpose of recommending pursuit of the group's values as the way to greater honor, and guarding against neglect of these pursuits as the way to lasting disgrace (cf. Heb 12:1-2, 16-17). Even where "visionary rhetoric" is the medium of argumentative texture, one can still find these basic forms of persuasion at work. In Revelation 14:9-11, for example, the course of action involving participation in the imperial cult (expedient from the point of view of relieving tension with the host society) is sternly cautioned against as the path leading specifically to degradation "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb" -- the public nature of the torment reveals that dishonor is a key factor in motivating the hearers to shun the course of action which leads to such eternal shame.

B. Honor and Appeals to Ethos

Of critical importance was the appeal to *ethos*, or the character of the speaker. The speech itself, and not merely prior impressions of the speaker, had to give evidence of the speaker's credibility and noble character. According to Aristotle, this "constitutes the most effective [or leading, κυριωτάτην] means of proof" (*Rh.* 1.2.4).[12] To effect persuasion, the

---

[12] Cf. also Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* 3.8.13: "But what really carries greatest weight in deliberative speeches is the authority of the speaker. For he, who would have all men trust his judgement as to what is expedient and honourable, should both possess and be regarded as possessing genuine wisdom and excellence of character."

audience had to regard the speaker as reasonable and honorable.[13] How could a speaker demonstrate nobility when direct self-praise was impossible or, at least, dangerous? Aristotle provides the following guidelines:

> We will next speak of virtue and vice, of the noble and the disgraceful, since they constitute the aim of one who praises and of one who blames; for, when speaking of these, we shall incidentally bring to light the means of making us appear of such and such a character, which, as we have said, is a second method of proof; for it is by the same means that we shall be able to inspire confidence in ourselves or others in regard to virtue. (*Rh.* 1.9.1)

By urging the hearers to pursue the virtuous course, or avoid a vicious course, the orator would be recognized as honorable himself or herself, and hence possessing a voice worth considering by those who were themselves concerned about honor. Thus the author of Hebrews, when using the topics of wisdom, shows himself to be a reasonable person, and, when urging the strict maintenance of loyalty even in the face of hardship, shows himself to be a virtuous and honorable person worthy of the hearers' attention and trust.

One might also find honor discourse at work negatively here, as part of an attempt to undermine the *ethos* of rival speakers. By demonstrating that they are motivated by vice, or are actually urging the audience to do what would compromise their own virtue and honor, a speaker can create prejudice against rivals. That this may be an important part of a speaker's establishment of *ethos* is evident in such texts as Galatians, 2 Corinthians, and Revelation.

C. Honor and Appeals to Pathos

Aristotle's discussion of the third mode of proof, the appeal to the emotions (*pathē*) of the hearer,[14] shows how considerations of honor may be used to

---

[13] The topics listed in the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrinus* reinforce these two key aspects of the advisor: "he who persuades must show that those things ti which he exhorts are just, lawful, expedient, honourable, pleasant, and easy of accomlishment. Failing that, when he is exhorting to that which is difficult, he must show that it is practicable and that its execution is necessary" (*Rhet. ad Alex.* 1.1, 1421b23-27). The "lawful" and the "just" are subsets of the "honourable," and the other considerations (expedient, pleasant, easy or at least possible, and necessary) all contribute to the impression of the speaker as a "reasonable" counsellor.

[14] Aristotle *Rh.* 1.2.5: "The orator persuades by means of his hearers, when they are roused to emotion by his speech; for the judgements we deliver are not the same when we are influenced by joy or sorrow, love or hate." Cf. also *Rh.* 2.1.8-9 "The emotions (*pathē*) are all those affections which cause men to change their opinion in

arouse strategic emotional responses in the audience. These passages are not adduced to suggest that honor is always involved in the rousing of emotions, but to help us ask whether or not considerations of honor might be involved when an appeal to certain emotions is made in the text.

The first emotion which Aristotle treats is anger. While anger can be provoked by many things, Aristotle highlights its relationship to honor in his definition: "Let us then define anger (ὀργή) as a longing, accompanied by pain, for a real or apparent revenge (τιμωρία) for a real or apparent slight (ὀλιγωρία; *Rh.* 2.2.1)." Orators could therefore expect to move their audience to anger by making the audience feel that it had been slighted or dishonored.[15] Aristotle's definition of slighting (ὀλιγωρία) leads us to watch carefully in a text for mention of disdain or insult, or for regarding something or someone as less valuable or worthy of respect than proper (*Rh.* 2.2.3). This would move the addressees to anger, if the slight is directed against them, or to indignation if they are observing a slight offered to someone or something worthy of greater respect,[16] or fear if they have slighted, or are in danger of slighting, someone worthy of respect.

Aristotle's discussion of anger takes us into another area of social and cultural texture, namely that "informal dyadic contract" more commonly known as patronage:[17]

---

regard to their judgements, and are accompanied by pleasure and pain; such are anger, pity, fear, and all similar emotions and their contraries"; Quintilian *Inst. Orat.* 3.8.12: "As regards appeals to the emotions, these are especially necessary in deliberative oratory. Anger has frequently to be excited or assuaged and the minds of the audience have to be swayed to fear, ambition, hatred, reconciliation."

[15] The reason for arousing anger relates to the particular situation: if the orator is seeking to prejudice a jury against a defendant, or a counsellor is urging the declaration of war, arousing anger might be part of that strategy. In the New Testament, anger appears to be aroused but rarely, although enmity (another, related *pathos*) is more frequently roused in order to reinforce social boundaries.

[16] This emotion is covered in Aristotle *Rh.* 2.9. Especially relevant is 2.9.11: "If a virtuous person does not obtain what is suitable to him, we feel indignant. Similarly, if the inferior contends with the superior."

[17] Robbins, *Exploring*, 79. For more information on patronage in the ancient world, see J. Boissevain, *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (New York: St. Martin's, 1974); F. W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis, MO: Clayton Publishing House, 1982); R. P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1982); G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, "Suffragium: From Vote to Patronage," *British Journal of Sociology* 5 (1954) 33-48; D. A. deSilva, *Despising Shame: The Social Function of the Rhetoric of Honor and Dishonor in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (SBLDS 152; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), chapter 5. See also the following ancient sources:

> [People] are angry at slights from those by whom they think they have a right to expect to be well treated; such are those on whom they have conferred or are conferring benefits (εὖ πεποίηκεν ἢ ποιεῖ)...and all those whom they desire, or did desire, to benefit (*Rh.* 2.2.8).

Within the patron-client relationship, it is expected that those who have been benefitted will repay their benefactors, in part, by honoring them. Repaying "grace" with dishonor was a slight which would certainly arouse anger.

Aristotle presents fear as a sort of reciprocal emotion to anger. Where the experience of being slighted leads to anger, the act of slighting may lead to fear if the prospect of revenge is sufficiently daunting:

> Let fear be defined as a painful or troubled feeling caused by the impression of an imminent evil that causes destruction or pain.... Such signs are the enmity and anger of those able to injure us in any way ... and outraged virtue when it has power, for it ... always desires satisfaction (*Rh.* 2.5.1, 3, 5).

The fear aroused in the hearers is proportionate to the honor and power of the one who has been slighted. An orator might arouse fear by augmenting the picture of the honor and virtue of the slighted figure through encomiastic embellishment.

At this point it may be helpful to turn to a text wherein one can see how attention to argumentative texture against the background of this cultural texture (honor) can benefit the reader. The Epistle to the Hebrews contains several striking appeals to *pathos*, none stronger than 10:26-31:

> If we sin intentionally after receiving knowledge of the truth, there remains no longer a sacrifice for sin but a certain fearful expectation of judgement and passion of fire which is prepared to consume the enemies. Anyone setting aside a law of Moses dies without mercy upon the witness of two or three: how much worse punishment do you think the one who tramples upon the Son of God, who regards as profane the blood of the covenant by which he or she was sanctified, and who insults the Spirit of favor deserves? For we know the One who said "vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "the Lord judges his people." Fearful it is to fall into the hands of the living God!

The repetition of the word "fearful" (Heb 10:27, 31), and the author's depiction of these fearful consequences as potentially close to the addressees (an impending injury, cf. Aristotle *Rh.* 2.5.1), shows this to be an attempt

---

Seneca, *On Benefits (de beneficiis)*; Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 31 (To the Rhodian Assembly); Pliny's Letters, Book X (requests of favors addressed to the emperor Trajan on behalf of Pliny's clients).

to move the addressees to fear, hence an appeal to *pathos*. The author has identified a certain course of action, namely shrinking away from loyalty to Jesus and its consequences, as an affront to the divine Benefactor. Preferring the benefits which peaceful re-assimilation into society would provide over the benefits which Jesus gained for the believers at the cost of his own blood amounts to a crass slighting of the latter. The author portrays such a course as a violation of the patron-client relationship, returning not gratitude but insult to the divine benefactor. This affront is painted in the most striking of terms: the apostate tramples the Son of God, the one who will one day subject all his enemies under his own feet (Heb 1:13; 10:13); the one who trades the promised inheritance for peace with the world shows contempt for the cost at which the former was purchased, namely the blood of the mediator of the new covenant; finally, the apostate encounters divine favor with insult (a shameful act of impiety).[18]

We recognize thus in this passage a script which is essentially the same as articulated by Aristotle (*Rh.* 2.5.1) in his definition of fear as "a painful or troubled feeling caused by the impression of an imminent evil that causes destruction or pain." The author has provided the prerequisite for fear in his depiction of the coming of God as Judge and Avenger. In showing contempt for the Son of God, one knowingly incurs the anger of God, as anger is the expected response to a slight (all the more when one is slighted by those whom one desired to benefit, cf Aristotle *Rh.* 2.2.8). The apostate has outraged the embodiment of the virtue of favor and generosity in insulting the Spirit of grace, and so can expect to be visited by an act of God's power seeking satisfaction. This fear is heightened by a comparison with the infraction of the Mosaic covenant (a sort of argument from legal precedent). Just as the dignity of Jesus exceeds that of Moses (cf. 3:1-6), so violations of that dignity will incur a greater punishment than even the "death without mercy" which fell upon those who disregarded Torah. Fear is also heightened by the declaration of the impossibility of restoration (10:26), for after rejecting the brokerage of Jesus there remains no mediator who can regain God's favor for the transgressor.[19]

Returning from our example of the fruitfulness of such readings to the theoretical discussion, we find two other emotions aroused directly through considerations related to honor -- shame (αἰσχύνη) and emulation (ζῆλος).

---

[18] Cf. Dio, *Or.* 31: "But to commit an outrage against good men who have been the benefactors of the state (εὐεργέτας ὑβρίζειν), to annul the honours given them and to blot out their remembrance, I for my part do not see how that could be otherwise termed."

[19] Cf. Aristotle *Rhet* 2.5.12: Fear is aroused "also when there is no possibility of help or it is not easy to obtain."

Aristotle defines shame as "a kind of pain or uneasiness in respect of misdeeds, past, present, or future, which seem to tend to bring dishonour; and shamelessness as contempt and indifference in regard to these same things" (*Rh.* 2.6.2). Orators sought to motivate audiences to adopt or discontinue certain courses of action by causing them to feel that their reputation was at stake, or that their reputation had already been marred and must be repaired quickly. Similarly, shaming the audience may aim at motivating them to pursue some good which they ought to have attained but have for some reason or other failed to secure (*Rh.* 2.6.12).

Once again, Dio Chrysostom provides a fine illustration of this strategy at work. The Rhodian assembly was in the habit of honoring benefactors through erecting statues to them. After the city was overrun with monuments, they hit upon the space-saving and money-saving practice of simply striking out the names of benefactors long since dead and rededicating the statue to a more recent benefactor. Part of Dio's strategy in urging them to cease this practice is to shame them for being willing to dishonor the memory of noble people for the sake of money (*Or.* 31.100). He further shames them by pointing to their past history, when, in worse conditions, they willingly incurred civic debt in order to allow not blot upon their civic honor. Their past commitment to nobility stands in stark contrast to the present, when there has been no disaster to threaten the economy, but for the sake of conserving public funds this disgrace is being perpetrated on the statues designated for the honor of past benefactors. Throughout the speech he appeals to the powerful sanction of the αἰσχρόν, the "shameful," in order to turn them from a course of action towards its remedy.

The appeal to the emotion of shame also appears in the New Testament documents. Hebrews 5:11-14, for example, chides the addressees for not attaining the status of "teachers" when they ought, in the author's opinion, have done so by this time (the good which they ought to have attained but have failed to secure). He hopes by such means to move them to cease questioning their own commitment to the Christian way of life and devote themselves rather to awakening this commitment in others.

The positive counterpart of "shame" is "emulation" (ζῆλος), which resembles ambition (particularly ambition to maintain status among peers):

> Emulation (ζῆλος) is a feeling of pain at the evident presence of highly valued goods, which are possible for us to attain, in the possession of those who naturally resemble us -- pain not due to the fact that another possesses them, but to the fact that we ourselves do not. Emulation therefore is virtuous and characteristic of virtuous men, whereas envy is base and characteristic of base men; for the one, owing to emulation, fits himself to obtain such goods, while the object of the other, owing to envy, is to prevent his neighbour possessing them (*Rh.* 2.11.1).

Again epideictic rhetoric may serve the deliberative goals, as orators bring in praiseworthy examples, or heighten the desirability of a good which others have attained, in order to stir up the hearers to desire that good themselves and take the course necessary to attain it.

It may be fitting to return to epideictic rhetoric under the heading of "emulation," for this appears to be a primary goal of the public praise of some figure or virtue. In Thucydides' *History* (2.35), Pericles is given the honor of delivering a funeral oration which is somewhat self-reflective on the Greek practice of giving and hearing such a speech. Pericles approaches the task of praising the fallen soldiers with some caution:

> Praise of other people is tolerable only up to a certain point, the point where one still believes that one could do oneself some of the things one is hearing about. Once you get beyond this point, you will find people becoming jealous and incredulous (2.35.2).

This comment provides important insights into the was encomia were heard. The audience responded by being roused to emulation at the praise of others, affirming their own nobility by telling themselves that they, too could act in a similarly praiseworthy manner when the situation called for it. If the audience began to distance themselves from emulating the subjects of the encomium, they would become unfavorably disposed toward the speaker. Public praise of figures such as these soldiers appealed to the hearers' own desire for honor, moving them to desire the same opportunity for praise. It encouraged them to reaffirm their belief that adherence to the civic virtues would lead to the fulfillment of their desire for honor. They might not exhibit the virtue of, say, courage in the same manner, but in some field of life they would have some opportunity.[20]

Such emulation would also be the response of readers of the written encomiastic biography. Plutarch explains that part of his purpose in compiling the *Parallel Lives* and in dwelling on figures like Pericles is the rousing of his hearers' emulation, such that they will seek to imitate the virtues of such great men of the past (*Per.* 3). For those who regard the gospels as a subset of the genre *βίος*, this should open up some avenues for investigating the way in which a gospel inculcates values through portraying

---

[20] Plutarch provides more evidence that hearing others praised for the attainment of some goal within the grasp of the hearers could be expected to motivate the hearers to pursue that goal with zeal. He suggests that praise of self could be excused if the aim was "to exhort hearers and inspire them with emulation and ambition (*εἰ προτροπῆς ἕνεκα καὶ ζήλου καὶ φιλοτιμίας*), as Nestor by recounting his own exploits and battles incited Patroclus and roused the nine champions to offer themselves for the single combat" (*On Inoffensive Self-Praise*, 15 [*Mor.* 544D]).

them in action in the person of Jesus. Kennedy's observation that epideictic rhetoric serves the social function of reinforcing the society's values, holding up as praiseworthy those who have exemplified those values, thus rousing emulation in the hearers, appears to be wholly justified.[21]

Once more we find this strategy at work in Jewish and Christian rhetoric. Ben Sira concludes his collection of wisdom instructions with a lengthy "hymn to the ancestors." This catalogue is meant not as a history lesson but as an attempt to demonstrate through example that the way of obedience to Torah is the way which leads to honor and a praiseworthy remembrance. The readers of his books will be moved to emulate Abraham (44:20), Phineas (45:23), and those who kept the covenant (46:10-12), by the success of such figures in gaining lasting honor, and to avoid the emulation of those who soiled or lost their honor (Solomon; most of the kings of Judah and Israel; 47:20-21; 49:4-5) through apostasy from strict loyalty to the One God and God's Law. Hebrews, similarly, supports the exhortation to remain loyal to the Divine Patron and focused on that patron's promised favors by recalling especially the model of Jesus, who endured temporary dishonor and pain in order to gain the place of greatest honor -- a seat at the right hand of God (Heb 12:1-2). The addressees are called to "consider" Jesus much as the audience of Pericles' funeral oration (Thucydides *Hist.* 2.43.1-4) are called to "consider" the fallen soldiers, whose courage gained them immortal fame in the city. Such "consideration" is calculated to arouse emulation of these figures, making their path to honor the desirable choice.

Taken together, these observations lead us back into the New Testament texts with a socio-rhetorical agenda. Understanding that the addressees are people who are concerned about honor, and who wish to be regarded as honorable people, appeals relevant to that concern become highly significant. What actions or attitudes lead to honor, according to the author? Are behaviors specifically suited to maintaining group life now being vested with the sanctions of the "just," the "courageous," and so forth?[22] How does the author use examples to elevate a course of action as honorable (since praiseworthy), or warn against a course of action as censurable? How does the author's speech reveal the author to be an honorable person? How does the author seek to move the hearers to fear, shame, anger, indignation, or emulation by means of considerations of

---

[21] G. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 19.

[22] Most often the labels "just" or "temperate" will not be explicitly used, hence the value of lists of examples of "topics" which fall under the category of justice, such as *Rhetorica ad Herrenium* provides (3.3.4-3.3.5).

honor, and to what end? How does awareness of cultural scripts like patronage or kinship assist us to discover where these considerations are woven into the argumentative texture? By such investigation, we find that "honor" is not merely part of the socio-cultural texture, but present at the level of inner texture in important ways.

II. Honor Discourse and Social Formation

Socio-rhetorical criticism refuses to leave us in the texts as merely literary artifacts, but challenges us to return to them as utterances embodied in three-dimensional social settings. After considering how honor works within argumentative texture, we must therefore move back into the social dimension of texts -- the way texts shape groups and direct relationships within the group and between the members of the group and outsiders. When we enter the world of the New Testament, we enter not a monolithic world sharing a single culture and set of values, but a complex cultural environment in which groups hold to mutually-exclusive world-constructions and struggle to retain the commitment of their members in the face of ever-available alternative groups and cultures. Robbins has captured the complexity of this environment in his discussion of dominant culture, types of subculture, countercultures, and contracultures.[23]

One difficulty which the investigator finds is that, since most every group is concerned with honor in some sense, one cannot determine whether or not an author is countercultural based on rejection of "honor" as a central value. In effect, almost any group investigated can be considered subcultural with regard to honor, since they all bestow honor on their members based on their adherence to th specific cultural values of the group. Honor thus appears to function more as a social value than a cultural value per se.

This leads us to think slightly differently about honor with regard to other values which might more truly be called "cultural" values. Honor and dishonor represent the primary means of social control in the ancient Mediterranean world. A society upholds its values by rewarding with greater degrees of honor those who embody those values in proportionately greater degrees. Dishonor represents a group's disapproval of a member based on his or her lack of conformity with those values deemed essential for the group's continued existence. The concept of the honorable and disgraceful are given content and meaning only within a specific culture in

---

[23] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 168-170, 182-189; *Exploring*, 86-89.

a specific period.[24] An individual has self-respect on the basis of his or her perception of how fully he or she has embodied the culture's ideals; that individual has honor on the basis of the society's recognition of that person's conformity with essential values.[25]

The threat of dishonor supports a society's prohibitions of socially disruptive behavior. For example, adultery -- the violation of the sanctity and peace of a bond which is foundational to society -- carries with it the promise of disgrace (cf. Prov 6:32-33). Concord and unity, essential values for the orderly life of the *polis*, are lauded as honorable, while dissensions and strife bring the threat of disgrace for the city (cf. Dio, *Or.* 48.5-6). Similarly, courage in battle (necessary for a city's survival) wins honor and lasting remembrance (cf. Pericles' Funeral Oration in Thucydides, *War* 2.35-42). In a society which had as its basic building block the patron-client relationship (Seneca, *De benef.* 1.4.2), the threat of irrevocable dishonor, and therefore exclusion from future patronage, supports the value of showing gratitude to one's patron (or a city's benefactors; Dio, *Or.* 31).

"Honor" becomes the umbrella which extends over the complex of behaviors, commitments, and attitudes which preserve a given culture and society; the desire for honor becomes the means by which one can motivate the members of that society to seek the good of the larger group as the path to self-fulfillment. In a collection of advice *To Demonicus*, ascribed pseudonymously to Isocrates (a Greek orator from the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE), one finds many actions connected either with the positive sanction "noble" or "honorable," or labelled with the negative sanction "disgraceful." By such means, the author sets before his reader a model of existence which acts always in the best interest of the public trust, which honors the established authorities on which the state rests (gods, parents, laws), and

---

[24] Cf. Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status" (pp. 21-77 in J. G. Peristiany [ed.], *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 38; Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World* (Louisville, KY: W/JKP, 1993), 53-54. This culture-specific definition of honor points to the function of honor as a sort of "meta-value," a social value which reinforces cultural values.

[25] In light of the criticism of classicist Bernard Williams concerning the portrayal of Classical Greek culture as a strictly dyadic environment, this seems to me to be a more precise formulation of the relationship of self-worth and publicly acknowledged honor than, say, the equation which one finds in B. Malina and J. Neyrey ("Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values in the Mediterranean World," pp. 25-65 in J. H. Neyrey, *The Social World of Luke-Acts* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991], 25-26). Williams has pointed out the value of self-respect in Greek tragedy (*Shame and Necessity* [Berkeley: University of California, 1993], 81-91), a value echoed by Epictetus in his promotion of the value of self-respect (living in accordance with nature) rather than recognition based on possession of external goods.

restrains the expenditure of resources on that which brings pleasure only to the self and not benefit to others as well. Those who follow such a model will be rewarded with society's approval and affirmation, that is, honor.

As we look for honor language in a text, we are thus called to look for those behaviors to which honor language points, and which the social grant of honor supports. It is at this level that we will discover the "cultural" values of the various groups living in the first-century Greco-Roman world, and at this level that we can discern subcultural, countercultural, and contracultural group orientations.

A. Delineating the Court of Reputation

Honor represents a social group's acknowledgement that an individual has embodied the appropriate norms of conduct and reflects the group's approval of that individual. Because a social group is maintained by individuals behaving in the group's interests, such individuals are valuable. Honor is the expression of that value. Because individuals are raised to seek after honor, they are the more likely to embody those behaviors which the group values and rewards. We have already seen how epideictic oratory was specifically geared to facilitate this process. Groups, however, will have different and distinctive values. One will tend to embody the values of those whose opinion one deems important or reliable as a guide to one's own worth. If a first-century Jew looks to devout Jews for affirmation of her self-worth, she will embody the values of devout Jews to attain that affirmation; if a Jew, however, looks to members of the Greek or Roman dominant culture for affirmation, he may be tempted to embody the values of the Greek or Roman elite. Where Jewish behaviors conflict with behaviors approved by the Greek or Roman elite, that Jew may abandon those behaviors which devout Jews would affirm. Paying close attention to how an author will construct the "court of reputation" -- that circle of significant others whose approval or disapproval matters -- will yield very important information about the social-engineering program of the author and the relationship he or she wants his addressees to have with other sectors of the broader society.

The rhetorical handbooks have already opened up the possibility that an audience would view the opinion only of certain people to merit their care and attention. *Rhetorica ad Herrenium*, for example, advises showing a particular course to be praiseworthy "in the opinion of qualified persons (if, for example, something should please a more honourable class of men, and be disapproved by a lower class), or of certain allies, or all our fellow citizens, or foreign nations, or our descendants" (3.4.7). Within this text, we discover that the same course might be affirmed by some, but censured by others. What constitutes honor is group-specific: the definition of the

"court of reputation" will also define the constellation of attitudes, behaviors, and commitments which come together under the larger heading of "honor." In his discussion on arousing shame (*Rh.* 2.6), Aristotle instructs the reader that people "are not ashamed...before those whose opinion in regard to truth they greatly despise -- for instance, no one feels shame before children or animals (*Rh.* 2.6.23)." People only feel shame, in the sense especially of pressure to conform to a given set of standards of "excellence," before those "whose opinion they do not despise (*Rh.* 2.6.15)." Aristotle gives further evidence for this construction of a "court of reputation" in his *Nicomachian Ethics*, wherein he speaks of the lack of concern of the "great-souled person" for either the praise or the censure of the common person -- only the opinion of a certain stratum within society matters to the μεγαλόψυχος. Considerations of honor and disgrace have meaning only with regard to that body of significant others.

If one seeks status in the eyes of the larger society, one will seek to maintain the values and fulfill the expectations of the dominant or majority culture. Members of minority cultures, such as philosophical schools and voluntary associations like the early Christian community), and ethnic subcultures such as Judaism need to redefine the constituency of their "courts of repuation" in order to remain committed to the distinctive values and pursuits of the minority culture. The "court of reputation" must be limited to group members, who will support the group values in their grants of honor and censure.[26] Frequently the minority status of this group will be offset by including some supra-social entity like God or Nature within this body of significant others. The opinion of one's fellow group members is thus anchored in and legitimated by a "higher" court of reputation, whose judgments are of greater importance and more lasting consequence than the opinion of the disapproving majority or the dominant culture.[27] All groups will seek to use honor and disgrace to enforce the values of their particular culture, so each must insulate its members from the "pull" of the opinion of non-members. Those who do not hold to the values and the construals of

---

[26] One finds this frequently in philosophical texts, wherein the opinion of the many is contrasted unfavorably with the value of the approval of the few or the one who has devoted his or her life to wisdom and virtue (cf. Plato *Cri.* 44C; 46C-47A; Seneca *Constant.* 11.2; 13.2, 5; 16.3; Epictetus *Diss.* 1.29.50-54; 4.5.22; Dio *Or.* 77/78.21, 25).

[27] Philosophers frequently appeal to a higher court for validation of their ideals: Plato (*Gorgias* 526D-527D) and Epictetus (*Diss.* 1.30.1) speak of living so as to pelase God, who naturally approves the distinctive way of life taught by these schools. One finds the same strategy in Jewish subcultural literature as well, wherein God's approval and the hope of honor in God's presence uphold strict adherence to Torah in the face of pressure from the dominant culture to assimilate (cf. Sir 23:18-19; *4 Macc* 17:4-5).

reality embodied in the group are excluded from the "court of reputation" as shameless or errant -- approval or disapproval in their eyes must count for nothing, as it rests on error, and the representative of the minority culture can look forward to his or her vindication when the extent of that error is revealed.

B. Re-interpreting the opinion of outsiders

A dominant or majority culture's displays its disapproval of the values and commitments of members of certain minority cultures by means of insult, abuse, shunning, or the more severe forms of marginalization such as lynching or execution. These are attempts to "shame" those whom the dominant or majority culture regards as deviants into falling back in line with the values of that dominant or majority culture. This social pressure carries tremendous weight, especially as it continues over time. Minority cultures develop strategies for insulating their adherents from these negative sanctions so as to stave off erosion of group-commitment.

The first level of defense resides in the claim that outsiders lack the ability to form a reliable judgement about the group members -- outsiders lack some essential insight, or commitment to virtue, or are mired in vice. A second level involves positing the predictability or inevitability of rejection by such outsiders (cf. 1 Thess 3:3-4). If dishonor or rejection is normal and to be expected, it will not be disconfirming, shaking the insider's commitment to his or her alternative culture. The next level pushes beyond this by reinterpreting the experience of dishonor or rejection at the hands of outsiders as a process by which the insider is fitted for greater honor. Particularly useful in this endeavor are athletic,[28] military,[29] and educative[30] imagery. All three arenas of life involve endurance of hardship, even suffering or pain: all three however promise the one who perseveres some honorable end, whether this be conceived of as victory (athletic and military arenas) or full enfranchisement as a citizen (the goal of the educative process in a Greek city). The dominant cultural virtues of courage and endurance can be appropriated by means of these images to urge perseverance in the pursuit of commitment to a minority culture. The impact of such rhetoric is that society's attempts at reclaiming the deviants

---

[28] Cf. Epictetus *Diss.* 1.24.1-2; 1.18.21; 3.22.56; Dio *Or.* 8.15-16; *4 Macc.* 11:20; 16:16; 17:11-16). For discussions in secondary literature, see Victor Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agōn Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); Robbins, *Tapestry*, 131-135.

[29] Cf. Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3;5, 12, 21; 21:7; 12:11; 15:2; *4 Macc.* 1:11; 7:4; 9:29-30; 11:27; 13:2; 16:14.

[30] Cf. Wisd. 3:5; Heb 12:4-12.

are now read as signs of divine approval -- not only do they fail to have their desired impact, they actually serve to confirm the deviants in their new loyalties and commitments.

C. Maintaining the Social Group

With the group's members insulated from concern about the opinion of outsiders, and therefore able to integrate dishonor from outsiders into a sense of self-respect and honor within the group, spokespersons of minority cultures may utilize the rhetorical strategies outlined in the first section to encourage pursuit of the group's distinctive values. Authors will promise their audiences honor in the eyes of this body of significant others for remaining committed to the group and enacting the kinds of behaviors that support the ongoing existence of the group. Authors may hold up as praiseworthy those figures who, though despised in the eyes of the ignorant masses, nevertheless achieved eternal honor in the court of God.

Community leaders must encourage frequent and meaningful interaction within the group -- interaction which promotes adherence to the group's values and ideals, which stimulates the desire for honor as the group defines what is honorable, and which maintains the plausibility of the group's counter-definitions of reality (including its evaluation of outsiders). The members will need to reinforce for one another the reality of the group's counter-definitions of the world. The more the members are challenged to invest themselves in the group (time, energy, resources), the more real and firm will be the minority culture's world-view. Relationships within the group must be meaningful if one's "court of reputation" -- one's body of significant others -- is to remain within the group. Encouragement within the group must outweigh the discouragement which comes to the individual from outside the group. The sense of connectedness and belonging so essential to the social being must offset the sense of disconnectedness and alienation from the society which formerly provided one's primary reference group.

III. Honor Discourse and Cultural Rhetoric

Whether or not an author uses honor language will not be an adequate guide to the nature of that author's cultural rhetoric. Most authors do include honor discourse within their argumentative texture, or within their narratives. The second part of this paper may, however, lead to some fruitful avenues for exploring cultural rhetoric as the investigator determines who forms the "court of reputation" for the implied readers of a given text. It may make a significant difference if the possibility of being affirmed by the dominant or majority culture is denied or allowed. It also pushes the

investigator to inquire concerning how honor is conceived within the text. Is honor attained in ways comparable to those found in the larger society? Are the components of honor presented in the same terms (e.g., the cardinal virtues)? Or is honor, while affirmed as a value, essentially inverted with regard to the majority or dominant cultural conceptions of it?

One important item to note at this juncture is the connectedness of argumentative texture and social texture. The former articulates a court of reputation which may reflect the realities of the social situation, or which may be seeking to shape the social situation.[31] The former articulates the values which constitute the "honorable," and thereby positions itself strategically to shape the addressees' behavior within the complex matrix of cultures which constitutes the first-century Greco-Roman world.

By way of example, let us consider the use of honor discourse in *4 Maccabees*.[32] This "demonstration" (1:8) seeks to promote adherence to the Jewish Torah in all of its particularity. Even the dietary regulations, which most often occasioned scorn in the eyes of members of the dominant culture,[33] are recommended for scrupulous observation (1:31-35; 5:25-26). The way in which the author commends observance of the Torah is, however, astounding. He appeals to the cardinal virtues (justice, wisdom, temperance, and courage), the chief sources of honor in the dominant culture, claiming that devotion to Torah trains the Jew in these virtues (1:16-18; 1:30b-3:18; 5:22-24). This document thus articulates the granting of "honor" in the same terms as the dominant culture. "Virtue" is the chief component of honor, and this "virtue" is configured in the same manner (the same foour cardinal virtues). The author articulates a culture distinct from the dominant culture in the mean by which such virtue is attained. It is at this point that the author can uphold the cultural values of the Jewish community. While the manner of education may be different from the curriculum of the *gymnasium*, the result, the author claims, is the same.

Those who are so fully dedicated to the Jewish way of life that they die rather than compromise it are lauded by the author as exemplars of the highest Greek ideals. They are associated with the virtue of καλοκἀγαθία, a word used only here in the LXX. According to Danker, who traces the use of this word in inscriptions to benefactors,

---

[31] Robbins has provided under the heading of "ideological texture" some intriguing examples of how an investigator might uncover which of these, or to what extent both possibilities, may indeed be operative in a given text (*Tapestry*, 195-199, 221-235).

[32] A full discussion of this can be found in D. A. deSilva, "The Noble Contest: Honor, Shame, and the Rhetorical Strategy of 4 Maccabees," *JSP* 13 (1995) 31-57.

[33] Cf. Tacitus *Hist*. 5.4.3; Juvenal *Sat*. 14.98-99; Josephus *Ap*. 2.137.

> to describe a person as *kalokagathos* (a perfect gentleman) or *kalēkagathē* (a noble woman) was one of the highest terms of praise in the Greek vocabulary. In some inscriptions the term *kalokagathos* appears a an alternate expression for *anēr tēs aretēs* (man of arete) and other terms used to describe high achievers or benefactors.[34]

The martyrs died "on account of καλοκἀγαθία" (1:10), die "equipped with καλοκἀγαθία," their deaths attesting to their character (11:22; 15:9), and lived with "a common zeal for καλοκἀγαθία" (13:25). All those among the author's audience have access to this praise as they, too, dedicate themselves wholly to Torah as did the martyrs (3:18). The martyrs act out of a commitment to ἀρετή, "excellence" or "virtue" as well as the reputation for being of such a character. The brothers endure degradation at the hands of the dominant culture "for the sake of ἀρετή" (1:8; 10:10; 11:2), but also receive the "prize of ἀρετή" (9:8). The audience is given the opportunity to give internal assent to their example, as the author asks a rhetorical question: "What person who...knows that it is blessed to endure any suffering for the sake of ἀρετή, would not be able to overcome the emotions though godliness?" (7:21-22). The author goes so far as to claim that Jews loyal to Torah will fulfill the highest ideals of the dominant culture *better* than non-Jews (7:18-19; 9:18).

Who form the court of reputation for this author? The author holds out the prospect of receiving approval and honor from God and from the ancestors in the faith -- a court which stretches beyond social entities and beyond death (13:3, 17; 17:5). Despite the degradation to which the martyrs are subjected, the author suggests that the members of the dominant culture are themselves still part of this court of reputation. The only way to receive honor from the Gentiles is through obedience to the Jewish Law. Eleazar, the first martyr, claims that, at a deeper level, the tyrant Antiochus would really despise the same capitulation he would seem to praise (6:21), and that transgression of the Law would lead not to honorable assimilation into Gentile society but would rather be an occasion for mockery and derision (5:27-28). To reinforce this perception, the author states that the endurance of the martyrs provoked the admiration of their torturers (1:1; 6:11; 9:26; 17:16), and that Antiochus himself proclaimed them as an example of courage and manliness (17:23). While, at the level of the story, this is mere fantasy, it does suggest that the author is taking a strong subcultural position with regard to the dominant culture. He stresses that the ethnic subculture fulfills the same values which the dominant culture upholds (the cardinal virtues), and even claims to fulfill them more

---

[34] F. W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Greco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis, MO: Clayton Publishing House, 1982), 319.

perfectly. While the author certainly does not hold up the approval of outsiders as the guide for conduct, he nevertheless suggests that such approval may eventually come as the dominant culture recognizes the virtues of the members of the ethnic subculture.

This mode of exploring texts may be helpful for investigating the relationship of different Christian communities to the larger society around them, as well as to other minority cultures within that society. What is the degree to which outsiders may be a part, or become a part, or the "court of reputation"? Paul points to the "judgement seat of Christ" as the primary and absolute court of reputation (cf. 2 Cor 5:9-10; 1 Thess 4:1), sets human opinion on a lower level than God's opinion (Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4), and frequently casts outsiders as "benighted" -- quite "in the dark" about attaining true honor before God (cf. 1 Thess 5:3-8). Nevertheless, Paul expects the dominant culture's representatives to recognize the virtue and praiseworthy character of the believers' lives (Rom 13:3-4). He exhorts his addressees to "conduct themselves becomingly towards outsiders" (1 Thess 4:12). Believers are to reach out not only to fellow believers but also to all people: "May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all" (3:12); "See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all" (5:13). Paul orients the believers toward the society as potential benefactors of their local community: by acting as benefactors, they will be able to dispel, to some extent, society's suspicion of them, and perhaps even begin to regain respect.[35] Their behavior must remain detached from the opinion of outsiders, yet their lifestyle is not to confirm society's opinion of them as disruptive, dissentious, non-contributing parts of the social body.

While Paul does indeed invert many aspects of the dominant or majority culture,[36] he has not entirely excluded their members from view and considers that the Christian way of life can command respect by outisders who weigh their lives fairly. A similar expectation may be found even more prominently in 1 Peter: outsiders may currently heap abuse on the Christians, but the virtuous lives of believers may prevail upon public opinion and even convert outsiders to the more virtuous way of life (1 Pet 2:12-17; 3:1-2).[37] In these texts which begin to affirm the potential of outsiders recognizing the honor of believers, the authors move closer to subcultural rhetoric.

The Gospel of John presents a radically different scenario. Here,

---

[35] So A. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 107.

[36] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 183-189.

[37] J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 108.

human approval and divine approval are mutually incompatible. Receiving approval from one's fellow human beings prevents the individual from receiving the approval which comes from God and prevents "believing" (5:44). Some Jewish authorities may believe in Jesus, but they do not confess it, "for they loved the praise of people more than the praise of God" (12:42-43). There is no hint that following Jesus will lead to outsiders' recognition of the believer's virtue and honor: there is only the expectation of rejection, following the pattern of the rejection of Jesus (15:18-22; 16:1-4). The believer's honor comes not from fulfilling virtues recognized by the outside world, as most clearly in *4 Maccabees*, but from embeddedness in the family of God through acceptance of Jesus (1:12-13; 17:22) and loyally serving Jesus (12:26) -- even here the honor which the believer receives comes from "God," and this is the only approval which John holds up as worthy of attention. Outsiders are the "spawn of Satan" (8:44-47), located on the other side of a cosmic rebellion against God. This suggests that the values of the minority group and the values of the outsiders (in John, perhaps most directly the Jewish ethnic subculture) are seen as incompatible, and may point to a countercultural relationship with that larger body.

The way in which honor is configured may also help the investigator determine an author's cultural location. Does the author define the "honorable" in terms which basically capture the dominant culture's definitions, or in ways which invert their configurations? We have seen how *4 Maccabees* regards the "honorable" in terms of the virtues widely recongized by the dominant culture: the point of difference is the manner of attaining those virtues, which is where the distinctive way of life of the ethnic subculture comes in. Robbins has provided an excellent example of Paul's contracultural relationship with the Greco-Roman culture in terms of self-esteem or honor: Paul inverts the dominant culture's emphasis on the "beautiful, strong, and eloquent," holding up conformity with the pattern of the suffering, serving Messiah as the source of true honor.[38] A similar relationship may be seen in Mark 10:41-45, where the value of honor, even of seeking pre-eminence, is not disputed. Rather, the content of this "honor" is inverted from the enjoyment of privilege to the posture of the servant or slave.

IV. A Map for Socio-Rhetorical Investigation of Honor Discourse

The foregoing discussion has brought together much information from classical rhetorical handbooks on the role of honor in argumentative texture, and used these same texts as a launching-off point for investigating the way

---

[38] Robbins, *Tapestry*, 184-185.

texts create social groupings, reinforce the boundaries of these groups, and orient members of these groups to the members of other groups, including the dominant culture. It may be useful to synthesize these observations into a model which, it is hoped, will be equally useful in investigating narratives as epistolary and visionary rhetoric.

What topics or strategies are relevant to the investigation of the relationship of argumentative and socio-cultural texture in the early Christian documents (or, indeed, those of any minority culture in the Hellenistic or Greco-Roman period)? What sorts of language or concepts should signal to us an author's concern for the group's endurance in commitment to the community and its values in the face of another group's disapproval of its new loyalties? Our desire to hold together innertexture and socio-cultural texture leads us to look closely at the following:

1. Language which establishes or reinforces the constituency of the court of reputation (the boundaries of the group) by: (a) explicitly naming those persons (and/or supra-social entities) for whose opinion and approval one should have regard; (b) stressing the differences in lifestyle, proximity to truth, ethos, and even ontology or origin between group members and outsiders (topics of encomia, such as origin and character, are used here negatively to heighten awareness of incompatibility); (c) censuring outsiders as unreliable guides to conduct, as shameless or dishonorable, as influences which ultimately jeopardize the well-being of individuals (again a place for epideictic rhetoric); (d) affirming the character of group members, particularly group leaders, strengthening the group's inner-directed focus on such people as reliable, honorable guides to right knowledge and conduct, bolstering the leaders' authority to delineate the group's norms and to grant honor or ascribe blame within the group.

2. Language which establishes or affirms the honor of the group or its members before the alternate court of reputation by: (a) detailing the honor the individual now possesses and the basis for this honor as defined by group's world-construction; (b) praising the group for its adherence to the minority culture's values, and giving expression to their honor and reputation within the larger body of significant others (a place for epideictic oratory); (c) reinterpreting the group's experience of society's disapproval, defusing the dominant culture's deviancy-control techniques or even turning them to advantage vis-à-vis group honor and commitment; (d) promising future honor and vindication for the group and dishonor for the group's opponents, advising individuals to follow as the path to their own honor and security the course which will promote the survival of the group and preserve the group's distinctive world-construction and values (a place for deliberative rhetorical strategies and the use of epideictic rhetoric -- examples -- to support the promise of honor or disgrace).

V. The Model at Work: The Gospel according to Matthew

A series of studies by the present author offers examples of how this line of investigation can open up and connect the argumentative and social textures of epistolary documents and other texts which are more oratorical in nature.[39] In the present study, the model will be applied to the literary genre of the gospel. While epistles are readily accessible to practicioners of rhetorical criticism (particularly when this is supplemented with a grounding in ancient epistolography), Gospels are more elusive. Socio-rhetorical criticism opens up new avenues for investigating the rhetorical effect of this genre even beyond the scheme of the elaboration of the *chreia*, which opened the door to the rhetorical investigation of the Gospels.[40] The four gospels have already been used as witnesses to the cultural phenomenon of honor and analyzed at the level of interactions within the narrative world itself (for example, in the confrontations between Jesus and the Pharisees).[41] J. H. Neyrey has taken a decisive step further in an analysis of John's subversion of dominant cultural evaluations of honor and the effect of his ironic portrayal of Jesus' trial and passion on the readers of his gospel.[42] What remains is to press further in this direction, and to show how honor and shame language in a narrative or story might be expected to shape the responses of the individuals and communities which read those narratives. We are looking here for connections between the inner texture of the story and the social and cultural location of the readers, specifically ways in which the former are designed to shape or reinforce the latter.

---

[39] D. A. deSilva, "Despising Shame: A Cultural-Anthropological Investigation of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *JBL* 113 (1994) 459-481; "Exchanging Favor for Wrath: Apostasy in Hebrews and Patron-Client Relations," *JBL* 115 (1996) 91-116; "Worthy of His Kingdom: Honor Discourse and Social Engineering in 1 Thessalonians," *JSNT* 64 (1996) 49-79; "The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Honor, Shame, and the Maintenance of the Values of a Minority Culture," *CBQ* 58 (1996) 433-455; "The Noble Contest: Honor, Shame, and the Rhetorical Strategy of 4 Maccabees," *JSP* 13 (1995) 31-57.

[40] B. L. Mack and V. K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1989); B. L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

[41] B. J. Malina and J. 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. J. H. Neyrey (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991) 25-66; B. J. Malina and R. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

[42] J. H. Neyrey, "John 18-19: Honor and Shame in the Passion Narrative," *Semeia* 68 (1994) 113-137.

A. Whose approval matters? -- Delineating the Court of Reputation

In many places, Matthew's words would have the effect of bracketing the opinion or evaluation formed by the parent body (the Jewish ethnic subculture) concerning the minority group. Jesus' characterization of the Pharisees and scribes as "an evil and adulterous generation" (12:38; 16:4) shows that their character is essentially dishonorable. They do not embody God's values, but rather are aligned with the forces of sin and shamelessness. The opinion formed by dishonorable people is not worthy of consideration (in effect, they lack *ethos*). Moreover, "the people of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here" (12:41-42). Before the judgement seat of God, those who opposed Jesus during his ministry, and by extension the disciples of those Pharisees who now oppose the Christian way of doing Torah, will be condemned. In light of God's eternal verdict, the synagogue which rejects Jesus and his followers is shown to be a court of reputation which ultimately does not matter. To give in to its pressures to conform now would only lead to the believer's own condemnation before God's judgement seat.

The parable of the wedding banquet reinforces this evaluation of those who were invited but refused to respond when called, i.e., refused to respond to Jesus, as "unworthy" (22:8). The detractors of Jesus and his followers only show their own lack of honor when they refuse the message of the Christian community, and all the more when they move into contempt for or open hostility against Jesus' followers (22:6-7). The seven woes of chapter 23 contain a scathing denunciation of the Pharisaic-Rabbinic understanding of how to live lives approved by God. This further undermines the character of the non-Christian Jews who exert some measure of pressure on their Jewish relations and neighbors who have joined themselves to the Christian sect. Such passages depict the outsiders as dishonorable, eliminating the force of their critique.

The lengthy passage about almsgiving, prayer, and fasting (6:1-18), in the first instance, warns against engaging in religious activity for the wrong reasons, namely human approval. Piety was a central virtue for both Jews and Gentiles (though defined differently by different groups), and thus an essential component of honor. Jesus' words warn the believers against giving in to the desire to be approved by outsiders and to engage in acts of religion which might suggest an implicit renunciation of one's exclusive commitment to Jesus. The phrase "in secret" points to God as the ultimate "court of opinion" to the explicit exclusion of the court of opinion formed,

in the first instance, by the Jewish synagogue. The Christians must now direct their attention to the God who sees in secret, and withstand the pressure to perform what non-Christian Jews would approve as pious actions for the sake of their acceptance. This would also not fail to impact Gentile Christians, who would be pressured as well by their neighbors to perform the public acts of piety which the Greco-Roman society approves as tokens of loyalty and civic virtue -- the prayers of such outsiders is vain babbling, but the One God hears the prayers of Jew and Gentile offered in Jesus' name.

The contrast between the "narrow" and "wide" gates (7:13-14) serves to offset the minority (i.e., deviant) status of the Christian group: they are a minority because only a small number from the mass of humankind finds the divinely-approved way. If the majority, who are entering the broad and easy road unto destruction, think that the Christians are fools, dishonorable, or disgracefully lacking in virtue, the Christians will be able to neutralize the force of such pressure to conform by contemplating the end of outsiders as, ultimately, destruction. The way of life promoted within the church, even if held as dishonorable by the majority of people, is nevertheless the narrow and difficult road to life and eternal honor before the court of God and the Son. Moreover, Jesus' teaching about what constitutes true greatness shows that the world's conception of what is "great" and "honorable" is upside down (20:24-28): those who adhere to such values cannot correctly evaluate the behavior of Christians. This is also important insofar as the Christians themselves were, in most cases, brought up as members of the dominant culture (or the Jewish subculture). They must therefore not evaluate their own honor or lack of honor based on the worldly standards they learned as adolescents and lived as adults, but only according to the new standards as revealed by the teachings of Jesus.

Christians are thus directed to look for God's approval, and to regard Jesus as the one teacher who is explicitly named by God as the Approved One, the One to hear and obey, who shows the way to live honorably before God. The narrative effective establishes Jesus' *ethos* as a credible and authoritative counsellor. God's approval and legitimation of Jesus and his teaching is shown not only at the baptism (3:17) and the transfiguration (17:5), but most powerfully in the resurrection. In the face of the world's contempt and disapproval (shown in the extreme by crucifixion), God vindicates Jesus and the way he taught, raising him to the place of highest honor in the cosmos: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet" (22:44). This reminds the believers not only of Jesus' honor and his ability to grant honor to his faithful followers, but also of the outsiders' dishonor -- those who oppose Jesus (through attacking and shaming, for example, his family on earth) will be subject to lasting disgrace

at Jesus' triumphant return. Reaffirmations of the basic conviction that Jesus is risen and coming again to judge the world serve to reinforce the believers' willingness to endure the society's disapproval and rejection now in order to gain the greater, eternal honor when "he will gather his elect from the four winds" (24:30-31). This is negatively reinforced by the sayings about judgement (10:32-33) which point the believer very firmly toward having regard for what the judge -- Jesus -- will say about one on that day of judgement, encouraging him or her to seek approval before that court no matter how strongly human courts of reputation pressure believers to give up their commitment to the minority group: "do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (10:28).

The believers are also gathered together to form a strong body of support and mutual reinforcement. Matthew's use of kinship language reinforces a high level of attachment and mutual support within the community, so that the affirmation one receives from fellow-believers offsets the negative pressure one receives from non-Christians. His discourse on the life of the community also provides for strong group reinforcement. Matthew's distinctive placement of the parable of the lost sheep in the context of care for straying group members (18:10-14) sets up a measure of reinforcement for the commitment of those who are wavering within the group: the community is to encourage its wavering members and keep individuals focussed on the certainty of the group's values, restoring the fallen (that is, not letting pressure from outside pull them away). We should also note the importance of the command "not to despise one of these little ones." Within the group, all the faithful must be honored, must receive approval and affirmation. There is no room for holding the weaker members in contempt, for then how will they remain faithful? What will strengthen them not to give up and give in to the outside pressures? The community is called to work to restore the fallen, not preen themselves for their commitment while members of weaker constitution are allowed to fall away.

The Christian community as "court of reputation" is given considerable authority in the detailed directions concerning handling a dispute between two believers. After a private confrontation and a meeting with two or three witnesses, the whole Christian community is called upon to enforce discipline, and the verdict of the community is witnessed by Jesus who is present in their midst and binding in both realms of earth and heaven (18:15-18). The church is in a position to enforce the wayward member's conformity with the ethical ideals of Jesus, for what member would willingly endure excommunication from the church as long as he or she believed that it truly has the authority to bind and loose, and remains the place where the

presence of God as mediated by Jesus can be known? If the narrow road is the way to the eternal inheritance of God's kingdom, the church is the gateway to that inheritance. Attachment to the community, and vital engagement of its values, is therefore a strong assurance also of God's approval of one's life and worth, a strong counterbalance to society's claims to the contrary.

B. Defining behaviors and values which lead to honor

How honor and shame uphold group values may be uncovered by asking the question, "within the view of reality espoused by the text, what behaviors lead to honor and what behaviors lead to dishonor?" The instructions concerning the fuller keeping of Torah which Matthew preserves in 5:21-48 are bracketed by appeals to honor. First, 5:17-20 declares that these behaviors (and, one may assume, an approach to the rest of Torah which follows these models) constitute the "greater righteousness," that is the "greater virtue" and therefore "greater claim to honor," than that possessed by the church's rivals, the scribes in their synagogues. It is, moreover, *this* righteousness which receives God's approval and recognition in the form of admittance to the kingdom of God, the reward prepared for those who embody God's will. Matthew's treatement of the attainment of righteousness and the doing of Torah begin to sound like subcultural rhetoric with regard to the Jewish ethnic subculture. It is the follower of Jesus who will perform more perfectly what the ethnic subculture claims to prize, namely fulfilling the Torah.

Second, these behaviors are said in 5:45 to make one a "child of the Father who is in heaven," giving the person the assurance of honor since one has brought one's character and life in line with the character of God. The believer will therefore pursue the virtues which are given as the path to honor, namely the renunciation of anger, grudges, lust, untruthfulness, vengeful aspirations, and hatred, and will pursue rather love for the enemy, prayer for the persecutor, reconciliation with the brother or sister, and so forth. The Sermon on the Mount closes with another passage which speaks close to home for those who are sensitive to honor: "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (7:21-23). The hearer is taken to the eternal court of reputation, whose verdict results in either lasting disgrace (being labelled an "evildoer" and excluded from Jesus' presence) or lasting approval. This appeal motivates the hearer to seek to "do the will of the Father who is in heaven" as Jesus reveals it.

Matt 10:24-39 is rich in language resonant with the rhetoric of honor and shame. 10:24-26, we have seen, contributes to the believers' freedom from the opinion of non-Christians and to their assurance of vindication

when all that is now hidden (e.g., the lordship of Christ) becomes manifest (i.e., at the Last Judgement). 10:32-33 uses language of honor and disgrace to sustain loyalty to and confession of Jesus in the face of pressure to deny association with the name: "So every one who acknowledges me before human beings, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before human beings, I also will deny before my Father." Desire for honor before the eternal court, secured by Jesus' character witness, should lead the believers to accept disgrace before the human court on account of their loyalty to Jesus. There is a new point of reference for one's honor: one must prove oneself worthy of Jesus rather than worthy of the affirmation of natural kin or the larger society: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (10:37-38). While the way of discipleship may cost a person his or her place in the natural kinship group, and while it may lead to contempt (even as did the cross of Jesus), it is still the way that one is found worthy of Jesus, and therefore worthy of honor before God.

Matthew shares Mark's emphasis on the definition of true greatness in God's sight: it consists in serving (20:24-28); true life is found when one loses one's life for the sake of the gospel (16:24-27); the way of the cross is the way to glory, for the same God who vindicated the honor of Jesus, once despised by his society as deviant and shameful, will also vindicate the followers of Jesus as their walk of discipleship leads them to experience society's contempt. Matthew emphasizes this new definition of greatness with a number of additional sayings: "Those who humble themselves like this child, they are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (18:4); "The one who is greatest among you shall be your servant; those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (23:11-12). These reinforce for the hearers the essential posture of discipleship, namely serving rather than self-promotion, as the only path to real and lasting honor. This path to honor is explicitly contrasted with the dominant cultural assessment of honor (what the "rulers of the Gentiles" do, 20:25): both Matthew and the dominant culture agree that honor is a value worth pursuing, but Matthew preserves a saying of Jesus which inverts the dominant culture's definition of honor, suggesting contracultural rhetoric at this point.

The counterpart to desiring honor is seeking to avoid disgrace. A wedding guest who lacks the appropriate garb is singled out, shamed by the host, and cast out into "outer darkness" in front of all the other guests (21:11-14). The parable contains an unnamed example who is censured for some lack of virtue, making the hearer aware that gross shame awaits those

who fail to do the will of God, motivating the hearer to bring forth the appropriate fruits of righteousness as Jesus has defined them. One interpersonal behavior which Matthew emphasizes quite heavily is forgiveness. Highlighted in the context of the Lord's Prayer, Matthew underscores this further in the lengthy parable which closes the discourse on community life (18:23-35). When the slave who was shown mercy refuses to show it in turn, he is reproached before the household as "base" and handed over to lingering degradation. The parable closes with the ominous words, "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart" (18:35). The hearers are motivated to practice mutual forgiveness, lest they come to dishonor when they stand before their God who forgave them so great a debt. If they fail to emulate the generous heart of God, if they fail to make God's virtue their own, they, too, shall come to disgrace.

The four eschatological "parables" in 24:45-25:46 reinforce commitment to seek honor in the terms defined by the group by holding out the promise of honor awaiting those who have lived out their lives faithful to Jesus' word, and of dishonor for those who fail to take his word to heart and commit their lives to bearing the fruits of righteousness. In the first parable (24:45-51), the servants who are continually occupied with the business to which the master has appointed them will receive honor within the household of the master at his return (24:47); those who neglect their service to the master will be shamed and cast out from the household (24:51). The second parable reinforces the need for preparedness to meet the bridegroom at any hour, without relying on an opportunity for last-minute preparations (25:1-13). In the third parable, the parable of the talents (25:14-30), those who use what the master has entrusted to them to increase the kingdom will receive advancement and honor when the master returns: the interim is a time for fruitful labor, for the use of time, resources, and gifts for the building up of what Jesus values. Those who fail to use what the master has entrusted to them to this end will come to shame: they will be branded "worthless," "wicked and lazy," and excluded from the kingdom. The final parable provides explicit behaviors in which Jesus' servants are to be occupied and to invest themselves. The promise of honor and approval -- "Come, you who are approved by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you" (25:34) -- and the threat of the shame of exclusion and disapproval -- "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (25:41) powerfully support works of love, deeds of charity and mercy toward the hungry, weak, sick, poor, and imprisoned, helping the hearers understand that, ultimately, their honor depends not on networking with the rich and powerful but with responding in mercy and generosity toward the needy and nobodies.

C. Dealing with dishonor from outside

A minority culture will completely secure its members from the pressure of the disapproval of the outside world if it provides them with a means of withstanding society's attempts at shaming them back into conformity. Matthew begins to do this by pointing out the outsiders' lack of knowledge concerning what truly pleases God. Their attempts at shaming are to be understood as the hostility of the ignorant. Moreover, Matthew presents disgrace and opposition from the dominant culture and the parent religion as experiences to be expected, which should not therefore catch the believers unaware so as to disconfirm their convictions about their place in God's favor and truth. The first disciples were told to expect such attempts at social control (10:17-18), and the generations of believers that would follow are warned that hostility from outside is inevitable (24:9-10). Matthew closely links believers' experience of persecution both with the experience of Jesus (10:24-25) and with the return of the Son of Man, so that believers are given hope for certain vindication (13:41-43; 24:30-31). Finally, Matthew preserves sayings of Jesus which pronounce these believers honored, approved, and enviable when they are subjected to disgrace and persecution for the sake of the name: "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (5:11-12). Just as the prophets of old stand in honor before God, so the believers are assured that they, too, stand in honor with them. Given the community's definitions of reality, according to which Jesus himself will come to judge the nations and reward his own, it becomes actually "honorable" to suffer contempt, reproach, insult, and hostility now on his account.

D. Conclusion

This cursory look at how Matthew uses honor discourse may begin to highlight the benefits of this line of inquiry. As we attend to a text's use of honor discourse, we see what behaviors the hearers are being led to emulate or avoid, as well as how the document works to reinforce group boundaries and values by answering for the hearers the question "whose approval should I seek?" and by motivating the sorts of behavior within the group which aid group solidarity and commitment. We can go on to explore what light these findings might cast on theories of the situation of the churches which Matthew envisioned as his audience. For example, the fact that Matthew preserves so much material challenging the Pharisees' ability to recognize what God values supports theories which place the church in tension with the local Jewish community, emphasizing the need for the Christians to be especially well-insulated in that direction. To put this in

terms of cultural rhetoric, we might posit Matthean discourse to have a subcultural relationship to emerging Pharisaic/Rabbinic Jewish discourse, claiming to fulfill a commonly-held set of values (Torah) better than the ethnic subculture itself. The relationship with Greco-Roman culture may be more complex: both agree that piety is a central value, but Matthew rejects the dominant culture's expression of piety as worthless; both agree that honor and pre-eminence are highly desirable goods, but Matthew inverts the dominant culture's definition of how honor is displayed and attained. The majority culture suggests that affronts (challenges to honor) demand satisfaction; Matthew preserves Jesus' sayings which point to forgiveness and even benevolence as the only appropriate responses to injury and affront (having revealed these to be the essential characteristics of God). All this points to a more countercultural relationship with the Greco-Roman world and with Mediterranean majority culture more broadly.

Despite these oppositions, Matthew seeks to motivate a conversionist stance toward the outside world. The believers are urged to conduct themselves virtuously in the eyes of outsiders, so that their "good works" will result in the outsider's coming to revere the One God (5:16). While Matthew establishes God and the Christian group as the primary court of reputation, it is clear that he does not entirely withdraw from an interest in the impression made on outsiders. The parting commission of Jesus is, moreover, overtly conversionist (28:18-20). Our findings may thus also serve as coordinates from which to begin to plot the larger rhetorical goal of Matthew for his readership: what kind of community is he trying to make of the churches who read and heed his work? How will they interact with outsiders and with one another? While analysis of honor discourse cannot in itself answer these questions, careful investigation of honor language at the levels of ineer texture and socio-cultural texture should at least give our work an added and useful dimension which leads us closer to an appreciation of the very real, three-dimensional issues faced by the first-century churches.

True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning, and Deception in Pauline Discourse

Mark D. Given
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

> It is never long, to be sure, until orthodoxy and enthusiasm again master this Paul and banish him once more to his letters. However the Church continues to preserve his letters in her canon and thereby latently preserves her own permanent crisis. She cannot get away from the one who for the most part only disturbs her. For he remains even for her the apostle of the heathen; the pious still hardly know what to make of him.[1]

Ernst Käsemann's comments raise some interesting questions. If Paul is more the apostle of the heathen than of the pious, why did the Church preserve his letters at all? If he mostly only disturbs her, why not banish both him and his letters altogether? Why preserve a pest? Why canonize a crisis? And how does one "master" Paul by banishing him to his letters? One possible answer to these questions is suggested by the following remarks from Tom Cohen, a contemporary literary theorist.

> . . . the manner in which we encounter canonized works often involves a systematic reversal of value-polarities and significations, a machine-like preinscription by which works already have entered the socialized or symbolic sphere of interpretation. To suggest this as an institutional given is to note that it may be part of the social function of such works to organize communities of readers dedicated implicitly to the foreclosure of specific irruptions that occur within them, that if developed, would put such communal icons--and the values based on them--at risk. Accordingly, canonical works are often preserved and transmitted not because they uphold the humanistic values of a cultural program for which they become icons, but because they have the power to radically disfigure the very values they are, once inscribed, used to uphold.[2]

Canon is containment. The measure measures, but the measure was established by measuring, and what can be measured can be mastered. Ironically, the Church preserves her permanent crisis in order to contain and protect herself from it. As

---

[1]Ernst Käsemann, "Paul and Early Catholicism," *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969) 250

[2]Tom Cohen, *Anti-Mimesis from Plato to Hitchcock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 262.

we shall see, although Käsemann was referring to the containment of Pauline *content*, his observations are equally applicable to the containment of Pauline *form*.

Protecting the church from Paul is a venerable tradition, but protecting Paul--from himself, his enemies, and even well meaning but misguided friends like myself--is the oldest profession of Pauline interpreters. Early protectors include "Luke," the "Pastor," and "Peter" (2 Pet 3:15-16), and modern examples are not hard to find. With respect to 1 Cor 9:19-23, Peter Marshall observes that

> Since H. Chadwick's seminal work on vv. 19-23 a number of articles have appeared, though scholars generally have not recognized the importance of the passage for our understanding of Paul. . . . As if in recognition of the dilemma of his enemies, but *protective* of Paul, scholars have chosen to describe his behavior as *flexible*, chameleon-*like*, *apparently* inconsistent or contradictory.[3]

I would not claim always to know when Paul's interpreters intend their work to be protective of Paul, the Church, or humanistic values. What interests me, rather, is the protective *effects* of such discourse, *regardless of the authors' conscious or unconscious intentions*.[4] Once a canon is established its pre(in)scriptive effects become, as Cohen says, "machine-like." Many poststructuralists argue that since all interpreters tend to be quite unconscious of certain investments that control their

---

[3]Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT 2.23; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck] 1987) 315, italics mine. H. Chadwick, "All Things to All Men (I Cor. IX.22)," *NTS* 1 (1955) 261-275.

[4]These remarks are intended to remind the reader of the complexity of intention. Even when we would like to think that we are being relatively objective and independent in our critical decisions, we are to some extent performing roles (pre)scripted by societal and cultural institutions. Attention to both readers' and writers' intentions is unavoidable when interpreting highly rhetorical texts like those found in the NT. As one who would claim to be practicing a postmodern rhetorical criticism, I would suggest that anyone who thinks postmodernism/postructuralism requires the exclusion of authorial intention from interpretation, or that interpretation is possible at all without positing intentions, should read Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 146-147, and Stanley Fish, *Doing What Comes Naturally* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1989) 96-100, 294-296; *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech and it's a Good Thing, Too* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 299-300. Considerable confusion exists among "biblical" postructuralists on this issue. Stephen Moore, e.g., while complaining of historical criticism's failure to "defamiliarize most of its seminal methodological assumptions," asks us to "witness the persistence, even in current biblical studies, of such problematic notions as . . . *the recoverability of authorial intentions*, and so on" (*Poststructuralism and the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1994] 117, italics mine). Yet earlier in same work he states "that deconstruction, in particular, can enable us to read against the grain of the biblical authors' intentions in ways that affirm women" (52). How does one read against the grain of intentions that cannot be recovered? The real issue is not the recoverability of intentions, but what one means by intentions (e.g., are they metaphysical presences or material constructs, monological or dialogical, unified or diffuse, univocal or equivocal?).

work, a constant and rigorous self-analysis is required.[5] Historical-critical methodology is not unacquainted with such introspection,[6] but only within certain limits. A major theme in Vernon Robbins' recent description of a comprehensive socio-rhetorical approach is the detection and destruction of such boundaries.[7] In that spirit, my essay seeks to further an ongoing process of lifting the canonical and critical veil from 1 Cor 9:19-23.[8] Only then may we be prepared to catch a glimpse of a *sophistic* Paul, one significantly beyond canonical and critical bounds.[9]

Aside from ignoring it, there are mainly two ways of critically containing 1 Cor 9:19-23. The first is to say that Paul cannot *really* mean what he says. It is

---

[5]A significant exception among postructuralists is Fish, who refers to this notion as "the critical self-consciousness fallacy" (see his "Critical Self-Consciousness, Or Can We Know What We're Doing," *Doing What Comes Naturally*, 436-467).

[6]"Every exegete is dependent--usually unreflectively and uncritically--on some conceptuality . . ." (Rudolf Bultmann, "On the Problem of Demythologizing," *New Testament & Mythology and Other Basic Writings* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984] 107).

[7]See, e.g., his critique of exegesis based on severely limited definitions of "intertextuality" like Michael Fishbane's model of "inner biblical exegesis" (Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, society, and ideology* [London/New York: Routledge, 1996] 97-102; see also 142-143, 192-236).

[8]First Corinthians 9 is used throughout Robbins' *Tapestry* to illustrate the multiple strategies of a socio-rhetorical approach. Broadly speaking, these strategies deal with the "inner texture," "intertexture," "social and cultural texture," and "ideological texture," of texts. I intend this essay to further understanding of the ideological texture of 1 Cor 9:19-23 and the authoritative traditions of interpretation "containing" it. Earlier transgressors of the veil include Marshall, who concludes that charges of inconstancy are not entirely without substance and that Paul really was part chamelion (Marshall, *Enmity*, 401-402, quoted below), and Dale Martin, who concludes that "Paul's self-portrayal as Christ's managerial slave, who must preach the gospel by compulsion and not from free will, is a clear rejection of the moral philosophical discourse that spoke of the leader as the benevolent, patriarchal wise man" (*Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* [New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1990] 117-118). Rather than the latter respectable model of leadership, Paul espouses the highly controversial and often disreputable populist or demagogic model. See especially "The Enslaved Leader as a Rhetorical Topos," and "Slave of All in 1 Corinthians 9," in *Slavery*, 86-116, 117-135. I might add that this model is often closely associated with sophistic rhetoric.

[9]Note that I do not call Paul a sophist, but rather sophistic. E. A. Judge wrote that "Our object is to place St. Paul in his correct social class in terms of the impression his activities must have given to the contemporary observer. The term 'sophist' has been chosen for lack of a better, and is meant to include many scholars (quite apart from St. Paul!) who would have hotly rejected it" (E. A. Judge, "The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community: Part II," *JRH* 1.3 [June 1961] 125). This procedure is highly questionable. Can it be wise to designate a rather diverse group of individuals by a single title they despised, one that many of them considered to represent the opposite of what they stood for? Surely this places the emic and the etic in too great a contradiction.

all just irony or hyperbole.[10] Some consider it incredible, if not impossible, that Paul lived sometimes as a Jew, sometimes as a Gentile, sometimes as a nomistic Christian.[11] The second way is to admit that Paul "means what he says," so to speak, but that it is merely a matter of being flexible, adaptive, or accommodating, though not *really* cunning or deceptive. This is the tendency Marshall notes above. My essay mainly pertains to this latter way of handling 1 Cor 9:19-23 since 1) it is probably the more prevalent of the two, 2) I agree that the presence of hyperbole does not mean that "all things to all people" is "just rhetoric," and 3) space limitations require that I choose to address only one way of containment at this time.

No responsible interpreter can ignore the wealth of social and cultural information now available to help us understand why both friends and enemies were likely to be taken aback by Paul's slavish/knavish behavior.[12] But after this material has been fully digested and one may even have gone so far as to admit that charges such as inconstancy, flattery, and demagoguery are not entirely inappropriate in this case, how Paul could have justified such behavior remains baffling.

