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Publisher's Preface

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Identity Crisis Reflected in Romans 14:1–15:13 and the Implications for the Chinese Christians' Controversy on Ancestral Worship

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Introduction

Paul's Letter to Romans has been interpreted from different perspectives and frameworks in the long history of interpretation. With critical awareness of the practice of exegesis in relation to author, text and interpreter,[1] I would like to join the collective discussion of a passage in Romans from my own social and cultural locations.

I am a Chinese, the only member of a family from Mainland China who was born in British Hong Kong. I hold two Passports since 1997, one is issued by the People's Republic of China for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region which does not grant the right of abode in Mainland China and another Passport issued by British Government which does not grant the right of abode in Britain. Having obtained primary and secondary education in British Hong Kong, I got my first degree from a national university in Taiwan, a rebellious province of China seeking for independence. I received my initial theological education (M.Div.) from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and had my Ph.D. studies at Durham, England. I have been a Methodist minister and a social activist serving in Hong Kong and overseas Chinese churches for nineteen years before I join the academic circle as a full time lecturer (part-time circuit minister) in Hong Kong and also as a Visiting Professor of a university in Mainland China in the last seven years. I regard myself as a Chinese living

[1] See Grenholm (2000, 105) and the quotation from Watson (1991, 252).

in the interface of Chinese and western cultures, a marginal Chinese among overseas and mainland Chinese, a minister, a social activist and a scholar travelling between local churches, society and scholarly world. With this background as a person on the boundaries, I enter the study of the Christian Scripture, Paul's letter to the Romans in particular, with a strong concern about the *identity crisis* faced by Chinese Christian as both Chinese (overseas, marginal and Mainlander) and Christian.

In this paper I would provide an analytical studies of the chosen text, Rom 14:1–15:13, and a discussion of my contextual and hermeneutical concerns of the passage in relation to Chinese Christians' controversy on ancestral worship.

I. Analytical Frames[2]

This passage has drawn the attention of many scholars since the publication of a lengthy study of Rauer (1923).[3] The main issues are as follows:

1. The *Sitz im Leben* of Romans in general and the context of the controversy of Rom 14:1–15:13 in particular;
2. the identities of the "strong" and the "weak";
3. the issues of controversy; and
4. Paul's solution to the controversy.

A brief discussion on these concerns is provided at the following.

1. The Sitz im Leben of Romans and the Context of Rom 14:1–15:13

Since the publication of *The Romans Debate* in 1977,[4] there are growing consensus among scholars[5] that Romans was a letter addressed to the concrete situation of Roman Christians. The more controversial issue is

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[2] Detailed footnotes of this Section can be found in the complete paper on the website: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/religious_studies/SBL2002/home2002.htm>.

[3] Recent discussions, see Nababan (1962), Minear (1971), Karris (1973), Watson (1986, 88–98), Meeks (1987), Schneider (1989), Barclay (1996), Nanos (1996, 85–165), Lo (1998, 117–58), Tan (1999) and Reasoner (1999).

[4] Edited by Donfried (1977), in which nine articles with different perspectives are collected, the revised and expanded edition (1991) adds thirteen more articles; see also Wedderburn (1988, 140ff.); Lo (1998).

[5] E.g., Barrett (R 1962, 256); Käsemann (R 1980, 364); Wilckens (R 1982, III:78) and those listed in Reasoner (1999, 4 & 8–16). Discussion on the similarities and differences between Rom 14:1–15:13 and 1 Cor 8–10, see Lo (1998, 52–55) and Reasoner (1999, 25–44).

the identity of the "strong" and the "weak" which will be discussed in next section.

However, as far as the context of the tension between the "strong" and the "weak" is concerned, the issues of eating foods, drinking wine and observing special days are raised in a setting which they meet one another. According to the evidence of the characteristics of the Roman Christians which we found in Rom 16,[6] it is quite possible that the Roman Christians belonged to different house churches organized according to their background, without substantial inter-relationship. Paul's use of household language, such as *proslambanō* (14:1, 3; 15:7, 7) and *oiketēs* (v. 4) support the hypothesis that the setting of house churches is the *Sitz im Leben* of 14:1–15:13.

Minear was probably the first scholar who showed us the significance of using the information uncovered from the last three chapters of Romans (14–16) to reconstruct the picture of the situation in Rome and to interpret the letter as a whole accordingly.[7] He rightly challenges the assumption held by most commentators that there was a single Christian congregation in Rome where different groups of Christians worshipped side by side.[8] In our opinion, he rightly suggests that there were plausibly five or six different house churches existing in Rome.[9] However, he probably goes too far when he suggests that it is possible to identify at least five distinct factions or five different positions among these various groups from the evidence of 14:1–15:13.[10]

In view of Paul's use of liturgical languages in Rom 14:10c–12[11] and 15:9b–12,[12] it is quite probable the more specific context of Rom 14:1–

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[6] Rom 16 is regarded as part of Romans. For the detailed discussion of the characteristics of Roman Christians found in Rom 16:3–15, see Lo (1998, 27–35).

[7] See Minear (1971) and the discussion on his methodology in pp. 6ff. His work did not gain widespread acceptance among scholars; exceptions see Donfried (1977) and Watson (1986, 88f.).

[8] Minear (1971, 7); see also Cranfield (R 1975, I:22).

[9] Minear (1971, 7).

[10] Minear (1971, 8–15). Donfried (1974b, 107) rightly criticized Minear's work that "while the direction of Minear's general interpretation is persuasive, . . . we are hesitant to concur with Minear in attempting to relate almost every passage to some problem or opponent in Rome."

[11] Paul's argument in 14:10c–12 includes an OT quotation from the later part of the LXX text of Isa 45:23 and an introductory formula *legei kurios* which is probably from Isa 49:18 (cf. Num 14:28; Jer 22:24; Ezek 5:11), see Ellis (1957, 151) and Käsemann (R 1980, 373).

15:13 is related to a setting of corporate worship. Further discussion of the context of the passage will be included below.

2. The Identity of the "Strong" and the "Weak"

In 14:1–15:13, the controversy is between the "strong" and the "weak." Some scholars, such as Karris,[13] who appealed to the argument of Rauer,[14] have argued strongly that the "weak" might be Christians with syncretistic or ascetic tendencies, but not ordinary Jews.[15] However, the evidence that the issue involves clean and unclean foods (*koinos* in 14:14, cf. *katharos* in 14:20) strongly supports the view that the "weak" were Christians who observed the Mosaic law.[16] It is probable that most of them would be ethnically Jewish but may include some Gentiles. The "strong" were mostly Gentile Christians who did not follow the Mosaic law, among whom there may be some ethnic Jews who act like Paul.[17] For convenience, these two groups of Christians are designated "Jewish Christians" and "Gentile Christians" respectively. This way of identifying the "strong" and the "weak" has been a point of growing consensus among most scholars.[18]

The most significant difficulty of this interpretation is the evidence that the "weak" were vegetarians (14:2) who not only abstained from meat but also from wine (14:21). However, the evidence found in Dan 1:8–16; Esth 14:17 (LXX); Judg 12:1–4; Josephus, *Vita* 14 indicates that there were cases of Jews who abstained from both meat and wine when they were in a situation which was controlled by Gentiles.[19]

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[12] Paul uses four OT quotations in 15:9b–12, which come from the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, LXX Ps 17:50; Deut 32:43; Ps 116:1 and Isa 11:10. Among these quotations, the one in 15:9b which follows closely the text of LXX Ps 17:50 indicates an individual Jew praising God among the Gentiles.

[13] Karris (1973, 79ff.).

[14] Rauer (1923).

[15] See also Barrett (R 1962, 257f.)

[16] The use of the word *koinos* to denote "unclean" in the religious sense is almost exclusively Jewish; Reasoner (1999, 17f.) suggests that there were other reasons why people abstained from meat and wine in first century Rome (pp. 102–38).

[17] For detailed discussion on the possible interpretations of the identities of the "strong" and the "weak," see Cranfield (R 1979, II:690–97), Wilckens (R 1982, III:109–15), Moo (R 1996, 828–32).

[18] See the bibliographical reference in Karris (1973, 76n. 6) and Reasoner (1999, 6–16).

[19] So Watson (1986, 95).

3. The Issues of Controversy

The *Sitz im Leben* of the controversy between the "weak" and the "strong" is probably more specific than many scholars have thought. Minear rightly, in our opinion, suggests that *the controversy happened on the specific occasion when the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians worshipped and had communal meals together.*[20] The "weak" (Jewish Christians) did not abstain from meat or wine in general, they were vegetarian only when eating with the "strong" (Gentile Christians).[21] *The crucial issue to concern a Jew when eating a meal with Gentiles was probably how to keep the Jewish food laws in such a situation, vis-à-vis the Jewish identity.*[22] The controversy in Rom 14:1–15:13 probably reflects the issues related to *identity crisis* faced by Jewish Christians in Rome. We think this is a more plausible suggestion than others, and will seek to demonstrate that plausibility in subsequent discussion.

It is generally agreed that the Roman Christian movement emerged from the Roman Jewish community. It is quite possible that the situation of the Roman Jewish community was a prototype of the situation of the Roman Christians. In the study of the situation of the Roman Jewish community, there are several findings which are specifically relevant to our understanding of the context and controversy of the Roman Christians:[23]

1. The Roman Jewish community was organized as a community net-work[24] which consisted of several synagogues without a central governing body.
2. These synagogues were quite diverse in their background and they adopted the principle of toleration and mutual acceptance in their relationship.
3. The Roman Jews had a considerable interaction with their Gentile neighbours and also made a great effort to preserve their Jewish identity.
4. Through the Jewish community net-work, different Roman synagogues could share their resources, such as using catacombs.

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[20] See Minear (1971, 9). In early Christian times, worship and communal meal were probably inseparable; 1 Cor 11:17–22; cf. see Cullmann (1950, 14ff.).

[21] See Minear (1971, 10).

[22] See discussion on Tacitus *Historiae* V, 5:1; *Letter of Aristeas, Joseph and Asenath* in Lo (1998, 85–88).

[23] See Lo (1998, 57–113).

[24] The hyphenated form of "net-work" is intended to show the relationship between the different synagogues and house churches in Rome which were closely connected but not as a united organization, see discussion in Lo (1998, 20).

Moreover, the controversy reflected in 14:1–15:13 probably suggests that there were different practices in following Jewish food laws among house churches. Their differences caused tension among themselves. In other words, the principle of toleration and mutual acceptance was not yet adopted in dealing with differences among these Roman Christians who were organized into different house churches. This situation probably occurred when the Jews returned to Rome after the death of Claudius in 54 CE.[25] When Paul wrote his letter to Rome around 55–57 CE,[26] he perhaps tried to address this situation.

4. Paul's Solution to the Controversy

Minear is probably right to see that, in this passage,
(1) Paul did not try to persuade the "weak" to relax their dietary or calendrical scruples, in fact, Paul endorsed them;[27] and
(2) Paul did not expect to combine the "weak" and the "strong" into one group by persuading all to take the same attitude towards food and days.[28]

Nevertheless, what are Paul's positive teachings directed to the controversy? They will be presented in the *personae analysis* of Rom 14:1–15:13 at below.

A. Personae Analysis

In 1976, David Clines published a small but very interesting book: *I, He, We, & They: A Literary Approach to Isaiah 53,* JSOT Supplement Series 1 (Sheffield, JSOT Press). In studying the poem Isa 52:13–53:12, he studies the identities and the function of the *personae* in the text and the relationship between them.[29] He argues strongly the impasse of historical-critical scholarship in understanding this poem, which has failed to provide acceptable solutions for the enigmas of the poem[30] and suggests the new hermeneutic approach which put focus on the text *in itself* and takes

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[25] See Wiefel (1970, 111–13). However, we disagree with Wiefel that the denial of assembly was a first step in moderating the eviction edict of Claudius, see discussion in Lo (1998, 78–80), 3.

[26] See Cranfield (R 1975 I: 16); Fitzmyer (R 1993, 86f.).

[27] Minear (1971, 13).

[28] Minear (1971, 15).

[29] Clines (1976, 25–33 & 37–40).

[30] Clines (1976, 25 & 53).

language *as event*.[31] The language creates an alternative *world* which invites the reader to enter.[32]

We share his dissatisfaction on historical-critical approach in studying the letters, especially the problem of mirror-reading method could not be avoided.[33] Since the nature of letter is *dialogical* in both inside the text as well as between the text and the readers in the historical context,[34] we find Clines' suggestion of the study of *personae* could be applied to studying letters. Especially, the letters are not simply a source for providing information, but usually aims at performing a process of persuasion to win the readers to the position of the authors, usually related to actions.

Clines' purpose of applying the approach is to show "the legitimacy of *multiple meanings*" of a text, especially in reading a poem.[35] Our is different from him, the *genre* of poem is very different from letter. The purpose of our study is to show how this approach could help us to understand the characteristics of different identities, relationship between them, and the operation of the persuasion among them in the text as well as relate these findings to the historical contexts of the author and the readers, so that we could have a better framework to study Paul's purpose and arguments in writing the text. In this way, we are not replacing the historical-critical method by this new hermeneutic method, but using both to supplement one another in studying Paul's letter to the Romans in general,[36] the passage of 14:1–15:13 in particular.

We borrow Clines' ideas and name this approach *personae analysis*.[37] Since the first person (singular and plural) and second person (plural and singular) form the basic framework of interaction in the letter, our *personae analysis* will focus on studying the occurrences of the first and

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[31] Clines (1976, 53–56).

[32] Clines (1976, 54ff.).

[33] For discussion of the problem of mirror-reading method, see Barclay (1987).

[34] For study of ancient epistolography, see Koskenniemi (1955); Cancik (1967); Thraede (1970), See detailed footnote in the complete paper on the website.

[35] Clines (1976, 33 & 59f.), his emphasis.

[36] See Lo (1998).

[37] Clines (1971) uses the phrase "*persona*-analysis" only once as a description of his study of the *personae* in the text (p. 38) but not as an approach. In fact he seems to avoid the phrase, even though he uses "Visual analysis," "Act/agent analysis," "Speech analysis," "Affect analysis," and "Temporal analysis" for all other Sections in ch. 3 (37–49) of his book, but only "Personae" (37–40) as the name of the Section (a) in which he mentions the phrase "*persona*-analysis."

second person (singular and plural) pronouns and verbs. If the context requires us to pay attention to the third person as well, we will do so accordingly. While we accept the assumption that Romans was a letter addressed to the situation of Roman Christians, we will focus our enquiry on. the persuasion *in the letter* on how Paul as the author provide solutions to the controversy faced by his audience. We hope that by using the interaction between the first person and the second person *within the text* as the framework for our study, we can also have a better approach to understanding how Paul addresses the concrete situation of Roman Christians.[38]

B. Personae Analysis of Rom 14:1–15:13

In Rom 14:1–15:13, first person and second person pronouns (singular and plural) occur twenty-five times.[39] First person singular verbs[40] and second person singular verbs[41] occur four times each; second person plural verbs occur twice[42] and the first person plural verbs occur eleven times.[43] We may say that the occurrence of the first and second persons in this passage is quite frequent.[44] It is significant to pay attention to Paul's change from one person to another when he uses these pronouns and verbs in this passage.[45]

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[38] It implies that by the letter of Romans Paul aims to persuade his Roman audience to accept certain theses. Thus the 'I' and the 'you' in the text are also involved in a process of persuasion. In other words, there are two processes of persuasion. One is in process between the sender and the recipients in which the letter is the means of persuasion. The other is in process within the letter, primarily between the 'I' (the "implied author") and the 'you' (the "implied reader") as suggested by Booth (1983, 70–76; cf. 138); see also Iser (1972, 30); McKnight (1985, 101f.).

[39] *Egō,* 3 times: 14:11, 11; 15:3; *sy,* 12 times: 14:4, 10, 10, 10, 10, 15, 15, 21, 22; 15:3, 9, 9; *hymeis,* 5 times; 14:16; 15:5, 7, 13, 13; and *hēmeis,* 5 times: 14:7, 12; 15:1, 2, 6.

[40] 14:14; 15:8, 9, 9.

[41] 36. 14:1, 13; 15: 6, 7.

[42] 14:15, 20.

[43] 14:8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 10, 13, 19; 15:4.

[44] See Table I in Lo (1998, 428) which shows the occurences of the first and second person (singular and plural, pronouns and verbs) in Rom 1–11, 14–16.

[45] 39. Wilcken (R 1982, III:79) suggests that the frequent change of the personal pronouns in this passage indicates that Paul is not only a teacher but also a pastor who directs his care to his addressees.

In the following analysis, we divide 14:1–15:13 into five sections according to the content and the characteristics of these "persons."

1. Paul Admonishes the Jewish and the Gentile Christians not to Pass Judgement on One Another (14:1–13a)

In this passage, there are one first person singular verb and one first person pronoun in v. 11, both of which are part of the OT quotations; two first person plural pronouns in vv. 7, 12 and remarkably nine first person plural verbs in vv. 8, 10, 13, of which seven occur in v. 8. Furthermore there are five second person singular pronouns in vv. 4, and 10, of which four occur in v. 10; and there is only one second person plural verb, which occurs in the first verse.

Naturally, we start our analysis from v. 1. Paul starts his exhortation by using the second person plural imperative[46] *proslambanesthe* which most probably refers to the "strong" mentioned later in 15:1.[47] If this is the case, Paul starts his admonition explicitly towards the Gentile Christians in Rome requesting them to welcome a Jewish Christian[48] who participates in the fellowship of their house churches,[49] even though the Jewish Christian only eats vegetables when he participates in the communal meal with them (v. 2). As we have mentioned above, this could have happened when the Jewish Christians returned to Rome after the death of Claudius and participated in the existing Gentile Christian house churches. This evidence does not imply that the Jewish Christian was a vegetarian in general. His abstaining from meat was probably because he had doubts as to whether the meat provided by the Gentile Christians was prepared according to the Jewish food laws.

Thus in 14:1f., Paul presupposed that there were cases of individual Jewish Christians who had participated in the communal meals of the Gentile Christian house churches. As they ate only vegetables and abstained from all meat provided by the Gentile Christians, they had dispute with the Gentile Christians over their doubt and were not welcomed by them.

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[46] Rom 14:1–15:13 contains thirteen imperatives: 14:1, 3, 3, 5, 13, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22; 15:2, 7; see Karris (1973, 84). In which three are second person plural imperatives (14:1, 13; 15:7) and three are second person singular (14:15, 20, 22).

[47] See Michel (R 1978, 422 & 447); Käsemann (R 1980, 366); Wilckens (R 1982, III:81).

[48] It is noteworthy that the singular article with a present participle occur frequently in 14: 1–7 to denote an indefinite person.

[49] The word *proslambanō* is used in the papyri of "receiving" into a household, see M & M: 549; Black (R 1973, 165).

From a detailed *personae analysis* of this passage (see the complete paper on the website), we gather the following findings:
(1) Paul directs his exhortation explicitly to the Gentile Christians, while the Jewish Christians are not referred to as a group. The Jewish Christians are addressed as individuals among the Roman Christians or as part of the Roman Christian community as a whole.
(2) Paul has in mind that the Gentile Christians should welcome the Jewish Christians to participate in their communal meal. In other words, he expects that the Jewish and the Gentile Christians could worship together as well.
(3) Paul admonishes the Jewish and the Gentile Christians to change their attitude towards one another. However, Paul does not try to persuade them to change their different practices in relation to Jewish ceremonial laws but asks them to accept their differences.
(4) Paul emphasizes that they are united in God in their service to the Lord, under the Lordship of Christ, and in their eschatological destiny. They are brothers one to another.

The above findings give us quite a clear picture of the situation of the Roman Christian community. Paul's argument obviously shows that he does not aim at bringing the Jewish and the Gentile Christians together into one congregation in which uniformity of practice in the communal meal and observance of days would be expected. What Paul presupposes is the existence of a number of house churches alongside each other, which belong to Jewish and Gentile Christians. This is consistent with our previous understanding of the situation of the Roman Christian community.

In 14:1–13a, Paul probably wishes to restore a situation in which Jewish Christians can participate in the worship held at a Gentile Christian house church. They could eat vegetables in the communal meal with no need to dispute with the Gentile Christians.[50] In this situation, the Jewish and the Gentile Christians should not pass judgement on one another.

However, if this is the way in which Jewish Christians can participate in worship held in a Gentile Christian house church, then another issue arises: *how can Gentile Christians participate in the worship held in a Jewish Christian house church?* It is quite obvious that this cannot happen unless either Jewish or Gentile Christians are willing to change their practice in eating meal. Paul goes on to deal with this issue in the following passages.

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[50] For discussion of the limits of table-fellowship in the Judaism of the late second temple period, see Dunn (1983, 12–25); Esler (1987, 76–86) and our discussion in Lo (1998, 85–88).

2. Paul admonishes the Gentile Christians not to put a stumbling-block or hindrance in the way of building up a Roman Christian community net-work (14:13b–23)

In this passage, there are two first person singular verbs in v. 14 and one first person plural verb in v. 19. However, there are four second person singular pronouns in vv. 15, 15, 21, 22 and three second person singular verbs in vv. 15, 15, 20. Furthermore, there is one second person plural pronoun in v. 16 and a second person plural verb in v. 13b.

We start this section from v. 13b because v. 13a is better understood as the conclusion of 14:1–13a.[51] Paul changes the "persons" from first person plural in v. 13a to second person plural in v. 13b, and the fact that he uses the word *proskomma* in vv. 13b and 20 (cf. v. 21) suggests that v. 13b belongs to 14:14–23 rather than 14:1–13a.

In v. 13b, Paul uses the second person plural imperative *krinate* to direct his exhortation explicitly to the strong,[52] that is the Gentile Christians. Paul admonishes them not to place a stumbling-block (*proskomma*) or hindrance (*skandalon*) in the way of a brother. In the context of 14:1–15:13, the brother is a Jewish Christian. It is noteworthy that in the NT, *proskomma* and *skandalon* are linked together only in three cases (Rom 9:33; here and 1 Pet 2:8).[53]

From a detailed *personae analysis* of this passage (see the complete paper on the website), it appears that in 14:13b–23, Paul explicitly directs his exhortation only to the Gentile Christians. The Jewish Christians are hidden in the background. Paul brings the discussion of the observance of the Jewish food laws to a different dimension. He asks the Gentile Christians not to make this issue a test of faith for the Jewish Christians. *A Jew can become a Christian and maintain his observance of the Jewish food laws. In other words, Paul admonishes the Gentile Christians not to put the Jewish Christians in danger of becoming either Jewish or Christian apostates.*

Furthermore, although Paul endorses the Gentile Christians' understanding of the lacking of final validity of the Jewish food laws, he admonishes them to restrict their freedom in eating meat and drinking

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51 So Cranfield (R 1979, II:711); Cf. Michel (R 1978, 430); Käsemann (R 1980, 374).

52 So, e.g., Käsemann (R 1980, 374); Wilckens (R 1982, III:90).

53 There are only 6 occurrences of *proskomma* in NT. Apart from 1 Pet. 2:8 all are used by Paul: Rom 9:32, 33; 14:13, 20; 1 Cor 8:9. *Skandalon* occurs 15 times, five times in Matt (13:41; 16:23; 18:7, 7, 7), once in Luke 17:1, and none in Mark or John. It occurs 6 times in Pauline epistles, in which 4 times in Rom (9:33; 11:9; 14:13; 16:17); once in 1 Cor 1:23 and Gal 5:11. The other 3 times occur in 1 Pet. 2:8; 1 John 2:10 and Rev 2:14.

wine for the sake of building up a peaceful and close relationship with the Jewish Christians in Rome. Paul probably even suggests that it would be good if the Gentile Christians could change their practice of eating and drinking probably on *specific occasions* when they have a communal meal with the Jewish Christians. This would mean that when the Jewish Christians participate in the communal meal held at a Gentile Christian house church, not only the Jewish Christians would eat solely vegetables, but the Gentile Christians may also do the same. Cranfield rightly describes the situation as "the strong Christian who 'has the faith to eat any food' has more room in which to manoeuvre than the weak Christian who 'eats only vegetables'. He has the inner freedom not only to eat flesh but also equally to refrain from eating it. So for him to refrain for his weak brother's sake is assuredly good."[54]

Therefore, if the Gentile Christians are willing to change their practice when eating in the presence of Jewish Christians in their own house church, it would open up the chance for the Gentile Christians to follow the practice of the Jewish Christians on specific occasions when they participate in a communal meal held at the house church of the Jewish Christians. As will be shown below, this seems to be the issue discussed in 15:1–4.

Nevertheless, although in 14:13b–23 only the Gentile Christians are addressed, the message is surely overheard by the Jewish Christians as well. On the one hand, they also have to understand the observance of the Jewish food laws from the perspective of Jesus Christ, the principle of love and the kingdom of God; on the other hand, they should know that Paul understands their dilemma and sympathizes with them. However, *as for Paul, the most important thing is not to let the issue of practicing Jewish food laws, which is related to an ethnic-religio-cultural practice, become a stumbling block or hindrance in building up a peaceful and close relationship between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians in Rome.* This is an exhortation that Paul wishes to direct to both groups.

3. Paul admonishes the Gentile Christians to please the Jewish Christians (15:1–4)

This section is the climax of Paul's exhortation directed to the strong which starts from 14:1.[55] The terms *dynatos* and *adynatos* occur for the first time (15:1) to identify explicitly those who should welcome "the man who is weak in faith" (14:1) and the person so far referred to as *ho asthenōn* (14:1, 2) respectively.

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[54] Cranfield (R 1979, II:725).

[55] For detailed discussion of the textual problem of the connection between Rom 14 and 15, see Gamble (1977, 16–35 & 96–126).

The other most significant point is that Paul uses the clause *hēmeis hoi dynatoi* to identify himself most explicitly with the "strong." In fact, in this passage, the first person singular verb, second person singular verb and the second person plural pronouns and verbs are all missing. The only occurrence of the first person singular pronoun and the second person singular pronoun are in an OT quotation (v. 3). However, the first person plural pronoun occurs twice in vv. 1, 2[56] and two first person plural verbs occur in vv. 1 and 4. Thus the only "person" that occurs in this passage is "we" which denotes Paul and the strong.

From a detailed *personae analysis* of 15:1–4 (see the complete paper on the website), it appears that when Paul forcefully admonishes the Gentile Christians to carry the burden of the Jewish Christians and not to please themselves (regardless of the effects which their pleasing themselves would have on the Jewish Christians), but to please the Jewish Christians, he is probably suggesting that the Gentile Christians should follow the Jewish practice in eating meal on the specific occasion when they participate in the communal meal held at the Jewish Christian house church (cf. 1 Cor 8:7–13).[57] This practice is very important because it is related to the "good" of the Jewish Christians and the "building up" (*oikodomē,* cf. 14:19) of the Christian community in Rome (15:2).

Paul's suggestion does not contradict his position stated in Gal 2:11–14. In Galatians, the issue at stake is whether the Gentile Christians should live *fully* according to the Jewish way of life.[58] More precisely, the issue is *whether a Gentile Christian should become a Jew if he is to become a member of God's people.* Paul is strongly against this position. However, in Rom 14:1–23, he clearly states his view on the Jewish food laws (14:14) which are essential for the Jews to preserve their Jewish identity but not essential to the Christian faith and it is optional for those who have faith in Christ. The *issue* at stake is that the observance of the Jewish way when eating a meal on *specific occasions* by the Gentile Christians would contribute to *the unity of the Jewish and the Gentile Christians in Rome.*

In fact, this suggestion is in line with Paul's exhortation that the Gentile Christians who have the freedom of the Gospel should not only eat meat and drink wine but equally refrain from eating and drinking them (14:15–21). Furthermore, by using the first person plural pronoun *hēmeis* to identify himself with the *Gentile Christians* in Rome (15:1), Paul is probably also thinking of his missionary principle which not only shapes

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[56] In v. 4, there is a first person plural possessive pronominal adjective *hēmeteros.*

[57] See Dunn (1983b, 30).

[58] See Dunn (1983b, 31f.).

his missionary work but probably also shapes the aspirations and the very style of his life:[59]

> "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law, I became as one under the law—though not being myself under the law—that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law, I became as one outside the law—not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ—that I might win those outside the law. To the weak (*asthenēs*), I became weak that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." (1 Cor 9:19–22)

If that is the case, *there are <u>three</u> possible conditions on which the Jewish and Gentile Christians can participate in worship and communal meals held at one anothers' house churches as revealed in Paul's exhortations from 14:1–15:4:*
(1) *The Jewish and the Gentile Christians* should change their hostile attitude toward each other and should restore the previous situation in which the Jewish Christians would eat only vegetables when they participate in the communal meal held at a Gentile Christian house church. They should *accept each other's diversified practice of the Jewish food laws and hold their unity in serving the Lord* (14:1–13a).
(2) *Gentile Christians* should not take the issue of observance of Jewish food laws as a test of faith. Their freedom in the Gospel should allow them to *change their practice of eating and drinking to bring it in line with that of the Jewish Christians* when the Jewish Christians participate in the communal meal held at a Gentile Christian house church (14:13b–23).
(3) *Gentile Christians* have an inescapable obligation to carry the burden of the Jewish Christians in the same way as Paul did. They *should please the Jewish Christians by following the Jewish way of eating meal on the <u>specific occasion</u>* when they participate in the communal meal held at a Jewish Christian house church (15:1–4).

Thus the agreements Paul expected to be made between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians in Rome are probably as follows:

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[59] So Senior & Stuhlmueller (1983, 182). The difference of Paul's position in Galatians and Romans seems to be that those occupying the superior position in Galatians were Jewish Christians while those in Romans were Gentile Christians. Thus in Galatians, the issue is the danger of Judaizing which requires a Gentile Christian to become a Jew if he is to become a member of God's people. While in Romans the issue is the danger of a Jewish Christian becoming a Jewish or a Christian apostate in the process of building up the relationship between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians.

(1) The *Jewish Christians* should agree that, although the observance of ceremonial laws is essential for Jewish identity, this observance is not essential for Gentiles to become God's people. The only essential requirement for God's people is faith in Christ.
(2) The *Gentile Christians* are free from observing the Jewish ceremonial laws, but they must not regard the observance of Jewish ceremonial laws as incompatible with the Christian faith. Whenever they have meals with the Jewish Christians, they could follow the Jewish way of eating meal.
(3) *The lordship of Christ is the ground for the unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians.*

As far as the first two concessions are concerned, it is difficult to judge whether a greater concession is demanded of the Jewish or the Gentile Christians.[60] The Jewish Christians were expected to differentiate themselves from the "orthodox" Jews' understanding of the Jewish law in regard to the requirements for being God's people, while the Gentile Christians were expected to understand the limit of freedom in the gospel and to change their eating practices whenever they shared in a communal meal with the Jewish Christians.

In fact, the above concessions brought the Jewish Christians no difficulty in their own practice of Judaism. Since Judaism is a religion concerning "orthopraxy" rather than "orthodoxy," it is quite probable that by these concessions the Jewish Christians were able to retain their relationship with the non-Christian synagogues and also with the Gentile Christian house churches. As far as the social intercourse between the Gentile Christians and their pagan environment is concerned, the concession does not seem to cause much difficulty.[61] Thus although these two concessions are probably against the original position of some Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome, they are probably the most feasible and practical concessions which could be made between them.

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[60] Watson (1986, 96) suggests that "by far the greater concession is demanded of the Jews." However, he seems to overlook the diversified attitude among Jews towards Gentiles who would like to become members of God's people; the most famous case is recorded in Josephus, *Ant.* 20.34–48.

[61] Barclay (1996, 303–8) suggests that by encouraging Jewish and Gentile Christians to accept one another, and insisting the Gentile Christians should not pressurize Jewish Christians to change their conviction and practices of Jewish law, in the short term, Paul's position could protect "the law-observant Christians, in the long term and at a deeper level he seriously undermines their social and cultural integrity" (306). However, this may not be the case in a process of cultural interaction, mutual influence is expected.

Nevertheless, one thing crystal clear is that Paul was very conscious of the danger of apostasy by the Jewish Christians and he admonishes the Gentile Christians not to put them in such a position. *In 14:1–15:4, Paul expresses his wish that the Jewish Christians could maintain both Jewish and Christian identities. He does not try to persuade the Jewish Christians to abandon the Jewish ceremonial laws, but rather defend and protect them for their practice.*

4. Paul's prayer-wish[62] towards the Jewish and the Gentile Christians in Rome (15:5–6)

As far as the "persons" in this passage are concerned, *hymin* occurs in v. 5, and the second person plural subjunctive *doxazēte* and the first person plural pronoun *hēmōn* occur in v. 6. As these verses are the concluding part of 14:1–15:6, it is obvious that Paul is addressing all the Christians in Rome, both Jewish and Gentile Christians alike.[63]

From a detailed *personae analysis* of 14:1–15:6 (see the complete paper on the website), it indicates that Paul directs his exhortation explicitly to the Gentile Christians (cf. 14:1, 13–23; 15:14). The Jewish Christians are addressed only as individuals (14:4, 10, 10) or together with the Gentile Christians as the whole Roman Christian community (14:7–13a; 15:5–6). This is clearly shown by the fact that Paul uses all the second person plural pronouns and verbs in 14:1–15:4 to address only the Gentile Christians.

However, Paul's message to the Gentile Christians would be overheard by the Jewish Christians and is relevant to them. The Jewish Christians would understand Paul's view on the food laws, his sympathy with their dilemma and his exhortation to the Gentile Christians for the sake of their difficulties. Nevertheless, it is clear that *Paul admonishes both the Jewish and the Gentile Christians to change their attitude to one another, but he admonishes only the Gentile Christians to change their practice in eating whenever they have a communal meal with the Jewish Christians. The Jewish Christians are not asked to change their observance of Jewish ceremonial laws, even though their understanding is not in accord with Christian belief.*

5. Paul Affirms the Significance of the Building up of a Christian Community Network for the Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome (15:7–13)

The occurrence of the second person plural imperative *proslambanesthe* here certainly connects 15:7 with 14:1. However, while in 14:1, the

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[62] The other prayer-wishes in Romans are all in ch. 15 (vv. 13, 33); see Cranfield (R 1979, II: 736).

[63] See Cranfield (R 1979, II:737); Käseman (R 1980, 383).

second person plural is addressed to the "strong," it is here addressed to the Christian community in Rome as a whole which is composed of the "strong" *and* the "weak."[64] Hence the use of *allēlous* in 15:7 is most significant. The phrase to "welcome one another" probably indicates the climax of the whole passage which has been built up from the exhortation in 14:1–15:4 and the prayer wish in 15:5: (i) let us no more pass judgement on one another (14:13a); (ii) let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual (*allēlous*) upbuilding (14:19); and (iii) may God grant you to live in such harmony with one another (15:5). In 15:7, Paul concludes his exhortation by admonishing the Gentile and the Jewish Christians to recognize and accept one another even though they have different attitudes towards the Jewish ceremonial laws and the fact that they belong to different house churches. *The reason why they must accept one another is the model of Christ* (cf. 15:5).

From a detailed *personae analysis* of the passage (see the complete paper on the website), it appears that in 15:7–13, Paul addresses the Christian community in Rome as a whole. In it, he not only refers to his exhortation to the Jewish and the Gentile Christians in 14:1 –15:6 about their mutual recognition and acceptance in the communal meal held at their different house churches, but also refers to God's covenant faithfulness to the Jews (15:8; cf. 3:4, 7; 9:4ff.), God's mercy to the Gentiles (15:9; cf. 9:15–18, 23; 11:30–32) and the content of the gospel (15:12; cf. 1:3–5; 9:5) which he has discussed in detail in Rom 1–11.[65]

Summary and Conclusion

From our detailed *personae analysis* of Rom 14:1 –15:13 (see the complete paper on the website), we have developed a *hypothesis* that there were two main groups of Christians in Rome: a Jewish Christian group which may have included proselytes and God-fearers with Jews who observed Jewish ceremonial laws, and which is a religio-cultural-ethnic group rather than a strictly ethnic group; and a Gentile Christian group which may have included Jews who did not maintain the observance of the Jewish ceremonial laws. They were organized into different house churches when the Jewish Christians returned to Rome after the death of Claudius. Since the Jewish Christians maintained their observance of Jewish ceremonial laws, they would probably have no difficulty in building

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64 See Sanday & Headlam (R 1902, 397); Michel (R 1978, 447); Wilckens (R 1982, III:105).

65 Black (R 1973, 173) rightly acknowledges that 15:9–13 not only sums up the conclusion of the argument between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians, but also the main theme and purpose of Romans.

up their relationship with the synagogues of the Roman Jewish community. However, the bitter experience of the Jewish Christians who had participated in the communal meal held in the Gentile Christian house had caused a tense relationship between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians.

Paul understood the situation and wrote the letter to *both* the Jewish and the Gentile Christians in Rome in order to persuade them to build up a peaceful and close relationship between their house churches. In 14:1–15:13, Paul admonished *both groups* to change their attitude towards one another, but explicitly asked *the Gentile Christians* to consider the dilemma faced by *the Jewish Christians.*

Paul admonished the Gentile Christians to change their practice in the communal meal and to follow the Jewish way of eating a meal whenever Jewish Christians were present. Paul desired that *the Gentile Christians* would welcome the Jewish Christians to participate in the communal meals held in their house churches, thus recognizing the significance of the ministry of Christ among the Jews. On the other hand, Paul wished *the Jewish Christians* to welcome the Gentile Christians to the communal meals held in their house churches, thus recognizing the legitimacy of the Gentile mission and the ministry of Christ among the Gentiles.

In his exhortation, Paul was fully aware of the danger of apostasy by the Jewish Christians. Paul explicitly asked the Gentile Christians not to put the Jewish Christians into such a position. *Paul's purpose was probably to build up a Roman Christian community net-work among the Jewish and the Gentile Christian house churches, and at the same time to let the Jewish house churches (Jewish Christian synagogues) retain their relations with the Roman Jewish community. In other words, Paul neither demanded the Jewish Christians to give up their connection with the non-Christian Jews, nor asked the Gentile Christians to become Jews.* This could happen if:

(1) the *Jewish Christians* could continue to *maintain their Jewish identity* and *their status* in the Roman Jewish community;

(2) the *Jewish Christians* recognized the *legitimacy* of the Gentile Christians also as God's people;

(3) the *Gentile Christians* recognized the *significance* of their relationship with the Jewish Christians;

(4) the *Gentile Christians* agreed to follow the Jewish way in eating a meal whenever they have communal life with the Jewish Christians; and

(5) the *Jewish Christians* and the *Gentile Christians* welcomed one another to participate in the communal life of their different house churches.

From the evidence of 14:1–15:13, we find that Paul addressed explicitly the first, the fourth and the fifth conditions and mentioned the

second and the third in passing. We suggest that Paul may have addressed these two conditions specifically in the first eleven chapters of Romans.[66]

We agree with Watson that the main issues were concerned with the question of the relationship between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians, and also that between Christians (Jewish and Gentile) and Jews (Christian and non-Christian). We disagree with him critically on Paul's attitude towards these relationships. In Romans 14:1–15:13, we find that:

(1) Paul emphasized the importance of the *unity* between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians but did *not* try to persuade the Jewish Christians *to separate* from the Jewish community; *They could be a Jew and a Christian at the same time.*

(2) Paul admonished the *Gentile Christians* not to make the Jewish Christians become Jewish apostates in pursuit of Christian unity, but *to support the Jewish Christians in their effort to preserve their Jewish identity.*

(3) Paul asked the *Gentile Christians* to exercise their freedom to choose to follow the Jewish way of eating a meal at the *specific occasion* when they participate in the communal meal held at a Jewish Christian house church. However he affirmed their correct understanding that the Jewish practice had nothing to do with their identity of people of God. They could *maintain their non-Jewish (Gentile) identity according to the Gospel.*

(4) Paul *differentiates* the importance of issues between *soteriological* and *cultural, essential* and *situational.* He stands firm on the former issues without any room to compromise in his letter to Galatians, but *suggests actions to please those who are wrong in their convictions and compromise* on the latter issues in Rom 14:1–15:13.

II. Contextual Frames[67]

The above findings are most significant in our discussion of the relationship between Gospel and cultural-ethnic identity among Chinese. Chinese Christianity has long been labeled as a foreign religion and has been criticized that to be a Christian is not to be a Chinese. The conflict of to be a Chinese and to be a Christian has been an issue reflected in the well known Rites Controversy (1615–1742) which arose among Catholic missionaries[68] regarding how they should deal with "Chinese rites" in the transitional years from Ming dynasty (1368–1644) to Qing dynasty

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66 See Lo (1998, 197–415).

67 See the complete paper on the website for a more detailed discussion.

68 See Ching (1993, 192); the following discussion of the controversy is largely based on the information from Latourette (1929, 131–51) and Ching (1993, 193–95).

(1644–1911). The issue at stake was *whether Christian converts be permitted to continue the practice of the ancestral cult which was so central to the entire family and clan system, as well as the veneration of Confucius, in those temples dedicated to his name which were attached to every school in the country?*

Under the leadership of Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), Jesuit missionaries approved for their converts the veneration of ancestors and of Confucius.[69] But opposition to this move was reported to the Pope in Rome, Clement XI. He sent an envoy to China (1704–1710), the Patriarch of Antioch, Maillard de Tournon.[70] Even though the Chinese Emperor K'ang-shi (1662–1722), who was very sympathetic to Christianity, had given his official confirmation in 1700—that Confucius was not worshipped as God, but venerated as a moral teacher; that ancestral veneration was regarded as a memorial service rather than as a worship of the spirit; and that the ancestral tablet offered a focus for filial attention and devotion, and no more; and that Heaven and Lord-on-high were identifiable, not with the physical Heaven, but the Lord of Heaven and Earth and all things,[71] the envoy reported to the Pope negatively about the practice.

The controversy was considered by eight popes and involved leading universities in Europe.[72] In the end, Rome was to support those who opposed the rites, whose judgement was that the ancient Chinese were idolaters and the modern Chinese atheist; that the Confucian classics themselves, and even the Jesuit works published in Chinese, taught doctrine contrary to the Christian faith; that ancestral rites were illicit because they were offered to spirits of ancestors and so involved idolatry and superstition; that Confucius himself was a public idolater and a private atheist, and should not be honoured by Christians as a saint.[73]

In a decree of 1704, reinforced by the bull *Ex illa die* of 1715, Pope Clement XI banned the rites.[74] Another envoy of the pope, Jean Ambrose Charles Mezzabarba, was sent to China in 1720. He was more tactful than his predeceeor, Tournon, and presented to the Emperor a concession in the form of eight "permissions" which were mainly *an interpretation* of the

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69 See Latourette (1929, 132–35) for Jesuit's attitude toward Chinese rites.

70 See Latourette (1929, 141–46).

71 See Latourette (1929, 140) and Ching (1993, 193).

72 The Protestant philosopher Leibnitz published a defense of the Jesuits, but in 1700 the theological faculty of the University of Paris formally disapproved the Jesuit position, see Latourette (1929, 139f.).

73 See Ching (1993, 194).

74 See Latourette (1929, 140f. & 146f.).

clauses that permitted ceremonies of a purely civil or political character.[75] However these concessions were far from satisfaction to K'ang-hsi and were annulled by the Pope Benedict XIV, the successor of Clement XI.[76] On July 11, 1742, Pope Benedict XIV decided "definitively" in favour of those opposing the rites. His decree, *Ex quo singulari,* condemned the Chinese rites and imposed an oath on all Catholic missionaries in China to oppose the rites.

The decision had incalculable consequences. The Catholic missionaries were expelled from China and an imperial edict to ban Christianity was issued. A golden chance of implanting the Gospel on Chinese soil was lost.[77] Cynically, almost two centuries after *Ex quo singulari,* during the second world war, Pope Pius XII in 1939 reversed the decision of 1742, authorizing Christians to take part in ceremonies honouring Confucius and to observe the ancestral rites. By then, however, the veneration of Confucius was largely discontinued since China had put in a modern school system to replace the traditional Confucian-oriented "temple-related" institutions. Besides, the Chinese were at war with Japan, and hardly had the time to spare for ancestral rites. The golden chance had simply gone, and not returned.

While the Catholics have an official position on the issue of ancestral rites, the Protestants could hardly come to any consensus even today.[78] Robert Morrison, who was the first Protestant missionary arrived China in 1807, had studied the problem and expressed his opposition stance

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[75] See discussion in Latourette (1929, 148f.).

[76] See Latourette (1929, 149f.).

[77] Latourette is ambivalent about the consequences of the controversy. On the one hand he criticizes that the papal decision had "established a tradition for making the Church unadaptable to Chinese conditions and beliefs. It tended and still tends to keep the Roman Catholic Church a foreign institution, one to which China must conform but which refuses to conform to China" (see p. 154). On the other hand he praises that "the papal decisions made the winning of nominal adherents more difficult, but they tended to keep high the standards of the Church." For him "Numbers were sacrificed for vitality" (155). However, Latourette has to answer the question (154; cf. 132) that "in the only countries where Christianity has triumphed over a high civilization, as in the older Mediterranean world and the Nearer East, it has done so by conforming in part to older cultures. Whether it can win to its fold a highly cultured people like the Chinese without again making a similar adaptation remains an unanswered question."

[78] See discussions in Huang (1994); Yeo (1996); Ying (1997a) and Leung (1997).

similar to the old Catholic position in 1832[79] While the missionary activities expanded after the opium war (1840), the conflicts on the issue between missionaries and Chinese society became a burning one among the missionaries. In the 19th Century, there were two missionary conferences (1877, 1890) held in China which had to pay a lot of attention to the controversy.

In the first conference (1877), almost all participants condemned the Chinese ancestral worship as an act of idolatry which must not be participated by Chinese Christians.[80] Only a few had raised questions, such as whether missionaries had the right to compel Chinese to give up their way of honouring the dead, and the practical situation for Chinese Christians to lose their right of inheritance if they refuse to participate in the rite. The most positive response was proposed by T. P. Crawford and C. Goodrich that an effort of developing Christian rites to replace ancestral worship should be pursued.[81]

In the second conference (1890), a report from a thorough study on the issue done by W. A. P. Martin[82] aroused a hot debate. In Martin's report, he agrees that there are some idolatrous and superstitious elements involved in Chinese ancestral worship, but there are positive elements as well. The origin of the rite comes from some best principles of humanity which include a wish to communicate with the parents passed away. The three levels in the rite including "posture," "invocation" and "offering" which do not necessary equivalent to idol-worship, but rather reflect a pattern of Chinese daily living. He suggests that the westerners offering of flowers to remember those dead has the same meaning as the Chinese offering meats and vegetables.[83] Thus it would be better to work according to the principle of cleaning the unacceptable elements but preserving the good ones, so that the rite could be modified to the extend that it is in harmony with the Christian faith. However, his accommodation approach was not welcomed by most participants. Nevertheless, the situation was not as one-sided as in 1877. Some prominent missionaries did express their support to Martin. They suggest that missionaries must learn how to differentiate ***religious*** and ***non-religious*** elements involved in the rite. It is unfair to identify ancestral worship simply as idolatry. The opponents proposed a strong resolution against Martin's report. For them, *non-western cultures such as the Chinese were simply pagan cultures.* The

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79 Morrison, J. (1832, 202) and (1833, 502).

80 See Ying (1997a, 11–13).

81 See *Records* (1878, 396–97 & 401), cited by Ying (1997a, 13n. 24).

82 See *Records* (1890, 620–31).

83 Ibid., 627.

issue at stake was not "*Gospel* and *cultures* of other people," but "*Gospel* and other *religious traditions*"[84] which were not compatible with Christianity, and must be totally rejected.

The debate among missionaries had also reflected among Chinese converts. It is because the stance of absolute opposition to Chinese Christian involvement in the rite and also the requirement to destroy the ancestor tablets in family as a pre-requisite for baptism had attracted attention and strong reaction from the Chinese society. Many of those anti-Christian publications focusing on the issue had been published, condemning Christianity as an immoral religion which did not honour parents and ancestors.[85]

Martin rekindled the debate in 1902 by publishing an essay on "How Shall We Deal with the worship of Ancestors?" He further expresses his view that the rite is *not religious* in nature but *an ancient Chinese social order.* A committee chaired by James Jackson of Methodist Episcopal Mission who served at Wuchang was formed to give report on ancestral worship to the China Centenary Missionary Conference (1907).

In the report, the issue of whether ancestral worship was idolatrous was avoided. The most obvious reason against the rite was the problem of replacing The Creator by human creatures.[86] Nevertheless, the positive elements of expressing filial piety and the differentiation between the nature and practice of the rite were emphasized. Five constructive practical methods were proposed, namely:[87] (1) Make greater use of Memorial days to dispel from the Chinese minds the false notion that the westerners care nothing for the dead, (2) more attention should be paid in Christian school and church to positive teaching about honouring parents and commemorating benefactors, (3) discourage wealthy families to spend much money at funerals, in feasts and presents, but to exhort to use money on such occasions in benevolent and philanthropic ways, (4) leave to individual conscience in dealing with the Ancestral Tablet, (5) make more decent and suitable provision in respect of cemeteries.

From the above proposal, we could see that except for the fourth proposal which is related to Ancestral Tablet, the others are oriented from the western cultural perspective. The main concern of Chinese on ancestral worship, *vis-à-vis* the participation of a Chinese Christian in the rite was rejected. The position that the ancestral worship was incompatible with Christian faith and could not be tolerated as a practice in the

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84 See Ariarajah (1994, 2–4).

85 See the list of publications in Ying (1997a, 20n. 42).

86 Ibid., 233.

87 See Jackson (1907, 239–4).

Christian Church was reiterated.[88] The most significant change was from a totally negative attitude reflected in the resolutions of the two previous conferences (1877 and 1890) to a more sympathetic one. The report advocated a constructive than a destructive attitude towards the rite.[89] This change had opened up space for more positive discussion by Chinese Christians. A few of them even openly supported the stance of Christian participation in the rite which was against the basic position of the missionaries.[90]

In the debate among Chinese Christians on the rite, the main issues were:[91]

(1) The mixed superstitious element in the present ancestral worship was criticized, but the original meaning of filial piety, which was emphasized by Confucius, was confirmed.

(2) The rite of ancestral worship should be reformed rather than destroyed. Filial piety embedded in the rite was regarded as the foundation of morality in Chinese culture. The most urgent issue was to introduce a rite, which would be compatible to both Christian faith and Chinese culture.

(3) The most critical concern of the rite should be not regarding ancestors as gods of any kind. Even though some had distorted the original meaning of ancestral worship, it would not be legitimate to reject the rite completely. The issues were related to concept and technicalities of the practice. Chinese Christian could accept the rite after some adjustments.

Nevertheless, although the above understanding of the rite as an expression of filial piety were generally accepted, the stance of the rite as heretic idolatry propounded by missionaries still prevailed among most Chinese Christians until today.

The position toward the rite among most of the Protestant churches is almost the same as the Catholics in the 18th Century. This stance has not only become a stumbling block for Chinese to become Christians but also indicates that a basic issue of the relationship between the Gospel and the Chinese culture has not been thoroughly understood. The crux of the matter of ancestral rites is very much related to the ***identity of Chinese***.[92] As a matter of fact, ancestral rites have different stages of development in the

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88 See the resolutions and the discussion in Jackson (1907, 604–24).

89 Ibid., 239.

90 See Ying (1997a, 55–64).

91 Ibid., 76–82.

92 See Watson & Rawski (1988) and Ying (1997b, 218 & 224).

Chinese history and possess multi-layers of meanings.[93] The question of how to differentiate these differences, especially the *religious* meanings and the *social, moral,* and *cultural* functions, and the i*mplied significance* of these to *Chinese* and *Christian identities,* are vital to the development of Christianity among the Chinese—including mainlanders, overseas, and marginal.

III. Hermeneutical Frames

The controversy of the ancestral worship among Chinese Christian is related to the interpretations of the rite and also Christian faith.

1. Interpretations on the Rite of Ancestral Worship

The main issue concerning the rite is its religious nature. However the understanding of religion in Chinese culture is very different from the west. It is a common understanding in the modern religious study that there is no Chinese word equivalent to the word "*religio* (Latin)" or "religion."[94] The modern Chinese term for religion—"*tsung-chiao*"—was imported from Japanese translations of European works and terminology in the 19th Century.

In his classic study, *Religion in Chinese Society* (1961), Prof. C. K. Yang differentiates religion into two types: institutional religion and diffused religion. According to Yang, "institutional religion in the theistic sense is considered as a system of religious life having (1) an independent theology or cosmic interpretation of the universe and human events, (2) an independent form of worship consisting of symbols (gods, spirits, and their images) and rituals, and (3) an independent organization of personnel to facilitate the interpretation of theological views and to pursue cultic worship."[95] Diffused religion is considered of as " a religion having its theology, cultus, and personnel so intimately diffused into one or more secular social institutions that they became a part of the concept, rituals and structure of the latter, thus having no significant independent existence."[96] Buddhism, Taoism and Christianity belong to institutional religion. Diffused religion includes ancestor worship, the worship of community deities, and the ethicopolitical cults.[97] In other words,

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93 See Yang (1961), esp. 29–31, 44–48, 60ff., 253–55.

94 See Yang (1961, 2) and Ching (1993, 1–3).

95 Yang (1961, 294).

96 Ibid., 294–95.

97 Further discussion of institutional and diffused religions in Chinese society, see Yang (1961, 295–340).

ancestral worship had all the primary qualities of religion diffused into the institutional structure, including the belief in the souls of the dead, their power to influence the living morally and physically, and the need for perpetual sacrifice by the descendants was a part of the classical thought that had been inseparably woven into the matrix of kinship values and the very concept of the traditional family. The mortuary and sacrificial rites and other social and economic arrangements of the family that were associated with the dead ancestors formed an integral part of the system of rituals of the family.[98] Nevertheless, although the religious element of Chinese ancestral worship which originated in Shang dynasty (c. 1766–1123 BCE) is obvious, the Confucian attempt to rationalize and moralize the understanding of the rite was as early as in the sixth century BCE.[99] Thus there are different motivations and understanding of the rite of ancestral worship among Chinese. For most intellectuals, it is a cultural activity which helps to express filial piety, serves the purpose of integrating the community and has a function of moral enhancement in society. For common people, it is religiously significant as a way to communicate with the departed kinsmen and even has a function of pursuing blessings and avoiding curses.

Nevertheless, from a survey of Henry Smith conducted in Hong Kong in the mid-eighties, most people who participated in the rite are not motivated by religious concern but rather connections with and responsibility towards ancestors.[100] In a survey conducted in Taiwan by Prof. Li Yi-yuen, around two third of those who claim to be non-religion believers participated in ancestral worship.[101] In other words, most Chinese in modern Hong Kong and Taiwan who participate in ancestral worship are not motivated by religious concern but rather filial piety as well as social and moral considerations.[102]

Although the communist Chinese government had adopted a policy of suppression of religious activities, including ancestral worship, during

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98 See Yang (1961, 29–31, 44–48, 53, 298).

99 Ibid., 48–49; Ching (1993, 19–21) and Leung (1997, 146–50).

100 See Smith (1987, 9–89, esp. 39–41), when the question of the feeling of ancestral worship is asked, 95% agreed as showing respect to the ancestors, 79% thanksgiving to ancestors, 79% as sense of belonging to family, 73% as for individual satisfaction, 67% remembering the dead. The religious concerns, such as practical needs of ancestors (44%), fear to arouse the anger of dead (40%), concern the situation of the dead (37%), represented less than 50% of the responses; see also Ying (1997b, 223–24).

101 Li (1992, 152–53, 160), see also Ying (1997b, 222–23).

102 See also Leung (1997, 158).

the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), an open policy has been implemented since 1980. Comprehensive survey on the ancestral worship in Mainland China has not been done recently, there is evidence that the rite has become more and more popular.[103]

Thus, ancestral worship is still a living issue among Chinese. Ones position on whether Chinese Christian could participate in ancestral worship is significant and depends on the interpretation of the meaning of the rite in Chinese context. The issue is religio-cultural-moral-ethnic related and it has directly implication to the ***identity of Chinese.***[104] The issue of identity is particularly significance for those Chinese outside the major population of Chinese, *vis-à-vis* among overseas Chinese.

2. Interpretation of Christian Faith

The position of Vatican in 18th Century as well as most Protestant missionaries and churches today is based on the interpretation of Christian faith, especially the first two of the Ten commandments (Exod 20:3–6).[105] However if the interpretation of the above on Chinese religious perspective on ancestral worship is taken into account, the charge of the violation of Ten commandments is not fit in the context.

Furthermore, in the discussion among missionaries in the 1907 conference, the issue of "individual conscience" was raised in relation to dealing of the Ancestral Tablet. This was a real breakthrough in the discussion of the ancestral worship since Morrison's essay of 1832.[106] The languages of "each one must be fully persuaded in his own mind"[107] and "A decision of the Emperor . . . might make it easier for a *weak* Christian to disobey the voice of conscience. For the *strong* Christian it might only make him realize that he must oppose the Imperial decision both as to Imperial and as to the Confucian worship"[108] surely echo languages used in 1 Cor 8–10 and Rom 14:1–5:13, especially 14:5b. Since the relationship between the discussion and 1 Cor 8–10 has been commonly seen.[109] I would like to propose that the message of Rom 14:1–15:13 is also relevant to the discussion, which has been overlooked. The issue related is the ***identity crisis*** faced by both Jewish Christians and Chinese Christians.

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103 See Ying (1997b, 221–22).

104 See Ying (1997b, 224–25).

105 Other biblical texts related to the discussion of ancestral worship, see Yeo (1996, 135–41).

106 See note 170 above.

107 Jackson (1907, 244).

108 *Records* (1907, 621–22), my emphsis.

109 See Yeo (1996) and also Leung (1997, 160 & 204).

As has been shown in the above Section of *Analytical Frames,* the main issue in the passage is the identity crisis faced by the Jewish Christians that whether they could maintain their Jewish identity and also followers of Christ. Under the pressure of the strong, the weak have to face a choice, which Paul does not think necessary or proper. Even though the strong are right in understanding of the relation between faith and eating and drinking, they should understand the implications from the view of the weak. For the strong enjoy more freedom in their daily practice, they should please the weak rather than judge the weak in their practices which are essential to maintain their Jewish identity.

Thus, only if the strong could see from the perspective of the weak, they would not agree to give up their "right" practice (orthopraxy) which is supported by their "right" understanding (orthodoxy). They could not accept the "wrong" practice of the weak as they are supported by the "wrong" understanding. Although the weak see the issue from the other way round.

In the Chinese Christian controversy on ancestral worship, the Popes and their delegates in the 17th and 18th Centuries as well as the Protestant missionaries in 19th and early 20th Centuries had not viewed the issue from the Chinese contexts and the Chinese Christian perspective. They did not see in their relationship with the Chinese Christians, that they are the strong who forced the weak, Chinese Christians, to face the identity crisis of being Chinese and Christian.

Would the missionary history in China be different if the message of Rom 14:1–15:13 had been heard from the position of the weak?

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Peace in the Epistle to the Romans and in the Malagasy Culture

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1. Introduction

Talking about peace in Romans is crucial for Malagasy people today, not only because of present political instability and incipient social violence, but also because of its intrinsic link with the central Malagasy concept of *fihavanana*. A dialogical approach of the theme will help the Malagasy churches and believers to appreciate the relevance of mutual criticism and clarification between Paul's epistle and their local culture. In this respect, the main contribution of this paper lies in the possible renewal of the concept of *fihavanana* through a Malagasy-oriented reading of Romans. We will then take into account two fundamental principles of interpretation, the first of which comes from the reader-response criticism:

> Meaning exists formally only in human beings. In the case of a human being who is also a reader, ***meaning is generated by a reader reading a text.*** In this operation, which the reader initiates, a mysterious interaction ensues between reader and text, in which ***the latter imposes powerful constraints on the reading process.*** Nevertheless, apart from a reader and a reading, a text is simply ink on paper.[1]

The second insight is worked out by the ideological criticism:

> Ideology is normally lived as if it were totally natural, as if its imaginary and fluid discourse gives a perfect and unified explanation of reality. Once it is work into a text, all its contradictions and gaps are exposed. The realist writer intends to unify all the elements in the text, but ***the***

[1] S. Brown 1988, 232. Cf. U. Eco 1985, 61–77.

> ***work that goes on in the textual process inevitably produces certain lapses and omissions*** which correspond to the incoherence of the ideological discourse it uses: "for in order to say anything, there are other things *which must not be said.*"[2]

Consequently, we will focus our attention, firstly, on the semantically constraining, and probably correcting, function of the biblical text vis-à-vis the contextually motivated reading and, secondly, on the possible "silences" and incoherences of the Pauline discourse on peace.

2. Peace in Romans

2.1. In this paper, the concepts of peace and reconciliation will be studied together, because (a) in the Malagasy Bible εἰρήνη is translated, according to the contexts, by *fiadanana* (peace) or *fihavanana* (reconciliation, good relation); (b) in the linguistic study of the New Testament, the semantic domain of *reconciliation* is intrinsically connected with that of *peace,*[3] In this respect, the linguistic findings show that three semantic domains are relevant for our discussion about Romans: (1) favorable circumstances and states (Louw and Nida's N° 22.G: εἰρήνη Rom 1:7; 2:10; 3:17; 5:1; 8:6; 10:15; 14:17,19; 15:13,33; 16:20); (2) reconciliation (N° 40.A: καταλλάσσω Rom 5:10ab; καταλλαγή Rom 5:11; 11:15); (3) peaceful behavior (N° 88.N: εἰρηνεύω Rom 12:18).

2.2. Before we comment briefly the above mentioned passages, we should establish the importance of the theme inside the epistle. First of all, the concept of peace is related to the *propositio* in Rom 1:16–17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is power of God, for the salvation of everyone who believes, to Jew first and to Greek since the righteousness of God is disclosed in it, progressively from faith into faith as has been written: *The righteous will live from faith.*"[4] It shows that the relationship between Jews and Greeks is one of the main concerns of Paul in this letter as ch. 9–11 and some passages in the exhortation part (ch. 14; 15:7–12; 15:26, 27) will confirm. The function of peace in the persuasion strategy of Paul is always crucial whether the epistle is considered as a *peace*

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[2] R. Selden and P. Widdowson 1993, 89–90.

[3] See Louw and Nida 1988: the semantic domain 40.A on reconciliation includes the word εἰρηνοποιέω.

[4] Every New Testament quotation is taken from *The African Bible,* edited in Nairobi in 1995.

memorandum for Jews and Gentiles (in Rome and outside)[5] or as a *doctrinal apology* for a mixed audience.[6]

Moreover, a statistical comparison within the Pauline corpus enables us to perceive the relative importance of our topic in Rom:

	Occurrences in Rom only	Occurrences in other six letters
καταλλάσσω / καταλλαγή	2 / 2	4 / 2
εἰρηνεύω / εἰρήνη	1 / 11	2 / 17

2.3. We may start our analysis with the most overarching category of letter inclusion: as a matter of fact, the opening salutation **χάρις** ὑμῖν καὶ **εἰρήνη** (1:7 *grace and peace be to you*) frames the letter twice with the closing salutation in 15:33 ὁ δὲ **θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης** μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν (*May the God of peace be with you*) and with the final promise and blessing in 16:20 ὁ δὲ **θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης** συντρίψει τὸν σατανᾶν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας ὑμῶν ἐν τάχει. ἡ **χάρις** τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν (*the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you*). These words can be treated as clichés, but in the concrete argument of Rom they earn an added meaning: they reflect Paul's conviction system according to which the reality of peace is a gift from God who establishes communion with his people and destroys the power of his main enemy. K. Haacker is right when he says that here we can recognize *the theological foundation of peace thinking*.[7] The German theologian explains with this phrase the divine

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[5] O. Pfleiderer (1885 *Hibbert Lectures*): "The epistle suggests that the relations between the Jewish and Gentile sections of the Church were strained, that the healthy development of the Church was thus daily placed in increasing peril, and the more so as through the rapid growth of the Gentile section,the Jewish, which had undoubtedly formed the principal element of originally, had sunk into the position of a powerless minority" (see M. Dods 1892, 91); H. W. Bartsch 1968, 291: "Damit wird aber der sachliche Grund das Bemühen des Paulus im Römerbrief deutlich, daß auf die Einheit der Gemeinde aus Judenchristen und Heidenchristen gerichtet ist"; K. Haacker 1990, 29: "den Römerbrief als ein Plädoyer für Frieden in verschiedenen Dimesionen und geschichtlichen Kontexten durchsichtig zu machen."

[6] M. Dods 1892, 92: "In substance the letter is a justification of the Apostle's mission to the Gentiles, a justification first to his own mind, and secondly to the Christian community at Rome"; R. E. Brown 1997, 563: "Rom was in a way a summary of Paul's thought, phrased with an air of finality as he pulled together his ideas before going to Jerusalem where he would have defend them."

[7] K. Haacker 1990, 41. C. Perrot (1988, 16) thinks that "par-delà les divisions qui secouent les églises, y compris celle de Rome, l'apôtre lance d'abord un message de paix, dans le respect des diversités. Au fait, cette paix est mentionnée tant dans le souhait qui débute l'ensemble (Rm 1.7 'à vous grâce et paix') que

origin of peace, but we can also emphasize upon the word *grace* which gives a Pauline flavour to the discourse. Indeed, peace is not only an apostolic project for the community, but a consequence of the salvation event in the Lord Jesus.

Such an uterrance is understandable in a cultural context in which peace is a social and political treaty between families or larger social groups, and according to the local traditions, it comes into force only after animal sacrifices and the invocation of the ancestors and God the Creator. Here God is not the gracious source of peace as such, but the sacred guarantor of any peace agreement or taboo removal conceived by belligerent communities or conflicting individuals.[8]

2.4. In Rom 2:10, 11 Paul wrote: "Glory and honour and peace to everyone who accomplishes good, both to Jew in the first place and to Greek; for with God there is no partiality!" One of the clues of this sentence lies in the phrase *peace to everyone* (εἰρήνη παντὶ) which contains the idea of universality and fairness of God's eschatological retribution. In this sentence, peace stands for a very positive reward which will restitute the wholeness of those who will have committed themselves to the well-being of humankind. In addition, by linking peace with two other core values, i.e. *glory and honor*, Paul suggests that the notion of peace is inseparable with a successful integration in the final salvation community. This irreversible condition comes from God who "does not accept people on the grounds of social status (Gal 2:6), or correctly-offered ritual."[9]

That peace is thought of as a reward from God's just judgment can be interpreted by a Malagasy reader as a confirmation of the ancestral belief

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dans la finale de l'Epître, avant les salutations: 'Que le Dieu de paix soit avec vous tous. Amen' (15.33)." It should be precised that the ch. 16 agrees completely with the preceding chapter by reformulating the action of the God of peace.

8 "The son who dishonoured his father by being disobedient or by slighting him in the presence of others, is inexorably expelled from his family and his relatives [. . .] If the son had anything to give as a sacrifice, be i an ox or a fowl, he had to give this before leaving. On such occasion allthe people of the village are gathered at the place of sacrifice where the sacrifier renders an account of the matter to *Andriamanitra* [God] and the dead ones of the family, mentioning them by name and asking them to accept the sacrifice as an atonement" (J. Ruud 1970, 21).

9 *The African Bible* 1995: ad loc. n. 23. Jouette Bassler (1984, 54) bases the indisputable character of the divine judgment upon this principle: "The fact of God's impartial justice over both Gentiles and Jews is, of course, a necessary presupposition for the charge that all are under sin and accountable to God. Impartiality precludes any qualification of this charge on the basis of ignorance or privilege."

according to which each moral act contains its own consequences and sends them back to the initial agent. It does not need any special intervention of God, because the perceived reality has been build in such a way[10]: *There is no retribution, but what you have done comes back to you.* Good works will necessarily bring honor and peace. At this level of analysis, the appeal to divine impartiality seems to be superfluous. Unfortunately, the other face of social reality shows the failure of such immanent retributive machinery, so that people should restate in pessimistic proverbs their responses to this cognitive dissonance: (a) *Whatever the king does we should always say to him: "Long live, His Majesty."* (b) *Antananarivo* [the capital city] *has got beautiful houses, but the youngsters from Ivakiniadiana* [a rural area] *have thereafter become bald-headed.*[11] Consequently, the application area of the retributive return (*tody*) is reduced to a minimum which still insures its limited validity in people's mind.[12] That is why some proverbs are emphatic about the moral function of God for the individuals: (a) *Don't look at the lonely valley, but fear God upon your head.* (b) *I still await God whom other people cannot wait for.* This incipient personalized relationship with the divinity in the Malagasy moral philosophy has been widely exploited by early foreign missionaries and indigenous Christian rhetoricians.

2.5. The next occurrence in Rom 3:17 goes in the same direction. We quote the larger passage: "*Their feet swift for pouring out blood, destruction and misery in their ways. And they have not known a way of peace* (ὁδὸν εἰρήνης, Isa

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10 "Le *tody* [Engl.: retribution] se présente comme quelque chose d'absolument impersonnel. Nous voulons dire que ce n'est pas Dieu qui intervient personnellement pour faire venir le *tody*. Dieu a fait l'ordre. Le *tody* est ce qui advient en vertu de cet ordre et comme conséquence d'actes bien définis. Tout ce qui arrive n'est pas fatal. L'homme a l'entière responsabilité d'agir ou de ne pas agir. C'est lui en définitive qui se fabrique pour ainsi dire son *tody*" (R. Andriamanjato 1957, 77).

11 "C'est d'abord dans les relations sociales des grands avec les petits que se manifestent les défaillances de la loi de rétribution. Une structure de la société fort hiérarchisée se prête en effet à des injustices de toutes sortes" (G. Navone 1987, 181).

12 The Jesuit ethnologist G. Navone describes in the following way the traditional dissonance-resolving move: "Comment alors ces échecs sont-ils vécus? Tout d'abord, sauf certains cas très rares et bien circonscrits, ils ne sont pas dramatisés: qu'il s'agisse de la mort, de la douleur, des imperfections du monde, du mal originé par l'homme ou de la plupart des injustices sociales, ils sont considérés comme ds éléments 'normaux' de 'ce' monde où nous vions, avec lesquels il faut composer [. . .]. Ainsi, en fait, le domaine où s'applique véritablement la loi de rétribution est assez réduit. A l'intérieur de ces limites, les formulations générales de la loi peuvent retrouver leur vérité dogmatique" (1987, 219–20).

59:8a LXX). *The fear of God is not before their eyes. We know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are in the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and that the whole world may be subject to God's verdict; for which reason, 'no flesh will be made righteous in his presence' through works of the law, for it is through the law that the full knowledge of sin comes*" (3:15–20). It concludes the refutation of a series of objections against the relevance of God's justice disclosed in Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, the pessimistic image of the Jewish society in Isa 59 supports Paul's rhetorical strategy in Rom 1:18–3:20 which tries to "prove that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin" (3:9). As a first approach, we can say that the ignorance of a *way of peace* concretely means living under the power of sin. The *African Bible* gives an illuminating definition of that reality: "Sin is basically the rupture of the order willed by God. It is the rebellion of human beings against God and produces social desintegration" (Rom 3:9n. 37). First, the **rupture of order** shows a real dysfunction inside the creation; second, **rebellion** unveils a high (the highest?) degree of symbolic conflict between God and human beings; third, **social desintegration** discloses a breaking down of the controlling influences of society, i.e. the emergence of anomie. In front of such description of human reality, any sociological theory[13] would tell you that the society in question reaches a phase of serious instability and finds itself in a critical situation. From a theological viewpoint, the absence of peace constitutes one of the indicators of human total depravity and points at the necessity of God's universal grace. It is useless to call upon human beings to perform law-abiding actions in order to acquire dignity before God, for such an orientation would only increase human anxiety (inner perspective) and have people miss God's salvation initiative in Christ Jesus (outer perspective).[14]

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[13] See J. M. Henslin 1997, 3–31.

[14] "<Works of the law> cannot justify, not because they are inherently wrong, nor only because a decisive shift in salvation-history has occurred, but fundamentally because no man is able to do them in sufficient degree and number so as to gain merit before God. The logic of this argument presume, however, that <works of the law> has reference to actions performed in obedience to the law; <works> could be expected to establish a situation of merit" (D. J Moo 1983, 98). In his *Forschungsbericht* on Paul and the Law, the same author (1987, 297–98) gave the following "reasons why it is thought that Paul rejected the law as a means of justification: 1. The 'quantitative' explanation: human beings are incapable of doing the law perfectly. 2. The 'qualitative' explanation: doing the law is wrong in and of itself (this approach is associated particularly with Bultmann and has received severe criticism). 3. The 'nationalistic' explanation: the law fosters Jewish exclusiveness. 4. The 'dogmatic' explanation: Paul rejected the law simply because nothing must compete with Christ."

Such a radical and overwhelming understanding of sin is unknown in Malagasy traditional thoughts. Social therapeutic means are always available for the natives in each region in order to atone taboo transgressions or to neutralize moral injuries or even to take the liability for committed mistakes away from people.[15] In the ethnological study on the *Merina* group in the central region of the country, Louis Molet (1979: p. 238) discussed the social problem of irresponsibility:

> The Merina willingly believes that the fate of human being, determined from the birth by astral circumstances, is out of his reach [. . .] Then, in order to live, the Merina observes as adequately as possible the practices of his religion and looks for the favor of the humanly conceived supernatural powers, through vows and scarifices [. . .] Concerning important matters as well as concrete decisions, he usually consults the soothsayer or the astrologist and follows his indications, being—by this very fact—exempted from choosing or making a decision.

In this religious system, the finiteness of human being does not exclude the possibility of social and spiritual peace, because in principle the traditional society has at its disposal all symbolic arsenals for tension-management.

2.6. In Rom 5 Paul reaches a decisive step in his argumentation: "Being made righteous therefore by faith, we have peace [εἰρήνην] with God through our Lord Jesus Christ [. . .] For if when we were enemies we were reconciled [κατηλλάγημεν] to God through the death of his Son, all the more so now, having been reconciled [καταλλαγέντες], shall we be saved by his life. And not only that, but we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we now received reconciliation [καταλλαγὴν]" (5:1, 10, 11). Peace is understood as the positive result of God's recognition and restoration of human beings as covenant partners. It is a biblical orienting concept which exerted its influence on Paul:

> It is to the genius of Cremer that we owe the fundamental insight that [*ṣ^ədaqah*], in its basic sense, refers to an actual relationship between two persons, and implies behaviour which corresponds to, or is consistent with, whatever claims may arise from or concerning either party to the

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[15] According to Pierre Colin (1959, pp. 77, 81), "le mot *ota* peut et doit se traduire par 'faute', 'manquement', 'transgression'; mais il ne correspond pas à la notion chrétienne de péché [. . .]. Le rite appelé *afana* est une prière expiatoire faisant appel à Zanahary pour effacer les souillures, les impuretés légales ou religieuses, car la distinction du <pur> et de l'<impur> est, en quelque sorte, un dogme fondamental de la religion malgache. De même que chez les Hindous et les Sémites, on retrouve, chez les peuples de la Grande Ile, la croyance que l'âme criminelle peut être purifiée par les aspersions d'eau lustrale et les ablutions rituelles, par le feu et par les sacrifices."

> relationship. The relationship in question is that presuposed by the covenant between God and Israel, which must be considered as the ultimate norm to which [*ṣ^ədaqah*] must be referred. The Hebrew concept of [*ṣ^ədaqah*] stands in a class of its own—a class which Cremer brilliantly characterised as *iustitia salutifera.*[16]

Nevertheless, the most important theological input of the apostle resides in his christology: Christ's sacrifice (v. 10 διὰ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ υἱοῦ) has radically changed the nature of relationship between God and the humankind. First, human beings—formerly threatened by the divine judgment—have access again to the holy God; second, they acquire a different type of existence (as a matter of course, the first meaning of καταλλάσσω is to give rise to change, to a different [ἄλλος] state of things); third, the atoning sacrifice of Christ put an end to the cultic sacrificial system as such[17] and gave the first place to *faith* (v. 1 ἐκ πίστεως).

This interpersonal character of justice and peace is not far from the traditional Malagasy conception of *fihavanana* (the edification of kinship among human beings; from the root *havana* = kin) which consists in three basic attitudes: in speech exchange, in mutual customary visits and in concrete solidarity.[18] Concerning the use of speech in the process of

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[16] A. E. McGrath 1998, 8 (cf. W. Eichrodt 1933, 121). It should be noted that this Israel-centered vision was afterwards extended to the world in the Old Testament itself: "Schon bei Deuterojesaja rückt ja das Verhältnis des Schöpfers zu seinen Geschöpfen in den Bereich des Bundes, sofern Jahves <Gerechtigkeit> d.h. seine bundesgemäße Güte, Treue und Hilfe als die Handlungsweise des Weltregenten beschrieben wird; gerade indem er seinem Volk den Gottesknecht als Bundesmittler schenkt und ihm das vollkommene Heil in der Form des Bundes gewährt, läßt er sein Licht über den Völkern der Erde aufstrahlen" (W. Eichrodt 1939, 147).

[17] This paragraph resumes some insights of E. Jüngel's recent theological treaty on justification: "*Friede* ist in der Tat die Kategorie, die das Ziel und die Früchte des Sühnopfertodes Jesu Christi sachlich angemessen begreift [. . .]. Die biblische Dimension des Friedens, des Schalom, ist erst da erreicht, wo diese Negation des Unheiligen den positiven Zugang zum Heiligen eröffnet. In diesem Sinne sagt Paulus, daß wir als Gerechtfertigte Frieden haben und Zugang zu Gott (Röm 5,1). [. . .] Christus ist als wahre Sühnopfer unser Friede, weil und in sofern er uns die verlorene *Ganzheit* des Daseins gewährt – jene Ganzheit, die mehr ist als die Summe ihrer Teile und die deshalb *Heil* genannt zu werden verdient. [. . .] Grundsätzlich hat die Kategorie des Opfers mit dem Sühnopfertod Jesu Christi ihren kultischen Sitz im Leben verloren. Der Opferbegriff wird *zur Metapher*" (1998, 141–42).

[18] P. Ramasindraibe 1971, pp. 8, 22–30; see the sociological approach by B. Razafimpahanana 1972, 45–54; the well-documented anthropological analysis by H. A. M. Raharilalao 1991, 117–86.

fihavanana, we can say that the Malagasy people believe in the mysterious power of word as a medium of life and cannot think about a peace-building activity without delivering a traditionally codified speech, in order to strengthen past ties and to *weave* a new relationship. We may add, in this respect, that *fihavanana* is a positive result of the pleasure of speaking and hearing. Moreover, this speech act occurs at some specific moments of social life when the entire families and the neighborhood gather and receive visitors: *in good things* (birth, circumcision, marriage, tomb building, exhumation . . .) and *in bad things* (death, catastrophes, breach of alliance . . .). Any Malagasy citizen who has got a classical education in his family knows that his major social duties should be accomplished through *visiting and standing before* the families affected by lucky or ill-fated events. Lastly, *fihavanana* needs to be bound with palpable, yet symbolic acts of solidarity such as physical help, social counselling, communal meal and financial contribution.

One can already notice that the Malagasy understanding of peace has a horizontal character, i.e. it aims at creating an extended, ever reconciling family in which every social partner (family member [*tapaka, mpihavana*], close friend [*namana*], neighbor [*havana*], companion [*sakaiza*]) has his assigned place. Even if Malagasy people seal some symbolic peace rituals (namely, blood brotherhood, family fusion, taboo removal . . .) with animal sacrifices, they do not consider the peace with God as a meaningful goal of religion, because the ancestors practically insure in everyday life divine functions such as blessing, personal identity, value protection, family unity.

2.7. The next occurrence of peace is found in Rom 8:6, 7, 11: "Now, the minding [φρόνημα] of the flesh is death, but the minding of the spirit is life and peace [εἰρήνη]. For the minding of the flesh is enmity against God, since it is not subject to God's law, nor indeed can it be [. . .]. But if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will cause your mortal bodies to live, through his Spirit dwelling in you." In this passage, the concept of peace is dependent upon the further reflection about the law and God's Spirit. In fact, the law is unable to fulfil—in the real condition of human life—its intended goal: to bring life to humankind (cf. Rom 7:10 ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ εἰς ζωήν). The problem lies neither in the will of the law-giver nor in the quality of the law enunciation, but in the basic orientation of the law-receiver: this latter does not have the inner power to obey to God's law, because his vision and performance are determined from the outset by motivations diametrically opposed to God.[19] So it is useless to exercise

19 "<Law>, in this Pauline usage, stands not simply for the concrete commands and prohibitions found in the Torah, but also for the mode in which these

influence on humans at the level of moral life. One should radically change his life-orientation, namely his attitude toward God, through personal encounter and resurrection-like empowerment:

> The authentic Christian can and knows how to take care of himself, to walk alone, without selvage. Not because he was abandoned to himself, but because he has received an interior endowment which makes him mature and completely free from any conditioning. And once again we should note that the filial adoption does not consist in a purely judicial declaration, but comes into being with the gift of a new dynamic principle, called *Pneuma* (Spirit).[20]

Then, peace is based upon the removal of the enmity against God and upon the transformation of human bodies into living sanctuaries of God.[21] In that way human existence can be changed from within and deep-rooted modifications in social and personal life can be obtained.