> A healthy respect for the dilemma felt by both Greeks and Jews over Paul may help us to be cautious in planting him too firmly in either tradition and may lead us to see something of his remarkable individuality. . . . It is here that we ourselves face a dilemma of definition. How do we describe Paul's inconsistency? I doubt whether this creative and elusive edge to his character can be defined and limited by such terms as 'principle' or 'strategy' or vague ideas such as 'higher consistency'. The chameleon in Paul must be allowed its full range of colours.[13]

In what follows I will argue that allowing the chameleon in Paul its full range of colours requires recognition that his "missionary strategy," a rhetoric of body and voice, is a "True rhetoric," a concept to be explained below. Although at first it

---

[10]Even Marshall's exegesis reduces the scandal of Paul bragging about his behavior by developing Chadwick's passing suggestion that 9:19-23 might not be Paul's own choice of words, but rather an ironic echo of charges made against him (Marshall, *Enmity*, 308-317).

[11]Interpreters who think Paul could only have lived one way, either as a Pharisaic rabbi or a Gentile, tend to treat these verses as hyperbole. E.g., Knox, who held that Paul always lived as a Pharisee, complains that "The rhetorical tone of the passage obscures the facts" (Wilfred L. Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925] 122). E. P. Sanders decisively refutes the notion that Paul lived as an observant Jew, but then argues that he lived consistently as Gentile except when visiting Jerusalem (*Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983] 179-190). I cannot here enter into a detailed discussion of this alternative, but I find this replacement of an extreme solution with its opposite unconvincing.

[12]See Marshall, *Enmity*, 70-90, 278-325; Martin, *Slavery*, 86-135; Clarence E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychology* (NovTSup 81; Leiden/New York/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1995) 15-52, 237-332.

[13]Marshall, *Enmity*, 401-402.

may sound as if I am locating Paul exclusively in the Greek tradition due to my extended discussion of rhetoric/philosophy, eventually it should become clear that keeping both Greco-Roman and Jewish apocalyptic perspectives on Paul together so as to preserve his "remarkable individuality" is one of my major points. All of this is intended to lay the foundation for a new reading of 1 Cor 9:19-23, but I will not attempt to provide "a reading" in the space of this essay. Instead I will concentrate on defining True rhetoric and describing characteristic features such as intentional ambiguity, cunning, and deception. In the process I will *insinuate* some implications for the way one might read certain Pauline texts, especially 1 Cor 9:19-23. My intention here is to be suggestive and provocative, not authoritative.

True Rhetoric or Philosophistries

While it was once typical to limit Greco-Roman rhetorical influence on Paul to encounters with ubiquitous Stoic-Cynic street preachers, the current flood of formal rhetorical analyses of the undisputed Pauline epistles leaves little room for doubting that he had at least a rudimentary rhetorical education.[14] Similar analyses of the disputed epistles demonstrate that rhetorical polish was an ongoing concern in the Pauline school or schools. Indeed, the trend is to suspect that Paul himself knew quite a lot about such matters, and that his letters attest to a combination of a fair amount of formal training with undeniable natural gifts.

Widespread recognition of Paul's self-conscious employment of established rhetorical techniques and *topoi* raises the question of the range of impressions he was likely to make on his epistolary audiences from the standpoint of rhetorical strategy. Here I refer not to formalistic debates about whether this or that letter or portion of a letter is forensic, deliberative, or epideictic, but to the broader question of where in "the Greco-Roman humanistic tradition" his rhetorical strategies tend to locate him. In the long wake of Betz's outstanding dissertation, most rhetorical criticism would appear to presume and perpetuate two important, yet little discussed, perspectives.[15] The first is that Paul's rhetoric has far more in common

---

[14]For a brief but decisive argument for why we should acknowledge that Paul had some rhetorical training see Martin, "The Rhetoric of the Body Politic," *The Corinthian Body* [New Haven/Yale: Yale University Press, 1996] 38-68). Rhetorical criticism is a large and diverse growth industry in NT criticism. A recent overview is provided by Dennis L. Stamps, "Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament: Ancient and Modern Evaluation of Argumentation," *Approaches to New Testament Study*, (eds. Stanley E. Porter and David Tombs; JSNTSup 120; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 77-128. A fine brief introduction is provided by Burton Mack's *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990). For a vision of a postmodern rhetorical biblical criticism, see "Rhetorical Criticism" *The Postmodern Bible* (The Bible and Culture Collective; New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995) 149-186.

[15]Hans Dieter Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus und die socratische Tradition: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu seiner "Apologie" 2 Korinther 10-13* (BHT 45; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1972).

with the philosophic than the sophistic rhetorical tradition.[16] The second, and related, perspective is that Paul employs recognized rhetorical techniques in a variety of situations to make his discourse as *un*ambiguous and truth*ful* as possible.[17] Both perspectives are questionable. The guiding thesis of my current research is that *Paul's rhetorical strategies, both according to the historical novel called Acts and his own epistles, display such a degree of intentional ambiguity, cunning, and deception as to make him justifiably vulnerable to the polemical charge of perpetrating sophistries*.

This thesis takes two widely accepted conclusions very seriously. First, as already mentioned, Paul's methods of argumentation demonstrate considerable rhetorical self-awareness. Second, Paul was accused both inside and outside his own congregations of speaking and acting in an opportunistic and not completely trustworthy manner.[18] I am sympathetic with Paul, but I am also sympathetic with Paul's enemies who were found among Jews, pagans, non-Pauline Christians, and even Pauline Christians who deigned to disagree with their "father" (1 Cor 4:14-15). My attitude is not simply to be equated with an anti-Pauline "hermeneutics of suspicion." I see little justification for the notion that Paul was an insincere, power hungry, self-seeking opportunist.[19] Paradoxically, however, I argue that Paul's

---

[16]This perspective is undoubtedly reinforced by the old and distinguished tradition of comparing and contrasting Pauline ideas with those of various Hellenistic popular *philosophies*. See, e.g., Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989). Interestingly, after expressing his skepticism about the possibility that Paul was as influenced by Greek culture as Betz's investigations require, the classicist John Dillon states, "That is not to say that he does not know Greek, or indeed that he has not perfected a certain Greek style--a style, indeed, which has much in common with contemporary and later Greek sophistic" (Hans Dieter Betz, "Paul's Apology: II Corinthians 10-13 and the Socratic Tradition" [Colloquy 2; Berkeley: Center for Hermeneutical Studies, 1975] 17). Unfortunately I have not yet obtained Bruce W. Winter's highly relevant forthcoming published dissertation (*Philo and Paul among the Sophists* [SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997]).

[17]Kennedy sets the tone when he says that "Like Socrates, Paul regarded some kinds of rhetorical appeal as unacceptable: anything that departed from the truth as he understood it or from his duty to preach the gospel" (*New Testament*, 138). This view of Paul is not shared by more radical Pauline critics such as certain feminist interpreters and others who have been influenced by various kinds of cultural and ideological criticism. Even more problematic, however, is the highly traditional and naive assumptions about Socrates' rhetoric of truth implied by Kennedy's remark.

[18]E.g., with regard to 2 Corinthians, "Throughout, Paul's fundamental aim, in the face of suspicions of his double-dealing, is to assert his utter transparency and openness and his single-minded commitment to his vocation" (Frances Young and David F. Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians* [Biblical Foundations in Theology; London: SPCK, 1987] 15). See also pp. 17-18, 20. Similar observations and further references can be found in Marshall, *Enmity*, 317-325, and Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 312.

[19]The most persuasive statement of this position is probably found in Graham Shaw, *The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and Freedom in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1983).

sincere conviction that he knew the Truth and had a divine mandate to promote it in a world filled with deception is an important key to explaining the perennial and entirely justified suspicion that his rhetorical strategies are sometimes not exactly *kosher*. To anticipate, one might say that Paul is more Socratic/Platonic, and thus more sophistic, than most interpreters realize.[20]

We can begin to fathom this paradox by considering a recent reformulation of the relationship between philosophy and sophistry, Plato and rhetoric, found in Thomas Cole's *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece*.[21] While Brian Vickers portrays Plato as an intellectual Odysseus, stealthily stealing the rhetorical arsenal of the sophists and using it both to discredit them and subjugate the masses,[22] Cole argues that Plato, the reputed arch-enemy of rhetoric is, along with Aristotle, its co-inventor. To some extent, this is simply a matter of taking Plato at his word when he sets forth his vision of what rhetoric ought to be in opposition to what he claims it is in the hands of the sophists. More original, however, is his explication of Plato's definition, and his analysis of its philosophical foundations. Cole contends that full-fledged rhetoric, as opposed to either mere eloquence or Odyssean lying (sophistry in the most negative and polemical sense), requires "conviction" that knowledge of the true is possible. Such epistemological confidence deriving from "a morphology of the real" was the missing ingredient in the sophistic movement.[23] Plato, on the other hand, understood that "The more thorough and exact a speaker's understanding of the way things are, the greater his ability to capitalize on those resemblances which allow an audience to be deceived into mistaking one thing for another (*Phaedrus* 261e6-62d6)."[24] Consequently, "Here as elsewhere in Plato (*Hipp. Min.* 366e-67a5), a thorough knowledge of the truth produces the most

---

[20]For the most part in this essay, the Socrates I compare and contrast with Paul might simply be called Plato's Socrates. Scholarly distinctions between the Socrates of the earlier, middle, and later dialogues, and other issues related to the "Socratic problem (or question)" are not critical for what I am doing here. Two recent and invaluable resources for the Socratic problem are James W. Hulse, *The Reputations of Socrates: The Afterlife of a Gadfly* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), and Mario Montuori, *The Socratic Problem: The History--The Solutions* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1992).

[21]Thomas Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins, 1991).

[22]Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

[23]Cole, *Origins*, 141-143. Cole sells the sophists short on this point by failing to take into account recent scholarship that recognizes them as philosophers in their own right. A morphology of the real, i.e., a metaphysically underpinned epistemology, was not simply a missing ingredient, but a carefully considered and reasonably rejected one by sophists like Gorgias and Protagoras.

[24]Cole, *Origins*, 9.

reluctant liars, but also the most successful ones."[25]

The crucial ingredient in Cole's description of Platonic rhetoric, or what I refer to somewhat playfully in the title of my essay as "True rhetoric," is identified in the following remarks.

> Saying something other than what one means is not rhetorical when it merely seeks to conceal meaning from one possible audience (the uneducated, for example, or the uninitiated, or the wielders of political censorship) without any corresponding enhancement in the way meaning is received by the audience for whom it is intended. Nor is the simple conveying of a message known to be false (lying) or an argument known to be fallacious (sophistry) rhetorical per se, however often rhetoric may be used to make lies seem like truth or introduce sophistry in such a way that its fallaciousness passes unnoticed.[26]

The first sentence implies that polyvalence is an essential ingredient in rhetorical discourse. Discourse is not truly rhetorical unless it both *conceals* and *reveals* meaning simultaneously. Not surprisingly, Cole will later link the advent of allegorical interpretation to the development of rhetoric.[27] Discourse is truly rhetorical when at least two audiences are simultaneously in view corresponding to at least two levels of meaning. On the one hand, there is an unworthy audience that is kept in the dark either intentionally, or simply because it lacks essential hermeneutical assets such as intelligence and training. On the other, there is the intended audience made up of those who are capable of detecting what the speaker *really* means. Interestingly, Cole's description of rhetoric is quite similar to Gregory Vlastos' description of the sly concealments characteristic of Socratic/Platonic irony.[28]

But Cole probably goes too far in limiting what counts as rhetoric only to discourse deriving from an epistemological confidence of Platonic proportions. One hardly needed the unchanging realm of the forms in order to have some semblance of epistemological assurance in ancient Greece. The leading sophists, though

---

[25]Cole, *Origins*, 10. Betz quotes Friedländer's similar observations concerning the notion of rhetoric found in the *Hippias Minor*, and concerning its Socrates who apparently "täuscht" his opponents "als Sophist" (Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus*, 62). But Betz was mainly interested in associating one particular Socratic "Täuschungsmanöver" with Paul, that of ironically pretending to be rhetorically incompetent. Although he quotes Friedländer's observation that "Sokrates ist *der Beherrscher aller sophistischen Mittel* mit dem Ziel des ‚Guten', der mit dem Blick aus das rechte Ziel täuschende Erzieher" (italics mine), he clearly assumes that Paul's pilfering of the sophistic arsenal could not be so thorough.

[26]Cole, *Origins*, 14.

[27]Cole, *Origins*, 55-68.

[28]Vlastos tries--unsuccessfully--to exculpate the historical Socrates from practicing the more radical forms of this deceptive irony, limiting it instead to Plato. See references and discussion in Mark D. Given, "The Unknown Paul: Philosophers and Sophists in Acts 17," SBLSP 35 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996) 346-348.

relativists at heart, believed there were better and worse *logoi*, even *orthoi logoi*.[29] Surely this level of confidence was sufficient to lead to the construction of the sort of polyvalent discourse Cole would limit to Plato. In fact, failure to recognize the type of multivalent discourse that Vlastos calls "Platonic irony" (or is it sophistic irony?) in the extant writings of the sophists probably leads commentators to misinterpret them from time to time, taking at face value statements that should be considered "ironic" in light of other statements.[30] Or is it that I am duped? Here we come to a crucial point. Once one suspects that someone, e.g., Gorgias, Protagoras, Socrates, Plato . . . or Paul, is a double dealer in this sense, i.e. someone who is sometimes addressing an audience within an audience, interpretation is severely complicated by the task of trying to decide which level of meaning is meant for this or that outsider and this or that insider.[31] In this reader-response nightmare the interpreter must always be asking herself, Am I being too clever, or not clever enough with regard to a given text?

Perhaps the original audience of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians felt like they were trapped in just such a nightmare.

---

[29]See "Sophistic Relativism," chapter in G. B. Kerford, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 83-110; see also 72-73. Let us remember that one does not have to be an Idealist to have "ideals."

[30]E.g., in *On Nature*, Gorgias sets forth arguments about the relationship of logos to external reality that render impossible the attainment of Truth or Knowledge, arguments that suggest that all logos is inherently deceptive. Yet in the *Encomium of Helen*, Gorgias intends to do nothing but "reveal the truth," and in his *Defence of Palamedes*, Palamedes declares his "intention of expounding what is true and of avoiding deceit in the process" (Kerford, *Sophistic Movement*, 81). Kerford tries to solve this contradiction by suggesting that Gorgias believes that the indication of truth or reality itself "can only be done by applying some kind of process of reasoning to the logos in question" (81). But surely a process of reasoning is just more logos, more deception! Perhaps a better solution is to suppose that Gorgias is being Truly rhetorical in the *Encomium* and the *Defense*. Those who know how Gorgias *really* feels about the possibility of "telling the truth while avoiding deception" can relish their superiority over the *hoi polloi* who are ignorant enough to take such statements at face value.

[31]To get a sense of just how complicated the situation can become see Shadi Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1994). In this brilliant analysis of both theatre and prose in the early empire, Bartsch looks at cases where writers use intentionally ambiguous utterances to send politically subversive messages while simultaneously protecting themselves from censorship; cases where an actor or lector create subversive double meanings with lines that were not intended to be so, simply by their interpretive performance of them; and cases where the audience itself creates such meanings by responses such as spontaneous laughter, knowing glances, etc., thereby becoming "actors in the audience." One comes away from this study with a deeper appreciation of what it means to say that the early empire marked a rebirth of rhetoric. Such doublespeak, which strongly resembles the definitions of Platonic rhetoric or Socratic irony discussed above, was common coin of the realm in Paul's day, and I do not think he escaped this rhetorical economy.

> Paul's mixing of praise and blame in 1 Corinthians as well as veiled arguments and covert allusions and ironical tone exacerbated the misunderstanding between Paul and the Corinthians. In Paul's polyphonic approach he appeared as a leader like [Philo's] Joseph, drawn in different directions, showing that his speech, mind, and action were not in harmony, and as such was no legitimate wielder of παρρησία. Such accusations conform to standard accusations against a Socratic type of philosopher who, instead of being direct and open in his approach, is indirect and oblique. Paul is like a "simple" friend, but has, like the Epicurean psychagogues, used a "varied and good method" of exhortation. Paul's audience has understood him as a Socratic type of philosopher and charged him with concealment. The charge of indirection hit home and Paul is at pains rectifying the image. Paul's language of openness is a response to charges of concealment and ambiguity.[32]

Some of the "language of openness" Glad refers to is Paul's protestations in 2 Cor 1 that he acts with "candor and godly sincerity," that he does not make plans in a worldly manner, and that he writes nothing other than what the Corinthians can read and understand.[33] Quite possibly some had charged that his gospel was "veiled" (3:12 - 4:6).[34] What might all this mean?

According to Betz, and surely most would agree, it could not mean that Paul had used "sophistic arts" in defending, commending, and propagating his gospel.

> Die "Wahrheit", um die es in seiner Verkündigung geht, ist natürlich die christliche Botschaft, aber es ist eben die Wahrheit, die sich nicht mit den Mitteln der Rhetorik verteidigen läßt--ebensowenig, wie sie sich mit diesen Mitteln "empfehlen" und "propagieren" läßt. Abgesehen von der inhaltlichen Füllung des Begriffes "Wahrheit" stimmt also Paulus ganz der socratischen Tradition zu.[35]

In the list of verses Betz provides to support this view, 2 Cor 4:2 stands out because of its clear relevance to the matter of rhetorical strategy. Here Paul maintains that "We have given up disgraceful concealments, not practicing cunning nor disguising the word of God, but by an open statement of the truth, we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience before God."[36] What could be clearer? Paul is adamant that

---

[32]Glad, 313-314. I do not agree, however, that the Corinthians' impression of Paul can be accounted for as a misunderstanding created by his "simple" but "varied and good" Epicurean-like psychagogy. From time to time Glad's study exhibits a Pauline apologetic quality. See, e.g., his rather stringent and convoluted rejection of Martin's view of 1 Cor 9:19-23 (Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 327).

[33]As Marshall notes, Chadwick called 2 Cor 1:13-24 "the locus classicus for the attacks on Paul for his versatility" (Marshall, *Enmity*, 317).

[34]Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 313; Chadwick, "All Things," 271.

[35]Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus*, 18.

[36]My translation. Unless otherwise noted, biblical translations are from the RSV and classical translations are from the Loeb, though both are sometimes modified.

he would never further his cause by misrepresenting himself or his gospel. But as so often when Paul makes an unambiguous statement, he spoils it with a further remark that ambiguates it or implies/allows just the opposite.[37] In this case the unsettling comment comes immediately: "*And even if our gospel is veiled*, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (4:3-4). Unbelievers are, in effect, kept in a state of *ignorance* by the god of this world. But Paul does not settle for simply saying that the eyes of their minds have been blinded. Rather, he allows the possibility that, for them, the gospel itself really is veiled. Was there something about the way he propagated, commended, and defended his gospel that both concealed and revealed at the same time, helping it to become simultaneously "to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life" (2 Cor 2:16)? In short, is his gospel a True rhetoric?[38]

I am persuaded that Paul more fully mastered and deployed the sophistic arts than Betz and most other scholars allow.[39] I think he knew quite a lot about veils, or "screens,"[40] and that he went far beyond Socrates in clothing himself with "weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left" (2 Cor 6:7).[41] In

---

[37]This happens often in Romans, especially with regard to Jews and Judaism. For example, "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much in every way" (Rom 3:1-2a). But only a little later he is saying "What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all . . ." (3:9). Now (theo)logically considered, *in a certain way*, this is not contradictory at all. But I cannot help but think it significant that Paul often expresses himself by saying both "yes" and "no" to an issue, especially a controversial one. Chadwick spoke of Paul's "giving with one hand what he takes away with the other" (Chadwick, "All Things," 271). I would say this is a major rhetorical strategy in Romans.

[38]Another interesting question would be, Is Paul's gospel Paul's pharmacy? Cf. Martin's discussion of the logic of the *pharmakon* in 1 Cor 11:17-34 (*The Corinthian Body*, 190-197).

[39]Betz knows that "Philosophers say they don't use rhetoric but of course they do" (Betz, "Paul's Apology," 27), but the underlying assumption is that there is a line separating the philosopher's rhetoric from sophistic that Paul could not possibly have crossed.

[40]See *Protagoras* 316c-317c. I cannot enter into a discussion of this passage in the space of this brief essay, but I refer the reader to Tom Cohen's discussion of "the screens of the sophist" (Cohen, *Anti-Mimesis,* 51-57).

[41]See the long footnote 72 in Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991) 98-99, concerning the *topos* of the ambidextrous or "double" warrior. The implication is that the complete warrior or athlete uses every weapon or skill available. The final paragraph contains much that I find suggestive for 2 Cor 6:7 and 1 Cor 9:19-23: "Georges Dumézil . . . was well aware of these aspects of warrior magic which confers upon warrior gods all the weapons of *maya*, ranging from cunning to a plurality of forms and the gift of transformation over and above their bodily strength. He writes: 'The warrior must be able to be beyond laws, not only moral but even cosmic and physical ones; to defend order he must be in a position to pass beyond it, to step

what follows I will discuss aspects of some of the more controversial weapons of True rhetoric: ambiguity, cunning, and deception. This is by no means a comprehensive treatment. As the notes will attest, entire books have been written on each of these subjects and the reader is encouraged to consult them. Rather, I want to focus on some particular aspects of ambiguity, cunning and deception that I find especially relevant to Pauline discourse in general, and to 1 Cor 9:19-23 in particular. Some semantic overlap will be evident in this unholy sophistic trinity.

Ambiguity

> But since in the eyes of some people it is more profitable to seem to be wise than to be wise without seeming to be so (for the sophistic art consists in apparent and not real wisdom, and the sophist is one who makes money from apparent and not real wisdom), it is clear that for these people it is essential to seem to perform the function of a wise man rather than actually to perform it without seeming to do so. *To take a single point of comparison, it is the task of the man who has knowledge of a particular subject himself to refrain from fallacious arguments about the subjects of his knowledge and to be able to expose him who uses them.*[42]

> In the first place, then, just as we say that we ought sometimes deliberately to argue plausibly rather than truthfully, so too we ought sometimes to solve questions plausibly rather than according to truth. . . . One must, therefore, beware not of being refuted but of appearing to be so, since the asking of ambiguities and questions involving equivocation and all similar fraudulent artifices mask even a genuine refutation and make it uncertain who is refuted and who is not. . . . *As we said, then, since there are some seeming refutations which are not really refutations, in like manner also there are some seeming solutions which are not really solutions. These we say that we ought sometimes to bring forward in preference to true refutations in competitive argument and in meeting ambiguity.*[43]

There is a great lesson to be learned about "rhetorical situations," from *On Sophistical Refutations*, especially competitive, agonistic ones similar to those Paul often faced. It is a lesson also found in the *Rhetoric* where Aristotle summarizes it rather aphoristically: *"Sophistry is not a matter of ability, but of intention* (ὁ γὰρ σοφιστικὸς οὐκ ἐν τῇ δυνάμει ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ προαιρέσει)"[44]

---

outside it--at the risk sometimes of yielding to the temptation of attacking it'" (99).

[42]Aristotle *On Sophistical Refutations* 165a.20-28, italics mine.

[43]Aristotle *On Sophistical Refutations* 175a.32-34, 41-46; 176a.19-24, italics mine.

[44]*Rhetoric* 1.1.14, my translation. Cf. Loeb: "For what makes the sophist is not the faculty but the moral purpose." Kennedy has "for sophistry is not a matter of ability but of deliberate choice [*proairesis*] [of specious arguments]" (George Kennedy, *Aristotle* On Rhetoric: *A Theory of Civic Discourse* [New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991] 35, brackets his). The latter translation, which could imply that anyone who chooses specious arguments is a

This principle is sometimes overlooked. Consider the description *On Sophistical Refutations* provided by the Loeb translator, D. J. Furley.

> Just as Aristotle treats of the demonstrative and the dialectical syllogism in the *Posterior Analytics* and the *Topica*, respectively, so in this treatise, which forms a kind of appendix to the *Topica*, he deals with the sophistical syllogism. A knowledge of this is part of the necessary equipment of the arguer, *not in order that he may himself make use of it but that he may avoid it, and that the unwary may not be ensnared in the toils of sophistical argument*; in fact, Aristotle is carrying on the Socratic and early Platonic tradition by attacking the Sophists, who taught the use of logical fallacy in order to make the worse cause appear the better.[45]

The blanket statement that the arguer will not make use of sophistical arguments trades exclusively on the sentiments of the first of the two quotations given above. But plainly, according to the second, the arguer *will* make use of sophistical refutations under certain conditions.[46] These conditions are "in competitive argument and in meeting ambiguity," which is to say, when arguing with people one has labeled sophists. Aristotle frequently exploits the common stereotype of sophists as merely contentious people who want to gain fame and money from winning arguments by any and all means, including fraudulent ones. But, in a distorted echo of Furley's statement, we might say that Aristotle "taught the use of logical fallacy in order to make the [better] cause *appear* the better."[47]

A major component in sophistical argumentation is intentional ambiguity.[48] In fact, Aristotle places a discussion of the deceptive potential of "the power of

---

sophist, is implausible unless Aristotle contradicts himself by later recommending that the non-sophist use such arguments when necessary.

[45]*Aristotle III*, 6, italics mine.

[46]The extent of Aristotle's advocacy of sophistry is actually quite astonishing. See Robert Wardy, "Mighty Is the Truth and It Shall Prevail?" *Essays on Aristotle's* Rhetoric, (ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty; Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1996) 56-87.

[47]Even more strikingly, the motives of the sophist and the philosopher for using sophistic argumentation actually overlap at one point. In the chapter preceding the one where he will recommend deliberately arguing plausibly rather than truthfully, Aristotle suggests three reasons for studying sophistical arguments and their solutions. His third reason is that "they establish our reputation (δόξαν), by giving us the credit of having left nothing untried" (175a.13-14). It is not only the sophist, but also the philosopher who employs sophistic arts to acquire fame and glory.

[48]Of course, not all ambiguity and fallacies arising from it are intentional. A recent comprehensive "invitation" to the entire subject is provided by Douglas Walton, *Fallacies Arising from Ambiguity* (Applied Logic Series 1; Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996). Aristotle's *On Sophistical Refutations* laid the foundation for such investigations and remains influential.

names" near the beginning of *On Sophistical Refutations*.[49]

> Some refutations do not affect their object but only appear to do so; this may be due to several causes, of which the most fertile and widespread division is the argument which depends on names. For, since it is impossible to argue by introducing the actual things under discussion, but we use the names as symbols in the place of the things, we think that what happens in the case of the names happens also in the case of the things, just as people who are counting think in the case of their counters. But the cases are not really similar; for names and a quantity of terms are finite, whereas things are infinite in number; and so the same expression and the single name must necessarily signify a number of things. As, therefore, in the above illustration, those who are not clever at managing the counters are deceived by the experts, in the same way in arguments also those who are unacquainted with the power of names are the victims of false reasonings, both when they are themselves arguing and when they are listening to others.[50]

A large number of the species of sophistical argument discussed by Aristotle fall under this genus of linguistic ambiguity. Indeed, from his description of the relationship between things and names one might wonder if all discourse is inherently ambiguous, even deceptive, always both true and false, a notion to which I will return in the discussion of Gorgias' "doctrine of deception." But Aristotle does not go to this extreme.[51] As argued in *Rhetoric* 3.2.1-7, truthful and sincere speakers can stick as closely as possible to "ordinary language," using nouns and verbs in their prevailing (*kyrios*) meaning.[52] One should avoid "excess," or more literally, too great a departure "from what is fitting" (τοῦ πρέποντος). Such excesses were associated with sophists, and most of Aristotle's negative examples will come from their writings.[53] Naturally the epitome of excess with respect to the single term, *homonymy*, is linked explicitly to the sophist.[54] According to

---

[49]Although Galen would have us believe otherwise (see Robert Blair Edlow, *Galen on Language and Ambiguity: An English Translation of Galen's 'De Captionibus (On Fallacies)' with Introduction, Text, and Commentary* [Philosophia Antiqua; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977]), it was not Aristotle but rather the Stoics who analyzed ambiguity most thoroughly and effectively in antiquity (see Catherine Atherton, *The Stoics on Ambiguity* [Cambridge Classical Studies; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993]). The significance of their great reputation for detecting ambiguity for the interpretation of Acts 17 is discussed in Given, "The Unknown Paul," 348-351.

[50] Aristotle *On Sophistical Refutations* 165a.3-18.

[51]For a summary of *On Sophistical Refutations* and a brief discussion of "focal meaning," Aristotle's attempt to overcome the problems posed by homonymy, see Edlow, *Galen*, 17-31.

[52]As Kennedy notes, modern literary critics have called this concept into serious question (Kennedy, *Aristotle*, 221).

[53]Interestingly, some will come from Plato's usage.

[54]Homonymy covers a multitude of sins in ancient linguistic theory, indeed every aspect of lexical ambiguity with respect to a single term. Thus what we would call polysemy, a diversity

Kennedy's delightful rendition, it is "by means of these that he does his dirty work" (παρὰ ταύτας γὰρ κακουργεῖ).[55]

Here I would remind the reader what Plato's Socrates does with χαλεπόν in the *Protagoras*, and what Luke's Paul does with δεισιδαιμονία in the Areopagus speech.[56] *It is by means of homonymy that both Socrates and Paul do their dirty work in these cases.*[57] Their rhetorical strategies are textbook sophistry by Aristotle's definition.[58] Of course one could easily imagine other ways to exploit homonymy.[59] One might also use homonyms in epistolary discourse to send two different messages to two different factions within a single audience, simultaneously protecting oneself from the ire of one while ingratiating oneself with the other. Consider, for example, Rom 10:4. Is Paul saying that Christ is the "end" or the "goal" of the law? Historical-critical scholarship tends to treat this as a theological problem that must be resolved one way or the other.[60] Paul must have intended

---

of possible meanings for what is, etymologically speaking, one word, is considered homonymy in ancient discussions (see Atherton, *Stoics*, 273-328, and Edlow, *Galen*, 21-22, 40-41).

[55]Kennedy, *Aristotle*, 223.

[56]See discussions in Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) 135-138; Given, "The Unknown Paul," 344-348; id. "Not either/or but both/and in Paul's Areopagus Speech," *Biblical Interpretation* 3,3 (Leiden: Brill, 1995) 363-365.

[57]On a related note, I find it intriguing how often a careful and sensitive reader like Martin finds Paul's language in First Corinthians ambiguous, even "conveniently ambiguous" (e.g., *The Corinthian Body*, 190).

[58]See also Karl Olav Sandnes, "Paul and Socrates: The Aim of Paul's Areopagus Speech," *JSNT* 50 [1993] 13-26. Sandnes argues that Paul's rhetorical strategy is *insinuatio*, speaking in a veiled manner. He argues that Paul does this to evoke curiousity.

[59]And we should remember that homonymy is just one species of ambiguity. According to ancient linguistic theory, such ambiguity can exist at the level of phrases and sentences as well. Modern theory would extend it to paragraphs and entire discourses (see Atherton, *Stoics*, 1-27).

[60]E.g., after the promising insight in his preface "that Paul may have intended to be deliberately ambiguous, or at least that occasionally he so formulated his thought as to allow his readers/hearers some freedom to hear it with different nuances" (James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* [WBC 38b; Dallas: Word Books, 1988] xiv), one is disappointed to find that Dunn then totally ignores Paul's rhetorical situation--audience and exigency are nowhere to be found--while reading 10:4. Instead, we find that "Paul's thought here is to be understood chiefly in terms of his salvation-history perspective" (597). Clearly what matters to Dunn in this case is not the possible effects of Paul's ambiguous discourse on the Roman Christians but clarifying Paul's theology; what counts is not so much history as *Heilsgeschichte*. While Dunn favors "end," Richard Hays, though he complains of historical-biblical criticism's inability to tolerate ambiguity (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven/London: Yale, 1989] 221), insists on "goal," declaring that "end," in the sense of termination, makes "no sense at all in the context of Romans" (75-76). It seems to me that both meanings make sense in the context of Romans, and that the key

either "end" or "goal," but infelicitously chose a homonym. But a socio-rhetorical perspective might note how much Paul has to gain by speaking ambiguously at this point in the context of a letter of introduction concerned, among other things, with finessing his controversial views on Judaism and the Law. The Pauline faction at Rome, whose existence is confirmed by Rom 16, knows what Paul *really* means: Christ is the *end* of the Law (Galatians). But nomistic types, whose existence is confirmed by Rom 14, in light of other seemingly positive statements about the Law--most are actually quite ambiguous in context--might think that Paul is saying something positive about it here as well: Christ is its *goal*. One might also use such doubled discourse to create and/or sustain factions within an audience, separating the sheep from the goats, so to speak.[61] Such are the signs of a True rhetoric.

Cunning and Deception

Detienne and Vernant's *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* is one of the more impressive classical studies of our time. Sadly it has not received the attention it deserves from Pauline scholars,[62] for to understand the cultural phenomena and issues it addresses is also to begin to understand why we should not only speak of a Socratic, but also of a sophistic Paul. What is cunning intelligence?

> There is no doubt that *mētis* is a type of intelligence and of thought, a way of knowing; it implies a complex but very coherent body of mental attitudes and intellectual behavior which combine flair, wisdom, forethought, subtlety of mind, deception, resourcefulness, vigilance, opportunism, various skills, and experience acquired over the years. It is applied to situations which are transient, shifting, disconcerting and ambiguous, situations which do not lend themselves to precise measurement, exact calculation or rigourous logic. Now in the picture of thought and intelligence presented by the philosophers, the professional experts where intelligence was concerned, all the qualities of mind which go to make up metis, its sleights of hand, its resourceful ploys and its stratagems, are usually thrust into the shadows, erased from the realm of true knowledge and relegated, according to the circumstances to the level of mere routine, chancey inspiration, changeable opinion or even charlatanerie, pure and simple.[63]

---

to understanding this irreducible doubleness is to become more sensitive to Paul's rhetorical goals and strategies with respect to this particular mixed audience.

[61]Robbins suggests the possibility that "the discourse in 1 Corinthians is 'faction culture' discourse" (*Tapestry*, 187-189), aimed at creating and/or furthering the goals of a Pauline "clique" (224). "The Romans Deception," chapter four of my dissertation, argues that a major purpose of Romans is to strengthen just such a Pauline faction.

[62]A notable exception is Martin's *Slavery*, 86-135.

[63]Detienne and Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence*, 3-4.

Much of Detienne and Vernant's work is concerned with myths of the Greek gods and heroes.

> However, it is in the world of men at grips with human problems that the intelligence of cunning comes into its own. When it operates in the sphere of Becoming it is constantly faced with unforeseen happenings and ambiguous situations. The unpredictable lies in wait for it and it must be sufficiently vigilant and polymorphic to reverse or divert to its own advantage the powers of cunning which plot to turn its own traps and nets against itself. In this context there can never be any end to the circular interaction between the binder and the bound.[64]

Not surprisingly, such habits of mind are frequently associated with sophists. But no matter how much Plato ostensibly condemns sophistic cunning, his Socrates frequently embodies it, a fact not overlooked by Socrates' interlocutors. After quoting the passage in which Meno tells Socrates that it feels like he is exercising magic and witchcraft upon him (*Meno*, 80a-b), and that in any other country Socrates would be arrested as a wizard/magician (*goēs*), Derrida rightly wonders, "What can be said about this *analogy* that ceaselessly refers the socratic *pharmakon* to the sophistic *pharmakon* and, proportioning them to each other, makes us go back indefinitely from one to the other? How can they be distinguished?"[65] Is not Socrates' ambiguous appearance a necessary byproduct of his *mētis*?

> *Mētis* is itself a power of cunning and deceit. It operates through disguise. In order to dupe its victim it assumes a form which masks, instead of revealing, its true being. In metis appearance and reality no longer correspond to one another but stand in contrast, producing an effect of illusion, *apatē*, which beguiles the adversary into error and leaves him as bemused by his defeat as by the spells of a magician.[66]

In *Cunning Intelligence* one mostly encounters deception (*apatē*) and related terms in what Aristotle would have called their ordinary everyday or prevailing (*kyrios*) sense. When we think of deception we tend to think first of things like trickery and bold faced lying. But I want to call attention to the profoundly philosophical meaning deception acquired in the hands of Gorgias, a sense already anticipated above by the mention of the "sphere of Becoming."

G. B. Kerford significantly advanced the reappraisal of the sophists as competent philosophers with *The Sophistic Movement*.[67] What tarnished their reputation was not so much that Plato utterly misrepresents them, but that they

---

[64]Ibid., 306.

[65]Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," *Dissemination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 119, italics his.

[66]Detienne and Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence*, 21.

[67]See note 28.

simply do not agree with Plato. They refused Socrates' "second voyage."[68] Throughout most of the intellectual history of the West, to reject this second voyage, metaphysics, was not only to reject Plato, but, quite simply, to reject Truth itself.[69] Only since the Enlightenment has there been any real possibility of a sympathetic reevaluation of their skeptical empiricism.

Kerford begins his discussion of Gorgias' "doctrine of deception" by noting that a fundamental change occurred in the second half of the fifth century B.C.E. in the understanding of language and how it works: ". . . there was a growing understanding that what is very often involved is not simply a presentation in words of what is the case, but rather a representation, involving a considerable degree of reorganisation in the process."[70] This realization led to the development of the theory of literature and rhetoric in the sophistic period. Gorgias' treatise *On Nature* presents us with the most radical statement of the great divide that was sensed between *logos* and reality. Kerford summarizes it well.

> What we communicate to our neighbors is never these actual things, but only a logos which is always other than the things themselves. It is not even, says Gorgias, speech that displays the external reality, it is the external object that provides information about the logos.
>
> It follows that Gorgias is introducing a radical gulf between logos and the things to which it refers. Once such a gulf is appreciated we can understand quite easily the sense in which every logos involves a falsification of the thing to which it has reference--it can never, according to Gorgias, succeed in reproducing as it were *in* itself that reality which is irretrievably *outside* itself. To the extent that it claims faithfully to reproduce reality it is no more than deception or *apátē*. Yet this is a claim which all logos appears to make. So all logos is to that extent Deception . . .[71]

The point I want to highlight is that *Plato's Socrates is in complete agreement with Gorgias' doctrine as it pertains to the phenomenal world, the sphere of Becoming*. Indeed, he would also agree with the related Heraclitean and Protagorean notion that language which most faithfully reproduces the phenomenal world will be

---

[68]Kerford, *Sophistic Movement*, 67.

[69]Of course the assimilation of Platonism by Christian theology reinforced this tendency.

[70]Kerford, *Sophistic Movement*, 78.

[71]Ibid., 80-81. This perspective on language and representation sounds quite avant-garde. Gorgias is no fifth century Nietzsche or Derrida, of course, but the resemblance between sophistic and Derridean perspectives is close enough to cause Derrida to remind his readers that "One must thus minutely recognize the crossing of the border. And be fully cognizant that this reading of Plato is at no time spurred on by some slogan or password of a 'back-to-the-sophists' nature" (Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 108). For a less restrained acknowledgment of the similarity between ancient sophistic and postmodern anti-foundationalist thought, see Gary A. Olson's interview with Stanley Fish, "Fish Tales: A Conversation with 'The Contemporary Sophist,'" *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech*, 290-291.

paradoxical and contradictory.[72]

> The only fundamental point on which Plato is going to take issue with them is their failure to understand that the flux of phenomena is not the end of the story--one must look elsewhere for the truth which is the object of the true knowledge, and even for the understanding of the flux and its causes we have to go to more permanent, secure, and reliable entities, the famous Platonic forms. This in turn suggests that the real basis of Plato's enmity towards the sophists was not that they were wholly wrong in his eyes, but that they elevated half the truth to the whole truth by mixing up the source from which things come with its (phenomenal) consequences (*Phaedo* 101e1-3).[73]

It is hard to miss the similarity between the Platonic critique of sophists voiced in the last sentence of this quote and the Pauline critique of idolaters voiced in Rom 1. The sophists mixed up the source with its phenomenal consequences, while idolaters "exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator" (1:25). They "did not see fit to have God in their knowledge" (1:28). Socio-rhetorically speaking, there are similarities between Platonic and Pauline "final cultural categories." Paul and Plato's Socrates share an "insiders" vs. "outsiders" view of reality that combines both "conversionist" and "gnostic manipulationist" argumentation.[74] Socrates and Paul are "gnostics" who possess Truth about the cosmos that demands recognition and conversion.

Here is where Cole's perspective on Socratic/Platonic epistemological "confidence" can inform our understanding of Paul's mimetic rhetorical "missionary strategy." Paul, like Socrates, regarded both his enemies and potential converts as being in a state of ignorance borne of deception. In Socrates' case the problem is an ignorance endemic to our existence in the phenomenal world. Stanley Rosen expresses well the rather suspicious Platonic attitude towards the sphere of becoming: "The world as it appears is a sophist . . ."[75] The sophists simply reflect and embody the phenomenal world they refuse to transcend. They are deceivers, but they themselves remain deceived through their rejection of the Truth. Since the deception is so severe that most have no idea how ignorant of the Truth they really are, Socrates must deceive the deceived--not just sophists, but everyone he meets--by becoming like them, i.e., *by pretending to be ignorant himself*. Then through an *insinuative* dialectic, he can gradually expose their ignorance both to themselves and others. In Paul's case, however, the problem is even more acute.

---

[72]Kerford, *Sophistic Movement*, 71-77.

[73]Ibid., 67.

[74]See Robbins, *Tapestry*, for a discussion of final cultural categories (167-176, 182-191), and different types of religious discourse (147-159).

[75]Stanley Rosen, *Plato's* Sophist: *The Drama of Original and Image* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1983) 15.

Ignorance is a state of *diabolical* deception: ". . . the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers . . ." (1 Cor 4:4a).[76] Humanity is not so much the victim of a passive deception, attributable to the nature of the phenomenal world itself, as they are victims of an active deception, perpetrated by a "power" working within "this world." In fact, from his description, one would have to conclude that for Paul "the god of this world" is a sophist: he seeks "to gain the advantage over" people through his "schemes" (2 Cor 2:11); he does not reveal his true identity, but rather he and his servants "disguise" themselves (2 Cor 11:13-15). The unworldly war Paul is waging (2 Cor 10:3-4) has the character of a philosophical/rhetorical debate: "We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (10:5). So it would appear that Paul had even more incentive than Socrates to deceive the deceived in order to lead them to the Truth.

This simultaneously rhetorical and apocalyptic perspective can enhance our reading of 1 Cor 9:19-23. Too often readers fail to take seriously enough Paul's attitude towards *all* the various audiences he mentions in 1 Cor 9:19-23. While the evidence is inadequate for an indisputable identification of the groups Paul mentions, they probably include Jews, Greeks, and nomistic factions in the church of God (cf. 1 Cor 10:32).[77] One thing, however, is clear: Paul thinks they all need to be "gained/won," or as he glosses it later, "saved."[78] Law observant Jews and

---

[76]Cf. Acts 26:16-18b. This is one aspect of Paul's thought that "Luke" understood very well and liked so much that he made it an important theme in his narrative, especially Acts 17 (see Given, "Not either/or," 367-372).

[77]Glad's argument that "lawless" (ἄνομοι) in 9:21 refers to the "immoral," rather than to Gentiles--those without the Law--is too exclusive (*Paul and Philodemus*, 257). While this word group most often does refer to the former, it is the context both here and in Rom 2:12 (*contra* Stowers upon whom Glad relies) that also requires the latter. The occurrence in Rom 2:12 is in the midst of a discussion of God's impartial judgment of Jew and Greek (2:9-14). Similarly with 1 Cor 9:21, the peroration of chaps. 8-10 will sum up those Paul tries to please as Jews, Greeks, and the Church (10:32). Consider also Acts 2:23, an example neither Stowers nor Glad discuss, where οἱ ἄνομοι could easily denote Gentiles as opposed to Jews, but also connote the lawless, immoral character of their actions. In all these cases it is good to bear in mind that Gentile immorality and being "Lawless" were hardly unrelated from a Jewish standpoint. In short, Glad falls prey here, as with κερδαίνω and σῴζω discussed in the next note, to a kind of either/or philology that declares that "only one of many components of meanings of a particular word is accentuated in a specific context" (275). This is a theological, not merely a linguistic, creed. Its axiomatic application, still all to common in biblical scholarship, leaves little if any room for intentional ambiguity in Scripture. The Lord our God--Logos--is One. If there is ambiguity, we simply have not penned down the "focal meaning," to use the terminology of the Aristotelian tradition still carried on in such declarations (see above, notes 51 and 52).

[78]Glad's assertion that a theological and apocalyptic meaning for κερδαίνω and σῴζω in these verses is "anachronistic" is unconvincing (Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 230-231). He tends to reduce them to present recruitment and pastoral maintenance. It would be better to argue that an ethical and psychagogic meaning is to be combined with an apocalyptic meaning in the case of the weak. One does not have to choose between an apocalyptic and a psychagogic meaning. For

nomistic Christians are enslaved by the στοιχεῖα (Gal 4:1-11), while "Greeks" are idolaters sharing in the table of demons (1 Cor 10:19-22). But are we to imagine that Paul, like some uncouth cynic, strolled into synagogues and pagan shrines proclaiming that Jews are yoked in slavery by the Law and Gentiles are devil worshipers? Such a notion was unthinkable for Luke as witnessed by his two paradigmatic specimens of Pauline discourse towards Jews and Greeks. Only towards the end of the Psidian Antioch address, after having argued extensively that Jesus is a fulfilment of the Law, does he allow Paul to *insinuate* what he knows to be the most scandalous aspect of Paul's message for Law observant Jews (13:39; cf. 21:21).[79] Only towards the end of the Areopagus address, after having argued extensively that the unknown God is not a stranger to higher paganism after all, does he allow Paul to *insinuate* what he knows to be the most moronic aspect of Paul's message for Greeks (17:30-31).[80] In both cases Luke presents the audience as recognizing Paul as one of their own, a brother among faithful Jews in Antioch and a new Socrates with a new teaching among the philosophers in Athens. Paul then only gradually reveals his true identity, disguising and suspending for a while the ultimately unavoidable offense. Is all this Lukan fantasy? Let us return to First Corinthians.

Glad argues cogently that what distinguishes Paul from the strong in Corinth is the advocacy of a gentle rather that a harsh psychagogy.[81] Though Paul rejected their methods, Glad thinks that he concurred with the strong that the weak must be reformed. I agree.[82] But one is left wondering how this is to be achieved. Paul's

---

Paul, caring for souls in the short term can hardly be separated from the ultimate salvific goal. Consider the man spoken of in 1 Cor 5:5. The short term psychagogic process of being "delivered to Satan" is done "so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." One could argue that this is a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosmic divine psychagogy of Rom 8:20.

[79]Notice how rhetoric that casts a very negative light on the Law like Peter's (!) remarks at the Jerusalem conference is reserved for "insiders" (15:10-11).

[80]See Sandnes, "Paul and Socrates."

[81]Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 334.

[82]Actually I *more* than agree. According to Gal 4:10-11, not only are the Galatians considering circumcision, but to Paul's horror, they already "observe days, months, and seasons, and years!" (Gal 4:10-11). As Betz explains, Paul is here drawing on a common religious topos in the ancient world concerning religiously scrupulous and superstitious people. After stating that "In any case, a religious behavior such as Paul describes is the very opposite of what the 'sons of God' ought to do," Betz rightly calls attention to similar and related descriptions of religious scrupulosity in 1 Cor 8:7ff., 10:23ff., Rom 14:1ff (Betz, *Galatians* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979] 219), the very passages with which Glad is concerned while discussing the wider phenomenon of "the weak" in Paul. The life or death, salvation or damnation, gravity of this situation is underscored by Paul's statement that "I am afraid I have labored over you in vain" (Gal 4:11). As Betz comments, "If they engage in such superstition, his work and the salvation of the Galatians will come to nothing . . ." (Betz, *Galatians*, 219). This is how Paul *really* feels about practices typical of the weak, and so it is not surprising that he lists them along with Jews

advice to the strong, based on his own example, is to pretend to be weak in the presence of the weak (1 Cor 10:27-30). But Paul never explains where one would go from there.[83] And yet, just as we can be sure that he does not become like a Jew or a Greek indefinitely--eventually they must be "saved"--so must we assume that his becoming like the weak is not an end in itself.[84] The only plausible answer is that after Paul identified with the weak by becoming like them, he followed an insinuative rhetorical strategy similar to that imagined by Luke with respect to Jews and Gentiles. Unlike the strong, his words and deeds would at first be "veiled" and intentionally ambiguous.

Just as Plato's Socrates feels free to break the rules of dialectic if necessary in order to win an argument, and Aristotle can counsel the use of sophistic *elenchus* to defeat sophists on their own terms, so Paul feels free to leave the world of being for that of seeming, "to become all things to everyone," in order to further the Truth, his gospel Truth. However different the reasons for their conviction that Truth is real and knowable, however differently they define the Truth, the effect is rather analogous: a willingness to employ intentional ambiguity, cunning, and deception to further the Truth, i.e., a willingness to employ True rhetoric.

---

and Gentiles as those he tries to "gain/win," or "save."

[83]Perhaps in light of the harsh and inconsiderate behavior the strong have displayed towards the weak, Paul does not instruct them further because he thinks they have neither the aptitude nor the right attitude to practice his form of psychagogy. Another possibility is that on this particular issue, Paul thinks the weak are more correct. He agrees with the Strong that an idol is nothing and that there is only one God and one Lord, but since there *are* daimons, the weak are right to avoid eating in an idol's temple, even if their conviction that an idol is "something"--a god or a lord--is wrong.

[84]While I agree with Martin's brilliant argument that "the theological and ethical disagreements between Paul and the Strong over issues related to eating and sex can be understood by sketching their respective assumptions about the body, its boundaries, and its susceptibility to pollution" (*The Corinthian Body*, 164), his application of it in 1 Cor 8-10 is problematic. Martin contends that Paul himself believes that gnosis is a talismanic prophylactic against daimonic pollution available only to high status individuals like the Strong. In essence, the weak never had it, never will (189). The implication is that they are irreformable. Paul, however, says nothing about pollution in this case, but rather of the danger of "provoking the Lord to jealousy" (1 Cor 10:22a). His monotheistic background and assumptions are never more evident than throughout 10:1-22. Furthermore, since 10:1-22 is clearly addressed to the whole community, Paul probably assumes that *all* are endangered by idolatry, regardless of their gnosis (note the thinly veiled insult aimed at those who consider themselves Strong in 10:22b). As I try to show in my dissertation, I think what Paul is up to in 1 Cor 8-10 is more rhetorically complex than Martin assumes. Briefly stated, I argue that the oft noted tensions--possibly contradictions--in these chapters result from an unfortunate attempt to be Strong to the Strong and weak to the weak simultaneously. Here Paul the chameleon morphs into Paul the peacock. We should always bear in mind that, presumedly, Paul's letters are designed to be heard by the *whole* church, e.g., both Strong and weak. Such situations surely presented Paul with difficult rhetorical challenges. In this case, one did not have the luxury of simply choosing "to welcome one who is weak in faith, but not for diacritical dialogue" (Rom 14:1).

A Truly Socratic Paul

Before such audiences, all subject to manifold forms of deception, stood the Apostle with his "good news" of a crucified Christ (1 Cor 1:21), "scandalous to Jews and moronic to Gentiles" (1:23). His challenge was no less formidable than that of the prisoner in Plato's allegory of the cave who was released from chains and forced to see "the light" (τὸ φῶς).[85] If he were required to share his vision with his former bondsmen,

> would he not provoke laughter, and would it not be said of him that he had returned from his journey aloft with his eyes ruined and that it was not worth while even to attempt the ascent? And if it were possible to lay hands on him and kill the man who tried to release them and lead them up, would they not kill him?[86]

I think the similarity between Socrates and Paul's rhetorical situations was not overlooked by Luke. Indeed, I would venture to add this passage to Loveday Alexander's list of popular Socratic traditions that may have influenced Luke's presentation of Paul.[87] Plato's released prisoner appears disgraceful (ἀσχήμων) and ridiculous (γελοῖος) when "he is required in courtrooms or elsewhere to contend about the shadows of the Just (περὶ τῶν τοῦ δικαίου σκιῶν) or the images that cast the shadows and to wrangle in debate about the notions of these things in the minds of those who have never seen Justice (δικαιοσύνην) itself."[88] Perhaps Luke even began preparing to present a Socratic Paul in his gospel. Only in Luke 23:47 does the centurion say "Really this man was just" (Ὄντως ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος ἦν). Then in Acts we find out that Paul was chosen by God "to see the Just and to hear his own voice; for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard" (Acts 22:14-15; cf. 17:31; 24:25). But he appears disgraceful or offensive to some (e.g., 22:22; 24:5), ridiculous or mad to others (17:32; 26:24). Many consider him worthy of severe punishment or even death. So it was according to Paul himself: "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods [a Roman punishment]. Once I received a stoning" (2 Cor 11:24-25). He experiences "danger from my

---

[85]Plato *Republic* 515C.

[86]Plato *Republic* 517A.

[87]L. C. A. Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting, Volume 1: Literary Setting* (eds. Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke; Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 1993) 31-63, especially 57-63. Betz was also impressed by the Socratic aspects of Luke's portrait of Paul: "Es ist tatsächlich die Frage zu stellen, ob Lukas nicht Paulus, ohne es frei heraus zu sagen, als den "neuen Sokrates" empfehlen will (Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus*, 39).

[88]*Republic* 517D-E.

own people, danger from Gentiles," and "danger from false brethren" (11:26). Truly Paul had some incentive to "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God," and to "try to please everyone in everything" (1 Cor 10:32).

But apart from changing his scandalous and moronic message--not an option as far as Paul was concerned--some offense was ultimately unavoidable.[89] *Penultimately* was another matter. Certainly, as is often observed, his "adaptability" was all part of putting no obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ (9:12). Since in the "new creation" (Gal 6:15), all the divisions of this present evil age are passing away (Gal 3:28), Paul feels perfectly free to masquerade in turn as an observant Jew, a proselyte, a Greek, or a nomistic Christian.[90] He seems to glory in this status ambiguity and mimetic freedom. Perhaps he saw it is as mandated by "the law of Christ." As Theissen observes,

> Although the name Christ does not occur, it is clear that Paul is interpreting his life according to the role of Christ. For Christ also became a "slave" (Phil. 2:7*) like Paul. Christ also was "placed under the law (Gal. 4:4*)--just as Paul places himself under the law. Christ is "weakness on God's part" (1 Cor 1:25*)--just as Paul intends to be weak with the weak. In all of this, he is an imitator of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).[91]

But could 1 Cor 9:19-23 be about something more than mere accommodation and adaptation so as not to give needless offense? Could it be a rhetorical strategy, a rhetoric of body and voice aimed against the "elements" of this world that maintain these divisions mandated by law, by *the* Law?[92] In this already-but-not-yet existence, perhaps one cannot carry out a frontal assault on the passing forms of this world. Perhaps one must always begin from within the world, no longer truly reflecting its image like the rest of the deceived, but miming and modeling it with a difference, a parodic and devious difference. Perhaps only a True rhetoric of ambiguity, cunning and deception, a rhetoric of both body and voice, can infiltrate a world of ambiguity, cunning, and deception.

> But we speak God's wisdom, concealed in a mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory, a wisdom none of the rulers/founders of this age

---

[89]I do not find Marshall's suggestion that "the gospel itself has a certain relativity for Paul" to be very likely (Marshall, *Enmity*, 402). Bornkamm, of course, was adamant that Paul would never change the gospel itself (Günther Bornkamm, "The Missionary Stance of Paul in I Corinthians 9 and in Acts," *Studies in Luke-Acts* [ed. by Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980] 194-207).

[90]My identification of the groups in 1 Cor 9:19-23, for what it's worth.

[91]Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987] 253).

[92]Note that *every* division of humanity Paul lists in 1 Cor 9:19-23 is ultimately founded upon the Law.

> perceived. For if they had perceived it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor 2:7-8).

God's incarnate wisdom, a wisdom of body and voice, was intended for an audience within an audience. For those who *really* know what God means, it results in "glory," but for those who lack the necessary gift of perception, it results in ruin.[93] God's *concealed* wisdom is a True rhetoric (cf. Rom 8:28-30).

Plato's Socrates teaches in the *Republic* that deception by certain privileged humans is useful and acceptable in a variety of situations, but that no one should say that God ever deceives.[94] The God of Paul, however, is not the impersonal and idealized One of Plato, but the anthropomorphic and active One of his Hebrew heritage, the kind of God who sent a *lying* spirit into the mouths of the prophets (1 Kings 22:22-23); the kind of God whose Son, "though in the *form* of God . . . emptied himself, taking on the *form* of a slave" (Phil 2:6-7); the kind of God who *seems* to be rejecting his people, but is *really* only hardening their hearts temporarily until the full number of Gentiles come in. How will this result in "all Israel" being saved? Maybe Paul saw his own rhetorical strategy as a mimesis of his God's: "Inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them" (Rom 11:13b-14).[95] This is Truly an unsearchable and inscrutable god (11:33), a mysterious, ambiguous, and finally *sophistic* god, who cares enough to be cunning and is devoted enough to be deceptive.[96]

---

[93]Whether the ruin is final or not depends, of course, on one's construal of Pauline universalism, a not unambiguous matter.

[94]*Republic* 382C-383C; 389B-D; 414C-415A; 459D-460A.

[95]Richardson also suggests that Paul may be modeling his adaptation upon a kind of divine accommodation (Peter Richardson, "Pauline Inconsistency: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and Galatians 2:11-14," *NTS* 26 [1980], 347-362, especially 357-358). He does not, however, reflect upon the implications for Paul's image of God.

[96]"Do you think that God is a wizard (γόητα) and capable of manifesting himself by design, now in one aspect, now in another, at one time himself changing and altering his shape in many transformations (τὸ αὑτοῦ εἶδος εἰς πολλὰς μορφάς) and at another deceiving us and causing us to believe such things about him . . .?" (*Republic* 380D). Paul Shorey, the Loeb translator of the *Republic*, footnotes this passage and observes that, "The two methods, (1) self-transformation, and (2) production of illusions in our minds, answer broadly to the two methods of [sophistic] deception distinguished in the *Sophist* 236c."

Voices of Authority in the Sermon on the Mount

Russell B. Sisson
Union College

I. Introduction

The collection of Jesus' teachings that has come to be known as the Sermon on the Mount (henceforth abbreviated SM) ends: "When Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, not as their scribes" (Matt 7:28-29). With this description of the crowd's reaction, Matthew inserts this collection of Jesus' teachings at the place in Mark's narrative occupied by a report of Jesus teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum (1:21-22). Mark gives no account of what Jesus taught that convinced his audience of his authority. Instead, Mark describes an exorcism Jesus performs in the synagogue that prompts his audience to testify to his authority (1:23-28). Matthew changes the setting and audience of the opening of his narrative account of Jesus' public ministry. The occasion for Jesus' teaching is not a Sabbath visit to a synagogue but the gathering of a crowd drawn to Jesus by reports of his preaching and healing (4:23-25). Without disregarding the impact that Jesus' reputation as a healer had on those who became convinced of his authority, Matthew constructs a narrative that gives special attention to Jesus' teaching as proof of his authority.

What is curious about the reaction of the crowd in Matthew is that what they affirm--Jesus' authority vis-à-vis "their scribes"--is not the primary focus of the discourse. Jesus never refers to his authority in the SM and the scribes are mentioned but once in it: "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (5:20). This saying amounts to a hermeneutical principle for interpreting the specific commandments of Jesus that follow it (5:21-48). It prompts the hearer of Jesus' commandments to understand them as defining righteousness. Yet, the saying defines righteousness only in the negative. The negative definition of righteousness is reinforced by the form of the six commandments that follow: "You have heard that it was said.... But I say to you...". Perhaps the reader is to understand that it is the scribes and Pharisees who define righteousness in line with "you have heard it said." This teaching of Jesus presupposes a history of controversy between Jesus

and these two groups.[1] Whether identifications of these two groups by name is a Matthean redaction is uncertain. Nothing in Matthew's narrative up to the SM suggests conflict between Jesus and these two groups is on the mind of the audience in the narrative (the crowd). Why then does Matthew report the crowd contrasting Jesus' authority with "their scribes"?

Perhaps the crowd's contrasting of Jesus' authority to the scribes, echoing the hermeneutical principle of 5:20, is Matthew's way of interpreting Jesus' authority for the readers of his gospel who themselves are interpreters or apologists for the teachings and authority of Jesus within a Jewish context.[2] Within the narrative framework of Matthew's gospel, Jesus' audience knows of his deeds and thus is predisposed to accept his authority. The purpose of the SM, it would then seem, is to record the teachings that set Jesus apart from other recognized authorities on righteousness, such the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' time and Matthew's time.[3] And yet, one wonders whether the response of the crowd in 7:28-29 serves as an adequate summary description of the type of authority Jesus projects in the SM. Is Matthew's gospel written for communities in the late first century whose only interest in the scope of Jesus' authority is how his teachings about righteousness compare with those of Jewish scribes?

Although the narrative placement of the SM does not indicate it, Matthew was probably sensitive to how Jesus' teachings were understood outside Jewish circles. The Great Commission (28:18-10) would seem to presuppose the SM as a primary source for the commandments of Jesus which his disciples are to teach to the Gentiles. Prior to the post-resurrection commission, the disciples were not to go among the Gentiles (10:5). Therefore, we need to consider the relation between the audience in the narrative (the crowds) and the possible audiences of the written gospel. Warren Carter suggests that reaction of the crowds in the narrative to Jesus--a reaction that is mixed, but often open and positive--is intended to encourage the audience of the gospel for the mission Jesus entrusts to his disciples,

---

[1]On the occurrence of "scribes and Pharisees" in pre-Matthean source material, see H. D. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995) 191.

[2]Sayings in the SM that define Jesus in relation other recognized Jewish authorities are not necessarily the addition of the gospel writer to the tradition, but may reflect pre-gospel redaction (that of Q-Matt). Betz argues (correctly in my opinion) that the SM "contains a consistent Jewish-Christian theology of a period earlier than Matthew (cf. *The Sermon on the Mount*, 44).

[3]As Raymond Brown observes, those described polemically in Matthew "are a blend of the adversaries of Jesus' own lifetime and the adversaries encountered by Matthew's community in post-70 Judaism when the Pharisee rabbinic establishment at Jamnia had become a dominant authority (*The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* [Ramsey, NJ: Paulist, 1984] 125-126).

a mission which, though difficult, is not impossible.[4] If the audience for the SM within the narrative are Jesus' disciples (5:1) and would-be disciples (people in the crowd drawn to Jesus because of his deeds),[5] then a Gentile mission is probably not on their minds because nothing in the SM clearly points to one. The audience of the written gospel, however, knows of the Gentile mission Jesus mandated. For that audience, the teaching of the SM are addressed to all would-be disciples, including Gentiles.

Matthew's source for the SM (Q), as it has been reconstructed, suggests that this collection of Jesus' teaching took shape without a narrative framework which identified a particular audience or occasion for the discourse. It is probable that the source that serves as the basis for Matthew's SM was subject to several pre-gospel redactions, and in its history of redaction different audiences were envisioned. Moreover, the hermeneutical principles of Matt. 5:17-20 and the antitheses that follow, which are absent from Luke's Sermon on the Plain, are undoubtedly a late addition to the Q sermon and envision an audience with a negative stereotype of Gentiles. Earlier forms of the Q sermon seem to have been part of a document that envisions a positive Gentile response to the message of Jesus.[6]

The influence of a Hellenistic style of paraenesis is evident in much of the SM. Commands to perform certain action and exhortations commending certain attitudes are often followed by rationales, sometimes in the form of rhetorical questions (cf. 5:43-47; 6:25-33; 7:7-11; 7:15-20). Betz argues that the source-discourse for the SM has the form of a Greek epitome, that is, a collection of essential teachings or doctrines (usually of a philosopher) that serves as an introduction to a larger body of material.[7] The use of common Hellenistic forms of moral teaching and exhortation in the Q discourse and Matthew's SM does not mean that the discourse presupposes a Gentile audience or even a mixed Jewish and Gentile audience. As Betz notes, epitomai show up in Hellenistic-Jewish literature, perhaps indicating that the success of works such as Epictetus' Kyriai Doxai "led Hellenistic-Jewish authors to come up with contrapropositional imitations."[8] However, when we think about the authorial audience(s) of Matthew's gospel, it

---

[4]Warren Carter, "The Crowds in Matthew's Gospel," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55(1993) 66.
[5]Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989) 456.
[6]In Q 7:29, 10:13-15, and 11:31-32, the positive response of Gentiles is used to shame Israel. Cf. Arland D. Jacobson, *The First Gospel: An Introduction to Q* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1992) 167-168.
[7]Betz, "The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-7:27): Its Literary Genre and Function," *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).
[8]Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 74.

seems plausible that the knowledge needed for any audience to make sense of the SM discourse is a knowledge grounded in Hellenistic (Gentile) as well as Jewish culture. Given the explicit focus on distinctively Jewish issues and practices in the SM,[9] why should we expect topoi of Hellenistic origin to figure prominently in the SM as used by Matthew and as understood by his readers? Although some contest the matter, literary and historical evidence seems to support that Greek language and culture was influencing Jewish culture at the time of Jesus. For this reason, B. Combrink says, "It should be clear that the author and the readers of the Gospel of Matthew lived in a context where the use of rhetoric was to be expected and appreciated."[10] If so, the rhetorical power of the discourse, which among other things seeks to establish or define the authority of Jesus, depends upon the audience making sense of words and figures of speech whose range of meaning has been established in a Hellenistic cultural context. Whether the Hellenistic traditions present in the SM have been reconfigured to function differently is something to consider, as is the relation of the gospel writer and his audience to the cultural traditions that have influenced them.

II. Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation

Matthew's conclusion to the SM suggests that Jesus manifests his authority in discourse addressed to a Jewish audience and dealing with Jewish concerns. And yet, Jesus addresses traditions of Jewish faith and practice in only a section of the discourse. Echoes of Hellenistic culture reverberate throughout the discourse in both the forms of arguments and themes addressed. It is difficult to believe that Matthew was concerned only with how a Jewish audience would discern Jesus' authoritative voice in the SM. All texts have an *intertexture*--the language of any given text mixes language borrowed from other texts and arenas of discourse. Language that carries connotations of authority because its association with *oral-scribal* arenas of discourse, such as the Hebrew Bible and its interpretation traditions, are generally the focus of intertextural analyses of New Testament texts. Socio-rhetorical interpretation expands the exploration of intertexture beyond

---

[9]Space limitations do not permit an exhaustive account of Jewish issues and practice referred or alluded to in the SM. For a thorough analysis of these, see the article of Harold S. Songer, "The Sermon on the Mount and Its Jewish Foreground," *Review and Expositor* 89 (1992) 165-177.

[10]H. J. Bernard Combrink, "Reference and Rhetoric in the Gospel of Matthew," *Scriptura* 40 (1992) 9. The specific basis for this judgment of Combrink is that in the areas of law and rhetoric Greek education found its way into Jewish schools and synagogues (cf. J. L. Kinneavey, *Greek Rhetorical Origins of Christian Faith: An Inquiry* (New York: Oxford University, 1987) 91.

Jewish scripture and tradition to Hellenistic-Roman literature that informed discussions of morality in Mediterrean culture. Socio-rhetorical interpretation then goes beyond the *cultural* intertexture to examine the *social* intertexture, that is, how a given text appropriates language that people of all ranks and stations in society, regardless of cultural background, use to refer to customs and practices that give order to society. Lastly, there is the *historical* intertexture to examine, that is, the language in a text which focuses the attention of the reader on particular historical events or circumstances.[11]

Once these four types of intertexture are explored, an interpreter should be prepared for a virtual cacophony of "voices" entering the text from a wide range of arenas of discourse.[12] How does one distinct voice emerge out of interaction of voices? The formal features of a text, a text's *innertexture*, set the various recitations of texts and echoes of cultural traditions in relation to each other, thus providing boundaries for the interaction of these distinct voices and directing the connotative powers of the language. The social context in which a text is read and the ideologies of writer and readers also give direction to the connotative powers of language. Socio-rhetorical interpretation thus includes exploration of the *social*, *ideological* and *sacred* textures.

A. Innertexture

Writers give structure to texts in various ways: (1) patterns of word repetition, (2) progressive development of thoughts and ideas, which often involve repetition, (3) narration about people and events, (4) opening-middle-ending patterns in which distinct sections of discourse interconnect so as to form a whole, (5) argumentative progressions setting propositions in relations to rationales or illustrations, and (6) sensory-aesthetic patterning, by which certain visions or emotions are sustained

---

[11]These four types of intertexture are distinguished by Vernon Robbins in two of his books: *The Tapesty of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 96-120, and *Exploring the Texture of Texts* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996) 40-68.

[12]On this matter, Roland Barthes writes: "In contrast to idyllic communication, to pure communication (which would be for example that of the formalised sciences) readable writing enacts a certain 'noise', it is the writing of noise, of impure communication; but this noise is not confused, massive and unnamable; it is a clear noise, made up of connections and not superimpositions: it is a matter of a distinct cacography" (*S/Z* [London: Jonathan Cape edn, 1974] 132).

throughout a discourse.[13] Several of these types of patterns are regularly present in the same text and overlap.