Concerning the Malagasy traditional anthropology, it recognizes the fallibility of the humans vis-à-vis the divinity, but does not promote such a radical vision of sin as in Paul's thought.[22] Some well-known proverbs state, for instance:

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obligations encounter rebellious humanity <in the flesh>: as commands that are externally imposed (their inscription on the tablets of stone is in marked contrast with demands recognized and endorsed within human hearts) upon a will bent on its self-assertion" (S. Westerholm 1997, 92). In connection with the *flesh* metaphor, we may refer to a classical understanding of sin as a breach of relationship: "Der Begriff der Sünde und entsprechend der Begriff des Bösen kommen für die Theologie nur als Relationsbegriffe in Betracht, und zwar als Begriffe, die eine negative Relation zu Gott bzw. die partielle oder auch totale Negation einer Relation zu Gott aussagen. Die Sünde und das Böse sind so etwas wie die Negation der Beziehung zwischen Geschöpf und Schöpfer. Die Sünde und das Böse betreffen das Gottesverhältnis der Kreatur in der Weise der Verhältniswidrigkeit" (E. Jüngel 1999, 79).

[20] R. Penna 1992, 116.

[21] The Italian exegete Lorenzo De Lorenzi (1989, 256) explained the phrase *the Spirit dwelling in you* in a sacral manner: "Dio non solo non gli è indifferente né lo abbandona; al contrario, egli ha trasformato il credente in sua propria abitazione – come si sarebbe potuto dire del tiempo ebraico – grazie al dono del proprio Spirito, poiché egli viene da Dio e egli comunica la stessa presenza divina, lui che è la stessa realtà operativa creatrice e munifica di Dio."

[22] See among others the analysis of *alienation* according to Marx and Paul by F. Refoulé (1975, 69–86) and the theology of sin by E. Jüngel (1998, 75–125). The Malagasy philosophy about human finiteness is explained by G. Navone (1987, 138–39) in the following way: "Ce qui est lié à la <finitude> n'est pas ressenti comme un <mal>, c'est-à-dire comme quelque chose qui n'est pas celle qu'elle

> God cannot be blamed, the Creator cannot be criticized, because it is the humans who are full of deviances.
>
> Just as honey is sweet but has dregs, and the eel is delicious but has bones, so is the human being: nobody is without handicap, but each one is blameworthy.

Nonetheless, that situation did not lead the Malagasy thinking to adopt a pessimistic view of the human nature, for the most intolerable common transgression concerns taboo violation, which demands the offering of a bloody sacrifice.[23] In the Malagasy symbolic universe, sacrifices can make the world upside down, for example in case of an incestuous marriage, which—in principle, inacceptable—becomes <normal> through a ritual of taboo removal called *fafy*.[24] Moreover, the abovementioned proverbs consider anomie and imperfection as obvious everyday realities, which can be spatially limited and partially corrected through socialization and, specifically, through the *fihavanana* process.[25]

2.8. The free quotation of Isa 52:7 in Rom 10:15 caused a text-critical problem: (a) the shorter text (without τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων εἰρήνην) can be dismissed on the basis of homoeoteleuton error; (b) the longer text (including τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων εἰρήνην *of them that preach the gospel of peace*) may be accused of textual harmonization with the Greek Isaiah text. In this paper, we maintain the longer text, for there is no complete uniformity between the two texts:

LXX Isa 52:7	**Rom 10:15**
ὡς ὥρα ἐπὶ τῶν ὀρέων, ὡς πόδες	ὡς ὡραῖοι οἱ πόδες
εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀκοὴν εἰρήνης,	εὐαγγελιζομένων εἰρήνην,
ὡς εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀγαθά	τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων τὰ ἀγαθά

devrait être. La finitude est une <donnée> cosmique, elle entre dans la normalité. On ne va pas rêver d'un monde sans imperfections. La contingence des choses ne fait pas scandale. C'est plutôt l'homme qui peut faillir à ce qu'il devrait être, sortir de la normalité, introduire le <mal>."

[23] "The observation of customs was so precious for the ancestors that, in case of serious infractions, Malagasy people often offered atoning sacrifices" (A. Razafintsalama 1998, 137).

[24] Cf. R. Dubois 1978, 13–41.

[25] "Le *fihavanana* n'est pas d'abord une affaire d'<atomes crochus>, mais la reconnaissance d'une co-participation à un donné réel, sans lequel ne saurait s'établir la communion des personnes; avant d'être unité, il est intégration [. . .] Le *fihavanana* promeut l'intégration des personnes dans un tout, cependant que philanthropie et amour poursuivent l'amélioration des relations interpersonnelles" (R. Dubois 1978, 115–16).

What value-added meaning can be drawn from this longer reading?

(1) The idea of peace is a part of Paul's core message in this letter and has received a proeminent place in the history of interpretation and in the Christian spirituality:

> It is not a chance that in the history of piety after the Reformation the harsh word <justification> has less penetrated the heart than the message concerning the <peace with God>. This motto is a gift of the epistle to the Romans, which—unlike the epistle to the Galatians—interprets the justification not so much as freedom, but as reconciliation and peace foundation.[26]

(2) In the concrete argument of this chapter, "peace"—as a relational concept—describes better the center of the salvation through the Lord Jesus (10:9 *if you confess the Lord Jesus with your mouth . . . you will be saved*) than "good things" alone. As a matter of fact, Jews and Gentiles are called upon to respond positively to God's peace initiative in Christ[27]; in addition, the religious integration of the Gentile Christians into the church of God (10:12 *there is no gulf between Jew and Greek, there is the same Lord of all*) gives a second dimension to the concept of peace.

In this Israel section of the letter, we find another occurrence of καταλλαγή (11:15): "*For if the rejection* [of the Jews] *is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be, other than life from the dead?*" The massive refusal of the gospel by Israel permitted a decisive extension of Christian mission beyond the Jewish frontiers (εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν, εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης 10:18). In fact, God's policy of jealousy[28] (*I will provoke you to jealousy* 10:19; 11:11, 14) shows that (1) Israel is not completely abandoned, but should be seduced again by God; (2) Israel is not considered

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[26] K. Haacker 1990, 31.

[27] "The proclaimed Word of God challenges the hearer to conversion (Rom 10.14–17). Conversion implies a radical rupture with the past and the acceptance of Jesus with all its implications [Rom 6.1–11]. The church should not fail in presenting the gospel as a call to the radical change and newness of life in Christ [Rom 7.1–6]" (*The African Bible* 1995: n. on Rom 10:14–17).

[28] In the subsequent history, the jealousy in question came not from the Jews, but from the Gentiles who had a long-term unstable identity vis-à-vis the Jewish people (cf. Paul's warning in Rom 11:21–22) and had been led astray by eliminating this "trouble-making" group. It can be interpreted as a result of the mimetic violence: "To win our identity we can only take over the identity of the other, outdo him through greater excellence in the same pursuit, through gaining what he fails to gain, or else through a slight differentiation that presents itself as an improvement. If we are directed by a model, then, to follow this model, we must also remove it. This, is according to Girard, characterizes the universal, <raw> condition of human desire" (J. Milbank 1995, 33).

as an *exclusive* people of God; on the contrary, she should be and is an *inclusive* one—paradoxically, because of her unbelief—: since then, the nations have been inserted in the midst of God's people through faith (*you, being a wild-olive, have been engrafted in them* 11:17); (3) Israel has no proper right to reintegration apart from faith and mercy (11:22, 23, 32); her renewal is unthinkable, except in the category of resurrection. Consequently, reconciliation means here the changing status of the nations vis-à-vis God's historical commitment.

The Malagasy understanding of *fihavanana* knows existential tensions within the blood relationship in the family, on the one hand, and within the duty-based social solidarity, on the other hand. Firstly, the kinship can be *broken* [in Malagasy, "tapaka"] through hierarchy-challenging attitudes, which demand a ritual of taboo removal, and *damaged* [in Malagasy, "simba"] through immoral behaviors, which could be corrected with severe admonitions by the Elders. Such a possibility shows that *fihavanana* cannot be reduced into a biological link, but should be conceived as an experimented life-situation.[29]

Secondly, the cohesion of a social group can be endangered by indifference [*He is neither my inner organs nor my hair = I have nothing to do with him*] and enmity. The former can be resolved by weaving ties between the two parties (for instance, emphasis on common values, advantage of union in front of dangers . . .), whereas the latter can be traditionally overcome through mediation, direct negotiation, or matrimonial reciprocity. The failure of a series of classical solutions can lead to open conflicts or war. Nevertheless, despite all efforts toward reconciliation, the division between kins and non-kins does exist in many regions of the country and becomes obvious at the burial (even spouses should be separately buried because of caste hierarchy).

2.9. In the hortatory section of the letter, Paul gives some basic instructions concerning Christian behavior toward the Roman society: "*If possible, insofar as it depends on you, make peace* [εἰρηνεύοντες] *with all people*" (Rom 12:18). This openness to the out-group is determined by the renewed understanding of peace in the early Christianity: according to G. Theissen, the imagination of the first Christians has been strongly influenced by the *demilitarisation* of social peace, promoted by some Old Testament prophets and Jewish religious thinkers.[30] In principle, a

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29 Cf. R. Dubois 1978, 71–76.

30 G. Theissen 1992, 63–64 & 66–71: "En tant que réponse au défi de la Pax Romana (et à la crise qui y est associée), le christianisme primitif développe une conception tout à fait nouvelle de la paix, que j'ai appelée l'idée d'une paix sociale, d'une paix qui ne dépend pas de la puissance militaire. C'est là que prend place la démilitarisation et non la dépolitisation de la paix" (70–71).

peaceful coexistence with non-Christians is possible for Paul, provided that Christians may live according to their faith, without being persecuted. We would add that Paul envisions a possible integration of nascent Christianity in the multireligious framework of the Roman Empire, as a *propounder of an alternative peace conception:*

> This peace is based upon religious convictions: peace between God and the human being is found in Christ and fulfils itself as social peace in small communities. This social peace coexists with political wars in the world, safeguarding its autonomy toward it. It is, at the same time, a positive model for a world which is unable to find peace. And thank to this <oppositional autonomy>, it can have possible impacts on political peace.[31]

Moreover, it is clear that peace process is not a one-sided initiative, but a mutual commitment. When an individual or a social group is not willing to accept the *otherness* of another person, it seems to be difficult for the latter alone to maintain peace—in the long run—within a hostile environment, for peace essentially has a dialogical structure. Despite this fact, the Roman believer should have a peaceful behavior toward the unfaithful and avoid conflicts with them, insofar as his relationship with Christ is not broken.

The last passage we have to examine talks about peace inside the Christian community: "*For the Kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace* [εἰρήνη] *and joy in the Holy Spirit. . . . For this reason therefore, let us pursue what pertains to peace* [τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης] *and to mutual upbuilding*" (Rom 14:17, 19). This chap. discusses the aftermath of food taboos among the first Christians: on the one side, the majority of Jews still avoid forbidden foods and find it compatible with the faith in Jesus, the Father of whom is the same as the God of their ancestors; on the other side, a number of Gentiles do not eat some foods they associate with the former practices of idolatry. The most free-minded Roman believers would consider such attitude as cowardice and inconsequence. As usual, Paul re-frames the problem in another perspective: (1) In order to designate the first-order evangelical value, he uses the Jesuanic phrase *Kingdom of God* which does not refer to another system of food taboos or their rejection, but to a charismatic (*in the Holy Spirit*) type of relationship with God and fellow Christians.[32] *Righteousness* and *peace* (cf. Rom 5:1) constitute the founding events of Christian life, whereas *joy* is its main

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[31] G. Theissen 1992, 83.

[32] "Denn Paulus schaut bei jener dynamischen und pneumatischen Anwesenheit der Gottesherrschaft doch eher auf das Gemeindeleben, wenn der Heilige Geist auch in jedem Glied wirkt" (R. Schnackenburg 1963, 204).

feature in interpersonal relations. It seems obvious that this last element bears the emphasis, because mutual accusations and criticism bring sorrow and pain in the community's life. (2) The apostle establishes the cause of peace as a principal goal of Christian existence: the Roman Christians should seek above all a moral consensus (for instance: mutual tolerance, acceptance of plural attitudes vis-à-vis food prohibitions, taboos as *adiaphora* for salvation . . .) which could strengthen peace-loving brotherhood and create better communal conditions for spiritual up-building.

The Malagasy culture gives an important place to the inclusive character of *fihavanana* and to taboo observances. According to Paul Ramasindraibe, the *fihavanana* process with all people is determined by four-fold relations reflected in the couple of phrases *tapaka sy namana, havana aman-tsakaiza*:

	1. TAPAKA / MPIHAVANA (kins)	**2. NAMANA (friends through similarity)**	**3. HAVANA (quasi-kins through neighborhood)**	**4. SAKAIZA (friends by choice)**
Type of contact	biological ties	common ideas	common territory	affinity
Main function	basic education	punctual collaboration	social duties	long-term friendship
Social domains	family, marriage	free association, profession	local customs	interpersonal relationship

Each Malagasy should be involved in these social networks in order to preserve his/her own identity and, then, to make peace with *everybody*. But what is really expected from each individual? The Malagasy traditions suggest that three kinds of actions should be fulfilled according to opportunities: *adequate speeches* reinforcing mutual respect, brotherhood and friendship inside the group; *physical presence* attesting sympathy and good will to others; and *concrete help* showing solidarity and charity among the family and the village. Consequently, we can affirm that here peace means *successful socialization of the individual*.[33]

[33] This corresponds to an important insight from Alfred Adler's individual psychology: "Il ne persiste qu'une seule mesure d'après laquelle nous pouvons évaluer l'être humain: *sa réaction, son mouvement en face des problèmes inéluctables de l'humanité*. En effet, trois problèmes nous sont imposés d'une façon irrévocable: l'attitude envers nos semblables, la profession, l'amour. Tous les trois, reliés entre eux par le premier, ne sont pas des devoirs fortuits mais inévitables. Ils résultent du comportement de l'individu envers la société humaine, envers les facteurs

Concerning the eating of taboo food, it is crucial to notice that the fundamental understanding of sin (*ota*) in Malagasy traditional communities is related to the transgression of taboo (*fady*): this fatal attitude is called *manota fady* ("doing wrong to taboo"). Since it seriously endangers the wrong-doer's life, the Malagasy neither try to challenge local taboos nor get their fellows to break eating restrictions. As a matter of fact, the divinities themselves are committed to watch over the transgression of taboos and to inflict punishments to the culprits (such as barenness, banishment with curses, inability to earn a living, premature death, partial paralysis, no ritual burial, a terrible death, a filthy and worthless life . . .):

> Why do they leave the punishment to the gods when its is a matter of taboo-breaking? It is not sufficient to say that it is a mystic power which works automatically. But by grouping the taboo-conceptions together and seeing them in their context, one will find that the punishment corresponds with the founding of the taboos. They have been founded by calling on *Andriamanitra* [God], that he must bear witness that what they have determined is true and correct. And in the ceremonial cursing he is called on to execute the punishment on the one who has broken the taboo in question. In this way the taboo-tradition is always a living and present factor, binding everyone to the rules.[34]

Among the numerous plant and animal taboos commented by J. Ruud, let us choose the prohibition of the eating of lemur in some regions and learn the subjective meaning attached by Malagasy people to this social norm:

> According to Malagasy beliefs and conviction the animals have souls (*ambiroa*), which live after death, like human beings. After death, however, it is not called soul (*ambiroa*), but spirit (*angatra*), and this word is only used about the beyond. From the word *angatra* the verb *manangatra* is formed, which is used about the spirits of the departed ones revenging themselves on people. This revenge is even more present when it is a human-like being, like lemur, which is revenging itself, than if it is another animal. The lemur, however, only revenges itself if it has been mocked at alive, or if it is killed in a cruel way [skinned alive, roasted and eaten]. The consequence is always misfortune in one way or the other.[35]

That's why no traditionally-educated Malagasy would say that he/she can ignore food taboos because of other highly respected values

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cosmiques et envers l'autre sexe. De leur solution dépend le sort de l'humanité et son bien-être. L'homme est une partie d'un tout" (1991, 14–15).

[34] J. Ruud 1970, 270–72.

[35] J. Ruud 1970, 100.

(friendship, honesty, faithfulness . . .). Nevertheless, he/she would accept without difficulty Paul's last remark, according to which "*the one who is undecided whether he may eat is condemned, because he does not act from faith; and everything that is not from faith is sin*" (Rom 14:23–24), but would translate the words *from faith* by "*out of respect for taboo-tradition.*" Anyway, a supernatural sanction will reach the wrong-doer:

> If one breaks the taboo one becomes guilty in relation to the ancestors, and one knows, according to what is learnt in childhood, that the punishment will come. It is the conscious feeling of guilt for having opposed the will of the sacred ancestors which results in contagion. If we ask a Malagasy why a transgressor is struck by disaster, he will usually reply that it is because the taboo is broken, but as a further he will say that in fact the person was to blame in relation to his forefathers.[36]

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[36] J. Ruud 1970, 283.

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". . . Let everyone be convinced in his/her own mind": Derrida and the Deconstruction of Paulinism

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I. Introduction

With his practice of deconstruction the French philosopher Jacques Derrida challenges Western logocentrism and with it the foundations of a tradition which for centuries has dominated Western European discourse. He perceives it as a pattern of thinking which to a vast extent is responsible for all kinds of oppressionist ideology and he goes as far as to attribute to it responsibility for oppression in Western thinking and culture generally.[1] In his essay on Emmanuel Levinas' philosophical approach, "Violence and Metaphysics"[2] he states:

> Incapable of respecting the Being and meaning of the other, phenomenology and ontology would be philosophies of violence. Through them the entire philosophical tradition, in its meaning and at its bottom, would make common cause with oppression and the totalitarianism of the same.[3]

Pauline studies are part of this logocentric tradition with its corresponding implications. The traditional image of Paul—or what I term the

[1] Referring to Lévinas Derrida states that "'Ontology as first philosophy is a philosophy of power,' a philosophy of the neutral, the tyranny of the state as an anonymous and inhuman universality" ("Violence and Metaphysics," in *Writing and Difference* [London: Routledge, 2002 reprint of the first edition of 1978], 120).

[2] *Writing and Difference,* 79–153.

[3] *Writing and Difference,* 141.

Paul of Paulinism is based on an interpretation of Romans as the centre and culmination of Paul's thought. This interpretation of Romans and the image of Paul inherent in it have been challenged from several perspectives over the last thirty years. Some of these challenges seem to indicate a critique of the traditional image of Paul which, although not being identical with, nevertheless show tendencies as radical as Derrida's deconstructions of philosophical and other Western discourses. The thesis advocated in this paper is that aspects of Derrida's approach and "deconstructive" questions raised by him could prove stimulating in analysing hermeneutical presuppositions in Pauline studies, particularly for an analysis of "Paulinism," and its interpretation of Romans as the culmination and centre of Paul's theology. Aspects of Derrida's thinking could moreover prove illuminating in the search for new and/or different perspectives on Paul, not least in a new approach from feminist perspectives.

I will concentrate on four aspects of Derrida's thinking, giving a brief outline of each of these: (1) Deconstruction and the Spirit, (2) Logocentrism and Universalization, (3) Texts and Contexts, and (4) Negotiations. This is a description from a theologian's perspective, limited to the purpose of this study. Much more could be said since I think that the implication of Derrida's thinking for Pauline studies is a topic for further research. I will then in Part III relate these four to corresponding aspects of the image of Paul in Paulinism, demonstrating how these could sustain an analysis of its hermeneutical presuppositions. As these four aspects cannot be clearly separated from each other, being all related in several ways, some repetition in these sections is inevitable.

II. Aspects of Derrida's Thinking

Deconstruction and the Spirit

Derrida challenges traditional patterns, categories, systems and methods of thinking since he seeks to find perceptions and understandings of life and reality beyond traditional patterns of Western philosophical discourse. He thereby does not situate himself beyond this discourse but at its limits.[4] He is nevertheless aware that in relating to this tradition it is inevitable that one must use its terminology and categories to some extent, else it would not make sense and thus be irrelevant to the discourse

[4] "The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures. Inhabiting them *in a certain way*, because one always inhabits, and all the more when one does not suspect it" (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997 [corrected ed.]), 24.

it is challenging. The danger implicit in this is that the totalising tendencies which are criticised are re-inscribed in the discourse of deconstruction itself. Derrida therefore emphasizes that deconstructive strategies need to critically reflect on their own deconstructive critiques of dominant "logocentric" discourses.

Derrida's thinking is subsumed under the label of "deconstruction" or "deconstructions"[5] by which he himself emphasizes that "deconstructions" is not a project, or a method or system. It is rather one of the possible names for designating a certain practice of dislocating texts of classical philosophy in the first instance—but also of texts of other disciplines, and of every "text" in the general sense Derrida uses this term. It could also be described as a set of practices by which formalising and totalising tendencies in philosophical as well as other discourses of European tradition are not opposed (since to oppose something implies to think in the categories of traditional dualistic patterns of logic) but maybe one could say—set aside. In setting aside a perspective different from the dominant one, the totalitarian character of an approach which claims to have found the one and only true meaning is revealed.[6] Western philosophical tradition is dominated, as Derrida demonstrates, by the values of essence and presence (ontology and phenomenology). It presupposes that there is one true essence present in everything that is. The spirit or the νοῦς is the "tool" by which this true essence can be recognized. There is an inherent relation/connection between truth/Being and logos/spirit. Thus the one true meaning, the essence of Being can only be found in the process of pure logical thinking, which makes privileged use of binary oppositional structures where one term is defined in opposition over against another. As some essential true Being or fundamental principle is presupposed, the respective essence of one term is defined through that which it is not. True knowledge is attained in an identification of spirit and the essence of being. As Heidegger says ". . . spirit is the being-resolved . . . to the essence of Being, of a resolution which accords with the tone of origin and which is knowledge."[7]

The ontological tradition of Western discourse/logocentrism cannot be neatly separated from totalitarian systems which emerged from it as is

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[5] Derrida prefers the plural form of the term. Cf. "A 'Madness' Must Watch Over Thinking," in Jacques Derrida, *Points: Interviews, 1974–1994* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 356.

[6] See Jacques Derrida, *Wie Meeresrauschen auf dem Grund einer Muschel . . . : Paul de Mans Krieg: Mémoires 2* (Wien: Edition Passagen 20, 1988), 108.

[7] Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 67.

evident in Heidegger's philosophy of the Nazi period in Germany. The fact that Heidegger launched his Nazi profession of faith in his Rectorship address in 1933 in Marburg in the name of the "freedom of the spirit" denotes a mentality that cannot be dismissed simply by condemning it as a mere distortion of an otherwise pure and innocent tradition. One question Derrida raises again and again is how Nazism as an ideology could emerge in the centre of so-called civilized Europe. It is not sufficient to condemn Nazism or a philosopher like Heidegger since Nazism did not emerge out of nowhere but in contact and interaction with the rest of Europe, with other philosophies, with other political or religious languages. In an interview in 1987 Derrida said, ". . . the elevation of the spirit, through the celebration of its freedom, resembles other European discourses (spiritualist, religious, humanist) which are generally opposed to Nazism. This is a complex and unstable knot which I try to entangle by recognizing the threads common to Nazism and anti-Nazisms, the law of resemblance, the inevitability of perversion. . . . It is not a question of mixing everything together, but of analyzing the traits that prohibit a simple break between the Heideggerian discourse and other European discourses, whether old ones or contemporary ones."[8] Deconstruction thus is a constant warning against all sorts of metaphysical purifications, essentialisations, totalisations, and transcendentalisations.

Deconstruction cannot be described as a method whose methodology can be transferred from one discipline or subject to another, as this would imply the sort of generalisation deconstruction is arguing against. Deconstruction means to account for the distinctiveness of each subject and issue and situation in its respective context, thus asking for a constant change of perspective according to the subject/issue dealt with (accommodating practice). This makes it impossible for one perspective to claim absolute truth since the limitation and changeability of any perspective is a basic presupposition of deconstruction. It further implies a constant unveiling of the constructed character of the patterns or textures of thinking and acting. It is a "thinking from another border," from beyond traditional presuppositions.

Logo-Centrism and Universalization

Traditional philosophical discourse which is based on Greek terminology and form is so deeply entrenched in thinking in identities that there is no room for difference.[9] To think in these terms implies

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8 "Heidegger, the Philosopher's Hell," in *Points,* 185

9 "The entirety of philosophy is conceived on the basis of its Greek source . . . it is simply that the founding concepts of philosophy are primarily Greek, and it

generalizations. The true essence of being behind or beyond all that is can only be truly recognized in getting beyond the diversity and particularity of what is through the logic of sameness and identification. To think in this tradition means to think in a specific terminology which is searching for identities and the general via the logic of pure thinking which is spiritual. This implies moving beyond the specific and particular to the universal, from the particular letter of a text to its universal meaning, as the letter is only a derivate of the true and essential being.[10]

As not only but particularly emphasized in the tradition of German idealism, this is the one and only appropriate method to attain truth. In order to find truth, particular subjects and experiences have to be overcome or universalized/*aufgehoben* into higher, more general insights. The search for truth in this perception is bound to generalizations, to generalizing abstractions. The spirit/logos/*Geist* is perceived as the means by which particularity and diversity can be overcome. It is the spirit that motivates humans to move toward the recognition of truth. True knowledge is always spiritual. Since the terminology of philosophy developed in Greek—and later in German language, Heidegger could state that only and exclusively Greek and German thinking are capable of approaching the heights of truth.[11] These are perceived as having achieved the highest and most developed terminology of abstractions and universalizations.

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would not be possible to philosophise, or to speak philosophically, outside this medium" ("Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Writing and Difference,* 81), or Martin Heidegger "the word *philosophia* tells us that philosophy is something which, first of all, determines the existence of the Greek world. Not only that—*philosophia* also determines the innermost basic feature of our Western-European history . . ." (*What is Philosophy?* [London: Vision Press, 1958], 29–31).

[10] Focused on the logos (Geist) as the means by which truth, that is, the essence of being can be recognized logocentrism devalues writing over against spoken language. The letter is only derivative of that which is more closely and naturally related to truth. Derrida states that "All signifiers, and first and foremost the written signifier, are derivative with regard to what would wed the voice indissolubly to the mind or to the thought of the signified sense, indeed to the thing itself. . . . The written signifier is always technical and representative. It has no constitutive meaning. . . . This notion remains therefore within the heritage of that logocentrism which is also a phonocentrism: absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and the meaning of being, of voice and ideality of meaning" (*Of Grammatology,* 11f.).

[11] True thinking is only possible in German; thus he could say in an interview in 1976 that those who think, think in German (see Derrida, *Of Spirit,* 69).

To perceive universalization and abstraction as higher stages of knowledge (irrespective in which language) implies that it is necessary to move beyond the particularity of the letters in reading and interpreting a text, since inherent and behind these some core or central meaning must be revealed. In and through the particularity of one specific text some essential meaning has to be found. Language points to the objective and stable truth, to true being and it can be accessed through logic and reason. Thus the aim of the process of reading/interpreting in logocentric tradition is to get beyond the particular to the fundamental, principal, central and universal meaning of the written letters. This means in fact, universalizing one particular aspect whilst silencing or erasing others. There is no room for difference in traditional logocentric discourse. The difference of the Other is an obstacle to universalisation.

Deconstruction draws attention to the constructed character of such fundamental or central meanings as original or universal status is granted to one particular expression of experience over another. As we will see in Derrida's understanding of "text" what gives meaning to specific signifiers is not a given essence but emerges in an ongoing play between signifiers which are distinct and differ from each other. "Différance," this neologism created by Derrida, is "the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the spacing by means of which elements are related to each other."[12] Differences, contradictions, inconsistencies and paradoxes are thus part of this interplay. They need not be silenced or oppressed as in logocentric discourse.

Texts and Contexts

Deconstruction refers particularly to the reading of texts of traditional philosophical discourse but it is also applied to other areas as in Derrida's approach "all that is" is "text"—"il n'y pas d'hors texte"—as his half ironical famous "saying" mentions. All is perceived as "text." There is a text as soon as there is a "trace," a reference from one trace to another, distinct trace. Such references are never static and traces are neither present nor absent. Thus a text can never be a closed system. A text is a texture of traces which are interwoven and interacting in mutual relation to each other. These traces refer to something which again is referring to something as a trace. Texts thus are not limited to written texts. Derrida's broad understanding of text implies that there is no perception of life and reality beyond text. Also spoken discourse or gestures and rituals are texts in this sense. By this understanding of "text" Derrida does not intend to create some sort of "textcentrism." He emphasizes that a text is not a

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[12] Derrida, *Positions* (London: Athlone, 1981), 27.

centre but an open interplay of references without any restricting boundaries.[13]

Writing as a sign is thus not referring to something beyond itself (as derivative of the voice which is closer to the true essence of being), but it is a trace referring and related to other traces within an interplay of traces. Texts are interplays of traces of experiences which are composed in differentiating from and relating to each other. There is no original meaning of a sign/word which others could be derived from. Meanings of words/signs are variable and vary in an ongoing interplay with other signs/words to constitute ever new meanings. Texts thus are always "on the move." They are in a sort of floating interaction of traces in ever new constellations responding to each other—thus meaning emerges in ever new situations and contexts. Since a text is always open—it cannot have only one single true meaning.

The interpreter also cannot interpret texts from one and the same perspective only since he/ she is part of this "movement" in his/her specific contexts which again are also varying. There cannot be one "objective" perspective which would allow for the one "objective" interpretation of the text. It is crucial for interpretation thus to read texts from and in their respective contexts as far and as appropriately as possible. The interplay of signifiers which constitute a text is itself again related and interwoven with particular historical, cultural, etc contexts. Thus Derrida emphasizes that "all texts are different. One must never try to measure them 'on the same scale.' And never read them 'with the same eye.' Each text calls for so to speak, another 'eye.'"[14]

It could be argued that this opens the door to absolute individualism and subjectivity in interpretation which would make any communication, even if only about a more or less appropriate interpretation, impossible. Over against this Derrida emphasizes the need to take thoroughly into account the specific contexts of texts which then allow for the elaboration of certain specific relative rules for interpretation. Such rules are not to be understood as general rules for deconstruction but as generalized relative tools deriving from a particular context applicable only in a particular context. The limits of application of a relative general rule could be described in analogy to the transferability of languages. It depends on the degree of generalization of a language to what extent rules derived from it can be transferred to another. It depends on the translatability of a text

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[13] See Peter Engelmann (ed.), *Postmoderne und Dekonstruktion: Texte französischer Philosophen der Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990), 21.

[14] *Points,* 216.

whether its rules can be transferred to another text. In that sense Derrida could say that deconstruction presupposes the plurality of languages.[15]

With regard to the danger of pure subjectivity in the interpreter, Derrida reminds us that in analogy to languages, texts are never purely individual but related to the context of the history of a particular language. Texts are related to other "interlocutors" within a network of an interplay within which there is mutual influence, that is, within a network of communication. Irrespective of the singularity of each text there is a communal aspect in each as well.

The interpreter as well as the text are both related to their respective contexts, which in themselves cannot be objective or stable. This implies that philosophical and theological arguments cannot be separated from the historical, political, social, and geographical context, or the language they emerged from. Moreover, the recognition of the fluidity of texts and contexts requires an ongoing relativization of one's own perspective, the recognition that no perspective can claim to be the only true and right one as it is always limited and variable. Each individual is born into his/her specific "preference"—into his/her family, into his/her geographical, and social context, into a specific language at a specific moment in time. Derrida emphasizes that "Everything is drawn for me from the (living, daily, naïve or reflective, always thrown against the impossible) experience *of* this "preference" that *I have at the same time to affirm and sacrifice.* There is always for me, and I believe there must be *more than one* language, mine and the other . . . and I must try to write in such a way that the language of the other does not suffer in mine, suffers me to come without suffering from it, receives the hospitality of mine without getting lost or integrated there."[16]

The emphasis on the ongoing interplay of signifiers in a text is an indication for another "trace" of Derrida's thinking—that reality and life cannot be "grasped" in any kind of closed system, that the process of understanding and interpreting never can come to a final conclusion, it has to remain open to that which is not yet and has not yet been.[17]

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15 See Engelmann (ed.), *Postmoderne und Dekonstruktion,* 25.

16 "A 'Madness' Must Watch Over Thinking," in *Points,* 363.

17 As he has formulated in the Exergue to *Of Grammatology,* "Perhaps patient meditation and painstaking investigation . . . are the wanderings of a way of thinking that is faithful and attentive to the ineluctable world of the future which proclaims itself at present, beyond the closure of knowledge" (4).

Negotiations

As texts are perceived as ongoing and never ending interplays of divergent signifiers the project of interpretation is perceived in analogy to this. Interpretations of texts in the narrower sense are in themselves again "texts," that is, interplays of divergent discourses interacting whit each other. This process can be described by the term "negotiations." Meaning emerges in an ongoing process of negotiations, requiring an ongoing questioning of the origins of one's own concepts and their political implications. Interpretation always takes place in a process of negotiation and thus has to ask these very same questions.[18] There is no stopping in this project, no settling down in one ever stable and unquestioned position, as there is no final and unquestioned true essence to be found in a text. Nor is there one fundamental stable principle from which to interpret any text. Understanding emerges in an open process of negotiation. As Derrida states ". . . one is always working in the mobility between several positions, stations, places, between which a shuttle is needed."[19] The need to negotiate constantly does not deny the necessity of negotiating from a position, but to constantly also be aware of the constructed and thus "deconstructable" character of one's own position. As such interpretation can be seen as "a knot of negotiation" where there are "different rhythms, different forces, different differential vibrations of time and rhythm."[20] There is an element of risk and undecidability in negotiation since openness implies uncertainty, else it would merely be programming and calculating. In the processes of negotiation there must be room for decisions which in interpretation always also have ethical implications.

These are only a few aspects of Derrida's approach which I think could provide refreshing insights in Pauline studies—particularly in deconstructing Paulinism and reading Romans "with a little help from Derrida." In the light of these I will now look at some aspects of Paulinism analysing the consequences of a deconstructive approach on this perspective and seeking for possibilities to move beyond it.

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[18] See Elizabeth Rottenberg, "Introduction: Inheriting the Future," in Jacques Derrida, *Negotiations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 2.

[19] *Negotiations,* 12.

[20] *Negotiations,* 29.

III. The Paul of "Paulinism" – Deconstructed

By the Paul of Paulinism I understand the image of Paul as it has been depicted by traditional interpretation in the dominant discourse influenced by the Reformation image of Paul but particularly relevant in Pauline studies since F. C. Baur. This image presents us a Paul who is a lonely fighter, the first Christian theologian, who has elevated Christianity to its true self-understanding as the religion of the universal spirit.

The core or centre of Paul's theology is found in Romans, particularly in the doctrine of justification by faith without works of the law. Presupposed and inherent in this perception of Romans was the image of Paul as the one who had overcome particularistic and ethnocentric Judaism in favour of the universalistic Christian faith.

Reading this image of the Paul of Paulinism through the lenses of deconstruction it is seen to be as constructed as any other discourse, and to be as limited as any other perspective, influenced by and influencing the context it emerged from. It thus needs to be analysed in relation to the context/texture of influences and agendas in which it has been developed. Derrida's emphasis is that there is no neutral interpretation but that all interpretation serves a certain purpose or is interest-related since it starts from specific presuppositions and has practical consequences. The Paul of Paulinism therefore cannot be viewed as a scholarly neutral image of a figure of a remote past which has been depicted according to some supposed objectivity. A deconstructive approach on Paulinism would be a project for a book length study, so here I can only give some indications as to where such an analysis might lead.

The Paul of Paulinsim—the Paul of the Spirit

The Paul of Paulinism shows surprisingly (or maybe not so surprisingly) clear traces of an idealization of the spirit and its universalizing tendencies. The two aspects are closely related, but I will deal with them in two different sections, probably with some overlap between them.

Paul is the first Christian theologian, the lonely fighter and pure theological thinker and as such he is the champion of the law-free gospel, the one who has liberated the concept of God from the ethno-centric particularities of Judaism to its true, spiritual essence. He has brought Christianity into its own true self-understanding as the universal spiritual religion.[21] This Paul is regarded as the one who has formulated the one

[21] This is emphasized by Baur (see n. 88 in my thesis), but still also by Rudolf Bultmann: "Indeed the main importance of Paul has not been mentioned yet. It is to be found in the fact that as a theologian he provided Christian faith with an

Christian truth in clear opposition to Judaism. F. C. Baur has most clearly developed this perception of Paul as the liberator of Christianity. But it is actually rooted in the Augustinian-Lutheran perception which turned Paul's arguments into a timeless theological concept of human agency in opposition to divine agency, with Jewish Law keeping becoming the paradigm for human self-righteousness and pride.[22]

It is significant to note that here as much distance as possible is put between Paul and Judaism. The high spiritual insights of Pauline theology are mainly due to his enculturation in Hellenism, due to the Greek categories of thinking which provide Paul with the terminology to formulate his insights into truth. Thus a dichotomy between Hellenism and Judaism is set up out of which true Christianity emerges. I do not think that it is purely incidental that aspects of this Paul were outlined by F. C. Baur at a time when German idealism and its high estimation of the *Geist*/spirit was still dominating wide areas of the cultural and academic "mood" in a not yet united Germany. It is significant to note, as Dale B. Martin has done in his recently published article "Paul and the Judaism/Hellenism Dichotomy" that it was only in the nineteenth century that scholars, especially in pre-united Germany, became interested in Hellenism as a cultural and political phenomenon in antiquity.[23] The Greek spirit which had unified Greco-Roman culture at its height in the one empire was depicted in analogy to the German *Geist* and its supposed unifying capacity to unite Germany as one Reich. The open minded universalistic tendency attributed to Hellenism as such was also regarded as the main basis for the development of early Christianity.[24] And if some Jewish influence was accepted as important for nascent Christianity, it was Judaism in its Hellenistic form. Moreover this was considered as being in

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adequate understanding of itself" (*RGG* [2d ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1930], 1026).

22 Cf. Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 327.

23 In Troels Engberg-Pedersen (ed.), *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2001), 29–62. In the same volume, cf. also Philip S Alexander, "Hellenisim and Hellenization as Problematic Historiographical Categories," 63–80.

24 We cannot elaborate on this in more detail, but considering the political implications this pattern of thinking had, I think it is significant to note that Heidegger stated that "it is not German idealism which ahs collapsed, it was the age (*Zeitalter*) which was not strong (*strong*) enough to remain equal to the grandeur, the breadth, and the original authenticity (*Ursprünglichkeit*) of this spiritual world, that is, to realize it truly, which means something different from simply applying maxims and ideas" (quoted in Derrida, *Of Spirit*, 60).

the process of overcoming its particularistic attitude. Thus it seems to be the Hellenistic influence of proper thinking which enabled Paul to become the founder of Christianity as the true spiritual religion.

Romans in this image of Paul is the letter where this concept of the pure spiritual religion is perceived as being outlined in its most perfect form. Romans 8 then is the culmination of Paul's outline of the ideal Christian life in faith, which is understood to be a life "in the spirit" beyond the particularities and contingencies of everyday life. One of the problems with Romans arising from this depiction is that the letter does not stop at the end of chapter 8. Chapters 9–11 in particular now seem to be superfluous and even irritating amendments, since here Paul suddenly takes up the particular issue of the Jews. Chapters 12–15 could somehow still be integrated as the outline of the ethical consequences of this spiritual faith.

C. H. Dodd for example "solves" this problem by depicting Paul as a man full of contradictions, who despite his grandeur is still struggling with his Jewish past. He now and then falls back into his Jewish past, overwhelmed by emotions which for a brief moment seem to obscure the clarity of truth in Christ.[25] He thus concludes that 12:1ff. is the real sequel to 8:39, 9–11 being an insert or digression. Rudolf Bultmann also had difficulties with chapters 9–11 as Nils Dahl in his review of the *Theology of the New Testament* noted. He stated that Bultmann had much to say about Rom 1–8 but hardly anything about Rom 9–11. And what Bultmann said demonstrated his view that Christ was the end of history, indicating that there is neither room nor time for ongoing Judaism in history.