Perhaps the most obvious form of patterning that occurs in the SM is the presence in the discourse into a distinct opening, middle, and end. The discourse begins with Jesus pronouncing blessings upon his audience. Nine "Blessed are..." statements form this distinct opening of the SM. There is nothing in the narrative preceding the SM to account for Jesus' proclaiming these blessings at this time and place. The first eight "Blessed are..." pronouncements (commonly called "beatitudes") are in the third person. It is therefore not clear that Jesus has his immediate audience (his disciples and the crowds following him) in mind. Each of these first eight blessings is followed by a reason, e.g., "Blessed are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (5:3-4). The reason for the last of the eight blessings in the third person is the same as that of the first: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (5:10). The type of persons Jesus pronounces blessed seem to fall into two groups: those in passive states of deprivation (poor in spirit, mourning, meek, and hungering and thirsting for righteousness) and those in active states demonstrating dignity and strength (merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted for righteousness sake). According to Betz, the *inclusio* formed by "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" reveals what all these types of persons have in common: the assurance that righteousness reigns and will ultimately prevail.[14] Robbins sees a qualitative progression underlying the sequence of beatitudes: "one beatitude introduces a quality which prepares the auditor for another quality, which the auditor accepts as appropriate in relation to the preceding qualities."[15] However different or related the individuals blessed are, because of the blessing Jesus pronounces upon them they can envision a future reversal of fortune. Who is Jesus to assure them of this? The opening of the discourse raises this question without answering it.

The last of the beatitudes is different from the others in two significant respects. One, there is a shift to the second person: "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account" (5:11). Two, the blessing is delivered with a double reason for believing it: "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way

---

[13]Each type of innertexture is described more thoroughly by Robbins in *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 44-65 and *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 8-36.

[14]Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 146.

[15]Robbins, "Pragmatic Relations as a Criterion for Authentic Sayings," *Foundations and Facets Forum* 1/3 (1985) 35-63.

they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (5:12). Jesus seems to have his disciples or would-be disciples in mind here, for he speaks of people who are mistreated *for his sake*. Yet, there is no break from the thought or vision that serves as the basis for the preceding beatitudes--those persecuted for the sake of righteousness will be vindicated. Suffering for the sake of righteousness is equated with suffering for the sake of Jesus, and the persecution of Jesus and his disciples (by whom Jesus does not say) is equated with the persecution of God's prophets before them. The authority by which Jesus pronounces this blessing is not revealed, but through these blessings Jesus implicitly identifies himself with righteousness and the prophets of God.

Although formally distinct, the commission Jesus gives his hearers in the form of two parables--"You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world" (5:13-16)--is linked thematical to the beatitudes. On the basis of Jesus' assurance of future rewards for those who live for righteousness, the hearers of the beatitudes are to see themselves as agents of God in the establishment of righteousness. With this the opening of the SM is formed. What follows are the specific deeds and attitudes Jesus expects of his disciples. Like the *proem* of a speech which attracts the attention of hearers and establishes a relationship between the speaker and the audience, 5:3-16 defines a relationship on the basis of which the audience is encouraged to do what the speaker asks of them.[16] The consequences of not carrying out this commission of Jesus are addressed at the end of the SM in the eschatological warnings of 7:13-27. Thus what lies in between constitutes the propositions of the discourse.

The first two sections of argumentation are easily discerned because of their repetitive and progressive patterns. Matthew 5:17-20 presents what amounts to a proposition about the authority of Jesus: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.." The law and prophets define righteousness for the scribes and Pharisees, to whom Jesus refers in the warning of v. 20. Righteousness and entrance into the kingdom of heaven are themes of the beatitudes that carry over into the rationales Jesus gives for obeying his commandments. Then follows Jesus' teachings regarding murder and anger, adultery, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and love of enemies, each introduced by the formula: "You have heard that it was said.... But I say to you...." Jesus recites or summarizes what the Law says on each of these matters, and then presents his own commandment. In each case, he demands more from a person than the Law. The

---

[16]On Matt 5:3-16 as a *proem*, see George Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) 49-35.

section ends with the summary conclusion: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48). The next section of argumentation turns from the law to another basis of righteousness for Jews, their religious practice (6:1-18). The section begins with a general principle: "Beware of practicing your piety (*δικαιοσύνην*) before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven" (6:1). Again, righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*) and the promise of a heavenly reward are themes connecting the instructions that follow to the *proem*. Jesus addresses three traditional Jewish religious practices--almsgiving, prayer and fasting. Here a different repetitive formula is used: "Whenever you ____, do not as the hypocrites....And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Exactly who the "hypocrites" are (scribes and Pharisees perhaps) is not revealed.

Up to this point in the SM, there has been a clear development of theme. This line of progression seems, however, to come to an end at 6:19, for here begins what seems to be a short series of randomly arranged teachings on daily living. There are only a few sayings in this section which relate to some part of the preceding discourse. The first of the teachings, On Treasures (6:19-21), does carry forward the theme of securing a heavenly reward. There is only one mention of righteousness in the teachings that follow, and only once is a contrast drawn between what Jesus teaches and what others teach or do. In his instructions regarding what people should not be anxious about, Jesus says, "For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (6:32-33). The section ends with The Golden Rule and this rationale for following it: "For this is the law and the prophets" (7:12). The Golden Rule seems to summarize all the moral instruction that precedes it, all the way back to 5:21, not just the teachings of 6:19ff. These several instances of a thematic link to the preceding discourse notwithstanding, 6:19-7:12 seems to stand as a section of teaching unto itself.

Betz says this section is the most difficult block of material in the SM.[17] Unlike the teachings that precede it, there is no programmatic introduction (like 5:17-20 and 6:1). Betz suggests that a clue to the unity of this section may lie in 7:13, a saying which may serve as a transition between this section and the closing section of eschatological warnings: "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road in easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take

---

[17]Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 423. Betz discusses the attempts of various interpreters to identify a unifying theme for the section.

it."[18] Looking back to 6:24, the instruction there and some of the ones that follow perhaps illustrate this general truth in specific situations. However, if 7:13 were a thesis to be supported by example, it would no doubt be stated at the beginning of the section. Instead of a thesis, there is the saying concerning treasures and the rather enigmatic saying about the sound eye (6:22-23).

The remaining sayings in the SM seem to form a distinct closing section, even though it is not defined by clear repetitive patterns like the first half of the discourse.[19] The warnings of punishment for those who fail to follow Jesus' commandments seem to serve as motivation to obey these commandments for those who are not motivated by the promise of rewards. The movement of the discourse from the *proem* opening to the propositions, with closing section that recapitulates the main themes in a manner that appeals to the emotions of the audience, represents a standard Greek speech structure.

B. INTERTEXTURE

If there is one section in the SM where echoes of Hellenistic moral thought are fundamental to the argumentation, it is that section of 6:19-7:12 which Betz says is the most difficult in the whole discourse. Where voices from Hellenistic culture can be heard elsewhere in the discourse the reverberations are rather faint. But in 6:19-7:12, where the topics are general and not particular to Jewish law or religious practice, Jesus seems to be addressing a more universal audience. (The case could be argued that the Beatitudes are addressed to a universal audience and the turn to a Jewish audience begins at 5:17.)

The strongest echoes of Hellenistic culture are found in a saying that lies at critical place in the flow of the discourse, the "sound eye" saying of 6:22-23. Here Jesus says, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if you eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" As Betz documents, theoretical discussions of the relation between sense perception and cognition employing the imagery of light and darkness are prominent in the Greek philosophical tradition from the pre-Socratics to New Testament times.[20] The Greek philosophical tradition is divided on the question of whether vision results

---

[18]Ibid.

[19]This may explain why there is debate about where the epilogue or conclusion actually begins. See Combrink, "Reference and Rhetoric," 10.

[20]Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 442-449, and "Matt 6:22-23 and Ancient Greek Theories of Vision," *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount*, 71-87.

from light passing from out of the eye or into the eye. The Empedoclean and Platonic traditions hold to the view that light passes from the inside of a person out through the eye.[21] For some Greek thinkers, this inner light is a spark of the divine and can never be extinguished.[22] In contrast, the saying in 6:22-23 supposes that the light can be extinguished or made so dim that it deserves to be called darkness. Betz thus concludes that this saying "can only be intended as an attack against the tenets of Platonic and Stoic philosophy in particular."[23] What would Matthew and his readers understand to be the cause of the inner light becoming dim? Betz suggests they would understand the cause to be sin. If this inner light is absent or too faint to be effective, then, as in the Greek philosophical tradition, a person has no strength in the battle against desire.[24] This explains why Jesus would say an unhealthy eye is bad for the whole body. Thus, Jesus' final words, "how great is the darkness," functions like a warning. What is the intended effect of this saying within the SM? Betz says, "It appears that the careful listener who mediates on the saying conscientiously will ask: What if my inner light is darkness? How can it be made to shine again?"[25] The purpose here seems to be paraenetical, as question with serious moral implications is raised but no answer given.

If indeed the function of this saying is to raise such a question in the mind of the audience, might Jesus be implying that he is the one who can restore or rekindle the inner light of a person? Let us recall that the preceding section of teaching, 6:1-18, ended without a concluding exhortation formally connected to it. Might not the saying about storing up treasures in heaven (6:19-21) and this saying about the sound eye serve both as a conclusion to the preceding teaching and an introduction to that which follows? The importance of securing one's heavenly reward is a repeated theme in the preceding section (6:4, 6, 18). In those same teachings the outward appearance that people consciously project is contrasted with the inner state of a person that only God sees. As a warning not to take the presence of inner light for granted, the saying about the sound eye anticipates the eschatological warnings that close the SM. More importantly, besides serving as a transition from one section of teaching to another, this saying keeps in the forefront of the audience

---

[21]Empedocles envisioned a light-source within the eye that sends out light (cf. Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsocratiker*, 31 B 84. Betz observes that ὁ λύχνος ("the lamp") is used in both Empedocles and Matthew, but in Matthew the lamp is not in the eye but somewhere else in the body ("Matthew 6 and Theories of Vision," 78).

[22]Cf. Plato's *Republic* 518E.

[23]Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 452.

[24]Ibid, 453.

[25]Ibid.

an idea implicit in the Beatitudes--people can know they are blessed only because Jesus has proclaimed them blessed in anticipation of something God will do for them. And, since the blessing is proclaimed in anticipation that those who receive it will become "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world," they need Jesus to define what righteousness is. Then, by pursuing that righteousness, they may secure their heavenly reward. In the words in 6:22-23, Jesus says nothing about himself, but it may be implied that those who pursue a righteousness other than that defined by Jesus are people whose light is really darkness.

An echo of a common topic in Greek philosophy thus plays an important role in the movement of the SM from beginning to end. Can we conclude anything from the fact that this distinct echo of Hellenistic culture comes where it does in the discourse? It is striking that the teachings of 6:19-7:12 seem addressed to a more universal audience that those in that precede which seem addressed specifically to Jews. However, one can hardly be certain that this signals a shift from one audience to another. The saying does not call attention to a particular audience as much as it does the cultural environment in which that audience lives and functions.

C. Social and Cultural Texture

The teachings of Jesus in the SM are addressed to a community of disciples whose lives are defined in relationship to Judaism, on the one hand, and the broader society, which includes Hellenistic culture, on the other hand. Jesus defines a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20). His disciples are to practice their piety in a more sincere fashion than the hypocrites within their religion (6:1-18) and Gentiles as a whole (6:7). The negative stereotyping of Gentiles throughout the SM (5:47; 6:7, 32) suggests an audience of persons who see themselves as Jewish, and yet distinct from other Jewish groups. Which of these is the source of the persecution the community experiences is not stated, but the mention of persecutors of prophets implies intra-Jewish conflict. On a third front, the community the SM addresses is called to be different from other Christians: "Not everyone who says of me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (7:21). Jesus then proceeds to say that prophesying and casting out demons in his name is not sufficient for entering the kingdom (7:22). Socially, the community's relationship to the political establishment is one of antipathy. The disciples are subject to mistreatment by an army of occupation (5:40-41), but we do not know if this is because of their religion. Taxcollectors are a specific object of negative stereotyping (5:46).

Since the audience is called to be in mission to the world (5:13-16) and that world tends to be characterized as corrupt, the SM seems to be addressed to a

conversionist community.[26] Although there is the prospect of persecution and mistreatment, retirement from the world is not an option. Yet, with instructions not to judge one another (7:1-5) and warnings about eschatological judgment, a polemical response to persecution and mistreatment is not allowed. The promise of blessing upon those persecuted for righteousness' sake is not just in the future; it is in the present also because of the special relationship between the disciples and God. The disciples' prayers will be answered and God will give to those who ask (7:7-11). With its belief in special dispensations for those who know God as "Father," one might expect a more *thaumaturgical* response to the world in the SM, but the primary motive for pursuing righteousness is the anticipation of eschatological rewards coinciding with the establishment of God's righteousness. The SM is not concerned to identify special types of dispensation that might be expected or their channels. Because of the danger posed by Christian spiritualists who overvalue the gifts of prophesy and casting out demons (and perhaps abuse these gifts), the SM minimizes the role of special dispensation in carrying out its conversionist mission.

Since the SM summons disciples to be agents of conversion in a corrupt world and not reformers, the rhetoric is *countercultural*.[27] The SM addresses a Jewish-Christian community that stands in a *subcultural* relationship to other Jewish communities. As a subculture, the SM community does not propose new values or norms, instead it claims to enact existing values and norms better than other groups who claim the same. This is the force of the argument in 5:17-6:18. On both fronts, the SM offers up a better model of righteousness and blessedness than other cultures offer. For all its negative stereotyping, the SM envisions the possibility of voluntary submission by anyone to the authority of Jesus.

D. Ideological Texture

The SM seems concerned to establish the legitimacy of Jesus and his followers' status as the special community in the sight of God. Does the discourse, however, do this at the expense of denying the legitimacy of other Jews who would make the same claim? In his study of the ideology underlying Matthew's gospel as a whole, Fred Burnett sees the gospel proposing that Jesus offers his followers

---

[26]For the characteristics of conversionist and other types of response to the world, see Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 147-150, and *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 72-74.
[27]For a discussion of the different types of cultures and the characteristics of their rhetoric, see Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 167-173, and *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 86-88.

exclusive access to God. This ideology is evident in the SM where God is referred to often as "your Father" (5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 8, 14, 15, 26, 32; 7:11).[28] The God referred to as "your Father" bestows eschatological rewards on some but not on others. Some of those who will not receive rewards are identified: "those who hate you," "persecutors," and the "hypocrites" in the synagogues. If Jesus' teachings are the true standard of righteousness, it would seem to follow that anyone who rejects Jesus and his teachings can not enter the kingdom. What excludes these people from "sonship" is their rejection of Jesus or their inferior standard of righteousness. Are we to believe that the fate of those so described in the SM is already sealed?

The ideology of the reader/interpreter comes into play here. Burnett proposes that "the 'implied author' of Matthew encourages readers *in every age* to read the narrative, including the SM, in an anti-Jewish way."[29] If Burnett is correct, Matthew's conclusion to the SM (the response of the crowd) would represent Matthew's attempt to direct the reader. However, it is not clear that the SM read apart from Matthew's narrative is anti-Jewish per se. If it is anti- anything, it is anti-standards of righteousness (morality) that fall short of that defined by Jesus. The opening blessings, if understood to be proclaimed to a universal audience,[30] anticipate the possibility that anyone might answer the commission that follows. However, the same blessings bring into vision an apocalyptic world in which verdicts are rendered in the present situation of the audience-- "Blessed are you when people...persecute you"--by equating their persecution with that of the prophets before them (5:11-12). Betz argues that the opening blessing upon "the poor in spirit," which envisions miserable humanity in general, "wipes out the entire apocalyptic framework.[31] The universal nature of the audience is not as obvious when the SM is read within Matthew's narrative framework. For instance, in his account of Jesus' activity leading up to his delivery of the SM, Matthew writes: "Jesus went through Galilee, teaching in *their* synagogues" (4:23). For Matthew and his readers, the synagogue is now associated with *others.*[32] Matthew is concerned that the reader render judgment against Jews who rejected Jesus and continue to do so by persecuting his disciples. Within the context of the narrative, the opening blessings do not seem universal. Apart from the narrative, the SM warns of exclusion from "the Father" by rejecting the Son, but if 6:22-23 addresses

---

[28]Fred W. Burnett, "Exposing the Anti-Jewish Ideology of Matthew's Implied Author: The Characterization of God as Father," *Semeia* 59 (1992) 155-191.
[29]Ibid, 156.
[30]Betz, "The Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount," *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount*, 34.
[31]Ibid.
[32]Burnett, "Exposing the Anti-Jewish Ideology of Matthew's Implied Author," 170.

disciples as well as a universal community of would-be disciples, all are warned not to mistake their inner darkness for light.

E. Sacred Texture

The SM is delivered by a person who enjoys a special relationship with God. This special relationship is not described in the discourse but is implied by it. It is implied most strongly in the negative contrast Jesus draws between himself and other recognized Jewish authorities. Jesus represents himself as a moral teacher of a higher order than others. By obeying his teachings, his disciples come to enjoy a special relationship with God. In fact, it is only by obeying his teachings that anyone can attain true righteousness. By following his teachings, people are saved from a self-deception that makes them believe they possess inner light. Jesus thus exclusive access to God for all people. Jesus' divine authority is not limited to moral teaching. As an eschatological prophet, he proclaims blessings upon all who would pursue righteousness, even to the point of persecution. At the same time, he warns those who reject this righteousness that they will be excluded from the eschatological community.

When the SM is read within the broader framework of Matthew's narrative, Jesus is more than a divine teacher and prophet. Matthew illustrates this through the introduction to the SM which describes a crowd drawn to Jesus by reports of his healings as well as his preaching about the kingdom. It is a Matthean tendency to make the words of Jesus subordinate to his deeds. For Matthew, the audience within the narrative is already predisposed to believe Jesus' authority; the discourse functions to define the nature and scope of his authority not only for audience both also for the readers of the gospel. Within both audiences are disciples and would-be disciples who see Jesus through the lenses of Jewish tradition. Yet, the SM itself seems addressed to a universal audience. Although a substantial portion of the discourse addresses particularly Jewish concerns (5:17-6:18), there are hints in the SM that this divine teacher and prophet will command the attention of Gentiles as well as Jews.

III. Conclusion

An analysis of the innertexture in the SM reveals a progressive development of thought. The discourse begins with Jesus pronouncing blessings that envision a reversal of fortune for those who presently suffer and eschatological rewards for those who pursue righteousness and suffer for its sake. The subsequent exhortations to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" suggest that these blessings

are contingent upon moral action. The type of moral action required is then outlined. Implicit in Jesus' moral teachings is the proposition that people are unable to attain righteousness without a knowledge of his teachings. All other sources for understanding righteousness, both Jewish and Gentile, are inadequate.

Betz seems correct to suggest that the "evil eye" saying in 6:22-23 expresses a typical Jewish concern in Greek ethical language.[33] But, what function does this polemical saying play within the SM? To whom is this critical engagement with the Greek philosophical tradition addressed? Clearly the SM addresses a Christian community that stands in a counter-cultural relationship to Hellenistic-Roman culture. Jewish-Christians attracted to Hellenistic-Roman culture may be the "you" addressed here. Yet, there is no reason why Gentile disciples or would-be disciples could not be the intended audience. Rhetorically, the conclusion of the saying, "If the light which is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!", functions as a warning alongside other warnings about the danger of failing to pursue true righteousness. Just as the opening blessings are universal in scope, it seems fitting that this warning about the mistaking inner darkness as inner light is universal in scope. The saying also underscores the idea implicit in the instructions that precede it, namely, that those who seek a knowledge of righteousness apart from Jesus are doomed to be ignorant of what righteousness truly is. The saying does not establish the authority of Jesus, it simply implies it. The SM presents Jesus' teachings as an indispensible condition for entrance into the kingdom of heaven, for both Jews and Greeks. The conclusion Matthew provides for the SM suggests that he is only interested in what the discourse reveals about Jesus' authority in relation to his Jewish critics and later critics of his disciples. However, if the SM anticipates controversies with the scribes and Pharisees later in the gospel, why should it not also anticipate the Great Commission and Jesus' authorization of a Gentile mission?

Is the ideology behind the rhetoric of the SM anti-Jewish? The conclusion Matthew gives to the SM suggests that it is. But without that conclusion, and apart from the narrative context Matthew provides for the SM, Jesus is presented through his teachings as one critically engaged with both his own Jewish culture and the surrounding Hellenistic-Roman culture. Jesus' teachings are not intended to be a rejection of Jewish tradition, but instead are a reinterpretation of that tradition for disciples who still identify with the tradition. At the same time, though, the tradition is reinterpreted with a Gentile acceptance of it envisioned. The one saying which most clearly represents a critical engagement with Gentile culture-- "the evil eye"-- is typically Jewish in its outlook on the possibility of acquiring wisdom without

---

[33] "Matthew 6 and Theories of Vision," 86.

divine intervention. The rhetoric of the SM is hardly anti-Jewish in the sense that Jesus and his community of followers desired a complete separation from Judaism. Yet, the universal scope of Jesus' authority, implicit in the SMand explicit at the end of Matthew (28:18), stands Jesus is sharp contrast to those who make no claim to universal authority, such as Jewish scribes and Pharisees. The SM addresses a Jewish-Christian community that sees itself enacting the values and norms of Judaism better than other Jews with the benefit of Jesus' teachings, and in doing so, it offers the hope of salvation to Jews and non-Jews alike. The community Jesus addresses in the SM is a Jewish-Christian sub-culture which does not yet envision its inevitable separation from the dominant Jewish culture, but is paving the way toward it with its understanding of Jesus' authority.

Like Father, Like Son, Absolute Case, Mythic Authority: Constructing Ideology in John 5:17-23

Mary R. Huie-Jolly
Theological Hall, Knox College

Socio-rhetorical criticism has multi-faceted potential for exploring the social power marshalled in arguments. Following initial interaction with the text, the question: "how does the argument generate authority?" motivates detailed rhetorical analysis of judicial speech in John 5. The speech constructs an alternate foundation for jurisdiction: the authority of the son based on the authority of the father. However, the judicial analysis fails to account for the divine exalted character of this authority. An intertextual comparison, explores the exalted dimension, linking early Christian recontextualization of the myth of divine enthronement with the trial of Jesus in John 5. The argument and the myth collude in pressuring an audience to give honor to Jesus as "just like" the monarchic and patriarchal authority, God.

Opening, Middle, Closing and Repetitive Progressive Features

How does the sonship speech in John 5:19-23 generate authority? It comes in the middle of a rhetorical unit 5:1-30 which begins (vs. 1-9) during the feast in Jerusalem at the pool peopled by the blind, and paralyzed. Jesus asks a man long sick, Do you want to be healed? The reply is ambiguous, he is prevented by others; but Jesus' word is performative "Rise, take up your pallet and walk."

The rhetorical unit closes with imagery of the coming, present hour when the dead hear the voice of the son of God, where all judging has been given over to the son of man; all in their tombs hear his voice and come forth to life or to judgment (5:25-29).

From pedestrian beginning to eschatological end, the opening impulse "rise...walk" echoes at the close. The same theme -- to rise in response to the authoritative voice -- is inscribed first at the Jerusalem pool (5:1-9), last in the apocalyptic open graveyard with the son of man at the final hour of judgment (5:25-29), from an earthly to a heavenly scenario.

Opposed themes emerge. On one side in Sabbath time and space, the Judeans question the performative healing word, asking "Is he an authorized person?" (5:9b-16). In defense, while denying he makes himself anything (I can do nothing apart from the father), speech attributed to Jesus reinforces, and logically demonstrates that equity between father and son is right, not wrong, on the grounds that the son acts just as the father.

The middle bridges the contrast. The opening Jerusalem poolside word to one chronic paralytic is linked to the universal resurrection of all, take your choice, to life or judgment at the end. Somehow the middle accomplishes the leap from pedestrian opening to apocalyptic closing. We can trace it in this progression: "Jesus" (v. 8) becomes "the man who healed me" (v. 11), "the man who said take up your pallet and walk" (vv. 12,15). On the other, exalted, side Jesus is named in language, attributed to himself, "the son" (vv. 19-23), reinforced and intensified in "the son of God" (v. 25), culminating in "the son of man" (v. 27). He leaps from healer to exalted judge of all. How does he gain this authority?

The father, father, father, son pattern

Observe the progression in 19-23, the first part of the sonship discourse attributed to Jesus. (Masculine endings and pronouns are translated into the nouns they represent in the repetitive progressive diagram below.)

Jesus replied, truly, truly, I say to you		19
without father	son nothing	19b
father does	son likewise ομοιως	19c
father	son likewise	
father loves	son	20
father shows	son	
father does	son does likewise	
father will show	son that you marvel	
father raises dead	son in same way	21
gives life	gives life	
father judges nothing		22
father gave judging to	son	
that ινα		23
all honor	son	
just as		
all honor	father	
not honoring	son	
is not honoring	father who sent son	

The authority to act is first in the hands of the father. The father acts, then the son after the same pattern. The basic pattern repeats throughout. Until the final clause, (v. 23), where, based on the father no longer judging, having given all that to the son, a shift occurs. The son is mentioned before the father is mentioned. The pattern of the father acting and then the son, based in the father, builds up to the final shift, where judgment is given to the son for the purpose of honor to the son. The closing line, the one not honoring the son does not honor the father who sent him, implicitly picks up on what the father has already done, shown, given. All this is dishonored, the father is dishonored, if one does not honor the son just as the father.

The "amen, amen" pattern

Attention to another repetitive pattern highlights the appeal to the audience to conform to a particular social role. In 5:19-30 The emphatic phrase "Amen, amen, I say to you" occurs three times.

logos

19 Jesus replied and said to them,
αμεν αμεν λεγω υμιν
the son not able without FATHER,
whatever FATHER does
likewise the son,
that all honor the son
just as they honor
the FATHER WHO SENT ME (5.19-23)

pathos

24 αμεν αμεν λεγω υμιν
the one who hears my word
and believes THE ONE WHO SENT ME
has life, does not go to judgment
passes from death to life.

pathos

25 αμεν αμεν λεγω υμιν
hour comes and now is
dead hear voice of Son of God
those who hear will live

The first amen statement is directly attributed to Jesus. It functions as the reasoning, called in rhetoric, the *logos* of the speech. The

second and third amen statements refer back to the first reply attributed to Jesus via the similar terms, "my word" (v. 24), and "the voice of the son of God"(v. 25). The second amen saying refers back to the *logos* set out in the first; the "father... therefore honor the son" pattern 5:19-23 is "my word." Within this repetitive context, to conform to this *logos* is "to believe the one who sent me" (the father). On the basis of the original, father son pattern, the second and third amen sayings generate *pathos* by making an appeal to the interests of the audience: pay attention to the aforesaid concept and you will have a reward. The third amen statement (5:25) is dramatically set in the urgent time of the coming and now present hour when only the dead who hear live. The implication being, "the dead" must hear these words (5:19-23) and believe them now, or else. Because the first amen saying sets in place the key concept (or *logos*), the appeal to the fear of judgment in the second and third amen sayings is contingent upon conformity to the first. To hear my word, to hear the voice of the Son of God, is to respond appropriately to the first amen saying, to honor the son just as the father.

Initial Reactions: What Does the Argument Do to an Audience?

Some claims demand a response. Refusal to accept authoritarian pressure to conform in belief and action motivates my resistance to the terms of the argument implicit in this discourse. Resistance motivates the question posed to the text: 'how do these claims generate authority?.' To ask this question of the text is to demystify an overpowering claim as a given of thought and behavior that is honorable to God.

The hierarchy of what is perceived as good in one's society, and the values flowing from this perception, is at the heart of persuasion (Aristotle *Rhetorica* 1.5-7; 9).[1] Arguments generate authority to persuade by speaking to the socially constructed assumptions and values, the vision of the world, that is taken for granted by all who participate in a particular social system (Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 2.22-23).

Speech promoting the 'role' of honor to God

John 5:19-29 appeals to the desire to honor divine fatherly authority; the authority of Jesus is supported entirely by virtue of his status as son in relationship to the father who first holds the power of life and judgment. For this reason, I suggest that the argument is designed to affect an audience who revere God's patriarchal authority, and, who accordingly,

wish to affirm and to be conformed to social expectations associated with the honor of God.

Audiences are inclined to an act by the motivation to stay in equilibrium in terms of behavior accepted as appropriate to one's role within one's social system.[2] *Pathos* for Aristotle is not emotion, but a state of being acted upon which causes one to experience or to suffer.[3]

To design an argument in order to persuade (*invention*) is not to create it *ex nihilo*. Rather *invention* is the discovery of how best to persuade a particular audience by appealing in argument to the unstated assumptions which motivate them.[4] Persuasion understands how to move its audience. In John 5:19-23 the *logos* (the father gives all to the son that all might honor the son just like the father) is followed by an appeal: all who do not hear this word will face judgement. Aristotle suggests that a speaker can argue a person into a state of fear by reasoning on the basis of the assumption that he or she is the right kind of person who in this situation ought to feel fear.[5] Such an assumption 5:24-25 appeals to the *pathos* of that audience.

Construction of arguments then relies upon finding places, or socially acquired "premises" upon which to build arguments. The premises are already embedded within the audience's social perceptions. They are social assumptions characteristic of the unwritten code of what is expected in society according to one's role and status. The premises usually articulate a value within the social order. In a theistic society honor of God is one such social good.

John 5:19-29 relies upon the audience's assumption of reverence for God as the cue the reader must act on in order to follow through on an expected pattern of behavior which generates honor and life. It grips the audience from both sides with the desire to hear and honor this *logos*, the reasoning is based on divine action on the one side, and the fear of failure to do so on the other. Appeal is made both positively and negatively. Positively, the son is empowered, "that all may honor the son just as they honor the father" (5:23) to believe this word is life, (vs. 24,25). Negatively, the role of dishonor, whoever does not honor the son does not honor the father, is associated with judgment (v. 24).

The premises for establishing fear in auditors are grouped according to the social patterns which are operative for the hearers: persons likely to suffer fear, persons to be feared, circumstances in which one fears; the speaker selects premises appropriate to the particular pathos of the audience and builds a line of reasoning upon these.[6] If the audience reveres and honors God then they feel pressure. The words attributed to Jesus, honor the son just as God the father is honored, generate fear lest by not honoring the son they will be seen not to honor the father (5:23). The audience who fears God has little choice. Either honor Jesus in the terms set up by the argument, or fail to honor God. Those who revere God find it uncomfortable to reject the claims altogether.

Judicial Form in a Speech Intensifying Praise and Blame

In order to persuade, speakers construct speech using familiar strategies for communication. Judicial speech, developed first in the law courts, asks and answers questions of who, what or why. It lends itself to demonstrative argument because it aims to persuade an audience to a particular point of view concerning a question or issue about a matter in the past.

Epideictic speech, developed in the context of ceremonial occasions of state, aims to affirm, intensify and clarify the values already held in the present by the audience. While treating the audience as observers, it characterizes the roles of praise and blame that are appropriate to them.[7]

The overall aim of John 5 is to intensify and clarify the appropriate role of honor for Jesus, overagainst blame for those who refuse him this honor; however, the epideictic aim is achieved using forensic devices. For example, following the story of healing which affirms his ethos, the narrator airs allegations against Jesus which normally would upset an honorable reputation: "It is not lawful... They prosecuted εδιωκον[8] him for doing those things on the Sabbath" (5:10,16). From this initial forensic accusation a complete argument is elaborated, using forensic rhetoric in defense of Jesus.

The complete argument, is a judicial form of speech which puts forth a proposition and sets out in full the reasons that confirm it. It allows the speaker to fully develop and justify the position taken on a particular issue. A description of the parts of the complete argument, from the rhetorical handbook *Ad Herennium* is is given below.[9]

In rhetorical development of a complete argument the proposition is what we intend to prove: "We shall show that Ulysses had a motive in killing Ajax."

The rationale is a brief explanation setting forth the causal basis for the proposition: "Indeed he wished to rid himself of his bitterest enemy, from whom with good cause he feared extreme danger to himself."

The proof or confirmation of the rationale corroborates the briefly presented reason. "He saw that, with Ajax alive his own life would be unsafe..." and hoped to secure his safety. "It was his habit to plan an enemy's destruction, by whatsoever wrongful means....Thus the fear of danger encouraged... and the habit of wrong-doing robbed him of his scruples.... (*Ad Herennium* 2.19.28).

The embellishment employs similes, examples, amplifications, or previous judgments that expand and enrich the argument (2.28.15). "Not

only do all men have a motive [even in minor matters], but certainly they are attracted by some sure reward when they enter upon crimes that are by far the most heinous.... (2.19.29).

The conclusion is a summing up of the main points in the order in which they appeared and to clarify what has been established by the argument as a whole (2.29.46). If I promised to give the motive that impelled Ulysses to kill Ajax, and I showed that enmity and fear were factors, "it must be unquestionably acknowledged that he had a motive for his crime" (2.19.30).

Annotated Display of a Complete Argument in John 5

The display below analyzes John 5 using the form of the complete thesis argument, to give an overview of rhetorical features within the text. Technical features not explained within the display itself are discussed fully later in the paper.

The narrative portions of John 5, which rhetoric would call the chreia (an action attributed to a notable person in 5:1-9a) and its expansion (in 5:9b-16), are displayed below in repetitive-progressive, open-middle-closing charting. From the perspective of judicial rhetoric these introductory narratives state the facts of the case which lead up to the thesis argument.

STATEMENT OF THE FACTS OF THE CASE

Basic Chreia 1-9a implicitly affirms the ethos of Jesus

	During a Judean feast, at a Jerusalem pool	
a	blind lame paralyzed, man ill 38 years	1-3
b	Jesus sees, knows, long time lying there	6
c	Do you want to be healed?	6 b
	he answered απεκριθη	7
	I have no-one to throw me into the pool	
	when I go, another comes before me_	
b'	Jesus "rise and walk"	8
a'	healed man took pallet and walked	9

[The progression is from opening paralysis to closing walking; the middle develops tension: a question requiring a decision contrasts with the man's ambivalent answer. The performative command of Jesus implies authority, but the audience is, as yet, left free to draw their own conclusion.]

Expanded Chreia 9b-16 Introduces forensic conflict

a Warning of unlawful action
Sabbath 9b
Judeans said
Sabbath 10
it is not authorized εξεστιν to take pallet
Jesus answered απεκριθη 11
he who made me well said take pallet walk

b Jesus' identity unknown
They asked ηρωτησαν 12
Who said take pallet walk?
healed man did not know who it is.

c Temple judgment
Jesus withdrawn, crowd in place 13b
Jesus in temple: you are healed
sin no more that no worse happen to you

b' Jesus' identity known
man went told Judeans
that Jesus is the one who healed him 15

a' Prosecutes unlawful action
Judeans prosecuted εδιωκον Jesus 16
because he did things on Sabbath

CONFLICT OF PLEAS
first charge of the plaintiff
because he did these things on the Sabbath

17 first plea for the defense doubles as the proposition:
Jesus replied απεκρινατο
My father is working still and I am working

18b THE ISSUE (emerging from conflicting pleas)
he calls God father making himself equal with God
[The issue functions as the rationale, as well as the second plea for the prosecution.]

REFUTATION contrary with rationale embedded in it
19 Jesus replied Απεκρινατο[10]
The son does nothing but what father does.
What father does, this the son does likewise.

ABSOLUTE CASE 20-23

20 confirmation of rationale supporting the contrary
for the father loves son and shows him all he does

21 embellishment (example of rationale)
just as the father raises the dead so does the son

22 contrary example of rationale
neither does father judge but he gives judgment to son

23 conclusion to the embellishment
that all honor the son just as they honor the father

23b contrary of conclusion
one not honoring the son does not honor the father

[The remainder of the thesis argument embellishes the reasoning that has already been set in place.]

EMBELLISHMENT

24 analogy one who hears has life

25 example the dead hear and live

26 summary of rationale
as the father has life so he has given son to have life

27 judgment he has given him authority to execute judgment
because he is the Son of Man

28 exhortation (by maxim re judgment scenes)
the hour comes when all in their graves will come out
the good to life the evil to condemnation

PERORATION

The peroration sums up the whole speech by running over the arguments. Typically it has three parts, the summing up, the *indignatio*, and the conquestio or the arousing of pity or sympathy. Observe the use of the first two techniques in John 5:30-49 the summing up of matters discussed previously are brought together to refresh the memory of the audience (Cicero *De Inventione* 1.51.98).

First the summary of reasoning in 5:30 concludes by revisiting the point of departure for the thesis argument in 5:19:[11] I am not able to do anything from myself. Just as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not my own will but the will of the one who sent me (5:30).

Summing up the arguments can be accomplished in two ways. At times Cicero says you should run over your own arguments one by one, but at other times you can bring on stage some person or thing and let this actor sum up the argument (*De Inventione* 1.52.99). Below in John 5:31-47 we find a striking combination of both techniques. A variation on the argument introduces authoritative witnesses who are cited as external evidence of the truth of what Jesus has argued.

30-40 witnesses

If I witness concerning myself it is not valid, but another is witnessing concerning me and I know his witness is true (v. 30 paraphrasing v. 19)

33-35 John the Baptist

36 the works I do

(introducing *indignatio* from v. 37b)

37-38 the Father whom you never heard nor saw

39-40 the scriptures though you refuse me

The part of the peroration called *indignatio* is designed to excite ill-will by bringing the dynamic of praise and blame to bear upon the previously argued position in relation to the present.[12] It includes the introduction of authorities who ought to carry the greatest weight, including the "immortal gods," and also forefathers and authors of laws (*De Inventione* I.53.101-54.105).

INDIGNATIO (praise and blame reinforcing v. 19a proposition) 41-43b

noble I do not receive glory δοξαν from humans

disgraceful you do not know the love of God

noble I have come in my Father's name

disgraceful you have not received me

contrary If another comes in his own name you will receive

This *indignatio* incidentally serves as a "summing up" in first person by Jesus, designed to "work up" the audience against his opponents. To cap it off, a yet more dramatic technique is added.

Cicero gives this example of how the summing up can be accomplished "in person." What if the author should appear and ask, why do you hesitate since this has been proved? (*De Inventione* 1.53.100). Or "what if the laws could speak? Would they not make this complaint to you? what more do you, jury, desire, as this has been made plain?" (*De Inventione* 1.53.100). In a strikingly similar form of speech Jesus asks:

> How is it possible for you to believe,
> receiving glory δοξαν from one another,
> and you do not seek the glory
> that comes from the one who alone is God

He concludes by nearly "bringing Moses on stage," by speaking "in person" for Moses in 5:44-47:

> <u>summing up "in person"</u> 44-47
> How can you believe?
> self glory not God's glory:
> I do not accuse you, Moses accuses you
> If you had believed Moses you would have believed me
> you do not believe his writings
> you do not believe my words

Summary of the Display

To intensify the roles of praise and blame, an epideictic goal, John 5 uses the pattern of judicial speech. Its internal rhetorical movement is complex. The narrative leads up to an accusation and defense, indicating a judicial format, though Jesus' response to charges (5:17,19-46) is characterized less by legal figures, than by reasoning designed to present him as an honorable person. Nevertheless, it incorporates the establishment of a thesis argument (5:17-23); the supporting arguments include exhortation (5:24-25), and take a distinct turn toward an epideictic conclusion. Jesus' self praise, contrasted with now explicit blame of his opponents, is used to personify their refusal to accept the witness in defense of his honor (5:30-37). Thus the epideictic conclusion ends having gone full circle from the epideictic beginning; the simple display of the honorable ethos of Jesus in an act of healing (5:1-9), reaches a finale which incites indignation, censuring those who will not honor him (5:37-47). The combination of all of these moves is one clue that John 5 elaborates a complete argument. Though the epideictic tendency of the speech is pervasive, it uses the formal reasoning of judicial rhetoric to intensify the roles of praise and blame.

Finding the Argument

What is at issue in the argument in John 5? The technique for "finding the argument" in judicial rhetoric provides a precise process for analysis.[13]

In judicial rhetorical theory, following the statement of facts, the division of the cause of the argument is found first by identifying what the opposing parties are agreed upon, and secondly, what is contested. The statement "it is not lawful" (5:10) warns the healed man that both he and the one who told him to carry his mat are at odds with the conventional view of Sabbath law. Their point of view may be reconstructed through building on what is stated to reconstruct their unstated chain of reasoning.[14] Reconstruction of the unstated portions of the argument is enclosed in parentheses.

Term 1	(Observance of Sabbath regulations represents one's honor of God.)
Term 2	Jesus did "these things" in provocation of the regulations on the Sabbath v. 16.
Term 3	(Therefore he does not respect the high status of the Sabbath.)
3a	For this reason we must take out legal proceedings because he did these things on the Sabbath.

The act of healing creates the notion that Jesus is a person with special authority. But the conflicting emphasis on another aspect of the act, the command to carry a mat, strictly forbidden on the Sabbath in Rabbinic law, is disreputable, deliberate, provocation of unlawful behavior.

A Case of Lese-Majesty?

Jesus answers his accusers in terms of his status in relation to God. Thus the narrator may wish us to interpret their challenge "he did these things on the Sabbath" in like fashion, as a charge of dishonor to the status of the Sabbath. In the terminology of Roman legal practice this can be interpreted as a charge of lese-majesty.

Cicero defines lese-majesty as the "lessening of the dignity or high estate or authority of the people or of those to whom the people have

given authority"; and he also quotes another conventional definition. Lese-majesty is "doing some public business without authority" (*De Invention* II.17.53; 18.55). *Ad Herennium* defines the charge of lese-majesty as follows: "He impairs the majesty of the state who destroys elements which constitute its dignity" (2.12.17). He describes one instance of the reversal of a charge of lese-majesty. In this case, as in John 5, the meaning of proper honor due to a governing authority is redefined through legal argument.

A citizen was charged with lese-majesty, Herennium explains. He was charged because he attempted to prevent a crucial decision of the assembly by destroying the bridges which made it possible for the assembly to meet in the Comitium. The case is used as an instance of the stasis of definition as follows.

The prosecutor first adjusts the definition to fit this particular case: the suffrage of the people and the counsel of the magistry constitute the dignity of the state. Then the accusation follows: "No doubt, then, in demolishing the bridges of the Comitium, you have deprived the people of their suffrage and the magistry of their counselling." The defendant answers the charge by reasserting the definition with a different referent for what constitutes the "dignity of the state":

> Likewise in reply, 'he impairs the sovereign majesty of the state who inflicts damage upon its dignity.' I have not inflicted, but rather prevented damage, for I have saved the Treasury, resisted the license of wicked men, and kept the majesty of the state from perishing utterly (*Ad Herennium* 2.12.17).

If the accusation in John 5 is construed as a charge of lese-majesty, then the peoples' public grant of majesty and authority to God is the basis for honor of the Sabbath; it is reason to prosecute one who appears to undo this authority. The charge is not simply, Jesus is wrong, but rather, Jesus does dishonor to, loosens ελυεν, the status of the Sabbath. Likewise in the second part of the charge: Jesus by presuming to call God father does dishonor to the status of God. Awareness of this subtle shift allows us more precisely to identify the question for adjudication.

Jesus' reply, "The father is already working and I am working" justifies his action (5:17) indicating that both parties do not agree that he is wrong for "doing these things on the Sabbath." This is the first point that is contested.

The stasis or issue in question

In every subject which contains a controversy to be resolved by speech and debate, the stasis or substance is the question from which the whole case arises, says Cicero (*De Inventione* 1.8.10). It emerges in the first conflict of pleas which arises from the defense or answer to the accusation, in this way: "You did it"; "I did not do it," or "I was justified in doing it" (*De Inventione* 1.8.18).

The conflict in John 5:16-17 conforms to criteria for questions capable of stasis, as defined by Hermogenes *Stases*:(391-392)[15] as follows. First, the conflict of the two contrary positions concerns both the person (5:18b) and the act (5:8,10,16,18a). Secondly, the charges are consistent with customary legal practice and thus implicitly must be taken seriously. Finally, though the audience presumably is already "on Jesus' side" (they are predisposed toward his innocence of the charge in 5:16), however, the fact that a complete judicial argument is elaborated in response to the opponents' charges indicates that the matter at issue would not have been clear to the audience without this confrontation; thus the audience needed to be convinced of the issue emerging from Jesus' response (5:17) to the opponents' charge.

The stasis is found by "joining the primary plea of the defense with the charge of the plaintiff" (*Ad Herennium* 1.10). The two conflicting pleas can be arranged in a dialectical structure:

> Accusation 1, the opponents begin to prosecute him because he "did these things" on the Sabbath (5:16).
>
> Defense 1, in reply Jesus answers, "My father is working even now and I am working."

The stasis emerges out of the tension between the first conflict of pleas. It focuses what is at issue: he calls God his own father making himself equal with God. To analyze the stasis, we begin by identifying what is agreed upon before moving on to analyze the point which is contested.

Jesus' cryptic reply to the charge of "doing these things on the Sabbath" is, "My father is working still and I am working." It picks up the assumption of Jewish first century audiences, that while Sabbath work was prohibited for Israel, God continued to be active. The works of life and judgment were proper to God, even on the Sabbath, and entrusted to no other.[16]

The opponents' objections (5:18) are presented as if they already presume this truism; it forms an unstated assumption which fills out their reasoning as follows.

Term 1 (Only God [the Father] works on the Sabbath)

Term 2 Jesus says, the father is still working (on the Sabbath)
and I am working
ο πατηρ μου εως αρτι εργαζεται καγω εργαζομαι

Term 3 (Jesus is not God, he should not work on the Sabbath,
to do so dishonors the higher status of
God who alone is free to undertake Sabbath work)

The second charge: "He calls God his own father making himself equal to God" doubles as an accusation. Ironically it will subsequently be elaborated as the core of the argument in Jesus' defense. This literary arrangement is similar to the device of Johannine misunderstanding. The argument is furthered and strengthened by a pointed statement which, in a dramatic sense, is misunderstood or wrongly construed. Because it emerges out of the conflict of pleas, it is also the place that most clearly expresses the stasis of the argument.

The stasis can be identified as one of three main types (*Ad Herennium* 1.16.26). 1) Conjectural when it is a question of fact. There is no question over the fact that Jesus called God father. 2) Legal when it turns on the letter of the text. For example, 'how can we define Sabbath? Is 6.p.m. on Friday the Sabbath?; Or could not the spirit of the law be interpreted to allow carrying a mat if the man was in desperate need of it?'; or 'Is it allowed since the man had been ill for a long time?.' There appears to be no legal question here. The implication that Jesus' address of God as "my father" constitutes a claim to do equally the same work as the father is not contested for such claims are explicitly stated by Jesus in 5:19-23. 3) Thus it appears to be a judicial case, which is a question of right or wrong: for there is agreement on the act and its legal meaning, but the question turns on whether the act is right or wrong.

The "question for the judge's decision," the point to adjudicate, arises from the first conflicting pleas between the two parties, as follows in an example from *Ad Herennium:*

"You killed Ajax"
"I did not"

Where the point for the judge to adjudicate is, "Did he kill him?" (*Ad Herennium* 1.17.26-27). In John 5 we determine the central question and point of adjudication thus:

<u>prosecution</u>
... Because he did these things on Sabbath
<u>justifying motive</u>
My father is working... I am working
<u>accusation opposing the justifying motive</u>
He calls God father... making himself equal with God

The central point of the accusation which is presented in opposition to the justifying motive of the defense is the place to look for the question for the judge's decision (*Ad Herennium* 1.16.26). Thus the point for adjudication should be found in relation to the statement: "He calls God his own father making himself equal with God" (5:18). The question for stasis is: 'Was this agreed upon act right or wrong?' Or in terms of lese-majesty: 'Does it honor God or does it lessen honor of Sabbath and God?'

The two main subtypes of judicial stases are absolute and assumptive. A question is absolute when "we contend that the act in and of itself was right." It is assumptive when other extraneous considerations are brought in; for example, the plea is for mercy, or that the act was done without intent (*Ad Herennium* 1 1.14.24). Jesus does not deny that he called God father, or that this mode of address implies equality with God. He and his opponents are agreed on the fact that he called God father. They differ on one point only. The opponents accuse him of wrongfully posturing, dishonoring the status of God by making himself out to be the equal of God. Jesus refutes the point which they contest: The son does nothing on his own (5:19); all that he does is given to him by the father.

One way of refuting an argument is by not granting one of its assumptions, by showing that the opponent's idea of a parallel case is shown to be dissimilar (Cicero, *De Inventione* 1.53.100). John 5:19 refutes the charge that Jesus makes himself God by affirming the son's utter reliance upon the father. In principle, the argument must proceed by distinguishing itself from the other side of the question. In John 5:19 the statement of the opposite does double duty. It is both the rebuttal, the son can do nothing from himself, and a dialectical move to clarify the intended interpretation of the rationale: the son does nothing except what he sees the father doing. Thus it restates "the father is working still and I am working" (5:17) in the contrary, while at the same time it (tacitly) refutes the opponents' charge that Jesus attempts to acquire honor.

However, the substance of the accusation, that his filial relation to God implies equality, is not refuted. Rather Jesus argues that it is right, by appealing to the authority of the father who in love gives all things to the son. The issue is one of jurisdiction, a question of right or wrong (*Ad Herennium* 2.13.19). One party charges that is wrong to answer "my father is working still and I am working," for this implies equality with God. The other affirms the statement, explaining why it is right, by appeal to the relationship which authorizes the son to act "just like" the father.

An absolute case

In a judicial case the defendant argues that the act was lawful, over against those who claim that it was not. The case is an "absolute issue" when the defense is not grounded upon interpretation of mutually accepted previous law but upon the cause of the act. Such a defense is built by returning to the more universal and fundamental constituents of law itself. An absolute case is constructed by appeal to a more basic authority (which constitutes the authority of law in general) as that which undergirds the cause of the act in question. The fundamental constituents of legal authority fall under the following divisions: nature, statute, custom, previous judgments, equity (agreement with truth and general welfare) and agreement (founded on a contract between parties) (*Ad Herennium* 2.13.19-20).

Rather than an appeal to an existing law that both parties in the conflict mutually agree upon, the absolute case pushes beyond existing law to the cause of legal authority. In the manner of an absolute case, Jesus does not accept that his action (in saying, "my father..."v. 17) is implicated in illegality according to the customary rule that 'anyone who calls God one's own father makes oneself equal with God.' Rather he appeals to the fundamental constituent or cause of the saying: (My father works still and I work) because of the love and privilege bestowed by father to son: the father loves the son and gives him power to create life and to judge (John 5:20-22).

Jesus' refers to the action of "My father..." as the more fundamental cause of his action in his role as son. It is an appeal to the parent/child relationship as a more basic criterion of legal authority. Jesus' defense is constituted by the parent/child relationship, as the cause justifying the action. *Ad Herennium* lists "nature" as the basis for an absolute case which is grounded in the duties observed because of kinship or family loyalty. Familial bonds constitute the natural law causing parents to be cherished by their children and children by their parents (*Ad Herennium* 2.13.19). Thus in rhetorical terms John 5:17-23 could be classified as an absolute case that falls under the division which *Ad Herennium* describes as "nature" (2.13.19).

When opposing parties fundamentally disagree about whether an act is right or wrong, the party challenging the customary judicial practice (or the status quo) must argue for a more basic criterion of justice than the prosecution.

A Father/Son Syllogism

In legal decisions that diverge from the status quo of customary law "change and change alone needs to be justified."[17] Thus the appeal to "my father" needs to be set out in the form of a demonstrative argument in order to construct a case which stands on its own, and which is more compelling than the prevailing appeal to customary practice.

The change is justified in John 5.20-23 by a deductive argument that is expanded by examples (e.g.) and reasons. The form below, elaborating the terms of the argument with reasons and examples, is Cicero's characterization of the syllogism (*De Inventione* I.34.58-59).

T1 Father loves son and gives him power to act just as father
reason- whatever father does this also son does in the same way
example- for just as the father raises the dead and creates life even so the son gives life to whom he wills

T2 The son acts just like the father
negative example- the father judges no one
positive example- all judgment has been given to the son

T3 In order that all might honor the son in the same way as they honor the father
contrary- the one who does not honor the son does not honor the father who sent him

The defense appeals to Jesus' calling God father as the cause justifying his action contrary to customary laws. The argument proceeds by establishing that the son's relationship to the father determines that he should be treated in the same way as the father.

Equity

Establishing the essential equality between persons has from ancient times been a fundamental move in articulating the basis upon which legal cases are to be judged. In principle those who are essentially equal in status or role should be treated equally by law. In explaining the principle of equity as a basic rule of justice, Perelman,[18] a philosopher of legal logic, follows Aristotle who notes that there is a likeness between beings to whom justice is administered: family first, then tribe, then city, then territory, then all humankind. He sees this situation between individuals as something in common whereby partial identity may be established; it is prerequisite

for any attempt to realize justice between them. Where there is no common measure there is no identity, and the question of justice does not arise, for example, between human and plant.[19]

The principle of equity between father and son is established in 5:19-23. The equality of father and son serves as the basis for the consequences that follow: those who do not honor the son equally with God, do not honor the father (5:23).

Formal justice is defined as "observing a rule which lays down the obligation to treat in a certain way all persons who belong to a given category."[20] John 5:17-23 sets out the filial relationship and the common work shared by father and son as the basis for treating them both equally. "Whatever the one does, this also the son does in the same way," α γαρ αν εικεινος ποιη, ταυτα και ο υιος ομοιως ποιει (v. 5:19b).

On this foundation it is possible to plead "against the written law on the basis of natural law and equity,"[21] by constructing an absolute case. Against the rule that no human shall speak in a way that implies equality with God, Jesus cites the father's work as an explanation for his Sabbath work. He challenges conventional notions of Sabbath action and propriety in speaking of God. His reasons conform to the natural law of sons who act just like their fathers. On the basis of the relationship, the son acts just like the father.

A deontic syllogism, a rule generating action in conformity

The defense presented through the syllogism is complex. It does not aim simply to prove that Jesus is right. The principle of equity between the son and the father is first of all an ontological concept which identifies the son in terms of action just like the father, establishing equity between father and son on a conceptual level.

However it does not aim simply to demonstrate that the father has indeed given the son the responsibility to act in the same way as the father. Rather, the conceptual paradigm is given to the end that all people may give the son the same honor as the father (5:23). The syllogism makes a claim upon the action of those who accept its terms. Thus it is deontic: it formulates a rule concerning behavior which is posited upon a fact or ontological statement.[22]

A deontic syllogism follows this pattern:[23]

a) The major premise is the rule to be applied.

Major	T1
	The father loves the son
	and gives him power to act just as the father

b) The minor premise is the quality of the person in question; the fact of regarding him or her as a member of a given category provides the minor term of the syllogism.

Minor T2
The son acts just like the father
Whatever the father does, the son does likewise

c) The conclusion is the just act which must be consistent with the conclusion of the syllogism.

Conclusion T3
In order that all may honor the son
just as they honor the father

In deontic, as opposed to strictly formal logic, the final term generates a just act which is consistent with the conclusion of the syllogism.[24] In the case of John 5:23 the just act is that hearers should give to the son the honor that is due to God the father. Those who do not honor the son thus do not honor the father.[25]

By the time of Cicero the dictum of Aristotle had become a truism of every schoolboy: if the written law is against the case, we must appeal to the universal law (Cicero, *Rhetorica* 1.14.1375). The dictum resonates with the absolute case in John 5:17-23. Rather than centering on divergent interpretations of a law observed by both parties, the appeal to a more fundamental cause justifies the action in question, in spite of customary legal practice. The relationship with the father, is the fundamental cause which removes Jesus from the jurisdiction of the Judeans; to them the narrator attributes the charges of lessening the majesty of God and the Sabbath as a crime worthy of deah (5:18).

Cicero describes a case of lese-majesty which evokes interesting parallels to John 5. A certain Gaius while tribune of the people seditiously proposed an agrarian law to the people against the wishes of the senate and, in general, contrary to the desires of all the upper classes. As he was haranguing the popular assembly his father dragged him from the rostrum and was charged with lese-majesty. The charge is, 'You committed lese-majesty in that you dragged a tribune of the people from the rostrum.'

The answer is: 'I did not commit lese-majesty.'
The question is, 'Did he commit lese-majesty?'
The excuse is, 'I used the authority which I had over my son.'
The denial of the excuse, 'On the contrary, one who uses the authority belonging to him as a father -- that is private authority -- to lessen the authority of a tribune, that is the authority of the people -- is guilty of lese-majesty' (summarized from *De Invention* II.16,52-53).

The inopportune father of Gaius is found guilty. For though the authority of a father is fundamental, in this case it is judged to be less weighty than the honor of the people.

Unlike Cicero's case, which contrasts the honor of the parental relationship to the honor of those vested with public authority, Jesus' defense dovetails the two. The dual basis in conventional values of honor, the very public honor appropriate to God in a theocracy and the more intimate inner motivation of honor toward one's own father, is the foundation for a yet more powerful case.

As an absolute case, a paternal relationship that was a fundamental basis for law, is cited to justify Jesus' action. Yet my judicial rhetorical analysis is inadequate to explain how, in this speech, the father is God, the story of the tribune Gaius and his irrepressible father provides no parallel. The extraordinary father/son relationship in John 5 pushes beyond familiarity with human fathers and sons to a godlike image of divine sonship: the son has been given the powers of creation and judgment.

Mythic Intertexture

The trial-like scene in John 5:9-29 when read alongside the similarly structured Markan trial discloses family resemblances. These help to explain the overlap of sonship with mythic god-like power.

Both John 5:16,17 and the trial before the Sanhedrin in Mark 14:60-64 juxtapose a forensic threat concerning sonship with Jesus' reply from an exalted sonship perspective. In both, the first sonship reply is met by a second forensic challenge which interprets his claim to sonship as a crime worthy of death, blasphemy in Mark 14:64, calling God his own father making himself equal with God in John 5:18. In both, forensic dishonor of Jesus is reversed by invoking mythic imagery of the exalted son in a scenario of absolute power. However the strongest evidence linking John 5:18-27 and Mark 14:62-64 is that both evoke the power of the son by recontextualizing a particular text, Daniel 7:13-14, the exalted scene of the Son of Man's dominion and judgment.[26]

In Mark 14:62 speech attributed to Jesus responds to the question, "Are you the Christ?"... in the affirmative "I am" εγω ειμι with words recontextualized from Daniel 7:13 and you will see "the Son of Man... coming with the clouds of heaven" conflated with a phrase from Psalm 110:1, "seated at the right hand of power." John 5 also clearly recontextualizes Daniel 7:9-14 because "Son of Man" υιος ανθρωπου without any article in John 5:27 is identical to the same phrase in the LXX of Daniel 7:13 (and in Theodotion's version); all other New Testament usage of the phrase includes the article, either as ο υιος του ανθρωπου or as ο υιος ανθρωπου.[27]

Yet the recontextualization of Daniel 7.12-14 is not the only intertext linking the trial scenes in Mark 14 and John 5. I have proposed that their common use of Daniel 7.14 indicates that both John 5 and Mark 14 variously express the same early Christian trial tradition; the tradition interprets the trial and crucifixion of Jesus retrospectively, retelling accusations against him from the perspective of his heavenly enthronement in resurrection by evoking the story line of a widely understood myth variously expressed in Daniel 7, Psalm 110, and in other early Christian *testimonia* to the exaltation of the son.[28] Daniel 7:1-14 is but one expression of the divine warrior myth, the myth of the primal enthronement of God victorious over the waters, the root metaphor of YHWH's Kingship.[29]

Psalm 89 gives the most lucid picture of mythic sonship as derived from the divine warrior myth; it retells the enthronement of the kingly son after the same mythic pattern as the enthronement of YHWH. First comes the divine warrior myth, the victory of God leading to his enthronement over chaos:

battle/victory
YHWH you rule the raging of the sea
You crushed Rahab like a carcass
You scattered your enemies with your mighty arm 89:9-10

enthronement (manifestation of reign)
Righteousness, justice are the foundation of your throne 89:14

victory shout-procession
Happy are the people who know the festal shout 89:15

Next the Davidic king is presented after the same pattern of God's primal victory over the waters and enthronement.

battle
God will crush [the Davidic king's] foes before
him and strike down those who hate him 89:23

victory
I set his hand on the sea, his right hand on the waters 89:25

enthronement
He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father,
my God, and the Rock of my salvation'
I will establish his line forever and his throne
as long as the heavens endure 89.26-29

The son's empowerment as king is modeled after the familiar pattern of the enthronement of God over the waters.[30] The exaltation of Israel's king is presented as a type of YHWH's victory over the deep.

The divine warrior myth appears to me to have been linked with some early Christian interpretations of the trial, crucifixion and exaltation of Jesus. For example, Psalm 2, an expression of the divine warrior myth, is recontextualized in various places in the New Testament, among these Jesus' trial (Acts 4:23-29), resurrection (Acts 13:33) and dominion (Rev 2:26-27). In recalling the trial of Jesus, Acts 4:23-29 quotes Psalm 2:1: "Why did the Gentiles rage...the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah? For in this city there were gathered together against... Jesus whom thou didst anoint...both Herod and Pontius Pilate ...." In both John 5 and the Markan trial, (speech attributed to) Jesus responds to a challenge concerning his sonship. The challenge and riposte resonate with the plot-line of Psalm 2. Plots and threats against the messiah are answered by the Enthroned One, laughing down from heaven. The messiah is inviolable because God has declared in the coronation decree, "You are my son," and has given all power to rule into his hands. Rebels are warned to submit to the son, or else fear the wrath of absolute sovereignty which God has vested in the son. Acts 4.25-27 uses the storyline of the myth inscribed within Psalm 2.1-3 to retell the memory of forensic action against Jesus.

When forensic action in John 5 and Mark 14 is placed within scriptural expressions of the divine warrior myth, such as Daniel 7:13-14, the myth channels interpretation of the trial. Jesus answers the challenge to his sonship with language evocative of the myth, as expressed in the coronation scene of Psalm 89:26-27, "[the kingly son] shall cry to [God], 'you are my father'... I [God] will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth." According to the same mythic storyline in Psalm 2 when the king is threatened by enemies he recounts to them the decree of the Lord, "God said to me, 'you are my son... I will make your inheritance the nations.'" Similarly, in Daniel 7:13-14 "the one like a son of man... when he reached the Ancient One... he received dominion, glory and kingship." The declaration of the father giving god-like powers to the son is similarly epideictic coronation-like speech in John 5:22-23.

In Psalm 2:10-11, once the divine warrior pattern of God's dominion has been replicated in the son, warning is given to all kings and rulers to take heed, to submit, to bow down in homage, "lest God be angry and you perish"; (see also Psalm 110). Likewise in John 5:23 anyone who does not honor the son thus does not honor the father. The mythic empowerment of the son draws a line between those who will submit to his reign and worship the enthroned son as God, and those who refuse.

A Logical System

The absolute power given to the son, which cannot be adequately explained in terms of forensic rhetoric, is understandable in terms of the mythology of the enthronement of YHWH, Sovereign over all, inviolable from any foe. When the divine warrior myth frames scriptural images of exalted sonship, the son is empowered after the pattern of YHWH's enthronement. In response to forensic threats to Jesus honor (foreshadowing his rejection and crucifixion) the sonship speech requires he be honored after the same pattern as God the father. Some audiences are ignorant of the grammar of the myth. But, the explicit argumentation "whatever the father does, the son does likewise..." (John 5:19-23) replicates sonship after the pattern of the enthronement of God. The question, 'how does the speech generate authority?' must receive a complex answer, because the divine element in the absolute case only makes sense against the background of the myth.

Jacob Neusner[31] comments upon the narrative of Jesus' expulsion of merchants from the temple as an example of the "absoluteness" of Christianity.[32] He describes it as an event which exemplifies the taxonomic enterprise of systemically viewing tradition from one absolute perspective. In this systemic sense, he maintains, Christianity began at Easter, and by virtue of the systemic centrality of this event it is absolute, wholly other, not to be confused with a reform of Judaism.[33] Neusner perceives Christianity as absolute, and he uses a narrative incident to make this point.

John's explicit deductive logic in the absolute case creates a line of reasoning capable of standing on its own. However intertextual comparison with the earlier Markan trial identifies a similar interpretation of conflict leading to his death. The myth of the son had already envisioned reversal of charges: the judges stand before the judge in Mark 14:62-64. John 5 develops upon the reversal according to the scriptural myth that the earlier Christian tradition had associated with Jesus' exaltation. The myth of the son enthroned had already evoked a trial-like division between those who acknowledged the son in the place of divine judgment, and those who questioned his authority; but in John 5 the absolute case gives it logical expression.

Being logical it is more precise. Only those who will acknowledge that the son empowered to judge is "just like" God can enter life. The "right" choice, the one that carries a reward, resurrection unto life, is made at the expense of people who the text calls "the Judeans." If οι Ιουδαιοι was already understood to refer to a faction that some early Christian traditions associated with the trial of Jesus, then use of this term may have served as negative reinforcement: 'If you do not accept the terms of this argument, then you react to Jesus as did "the Judeans" who sought to kill him (v.18). Do you want to put yourself in that position?'

The supplementary section on witnesses indirectly characterizes the role of blame of the Judeans: they have never even heard the father's voice, lack his word, do not believe Jesus whom the father sent, refuse to come to him, have not the love of God, only glory in one another not in God, and are accused by Moses for not believing Jesus' words (John 5:37-47). By association they are those who in the hour of judgment will not have heard his voice, have done evil and face 'judgment'(v. 29). The outcome is the systemic exaltation of Jesus, precisely, "just as" God the father, at the Judeans' expense. Alongside the foiled Judeans, whoever refuses to conform by honoring Jesus "just as" God is blamed.

Because Jesus is "just like" God in creating life and judgment, God demands that all must honor Jesus "just as" God is honored. The claim to authority is a tautology.[34] John's careful argument, the absolute case, establishes a kind of algebraic formula, a theo-logic, which duplicates the myth of the son enthroned in likeness of the father. Within a universe of meaning where no legal precedent or authority is not implicitly reliant on God the Monarch and Ruler of all, the statement logically stands on the self-evident premise it presupposes.

Northrope Frye maintains that biblical language, on the whole, is metaphoric, evoking comparison with another reality; it is rarely metonymic, designating that this person or name is 'put for' another, establishing an identity or equivalency between them. Frye argues that the language of the New Testament was relatively free from the cultural ascendancy of the Platonic language of an intellectual elite: a perspective on language in which, as he describes it, formally stated primary truths conveyed a sense of superior order embodied in language. By virtue of this order, "properly constructed verbal sequences" demonstrate an "inherent power of compelling assent."[35] The rationale embodied in the deductive line of reasoning in John 5:17-23 may be an exception, for it translates a metaphor into a logical principle. A myth, previously communicated through imagery evoking (in metaphor) divine superiority, is transformed into a system. It demonstrably sets out the relation between father and son. Evocative images constitute the separate elements of this speech, even "father" is such an image; however, the outcome of the systemic reasoning is that purposeful acts of the son are to be 'put for' the work and honor of the father.

Had the testimony of the healing ended when the man took up his mat and walked, hearers would have needed to ask, "What does it mean?, how did Jesus get this authority?." The healing (5:1-9) and the saying "My father is working... and I am working" (v. 17) could have been interpreted in various ways, in open ended ways. But that was not to be. Neusner cites a principle borrowed from economic theory that appears to be relevant here: statements of fundamental facts generally only acquire importance in reference to the superstructure they are made to bear and are commonplace in the absence of such superstructures.[36] Within the controlling

superstructure of the absolute case, the healing is but a sign supporting the rationale: the work of Jesus is the work of God.

Kenneth Burke[37] notes the difference between dialectical treatment of conflict in "parliamentary" argument style and an "ultimate" treatment. The dialectical leaves the competing voices jangling with one another. But the "ultimate" order would place these competing voices themselves in a "Hierarchy, or Sequence, or evaluative series so that, in some way, we went by a fixed and reasoned progression from one of these to another, the members of the entire group being arranged developmentally in relation to one another."[38] Within the unitary structured system, or synecdoche, that is set in place in John 5:17-23, 'the son' has become a transferable term that can be 'put for' the term 'father'; its referent, Jesus, can be 'put for' God. The system defies a dominant culture which does not allow that honor of any human can rightly be "just like" honor to God.

Changes from the norm need to be explained fully in construction of a new basis for jurisdiction. In setting new grounds for authority one can presume that an audience accustomed to the status quo understands the premises upon which the new ground for authority is based. Accordingly the absolute case is low context, i.e. it is stated explicitly. Typically speech constructing a self-sufficient ideology, an alternate base for authority in a counter culture must be stated in full.[39] In John 5:17-23 speech attributed to Jesus explicitly communicates internally coherent grounds for giving absolute authority to Jesus. It bases his authority on a carefully argued explanation of the son's relationship to the father. Its mythic intertext, the vision of the son enthroned like YHWH, is translated into a logical principle. To sustain a counterculture relatively independent of the dominant system from which it emerged, it carefully builds the rationale of its own alternate ground of authority.

The absolute case sets in place a new basis for jurisdiction, the authoritative son who is just like the father. It clarifies the role of honor to Jesus "just as" God; conversely its blames those who refuse to honor Jesus in this precise way. Blame extends, beyond the Judeans, to any who question the absolute case as the authoritative basis of the jurisdiction of the son. Pressure to conform, is exercised by combined divine monarchic and patriarchal authority. The outcome is absolute reasoning. Though it is countercultural in origin, the absolute case is equipped for dominance. It makes explicit the myth of divine superiority. From father to son, the reasoning colludes with the myth, until Jesus becomes "just like" the monarchic father God.