This image of Paul as the pure, Hellenistic, "spiritual" thinker did not emerge in a vacuum but in specific political contexts in Europe. It is no coincidence, I think, that in these contexts rising anti-Semitism soon emerged.[26] Such a perspective on Paul does not seem to be far removed from the appraisal of the *Geist*/spirit of Western logocentrism and German idealism and its philhellenism in particular, and its later unfolding in a variety of approaches. (Nazism and anti-Nazism as well—see above). These are obviously related to political and ideological contexts and Derrida has alerted us to the fact that there are totalitarian tendencies inherent in essentialist, universalizing approaches. In emphasizing the "spiritual" aspect in Pauline interpretation today one therefore needs to ask what is the purpose behind this emphasis and what are its ethical consequences.

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[25] *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 42.

[26] It would be a topic for further research to investigate the relation of the emergency of ethnic national states, the problem of minorities, racism, and the history of Pauline interpretation.

It might also be relevant to take into account another question raised by Derrida in *Of Spirit.* What is actually meant by the word "spirit" in Pauline interpretation, what are the associations which are implied in the use of this term ? How come that it often seems taken for granted, as Heidegger states, that "*Geist,*" "pneuma," and "spiritus" are historically related to each other in their meaning in an "intra-translational triangle"[27] leaving aside—or as Derrida says, foreclosing the Hebrew "ruah"? Derrida rightly asks what justifies this closure historically, since what had to be translated into the Greek *pneuma* and then the Latin *spiritus,* and only later into the German *Geist,* was originally the Hebrew *ruah.* We also have to ask what changes with the translation of one term not only from one language into another but also from one cultural context into another. I cannot elaborate here on these questions, but they are raised here as indications of what needs to be taken into account in reemphasizing the "spiritual" Paul of Paulinism after Derrida.

The Paul of Paulinism—the Paul of Universalism

The "spiritual" Paul cannot be separated from the "universalizing" Paul as I have already noted. The spirit leads from the particularities of the physical appearances to the real spiritual world which is universal. The particularities and differences of this physical world have to be overcome —or, formulated with Hegel—have to be "*aufgehoben*" (raised above into) into the higher spiritual dimension of the real world.

Christianity as advocated by the Paul of Paulinism must be universally applicable; Romans as a theological treatise and "his last will and testament" must address humanity as such. Bornkamm regards Romans as the elevation of themes Paul had dealt with in earlier letters, having elevated them in Romans from particular everyday problems to the heights of universal truth.[28] Bornkamm seeks to avoid contradictory interpretations of Paul by regarding him as developing his theology from a stage where he is still more or less bound to his Jewish past (which is viewed as a minor stage of faith) to an increasingly clear view and understanding of the universal meaning of the Christ-event.

In order to depict the universalism of Paul, the particularity of Judaism necessarily has to be depicted as in opposition to it. Thus F. C. Baur described the history of early Christianity as an antithesis between the Jewish "Petrine" and "Pauline" faction through which the genuine Christian self-consciousness arose. For this depiction of history Baur "needed"

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27 Derrida, *Of Spirit,* 100.

28 *Der Römerbrief als Testament des Paulus, Geschichte und Glaube 2* (Munich, 1971), 134f.

Jewish Christianity as representing "the narrow, nationalist, conservative tendency of adherence to Old Testament law among early Christians."[29] For Baur Paul advocated "a total renunciation of the compulsoriness of the Mosaic Law" and revealed the fundamental "antithesis between Judaism and Pauline Christianity."[30] The essence of Christianity is regarded as a moral universalism already present in Jesus teachings but there it was still bound to Jewish particularism.

E. P. Sanders has convincingly demonstrated that the image of Judaism depicted as in opposition to Christianity is in fact a construction created in the pattern of 16th century Reformation problems. This is turn was rooted in Augustine's transformation of Romans during the Pelagian controversy into a timeless theological treatise of human over against divine agency. This Jewish religion of works-righteousness, which is needed to support the doctrine of justification by faith, (which since the Reformation was perceived as the centre of Paul's theology), according to Sanders actually did not exist. But Sanders' own depiction of first century Judaism has most recently been criticized from several perspectives. It has been argued that this depiction is not appropriate and that this is proof that Paul was actually opposing Judaism as such. But even if Sanders' depiction of first century Judaism and his own image of Paul are inadequate, he nevertheless convincingly demonstrated the constructed character of the image of Judaism of the Lutheran approach and of Paulinism as a reflex of the situation of the churches in the 16th century.[31] He has thus also "deconstructed" the hierarchical oppositional pattern of the traditional formulation of Christian identity. There is no way back behind this.

Nevertheless, the pattern of Paulinism can be discovered in several recent approaches. Daniel Boyarin in his *A Radical Jew* is depicting Paul as a Hellenistic Jew who has close similarities with the Paul of Paulinism. He finds in him someone who "motivated by a Hellenistic desire for the One, which among other things produced an ideal of a universal human essence, beyond difference and hierarchy."[32] Based on this presupposi-

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[29] Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 112.

[30] Baur, "Christuspartei," 49, 74f.

[31] See W. S. Campbell, "Martin Luther and Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in *The Bible as a Book: The Reformation* (ed. Orlaith O'Sullivan; London: British Library, 2000), and "The Interpretation of Paul: Beyond the New Perspective" paper given at the British New Testament Conference, Manchester 2001.

[32] Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 7.

tion Boyarin contends that for Paul all ethnic and gender distinctions are erased in Christ. From this background Paul, in Boyarin's view, in his interpretation of Jewish Scriptures, consequently spiritualizes integral Jewish features such as circumcision (Rom 2:25–29), descent from Abraham (Gal 4:21–31) or Israel according to the flesh (1 Cor 10:18). Through this method he "transforms the rites and the very existence of a 'particular tribe' into 'an ahistorical, abstract, and universal human truth.'"[33] Differences between individuals and people are thus relegated to the extent that they are perceived as irrelevant and of minor value. According to Boyarin this is what Paul's message promotes. It thus implies the eradication of diversity to achieve sameness—"a humanity undivided by ethnos, class, and sex."[34] What Boyarin here ascribes to Paul is really just another interpretation but it is nevertheless quite an adequate description of some implications of the universalization of Paul's statements in his letters. This is the universalized Paul of Paulinism. Again, as in the previous section, this Paul is seen as being enculturated in Hellenism, having departed at least partly from Judaism. Similarly, even in the work of the most prominent representative of the "New Perspective" J. D. G. Dunn this pattern of interpretation can still be found. Dunn sees Paul not opposing Judaism as such but only a particularistic, ethno-centric form of it. Thus Paul's universal gospel is defined in opposition to "bad" Judaism.[35]

Behind this "universal Paul" the logocentric presupposition that there is one true essence of Being beyond the particularities of this world clearly shines through. The logic of sameness and identification leads to an eradication of differences. Particularities hinder the universal truth of the gospel. There is no room for Jews in Christ since to be one in Christ implies that all are the same. Diversity and difference thus threaten this "Oneness." Nor is there room for Jews after the time of Christ in this depiction since difference and diversity threaten the universal truth of

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[33] John M. G. Barclay, "Neither Jew Nor Greek: Multiculturalism and the New Perspective," in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 207.

[34] Boyarin, *A Radical Jew,* 181.

[35] See Luise Schottroff: "Here a law observant Gentile church is seen as being Paul's achievement, thus traditional anti-Judaism is overcome. But thus law observant Gentile church is set up to bring to an end a wrong Jewish understanding of the Torah. The sociological construction of Dunn continues to adhere to a anti-Jewish Christian perception of the narrow particularistic Israel versus the universal gospel" (*JSNT* 79 [2000]: 340). Also Neil Elliott, "Paul and the Politics of the Empire," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (ed. Richard A. Horsley; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 20.

Christian faith. The Jews are and remain the "Others," those who are and remain different. The particularity and difference of Judaism is perceived as anachronistic, a hindrance for the unfolding of the spirit, it thus had to disappear for the sake of the universalism of Christian faith. That there is a totalitarian tendency in this claim which is not merely theoretical we are very well aware at the beginning of the 21st century. The universalistic claim of Western discourse, and thus also of Paulinism, can only formulate its self-understanding at the expense and exclusion of the "others," which in the latter case are the Jews. Recognizing its constructed character, it becomes evident that those values and appearances which are declared to be universal are most likely to be those of the dominant power. Thus what is declared to be the universal identity in Christ resembles very much *gentile* identity in Christ. The Paul who is depicted as the founder of universal Christianity in opposition to particularistic Judaism, has close similarities with a white Christian man, which is a very particular identity. What is declared to be the universalism of Paul's gospel is in fact the universalization of one aspect of Paul's acting and theologizing which is related to particular people in a specific situation at a specific moment in time addressing particular problems. This in fact is not universalism but the universalization of particularity.[36]

Beyond the Paul of Paulinism—Paul in Context

To see Paul as the first Christian theologian and as a pure theological thinker raises him above the contingencies of everyday life and thus detaches him from the context in which he was living and acting. It is an image which tends to see his letters as chapters of a systematic theology. Paul's gospel concerning Christ is then viewed as a coherent system of timeless theology. Romans likewise is perceived as the culminating conclusion, the clearest expression of Christian truth. Themes of this timeless theology are to be found throughout the letters, and since they are all indications of the same one truth, generalizations across the letters can be made to clarify and develop the content of each term. Galatians and Romans, for example, are combined under the one heading of righteousness.

In this perception of Paul it is presupposed that there is one and only one true meaning in the written text which is accessible through scholarly objectivity. Once this meaning is found the process of interpretation comes to a halt, is closed, or maybe foreclosed. The absolutistic claim

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[36] Cf. W. S. Campbell who emphasized this in his paper "How New Perspectives on Paul Assist in Illuminating Ancient Jewish-Christian Relations," given at the SBL annual meeting (Denver, November 2001).

inherent in this understanding of Paul has found its explicit formulation not only in the establishment of church hierarchies and doctrines but also in the posited universalism of Paul's theology. This claim renders any differing interpretations invalid if not heretical and marginalizes or even forecloses them as errant with regard to truth.

With Derrida's help this absolutistic claim inherent in Paulinism can be deconstructed as the claim of the dominating mainstream discourse which is part of the logocentric discourse of domination.[37] The emphasis on the fluidity of any text as an interplay of interrelated signifiers and its embeddeness in a particular context challenges radically the notion of one single timeless truth fixed in a text. What applies to the text in the same way applies also to the interpreter. Both are part of the "text," that is, of the "context" from which they emerged and to which they are related. Derrida's approach parallels and confirms several of the most recent approaches in Pauline studies.

It is significant to note that in such new approaches particularity and the contextuality of Paul's letters, including Romans, are emphasized. The Pauline Theology group at SBL devoted itself between 1986 and 1996 to the exegetical principle to read and interpret each of the Pauline letters and its "theology" without reference or recourse to the other letters of the Pauline corpus. This project is an indication of an increasing awareness that "Paul's letters should not be read as disparate chapters of dogma or milestones in an ongoing theological biography."[38] Since Paul had not intended to develop a systematic theology, as William S. Campbell asserted "we can no longer therefore legitimately use his statements as if they were abstract and timeless theology."[39] We should rather, "as far as humanly possible . . . interpret Paul's mission and Paul himself as they are presented in this specific text, before we resort to harmonization or revision from any other sources, however significant."[40]

J. C. Beker's concern for the particularity and contingency of each letter must also be mentioned here as well as scholars who emphasize rhetorical aspects of Paul's letters. Neil Elliott sees striking resemblances between Beker's coherence-contingency scheme and recent rhetorical

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[37] Cf. the first page of this paper.

[38] Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 56.

[39] Campbell, *Paul's Gospel in an Intercultural Context: Jews and Gentile in the Letter to the Romans* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1992), 81.

[40] "Divergent Images of Paul and His Mission," in *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations* (ed. Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 208.

approaches since both emphasize that Paul's letters are discourses "determined by persuasive purpose within a constraining situation."[41] Elliott and others such as Richard Horsley, emphasize that the concrete situation of Paul and his communities has to be seen to be related to the political context of first century Roman Empire. Not only Paul's use of language and imagery are related to this context but his message of the gospel has to be read from this context. What emerges then is a Paul who at the margins of mainstream imperial society and its hierarchical power structures tries to set up alternative satellite communities as forerunners of another justice and another peace than that of the Roman empire. Significantly also the Jewish texture of Paul's thinking and activity is more and more acknowledged.[42]

Even Romans is in these perspectives perceived as a particular letter addressing specific problems of the Christ-believing groups in Rome. The issue most prominently addressed in it then is not the doctrine of justification as such but the relation of Jews and Gentiles after the Christ-event. Paul is pleading not for the erasure of differences but for the abiding respect and appreciation of different and distinct identities as Jews and Gentiles in Christ.

These tendencies show parallels to Derrida's emphasis that texts are bound to contexts, in that they all in various ways emphasize different aspects of the context of Paul's letters. The emphasis on the particularity of each letter and the need to interpret each one in its own right is parallel with Derrida's insight that a text, as we have seen above, is an interplay of signifiers in which one signifier/word in ever new constellations is responding to the other, thus constituting meaning in an ongoing process of interaction. Thus, as I quoted above Derrida emphasizes that "each text calls for another 'eye.'" Reading the Pauline letters, and Romans in particular from such "deconstructive" perspectives necessarily leaves the process of interpretation open. In as much as a text is not a closed system, Romans as any other of Paul's letters is not a closed system with one final true meaning since not only the context of the text but also the context of the interpreter is constantly varying.[43]

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41 *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy in Paul's Dialogue with Judaism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 18.

42 Cf. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Elements in Pauline Theology* (Fiftieth Anniversary edition; Mifflintown, PA: Sigler Press, 1998), Peter Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law,* et al.

43 See above pp. 6f. of this paper.

Paul Inconsistent or a Partner in Negotiations?

The issues most frequently addressed recently in Pauline studies are what seem to be contradictory statements within one and the same letter or between different letters. In particular Paul's statements about the Law and the status of the Jews after the Christ event seem inconsistent, as Räisänen insists.[44] Paulinism requires a Paul consistent with the conceptualized logic of Western rationality. Whenever he differs from this logic this causes irritations especially when the relation between Jews and Gentiles and the question of the unity in Christ is at stake. According to Western rationality unity and oneness require sameness. Thus there can be no room for diversity in a logocentric concept of Christianity according to the Paul of Paulinism. Oneness in Christ equals sameness in Christ, which implies that Jewish identity has to disappear after the Christ-event, be it in Christ or outside of Christ. Paul does not seem to advocate this consistently. When he emphasizes "let everyone be convinced in his/her own mind" (Rom 14:5b) on the one hand, and "to be likeminded" (Rom 15:5) this seems to be contradictory in itself. F. Watson, e.g., stated that Paul arguments for his people in Rom 11 are inconsistent since some would claim that Romans 11 is based on the definition of the chosen people rejected in Romans 9." Watson's surprise seems to be based on the presupposition of a complete sociological distinction between Judaism and Christ-believing groups at the time of Paul. This in fact is a sociological repetition of the theological opposition between Pauline Christianity and Judaism in Paulinism.[45]

Some scholars recently have challenged the notion that Paul is thinking and acting according to Western rationality.[46] They perceive him as well rooted in the tradition of his ancestors, that is Judaism, and thus well at home in the Scriptures, which for him were nothing other than the Scriptures of Israel. Thus these scholars do not perceive Paul as having departed from Judaism after his call, but see him embedded in this tradition interpreting the Christ-event from within it. This implies that he could not have argued for a rejection or supersession of Israel since "God's call and election are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29). Christianity is not lifted out of Judaism. Paul is perceived as living and thinking within a Jewish texture of thought, predominantly within the symbolic universe of

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[44] Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 264.

[45] *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 168.

[46] Cf. W. D. Davies, P. Tomson (above, n. 42) W. S. Campbell, *Paul's Gospel in an Intercultural Context,* and M. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1996), et al.

Judaism. It is a way of thinking and arguing which by Peter Ochs and Stanley Hauerwas is described as scriptural reasoning.[47] It as a thinking that is more responsive than originative as it evolves in a constant "dialogue" with the Scriptures (of Israel). W. S. Campbell states ". . . Paul understands himself in front of scriptures, standing before them and answering to them and a form of life that they project."[48] Similarly P. Tomson emphasizes that Paul is coherent according to the "logic" of scriptural reasoning when he states

> . . . it is precisely this variegated structuring of life by means of halakha which enables and indeed requires the seemingly unlimited flexibility of theological thought in Paul. In other words the basic coherence of Paul's thought is not in any particular theological theme but in the organic structure of practical life.[49]

This implies that Paul is in ongoing interaction in interpreting, theoretically and concretely, with the best exegesis of his time, that is, also with Jewish interpreters whether they were Christ-believers or not. Differences, diversity and contradictions then are not indications of a minor stage of faith or of incoherence in Paul but they are consistent within this way of scriptural reasoning and contextual arguing. Paul here is not seen as being interested in abstract truth but in the life of Christ-believing groups, that is in the life of Jews, Jews in Christ, and Gentiles in Christ.

Derrida's challenge to Western rationalism, and his philosophizing at and beyond the boundaries of this discourse is not identical with, but rather demonstrates parallels to and confirms these most recent approaches in Pauline studies. His depiction of the limited character of Western logocentrism confirms and supports the notion of a different kind of thinking which is described as scriptural reasoning. Derrida's emphasis on the contextuality and interrelation of texts with other texts sheds light on Paul's way of interpreting the Christ-event in the light of Scriptures and practical life. Interpretation is itself part of this interactive interrelation, that is, in an ongoing process of negotiation. Romans then can be viewed as part of such processes of negotiation between Paul, his

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[47] See the volume *Christianity in Jewish Terms,* in the series *Radical Traditions: Theology in a Postcritical Key* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000). What Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte describe as scriptural criticism in their "Overture" to *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 1–54, points in a similar direction.

[48] Campbell, "The Contribution of Traditions to Paul's Theology," in *Pauline Theology,* Vol. II (ed. David M. Hay; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 241.

[49] Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law,* 265.

Christ-believing communities, his co-workers, other apostles, other exegetes, and Scriptures, with Paul being one of the partners in this process. Romans, as Paul's other letters, provides us with insights into this specific process, a process of negotiations within which aspects of truth and meaning can emerge. Paul's statements cannot then be perceived as timeless theology since they are part of a vivid interaction closely related to life. An element of uncertainty has to be maintained in the process of negotiation, otherwise it would not be really negotiating but calculating. Negotiation implies real openness to that which is still to come, to that which has never yet been.

It is further significant to note here that Derrida maintains that the presuppositions for the possibility of negotiation are not sameness or identity but difference and affirmation. Moreover the aim of this process is not understanding in the sense of a unification of horizons but the recognition and appreciation of differences and the continuing of the process of negotiation

To perceive interpretation as negotiation not only sheds light on Paul's thinking, and activity but they also apply to contemporary interpretation. The context of the interpreter is as much part of this process as the context of Paul. The aim of interpretation then is not to uncover the centre and core of Paul's theology (in Romans), but to enter from one's own perspective into a process of ongoing negotiation with Paul via the text of his letters as well as with other interpreters. This is the purpose and rationale of the "Romans through History and Culture" Seminar.[50]

Derrida's emphases are very much in support of insights within the most recent trends in Pauline scholarship as demonstrated above. His deconstructive approach helps to uncover hermeneutical presuppositions in Pauline studies and draws attention to practical implications they had or might have. Contingency and diversity thus need not be perceived as a problem in Romans but as intrinsic to Paul's negotiating way of theologizing in context. The call for Oneness in Christ in Gal 3:28 and like-mindedness in Rom 15:5 then do not demand sameness but real unity in abiding difference in Christ. Derrida's emphasis on the necessary openness of the process of negotiation resonates well with the end of Romans 11 where Paul, rather than closing his interpretation of the Christ event in a final last word, leaves it open to that which is still to come, open to God thus offering hope for oppressed and marginalized minorities.

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[50] As is outlined by Daniel Patte und Cristina Grenholm in the "Overture" to *Reading Israel in Romans,* 1–54.

Taubes, Badiou, Agamben: Reception of Paul by Non-Christian Philosophers Today[1]

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> "Most contemporary receptions of Romans are interpretations by Christians who read this text as Scripture." (Grenholm and Patte 2000, 1)

As part of the "Romans through History and Cultures Seminar," I am presenting three contemporary readings of Paul proposed by European philosophers.[2] Sign of the times at the turn of the millennium? These reading have just been published in French, one right after the other: Alain Badiou (1997,1998), Jacob Taubes (1999, translation of the original posthumous German published in 1993), and Giorgio Agamben (2000, translation from the original Italian published the same year). The project pursued here is an ambitious one, since each of these works could—and should—be the subject of a separate study. Three reasons prompt me to undertake this daring task: to bring these works as yet unpublished in English into public view; to bring to light the intersections linking them; and to reflect upon the hermeneutic implications of these non-Christian and not directly theological appropriations of Romans. But I would first like to explain why I became interested in these thinkers who poach in the hunting grounds of theologians and exegetes, and how this interest has come to be grafted, almost impertinently, on this SBL seminar.

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[1] I am grateful to Sybil Murray-Denis for the translation of this paper from the original French.

[2] As I was about to send this article off to the editor, I learned of a project similar to this one but pursued from a philosophical point of view: Büttgen (2002).

1. Why Summon Three Philosophers to This Seminar?

1.1 My reading context: a secularized Quebec

As a Quebec academic professionally dedicated to the interpretation of Paul's writings, I find myself in a paradoxical situation. I am paid by the State to do theology in a society which is extremely ambivalent, even profoundly ill at ease, about religious matters—now considered irrelevant. We are speaking of a society that will not even draw on its Christian roots, however fertile they may be. Having evolved on the outskirts of North America's mainstream Anglo-Saxon society and in estrangement from the international (but still Euro-centred) French-speaking community, Quebec has a minority status in both linguistic spheres, but has produced a very distinct culture. And, to my mind, Quebec is now perhaps one of the West's most secularized societies,[3] having in some sort swung from one extreme to the other in the space of forty years (Lefebvre 2000, Lemieux and Montminy 2000).[4] Once derided as a "priest-ridden province," Quebec experienced the rapid transformation of its state, social, and cultural institutions, amounting to a secularization which, for all its quietness, was nonetheless radical: Hence, the now familiar tag "Quiet Revolution" used to label the 1960–1980 era. The Church is no longer a major social force; the Bible is no longer a touchstone; and religious experience itself has been overshadowed or at least privatized in the extreme. It will thus be understood that, in today's Quebec, studying the Bible in a scientific and faith-filled manner mindful of the ancient "fides quaerens intellectum" maxim is no longer a given.

In the context which is mine, why and how should Romans be read today? Two paths quickly appeared to me as dead ends, or at the very least, as unpromising. First, there is what I would call the canonical approach, postulating that the biblical text's authority and relevance abide in its having been transmitted by the believing community and in its capacity for transmitting that community's experience.[5] Despite the fact

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[3] In the current Quebec context, it would be unthinkable for the Head of State to recite the 23 Psalm after an event like that of September 11, or to countenance a German-style concordat where the State pays religious ministers. France, where I lived for many years, remains a paradoxical case: the Christian feasts of the Ascension, Pentecost, and All Saints Day are all public holidays and the Church is still a strong institution, but this country already has a long history of *laïcisation* (which some would distinguish from secularization).

[4] These two studies contain important bibliographic references on the subject and give a more nuanced expression of my succinct statement.

[5] This approach has been described by Grenholm and Patte (2000, 3): "It accounts for the fact that (1) believers trust that they can trace a religious dimension

that I personally assume the canonical character of the Bible, I am no longer able to proceed as if this postulate were evident. Besides, what relevance is there in understanding Romans based on traditional categories and issues, such as justification and salvation, when these concepts are meaningless for my fellow citizens?[6] In my Quebec context, I cannot read Romans solely from the believer's perspective. If I want to make room for the hermeneutic objective of interpretation—seeking to understand myself through the text—I cannot assert beforehand that I shall reach that objective. Second, there is what I would call the academic approach which undertakes the rigourous descriptive study of the biblical text as if it were any other human artifact proposed for study. Despite the fact that I endorse the demands of scientific principles, I cannot allow them to restrict the scope of my reading. Where is the relevance in explaining Romans from an historical or literary point of view, if this adds nothing to its meaning for my fellow citizens? Notwithstanding the Quebec context—or perhaps because of it!—I cannot read Romans as if this text were insignificant and powerless to fuel the quest for meaning. If I want to honour the heuristic objective of interpretation—explaining the text as it is—I cannot, *a priori,* restrict my investigation to this sole objective.[7]

In sum, from where I speak, I must question both my role as a theologian who reflects on the coherence of the faith in and for a believing community and my role as an academic who ensures the cohesion of a scholarly body of knowledge—without denying either role. This questioning led me to the following working hypothesis: *read Romans today as a classic of Western culture, in counterpoint to the contemporary philosophical query which is now commonly called (post)modern.*[8] Here, my definition of "classic" will not be that of Gadamer (1996, 306–12)—a text fusing two horizons

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in these texts; (2) believers are powerfully affected in their concrete life-situations by the teachings of scriptural texts; and (3) at times, believers encounter divine mystery through the mediation of Scripture."

[6] By way of contrast: At the 2001 SBL Meeting in Denver, I attended the consultation group on Pauline soteriology. Whereas the participants raised questions about how they could make a fresh analysis of Paul's soteriological grammar, no one asked about the relevance of Pauline metaphors for today's world.

[7] What is perceived as inadequate in the Quebec context may be fully valid in the American context. In fact, in the SBL, some seminars will be governed by the first of these approaches while others will follow the second, with very little cross-fertilization between the two.

[8] See my articles (Gignac 2001, 2002).

opens onto a revelatory experience,[9] neither will it be performative—a text whose intrinsic narrative and rhetorical qualities are capable of transforming the reader. Though I do not exclude these two possibilities, my criterion is more pragmatic: a classical text is one which is *still taught and transmitted* because it is deemed fundamentally relevant in its message and/or exemplary in its form and/or capable of "reviving subjects through the word" whose trace it bears (Panier 2002).

That Romans has been a classic along with Augustine, Luther, and Barth is not open to discussion; that it will remain so in the future is beyond demonstration; that it remains a classic for current philosophical discussion—now, that *is* surprising. Yet, to the question: "Can today's questions be touched on in a reading of Romans?" the three philosophers with which we are concerned reply: "Yes."

1.2 The Context of the Romans Seminar

By proposing to undertake a *classical criticism* rather than a strictly speaking *scriptural criticism,* does my contribution respect the spirit of this seminar, as described in the preface to the first book in the collection of its published works (Grenholm and Patte 2000)? Two objections occur to me. On the one hand, the seminar takes a resolutely confessional stance: "Without denying the value and insightfulness of non religious readings, this approach is deliberately focused upon individual and communal interpretations of biblical texts by believers, because these interpretations have been neglected for too long by biblical studies" (Grenholm and Patte 2000, 3). It is clear that the three thinkers whom I present do not offer a religious reading—which does not mean that they do not respect the religious perspective of the text. Quite to the contrary, taking a view opposed to the above quote, I wonder *whether these profane and secular readers of Paul cannot help us rediscover the religious depths of Romans, by getting us out of our confessional ruts and stereotypical readings.* It even seems to me that these non-religious readings have been too long neglected by the interpretative community of theologians.

On the other hand, the seminar wishes to establish a dialogue between "church historians, theologians, specialists of present-day receptions of Romans, and New Testament scholars" (Grenholm and Patte 2000, 1). Now, I am not sure where I should place myself in that enumeration. Trained as a New Testament scholar, I nevertheless can no longer clearly

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[9] Does this statement by Grenholm and Patte (2000, 14–15) follow Gadamer's line of thought?: "Scripture is revelatory and authoritative for believers. Yet, both revelation and authority are constructed in very different ways in various interpretations of biblical texts as Scripture."

distinguish my work from that of a theologian. What is more, I am not speaking here as a Pauline expert submitting his own interpretation of Romans (which I have done elsewhere in, for example, Gignac 1999), but as a specialist in the current reception of Romans—which I am not! In other words, I am here playing a role of mediation between Pauline studies and the field of contemporary philosophy, even though I am all too aware of the gaps in my philosophical training. Aware as well of my temerity, I take courage in noting that Taubes, Badiou, and Agamben, in their own transgression of disciplinary barriers, were also bound to commit certain faux pas, but this did not prevent them from producing seminal analyses. Now it's my turn to poach for nutritious game in the hunting grounds of the philosophers.

1.3 Three Philosophers

Taubes, Badiou, and Agamben are little known in the United States; only the last named is systematically translated into English. As part of their university teaching (seminars), they have read Paul in their respective philosophical reading traditions—I shall come back to this—as the culmination and verification of their philosophical process. We are dealing with mature thinkers and not novices. We can unhesitatingly affirm that they are attentive, curious, erudite, empathetic readers who meet the text with what they consider urgent and crucial questions. Broadly, what is at stake is nothing less than examining the possibility of politics in today's world where the collapse of Marxism gives free reign to the only surviving proponent: neo-liberal thought. In this context, how can the relationship of the subject to the event, to the universal, and to history be thought out? As we shall see, the three are linked by genealogy or rivalry—Agamben dedicates his book to Taubes and, like him, takes his inspiration from Walter Benjamin; Agamben and Badiou, implicitly and even explicitly, sometimes take aim at each other.

For each of the three philosophers, we shall follow the same pattern of presentation. In keeping with the procedure developed as part of the Romans Seminar (Grenholm and Patte 2000, pp. 2–3, 25–36, 42–43), we shall have to be attentive to their general hermeneutical frame (their philosophical system), to their contextual frame (the problem with which they are concerned), and to their analytical frame. In the last case, this will mean presenting both the results of the reading (their theses) and the manner in which they read. In the course of the exposition, I shall be marking the reactive point of view of the exegete.

2. Three Readings of Romans

2.1 Taubes: Paul, founder of a new people

Jacob Taubes (1923–1987) is a non-conformist intellectual. A rabbi and son of a rabbi, a practising Jew, first a citizen of Austrian and then a naturalised American. Professor at the Freie Universität of Berlin (Brague 2000), his book *Die politische Theologie des Paulus* (Taubes 1993, 1999b)[10] is the posthumous publication of four lectures delivered to a theological audience in rather peculiar circumstances. Suffering from terminal cancer—Taubes was hospitalized between the second and third lecture—the philosopher was determined to keep his commitment because he wanted his commentary on Romans to be his intellectual testament. Indeed, he insisted that the recordings of his lectures should be published: strange for a man who published so little during his career. Moreover, the tone—by turns confiding, anecdotal, and trenchantly judgemental[11]—and the form—digressions, understatements, circular thought, incomplete demonstrations—are both bewildering. Nor is Taubes devoid of humour about himself: "I should have devoted myself to theology, but by vanity and destiny, I became a philosopher" (21). Finally, he ends up by describing himself as a Pauline non-Christian (130).

System (world vision)

In a postface not included in the French edition, the editors of the German edition of the four lectures call Taubes's thought *negative political theology*, in as much as it proposes a new universalism which undermines the legitimacy of every political order, whether imperial or theocratic (Taubes 1993, 151–52). It would be more exact to speak in terms of a political philosophy of enlistment in history, elaborated through two Judeo-Christian theological concepts: the apocalyptic and the messianic. Hence Taubes's questions: ". . . at what epoch are we living? With what present are we dealing?" (83). Calling himself a "secular theologian"

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[10] To simplify the references in this section on Taubes, they will be indicated by page number in parentheses—I am using the French translation.

[11] The following samples will give some idea of the man and his peremptory affirmations: (1) Jewish readers of Paul are given a bad time: Buber misses the nub of the problem; Baeck is honest but doesn't have much to say; Klausner possesses almost no religious imagination; Schoeps is only a Protestant (22–24); (2) Philo of Alexander is a court lackey (46); (3) The French do exhaustive research but without making any distinction between what counts and what doesn't count (74); and American Jews are insolent like all Americans (49); (4) Rudolph Bultmann, in his naiveté, has been duped by Heidegger (100).

(113), Taubes positions himself at the crossroads of theology and philosophy: this is in no way exceptional, given the pre- and post-war intellectual climate in Germany, Taubes's stated adherence to Judaism, and, above all, the influences he has accepted.

Die politische Theologie des Paulus reveals to us the author's intellectual itinerary. Taubes was first the disciple of Gershom Scholem (25) who had himself been the close friend of Walter Benjamin. In critical terms, Taubes falls in line with Benjamin who advocated transforming the world through commitment to political action in the form of messianic nihilism (106–12). So much for the Jewish influences. But, paradoxically, Taubes's whole opus, and especially the book with which we are concerned, is a dialogue with the conservative Catholic jurist, Carl Schmitt.[12] This dialogue could only be dramatic, since Schmitt, like Martin Heidegger, had given his consent to the Nazi regime and its "theo-zoological" racism (81) and since Taubes admired him, having delved into his writings from the start of his university studies (Taubes 1999a, 153–54):

> As a counter-revolutionary apocalyptic thinker [= Schmitt], I knew and still do know that there is an intellectual affinity between us. We are caught up with the same themes, even though we have drawn opposite consequences from them. (Taubes 1999a, 160)
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> Carl Schmitt thinks apocalyptically, but from the top down, from the domain of the powers, whereas I think from the bottom up. But we both share the experience of time and history as a delay. And this was, originally, the Christian experience of time. (Taubes 1999a, 164)
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> We knew that we were *adversaries* both in life and in death, but we understood each other deeply because we knew, both of us, that we were speaking on the same level. (106, emphasis added)

The word *adversary,* to which we may add the word *enemy,* is here of heavy significance. It will determine the crucial importance of Rom 11:28 which, for Taubes, becomes the key to the whole letter: "As regards the gospel they are *enemies* of God for your sake; but as regards election they are *beloved,* for the sake of their ancestors"(emphasis added). But, if we

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[12] We should add that, according to Taubes's interpretation, Benjamin also dialogued with Schmitt: "The 'present time' (*Jetztseit*), an enormous abridgement of messianic time, determines the ways in which both Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt experience history, both sharing a mystical conception of history whose essential message concerns the relationship between the sacred and the profane order" (Taubes 1999a, 169). For Taubes, the eighth thesis of "Sur le concept d'histoire" (Benjamin 2000b) is an inverted response to Schmitt: "the principal notions of Carl Schmitt are here introduced, reworked, and turned into their opposite by Walter Benjamin" (Taubes 1999a, 168).

would understand the full weight of the word, we must know Schmitt's specific use of it.[13] On this, I shall quote the limpid explanation given by Daniel Tanguay:

> He intended this distinction to express a concrete and existential meaning: the political struggle is constituted first by the clash of groups which are gathered together on the grounds of a friends-enemies criterion (See concerning this Carl Schmitt, *La notion du politique: La théorie du partisan,* Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1972, 65–77). What is here at stake is not some personal antipathy pitting one individual against another, but much rather the watershed dividing human groups between friends and enemies. This divide originates in a primordial existential decision which assigns to a group or a people the title of friend or enemy. This is the decision in which politics expresses its essence. Schmitt will not stop at this simple agonistic definition of the political. Behind the political struggle another struggle is taking form: a struggle between spiritual forces which secretly dominate the actual political struggle. For the political theologian that Schmitt was, this struggle pitted Catholicism against the forces of anarchy and revolution (134–35). But one could say that this struggle was still only secondary to a more essential rivalry: that of Christianity and Judaism concerning divine election. As in the other struggles, Schmitt had chosen his side: the true enemy is the Jewish people (Tanguay 2001, 365–66)

In sum, Taubes institutes a veritable triangular dialogue: Paul, Taubes-Benjamin, and Schmitt. Let's now see what results it will have for the interpretation of Romans.

Problematics

"It really does take a certain cheek to tackle this text" (17). What compels Taubes to read Romans is that time is running out, in two senses: As I said, he knows that his days are numbered; but then his entire career also bears the stamp of this apocalyptic urgency. Taubes tells how, during his only meeting with Carl Schmitt, he had defended his apocalyptic and Jewish reading of Paul, showing him the impossibility of founding a Christian anti-Semitism on Rom 11. Schmitt had then made him promise to state his case one day "before passing away" (19).

Taubes seems to have a threefold objective: (1) to defuse the Christian anti-Judaism which takes Paul as its source; (2) to defend his political vision one last time; (3) to build a bridge between philosophy and theology: "Why have I ventured into the theological field? I consider

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[13] "J. Taubes proposes an understanding of Rom 11:25–36 which is rather hard to perceive, even though C. Schmitt found it enlightening, as he so states. He insists on the term 'enemy' . . ." (Mimouni 1999, 458).

the isolation of faculties of theology fatal to them. In my opinion, the most urgent task for these faculties consists in installing a few windows in their monads" (20). Inversely, Taubes deplores the lack of biblical culture in his students of philosophy.

Reading approach

Ironically, despite the muddled and disheveled style of his lectures, Taubes is the one among our three philosophers who reflects most on his method, but by an accumulation of little secrets, so to speak. Indeed, in keeping with his objective of recuperating Paul for Judaism, Taubes, the philosopher and rabbi, proposes a Jewish reading of Romans which is at once literal, intuitive, and associative. He lets the word slip in reading the introduction to Paul's Epistle: his reading is in the Talmudic style (36). Then further on, he will shed light on Rom 9:3 (to be anathema) with an exposé of the Talmudic treatise Berakhoth 32a (52–56).

Taubes is aware that his reading is not that of a theologian, and even less that of an historico-critical exegete: "What I intend to expose here has nothing to do with the Paul studied in the faculties of theology, rightly and legitimately, besides" (18). "I do not think in a theological mode. I am working with theological material, but thinking from the viewpoint of intellectual history, in line with historical reality. I am asking what political potentials the theological metaphors conceal" (105); "I do not have a very high opinion of the modern biblical criticism begun with Spinoza" (72). Yet, as we shall see, his political interpretation of Paul presupposes and takes into account the historical situation of the apostle. Specifically, he stresses the rivalry between Judeo- and Pagan-Christians which is essential to any understanding of Paul (38–41)—and Badiou will connect with him on this point.

In line with the history of religions (67), Taubes proposes to be a philologist attentive to religious symbolism which, according to him, is a risky intuitive method but one which, if skillfully practised, can be fruitful. He wants to touch the experience which emerges in the Pauline text, an experience that he more than once correlates with the (mystical) Jewish experience recurring in history (79): he relates Paul to Sabbatianism, the liturgy of Yom Kippur, the mentality manifested in the current collections sent by the Diaspora to Israel, the return of young American Jews to Israel, the experience of Walter Benjamin in his youth.[14] Taubes calls this a

[14] After having presented the "Fragment théologico-politique" (Benjamin 2000a) as Benjamin's densest text (106), Taubes writes: "Obviously, I do not mean to say that this is identical to Paul in a strictly exegetical sense. I mean to say that what it expresses arises from the same experience, and there are signs in the text

phenomenological reading: "How does this feel to a Jew?" (76). He thus pleads in favour of a *sensus allegoricus,* an interpretation contrived to point towards a life experience[15] (71–72).

However, Taubes intends to stick closely to the text: "What does it say? not What does it recount? but What does it say fundamentally?" (118) "The reader must not pretend to be more intelligent that the author and attribute to him concepts he does not possess nor want to possess" (43). Taubes' definition of *philology,* a term which surfaces often in his discourse, can doubtless be related to *close reading.*

Finally, I note a broad hermeneutical openness, summed up in the following formula: "It is easy to read Paul's history unilaterally and not see the latent elements it conceals. We may say that no one has understood it and that, all the same, no one has entirely misread his words" (90).

What emerges in the course of the reading? General remark: the (intuitive) grasp of the letter as a whole is remarkable: "The Epistle to the Romans is a great fugue which begins in 1:18 with the *orgè theou* and which then unfurls in waves, in 5, then in 7, and which culminates in the great shout of jubilation in Chapter 8" (49). In the first part of his book, following his conversation with Schmitt, Taubes *truly* reads. Though indulging in occasional digressions, Taubes gives a close coherent reading of the following passages: the letter's epistolary framework (Rom 1:1–17 and Rom 15:30–33); Rom 8:31–9:5; and then Rom 9–11, relating it in an original manner to Rom 12 and Rom 13:

> In 9–11 what is provided is the legitimization of the new people of God: In the Epistle to the Romans 12 it is the Christian life which is described, whereas in the Epistle to the Romans 13, he treats the question of knowing how to behave as part of the Roman Empire which represents evil. (67)

Taubes reads with great finesse, not hesitating, for example, to advance a non-Christological interpretation of the benediction in Rom 9:5 (51). I note with interest—and a good measure of humility—that the broad lines of his reading of 9–11 coincide with mine (Gignac 1999): the Apostle's anguish; the parallel between Paul's estrangement in Rom 9:1–5 and Moses interceding for his people[16]; the problem of election; the

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which confirm that: it is experiences that make Paul tremble and make Benjamin tremble after 1918, that is after the war" (112)

15 *Pace* Simon Mimouni (1999, 457) who attributes to Taubes the point of view of Spinoza favouring the strict *sensus litterali.* Taubes, in contrast, criticizes his predecessor here: among Jewish philosophers, the battle is sometimes fierce!