---

[1] Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1.5-7 & 9, trans. W. Rhys Roberts in *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (ed. R. McKeon; New York: Random House, 1941) 1325-1451.

[2] J. T. Murphy, "The Origins and Early Development of Rhetoric," in *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric* (ed. J. T. Murphy; New York: Random House, 1972) 45-46.

[3] Murphy, *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*, 45.

[4] Murphy, *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*, 57.

[5] Murphy, *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*, 46; see also B. J. Malina, "Is There a Circum-Mediterranean Person? Looking for Stereotypes," *BTB* 22(2) (1992).

[6] Murphy, *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*, 45-46.

[7] B. L. Mack and V. K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1989) 162.

[8] Εδιωκον in John 5.16 can be translated "to prosecute," not only "to persecute." See A. E. Harvey *Jesus on Trial: A Study in the Fourth Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1976) 50.

[9] Cicero *Ad Herennium De Ratione Dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium)* (trans. H. Caplan, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964) 2.19.28-30.

[10] H. V. D. Parunak observes that the basic structure of accusation and defense is confirmed by the aorist middle construction of απεκρινατο in John 5:19, attested elsewhere only in John 5.17. Parunak notes it is a form that without exception is used in legal reports in which it means 'replied' of an advocate or party in a suit, citing J. Moulton, J. Hope, and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament illustrated from the Papyri and other non-literary sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930) 64. Parunak concludes that the evangelist uses legal idiom to stage Jesus' discourse as a defense to the Jewish charges ("Transitional Techniques in the Bible," *JBL* 102 (4) [1983] 538).

[11] Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 42.

[12] Mack and Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels*, 52.

[13] See *Ad Herennium* 1.10.16.

[14] V. K. Robbins shows how the words that are stated in the text can aid in examination of the reasoning that is unstated ("Pragmatic Relations as a Criterion for Authentic Sayings," *Foundations and Facets Forum* 1 [3] [1985] 35-63, and "The woman who touched Jesus' Garment: Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of the Synoptic Accounts," *NTS* 33[4] [1987] 502-515).

[15] Hermogenes, "*On Stases*: A Translation with an Introduction and Notes," R. E. Nadeau, *Speech Monographs* 31 (1964) 361-424.

[16] TalBab *Taanith* 2a, Gen 30:22; Ezek 37:13, cited by R. E. Brown, in *The Gospel According to John* (2d ed. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1986) 217; see also E. K. Lee, *The Religious Thought of St. John* (London: SPCK, 1950) 42.

[17] C. Perelman, *The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument,* (trans. J. Petrie, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963) 63-64.

[18] Perelman, *The Idea of Justice*, 14-15.

[19] Perelman, *The Idea of Justice*, 14-15.

[20] Perelman, *The Idea of Justice*, 40.

[21] Perelman, *The Idea of Justice*, 101.

[22] Perelman, *The Idea of Justice*, 40.

[23] Perelman, *The Idea of Justice*, 98,101.

[24] Perelman, *The Idea of Justice*, 41.

[25] L. Aqvist observes that deontic logic is profitably understood within the context of a normative system in reference to the role played by sanctions or penalties ("Deontic Logic," *Handbook of Philosophical Logic* Vol. II. Extensions of Classical Logic, ed. D. Gabbay and F. Guenthner, Dordrecht: D. Reidel, [1984] 608).

[26] On recontextualization, see V. K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996) 48-50.

[27] J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 357.

[28] For more detail on this hypothesis see M. R. Huie-Jolly, "Threats Answered by Enthronement: John 5:17-27 with Reference to the Divine Warrior Myth in Psalm 2 and Daniel 7," in C. A. Evans and J. A. Sanders, eds. *Christian Interpretations of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (JSNTSup/SSEJC 4, 1996 [or 1997 forthcoming]); also M. R. Huie-Jolly, "The Son Enthroned in Conflict: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of John 5:17-23," Unpublished Phd Dissertation, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 1994.

[29] The standard treatment of the divine warrior myth is F. M. Cross *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973). See also P. D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); A. Y. Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula MT: Scholars Press, 1976); J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); P. B. Duff, "The March of the Divine Warrior and the Advent of the Greco-Roman King: Mark's Account of Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem," *JBL* 111(1) (1992) 55-71; and F. R. McCurley, *Ancient Myths and Biblical Faith: Scriptural Transformations* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

[30] In Daniel 7:1-14 and Psalm 2 the son's enthronement similarly follows mention of divine enthronement.

[31] J. Neusner, "The Absoluteness of Christianity and the Uniqueness of Judaism, Why Salvation is not of the Jews," *Interpretation* 43 (1989) 19-20.

[32] Neusner continues, "Jesus' overturning of the tables of the money changers is an 'incomprehensible act for Jews' to whom it represented a rejection of the provision for sacrifices of atonement for all Israel..., only someone who explicitly rejected Torah could have done so, or someone who intended to set up a different table" ("The Absoluteness of Christianity," 25).

[33] Neusner, "The Absoluteness of Christianity," 18-19.

[34] H. Odeburg in commenting on John 5 observes that Jesus speaks in tautologies (*The Fourth Gospel, Interpreted in Its Relation to Contemporaneous Religious Currents in Palestine and the Hellenistic-Oriental World* [Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri-A-B, 1929]).

[35] N. Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982) 6-9.

[36] Neusner, "The Absoluteness of Christianity," 20.

[37] K. Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (New York: George Braziller, Inc 1955) 187.

[38] Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 187.

[39] See V. K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 1996) 169.

The Rhetoric of Revelation

Robert M. Royalty Jr.
Stanford University

I. Text and Context

The relationship of text and context has plagued twentieth-century literary criticism as well as biblical studies. Although Revelation has not been at the forefront of NT studies over the past 100 years, the interpretation of the book has been marked by the same theoretical divisions that have characterized Synoptic studies and, to a lesser extent, the study of Paul.[1] I will keep the issue framed in terms of the Apocalypse. Historical-criticism pays a great deal of attention to what is going on behind the text. This concern has been well represented in interpretations of the Apocalypse.[2] Revelation makes a number of historical claims and seems to describe political events in the first century CE. But on the other hand, Revelation spins such a fantastic narrative of visions and sevens and phantasmagorical characters that the "meaning" surely

---

[1]While Synoptic studies have focused on the relation of text and history since Schweitzer and Wrede, the notion of the Pauline epistles as narrative to be interpreted rather than history and theology to be reconstructed is relatively new. See Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation into the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (SBLDS 56; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983) 1–36; and Norman Petersen, *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 1–42.

[2]I am not speaking here of conservative interpretations that apply Revelation to their various contemporaneous situations because such readings pay no attention to the text's historical context. For surveys of the history of interpretation of Revelation, see Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (5th ed.; MeyerK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1896) 51–141 (102–40 on the triumph of historical-critical methodology); M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation* (IBC; Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1989) 47–51; and Arthur W. Wainright, *Mysterious Apocalypse: Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993). British scholars have applied the strictly historical interpretation to Revelation 2–3 and 13 in particular; see William M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia* (ed. Mark W. Wilson; Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1994; orig. pub. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1904) and Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in the Local Setting* (JSNTSup 11; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986).

goes beyond the historical context of Asia Minor. The Apocalypse is what Umberto Eco has described as an "open work."[3] The seductive richness of the imagery and the complexity of the vision-cycles lead scholars to construct equally rich and complex literary interpretations, which tend to leave the historical context behind in a search for more universal significance.[4] Structuralist theory has dominated literary analysis of Revelation for the past 25 years. While pure structuralism leans toward the ahistorical, the strong historical bent of biblical studies (the "old historicism") has kept most structuralist studies of Revelation firmly anchored in the historical context of the text.[5] In recent years, post-structural theory, which can be radically ahistorical in its deconstructionist guises, and ideological criticism, which may discuss the relation of a text to the structures of power in any historical context, have begun to be applied to Revelation.[6]

Battles rage over text and context at the MLA, to resurface a year later at the SBL, but most students and scholars of the Apocalypse are really interested in both its complicated narrative world and its function in its original setting.

---

[3]See Umberto Eco, "The Poetics of the Open Work," *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979) 47–66.

[4]For source criticism, the intricate theories of R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920, 1985), rival those of Synoptic scholars. For Jungian and symbolic analysis, see Austin Farrer, *A Rebirth of Images: The Making of St Johns' Apocalypse* (Westminster, Dacre Press, 1949) and Adela Yarbro Collins, "Feminine Symbolism in the Book of Revelation," *Biblical Interpretation* 1 (1993) 21–33; for New Criticism, Paul Minear, *I Saw a New Earth: an Introduction to the Visions of the Apocalypse* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1968).

[5]Important structuralist studies in the 1970s that have shaped subsequent research include John Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975); Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press for the Harvard Theological Review, 1976); and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Composition and Structure of Revelation," *CBQ* 39 (1977) 344–66 (repr. *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984] 159–80). A recent study that has stayed within the structuralist fold is Leonard Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[6]See Tina Pippin, "Eros and the End: Reading for Gender in the Apocalypse of John," *Semeia* 59 (1992) 193–210; idem., *Death and Desire: The Rhetoric of Gender in the Apocalypse of John* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993); and Stephen D. Moore, "The Beatific Vision as a Posing Exhibition: Revelation's Hypermasculine Deity," *JSNT* 60 (1995) 27–55.

Historicist farmers and literary cowboys can be friends. Nevertheless, in order to begin to relate text and context, narrative world and social world, one must choose sides. In this paper, my primary concern is with the early Christian communities, the historical audience of Revelation. This does not mean that I am choosing "meaning" over "significance," for I am not asserting the primacy and immutability of John's intentions when writing Revelation, nor do I assert that the way the text was heard by its original audience is normative for later readers.[7] But I have made the choice, for this study, to use this particular social embodiment as the context for reading Revelation. This exercise of listening with the ears of the early Christians is related to the turn to the reader in recent reader-response and reception theories. Of course, the construction of the "implied" or "competent" reader is another notoriously difficult problem in critical studies.[8] But by considering the probable historical audience rather than the competent reader, one considers the social dimension and functions of the text rather than constructs an individual response based on modern sensibilities and ideologies.

Choosing sides still leaves us with the problem of *how* to relate text and context. Rhetorical criticism offers an elegant and efficacious solution. Revelation is a highly rhetorical text that tries to *do* something; it is, in fact, performative rather than referential language.[9] Rhetorical criticism keeps the

---

[7]On meaning and significance, see E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); on the relationship of what a text means and what it meant, see Krister Stendhal, "Biblical Theology," *IDB* 1.418–32; James Barr, "Biblical Theology," *IDBSup* 104–11; and Wayne A. Meeks, "A Hermeneutics of Social Embodiment," *HTR* 79 (1986) 176–86.

[8]I am borrowing from reader-response theorists, such as Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, 3–43; and Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); but I would hesitate to characterize my method as reader-response criticism. My reading of Iser, however, is compatible with my use of anthropological methods, for Iser takes an explicitly functionalist model to describe the intersection of text and reading and describes in some detail the "repertoire" or culture that provides the context for the act of reading (see 68–79). But, as Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minn. Press, 1983) has noted, Iser's "repertoire" or context presupposes a liberal humanist ideology, one quite different from the culture of the early Christian communities. Adding the dimension of symbolic anthropology, I believe, provides the necessary corrective for Iser's ideological shortcomings.

[9]See the discussion of propositional and pictorial language in Boring, *Revelation*, 51–58. Hemer, *Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia,* claims that the language of Revelation is referential, rather than performative, and that the letters have specific and concrete referents in the social historical setting.

audience ever in mind, and the book of Revelation is a highly rhetorical work.[10] George Kennedy has defined rhetoric simply as "that quality in discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his purposes."[11] Keeping attention on the rhetorical nature of the Apocalypse avoids separating the text from its context, or its "rhetorical situation."[12] We can try to hear Revelation as the audience in ancient Asia Minor would have heard it by focusing on the rhetoric of the text.

Important to my understanding of the rhetoric of Revelation is the idea that the text does not *reflect* a situation of crisis or oppression so much as it tries to *create* a crisis in the social world of its original audience. This view of the *Sitz im Leben* of the Apocalypse, now widely held, stands in contrast to the view that the book reflects a situation of extreme oppression and organized persecution by the Roman authorities. The latter, more traditional view derives from the rhetoric of Revelation itself and is not necessarily consistent with the way other writers, including other ancient Christians, understood their world. To say that the rhetoric of Revelation attempts to create a crisis in the social world of its audience is slightly different than speaking of the crisis of the Apocalypse as "real or "perceived," as does Adela Yarbro Collins.[13] In essence I am saying the same thing about the social setting of the Apocalypse as Yarbro Collins, but I object to the implication in her terminology that, with more data, we could really know what was going on. More promising is the sociology-of-knowledge approach to the narrative world of Revelation set forth by Wayne Meeks. Meeks writes that "the general strategy of the Apocalypse is to oppose to the ordinary view of reality, as anyone might experience it in Smyrna or Laodicea, a quite different picture of the world as seen from the standpoint of

---

[10]By "rhetoric," I mean the practice and study of persuasive speech in Greco-Roman antiquity, and by "rhetorical criticism" the method introduced to NT studies by George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984). The standard reference work on ancient rhetorical forms and figures is Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch zum literarischen Rhetorik: Ein Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft* (2 vols.; Munich: Max Hueber, 1960).

[11]Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 3.

[12]See Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968) 1–14.

[13]See Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 84–110.

heaven."[14] Revelation, according to Meeks, robs the perceived social order of its greatest asset, "its sheer facticity," by removing "common sense" as a guide for perceiving the social order and thereby turning the social order upside down. Leonard Thompson, also using the sociology-of-knowledge approach, has presented a full analysis of the social world as constructed by John of Patmos and other enemies of Domitian, such as Suetonius and Pliny, and the social-historical situation as he constructs it with the help of sources more friendly to Domitian.[15] Thompson's volume is a new addition to a growing consensus among scholars. To quote Thompson, "In a nutshell, the conflict and crisis in the Book of Revelation between Christian commitment and the social order derive from John's perspective on Roman society rather than from significant hostilities in the social environment."[16] The crisis of the Apocalypse is a construction that stems from the community of John and his circle of prophets.

II. The Rhetoric of Revelation

When using rhetorical criticism, we should be cautious in assuming too much formal rhetorical knowledge in the Christian communities at this time, but we should not sell them too short as uncultured and uneducated. Rhetorical theory was part of the social and intellectual climate in Asia Minor when Revelation was first written and heard. Smyrna and Ephesus were famous centers of rhetorical training during the first and second centuries and sophists frequently performed for the public.[17] The author of Revelation digested vast amounts of

---

[14]Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 143–44.

[15]Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*. See the review of Thompson by Adela Yarbro Collins, *JBL* 110 (1991) 748–50, where she answers some of the charges brought against the use of "perceived crisis" theory; and also the recent study supporting many of Thompson's findings, Brian W. Jones, *The Emperor Domitian* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[16]Thompson, *The Book of Revelation*, 175.

[17]While the rhetorical performances of the sophists were often held only for their aristocratic students or elite gatherings such as the emperor's salon, declamations were also public performances in the theaters of the cities. See Philostr. *VS* 1.19 (511) on Nicetes' fear of speaking in the public assembly and the accusations of the crowd; 1.21 (518) on how Scopelian appeared to the crowd; and 1.25 (537–38) on how Polemo would prepare for the crowd. See also Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 8–10, for a reasoned historical justification for using classical rhetoric to study the NT; and David E. Aune, "The Influence of the Roman

the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, which provided him with a form of rhetorical training. There were also rhetorical handbooks in circulation. Classical rhetorical theory furnishes a more emic analytical tool for studying the argument of Revelation than modern linguistic theories.[18] If nothing else, it provides a vocabulary for discussing the rhetoric of Revelation that corresponds to the vocabulary of Greco-Roman antiquity for discussing public discourse. The Greek of Revelation may not be up to Attic standards, but the text lends itself to analysis in terms of rhetorical invention, arrangement, and style.

The rhetorical nature of the Apocalypse, like other NT writings, begins with its performative character. This was a text to be read aloud (ἀναγινώσκω, Rev 1:3) and to be heard by an audience (ακούω, Rev 1:3; 22:17, 18). Of the three types or "species" of classical rhetoric, Revelation may be compared to either deliberative rhetoric (λόγος συμβουλευτικός), which seeks to persuade an audience to follow or not to follow a specific course of action, or epideictic (λόγος ἐπιδεικτικός), which seeks to affect an audience's values or their views towards a person or city.[19] Revelation has clear affinities with epideictic rhetoric. First, epideictic tries to affect an audience's view, opinions, or values. The Apocalypse tries to convince its audience to hold a favorable point of view towards John and his allied prophets and their version of Christianity and to take a negative point of view towards the Roman authorities, the Jews, and Christian teachers or prophets who hold different views from John.[20] Second, epideictic includes speeches of praise (encomium, panegyric, *laudatio*) and blame (ψόγος, *vituperatio*) of persons and cities. Revelation begins with the praise or blame of the seven cities in Asia and builds to extended invective against Babylon and encomium on the New Jerusalem. Third, epideictic rhetoric is distinguished by its amplification (ἐργασία, *amplificatio*) of topics and imagery; vivid description (ἔκφρασις);

Imperial Court Ceremonial on the Apocalypse of John," *BR* 28 (1983) 5–26, pp. 6–7.

[18]Compare the etic approaches of Schüssler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*, 159–80; and David Hellholm, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John," *Semeia* 36 (1986) 13–64.

[19]The third species, judicial or forensic rhetoric (λόγος δικανικός), applies to the setting of the law court and has less relevance to the study of Revelation.

[20]See Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 19–23, 73–77, on the goals of epideictic rhetoric. As he notes, 74, there is always a "subtle deliberative purpose" in epideictic rhetoric but the primary goal is the strengthening of values.

and comparison (σύγκρισις).[21] All three of these characteristics are prominent features in Revelation. There are elements of deliberative rhetoric in the exhortations to "stand firm" and dissuasion from eating idol meat in the messages in Revelation 2–3; there are elements of accusation against Rome/Babylon in Revelation 18 that might suggest the law court. But the few calls for action in the text are vague; what does it mean to "hold fast" (Rev 3:11), "rest a little longer," (6:11), or "calculate the number of the beast" (13:18)? Rev 13:18 also calls for wisdom; understanding is more important than action. The visions describe "what is, and what is to take place" (1:19) rather than what the audience should do. While the implied author asserts that events are going to happen in the future, the rhetorical function of these assertions is to change the audience's view of their social world in the present. Revelation should be read as epideictic rhetoric.[22]

Again, the use of classical terminology should not be taken as a claim that John and his audience were trained rhetoricians who analyzed discourse in light of these classical categories. The terms are helpful for describing what is going on in the text and were also being used by theorists around the time Revelation was written and first read. A comparison with a modern method of interpretation, the sociology-of-knowledge, shows the value and flexibility of classifying Revelation as epideictic rhetoric. While rhetorical theory helps us understand *that* Revelation is trying to convince its audience and *how* the text tries to do this, the sociology-of-knowledge helps us understand *what* the text tries to convince them. Analysis of Revelation in terms of the sociology-of-knowledge discusses how Revelation tries to change the symbolic universe of the audience by imparting new knowledge that differs from the publicly accessible knowledge of Greco-Roman society.[23] Revelation tries to change the way the audience sees their social world. This is the function of epideictic rhetoric, which tries to change an audience's values or opinions.

---

[21]Ibid., 23, notes the ἔκφρασις of the visions in Revelation.

[22]John T. Kirby, "The Rhetorical Situations of Revelation 1-3," *NTS* 34 (1988) 197–207, mistakenly contends that Revelation is deliberative rhetoric because it "is concerned with events in the future (Rev 1. 1, 3) and with a course of action expedient to the audience (22. 11–12)" (200). In effect, he takes these statements at face value, abrogating his critical position, rather than examining their rhetorical purposes.

[23]See Susan R. Garrett, "Chaos or Community? The Social World of the Book of Revelation," (master's thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1983) 73–87; Meeks, *Moral World*, 143–44; and, on public and deviant knowledge, Thompson, *Revelation*, 186–97.

The outline or arrangement of a speech in antiquity varied according to the species of rhetoric, but all three types moved in good Aristotelian fashion from beginning (proem or *exordium*) through the middle (including the διήγησις or *narratio*, *propositio*, *argumentatio*, *exempla*, etc.) to end (epilogue or *peroratio*).[24] Outlines of Revelation have been notoriously unsuccessful in proving very much; the proposals are as numerous as the scholars who have tackled the text.[25] Most commentators discern units in Rev 1:1–20, which I shall discuss below as proem and *narratio*; Rev 2:1–3:22, the messages to the seven churches; and an epilogue (*peroratio*) in 22:6–21. The main point of contention is how to divide up Rev 4:1–22:7, with its complicated patterns of interlocking, interwoven, and intercalated visions.[26]

---

[24]See Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 23–5, and the table of authorities in Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 148–49 [§ 262.]

[25]The study and comparison of literary outlines of Revelation would be a major work in its own right; three major proposals will suffice to demonstrate the complexity. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*, 174, proposes a series of four, sometimes overlapping, major parts: [1] the inaugural vision and letter septet, 1:9–3:22; [2] the seven sealed scroll, 4:1–9:21; 11:15–19; 15:1, 5–16:21; 17:1–19:10; [3] the small prophetic scroll, 10:1–15:4; and [4] visions of judgment and salvation, 19:11–22:9. Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 19–32, divides Revelation into two "great cycles" of visions, 1:1–11:19 and 12:1–22:21, including two series of seven unnumbered visions, 12:1–15:4 and 19:11–21:8 (following here Farrer, *Rebirth of Images*, 47–49). Yarbro Collins also introduces the unfortunate terms "Babylon Appendix" (17:1–19:10) and "Jerusalem Appendix" (21:9–22:5). Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993) 5–6, 17, questions the actual count of the markers for these "unnumbered series," καὶ ἔιδον and ὤφθη. He proposes an inaugural vision in 4:1–5:14, leading into three numbered series of sevens, with two intercalations (6:1–8:1; 8:3–5 / 8:2; 8:6–11:19 / 15:1; 15:5–16:21). "The story of God's people in conflict with evil," 12:1–14:20 and 15:24, falls between the seven trumpets and seven bowls. Bauckham's Babylon section is 17:1–19:10; 19:11–21:8 is transitional; and 21:9–22:9 is the New Jerusalem section, followed by the epilogue (see *Climax of Prophecy*, 2–22).

[26]Problems in terminology are symptomatic of the problem in describing the structure of Revelation. A passage such as Rev 6:1–8:5 demonstrates this well. The seven seals are opened in 6:1–16 and 8:1–2. The visions in Rev 7:1–17 are thus inserted between the sixth and seventh seal, a process called "intercalation" (Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 9) or "interlude" (Schüssler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*, 172–73). But Schüssler Fiorenza uses the term "intercalation" to describe the linking process in 8:1–2 in which the seventh seal leads immediately to the seven trumpets; Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth*, 16–18 calls this second device "interlocking" and Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 8–9, "overlapping or interweaving." Schüssler Fiorenza thus describes "double intercalations" in Rev 10:1–11:14 and 17:1–19:10.

The "septenaries" or series of sevens (seven messages, seven trumpets, etc.) would have been evident as a structuring device to an audience hearing the Apocalypse even for the first time. There are also a number of recurring phrases, in particular "after this I saw" (or "heard"), which would guide the audience (Μετὰ ταῦτα ἔιδον or Μετὰ ταῦτα ἤκουσα; see Rev 4:1; 7:1; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1). Problems arise when commentators attempt to be more precise than this—for there are a number of confusing twists and turns—or, in a variation of the same error, when commentators see more structure in the Apocalypse than there really is. Hinge texts, such as Rev 10:1–11:14 and 19:1–10, which interrupt septenaries or start new sections before another has finished, complicate analysis of the units even more. Attempts to group visions in "unnumbered series of sevens," interludes, appendices, and intercalations, however justified by detailed analysis of the text, offer little insight into how the audience would have heard the Apocalypse, since these complicated structures would not have been accessible to auditors. It is important to keep in mind the distinction between rhetorical *style* and *arrangement* or structure when considering the structure of the Apocalypse. Style, in rhetorical criticism, may be divided into *lexis* or diction, the choice of words, including metaphors and tropes; and *synthesis* or composition, including figures of speech and thought.[27] The recurrence of stylistic features might be mistaken for structural markers by commentators and such a mistake could produce a more complicated arrangement than necessary. Furthermore, the cyclical, repetitive, and confusing structure of the visions is in itself a rhetorical technique designed to destabilize the audience's view of their social world.

The *general* structure of the Apocalypse can be compared to the arrangement of epideictic rhetoric, "an orderly sequence of amplified topics dealing with the life of the person being celebrated or with the qualities of the concept under consideration, often adorned with vivid description (ecphrasis) or with a comparison of the subject to something else (synkrisis)."[28] The amplified topics of the Apocalypse are the visions, which, if not always in orderly sequence, are vividly described and contrasted to each other. *Synkrisis* or rhetorical comparison is a major structuring device of the Apocalypse; it has been so recognized under the names "polemical parallelism" or the "mirroring

---

[27]See Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 26–30. Bauckham identifies a number of repeated phrases exhibiting "remarkable" variation (*Climax of Prophecy*, 22, 27). While John's use of *variatio* is skillful, it is hardly remarkable within the context of ancient rhetorical conventions. A number of these features Bauckham identifies, as he himself notes, would not have been evident to the audience nor to most careful readers today (29).

[28]Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 24.

motif" by commentators.[29] As a literary device, it expresses the cosmic conflict in the narrative world of the Apocalypse between the forces of heaven and the demonic powers. Satan and Satan's allies mimic God and God's creatures throughout the book of Revelation. The Beast from the Sea, with ten horns and seven heads and a deadly wound that had been healed (Rev 13:1–3), mimics the Lamb of God who was slain and has seven horns and seven eyes (Rev 5:6–7). An angel seals the slaves of God upon their forehead, protecting them from the disasters that beset the earth (7:3); the Beast from the Land causes everyone to be marked on their forehead or right hand (13:16), designating them for eventual death and destruction. The cities of Babylon and the New Jerusalem are set in clear contrast. The mirroring motif is an important structuring element that connects Revelation to the arrangement of epideictic rhetoric.

Rhetorical theory describes the proofs in the argument (πίστις, *probatio*) of a speech as "inartistic" or external (ἄτεχνος, *inartificialis*) and "artistic" or internal (ἔντεχνος, *artificialis*) proofs.[30] External proofs, such as the testimony of witnesses or court documents, would be of particular importance in judicial rhetoric but are helpful for describing the argument in Revelation as well. The visions of the Apocalypse function as external proofs. While a critical reader might argue that these are literary creations of John and therefore internal proofs, in the narrative-rhetorical situation they are presented to the audience as something John sees, records, and reports to the seven churches. In other words, they must be perceived by the audience as something "real" rather than as literary creations for the rhetorical and ideological purposes of the author. John's visions acquire additional authority from their correspondence to earlier prophetic and apocalyptic visions and their use of biblical language, since the Hebrew scriptures frequently functioned as external proofs in early Christian writings. But while the visions could seem authoritative to members of the audience familiar with Jewish and Christian traditions, they might seem quite bizarre to others. The visions cannot stand alone, therefore, but require additional argument or proof.

---

[29]Adolf Deissmann coined the phrase "polemical parallelism" to describe the cult of Christ in opposition to the cult of Caesar; see Paul Barnett, "Polemical Parallelism: Some Further Reflections on the Apocalypse," *JSNT* 35 (1989) 111–20. The pattern of binary oppositions has been used by structuralist commentators on Revelation such as Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, and Yarbro Collins, *Combat Myth* and *Crisis and Catharsis*. See also Meeks, *Moral World*, 144–45.

[30]See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 1.190–93 [§348–54]; Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 13–19; Arist. *Rh.* 1.2.2 [1355B]; 3.13.4 [1414B]; Quint. *Inst.* 5. preface, 1.1.

The second type of rhetorical proof centers on the author himself, his own authority, and his relation to authority figures in the Christian community, in particular Jesus Christ. If the Apocalypse is to have validity among its intended recipients, the text must successfully convince the audience that John of Patmos has recorded visions received from God through Christ. The validity of John's visions, or external proofs, depends a great deal upon the authority of the narrator and the goodwill of the audience. Throughout the Apocalypse, then, but particularly in the introductory proem (Rev 1:1–8) and narration (1:9–20), the author presents internal or "artistic" proofs designed to seek their sympathy and goodwill of the audience towards the narrator.[31] Two different types of artistic proofs featured in John's proem are "ethical" and "pathetical" proofs. An "ethical" proof attempts to establish the narrator's character (ἦθος, *ēthos*) and credibility; a "pathetical" proof works upon the feelings (πάθος, *pathos*) of the audience with promises and threats.[32] Again, use of these terms should not be taken as a claim that John had a copy of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* or that the audience judged the Apocalypse by its faithfulness to Aristotle's *"Art" of Rhetoric*. The modes of *ēthos* and *pathos* are convenient terms to describe a feature common to discourse in all cultures: a speaker attempts to establish credibility and to play upon the feelings and emotions of his or her audience.

I shall now illustrate how rhetorical theory may be applied to the text of Revelation in three exegetical case studies. These studies will show how reading Revelation as epideictic rhetoric clarifies the ideological agenda of the author. By emphasizing the rhetoric and ideology of the text, I cannot perforce account for every literary detail in this rich text. Rather, the analysis of the rhetorical and ideological of Revelation shows how the text attempts to change the values and opinions of the implied audience and thereby changing their perception of their social world.

---

[31]See on artistic proofs, Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 193–95 [§§ 355–357]; Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 14–19; Arist. *Rh.* 1.2.2–5 [1356a]; Quint. *Inst.* 5.12.9–12.

[32]Aristotle's third mode, *logos* or logical proof, is not a prominent feature in Revelation, although see on Rev 1:3 below.

III. Revelation 1:1–3

Rhetorical theory and practice place a great burden on the beginning of a text. In the opening proem (Rev 1:1–8) and narration (Rev 1:9–20) of the Apocalypse, the implied author seeks the attention and goodwill of the audience; establishes the trustworthy character of his narrator; and introduces the main themes of the Apocalypse. Above all, the author has to begin the task of convincing the audience that he is right.

The function of the proem is "to obtain the attention of the audience and goodwill or sympathy toward the speaker."[33] The proem of the Apocalypse, Rev 1:1–8, can be divided into the superscript or preface, 1:1–3, and the epistolary prescript, 1:4–8. This division is marked by shift from third person in the preface to first person in the epistolary prescript. Revelation in effect begins twice, but there are rhetorical implications in postponing the opening of the letter in 1:4–8 until after the third-person preface in 1:1–3.[34] If Revelation opened with Rev 1:4, the epistolary character of the text and John's role as author would be foregrounded rather than mediated through the preface. But rather than presenting itself as a letter from John, the Apocalypse presents itself as the *apokalypsis* of Jesus Christ. This shift is a subtle rhetorical move designed to increase the authority of the visions in the text (the external proofs) by ascribing them to God and Christ while establishing the *ēthos* or character of the narrator as trustworthy to deliver these visions to the audience (an internal, artistic proof).

A number of rhetorical features of the preface in Rev 1:1–3 focus on the *ēthos* or character of the narrator. The Apocalypse is identified as Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:1), the "revelation" (lit. "uncovering") of Jesus Christ, only once. The lack of further description, coupled with the expectation that this *apokalypsis* be read aloud in assembly, shows that the word was familiar to its audience. The audience would likely have understood it as a reference to Christian worship and prophetic activity rather than a

---

[33]Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 23–24; see also Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 1.150 [§263]; Arist. *Rh.* 3.14 [1414b]; Quint. *Inst.* 4.1.1–79.

[34]This rhetorical move could be attributed either to the historical John of Patmos or to a later editor. The heuristic assumption of the "implied author" includes both possibilities; see Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (2nd ed.; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1961, 1983) 67–77, 151–65, 211–40. David E. Aune, "The Prophetic Circle of John of Patmos and the Exegesis of Revelation 22.16," *JSNT* 37 (1989) 103–16, suggests that the Apocalypse was carried to the churches by different prophetic envoys and the prologue legitimates their role.

description of the genre of the text (see 1 Cor 14:26).[35] The preface claims that this is the revelation "of Jesus Christ," given to Jesus by God and then delivered to John by an angel.[36] Although the "historical" John of Patmos was probably a leader of a group of Christian prophets and known to the Asian churches, the text itself has to construct the character of the narrator, by means of artistic proofs, so that the audience will find the report of heavenly visions convincing. Before John speaks directly to the audience as "I," he is introduced as a slave of God, to whom God sent an *apokalypsis* of Christ by means of God's angel. John is introduced in the third-person in 1:1–2, at the center of a chiastic structure:

(A) Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
(B) ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς,
(C) δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ
γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, καὶ
ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ
ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ
Ἰωάννῃ,
(B') ὃς ἐμαρτύρησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ
(A') καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅσα εἶδεν.

The chiastic structure surrounds John with the highest Christian authority figures, Jesus Christ and God, and introduces the mediating angel. The rhetorical strategy of ascribing this *apokalypsis* to God is part of the overall strategy of cloaking the author's own moral, ideological, and theological convictions in divine garb. Here, in contrast to every other NT text, God and Jesus Christ are ascribed authorship. John, a slave of God, merely receives the revelation.

---

[35]Revelation is the first "apocalypse" to take this title. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*, pp. 150–51 and n. 56, makes a strong case that the title was meant to characterize John's experience as a Christian prophetic experience in the Pauline tradition. See also 1 Cor 1:7; 14:6; 2 Cor 12:1, 7; Gal 1:12; 2:2; Eph 1:17; 3:3; 2 Thess 1:7; 1 Pet 1:7, 13; 4:13. The verb ἀποκαλύπτω does not occur in Revelation but is frequent in Paul and Deutero-Pauline texts (Rom 1:17, 18; 8:18; 1 Cor 2:10; 3:13; 14:30; Gal 1:16; 3:23; Eph 3:5; Phil 3:15; 2 Thess 2:3, 6, 8; 1 Pet 1:5, 12; 5:1).

[36]Reading the genitive here as subjective, with Bousset, *Offenbarung*, 210; H. B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (3rd ed.; London: MacMillan, 1911) 1–2; Charles, *Revelation*, 1.6; and subsequent commentators.

The preface begins to establish the narrator's character, or *ēthos*, by claiming that God has entrusted the "revelation" of Jesus Christ to his slave John by means of an angel. It also heightens the emotional impact, or *pathos*, of the text on the audience. This is done in two ways. First, John creates an eschatological time frame with the phrases "what must soon take place" in the first sentence (ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, 1:1) and "the time is near" in the second (ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς, 1:3). The preface expresses a clear sense of eschatological urgency; God has revealed the future to John. Second, the preface includes the first of the seven beatitudes in the Apocalypse, with a blessing upon "the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy" and "those who hear and who keep what is written in it" (1:3). This blessing implies a palpable threat for those who do not keep these words or act within the eschatological time-frame created by the text (see Rev 22:18–19). The blessing is linked to the warning "the time is near" by a causal γάρ, so that the final phrase is an *enthymeme* or deductive proof. Those who pay attention to this *apokalypsis* are blessed *because* the time is near. The rhetoric of the preface attempts to instill in the audience a sense of urgency and of the importance of this revelation, heightening the emotion or *pathos* of the text.

IV. The Messages to the Seven Churches

The messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2–3 have a regular structure with several repeated elements. Various outlines have been proposed, the most valuable of which recognize that these are not letters but prophetic proclamations within the larger epistolary framework of Revelation.[37] Rather

---

[37]The idea of Charles, *Revelation*, 1.37, 43–47, that the letters were composed and sent at an earlier date and then re-edited into the final version of the Apocalypse has fallen out of favor. Kirby, "Rhetorical Situations," argues that these are in fact letters, following the lead of Ramsay, *Letters*, and Hemer, *Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*. The weaknesses in his position have been ably discussed by David E. Aune, "The Form and Function of the Proclamations to the Seven Churches (Rev 2–3)," *NTS* 36 (1990) 182–204, pp. 194–97 and n. 46. Boring, *Revelation*, and Wilfrid J. Harrington, *Revelation* (Sacra Pagina 16; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical/Michael Glazier, 1993) describe Revelation 2–3 as messages while Jürgen Roloff, *Revelation: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) prefers "circular letters." See also L. Hartman, "Form and Message. A Preliminary Discussion of 'Partial Texts' in Rev 1–3 and 22,6ff." in *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Noveau Testament* (ed. J. Lambrecht; BETL 53; Leuven: J. Duculot, 1980) 129–49; Heinrich Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (HNT 16a; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1974) 49–54; and Martin Karrer, *Die Johannesoffenbarung als Brief: Studien zu ihre literarischen, historischen und theologischen Ort* (FRLANT 140; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986) 159–65.

than having an epistolary structure, these messages have formal and structural similarities to ancient royal or imperial edicts.[38] The association of these messages with imperial edicts strengthens the political imagery introduced in Rev 1:1–20.[39] The messages also have a strong prophetic content, recognized by a number of scholars.[40] The use of familiar prophetic forms was an integral part of the rhetorical strategy to establish John's character (*ēthos*) and authority. John intended the churches to hear these messages as Christ speaking through him prophetically so that Christ, not John, was heard addressing the particular situation of each community.

A variety of schemes have been suggested to describe the regular form of the seven messages. Each message has an opening section, a body, and a concluding section; these can be subdivided into four to eight parts. For instance, Aune discerns four different structural features in the opening of each proclamation: (1) the *adscriptio*, the name or address of each church; (2) the command to write (γράψον); (3) the "thus says" formula, (τάδε λέγει); which leads into (4) the christological predications, "of him who . . . ." While four opening units may be discerned formally, rhetorically they would have functioned as one opening unit. The only significant variations in this opening section are in the christological predications.[41] The concluding section of each message has two parts: a proclamation formula, "let anyone who has an ear listen" (ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω), an echo of the Synoptic parables; and a

---

[38]Argued forcefully by Aune, "Form and Function of the Proclamations," 183, 198–203.

[39]Ibid., 204.

[40]See Boring, *Revelation*, 85; Ferdinand Hahn, "Die Sendschreiben der Johannesapokalypse: Ein Beitrag zur Bestimmung prophetischer Redeformer," in *Tradition und Glaube: Das frühe Christentum in seiner Umwelt* (ed. G. Jeremias, H.-W. Kuhn, and H. Steggemann; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971) 357–94; Ulrich B. Müller, *Prophetie und Predigt im Neuen Testament: Formgeschichteliche Untersuchungen zur urchristlichen Prophetie* (Gütersloh, 1975) 47-104. David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983) 326 and "Form and Function of the Proclamations," 197–98, offers the unwieldy form "parenetic salvation-judgment oracle" to describe the messages.

[41]Aune, "Form and Function of the Proclamations," notes that variation in particles in the *adscriptio* suggests the author was purposefully varying his style here; note also that the fiction of addressing each angel is not held throughout the letters (Rev 2:10, 13, 20–25; 3:4). Boring, *Revelation*, 86–90, also sees eight parts which are similar to Aune's but with different names and functions. Roloff, *Revelation*, 41, divides the opening section into the command to write and a messenger formula.

promise of victory, "to the one who conquers I will give" (τῷ νικῶντι δώσω).[42]

The variations in the christological formula in the opening of each message call attention to this unit and how it shapes each proclamation and characterizes each church. These christological passages contain direct literary references to Rev 1:4–20. Christ uses John's exact words when addressing the seven churches. Christ describes himself to the Ephesians (2:1) with the same words that John used to describe his opening vision: "these are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand [see 1:16], who walks among the seven golden lampstands" (see 1:12–13). In the message to Thyatira (3:18), Christ uses the words from John's description in 1:14–15. In the message to Sardis (3:1), Christ lifts a phrase from the epistolary greeting in 1:4 to describe himself: "these are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars." This is entirely plausible in narrative time, since John would have heard the messages from Christ before composing the epistolary prescript to all seven churches. And yet this intratextuality also shows the literary artifice evident in John's careful rhetorical constructions throughout the Apocalypse.

The body of each message is generally divided into two parts. The first part describes the situation in each church and includes the οἶδα clause, usually "I know your works" (οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα) but somewhat different in the messages to Smyrna and Pergamum (Rev 2:9, 13).[43] Both Aune and Kirby describe this section as a *narratio* or διήγησις, a "statement of facts" in a deliberative or judicial oration. This label implies that the οἶδα section is preparatory but not central to each message. But the seven οἶδα-passages are in fact highly charged statements of praise or blame for each community based on the church's adherence to the author's ideology or toleration of dissenting views. In the second part of the body, often after the descriptive narration but sometimes intermingled with it, Christ proposes the "arrangement" or *dispositio* for each church.[44] These two units are the meat of each message and

---

[42]These are Aune's terms; Kirby combines them in an "epilogue"; Roloff and Boring describe essentially the same two parts.

[43]Called "οἶδα-Abschnitt" by Hahn, "Sendschreiben," 370–77; "narration" by Kirby; *narratio* by Aune; "divine knowledge" by Boring. Roloff and Harrington describe only one central section.

[44]Kirby "proposition"; Aune "arrangement" or *dispositio*; Boring "body."

difficult to distinguish from one another precisely.[45] They demonstrate the vivid description and rhetorical amplification of epideictic rhetoric. As rhetorical characterizations of each church, they are as important as the threats and promises that follow. The seven messages to the churches in Asia in Rev 2–3 focus on two moral issues.[46] The first is endurance in the face of suffering, and there is a clear suggestion in the text that all seven churches are not opening themselves fully to the trials of being a Christian as the implied author understands them (see Rev 3:1–5, 15–18; cf. Rev 1:9; 2:2, 10, 19). The second moral issue is how each church has responded to other groups or Christian leaders: "apostles" (2:2); "Jews" (2:8, 3:9); the "Nicolaitans" (2:6, 15); "Balaam" (2:14); and "Jezebel" (2:20-25). The text raises the issue of authority within the Christian communities by mentioning other Christian leaders by name and then characterizing them negatively. While commentators often combine these teachers into a unified opposition to John and his circle of prophets, there is no particular reason to do so other than the rhetorical force of Revelation.[47] Reading these messages as epideictic rhetoric shows how the

---

[45]Aune sees some overlap of the two features in the proclamation to Sardis, in which the *narratio* consists of Rev 3:1b, 4 and the *dispositio* of 3:2–4. In the proclamation to Laodicea, Rev 3:16 starts the *dispositio* but 3:17, "for you say 'I am rich,'" may be read as part of the *narratio* since it is part of the basis for Christ's rejection of the Laodicean attitude. Such complications support the outlines of Roloff and Harrington, who discern one central section.

[46]I have analyzed in detail the discussion of wealth and poverty in the messages to Smyrna and Laodicea in *The Streets of Heaven: The Imagery and Ideology of Wealth in the Apocalypse of John* (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1995).

[47]Aune, "Social Matrix," locates the struggle between John, the Nicolaitans, and "Jezebel" in the context of early Christian prophecy. He sees John fighting with "Jezebel" and the Nicolaitans over the majority centrist party of Christians in the seven churches. Aune's contention that the Nicolaitans of Ephesus and Pergamum are part of a movement sponsored by "Jezebel" of Thyatira has no supporting evidence. His labels of "conservative" and "liberal" to describe John and "Jezebel" (and her supposed allies) are anachronistic and have no historical or sociological value in the discussion. An emic analysis extending the discussion by Paul in 1 Corinthians and Romans might suggest the terms "weak" for John and "strong" for some of his opponents; a more rigorous etic analysis than Aune provides might suggest categories of social deviance, status, or some other more concrete descriptor of social location than liberal and conservative. I agree with Aune ("Social Matrix" p. 29 and n. 36) that labelling John's opponents as Gnostic by Schüssler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*, 114–32, is anachronistic and does not add to our understanding of the groups mentioned in Revelation.

author tries to shape his audience's opinions of each Asian church and of his Jewish and Christian opponents.

V. Revelation 18

The Apocalypse moves towards a great climax of destruction and renewal in the *ekphrasis* and *synkrisis*, description and comparison, of Babylon and the heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation 17–18 and 21–22. My final exegetical example showing how Revelation can be read as epideictic rhetoric is the great lament over Babylon in Revelation 18. Rev 18:1–24 is comprised of three speeches, as follows:

(1) Speech of the First Angel from Heaven, 18:1–3
(2) Speech of a Heavenly Voice, 18:4–20
  (a) Announcement of Judgment, 18:4–8
  (b) Three Laments
    (i) Kings, 18:9–10
    (ii) Merchants, 18:11–17
    (iii) Seafarers, 18:18–19
  (c) Call to Rejoice, 18:20
(3) Speech of the Mighty Angel, 18:21–24

The description of the destruction of Babylon creates its own rhetorical situation within the narrative context of the Apocalypse. These are speeches upon the occasion of the destruction of Babylon, a proper situation for epideictic rhetoric. The boundaries of each speech are clearly marked. John, the narrator, had been carried away from the heavenly throne room by an angel in the spirit to a place in the wilderness, where he saw the great harlot (17:3ff). Now, in 18:1–2, he sees an angel coming down from heaven and crying out the first speech in a mighty voice (καὶ ἔκραξεν ἐν ἰσχυρᾷ φωνῇ λέγων, 18:2). After this first speech, John hears another voice from heaven (Καὶ ἤκουσα ἄλλην φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λέγουσαν, 18:4). This speech includes the three dirges or laments of the kings, merchants and seafarers, and continues to 18:20. A mighty angel throws a stone into the sea and gives the final lament for the city (Καὶ ἦρεν εἷς ἄγγελος ἰσχυρὸς λίθον ὡς μύλινον μέγαν καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν λέγων, 18:21).

The key to understanding the structure of this chapter is recognizing that the central speech in 18:4–20 is given by one heavenly voice.[48] This heavenly speaker calls for God's people to leave the city; calls for vengeance; and pronounces judgment on Babylon (18:4–8). It then takes up ironic laments in the role of the city's former allies: kings, merchants and sailors (18:9–19). The direct address to Babylon 18:14, using second person singular, interrupts the rendition of the merchants' lament.[49] This voice then issues a call to rejoice in 18:20 at the conclusion of the lament. Candidates for this heavenly voice include God, an angel, or one of the other members of the throne room such as an elder, but a strong case can be made that this is the voice of Christ.[50] God does not speak in the Apocalypse until 21:5–8; if this extended speech in Revelation 18 over Babylon were by God, it would steal much of the rhetorical thunder of that passage. The speech refers to God, moreover, in the third person (18:8, 20). The other two speakers in Revelation 18 are explicitly identified as angels, as is usually the case in the Apocalypse when an angel speaks.[51] Christ is referred to as a voice first in 1:11–12 and again in 4:1.[52]

---

[48]So recognized by Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (2nd ed.; HNT 16; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953) 147; G. B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (2nd ed.; London: A. & C. Black, 1966, 1984) 228; Adela Yarbro Collins, "Revelation 18: Taunt-Song or Dirge?," in *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Noveau Testament* (ed. J. Lambrecht; BETL 53; Leuven: J. Duculot, 1980) 185–204, p. 193, who effectively argues against the divisions in the chapter proposed by Charles, *Revelation*, 2.87–95; and Bauckham, "Economic Critique," *Climax of Prophecy*, 340–41.

[49]See Charles, *Revelation*, 2.105–13, who rearranges 18:21–24 completely, adding 18:14 and 18:20 and calling 18:23e "meaningless"; see also Bousset, *Offenbarung*, 485; Lohmeyer, *Offenbarung*, 151; Kraft, *Offenbarung*, 235. Adela Yarbro Collins, "Revelation 18," 194–95, makes a sound argument for reading 18:14 in its present location as part of the central section.

[50]Charles, *Revelation*, 2.97, and Ernest Bernard Allo, *L'Apocalypse (*3rd ed.; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1933) 290, hold that it is Christ; Bousset, *Offenbarung*, 482, that it could be Christ or God; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdman's, 1977) 324, and Roloff, *Revelation*, 205, identify this voice as an angel. Yarbro Collins, "Revelation 18," 193, leaves the issue open.

[51]For instance Rev 5:11; 7:2; 10:3–5 (in contrast to "a voice from heaven"); 14:7, 8, 14–20 (where an angel gives instructions to the Son of Man); 16:5; 17:1–18; 19:9–10; 21:9.

[52]In 10:4 and 10:8, the instructions given by "a voice from heaven" parallel the instructions given by Christ to write in 1:19 and 22:10, suggesting that this too is the voice of Christ; see also 14:13. The voice in 22:10–11 is most likely Christ, even though an angel

Using "voice" to stand for Christ is an example of the trope of *synecdoche* (συνεκδοχή), using a part for the whole. Revelation 18 is a speech about the wealth of Babylon and its destruction. As with the messages to Smyrna and Laodicea, so here the implied author uses his most authoritative character to speak at length about wealth.[53] The city that is to be destroyed has a number of similarities in wealth and power to the heavenly throne room and the New Jerusalem that replaces Babylon. Proper words must be spoken on this occasion to separate for the audience the wealth of heaven from the wealth of Satan.

While the phrasing, diction and individual units of the speech show its biblical sources, Christ's speech also suggests the monody, "an emotional lament, not entirely unlike some passages in the prophets, usually on the death of a person or the destruction of a city."[54] According to Menander Rhetor, in his second treatise on epideictic rhetoric (2.16), the purpose of the monody is "to lament and express pity" (θρηνεῖν καὶ κατοικτίζεσθαι [434.19]).[55] He writes that a monody should fall into three "periods" (χρόνοι) covering the present, past, and future. Menander discusses the monody only in terms of a person, but Aelius Aristides delivered a famous monody on Smyrna in 178 CE, after the city was destroyed by an earthquake. Composed in the short, rhythmic cola of the style called "Asiatic" by the sophists, this monody also falls into three sections: the destruction of Smyrna; the former state of the city; and a threnody.[56] In the central section on the city's past, Aristides describes the former glories of Smyrna:

> Was mankind satiated for all their intercourse and association? What other city for them came close? The springs, theaters, avenues, and streets both covered and open to the air! The

---

speaks in 22:9, since it is clearly Christ in 22:12–13.

[53]See Royalty, *The Streets of Heaven*, for a full discussion of wealth imagery in Revelation.

[54]Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 76. See Yarbro Collins, "Revelation 18," and Royalty, *The Streets of Heaven*, 317–21, on the use of the Hebrew Bible in Revelation 18.

[55]See D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson, ed. and trans., *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981) 200–207, 347–47. As a lament, the monody provides a better comparison than the *paramuthētikos* or consolatory speech; or the *epitaphios* or funeral speech.

[56]See Charles A., Behr, trans., *P. Aelius Aristides: The Complete Works* (2 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill,, 1986) 2.58.

> beautiful and splendid market place! The streets named for gold and sacred rites, at every square each like a market place! The harbors longing for the embrace of their city most dear! The indescribable beauty of the gymnasiums! The grace of the temples and the precincts! Where in the earth did you sink! The monuments of the seacoast! All those dreams! What springs of tears are sufficient for so great an evil? What concerts and symphonies of all the choruses will be enough to bewail the city of fair choruses, much-hymned and thrice-desired by mankind? The fall of Asia! (*Or.* 18.6–7)[57]

The comparison between Revelation 18 and the monody tells us more about how the passage might have been heard by the Asian audience than what the implied author had in mind during composition. The monody was to be short, no more than 150 lines, since "mourners do not tolerate long delays or lengthy speeches at times of misfortune or unhappiness" (Menander Rhetor 2.16 [437.1–4]). The three speeches of Rev 18:1–24, as outlined above, describe the present, past, and future of Babylon, although the correspondence is likely coincidental. A monody was, strictly speaking, "one voice," and we have three voices in Revelation 18, with Christ ironically reading for a chorus of kings, merchants, and sailors.

Rev 18:1–24 could have been heard as prophetic lament or epideictic speech. The power of the rhetoric of Revelation is that it evokes two great traditions, the language and forms of the Hebrew prophets and the style of Greek epideictic rhetoric. The indictment of the city in Revelation 18 is a powerful *psogos* or invective against Babylon as well as an oracle against the nations. While source criticism of Revelation 18 shows affinity to scriptural traditions, the urban Asian context of the text and its implied audience suggests sophistic performance as well. It is unlikely that John's knowledge of rhetorical theory approached his scriptural erudition, but both author and audience would have had some grasp of public rhetoric. Epideictic invective was a powerful tool for the negative characterization of Babylon/Rome in Revelation 18.

---

[57]Ibid., 2.8.

VI. Conclusions

As I discussed in the beginning of this paper, the relation of text and context is particularly difficult for Revelation. Interpretations of the Apocalypse have struggled to bridge the abyss between its phantasmagorical narrative world and the social world of the implied audience. Part of the difficulty may be that the study of Revelation has been preoccupied with the author's sources and background. This preoccupation leads the reader deeper and deeper into the narrative world of Revelation and into constructions of the author's mind and intent, all the while moving further and further away from the Asian Christians who read the text aloud in their assemblies. In order to understand Revelation in its social-historical context, we have to move beyond a preoccupation with the author's sources and background. In this paper, I have shown the importance of rhetorical criticism as a way to bridge the gap between text and context and to understand how the text would have been heard by its original audience. Three exegetical case studies analyzing Revelation as epideictic rhetoric have revealed aspects of the ideological agenda of the text. Rev 1:1–3 foregrounds the divine origin of the visions of the Apocalypse in order to increase the authority of the narrator, John of Patmos, while working on the feelings of the audience by instilling a sense of eschatological urgency. The messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2–3 praise or blame each church according to how they have received the author's theological message and whether they have tolerated the dissenting views of John's opponents. Revelation 18 uses rhetorical force to construct a moral portait of Babylon/Rome's sexual profligacy, commercial wealth, sorcery, and bloodthirsty persecution in a powerful *psogos* or invective. The rhetoric of Revelation, which uses a narrative world to create a crisis in the social world of its audience, is the key to relating text and context. Construing Revelation as epideictic rhetoric, as demonstrated by the three case studies in this paper, is an effective way of discerning the rhetorical and ideological functions of the text since it focuses on how the text tries to change the audience's values and opinions. This method parallels the sociology-of-knowledge approach, which describes how Revelation tries to change the symbolic universe of its audience by changing the way they perceive their social world. These two methods, rhetorical criticism and the sociology-of-knowledge, keep the critic of the text focused not on the reconstruction of a historical situation of oppression but rather on the ideological agenda of the community which produced the Apocalypse.

"There's More in the Text than That": William Wells Brown's Clotel, Slave Ideology and Pauline Hermeneutics

by

Abraham Smith
Andover Newton Theological School

> Why stands she near the auction stand,
> That girl so young and fair?
> What brings her to this dismal place?
> Why stands she weeping there?[1]

With these telling, typical and yet tantalizing lines, the abolitionist William Wells Brown begins the engaging query for which his novel Clotel is the fuller commentary.[2] The subject of the poetic lines is the central protagonist--here identified only as young, a quadroon (fair) and tearful. Yet, the novel is more than a story about Clotel, a sixteen year-old quadroon offered up for sale to one Virginian at the death of another, her master, Mr. John Graves. No, there's more in the text than that.

Before long into the novel, the narrator introduces Clotel's mother (Currer), the assumed former mistress of Thomas Jefferson, and Clotel's sister (Althesa), both of whom are purchased by a slave trader and taken from Virginia to the Lower South from which they never return to see Clotel

---

[1]William Wells Brown, Clotel (New York: Arno, 1969), 55. All citations are taken from this edition.

[2]Borrowed verse virtually heads every chapter--foreshadowing the contents of riveting scenes, highlighting the inconsistencies of America's principles and practices and resounding the moral degradation of slavery's cultural economy.

again. Yet, the novel is more than a melodramatic story that follows the travels, encounters and fates of three female protagonists as they suffer the physical, psychological and legal constraints of human bondage.[3] No, there's more in the text than that.

Long before the suicide jump of Clotel off the "Long Bridge" into the Potomac River, Clotel gives birth to a daughter, Mary, the travails of whom only culminate years after her mother's death because her white father, in pursuit of a political career, fails to secure his family from the binding slave laws of the state of Virginia. And long before her death by yellow fever, Althesa gives birth to two daughters, Ellen and Jane, neither of whom escapes slavery because their white father, in ignorance, fails to secure them against that fate by manumitting his wife. Yet, this is not a story that simply repeats the sentimental fortunes or misfortunes of tragic octaroons.[4] No,

---

[3]Clotel does, in fact, draw on some of the conventions of melodrama--"family separations, assaults on virtues, and unrequited love . . . ." See Thomas Doherty, "Harriet Jacobs' Narrative Strategies: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," Southern Literary Journal 19 (1986): 83. Each of its main protagonists--Currer and her daughters, Clotel and Althesa--is as vulnerable as a heroine in a Samuel Richardson novel (e.g., Pamela or Clarissa).

[4]On the tragic octaroon, see Jules Zanger, "The `Tragic Octaroon" in Pre-Civil War Fiction," American Quarterly 18 (1966): 63-70. For criticisms of antislavery writers' use of this figure, see Robert Bone, The Negro in America (New Haven: Yale, 1958), 22-23; Hugh M. Gloster, New Voices in American Fiction (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1948), 12.

In Clotel, the fate of Althesa's daughters (Ellen and Jane) is reminiscent of the sentimental romance in which a daughter is subjected to slavery and the seduction of a brute at the unexpected death of her father (Doherty, 83). Yet, Clotel uses diverse popular conventions and citations--a slave narrative preface, tales of slave trickery, repartee jokes, newspaper and journal notices and borrowed verse from Shakespearean plays or popular poets--to

there's more in the text than that.

Brown's abolitionist tale is, in fact, tantalizing precisely because it is designed to answer deeply the opening questions: Why does Clotel stand near the auction block? What brings her to this dismal place? Why stands she weeping there? On the surface, of course, Clotel stands near the auction block simply because she is a slave. And surely she weeps because her mother and sister have recently become the property of a slave trader (Dick Walker) during the Graves' auction. But the deeper answer to the opening questions is that Clotel stands near the auction block because purportedly good people--people in a city that "thronged with churches" (64)--stand in complicity with evil. Clotel, the assumed daughter of Thomas Jefferson, weeps because an entire nation of "enlightened and Christian people" (64) allow the vicious cycle of slavery and its detriment to marriages and whole families to continue again and again from one generation to another.

Brown's abolitionist novel then appeals to the British reading public--who were the first to read it--to see how slavery continues because so many apparently good people--good people like Clotel's husband (Horatio Green) or Althesa's husband (Henry Morton) or Currer's slave master (the Reverend Peck)--all allow it to continue. Horatio Green allows it to continue because he cares more about political ambition than about his family. Henry Morton allows it to continue because he is not astute enough to know the slave laws of New Orleans, one of which states that children follow the status of their mother. The Reverend Peck

---

stage its narrative. On Brown's use of several techniques (e.g., mistaken identity, the imprisoned princess, literary borrowings, the tragic octaroon and authentic documentation), see Richard O. Lewis, "Literary Conventions in the Novels of William Wells Brown," CLA 29 (1985): 130. On his use of tales and jokes, see Vernon Loggins, The Negro Author: His Development in America to 1900 (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, Inc, 1964), 166-167.

allows it to continue because, as a minister of religion, he even uses proslavery biblical arguments to support the peculiar institution.[5]

Given Brown's abolitionist goal, especially his attempt to "lay bare" the passive and active supporters of slavery, including those who use the bible to support slavery, the aim of this paper is to evince the novel's critique of antebellum proslavery biblical arguments.[6] In examining Brown's extended narrative discussions about religion (chapters six, seven, ten, thirteen and twenty-one), moreover, I wish to analyze Clotel's use of "Paul" (i.e., the undisputed Pauline letters, the disputed ones and the Paul portrayed in Acts) to critique proslavers' Pauline hermeneutics.[7]

---

[5]Brown assumes that slavery continues because it has multiple levels of support. On the multiple levels of the institution, Brown's prefatory remarks (iv) are apt: "In all grades of society are to be found men who either hold, buy or sell slaves, from the statesmen and doctors of divinity, who can own their hundreds, down to the persons who can purchase but one."

[6]According to Brown (iv), "The great aim of the true friends of the slave should be to lay bare the institution, so that the gaze of the world may be upon it."

[7]To provide a reading guide for those unfamiliar with the novel's chapters, the following outline is useful. In the order of its parts, the narrative includes an opening, a protracted complication section and a didactic conclusion. The opening chapter introduces the protagonists, the setting of slavery and the theme of good people's complicity with evil. The long narration of the complications of slave life, chapters two through twenty-eight, depict: 1) the travails of Currer's separated family in the Upper and Lower South, 2) the unrecognized marriages of Currer's daughters, 3) the eventual enslavement of Currer's granddaughters, 4) the complicity of powerful persons who support slavery through their wanton ambition (e.g., Horatio Green), greed (e.g., the Reverend John Peck) or ignorance (e.g., Henry Morton); and 5) the separation, chance meeting and eventual reunion of Currer's only surviving granddaughter and her lover in Dunkirk, France. The final chapter then implores

To do so, three steps are needed: 1) a reconstruction of the role of antebellum African American novels in the context of a swelling anti-abolitionist tide; 2) an examination of proslavery biblical arguments leveled against the abolitionist movement; and 3) an analysis of Clotel's critiques of proslavery biblical arguments, including its counterhegemonic use of "Paul," its invective characterization of Christian slavers' "Pauline" hermeneutics, and its recontextualization of "Pauline" support for slavery within wider frameworks of interpretation.

I

Abolitionists, Anti-abolitionists, and the Antebellum African American Novel

In its incipient form, the Abolitionist movement was spirited first by the Quakers' antislavery sentiments and the secular push for natural rights in Revolution ideology, and later by 18th and 19th century evangelicalism. The Quakers (e.g., John Woolman and Anthony Benezet), bound by a creed of friendship to all persons, began the antislavery movement in mid-18th century colonial times.[8] Their efforts before the American Revolution, however, had little force because of the great need for slave labor to support the economic flourishing of mercantile capitalism in North America.[9] In the first decade after the

---

the British public to extricate themselves from those who support slavery in any form because those persons deny the one family (or one flesh) from which all persons descend.

[8]Mitchell Snay, The Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South (New York: Cambridge University, 1993), 21.

[9]Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century: Varieties of Protest and Accommodation (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee,

American Revolution, many slave owners faced the grim disparity between the new Republic's ideals of natural rights (as stated in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights) and the horrible degradation of slavery.[10] The shift from a mercantile economy to an industrial one also rendered slavery unprofitable, at least until two related factors came into play: the growth of U.S. exports to the English and the invention of the cotton gin.[11] In addition, before and after the revolution, Evangelical revivals in the 1740s (the so-called "Great Awakening") and later in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (the so-called "Second Awakening") converted large numbers of slaves.[12] The "Second Awakening," occurring on the cusp of the shifting economy, eventuated in numerous slave manumissions among the Methodists and Baptists in the 1780s, though the fervor for manumissions only lasted about a decade.[13] Indeed, even the great evangelist George Whitefield supported slavery for the sake of the

---

1992), 6.

[10]The recognition of the inconsistency also predates the war. See Clayton E. Cramer, Black Demographic Data, 1790-1860 (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1997), 10.

[11]On the economic shift, see Baer and Singer, 8. Cf. Cramer (80) who argues that slavery initially declined because of the "decrease of tobacco farming, the major pre-revolutionary use of slavery." With the invention of Eli Whitney's cotton gin, however, slave states--now pressed to export cotton overseas and able to harvest it in a cost-efficient manner--made cotton their number one crop. Thus, the need for more cotton harvesters increased the need for more slaves.

[12]Albert Raboteau, A Fire in the Bones : Reflections on African-American Religious History (Boston: Beacon, 1995), 22.

[13]Ibid.

slaves' salvation.[14]

The revivalistic era brought two kinds of organizations into the discourse about slavery.[15] One of them, the American Colonization Society (formed in 1816), ostensibly supported the eradication of slavery, though its real goals were to avoid disturbances, deter insurrections and emigrate free-born and (newly purchased) emancipated blacks to Africa.[16] The other one, vigorously opposed to the former, was the American Antislavery Society (formed in 1833) which became the most vocal and visible force of abolitionism in the second-third of the nineteenth century.[17] This society, the abolitionist movement proper, opposed black emigration to Africa, promoted abolitionist propaganda (especially through the Emancipator, the Liberator and the North Star), enlisted fugitive slaves as speakers in their lecturing tours, and appealed to religious denominations (clergy, revivalists, judicatories and foreign religious groups).[18]

The abolitionists' early success in pressing for immediate emancipation eventually attenuated in the 1840s and 1850s because of internal debates and because of their failure to convince governing

---

[14]Riggins Earl, Dark Symbols, Obscure Signs: God, Self, and Community in the Slave Mind (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 22.

[15]The revivalist movement led to the development of several voluntary, benevolent organizations. That is, those persons who repented of their wrongs needed to demonstrate their commitment to a new way of life. One such way was the support of others through benevolent societies. See John B. McKivigan, The War Against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches (1830-1865) (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1984), 19.

[16]Snay, 23.

[17]On Garrison's opposition to the American Colonization Society, see his Thoughts on African Civilization (1832).

[18]McKivigan, 40-43.

religious bodies both to endorse immediate emancipation and to sanction their constituents who did not.[19] Against the abolitionist movement, moreover, was a wave of anti-abolitionist sentiment. In part, this antiabolitionist sentiment was a reaction to the San Domingo revolution in the West Indies, Prosser and Vesey's conspiracies (1800 and 1822, respectively) and Nat Turner's slave insurrection (1831). In part, it was also a sectional reaction to the vigorous mail campaign of abolitionist propaganda in 1835.[20] In part, moreover, it was a reaction of labor movements which spoke against the oppression of the capitalist forces supporting the abolitionist movement.[21]

The anti-abolitionist sentiment manifested itself in at least two forms. For one, abolitionist opponents exploited counter-propaganda, using biblical, theological and historical arguments to oppose the abolitionists. In addition, the opponents resorted to riots and kidnaping of free Negroes, along with the destruction of abolitionist publishing houses.[22] And the riots continued into the 1850s, though the most violent ones occurred in the mid-1830s.[23]

Stripped from their homeland, readied for servitude in the Middle Passage (the transatlantic

---

[19]Ibid., 43-55; cf. Snay, 64. It should be stated, however, that the split did not weaken the abolitionist movement altogether, for all of the splinter groups pressed for abolition, though many non-Garrisonians endorsed a gradual abolition. On the abolitionist goal to get church bodies to censure their constituents, see McKivigan, 22.

[20]Snay, 19,20.

[21]Cramer, 26.

[22]William Edward Farrison, William Wells Brown: Author and Reformer (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1969), 86.

[23]Leonard L. Richard, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing": Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America (New York: Oxford University, 1970), 156-165.

slave trade), disenfranchised as chattel property and deemed as inferior to whites, Africans in the Diaspora, both slaves and African freed persons, had already responded to slavery and the ideological system which supported it even before the American Anti-Slavery Society began.[24] Moreover, these Africans continued their ideological battles within the framework of the abolitionist literary and oratorical tradition. Because of the growth of the anti-abolitionist tide, the introduction of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, and the aggressive moral campaign of the proslavers, however, a number of African American writers pressed for a new ideological response which would incorporate yet extend the traditional forms of abolitionist writings.[25] That new response was the antebellum African American novel.

Three antebellum African novels--Brown's Clotel, Frank Webb's The Garies and Martin R. Delany's Blake--directly supported the abolitionist movement, either by placing noble abolitionists on the narrative stage or by using "the methods and materials of Abolitionist propaganda."[26] One antebellum novel, Harriet Wilson's Our Nig, often critiqued feigned abolitionist sensibilities. Yet, it spoke, as did the others, against all forms of enslavement--the economic kind in the north and the physical kind in the South.[27]

---

[24]It should be noted that the importation ban of 1808 did not fully eradicate slave importation. See Cramer, 54.

[25]One writing during this period--not written by a black person--was Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin (1850). The work spoke of the cruelty of slavery and of the radical divide between the North and the South over the issue of slavery.

[26]On these authors' use of abolitionist propaganda, see Gloster, 25.

[27]On Wilson's work, two sterling analyses are John Ernest Resistance and Reformation in nineteenth-Century African-American Literature and B. Walker, "`Our Nig' and

Though the antebellum African American novels differ in many ways, three factors linked them together. First, appearing at a time when novelistic writing in general was more plentiful than before, all of these works exploited fiction to expand their audiences and extend their narrative possibilities (e.g., the shift from a first person account to a third person omniscient account).[28] Second, all of these works used and then departed from the sentimental tradition by overlaying the motifs of the tragic octaroon with anti-slavery propaganda,[29] and by weaving together a wide variety of documents to critique "un-Christian Christianity."[30] Third, all responded to proslavery advocates who wished to support slavery with appeals to a sacred text, namely, the bible. To

---

the She-Devil," American Literature 65 (1993): 19-52.

[28]Carla Peterson, "Capitalism, Black (Under)development, and the Production of the African-American Novel in the 1850s," American Literary History 4 (1992): 562-563.