16 Taubes doesn't use Exod 33:19 quoted in Rom 9:15 to confirm this approach which is essential for him. Now, this passage evokes the theophany granted

mechanism of jealousy; key to Rom 9–11 found in Rom 11:28; careful attention to intertextuality.

In the second part of the book, we have rather to do with a passionate trip through the history of philosophy's reception of Paul in terms of the messianic motif: Marcion and Harnack, Schmitt and Barth, Benjamin and Adorno, Spinoza, Nietszche, and Freud. In my view, the figures of Benjamin, Nietszche, and Freud stand out from this list as philosophers who can help us understand Paul.

Theses

The preceding remarks have already introduced the main keys to reading the author; I shall now take up these key points systematically and add to them a few critical assessments:

1. On the one hand, Jewish thought must reappropriate the heretic Paul and, on the other hand, one can only understand him through the lens of Jewish sensitivity. Paul is more of a Jew than many of today's liberal reformed rabbis (29)! Even Paul's Greek, which is that of the Diaspora, affords a functional analogy linking his *koinè* with Yiddish (20). Paul is certainly the Apostle to the Gentiles but this needs to be stated more specifically: He is the *Jewish* messenger who brings the good news to non-Jews (64.77). *The Christian exegete assents to this Judaizing of Paul, in keeping with a strong trend in recent research. Hence, it is perhaps in listening to a Jewish commentary on Paul that this exegete will gain an even better grasp of the Apostle's Jewishness . Despite its intuitive cast, the analogical method employed by Taubes makes it possible to perceive the Jewish sensitivity of the Pauline text from within. The philosopher seems to have been aware that he was thus throwing a paving stone into the pool of current Jewish theologians.*

2. The writing of Romans constitutes the founding act of a subversive political theology, primarily in its criticism of the *Nomos* which includes both the Pharisees and the whole Roman world (48): "This theology of the Nomos brought law and order to the Roman Empire which, in the Augustan era following the civil wars, was enjoying a long period of peace. At that time, the different groups all participated equally in developing this theology of the Nomos" (46). In the letter's opening words, including those of the initial credo of Rom 1:3–4, the vocabulary is unmistakably political (34): *Gospel, Lord, Messiah.* Now, this letter is being sent to a community in the city which is the very centre of the imperial cult and power. We are reading a veritable declaration of war whose aim is to establish a counter-power (36–37). Similarly, the whole of Rom 13 must be

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to Moses as God's positive response to the prophet's intercession in favour of his people.

seen as a veiled threat to the imperial order, doubled with a strategic imperative to show prudence in not arousing the suspicions of the authorities. *To so highlight the political character of Romans is extremely stimulating, opening up an original perspective which compels us to reread the text. This insight falls in line with a new trend in Pauline research (see, for instance, Horsley 1997 and 2000).*

3. Consider this corollary to the foregoing thesis. . . . As Nietzsche had clearly seen, with the spite and envy of one who would make himself the rival of Paul (117–30), the Apostle is operating a revolutionary reversal of values: ". . . it is not the Nomos but the Crucified One on behalf of the Nomos who is the Imperator. [. . .] By this reversal of values the whole world of that time is turned upside down: the whole Jewish-Roman-Hellenistic theology of the ruling class, all of Hellenism's eclecticism—all turned upside down. Paul is certainly also a universalist, but in his case the universal is drawn through the eye of the needle of the Crucified One. And that means reversing all the values of this world" (47). *It would be interesting to look closely at how the letter's rhetoric induces in the reader such a transformation of his identity and behaviour.*

4. Paul is the founder of a new people, by enlarging the election of Israel; but he does not renounce his solidarity with Israel nor does he deny the permanence of its election: a universalism which does not destroy Israel's special status (47)—*pace* Badiou! Paul thus perceives himself as a new Moses in rivalry with the first Moses (66–67). Recalling Exod 32–34 and Num 14–15, Taubes contrasts the two figures: "Moses who, as the spokesman of the people of Israel, refuses, who twice refuses, to accept that a new people be born of him and that the existing people of Israel should be annihilated—and Paul who accepts this" (19), in anguish and fear, but with the hope that, in the end, all of Israel will be saved. *As I have already pointed out, this reading connects with mine, but sets out from another path that explores the Jewish experience throughout the ages.*

5. In several places (83, 87, 135), Taubes insists on the following observation: Paul modifies the dual commandment of love for God and love for neighbour which seems to go back to Jesus; when only the love of neighbour is considered (cf. Rom 13:9): "attention is fixed on the son, on man; there is already no longer any question of the father in this commandment" (83). *Here again, another surprise, founded however on a judicious observation. Where Luther had problematicized* Romans *anthropologically (the justification), where Calvin problematicized it theologically (the justice of God), Taubes brings us back to the anthropological but by means of ethics.*

6. This leads us to a final, somewhat obscure thesis which closes Taubes's seminar like a swan song: there needs to be a new interpretation of Paul based on Freud and his book *Moses and Monotheism* (139). "Freud who treats the fundamental experience of guild is a direct descendant of

Paul" (131). Judaism would be a guilt-bearing religion of the Father, because of the repression of the primordial murder of the Father. Paul could be said to have attempted a reconciliation with the Father through the avowal of this original sin, a sin expiated by the obedience of the Son. But in divinizing the Son he could not escape the fatal necessity of demoting the Father (138). *How should this insistence on guilt and this return to a sacrificial interpretation of the death of Jesus be received, envisaged no longer as the vengeance of God but rather as the relief of human guilt? In any case, what we do have is a Jewish reader who reminds us that this question must be raised again and again in our attempts to understand Romans. For better or for worse, this question is an essential current in the Wirkungsgeschichte of Romans, acting like a subterranean force guiding the text's interpretation.*

2.2 Badiou: Paul, founder of universalism

Alain Badiou (born in 1937) teaches at the *École normale supérieure* in Paris where he read Romans with his students and this led to the publication of his *Saint Paul: La foundation de l'universalisme* (Badiou 1998).[17] His frame of reading is much more elaborate, rigourous, and exact than that of Taubes and this requires our taking a rather long look at it.

Philosophical system (world vision)

At the cross-roads of philosophy and mathematics, Badiou takes an original approach to certain problems or concerns raised by the Marxist Louis Althusser and by the psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, adding to them mathematical concepts of set theory borrowed from Georg Cantor and Paul Cohen, among others. Badiou's project consists in re-founding philosophy on new bases (Sedofsky and Badiou 1994). The title of his major work, *L'être et l'événement* (Badiou 1988), bowing as it does to Heidegger and Sartre, reflects this pretension.[18] More specifically, it is a matter of "re-founding a theory of the subject which subordinates its existence to the random dimension of the event, as to the pure contingency of multiple-being, without sacrificing the motive of truth" (5). What does that mean?

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[17] To simplify the references in this section on Badiou, they will be indicated by page number in parentheses. The author proposed a shorter version of his book in an article (Badiou 2000).

[18] For an initiation to the thought of Badiou in English, see Zizek (1998, 2000—very critical of Badiou) and Sedofsky and Badiou (1994).

Based on mathematical postulates,[19] Badiou opposes being and event, the set of "there is" and that of "it happens," posing them as separate but indissociable. On one side, we have the "ontological" order of being, accessible to knowledge and characterized by multiplicity: being is the juxtaposition of individuals and the locus of particularisms. In a word, it is the situation. On the other side, we have the event which produces the truth of that situation and emerges from it in a contingent, unpredictable, and undemonstrable manner—on the horizon of knowledge, a truth always appears impossible. "For a truth to arise factually requires that it should be without number, without predicate, uncontrollable" (80). The event, as procedure of truth, implies unity (the One), requires that a subject should arise to proclaim it and that it should belong to the realm of singularity (in contrast with that of multiplicity, individuals, and the particularisms of being).

In sum, the ordinary and the extraordinary are in a face off.

There is one point I want to stress as important to the understanding of *Saint Paul.* The truth in question is that of a subject (in the dual sense of the objective and subjective genitive): the event gives rise to a subject who, simultaneously and by backlash, gives it existence through an act of nomination. The subject interprets the event as event and this interpretation is part of the event. Here, Badiou speaks of *intervention,* a subjective decision which retroactively gives birth to the event. In other words, subject and event exist in mutual dependence. Now, the event is teleological and normally leads to a reconfiguration of the initial situation from which it has unexpectedly arisen. What is required on the side of the subject is unwavering, active, and faithful commitment, without which the event ceases to be an event at all and risks being perverted, that is ontologized, reduced to an element of being and, hence, trivialized.

Badiou distinguishes four types of truth and, consequently, of events: love, art, science (mathematics), and politics, not to be confused with their counterfeits when they become the objects of knowledge (and of merchandising) on the side of being, in the form of sex, culture, technique, and management (13). What example can be given to make this comprehensible? Badiou puts forward the French Revolution (1789–1794), which arose from the situation of the *Ancien Régime* (Badiou 1988, 201). But it could also be the Russian Revolution, falling in love, the atonal revolution in music. Through the chaos apparent in rebellions and riots, the revolutionary subject has discerned the unprecedented novelty

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[19] "The thesis that mathematics is ontology has the double-negative virtue of disconnecting philosophy from the question of being and freeing it from the theme of finitude. (. . .) Mathematics dismantles the perilous theological connection Truth-Being-One" (Sedofsky and Badiou 1994, 86).

of a Revolution aimed at universal emancipation (liberty—fraternity—equality) and the institution of democracy. But the revolutionary ideal was rapidly betrayed to serve particular factions.

A second example—a very paradoxical one since it concerns neither love, art, science nor politics and since our author calls himself an atheist (Zizek 2000, 141–42)—is of the utmost interest to us. In Badiou, Christian faith appears almost to be the ultimate paradigm of the event: ". . . at the heart of Christianity there is this event, situated and exemplary, which is the death of the son on the cross. And, at the same time, the belief does not relate centrally to the being-one of God in His infinite might: Its active kernel is the meaning to be built up out of that death and the organization of faithfulness to that meaning. [. . .] All the parameters of the doctrine of the event are thus deposited in Christianity . . ." (Badiou 1988, 235). Thus the reading Badiou makes of Romans in *Saint Paul* is already intuitively present ten years earlier as he reflects on Pascal in *L'être et l'événement* (Badiou 1988, "Méditation 21," 235–45).

We note that Badiou uses traditional philosophical vocabulary: *ontological, being, event, subject, truth,* but in giving it an entirely different thrust. The exegetes who have reviewed Badiou's book, for the most part favourably (Quesnel 1999, for example),[20] have not picked up on the potential for misunderstanding implied. Thus, when Badiou speaks of the *fable* of Christ's resurrection (5) it is surely to avoid laying himself open to the criticism . . . of have become a Christian. *And taking an interest not in the content but in the structure of "resurrection" event, he neutralizes and secularizes it.* Nonetheless, the word *fable* is more ambiguous than it may appear. On the one hand, it can be used to describe an effect of language where the ineffable attempts to express itself—an intuition present in Lacan but explored in depth by De Certeau (1992) and not to be confused either with naiveté or with myth. On the other hand, the word can refer to the very meaning of event which I have just briefly presented: Is it not characteristic of the event to be . . . fabulous?

> Why invoke and analyse this fable? Let us make something very clear: for us, it is very precisely a fable [. . .]: Jesus has risen. Now, this is indeed the fabulous point, since all the rest, the birth, the preaching, the death *may*

20 "Such a work, written in a tongue which is not one's own by habit, cannot leave the exegete indifferent" (Quesnel 1999, 28). See also (Neusch 1999, Vouga 2001). The latter is, to my knowledge, the only theologian to have undertaken a true dialogue with Badiou on the question of the subject which he, for his part, perceives as a person loved independently of his qualities and acts. It is, so to speak, a matter of reinterpreting justification by faith. Vouga stresses the apocalyptic context of the revelation for the human being, placing him in the company of Taubes.

> after all be tenable. What is "fable" in a narrative is that which, for us, fails to touch anything real, if not that invisible and indirectly accessible residue which clings to whatever is patently imaginary. In this respect, Paul brings the Christian narrative back to its sole point as fable, with the forcefulness of one who knows that, holding this point as real, one is spared the whole imaginary fringe surrounding it. (5)

When Badiou affirms "let us say that for us it is rigourously impossible to believe in the resurrection of the Crucified One" (6). This is not to belittle the resurrection but to affirm the impossibility he feels—contrary to Paul—to name it an event. In any case, like any event "the Resurrection of Christ is neither an argument, nor an accomplishment. Nor is there any proof of the event, nor is the event itself any proof (52)."

In line with this, our closing remarks turn to the main criticism raised against Badiou (for example Lyotard 1989, 240ff.; Zizek 2000, 143–44). If the event is not "in the order of a falsifiable and demonstrable fact" (47), will not the "intervention" which names the event arise from the purely arbitrary? What is to distinguish the option for Nazism from that for the French Revolution? What in the event calls upon the subject to discern something unprecedented and imperative? Badiou would no doubt answer that the subject must be in order with equality, thus with the universal (Terray 1990, 75).

And this leads us to Badiou's *Saint Paul.*

Problematics

The questions driving Badiou's reading of Paul are clearly developed in chapter 1 "Paul's Contemporaneity" (5–16). Seeing the upheaval we are experiencing, specifically that revolutionary disillusionment arising from the disappearance of any mobilizing utopia, we find in Paul a model for thinking the event and living militantly. For, notwithstanding the content of his message, Paul makes it possible to rethink the structure of the political, since he is "himself a contemporary of a monumental figure of the destruction of everything political (the beginnings of the military despotism called 'the Roman Empire') . . ." (8)—here, Badiou connects with Taubes.

By renouncing the concrete universal of truths in order to affirm the right of racial, religious, national or sexual minorities, the current epoch no longer has any tools to obstruct the abstract homogenization of the circulation of capital and its complete disregard for persons. Cultural globalization and the retreat into ethnic enclaves are two sides of the same coin: "The capitalist logic of general equivalence and the identity and cultural logic of communities or minorities form an integral whole" (11,

cf. 14).[21] *We must be open to a reading of Romans which allows us to state clearly some criticism of the current political crisis.*

Reading approach

Badiou does not hesitate to accord Paul the status of a classic, but he fails to define this status: "I have always read the Epistles as one returns to classical texts which are particularly familiar, well-worn paths, details abolished, power intact" (1). He will read Romans as he reads Pascal, Heidegger, and Plato, which means through the lens of being and event. The pieces of the puzzle retrieved from the analysis of Paul fall almost too perfectly into place to reconstitute Badiou's philosophical system, so much so that, when he writes: "Paul points out," we would be tempted to read "Badiou points out." We also have the impression that Badiou keeps less closely to the text than Taubes, though he thinks in a more rectilinear fashion and quotes more Pauline passages *in extensio* than does the German philosopher.

I want to stress this point: Badiou rereads Paul to find his own conception of the event there. From the start, his reading template is obvious: "The philosophically reconstituted debate covers three concepts. Interruption: What does an event interrupt, what does it preserve? Fidelity: What does being faithful to an event-based interruption imply? Marking: Are there visible marks or signs of fidelity? At the intersection of these three concepts the fundamental inquiry builds up: Who is the subject of the process of truth?" (24)

Badiou's reading is a-historical, in more ways than one. First, running counter to all exegesis of Romans over the last twenty-five years (Donfried 1991), one can and even must dispense with any contextualization of Paul's letters, since there is no causal link between the event and the situation which saw its birth—therefore, in the case of Paul, between the Gospel and the Roman Empire (16): "There we have, under the imperative of the event, something dense and timeless, something which, precisely because it involves a thought destined to universality in its emerging singularity but *is* so independently of any anecdote, we can find intelligible without recourse to complicated historical mediations . . ." (38). Regarding biographical elements and the circumstances in which the text was written, Badiou will write: "What good is all that? Look at the books. Direct tickets to doctrine" (17). Yet, in his chapter "Who is Paul?"

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[21] On the situation of current culture, Badiou's analysis both connects with and contests that of Lyotard. To counteract the dominant power of neoliberalism and its unifying "metanarrative" Lyotard proposes a return to a pluralism of viewpoints and a serialization of their respective narratives. See Lyotard (1979).

(17–23), this does not prevent him from being surprisingly well informed with regard to the discussions surrounding the authenticity of the letters, the situation of Judaism in the Roman Empire, the debate stirred up by opening Christianity to pagans and their relation to the Jewish Law, and the political issues involved in Pauline collections. Similarly, his remarks on the reasons for canonizing the Pauline corpus are enlightening and incisive. Nor, as we have seen, is he prevented from making an analogy between our epoch and that of the Roman Empire.

Second, Badiou connects with Bultmann: "All is brought back to one sole point: Jesus, son of God [. . .], and thereby Christ, died on the cross and was resurrected. The rest, all the rest, is of no real importance. We would even say: the rest (what Jesus said and did) *is not the reality of the conviction but encumbers and even falsifies it*" (35, cf. also 67).

Moreover, we note that, except for Pascal and Nietzsche (64–67, 75–77), Badiou, unlike Taubes, spends little time dialoguing explicitly with philosophers who have read Paul before him. And when he does, it is to insist on the fact that they have not understood Paul. Could it be that Badiou finally has? This attitude stands in contrast to that of Taubes for whom, I recall, no one has entirely understood Paul, just as no one has been completely led astray in interpreting him.

Theses

Spelled out and commented on in the six points enumerated below, one thesis stands out: ". . . for *Paul* it is a matter of exploring what *law* can structure a *subject stripped of all identity,* and suspended from an event whose only 'proof' is exactly that a subject *proclaims* it [. . .] this paradoxical connection between a subject without identity and a law without support founds the possibility within history of a *universal predication*" (6, emphasis added).

1. Paul, like a Nietzsche—who saw in him his rival, as Taubes already pointed out—is an anti-philosopher (18.62.76), but in a radical sense: not "that philosophy is an error, a necessary illusion, a phantasm, etc., but that there is no longer any place to receive its pretension" (62). What is more, the figure of Paul is that of a militant, a resistance fighter, as the filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini so well understood (38–41) in his film project on Paul (Pasolini 1980).[22] Much like a Party faithful or union delegate,

[22] Pasolini transposed Paul into the context of the Second World War: Paul is a man in the Vichy régime (= Pharisees), a collaborator who, stationed in Paris (= Jerusalem) pursues members of the resistance (= Christians). During a mission to convince the supporters of Franco not to take in refugees, he encounters his road . . . to Barcelona (= Damascus) and becomes a member of the resistance. His engagement will lead him to a dire defeat in Rome (= Athens) and New York (the

Paul is an activist encountering adherents, sympathizers, and opponents; he writes to organize the former or to contest the latter and he busies himself collecting funds for the cause. Taubes had already presented Paul as a political agitator, but without going into as much detail. *This Pauline "reconfiguration" is refreshing, after so many centuries of hagiography. However, it is done at the expense of a very dangerous historical uncoupling. Moreover, this recuperation leaves somewhat puzzled: why does a Marxist philosopher like Badiou feel the need to go looking for his figure of the militant in the religious field? Could it be that available revolutionary models no longer exist? Could this be yet another example showing that Marxism is a secularized Christianity (see Agamben in the next pages)? As for the anti-philosophical (philosophical!) category . . . there's a question to dig into, but one which puts Paul solidly in the philosophical tradition! In a similar manner, why shouldn't Paul be presented as an anti-theologian?*

2. Badiou finds in Paul, i.e. in 1 Cor 1:17–19, a topological dynamics[23] of four subjective discourses similar to Lacan's figures of discourse[24] (ch. 4, pp. 43–57). This topology shows that Paul is in actual fact the subject witnessing the event. Taking the Jewish and Greek discourses as two opponents propping each other up, Paul dismisses them both as unsatisfactory: the first is that of the prophet who asks for a sign in the frame of a particular election; the other is that of the sage who questions nature in the frame of a universal cosmos. "'Jew' and 'Greek' designate properly nothing that we could spontaneously understand in the word 'people' [. . .] it is a matter of what Paul considers the two coherent intellectual figures in the world which is his" (43–44). To these two master discourses which are also discourses of the father, Paul opposes a third one, the apostle's discourse which proclaims the truth of an event surpassing all discourses based on knowledge, whether of sign or of reason. Paul thereby institutes the discourse of the son in which one will note the apparent convergence with Taubes's reading of Freud. The destitution of the two master discourses—Jewish particularism and (false) Greek universalization—founds the equality of the sons, which is true universalism. (63) There exists a fourth discourse, that of the mystic, which is in the order of the ineffable and the non-discourse. According to 2 Cor 12:1–10, Paul is acquainted with it, but refuses to use it, as this would be returning to the

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Rome of today) where he will be assassinated. Now, despite this contemporary setting, the text of the script is woven almost exclusively from passages lifted whole-cloth from the *Acts of the Apostles* and Paul's letters!

[23] *Topological dynamics, topology, topological system* translate here the Lacanian word *topique.*

[24] The figures of discourse in Lacan are: the master (the Law), the hysteric, the university, and the analyst (Lacan 1991).

discourse of the sign. Hence the expression: "There is neither Jew not Greek." *The analysis of 1 Cor 1 is interesting. However, the conceptual interpretation of the Jew/Greek couple in Paul has three weaknesses. (1) Jew/Greek is in fact a polarity of ethnic identity expressed from the Jewish point of view. (2) This polarity does not work the same in Rom as in 1Cor: "there is no longer any difference" (Rom 10:12, quoted by Badiou), but from one end to the other of the letter, the Apostle's argument is based on this difference! Paul's universality does not level differences. (3) The analysis of Rom 9–11 shows clearly that by opening election to the Greek, Paul does not obliterate the election of the Jews; it seems to me that here Taubes's reading of Paul is better. Moreover, the relation with Lacan's topological system needs to be verified (Zizek 2000, 162–65).*

3. The subject who discerns the event and is roused by it is a divided subject (chapter V, 59–68 and Badiou 2000, 327–30). Here again we perceive the influence of Lacan (1977). Contrary to the other three discourses (Greek, Jewish, and mystical) that of the Apostle witnessing the resurrection-event does not *unify* the subject, but braids together two simultaneous subjective paths: the flesh and the spirit, death and life, the Law and grace, the situation and the effects of the event. In other words, the Christian lives, at the same time, the situation of the first Adam and of the second Adam (73). The flesh refers to the closed identities from which one must liberate oneself: this is the reign of particularistic multiplicity of accountability, it is the refusal of the event. The spirit refers to the consequences of the event to be brought forth, it is the reign of the multiplicity of overabundance, it is the One offered to all. "(A)n event-made rupture always constitutes its subject in the divided form of 'no . . . but' and *it is precisely this form which bears the universal.* For the 'no' is a potential dissolution of closed particularisms (whose name is 'law'), whereas the 'but' indicates the task, the faithful labour in which the subjects of the process opened by the event (whose name is grace) are the co-workers" (67–68). *This reinterpretation of the flesh/spirit duet as an analogy of the situation/event duet is daring, but adequately expresses the still-there/already-there paradox which characterizes the co-existence of the two ages of the Pauline apocalyptic.*

4. In relation with the above thesis and still from a Lacanian perspective: the Law is the mechanism by which the Ego (to be distinguished from the subject) is assigned to death so that Sin should live, that is so that desire should rampage in the form of an automatism (chapter VII, 79–89). Rom 7:7–23 is then read as an autobiography of what Paul experiences *after* Damascus (59,84): "The law makes death live, and the subject, as life according to the spirit, falls on the side of death. The law distributes life on the side of the way of death and death on the side of the way of life. The death of life is the Ego (in the death position). Sin is the life of death" (86). "Sin is nothing other than the permutation, under the

effects of the law, of the positions of life and death" (88). "Only a resurrection redistributes death and life to their rightful places, by showing that life does not necessarily occupy the place of death" (89). *By clearly identifying the "I" of Rom 7 with a Christian Pauline "I", Badiou clearly takes sides in a controversial debate—a plausible option beside the Adamic "I" and the Mosaic "I". He also follows in the tracks of many readings done from a psychoanalytical perspective (for instance Lacan 1992, 83–84), but his reading of Lacan has been strongly contested (Zizek 2000, 152–56).*

5. Basing himself on Rom 6:4–8, Badiou affirms that the relation between death and resurrection is not dialectical as would be two moments of the same reality (ch. 6, pp. 69–78). "The resurrection is neither the *co-optation* of death[25] nor the fact of overcoming it, but something else" (Badiou 2000, 330, emphasis added). As event, the resurrection emerges from a situation (death) but is not caused by it. Consequently, the proclamation of a crucified Messiah remains folly and is, thereby, the bearer of great rhetorical power, but it does not make "suffering an intrinsically redemptive" function. (74) In sum, unlike the conclusion of Nietzsche's analysis, there is nothing death-dealing in the Pauline message: to be resurrected, Christ had to die, obviously, but he is not resurrected because he was dead.

Now, "death" here does not refer to the biological reality, but to one of the two facets of the divided human condition (cf. thesis 3). According to Badiou, the "death" of Christ allows God to enter into solidarity with the divided human being and permits the latter to opt for life. On the one hand, this solidarity is called reconciliation, an equalization which distinguishes itself from salvation (Rom 5:10): "we become like Christ for he becomes like us" (Badiou 2000, 330). On the other hand, to resurrect, to be saved, is to opt for life: "The whole point is to know whether any existence, breaking with the cruel ordinariness of time, encounters the material opportunity to serve a truth and to thus become an immortal, within the subjective division, quite beyond the survival instincts of the human animal" (70). By this conceptual formalization, Badiou operates as well a "secularization of grace" (70, see also 91). *This thesis is Badiou's most daring. It discards the existential interpretation of "being-for-death" (cf. Heidegger) and a good part of Latin soteriology as well, but it is not without some analogy with Greek soteriology which stressed divinization—"God became human so that the human being might become God." In this sense, it relativizes the sacrificial interpretation of the death of Christ and replies directly to the Taubes-Freud duet. The theologian, for his part, sits stunned by this immanentization of salvation, its*

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[25] There is an implied wordplay in French: "La résurrection [le *relèvement*] n'est pas la *relève* de la mort. " Also, *relève* refers to the Hegel's *Aufhebung.*

reduction to the opportunity of embracing an intra-wordly cause-event. Moreover, it is remarkable that Badiou revisits the all important reconciliation/salvation distinction in Romans, but from an entirely different perspective, which allows me to note that he never refers to the metaphor of justification—much like Taubes, in fact. Finally, the question remains: Does Badiou do justice to the "for us" of the death of Christ?

6. Finally, Badiou gives an original interpretation of the Paul's three theological virtues, in the sense of a militancy faithful to the event proclaimed (chs. 8 and 9, 91–103). Faith, love, and hope thus become conviction, love, and certainty. *To the very end, Badiou pursues his project of immanentizing the event proclaimed by Paul.*

2.3 Agamben: Paul, founder of the messianic fracture

Giorgio Agamben (born in 1942) is a professor at the University of Verona. A jurist concerned with the question of language, he stands at the cross-roads of poetry and philosophy. He is celebrated for the quality of his writing, the finesse of his reasoning, and a remarkable erudition, which are all evident in his book *Il tempo che resta*—a book which is subtitled *a comment on the Letter to the Romans* (Agamben 2000a, 2000b).[26] This book is the complement of an unfinished trilogy (Agamben 1998, 1999): as with Badiou's, Agamben's reading of Paul cannot be understood without some knowledge of the progress of his thought over almost thirty years.

System (vision of the world)

In an interview with the French daily *Libération* (Marongiu and Agamben 1999), the Italian philosopher indicates how his meeting with Heidegger had constituted a philosophical vocation[27] and how Benjamin had been for him an antidote to the traces of poison Heidegger's thought could contain(!) In the interview, he also describes himself as "an epigone [. . .] who is trying to finish, to complete what others, far better than himself, have left undone," explaining that his political reflections owe a

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[26] To simplify the references in this section on Agamben, they will be indicated by page number in parentheses—I am using the French translation. We can give a few examples of the erudition he displays there, quite apart from the philosophical domain: reference to Cervantes (21), to the *Digest* of Justinian (compared to the *Talmud,* 30–31), to the grammarians of the Middlge Ages (45), to Roman law (48–50), to the linguistics of Benveniste and Gustave Guillaume (109–10), to Baudelaire (103), and to Kafka 118), etc.

[27] As will be seen in the theses, the idea of vocation occupies an important place in *Il tempo che resta.*

great deal to Benjamin, whose works he edited in Italian, and to Foucault. We should add that *Il tempo che resta*, dedicated to Taubes, takes up things where the Jewish philosopher had left them off. Several of Agamben's key concepts had already been outlined in Taubes: the *hōs mē* of 1 Cor 7:29 (Taubes 1999b, 83.109), the Paul-Benjamin relationship, the *katechon* of 2 Thess 2:6–7 (Taubes 1999b, 105).

In his *Homo sacer* trilogy, Agamben intends to unmask the hoax of modern politics, whose model is not the city, i.e. the State founded on law and discussion, but the concentration camp, i.e. the State founded on exception and suspension of the law. He thus dismisses both democracy and totalitarianism as unsatisfactory: Auschwitz only revealed the logic of a system which, since the Second World War, has grown more perfect. No longer exercised by citizen subjects, power is exercised upon an object, "*life naked* and reduced to the silence of refugees, deportees or the banished: that of an '*homo sacer*' whose biological body is exposed, without mediation, to the action of a force of correction, of imprisonment, and of death" (Grelet *et al.* 1999, emphasis added). The expression *Homo sacer,* sacred man, thus designates the *object* of this modern anti-politics for which Agamben has coined the neologism *biopolitics.* In Roman law, the condemned person became *sacer,* outlawed and banished. He had no identity: neither religious—he was unfit for sacrifice—nor civil—he could be executed summarily and with impunity (Custer 1997, 217). As in a camp, the modern State, constantly and at its wills, operates on each "citizen" a desubjectivization, followed by a resubjectivization meant to provoke the subjection of persons who are no longer persons, but naked lives—numbers.

Confronted with this impasse, time and the subject must be re-thought. Hence, the interest in the messianic (substantivized adjective), a concept which in Agamben plays a role analogous to the concept of event in Badiou. Hence also, the detour by way of Paul, for the messianic time of *Romans* can and must become the paradigm of historical time.

Problematics

Il tempo che resta speaks of urgency and of Paul as the prototype of the messianic thinker, but it never explains the reason for this urgency or the interest held by the messianic idea—very much in contrast with the very clear problematics of Badiou. We must look elsewhere for that: for example in the *Homo sacer* trilogy. Faced with the aporia of current biopolitics, we must give politics a new foundation. "What does it mean to live in the messiah, what is the messianic life? And what is the structure of messianic time? These questions which are those of Paul, *must* also be ours" (36, emphasis added), because—are we to imply?—patients in the

maw of the bureaucratic health system, people with AIDS, illegal immigrants, and the elderly, among others, are prisoners in a vast concentration camp. In other words, but still only implied: the Pauline structure of time can allow us to subvert the political alienation to which we are being subjected.

Reading approach

"What interests me in the texts of Paul is not so much the domain of religion, but this punctual domain, the messianic, which has to do with religion but does not coincide with it: this is a domain very close to the political. " (Grelet et al. 1999) Like Badiou, Agamben proposes first of all a philosophical and secular reading of Paul. He follows in the path of the great German philosophical tradition, where Paul is interpreted through Luther's translation. He shows that the great thinkers of modern political philosophy have honed their concepts by secularizing Paul's messianic: the Puritan work ethics in Weber (39–41), class in Marx (51–58), appropriation of the unsuitable in Heidegger (59–60), Hegel's *Aufhebung* (158–64), and, above all, the conception of history in Benjamin (215–27).

This being said, of the three philosophers presented here, Agamben is the closest to the exegete-philologist model—in that, very different from Taubes. He is attentive to words, to etymology, to textual criticism, to punctuation, to grammar, to the history of theological interpretation; he even proposes his own translation of the passages studied. None of this means that Agamben's exegesis is not disconcerting, as Denis Müller points out. According to Müller, this interpretation is a "fertile exegetical subversion, free of historico-critical cliques, but just as far removed from certain psychoanalytical or Hebraizing over-interpretations typical of a certain contemporary coquetry." Agamben reads the text from his position of a reader, without postulating any certainty as to its meaning" (Müller 2001, 52). If for Taubes (Taubes 1999b, 33), everything was found in the *exordium* of the letter, Agamben conceives his book as "a commentary *ad litteram* and 'in every sense'[28] of the first ten words composing the first verse of the Epistle to the Romans" (8). The titles of the six chapters—which correspond to the six days of the seminar—thus take up the words in Rom 1:1: *Paulos doulos christou Ièsou / klètos / aphōrismenos / apostolos / eis euaggelion theou.*

Though the book's title and procedure stress urgency—there is too little time to comment on the whole letter!—we discover along the way that his structure in six "days" and a conclusion titled "*Tornada*" also relate to temporality. On the one hand, we have a nod at the "6 + 1" biblical

[28] In French and Italian, the word also means: *in all directions.*

arithmetic, the time of creation and the time of rest, which allows a kind of recessed consideration of the whole time of creation. Saturday is not a "day like the others but rather [. . .] the messianic recapitulation and abbreviation of history and creation" (135). On the other hand, this structure is that of a redundant poetic form which Agamben analyzes and which is supposed to be the model of messianic temporality (130–40). This very rigid poetic form, the sextine, is made up of six strophes of six verses, to which is added a last strophe of three verses, the *tornada, recapitulating* the whole but somewhat apart from it. Only six words can end the verses, they each appear once by strophe, but never in the same sequence, following an order of complex but regular permutation. They also all appear in the final *tornada.* "The sextine [. . .] is a soteriological machine which through the sophisticated, *mèchanè* of annunciations and repetitions of rhyming words (which correspond to topological relations between the past and the present) transform chronological time into messianic time" (134). In other words, the chronological linear time of the reading of the poem (36 + 3 verses), i.e. the time it takes for the poem to end is, in the process, metamorphosed into a recessed time, a rest time, that of the three verses of the *tornada,* and it does so by folding back on itself—the repetition of the words at the end of the verse constantly referring to what comes before and after in the poem.

This observation on the structure of the book anticipates its most complex thesis on time, but also describes very well Agamben's style of exposition which, from one chapter to the next relentlessly repeats the same intuitions, but with different shadings or utterances.

Theses

Agamben's overall objective is "to restore the Epistles of Paul to their status as the fundamental messianic text for the West" (9). Where Taubes scarcely explained what he meant by the term *messianic,* except in reference to the history of Jewish mysticism, Agamben's book explores this term methodically. The seven theses that I comment on correspond to the order of the chapters in the book.

1. The messianic perspective erases identity:

(a) On the one hand, *christ* is a title and no longer the proper name of Jesus Christ. According to the author, this is an unquestionable philological conclusion (!)—no polemical or Judaizing prejudices intended (33): Christology does not interest him, but rather the meaning of the word *christos,* messiah (35). *This preliminary thesis makes it possible to examine Romans through the messianic prism. Agamben, while justifying his reading of christos in a functional sense, is very well aware that he is going against the consensus in Pauline research. Now, his argumentation is too rapid, exegetically*

speaking, and this has a measurable theological impact. In the logic of Romans, can the title of Messiah and the person of the Crucified be dissociated so easily? Obviously, this question is always open to re-examination—for any number of different motives, even if only out of defiance towards the TDNT (Grudmann *et al.* 1974). *However, it is obvious that christos designates someone who has some of the traits of the Messiah, but who at the same time explodes this category. And if Christologists like Moltmann (Moltmann 1993) have wanted to re-messianize Jesus in ways which resemble those of Agamben, this is not without its problems: the hiatus existing between christ and Christ is perhaps the gap which founds Christology (St-Arnaud 1998). Be that as it may, where Taubes is content to stress the Jewish nature of faith in Christ, Agamben proposes to us a messianic without a Messiah.*

(b) Moreover, the free man Saul has become the slave of Christ; he now has only one messianic name, Paul, and no identity—he can then become the model of the modern messianic subject. This prepares the way for the second thesis. *But this slave without identity, can he not also become the model of the non-subject of biopolitics, i.e. of the prisoner in the concentration camp who has only a number tattooed on him by his guards? Here we touch on one of the problems of Agamben's political position: Isn't the messianic a flight from the problem? (Grelet et al. 1999) What is the difference between the no-subject of Auschwitz and the messianic subject? A partial response to this objection will be found in theses 2 and 6.*

2. The messianic vocation is the revocation of all other vocations and the suspension of all identities. The word *klêtos*, at the heart of Rom 1:1, is also the pivot of Agamben's interpretation which analyses at length the working of *klēsis* in 1 Cor 7:17–32, particularly the last verses (vv. 29–31) which repeat five times the expression *hōs mē*, translated by *as not*.[29] "To be messianic, to live in the messiah means dispossession, in the form of *as not*, of all judicial and factual status (circumcised/ uncircumcised, free/slave, man/woman); but this dispossession does not found a new identity, and the 'new creature' is only the use and messianic vocation of the old one" (48). "[. . .] vocation calls to vocation itself, the former is like an urgency working and hollowing the latter from within, cancelling it to the very extent that it holds its own and abides there" (44). Messianic faith does not envision salvation as an unrealizable "impotential" utopia, which would imply acting *as if* it were true. Neither does it envision salvation as

[29] 1 Cor 7:29–31: I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short, from now on, let even those who have wives be *as though* they had none, and those who mourn *as though* they were not mourning, and those who rejoice *as though* they were not rejoicing, and those who buy *as though* they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world *as though* they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

the ineluctable necessity of what is to come. Neither does it feed on resentment against the world. Messianic faith envisions salvation instead as an exigency for this world now. "To repeat the words of Benjamin, it [=the messianic subject] contemplates salvation only to the extent that it loses itself in what cannot be saved" (72). *Agamben's subject without identity has something in common with the subject of Badiou—notwithstanding the quarrel between the two men. It is also with this subject that Agamben replies to the objection raised above concerning a flight from the biopolitical problem. This subject can destroy the system without replacing it, by living what this system demands that we live* otherwise: *making use of everything while possessing nothing legally. The almost mystical nature of this call which is called only to be called again . . . is fascinating. From this perspective, could we not rethink Christianity's eschatological hope, which is too often lived in a mood of indeterminate postponement—thus as unreal—or, worse, in a mood of resignation? Finally, what would happen if we applied this intuition to a specific Messiah who, against all expectations, also made himself a slave, renouncing the messianic vocation even as he assumes it? Even more scandalous: a Messiah having been condemned to the infamy of the cross and cursed by the Law, who thus becomes the Homo sacer? It would be ironic to have Christology use the idea of a philosopher who wants nothing to do with the Messiah.*[30]

3. Paul *is not* the founder of universalism (87–88, against Badiou). Far from cancelling the division between Jews and Gentiles, he divides it again fourfold. Paul himself, from the *separated* Pharisee that he was, has become the Apostle set *aside* (*aphōrismenos*): his experience is also the division of a division. On this subject, Agamben evokes the tale of the Greek painter Apelles who had succeeded in cutting in two with a brush stroke the already untrafine line drawn by Protogenes. He draws on Rom 2:28–29 (the Jew according to the flesh and the Jew according to the spirit) and Rom 9 (Israel and Israel) to affirm that there exists "a sort of rest between each people and itself and between each identity and itself" (87). With Badiou especially in mind, Agamben perhaps denounces the danger of a universalism, of a catholicity which, in the name of an event, would replace one totalitarianism . . . with another. He dismisses as

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[30] I have in mind the thesis of my colleague Guy-Robert St-Arnaud (1998, 168–69, emphasis added): ". . . who is in a position to decide whether or not such and such actions of a person adequately justify according him the *title* of messiah? The first Christians, perhaps implicitly, answered this question. In a way, their response consists in saying that *no one can make this judgement.* So, they called this Jesus by a well identified *proper name,* the Messiah-Christ, as the name which puts to rout the very possibility of *messianic self-importance* [. . .] Christ becomes the very singular name identifying this *relentless pruning* of the many pretensions to lay hold of the kingdom of God."

unsatisfactory particular monolithic identities—which in reality are never monolithic—as well as the universal, for the messianic offers an eccentric position which makes it possible to criticize both. The new cut, the fracture established by Paul, concerns all peoples, without levelling differences. We also note that where Badiou thinks in terms of individuals, Agamben thinks in terms of communities. *Though, from their point of view, these two philosophers see that their quarrel about the interpretation of Paul has political consequences, it may also highlight ecclesiological issues. Should we think Christianity in individual or collective terms? In terms of univocal or plurivocal identities? Is there a Christian identity?*

4. In correlation with thesis 2: messianic time is a *nun kairos*—this moment of infinite quality which, being apart and back from the *chronos* of history, makes it possible to apprehend history and give it meaning. The *kairos* is a contraction of the *chronos.* It is the time that time takes to come to an end; the time we have left; the time that we are ourselves (112–13); the time where our history touches eternity without ever entering it—here again, Agamben takes up the metaphor of the division of the division, the fracture:

> . . . the two extremities of the *olam hazzah* and the *olam habba* contract against each other, coming face to face, but without coinciding: and this face-to-face, this contraction, is the messianic time—and nothing else. Once again, in Paul, the messianic is not a third eon between the two times, but rather a caesura which divides the division between times and introduces between them a rest, an unassignable zone of indifference within which the past is shifted to the present and the present stretched into the past. (123–24)

Kairos and *chronos* are heterogeneous, joined together but not to be added together (118). In passing, Agamben distinguishes and opposes—with just cause—the economy of salvation, truer to his vision of time, and the history of salvation (126–29). *This insistence on the* kairos *in Paul and on criticism of the history of salvation seems valid to me (Gignac 2002). As for the philosophical and theological implications of this conception of time, that would deserve in-depth study.*

5. The *Nomos* is to the Gospel what laws are to the state of exception.[31] The first is neither opposed nor subordinate to the second. Their relationship is not one of exteriority but of intimacy, like two sides—the norm and the promise—of the same reality. Here, Agamben comments

[31] Agamben returns here to the analysis formerly made by . . . Carl Schmitt to justify the Nazi regime (165–68). The state of exception is characterized by (1) the impossibility of distinguishing those who are within the law and those who are not; (2) the inexecutability of the law; and (3) its informulability.

on Rom 3:27–31, especially the last verse: "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law." He also has an eye on Rom 10:4: "Christ is the end of the law." The Law is not destroyed or annulled but deactivated (*katargein*), thus confirmed—as the exception confirms the rule. The messianic allows usage quite beyond any law. *Whereas Badiou tried to understand the complex web of the Law in Paul by means of psychoanalysis, Agamben keeps the political perspective to the end.*[32] *Can his idea of deactivation serve to get beyond the debate which has crystallized around Rom. 10:4: fulfillment or abolition? Perhaps (see Müller 2001).*

6. In Paul, faith is an experience of the word with political repercussions. In an excellent analysis of Rom 10:6–10 in its connection with Deut 30:11–14, Agamben intends to show that the confession of faith does not designate a truth—I believe that Jesus is the Messiah—or an attitude—I believe in the same ways as Jesus did. In other words, the opposition between faith in Jesus and the faith of Jesus can be overcome. The confession of faith is rather a *performative act* going beyond essence and existence: it produces a salvation. "It is not between words and things that *homologia* comes into play, but within the language itself" (210) around a still unresolved tension between law and faith. The messianic is that grace, that excess which prevents faith and law from coinciding or separating (187.212) and which makes it possible to disarm the law. Any politics or religion that forgets this tension in favour of one of the two terms—generally the law—will generate a state of crisis. *This is an allusion to the problematics of biopolitics, and faith appears as a possible way out of the logic presiding over the biopolitical. Faith, in its very weakness, makes it possible to disarm the vicious circle of the succession of totalitarianisms. Agamben here presents the consequences of his thesis 5, but from a linguistic perspective. He both distinguishes himself from and moves closer to Badiou, since for the latter the declaration of the subject designates the truth of the event and only this declaration counts. In my view, the redefinition of the faith proposed by Agamben makes it possible to advance the understanding of the faith/salvation link and the debate surrounding the expression* pistis christou *(see also Vouga 2000, 347).*

7. The one who has understood Paul is Benjamin—an intuition already outlined in Taubes (see note 14). "No work of the past ever

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[32] As for thesis 1, one has the impression that the messianic situation comes dangerously close to the situation of the camp—there, with regard to the identity of the subject and here on the state of exception. Now, by pointed exegesis of 2 Thess 2:3–9, Agamben replies to the objection. The *katechōn* binding the lawless man (*anomos*) until the triumph of the Messiah is traditionally likened to the State, but *katechōn* and *anomos* designate instead "one and the same power, before and after the final unveiling" (175). To the anomic dictatorship of the State corresponds another type of overstepping of the law: messianic anarchy.

achieves complete readability except at certain moments of its own history [. . .] between the Epistles of Paul and our epoch, there is a secret rendezvous that we must not miss, come what may" (4th page of the cover). In his last chapter "*Tornada,*" which I recall corresponds to messianic time, Agamben produces several examples of the influence of Paul on Benjamin's thinking. Among others, here is the reading he gives of the first thesis of "Sur le concept d'histoire" (Benjamin 2000b, 427–28). The dwarf who, hiding under the table, manipulates the chess game played by historical materialism, is . . . Paul. Benjamin's ally, the source of his political philosophy, is thus the Apostle. *Here, theologians should perhaps beware of Agamben who, following Benjamin, requisitions the Pauline text. Moreover, this finale displays a dual pretension: since Benjamin has understood Paul and since Agamben has understood Benjamin, then . . .*

3. Reactions of a New Testament Scholar

In ending this presentation, I realize that I have scarcely begun to digest the rich interpretations of Taubes, Badiou, and Agamben or to foresee what consequences this digestion may have on my theological work. In other words, questions are arising at an ever greater pace. In that sense, the present article is truly a contribution to a seminar—a progress report on my reflections, a fervent appeal for truly interactive and interdisciplinary discussions with my colleagues. Not to unduly prolong an already long and technical exposé, I shall indicate rapidly a few of the intersections I see between the three philosophers and the questions they raise.