[29]According to Blyden Jackson, "Melodrama is a constant element, perhaps the most constant element, in the early Negro novel." Blyden Jackson, A History of Afro-American Literature (Volume I): The Long Beginning, 1746-1895 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1989), 335. Again, however, melodrama is not the aim of the works. In Clotel, in fact, most of the sentimental scenes in which the characters speak "elevated" English occur in the cities of Richmond, Virginia or New Orleans, Louisiana, but the majority of the novel's pages depicts scenes of more realistic dialect from the "hinterlands of Natchez [Mississippi], far from the traffic of bright lights and glamorous possibilities." J. Noel Heermance, William Wells Brown and Clotel: A Portrait of the Artist in the First Negro Novel (Greenwood, CN: Archon, 1969), 167. As Heermance notes (167), "What this means for the novel is that, when dealing with Natchez, Brown does not feel required to use artificial, melodramatic language about silly, sentimental happenings."

[30]Arlene Elder, The "Hindered Hand": Cultural Implications of Early African-American Fiction (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1978), 46.

understand the appeal to a sacred text, we turn to the next section of this paper.

II

Proslavery Biblical Arguments

Though the number of proslavery arguments grew steadily and even ferociously after the 1835 abolitionist mail campaign, even in colonial times the range of these arguments was wide, extending from ethnic superiority claims to necessity pleas to appeals to scripture.[31] Initially, appeals to scripture either sanctioned the slave trade or ostensibly placated slaves and rendered them docile. The bible had already served as a source for racial prejudice before the establishment of North American slavery. The tracts of Morgan Godwin (published between 1680 and 1685) show that the Hamite hypothesis was accepted both in England and in America as early as the 17th century.[32] According to H. Shelton Smith, moreover, the Hamite hypothesis "had been in circulation long before the discovery of America."[33]

Though the American slavers did not initially seek the conversion of the slaves, some gave consent when the Church of England (1701) both argued that conversion would render slaves servile and supported their contention with tracts based on Ephesians 6:5: "Slaves be obedient to your

---

[31]William Sumner Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1960), 104, 200-284.

[32]Morgan Godwin, The Negro's Indian Advocate: Suing for their admission to the church: or A persuasive to the instructing and baptizing of the Negro's and Indians in our plantations. Shewing that as the compliance therewith can prejudice no man's just int. . . . (London: Godwin, 1680).

[33]H. Shelton Smith, In His Image, But . . .: Racism in Southern Religion, 1780-1910) (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1972), 131.

masters."[34] Many slavers, following the teachings of missionaries, instituted a whole array of pedagogical tools based on biblical verses or themes. Plantation sermons focused on the morality implied in Jesus' parables and healings.[35] Slaveholders' catechetical materials commended patience and apathy toward the institution of slavery.[36] Sambo and Toney stories gave masters vivid illustrations for instructing their slaves on the merits of slave conversion (as with Sambo) and the sinful character of the nonconverted (as with Toney).[37] Baptismal rituals granted biblical names to the slaves but still guarded against the desire of some slaves to use conversion as a grounds for total freedom.[38]

Later, an appeal to scripture also served as a fundamental rallying point against the abolitionist movement. Christian slavers appealed to several biblical passages (e.g., Gen 9:25-27;14:14;14:18-20;17:13; Exod. 12:43-45;20:17;21:2-6;21:20-21; Lev. 25:44-46; Deut. 23:15-16; 1 Cor 7:20-21; Eph 6:5-9),[39] some even arguing that slavery was permissible because Jesus did not explicitly forbid it.[40] So forceful were the proslavery biblical arguments in the South, moreover, that many churches, including Anglicans, Baptists and Methodists, acquiesced for the sake of

---

[34]Raboteau, 19.

[35]Earl, 40.

[36]Ibid., 41.

[37]Ibid., 41-43.

[38]Ibid., 44.

[39]The list comes from Robert Allen Dunne, "Protestant Backlash: The American Dream Myth and Marginalized Groups, 1820-1860," 191, n.5.

[40]Snay, 26.

"denominational growth."[41] Even the efforts of William Lloyd Garrison, especially through his publication, The Liberator, did not bring an end to proslavery biblical arguments. Instead, the abolitionist movement was castigated as "intrusive," "wicked," "unscriptural,"[42] and "inconsistent with the gospel of Christ."[43]

How could antislavery advocates deny these charges? How could they use the bible, including "Paul," to support their positions, when much of the bible was put in the service of slavery's defense? How could a novel contextualize proslavery biblical exegesis, especially that rendered by ecclesiastical supporters, to demonstrate the moral inconsistency of these supporters? The answers to these questions lie in a closer analysis of Brown's Clotel.

III

Clotel's Critique of Proslavery Biblical Arguments

It is in the context of the proslavery and antislavery biblical arguments that the responses of the slaves or antebellum freed slaves must be seen. It is also in this context that one must understand Brown's Clotel and Brown's use of "Paul." Clotel's response to proslavery biblical arguments came in three forms: A) a counterhegemonic use of "Paul," B) invective characterization of Christian slavers' "Pauline" hermeneutics, and C) recontextualization of "Pauline" support for slavery within wider frameworks of interpretation.

---

[41]Ibid., 24.

[42]Ibid., 31.

[43]Ibid., 33.

A. Clotel's Counterhegemonic Use of "Paul"

Using Gramscian hegemony theory, Katie Cannon recently discussed three mythological structures which gave ideological support for the perpetuation of slavery: the denial of black humanity; a "reconstruction of history" to support racialized discourse; and the use of legal codes, both civil and biblical, to sanction slavery.[44] The Reverend Peck's daughter, Georgiana, responds to each of these ideological supports in her use of "Paul." Against the denial of black humanity and a reconfiguration of history to support a racialized discourse (best exemplified in the Reverend Peck, 88), Georgiana cites an expression from "Paul's" Areopagite speech: "God has created of one blood all nations" (115). Against the claim that the New Testament lacks any legal catalogues denouncing slavery, moreover, she repeatedly notes "Paul" in 1 Timothy 1:9,10. In describing slave traders, she avers: "The Christian religion is opposed to slaveholding in its spirit and its principles; it classes men-stealers among murderers; and it is the duty of all who wish to meet God in peace, to discharge that duty in spreading these principles" (115). Later, she actually cites the passage, stating: "The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers,

---

[44]Katie Geneva Cannon, "Slave Ideology and Biblical Interpretation," in The Recovery of Black Presence: An Interdisciplinary Exploration, ed. Randall C. Bailey & Jacquelyn Grant (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 119-28. Gramsci defined hegemony as the domination of one social group over others not through coercion, but through civic formation (to which the dominated groups give consent). Furthermore, Gramsci avers that subjugated people must create a new hegemony against the dominant class. On Gramsci, see Joseph A. Buttigieg, "Gramsci on Civil Society," Boundary 2 (1995): 1-32.

for liars, for perjured persons" (118-119).

In having Georgiana to use "Paul" in this counterhegemonic fashion, then, Brown suggests that the hegemony of slavery need not be accepted.[45] With carefully chosen biblical citations designed to point out the fallacy of hegemonic mythologies, it is possible to challenge slavery rather than to acquiesce to its constructs. That is, good people--like Georgiana and the British reading public--have the power to question the moral ground of slavery. They must not stand in complicity with evil.

B. Invective Characterization of Christian slavers' "Pauline" Hermeneutics

Brown's novel is replete with scriptural citations and allusions, from the Pentateuch, the Psalms and the prophets in the Hebrew bible to the Synoptics, "Paul" and James in the New Testament. Yet, an appeal to scripture alone could not prove convincing inasmuch as slavery's advocates could do so as well. Nor could Brown, uninfluenced by historical criticism, use the distinction between the Paul of the undisputed Pauline letters and the Paul of the disputed letters or the Paul portrayed in Acts as a strategy in his critique of slavery. That is, Brown does not suggest that the slavers' use of Colossians and Ephesians (as in the case of the missionary Snyder, 93-99) renders their proslavery biblical arguments suspect because the real Paul did not write these letters, as if the letters, once deemed not written by Paul, suddenly lost their authoritative status. Rather, Brown exploits methods of invective characterization to force the readers to question the motives and the exegesis of the religious supporters of slavery. That is, Brown critiques the <u>character</u> of slavery's

---

[45]It should be noted that after her father's death, Georgiana frees her father's slaves.

proponents, suggesting that biblical interpretation must take into account why and how interpreters reach their conclusions about the bible's sentiments.

To issue a critique to Christian slavers' Pauline hermeneutics, Brown uses two methods of invective characterization. First, Brown argues that many of the religious teachers who use Paul to support slavery do so without sincere conviction or persuasive force. For example, Snyder, away from the Reverend Peck, admits that slavery is economically inefficient and morally reprehensible (103-106). Thus, his exegesis of Colossians and Ephesians is suspect because he does not actually believe that slavery is morally defensible. Furthermore, as Georgiana explains, use of the bible to perpetuate slavery lacks persuasive force. Instead, it feeds infidelity (117-118).[46]

Second, the exegesis of Christian slavers, argues Brown, emanates from a self-absorbed demeanor or from deception. For example, after Snyder's sermon, the slaves, away from the earshot of their owner, note that Snyder's preaching was pitched to impress Carlton, Reverend Peck's former classmate (99). Furthermore, in describing Georgiana as one who imparts "Christianity in its true light" (92, 115) or as one who proffers the gospel in its "purity" (163), Brown's narrator portrays this abolitionist as one who simply speaks the truth without trickery. Thus, Brown casts a shadow over the religious teachings of Snyder and Reverend Peck--teachings which their slave-hearers judge as intended to "fool de black people" (99).

---

[46]Brown castigated the use of the bible to support slavery. He considered that such use actually creates or enhances the resistance of "infidels" (unbelievers). For Brown, who knew that abolitionists were often castigated as infidels, abolitionism should be distinguished from infidelity. Thus, Brown quickly distinguished Georgiana, an abolitionist, from Carlton, who followed the natural rights theory of Voltaire, Rousseau and Thomas Paine without regard for the bible's authority.

For Brown, use of scripture or of "Paul" alone is not a sufficient appeal for taking a certain course in life. The character of an interpreter may predispose her or his complicity with evil.

C. Recontextualization of "Pauline" Support for Slavery within Wider Frameworks of Interpretation.

In Clotel, Brown argues that the Christian slavers who use "Paul" to support slavery are not reasonable or logical in their deductions because they overlook the spirit and principles of the Bible or of "Paul" himself. In quoting extensively from "Paul" through one of the novel's characters or through the narrator's voice, Brown shows, by comparison, the limited canon of both the Reverend Peck and Snyder. In chapter ten, Peck's daughter, Georgiana, quotes extensively from "Paul" and elsewhere, even alluding to Ephesians without mentioning the "Servants be obedient to your masters" passage. Speaking of Jesus' life as a "living testimony against slavery," Georgiana alludes to Philippians 2:7, saying, "When he [Jesus] designed to do us good, he took upon himself the form of a servant" (120). In the same chapter, she speaks of "prayer and supplication," perhaps an allusion to Philippians 4:6 (116). In her description of slave-traders, as I have noted, she cites a deutero-Pauline passage, namely 1 Timothy 1:9,10 (118-119). Later, in the same chapter, she describes how the early church's prayer prepared them for "the great and glorious enterprise of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to a lost and perishing world" (116), a line reminiscent of Eph 3:8.

In a eulogy about Georgiana, the narrator quotes from Paul's letter to the Philippians (2:4) to describe the beneficent character of Georgiana: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (185). Quoting the "Paul" of 2 Timothy, the narrator extends the eulogy for Georgiana, saying that she "fought the faith" and that she "wears the crown," an allusion

to 2 Timothy 4:7-8 (189). Furthermore, the narrator closes the book with allusions to Paul in Galatians and "Paul" as portrayed in Acts. That is, the narrator's suggestion that there is a "common salvation which knows no distinction between the bond and the free" (245) alludes to Galatians 3:28 ("There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus") and the narrator's assertion that both the British reading public and the slaves are persons "whom God has made of one flesh" (245) appears to be an allusion to Paul's Areopagus speech in Acts (cf. 17:26).

Thus, the use of other texts from "Paul"--whether from the undisputed letters, the disputed ones or from Acts--suggests the truth of a remark given by Uncle Simon, the novel's black preacher who questions the limited canon of the missionary Snyder: "thars more in de Bible den dat" (100). In quoting more extensively from "Paul," Brown shows that the proslavery biblical arguments lack a wider frame of interpretation for understanding "Paul" or the entire bible. Proslavers' limited frame of interpretation, then, allows them to perpetuate the peculiar institution--to perpetuate the vicious cycle of slavery and its detriment on the family of one Clotel after another.

Conclusion

Brown's Clotel is a remarkable story which uses the bible, particularly Paul, in a narrative about the complicity of purportedly good people with evil. In this paper, I have shown Brown's hermeneutics of suspicion about proslavery biblical hermeneuts as well as his insistence that slavery continues (and one Clotel after another stands and weeps at the auction block) because supposedly religious people condone it. For whatever forces of hegemony we may have to face today, especially those which bring premature closure to the bible's sentiments, Uncle Simon's remark is still relevant:

"thars more in the Bible den dat." There's more in the text than that.

Community Definition and Matthew's Gospel
Warren Carter, Saint Paul School of Theology Kansas City MO

Richard Burridge persuasively argues that the gospels belong to the genre of βίοι.[1] After identifying four groups of generic features,[2] he discusses ten βίοι and the four canonical gospels concluding that the gospels belong to this genre.[3]

In reaching this conclusion, Burridge offers some insights which provide the point of departure for this paper. 1) Informed by a literary theoretical understanding of genre as a "framework of conventions and expectations," he recognizes the interconnectedness of genres and the "sharing of generic features across boundaries within a literary network.[4] 2) Noting that the first centuries BCE and CE were a time of flexibility and innovation in genre, he locates his broadly-defined genre of βίοι in a network that shares topics and includes works of moral philosophy, religious teaching, encomia, entertaining stories, political polemic and history.[5] 3) Burridge observes that "biography is a type of writing which occurs naturally among groups of people who have formed around a certain charismatic teacher or leader, seeking to follow after him."[6]

True to their genre, the gospels focus on "the person of their subject, Jesus of Nazareth".[7] Like βίοι, they function not only to instruct about or elicit praise or admiration for Jesus, but also to offer "a model for the audience to follow".[8] They provide examples, instruction, and apologetic and polemic material for communities of disciples. Burridge cites Graham Stanton in saying that Matthew is "primarily concerned to set out the story and significance of Jesus in order to encourage and exhort Christians in his own day."[9] As βίοι, the gospels have a "community building" function.[10] Talbert says the gospels "find it necessary to correct misunderstanding about Jesus at the same time that they set him forth as the expression and the norm of a community's values."[11] They are identity-forming, lifestyle-shaping writings which define, correct, confirm and reinforce the identity of communities of disciples of Jesus.

Though naming this important social function, Burridge, however, pays little attention to <u>how</u> the gospels define community identity. Studies have identified a variety of diverse, complex, and interrelated ways in which groups defined themselves in the Greco-Roman world.[12] These include definition by naming, by separation and social organization, by association with a group, by practices and ritual, by invective against opponents, by claims to be the exclusive center for revelation, or by claims to be the true heirs and interpreters of a tradition.

Matthew evidences all of these. The gospel employs an

array of names for its own community of disciples (the covenant terms of ἐκκλησία and "children of God", disciples, prophets, scribes, the wise, infants, little ones, etc.) as well as for its opponents (enemy, hypocrite, scribe, Pharisee, blind guides, evil, serpents, brood of vipers, etc).[13] The names secure separation from other communities, reinforce group identity and warn this community not to be like the others.[14] Social organization also differentiates this community. As seems most likely, Matthew's community has physically and socially separated from "their/your synagogue/s" (4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54; 23:34), not into social isolation but to form its own community.[15] This community has its own authorities, structures, and practices (18:15-20; 20:25-28; 23:8-12), yet continues to interact with and participate in its larger society.[16] Associating with this group, complying with its entrance ritual of baptism (28:19), accepting its teaching (7:24-27), interacting with other members in appropriate ways (e.g. forgiveness [6:14-15; 18:21-35], love [22:38-39]), participating in its governance (18:15-20) and rituals (26:26-29), forge identity as a participant in this community.[17] Definition "over against" also figures as an important strategy. Matthew vilifies Jesus' opponents, the religious leaders, for being "evil",[18] for failing to understand the scriptures and the power of God (22:29), for being hypocrites and blind,[19] for not following Jesus, the definitive revealer of God's presence, will and forgiveness.[20] They are disqualified from leadership of God's people (21:43; 23:38). They have no place socially in the Matthean community or eschatologically in God's future (15:13; 23:13).[21] Jesus provides the center point for the community's identity.[22] As a result, over against all other attempts and claimants, this community and its central figure Jesus provide the definitive interpretation of the tradition's scriptures and expectations.

In this paper I discuss another means of community building or definition which incorporates aspects of these approaches, but which has not been given sufficient attention. It is suggested by Burridge's correct claim that while the gospel belongs to the genre of βίοι, this genre does not exist in isolation from but in relation to other genres such as history and encomium with which it shares some generic features.[23] Recognizing that topics appear in various and related genre, I will investigate the topics which encomia use to praise, and thereby define, cities or peoples. I will note that these topics also appear in Matthew's gospel, enabling its function of community definition and building.[24]

1. Encomia and Topics of Community-Definition

In the Greco-Roman world, encomia praised an individual,

a people or a city.[25] Writings also attacked or slandered a people (vituperatio). The same topics appeared in both writings, defining the people or community positively or negatively.[26] An examination of Josephus' two-part, late first-century work, Contra Apion, indicates the topics conventionally included in an encomium.

In Contra Apion, Josephus answers charges made against Jews by writers such as Lysimachus, Apollonius Molon and Apion.[27] He expresses surprise that despite his lengthy work Antiquities which demonstrates "the extreme antiquity of our race, the purity of the original stock and the manner in which it established itself in the country which we occupy today" (1.1),[28] charges about the Jews' origin continue to be made. Doubts are cast on the "antiquity of our race" (1.3, 59). Writers assert "the late origin of our constitution" (1.58). In response, Josephus recognizes that every nation claims the antiquity of its governance institutions (2.152), but he argues that silence in Greek histories about the Jews indicates not a Jewish but a Greek lack of antiquity. Earlier historians -- Egyptian (1.73-105), Phoenician (1.106-15), Ephesian (1.116-27), Chaldean (1.128-60) and some Greeks (1.161-218) -- attest Jewish antiquity. He also answers the false charges which writers such as Apion make about Jewish origin and antiquity (1.223), especially that the Jews were Egyptians expelled from Egypt with a group of lepers and diseased people (1.228-2.144).[29]

Having defended the ancient origin of the Jews, Josephus addresses numerous charges concerning Jewish practices. These charges allege that Jews in Alexandria refuse to worship Alexandrian gods thereby fomenting sedition (2.66-72), do not erect statues of the emperor (2.73-78), worship an ass's head in the temple (2.79-88; cf. 2.112-20), annually sacrifice a Greek (2.89-111), swear to show no goodwill to any foreigner especially Greeks (2.121-4), lack an empire and are regularly slaves of other powers (2.125-34), do not "produce any geniuses, ...inventors...or eminent sages" (2.135-6), sacrifice domestic animals, do not eat pork and practice circumcision (2.137-42). Josephus sums up Apion's charges: Jews "lack just laws and do not worship God as is fitting" (2.125).[30] The charges concern unwelcoming relations with other peoples and governments, the failure to practice justice and to display piety in appropriate religious practices. Throughout, Josephus seeks to show that each charge is false, originating in the scurrilous motivations of its perpetrator.

He then moves to a more substantial charge concerning governance. Writers, such as Apollonius Molon and Lysimachus, make charges "which are neither just nor true, upon our lawgiver Moses and his code, maligning the one as a charlatan and imposter, and asserting that from the other we receive lessons in vice and none in virtue" (2.145). Josephus offers

"a brief account of our constitution" to show that "we possess a code excellently designed to promote piety (εὐσέβειαν), friendly relations (κοινωνίαν) with each other, and humanity (φιλανθρωπίαν) towards the world at large, besides justice (δικαιοσύνην), hardihood and contempt of death" (2.146). His response emphasizes justice, piety and philanthropy.

Josephus begins his "account of our constitution" by focussing on Moses, the legislator. Returning to the familiar appeal to antiquity, he asserts that Moses is "the most ancient of all legislators" (2.154). He lived "in the remotest past", was responsible for a code which embraced "the whole conduct of life," and ensured its acceptance and observance by Jews (2.156). He led the return of "our ancestors" to "their native land" from Egypt. In this difficult migration, "he proved the best of generals, the sagest of counsellors, and the most conscientious of guardians," living piously before God (εὐσεβεῖν) and enacting laws for the wellbeing (σωτηρίαν) of the people (2.159). In leading the migration, God was "his guide and counsellor" (2.160). Far from being "a charlatan and imposter," he was "the most successful legislator...who attained to the truest conception of God" (2.163).

Moses fashions not a monarchy, oligarchy or democracy, but a theocracy "placing all sovereignty and authority in the hands of God" (2.165).[31] His constitution succeeds for several reasons. At its center is piety (εὐσέβεια) expressed in virtues (justice, temperance, fortitude and mutual harmony), actions, occupations and speech (2.170-71). Moses ensures that all people know the law (2.171b-78) and observe it carefully (2.179-81). The law covers all aspects of life (2.173-74). Apion's accusation that the Jews "lack just laws and do not worship God as is fitting" (2.125), and Apollonius' charge of atheism (2.148) are shown to be false and ignorant (cf. 2.291-92).

Two observations indicate the success of Moses' legislation. Some critics, including Apion (2.135) and Apollonius Molon (2.148), have accused the Jews of lacking inventiveness and skills in "craft and literature." But Josephus argues that true craftsmanship consists of observing the original laws (2.182-83). Nor can the constitution "in accord with the will of God" be improved, but is administered piously and justly by priests (2.184-89).

Basic to the constitution is the worship of God carried out in virtuous living and in offering sacrifice and prayer (2.190-98). Marriage laws recognize God-given male authority over the inferior and submissive female, intercourse within marriage, and the upbringing of all children in "the laws and the deeds of their forefathers" (2.199-204). The dead are honored in appropriate funeral rites, children honor their parents, judges do not accept bribes, and stealing of property

is forbidden (2.205-208). Philanthropy marks the community whether in welcoming aliens,[32] supplying the needs of others or in restraint in the treatment of enemies (2.209-14). The welcome to foreigners, though, is restricted to "any who elect to share our customs" (cf. 2.261). Apion's charge that Jews swear "to show no goodwill to a single alien, above all to Greeks" (2.121-2) and Apollonius' charges that Jews are "misanthropes" (2.148) are false. The non-observance of the laws results in punishment; faithful observance means God-given life after death (2.215-19).

After outlining Jewish origins and governance, Josephus formulates criticisms of other legislators and their laws (2.220-96). This section frequently employs synkrisis, comparing and contrasting features of the Jews with other peoples.[33] Josephus also notes ways in which Moses' laws have influenced other peoples, especially Greeks. This is not a new theme. Previously he has noted that the Greeks, from whom "we are severed more by our geographical position than by our institutions," have "agreed to adopt our laws" (2.123). Moreover, "the wisest of the Greeks learnt to adopt these conceptions of God from principles with which Moses supplied them" (2.168, 255; compare the contrasts of 2.236-54). Plato follows Moses in requiring the laws to be studied and in exercising some restraint in admitting foreigners (2.257). And Plato was not the only emulator (2.279-80). So too are Greek philosophers, "the masses", and every city and nation (2.281-83). Such imitation means "the law has found its way among all humankind" (2.281-86). Jews have "introduced to the rest of the world a very large number of very beautiful ideas" including piety, the justice of obeying the laws, harmony with others and the recognition that all is under God's "eye and direction" (2.293-94). Jews have not borrowed from others (2.161) but have observed their own laws (2.232-35, 271-72).

Josephus has identified a number of qualities which show Jews to be worthy not of criticism but of praise. His material centers on three topics: origin, accomplishments particularly governance, and deeds (practices or virtues) which comprise their way of life. In terms of their origin, he has concentrated on antiquity and migration from Egypt. With regard to accomplishments, he has shown the antiquity and skill of Moses, their founder and legislator, and the antiquity and theocratic nature of their constitution. Their deeds include piety, the doing of God's will, expressed in worship and specified virtuous deeds. Matters of origin, accomplishments and deeds define Jews as a nation. Josephus turns characteristics which, in the hands of those who attacked Jews, were reasons for dishonor and scorn into qualities defining an honorable nation. Significantly, Josephus recognizes that these charges are not made exclusively against Jews. They are typical of attempts to

"sully the reputations of nations, and of the most illustrious cities, and to revile their forms of government" (1.220-21). That is, while the content is particular to Jews, Josephus indicates that the charges about origin, accomplishments or governance, and deeds or way of life represent typical categories or ways of thinking about and defining nations or peoples, either to praise or dishonor them.

For whom does Josephus write? Some have argued that he writes for Gentiles, either commending Jewish practices for their adoption, or, without appealing for proselytes, explaining misunderstandings to identify common ground or to solicit admiration for Jewish practices.[34] Yet others have argued that Josephus writes for diaspora Jews, offering in a context of some hostility and public dishonoring knowledge of and appreciation for their own traditions and practices.[35] Collins helpfully posits a double audience in the context of a "double dissonance" to account for such functions. While Jews valued their traditions, the Hellenistic world generally contradicted their claims of origin and mocked distinctive practices like sabbath observance. But while some Jewish traditions discouraged intercourse with Gentiles, diaspora Jews lived in this context and some clearly felt "at home".[36] Collins argues that attempts to reduce the dissonances refuted and contradicted hellenistic views or played down Judaism's distinctives. Works like Josephus' reduced dissonance by explaining Judaism to Gentiles as well as by strengthening and maintaining the identity of the Jewish community. The "apologetic" is "directed simultaneously to those within and to those outside".[37] And for either audience, its discussion of Jewish origin, accomplishments, and deeds serves to define the people.

2. Encomia and Definition of a People

David Balch has argued that in Contra Apion, Josephus organizes his discussion of the origin, accomplishments and deeds of his fellow Jews in accord with a well-known rhetorical pattern of an encomium which praises a city and its people.[38]. Balch points to a late third century CE treatise usually attributed to Menander of Laodicea in which Menander instructs rhetors about how to praise a country or city.[39] Given the conservative nature of education and rhetoric,[40] Menander's pattern incorporates elements deriving from hellenistic times.[41] Menander argues that to praise a city involves two main divisions. First one praises a city for its geographical location. Then, as with praising an individual, one focusses on its origins, its accomplishments such as governance, and the deeds or practices of its way of life[42] (1.346). In summary form Menander's pattern looks like this:

I. Praising the city as a country

Sky, climate, mainland, sea; size and age; praise for harbor, inlet, citadel (347-353).

II. Praising the city as a man (353-65)

A. Origins (353-59)

1. Of the founder: a god, hero or man? (353).
2. Of the settlers: hellenes or barbarians? quality/ies of race (354).
3. Founding Date (ancient, middle or recent 354-55)
4. Changes or means of founding: city results from colonization (migration), union, transference of site, growth, new settlement (355-57).
5. Cause of founding: divine, heroic or human action; by joy (birth, marriage, victory) or grief (death); justice, expediency, necessity (357-59).

B. Accomplishments or Habits (359-61)

1. Political System - three forms: kingship, aristocracy, democracy; three perversions: tyranny, oligarchy, laocracy; mixture (359-60).
2. Accomplishments in Knowledge: astrology, music, geometry, grammar, philosophy (360).
3. Accomplishments in crafts: goldsmith, bronzesmith, carpentry, sculpture (360).
4. Accomplishments in rhetoric and athletics (361)
5. The good order of the city: daily lives of men and women, education of children (361).

C. Deeds or Actions Praised According to Four Virtues (361-65)

1. Justice: piety towards the gods, fair dealing to others, reverence towards the dead; i) piety involves being loved or blessed by the gods, and loving the gods both in the private devotion of each citizen and in the public rites, festivals, temples and priests of the city. ii) Fair dealing involves treatment of foreigners, relations among citizens, just and fair customs and laws. iii) Reverence towards the dead concerns description of the rites of funerals, memorials and tombs (361-63).
2. Temperance: in public life, the education of children, marriage practices, punishments for offenses against order, the public role of women. In private lives, adultery and bad behavior (364).
3. Prudence: in public life, customs and laws, inheritances by heirs and other legal topics. In private lives, the presence of famous rhetors, sophists, geometers, and others depending on wisdom (364).
4. Courage: tested in peace (responses to accidents

> of fate like earthquakes, famines, plagues droughts etc.) and war (its results, causes and actions, 365).

Menander also recognizes some flexibility by including other topics (celebrating particular festivals) if appropriate.

Balch demonstrates that Josephus employs the same pattern in 2.145-295 of Contra Apion.[43] Josephus omits Part One ("Praising the city as a country") because his concern is with a people. But in "Praising the city as a man" he follows Menander's pattern beginning with origins. As we have observed, this section builds on the claims which Josephus makes about the people's antiquity prior to 2.145 by claiming Moses as "the most ancient of all legislators" (2.154). Moses wisely and carefully leads "our ancestors" to "their native land" from Egypt. This migration, under God's leading, is the means of founding this people.

Josephus then takes up the second section of Menander's pattern, accomplishments. Starting with governance, Josephus says that Moses establishes a theocracy "placing all sovereignty and authority in the hands of God" (2.165). He omits discussion of knowledge and crafts, claiming that the greatest craft is to do the divine will (2.182-83). The "good order" of the people, though, receives much attention as Josephus emphasizes the education of the people in knowing and doing the law in daily life (2.175-89).

The third section in Menander's pattern focuses on deeds or actions, the virtues of the people's way of life. Josephus begins as does Menander with the virtue justice (δικαιοσύνη). Josephus outlines the worship of God in virtuous living, sacrifice and prayer (2.190-98). Fairdealing is emphasized through just laws, welcoming aliens, supplying the needs of others, and in restraint in the treatment of enemies (2.205-14). The dead are honored (2.205). Josephus exemplifies Menander's second virtue, temperance (σωφροσύνη), in marriage, sexual relations, and educating children (2.199-204). He also illustrates prudence[44] (concerning customs and laws) throughout. Josephus emphasizes punishment for those who do not keep the laws (2.215-19). Josephus' fourth virtue is not Menander's courage, but mutual harmony which he demonstrates not only in claims about philanthropy but the impact of Jewish laws on other peoples.

Balch has demonstrated that Josephus structures his discussion of Moses' constitution and laws along the same lines as the pattern for praising a city and its people which Menander outlines. Balch also points to other works which praise cities and their people according to the same pattern of origin, accomplishments (especially governance), and deeds or practices (especially the virtues which they display).

One example comes from the first century BCE historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus who employs this pattern in the

opening section of Roman Antiquities (1.9-2.29) to praise Rome and its people.[45] Like Josephus he does not employ Menander's first section about the city's location. He can not praise the position of Rome because it is not good (e.g. 1.56.2-4). He does, though, employ the second section "praising the city as a man." In 1.5, he outlines his intentions as first being "to show who the founders[46] of the city were". After discussing origins, he will "tell of the deeds...and of the customs and institutions",[47] Menander's second and third subdivisions. He will include "examples of virtue" including piety, justice, temperance or self-control, and valor. Balch shows that Dionysius carries out his intentions.[48] In Book 1 Dionysius covers the topics concerned with origin: Rome's founders, the ethnicity of the settlers, its date, the means by which the settlers moved to Rome, and the divine cause of its founding. Then, moving to accomplishments, he discusses the political system from which the virtues derive (2.3.5), and the city's institutions. The third section focuses on the city's virtuous deeds: philanthropy (2.15.2), piety (2.18), temperance (2.24) and courage (2.28). As with Josephus, Dionysius writes in response to attacks on Rome and to correct false charges (1.5). Like Josephus, he compares Rome with other cities, praising the former and showing the latter to be inferior.[49]

Balch identifies other instances of this pattern (origin, accomplishments, deeds) to praise a city and its people. From the second century CE, Aristides provides two examples. Like Dionysius he writes an encomium on Rome.[50] Unlike Dionysius, he begins with praise for the city's location (6-8). Most of the work centers on governance which, supported by the army, enables Rome to rule the empire more successfully than any other people (14-91). Aristides concludes by identifying further aspects of the empire's deeds in celebrating the benefits that have come to the world through Roman rule (92-109). Often he uses comparisons to show Rome's superiority and the inferiority of other peoples.

Another work by Aristides, his Panathenaic Discourse, written perhaps in the 160s CE, praises Athens in similar categories.[51] Oliver claims that this work provided Menander with "the chief model for the encomium of a city."[52] Aristides begins by praising its geographical position (7-24), the "origin, nurture and honor from the gods" of its settlers (25-44), its virtues of philanthropy and benefaction, of justice and courage displayed in various deeds to the rest of the world (45-261), and its constitution (262-70).

From the fourth century CE comes Libanius' Oration in Praise of Antioch.[53] Libanius begins by praising the city's position (12-41), and then takes up its origin, its first settlers, their migration, the role of the gods and the city's history (42-131). True to Menander's pattern, he then

discusses its accomplishments and deeds (132-95) including governance and virtues such as justice (142), courage (157) and welcome for strangers (164). The final section provides a descriptive tour of the city (196-272).

In discussing first Menander, then Josephus, Dionysius, Aristides and Libanius, Balch establishes in encomia a pattern of praising cities and their people. This pattern, consisting of the city's or people's origins, accomplishments especially governance, and deeds or virtues, appears in works spanning some five hundred years, various geographical locations from Rome to Antioch in Syria, and diverse literary genre including an apology on behalf of a race (Josephus), a history (Dionysius), encomia (Aristides, Libanius) and rhetorical models (Menander).

My concern here is with the significance of this pattern. Balch has not just identified a rhetorical pattern, he has also uncovered a way of thinking, a widespread way of perceiving and defining communities in the Greco-Roman world. Community definition embraces matters of origin (antiquity, founder, settlers, migration, role of the gods/God), accomplishments (especially governance, skills, domestic structures for daily life), and deeds (virtues, religious practices and piety, laws especially concerning the household, respect for the dead, welcome of foreigners, punishment for breaking the laws). Superiority to other peoples (through contrasts) and influence on others are also important dimensions of this definition. By employing these topics, one defined a people, either positively or negatively.

Defining the community happens, in part, as false impressions or misinformation about a people's origins, accomplishments and deeds are corrected. Josephus begins Contra Apion by telling his patron Epaphroditus that he must address the "falsehoods" which some maliciously spread, inform the ignorant and instruct those who "want to know the truth" (1.1-3). Dionysius praises Rome to remove "erroneous impressions" and establish a positive impression (1.5). Oliver argues that Aristides' Panathenaic Discourse answers "the deeds of Augustus and the miracles of Christ" (though neither are named) by depicting "the Logos...[as] a divinely fostered, consistently behaved city of men (sic)...offering all mankind (sic) an image of the highest human values and a standard of the greatest human potentialities."[54] The last phrase paraphrases Aristides' description of the city as "image of the virtue and standard of the power in human nature" (274). The enemy is barbarism which Athens resists with its superior culture (14). Oliver argues that the work urges all Hellenes and civilized people "to unite around the pure Hellenism of Athens, which means the purest form of human culture and religion, the form furthest removed from barbarians and from those who assail the nature of the

community of humankind."[55] False impressions are corrected, and an alternative view offered.

But while false views are countered, existing identities are reinforced. Josephus' Contra Apion affirms that Jews value Moses' role and dependence on God, and regard highly obedience to the teachings. For a Jewish audience, these are familiar qualities. The work reinforces an identity perhaps threatened in a multi-cultural context. Likewise Dionysius and Aristides are not the first to sing the praises of Rome's imperial and military system. Their content is scarcely a revelation of new claims but the affirmation of an existing identity. As Marrou notes, rhetoric in the Roman empire was both a product of and an instrument of Romanization, maintaining and perpetrating the accomplishments and values of the empire.[56] Aristides addresses his Panathenaic Oration to the "men of Athens" (1), "to a panhellenic and especially Athenian audience"[57] to whom the claims that Athens is the benefactor of all people with its empire of "speech and reason",[58] and that "all the cities and races of men (sic) have turned toward you and your way of life (δίαιταν) and your language" (225), are certainly not new claims. For such an audience Aristides reinforces an existing identity. A similar scenario exists for Libanius' Oration. His fellow citizens of Antioch will hardly be surprised by his claims of the greatness of Antioch (1-2).[59] In such instances existing community identities are invoked and confirmed. The content of this literature, focussing on origin, accomplishments and deeds of virtue, identifies, depicts and celebrates community values and practices. In so doing, the literature reinforces and affirms, strengthens and builds up shared perceptions of a community's identity. It repeats and renews visions of what the particular community holds to be important.

3. Gospel of Matthew: Origin, Accomplishments, Deeds

If Burridge's claim that βίοι offer important teaching for followers of their central figure is correct, and if my claim that Matthew is a document which shapes the identity of a marginal community of disciples of Jesus is right,[60] it would be reasonable to expect that this gospel, a βίος which originates from the same time period and general cultural milieu as the writers named above, would evidence similar concern with its community's origin, accomplishments or institutions, and deeds and virtues. My claim is that Matthew incorporates these topics within his βίος of Jesus to shape and legitimate the identity and lifestyle of this community of disciples. I begin, as does Matthew, with origin.

With the genealogy of Jesus (1:1-17) and accounts of his conception (1:18-25), birth (2:1a), early childhood (2:1b-21), and settlement in Nazareth (2:22-23), the gospel uses

conventional topics associated with βίοι.[61] Attention to Jesus in the context of Israel's history with God (1:1-17) and in relation to God's purposes for him (1:18-25) and protection of him in a hostile and dangerous world (2:1-23) establishes Jesus' importance. Attention to a people's founder is present in the community-defining material in the encomia, as we have noted. Several factors indicate, though, that this material functions not only to establish the origin of Jesus but also of Jesus' followers.

The gospel's opening verse identifies Jesus as son or child of Abraham (1:1). It soon emerges that God will bring into existence more children of Abraham, not on the basis of ethnicity but, as John the Baptist declares, through doing God's will in relation to God's coming reign to be announced by Jesus (3:9; cf. 4:17; 8:11). God is establishing a community of Abraham's children centered on Jesus "child of Abraham". Likewise Jesus is identified as God's son or child, led by God out of Egypt (2:15). This identity is reinforced as the designation is repeated in the baptism by the voice from heaven (3:17) and in the temptation by the devil (4:3, 6). But the term used for Jesus (υἱός) is not restricted to Jesus; its plural form is used for his followers (υἱοί). Those who have encountered him (4:17-5:6) and who live a life of making peace are called "children of God" (5:9). Such "children" love their enemies and pray for their persecutors (5:43-45). They know God as their heavenly father (5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9 etc) and each other as brother/sister (4:18-22; 5:22-24, 47; 7:3-5). Jesus, child of God, draws others into a new identity as children of God.

Other features indicate the formation of this community of God's children. In 1:21 the angel informs Joseph that he is to name Mary's baby "Jesus", a name which identifies his God-given commission to save a people. In 2:2 the magi, the mobile Gentiles who appear in 2:1-12 as reliable and trustworthy characters, and who model characteristics of ideal discipleship in coming to worship Jesus (2:2, 11; cf. 14:33), identify Jesus as "king of the Jews". One can not be a king without a people.

Moreover in pointing beyond the origins of Jesus to the origins of a community, this opening conventional biographical material links this community with another community. The genealogy (1:1-17) stretches back across Israel's history to Abraham. It is not a biological record but a record of God's dealings with Israel through circumstances that span both faithful and unfaithful living.[62] The listed names invoke stories of God's faithful but unconventional ways. God is not bound to one gender (male), nor to primogeniture, nor nationality (Jews), nor a particular ethical characteristic (the righteous). God can chose a younger brother Isaac rather than the older Ishmael (1:2), the fourth brother Judah rather

than the other eleven (1:2c), but can also be conventional in choosing the older brother Perez not Zerah (1:3). Women and Gentiles are included (Abraham 1:2, Tamar 1:3, Rahab 1:5, Ruth 1:5, the wife of Uriah 1:6), as are wicked kings like Manasseh (1:10), righteous kings like Hezekiah (1:9), and very significant kings like David who are a bit of both (1:6). God can work through the obedient (Abraham 1:2) and through circumstances of failure, punishment and restoration experienced in Babylonian exile (1:11-12). In this history Jesus is located, son of Abraham and of David (1:1), of Joseph and Mary (1:16), of God (2:15), anointed ("Christ" 1:1, 16, 17, 18) and commissioned by God to save his people from sins and manifest God's presence among them (1:21-23). The community that follows Jesus is also located in this history, a community that will be united with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the completion of God's purposes (8:11) and with their God (22:32), a community which as the rest of the gospel shows is addressed by the scriptures which narrate God's actions with this people, a community addressed by David through the scriptures (1:21, cf. Ps 129:8; 22:41-46) and through the one who is son of David (9:27; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15).

A further connection with Israel's origins exists in these opening chapters. Numerous commentators have pointed out similarities between Jesus and Moses.[63] Like Moses, Jesus is born into a world of a murderous ruler, both Pharaoh and Herod learn of the baby from scribes, both Moses and Jesus dwell in Egypt, both have to leave their homelands, God watches over both, thwarting the destructive actions taken against them and keeping them safe to carry out the tasks to which they are commissioned, both journey from Egypt toward Judea. Jesus, like Moses and his people, passes through water (3:13-17) and encounters temptation "in the wilderness" (4:1-11). Jesus seems to reprise the exodus story (cf. 2:15). To invoke Moses is to recall the founding of a people. To link Jesus with Moses is also to point to the origins of a people, the community of Jesus' disciples which appears in the context of a much more ancient people.

These opening chapters, then, contain material important not only for the biography of Jesus, but for defining the community of Jesus' followers. By attending to its origins, this material bears significant similarity to that contained in the encomia, the works of community definition. It has focussed on the origin of Jesus, the community's founder, brought into being by divine activity for the purposes of establishing a people. His existence is located in a context of great antiquity stretching back through three distinct periods of fourteen generations to Abraham. This ancient people consists mainly of Jews but God's actions have also incorporated Gentiles. By locating Jesus in this context, the gospel connects him with migrations, those of Abraham, Moses

and the exile, as well as narrating his own journey to and from Egypt to his settling in Nazareth. In the context of God's long dealings with God's people, God brings Jesus into being through the Spirit, in accord with the scriptures, to carry out God's purposes of saving a people who encounter God's presence (1:21, 23).

While these opening chapters begin the process of forming the community's identity by locating its origins in the purposes of God, the call narratives further locate its origins in the ministry of Jesus.[64] That ministry begins with the proclamation of the reign of the heavens and Jesus' calling of the first disciples (4:17-22). The call demonstrates the impact of the reign's presence, disrupting the everyday lives of its hearers with a gift, a demand, and the creation of a new community focussed on Jesus. The call narratives name original community members (4:18-22; 9:9; 10:1-4), as well as functioning paradigmatically for subsequent disciples whose identity is also grounded in Jesus' call. They establish that the community of disciples exists because of Jesus' initiative. One can not volunteer to be a disciple as the accounts of unsuccessful attempts to join the community show (8:19-22; 19:16-22). Rather Jesus calls people from everyday, settled lives to a new focus, to follow him in a community of mobile disciples. This call to follow him marks a distinct beginning for disciples and distinguishes them from non-disciples who have not been called or who do not choose to participate in God's actions. The call stories also set the direction for, or the mission of, the community's existence. To "follow me" (4:19, 20, 22; 9:9) becomes a call "to fish for people" in 4:19b which means in 10:1 the granting of "authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, to heal every disease and every infirmity...and preach as you go..." in Israel (cf. 10:5-14), but in 28:19-20 it becomes a command to disciple and teach all the nations. Disciples authorized by Jesus continue his mission, calling more disciples, both Jews and Gentiles, into the community. The community originates in the call of Jesus and the commissioned mission activity of previous members.

In addition to origin, the gospel evidences concern with the second area in encomia, the community's accomplishments, especially governance. While the gospel does not mention accomplishments in crafts, rhetoric and athletics, it does include, in keeping with the conventional topics of βίοι, extensive teaching from Jesus which shapes the community's governance.[65] Like Josephus, Matthew presents this governance as a theocracy focussing not on offices and officials but on the community of disciples which does God's will revealed by Jesus (1:21; 11:25-27; 12:46-50).

Jesus does not reveal God's will for the community's governance ex nihilō. He interprets traditions (5:21-48),

appealing to antiquity, God's will "from the beginning" (19:3-6), and to the teaching of Moses (8:1-4), David (12:3; 22:42-45) and the prophets (9:10-13). These appeals cohere with Jesus' interpretive principles expressed in 5:17-20.[66] He has not come to "abolish" the scriptures. Rather, using the language of "Greek political discussions of a state's or a people's constitution and laws,"[67] he has come to "fulfil", to interpret appropriately and justly,[68] the existing law and the prophets (5:17).

This is a pivotal declaration. It suggests debate about and opposition to his interpretive work,[69] evidenced in the subsequent disputes between Jesus and the religious leaders (e.g. 12:1-14; 15:1-20; 16:1-4; 19:3-12). Throughout, Jesus appears as the definitive and reliable interpreter for disciples (7:23-27; 12:46-50). He declares that his opponents know "neither the scriptures nor the power of God" (22:29). Always bettered in the interpretive controversies, they do not "dare to ask him any more questions" (22:46).

Jesus' "fulfilling" of "the law and the prophets", his interpreting of scripture, begins to be clarified in 5:21-48.[70] His interpretation internalizes (5:21-22, 27-28), restricts (5:31-32), revises (5:33-37, 38-42) and extends (5:43-48) the tradition. His providing of the community's governance continues through the gospel. At times Jesus seems to adhere strictly to Moses' teaching (8:1-4). At other times he takes a more flexible line with the traditions (9:10-13; 12:1-14), while appealing to the tradition itself for legitimation (9:13b; 12:3-4, 5, 7). Always it is Jesus' teaching which is determinative for the community. Those who follow him (4:18-22), who believe in him (8:13; 15:28; 18:6), must live according to his teaching (7:24-27; 12:46-50).

Nor will his words pass away (24:35). They are to be faithfully taught to successive members and generations of the community (28:19-20). But this does not mean robot-like transmission. As Balch notes, the gospel allows for a process of faithful reinterpretation by Jesus' disciples. Dionysius and Josephus uphold a utopian idea from earlier writers that the founder's constitution remains for the people's history and only the impious and unjust would abolish or alter it.[71] Yet both historians recognize that new circumstances bring revisions, even the abolition of laws. One of the historians' tasks is to validate and legitimize such developments. Likewise in Matthew, while Matthew's Jesus declares he will not abolish the law, he seems, while fulfilling it, to do almost that (5:43-48). And in 16:19, utilizing further vocabulary from Greek political discussions about a state's constitution,[72] he authorizes Peter, the community's representative "to bind and loose", to have the power to determine which laws and teachings are or are not to be observed.[73] The gospel demonstrates this provision to revise communal practice. In new circumstances, (the now risen) Jesus legitimates Gentile mission (28:18-20), having earlier limited it to Israel (10:5). The laws or teaching are

"adaptable for life".[74]

The same vocabulary from Greek political discussions about a state's constitution appears in chapter 18.[75] Now speaking to the whole community, Matthew's Jesus authorizes the community "to bind and loose" (18:18), to decide which laws and teachings are or are not to be observed. But not only is this an extension of authority from Peter to the community, the community is also given a procedure consisting of several stages and options, as well as criteria, for disciplining members who do not live appropriately (18:15-20). To those who claim there are emerging leadership roles in the Matthean community (scribes, prophets, teachers etc) to whom teaching and reinterpretation are committed,[76] this community responsibility presents an important challenge.

As part of this communal governance, and consistent with the encomia's focus on the "good order" of households and daily life, the gospel also attests concern with household order including children. Given the emphasis in philosophical traditions about the household as a basic unit of a state or kingdom, this concern with the governance of the households of those who encounter the reign of the heavens (βασιλεία) is not surprising.[77] Chapters 19-20 employ, but subvert, the four standard elements of philosophical discussions of household order to offer an alternative household structure.[78] Instead of unrestricted patriarchal power, more "egalitarian" structures are proposed. Women are not to be objects of male lust and power. The warnings against adultery are severe. Divorce is permissible, though since remarriage is discouraged, it is not to be used by a man as an easy means of discarding a woman (5:27-32; 19:3-12). Children are valued and model important characteristics of the community's existence (19:13-15; cf. 2:1-23; 18:1-14).[79] Excessive wealth is to be redistributed and used for the poor (19:16-30; 6:19-34). Community members are to live not as masters but slaves (20:17-28). Jesus' teaching determines the structures and relationships of the community's households.

In addition to a focus on the community's origin and governance, concern with the third topic of community definition evident in the encomia, the actions or deeds and virtues of the community of disciples of Jesus, is also evident in the gospel.[80] Menander commends four virtues: justice, temperance, prudence and courage. Matthew's Jesus is more expansive, though the gospel does embrace some of the same virtues commended by the encomia, notably righteousness and welcome to strangers.[81] The basis for and content of these virtues differ somewhat because of the gospel's theological point of view.[82]

Jesus' five major teaching sections (5-7; 10; 13; 18; 24-25) outline actions envisioned for disciples. The experience of God's saving presence is a foundational virtue since the community originates with Jesus ("he will save his people from their sins", 1:21), Emmanuel ("God with us," 1:23). Not surprisingly the opening teaching block, the Sermon on the

Mount, begins with articulating blessings on those who know this presence (5:3-12). Numerous stories depict the transforming experiences of those who encounter God's merciful and saving presence or reign in the person of Jesus. People are healed, sight is restored, demons are cast out, marginalized people are accepted, the dead are raised, those who can't speak have speech restored (4:18-25 following 4:17; chs 8-9). Rituals of worship are important for expressing response:[83] disciples worship (2:1-12; 5:23-24), learn (5:1-7:27), pray (5:44b; 6:5-15; 7:7-11; 18:18-20), forgive (6:14-15), eat (9:10-13; 26:26-29) and baptize (28:19-20). Rituals create order, foster community and effect transformation.[84]

One of the primary actions or virtues to be evident in the community is justice or righteousness (δικαιοσύνη). Exactly what constitutes this action has puzzled interpreters.[85] Some have claimed that it refers to God's saving action, others have argued that it refers to human ethical action, and others have suggested its meaning is not consistent. More accurate I think is the view that it denotes God's will or reign enacted in human actions. The term is used seven times (3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 21:32) though in contexts such as 5:20 and 6:1 it serves as an inclusive term for other virtues which the subsequent material describes (5:21-48; 6:2-18). Righteousness or justice (3:15; 5:6) means reconciling and faithful relationships (5:21-26, 27-32), integrity of one's word (5:33-37), non-violent resistance to evil (5:33-37), love and prayer even for one's enemy (5:43-48), giving alms (6:2-4), prayer (6:5-15; 7:6-11), fasting (6:16-18), an anxiety-free existence (6:19-34), refraining from judging others (7:1-5). It creates a distinctive way of life not shared by the wider society and for which disciples are persecuted (5:10).

Closely related to this virtue are love and mercy. Disciples are to love God with all their being (22:37). They are also to love others, including the enemy, in imitation of God's love (22:38-39; 5:43-48; 7:12). On the same basis, disciples who know God's forgiveness of sin extend forgiveness to others and maintain community relationships (6:14-15; 18:21-35). Likewise the experience of God's mercy (5:7) means a life marked by mercy and peacemaking (9:13; 12:7; 6:2-4; 5:7, 9). Such a community is open to strangers who wish to follow Jesus (5:13-16). Jesus sends disciples to continue his mission of preaching, healing and casting out demons among the marginalized and Gentiles (10:7-8; 24:14; 25:31-45; 28:18-20). Jesus warns, though, of hostility and that many will not want to join; courage and perseverance are needed (10:14-25).

This community knows communal discipline for members who do not live its teaching (18:15-20). But the primary means of punishment is eschatological. Disciples are accountable to God who will reward and punish disobedient and obedient disciples at the judgment (chs 24-25). Each teaching section ends with scenes depicting reward for faithful discipleship and punishment for unfaithfulness (7:15-27; 10:32-42; 13:47-

50; 18:21-35; 25:31-46). This is a community which anticipates the resurrection of the dead, guaranteed by Jesus' resurrection (27:51-54; 28:1-20; 22:23-32). Death is not the final reality (9:18-26). The burial of the dead must not hinder discipleship (8:21-22).

Matthew's gospel, then, presents the origin, accomplishments especially governance, and deeds and virtues of the community of disciples. As in the encomia, the identity and way of life of the community of disciples are frequently contrasted with other groups (synkrisis). The righteousness or justice of disciples is "greater than" that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20). Jesus' interpretation is not the same as what "you have heard it said..." (5:21-48). The community's practices are to differ from the hypocrites in the synagogue (6:2-4, 5-6, 16-18), from the scribes and Pharisees (ch 23), and from the Gentiles (6:7; 20:25).

By including topics of origin, accomplishment and deeds, the gospel as a βίος presents and affirms the particular identity of Matthew's community of disciples of Jesus. It provides a vision, direction and guidelines for how it is to live in its difficult circumstances as a marginal community. It offers broad instructions to be reinterpreted for and imitated in particular circumstances. It strengthens identity and encourages perseverance in a lifestyle of following Jesus the crucified and risen one.

Conclusion

I have built on Burridge's identification of the gospel's genre as a βίος by attending to its function of shaping the identity of communities of disciples. I have utilized his insight that βίοι overlap with other genre, notably encomia and history, in sharing generic features. I have employed Balch's work on encomia to establish that describing a people's origin, accomplishments and deeds comprises a vital way of defining a people's identity and lifestyle. I have suggested that one way in which Matthew's gospel performs its community-defining, lifestyle-guiding work is by delineating this community's origin, accomplishments and deeds.

1. R. A. Burridge, What Are The Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biographies (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992); among the earlier literature, H. Crancik, "Die Gattung Evangelium. Markus im Rahmen der antiken Historiographie," and "Bios und Logos. Formengeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Lukians "Leben des Demonax"," in H. Crancik (ed.), Markus-Philologie (WUNT 33; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1984) 85-113, 115-30; K. Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im NT," ANRW II.25.2 (1984) 1031-432, esp. "Biographie", 1231-45, and "Evangelium", 1259-64.

2. Burridge, What Are The Gospels?, 109-239. **Opening Features:** titles, prologue/preface; **Subject:** focus on one person (verbal syntax; allocation of space); **External Features:** prose narrative, size (medium length), structure as chronological framework (limited to subject), mixture of literary units (anecdote, stories, speeches, sayings), use of sources, characterization through display (words and deeds); **Internal Features:** setting, topics (ancestry, birth, education, deeds, virtues, death and consequences), style (fairly literary but a range is possible) atmosphere (serious and respectful), quality of characterization, social setting and occasion (educated but popular tendencies), authorial intention and purpose (encomiastic, exemplary, informative, entertainment, preserves memory, didactic, apologetic and polemic).

3. While his work is generally convincing in method and conclusion, a significant reservation concerns Luke-Acts and its affinities with Greco-Roman historiography. See D. L. Balch, "The Genre of Luke-Acts: Individual Biography, Adventure Novel, or Political History?" Southwestern Journal of Theology 33 (1990) 5-19; G. E. Sterling, Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography (NovTest Suppl. 64; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992); D. E. Aune, The New Testament In Its Literary Environment (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987) 77-157.

4. Burridge, What Are the Gospels?, 26-54, 61-69.

5. Burridge, What Are the Gospels?, 55-81.

6. Burridge, What Are The Gospels?, 80. C. Talbert ("Biography, Ancient," in ABD 1.747-8) identifies several social functions: to portray the subject as an ideal figure so that readers will accept his authority; to defend the subject against misunderstanding; to discredit the subject; to indicate where the true tradition is in the present; to legitimate the subject's teaching or provide an interpretive clue to it.

7. Burridge, What Are The Gospels?, 256.

8. Burridge, What Are The Gospels?, 214.

9. Burridge, What Are The Gospels?, 216. G. Stanton, The Gospels and Jesus (Oxford: Oxford University, 1989) 78.

10. S. Freyne, "Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self: Matthew's and John's Anti-Jewish Polemic in Focus," in J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs (eds.), "To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity (Chico, CA.; Scholars, 1985) 117-43, for example, 119, 129, 132.

11. Talbert. "Biography, Ancient," ABD 1.749.

12. See E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, A. Mendelson, B. F. Meyer (eds.), Jewish and Christian Self-Definition vols 1-3 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980-82); Neusner and Frerichs (eds.), "To See Ourselves as Others See Us"; J. J. Collins, Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora (New York: Crossroad, 1986); J. M. G. Barclay, Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE) (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996); on Matthew, A. J. Saldarini, Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community (Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 1994).

13. For these terms as conventional terms for vilifying one's opponents, L. Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Rhetoric," JBL 108 (1989) 419-41; B. J. Malina and J. H. Neyrey, Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1988) esp. 152-57.

14. Freyne ("Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self," 143) lists eleven characteristics in chapter 23 for which Scribes and Pharisees are denounced and about which disciples are also warned. For the language of belonging and separation in Paul, W. Meeks, The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1983) 84-110.

15. It should be noted that a claim of separation from a synagogue community is not the same as claiming separation from Judaism. The two are not to be confused. I understand, as the subsequent discussion will demonstrate, that this gospel's Jewish location is a crucial factor in its interpretation.

16. T. Rajak, "Jews and Christians as Groups in a Pagan World," in Neusner and Frerichs (eds.), "To See Ourselves as Others See Us", 247-62; W. Carter, "Matthew 4:18-22 and Matthean Discipleship: An Audience-Oriented Perspective," CBQ forthcoming 1997.

17. For the importance of groups as the basis and context for identity in the first-century, B. J. Malina, The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology (Rev. Ed.; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1993) 63-89.

18. For "evil" as the "root trait" of the characterization of the religious leaders, J. D. Kingsbury, "The Developing Conflict between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: A Literary-Critical Study," CBQ 49 (1987) 57-73. But note that in 7:11 disciples (5:1-2) are described as evil.

19. Freyne, "Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self," 132-35.

20. G. W. E. Nicklesburg, "Revealed Wisdom as a Criterion for Inclusion and Exclusion: From Jewish Sectarianism to Early Christianity," in Neusner and Frerichs (eds.), "To See Ourselves as Others See Us", 73-91, esp. 85-87; D. Harrington, The Gospel of Matthew (Sacra Pagina 1; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991) 10-22; W. Carter, Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996) 80-88; C. M. Deutsch, Lady Wisdom, Jesus, and the Sages: Metaphor and Social Context in Matthew's Gospel (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996).

21. For apocalyptic rhetoric and the "language of annihilation", Freyne, "Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self," 135, 142.

22. For this helpful emphasis on the center rather than the boundaries as a means of definition, S. Saunders, "No One Dared Ask Him Anything More:" Contextual Readings of the Controversy Stories in Matthew (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1990).

23. See Burridge, What Are the Gospels?, 61-69, 66 for a diagram. Basic to my argument are Burridge's observations (61-69) on the interconnectedness of genre, on flexible boundaries and "the borrowing and sharing of generic features across boundaries", especially from "neighboring" genre like history and encomia. For the relationship of biography and history, A. Momigliano, The Development of Greek Biography (Expanded Ed.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993) passim, 15.

24. It should be very clear that my attention to encomia in no way revives the thesis of P. L. Shuler (A Genre for the Gospels: The Biographical Character of Matthew [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982]) who argues that a genre of laudatory or encomium biography existed to which the gospels belong. I am not seeking, as Shuler was, to identify the gospel genre in these terms. I have already identified Burridge's work as the point of departure. Nor do I focus, as Shuler did, on encomia concerned with individuals. I am interested in encomia concerned with cities and peoples and their use of certain topoi, shared with βίοι, to describe and affirm the identity of a community or people. For critique of Shuler, Burridge, What Are the Gospels?, 86-89.

25. Leading examples will be discussed below. See D. Balch, "Two Apologetic Encomia: Dionysius on Rome and Josephus on the Jews," Journal for the Study of Judaism 13 (1982) 102-22; also D. Balch, "Anti-Judaism, modern and ancient, in relation to Luke-Acts: a response to Daryl Schmidt," in W. Farmer et al (eds.), Anti-Judaism and the Gospels (Trinity Press International forthcoming). My debt to Professor Balch for comments on this paper and in what follows should be evident throughout. He does not, though, make any connection with

Matthew's gospel. Also D. L. Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education (New York: Columbia University, 1957) 194-98.

26. "It (a vituperation) is divided into the same topics as the encomium, and it is required to find fault with just as many things as are objects of praise." These topics are the genus, education, achievements, comparison, and epilogue. So Aphthonius, in R. Nadeau, "The Progymnasmata of Apthonius in Translation," Speech Monographs 19 (1952) 264-85, esp. 275. For analysis of "strategies of vituperation", Freyne, "Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self," 129-43; M. A. Grant, The Ancient Rhetorical Theories of the Laughable: The Greek Rhetoricians and Cicero (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1924) 128-31.

27. Their charges are representative of charges made against Jews by numerous other writers. See references in M. Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism: Edited with Introduction, Translations and Commentary 3 vols (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1976-84); idem, "The Jews in Greek and Latin Literature," in S. Safrai and M. Stern, The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 2.1101-59. Representative examples can be found in Diodorus of Sicily, 34.1-5 (text in Stern, Greek and Latin Authors, 1.181-85; and Diodorus of Sicily [LCL: tr. F. R. Walton; vol 12; Cambridge: Harvard University, 1967]) and Tacitus, Histories, 5.1-13 (text in Stern, Greek and Latin Authors, 2.17-31; and The Histories [CL: tr. C. H. Moore; vol 3; Cambridge: Harvard University, 1969]).

28. Citations are from H. St. J. Thackeray, Josephus vol 1 (LCL; Cambridge/London: Harvard University/William Heinemann, 1961).

29. It should be noted that this charge is but one of six theories of origin which Tacitus lists (Hist. 5.2.1-3.2).

30. My translation: Loeb translates "our laws are unjust and our religious ceremonies erroneous...".

31. H. Cancik, "Theokratie und Priesterherrschaft: Die mosaische Verfassung bei Flavius Josephus, c. Apionem 2, 157-198," Religionstheorie und Politische Theologie (München: Wilhelm Fink / Ferdinand Schöningh, 1987) 65-77.

32. On welcoming aliens, see D. Balch, "Paul in Acts...You teach all the Jews...to forsake Moses, telling them not to...observe the customs" (Acts 21:21)," in M. Wacht (ed.), Panchaia (FS für Klaus Thraede; Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 22; Münster: Aschendorffsche, 1995) 11-23, esp. 13-16, 20-22.

33. G. A. Kennedy, Greek Rhetoric Under Christian Emperors (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) 64.

34. So Balch, "Two Apologetic Encomia," 120-21; T. Rajak, Josephus: The Historian and His Society (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 223-25; Barclay, Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora, 368.

35. V. Tcherikover, "Jewish Literature Reconsidered," Eos 48 (1956) 169-93. Tcherikover argues that Jewish diaspora literature was generally directed internally to Jewish audiences rather than to Gentile audiences, but notes Josephus as an exception to this view (183, note 32, though note the suggestion of a double audience in the sentence, "He...could be sure beforehand that the circle of his readers would include also the Gentiles,..." my emphasis). Sterling (Historiography and Self-Definition, 297-308) recognizes Greek, Roman and Jewish audiences. Balch ("Two Apologetic Encomia," 121 note 51) notes numerous examples of an encomium exhorting those who are already citizens to imitate the virtues of their ancestors: Plato, Menexenus, 236E, 246B, 248E; Thucydides, II.43; 45.2; Isocrates, On the Peace, 41, 72; Polybius, Histories, X.21; XV.36.3; Diodorus Siculus, Library of History, XI.38.6; XV.1.1.

36. A. T. Kraabel, "The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions," JJS 33 (1982) 445-64, esp. 457-58.

37. Collins, Between Athens and Jerusalem, 8-10.

38. Balch, "Two Apologetic Encomia," 102-22.

39. For introduction, text and commentary, D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson, Menander Rhetor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981). References in the main text are to this edition. Its attribution to Menander has been questioned (Russell and Wilson, Menander Rhetor, xxxiv-xlvi); authenticity does not affect either Balch's argument or mine. Menander's pattern might be compared to the instructions about encomia found in the elementary exercises (Progymnasmata) of the second-century writer Hermogenes. For text, C. S. Baldwin, Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic (to 1400) Interpreted from Representative Works (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1959) 30-33; for the late fourth-early fifth century text of Aphthonius, see Nadeau, "The Progymnasmata of Aphthonius"; for discussion of progymnasmata including encomia, Kennedy, Greek Rhetoric, 54-73.

40. See Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education, passim, 66; H. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity (Tr. George Lamb; Sheed and Ward, 1956; Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1982) 284-89.

41. For discussion, Russell and Wilson, Menander Rhetor, xiii-xxxi.

42. On the translation of ἐπιτηδεύματα see Balch, "Two Apologetic Encomia," 103, note 8.

43. Balch, "Two Apologetic Encomia," 114-22.

44. Menander uses φρόνησις "prudence" or "insight"; Josephus employs καρτερία "fortitude," or "steadfastness" but includes the topics Menander specifies as well as examples of Jewish faithfulness to the laws.

45. References are to The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus vol 1 (Tr. E. Cary; LCL; Cambridge/London: Harvard University/William Heinemann, 1948).

46. Menander employs οἰκιστάς; Dionysius uses οἰκισάντων.

47. For "deeds" (πρᾶξις) Menander and Dionysius use the same vocabulary. For "customs and accomplishments" Dionysius uses ἐπιτηδεύσεις, while Menander uses ἐπιτηδεύματα.

48. Balch, "Two Apologetic Encomia," 107-14.

49. Balch, "Two Apologetic Encomia," 113-14.

50. For a Greek text, translation of and commentary on Aristides' Roman Oration, see J. H. Oliver, "The Ruling Power: A Study of the Roman Empire in the Second Century after Christ through the Roman Oration of Aelius Aristides," in Transactions of the American Philosophical Society ns 43 Part 4 (1953) 871-1003. For Aristides, G. A. Kennedy, The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 582-85; for connections between Menander's pattern and Aristides' Roman Oration, Balch, "Two Apologetic Encomia," 108-114, notes 11-32.

51. For Greek text, translation of and commentary on Aristides' Panathenaic Discourse, see J. H. Oliver, "The Civilizing Power: A Study of the Panathenaic Discourse of Aelius Aristides Against the Background of Literature and Cultural Conflict, with Text, Translation, and Commentary," in Transactions of the American Philosophical Society ns 58 Part 1 (1968) 3-223; see 33-35 for date and place of composition. For connections between Menander's pattern and Aristides' Panathenaic Discourse, Balch, "Two Apologetic Encomia," 108-114, notes 11-32.

52. Oliver, "The Civilizing Power," 6.

53. For introduction, text, translation and brief commentary, see G. Downey, "Libanius' Oration in Praise of Antioch (Oration XI)," in Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 103 no. 5 (1959) 652-86.

54. Oliver, "The Civilizing Power," 6; also 20-21, 35-38.

55. Oliver, "The Civilizing Power," 21.

56. Marrou, History of Education, 292-95.

57. Oliver, "The Civilizing Power," 34.

58. Oliver, "The Civilizing Power," 21.

59. The Oration was delivered, at least in part, at the Olympic Games of Antioch in 360, an event which drew many visitors to the city (so Downey, "Libanius' Oration," 653). If the audience combined both Antiochenes and visitors, it would have had numerous functions, including affirming identity, imparting information, countering misinformation, and inviting new understanding.

60. D. Duling, "Matthew and Marginality," in E. H. Lovering (ed.), SBL 1993 Seminar Papers (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993) 642-71; W. Carter, Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996) 78-102.

61. Burridge, What Are the Gospels?, 145-46, 178, 207.

62. R. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah (New Updated Edition; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1977, 1993) 66-69.

63. Brown, Birth of the Messiah, 110-19; D. Allison, The New Moses: A Matthean Typology (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 140-65; W. D. Davies and D. Allison, The Gospel According to Saint Matthew 3 vols (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988) 1.190-96.

64. See A. J. Droge, "Call Stories in Greek Biography and the Gospels," in K. H. Richards (ed.), SBL 1983 Seminar Papers (SBLSP 22; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983) 245-57; Carter, "Matthew 4:18-22 and Matthean Discipleship;" J. Zumstein (La Condition du croyant dans l'Evangile selon Matthieu [OBO 16; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977] 217), among others, emphasizes connections with the Elijah-Elisha episode in 1 Kings 19:19-21.

65. Burridge, What Are the Gospels?, 146, 179, 208.

66. H. D. Betz, The Sermon on the Mount (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995) 166-97.

67. D. Balch, "The Greek Political Topos περὶ νόμων and Matthew 5:17, 19, and 16:19," in D. Balch (ed.), Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991) 68-84.