3.1 Intersections

Taubes the Midrashic commentator, Badiou the mathematician, and Agamben the erudite: several comparisons have been made between these three in the course of the presentation. Can we point to any meaningful intersections among the three?

- The three authors read Paul within a philosophical tradition: French with Badiou, German with the two others who, more than the Frenchman, call upon other philosophers in the interpretation of what they consider the key Pauline concepts.
- Badiou (implicitly) and Agamben (explicitly) claim to understand what meaning Paul has for today's world.
- *Romans* is read thematically, often in light of passages imported from the other letters and which have a decisive impact on the interpretation.

- The Pauline writings are taken as fundamental in establishing political thought and as a way of overcoming its current aporias which are described differently by the three authors.
- Paul thus becomes exemplary for his reversal of values (Taubes), for his anti-philosophy (Badiou), for his messianic witness (Agamben). Paul is a founder.
- *Romans* is radically de-*theo*-logized: Taubes and Badiou speak of the religion of the son and of sons; Badiou and Agamben go even further in their de- Christo-logizing of the letter. In any case, the accent is placed more on the believer than on the object of faith.
- Paradoxically, we may speak of a secularized theopolitics. Religion and politics join hands, not in their institutionalization, but in the ideas which found political paradigms (see Terray 1990, 74).
- The three authors reinterpret the Pauline criticism of the *Nomos* as subtly as could be wished but with propositions that must seem very strange to any reader bearing in mind the themes of current theological interpretations: for example, Bultmann's works of the Law as human self-justification before God or Dunn's identity markers of the election of Israel. Criticism of the Law thus becomes a declaration of war against Caesar (Taubes); emancipation from the repetition of the situation (Badiou) or a nihilistic response to the state of exception founding the Law (Agamben).
- Three distinct theories of the subject are grafted on to these three criticisms of Law. However, in all three cases, we are faced with a divided subject: divided by guilt (Taubes); divided by the situation/event dichotomy (Badiou) or divided by the subject's failure to coincide with its identity (Agamben). Badiou and Agamben in particular differ in the way they situate their subject. The first sets the subject in becoming, in an unfinished process moving from the flesh to the spirit, from the situation to the event. The second presents it as the product of a metamorphosis and as the bearer of a new attitude. If I reach for a spatial register: Badiou places the subject above the mêlée of identities whereas Agamben sidelines it to the background. To repeat the formulas of the two philosophers: the subject either evolves according to a "no . . . but" dynamic (Badiou) or lives out its condition according to the "as not" logic (Agamben).
- Badiou adopts a more individualistic perspective, more psychoanalytical also. Agamben and Taubes never lose sight of the political and community—even communitarian—perspective which is not without its links to their attempt to re-Judaize Paul.

- We should thus rework the Badiou/Agamben quarrel more in depth, perhaps to be surprised by discovering a deeper convergence beyond their divergence (Büttgen 2002). What meaning does a subject without identity have?

3.2 Hermeneutical reflections

Have I succeeded in rendering an account of the density of the intuitions of these three philosophers or have I at least stirred an interest in reading them? Whatever the case may be, reading them has been, for me, an abrasive experience. First, I saw that my exegetical training, focused on 1st century philology and history, and my theological training, centred on the Catholic and more largely Christian tradition, were very slight indeed. I learned that the Pauline corpus has been read and is still being read in another tradition, that of the philosophers. I became aware that Paul even constitutes a compulsory passage for anyone who wants to understand Hegel, Heidegger, and Pascal.

Second, I finally gave up claims as to my own scientific objectivity, thanks to the omnipresent presuppositions philosophers use in their act of reading. I recalled St. Augustine's *Doctrina christiana* (1:39–44): in taking up the study of texts, we always manage to find in them our own key to their interpretation. Augustine finds love; Luther, justification; Badiou, the structure of the event; Taubes, messianism; Agamben, "what rests."

Third and as a corollary to the preceding point: I became aware that certain readings deeply rooted in our theological readings were not so obvious: thus, for example, the redemptive value of suffering which Badiou contests out of hand. The disorientation afforded us by philosophers may at the very least get us out of our ruts.

Fourth, we are dealing with three readings of *Romans* which make no attempt to say the last word on the letter; even more, they do not even bother to read it *in extensio*—we even note a contraction of the corpus from Taubes (Rom 1, Rom 9–13) to Agamben (Rom 1:1) by way of Badiou (Rom 6–7, 10:4). These readings could of course be called partial because they *are* only partial. But it seems that the axes of reading suggested correspond to certain commonly accepted thematics, though our philosophers do transform them: the problematics of the election of Israel (Rom 9–11); the understanding of the believing subject (Rom 3–8); the universality of the Gospel (Rom 1–4, 10); eschatological urgency in relation to the State (Rom 13); etc.

However, one could reverse the perspective and ask whether our long commentaries on *Romans*—a genre which is taking up more and more room in theological production—do not "sin" in the opposite direction.

On the one hand, by attempting to say it all and burying us under what is becoming a mass of erudition, these commentaries no longer say anything; on the other hand, by claiming to say it all, they forget that any act of reading always leaves a remainder that the key to interpretation proposed has failed to see. It is refreshing to come in contact with rigourously constructed interpretations that, without claiming to be exhaustive, go straight to the point.

Fifth, as several surveys have noted: What does it mean that so many "secular" readers are turning to Paul? "*What is being asked of Christianity,* and singularly its founding documents, since the exegesis being proposed claims to be neither confessional nor scientific?" (Büttgen 2002, 83; cf. also Beaulieu 1999, 375). Between canonical and scholarly readings, would there be some place for reading Paul as a classic?

Finally and as a corollary of the foregoing point: How can theology *assume* such a perspective (Romans as a classic) and *receive* these not strictly theological readings of a document so outstanding in all the turning points of Christian thought over the centuries? Our three thinkers force us to reconsider certain givens of Pauline studies: the time (the delay) of the parousia, eschatology, the kairos, the believing subject, political commitment, redemption, the paradoxical nature of Christian identity, etc.

But does theology really have any choice?—if it "wants to stay in contact with the process and genealogies of modernity without disconnecting from its own historicity or dissolving in an uncritical adaptation to the world and history" (Müller 2001, 57).

This opens up a work site: to clearly define what a classic is and to explore more in depth the possible meaning and scope of *classical criticism.*[33]

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Can Kierkegaard Help Us Understand the Role of the Law in Romans 7:7–12? Tools for a Kierkegaardian Reading of Paul

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Why would one want to read Romans in relationship to Kierkegaard? Doesn't the Pauline text already offer enough difficulties of its own? Why add even more difficulties by trying to interpret it through a *Kierkegaardian* lens? It is my conviction that some of Kierkegaard's categories of thinking, if carefully used, will aid our understanding of Romans rather than confound it further. I do not aim to propose a thorough interpretation of Romans through Kierkegaard's philosophy in this paper. Rather, I will try to show, that Kierkegaard's *Sickness Unto Death* offers some interesting insights into a careful reading of Rom 7:7–12. In a way, it will serve as a first test to decide whether it would be pertinent or not to pursue such an analysis of Paul's text any further. Quite evidently, reading Rom 7:7–12 through Kierkegaard's *Sickness Unto Death* will also mean discovering whether Kierkegaard wrote *Sickness Unto Death* bearing Romans 7 (and Romans more generally) in mind.

I am sure this opportunity to share my research in the "Romans through History and Culture Seminar" will allow me to refine my understanding of Rom 7 and to ameliorate my interpretation of the two major difficulties in the text, namely, who is speaking in this passage, and what exactly is Paul's understanding of the law—what is its role. The results will be the possibility of a better way of relating *Sickness Unto Death* and Romans 7:7–12.

I will present my thoughts in the following manner: The first part will help us enter into the problem and will introduce these questions: "Was

Kierkegaard inspired by Romans 7 when he wrote *Sickness Unto Death?*" and "Is it easier to understand Romans 7 when one keeps some concepts of *Sickness Unto Death* close at hand?" These two questions will be fully analyzed in the second part of my paper which will be divided into three distinct sections: First, there will be an analysis of Rom 7:7–12 based on the two following questions: "Who is speaking?" and "What is the law?" Second, there will be a reading of *Sickness Unto Death,* through several passages taken mainly out of book IV. Third, I will try to establish a relationship between the two texts. It will be more than a mere comparison. I will try to establish the influence of Romans 7 on *Sickness Unto Death* and show that Kierkegaard can and does indeed help us understand Romans 7. Finally, in my conclusion, I will evaluate how pertinent it is to use *Sickness Unto Death* for understanding Romans 7 and whether it is possible to apply this analysis to the entire letter of Paul.

There are several doors through which one can enter the previously posed questions. I've decided to recall two texts; one from Kierkegaard's *Sickness Unto Death* and one from Paul's letter to the Romans.

1. Discovering the questions

1.1 In Sickness Unto Death

The first text is taken from the opening lines of book IV, which begins the second part of *Sickness Unto Death* entitled *Despair Is Sin.*[1] The quotation reads as follows:

> Sin is: *before God, or with the conception of God, in despair not to will to be oneself, or in despair to will to be oneself.* Thus sin is intensified weakness or intensified defiance: sin is the intensification of despair. The emphasis is on *before God,* or with a conception of God; it is the conception of God that makes sin dialectically, ethically, and religiously what lawyers call "aggravated" despair. (*SuD,* 77)

Allow me to say a few words about the context of this quote. *Sickness Unto Death* can be separated into two parts. The first part is titled *The Sickness Unto Death Is Despair.* It is a phenomenological analysis of despair. This is the properly psychological portion of *Sickness Unto Death* where despair is analyzed in a psychological manner. In this section, the problem

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[1] Søren Kierkegaard, *Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition by Anti Climacus (edited by S. Kierkegaard)* (translated from the Danish by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 75. From now on, I will indicate quotations from *Sickness unto Death* with the abbreviation *SuD,* followed by the page number, in parenthesis after the quotation.

of human beings before God is not posed. In the second part, one realizes (as Kierkegaard himself describes it) that despair is qualified. Kierkegaard introduces the notion of "aggravated despair," despair before God. Only in the second part will the Christian element appear in an accented manner. In Kierkegaard's text, this is clearly indicated through the "before God" qualification.

This quotation already indicates two elements that will retain our attention in our attempt to relate Romans 7 with *Sickness Unto Death.* First, it is important to note the qualification of sin as "before God." Kierkegaard insists on it himself: "The emphasis is on *before God,* or with a conception of God." For Kierkegaard, the "before God" presents a new definition of one's self. He explains it in his first chapter (The gradations in the consciousness of the self [the qualification "before God"]):

> The preceding section concentrated on pointing out a gradation in the consciousness of the self; first came ignorance of having an eternal self (C, B, a), then a knowledge of having a self in which there is something eternal (C, B, b), and under this, in turn (1–2, ß), gradations were pointed out. This whole deliberation must now dialectically take a new direction. The point is that the previously considered gradation in the consciousness of the self is within the category of the human self, or the self whose criterion is man. But this self takes on a new quality and qualification by being a self directly before God. This self is not longer the merely human self but is what I, hoping not to be misinterpreted, would call the theological self, the self directly before God. And what infinite reality [*Realitet*] the self gains by being conscious of existing before God, by becoming a human self whose criterion is God! (*SuD,* 79)

The qualification "before God"—we will see it in greater detail—allows Kierkegaard to do two things. First, it allows him to critique any definition of sin that would deny that sin gains a supplementary dimension when it is committed by someone who is conscious of being in front of God. Second, it allows him to introduce the possibility of offense, namely the possibility for human beings to refuse the fact that they are living as unique individuals before God (*SuD,* 83ff.). The definition of sin as being despair with the consciousness of being before God is the first important thing to keep in mind when we begin reading Romans 7.

The second thing one should note is the tight relationship between sin and despair which is also expressed in the clause "not to will to be oneself or (. . .) to will to be oneself." Kierkegaard has presented an understanding of despair with great care in the pages before book IV developing it from a number of different angles (despair as deadly sickness, despair as a universal phenomenon, despair as defined by finitude/infinitude, despair as defined by consciousness). He also explains that despair is created by the fact that the self, as a relation that relates itself to

itself, (*SuD,* 13), was established by a third entity. From this, two kinds of despair originate; one does not want to be oneself or one wants to be oneself (*SuD,* 14). The self cannot attain equilibrium by itself. Kierkegaard expresses this another way:

> To despair over oneself, in despair to will to be rid of oneself—this is the formula for all despair. Therefore the other form of despair, in despair to will to be oneself, can be traced back to the first (. . .). A person in despair despairingly wills to be himself. But if he despairingly wills to be himself, he certainly does not want to be rid of himself. Well, so it seems, but upon closer examination it is clear that the contradiction is the same. The self that he despairingly wants to be is a self that he is not (for to will to be the self that he is in truth is the very opposite of despair), that is, he wants to tear his self away from the power that established it. (*SuD,* 20)

The problem of the desperate human being (and it can express itself in weakness or in defiance) is that he or she does not want to root himself or herself in that third entity that established the human being. Human beings try to escape from God, precisely the one who would allow them to become theological selves—the real selves that they should want to become. This truly is sin.

With Kierkegaard's definition of sin, we are confronted by aspects of an explanation for sin that resonates with several Pauline concepts. Specifically, these aspects are the "before God" dimension, and the importance of the definition of the self. The "before God" dimension insists on the fact that sin is always committed with the conception of being before God. And the definition of the self allows one to see how important a correct understanding of anthropology is when one has to explain what sin is. We should remember these elements when we will analyze Romans 7 in greater detail. Let us now turn to the second quotation that will guide us further in our discovery of the question at stake.

1.2 In Paul

The second text comes from Romans 7: "What then do we say? The law is sin? No! But I would not have known sin, if it had not been for the law (. . .)" (Rom 7:7). The context of this verse is a discussion of the role of the law in Romans which is introduced in several passages throughout Romans, particularly 3:20, 3:31, 4:15, and 5:20. In these verses, Paul makes very strong statements about the role of the law, but he does not explain any of the reasons behind these affirmations. It is not until chapter 7 that Paul takes the opportunity to develop his understanding of the role of the law. A quick look at the different occurrences of the law vocabulary in Romans confirms this. The term "law" (νόμος) appears at its highest density in Rom 7 where there are nineteen occurrences (in Rom 2:12–27

there are 11 occurrences; in 3:19–31, there are 7 occurrences; in 4:13–16, there are 4 occurrences; and in 5:20–8:7, there are 27 occurrences). But, even more importantly, after Rom 7, Paul rarely uses the term. There are only a few isolated occurrences of the νόμος vocabulary (in 9:31, 10:4, 13:8, and 13:10). Obviously, with Rom 7, Paul is finished explaining the problem of the law. Therefore it can be ascertained that chapter 7 seeks to resolve, if not in a definitive manner, at least in a satisfying manner, the question of the law in Romans. This also explains why this discussion is found in such a surprising part of the letter since Rom 6 and Rom 8 deal with the justification of humanity.

Verse 7 itself—and we will go back to the role of this verse when we'll present the structure of the passage—introduces the entire section 7b–25. It functions as a *propositio* for 7–25.[2] Its language is found throughout the rest of the passage and the explanation of what it affirms– which does not differ from 5:20 and 7:5 in its meaning—is the goal of the entire passage. The meaning of the verse is quite clear—the law unveils sin.

What are the issues to which we need to remain attentive? The first question is why and how does Paul understand the role of the law to be the unveiling of sin. Also, it is important to uncover what nuance ἔγνων carries. What does "know" mean exactly? The passage seems to indicate that it is not only a matter of intellectual knowledge, but also of practical knowledge. The law does not simply make one know what evil is (one could then think that this awareness of evil would suffice to avoid doing evil) but the law actually leads one to do evil. The goal of the law is perverted. Paul will explain in the rest of this section how this perversion takes place—through sin. For now, let us remember that the law grants an active knowledge of sin. In Paul's way of understanding the world, the law is more on the side of the sin, flesh, and death pole, than on the side of the faith, spirit, and life pole. We will also have to ask what sin is for Paul. In the end of verse 7, sin seems to be summarized in ἐπιθυμία—desire or covetousness. What then is ἐπιθυμία? And to what human attitude does it refer? The final question that needs attention becomes "How can we relate this verse, which introduces many of the issues of Romans 7, with the Kierkegaard quotation previously discussed?"

1.3 A first hypothesis

The only aims of this hypothesis are to see how some elements of Romans 7 find echoes in *Sickness Unto Death* and to see if we should keep

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[2] Jean-Baptiste Édart makes the same claim in "De la nécessité d'un sauveur. Rhétorique et théologie de Rm 7:7–25," *RB* 105 (1998), p. 359–96, here 361, 362, 368.

in mind the concepts developed in *Sickness Unto Death* when we read Rom 7. Kierkegaard says that human error only becomes sin when it is consciously acted out with the knowledge of being in front of God. In Kierkegaard's language, the law would make sin visible for human beings because it places them in front of God. The "before God" dimension leads human being to an intellectual understanding of sin. But it does more, as the law does more in Paul. It confronts human being with the possibility of being a single and unique individual before God, of being the one that she or he really is. The fact of being before God offers the possibility of being saved but also puts humans in a position of being offended. In this hypothesis, sin is understood, in a very *Kierkegaardian* fashion, as the human refusal of establishing his or her self in God. We encounter here, perhaps, a resonance of the Pauline ἐπιθυμία. This first "perhaps" shows, if needed, that this first hypothesis has to be tested through a reading of the texts. If it resists that reading, how can it be refined through a subtler way of reading the texts? This is what we'll see.

2. Exploring the question

One can choose to start with the "source" text—to let it speak—while keeping in mind the hypothesis (an new interpretation of the text of Romans 7 through *Sickness Unto Death*). The law reveals, accentuates and creates sin because it places humans, in their mistakes, before God. The law makes human beings realize they're in front of God. They are offended by this fact and, therefore, sin. Sin uses the law to actualize itself in human beings. Therefore, let us examine what the "source" text says about this.

2.1 Analysis of Romans 7:7–12

2.1.1 Division and structure of the text

The main difficulty with the division of the text (7–12)[3] is whether or not to include verse 13 in this passage (placing it at the end of the pericope at verse 12). To make this decision, one can rely on certain textual indications. Verse 13 introduces a new rhetorical question into the passage,

[3] This is how Moo (Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* [NICNT XXV; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996], 432) and Wilckens (Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer. Teliband 2. Röm 6–11* [Zürich: Benziger Verlag; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980], 74–75) divide the text, but Fitzmyer (Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* [AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993], 462–63) includes v. 13 in the passage that starts in v. 7.

which would seem to indicate that this verse starts a new unit. However, verse 13 has verbs in the past tense, and verse 14 introduces a long passage with verbs in the present tense. The verb tense indicates that verse 13 should go with what comes before (verses 7–12). However, because verse 13 introduces a new rhetorical question, it could also be placed at the start of a new section, which would include verses 14–25.

If one devotes his or her attention to verb tenses, one would obtain the following results: 1–3 (present tense); 4–13 (past tense); 14–25 (present tense). If one focuses on the division brought about by rhetorical questions, the passage would be divided: 1–6, 7–12, 13–23, 24–25. I prefer the latter division. As was mentioned earlier, the problem is that this division removes verse 13 from verses 7–12 and includes it with 14–23. However, Jean-Baptiste Édart sees this verse as a transition between the two parts.[4] His argument in favor of this goes as follows: the literary form of the text shows that the question in verse 13, even if it does not add new elements to the debate, has a very specific function. Four times in Romans, a form similar to the one in verse 13 (a rhetorical question answered by μὴ γένοιτο) introduces Paul's reasoning (6:1–2 introduces the development that ends in 6:14; 6:15 functions as an entry way for 6:16–7:6; 7:7 starts the section 7:7–25; and 9:14 inaugurates 9:15–23). Édart thinks that Rom 7:13 can serve a similar function. The difficulty—and Édart is well aware of it—becomes the relationship between Rom 7:13 and Rom 7:7. If verse 7 already introduces 7:7–25, one can ask why one needs another introduction in verse 13. Édart argues that one can conceive the relationship like this. Verse 7 expresses the thesis, made up of three elements: sin, the fact of getting to know sin, and the role of the law in the process of knowing sin. Verse 13 refers to two of these three elements: sin and role of the law. The third element—knowledge—is, according to Édart, developed in the ἵνα clauses (so that it would be manifested as sin and that it would become very sinful).

Verse 7 is indeed referred to in verse 13, which represents somewhat of a synthesis of verses 7–12. Why then use it as the beginning of verses 14–25? For Édart, it is the literary form of the verse that implies this. For him, verse 13 is emphatic—the commandment manifests forcefully (καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς ἡ ἁμαρτία) the sinful nature of sin. For Édart, the commandment can do that only through the action of sin—action that gives death. The work of sin is developed in verses 14–23, which also shows the law's incapacity of refraining from sin. This is the new aspect that verse 13 introduces. But this new aspect remains subordinated to verse 7, the passage's *propositio*.

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[4] Jean-Baptiste Édart, *art. cit.*, 371.

Following Édart, I reach the following conclusion. Verse 13 is distinguished from verses 7–12 not because it would omit an important part of these verses, but because it summarizes them and adds a new element to them through its literary form. Chapter 7 can then be structured in the following manner:

Human Beings' Situation

1–6: establishment of a promise

7: Propositio: the promise is called into question through a rhetorical question

↓ 8–12: reaction to the proposition

13: Sub-propositio: the explanation in 8–12 is called into question

14–23: reaction to the sub-propositio

24–25: repetition of the promise

The passage receives its structure from the rhetorical questions and is framed by the promise. In my opinion, this structure justifies the separation of verse 13 from verses 7–12. This structure gives all of its weight and importance to the rhetorical questions that provide a certain rhythm to the epistle to the Romans. It respects the construction of Paul's thought around these questions. One should, of course, analyze Rom 7:7–12 in tight relationship with verses 13–25 and with the metaphor developed in Rom 7:1–6. However, in this paper, I will only consider Rom 7:7–12.

Three problems require closer scrutiny. Who did Paul intend to be the speaker behind the "I" in Rom 7:7–12? The answer to that question will help us understand the second problem—the role of the law. Finally, there is the question of sin in this passage. Let us first consider who is speaking in Rom 7:7–12.

1.1.2 Who's speaking?

The answers to this question have been very diverse and numerous. The focus of interest has mainly been on the question of whether the affirmations contained in Rom 7:7–12 could be attributed to Paul or not. If one decides that it is impossible for the passage to be autobiographical,[5] one has to decide whether Paul refers to Adam in this passage[6] (as the ἐντολή vocabulary might suggest, as well as the general idea contained in

[5] Theissen thinks Rom 7 is at least partially autobiographical: Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology,* Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987, 178; 201.

[6] Ulrich Wilckens, *Römer,* 79.

the passage) or whether Paul makes Israel (before the events at Mount Sinai) the speaker[7] (as the quotation of the 10th commandment would make one think, as well as the idea that the "I, then, before the law, was alive"—this could only be said by someone prior to the gift of the Torah). A third interpretation considers this "I" as purely rhetorical, without any reference to the person of Paul or to any other reality.[8]

I cannot engage in a thorough discussion of every position held by scholars, but it does seem important to establish what kinds of references one can find behind the "I" that Paul employs in this passage. Identifying the "I" helps one to understand the concepts of sin, law, commandment, and desire.

Without affirming that there is absolutely no reference to Paul in the "I" of Rom 7, I think it is extremely difficult to understand this "I" as Paul, who tells of the conflict that he could have experienced with the law before he became a Christian.[9] The first reason this makes the identification difficult is that Rom 7:7–12 completely contradicts the portrayal Paul brushes of himself in Phil 3 (for example) where he refers explicitly to his Jewish existence before his conversion. The second reason lies in the fact that commentators who defend a strictly autobiographical interpretation of Rom 7:7–12 have trouble explaining what event Paul might be referring to in his life when he affirms that "then, without the law, he lived," when he also describes himself elsewhere as having been circumcised on the eighth day (Phil 3:5).

In his commentary on Romans, Moo distinguishes two interpretative tendencies.[10] The first is that Paul realizes that he is sinful at his bar mitzvah. Gundry, Deissmann and Davies say that Paul was without real comprehension of the power of sin before his bar mitzvah, but when he

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7 Douglas J. Moo, *Romans,* 430–31.

8 Werner Kümmel, *Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschens im Neuen Testament,* München: Kaiser, 1974.

9 Things might be slightly different in Rom 7:13–25 where the more personal tone indicates that Paul might have some personal experience related to the incapacity of doing the good one wants to do. It might be related to the fact that, as a Pharisee, the good he thought he was doing—persecuting the Christians—revealed itself to be a wrong when seen in the light of his new Christian existence. However, it might also be that Paul uses a very personal tone in 13–25 because he's referring to a common human experience and tries to identify himself with it. He might well be using a personal tone to convince his reader, without in fact having gone himself through this dreadful experience. See also for a more general theory: Lauri Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul,* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002, 1–50.

10 Douglas Moo, *Romans,* 425.

became accountable to the commandments, sin sprang to life and Paul came to realize he was under the weight of sin. For the second interpretation, scholars refer to Paul's conversion. Paul thought he was alive when he was accomplishing the law as a self-satisfied Pharisee. At the time of his conversion, he realizes that he was far from satisfying the demands of the law, and that he was in fact under the law's condemnation. This interpretation goes back to Augustine.

Neither one of these two explanations are satisfying, mainly because they bring extra-textual explanations into the text of Rom 7:7–12. They refer to moments of Paul's life about which we have no evidence—we have no idea of how Paul experienced his bar mitzvah and Paul never says he felt the weight of the law's condemnation. Therefore it is more reasonable to give up trying to find an autobiographical reference to Paul's affirmations in Rom 7:7–12. However, one should not neglect the simple fact that Paul does indeed speak in the first person. If only through a rhetorical practice, Paul accepts the fact that the reader can ask the question of whether one can include Paul in the "I" who is speaking. There, the rhetorical concept of *prosōpopoiia* or "speech-in-character" might be of help when interpreting this difficult passage.

Prosōpopoiia, as Stowers explains it, is "a rhetorical and literary technique in which the speaker or writer produces speech that represents not himself or herself but another person or type of character."[11] According to Stowers, *prosōpopoiia* presents aspects of self-reflection and develops itself in the manner of a monologue.[12] For him, Rom 7:7–25 corresponds perfectly with the *prosōpopoiia* structure. According to Stowers, the character that Paul depicts in this passage represents the barbarian woman, especially as she is presented in Euripid's Medea.[13] Medea illustrates perfectly the human being who has completely lost his or her self-control. If Stowers' presentation is indeed attractive, especially for verses 13–23, it impoverishes the theological meaning of the text, in particular verses 7–12, and it fails to highlight the role of the law, the definition of sin and the importance of ἐπιθυμία.

If one wants to keep the rhetorical tool of *prosōpopoiia* to interpret these verses, one can notice the following elements in the text. First, the text carries strong references—even if they're not explicit—to the text of

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[11] Stanley K. Stowers, "Romans 7:7–25 as Speech-in-Character (προσωποποιια)," in: Troels Engberg-Pedersen (ed.), *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (Studies of the New Testament and its World; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 180–202, here 180.

[12] *Ibid.,* 192.

[13] *Ibid.,* 199.

Gen 2:4–3:14. If one looks at the Septuagint translation, the following parallels are possible: the use of the word ἐντολή, which only appears in Rom 7 and Rom 13:9 and stems from the same root than the verb ἐντέλλω, found in Gen 2:16–17 to carry the order of God to Adam: "And the LORD God commanded Adam, saying: 'From every tree in the garden, you will eat for food, but from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you will not eat. In the day you would eat from it, you will die of death.'" The reference can, however, be considered as fortuitous. Are there other elements that might make the connection clearer? In Gen 3:13, Eve tries to justify herself before God in saying that the serpent seduced her and made her eat the fruit of the tree—ὁ ὄφις ἠπάτησεν. In Rom 7:11, Paul writes that sin "seduced me through the commandment": ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐξηπάτησεν. The same root is used in both cases. Furthermore the meaning of each verse corresponds to the same theme. It is the gift of the commandment, manipulated by the serpent (is it possible to equate the serpent with sin?) that leads to disobedience. We meet yet another parallel theme—the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve, after they have eaten the fruit, become equal to God, having obtained the knowledge of what is good and evil. The problem varies a little in Rom 7 where human beings know sin through the commandment. However, the fact of knowing sin (in both cases, γινώσκω is used) does indicate that human beings also know good. This interpretation is confirmed by verses 14 and following since, in these verses, human beings know good (ἀγαθόν) and evil (κακόν) but cannot accomplish good. In both texts, one can also notice that γινώσκω does not only imply an intellectual knowledge of what is good and evil, rather, a practical dimension is envisioned.

Even if one doesn't place a lot of weight on these similarities in vocabulary (they can make us attentive to a possible relationship that needs to be confirmed), it does seem clear that Rom 7:7–12 presents similarities to Gen 2:4–3:14. The text becomes clearer if one thinks that Paul had Adam in mind when he was writing it. In Gen 3 the serpent alters the meaning of the good commandment given by God. The commandment then indirectly provokes the rise of human sin and the death of the human beings (since they don't have access to the tree of life in the garden; a tree from which God had not prohibited eating the fruits[14]). The narration in Gen 2:4–3:14 corresponds rather well to the content of Rom 7:7–12. And, the reference to Adam could still be present to the hearer's mind since Paul names the character in Rom 5:14.

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[14] Cf. Robert G. Hammerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence. Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

Two elements can call into question the reference to Adam behind Rom 7:7–12. First, the fact that the serpent is not explicitly identified with sin. Second—and more importantly—the fact that ἐπιθυμία is not mentioned in the Genesis story. Of course, one can say that it is ἐπιθυμία that drove Eve towards eating the fruit (verse 6: "and the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and that it was agreeable to the eyes, and that it was appropriated for intelligence, and, taking its fruit, she ate, et gave also to her man, with her, he ate"), but the vocabulary and the idea itself do not explicitly appear in Gen 2:4–3:14.

But the interdiction μὴ ἐπιθυμήσεις does quote the 10th commandment of the decalogue in a shortened form (Exod 20:17 and Deut 5:21 LXX), which implies a strong reminder of the gift of the law to Israel at Mount Sinai. One can argue whether it is possible to say that the 10th commandment has to be understood as summarizing the entire Torah. Rom 7:7–12 should then be seen as an exclusive reference to the history of Israel. It seems unnecessary to try to demonstrate this. One can very well think that Paul chooses this commandment because it allows him to introduce a reference to the story of Adam and Eve as well as to the gift of the Torah at Sinai.

I would like to propose the following result for the identity of the "I" in this passage: Paul, following the general idea of *prosōpopoiia* has an imaginary character speak in that passage. It would indeed be hard to imagine that Paul would suddenly introduce a direct discourse of Adam in this passage. On the contrary, to construct that character, Paul relies heavily on the story in Gen 2:4–3:14, which matches his goal in this passage. And, since Paul wants to discuss the role of the law and not limit himself to the commandment made to Adam, Paul uses a quotation of the 10th commandment. He also employs in parallel fashion the vocabulary of νόμος and ἐντολή (that only appears here and in Rom 13:9 in the epistle to the Romans). This allows him to introduce in his "I" discourse strongly referenced to Adam the problem of the Torah given to Israel at Mount Sinai. The reference to Paul's biography is rather limited in this case, and one can ask why Paul chooses to speak in the first person at all, rather than simply present his ideas, with clear references to Adam and to the gift of the Torah at Sinai—the two traditions building up that passage (Adam being present in a stronger manner than the gift of the Torah[15]).

I think this choice can be explained through an argumentative strategy. The fact that Paul uses an "I" in this passage gives him the opportunity to introduce himself in the background of the character he's

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15 If one thinks that Romans is addressed to a mainly Gentile community in Rome, it also allows Paul to universalize his discourse more easily.

constructing through *prosōpopoiia.* Through the "I" that Paul uses, the hearer of the letter can imagine being that "I" of which Paul speaks. Since this "I" refers to traditions the hearer knows, he or she can identify with this "I" even more easily, and enter the "I"'s world of experience. If the "I" in Rom 7:7–12 does not explicitly speak of a personal experience of Paul, it can address events that Paul's hearers know. Thus, they can really enter into his discourse, which portrays a figure they can identify with.[16] In a way, this is a form of indirect communication—a concept developed and abundantly used by Kierkegaard—a way of communication that allows the author, through the use of a pseudonym (perhaps an echo of *prosōpopoiia*), to present a way of being to a reader considered in his or her existence of existential subject.

A short excursus will show how Kierkegaard says it. The quotation is fairly long, but it casts an interesting light on what Paul does when he uses that "I".

1.1.3 Excursus

The quotation is taken from the "Post-Scriptum":[17]

> La méthode indirecte fait de la communication un art différent de ce que l'on admet généralement, quand on s'imagine que le rôle du penseur est de présenter son message à une personne instruite pour qu'elle en juge, ou à un ignorant pour qu'il s'en instruise. Mais l'on n'a cure de la suite, de ce qui rend si justement la communication dialectiquement si difficile; on ne voit pas que le lecteur à qui on s'adresse est un existant et que là est le point essentiel. Il est moins difficile d'arrêter un homme dans la rue et de rester soi-même immobile pour lui parler, que d'avoir à dire en passant quelque chose à un passant, sans demeurer soi-même sur place ni retarder l'autre, sans l'inviter à suivre le même chemin, en l'engageant au contraire à poursuivre sa route: telle est la situation d'un existant vis-à-vis d'un autre existant,

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16 Lauri Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul,* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002, 121n. 132 goes in the same direction: "However, *ego* is here a good literary device: it identifies the apostle with Adam, the addressees and all humanity. It also allows the rhetorical merger with a more personal, emotionally affective *ego* at the end of the chapter."

17 I apologize for the quotations in French but I was unable to find an English version of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragment* in the Swiss libraries.

> quand la communication a trait à la vérité entendue comme intériorité de l'existence.[18]

Earlier, Kierkegaard says: "Exister dans ce que l'on a compris, cela ne peut pas être transmis directement à un esprit existant, pas même par Dieu, et à plus forte raison par un homme[19]". Quite evidently, Paul does not think of an entire theory of indirect communication when he writes to the Roman community using "I". However, he does think of them as "existential subjects." This leads him to tell them one of his truths by using an "I" discourse that gives him the opportunity to include them in what he's telling them. The "I" of Rom 7:7–12 does not need to represent Paul himself, Adam or the people of Israel. Paul uses these three sources to express one of his convictions and to bring his hearers to live in that truth. But this he can only do through indirect communication.

The next question that needs to be discussed is the difficult role of the law in this passage. This discussion will be shorter.