68. Betz, Sermon on the Mount, 179. For discussion of the verb "fulfil", see Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1. 484-87; W. Carter, What Are They Saying about Matthew's Sermon on the Mount? (New York/Mahwah: Paulist, 1994) 84-88; J. P. Meier, Law and History in Matthew's Gospel (AnBib 71; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1976) 73-81.

69. Betz (Sermon on the Mount, 173) identifies three possible histrorical charges, that Jesus' teaching was arbitrary, he undermined the authority of scripture, that he abolished the Torah.

70. Betz, Sermon on the Mount, 172, 179; Carter, What Are They Saying about Matthew's Sermon on the Mount?, 88-93. For discussion of the Sermon on the Mount as variously revealing God's eternal will for the eschatological community, or providing visions of discipleship for imitation, see D. Patte, Discipleship According to the Sermon on the Mount: Four Legitimate Readings, Four Plausible Views of Discipleship and Their Relative Values (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996) 128-260, passim.

71. Balch, "The Greek Political Topos," 72-76; passim.

72. Balch, "The Greek Political Topos," 68-69.

73. For discussion of options, Davies and Allison, Matthew 2.635-41. They also conclude for teaching authority.

74. Balch, "The Greek Political Topos," 84, quoting James A. Sanders, "Adaptable for Life: The Nature and Function of Canon," in Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God. Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright (ed. F. M. Cross et al.; New York: Doubleday & Co., 1976) 531-60; also in J. Sanders, From Sacred Story to Sacred Text: Canon as Paradigm (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 9-39.

75. Balch, "The Greek Political Topos," 68-69.

76. For example, Duling, "Matthew and Marginality," 661-62; Deutsch, Lady Wisdom, Jesus and the Sages, 122-23, 137-41.

77. W. Carter, Households and Discipleship: A Study of Matthew 19-20 (JSNTSS 103; Sheffield: JSOT, 1994) 19-24.

78. Carter, Households and Discipleship, 17-22, 56-192. See now C. Osiek and D. Balch, Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 130-35.

79. Carter, Households and Discipleship, 90-114.

80. Burridge, What Are the Gospels?, 146, 179, 208.

81. It should be noted that while strangers are welcome, those who reject the proclamation about Jesus are excluded (10:32-42).

82. On point of view, see Carter, Matthew: Storyteller, 119-48, and the bibliography noted there.

83. See M. A. Powell, God With Us: A Pastoral Theology of Matthew's Gospel (Minneapolis: Fortress Augsburg, 1995) 28-61.

84. W. Carter, "Recalling the Lord's Prayer: The Authorial Audience and Matthew's Prayer as Familiar Liturgical Experience," CBQ 57 (1995) 514-30, citing the work of T. Driver, The Magic of Ritual: Our Need for Liberating Rites That Transform Our Lives and Our Communities (San Francisco:

HarperSanFrancisco, 1991).

85. For discussion of options, Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1.325-327; Meier, Law and History in Matthew's Gospel, 76-80; B. Przybylski, Righteousness in Matthew and His World of Thought (SNTSMS 41; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1981) 77-123.

An Early Non-Canonical Annunciation Story

George T. Zervos
University of North Carolina, Wilmington

In a paper presented to the Intertextuality in Christian Apocrypha Seminar at the 1994 Annual Meeting of the SBL,[1] certain discrete textual material was identified as having been interpolated into chapter XI of the Protevangelium of James (PJ). The existence of this material was disclosed in that paper as one of the arguments in support of the priority of PJ over the works of Justin Martyr. This evidence led to the conclusion that the text of PJ already had been redacted before it was read by Justin Martyr around the middle of the second century CE. Justin appears to have used PJ as a source of nativity material and possibly numbered this apocryphon among his "memoirs of the apostles."[2]

As a result of these conclusions the status of PJ has been elevated to that of a primary document of the first half of the second century CE. The importance of PJ for the study of the composition and transmission of early Christian teaching and literature has been enhanced, especially with regard to the content and text of the synoptic nativity stories. Hitherto, Justin Martyr had been thought of as the first writer to quote, although loosely, significant portions of the synoptic gospels.[3] Now the unknown author of this most ancient Christian pseudepigraphon which is attributed to James, the "brother of the Lord," has replaced Justin at center stage in the quest for the original text of the synoptic gospels.

This increased prominence of PJ is further magnified when considered against the background of the almost total absence of empirical textual evidence from the first two centuries of the Christian era; there are no extant MSS of the synoptic gospel texts before *ca.* 200 CE. We continue to be completely reliant upon the usually loose references to these gospels among the secondary witnesses of the apostolic fathers and the early Christian apologists. Now, as a result of this new

perspective on the date of PJ, this apocryphon has been elevated to a position of preeminence within this privileged group.[4]

Since the primary purpose of the 1994 paper referred to above was to inquire into the date of PJ, neither the extent of interpolation nor the interpolated material itself was assessed fully. The present paper represents a more thorough and systematic investigation into the evidence of redaction in the annunciation story found in chapters X-XIII of PJ. The application of the methodology of source and redaction criticism to these chapters of PJ reveal several instances of the type of textual confusion and dislocation that could indicate editorial activity, i.e., the insertion of foreign material into the text and the modification of the original text to accommodate the new material.

The present study focuses especially upon chapters X-XII[5] of PJ as they appear on pages 20-26 of Papyrus Bodmer V (PBV).[6] This papyrus affords us a rare luxury among ancient writings--a complete copy of our document in its original language dating to within two centuries of its composition.[7] Not only is PBV an invaluable witness to a very early phase in the development of the PJ text, but the papyrus itself also contains additions and corrections by a second scribe (Z^2) as evidence of the earliest stages of the editorial process which began in antiquity, continued throughout the ensuing centuries, and finally resulted in the form of PJ which is presently available in the modern editions.[8]

The present study stems from an attempt to recover the original text underlying PJ X-XII according to PBV. To accomplish this it became necessary to reevaluate not only the traces of scribal activity on the papyrus itself, but also the corrections and emendations of the PBV text which appear in the most authoritative and influential critical edition to date of the Greek text of our apocryphon, *La Forme la plus ancienne du Protevangile de Jacques*, by Emile de Strycker (DS).[9] The criterion upon which this reevaluation was based was respect for the integrity of the text of PBV. The readings of the papyrus were retained wherever they were comprehensible. Corrections of the text of PBV were held to an absolute minimum and consist mostly of itacisms and minor errors in spelling.

Our investigation revealed that the text of PJ X-XII contained in PBV has been obscured substantially by both its ancient and modern editors.[10] Consequently, much of the primary evidence of redaction in the PJ annunciation story has been concealed by the emendation of the original text by these editors in their effort to bring PBV into conformity not only with the later "received" text of PJ but also with that of the canonical Luke. The Greek text of PJ X-XII which appears below is the result of our attempt to eliminate, as far as possible, these later editorial adjustments and to allow the venerable papyrus to speak for itself.

When the secondary additions and corrections are removed from the PJ text, it becomes clear that the material which remains constitutes a complete, self-contained annunciation story which differs significantly from those found in the present form of PJ and the canonical gospels. It appears that this story was part of an earlier document which may have been one of the original sources of PJ. This document probably was known as the ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ ΜΑΡΙΑΣ (GM) as witnessed by the title of PJ as it appears only on PBV.[11] Henceforth this primary annunciation story which underlies PJ X-XII will be referred to as the GM annunciation story to distinguish it from the present form of the PJ annunciation story.

In their present form, chapters X-XII of PJ narrate the participation of Mary in the preparation of thread for the temple veil in PJ X, 1-2 (PBV 20:16b-22:8) and PJ XII, 1 (PBV 24:9b-25:1), the annunciation of Mary in PJ XI, 1-3 (PBV 22:9-23:9a), and Mary's visit to her relative Elizabeth and return to her own home in PJ XII, 2-3 (PBV 25:2-26:11).[12] These events take place while Joseph is away on a business trip. Joseph had left Mary in his home at the end of PJ IX and returns from his trip at the beginning of PJ XIII only to find Mary pregnant. Joseph laments over what he assumes to be the sexual defilement of Mary and interrogates her about her pregnancy. Mary insists upon her innocence and swears that she does not know the cause of her pregnancy.

The following outline and Greek text of PJ X-XII will facilitate the isolation of what seem to have been the elements of the original GM annunciation story from the later editorial additions which have accrued down through the centuries. The passages which have been determined to be secondary are denoted by an asterisk (*) in the outline of PJ X-XII below. The Arabic numerals which introduce each section in the outline, and which are enclosed in brackets in the ensuing Greek text, are references to the pages and lines of PBV.[13]

OUTLINE OF PJ X-XII

Chapter X

20:16b-21:8a A council of priests decides to make a new veil for the temple; a priest orders the undefiled virgins of the tribe of David to be gathered together; Servants go out, search, find seven virgins.

***21:8b-12 The priest remembers that the child Mary is of the tribe of David and undefiled; servants go out and bring her to the temple.**

21:13-22:2 The servants bring them (the seven virgins) into the temple; the priest orders a lottery to determine who will spin the colored threads for the veil; the purple (and scarlet?) thread fall to Mary;

***22:3-7a Mary takes thread to her home and begins spinning; Zacharias becomes silent; Samuel replaces him until Zacharias speaks again.**
22:7b-8 Mary picks up the scarlet thread and begins spinning.
{{{Mary puts down the scarlet thread (From 25:6)}}}

Chapter XI, 1 (The Original GM Annunciation)
22:9-15a Mary picks up a pitcher and goes out to fill it with water; Mary hears a voice telling her she is begraced[14] among women; Mary looks around for the source of the voice.
***22:15b-23:2a Mary is frightened and reenters her house.**
23:2b-5a Mary puts down the pitcher; Mary picks up the purple thread, sits down on the throne, and begins spinning the purple thread.

***Chapter XI, 2-3 (The Lukan Annunciation).**
***23:5b-13a First Angelic Appearance telling Mary not to fear, that she has found grace before the Lord and will conceive by the Logos; Mary wonders if she will conceive by God as all women conceive.**
***23:13b-24:9a Second Angelic Appearance telling Mary she will not conceive thus but by the power of God; She will bear Jesus who will be called the son of the Most High and savior of his people.**

Chapter XII
24:9b-25:1 Mary finishes spinning the purple and scarlet thread, takes them to the priest; the priest blesses Mary, tells her God magnified her and she will be blessed by all the generations of the earth.
***25:2-15a Mary goes to visit Elizabeth;**
{{{Elizabeth puts down the scarlet thread? (Move to PBV 22:8?)}}}
Elizabeth blesses Mary and tells her that her own baby leapt in her womb and blessed Mary; Mary has forgotten the mysteries spoken to her by the angel Gabriel.
25:15b-26:3a Mary sighs towards heaven and says: "Who am I that all the women of the earth will bless me?"
***26:3b-5a Mary remains with Elizabeth for three months.**
26:5b-6a Day by day Mary's womb swells.
***26:6b-11 Mary becomes afraid, returns home, and hides herself from the sons of Israel; Mary is sixteen when these mysteries happen to her.**

In the Greek text on the following pages the secondary passages--which correspond to the asterisked sections in the outline above--are indented and written in an italicized font to distinguish them from the original text of the GM annunciation story which is written in a heavier Greek font.[15]

PROTEVANGELIUM X-XII

X, 1 Ἐγένετο δὲ συμ[21:1]βούλιον τῶν ἱερέων λεγόν[2]των·
((Ποιήσωμεν καταπέτασ[3]μα τῷ ναῷ κυρίῳ.))
Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἱερεὺς· [4]((Καλέσατε τὰς παρθένους
τὰς [5]ἀμιάντους ἀπὸ τῆς φυλῆς τοῦ [6]Δαυίδ.))
Καὶ ἀπῆλθασιν οἱ ὑπηρέ[7]ται καὶ ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ εὗρη[8]σαν ζ΄.

Καὶ ἐμνήσθη ὁ ἱερεὺς [9]*τῆς παιδὸς Μαρίας ὅτι*
ἦν τῆς [10]*φυλῆς τοῦ Δαυὶδ καὶ ἀμίαν*[11]*τος τῷ Θεῷ.*
Καὶ ἀπῆλθασιν οἱ [12]*ὑπηρέται καὶ ἤγαγαν αὐτήν.*

2 [13]Καὶ εἰσήγαγαν αὐτὰς ἐν τῷ να[14]ῷ Κυρίου.
Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἱερεὺς· ((Λάχε[15]τέ μοι ὧδε,
τίς νήσει τὸν χρυ[16]σὸν καὶ τὸν ἀμίαντον καὶ τὴν [22:1]βύσσον
καὶ τὸ σιρικὸν καὶ τὸ ὑα[2]κίνθινον καὶ τὸ κόκκινον καὶ
Ζ² *<<<τὴν ἀληθινὴν πορφύραν.))* Καὶ << DS>> *τὸ κόκκινον>>>* Ζ²
<<DS ἔλαχε τὴν Μαρίαν ἡ ἀληθινὴ πορφύρα καὶ DS>>

[3]λαβοῦσα ἐποίει ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐ[4]τῆς.
Τῷ δὲ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ Ζαχα[5]ρίας ἐσίγησεν.
Ἐγένετο ἀντὶ [6]*αὐτοῦ Σαμουὴλ*
μέχρι ὅτε ἐ[7]*λάλησεν Ζαχαρίας.*

Μαρία δὲ [8]λαβοῦσα τὸ κόκκινον ἔκλωθεν.
XI,1 [9]Καὶ {{{ 25:6 *ἔρριψεν τὸ κόκκινον καὶ* (From 25:6)}}}
ἔλαβεν τὴν κάλπιν καὶ ἐξῆλ[10]θεν γεμίσαι ὕδωρ.
Καὶ ἰδοὺ αὐ[11]τῇ φωνὴ λέγουσα·
((Χαῖρε, κεχα[12]ριτω<<DS>>μένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν.))
<<DS μένη, ὁ κύριος μετά σου εὐλογη>>
Καὶ [13]περιέβλεπεν τὰ δεξιὰ καὶ τὰ [14]ἀριστερὰ Μαρία
πόθεν αὕτη [15]εἴη ἡ φωνή.

Καὶ ἔντρομος [23:1]*γενομένη εἰσῆει εἰς τὸν οἶκον*
[2]*αὐτῆς*
καὶ ἀναπαύσασα τὴν κάλπιν
[3]ἔλαβεν τὴν πορφύραν καὶ ἐκάθι[4]σεν ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ
καὶ ἦλκεν [5]τὴν πορφύραν.

2 Καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔστη [6]ἄγγελος ἐνώπιον λέγων·
((Μὴ [7]φοβοῦ, Μαρία, εὗρες γὰρ χάριν [8]ἐνώπιον
τοῦ πάντων δεσπότου. [9]Συνλήμψῃ ἐκ Λόγου.))
Ἡ δὲ ἀκού[10]σασα Μαρία διεκρίθη ἐν ἑαυτῇ
[11]λέγουσα· ((Ἐγὼ συνλήμψομαι [12]ἀπὸ
Κυρίου Θεοῦ ζῶντος ὡς πᾶσα γυ[13]νὴ γεννᾷ;))
3 Καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος ἔ[14]στη αὐτῇ λέγων αὐτῇ·
((Οὐχ οὕτως [15]Μαρία. Δύναμις γὰρ Θεοῦ
ἐπισκιά[24:1]σει σοι· διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον
[2]ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς ὑψί[3]στου.
Καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα [4]αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν.
Αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει λα[5]ὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν
[6]αὐτῶν.)) Καὶ εἶπε Μαρία· ((Ἰδοὺ
[7]ἡ δουλη Κυρίου κατενώπιον αὐ[8]τοῦ.
Γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά [9]σου.))

XII,1 Καὶ ἐποίησεν τὴν πορφύ[10]ραν καὶ τὸ κόκκινον, καὶ
ἀνή[11]νεγκεν τῷ ἱερεῖ. Καί λαβὼν [12]ὁ ἱερεὺς εὐλόγησεν αὐτὴν
καὶ [13]εἶπεν· ((Μαρία, ἐμεγάλυνεν [14]σε Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τὸ ὄνομά
σου [15]καὶ ἔσῃ εὐλογημένη ἐν[25:1]πάσαις ταῖς γενεαῖς τῆς γῆς.))

2 [2]Χαρὰν λαβοῦσα Μαρία ἀπῄει
[3]πρὸς τὴν συγγενίδα αὐτῆς [4] Ἐλισάβεδ
καὶ ἔκρουσεν πρὸς [5]τὴν θύραν. Καὶ ἀκούσασα
ἡ Ἐλισά[6]βεδ {{{ἔρριψεν τὸ κόκκινον καὶ (To 23:2)}}}
ἔ[7]δραμεν πρὸς τὴν θύραν καὶ ἤ[8]νοιξεν αὐτῇ
καὶ εὐλόγησεν αὐ[9]τὴν καὶ εἶπεν· ((Πόθεν μοι
ἵνα [10]ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Κυρίου ἔλθῃ πρὸς ἐμέ;
[11]Ἰδοὺ γὰρ τὸ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐσκίρτησεν
[12]καὶ εὐλόγησέν σε.))
Ἡ δὲ Μαρία [13]ἐπελάθετο τῶν μυστηρίων
[14]ὧν ἐλάλησεν Γαβριήλ ὁ ἄγ[15]γελος.

K ἀναστένισεν εἰς τὸν [26:1]οὐρανὸν καὶ εἶπεν· ((Τις εἰμι ἐ[2]γὼ
ὅτι ἰδοὺ πάσαι αἱ γυναίκες [3]τῆς γῆς μακαριοῦσίν με;))

3 Καὶ [4]ἐποίησεν τρεῖς μῆνας πρὸς τὴν [5] Ἐλισάβεδ.

Καὶ ἡμέρᾳ ἀφ' ἡμέρας [6]ἡ γαστὴρ αὐτῆς ὠγκοῦτο.

Φοβη[7]θεῖσα ἡ Μαρία ἦλθεν ἐν τῷ οἰ[8]κῷ αὐτῆς καὶ ἔκρυβεν αὐτὴν [9]ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ. Ἦν δὲ[10] ἐτῶν ΙΣΤ΄ ὅτε ταῦτα τὰ μυστή[11]ρια ἐγίνετο αὐτῇ. <<Z² Καὶ ἐγένετο ζ΄ μήν.>>

THE ORIGINAL ANNUNCIATION STORY OF THE ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ ΜΑΡΙΑΣ

X Ἐγένετο δὲ συμβούλιον τῶν ἱερέων λεγόντων·
((Ποιήσωμεν καταπέτασμα τῷ ναῷ κυρίῳ.))
Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἱερεύς· ((Καλέσατε τὰς παρθένους
τὰς ἀμιάντους ἀπὸ τῆς φυλῆς τοῦ Δαυίδ.))
Καὶ ἀπήλθασιν οἱ ὑπηρέται καὶ ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ εὕρησαν ζ΄.
Καὶ εἰσήγαγαν αὐτὰς ἐν τῷ ναῷ Κυρίου.
Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἱερεὺς· ((Λάχετέ μοι ὧδε, τίς νήσει τὸν χρυσὸν
καὶ τὸν ἀμίαντον καὶ τὴν βύσσον καὶ τὸ σιρικὸν καὶ τὸ ὑακίνθινον
καὶ τὸ κόκκινον καὶ τὴν ἀληθινὴν πορφύραν.))
Καὶ ἔλαχε τὴν Μαρίαν ἡ ἀληθινὴ πορφύρα καὶ τὸ κόκκινον
Μαρία δὲ λαβοῦσα τὸ κόκκινον ἔκλωθεν.

XI Καὶ ἔρριψεν τὸ κόκκινον
καὶ ἔλαβεν τὴν κάλπιν καὶ ἐξῆλθεν γεμίσαι ὕδωρ.
Καὶ ἰδοὺ αὐτῇ φωνὴ λέγουσα·
((Χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν.))
Καὶ περιέβλεπεν τὰ δεξιὰ καὶ τὰ ἀριστερὰ Μαρία
πόθεν αὕτη εἴη ἡ φωνή.
καὶ ἀναπαύσασα τὴν κάλπιν ἔλαβεν τὴν πορφύραν
καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ ἤλκεν τὴν πορφύραν.

XII Καὶ ἐποίησεν τὴν πορφύραν καὶ τὸ κόκκινον,
καὶ ἀνήνεγκεν τῷ ἱερεῖ.
Καί λαβὼν ὁ ἱερεὺς εὐλόγησεν αὐτὴν καὶ εἶπεν·
((Μαρία, ἐμεγάλυνεν σε Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τὸ ὄνομά σου,
καὶ ἔσῃ εὐλογημένη ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γενεαῖς τῆς γῆς.))
Κ΄ ἀναστένισεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ εἶπεν·
((Τις εἰμι ἐγὼ ὅτι ἰδοὺ πάσαι αἱ γεναιαὶ τῆς γῆς μακαριοῦσίν μὲ))
Καὶ ἡμέρᾳ ἀφ᾽ ἡμέρας ἡ γαστὴρ αὐτῆς ὠγκοῦτο.

COMMENTARY

The passages which are designated as secondary in the outline and Greek text above fall into two basic categories. The first category consists of interpolations containing material closely related to the synoptic nativity stories which serve to bring the original GM annunciation story into conformity with the annunciation stories of the canonical gospels. The second category of interpolations are adjustments made to the text which seem to be designed to reconcile this canonical material with the GM annunciation story into which they were inserted.

In the first category of interpolations is the reference to the silence of the high priest Zacharias in PBV 22:4b-7a which presupposes knowledge of Luke 1:20-21. The double angelic appearances to Mary in PJ 23:5b-24:9a and the visit of Mary to Elizabeth in PBV 25:2-15a contain numerous parallels with Luke and one with Matt.[16] In the interpolated angelic appearances to Mary in PJ XI, 2-3, PBV 23:6b-9a is a clear reference to Luke 1:30-31; PBV 23:9b-24:1a reflects Luke 1:34-35; PBV 24:1b-6a contains elements from Luke 1:31-32 and Matt 1:21; and PBV 24:6b-9a closely parallels Luke 1:38. In the account of the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth in PJ XII, 2-3, PBV 25:2-5a refers to Luke 1:39-40 and PBV 25:5b-12 parallels Luke 1:41-44. PBV 26:3b-5a and 6b-9a reflect Luke 1:56.

Since the entire episode of Mary's visit to Elizabeth is secondary to PJ and derives from an external source, it follows that the GM annunciation story probably contained no such visitation by Mary to Elizabeth. However, the redactor who inserted the Elizabeth material into PJ seems to have preserved several elements from the original GM annunciation story within his interpolation. The first of these elements is the curious statement in PBV 25:5b-6a that Elizabeth heard Mary's knock on her door then "threw (or put) down the scarlet" and ran to open the door to Mary. There is no apparent reason for Elizabeth to have in her possession what we may assume to be scarlet thread. Rather, it seems likely that in the process of editing this section of PJ the redactor could have inadvertently detached this one line from its original position in the GM annunciation story and placed it in the Elizabeth passage.

This statement fits perfectly into the context of the GM story of the annunciation of Mary by the unidentified voice in PBV 22:7b-8b, where Mary has just picked up and was spinning the scarlet thread. There are several possible places in this passage where Mary could be depicted as throwing, or putting, down the scarlet thread. But this line is best suited to the context immediately following PBV 22:8. It is more appropriate for Mary to have put down the scarlet thread before she picked up the water

pitcher and went out to fill it in PBV 22:9 than for her to have carried the scarlet thread out with her while she was filling up the pitcher and then to have thrown the scarlet thread down after hearing the voice in PBV 23:2. As we shall see below, the precise sequence of these events may have serious implications for the theology of the GM annunciation story.

A second possible element of the GM annunciation story which has been preserved by the redactor in the interpolated PJ pericope containing Mary's visit to Elizabeth (PBV 25:2-12a) is Mary's response to being blessed by both Elizabeth and Elizabeth's fetus and being asked by Elizabeth why the mother of the Lord has come to her. Mary responds to these blessings in PBV 25:15b-26:3a by sighing towards heaven and saying, "Who am I that, behold, all the women of the earth will bless me?" (τίς εἰμι ἐγὼ ὅτι ἰδοὺ πάσαι αἱ γυναῖκες τῆς γῆς μακαριοῦσίν με;).

The reader is struck by several inconsistencies between Mary's statement and its present context. The first of these is that Mary's statement does not correspond to what Elizabeth has just said to her. Mary speaks of being blessed by women in the plural, even though she has only interacted with one woman, Elizabeth. Mary also refers to these women as blessing her in the future, although this blessing has just happened in the past and there is nothing in the text to lead Mary to believe that anyone--much less all the women in the earth--is going to bless her in the future. Furthermore, Mary's apparent bewilderment at being blessed by Elizabeth seems irrelevant to the series of events that have just transpired in the narrative.

Mary's response is obviously inappropriate for someone who has heard an unidentified voice telling her that she was begraced among women; then immediately had a dialogue with two angelic visitors who explained to her that she had found favor in the Lord's sight, would conceive by his word, would be covered by his power, and would give birth to Jesus, the holy son of the Most High who would save his people from their sins; then received another blessing from a priest in the temple telling her that the Lord had magnified her name and that she would be blessed by all the generations of the earth; and just received a final blessing from the pregnant Elizabeth who called her the mother of the Lord and said that her own child leapt in her womb and blessed Mary.

The inappropriateness of Mary's response to the astonishing news and numerous blessings that she had been receiving up to this point in the story did not escape the attention of the redactor who had originally caused this anomaly by the interpolation of so much diverse material into the text of what appears to have been a relatively subdued annunciation story. The redactor attempted to rectify this discrepancy by inserting into the text immediately after Mary's response still another spurious passage

designed to justify Mary's bewilderment at her most recent blessing by Elizabeth. This editorial intercalation in PBV 25:12b-15a somewhat unsatisfactorily ascribes Mary's befuddlement to the fact that she "had forgotten the mysteries which the angel Gabriel had spoken."

However inappropriate Mary's answer may be to Elizabeth's blessing within the present context of PJ, her response is most appropriate to the blessing bestowed upon her in PBV 24:9b-25:1 by the priest to whom she had just given the scarlet and purple thread that she had spun. This probably was the actual context of these words of Mary in the GM annunciation story before they were separated from their original location by the ancient redactor's insertion of the episode of the visit to Elizabeth and its subsequent emendatory intercalation. And since the Lukan double angelic annunciation also was a later interpolation into the GM annunciation story, Mary still had been given no information in the original scenario other than what she had first heard from the unidentified voice--that she was begraced among women. She was genuinely perplexed by the priest's blessing.

In the original GM annunciation story Mary could have responded most fittingly to the priest's blessing and to his information that the Lord had magnified her and her name and that she would be "blessed by all the generations of the earth" by answering, "Who am I that all the (generations) of the earth will bless me." But even in its present heavily interpolated PJ context Mary's answer to Elizabeth still matches almost word for word the blessing given to her by the priest. The priest says to Mary in PBV 24:15b-25:1 ἔσῃ εὐλογημένη ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γενεαῖς τῆς γῆς. Mary's answer in PBV 26:1b-3a includes the phrase ὅτι ἰδοὺ πάσαι αι γυναίκες τῆς γῆς μακαριοῦσίν με. Mary's statement even retains the future tense in accordance with the priest's words to her.

The two most noticeable discrepancies between these texts are attributable to the editors and may betray the influence of the song of Mary preserved in Luke 1:48 (ἰδοὺ γάρ, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μακαριοῦσίν με πάσαι αἱ γενεαί). Whereas the priest had used the word εὐλογημένη to indicate the blessedness of Mary, Mary's response to him contains the synonymous term μακαριοῦσιν which is present also in Luke. However, Luke's passage does not contain τῆς γῆς which occurs in the GM text. Since the GM annunciation story generally seems to have no affinity with Luke, either the PJ redactor inserted this word into the text from Luke or the writer of GM had access to the song of Mary through another source.

The second discrepancy between the priest's blessing and Mary's response to his blessing is more apparently the result of editorial activity. Whereas the priest tells Mary that she will be blessed by all the "generations of the earth" (γενεαῖς τῆς γῆς), Mary wonders who she is

that all the "women of the earth" (γυναῖκες τῆς γῆς) will bless her. This substitution of γυναῖκες for γενεαῖς represents an attempt by the redactor to adapt the text of Mary's statement from its original position as part of a dialogue between Mary and a priest who had just blessed her to its present context as part of a conversation between Mary and another woman who had just blessed her.

The similarity of the Greek words γενεαῖς and γυναῖκες probably tempted the redactor to transfer this passage to its new location virtually intact except for this one minor adjustment. The plurality of γυναῖκες in this scenario of Mary's interaction with only one woman is an example of the redactor's characteristic inattention to detail in harmonizing his original GM source with the interpolated Lukan material. This lack of thoroughness on the part of the redactor is exemplified, not only by this and the other discrepancies between the two texts discussed above, but especially by his ineffective attempt to explain these discrepancies by means of the intercalated statement to the effect that Mary had forgotten the mysteries spoken to her by Gabriel.

In addition to the Lukan interpolations discussed above and the editorial adjustments made to accommodate them to the GM text, there are other secondary additions evident in the PJ text which contribute indirectly to the reconciliation of the GM annunciation story with the added canonical material. The following discussion of the characteristics of the original GM annunciation story will center around those passages in which the presence of interpolated material raises significant questions about the content of the GM annunciation story and how that story was modified to conform to its present context.

The Location of the Annunciation

Foremost among the secondary passages which assist in harmonizing the interpolated canonical material with the original GM annunciation story are four statements (PBV 21:8b-12, 22:3-4a, 22:15b-23:2a, and 26:6b-8a) locating the annunciation events at Joseph's home; this has been Mary's home also since PJ IX. The fact that, even within the limited textual material contained in PJ X-XII, there are four separate passages which specify that Mary was at, or near, her home when most of the events related to the PJ annunciation story took place strongly suggests that this was one of the primary concerns of the ancient redactor of PJ.

The first of these passages, PBV 21:8b-12, disrupts the continuity of the account of the temple servants going forth to seek out and find undefiled virgins of the tribe of David in PBV 21:6b-8a and their bringing

the seven such virgins they found back to the temple in PBV 21:13-14a. The secondary passage intrudes abruptly at the point where the servants had already gone out and found the seven girls but had not yet brought them back to the temple. Without the interpolation, the narrative reads quite smoothly: "and the servants went out and sought out and found seven (undefiled virgins of the tribe of David) and brought them back to the temple of the Lord."

The interpolation modifies, and confuses, the original story to the effect that, while the servants are still away from the temple with the seven virgins they had found, the priest who had sent the servants suddenly remembers that the child Mary also fits into the category of undefiled virgins of the tribe of David. The servants then go out again--even though they still had not returned to the temple from their first mission--and bring Mary to the temple. Immediately afterwards the servants complete their first mission by bringing the other seven virgins back to the temple. Since the servants who went out originally and found the seven virgins, and the servants who went out afterwards to get Mary are all referred to as "the servants," (οἱ ὑπηρέται) the reader is given the impression that the same servants are accomplishing both tasks.

The second passage in question, PBV 22:3-4a, occurs as part of a very corrupt text in PBV which describes the different colors of thread which are to be spun for the temple veil. The priest calls for a lottery to determine who--presumably which of the virgins who had just been brought to the temple--will spin the gold, white, linen, silk, blue, scarlet, and purple thread. The original PBV text has only six types of thread: gold, white, linen, silk, blue and scarlet. The corrector of the papyrus, Z^2, adds "the true purple" (ἡ ἀληθινὴ πορφύρα) to this list. In his critical text, DS supplies the statement, based on later MSS, that the lot fell to Mary to spin the scarlet and purple thread.[17]

Obviously, the original PBV text is not complete at this point. PBV 22:2 moves immediately from a scene in which a priest is asking who will spin the gold, white, linen, silk, blue, and scarlet thread to a statement at PBV 22:3 about an unspecified female taking an unspecified object and making it at her home. Although it is not stated in PBV, we may assume that Mary is taking the unspecified thread to her house and is spinning it. It is precisely this confusion in PBV that both the ancient editor and DS attempt to clarify.[18] The addition by DS to PBV 22:2 is based upon the overwhelming witness of the later manuscript tradition of PJ and is included in our text as a viable explanation of how Mary had obtained the scarlet and purple thread in the subsequent lines of PJ.

The addition of purple to the list of six other colors of thread in the PBV text by the ancient editor Z^2 has been accepted into our text for two

reasons. First, the purple thread plays a major role in the following lines of the story and must have been part of the original list of colored threads. Second, an examination of several passages in the Septuagint[19] which describe the colors of thread used in the veils of the tabernacle and the temple of Solomon indicates that purple was one of the colors consistently present in these passages. Purple (πορφύρα) always occurred along with scarlet (κόκκινον) and blue (ὑάκινθος) in the references to the various colors of thread making up the veil of the tabernacle in Exod 26:31 and 37:3, and of the temple in 2 Chr 3:14.[20]

The significance of this secondary passage in PBV 22:3-4a for our present investigation is that it describes Mary as taking the thread to her home and spinning it there. It is worthy of note that in his critical edition DS "corrects" the reading ἐποίει in PBV to ἀπῆει, thus making Mary's presence at her own home even more emphatic and further weakening the tension created in the narrative by the interpolation.[21] The interpolation creates an awkwardness in this text by duplicating the word λαβούσα which occurs already at PBV 22:7b, the exact point at which the narrative would continue if the insertion were not present. PBV actually reads more smoothly without the inserted line. The purple and scarlet fall to Mary in PBV 22:2.[22] Mary simply picks up the scarlet and begins to spin in PBV 22:7b-8.

The secondary nature of PBV 22:3-4a is indicated also by the close association of this passage with the immediately succeding lines at PBV 22:4b-7a which state that Zacharias became mute and was replaced by Samuel until Zacharias spoke again. These verses have been inserted into PJ at this point to harmonize the GM annunciation story with the corresponding account of the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias in Luke 1:5-25, 57-67. The Lukan story is a much fuller narration of an angelic visit to Zacharias to announce the birth of a son; Zacharias doubts the word of the angel and is punished for his disbelief by being struck mute until his son is born. The close proximity of PBV 22:3-4a to this interpolated Zacharias material lends credence to the argument that both passages may have been inserted into the GM annunciation story at the same time.

The third passage in PJ X-XII which places Mary in her home during the annunciation is PBV 22:15b-23:2a. This text seems to have been inserted into the GM annunciation story at the point at which Mary has just heard a voice telling her that she is begraced among women. Mary had been weaving the scarlet thread (PBV 22:7b-8) when she picked up a pitcher and went out to fill it with water (PBV 22:9-10a). Mary then heard the voice of the annunciation (PBV 22:10b-12a) and was looking around for the origin of the voice (PBV 22:12b-15a). At this point

PBV 22:15b-23:2a states that Mary became frightened and went back into her house.

Mary's return to her house after being frightened by an unidentified voice would seem quite natural were it not for the other interpolated passages discussed above which testify to the existence of a redactor with a possible interest in presenting the annunciation of Mary as taking place at her home.[23] A detail in PBV 23:2b-5a may provide some insight into why the redactor exerted this effort to locate the annunciation at Mary's house. After hearing the voice, putting down the pitcher of water (and possibly the scarlet thread), and picking up the purple thread, the GM annunciation story then states that Mary "sat on the throne," and spun the purple thread.

The Throne of God

To my knowledge there has yet to be found an adequate explanation of the nature of this enigmatic throne upon which Mary sat to spin the purple thread. In his commentary on PJ, H.R. Smid proposes that this throne is an accessory to the beautification of the scene of the annunciation by the pious imagination.[24] But even a pious imagination would be hard pressed to justify the unlikely proposition that there would have been a royal throne in Mary's home. If the annunciation in the GM annunciation story did not take place in Mary's home--as our investigation up to this point suggests--the throne may be a clue as to where it actually did take place.

It is our contention that the GM annunciation took place in the temple itself where Mary had resided for nine years since her parents dedicated her to the temple at the age of three (PJ VII). This is the reason that it was not necessary for the temple servants to go out a second time and bring Mary to the temple as stated in the interpolation at 21:8b-12; Mary was already in the temple because she still lived there. And this is the reason that it was not necessary for Mary to take her thread home to spin it as stated in the second interpolated passage at PBV 22:3-4a. Mary simply took up the scarlet thread there in the temple in PBV 22:7b-8 and began to spin.

It appears, therefore, that the location of the annunciation of Mary in the temple may have been one of the original elements of the GM annunciation story that the ancient redactor felt compelled to conceal. But if the GM annunciation did take place in the temple and Mary sat upon a throne after hearing the still unidentified voice tell her that she was begraced among women, what exactly was the throne upon which she sat? The most obvious answer to this question almost seems too scandalous to

consider. Is it possible that Mary actually sat on the throne of God in the Holy of Holies to spin her purple thread?

The characterization of the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem temple as the throne of God is well documented in the Hebrew scriptures. Two of the most dramatic prophetic visions in the Hebrew Bible are visions of the throne of God; both are associated with the Jerusalem temple. The first of these is the classic OT throne-vision passage in Isaiah 6, where the prophet states: "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple."[25] That it was in the earthly Jerusalem temple that Isaiah saw the throne of God is verified by clear references in the continuing description of the vision in Isa 1:4 and 6 to the pivots on the thresholds, the house being filled with smoke, and the altar.

The concept of God residing in the Jerusalem temple is so common in the OT that Hebrew terminology which refers to the temple designates it as the "house" or "dwelling-place" of God (בֵּית יְהוָה or בֵּית אֱלֹהִים).[26] Another biblical Hebrew term, הֵיכָל, is particularly illuminating for our present discussion concerning the temple being thought of as the earthly location of the throne of God. הֵיכָל normally refers to the "temple" as in the "temple of Yahweh" הֵיכַל יְהוָה.[27] But הֵיכָל also is used in reference to a royal residence or palace as in the phrases הֵיכַל אַחְאָב מֶלֶךְ שֹׁמְרוֹן (palace of Ahab, king of Samaria) and הֵיכַל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל (palace of the king of Babylon).[28] The scenario of a palace implies the presence of a royal throne.

Closely related to the idea of the temple as a divine residence are the references to God as "sitting upon the Cherubim."[29] This title for God can be traced to the story of the building of Solomon's temple in 1 Kgs 6:23-28 and 8:6-7 where Solomon placed two gigantic cherubim side by side, facing forward with their wings spread out in the Holy of Holies in his temple. The wings of the two cherubim spanned the entire width of the inner sanctum. One of the wingtips of each cherub touched one of the side walls of the Holy of Holies; their opposite wingtips touched each other in the middle of the room. Beneath the outstretched wings of these cherubim Solomon placed the ark of the covenant which symbolized the presence of God in the Holy of Holies and served as the footstool of his throne.[30]

The second classic biblical treatment of the throne of God in the temple is found in the book of the prophet Ezekiel which contains three separate references to the throne of God (1:26, 10:1, and 43:7). The first is part of the description of the mobile chariot-throne in Ezek 1. The second and third references to the throne occur within the framework of two major prophetic visions. In Ezek 8-11 the prophet sees a vision of God abandoning the temple before its destruction by the Babylonians. In Ezek

40-48 Ezekiel sees God return to the future temple which will be rebuilt when the Israelites repossess their land. In both of the latter two cases the prophet is transported from Babylon to Jerusalem where he sees the throne of God in the temple.

In Ezek 41-42 Ezekiel is brought from Babylon to the temple mount in Jerusalem and conducted on an extensive tour of the whole temple complex by an angelic guide who takes detailed measurements of the various buildings and explains certain aspects of the architecture to the prophet. In Ezek 43 the guide takes Ezekiel to the east gate where the prophet sees the glory of God returning to the temple. In Ezek 43:5 the prophet is taken up by a spirit and brought to the inner court of the temple where he sees the glory of God filling the house.

The next passage, Ezek 43:6-7, is the climactic event of Ezekiel's vision of the future temple. God himself now speaks directly to the prophet from within the Holy of Holies.[31] This passage is most pertinent to our discussion of the throne of God in the temple and may have influenced the author of the GM annunciation story. The LXX text of this passage reads as follows:

> καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου λαλοῦντος πρός με,
> καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ εἱστήκει ἐχόμενός μου
> καὶ εἶπεν πρός με, <<ἑώρακας, υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου,
> τὸν τόπον τοῦ θρόνου μου, καὶ τὸν τόπον τοῦ
> ἴχνους τῶν ποδῶν μου, ἐν οἷς κατασκηνώσει τὸ
> ὄνομά μου ἐν μέσῳ οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ τὸν αἰῶνα.>>

In this scenario, which closely parallels the GM annunciation passage in PBV 22:10b-12a, Ezekiel hears the voice of God "speaking to him out of the house" and identifying what the prophet has just seen as the "place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, in which my name will dwell in the midst of the house of Israel forever." The φωνὴ of God is announcing to Ezekiel that the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem temple contains both his throne and his footstool and that he will dwell there forever.

The throne-visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, the characterization of the temple in Hebrew as the "house" or "royal palace" of God, and the portrayal of God himself as the one who sits on the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies with the ark as his footstool attest to the existence of a strong tradition in ancient Israel that the temple was indeed considered to be the location of the earthly throne of God. This information supports the possibility that this is the throne upon which Mary sat after hearing the unidentified voice in the GM annunciation story.

The Agent of the Annunciation

Closely related to the problem of the location of the annunciation is the matter of the identity of the agent of the annunciation, i.e., who--if anyone--actually gave Mary the news that she would conceive and bear Jesus, the savior and son of the most high God. In its present form, the PJ annunciation story contains three separate communications to Mary about her conception. The first of these is the incident of the unidentified voice which spoke to Mary in PBV 22:10b-15a. The second and third divine communications to Mary are the two angelic annunciations in PBV 23:5b-24:9a which are replete with Lukan elements and which were identified in the 1994 article as being interpolations into the PJ text.[32]

The article referred to above demonstrated that the message of the unidentified voice to Mary was the original PJ annunciation and that the two Lukan angelic annunciations which follow this passage are secondary insertions which break the continuity of the story of Mary spinning the purple and scarlet thread for the temple veil. Without this secondary material, there is a smooth transition from PBV 23:2b-5a, where Mary is sitting on the throne and spinning the purple thread, and PBV 24:9b-25:1, where Mary finishes spinning the thread, takes it to the priest and receives his blessing.

Further corroboration of the originality of the GM annunciation story and of its distinction from the double angelic annunciation becomes evident when one eliminates yet another editorial adjustment of the PBV text of this story which appears in DS's critical edition. In the GM annunciation story, according to the text of PBV 22:10b-12a, the unidentified voice says to Mary: χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξιν.[33] Following the later manuscript tradition, DS modifies this statement by inserting the words μένη, ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ, εὐλογη after κεχαριτω, thus conforming the PBV reading to the "Hail, Mary" of Luke 1:28 and effectively suppressing one of the critical pieces of evidence of redaction in the text of PJ.

In the annunciation stories in Luke and the redacted PJ, which now agrees with Luke, an angel is conveying a message from the Lord God to Mary. The addition of the phrase ὁ κύριος μετὰ σου places God as the third person in a communication between the angel and Mary. But in the original GM annunciation which is preserved in the text of PBV the message of the voice must have been a direct first person to second person communication from God to Mary, telling her, "You are begraced among women" (κεχαριτωμένη σὺ). The unidentified voice which spoke to Mary in the temple was none other than the voice of God himself, or as it is commonly known in the rabbinical tradition, a Bath Kol (בַּת קוֹל).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to catalogue the numerous appearances of this almost personified voice of God in the OT, NT, and rabbinical tradition.[34] However, the instances in which the Bath Kol has acted within the temple are pertinent for our argument. The most important of these is the passage which was discussed above in Ezek 43:7 where Ezekiel hears the φωνὴ of God from within the Holy of Holies identifying the temple as the place of his throne and footstool (καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου λαλοῦντος πρός με). This verse shares common elements with our present scenario in which Mary also is in the temple, hears the φωνὴ of God (καὶ ἰδού, φωνὴ αὐτῇ λέγουσα), and sits on the throne.

Another example of the activity of the φωνὴ of God in the temple is attested in the Tosefta, the Jerusalem Talmud, and Josephus. According to *t. Sota* 13:5 (cf. *y. Sota* 9:13) the high priest John Hyrcanus heard a word from the Holy of Holies telling him of a victory by the young men who went to war against Antioch. It was later verified that the victory had happened in the same hour that the high priest had heard this word. In his own version of this same story in *Ant.* xiii, 10 § 3, Josephus uses the Greek φωνὴ to describe the word that the high priest heard as he was burning incense in the temple (αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ ναῷ θυμιῶν μόνος ὢν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ἀκούσειε φωνῆς).[35]

If Mary was considered worthy to receive a direct communication from the voice of God within the temple, this would reflect favorably on the appropriateness of her sitting on God's throne in the Holy of Holies to spin her purple thread. This concept may not be as unorthodox as it first appears. The ancient redactor who modified GM so as to conceal this information did so to harmonize this account with Luke, not because it was repugnant. Otherwise, all of the PJ material, whether it was original to GM or secondary, is dedicated to demonstrating the holiness and purity of Mary. In the narration of the life of Mary leading up to the annunciation there are numerous instances where Mary is described as being set apart and preserved in an extreme state of purity.

The conception of Mary by her parents is described in PJ I-IV as being the result of an answered prayer and is mediated in a series of annunciations by several heavenly messengers. Mary's mother, Anna, who had dedicated Mary to the temple in PJ IV, took special measures to keep Mary pure and holy during her first three years. In PJ VI Anna allowed Mary to take her first seven steps at the age of six months then vowed not to let her child's feet touch the ground again before her dedication to the temple. Anna set up Mary's room as a sanctuary where nothing profane or common came into contact with her and where she only had the company of undefiled Hebrew virgins until her first birthday

when she was blessed by the high priests and priests.

In PJ VII, when Mary was being dedicated to the temple at the age of three she was led to the temple by a procession of undefiled Hebrew virgins holding lamps and was received by the priest who blessed her and sat her on the third step of the altar. God put grace upon Mary, causing her to dance there at the altar of the temple; these were the first steps that Mary took since the age of six months. In PJ VIII Mary is left by her parents in the temple where she would live in the Holy of Holies for the next nine years as a dove, receiving food from the hand of an angel. These special circumstances of her birth and childhood certainly indicate that in PJ Mary is presented as being in a condition of heightened ritual purity which is required of those entering the temple.[36]

But perhaps the worthiness of Mary to sit on the throne of God is not as contingent upon her own holiness, as it is upon the holiness of the child within her. This may be implied by a peculiarity within the GM annunciation story in PBV 22:7b-23:5a. The author of GM provides an inordinate amount of detail in this passage describing the exact sequence of Mary's actions before and after hearing the Bath Kol, so much so, that it is completely out of proportion to the enormously more significant event of the Bath Kol itself which is narrated relatively succinctly. Why would the author of GM pay so much attention to trivialities such as Mary's picking up and putting down the red thread, then picking up the pitcher of water, going out to fill it up and putting it down, then picking up the purple thread, etc., if there were not a particular motive for doing so?

If our reconstruction of the original sequence of events leading up to and following the point at which Mary hears the Bath Kol is correct, then the actual details and order of these events may be meaningful for understanding the theological perspective of the GM annunciation story. This passage begins with Mary spinning the scarlet thread. She puts down the scarlet thread, goes out to fill a pitcher with water, hears the voice of the annunciation, and returns to the Holy of Holies to sit on the throne of God and spin the purple thread. May we infer from these circumstances that Mary is now worthy to sit on the throne of God and symbolically spin royal purple thread because she has just conceived by means of the Bath Kol and now contains in her womb the divine Messiah?

The Agent of the Conception

This conclusion may derive support from an element that plays a pivotal role within the GM annunciation story itself--Mary's action of picking up the water pitcher and taking it out to fill it with water. This episode intervenes between her spinning the scarlet thread before she goes

out and her spinning the purple thread after she reenters the temple. And it is while she is out filling the water pitcher that Mary actually hears the Bath Kol. Although GM does not specify where in the temple environs Mary went to find water, biblical texts describing the temple mention an enormous bronze "molten sea" and ten smaller bronze "lavers" in the court outside the temple which contained water for ritual purposes.[37] Perhaps the water pitcher is symbolic of Mary being washed ritually before receiving the annunciation by the Bath Kol.[38]

An important component of the secondary PJ annunciation story which seems to corroborate Mary's impregnation by the Bath Kol is the hitherto abstruse proclamation made by the first angel to appear to Mary in PBV 23:5b-9b. This angel informed Mary that she would conceive by the Logos (συνλήμψῃ ἐκ Λόγου). Although it is part of an interpolated passage with heavy Lukan influences, this particular assertion by the first angel is alien to Luke's theology of the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit and by the power of the Most High.[39] If Luke was the source of the material surrounding this angelic declaration, the PJ redactor either possessed a radically unconventional version of Luke, or inserted the Logos element into the interpolated Lukan text himself.

It cannot be mere coincidence that the addition of the conception of Mary ἐκ Λόγου into the Lukan interpolation in PBV 23:5b-24:9a brings the Lukan material into harmony with the sense of the original GM annunciation by the voice of God. A comparison of the text of the canonical annunciation story in Luke with that of the Lukan material which has been interpolated into the PJ annunciation story reveals many similarities but also several discrepancies which may illuminate our present discussion about the conception of Mary by the voice of God.

The first pertinent discrepancy between the two blocks of Lukan material under study relates a statement made by the angel to Mary reassuring her and telling her that she has received grace from God. PBV 23:6b-9a (μὴ φοβοῦ, Μαρία, εὗρες γὰρ χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ πάντων δεσπότου, συνλήμψῃ ἐκ Λόγου) parallels Luke 1:30b-31a (μὴ φοβοῦ, Μαρία, εὗρες γὰρ χάριν παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ, συλλήμψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ καὶ τέξῃ υἱόν). Although Luke does not specify the agent of the conception at this point in his text, the PJ redactor interjects into his interpolation in PJ the ἐκ Λόγου phrase which seems to identify the voice of God, the Bath Kol, as the agent of the conception.

The passage in canonical Luke which does specify the agent of the conception of Mary is Luke 1:35-36 in which the archangel Gabriel says to Mary: πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς Θεοῦ

The parallel statement in PBV 23:15b-24:1a reads: **Δύναμις γὰρ Θεοῦ ἐπισκιάσει σοι διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς ὑψίστου.** A comparison of the two texts reveals that the redactor has omitted the Lukan allusion to the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary, but has retained the reference to the power (**δύναμις**) of God. Also in Luke the holy child which will be born of Mary will be called **υἱὸς Θεοῦ**, whereas in the parallel PJ text he will be called **υἱὸς ὑψίστου.**[40]

The Holy Spirit may be absent from the PJ text above because the redactor intentionally replaced it with the **ἐκ λόγου** as the agent of Mary's conception. The **Λόγος** may have been substituted for the Holy Spirit in this context so that the Lukan interpolation could be in agreement with the original GM annunciation story into which it was being inserted. If this hypothesis is correct, then the Bath Kol was not only the agent of the annunciation in the GM annunciation story, but also was the agent by which Mary conceived Jesus, possibly at the very moment that she was told that she was **κεχαριτωμένη**. This is the only occasion that Mary could have conceived Jesus in the GM annunciation story because the last element in the original GM annunciation story in PBV 26:5b-6a states that her womb began to swell day by day.[41]

One final factor which may add support to our hypothesis is the manner with which the redactor adapted Luke 1:31b-33 to PBV 24:2b-4a. Luke 1:31b (**καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν**) was transposed intact to PBV 24:3b-4a. It may be significant for our discussion that the redactor eliminated the two verses (1:32-33) which immediately followed Luke 1:31b. The redactor was aware of one of these verses, as indicated by his insertion of the phrase **υἱὸς ὑψίστου** from Luke 1:32a to PBV 24:2b-3a immediately before Luke 1:31b. Since **υἱὸς ὑψίστου** displaces the more correct **υἱὸς Θεοῦ** (Luke 1:35b) at that location, it probably was placed in its new setting in the PJ interpolation simultaneously with Luke 1:31b which immediately preceded it in their former Lukan context.

But if the redactor transposed Luke 1:31b intact and knew Luke 1:32a, the fact that he did not include 1:32b-33 in the interpolation may support our conclusions. These verses state that "the Lord God will give Jesus the throne of his father David, and he will rule over the house of Jacob." Did the redactor omit this statement because it contradicted the text into which he was interpolating Luke 1:31b and 1:32a? At the point at which these passages were inserted in PBV 23:3-5a, Mary was sitting on the throne of God in the Jerusalem temple presumably because she held within her the divine Messiah Jesus conceived by the Bath Kol, i.e., **Λόγος**. Following such an illustrious scenario, for Jesus to have sat upon the throne of David would have represented a demotion in status.

The Messiah on the Throne of God

Although the Messiah is generally thought of as David's descendent and successor to the throne of Israel, the OT throne-vision texts normally depict only God as sitting on his heavenly throne.[42] Gradually, however, a mysterious human figure begins to appear in association with the image of God seated upon his throne. In the throne-visions in Ezek 1:26 and 8:2[43] the prophet sees something manlike on the chariot throne. This human figure comes into sharper focus in Ezek 43:6-7 where he stands by the prophet as God is speaking about his throne and footstool.[44] In the apocalyptic throne-vision in the book of Daniel 7:9-28 the Ancient of Days is sitting on his throne in judgment when one like a "son of man" comes before the throne of God to receive glory, kingdom, and dominion.

It is in the book of Enoch, however, that the Messiah will actually sit upon the heavenly throne of God. There are abundant references to God as the "Lord of the Spirits" in the Parables, or Similitudes, of Enoch which comprise chapters 37-71 of this important book.[45] The Messiah also appears in numerous passages in the Parables where he is referred to as "the Elect One" and the "Son of Man." There are six separate occasions in the Parables of Enoch that the Messiah is described as sitting on the "throne of glory" of the Lord of Spirits (1 Enoch 45:3; 51:3; 55:4; 61:8; 62:5; 69:27, 29). Of these 1 Enoch 62 is the most relevant to our purpose.

1 Enoch 62 begins with the Lord of the Spirits seated on his throne of glory being viewed with trembling by the powerful ones of the earth. In verse 5 of this narrative it is suddenly the Son of Man who is seated on the throne of glory being viewed with terror and pain by these same rulers of the earth. In verse 7 the Son of Man is named again, but the Ethiopic expression for this particular instance of the Son of Man title differs from that in verse 5. In verse 7 Son of Man is translated literally as the "offspring of the mother of the living," which the Ethiopian grammarians interpret as a reference to Eve.[46] But one wonders if in the original language version of 1 Enoch this may have been interpreted as a reference to Mary as well. And if so, could this be a possible link with the GM annunciation story which is followed immediately in PJ XIII by a comparison of Mary and Eve?

These Messianic texts from the Parables of Enoch have significant, close parallels in at least two NT books. Matt 25:31 completely recreates the scenario of 1 Enoch 62, showing the Son of Man coming in glory to sit on his throne of glory to judge the nations (ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ). The NT book of Revelation also contains relevant passages. In Rev 3:21 Jesus says to the angel of the

church of Laodicea that he would grant to his victorious followers to sit on his throne with him (καθίσαι μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ μου) as he was victorious and sat with his father on his throne (καὶ ἐκάθισα μετὰ τοῦ πατρός μου ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ αὐτοῦ).[47]

The vision of the woman and the dragon in Rev 12 would be pertinent to our present discussion if this image is interpreted as a representation of Mary giving birth to Jesus. A woman described as being clothed with the sun and having the moon under her feet and wearing a crown with twelve stars on her head is pregnant and undergoing the pains of childbirth. In Rev 12:5 she gives birth to a male child who will rule the nations with an iron rod and "her child is snatched up toward God and toward his throne" (ἡρπάσθη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ πρὸς τὸν θρὸνον αὐτοῦ). A majestic image of Mary wearing a crown on her head would be particularly relevant to the GM annunciation story which depicts Mary as being of the royal "tribe of David" and seated upon the throne of God as the bearer of the divine Messiah.

CONCLUSIONS

It has long been recognized that PJ is a composite text. But the present investigation of interpolated material in the annunciation story contained in PJ X-XII has revealed considerable evidence of the existence of redactional activity in this most ancient apocryphon. Using the pristine text of PBV as a base, layers of editorial revisions by ancient and modern editors were detected and eliminated. A distinctive, integral annunciation story emerged which was identified as possibly belonging to a primary source of PJ, the Γένεσις Μαρίας. The GM annunciation story differs substantially from that found in the present, redacted form of PJ which has been harmonized with the nativity stories of the canonical gospels.

Two fundamental elements of the GM annunciation story were found to have been modified by the ancient PJ redactor. The original location of the annunciation in the Jerusalem temple was transferred to Mary's home. And the agent of the annunciation, which in the GM story was the voice of God, the Bath Kol, was camouflaged by a double angelic appearance. These findings convey the implication that the agent of the annunciation was also the agent of the conception. Mary conceived by means of the voice of God, or Bath Kol, or Logos, and sat on the earthly throne of God in the Holy of Holies as the bearer of the divine Messiah who is destined to sit on the heavenly throne of God to judge and rule the nations.

The present writer has argued for establishing the works of Justin

Martyr around 150 CE as the *terminus ad quem,* and the canonical gospels of Matthew and Luke as the *terminus post quem* for the already-redacted PJ.[48] Now that GM has been identified--with Matthew and Luke--as one of the primary sources of PJ, GM may be promoted to the rank of the canonical gospels. This elevated status of GM is verified by the revelation above that an ancient redactor seems to have modified Lukan material to accommodate it with the GM annunciation story by inserting a reference to the Logos which betrays either a lack of familiarity with or a disregard for the Logos theology of the gospel of John.

This position of authority of GM vis-a-vis the canonical gospels suggests a date for GM approaching that of the gospels themselves, around the turn of the first to the second century CE. However, the date of GM must not be bound to Luke and Matthew until it is ascertained whether or not the author of GM even knew these documents. And this can only be determined when the limits of GM within PJ are established by further study. The only hint of familiarity with the canonical gospels in the GM annunciation story is the salutation of the Bath Kol to Mary at PBV 22:11b-12a, which may be an aberrant version of the Lukan "hail, Mary." But the context of this salutation differs so radically from that of Luke that it is more reasonable to attribute it to common oral tradition.

An early dating of GM is corroborated by the conceptual parallels indicated above between the GM annunciation story and the Parables of Enoch and Revelation which suggest a common environment with these significant Jewish and Christian documents which were current in the late first and early second centuries. Further support for the assignment of GM to this period may be found in the motif of the Davidic descent of Mary which is implied in the GM annunciation story at PBV 21:3b-6a and appears as a recurrent theme in the epistles of Ignatius of Antioch; these epistles were written before the martyrdom of Ignatius in 117 CE.[49]

The Davidic descent of Mary occurs also in the Vision of Isaiah, an originally independent work which now constitutes chapters 6-11 of the Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah.[50] Serious scholars in the past have attributed the Vision of Isaiah to the end of the first century CE.[51] And it is highly significant within our present discussion that a suggested later dating of the Vision of Isaiah in the second century is based upon the similarities of the nativity narrative in *Asc. Isa.* 11:2-16 "with the Protoevangelium (sic) of James, a work attributed to about 150 CE."[52]

The Ascension of Isaiah also contains a clear reference to the *post partum* virginity of Mary, which is one of the central themes present in the nativity story in PJ 18-20.[53] Another significant parallel between the nativity stories in PJ and the Ascension of Isaiah concern Mary's giving birth to Jesus without pain and without the services of a midwife.[54] This

same motif occurs also in another OT Pseudepigraphon of the late first or early second century CE, the Odes of Solomon.[55] These important parallels with the epistles of Ignatius of Antioch and the Odes of Solomon, which also are considered to be of Syrian origin, may point to a provenance for GM in Syria in the late first or early second century.

Although the *terminus ad quem* of GM may be fixed by its presence in PJ when that document was used by Justin Martyr about the middle of the second century CE, the *terminus post quem* of GM must remain open pending further study. The cumulative evidence presented above of the numerous parallels of central themes in GM with significant documents of the turn of the first to the second century CE strongly indicates a *Sitz im Leben* for GM within very early, possibly Syrian, Christianity. A final determination of the date and provenance of GM awaits a definitive study of the actual limits of GM within PJ, as well as of the relationship, or lack thereof, of GM with the canonical gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Following are what have been determined above to be the surviving elements of the GM annunciation story which appears for the first time since it was suppressed almost nineteen centuries ago.[56]

THE ORIGINAL GM ANNUNCIATION STORY

Mary was in the Jerusalem temple, which had been her home for the nine years since she had been dedicated to the temple by her parents at the age of three. A council of priests decided to make a new veil for the temple and sent servants out to gather the undefiled virgins of the tribe of David to spin the thread. The servants went out and found seven such virgins and led them back to the temple.

The priests cast lots to determine which of the virgins would spin the gold, white, linen, silk, blue, scarlet, and purple thread for the veil. The lots for the scarlet and purple thread fell to Mary.

Mary picked up the scarlet thread and began to spin it. She then put down the scarlet thread, picked up a pitcher, and went out to fill it with water. She heard an unidentified voice saying, "Hail, you are begraced among women." Mary looked around for the origin of the voice and saw none. She then put down the water pitcher, picked up the purple thread, sat down on the throne and spun the purple thread.

Mary finished spinning the scarlet and purple thread and took them to the priest. The priest received the thread from Mary and blessed her, saying, "Mary, the Lord God has magnified your name and you will be blessed by all the generations of the earth. Mary sighed toward heaven and said, "Who am I that, behold, all the generations of the earth will bless me?" And day by day, Mary's womb swelled.

Endnotes

[1] G. T. Zervos, "Dating the Protevangelium of James: The Justin Martyr Connection" *SBLSP* 1994, pp. 415-34.

[2] Ibid., pp. 432-34.

[3] H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development*, (Philadelphia and London: Trinity/SCM, 1992) 360.

[4] See H. Koester's sobering argumentation in "The Text of the Synoptic Gospels in the Second Century," *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century* (ed. W. L. Petersen; Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1989)19-37. "Since there is no second-century manuscript evidence, the quest for the text of the synoptic gospels in the second century is identical with the question of the earliest usage of their text in other writings."

[5] The last verse of chap. XIII is significant for this study primarily because it contains a statement by Mary denying any knowledge of the origin of the fetus within her womb. Mary's ignorance—after the annunciation—of information which she should have received during the annunciation is significant for the argument below.

[6] See the diplomatic *editio princeps* by M. Testuz, *Papyrus Bodmer V: Nativite de Marie* (Cologny-Geneve: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1958).

[7] E. de Strycker, *La Forme la plus ancienne du Protevangile de Jacques: Recherches sur le Papyrus Bodmer 5, avec une edition critique du texte grec et une traduction annotee* (*Subsidia Hagiographica* 33; Brussels, 1961) 21-26.

[8] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

[9] For the vast influence of the work of de Strycker on scholarly opinion concerning PJ, see "Dating," pp, 1-3.

[10] PJ constitutes an outstanding example of the ongoing editorial process throughout antiquity and modernity. See B. L. Daniels, "The Greek Manuscript Tradition of the Protevangelium Jacobi" (Duke Ph.D. diss., 1956) and G. T. Zervos, "Prolegomena to a Critical Edition of the Genesis Marias (Protevangelium Jacobi): The Greek Manuscripts" (Duke Ph.D. diss., 1986) for exhaustive lists of collations of 125 Greek MSS of PJ containing numerous examples of this editorial process from antiquity to the twentieth century.

[11] The full title of PBV is ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ ΜΑΡΙΑΣ ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΙΑΚΩΒ.

[12] The mixed Roman and Arabic numerals preceded by PJ designate the chapter and verse notations in the standard editions of PJ.

[13] This notation will facilitate the comparison of this Greek text to the editions of PBV by Testuz and DS.

[14] The word "begraced" is used to translate the Greek perfect middle participle κεχαριτωμένη.

[15] This Greek text of PJ X-XII according to PBV was produced during the course of an Intermediate Greek Seminar at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington with the assistance of the following students: Johnny Bakane, Shawn Bates, Shireen Hilou, Timothy Reaves, Heath Richardson, and Townsend Sloan.

[16] It is not within the scope of the present paper to explore the exact nature of the Lukan interpolations in PJ. But this is an issue of the first magnitude when one

considers that the text of PJ may be the oldest extant independent witness to portions of the text of Luke.

[17] *Forme*, p. 112; *Papyrus*, p. 72.

[18] In the Greek text of PJ X-XII above, this editorial insertion within an editorial insertion is designated as <<<Z^2 <<DS>>Z^2>>>. The text of the insertion of Z2 is written immediately below the text of PBV 22:2 and is preceded by Z2<<< and followed by >>>Z2. The point at which the insertion of DS occurs within that of Z2 is indicated by <<DS>>. The text of the insertion of DS is written in a different font below the insertion of Z2 and is preceded by DS<< and followed by >>DS.

[19] PJ generally seems to be dependent upon the text of the Septuagint.

[20] καὶ ποιήσεις καταπέτασμα ἐξ ὑακίνθου, καὶ πορφύρας, και κοκκίνου κεκλωσμένου. . .(Exod 6:31); καὶ ἐποίησαν τὸ καταπέτασμα ἐξ ὑακίνθου, καὶ πορφύρας, καὶ κοκκίνου. . .(Exod 37:3); καὶ ἐποίησε τὸ καταπέτασμα ὑακίνθου, καὶ πορφύρας, καὶ κοκκίνου. . .(2 Chr 3:14).

[21] *Forme*, pp. 112-13. DS alters the original reading from "(Mary), taking (the thread), was spinning (it) in her home" to "(Mary), taking (the thread), went into her house."

[22] This is the point at which the additions of Z^2 and DS have been accepted into the text.

[23] A fourth instance of Mary entering her home occurs at PBV 26:7b-8a, where she returns from her visit to Elizabeth.

[24] "Mary takes place upon a royal seat. thronos (sic) suggests more here than only a chair. Mary, of royal blood, takes place upon her throne." *Protevangelium Jacobi: A Commentary* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1965), p. 82.

[25] Translation according to NRSV.

[26] 1 Kgs 7:12, 40, 45, 51; Zech 8:9; Neh 6:10; 1 Chr 9:11, 13, 26; 2 Chr 29:15.

[27] 1 Sam 1:9, 3:3; 2 Kgs 23:4, 24:13; Jer 7:4, 24:1, 50:28, 51:11; Hag 2:15; 2 Chr 26:16, 27:2, 29:16.

[28] 1 Kgs 21:1; 2 Kgs 20:18 (cf. Isa 39:7), respectively.

[29] 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15 (cf. Isa 37:16); Pss 80:2 and 99:1.

[30] 1 Chr 28:2; Pss 99:5 and 132:7.

[31] Cf. Ezek 41:1-4.

[32] "Dating," p 7.

[33] DS distinguishes the editorial insertions in his critical text by enclosing them in angled brackets <>.

[34] Just a few examples are Gen 3:9-11; 15:4; Exod 4; Dan 4:28; Matt 3:17, 17:5; Mark 1:11, 9:7; Luke 3:22, 9:35; John 12:28; Acts 9:4, 7; 10:13, 15.

[35] In *J.W.* vi, 5 § 3, and *b. Pesah. 57a*, four instances are recorded where the temple court cried out in favor of or against priests who were ministering in the temple.

[36] Normally the high priest alone, the holiest human in Israel, is allowed to enter the Holy of Holies only once a year on the Day of Atonement, and even he must perform certain ritual acts to prepare for this occasion. Based upon Lev 16 the high priest must bathe completely, put on special holy garments, use special holy incense, and desanctify himself by reversing the process after completing the ritual.

[37] 1 Kgs 7:23-39; 2 Kgs 16:17, 25:13; 1 Chr 18:8; 2 Chr 4:6.

[38] 2 Chr 4:6 specifies that the smaller lavers were for washing burnt-offerings but the "sea" was for the priests to wash themselves.

[39] Luke 1:35.
[40] This seemingly insignificant detail may be relevant to the argument below.
[41] For a discussion of early traditions of Mary being impregnated through her ear, see Smid, *Protevangelium*, p. 84.
[42] Isa 6:1; 1 Kgs 22:19-23.
[43] Cf. Ezek 10:2-3.
[44] See the Greek text above.
[45] Translations of 1 Enoch are from E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* vol. 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983) 5-89.
[46] Ibid., p. 43, n.j.
[47] Rev 4 contains a major vision of God enthroned among his elders and heavenly creatures. In the midst of his heavenly throne stands the lamb who approaches the throne of God and receives a book from the right hand of God. Cf. Rev 7:9-10.
[48] "Dating," p. 434.
[49] Ign. *Eph.* 18:2; 20:2; *Trall.* 9:1; *Smyrn.* 1:1.
[50] *Asc. Isa.* 11:2.
[51] R. H. Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah, Translated from the Ethiopic Version, Which, Together with the New Greek Fragment, the Latin Versions and the Latin Translation of the Slavonic is Here Published in Full, Edited with Introduction, Notes, and Indices* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1900) xlv; E. Tisserant, *Ascension d' Isaie: Traduction de la Version Ethiopienne avec les Principles Variantes des Versions Grecques, Latines, et Slave,* (*Documents pour l'Etude de la Bible;* Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1909) 58.
[52] M. A. Knibb, "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* vol. 2, *Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom, and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Garden City: Doubleday, 1985) 150.
[53] *Asc. Isa.* 11:9.
[54] *Asc. Isa.* 11:14.
[55] *Odes Sol.* 19:6-10.
[56] See the Greek text above.