1.1.4 The role of the law

If one accepts the fact that, in Rom 7:7–12 one finds traditions related to Adam and to the gift of the Torah at Sinai, it becomes clear that the law of which Paul speaks is the Jewish law, the Torah (at least in Rom 7:7–12; things might change slightly in verses 13–25). On this basis, one can also assimilate ἐντολή and νόμος. ἐντολή is the law in its very concrete aspect and highlights the relationship with Gen 2:4–3:14. Νόμος illustrates the link to Torah as a collection of laws and as a collection of affirmations which guide the life of human beings. At first sight, what Paul says about the law in Rom 7:7–12 might seem hard to keep together. If one follows the text of Rom 7:7–12, one discovers that Paul writes the following things about the law:

- the law isn't sin
- sin remains unknown without the law
- the law that says: "You shall not covet" brings covetousness
- without the law, sin is dead
- the commandment gives life to sin
- sin, using the commandment, kills
- the law is holy, the commandment is holy, just and good

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[18] Søren Kierkegaard, "Post-Scriptum définitif et non scientifique aux Miettes philosophiques par Johannes Climacus édité par S. Kierkegaard," *Œuvres complètes Vol. 10,* Paris, Édition de l'Orante, 1977, 257s.

[19] *Ibid.*, 255

In Rom 7:7–12, Paul tries to show that the law and the commandment are not evil things in themselves. If they're put on the side of sin and death, it is only through the work of sin that manipulates them. The fact of associating the law with sin and death was quite blasphemous for a Jew, since the gift of the law was supposed to bring human beings life. One can see that idea expressed in Deut 30:15–20 for example:

> See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob (NRSV).

Here, the law is understood as the power of God that offers life.[20] The issue, in Rom 7:7–12, is to know whether Paul critiques the law because it fails in its mission to give life and finds itself on the side of death and sin[21] or whether Paul tries to exonerate the law of that failure, keeping it on the side of life and showing that it fails because it has been manipulated by sin.[22] It seems that verse 12 of chapter 7 favors this last interpretation. Paul does not want to give an active power to the law in the salvation process—the affirmations at the beginning of Romans show this clearly: 3:28, 4:15, 5:20—but he does say in Rom 7 that the law remains a gift of God, even though it is perverted through sin. How does Paul then understand the law?

According to Jürgen Becker, for Paul, the law always meets a human being who is already sinful (which corresponds to Rom 7:7b—the law does not create sin in itself, it brings the knowledge of sin)—one who cannot obey the law. But in Judaism (and Deut 30 shows it well), the law meets a

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[20] Cf. Ulrich Luck, "Das Gute und das Böse in Römer 7," in Helmut Merklein éd., *Neues Testament und Ethik. Für Rudolf Schnackenburg,* Freiburg: Herder, 1989, 220–37, here 229.

[21] Cf. Ulrich Luck, *art. cit.*

[22] Cf. Ulrich Wilckens, *Römer,* 74; 80; 83.

human being who can choose between good and evil. Becker says it like this: "In distinction to this, for Judaism the life (and death) function of the Torah is linked to the human ability to choose freely between good and evil (Sir 15:11–20; *Pss. Sol.* 9:4–5; *4 Ezra* 8:55–56)."[23] Since Paul develops a pessimistic anthropology, he could consider the Torah as a power of life only if it has the power of breaking the sinful state of the sinner. But, for Paul, this it cannot do. The relationship with Gen 2:4–3:14 shows the role of the law—it should protect the life of human beings (in this way, it is holy, just and good) but it cannot do this because it is manipulated by sin (a power that dwells in human beings in a non-active state before the law steps on the scene). Sin could not in itself lead human beings to death, since only the law contains the power to bring human beings life and death. Sin needs the condemnation of the law to lead human beings to death.

Since Paul accuses sin of being responsible for the perversion of the law, Paul can preserve God's role and the law's role concerning the emergence of sin. But Paul does not suppress human responsibility in the existence of sin: sin provokes covetousness in human beings and human beings let themselves be seduced. Human beings would rather trust sin—that perverts the law—than God. Thus, this clarifies the status of the law. However, the way the law is manipulated by sin remains obscure. Becker says: "But it [the commandment] turns inexplicably into the impetus of covetousness followed by trespass and death."[24] We will see later if our reading of Kierkegaard might help us understand the mysterious influence of the law on the surfacing of covetousness and sin.

For now, it matters only to say a couple of words about sin in Rom 7:7–12 even though the concept is not explicitly defined in this passage.

1.1.5 What is sin?

So far, we've seen that Rom 7:7–12 speaks of the law as bringing sin to knowledge. In this passage, sin is always related to the commandment against ἐπιθυμία. In order to understand what sin is, one has to understand what ἐπιθυμία is. Since Rom 7:7–12 does not give a real explanation of what either sin or ἐπιθυμία are, it seems logical to look at the two texts that Paul uses in Rom 7 to build his argument: Gen 2:4–3:14 and the quotation of the 10th commandment of the decalogue.

In Gen 2:4–3:14, when Eve agrees to listen to the serpent and eats the fruit, she's guilty of not obeying God's commandment. She trusts the

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[23] Jürgen Becker, *Paul. Apostle to the Gentiles,* Louisville, KY: Westminster-John Knox Press, 1993, 396.

[24] *Ibid.*, 397.

snake that distorts God's commandment more than she trusts God himself. She refuses to depend completely on God since she's ready to believe one of God's creatures, instead of trusting the creator. The consequence of this misplaced trust, of this challenge to God's authority, is that she looses—and Adam with her—access to the tree of life and therefore she will die. She enters a new state. She knows what is good and evil, which makes her like a god. Her sin (although the word is never mentioned as such in Gen 2:4–3:14) was that she failed to trust God. This lack of faith or trust in God was made evident when she gave in to the temptation of the snake and desired to become like God. She wanted to become more like God than remain as a creature. She wanted to be like God, to rule her own life rather than trust in God for the life and position given to her. She escaped her human condition. If one remembers what Kierkegaard said about despair, one can say that Eve refuses to be what she really is, a creature, and tries to root herself in herself, even though she knows herself to be before God. This understanding of sin is not defined like that in Rom 7:7–12, but it can be inferred from the concept of ἐπιθυμία.

Ἐπιθυμία in Rom 7:7–12 represents sin in general. The relationship with Gen 2:4–3:14 could be presented in the following manner: you shall not covet what you're not supposed to have in order to become what you're not supposed to be. Again, the creature's status is endangered. Here, the reference happens through the decalogue, that prohibits covetousness of the neighbor's house, or field, or servants, or ox and donkey, or of anything that belongs to the neighbor. Covetousness is the desire for what one does not have. It is a negative attitude towards God's will which foresees what human beings need. In relationship with chapter 4 of the epistle to the Romans, one comes across a representation of what is not sin in the attitude of Abraham. With Abraham, faith—which is the opposite attitude of sin according to Rom 14:23—is presented as the decision to trust completely in God, to be dependent upon God. Abraham hopes against all hope (Rom 4:18), he trusts God before any other thing. The contrary attitude is sin: to trust in something or somebody else than God. Even if these definitions are not stated in Rom 7, one can think these concepts are behind the use of the word. However, the definition is not completely satisfying for Rom 7 where one needs to be reminded that sin is a power opposed to God, a power that takes hold of human beings. Sin seems to be more than merely disobedience to the law (although it is also that) since it is also a power that seizes human beings. But it is not clearly explained in this passage.

Let us summarize the results of our work on Rom 7:7–12 in order to simplify the comparison with Kierkegaard.

1.1.6 Summary of results

- The "I" in Rom 7:7–12 is based on traditions related to Adam and to the gift of Torah at Mount Sinai. It a device of indirect communication used by Paul.
- The law is manipulated by sin. However it is not assimilated to the negative pole of sin-flesh-death by Paul. Paul objects to its role as saving power in the salvation process. It is unable to lead human beings to life, as it promised. Because of that, it is criticized. It remains holy, good and just because its intentions were good. Only sin perverted it. We'll see how passages of *Sickness Unto Death* might help us to understand the way the law makes sin even more sinful.
- Sin in itself is not defined in Rom 7:7–12. It's strongly related to ἐπιθυμία, covetousness and a lack of faith. Is it the wrong attitude of human beings who want to escape their creature's condition? Can the concept of despair help us understand what sin is?

We will now turn towards *Sickness Unto Death.*

1.2 Analysis of Sickness Unto Death

I will read Kierkegaard's texts in close relationship with Rom 7:7–12 in order to see how the relationship between them affects our understanding of Kierkegaard and how Kierkegaard, in return, helps us understand Rom 7:7–12.[25]

1.2.1 Pertinent texts in *Sickness Unto Death*

The first passage is found in the first chapter of book IV of *Sickness Unto Death.* The text follows Kierkegaard's own reflections on the various degrees of self consciousness and on the new quality the self takes when it finds itself before God:

> It was a very sound idea, one that came up so frequently in an older dogmatics,[26] whereas a later dogmatics very frequently took exception to

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[25] For matter of space, I will only refer to texts in Kierkegaard that help us understand Rom 7 or in which an idea could be traced back to Rom 7. I will not analyze passages that develop themes particular to Kierkegaard's thought.

[26] According to the note in the French edition of Kierkegaard's work, the old dogmatic refers here to the Lutheran orthodox theology of the 16th and 17th centuries, in opposition to the liberal theology of the 18th century: Søren Kierkegaard, "La maladie à la Mort: un exposé psychologique chrétien par Anti Climacus (édité par S. Kierkegaard," *Œuvres complètes Vol. 16* (traduit du danois par

> it because it did not have the understanding or the feeling of it—it was a very sound idea, even if at times it was misapplied: the idea that what makes sin so terrible is that it is before God. It was used to prove eternal punishment in hell. Later, as men became more shrewd, they said: Sin is sin, sin is no greater because it is against God or before God. Strange! Even lawyers speak of aggravated crimes, even lawyers make a distinction between a crime committed against a public official, for example, or against a private citizen, make a distinction between the punishment for a patricide and that for an ordinary murder.
>
> No, the older dogmatics was right in maintaining that because sin is against God it is infinitely magnified. The error consisted in considering God as some externality and in seeming to assume that only occasionally did one sin against God. But God is not some externality in the sense that a policeman is. The point that must be observed is that the self has a conception of God and yet does not will as he wills, and thus is disobedient. Nor does one only occasionally sin before God, for every sin is before God, or, more correctly, what really makes human guilt into sin is that the guilty one has the consciousness of existing before God. (*SuD,* 80)

I would like to note the following points that might help us understand Rom 7. Kierkegaard introduces a degree of difference between human error and sin. For Kierkegaard, human error only becomes sin when it is committed before God—when the culprit is conscious of being before God. Kierkegaard even goes so far as to say that, before God, sin is raised to infinite power. Here we are not far from Paul's affirmation in Rom 7:13, where sin is manifested in all its sinful violence through the law. But there is also an echo of Rom 7:7, 8. Humans know sin only through the law; without the law, sin is dead. For Kierkegaard, if humans don't know they're before God, their sin remains a human error.

One can ask the question of whether or not Kierkegaard understands the law to be the power that brings humans before God. If one keeps this in mind, the affirmation that sin used the law to make itself known to human beings becomes clearer. As long as there is no law to reveal to humans that they're before God, sin cannot spring to life. It remains, to use Kierkegaard's words, a human error. Only the law, that shows humans that they live before God, makes clear that when they are making a mistake, they're making it before God. Only this law allows sin to realize itself as an evil power inside humans, because humans now know they're acting against God.

Paul-Henri Tisseau, revision par Else-Marie Jacquet-Tisseau), 163–285, here 236, note 60.

However, Kierkegaard has not yet said that living before God depends upon the law and therefore it isn't clear why saying "you shall not covet" would provoke covetousness. Let us read further. The first chapter of book IV is followed by an appendix, entitled: "That the definition of sin includes the possibility of offense: a general observation about offense". It is quite useful to look at it more closely. Kierkegaard, to illustrate his understanding of offense, just exposed the example of a poor day-worker to whom the emperor offers to marry his daughter. If the day-worker doesn't have enough courage to believe this most extraordinary thing, he can only be offended by it: Why would an emperor give him his daughter to marry? He must be making fun of him. Kierkegaard continues:

> And now, what of Christianity! Christianity teaches that this individual human being—and thus every single individual human being, no matter whether man, woman, servant girl, cabinet minister, merchant, barber, student, or whatever—this individual human being exists *before God*, this individual human being who perhaps would be proud of having spoken with the king once in his life, this human being who does not have the slightest illusion of being on intimate terms with this one or that one, this human being exists before God, may speak with God any time he wants to, assured of being heard by him—in short, this person is invited to live on the most intimate terms with God! Furthermore, for this person's sake, also for this very person's sake, God comes to the world, allows himself to be born, to suffer, to die, and this suffering God—he almost implores and beseeches this person to accept the help that is offered to him! Truly, if there is anything to lose one's mind over, this is it! Everyone lacking the humble courage to dare to believe this is offended. But why is he offended? Because it is too high for him, because his mind cannot grasp it, because he cannot attain bold confidence in the face of it and therefore must get rid of it, pass it off as a bagatelle, nonsense, and folly, for it seems as if it would choke him (. . .). The uncharitableness of the natural man cannot allow him the extraordinary that God has intended for him; so he is offended. (*SuD*, 85–86)

Kierkegaard develops his notion of sin through offense, which consists in the fact that one does not want to recognize that, as a particular individual, he or she is living before God. There are no clear echoes of this found in Rom 7:7–12. For Kierkegaard, sin functions like this: I find myself before God. For me, it is too extraordinary. I refuse to believe it and I can only be offended by it and think that someone is trying to make fun of me by saying I can have a perfectly intimate relationship with God. Since humans cannot accept that they live before God, they become even more separated from faith. In Rom 7, the process goes like this: the law reveals sin and instead of guiding humans towards life—as it should—it leads them to death.

Here, one might find an indirect parallel. The goal of the revelation "before God" is to offer humans the possibility of an authentic relationship with God. But this offer is so extravagant to the human mind that, rather than bringing humans to faith, it leads them to offense. The role of the law is somewhat parallel. It too offers a privileged relationship to God. It offers to lead humans to life, but, perverted by the power of sin in humans, it only leads them to death. Sin would then be the fact of not being able to believe what God offers, of not being able to trust God when God offers the possibility to humans to live as a particular individual before God, or when God offers the law as a possibility to attain life. Humans cannot trust God, because, intrinsically, they refuse to understand themselves as related to God, which Kierkegaard expresses through the concept of despair and Paul through the reference to the Genesis story.

Kierkegaard continues his analysis of sin in Book IV, chapter II, with a passage which challenges the Socratic definition of sin. Again, an extract of this chapter will be useful because, within it, Kierkegaard explains more clearly how humans come to know they live before God. For Kierkegaard, the Socratic definition of sin is insufficient ("Sin is ignorance" [*SuD,* 87]). Indeed, "if sin is being ignorant of what is right and therefore doing wrong, then sin does not exist" (*SuD,* 89). For Socrates, it would be impossible for a human to do something unjust if he or she knew it was unjust. Kierkegaard opposes that definition (in agreement with Paul in Rom 7:13–23). He says that the Socratic definition of sin is missing a category to explain the following transition. How does someone who knows what is right concretely accomplish what is right? According to Kierkegaard, "In this transition Christianity begins; by taking this path, it shows that sin is rooted in willing and arrives at the concept of defiance (. . .)" (*SuD,* 93). For Kierkegaard, in this passage from knowing what is right to doing what is right, a long process begins. It resembles the following scenario (*SuD,* 93ff.). When a human being recognizes what is just and does not do it right away, he or she waits before acting. While the human being is waiting, his or her knowledge of what is just fades. Soon, there is an agreement between the will of the inferior self and the knowledge. The human beings give up doing the right thing. For Socrates, according to Kierkegaard, it simply signifies that humans have not really understood what is right. Kierkegaard shows how he agrees and disagrees in this passage:

> This means that the Greek mind does not have the courage to declare that a person knowingly does wrong, knows what is right and does the wrong; so it manages by saying: If a person does what is wrong, he has not understood what is right.

> Absolutely right. And no *human being* can come further than that; no man of himself and by himself can declare what sin is, precisely because he is in sin; all his talk about sin is basically a glossing over of sin, an excuse, a sinful watering down. That is why Christianity begins in another way: man has to learn what sin is by a revelation from God; sin is not a matter of a person's not having understood what is right but of his being unwilling to understand it, or his not willing what is right (. . .).
>
> Therefore the definition of sin given in the previous section still needs to be completed as follows: sin is after being taught by a revelation from God what sin is—before God in despair not to will to be oneself or in despair to will to be oneself. (*SuD,* 94–96)

The passage which challenges the Socratic definition of sin serves Kierkegaard in the sense that he is able to introduce the necessity of a divine revelation in order to understand the nature of sin. In book IV, Kierkegaard does not explain what this revelation is. He only says it comes from God. Of course, it is tempting to interpret it in the light of Romans 7:7–12 as the gift of the law, which makes humans aware of being in sin and then gives life to sin. Some elements in Kierkegaard's text invite this interpretation—the way Kierkegaard insists on the fact that humans, although they know what is just, will do what is unjust (which reminds one of Rom 7:13–25); Kierkegaard's affirmation that everything humans say about sin is intended to justify themselves (which could stem out of the observation of Eve's comments accusing the snake). The law—revelation—would then have the function of reminding humans of their own culpability in repeating that humans knew what was good but deliberately chose to do evil.

The parallel might not be that clear however. In Romans, the law stimulates sin. In Kierkegaard, the revelation of the nature of sin does not intensify the sinful actions of humans. It does not diminish them but neither does it multiply them. However, without that revelation, humans would ignore that they are in sin. They would also ignore that they are before God. And it is precisely the fact of being before God that makes their human mistakes, sin. In a way, therefore, the revelation of sin does change the nature of human mistakes.

The revelation of what sin is does not help people stay out of sin. In the same way, the law, even though it reveals sin, does not lead people to life. For Kierkegaard, the revelation that sin is before God shows that sin is a position, and, because it is a position, humans cannot escape this position by themselves (he would agree with Rom 7:14–25). He expresses this in the following manner: "But Christianity, which was the first to discover paradoxes, is as paradoxical on this point as possible; it seems to be working against itself by establishing sin so securely as a position that

now it seems to be utterly impossible to eliminate it again—and then it is this very Christianity that by means of the Atonement wants to eliminate sin as completely as if it were drowned in the sea" (*SuD,* 100). Let us try to summarize our results.

1.2.2 Summary of the results

- Kierkegaard distinguishes between human error and sin. Human error only becomes sin when it is committed with the knowledge of being before God. Sin becomes entirely dreadful when it is before God. The "before God" category is essential to understand sin in Kierkegaard.
- The "before God" category creates the possibility of an offense: a human cannot believe that he or she is a unique individual before God—that he or she is in an intimate relationship with God. Since humans cannot believe this, they become offended and move away from God.
- Humans only become aware of sin through a revelation. It shows them that sin is the fact of not wanting to do what is just, when one knows what is just. It is in this way that the Christian definition of sin is different from the Socratic one.

Let's go back to the relationship between the two texts, a relationship we've already touched on through the analysis of passages of *Sickness Unto Death.*

1.3 Relationship between the two texts

We've already noticed that there are echoes of Rom 7:7–12 in *Sickness Unto Death* and that in some passages, *Sickness Unto Death* helps us understand Rom 7:7–12.

1. When trying to identify the Pauline "I", the concept of indirect communication developed by Kierkegaard makes it easier to understand what Paul might have wanted to do. He used an "I" that does not refer to his own person, but rather presents a character created from the traditions related to Adam and the gift of the Torah at Mount Sinai. The following remark must be made. Paul does not develop a theory of indirect communication. But what he does in Rom 7:7–12 fits nicely with what Kierkegaard describes as indirect communication. The theory of indirect communication does help us interpret what Paul intended to do in Rom 7:7–12. It might be helpful because the theory of indirect communication arises from the difficulties a person rooted in existence meets when he or she has to transmit a truth, for example the Christian truth, to another person who is also grounded in existence. The common ground for Paul and Kierkegaard is that they both consider the person

they address as a "subjective I." If the style of Rom 7:7–12 is better understood through the concept of indirect communication, it might well be because this theory of indirect communication has been elaborated by Kierkegaard because of the conviction Paul gave rise in him, namely that each person is an existing subject.

2. The notion of being "before God" along with the notion of being offended—both being central in Kierkegaard's understanding of sin—can help us assess how the law reveals sin and makes it even more sinful in Romans. Paul and Kierkegaard agree on the fact that humans cannot believe, cannot trust what God is offering them, be it through the law or through being "before God." In Genesis, Eve trusts the snake more than she does God. She believes the snake instead of believing God and this brings her death. Eve cannot believe the commandment that promised her life. For Kierkegaard, human beings cannot believe that they are a unique individual before God. They get offended and plunge into sin. But it is the promise that offered a particular relationship to God that is the cause for this offense. In both cases, the gift of God leads to human beings revolting against God, because that gift is too much—it cares too much about people's lives. It offers too much.

This interpretation can of course be called into question, since the commandment in Genesis imposes a restriction on humans. But this restriction does promise life. When Adam and Eve go against that restriction, it is then that they loose something—access to the tree of life in the garden of Eden. It is interesting for that matter to go back to the definition that Kierkegaard gives to offense—it is "unhappy admiration". "For what is offense? Offense is unhappy admiration. Thus it is related to envy, but it is an envy that turns against the person himself, is worse against oneself to an even higher degree. The uncharitableness of the natural man cannot allow him the extraordinary that God has intended for him, so he is offended" (*SuD*, 86). Here, human beings desire what in fact God has already given them. But they cannot believe they've received it, so they get offended. It is the offer of God itself that creates covetousness—the jealousy of human beings. Humans cannot stop coveting God's offer when indeed they should believe it. Since they're unable to believe it on account of their "uncharitableness," they become offended. Maybe we hear here an echo of the Pauline ἐπιθυμία, ἐπιθυμία produced by the divine gift itself, that humans cannot accept, but can only covet. This covetousness puts them in a wrong relationship with God.

I think this interpretation is interesting, however hazardous it may sound. The main difficulty is in integrating the commandment "you shall not covet" within this explanation. When the law says "you shall not covet," does it mean (in a *Kierkegaardian* fashion) that humans shouldn't covet anything because they've already received everything from God (as is the

case for Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden)? Human beings cannot believe that they've already received everything from God and they become offended by that promise. They get jealous of that offer, and begin to covet. So the commandment not to covet creates covetousness. This proposition is perilous, I admit, but at least it goes further than the traditional interpretation "what is forbidden attracts."

3. The revelation about which Kierkegaard speaks and that allows humans to know what sin is might be the law. It shows sin, and places humans before God, but it does not offer humans an exit out of sin.

2. Conclusion

At the end of this exploration of the Pauline and *Kierkegaardian* texts, what is the result? Where is the interest in this kind of work on the Pauline text? I hope I have shown two things: First, texts of Kierkegaard do help us understand some of the issues in Paul better. Of course, it is the interpreter's decision to relate a specific text to a passage in Romans, but this decision allows one to regain the important theological dimension of Paul's writing. It is my conviction that reading Romans 7 when bearing Kierkegaard's philosophy in mind helps one to see that even rhetorical choice (like the use of "I" in this passage) might have ideological consequences. I do not intend to say that Romans is a work of systematic theology, but I do think that it unnecessarily impoverishes the meaning of the letter if one fails to analyze the deeper convictions that might influence the writing of the epistle.

Second, I hope to have at least indicated how important it is to be conscious of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the text, especially in reformed systematic thinking. In many issues, one can still feel the influence of Paul on Kierkegaard's way of thinking, even if it is only in an indirect manner. It has been suggested that although Kierkegaard does not refer to Romans in a explicit manner, there are several connections between this Pauline epistle and the work of the Danish philosopher. In evaluating how important Paul has been for Kierkegaard, it would be important to consider sLuther's influence on Kierkegaard's reading of Paul. Here, I did not have the opportunity to study the way Kierkegaard read Paul in depth. However, the first results of an analysis of Romans 7 are promising. It seems to me that, from what Rom 7:7–12 has shown, it would be rather interesting work to deepen the understanding of the relationship between Kierkegaard and Romans.

Hidden Eunuchs of the Hebrew Bible

Janet Everhart

Introduction

In recent years, studies conducted by anthropologists, sociologists and biologists have challenged the binary gender paradigm (male/female) that undergirds so much of western thought.[1] Alternative genders are attested in almost every culture around the globe. Examples include the *hijras* of India, the *khanith* of Oman, the *jogoppa* of Yellamma, the *acault* of Myanmar and two-spirit Native Americans.[2] Increasingly, biologists note the difficulty of determining physiological sex with any kind of precision.[3]

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[1] In this project, "gender" refers to socially constructed expression that may or may not be related to one's biological "sex" (male, female, or intersexual). In keeping with the most recent scholarship in biology, I contend that humans manifest sexual diversity (rather than a clear binary division) and that gender expression is a complex combination of culture, choice, and in some cases, biological traits. For technical discussion of the terms "sex" and "gender" and "intersex," as well as for recent research on the wide varieties of physiological sexual diversity among humans, see Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000). See also Suzanne Kessler, *Lessons from the Intersexed* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998). For discussion of the one sex/two gender paradigm of western culture, see Thomas Lacquer, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

[2] See, for instance, Ann Bolin, "Traversing Gender: Cultural Context and Gender Practices," in *Gender Reversals and Gender Cultures: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives* (ed. Sabrina Petra Ramet; London: Routledge, 1996), 22–51.

[3] As many as 2% of live births involve children whose sex is ambiguous; see Kessler, 13n. 4. Because western culture has tied sex to gender, these children are normally surgically altered so that their genitals correspond to either "male" or "female;" such children are then raised in the gender that "matches" their created genitals. Additionally, some individuals whose biological sex is clear at birth later

Both sexuality and gender are more complex than a binary paradigm recognizes. This complexity is reflected in ancient as well as modern societies. As Asher-Greve discovered in her study of gender in ancient Mesopotamia, "gender taxonomy tolerated ambiguity beyond the normative 'masculine' and 'feminine.'"[4] Given the widespread attestation of gender diversity across time and cultures, one might reasonably expect to find evidence of such diversity in the Bible.

In this paper, which represents a small piece of a larger project, I argue that the biblical *sārîs* represents an individual who is not clearly "male" but who is also clearly not "female."[5] The gender of the *sārîs* is connected to his physical status as a male who cannot procreate. Building on recent studies of gender variability, I will also argue that gender-based assumptions about masculinity and power have hidden eunuchs from the view of most readers. To locate eunuchs, including those who may not be explicitly identified as such, I employ a hermeneutic of suspicion, to borrow Schüssler-Fiorenza's well-known phrase. I also assume that all translations and interpretations are interested; just as some interpreters may have an ideological stake in hiding eunuchs in the biblical text, I have a similar stake in uncovering them. My approach is multi-disciplinary, incorporating the work of gender theorists with the tools of biblical criticism to explore issues of gender and power in text and interpretation.

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express a gender that does not match their sex. Expressions such as "boy wife" or "lesbian husband" designate these mixed gender/sex roles.

[4] Julia M. Asher-Greve, "Feminist Research and Ancient Mesopotamia: Problems and Prospects," *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible* (ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 234. See also Judith Ochshorn, "Sumer: Gender, Gender Roles, Gender Role Reversals," in Ramet, *Gender Reversals . . .*, 52–65.

[5] I am using the term "eunuch" to translate *sārîs*. My argument is that the HB *sārîs* represents a non-procreative male, normally one who has been castrated. *Sārîsîm* is the plural of *sārîs*; *ša-rēši* transliterates the Akkadian logogram LU.SAG or "eunuch"; *šūt-rēši* is the plural of *ša-rēši*. I use male pronouns to refer to the eunuch, since "eunuchness" relates to the absence of organs (testicles and/or penis) normally found on biological men. The binary gender concept that dominates western culture is reflected in the structure of the English language, where singular personal pronouns are either "male" or "female."

Finding the Sārîsîm of the Hebrew Bible

The noun *sārîs* occurs forty-five times[6] in the Masoretic Text (MT) of the Hebrew Bible (HB), but the variety of terms and phrases used to render *sārîs* from the Hebrew into various "target" languages has made it difficult for most readers to identify the presence of the *sārîs* throughout the HB.[7] For example, while the majority of translations identify the *sārîs* of Jer 38:7 as a "eunuch," in most modern translations the *sārîs* who commands the soldiers in 2 Kgs 25:19/Jer 52:25 is identified as an "officer" or "official," as are other *sārîsîm* who act as agents of the king.[8] In the New Revised Standard Version translation of 2 Kings, four different English words are used to translate the six occurrences of this Hebrew noun.[9] A number of scholars have discussed translation discrepancies and philological confusion concerning *sārîs*, but to my knowledge none has employed gender theory to analyze the translation and interpretation of this term.[10] To set the stage for this analysis, a brief overview of the proposed etymologies of *sārîs* is in order.

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[6] An additional task involves locating other eunuchs who are not identified by the term *sārîs* but who may be lurking within the biblical text. Some scholars have suggested that Nehemiah was a eunuch. Albright, for instance, makes this claim based on Nehemiah's function as the king's cupbearer. See W. F. Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," *BA* 9/1 (1946): 11. Both Daniel and Mordecai also fit the profile of ancient eunuchs. Daniel and his companions, who fall under the supervision of the chief eunuch Ashpenaz, are described as "young men without physical defect and handsome . . . and competent to serve at the king's palace" (Dan 1:4). This description closely matches that Herodotus gives for would-be castrates of the Persian kings (Her. VI:32; VIII:105). Mordecai, who walks daily near the harem (Est 1:11), is also frequently situated near the king's gate or threshold where other eunuchs are found. In LXX Addition A, Mordecai rests "in the courtyard with Gabatha and Tharra, the two eunuchs of the king." Mordecai is also introduced in Esther as an ancestor of the Judean captives who were destined to "become eunuchs in the house of the king of Babylon" (Isa 39:7/2 Kgs 20:18).

[7] This count includes singular and plural forms as well as three instances in which the title *Rab-Saris* occurs to describe an Assyrian official. See appendix for a listing of the 45 occurrences.

[8] Exceptions include the New English Bible and the Jewish Publication Society TANAKH, where the term is translated "eunuch."

[9] "Eunuch": 2 Kgs 9:32, 20:11, 23:11; "palace officials": 24:12; "officials": 24:15; "officer": 25:19.

[10] See, for instance, Réne Péter-Contesse, who lists all 45 instances of *sārîs* and briefly discusses the history of translation ("Was Potiphar a Eunuch?" *BT* 47/1 (1996): 142–46).

The Etymology of *sārîs*

For over a century, scholars have posited that Hebrew *sārîs* derives from Akkadian *ša-rēši*. Many scholars argue that both terms, while clearly associated with castration, were also used to designate a variety of court personnel who were not necessarily castrated.[11] Most scholars believe that the term underwent a semantic narrowing during the early first millennium BCE.[12] In a recent article, Johnston summarizes a widely held position: *sārîs,* like Akkadian *ša-rēši,* "exhibits the same twofold range of meanings corresponding to a common historical development: court official, royal steward (preexilic); and eunuch = royal steward, harem guard (exilic and postexilic)."[13] While most analyses of *sārîs* follow some version of this position, translation discrepancies continue, because scholars are not consistent in their evaluations of which texts depict castrated men and which do not.[14] For instance, McAfee argues that the *sārîsîm* listed among the royal entourage were eunuchs (perhaps because of their proximity to women), and cites this as evidence that "eunuchs were native to ancient Israel."[15] Péter-Contesse, however, who states that in most cases the "correct translation can be seen from the context," translates *sārîs* in the same passages as "officer."[16] The current confusion surrounding the meaning of *sārîs* is evident in an article that appears in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament:*

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[11] For example, the "twofold" meaning theory is discussed by Cheyne in 1901. See "Eunuch," *Encyclopedia Biblica* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1901), 1427.

[12] However, a few scholars believe that the term moved from a more specific to a more general meaning! See, for instance, E. Neufeld, *Ancient Hebrew Marriage Laws* (London: Longman, 1944), 221.

[13] Johnston, in "Eunuch," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (ed. Willen VanGemesen; Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press), 290.

[14] Péter-Contesse, "Was Potiphar . . . ," 145.

[15] McAfee, "Eunuch," in *Oxford Companion to the Bible* (ed. Bruce Metzger and Michael Coogan; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 205.

[16] Péter-Contesse, "Was Potiphar . . . ," 145. In some instances, scholars defend translation based on the dating of the texts involved. Earlier texts (Gen, e.g.) are assumed to reflect a more generic meaning of *sārîs*; in post-exilic texts *sārîs* is usually understood as "eunuch." Collins, for instance, notes that the viewing the "majordomo" in Daniel as a eunuch is more likely if the text originated during the Persian period (John J. Collins, *Daniel* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993], 135). Recently much lively discussion has occurred around the dating of a number of texts in the HB; my hypothesis is that the texts involving eunuchs *may* all originate, in their presented redacted form, in the sixth century or later.

> Two socially contrasting classes are indicated by the term *sārîs*. The first includes distinguished officials at the royal court (1 Ch 28:1), the second the group of castrates excluded from the community at large. Because neither two separate etymologies nor a semantic change in one or the other direction can be persuasively demonstrated, one cannot determine whether this semantic ambivalence involves genuine homonymy on the one hand, or polysemy on the other. . . .[17]

A key assumption undergirding Kedar-Kopfstein's analysis is that "distinguished official" and "castrate" are mutually exclusive. The supposed incompatibility of emasculation and power is clear in other scholarly work. For instance, based on his evaluation of a text in which a *ša-rēši* represented the king in an important ritual, Leo Oppenheim argued in 1973 that some Neo-Assyrian *šūt-rēši* were not castrated: "it is inconceivable that a eunuch would have been selected to act for the king of Assyria."[18] This time-honored distinction between castrated and non-castrated *šūt-rēši* is based on assumptions about gender and power so firmly embedded in our modern western consciousness that they seem self-evident. A closer review of the actual textual and material evidence, however, reveals little to deny the eunuch status of the *šūt-rēši* and much to confirm it. A brief review of this evidence sets the stage for my claim that the *sarisim* of the HB represent eunuchs as well.

Eunuchs in Neo-Assyria: Comparative Hints

There are sound reasons for connecting the Hebrew *sārîs* with the Neo-Assyrian *ša-rēši*. Links between Neo-Assyria and biblical Israel are well established, the volume of Neo-Assyrian material is impressive, and *šūt-rēši* are ubiquitous in Neo-Assyria.[19] A survey of the HB *sārîs* and a review of

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[17] Kedar-Kopfstein, "Saris," *TDOT* 10:345. See also "Eunuch" in *Encyclopedia Judaica* 6 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Limited, 1971), 959. Recently, Scholz, in a cultural study of eunuchs, follows this pattern by distinguishing between "eunuchs" and "castrati," arguing that some but not all eunuchs were castrated. However, he fails to elucidate this distinction, conflating the two categories and ironically appealing to biblical material with no evidence other than apparent popular consensus: "There are many reasons to assume that at some of the courts . . . eunuchs were not castrati. The Bible contains indications to this effect when referring to Potiphar and other palace officials (Gen 39:1, 1 Sam 8:15, 1 Kgs 22:9)." It is not clear what indications Scholz is referring to. See *Eunuchs and Castrati: A Cultural History* (Princeton: Marcus Weiner, 2001), 76f.

[18] Leo Oppenheim, "A Note on *ša-rēši*," *JANES* 5 (1973): 332.

[19] For example, in the past decade thirteen volumes have been published by Helsinki University Press, providing translation (into English), transliteration and

comparative textual and material evidence from Neo-Assyria reveals the multiplicity of the eunuch's roles in both settings, as well as establishes that most, if not all, *sārîsîm* and *šūt-rēši* are castrated men.[20] The Neo-Assyrian material evidence depicts a dramatic distinction between individuals who are identified as *šūt-rēši* and those who are identified by other terms. The eunuchs are portrayed as clean-shaven, and often wear garments that are distinctive. The merism "eunuchs" and "bearded ones" (*ša-rēši* and *ša-ziqni*) is frequently used in the NA literature to identify personnel. In many instances, the functions of the two groups appear to be the same, suggesting that the distinction points to a difference in status rather than a difference in role.[21] Understanding the term as designator

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some commentary on the massive State Archives of Assyria, a corpus that includes legal records, omens, prophetic material, letters, poetry, and a variety of other texts. These volumes are indexed, and the logogram LU.SAG (transliterated *ša-rēši*) is consistently translated "eunuch," expediting a search of the corpus to assess how the eunuch is portrayed.

My own form-critical work strengthens the established links between Akkadian *ša-rēši* and the biblical *sārîs*. Patterns I have discovered include use of a form of address, "the king my lord." In the Hebrew Bible, the 61 occurrences of this form occur only in the books where eunuchs also appear. In fact, the eunuch Ebedmelech addresses the king with this formula (Jer 38:5). Another form comprises a listing of personnel who are close to the king. In both NA and biblical texts the personnel lists highlight the distinct status of the eunuch, as I will argue below. A more limited body of other comparative material from the ancient Near East is available. It is my hope that this study will help set the stage for evaluation of additional material from Egypt, Old Babylonia, the kingdom of the Hittites, Ugarit and Urartu. For a useful list of links between the biblical books of Kings and extra biblical texts, see Hayim Tadmor and Mordecai Cogan, *II Kings* (AB 11; New York: Doubleday and Company, 1988), Appendix 1.

[20] Scholars agree that the term *sārîs* is semantically related to the verb *srs* designating "castration" and the eunuch status of the *sārîs* is abundantly clear in some passages. Similarly, evidence from Assyria, including key texts from the Middle Assyrian Harem edicts, clearly link *srs* with castration. Studies conducted on the term *ša-rēšu* in documents from Ugarit strengthen the notion that this term refers to a castrated man. See, for instance, M. Heltzer, "On the Akadian term *resu* in Ugarit," *IOS* IV (1974), 4–11. Two seals that appeared to depict a "beardless king" who was not a eunuch have been evaluated by Watanabe as depicting not the king but his *rab saris,* or chief eunuch. For discussion of these seals see Kazuko Watanabe, "Seals of Neo-Assyrian Officials," in *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Kazuko Watanabe; Heidelburg: Universitäts Verlag C. Winter, 1999), 320.

[21] Here I am using Linton's classic distinction between role and status: Status is "position in a social system;" role is the behavior associated with a status. See Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1936).

of status alleviates the problem of positing two distinct meanings that appear to be required when the word is understand as describing a particular "role."

In recent years, and in light of new evidence, "the vast majority of Neo-Assyrian specialists believe now that in Assyrian the word *ša-rēši* means eunuch."[22] Building on the well-established premise of significant contact between Neo-Assyria and "biblical Israel," I contend that in both cultures it is reasonable to view the *sārîs* and the *ša-rēši* as castrates whose distinction from other men served a social purpose that has not yet been clearly identified or understood. In some instances, such as Isa 56:3–5, the context requires that *sārîs* be understood as a non-procreative male; no passage demands an translation that refutes that assumption. Translating all instances of biblical *sārîs* with the English term "eunuch" is faithful to the historical evidence and allows the eunuch's unique status to emerge.

Challenging Eunuch Myths

The assumption that eunuchs are pitiable creatures to be despised, an attitude manifest by a number of interpreters, has interfered with both translation and assessment of ancient texts. Grayson summarizes this perspective: "The attitude of modern scholarship toward eunuchs has been almost universally the same: the matter is to be avoided entirely, or, if that is impossible, it is to be dismissed as a trivial and unsavoury institution. This view goes back at least as far as Gibbon. . . ."[23] Scholarly distaste notwithstanding, castrated men served as military leaders in a number of cultures, including Assyria, China, Byzantium and the Mamluk Empire.[24]

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[22] Watanabe, "Seals . . . ," 317.

[23] Grayson summarizes scholarly attitudes: "The attitude of modern scholarship toward eunuchs has been almost universally the same: the matter is to be avoided entirely, or, if that is impossible, it is to be dismissed as a trivial and unsavoury institution. This view goes back at least as far as Gibbon . . ." (A. Kirk Grayson, "Eunuchs in Power: Their Role in Assyrian Bureaucracy," in *AOAT* 240, [ed. Manfried Dietrich and Oswald Loretz; Neukirchener: Verlag Neukirchen Vluyn, 1995], 85).

[24] Many NA texts identify the *Rab Saris* as commander of the king's army; for discussion of eunuchs as military leaders in China, see Henry Shih-Shan Tsai, *Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996). On eunuchs in the Byzantine military, see Shaun Tougher, "Byzantine Eunuchs: An Overview, with Special Reference to their Creation and Origin," in *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium* (ed. Liz James; London: Routledge, 1997), 168–84. On eunuchs in the Mamluk Empire, see David Ayalon, *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols, and Eunuchs* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988).