2 Timothy and Its Theology: In Search of a Theological Pattern

James W. Aageson

Method and Approach

The approach in this paper is to assume neither authenticity nor pseudonymity. Therefore, in contrast to much scholarship on the Pastorals, the starting point and focus for this paper is the literary character and world of 2 Timothy. In this discussion, the theology of 2 Timothy is the theology that is represented in the literary construct we call 2 Timothy. Although the issue that drives this discussion is not the question of Pauline authorship, it will be necessary to think about the literary features of implied authorship. It will also be necessary to frame this issue in such a way that historical questions do not surreptitiously preempt our starting point or our focus on the theology represented in the literary world of the text.[1] In this approach, historical

[1] To illustrate how subtly the historical and literary issues get turned around, Jerry Sumney--my predecessor in this approach--writing on 1 Timothy last year stated: "The reading of the theology of 1 Timothy offered here denies itself the presupposition of either authenticity or pseudonymity. This stance has some practical advantages. First, it need not constantly compare itself with ideas and emphases assumed to be present in the undisputed Paulines, whether to show similarity or difference…. Perhaps more importantly, this 'agnostic' stance on authorship allows the letter to speak for itself because it does not presuppose a provenance in a narrow period of early church history which is assumed to be concerned with some issues and no longer, or not yet, concerned about others. *Given the starting point of this essay, the first order of business is to establish the primary exigence of the letter. After this is done, we will* turn *to the theological reasoning of 1 Timothy* (italics mine)." (Jerry L. Sumney, "A Reading of the Theology of 1 Timothy Without Authorial Presuppositions," Theology of the Disputed Paulines Group, November 1996, New Orleans, pp. 2-3.) The immediate question is: why should the first order of business be to establish the primary exigence of the letter? This is not self-evident. Given his approach and what he says earlier in the paragraph it could just as easily be the

questions--to the extent they come into view at all--emerge only when one is adequately prepared to read through the text into the historical world behind the text.

In his work on Philemon, now over a decade ago, Norman Petersen refocused the critical distinction between *text* and *history,* between contextual history (time of writing) and narrative world (literary construction), and applied it to the referential, narrative world of Paul and his epistles, especially Philemon.[2] In the course of his attempt to clarify the differences between narratives and epistles with regard to these historical and contextual distinctions, Petersen wrote: "In letters, as well as in narratives, we have to move from the text to its referential, narrative world, and from its narrative world to history." [3]

While Petersen's overall distinction between contextual and narrative worlds in epistolary literature may need greater refinement, his argument is germane to our discussion of 2 Timothy in at least two ways: 1) epistles have referential, narrative worlds and 2) history must be constructed from the narrative, referential world of the document. What is not entirely clear in the case of 2 Timothy, however, is the extent to which the

---

last order of business or of no concern at all. Once the issue of exigence is defined as the first order of business, the discussion takes a decidedly historical turn that requires some projected real-world context for 1 Timothy and its theology. And that in turn begs the questions of authorship, historical context, and linkage with Paul and the Pauline tradition, even though Professor Sumney seems to disavow such concerns.

[2] Norman R. Petersen, Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), pp. 1-42.

[3] Ibid., pp.8-9. In that same discussion Petersen also writes: "The only history *referred to* in a letter is its contextual history, which is the total history envisioned by the writer as relevant for the letter. However, as real as this difference between letter and narrative is, because letters refer to a world they have *referential worlds,* and these are the *narrative worlds,* from which any real-world history must be reconstructed."

referential world of the text overlaps the contextual world of the epistle. If Paul actually wrote 2 Timothy, presumably--though not certain--the two overlap to a greater extent than if someone else wrote in the name of Paul at a later date. If the letter was written pseudonymously at some date after Paul's death, for example, the time in and for which it was written is clearly removed from the narrative events and circumstances projected back onto the time of Paul and Timothy. In any case, it would be a methodological fallacy to assume congruence between the two when there may in fact be little or none.

To be sure, the question of congruence between the contextual and narrative worlds of 2 Timothy is affected by the question of authorship, but given the persistent uncertainty regarding the questions of authorship and historical context, the appropriate methodological response may well be, and is the case here, to make no working assumptions about authorship one way or the other and to discern the theology of 2 Timothy in the narrative and referential world of the text as best we can. According to this way of approaching the issue, any historical conclusions to be drawn will intentionally be subsequent to that literary enterprise. In short, the methodological emphasis has shifted from historical criticism to literary criticism.

Theology and Genre

The *theology* of 2 Timothy is understood broadly in this paper as the pattern of convictions and behaviors related to God and to the activity of God represented in the implied world of this text, and this text alone. This is intentionally broad in order not to screen out by definition any of the elements of 2 Timothy's thought world and theology. If the theology of 2 Timothy reflects a patterned--as distinct from a systematic--view of reality, it stands to reason that the goal of this project is to understand the relationship of the elements in that pattern. It is not necessarily an attempt to find the "key" that unlocks the theology of 2

Timothy or the "red thread" that runs through it and ties it all together. Finding the central concept of 2 Timothy's theology is not the goal. Understanding the pattern of convictions and behaviors is. The more appropriate metaphor may be an orchestrated "collage," as opposed to a random and disconnected set of elements, where a pattern of images is constructed that shapes and defines the individual elements within the whole. It is this pattern that we are after in 2 Timothy.

Closely connected to this theological pattern, of course, is the question of genre. According to Benjamin Fiore, the Pastorals are most aptly thought about under the heading "traditional instruction," a form marked by hortatory and paraenesis recalling the authoritative foundation upon which the true teaching, taught in this case by the divinely appointed teacher, is based.[4] Among the most conspicuous features of this hortatory structure are contrast and personal example, in which the rhetor is his or her own example of what is taught.[5] With great care, Fiore shows the way the Pastoral letters stand in a long line of hortatory literature.

His argument is persuasive, and it is also constructive for our argument here. Contrast and personal example are important formal features of 2 Timothy, and they clearly shape the pattern of the text's theological presentation. But Fiore's argument is also important in another way. While the text of 2 Timothy turns on the literary axis between "Paul," the implied author, and "Timothy," the implied reader of the text, the real audience which would probably have heard this text read aloud may also be assumed to enter into the thought

---

[4] Benjamin Fiore, The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles, Analecta Biblica 105 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1986) p. 6. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, Letters to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, The New Testament in Context (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996) p. 32 and Robert J. Karris, The Pastoral Epistles, New Testament Message, vol. 17 (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1979) p. 8.

[5] Fiore, The Function of Personal Example, pp. 21 and 36.

world of the text.[6] In that way, the text may also presume an implied audience. This implied audience --whether it be thought of as the community's leaders or the community more broadly--then becomes another dimension of the text's referential world and its theology. On different axes, both "Timothy" and the "presumed audience" are implied recipients of the letter and its theology. Hence, the audience enters into the hortatory drama right alongside Timothy. What may very well be beyond our grasp, at this point, is the precise congruity between the real and implied "Timothy" and the real and implied "audience." That issue, however, becomes most critical when one seeks to move from the literary world to history.

Theology and the Implied World of 2 Timothy

The narrative axis of 2 Timothy is established immediately in the first two verses of the document, the greeting. Paul, the sender of the epistle, is identified as an apostle of Christ Jesus **διὰ θελήματος Θεοῦ, κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν ζωῆς,** and **ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ**. The objects of the prepositions identify different aspects of Paul's apostleship: "the will of God," "promise of life," and "Christ Jesus." And each of these has theological implications for the identity and authority of the implied author of the letter. The authority of the apostle is by the will of God, its purpose is for the promise of life, and its source is in Christ Jesus.[7]

Timothy, the recipient of the epistle, is identified on the other hand as the "beloved child." Clearly implied in this description is an ongoing and intimate relationship with Paul that precedes the narrative time-frame of the text. Just as Paul the apostle confers the grace, mercy, and peace that comes from God the Father and Christ

---

[6]Ibid., p. 12; Arland J. Hultgren, I, II Timothy, Titus, Augsburg Commentary on the NT (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) p. 107; and Karris, The Pastoral Epistles, p. 7.

[7]Following the suggestion regarding **ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ** by Jouette M. Bassler, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996) p. 126.

Jesus "our" Lord, it may be that as the "beloved child" Timothy is also linked to the will of God, the promise of life, and Christ Jesus, through the apostleship of Paul.

While the literary axis that runs from Paul to Timothy is established already in the greeting, it is this axis that shapes the exhortations, personal examples, ethical patterns, and theological claims that run through the epistle. Though these may in fact alternate in the sequence of the epistle, they all turn on the implied relationship between Paul and Timothy which is set out at the very beginning of the letter. Eavesdropping on this epistolary monologue is the presumed audience which would also have entered into the exhortations, personal examples, ethical patterns, and theological claims of the epistle as it was read and heard. This audience, too, is expected to heed the warnings and exhortations of the apostle. Once again, the authority behind these apostolic exhortations and personal examples for this presumed audience is the divine will. The purpose for heeding them is the promise of life, presumably life that extends beyond the present circumstances.

The Pattern of Faith

In 1:3-5 Paul shapes his thanksgiving around remarks focused primarily on Timothy. In other words, this epistolary thanksgiving, with the exception of the reference to the God whom Paul worships **καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει** as did his ancestors and the remembrance of Timothy in prayer night and day,[8] is organized around things that are worthy of thanksgiving in Timothy's life: **σου τῶν δακρύων, ὑπόμνησιν ... ἐν σοὶ ἀνυποκρίτου πίστεως ... πρῶτον ἐν τῇ μάμμῃ σου ... καὶ τῇ μητρί σου ... ὅτι καὶ ἐν σοί.** By juxtaposing the God whom Paul and his ancestors worship and the genuine faith of Timothy and his ancestors, there is some presumed connection between the God of Paul and the faith of Timothy. This connection is encompassed retrospectively by the narrative world of the text,

[8] Hultgren asserts that "clear conscience" here means "without reservations," I, II Timothy, Titus, p. 109.

even though it precedes the projected time-frame of the text. At this point, however, the link between God and Timothy's faith is only implicit.

Although the formal content of faith is rarely made explicit in the letter, **πίστις** also appears in 1:13, 2:18, 2:22, 3:8, 3:10, 3:15, and 4:7. In 1:13, Timothy is exhorted to hold to the "standard of sound teaching" (**ὑγιαινόντων λόγων**) which he heard in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Once again, the description of the content of this faith is not the point of 1:13. While it is clear that "sound teaching" is not simply identified with faith--the "sound teaching" was heard in the faith --the text may imply the character of Timothy's reception in Christ of the teaching that Paul presented to him. If this inference is appropriate, there is at least an implicit connection between the "sound teaching" and the faith in Christ with which Timothy received that teaching. The alternate interpretation is that Paul presented the "sound teaching" in the faith and love that are in Christ. In which case, the connection is between Paul's faith, which has its source in Christ, and the "sound teaching." In both interpretations faith, either on the part of Paul or Timothy, is connected with "sound teaching." Furthermore, Timothy is exhorted to hold to this teaching. In which ever way we read this text, it is clear that the character of this faith is not spelled out, except for the claim that it is related to Christ Jesus and in some vague way to "sound teaching."

The reference to "sound teaching" in 1:13 is bracketed by references to guarding **παραθήκη** in 1:12 and 14.[9] While the translation problems, especially of 1:12, are well known,[10] it is clear that **παραθήκη** implies some substance, if not content, to that which has been deposited. Whether the deposit is entrusted to God or to the apostle, Paul knows in

---

[9] Louw and Nida define **παραθήκη** as "that which has been entrusted to the care of someone...." Bauer defines it as "deposit, property entrusted to another."

[10] Louw and Nida assert that the most likely translation of 1:12 is "because he is able to keep what he has entrusted to me," but that "... 'what I have entrusted to him,'" is a possible translation.

whom he has believed (**πεπίστευκα**) and is persuaded there is something to be guarded. Furthermore, God has a role in protecting it **διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος ἐν ἡμῖν** (1:14) and **ὅτι δυνατός ἐστιν τὴν παραθήκην μου φυλάξαι εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν** (1:12). While Paul exhorts Timothy to guard the good deposit with the help of the holy spirit, in 2:2 he also instructs him to pass on to faithful (**πιστοῖς**) people what he has heard from Paul through many witnesses. They will in turn teach it to others. The tradition is to be passed on, and it will be guarded. In the theological world of this text, there is a close connection between the divine and human roles in protecting that tradition as it is passed on.[11]

In 2:18 **πίστις** appears again, and in this context it is asserted that those who have deviated from the truth and claimed that the resurrection has already taken place are upsetting the faith of some people. While there may not be a direct link in the world of the text between the faith that is being unsettled and the deviating claim that the resurrection has already taken place, the implication is unmistakable. Faith has a particular expectation about the resurrection, and when it is contradicted it is unsettled. For genuine faith, the resurrection is a future expectation.[12]

In 2:22, Timothy is exhorted to flee "youthful passions" and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace.[13] Here, faith and its parallel terms are set opposite the passions of youth; and in the immediate context, it is clear that "youthful passions" refers to inappropriate behavior. The virtuous qualities, faith among them, represent good behavior as opposed to bad. The very mention of this contrast sets the context for Paul's

---

[11] Karris argues that what has been entrusted is not a fixed and unchanging package of truth but is rather quite dynamic, The Pastoral Epistles, pp. 14-15. Bassler also notes that careful transmission is an aspect of guarding and is a common element in testamentary literature, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, p. 139.

[12] See also 1:12, 2:10, and 4:8.

[13] See 3:14 where **ἐπιστώθης** is used in a hortatory context: "But as for you, remain in what you have learned and believed...." Cf. also **πιστοῖς** in 2:2.

exhortation to flee "youthful passions." Do this and not that. The more sharply the contrast is drawn, the more pointed the exhortation becomes.

In 3:10, Paul turns to his own autobiography, and here faith is included in a list of attributes and activities that mark his personal narrative: my teaching, conduct, aim, faith, patience, love, steadfastness, persecutions, and suffering the sorts of things that happened to me in Antioch. An entire domain of terms is formed that causes the individual terms to shade into one another, as the personal story and authority of the author is conjured up for Timothy and for the audience. In this linguistic pattern, faith is listed alongside teaching, as well as a series of other terms that designate conduct and personal circumstance (patience, steadfastness, persecution, and suffering). Faith is not simply the act of teaching or the content of teaching. It is also closely linked to conduct, persecution, suffering--in short, the circumstances of the implied author's own life. An autobiographical appeal is made again in 4:7: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

The implications of faith are extended still further in 3:8, where the corruption of mind, opposition to the truth, and inappropriate behavior are all closely linked. As Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses in the past, there are those who oppose the truth, are corrupt of mind, and have an unfit faith. A genuine faith would presumably correspond to the truth and a healthy mind. The precise character of this truth, healthy mind, and genuine faith is not made clear, but the things of the mind and faith are closely connected with behavior and conduct in the thought world of the text. What stands out most conspicuously in these references, however, is contrast. Even though we only get glimpses of the content of faith in the referential world of 2 Timothy, the fact that unfit faith is contrasted with genuine faith makes clear that faith has theological substance, if not content, as well as ethical form. What that theological substance and ethical form may be in 2 Timothy is not always transparent, but the fact of

the contrast itself signals that it is there. Without that implicit theological substance and ethical form, there would be no basis for the contrast.

In 3:15, the text reads: "...from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Scripture instructs for salvation, but more than that it instructs for salvation *through faith in Christ*. Salvation and faith are here linked explicitly. Scripture instructs for salvation, and faith in Christ is the means to salvation. Hence, the sacred writings may well be important for instruction in faith, as the means to salvation. Similarly, Paul's faith (πεπίστευκα)--apparently faith in Christ--is connected in 1:12 with his own suffering and lack of shame and with the expectation of "that day" (εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν). Here, too, belief or faith is apparently connected with salvation.

Though the full character of faith is not made explicit in the theology of 2 Timothy, several of its features come into view when we begin to see the pattern of this theological world. Genuine faith is linked to both God and Christ,[14] and there is also an implicit connection between faith and the concept of "sound teaching." Even though the precise content of faith may be unclear to us, the fact that faith has theological substance and ethical form is not to be doubted. For example, the deviant claim that the resurrection has already occurred is contrary to faith, at least genuine faith. Moreover, the implication of the contrast is that it is possible to differentiate true faith from untrue faith. Faith is also tied to appropriate forms of behavior and becomes in that way part of the context for the paraenesis. Faith is one of the markers of appropriate behavior. Paul has remained steadfast in this faith, and Timothy is exhorted to hold firmly to it as well. Finally, faith in Christ is also linked to scripture and

[14] See the reference to God's faithfulness in 2:13 and the discussion below.

salvation. Scripture instructs for salvation, and salvation is through faith in Christ Jesus.

The Word of Truth

Ἀλήθεια appears in 2:15, 2:18, 2:25, 3:7, 3:8, 4:4 and is closely linked to the pattern of faith in 2 Timothy. The content of this truth, whatever it may be, only comes to the surface of the text incidentally. In 2:15 Timothy is exhorted to explain the word of truth, and in 2:18 Hymenaeus and Philetus are said to have deviated from the truth by claiming the resurrection has already come. In the first example, the emphasis is on the exhortation to an activity (explaining the word of truth); whereas in the second, it is on the deviation of those who have made claims about the resurrection (it is past tense).

In 2:25 Paul counsels Timothy to correct opponents with gentleness, for it may be that God will grant them repentance that leads to knowledge of (the) truth (**ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας**). In this case, knowledge of truth is said to follow repentance. Whatever the content of this truth, it is dependent on Timothy's correction and God's granting of repentance. The women in 3:6-7, who are overcome by their sins and are always being instructed, are never able to come to knowledge of (the) truth. Apparently, knowledge of truth does not result from teaching alone. It follows from repentance which God grants as well (2:25).[15] Moreover, according to 3:8, those who have an unfit faith and a corrupt mind oppose the truth. Corruption of mind and inauthenticity of faith go hand in hand with resistance to the truth. There will also come a time when people will turn from listening to the truth and turn to myths (4:4). A notion of truth, closely connected to faith, stands in the background of 2 Timothy's theological world and only comes into the foreground on occasion,

[15] Dibelius and Conzelmann claim that in the Pastorals **μετάνοια** is "the return to the truth," The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles. trans. Philip Buttolph and Adela Yarbro, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972) p. 113.

primarily to contrast the opponents and their faith from Paul, Timothy, and their faith. Linked closely to truth in 2 Timothy is the manner of life to which Paul exhorts Timothy and his church.

The Gifts and Power of God

Paul's thanksgiving for Timothy's faith turns into exhortation in 1:6-8. Timothy is called upon to rekindle the gift of God that is within him through the laying on of "my" hands. God did not give Timothy a spirit of cowardice but a spirit of power, love, and self-control. God is the source of this gift, but Timothy is also exhorted to rekindle the gift that was given to him through the laying on of hands. It seems that the gift to be rekindled is the spirit of power, love, and self-control.[16] Hence, the gift of God and the exhortation to Timothy stand side by side in this text.

The exhortation to Timothy continues in 1:8 with the plea not to be ashamed of the **μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν** or of **ἐμὲ τὸν δέσμιον αὐτοῦ**. He is also exhorted to join with Paul in suffering for the gospel **κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ**, according to the power that comes from God.[17] From the perspective of the epistle's place in narrative time, Paul's imprisonment and suffering precede the exhortation to Timothy, whereas the fulfillment of the exhortation necessarily comes after it. Along this axis that runs temporally between the past and the present and on to an expected future where Timothy displays confidence and not shame, the theology of divine power and activity emerges from the text.

God is the one who saved and called "us" to a holy calling. This saving and calling was not according to "our" works but according to "his own" plan and grace, which was given to "us" in Christ Jesus before the ages. These have already been accomplished. Moreover, it is clear that this God

[16] Jouette M. Bassler, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996) p. 130.

[17] See the references to suffering in 1:12, 2:3, 2:9, 3:11-12, 4:5.

is both a saving and calling God who does these things according to divine grace and purpose, not as a result of human works. While these were given before the ages began, they have now become manifest through the coming of "our" savior Christ Jesus who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. In the temporal "now," what have already become realities --the saving, calling, divine purpose, and grace-- have come to light. They represent the gifts and power of God, and these are the reasons that Timothy need not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord and can suffer for the gospel with confidence. They are also the reasons that Paul says he has been appointed a preacher, apostle, and teacher, and for which he suffers without shame.

These theological realities, which are portrayed as being manifestations of divine power and as having objective reality, are situated in a context framed by Paul's exhortation and personal example. This exhortation to confidence and suffering for the gospel is intended to have added persuasive power because it is driven by the reality of divine power which "now" is manifest. Although this exhortation turns on the axis that extends from Paul to Timothy, it is expected that the audience overhearing these instructions is also being called to suffering and confidence within the context of divine power and activity. But what is especially striking about this is that divine gift and power are in no way set against the exhortation to a particular manner of life. The theology and the ethical pattern to which Timothy is exhorted are inextricably linked.[18] In fact, the power of God is portrayed as the reason why Timothy ought to heed the exhortation not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord and why he ought to join Paul in suffering for the gospel.

In 2:1 Timothy, "my" child, is exhorted to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus and to entrust to the faithful what has been heard through many witnesses, who in turn will be able to teach others. Once again, Timothy is called upon to share

---

[18] Hultgren, I, II Timothy, Titus, p. 137.

suffering, in this case as a good soldier. Following the three analogies in 2:4-6, Timothy is also called upon to remember Christ Jesus, who was raised from the dead and is identified as a descendant of David. This is the gospel for which Paul is said to suffer even to the point of being chained like a criminal. Though the word of God is not bound, he endures these chains on account of the elect, in order that they may gain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

In this text, Timothy is exhorted to be strong in grace. In Christ, this is what Timothy possesses. Whereas in chapter one Timothy is exhorted to suffer for the gospel relying on the power that comes from God, here he is to find strength in grace. What is significant at this point is the theological pattern that develops. The power of God and the grace that is in Christ Jesus are both sources of confidence and strength for the suffering to which Timothy is called. In 1:9 it is clear that salvation and the call are not by "our" works but are according to his plan and the gift of his grace, and in 2:1 it is equally clear that Timothy is called upon to be strong in this gift. Once again the divine gift is not contrary to the implications of the exhortation but rather sustains the one who heeds the call to suffer. Hence, the call to suffering has important theological dimensions. Not only is the gospel that for which Paul himself suffers, but it is the theological reality of the gospel that sustains and gives confidence in the face of this suffering. And that is why Timothy ought to heed Paul's exhortation.

Because these sufferings are endured for the sake of the elect and their salvation, it is obviously the case in the theological world of this text that election does not automatically confer salvation. To put it more directly, election and the ultimate realization of the promise of life are not only tied closely to the gift of God's power and grace but also to faith, a proper manner of life, and the work of the apostle, a part of which is apparently to endure suffering as required for the sake of the elect. These elements cannot be wedged apart, and together they form a complex

theological pattern that shapes the paraenesis. Furthermore, the use of personal example in the paraenesis is also bound up with the theological reality represented in the text. What is theologically the case for Paul is also the case for Timothy: God saves and calls, he bestows a spirit of power and love and self-control, there is grace in Christ Jesus, Christ has abolished death, and so there is a promise of life for those who live in genuine faith. Since these theological realities pertain to both Paul and Timothy, the example of one (Paul) can serve as a model for the other (Timothy and also the audience).

In 2:11-14 the preceding exhortation is reinforced yet again by a set of four theological assertions. In parallel fashion, the first three assertions are designed to relate a future theological consequence to a present action. Living with Christ presupposes having died (with him).[19] Reigning with him presumes enduring (with him). Denying (him) will result in his denying "us." And finally being faithless to him does *not* result in divine faithlessness. The fourth member of the saying breaks the expected literary pattern that was established in the preceding line: if we are faithless, God will also be faithless. The words, "he is not able to deny himself," intrude into the pattern of the text and explain why the expected pattern cannot be so. To be God is to be faithful. By breaking the pattern, divine faithfulness stands in bold relief. But even more than that, the previous exhortations depend for their force on the reliability of God. If God is not inherently faithful (**πιστός**), then God cannot be trusted; and if God cannot be trusted, Paul's appeal to Timothy to be steadfast in suffering, upright in behavior, and without shame at the testimony of the Lord is eviscerated.[20]

---

[19] Despite the omission of the pronoun, I follow most English translations and assume that the reference is to dying with Christ. See the discussion by Bassler, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, pp. 144-147.

[20] Bassler, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, pp.146-147, discusses the full range of interpretive issues for this statement.

The Pattern of Behavior

In 2:14, Paul calls upon Timothy to remind the people in his care of these things, that is, the things that have just been said in 2:11-13 about dying, enduring, denying, and faithlessness. Coordinate with this are the warnings (before God) and exhortations that follow in 2:14-18. As this discussion proceeds, the warnings to the people and the exhortations to Timothy seem to shade into one another. Timothy is to warn people against disputes over words for they are of no use and are ruinous to those who listen. But in 2:15 Timothy is called upon to make every effort to present himself approved by God, a worker who is not ashamed and one who rightly expounds the word of truth. In this verse, the command to warn others has become a command directly to Timothy. In 2:16 the plea to avoid Godless chatter, because it leads to more and more ἀσέβεια, is apparently directed to Timothy, but may be directed to those faithful people under his care as well. As examples to reinforce the nature of the problem, Hymenaeus and Philetus are said to have deviated from the truth by claiming the resurrection has already occurred.[21]

These warnings and exhortations culminate in yet another theological assertion, enhanced in this case by allusions to scripture. In the face of these deviations from the truth, God's solid foundation nonetheless stands bearing this inscription: "'the Lord knows those who are his,' and 'let those who name the name of the Lord turn from unrighteousness.'"[22] As we have seen before, a theological claim, in this case God's knowledge of those who belong to him, is combined with an exhortation, in this context to turn from unrighteousness. Theological claims and exhortations are two sides of the same coin in the

[21] See 2:25 where Timothy is told that the servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome but ought to correct the opponents with gentleness that God may grant that they repent and come to knowledge of the truth.
[22] Cf. Num 16:5 and Is 26:13.

implied world of 2 Timothy.[23] Moreover, the theological claims that run through the text add power and substance to the exhortations. The personal example of the author certainly gives credibility and authority to the paraenesis of 2 Timothy. But it is the theology generated within the first two chapters of the text that serves as the foundation for the exhortations and makes the desired pattern of behavior compelling

The analogy of the vessels in 2:20-21 is not about the divine prerogative in creating some vessels for special use and others for ordinary use.[24] It is about cleansing oneself of the inappropriate behaviors that have been mentioned previously in the discussion. Those who do so will be useful to the **δεσπότης** and prepared for every good work. Presuming that the lesson of the analogy is clear, the discussion is driven forward as Paul launches into a virtual list of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors: shun "youthful passions;" pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace (with those who call upon the Lord with a pure heart); avoid foolish and stupid controversies that breed quarrels; it is necessary that the Lord's servant not quarrel but be gentle to everyone, able to teach, patient, in kindness correcting opponents that God may bring them to repentance that leads to the knowledge of the truth and that they may escape from the devil's snare. To be sure, exhortation drives this discussion, but now the behavior appropriate (and inappropriate) for those who have cleansed themselves and are prepared for every good work is being laid out. Moral and ethical content is now being injected into the paraenesis in a more deliberate way than earlier in the discussion.

In contrast to the list in 2:22-26 which has in the main a positive cast, the list in 3:1-5 is a catalogue of vices. And among those people who engage in these condemned activities, one finds those who make their way into houses and mislead

---

[23] Dibelius and Conzelmann, The Pastoral Epistles, p. 113. They argue that paraenesis draws its motivation from the awareness of election in the theology of the text.

[24] Cf. Rom 9:21.

women who are overwhelmed by sins.[25] The temporal presumption of the text in 3:1-9 is that "now," in the present moment of the text, the distressing times of the "last days" have come to pass (or just about come to pass). This is reinforced at the end of the catalogue in 3:5 when Paul instructs Timothy to "turn away" from the people who do these things. In the theological world of 2 Timothy, the "last days" are on the horizon and accordingly people who exhibit these reprehensible behaviors are to be avoided. A sense of urgency and impending judgment is also being interjected in the exhortation. The time is short.[26] Set about the work at hand, and avoid these behaviors and those who do them. This entire exhortation, of course, is framed by Paul's impending departure and his desire that Timothy remain steadfast in his absence(4:6-8).

In 3:10-15, the author drives home yet again his appeal to live according to the proper manner of life. The exhortations in 2:14-19 are undergirded by appeal to theology and scripture. In 2:20-26, they are illustrated by analogy and the negative consequences that follow from senseless quarrels. In 3:1-9, the exhortations are framed by the "last days" and allusion to scriptural magery. But in 3:10-15, appeal is made once again to Paul's own personal example, especially to his persecutions and sufferings which are to be expected for all those who wish to live a Godly life. Not only does Paul's example lend authority to the epistle's general hortatory tenor, but it gives form to the manner of life that is expected. Paul's prior conduct, as well as that which Timothy has learned and from whom he has learned it,[27] reinforce the bond between the author and recipient, the teacher and student, the parent and child. Paul is Timothy's authority figure and role model. This is a message presumably not lost on the audience that hears this text read and reread.

---

[25] 3:6-9. See also the discussion above.

[26] Bassler down-plays the apocalyptic outlook of this text preferring to connect "that day" with the end of Paul's suffering rather than the end of the world, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, pp. 158-159.

[27] See Bassler's suggestion, Ibid., p. 166.

Conjuring up the image of eschatological judgment and the impending arrival of the kingdom in order to lend authority and urgency to the exhortations, Paul appeals to Timothy in 4:1 yet again: "Preach the word, be persistent, convince, reprimand, and encourage in all patience and teaching." In 4:5 the exhortation to Timothy is carried still further: "Be sober in everything, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." In the presence of God and Christ Jesus who judges both the living and the dead, Timothy is called upon to remain steadfast in his ministry. Though the time is coming when people will seek teachers to suit their own desires, Timothy is not to waver. The pattern of behavior set before him is clear and direct. And once again theology (or christology), in this case Christ's reappearance and his judgment of both the living and the dead, frames the exhortations.

One of the most striking features of 2 Timothy's pattern of behavior is the theme of suffering. In 1:12, 2:9, and 3:11, the references are to Paul's suffering; whereas in 1:8, 2:3, and 4:5 the exhortation is for Timothy to suffer. The appeal to Timothy is not to suffer with Christ--with the possible exception of 2:11--but with Paul.[28] Since Paul has already suffered, the exhortation to Timothy is to join him in suffering (**συγκακοπάθησον** 1:8 and 2:3). The past reality of Paul's suffering is linked to the future expectation of Timothy's suffering. In the world of the text, suffering holds the prospect that the two might be united on yet another level. Not only are Paul and Timothy united by the bond between teacher and pupil, but they ought to be united as fellow sufferers for the sake of the gospel as well.

A Theological Conclusion

The literary progression of 2 Timothy culminates in 4:6-8 with what seems like the author's final testament. Following this, the epistle concludes with rather detailed instructions

[28] Ibid., p 131.

to Timothy. Although the testamentary material in 4:6-8 functions as the conclusion to the body of the epistle, it is unlikely that it defines the genre of the text. As already indicated, 2 Timothy is more accurately described as a paraenetic letter.

In light of that, one of the noteworthy conclusions of this discussion is that the paraenesis does not rest on Paul's personal example and authority alone. The theology of the text, especially in the first two chapters, is thoroughly interwoven with the various exhortations and appeals to follow Paul's example. The reason why Timothy ought to suffer with confidence, not be ashamed, and behave appropriately has as much to do with God and the activity of God as it does with Paul's own example. To put it another way, it is the theological reality of what God has done and will do that makes Paul's example compelling and authoritative. In that regard, Paul lives and teaches the things of God. If 2 Timothy is in fact driven by paraenesis, it is paraenesis thoroughly informed and shaped by theology.

Looking Ahead

The theology of 2 Timothy appears on many different levels. For the sake of this discussion, two will be distinguished. On the first level, the form and shape of 2 Timothy's theology is explicit. In other words, it is on the surface level of the text and its pattern can be discerned quite directly. On the second level, 2 Timothy only hints at theological conceptions and patterns that are at most implicit in the literary world of the text. They are part of the theological sub-text. We know they are there because they are suggested by the text, but their full shape and form are not made clear. At several points in the discussion above, this has become evident. This also means that any attempt to identify the pattern of 2 Timothy's theology will necessarily have gaps in it, and there will be places where the pattern is less than clear.

Interpreters customarily deal with this second level of theology in two ways. First, they seek to draw a fuller picture of 2 Timothy's theology by appealing to the implications inherent in the text itself. In this way, interpreters seek to make explicit that which is only implicit. The second approach is more interesting for our purposes. It involves placing 2 Timothy in a broader narrative and theological framework as a way of drawing the latent theology of the text to the surface. Grouping 2 Timothy with 1 Timothy and Titus as modern scholarship has done for the last two hundred years or grouping 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus with the larger Pauline corpus on the basis of authorship is, from a literary point of view, really a matter of claiming how that larger referential world ought to be construed. Once the larger theological background is identified it becomes a way of elaborating this second level of theology and of drawing it to the fore.

In modern historical critical scholarship, the method of choice for determining that broader framework is to argue comparatively for or against Pauline authorship on the basis of internal theological, stylistic, and linguistic evidence and to situate the Pastoral epistles historically in the chronology of Paul's ministry. This approach is undoubtedly predicated on assumptions about the importance of historical context for determining theological meaning. It also assumes some degree of correspondence between the context of the author, the thought of the author, and the text the author produces. It might be added at this point that radical literary criticism has made this correspondence increasingly problematic.

Along this same line, debates about the authorship of the Pastorals may also imply that the theology that is really being sought is the theology of the author rather than the theology of the text. If the theology being sought is in the mind of the author, then the theology of any text written by that author is a contextual expression of that author's larger theology. And the issue of authorship is, of course, critical for this enterprise. In this case, 2 Timothy's theology

would in fact be the theology deposited in the text by the author rather than the theology represented by the text itself. If we can know who the author of 2 Timothy is, then the author's other writings presumably can be used to enrich our understanding of this text. According to this approach, even where the intent is to identify 2 Timothy's theology, the theology of the author, whoever that author is determined to be, provides the backdrop for understanding 2 Timothy. For this approach to be productive we must assume the author's theology has a significant degree of coherence and consistency in order for our comparisons to be meaningful. Without this, we would be left with disconnected, contingent statements that provide a less than meaningful context for interpretation. The nature and degree of this coherence in the Pauline and Pastoral epistles continues to be a matter of much debate.

Where does this leave us? Are we trapped by our historical presuppositions, our assumptions about authorship and its relationship to literary text, as well as by our own lack of clarity about where to search for the theology of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus? Are we consigned simply to repeat the debates of the past? The fact that this seminar is meeting at all suggests that we are not satisfied with the current state of the discussion. But where do we go from here? Let me suggest two ideas. First, the preoccupation in modern scholarship with the question of authorship and historical context is not the only way of determining the theological context within which these epistles might be read productively. In fact, it seems to have limited the options. Perhaps a theological context determined by canonical considerations where the theology of these epistles is read in relation to a variety of other New Testament epistles--Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Thessalonians; the undisputed Pauline corpus; or some other grouping of epistles --is just as appropriate. Perhaps the work that has been done in the sociology and anthropology of religion can provide a profitable methodological context for understanding the theology of these epistles. Or perhaps the use and interpretation of

the epistles by Christian communities over time can provide an interesting context for understanding their theology. Once again, the point is not to suggest that issues of authorship and history drop entirely from view but rather that they not dominate the conversation. They are problematic in their own right, and there are other ways of construing context.

Finally, as has been suggested in this essay, literary approaches that defuse the issue of historical authorship may hold further promise. Significant strides have already been made in this regard, especially with respect to the issue of genre.[29] But further investigation of the implied world and the literary quality of these epistles is still needed. These investigations may also provide further comparative material. In any case, when literary approaches come to the fore, historical questions become relatively less prominent.

---

[29] See Fiore, The Function of Personal Example.

Studying Paul:
2 Timothy as Remembrance

Lewis R. Donelson
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

If authorial intent still has some legitimate force in the act of reading, then an assumption of pseudonymity initiates a peculiar dilemma.[1] Should we hear the text as the voice of the "real" author or the "pseudonymous" one? In the case of 2 Timothy, when we assume that Paul did not write the letter, our responsibility to hear the voice of the author becomes confused. The "real" author does not want us to hear him; the real author wants us to hear Paul. So if we hear the real author as himself we are reading contrary to the intentions of the author. But how can we hear the text as written by Paul if we assume it was not? What becomes the force of the author in directing our reading of this text?

This dilemma is intensified by the rhetorical character of 2 Timothy. There is perhaps no other letter in the Pauline corpus wherein Paul himself is so deeply embedded in the syntax of the text. "Paul" speaks constantly in the first person. He evokes memories of his own life and offers his own life as a paradigm of Christian behavior. He authenticates tradition; he gives direct commands to Timothy; he divides the righteous and the unrighteous by their loyalty and disloyalty to Paul. No matter what one's assumptions on authorship it is not possible to dismiss Paul, the real one or the one inscribed in this text, from 2 Timothy.

---

[1] See Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) for the most influential survey of the role of the author in recent New Testament scholarship. In my opinion, Moore too easily abandons the obligation of the reader to the author. In particular his citing of Derrida as holding this view is incorrect (Moore, 138). In fact, although Derrida deeply complicates the role of the voice of the author, he does not abandon it. For instance, Moore cites Derrida's opposition between Rousseauistic and Nietzschean readings as evidence for Derrida's affirmation of pure play, free of obligation to the author. But Derrida in the very next paragraph declares "For my part, although these two interpretations must acknowledge and accentuate their difference and define their irreducibility, I do not believe that today there is any question of *choosing* (Derrida's italics)" (Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978], 293). Instead, Derrida suggests that we must conceive of the *différance* of the difference (293).

I. Introduction

The task of this paper is to address the theology of 2 Timothy.[2] To some extent the category of theology might permit us to escape the embeddedness of the author, for theology can focus upon ideas. And ideas do not depend for their cogency or validity solely on the person who speaks them. Furthermore, it is surprising how much agreement there is about the theological ideas in 2 Timothy. Given some variations, readers who think Paul wrote the letter and readers who think Paul did not tend to find similar theologies. For instance, it remarkable how much agreement there is in the recent commentaries of Luke Timothy Johnson, who thinks Paul wrote 2 Timothy, and Jouette Bassler, who thinks Paul did not.[3] Their readings are not, of course, identical. And where and why they agree and disagree illustrates what kind of forces are put in play with a decision about authorship. Nevertheless, we might imagine that focusing upon the ideas of the text could moderate or even circumvent the reading problems created by an assumption of pseudonymity. But this will not prove to be the case.

In fact, it is the opening thesis of this paper that 2 Timothy places real people and their relationships at the center of the gospel in such a way that any account of the theology of the gospel must surrender to the memory of the people who form the gospel. That is to say, the gospel in 2 Timothy is more a question of how one relates to certain persons than to certain ideas. And therefore an account of the theology of 2 Timothy can only be done by remembering the people inscribed in the text of 2 Timothy.

It is the second thesis of this paper that the observation of Jacques Derrida on the role of the author in governing our reading of this text makes it impossible to perfectly master the text of 2 Timothy, no matter what our assumptions about authorship. Three observations of Derrida are crucial here.

First, Derrida complicates the notion of the presence of the author in the author's text. He insists that the condition of speech, of language, is that of absence, absence of both the speaker and hearer, or writer and reader. Paul must, to some extent, betray himself in order to portray himself. For there to be a text, there must be distance between the text and its author.

---

[2] This paper is one of three scheduled for the 1997 session of the Theology of the Disputed Paulines Group. My assignment is to discuss the theology of 2 Timothy given an assumption of non-Pauline authorship.

[3] Luke Timothy Johnson, *Letter's to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (The New Testament in Context; Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996); Jouette Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996).

Thus, any attempt to hold 2 Timothy in a unified meaning by an appeal to Paul as author or to the single of author of the Pastorals or to even an unknown author of this one text is based on the faulty assumption of full presence. The text must escape any attempt by an author to control its meaning. However, contrary to Moore's reading of Derrida,[4] Derrida is not banishing the author from the text. Thus, Derrida can say, "By definition, a written signature implies the actual or empirical nonpresence of the signer."[5] But this is not grounds for pure forgetfulness, permission to engage in the pure play of reading without regard to the intentions of the author, for Derrida also insists that "the category of intention will not disappear."[6] What does disappear is purity, either the purity of the presence of the author or the purity of the absence of the author.

It becomes less clear what is it at stake exegetically in a decision about authorship. Derrida would insist that something is at stake, but he would also insist that we cannot simply return the text to an imagined mind of an author. The author cannot control in an absolute way how the text is read.

This leads to the second factor from Derrida that I want to put in place: the necessity of dissemination. The author of a text cannot supply a unity of meaning, a perfect center of consciousness, so as to prevent the polysemy of the text. "There is no experience of *pure* presence but only of chains of differential marks."[7] That is to say that no appeal to a non-Pauline author can fully prevent us from hearing, for example, Pauline texts on grace when we read 2 Tim. 1:9. Texts lead to other texts in an inexorable way that the intentions of the author cannot prevent.

This leads to the third observation of Derrida that needs to be put in place: the indeterminancy of context. "This essential absence of intending the actuality of utterance, this structural unconsciousness, if you like, prohibits any saturation of context. In order for context to be exhaustively determinable . . . conscious intention would at the very least have to be

---

[4] See note 1.

[5] Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 20.

[6] Derrida, *Limited Inc*, 18.

[7] Derrida, *Limited Inc*, 10. On the concept of dissemination see, for example, Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination,* trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

totally present and immediately transparent to itself and to others...."[8] And this cannot be the case. The act of reading involves the constant pairing of texts. We understand one text in terms of another. We let one text explain another. Derrida problematizes the rules for such citations. Who and what decides whether we read, for example, ἐπιφάνεια in 2 Tim. 1:10 in terms of fairly close linguistic parallels in the Pastorals or in terms of more general parallels in the larger Pauline corpus?

This indeterminancy of context tends to make all exegetical decisions unstable. But it does not make them perfectly unstable. The intentions of the author cannot be dismissed. Willful disregard of the intentions of the author borders on the immoral. But we show our loyalty to the intentions of the author primarily by which texts we choose for the context of our text. The instability of our text instigates the citation of other texts. This is not done simply out of frustration, our looking for a way to stabilize the instability of the text. The instability of the text initiates dissemination, the plurality of reading, the creation of context. The text we cite is itself unstable, and the choice of text is unstable. This instability of meaning is perhaps the most famous legacy of deconstruction. But the instability is not perfect. We are not free to be satisfied with it. We are not free of obligation to the intentions of the absent author.

All of this complicates the way I want to read 2 Timothy. If Paul did not write 2 Timothy, then we generally assume that 1 Timothy and Titus should provide the primary texts for reading 2 Timothy. In fact, I do not know of anyone who thinks Paul did not write 2 Timothy who does not also think that there is one author of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. In this case, this unknown person functions as the holder of the authorial intent of 2 Timothy. Thus, if I want to know what πιστός means in the phrase πιστὸς ὁ λόγος in 2 Tim. 2:11, I refer first of all to 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; and Titus 3:8 where the same phrase occurs, and only secondarily and nervously to usages of πιστός in the undisputed Pauline letters. My assumption is that the unknown common author of these texts should be the one to explain what this text means. This is part of the ethics of reading. Part of what I want to know when I read is what the author wanted to say. That is not, of course, all I want to know, but it is, I would argue, a necessary part.

Herein lies the aforementioned problem. The author is not in text nor is the author irrelevant to the text. On the one hand, I cannot call upon some kind of real presence of the real author to explain in person what the text means. And, even if I could, I would need a speaking presence. Thus, I would get more words, a new text, which in turn would need exegesis.

---

[8] Derrida, *Limited Inc*, 18.

Thus, all there is, in this context, is texts.[9] But, on the other hand, this absence does not absolve me of the need to decide. My obligation to the author requires the citing of texts. Thus, when we assume non-Pauline authorship of 2 Timothy, we have tended to read it in light of 1 Timothy and Titus. It is part of our attempt to hear the voice of the author.

In fact, 2 Timothy is rarely heard on its own. Readers have, of course, long noted the uniqueness of 2 Timothy in the Pastoral corpus. It lacks all the directives about church order; it seems to have a more polemical relationship with the opponents; it focuses on suffering; it highlights themes of leadership, of persecution, of death, of abandonment, and so on beyond what we see in 1 Timothy and Titus. Luke Timothy Johnson, it seems to me, has labored harder than anyone I know to read 2 Timothy as distinct from 1 Timothy and Titus.[10] As I noted above, Johnson holds to Pauline authorship. And this means that he is quite willing to cite texts from the undisputed letters of Paul whenever there is exegetical ambiguity. Furthermore, I cannot find anyone who holds to non-Pauline authorship who does not use 1 Timothy and Titus to clarify 2 Timothy. Recent examinations of the Pastorals tend to hold all three under a common theology. We assume that the unknown author of the Pastorals had the same theology when he was writing 2 Timothy that he had when he was writing 1 Timothy and Titus. This imagined person holds these three, at least somewhat distinct, texts under one point of view. This one point of view calls forth new texts, those of the modern authors on the theology of the Pastorals. This assumption of common point of view seems to be in force for Frances Young, Reggie Kidd, Philip Towner, Karoline Läger, Margaret Davies, and anyone else I can find, including me in my own work.[11] By writing a fourth text, our modern text,

---

[9] "*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte.*" Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology,* trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 158. Among Derrida's many comments about the impact of this phrase, see his illuminating remarks in Derrida, *Limited Inc,* 136.

[10] See, especially, Luke Timothy Johnson, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Knox Preaching Guides; Atlanta: John Knox, 1987) 7-10.

[11] Frances Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Epistles* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Reggie M. Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence in the Pastoral Epistles* (SBLDS 122; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); Philip H. Towner, *The Goal of our Instruction: The Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles* (JSNTS Monograph Series 34; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989); Karoline Läger, *Die Christologie der Pastoralbriefe* (Hamburger Theologische Studien 12; Münster, Lit Verlag, 1995); Margaret Davies, *The Pastoral Epistles* (New Testament

we can hold together these three ancient texts in one syntactical sequence.

As we noted above, there are formidable reasons for this procedure. First of all, our obligation to the author makes us seek other texts of the other. But the structure of dissemination produces these readings as well. It is difficult for any reader to isolate 2 Timothy from 1 Timothy and Titus, for there are too many lexical and syntactical echoes. The terminology and rhetoric of 2 Timothy remind almost everyone, including Johnson, of those of 1 Timothy and Titus. The language and syntax of 2 Timothy connects me, by the very structure of language to the language and syntax of 1 Timothy and Titus.

But this necessary force of dissemination is not without its costs. Can I simply let one text flow into another? Do I not have some obligation to the singularity of each text? Thus, what is the proper role of one text to explain another text by the same author? Does common authorship mean that fuller accounts of the law in Romans may be used to explain briefer statements in Galatians? How should I use the references to σωτήρ and ἐπιφάνεια in 1 Timothy and Titus to help me understand their occurrences in 2 Timothy? What do I do with the constant event of reading wherein I think, for instance, of Galatians and its accounts of grace when I read of grace in 2 Timothy, even though I do not think there is common authorship? Of necessity I must cite other texts; I must decide about context. But there is no way to cite without a certain sense of the arbitrary, without a certain sense of invasion.

Thus, in Derrida's account of text, a text is both personal and impersonal. A text is neither safe from the controlling intentions of the author nor safe in. This predicament is peculiarly intense in the instance of 2 Timothy. There are so many echoes of other texts in 2 Timothy that the forces of dissemination are in constant play. The possibility (can I say, probability) of pseudonymity further complicates our obligation to the intentions of the author and the power of the author to speak for the text. And finally, the tendency of 2 Timothy to do theology by way of reference to persons further destabilizes the meanings of the text.

This last point returns us to our opening thesis. 2 Timothy connects words of the gospel to people of the gospel. This "personalizing" of the gospel intensifies the instability of the text, for the text points in these persons to forces outside the text and beyond the control of the text. People do not fully submit to any one inscription. Paul's role in 2 Timothy is crucial

---

Guides; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (HUT 22; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1986).

and instructive here. Paul is not simply author. Paul inscribes himself in his own text. Or, in my opinion, an unknown author has Paul inscribe himself in his own text. For example, in 2 Timothy the figure of Paul functions rhetorically as a paradigm for Timothy (and, assuming non-Pauline authorship, for any Christian leader who reads the letter). I can find no recent author who does not read 2 Timothy this way.

Thus, Johnson remarks:

> This passage [2 Tim. 2:8-13] concludes the first major section of 2 Timothy. Paul has presented himself as a model not only of healthy teaching but, above all, of a willingness to suffer for the sake of the good news to which he was appointed as a preacher and teacher. In order to persuade his delegate [Timothy] to be strengthened in his own gift of service, Paul has brought forth many witnesses who also serve as examples of suffering for the sake of a goal, and whom Timothy can imitate: Onesiphorus, the soldier, the athlete, the farmer, and Jesus Christ himself.[12]

Bassler reads the inscribed Paul in 2 Timothy is much the same way. For instance,

> The concluding verses of the letter present a portrait of Paul that confirms the letter's fundamental theological messages about the need to suffer and the promise of eschatological reward. The apostle is in prison.... In all of this he models the behavior demanded of Timothy.[13]

Both Johnson and Bassler (and nearly everyone else) agree, Paul in 2 Timothy embodies the theology of the letter. Thus 2 Timothy resists any contention that theology can become impersonal, adequately contained in ideas. 2 Timothy suggests that Paul's ideas and Paul's own self cannot be disconnected.

The observations of Derrida, the puzzling dilemma of pseudonymity, and the inscribed presence of real people in the syntax of 2 Timothy, all put a peculiar pressure on the act of reading. These complications do not mean that a reading cannot and should not be attempted. But they do suggest that it is structurally impossible to manage a reading that can master this text. We shall try to track some of the implications of these factors in the readings which follow.

---

[12] Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates*, 69-70.

[13] Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 179.

II. Readings

If neither the author nor any text external to 2 Timothy can master it, can function as sufficient hermeneutical center so as to control and explain all disseminations, this does not mean that any place *in* the text of 2 Timothy can master it either. There is no word, phrase, sentence, or series of sentences in 2 Timothy that can explain the rest of the words, phrases, and sentences in the text. Thus, any entry into the text must have aspects of the arbitrary.[14] But this sense of arbitrary is necessary, since an entry of some kind must be made. If no ordering is proposed and no entry is made, then no reading can occur. With all this in mind, 2 Tim. 1:8 makes a wonderful point of entry, for it provides in compact form a surprisingly full configuration of the geography of the gospel in 2 Timothy, and it calls forth many of the problems of reading 2 Timothy. On the one hand, 2 Tim. 1:8-14 will function in this essay as the reading center, the hermeneutical anchor, of 2 Timothy. We shall hold the text through the syntax of these verses. On the other hand, through the processes of dissemination this text will unavoidably connect us to other texts. Thus, we shall begin with 2 Tim. 1:8.

> Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord (τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν) or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God.... (NRSV; 2 Tim. 1.8)

Läger calls this verse the "Motto des Schreiben," meaning that the issues of shame, witnessing, suffering, and power are perhaps the central theological themes of the letter.[15] A certain order is outlined here: witnessing to the gospel, which itself remembers suffering, leads to more suffering; suffering evokes the possibility of shame; and shame has the power to discourage our witnessing. This verse puts in place a peculiar theology of suffering, witnessing, shame, and salvation, which we shall see repeated throughout the letter. Furthermore, as the syntax of 1:8 shows, this sequence is directed both towards the verbal formulations of the gospel which inscribe the events of the gospel and towards any person who witnesses and endures this suffering. Thus, Timothy is enjoined to witness both to the gospel and

---

[14] I am reminded of Margaret M. Mitchell's comment in her paper "'Speaking of God as He was Able': Three Accounts of the Theology of 1 Timothy Compared (A Response to L.T. Johnson, J.L. Sumney, and B. Fiore)," (Paper delivered at the 1996 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, New Orleans, LA, Nov. 23-26, 1996). "Why have complementary concepts vying with one another for a single supremacy" (8). Mitchell argues persuasively for how difficult it is demonstrate a center. But it is not clear to me that we can eliminate all forces of syntactical dominance from a text or that we can assume that all or any terms are complementary.

[15] Läger, 66.

to the person Paul. In fact, the letter itself models this: it states in verbal form this gospel which must include suffering and it remembers and blesses Paul and anyone else who lives this suffering. As this verse suggests, theological ideas and theological persons are not, in 2 Timothy at least, to be separated.

In fact, the letter begins with the witness of persons. The mention of Timothy's mother and grandmother is fundamental to the theology of the letter. 1:3-7 combines a Pauline thanksgiving, an exhortation to "rekindle the gift of God that is within you," a theological affirmation about the power of the spirit (which is itself a face[16]), with a series of personal notes. These personal notes do not simply add warm feelings to true theological ideas. Persons and theologies are embedded in one another. Everything becomes haunted by personal presences and validations. In these verses (1:3-7) Paul is himself an example of serving with a clear conscience. Paul recalls his own ancestors, reminds Timothy of Timothy's mother and grandmother, and evokes his personal laying on of hands on Timothy. This is the language of family. Thus, it is fitting that Paul calls Timothy "beloved child" (τέκνον) in 1:2.

The persistent use of Paul as an example is not ancillary to the theology of the letter. It is the theology of the letter. To remember persons, their sufferings, their loyalties, their disloyalties, is a necessary moment in remembering their words. 2 Timothy does not want separate the person Paul from Paul's thoughts. Thus, to understand Paul's gospel we must study Paul himself.

If Paul wrote this letter, Paul is presenting himself as part of the gospel. If he did not, someone else is inscribing Paul as part of the gospel. It is not clear to me which scenario gives more import to the image. But, in either case, the reader is being called, in the words of 3:10f., to observe (παρακολουθέω) Paul's teaching, conduct, aim in life, and especially his persecutions. The exhortation in 3:10f. illustrates both the theology and the rhetorical procedure of the letter. It is a study of Paul, a remembrance. Of course, it is overstating things to say that Paul himself is being remembered here without some kind of qualification. It is more accurate to say that Paul's character, conduct, and experiences are being inscribed in a certain way. It is Paul textualized.

The linkages in 3:10-15 are typical of this Pauline inscription. In Paul we are to see good teaching, good conduct, and especially sufferings. This parallels and repeats the similar linkages in 1:8f. Furthermore, in both 1:8f. and in 3:11, Paul's sufferings and faithfulness are coupled with God's

---

[16] See below for the role of divine faces in 2 Timothy.

power. "The Lord rescued (ἐρρύσατο) me from all of them [the persecutions]" (3:11). Thus, perhaps the most forceful theological voice in 2 Timothy is that, while "all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (3:12), this is not a tragedy, for God is rescuing them all.

Thus, Paul's experiences are inscribed in 2 Timothy as embodying universal theological truths. In Paul, we can see who God is. Or at least, memories of Paul, inscribed in this particular way, embody the truths of God. And the truths have to do with suffering, shame, witnessing, power, and salvation.

The double accusative in 1:8 is, therefore, not accidental or casual: "Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner." To be ashamed of the gospel is to be ashamed of Paul, and vice-versa. Furthermore, the exhortation to "join in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God" underlines this connection between gospel and persons. To take on the sufferings that come with witnessing to the gospel connects one to God's power and to other persons. It is a joining. It is being in the family, with children, mothers, and grandmothers.

There is a wonderful exegetical debate created by the word συγκακοπαθέω (join in suffering). There is debate because it has no object. And I think it is wonderful because it necessarily evokes the problem of authorship. The question is: join with whom? Jesus, Paul, all who suffer? How should we decide? Perhaps a clear decision about authorship can direct us. If Paul wrote this, we have a certain permission to go to Rom. 8:17 or Phil. 3:10 wherein it is clear that we suffer with *Christ*. But if we think Paul did not write this and we do not want to use other texts by Paul to explain this text, we would tend to see Paul or even any Christian sufferer as the object. Bassler is adamant: "The suffering is suffering with Paul, not suffering with Christ...."[17] Such a reading is the direct result of confining one's explanatory texts to the 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. In these texts, Paul is the primary model; Jesus is the savior and revealer.

But there are problems with both of these readings if these readings are understood as mastering the ambiguity of this text. If Paul wrote it, what kind of explanatory force does this give to Rom. 8:17 and Phil. 3:10? Certainly they do not possess an absolute authority, as though Paul thinks only one thing about suffering and thinks it all the time. Furthermore, 2 Timothy itself clearly uses Paul as a model for suffering. And, in this scenario, we must assume that Paul also wrote the rest of this letter and perhaps even 1 Timothy and Titus. Should Romans and Philippians exert more force here than other verses in 2 Timothy? Should some kind of

---

[17] Bassler, 131.

decision about textual proximity guide us here? Or, if Paul did not write this letter, can we thereby exclude Rom. 8:17 and Phil. 3:10? The non-Pauline author of 2 Timothy constantly points us to Pauline letters. It seems to me that his pointing gives a certain exegetical force to parallel texts in the undisputed letters. The non-Pauline author wants them there. Furthermore, 2 Tim. 2:11 uses Jesus himself as a model that clearly includes suffering, even if the terminology is different. And, expanding our horizons a bit, 1 Tim. 6:13 evokes Jesus as the model of one giving the good confession in the face of persecution. Thus, I do not see how we can eliminate either the possibility that the object is Paul and not Jesus by appealing to the mind of Paul or the possibility that the object is Jesus and not Paul by appealing to the mind of a non-Paul author of the Pastorals.

We must therefore see συγκακοπαθέω as lexically unstable.[18] The word in this context wants an object which it lacks. And there is no way to place with the word an object by an absolute appeal to another text in such a way that the object is not, to some degree at least, suspect. Here we are recalling a key argument of this essay: 2 Timothy creates instability in its syntax by its echoing of other texts and its invocation of real people, and thus no appeal to the mind of any author or any other text can fully stabilize the meaning.

The ambiguity about the object does not, however, undermine the social aspect of the command. The συν in συγκακοπαθέω injects other real persons into Timothy's own experience of suffering. If Timothy is to suffer for the gospel, it can only be a suffering with.

A certain theological geography is constructed here. A place is inscribed with a peculiar set of forces and faces. It is a place of both ideas and people. Thus, it is neither a lonely place nor a place without theological content. Timothy is to remember Paul and his sufferings; he is to deny natural feelings of shame[19] over this suffering and Paul's imprisonment; and he is to witness himself to this gospel, witnessing not only with voice and good teaching but also with his own suffering.

This place, to which Timothy is called, is peopled by many faces. Some of those faces are positive ones--Paul, Onesiphorus, Timothy's mother and grandmother. Some of those faces are negative--Phygelus, Hermogenes,

---

[18] Johnson's translation nicely maintains this ambiguity: "take your share of suffering for the good news" (*Letters to Paul's Delegates*, 49). But this translation creates its own problems. It sounds as if Timothy is being asked to dip into a bucket of objective suffering, rather than join with real people. And the tension in the missing object of the verb is dissolved.

[19] Bassler, 130-131; 135-138.

and Alexander. The role of the negative appears to be essential. 2 Timothy is loaded with negative examples. Apparently, one decides one's theology by whom one chooses to follow. In the proper Christian place, in the place to which Timothy is called, live positive and negative faces. "In a large house there are utensils not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay" (2:20).

Thus, negative inscriptions of certain people is a necessary part of any description of the place of the gospel. The pedagogical function of the examples has been fully discussed in recent literature.[20] And, as 1:8 suggests, the examples all illustrate positive and negative responses to the possibility of shame. "Do not be ashamed" of the sufferings of the gospel or the sufferer. In 1:15 Paul declares that "all" in Asia have deserted him. This "all" is repeated 4:16. Inscribed here is the necessity of abandonment, of loneliness. Faithful people will be deserted by faithless people. But this loneliness and abandonment is paired with loyalty and presence (Onesiphorus in 1:16-18 and others in 4:9-21). Onesiphorus was "not ashamed of my chains." Rather, he acted as family. He sought Paul out; he refreshed him. He held onto the sufferer as though he were family. In fact, he creates family, as Paul does in the naming of Timothy as τέκνον and in the recalling of mothers and grandmothers. And this is not simply admirable behavior. The creation of family connects Onesiphorus to God's mercy (1:18).

In 2 Timothy Paul is himself the best example of how loyalty to the people of the gospel connects one to God's mercy.

> As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (2 Tim. 4:6-8)

Thus, the apostle Paul comes to occupy a curious position in the geography of the gospel. On the one hand, his behavior and his experience illustrate the theological truths of the gospel. He is a paradigm of faithfulness, of fidelity in suffering, of family affection (his letter to Timothy), of

---

[20] The best place to start is still with Benjamin Fiore, *The Function of the Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles* (AnBib 105; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1986). On the larger Greek and Roman tradition see Klaus Döring, *Exemplum Socratis: Studien zur Sokratesnachwirkung in der kynisch-stoischen Popularphilosophie der frühen Kaiserzeit und im frühen Christentum* (Hermes, ZKP 42; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1979) and Hildegard Cancik, *Untersuchungen zu Senecas epistulae morales* (Spudasmata 18; Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967).

confidence in God to preserve his tradition and to reward him personally. Paul shows both the necessity of suffering in the life of the Christian witness and the proper response to that suffering. On the other hand, Paul is more than an example in 2 Timothy. He becomes part of the content of the gospel. Fidelity to the gospel is not accomplished simply by imitating Paul; it is also done by remembering Paul, the person, the prisoner.

The double accusative in 1:8 becomes more curious and potent. We are approaching a hendiadys. "The testimony about our Lord" and Paul "his prisoner" are both being inscribed as indispensable forces in every Christian's life. To testify about Jesus must include testifying about the sufferings of Paul. We know your relationship to Jesus, to God's mercy, to the crown of righteousness, by your relationship to Paul, the prisoner.

The theology of 2 Timothy does not, however, consist simply in a plea for loyalty, but in a claim that this loyalty calls forth the presence of divine faces which behave in a particular way. For example, 2 Tim. 1:8 also names both "our Lord" and "God." The naming of God's face puts in place a set of forces which cannot be inscribed by way of Paul or Onesiphorus or Phygelus. In the relative clause beginning in 1:9 we have the most compact series of traditional-sounding theological statements in 2 Timothy (in fact, probably in all of the Pastoral epistles). It is clearly beyond the scope of this essay to trace all the theological themes outlined here. Fortunately, Läger, Davies, and Young have all done excellent jobs of summarizing these issues and connecting them to other motifs in the letters.[21] And it is remarkable, to me at least, how similarly they configure the theology of the Pastoral Epistles. Furthermore, they all detect in these verses the theology of the author of the Pastorals and not a tradition cited without understanding or force. Läger makes the most forceful argument for 1:9-10 coming from the hand of the author, noting how typical the vocabulary is of the Pastorals.[22]

The difference between Johnson's and Bassler's readings of the verses is instructive. Certain aspects of these two verses stand out for both of them. Both notice the peculiar combination of savior, epiphany, and the abolishing of death and bringing to light of life and immortality. For Bassler, these terms evoke the peculiar theology of the Pastoral epistles. She

---

[21] See n. 11 above.

[22] Läger, 67-69. Nevertheless, a pure distinction between tradition and the author is deeply problematic. Only if tradition is a pure thing unpolluted by use and the author is equally pure to himself, unable to speak, can an absolute barrier be constructed. Otherwise, forces of dissemination must have their place.

notes that "the author makes no direct reference to Jesus' atoning death."[23] But she suggests that "There is also an element of intervention, though this is oddly described as abolishing death--*presumably* (my italics) the *power* (her italics) of death, and *presumably* (my italics) accomplished through his own death and resurrection (see Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Cor. 15:35-37).[24] Bassler use of "presumably" demonstrates her exegetical dilemma. She needs other texts to explain this "odd" reference to the abolishing of death. For the larger configuration of these verses there are many parallels in the Pastorals. But, with this phrase, the Pastorals themselves do not help her much. Thus, she assumes, with some plausibility, that the author is remembering a theological dynamic from Paul's own letters. But, in fact, she cannot find a way to control this text. She is not willing to control the text by asserting the mind of Paul, since she does not think Paul wrote these verses. And the author she (and I) imagines does not help her much.

Johnson's dilemma is of a different sort.[25] He willingly cites Pauline texts which enable him to assimilate this text to acknowledged Pauline ideas about Jesus' death and resurrection. But Paul's undisputed letters do not put these terms together in the precise configuration we find here, and so he must, in a gentle way, reargue the question of authorship. Once Paul himself is reasserted as author, the assumption of some kind unity of thought permits other Pauline texts to control this text.

In seems to me that the insights of Derrida give permission to both of these readings and makes both of them suspect.

In any case, these verses read less to me as a clear theological program and more as an invocation of forces that frequent the place of the gospel. The relevance of these named forces depends of the reliability of the faces present. Jesus is the one who shapes the Christian place this way. And Jesus does not remain wholly other, beyond language or knowledge or predictability. He is inscribed in a particular way, namely, by way of the words power, salvation, grace, epiphany, death, life, and so on. Again, I think that recent scholars who assume non-Pauline authorship have done persuasive jobs of configuring these terms into a coherent theology. And I do not want to rehearse that here.[26] As they have shown, if we connect these verses to others in 2 Timothy and further to others in 1 Timothy and Titus, and if we

---

[23] Bassler, 132.

[24] Bassler, 133.

[25] Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates,* 54-55.

[26] I think Läger, Davies, and Young have all traced these terms effectively.

assume one author with one theology, we can hold these verses with an epiphany Christology and theology of God the savior.

But, as Derrida has shown, both the faces in the text and the terms in the text destabilize the meaning of the text. The words power, grace, life, salvation connect us inescapably to other texts. A world of literature opens before us. When do we stop reading? And the face of Jesus also forces other texts into this text. Jesus cannot fully submit to this language or to any language. While we cannot speak of Jesus outside of language, to say the name Jesus is to remember the inadequacy of any language about him or from him. This is true of any human named in any text. Any language about a person betrays, at least in part, the otherness of the person. Furthermore, in some sense at least, the person Jesus connects one inscription of Jesus to another. And this means that Johnson's willingness to read inscriptions of Jesus' presence here by way of inscriptions elsewhere is hard to resist, especially when we have the double connection of the names of Jesus and Paul. Thus, both the face of Jesus and the words of the text necessarily connect this text to other texts in ways that cannot be fully controlled.

Since the author is constructing his theology by way of persons, we must account for the place of the gospel by, at least, all the inscriptions of each person in 2 Timothy. Apposite here is 2:11-13. Jesus, who comes to the place of loyalty to the witness of Christ and to Paul his prisoner with saving presence, is inscribed in 2:11-13 with other forces. Here Paul is invoking his own loyalty--obviously, not to himself, as he enjoins Timothy, but to the story of Jesus. He remembers Jesus, the gospel "for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal" (2:9). Paul in 2:8-10 embodies the loyalty called for by Timothy in 1:8. Furthermore, when one comes to this place of loyalty to the gospel and its suffering, one finds in that very place the power of God for salvation (2:10). The same geography is put in place.

But salvation is not an objective force; it belongs to the person of Jesus. Therefore, just as in 1:8-10 the name God called forth a description of the powers of God, in 2:10 the name Jesus calls forth a description of the powers of Jesus (2:11-13). The theology here is a theology of place defined by the persons who are present there. Thus, because of the character of the person Jesus--

> If we have died with him, we shall also live with him;
> if we endure, we will also reign with him;
> if we deny him, he will deny us;
> if we are faithless, he will remain faithful,
> for he cannot deny himself. (2:11-13)

Jesus is πιστός. Perhaps this sense of reliability is the key to the geography

of the gospel. We can rely on certain behavior from certain faces, especially the divine ones.

We can, at this point, suggest that a consistent theology of place is established in 2 Timothy. In fact, a consistent order of events also appears. In each case, the gospel is described as including stories of suffering. This witnessing to suffering leads to suffering for oneself. When this scenario occurs, one is promised the presence of God's saving powers. If we die, we shall live. If we endure [suffering], we will reign. These promises are true because of the presence and character of Jesus. But if we deny, we are no longer in the place of the gospel, the place of salvation, and Jesus will deny us. Thus, the theology of 2 Timothy is ordered by interpersonal actions. If we are faithful to the persons Jesus and Paul, Jesus and God act to save us.

Thus, it is no surprise that the account of the forces of God and Jesus in 1:9-10 is immediately connected to the loyal witnessing of Paul in 1:11: "For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher." This witnessing leads to Paul's own suffering: "and for this reason I suffer as I do" (1:12a). This inscription of Paul's witnessing and resultant suffering is then restated in an echo of the opening call to Timothy not to be ashamed: "But I am not ashamed" (1:12b). And, just as the exhortation to Timothy in 1:8 not to be ashamed is built upon trust in God and Jesus to be present with salvation (1:9-10), Paul's lack of shame is built upon this same trust in the presence of God (and/or Jesus): "for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him" (1:12c). Into this scene of loyalty and faithfulness by Paul, God, and Jesus, Timothy is then called by two imperatives echoing the one in 1:8: "Hold to the standard..." (1:13) and "Guard the good treasure..." (1:14). And this call to Timothy to come to this place includes inscriptions of the presence of Jesus (1:13) and the powers of the Holy Spirit (1:14). This crowded place is in turn made more crowded by the "all in Asia," including Phygelus and Hermogenes, who have been disloyal, and Onesiphorus, who models loyalty (1:15-18).

This geography of persons is, I would claim, the theology of 2 Timothy. Theology is a set of human and divine faces which gather at the place of the gospel. In fact, it is the gathering of these particular faces that makes the place the gospel place. And theology becomes forms of faithfulness and faithlessness among the faces.

III. Conclusion

What happens to this geography of place if all the presences are false presences? Can this place exist if the people named here are fictitious? Can Paul be present if he does not put himself there?

Derrida's work on the signature is helpful here.[27] He argues that all signing must be, in some sense, false. A signature is, in part, a witness to an absence. Thus, Paul's signature, even if signed by Paul himself, cannot guarantee 2 Timothy. In this sense, all signing is pseudonymous. All reading is of pseudepigraphies. All presences are false presences. And Paul cannot be present whether he inscribes himself or someone else inscribes him. Thus, as a matter of principle, the act of pseudepigraphy accomplished in 2 Timothy does not negate the force of the text. It may witness in a poignant way to problem of absence, but this is a problem that haunts all texts.

But a signature is, in part, also a witness to traces of a real person. We are not free to forget and abuse. Thus, something is at stake in a signing. There is the question of ethics. We must inscribe fairly. All inscription must, because of the structure of language, misrepresent; but not all misrepresentation is the same. At some point, misrepresentation becomes too severe and undoes the force of the text. This is true whether Paul or someone else does it. What if Paul is deceived about himself? What if he is inscribing some sort of misrepresentation of his true self and his true feelings in 2 Timothy? To some degree, he must be doing all these things if he is a human taking recourse to language or even to thought. But this deception is not merely a structural necessity; it is moral problem. At what point does flawed portrayal become betrayal?

I can see no real structural difference if Paul is not the author. The question is one of the adequacy of the inscription of the person to the person. The real question is not who wrote 2 Timothy, but whether 2 Timothy is fair to Paul.

In the same way, the potency of the theology of 2 Timothy is not resolved with the question of authorship. Rather, the question is to what extent the inscriptions of Jesus and God in 2 Timothy are faithful to Jesus and God.

2 Timothy makes the point well. The question of the truth of theology is its truth about persons and presences. The place of gospel is configured less by concepts and more by people. And the question raised by 2 Timothy is, Are you remembering Paul well?

---

[27] See, especially, Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit, trans. D. Wood, J.P. Leavy, Jr., I. McLeod (Meridian, Crossing Aesthetics; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

Toward a Theology of 2 Timothy — from a Pauline Perspective

Gordon D. Fee

The task of this paper is to present the theology of 2 Timothy, both explicit and implied, on the assumption that the letter was written by Paul.[1] In order to do that, some preliminary methodological matters first need to be set forth, including an overview of the assumed rhetorical situation of the letter and how that in turn may be assumed to affect its theological emphases.

1. Some Methodological Concerns

It may be taken as a common starting point, no matter what view of authorship one holds, that 2 Timothy is not intentionally theological, in the sense that theology as such is not its primary reason for being. Nonetheless, the presupposed rhetorical situation of the letter shows deep concern for continuing loyalty to the apostle and his gospel. One may, therefore, legitimately examine the clues throughout the letter which both explicitly and more incidentally reveal the theological content of the gospel to which Timothy and the church are being urged to be loyal.[2]

Significantly, these clues emerge precisely at those places where Paul either (1) urges Timothy — and thus the church through Timothy — to "hang in there" as his faithful companion in the gospel by "joining with

[1]For this reason, whatever one means in this case by "authorship," I intend to use the name "Paul" as subject of my sentences throughout, rather than a more neutral (but clumsier) circumlocution like, "the writer" or "the Paul of this letter." By this usage I mean nothing more than that in this paper the presupposed rhetorical situation of the letter is assumed to reflect an actual historical situation of the apostle during his lifetime. While I hold this to be historically more probable than otherwise, there is no attempt to demonstrate that here. At best, I hope to show that one can make a good deal of sense of the letter as a document from early Christian history under this assumption.

[2]I should point out that the paper reflects of my own working through the text of 2 Timothy again, with almost no consultation with the secondary literature (including my own commentary!) in the first go around, which is essentially reproduced here. There are two reasons for this procedure: first, it gave me the opportunity to have a fresh encounter with the letter on its own terms; second, all of the literature to a piece that speaks to this question (the theology of 2 Timothy) does so *only* in the context of "the theology of the Pastoral Epistles"; and in this case that proves disastrous. Even in such a helpful (and corrective) study as Frances Young's *The Theology of the Pastoral Epistles* (Cambridge, 1994), much of what is there presented is almost unrecognizable as the theology of 2 Timothy. For example, no one who had read her initial theological chapter (on "theology and ethics") and then read 2 Timothy could imagine that her study were based on a careful reading of our letter, since what is presented, in reality the ethics of 1 Timothy and Titus, could not possibly have been derived from 2 Timothy on its own. Likewise with her section "God as Saviour," which would look quite differently had she started with 2 Timothy, rather than amalgamating its theology into that of 1 Timothy.

me in suffering" (1:8; 2:3),[3] or (2) urges faithfulness vis-à-vis some "opponents"[4] who are not loyal to Paul and his gospel, who themselves have "deviated[5] concerning the truth," and who bid fair to "overturn[6] the faith of some." Therefore, it is of some importance for us to try to establish the rhetorical situation in which these various clues emerge, if we are going to read its theology in light of its assumed contingencies.

I should also offer a definition of "theology," since in this seminar and its predecessor "theology" has become an "accordion" word, depending on how much air one pumps into or out of it. I take our task not to be a sociological or rhetorical one, but a *theological* one in the sense that biblical theology by its very nature presupposes a narrative in which *God* is the protagonist, *people* the agonists, and *redemption* the goal of plot resolution. All other theological concerns, as I perceive them, find their meaning in light of these narrative realities. My concern within this framework is to determine and analyze the *coherent nature* of Paul's (as assumed "author" of 2 Timothy) theological explication of the narrative of salvation, as that finds expression in the *contingencies* of this letter.

Finally, since my task is to read the theology of this letter in the light of Pauline theology as reflected elsewhere in the corpus, I should at least indicate what I perceive to be the essentials of that theology. And since it is arguably impossible to understand Paul without recognizing *eschatology* as the essential framework of all his theological thinking, while *salvation in Christ* is the essential concern within that framework, at issue is the nature of the "constants" in Paul's understanding of "salvation in Christ" — even if they do not each find expression in every soteriological moment in his letters. Therefore, I have chosen to outline my understanding of those constants in Part 4 of this paper, and then to use them as a convenient framework for analyzing the theology of this letter.[7]

---

[3]Thus I take the *συψκακοπάθησον* to mean "join with me" rather than "join with Christ" or "with Christ and me" — despite the *συν* compounds in 2:11–12, which almost certainly intend the latter.

[4]See 2:25, *τοὺς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους* (NT hapax), and 3:8; 4:15, where a form of *ἀνθίστημι* occurs (a Pauline word, but unique to 2 Timothy in the PE).

[5]See 2:18, *ἠστόχησαν* (a PE word; see 1 Tim 1:6; 6:21); cf. 1:15; 4:4, where *ἀποστρέφω* appears with reference to those within the church who have followed the "opponents of the truth."

[6]See 2:18, *ἀνατρέπουσιν* (cf. Titus 1:11).

[7]By adopting this methodology, of course, I lay myself wide open to the charge of reading the theology of 2 Timothy through a grid that may be foreign to the letter itself. But what happened to me in fact was quite the opposite. It was after I had finished writing parts 2 and 3 of the paper, especially part 3, that I saw the Pauline "constants" were precisely those that had to be addressed in any proper theological analysis of the gospel in 2 Timothy. That one has to analyze the gospel in order to do its theology properly is what emerged out of writing parts 2 and 3. That all of this happened during the writing of the paper will be evident to any who might chance to read both the abstract and the paper. In the strange, but necessary, workings of the SBL, abstracts are required to be in hand three months before the paper; and I therefore submitted as an abstract of what I *expected* to do, which changed some in the course of things.

2. The Assumed Rhetorical Situation

Read on its own terms, 2 Timothy was written from prison[8] with the primary purpose of urging Timothy to join Paul posthaste (4:9, 21), presumably in Rome,[9] and to bring Mark and some personal items along with him (4:11, 13) when he comes.[10] Timothy is to be replaced by Tychicus, the presumed bearer of the letter (4:12). The reason for haste is the onset of winter (4:21) and the fact that the preliminary hearing has already taken place (4:16).

But the letter body is very little about this matter, and very much an appeal to Timothy to remain loyal to Paul and his gospel, and to do so by embracing suffering and hardship, in light of (1) the defection of so many (1:15), (2) the present opposition, which even though its leadership had been previously excommunicated, continues to spread its teachings like gangrene in the church (2:18; cf. 1 Tim 1:19–20),[11] and (3) Paul's own urgencies in light of his expected execution (4:6–8).

At the same time, however, although in a more indirect way, this appeal to loyalty to Paul and his gospel is also intended for the church. This is evidenced first of all by the double "grace" at the end (4:22; "the Lord be with your [sing.] spirit; grace be with you all [plural]"), and further by: (a) the instruction in 2:2 that what has been entrusted to him Timothy is to entrust to others who are reliable and qualified to continue the teaching, and (b) the plaintive note in 2:18 that the "faith of some is being overturned" by the false teachers, matched (c) by the stronger note in 4:3–4 that many within the church are quite pleased to have it this way. As with all the other Pauline letters, including Philemon, this letter was expected to be read publicly in the church(es), in this case apparently as a simultaneous final affirmation of Timothy (and therefore also of

---

[8]See 1:8; 4:16, and esp. 2:9, where the reference to his suffering "even to the point of being chained like a common criminal" (*κακοῦργος*, used elsewhere to refer to those who commit especially serious crimes; cf. Luke 23:32ff.) seems especially repugnant to him.

[9]Assuming that the *πρώτη ἀπολογία* of 4:16 was a *prima actio*, a preliminary hearing before the emperor or another magistrate, roughly comparable in purpose to a grand jury hearing, and that the "lion's mouth" in v. 17 (echoing Ps 22:13) is Nero, even if he was not personally present.

[10]That Timothy is to pick up these items in Troas implies a journey from Ephesus by way of Troas, the Egnatian Way, across the Adriatic and on to Rome.

[11]A word about the perceived relationship between 1 and 2 Timothy. The rhetorical situation of 1 Timothy assumes Paul to be free, having recently left Timothy in Ephesus with the specific charge to stop false teaching (apparently led by some elders in the church[es]) while he himself went on to Macedonia. Before he left he had excommunicated Hymenaeus and Alexander. That the excommunication failed to "take" in the case of Hymenaeus is assumed in the new rhetorical situation of 2 Timothy. Alexander appears to have gone on to Troas, where he is most likely in part responsible for Paul's arrest in that city (4:14–15, hence the warning for Timothy to watch out for him as he goes through Troas), while Hymenaeus is now teamed up with a Philetus. One may assume these two at least to be included in the descriptions of those who make their way into the homes of "sin-laden women" in 3:5–9, who are thus the imposters of 3:13 who deceive even as they are themselves deceived.

Tychicus) and appeal to their loyalty to his gospel.

Everything in the letter presupposes this situation, starting with the thanksgiving (1:3–5), with its reminder that both Paul and Timothy have been loyal to their own pasts and that true[12] "faith" (= faith-fulness) really does reside in Timothy,[13] and concluding with the final charge (4:1–5), for which Paul himself serves as paradigm (vv. 6–8); and, of course, it continues on into the personal matters and instructions of 4:10–18.[14] But it is especially pronounced in the several appeals to loyalty that make up the body of the letter. The first of these, with which the letter begins (1:6–14), sets the stage for the whole. It is resumed in 2:1–13,[15] after a preliminary setting forth of a positive paradigm (Onesiphorus, 1:16–18) in light of negative ones (1:15). The second appeal (2:14–3:9), while made to Timothy, is specifically directed toward the church and set in the context of the opposition to Paul's gospel (2:14–3:9), while the final one (3:10–17) returns to the paradigmatic nature of Paul's ministry in light of these opponents, before giving Timothy his final charge (4:1–5).

Of these three (or four)[16] appeals to loyalty, the two parts of the first one (1:6–14 and 2:1–13) are the more important theologically, not only because they come first and set the course for the whole, but in both cases they are bolstered by specific references to the content of Paul's gospel. Indeed, both the positioning and the (apparently) careful structuring of 1:6–14 make it especially important for our purposes. The paragraph as a whole is framed chiastically, first by the appeal to Timothy's experience of the Spirit (vv. 6–7 and 14), and then by Paul's own loyalty in the midst of his present hardship and suffering (vv. 8 and 11–13), so that the confessional theologoumenon of vv. 9–10 serves as the centerpiece. The theological grist behind the resumed appeal appears at the end in 2:8–10 and 11–13.

---

[12]Gk *ἀνυποκρίτου*, a word that is often pointed out as betraying the ultimately "un-Pauline" character of "faith" in the PE. But is not this objection the clear evidence of finding what one is looking for? How is it "un-Pauline" to speak of "genuine faith" when the so-called "real Paul" speaks exactly this way of "love" (Rom 12:9)? Given that the "faith of some" is being overturned, could it not be argued to be typically Pauline that in the thanksgiving he should remind Timothy of the "genuineness" of his own "faith-fulness" toward Christ Jesus?

[13]It might be noted in passing how Pauline it is to thank God in his thanksgiving periods for the very matter(s) that are also at stake in the letter.

[14]In very much the same way as Philippians, 2 Timothy may be described as a combination of a letter of friendship and of moral exhortation. Among other things, "friends" have "enemies" in common, and in letters share about each other's personal affairs, while letters of moral exhortation appealed to exemplary paradigms (cf. Phil 3:4–14, 15–16, 17; 4:9 with 2 Tim 1:11–12; 3:10–12; 4:6–8 [esp. v. 8!]). On these matters, see Fee, *Philippians* (pp. 1–14).

[15]The basic reasons for seeing 2:1–13 as the *resumption* of the appeal begun in 1:6 are that (a) both begin with the imperative *συγκακοπάθησον* (1:8; 2:3), (b) both appeal to Timothy's own loyalty and endurance (in 2:14 the direction clearly changes toward the church), and (c) both focus on the gospel itself.

[16]Three, if one assumes as I do, that 2:1–13 belongs with 1:6–14 as its resumption. Otherwise, there are four (1:6–14; 2:1–13; 2:14–3:9; 3:10–17), plus the final charge in 4:1–5.

What is expressed explicitly in these two passages, therefore, serves as the primary source for our inquiry. But we are also served by a score of incidental moments throughout the rest of the letter, since for Paul participation in the Story (the gospel) through the experience of grace also involves one in getting the story right, not to mention living out the story in keeping with God's own gracious character. And 2 Timothy fully fits these concerns.

We should note finally that there is an inherent uniqueness to this rhetorical situation that will predetermine its special theological emphases. That is, even though Paul has previously written a letter while "in chains" (see Phil 1:7, 13–18; cf. 2 Tim 2:9), in that case he clearly expected to be released (Phil 2:24, "I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon"). But here he just as clearly expects to be executed (4:6–8). It should not surprise one, therefore, that on the one hand the letter breathes Paul's characteristic christocentricity, while on the other hand it focuses on the eschatological "not yet" (but without losing the eschatological "already").

3. Paul's Gospel (the Narrative)

The word "gospel" occurs three times in 2 Timothy (1:8, 10; 2:8),[17] in the first two instances as the framing words for the confessional moment that spells out its content, and in the second in the identifying prepositional phrase, "according to my gospel." Elsewhere in the letter the gospel is designated by the companion (also Pauline) words, "truth" and "word,"[18] the former always, as elsewhere in Paul, in the context of controversy.

For the sake of convenience, the two primary texts are given here:[19]

> *God, . . . saved us and called us unto a holy calling,*[20] *not in keeping with our works but in keeping with his own purpose and grace, which was given to us by/in Christ Jesus, before the ages began, but was*

---

[17]A little more frequently in ratio than in Romans, where it occurs nine times.

[18]See 2:15, 18, 25; 3:7, 8; 4:4 for ἀληθεία; see 2:9, 15; 4:2 for λόγος as referring to the message of the gospel (the combined phrase ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀληθείας occurs in 2:15); cf. 2:17 for ὁ λόγος αὐτῶν as the "message" of the false teaching. For Pauline usage see, inter alia, esp. Gal 2:5 and 14 ("the truth of the gospel") and Phil 1:14 and 2:14 ("the word [of life]" = the message of the gospel).

[19]It should be noted that these kinds of semi-creedal soteriological sentences occur on a regular basis throughout the corpus. In *God's Empowering Presence* (p. 48 n. 39) I have isolated about 25 of these kinds of sentences in Paul, some of which are more "creedal" in appearance than others, and the most of which are "Trinitarian" in composition. What is perhaps most remarkable about these various passages is that, apart from Gal 4:4–6 and its companion in Rom 8:15–18, none of them is even remotely similar to the others. Which in turn has been part of the reason for assuming that many of them existed in a pre-Pauline form that Paul has taken over and adapted. One would hardly deny this as a valid historical option, but it also seems to presuppose an unusually "static" Paul, who as one of the early church's premier theologians is not capable of such creedal expressions himself!

[20]I take the dative κλήσει ἁγίᾳ to be a dative of interest (so REB, NIV) rather than manner (NRSV). In either case, the concern surely is with the people who are called, in terms of what they are called unto, rather than the nature of God's call as such.

manifested in the present time with the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who broke death's back and brought to light life and immortality through the gospel.

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel; . . . but the message from God is not bound; therefore, I endure all things for the sake of the elect, in order that they might obtain the salvation which is by/in Christ Jesus [and] accompanied with eternal glory.

Faithful is the saying:

For if we have died with him, we shall also live with him;
if we endure, we shall also reign with him
If we deny him, he will deny us,
if we are faithless, he remains faithful;
for he cannot deny himself.

Here are all the primary theological components of Paul's gospel: (1) eschatological salvation,[21] that is (2) brought about by the divine protagonist (God) through the death and resurrection of Christ, (3) the goal of which is a people for God's name (the "elect") who live in keeping with his own (holy) character, and which (4) is a present reality destined for a final glorious consummation. Indeed, the only missing element in the sentences themselves is the work of the Spirit, and that is presupposed in both 1:6–7 and 8. In vv. 6–7 Timothy is urged to "fan into flame the gift of the Spirit," whom God gave "us" to effect "power, love, and a wise head," and in v. 8 to "join in the suffering according to the [prior mentioned] power of God." The rest of this paper will attempt to unpack this theology as it emerges both in these sentences and throughout the letter.

4. Salvation in Christ

One of the more significant aspects of Pauline theology is the rich variety of metaphors and images he uses to express the heart of his gospel, "salvation in Christ." There are indeed "constants" within his understanding of the gospel:

(a) salvation is a divine activity, initiated and carried out by God the Father,[22]

---

[21]On the matter of eschatological salvation lying at the heart of the theology of the PE, see esp. Phil Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction* (JSNTS 34; Sheffield Academic Press, 1989) 75–119.

[22]In light of the thoroughgoing nature of this reality in Paul, I was not just a little taken aback by Young's statement (*Theology*, 50–51) that "the use of 'Saviour' to characterise God and his activity is one of the distinctive features of these short texts — it is not particularly Pauline." I assume by this that she is referring to the title "Savior" as applied to God, since in fact, apart from a rare instance such as in Gal 1:4, God is regularly the express or implied (as in the divine passives) subject of all of Paul's "saving verbs." Thus, as 1 Cor 8:6 makes clear, the proper prepositions for God's activity are ἐκ and εἰς, whereas διά (or ἐν) are invariably used for Christ. This reality should have made us wonder not that *God* is called "Savior" in the PE, but that *Christ* is called "Savior" by Paul in Phil 3:20, which, of course, as in 2 Tim 1:10 seems to be set directly over against the emperor cult.

(b) effected through the death of Christ, who is Son and Lord, and
(c) made effectual by the gift of the Spirit,
(d) as an act of pure grace,
(e) and thus entered and sustained by trusting Christ; moreover, it is
(f) an eschatological reality that is both "already" and "not yet";
(g) its primary goal is a people for God's name,
(h) which involves "turning away from wickedness and doing good"

But these constants are expressed in so many different ways as to defy all attempts to narrow the elusive "center" down to one metaphor or way of speaking.[23] What should be clear to all is that the "form" and "imagery" his various soteriological statements take are predicated almost altogether on either (1) the aspect of the *human predicament* from which God is saving his people, or (2) the *nature of the error* that he perceives his gospel as standing in opposition to.

Thus the metaphor of "justification by faith" over against "works of law" appears only in the three letters (Galatians, Romans, Philippians) where some form of Judaizing (that is, imposing Jewish boundary markers on Gentile believers) is at issue; the metaphor of "adoption" in those places (Romans and Galatians) where at issue is "who are the true 'children' of Abraham, hence of God," who are thus no longer "enslaved" to the Torah; the reality of "turning from idols to the living and true God, whose Son Jesus rescues us from the coming wrath" (1 Thess 1:9–10) is played back to some early Gentile converts soon after their conversion and in the context of increasing opposition and suffering.

And so it goes throughout the corpus. The theological constants are always in place, although often emerging only in implicit ways. But the lack of *explicit* emphasis on any one, or several, of them does not make a letter therewith less Pauline.[24] And so it is with the soteriological priorities in 2 Timothy, which are christological in emphasis, eschatological in focus, and ethical in concern. These emphases are the direct result of the concern for loyalty to Paul's gospel — and therefore

---

[23]It is this fluidity of form, usage, and imagery that should cause us to distinguish more carefully between the terms "unPauline" and "non-Pauline." I use the former to refer to something that is is uncharacteristic of the Paul we tend to think we know thoroughly from the rather scanty evidence of a few letters; "non-Pauline" refers to that which seems to lie outside Paul's linguistic and conceptual framework altogether.

Moreover, in reconstructing Pauline theology one must be especially cautious about "silence" and/or "frequency of mention." Who around our table, I wonder, would believe that they celebrated the Lord's Supper in the Pauline churches, had the Corinthians not been messing it up? And the "unPauline" ("non-Pauline"?) sentiments expressed in Phil 4:8 should embarrass any self-respecting Paulinist, and would surely damn any suspect letter like this one had they occurred here.

[24]So, e.g., the absence of mention of God's grace in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians (appearing primarily only in the salutation and final blessing) does not make them unPauline. Indeed, the combination of "grace" (in the form of the verb χαρίζομαι; the only occurrence of χάρις is in 1:7, where it is not at all clear that it refers to God's act of "saving grace") and "believing [as a verb] in Christ" emerges only once in Philippians — in 1:29, in a rather off-handed way that is the certain evidence for its presuppositional nature. But one could hardly consider it an "emphasis" in this letter.

endurance — in the face of error, combined with his own expectation that the end of the "already" is near at hand for him, and is expected before the final eschatological denouement. Yet most of the other "constants" characteristically find expression throughout the letter in some form or another. Thus we turn to these "constants" as they emerge in our letter.

(a) Salvation as God's activity. Above all else, the eternal God stands at the beginning and end of everything; God is the initiator of salvation, as well as its sustainer and final goal. Thus God is the one who "saved us" by "calling us" to himself (1:9), and did so in the present time (*νῦν*) on the basis of the "grace [God has] given[25] in Christ Jesus." Such salvation also expresses God's own purpose (*πρόθεσις*) that is rooted in God "before the ages began."[26] Furthermore, it has found prior expression in the "God-breathed Scriptures" of Israel, knowledge of which is able to make one wise with regard to "the salvation that comes through faith in Christ Jesus" (3:15–16). And even when those who have wandered away come to repentance, that too has been given by God (2:25).

God is thus the ultimate reality of all human life, especially Christian life, so that even though Timothy is "the Lord's (= Christ) servant" (2:24), ultimately he must present himself before God (2:15; cf. 1:3) — just as those being warned regarding error must consider themselves as being called into account by God himself (2:14). For this reason the final doxology is probably also directed toward God, as the one worthy of "glory unto the ages of ages" (4:18), even though its immediate antecedent, "the Lord," refers to Christ.[27] In this letter, therefore, the gospel is God's story, whatever else. God is its divine protagonist, who, full of grace, purposed life for the people he has called to participate in the story.

(b) Effected by Christ. If God stands at the beginning and end of things, the key player in the divine drama is Christ, whom God has "given" to effect eschatological salvation. Everything that God has done — or does — is through Christ Jesus. Our letter is thus thoroughly christocentric, in a thoroughly Pauline way, demonstrated not only by the high frequency of the name "Christ Jesus" (13x) and of the title "Lord" (16x, all but one of which refers to Christ), but also by the (again Pauline) idiom *ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* ("which is by/in Christ Jesus"). Every significant aspect of Christian life is made available *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*

---

[25]Assuming as always that the passive *δοθεῖσαν* is a "divine passive" (cf. *ἐγηγερμένον* in 2:8).

[26]I thus take the combination *πρόθεσιν καὶ χάριν τὴν δοσεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων* to be chiastic: the grace (b) given us in Christ Jesus (b′) is also in keeping with God's purpose (a) inherent in God before the ages began (a′). Such a view, of course, is thoroughly Pauline, who understands the present "revelation" of Christ to be something "hidden in God" from *πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων* (1 Cor 2:6–7; cf. Col 1:26).

[27]Indeed, the only exception to the "rule" that God is the subject of all the saving verbs and activities in this letter is the *σώσει εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπουράνιον* of 4:18, where Christ, who "will rescue" Paul from "every evil deed" (= from any real power of evil to destroy me), will also thus "save" him "for his heavenly kingdom." And here the structure of the sentence calls forth this exception.

(salvation [2:10]; the promise of life [1:1]; grace [2:1; cf. 1:9]; faith [1:13; 2:15]; love [1:13]).[28]

Furthermore, the combination that one finds elsewhere of "high christology," in terms of who Christ is, and "functional subordination," in terms of his saving work, is likewise present here, in the same kind of explicit/implicit ways.

(1) The high christology is found in the standard "subtle" ways, such as in the salutation, where one preposition serves to designate "God the father" and "our Lord Jesus Christ" as the coordinate source of "grace, mercy, and peace."[29] It is also found especially in this letter by the (very Pauline) use of κύριος language, which is deeply rooted in the LXX, and which thus transfers to Christ[30] what originally referred to God (κύριος = Adonai = Yahweh). This occurs in three ways: (a) in the septuagintal echoes in such phrases as "servant of the Lord" (2:24)[31]; "call upon the name of the Lord" (2:22)[32]; "the Lord rescued me" (3:11; cf. 4:17–18)[33]; and "the Lord . . . the righteous judge" (4:8)[34]; (b) in the explicit citations of the LXX in 2:19 ("the Lord knows those who are his" [Num 16:5]; let "every one who names the Lord's name" [cf. Isa 26:13] depart from evil)[35]; and (c) in the intertextual use of Psalm 22 (21, LXX) in 4:17–18, where "the Lord" who stood with Paul and strengthened him during his

---

[28]The idiom also occurs twice in 1 Timothy (1:14; 3:13); for its occurrence elsewhere in Paul see Rom 3:24 ("redemption"); 8:39 ("love"); Gal 3:21 ("faith"). The idiom has been criticized as reflecting a "non-Pauline" element in the PE (see e.g., Easton, *Pastoral Epistles*, 12). The methodological question that seems never to be raised by those who make these kinds of assertions is "how many times must something occur in the Pauline letters before it is considered Pauline"?

[29]See also the similar phenomenon in 4:1, where the emphasis is even more christological: "I charge you ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ," which is then elaborated altogether in terms of Christ: "who is going to judge the living and the dead, and [in the light of] his appearing and his kingdom."

[30]But see Young (*Theology*, 59–61) to the contrary, who notes that the first two occurrences (1:1 and 8) clearly refer to Christ, but then sees more ambivalence throughout the rest of the letter. But this does not seem to take seriously enough what good narratology should teach us about how an author expects his/her readers to pick up clues of meaning from first occurrences, as determining how key words will be used throughout a document.

[31]See inter alia 2 Kgs 18:12 (Moses); Josh 24:30 (Joshua); Jonah 1:9; Ezek 34:23 (David).

[32]This phrase, or variations thereof, occurs over 50 times in the LXX; in the Pauline corpus, cf. 1 Cor 1:2; Rom 10:13-14.

[33]The combination of a form of ῥύεσθαι with με occurs at least 25 times in the Psalter, not counting the many instances of "rescue my soul." As noted below, that this is a septuagintalism is made certain by 4:17–18, which is full of intertextual echoes of Ps 21 LXX (esp. vv. 1, 4–5, 21).

[34]Besides all the passages that refer to God's judging righteously, see esp. Ps 7:12 (LXX) for this very language (ὁ θεὸς κριτὴς δίκαιος; cf. 49:6; 74:8); that Paul intends Christ in this passage is made certain both by the clear assertion in 4:1 and thus by the substitution of κύριος for θεός in this septuagintal echo.

[35]That κύριος in these citations refers to Christ seems certain, not only by the fact that in its first occurrences in the letter (1:2, 8) κύριος unambiguously refers to Christ, but also because in the Numbers citation the word κύριος has been substituted for the LXX's θεός.

first hearing and also "rescued" him "from the mouth of the lion" is the same Lord who will "save" him unto *his heavenly kingdom*.[36]

Furthermore, both the language and the implication of Christ's "sovereignty" over Caesar in this latter passage give one good reason to believe that the combination of the titles κύριος and σωτήρ with ἐπιφανείᾳ in 1:10 also functions in direct antithesis to the cult of the emperor.[37] There is only one divine κύριος, Jesus Christ; and he will rescue his servant from the world's κύριος, Nero Caesar.

(2) Yet for all that, the emphasis in this letter is not on Christ's person or status, but on his role as Savior (as one finds also primarily in Paul). God's grace has been given to us ἐν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1:9), having been revealed in the present with the "appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus," who broke the power of death and thus brought us to life (1:10); salvation is thus to be had ἐν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (2:10; 3:15). While the ultimate nuance of these ἐν's is a matter of debate, in either case, whether locative or instrumental, the effect is theologically the same. God has effected his eschatological salvation "through" Christ Jesus or "in Christ Jesus," who is the divine agent of such salvation.

The emphasis in this letter is on the eschatological results of Christ's saving activity, hence there is no explicit mention of his death as "for us." But Christ's own death as the locus of his victory over death for us, thus making him the bringer of life, is clearly presupposed. This is made certain by the "faithful saying" in 2:11–13. Here believers' present sufferings (line 2, "if we endure") and future glory ("we shall reign with him") are integrally bound up with their relationship to Christ's death and resurrection, in a manner that recalls Romans 6 (cf. 1 Thess 5:9–10). Thus (line 1), "if we have been joined with Christ in death [i.e., if our present life, including its suffering, is bound up in Christ's redemptive suffering], then we shall also live with him [i.e., our present life in Christ shall be consummated by eternal life with him, in which we also reign with him]."[38] Therefore, even though "atonement" is not an issue in this letter, Christ's death as "for us" is the certain suppositional base for all of its soteriological statements.

But in light of Paul's own impending death and the need for Timothy and the church to remain loyal to Christ, the emphasis in this letter is on the eschatological dimensions of salvation in Christ: Christ has brought to pass the "promise of life" (1:1, 10), and has done so by breaking the power of death[39] (1:10). This same presupposition lies behind the striking

---

[36]That this can only refer to Christ is made certain by the prior usage in 2:12 (and 4:1).

[37]On this matter, see further Young, *Theology*, 64–65. The only other place in Paul where σωτήρ is used to refer to Christ, and again in conjunction with κύριος in the context of Christ's coming, is Phil 3:20–21 — again almost certainly as direct confrontation with the emperor cult. Which is also what makes sense of the intertextual use of Isa 45:23 in Phil 2:9–11; even the emperor himself will someday bow before Christ and confess him alone as κύριος.

[38]The first line in this saying, of course, is precisely in keeping with Rom 6:8, and one would be bold indeed to argue that it should mean something different here from what it does there, since the present context demands such a meaning.

[39]καταργήσαντος, an especially Pauline word (25 of 27 occurrences), used primarily in eschatological contexts to reflect the reality that the work of Christ has

imperative in 2:8: "Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead, of the seed of David," a combination which occurs in a similar semi-creedal moment in Rom 1:3–4. The emphasis clearly lies on the resurrection, but that presupposes the crucifixion; and whatever else is true of the Risen One, he is first of all God's kingly Messiah, who is both "from" David's seed and David's true Seed (2 Sam 7:12–14); and his kingly messiahship has been entered through death and resurrection.

(c) Made effectual by the Spirit. The Spirit also plays a very typical role in this letter. To be sure, the Spirit is not mentioned in conjunction with Christ's *saving* activity in the two primary passages that speak about the gospel. But that is almost certainly due to the nature of these two passages, since neither is speaking directly about the believer's appropriation of salvation. That is, in passages such as 1 Thess 1:4–6; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 1:21–22; Gal 3:2–5; 4:4–7; Rom 8:2–3; 8:15–17, the emphasis is on the believers' *experience* of the salvation that God has effected in Christ; hence the mention of the Spirit, who certifies that salvation by making it an experienced reality. But in passages like Rom 1:16–17 and 3:21–26, as in our two passages, the emphasis is on the larger reality of the work of Christ as such; hence there is no mention of the Spirit's appropriating role.[40]

But the Spirit's presence in the believer's life is fully assumed by what Paul says about himself and Timothy in 1:7 and 14, and is certainly implied in the κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ of v. 8. Here δύναμις is something of a periphrasis for the Spirit, since in v. 7 the Spirit is declared to have been given to "us" for this very purpose. Hence Paul can say, "join together with me in suffering in keeping with the power [of the Spirit] of God." In the same way, at the end of this first appeal to loyalty to the gospel, Paul reminds Timothy that "the Spirit who dwells in us"[41] will enable him to "guard what has been entrusted to him." There is nothing either static or "defensive"[42] in this imagery; the imagery itself would not work with any other language. How Timothy is "to guard" his trust is spelled out in a whole variety of ways throughout the letter (e.g., 2:15–26; 4:1–5), none of which means merely "to sit on it." And the Spirit is the obvious presupposition for how Timothy is to "do" the gospel.

Thus the Spirit is explicitly referred to in this letter in one of the three primary ways he is mentioned throughout the corpus — as the one who enables the believer effectively to "do" and "live" the gospel in the

---

rendered the powers of the present age ineffective, so that they are currently "on their way out," and thus finally to be abolished. See further section (f) below.

[40]One can see these two aspects of salvation merge in a passage like Gal 4:4–7, where the effective work of Christ is mentioned as a reality unto itself in vv. 4–5. But in order for Christ's redemptive work of adoption to become effectual for the "adopted children," God thus "sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying out Abba," the very language of the Son.

[41]Gk. ἐνοικέω, found elsewhere in the NT only in Rom 8:11; cf. the non-compounded οἰκέω in Rom 8:9 and 11, and 1 Cor 3:16. Thus the imagery of the "indwelling Holy Spirit" is a uniquely Pauline usage in the NT.

[42]That is, this is not a kind of "hold the fort" imagery. In the culture presupposed by this usage, the imagery serves as an especially powerful one to appeal to loyality to one's trust.

world.[43]

(d) By grace alone. Precisely because salvation is God's act, initiated and effected by God, Christ, and the Spirit, it is also therefore an act of sheer mercy and grace, which has already been emphasized in the salutation by the addition of "mercy" to the standard "grace and peace." Since there seems to be no special reason for this emphasis in the letter, this would seem to be a genuinely Pauline touch. Salvation, which is rooted in God's eternal purposes, is thus also rooted in God's own grace, which found expression as "revelation" through the saving work of Christ. But grace has to do not only with "getting saved," but with "being saved" as well. Hence Paul urges Timothy to "be strong" by means of the grace that is always to be found in Christ Jesus (2:1).

Because all is of grace, it therefore cannot be "according to our works" (1:9).[44] Even though this phrase does not reflect Paul's best known usage ("not by works of law"), it is Pauline at its heart, as the argumentation in Rom 9:12 and Phil 3:3 makes certain.[45] Indeed, the tendency toward an "either-or" (between a socio-ethnic and religious-theological understanding) of "works of law" and "faith in Christ Jesus"[46] seems to miss the mark by a wide margin. In all of the contexts where the phrase "works of law" occurs, it is a contingent way of addressing a *theological* issue[47] that has admittedly deeply socio-ethnic implications that finally impact Paul's theology at its two crucial points: (1) that the people of God newly constituted by Christ and the Spirit *must* include both Jew and Gentile together for the eschatological fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant; and (2) that the only way that can happen is by way of grace, faith, and the gift of the Spirit. Hence what is expressed in socio-ethnic terms is ultimately and profoundly theological. The only question we should therefore ask of this phrase is what shape Paul's *theological* concern might take in this matter once it is no longer tied to

---

[43]On this matter see section (h) below. The other two ways, of course, are (1) for initiation into life in Christ and (2) for enabling worship and the building up of the people of God as they do so.

[44]One should perhaps not make too much of this little phrase, since nothing quite like it appears elsewhere in the letter. On the other hand, it does occur right here, precisely at a point where Paul is reminding Timothy of the gospel for which he must be ready to suffer through the power of the Spirit. Its appearance only here may simply indicate how little we know about the contingent situation of this letter, and in this case may be a faint reflection of the fact that the false teachers elsewhere in the PE think of themselves as "teachers of the law" (1 Tim 1:7; cf. Tit 3:9). But if our letter is ultimately from Paul himself, this could just as easily simply be Paul's being Paul.

[45]Cf. also the way "through law" and "nullifying the grace of God" in Gal 2:21 (see also 3:10–14) clearly presuppose the traditional theological understanding of this contrast.

[46]This, of course, assumes a traditional understanding of πίστις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ; but it is based on the larger reality that when πίστις becomes a verb in all of the contexts where this phrase occurs — and it always does — the verb clearly intends the so-called traditional view.

[47]After all, "works of law" are emphatically underscored by Paul to be a "means of boasting" before God (Phil 3:3–4; Rom 3:27). In Philippians, where this issue is raised without use of the phrase "works of law," Paul describes the contrast to "faith in Christ Jesus" in terms of "a righteousness of my own based on law."

its original contingencies. And "not according to our works" but "according to God's own grace given us in Christ Jesus" would seem like the most plausible way. In any case, this is surely how we are to understand the theological implications of the phrase, which is thus fully Pauline at its very core.[48]

(e) Through faith. As always in Paul, "faith" is the human response to God's saving work in Christ. This central point finds expression in our letter in an almost incidental fashion in 3:15: Salvation is through[49] faith in Christ Jesus. But we need also be reminded that the rhetorical situation of our letter does not beg for this to be said, since at issue is not how Timothy (or the others) came to be saved, but his/their enduring "faithful" trust in Christ in the midst of a present crisis. Thus, the predominant use of πίστις in this letter is in the very Pauline way of referring to one's whole relationship to God as an expression of "faith" (1:5, 13; 2:22; 3:10), meaning one's lifelong faithful trust in Christ that also began that way.[50] In one instance "faith" does seem to come closer to being a synonym for "the content of the gospel" (4:8; "I have kept the faith").[51] Even here, however, it probably contains the same kind of ambiguity one finds in the similar usage in Phil 1:27, where "the faith of the gospel" most likely refers to the content of the gospel, but in context also speaks to the "faith-fulness" that is essential to the gospel. In any case, the understanding of "faith" in 2 Timothy is profoundly Pauline theologically.

(f) An eschatological reality. As throughout the corpus, salvation is first of all to be understood as an eschatological reality. That is, it has to do with the promised eschatological salvation of the OT, which is believed to have come present through Christ's death and resurrection and the gift of the eschatological Spirit. Hence it is a reality that is "already" present through Christ (and the Spirit), which will eventually be consummated with the (now second) coming of Christ. One can scarcely understand "salvation in Christ" in 2 Timothy apart from this eschatological tension.

First, because of the predominantly future orientation of the letter, based on Paul's own situation, salvation has ultimately to do with "life" and "death." Through both his death and resurrection Christ has freed people from the tyranny of death and given them life, both for now and for ever. Participation in Christ's death and resurrection (2:11) are what lead to the "promise of life" now made available in Christ Jesus (1:1). Hence Timothy, in the context of being urged to "join with me in suffering" (2:2; 1:8), is also urged to "remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead" (2:8), precisely because what God's saving grace ultimately

---

[48]On this phrase in our passage see especially Towner, *Goal*, 96–97.

[49]διά, implying secondary agency to God's prior grace, which is the primary agent.

[50]This is surely its meaning as a "fruit of the Spirit" in Gal 5:22, and is thus the preferred way of understanding πίστις in many other passages as well: e.g., Rom 1:8, 12; 1 Cor 16:13; Phil 1:25; 2:17; and in all 8 occurrences in 1 Thessalonians, and the majority in 2 Thessalonians.

[51]Which is also a Pauline way of using this word, as Gal 1:23; Phil 1:27, et al. make clear.

wrought through Christ's first "appearing"[52] was to "render death ineffective" by bringing to light *ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν* ("life and incorruptibility").

This does not mean that one will not die; on the contrary, Paul is about to be "poured out," the time of his "departure" is at hand, because he has come to the end of his race (4:6–7). What has been rendered ineffective through Christ's death and resurrection is the final triumph of death (cf. 1 Cor 15:54–55); its back has been broken. And this is the significance of the addition of the (especially Pauline) word "incorruptibility" to "life." No Pauline (and NT) word carries the *ambiguity* of the already/not yet so completely as "life," since by its very nature "life" is both for now and for ever. By adding "incorruptibility," Paul is clearly pointing to his and Timothy's (and other believers') future bodily resurrection, since *ἀφθαρσία* is Paul's primary way of speaking about this reality in the one passage where he tackles the issue head-on (1 Cor 15:35–58). Very likely this emphasis in 1:9–10 is directly related to the one piece of content we are given regarding the gangrenous teaching of the opponents, namely that the resurrection ("of believers" is intended) has already happened (2:18).

Furthermore, because in Christ's first *ἐπιφανεία* he effectively dealt with death, this guarantees that he will equally effectively deal with justice at his second *ἐπιφανεία* (4:1, 8), when he "the righteous judge" (4:8) will judge both the living (meaning those alive at his coming) and the dead. Those who are his, who "love his appearing" (probably meaning "who long for it to come") will receive a victor's "crown of righteousness"[53] (4:8). Therefore, the one who believes in Christ is confident that God will have guarded that one's trust until the final eschatological day (1:13). Likewise, those who have spurned grace and persist in wickedness by their resistance to Paul's gospel will also be "repaid"[54] by Christ in keeping with their deeds (4:14).

Christ's second *ἐπιφανεία* will also bring about his "heavenly kingdom" (4:1, 18). Thus the use of *βασιλεία* in this letter refers altogether to the final reign of Christ, just as it does most often elsewhere in Paul. Very likely the comparatively heavy concentration of this language in 2 Timothy is the result of Paul's Roman custody, as a means of emphasizing eschatological certainty in light of Nero's present reign.

---

[52]In an unfortunately tendentious presentation of the evidence, P.-G. Müller's discussion of *ἐπιφανεία* in EDNT (2.44–45) asserts that all five of the occurrences of this word in the PE "refer to the anticipated second appearance of the resurrected and exalted Christ." But that is to run roughshod over the plain meaning of this clause, where both the cognate verb and noun emphatically point to already present realities based on the "first" *ἐπιφανεία* of Christ.

[53]This ambiguous phrase could mean either "the prize awarded a righteous life" (so Bernard, Barrett, Kelly), or "one which consists of the gift of righteousness, which only the Judge, as he who alone is *dikaios*, can give" (Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif*, 184). While I tend to lean toward the latter, in either case it does not mean that "righteousness" is achieved, but that it represents the appropriate crown for those who have received grace and have thus "pursued" righteousness as a way of life (2:22). See the discussion of ethics in section (h) below.

[54]*ἀποδώσει*, the same word that first appeared in 4:8 above.

Nonetheless, the tension of living in the "already" as one awaits the "not yet" is also thoroughgoing in this letter, being most evident in the (again typically Pauline) theology of suffering, on the one hand, and in the context of the "last day" messianic woes, on the other. Suffering, in the form of persecution, is to be expected by all who wish to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus (3:12), for which Paul serves as paradigm (vv. 10–11; cf. 1:8/12; 2:9). Such a life, which is related to one's being joined to Christ in his death, thus calls for "endurance" (2:10, 12; 3:10) and "long suffering" in the present.

Moreover, such suffering may be expected to intensify as the final eschatological event draws nearer (3:1–5),[55] which is the way one is to understand the present opposition to the gospel (3:5–6); indeed, such "imposters" (3:13), who are understood to be entrapped by the devil (2:26) and thus "deceived and deceiving" (3:13), will only go from bad to worse (3:9, 13). At the end they will receive their due (4:14). But so will those who endure faithfully (2:10, 12; 4:8).

(g) The goal — a people for God's name. As everywhere in Paul, even though salvation is for the individual (1:12), and is received individually and lived out at the individual level (3:14–17; cf. 1:5),[56] the goal of God's saving activity in Christ is a people who "name the name of Christ" (2:19). That this is the thoroughly presuppositional stance of 2 Timothy is made certain by the fact that such a thing is said at all in a letter directed primarily to an individual, appealing to his loyalty. But Timothy's loyalty will hopefully be manifested in the people of God as well.

At two points in the letter Paul refers to God's people in a way that makes it clear he understands them as in continuity with the former covenant people of God, even though they are obviously reconstituted by Christ and the Spirit (1:9–10, 6–7). First, they are God's "elect" (2:10), language that recalls Old Testament realities, where Israel was "chosen" by God to be his people in the world. Not only does this term evoke for the people a sense of their "secure" place in God, but it also evokes the purposeful nature of their being God's people. That comes out even more in the language *καλέσαντος κλήσει ἁγίᾳ* (probably, "called unto a holy calling") in 1:9.

Second, and similarly, the imagery of the people as God's temple, or at least so it would seem,[57] in 2:19 also carries this twofold thrust. The

---

[55]For a recent and helpful survey of this motif in Paul, see J. Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997) 244–64.

[56]In clear reaction to the unfortunate individualism in much of Protestantism, it is common in some circles in NT studies to stress the "corporateness" of the cultural-anthropological setting of first-century Christianity. That this indeed is Paul's primary focus seems clear, and in this he is simply in continuity with his OT heritage. But discontinuity with the past is equally significant for Paul, in that people become members of the believing community one by one on the basis of faith in Christ Jesus (as over against birth and the rite of circumcision). Anyone who has read the Psalter and the epistles of Paul will recognize that the significance of the individual is not an idea that began with the Reformation or Enlightenment. But to say this is a far cry from espousing the intense, and unbiblical, individualism that marks so much of contemporary Western culture. See further, Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996) 63–73.

foundation of God's temple is firmly fixed, having been sealed with God's own stamp of ownership. And although this imagery is pregnant with possibilities of meaning, Paul makes his twofold point by citing or echoing OT passages: Christ "knows" those who are his (citing Num 16:15, where those who are truly God's people will be distinguished from the false!); and those who name his name (= are thus known by his name) should therefore separate themselves from what is evil.

In these two clauses one finds the heart of Pauline ecclesiology. On the one hand, the people belong to Christ (or God). Their security and eschatological vindication rests there. And it is always so for Paul. Not that he is adverse to speaking about believers' knowing Christ (as e.g., in Phil 3:8, 10), but their existence as a people is predicated on the fact that God knows them (Gal 4:9; 1 Cor 8:3).

On the other hand, those who are so known by God and thus "name Christ's name" must themselves walk in ways that conform to God's/Christ's own character. Which is where ethical instruction comes in for Paul. Salvation is the result of God's grace, not "in accordance with our works" (1:9); nonetheless, Paul could not have understood salvation that did not include an ethical imperative. After all, the goal of salvation is not to people heaven, but to create a people who reflect God's own glory.

Thus, even though newly constituted through Christ, this now newly constituted people are not only in continuity with the former covenant people of God, but are in the true succession of that people.

What is most striking about the ecclesiology of this letter is the total lack of concern for order, structures, and leadership. Indeed, if 2 Timothy were the only one of the PE to have survived, no one would ever have imagined that this epistle should be read as a some kind of manual for church order. The one text (2:2) that might possibly be read that way has nothing to do with order, and everything to do with loyalty to Paul's gospel by faithfully transmitting it to those who will faithfully continue the process. But there is no "appointment," no titles, nothing that hints of "order" per se. Even in the places where Timothy's role as a leader might be in view (2:3–7; 2:15–17; 2:22–26; 3:14–17), at issue is not "church order" but ethical conduct. What makes Timothy a "man of God" in this letter is not an "office" but that he serves as a model for "every good work" (3:17).

And that, too, reflects Pauline theology. It is not that order or structures did not exist; it is simply that we know very little about them except that they are plural and included ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι (Phil 1:1). In his earlier letters Paul's concerns for the church lie not with its leaders getting their act together, but with the church and its leaders together living out the life of the future in the present age. That same theological concern emerges in 2 Timothy as well.

(h) From sin and for holiness. Finally, we need to note that although

---

[57]The imagery of 2:19 seems hardly applicable to a "household," the other possible imagery (and adopted by some on the basis of vv. 20–21). But the "foundation" stone affixed with the owner's seal seems to imply a more public structure. And in any case, as a Pauline document, it picks up the temple imagery from 1 Cor 3:10–17.

salvation is primarily an eschatological reality, it also has a purely "religious" dimension as well. Those who are rescued from "death" for "life" are also called "to a holy calling," which means to a life that is set apart for God and his purposes. This means both a rejection of "wickedness" (2:19) and the pursuit of "righteousness, faith-fulness, love, and peace" (2:22).[58]

Therefore, eschatological salvation, the gift of life both for now and for ever, also includes being "saved from sin(s)." The women who welcome the false teachers into their homes are described as "laden down with sins," as they pursue "all kinds of lusts"; and the sins of the false teachers are given in a stereotypical vice list[59] that is undoubtedly intended to portray the pagan culture from which these men were to have been saved. Such people lack love for God, being lovers of themselves — and of money! — and are therefore full of arrogance, ingratitude, divisive quarreling, and all other kinds of aberrant behavior.

Those who are known by Christ are obviously intended to live differently. With Timothy as their paradigm, they are to "cleanse themselves" from wickedness and thus to be "ready for every good work" (2:21). This means actively to pursue what Paul elsewhere calls "fruit of the Spirit": righteousness, faith-fulness, love, peace (2:22), and gentleness (2:25). As elsewhere in Paul, not only "power," but especially "love" (1:7, 13; 2:22; 3:10) and also "sober-mindedness"[60] are the direct result of the presence of the indwelling Spirit, given by God.

Since God is full of goodness that exhibits itself in his "doing good" to those he loves,[61] his people are to exemplify the same. They are "equipped" through the God-breathed Scriptures for doing every kind of good work (3:17), just as they are "prepared" for doing every kind of good work (2:21) by turning away from wickedness (2:19).

That this is a thoroughly Pauline view of things can be found on every page of Paul's extant letters. Indeed, "doing good" might well be argued as lying at the heart of Pauline ethics — especially since this thoroughly OT way of speaking[62] is how the argument of Galatians

---

[58]The structure of the large middle section of the letter (2:14–3:17) is especially significant in this regard. After (a) the opening warning that the people are not to do battle with words (2:14), (b) the appeal to Timothy to obtain divine approbation (v. 15), and (c) the description of those who do not do so and who are thus leading others astray (vv. 16–18), Paul affirms the church as belonging to Christ, yet they too must "turn away from wickedness." That is followed by what some perceive as the enigmatic imagery of vv. 20–21, but which surely functions to call Timothy to modeling behavior that must be embraced (vv. 22–26), while in 3:1–5 and 6–9 the false teachers model the "wickedness" that must be rejected.

[59]Which, of course, in itself is another typically Pauline feature, including that fact that no one of Paul's vice lists bear very much resemblance to any of the others.

[60]σωφρονισμός; cf. the use of σωφρονεῖν and its compounds in the context of making sober assessments about one's own place in the body of Christ in Rom 12:3.

[61]This, of course, is not said in 2 Timothy, but one may assume it to be so on the basis of 3:16–17, where the "man of God" is "equipped" by means of the "God-breathed" Scriptures for "every good work." Whatever else those Scriptures tell us about God, they continually remind us that God is good and does what is good for his people.

[62]Note, e.g., how often in the Psalter, set up on the basis of Psalm 1, the righteous and the wicked are contrasted in terms of their respectively "doing good" or

concludes (6:9–10, "Let us not flag in doing what is good; . . . let us do good to all, especially those of the household of the faith") and finds expression again at the end of Romans (16:19, "I want you to be wise unto what is good and guileless unto what is evil").

We may thus conclude this reading of 2 Timothy as a Pauline letter by noting again how thoroughly Pauline it is. Indeed, if one excludes arguments from silence (and they must be excluded, since every letter in the corpus can be damned for not mentioning some "important" Pauline matter), and likewise if one reads the letter on its own, apart from 1 Timothy and Titus, it has a decidedly Pauline ring at every turn. At times what we hear are old words or phrases newly configured or juxtaposed; at other times the language itself is new. But in all of it the theology is both essentially Pauline and full of what is essential to Paul.

Perhaps I may be allowed to return to the question of methodology at the end. What is striking in the literature on the theology of these letters, and the otherwise very helpful study by Frances Young is a case in point, is that it is common (1) to lump the three letters together, and thus to read their theology *en bloc*, but even so (2) to begin such a study with 1 Timothy and Titus (for understandable reasons), and then (3) to read into 2 Timothy the now presupposed theology that one has found in 1 Timothy and Titus. One wonders in passing what would happen if we were to do this in reverse. What if one were to begin with 2 Timothy and its very Pauline theology, and then read the other two letters in light of this one? Surely they would sound much more Pauline than is often asserted to the contrary, since they address contingent situations that simply have not arisen elsewhere — where current *leadership within the church* is responsible for leading whole house churches astray. In any case, this letter lives and breathes Paul's own understanding of the gospel narrative as God's gracious saving activity in Christ.

"doing evil" (e.g., Ps 14:1, 3; 34:14; 36:3; 37:3).

Q Bibliography Supplement VIII: 1997

David M. Scholer
Fuller Theological Seminary

Introduction

This brief listing supplements the Q bibliographies that have appeared in the *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* volumes since 1986. This Supplement contains an additional ninety-seven items. It is still the plan to publish a comprehensive Q bibliography (through either 1999 or 2000; appearing in 2001 or 2002) in connection with the work of James M. Robins.on, John S. Kloppenborg and Paul Hoffmann. I wish to thank Susan Carlson Wood for her excellent help in the preparation of this manuscript.

Books and Reviews

Bergmann, T. *Q auf dem Prüfstand....*
Burnett, F. W. *Religious Studies Review* 23 (1997), 71.

Borg, M.; Powelson, M.; and Riegert, R. *The Lost Gospel Q: The Original Sayings of Jesus*. Berkeley: Ulysses Press, 1996.

Carr, D. M. *From D to Q....*
VanderKam, J. C. *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 13 (1995), 116.

Carruth, S. and Garsky, A. *The Database of the International Q Project: Q 11:2b-4....*
Elliott, J. K. *Novum Testamentum* 39 (1997), 204-05.
Neirynck, F. *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 72 (1996), 418-24.

Carruth, S. and Robinson, J. M. *Q 4;1-13, 16: The Temptations of Jesus Nazara*. Vol. Ed. C. Heil. (Documenta Q.) Leuven: Peeters, 1996.

Catchpole, D. R. *The Quest for Q....*
Carruth, S. *Critical Review of Books in Religion* 1995 (1996), 186-88.
Keylock, L. R. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40 (1997), 315-16.
Langlament, F. *Revue Biblique* 102 (1995), 142-43.

Fleddermann, H. T. *Mark and Q....*
Derrenbacker, R. A., Jr. *Religious Studies Review* 23 (1997), 182-83.
Franklin, E. *Expository Times* 107 (1995/96), 378.
Goulder, M. *Novum Testamentum* 39 (1997), 193-94.
van Iersel, B. *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 36 (1996), 190-91.
Schenk, W. *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 122 (1997), 35-36.

Hoffmann, P. *Tradition und Situation....*
Cochand, N. *Revue de Theologie et de Philosophie* 127 (1995), 414.
Méhat, A. *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 212 (1995), 479-80.
Tuckett, C. M. *Journal of Theological Studies* 47 (1996), 597-99.

Kloppenborg, J. S. *Conflict and Invention....*
Burnett, F. W. *Religious Studies Review* 22 (1996), 246.
Neirynck, F. *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 72 (1996), 442-43.

Kloppenborg, J. S. *The Shape of Q....*
Henaut, B. *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 24 (1995), 387.
Neirynck, F. *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 70 (1994), 163-64.

Mack, B. L. *The Lost Gospel....*
Boring, M. E. *Interpretation* 49 (1995), 108-10.
Jacobson, A. D. *Critical Review of Books in Religion 1995* (1996), 253-57.
Scroggs, R. *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 48 (1994), 155-58.
See also article by J. M. Robinson (1994; 247-65).

Meadors, E. P. *Jesus the Messianic Herald of Salvation....*
Reprinted Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997.
Burridge, R. A. *Expository Times* 107 (1995/96), 183.
Catchpole, D. *Journal of Theological Studies* 47 (1996), 595-97.
Patterson, S. J. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116 (1997), 138-40.
Tuckett, C. M. *Novum Testamentum* 38 (1996), 296-97.

Neirynck, F. *Q-Synopsis....*
Burnett, F. W. *Religious Studies Review* 23 (1997), 71.
Cuvillier, E. *Études Théologiques et Religieuses* 71 (1996), 118.
Focant, C. *Revue Théologique de Louvain* 27 (1996), 99.

Piper, R. A. *The Gospel Behind the Gospels....*
Ehrman, B. D. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116 (1997), 178-79.
Goulder, M. *Novum Testamentum* 38 (1996), 194-96.
März, C.-P. *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 121 (1996), 552-54.
Neirynck, F. *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 72 (1996), 443-44.

Sato, M. *Q und Prophetie....*
Reiling, J. *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 48 (1994), 239-40.

Sevenich-Bax, E. *Israels Konfrontation ... Logienquelle....*
Burnett, F. W. *Religious Studies Review* 23 (1997), 71.
Niebuhr, K.-W. *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 121 (1996), 941-43.

Tuckett, C. M. *Q and the History of Early Christianity....*
Fuchs, A. *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* 21 (1996), 188-210.

Uro, R. *Symbols and Strata: Essays on the Sayings Gospel Q.* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 65.) Helsinksi: Finnish Exegetical Society/ Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.

Vaage, L. E. *Galilean Upstarts....*
Klassen, W. *Revue Biblique* 102 (1995), 425-28.

Articles

Allen, C. "The Search for a No-Frills Jesus: Q," *Atlantic Monthly* 278:6 (1996), 51-68.

Arnal, W. E. "Gendered Couplets in Q and Legal Formulations: From Rhetoric to Social History," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116 (1997), 75-94.

Arnal, W. E. "The Rhetoric of Marginality: Apocalypticism, Gnosticism, and Sayings Gospels," *Harvard Theological Review* 88 (1995), 471-94.

Black, M. "The Aramaic Dimension in Q with Notes on Luke 17.22 and Matthew 24.26 (Luke 17.23)," *The Historical Jesus: A Sheffield Reader* (ed. C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter; The Biblical Seminar 33; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 237-44.

Borg, M. "Preface," in *The Lost Gospel Q: The Original Sayings of Jesus* (ed. M. Borg et al.; Berkeley: Ulysses Press, 1996), 13-20.

Broadhead, E. K. "On the (Mis)Definition of Q," *AAR/SBL Abstracts 1996* (1996), 318.

Cameron, R. "The Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Response to John S. Kloppenborg," *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996), 351-54.

Crossan, J. D. "Itinerants and Householders in the Earliest Kingdom Movement," Chapter 6 in *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack* (ed. E. A. Castelli and H. Taussig; Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 113-29.

Dungan, D. L. "'*Eppur si muove*': Circumnavigating the Mythical Recensions of Q," *Soundings* 78 (1995), 541-70.

Gibson, J. B. "A Turn on 'Turning Stones to Bread': A New Understanding of the Devil's Intention in Q 4.3," *Biblical Research* 41 (1996), 37-57.

Goulder, M. D. "Is Q a Juggernaut?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996), 667-81.

Heil, C. "The Reception of Ps 6:9a LXX in Q and Luke," *AAR/SBL Abstracts 1996* (1996), 318-19.

Hoffmann, P. "Jesu 'Verbot des Sorgens' und seine Nachgeschichte in der synoptischen Überlieferung," Chapter 4 in P. Hoffmann, *Tradition und Situation*.... (1995), 107-34.

Hoffmann, P. "Jesus versus Menschensohn: Matthäus 10,32f und die synoptische Menschensohn-Überlieferung," Chapter 8 in P. Hoffmann, *Tradition und Situation*.... (1995), 208-42.

Hoffmann, P. "Q 6,22 in der Rezeption durch Lukas," Chapter 6 in P. Hoffmann, *Tradition und Situation*.... (1995), 162-89.

Hoffmann, P. "Der Q-Text der Sprüche vom Sorgen: Mt 6,25-33/Lk 12,22-31: Ein Rekonstruktionsversuch," Chapter 2 in P. Hoffmann, *Tradition und Situation*.... (1995), 62-87.

Hoffmann, P. "QR und der Menschensohn: Eine vorläufige Skizze," Chapter 9 in P. Hoffmann, *Tradition und Situation*.... (1995), 243-78.

Hoffmann, P. "The Sayings Source Q and Hans Dieter Betz' Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount/Sermon on the Plain (1995)," *AAR/SBL Abstracts 1996* (1996), 246-47.

Hoffmann, P. "Die Sprüche vom Sorgen in der vorsynoptischen Überlieferung," Chapter 3 in P. Hoffmann, *Tradition und Situation*.... (1995), 88-106.

Hoffmann, P. "Der Versuchungsgeschichte in der Logienquelle: Zur Auseinandersetzung der Judenchristen mit dem politischen Messianismus," Chapter 7 in P. Hoffmann, *Tradition und Situation*.... (1995), 193-207.

Hoffmann, R. J. "'Q'," a section in Chapter 3 in *Jesus Outside the Gospels* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1984), 86-97.

Humphries, M. "The Kingdom of God in the Q Version of the Beelzebul Controversy," *Forum* 9 (1993), 121-50.

Karrer, M. "Christliche Gemeinde und Israel: Beobachtungen zur Logienquelle," *Gottes Recht als Lebensraum: Festschrift für Hans Jochen Boecker* (hrsg. P. Mommer, W. H. Schmidt, H. Strauss, E. Schwab; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 145-63.

Kee, H. C. "Social Formation and Educational Strategy in Early Christianity: From Q and Matthew to Barnabas and the Didache," *AAR/SBL Abstracts 1996* (1996), 249.

Kirk, A. "Some Compositional Conventions of Hellenistic Wisdom Texts and the Juxtaposition of 4:1-13; 6:20b-49; and 7:1-10 in Q," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116 (1997), 235-57.

Kirk, A. "Upbraiding Wisdom: John's Speech, Liminality, and Resocialization in Q (Q 3:7-9, 16-17)," *AAR/SBL Abstracts 1996* (1996), 319.

Kloppenborg, J. S. "The Sayings Gospel Q: Literary and Stratigraphic Problems," in R. Uro, *Symbols and Strata....*, 1-66.

Kloppenborg, J. S. "The Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest of the Historical Jesus," *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996), 307-44.

Koester, H. "The Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Response to John S. Kloppenborg," *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996), 345-49.

Limberis, V. "'Q', James, and the Sayings of His Brother: Parallel Sayings Traditions in Light of Linguistic Theory," *AAR/SBL Abstracts 1996* (1996), 319.

Linnemann, E. "The Lost Gospel of Q—Fact or Fantasy," *Trinity Journal* 17 (1996), 3-18.

Martin, R. A. "Syntax Criticism of Q Material," Appendix 1 in *Studies in the Life and Ministry of the Historical Jesus* (Lantham/New York/London: University Press of America, 1995), 73-82.

Meadors, E. P. "The Christological Unity of the Q Material," *AAR/SBL Abstracts 1996* (1996), 320.

Moore, T. "Introduction," in *The Lost Gospel Q: The Original Sayings of Jesus* (ed. M. Borg et al.; Berkeley: Ulysses Press, 1996), 9-12.

Mott, S. C. "Centrality of the Poor in the Teaching of Jesus," *Christian Social Action* 9:7 (July-August 1996), 37.

Myllykoski, M. "The Social History of Q and the Jewish War," in R. Uro, *Symbols and Strata....*, 143-99.

Neirynck, F. "The Sayings Source Q and the Gospel of Mark," *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag; Band III: Frühes Christentum* (hrsg. H. Lichtenberger; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1996), 125-45.

Neyrey, J. H. "Loss of Wealth, Loss of Family and Loss of Honour: The Cultural Context of the Original Makarisms in Q," Chapter 8 in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (ed. P. F. Esler; London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 139-58.

Paffenroth, K. "The Testing of the Sage: 1 Kings 10:1-13 and Q 4:1-13 (Lk 4:1-13)," *Expository Times* 107 (1995/96), 142-43.

Pixley, J. and Vaage, L. E. "El Evangelio radical de Galilea; la fuente sinóptica Q (citato: según Lucas)," *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana* 22 (1996), 153-61.

Räisänen, H. "Exorcisms and the Kingdom: Is Q 11:20 a Saying of the Historical Jesus?" in R. Uro, *Symbols and Strata....*, 119-42.

Reed, J. L. "Jonah and Other Epic Traditions in Q," *AAR/SBL Abstracts 1996* (1996), 320.

Reed, J. L. "The Sign of Jonah (Q 11:29-32) and Other Epic Traditions in Q," Chapter 7 in *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack* (ed. E. A. Castelli and H. Taussig; Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 130-43.

Robinson, J. M. "Building Blocks in the Social History of Q," Chapter 5 in *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack* (ed. E. A. Castelli and H. Taussig; Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 87-112.

Robinson, J. M. "The History-of-Religions Taxonomy of Q: The Cynic Hypothesis," *Gnosisforschung und Religionsgeschichte: Festschrift für Kurt Rudolph zum 65. Geburtstag* (hrsg. H. Preissler und H. Seiwert; Marburg: diagonal-Verlag, 1994), 247-65.

Robinson, J. M. "The Trajectory from the Sermon to Matthew," *AAR/SBL Abstracts 1996* (1996), 247.

Sand, A. "Die Logia Jesu, die vier Evangelien und der Kanon der ntl Schriften," *Theologie im Werden: Studien zu den theologischen Konzeptionen im Neuen Testament* (hrsg. J. Hainz; Paderborn et al.: Ferdinand Schönigh, 1992), 125-41.

Sato, M. "Q: Prophetie oder Weisheit? Ein Gespräch mit J. M. Robinson," *Evangelische Theologie* 53 (1993), 389-404.

Scholer, D. M. "Q Bibliography Supplement VII: 1996," *Society of Biblical Literature 1996 Seminar Papers* (SBLSPS 35; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 1-7.

Seeley, D. "Futuristic Eschatology and Social Formation in Q," Chapter 8 in *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack* (ed. E. A. Castelli and H. Taussig; Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 144-53.

Uro, R. "Apocalyptic Symbolism and Social Identity in Q," in R. Uro, *Symbols and Strata....*, 67-118.

Vaage, L. E. "El Cristianismo Galileo y el Evangelio radical de Q," *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana* 22 (1996), 81-103 [Spanish and English summaries, page 81].

Vargas-Machuca, A. "La llamada fuente Q de los evangelios sinópticos: Teoría de las dos fuentes; Modernas precisiones; Origen, composición y redacción de la fuente Q; Su función en el cristianismo primitivo," §3 in *Fuentes del cristianismo: Tradiciones primitivas sobre Jesús* (ed. A. Piñero; Cordoba: El Almendro/Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1993), 63-94.

Verheyden, J. "Mark and Q," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 72 (1996), 408-17.

Wright, T. N. "Burton L. Mack (and the Question of Q)," §I,2,3 in *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 2; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 35-44.

Dissertation

Cho, T. Y. "The Son of Man Came Eating and Drinking (Matt 11:19): A Study of the Table Fellowship in Qumran and Q." Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1992.