Similarly, eunuchs are well attested as close companions and advisors to kings and queens in a variety of cultures. This achievement of powerful positions close to kings, queens and deities suggests a complexity that has not been carefully evaluated. The eunuch's proximity to power is clear in a number of biblical texts. Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian eunuch of Jer 38:7, has ready access to King Hezekiah: the eunuch challenges the king to rethink his abdication of power to his *śarim*, who silenced the prophet Jeremiah by casting him into a well. At Ebedmelech's urging, Jeremiah is rescued and regains his voice. Similarly, the eunuchs in Esther help to control and facilitate the flow of information between king and queen and between Esther and Mordecai, with the result that the king's official Haman is hanged and the Jewish community achieves safety and prosperity in Persia.[25]

Most scholars assume that eunuchs were preferred court personnel because they posed no threat to the king or to the king's harem, and yet eunuchs in a number of cultures have amassed enough power to overthrow a ruler and, in some instances, have done so in concert with the women they were supposed to protect.[26] In the Bible this power is clearly suggested in the book of Esther, where the eunuchs Bigthana and Teresh plot to assassinate King Ahasuerus, a fact that few biblical commentators notice.[27] The notion that eunuchs are "safe" guardians of women because

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[25] Hopkins and Patterson have suggested the role of eunuchs as those who buffer the king from the elite of the land, whose interests are often in conflict with those of the monarchy. Their theories offer a helpful interpretive lens through which to view the function of some of the eunuchs in the Biblical texts, who appear to perform a similar function. I suspect that the gender of the eunuch is again a factor in mediating between the king and other powerful men. See Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 172f.; also Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 327f.

[26] Examples of eunuchs plotting against kings are found, for example in Chinese, and perhaps Neo-Assyrian history. See Mary Anderson, *Hidden Power.* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990), especially chapters 7 and 16; A. Kirk Grayson has suggested that challenges to Assyrian monarchy in the 9th and 8th centuries BCE came about partly as the result of the longevity of certain officials, including a number of eunuchs. See "The Struggle for Power in Assyria: Challenge to Absolute Monarchy in the Ninth and Eighth Centuries B.C.," in *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Kazuko Watanabe, Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1999), 253–70.

[27] A similar scholarly "blind spot" occurs in the work of Assyriologist Simo Parpola, whose own research has unveiled eunuch-led plots to unseat Assyrian kings; nonetheless, Parpola quotes the "party line:" "eunuchs were "the most

they are asexual is also countered by the data. Stories of the sexual adventures of eunuchs with both men and women are found in Chinese, Greco-Roman and early Christian sources.[28] As Taylor points out in his recent study of castration, the eunuch's inability to procreate does not necessarily include a lack of interest in or an inability to perform sexually.[29]

Biblical Eunuchs as a Gender

In recent years, perhaps in response to the confusion surrounding the biblical *sārîs*, a few scholars have evaluated the material from perspectives that push beyond the etymology involved and establish important groundwork for an assessment of eunuchs as a gender. In a study of officialdom in ancient Israel and Judah, Fox proposes to reevaluate the term "in light of biblical ideology concerning castration."[30] Some of Fox's insights, such as the use of *sārîs* as a category separate from *śar* and *ʿebed* are consistent with my analysis: eunuchs perform functions that may be similar to those performed by others, but are designated by a status signifier.[31] In a similar vein, Péter-Contesse argues that in some instances of *sārîs* "what is stressed is . . . social status rather than . . . physical condition."[32] I agree that social status is indicated but argue that physical

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trustworthy and reliable men imaginable." See *The Correspondence of Sargon II* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1987), xiv.

[28] For information on sexual relationships between women and Chinese eunuchs, see, for example, Mary Anderson, *Hidden Power: The Palace Eunuchs of Imperial China* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990). On eunuchs and women in the early Christian world, see Gary Brower, "Ambivalent Bodies: Making Christian Eunuchs" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1996), 138f. and 174f.

[29] Gary Taylor, *Castration: An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood* (New York: Routledge, 2000). Most studies of eunuchs agree that "eunuchness" is related to lack of procreative ability. Guyot, for instance, offers this definition: "Eunuchen sind infolge eines Defektes der Gonaden zeugungsunfähigkeit Männer." He also notes that what distinguishes the eunuch from others is his lack of procreative ability. *Eunuchen alls Sklaven und freigelassene in der grieschisch-römischen Antike* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), 15.

[30] Nili Sacher Fox, *In the Service of the King: Officialdom in Ancient Israel and Judah* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2000), 197.

[31] Fox includes *sārîs* in her discussion of miscellaneous categories rather than "status-related" or "function-related" titles, although her analysis leaves room for the possibility of considering *sārîs* as a status.

[32] Réne Péter-Contesse, "Was Potiphar a Eunuch?" *BT* 47/1 (1996): 145.

condition, in this case, is an integral part of the gendered social status. The eunuch's physical condition as a non-procreator results in his unique status.

In keeping with increasing evidence of gender diversity that defies simple categorization, I propose that eunuchs represent one among a number of possible genders.[33] The gendered distinctiveness of the *sārîs* is particularly evident in certain biblical texts. For instance, in Jer 41:16 eunuchs appear in a list that also includes "fighting men, women, children." This list describes "all the rest of the people" who had been carried captive from Mizpah, suggesting that "fighting men" or soldiers, women, children and eunuchs encompass the whole community. Each term in the list refers to a status; here the eunuchs are distinguished from "men" and "women." In several instances, the *sārîs* appears to perform functions very similar to that of other individuals, but is separately identified in the Hebrew text. For example, in some passages *sārîs* occurs alongside *śar:* the *sārîs* "had been in command of the soldiers," whereas the *śar* commanded the "army who mustered the people of the land" (2 Kgs 25:10/Jer 52:25; Jer 34:19). The difference between the two officials listed here may be a difference in gender; reading the HB material in light of Neo-Assyrian evidence strengthens this notion. Other personnel lists in which eunuchs appear alongside *śarîm* include Jer 29:2, 34:19 and 2 Kgs 24:12.

In several texts, eunuchs are introduced with a dual description: one term designating function, and the other, "eunuch," indicating status. For instance, Gen 40:2 identifies a head (*śar*) cupbearer and a head baker; in 40:7, these same two individuals are simply called the "eunuchs of Pharoah." The use of titles that specify a job function in addition to the designation *sārîs* implies a characteristic beyond the job that is identified. I suggest that this distinction signals the eunuch's gendered status, a status that differs from non-eunuchs who may also serve as butchers, bakers, cupbearers, messengers, commanders, and so forth.[34] Other lists in which eunuchs appear variously place the eunuch next to the king, next to the

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[33] Although some anthropologists have used the term "third gender" in reference to eunuchs, this term designation assumes a binary gender paradigm that is expanded to include a third "neither male nor female" status. Serena Nanda, for instance, describes the *hijras* of India as "neither male nor female." See "the Hijras of India: Cyultural and Individual Dimensions of an Institutionalized Third Gender Role." *Ritual and Belief: Readings in the Anthropology of Religion* (ed. David Hicks; State University of New York Press, 2002), 359.

[34] Another example of this dual designation occurs in the parallel texts 1 Kgs 22:9,13/2 Chr 18:8,12, where the eunuch is also identified as a "messenger." Here again, "messenger" relates the role or function, and eunuch, the status.

women (queen mother or wives) related to the king, and in one case, next to the priests.[35] Some lists that include eunuchs are comprehensive, describing "all the people" of the land, and others enumerate the most important officials and/or relatives of the king. Further analysis of these lists may cast additional light on the status of the *sārîsîm.*

The gender of the eunuch is characterized by a combination of liminality and power. The eunuch's lack of procreative power results in easy access to the most powerful women and men at the royal courts portrayed in biblical texts. He can tend the intimate needs of kings and queens, command the army, and cross thresholds that represent barriers to most people. In Esther, the eunuchs are literally the "watchers of the threshold" and it is here that they plot to assassinate the king, share information, and ferry women, men and messages across the boundaries of the royal palace[36] (Est 2:21; see also 6:2). Eunuchs stand with Jezebel at her window; presumably, other men would not have such easy access to the queen (2 Kgs 9:32). Several scholars have explored the "woman at the window" motif that appears in a variety of cultures in the ANE. The setting appears to be gendered; here eunuchs appear in the female space, again suggesting their ability to cross gender boundaries.[37]

The decision of translators to diffuse the eunuch's presence in the biblical text masks the possibility that *sārîs* represents a distinct status. Indeed, as Gary Taylor aptly notes in his recent work on castration, "allegorizing translations [notably sixteenth century English translations that used the word "chaste" instead of eunuch] and commentaries effectively cut out of the New Testament the objectionable word *eunuchs.* They castrate the text. . . ."[38] Taylor's observation can be applied to Hebrew Bible translations as well, where eunuchs are often visible only as foreigners.

I have reviewed each of the "eunuch" texts in the following translations/paraphrases: Septuagint (LXX; 2d century BCE), Vulgate (4th century CE), Geneva Bible (1560), King James Version (KJV; 1611), New

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[35] Jer 29:2; 2 Kgs 24:12, 15, Jer 34:19.

[36] Est 2:21, eunuchs at the threshold; Est 4:4, eunuchs bring messages to Esther; Esther ch. 4, the eunuch Hathach carries messages back and forth between Esther and Mordecai; Esther 6:14, eunuchs accompany Haman to a banquet that Esther prepared for him and the king.

[37] For the motif of the woman at the window, see, for example, Nehama Ashkenasy, *Woman at the Window: Biblical Tales of Oppression and Escape* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998).

[38] Gary Taylor, *Castration: An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood* (London: Routledge, 2000), 205.

Revised Standard Version (NRSV; 1989), New English Bible (NEB; 1970), Today's English Version (1978), New International Version (NIV), French Bible en français courant (BFC; 1997), Luther Bible (LUO; 1912), Einheitsübersetzung (EIN; 1980), La Biblia de Las Americas (LBA; 1986), and Jewish Publication Society TANAKH (1985). With the notable exceptions of the NEB and the TANAKH, Post-Reformation translations appear to reflect the gender and cultural biases of modern scholars: the *sārîs* who is foreign and/or associated with the queen is most often identified as "eunuch"; when the *sārîs* holds a military position or is the king's close advisor, "officer" or "official" is typically used.[39]

When scholars assume that eunuchs represent a gendered "other" and that only foreigners can be eunuchs, the potency of manhood is upheld for our biblical ancestors as well as for modern readers, and the complex realities of multiple genders are hidden from view. It is not surprising that members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community have been the first to identify eunuchs as biblical "queers." McNeill, Wilson, and Mollenkott have each entertained the possibility that biblical eunuchs are "gay, lesbian, and bisexual antecedents."[40] While a number of feminist scholars have probed the story of Jezebel, noting the tendency to read her as the "Other Woman" who represents the evils of pagan worship, Kolakowski, a self-identified transsexual, is the only reader I am aware of who seriously explores the interplay between Jezebel, Jehu, and the eunuchs who push Jezebel out of her feminine space at the window to the open, public (male) space below where she is literally obliterated.[41]

The tendency to use the label "eunuch" in conjunction with what is considered "other" (non-male, non-native) is consistent with the findings of recent studies that examine the combination of repulsion and desire

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[39] The NEB consistently translates *sārîs* as "eunuch." Réne Péter-Contesse has recently reviewed a number of translations of *sārîs* in his article, "Was Potiphar a Eunuch?" See *BT* 47/1 (1996).

[40] Nancy Wilson, *Our Tribe: Queer Folks, God, Jesus, and the Bible . . .*, 124. See also John J. McNeill, *The Church and the Homosexual* (4th ed.; Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 65, and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *Omnigender: A Transreligious Approach* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 108. I am using the term "queer" as a broad designation of any sexual/gender identity and expression that does not fit the heterosexual, procreative norm.

[41] Victoria S. Kolakowski, "Throwing a Party: Patriarchy, Gender, and the Death of Jezebel," in *Take Back the Word: A Queer Reading of the Bible* (ed. Robert Goss and Mona West; Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000), 103–14.

inspired by the "other."[42] As Sugirtharajah argues in an article on "textual cleansing," translation is a site "for promoting unequal relationships among languages, races, religions, and peoples. It brings into focus the manipulative power of a translator. . . . One of the ploys used to maintain racial superiority was to demonize the Other and to emphasize racial, gender and class differences."[43] My argument moves in a different, but related direction: translation can obscure differences (in this case, of gender) and assimilate groups that need to emerge. Sugirtharajah argues that in a "postcolonial, post-missionary era, translation should seek for a wider intertextuality which will link biblical texts with Asian scriptural texts."[44] In the case of biblical eunuchs, I advocate an intertextuality that links biblical texts with eunuchs in other cultures as well as with modern-day gender benders who challenge the "heterosexual procreative privilege" promoted by centuries of Christian biblical interpretation.[45]

Intertextual Readings

Identifying all of the eunuchs of the HB opens up possibilities of new intertextual readings. Definitions of intertextuality abound.[46] Here I am working with Timothy Beal's concept that "intertextuality . . . conceives of every text as a set of relations between texts."[47] The task of an intertextual reader includes determining the boundaries of the text(s) and intertext(s) to be considered, a process that involves an ideological component. Many possible intertexts exist for any given text. In a larger project, I will read the HB eunuchs in light of several intertexts, including Acts 8:26–40, which features an Ethiopian eunuch, and the contemporary

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[42] See, for instance, Jonathan Z. Smith, Differential Equations: On Constructing the 'Other'" (Tempe: University of Arizona, Department of Religious Studies, 1992).

[43] R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Textual Cleansing: A Move from the Colonial to the Postcolonial Version" *Semeia* 76 (1996), 9.

[44] *Ibid.*, 13.

[45] I am borrowing this phrase from Robert Goss; see "Challenging Procreative Privilege: Equal Rites," *Theology & Sexuality* 6 (1997): 33–55.

[46] See for instance Timothy K. Beal, "Intertextuality," in *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation* (ed. A. K. M. Adam; St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 128–30. See also Beal, "Ideology and Intertextuality," in *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Danna Nolan Fewell; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), 27–39. See also *Intertextuality and the Bible, Semeia* 69/70 (ed. George Aichele and Gary Phillips; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1995).

[47] Beal, *Handbook of Postmodern . . .*, 128.

western Protestant church, where the issue of gender diversity is contentious and time consuming. These and other explorations become possible when biblical eunuchs emerge, as a group, from the pages of the canon.

Intertextual readings begin to collapse the supposedly clear boundaries that define the covenant community. Categories of people who are prohibited or censured by one or more texts appear with regularity in other parts of the biblical canon; eunuchs are no exception. The Deuteronomic prohibition barring men with "crushed testicles" or a missing penis from entering the "assembly of the LORD" is clearly countered in Isa 56:3–5, where the access of eunuchs to the community of YHWH is based on Sabbath observance and not physical wholeness. The assumption of some scholars that Deut 23:1 precludes the existence of non-foreign eunuchs in Israel or Judah seems idealistic, at best![48] Proscriptions against a practice in one part of the canon do not eliminate descriptions of that practice elsewhere in the HB; a clear example of this text/countertext is found in 1 Sam, where Saul is described as having banished all mediums and wizards from the land, and a few verses finds a medium readily available at Endor. The worship of deities other than YHWH is censured clearly and often and just as clearly violated time and again. While the "party line" on polytheistic worship is consistently negative, increasing evidence of the coexistence of YHWH and Asherah indicates that monotheism developed quite slowly in ancient Israel. The proximity of biblical eunuchs to vestiges of polytheistic worship bears further investigation: Jezebel is linked with both pagan worship and eunuchs, and the eunuch Nathan-melech is located in the temple precincts near the "horses dedicated to the sun" that are abolished as part of Josiah's reform. (2 Kgs 23:11)[49]

When *sārîs* is consistently translated with a term that honors his gender as a male who does not procreate, readers discover that the eunuch appears frequently in the text. Allowing the eunuch to emerge invites new analyses of gender and power both in the biblical world and in contemporary communities of interpretation and worship. Because the Bible exerts enormous influence in many cultures of the world, uncovering eunuchs as a biblical presence is an important step toward

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[48] In the MT, the text is Deut 23:2. Johnston makes this claim: "Because castrates were prohibited from the assembly (Lev 21:20; Deut 23:2) the only referents to eunuchs are foreigners" ("Eunuch . . . ," 290).

[49] For a summary discussion of some of the gender-benders of the ANE, see, for instance, Martti Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1998). Most of 2 Kgs 23, where Nathan-melech appears, describes the eradication of polytheistic worship.

creating better visibility, and perhaps greater credibility, for contemporary "gender-benders." Just as the editors and shapers of the biblical canon could not completely eradicate the reality of diversity in the biblical world, so translators need not, and should not, diminish the eunuch's presence in the text.

A Catalogue of "*sārîs*" in the Masoretic Text (NRSV translation)

Gen 37:36 Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

Gen 39:1 Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

Gen 40:2 Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker,

Gen 40:7 So he asked Pharaoh's officers, who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?"

1 Sam 8:15 He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers.

1 Kgs 22:9 Then the king of Israel summoned an officer and said, "Bring quickly Micaiah son of Imlah."

2 Kgs 8:6 When the king questioned the woman, she told him. So the king appointed an official for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, together with all the revenue of the fields from the day that she left the land until now."

2 Kgs 9:32 He looked up to the window and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked out at him.

2 Kgs 18:17 The king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. They went up and came to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway to the Fuller's Field.

2 Kgs 20:18 Some of your own sons who are born to you shall be taken away; they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

2 Kgs 23:11 He removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of the eunuch Nathan-melech, which was in the precincts; (1) then he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. {(1) Meaning of Heb uncertain}

2 Kgs 24:12 King Jehoiachin of Judah gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself, his mother, his servants, his officers, and his palace officials. The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign.

2 Kgs 24:15 He carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon; the king's mother, the king's wives, his officials, and the elite of the land, he took into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

2 Kgs 25:19 from the city he took an officer who had been in command of the soldiers, and five men of the king's council who were found in the city; the secretary who was the commander of the army who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the city.

1 Chron 28:1 David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes, the officers of the divisions that served the king, the commanders of the thousands, the commanders of the hundreds, the stewards of all the property and cattle of the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the mighty warriors, and all the warriors.

2 Chron 18:8 Then the king of Israel summoned an officer and said, "Bring quickly Micaiah son of Imlah."

Esth 1:10 On the seventh day, when the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha and Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who attended him,

Esth 1:12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command conveyed by the eunuchs. At this the king was enraged, and his anger burned within him.

Esth 1:15 "According to the law, what is to be done to Queen Vashti because she has not performed the command of King Ahasuerus conveyed by the eunuchs?"

Esth 2:3 And let the king appoint commissioners in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the beautiful young virgins to the harem in the citadel of Susa under custody of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women; let their cosmetic treatments be given them.

Esth 2:14 In the evening she went in; then in the morning she came back to the second harem in custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the concubines; she did not go in to the king again, unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

Esth 2:15 When the turn came for Esther daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had adopted her as his own daughter, to go in to the king, she asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther was admired by all who saw her.

Esth 2:21 In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and conspired to assassinate (1) King Ahasuerus. {(1) Heb [to lay hands on]}

Esth 4:4 When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them.

Esth 4:5 Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why.

Esth 6:2 It was found written how Mordecai had told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, and who had conspired to assassinate (1) King Ahasuerus. {(1) Heb [to lay hands on]}

Esth 6:14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman off to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Esth 7:9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that."

Dan 1:3 Then the king commanded his palace master Ashpenaz to bring some of the Israelites of the royal family and of the nobility [Heb: *rab saris*].

Dan 1:7 The palace master gave them other names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego. [Heb: *sar saris*]

Dan 1:8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine; so he asked the palace master to allow him not to defile himself.

Dan 1:9 Now God allowed Daniel to receive favor and compassion from the palace master.

Dan 1:10 The palace master said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king; he has appointed your food and your drink. If he should see you in poorer condition than the other young men of your own age, you would endanger my head with the king."

Dan 1:11 Then Daniel asked the guard whom the palace master had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Dan 1:18 At the end of the time that the king had set for them to be brought in, the palace master brought them into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar.

Isa 39:7 Some of your own sons who are born to you shall be taken away; they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

Isa 56:3 Do not let the foreigner joined to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people"; and do not let the eunuch say, "I am just a dry tree."

Isa 56:4 For thus says the LORD: To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant . . .

Jer 29:2 This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen mother, the court officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the artisans, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem.

Jer 34:19 the officials of Judah, the officials of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf

Jer 38:7 Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, (1) a eunuch in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. The king happened to be sitting at the Benjamin Gate, {(1) Or [Nubian]; Heb [Cushite]} [LXX omits eunuch]

Jer 39:3 When Jerusalem was taken, (1) all the officials of the king of Babylon came and sat in the middle gate: Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim the Rabsaris, Nergal-sharezer the Rabmag, with all the rest of the officials of the king of Babylon. {(1) This clause has been transposed from 38.28}

Jer 39:13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, Nebushazban the Rabsaris, Nergal-sharezer the Rabmag, and all the chief officers of the king of Babylon sent . . .

Jer 41:16 Then Johanan son of Kareah and all the leaders of the forces with him took all the rest of the people whom Ishmael son of Nethaniah had carried away captive (1) from Mizpah after he had slain Gedaliah son of Ahikam – soldiers, women, children, and eunuchs, whom Johanan brought back from Gibeon. (2) {(1) Cn: Heb [whom he recovered from Ishmael son of Nethaniah] (2) Meaning of Heb uncertain}

Jer 52:25 And from the city he took an officer who had been in command of the soldiers, and seven men of the king's council who were found in the city; the secretary of the commander of the army who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land who were found inside the city.

Translating the Bible in Southern Africa: Contested Ownership? Owning, Owing, and Owning up[1]

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Abstract

An important but often neglected aspect of the use of the Bible in Africa is its ownership and issues related to it. Ownership of the Bible obviously concerns its personal possession and all that that entails, but goes beyond the commodification of the Bible in modern consumerist culture to refer, ultimately, to the control of the biblical texts. The limited attention to the ownership of the Bible is mostly restricted to hermeneutics, often identified as a site of struggle in Africa. However, claims to ownership are becoming increasingly visible and up-front in the area of vernacular translations, where such claims and other conditions imposed on Bible translations illustrate the affinity people have with the Book, how their sense of identity and worldviews are moulded by it and how a Bible translation acts as an important player in issues of power at various levels.

1. Introduction: Bible Translations in Africa

The Bible has been read in translated format, since its earliest years and even when it was still in fragmented form. For many centuries the translation language of choice would be the Latin of the Vulgate,[2] but

[1] Paper prepared for the Bible Translation Section at 2002 SBL Annual Meeting, 23–26 November 2002 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

[2] Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible was completed early in the fifth century, and became the Bible of the (Western) church for the next millennium.

since the sixteenth century vernacular translations became increasingly common, and on the African continent even more so with the impact of eighteen-century missionary activity. It is often argued that biblical interpretation, in the broad hermeneutical sense of the word, is a site of struggle in Africa, leading to discontent and conflict among Bible-readers on the continent. My claim is that the issue is not primarily about tension between different hermeneutical models, between *trained* or *ordinary* readers, or between Afrocentric or Eurocentric interpretive models, but that it is the contested ownership of the Bible which gives rise to many problems regarding the appropriation of the Bible in Africa, *and* that Bible translation plays a vital role in the issue of ownership.[3]

Bible translation has a long history on the African continent, with one of the earliest and certainly one of the most influential translated texts, the Septuagint (LXX), raising issues not unfamiliar today. The Hebrew Bible translated into Greek came into existence on African soil in Alexandria ostensibly during the latter half of the third century (*c.* 280–260) BCE, commissioned by Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Today it is commonly accepted that the Septuagint had a longer and more complex history of development than what was often assumed or claimed in the past. And whereas at a later stage its position in the Christian church and in Protestantism in particular was determined by theological considerations, this translation seems to have led to some uneasiness and reservations. The anxiety was not so much caused by issues regarding the translatability of Holy Scripture or speculation on the inspirational nature of the translation, but was due rather to the inability to render a translated text identical to the original, indicated for example by comments to that effect in the prologue to the translation of Sirach (Müller 1996, 41–45; 66–67).

However, the Septuagint as the Bible of the Gentile Christian Church was abandoned in the West, mainly for theological reasons, but also because of the growing influence of Latin-speaking Christianity. In fact, Christianity's retreat from Roman North Africa some centuries later was, at least in part,[4] due to the dominance of Latin as official language of the

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He was, however, accused amongst other things of judaising the Bible because of his preference for the Masoretic text above the LXX (Van der Merwe 1999, 294; cf. Trebolle Barrera 1998, 353–57).

[3] My perspective is deliberately broad, as is typical of the use of translated Bibles, and includes references to trained, theological as well as ordinary, devotional and spiritual use of the Bible.

[4] Other factors for Christianity's disappearance from Northern Africa was the doctrinal (e.g., Donatist, Monatist, and Arian) controversies which divided and weakened it, and the prevailing perception that Christianity was an elitist religion,

church (Schaaf 1994, 14–17), and "[t]he failure to produce a Punic version of the Bible was an ill omen for the church in North Africa" (Sanneh 1989, 69). Inversely, the prominence of Christianity in the East was related to its embrace of local languages such as Syrian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian and Greek (Gibellini 1994, 2). The translation of the Bible into contemporary African languages, although a relatively recent phenomenon,[5] going back to the Christian missions of roughly the last two centuries, has put the focus on the role of vernacular translations in Africa.

Translating the Bible in Southern Africa today is subjected to two oppositional drives, one towards maintaining boundaries and perimeters to secure control, and the other one challenging both the boundaries and their accompanying controls. Van Toorn's claim regarding the use of the Bible in Australia (Tasmania) holds true for Southern Africa as well. "The more widely the Bible was disseminated across cultural borders, the greater was the dialogizing pressure toward semantic fragmentation through translation and cultural recontextualization, and the stronger in many cases was the reactionary monologizing impulse to hold that fragmentation in check" (Van Toorn 2001, 42–42). All texts, and especially those disseminated and used widely such as the Bible in Southern Africa, encounter two powerful forces which have been described by Bakhtin and others as centripetal and centrifugal, or monologising and dialogising. Centripetal or monologising forces are powerful efforts to "centralise hermeneutic authority, suppress ambiguity and ambivalence, and curtail the practice of reading differently". In contrast, centrifugal or dialogising forces entail practices which allow and stimulate ambivalence and diverging interpretations. Both centripetal and centrifugal forces are important in the proper use of the biblical texts, since the Bible can easily degenerate into dogma unless it is consistently re-interpreted or re-incarnated (Ong), as much as it can fragment semantically under extreme dialogisation, becoming nothing less than cacophony or dissonance.

It is within the tension field between these two ranges of powerful forces where Bible translation in Southern Africa finds itself today, and where the issue of ownership of the Bible emerges forcefully. Perhaps

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e.g., through the exclusion of the Berber peoples during Christianity's early years (Obeng 1997, 24n. 23; cf. also Schaaf 1994, 16–17).

[5] Excluding the Old Latin version from Carthage in the third century, or the Sahidic (Upper Egypt Coptic) Bible from the end of that century, or soon thereafter the Bohairic and Bashmuric Bibles. The Ethiopian Bible, in Ge'ez, might be dated as early as the fourth century (Schaaf 1994, 12, 14, 21). For a taxonomy of translations first published by 1885, cf. Schaaf (1994, 91–93); for a more recent picture, cf. Schaaf (1994, 132–44).

more than elsewhere, the social identities and self-perception of many people in predominantly Christian southern Africa are still refracted through the prism of religious and a biblically-infused identity. Being more than just a religious text in Africa, the Bible also assumes a social role where issues of proprietorship, alongside translation and hermeneutical concerns, are brought to the fore. To this, we will first turn our attention.

2. Social Role of the Bible in Africa as Incentive for Ownership

In Africa the translated Bible is the book with the widest circulation figures, read, studied and used by an astonishing variety of people for religious and related purposes. "There is no doubt that the Bible is the most influential, most widely translated and the most widely read set of documents in contemporary Africa" (Mugambi 1997, 78). But translation has been and always will be contested, at least when it is accepted that translation and interpretation are inseparable, and that no single translation can do equal justice to both original and receptor languages, more especially given the vastly different socio-historical contexts along various chronological lines. If it is true as Manus (2001) claims, that the—most often, translated—Bible is the main source of theology in Africa,[6] it is not surprising that many a claim is made concerning its proper translation and reading in Africa. And if the Bible in Africa is indeed about more than matters religious, spiritual and devotional, and include socio-cultural matters as well,[7] the significance of translated Bibles is maybe even greater.

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[6] The claim that the Bible is considered by African theologians as the primary "source and norm of all Christian knowledge and the evidence of the divine will toward all humanity," as the "diving board" (Martey 1993, 71–72), or "jumping pad" (Wambudta 1980, 33) from which African theologians initiate their efforts, is often heard but also contested.

[7] "Translating the Bible into these African languages has meant, among other things, putting it right into the heart of African cultures" (Mbiti 1994, 27). "Even to those with little religious inclinations, the Bible has proved to be important in its existential reflection on life and the human condition" (Nthamburi and Waruta 1997, 49).

2.1 Interconnected Religious/Theological and Social Roles of the Bible in Africa

The importance of the Bible in Africa is underscored by challenges to its translation and reception, and the variegated, disputed and unstable profile of biblical hermeneutics on the continent. The importance of translation in and for African Christianity is noticeable in the broader discussion, which involves more than mechanical and technical issues. Christianity is a "translation phenomenon" because since its earliest years "Christianity formed and spread through the continual effort of creating and translating new terms and concepts" (Trebolle Barrera 1998, 125). Translation becomes a metaphor for the inculturation of the Gospel,[8] characterised by the incarnational quality of Christianity exemplified in Jesus Christ (Sanneh 1989, 3). And, the vernacular Bible became the primary vehicle of local Christianity, since "the process of translating the Bible submitted the Christian faith to the terms of the local culture" (Nthamburi and Waruta 1997, 42). Such influence of translated Bibles is noticed in their contribution to the formation of local or indigenous churches,[9] theologies as well as to social and cultural development in Africa.[10] Bible translation activities regularly initiated the first detailed

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[8] On inculturation, cf., e.g., Bevans (1992: esp. 30–46) and Schreiter (1985: esp. 6–9); in Africa, also Bediako (1994, 246–47). Maluleke criticises Sanneh and Bediako for their insistence on the "translatability" of Christianity and respectively the attempt to disconnect African Christianity from Western colonialism and imperialism, and the reaction to the African intellectual critique on Christianity (1996: esp. 3–8).

[9] Surveys show that the incidence of founding new, independent churches was higher amongst communities in possession of vernacular Bibles (cf. Bediako 1994, 246; Combrink 1996b:282), where local communities could engage the texts and their meaning on the communities' own terms. The vernacular Bible was taken as "proof" of a link between the local divinities and the God of the Bible, and that "they embody God's revelation and truth" through the translation (Nthamburi and Waruta 1997, 43; cf. Mbiti 1986, 29–31). In one example, the translation of the Christian Testament into Gikuyu in 1926 coincided with the conflict between Christian missionaries and Gikuyu Christians about traditions and customs, e.g., polygamy, dance, and female circumcision, and resulted in the founding of the Akurinu church in 1927 (Ndungu 1997, 60).

[10] Although not an uncontested notion, vernacular Scripture is believed to have contributed to the development of people of the Two-Thirds World, through strengthening their self-respect and dignity, expanding their life-worlds, contributing to literacy and promoting a new sense of identity (Whiteman 1992, 134–36; cf. Mbiti 1986, 26–27). Cf. also the interesting comments by Walls on how

inventory of local language and culture[11] (cf. Mbiti 1986, 24), leading to far reaching consequences and—in subversive contradiction to the often dominant Western paradigm of the missionary translators—often provided the impetus for nationalism[12] (Sanneh 1992, 16–17). Against the background where vernacular Bibles became the backbone of African Christianity, but also informed the socio-cultural fibre of African communities as from around the middle of the nineteenth century, translated Bibles were soon however trapped in the question of their proprietorship, alongside the control of their meaning.

The Bible is in the Southern Africa of today widely perceived as a significant and meaningful text, a foundational document (Scroggs 1995) with a life-giving quality (Camp 1993, 161–63), and it is irresponsible to ignore its involvement in matters related to religious and social identity. The relationship between identity formation, maintenance and transformation, and the Bible cannot be ignored. The formative and sustaining role of the Bible in fostering a sense of identity among believers and in communities can be described as enscripturalised identity.13 "Christian communities are constituted and reconstituted politically by Scripture, because Scripture provides the primary context for understanding what it

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the septuagint translation contributed to the Platonic and Stoic debates on the nature of law, reality, and the Greek *logos*-idea (1992, 29).

11 Cf. Dahunsi (1972, 117–20). This is, however, not unlike the early years of Christianity, where translated Bibles would present those on the frontier zones of the Roman Empire with the first literary corpus of their future reservoir of national literature; examples include the Armenian, Ethiopic, and Old Slavonic translations (Trebolle Barrera 1998, 125). Constantine-Cyril's translation of the Roman Mass into Slavonic in the 9th century led to the creation of the Cyrillic alphabet (Sanneh 1989, 73). For an optimistic view of Christianity's contribution to the development of the vernacular, cf. Sanneh (1989, 51–53).

12 "An important difference, however, is that mission furnished nationalism with the resources necessary to its rise and success, whereas colonialism came upon it as a conspiracy" (Sanneh 1989, 106). Sanneh is at times more reluctant to separate mission and colonialism, reminding his readers that the growth of new Christian churches after the twentieth-century independence of African states indicates how colonialism did inhibit the spread of the gospel (1989, 112).

13 "Enscripturalised identity" is not offered as the full extent of (determining) Christian consciousness and character: many other elements are involved in the formation of Christian identity (cf., e.g., Fowl and Jones 1991, 44–49, on the importance of "readings of the world"). Enscripturalised identity, however, is arguably one of the most important constituent elements of Christian identity as much as it does not require or imply a "totalising discourse" (Foucault). "Enscripturalising" may be an even better, if more clumsy, word to underline the dynamic and active nature of what transpires between community and Scripture.

means to live faithfully before God" (Fowl and Jones 1991, 36). In Christian, and Protestant communities in particular the Bible often becomes a mode of identity, as these documents contribute in different ways to open up other worldviews, to create different realities. As Scripture, the Bible is a document which enables and helps us "to understand ourselves and our fellows as human beings" and "to understand the world—the cosmos—in which we live" (Smith 1993, 238; cf. Schüssler Fiorenza 1993, 9–11). Enscripturalised identity entails not only self-definition in communal and individual sense, but also the identification of difference, of the Other, through the interpretation and appropriation of the biblical texts. The Other is also scripturally—and often, textually—inscribed. The relationship between hermeneutical processes of identity and othering, and social identity and othering is worth noting, especially against the background of a pragmatist or interpersonal reading perspective: Hermeneutical and social otherness is interrelated.

If the circular movement of interpretation is accepted, namely that while hermeneutical considerations are interrelated to and at times dependent upon worldviews, those very worldviews are the result of and prescribed by hermeneutics (Westphal 1997, 65), our interpretations of the Bible cannot stand aloof from the configuration of our lives. Enscripturalised identity entails more than using the Bible, especially when perceived in an atemporal, asocial and ahistorical sense, as legitimating agent for an assumed and historically developed identity, and for justifying the identification and vilification of the Other as defined in terms of ourselves.[14] Enscripturalised identity rather requires one to comprehend Others on their own terms, to interact both with Others, and their interpretation of the same or other texts.[15]

Processes of Othering emerge in Bible translations' less benevolent achievements. While the contribution of translated Bibles to indigenous

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[14] Indeed, one also seriously has to consider, apart from the question of whether or not the Bible is demonstrably linked to the construction of identity, whether all those implicated would necessarily countenance such a link. Cf., e.g., Banana (1993, 17–32); Camp (1993, 154–71, esp. 160): Indeed, a relationship to the text to the extent that it is personified in the life of the individual or community, is decried by some feminist scholars.

[15] Identity in religionism ("a form of religion in which the individual and collective identity of one religious group is maintained by asserting negative aspects of the other") is dependent upon sentiments and mechanisms of rejection and exclusion (Sugirtharajah 1998, 93). Apart from reckoning with the otherness of the biblical texts on historical and literary levels, the Bible can also become an outsider to Christian communities and individuals, when it is read over against us ourselves (Segovia 1995, 298; cf. McDonald 1993, 200ff.).

languages provided utilitarian tangibles in the form of grammars, dictionaries and lexicons, they assisted colonising agents to acquire a working knowledge of the languages in order to exert even more effective rule, administer justice and collect revenues. The translated Bibles, moreover, proved valuable in the education of indigenous people and contributed to their embracing of consumer class values. They became the servants of the colonial endeavour by reinforcing stereotypical images of the Other. Racial superiority supported by the Western, progressive notion of history was achieved through demonising the Other and by emphasis on racial, gender and class differences. So Robert Moffat could assert about the people of Botswana, "[T]hus by the slow but certain progress of Gospel principles, whole families became clothed and in their right mind" (Sugirtharajah 1998, 88–89).

2.2 Ownership of the Bible in Africa

> The battle over the Bible in South Africa . . . is a contest of conflicting claims over legitimate ownership of that constellation of sacred symbols. (Chidester 1991, 22)

Historically, ownership of the Bible relates to claims in this regard on behalf of Judaism, Christianity and Western or world literature, in particular concerning the ability to authorise or sanction the list of texts deemed to properly belong to the biblical corpus. Beyond the power to include or exclude texts, ownership also lies at the heart of claims about the canons of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, Judaism, the early Christian church, Greek and Eastern orthodoxies, Roman Catholicism and the variety of Protestant groups and churches. Such canons are of course not constructed for their own sakes, but are seen as the source of theologies and doctrines or at least the inspiration for such constructions, at times acknowledged and approved by religious organisations, and crafted most often in relation to religious communities (cf. Betz 2000, 5–6).

In Southern Africa, however, ownership of the Bible is disputed within a predominantly Christian religious setting. Ownership most obviously relates to the simple fact that many people and Christian communities in particular aspire to possess a Bible of their own, regardless of the ability or propensity to read it, but the notion of Bible ownership extends beyond the commodification of the Bible in modern consumerist culture, its buying-and-selling power. It concerns claims to the biblical texts, the right to interpret their meaning, to prescribe and proscribe their contemporary

use,[16] the nature of the relationship between the Bible and one or more communities, the privilege of claiming a specific identity natured and fostered by the Bible—claims some of which are made in a totalitarian and exclusionist way. In short, ownership is about claims regarding the control of the biblical texts.

Ownership can be constituted in a variety of different ways, ranging from claims to the Bible as the unique or exclusive property of one group, to proprietorship through activity, namely when the production, distribution and systematic reflection on the Bible reflect high levels of energy and activity invested by interested communities. Ownership of the Bible, therefore, need not necessarily be accompanied by explicit claims to these texts for the benefit of the community, since the notion of ownership is already perceived in the attachment to the texts portrayed in attitudes and activities linked to the production and dissemination of the texts and their readings. In Southern Africa, ownership claims regarding the Bible relate to either a religio-theological or a cultural-political context, or both, especially since on the African continent such distinctions are often arbitrary. Religio-theological concerns relate to churches and their structures, and the notion of negotiating divine power. Political-cultural matters are concerned with issues of identity and nationalism, using the "master's tools" and negotiating power in a more general sense, and the notion of the Bible as the text of the oppressor as opposed to the Bible as a liberating, empowering text. It is not wise, therefore, to distinguish too sharply between religious and cultural ownership on the African continent.[17]

The issue of control of or power over the use of the Bible should not be seen as a predilection of opportunist or imperialist cultures, communities or individuals: every community claiming allegiance to it in effect asserts its particular authority on the Bible's use.[18] The Bible's formative

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[16] This includes the widespread "magical" use of the Bible, in healing practices (Ndungu 1997, 62–63) or where the possession or touching of the Book is considered beneficial (Waliggo 1997, 179). Recently, West has found the notion of the Bible as *bola* (prognosticating dice) as a metaphor for understanding the Bible in Africa (2002, 23–37)

[17] The importance of "mother-tongue" translations of the Bible in Europe during the period of the Protestant Reformation can probably also not be explained with an exclusive reference to either religious or political concerns.

[18] "All acts of communication, also in the Bible, reveal a struggle for power" and "the Bible we so often hold in a grasp of power, is often nothing but our own ideologies and idolatries" (De Villiers 1993, 20). "Of course we must recognize that revolutionary interpretations of Scripture can be [*sic*] as ideological as

influence depends on whether there are "powerful enough communities, institutions, establishments"[19] whose reading and constructing of the Bible impacts on the South African society. The increasing realisation that the ownership of the Bible relates not only, and not even primarily, to the context of its production but rather to the context of the reader, is a corollary of the acknowledgement of the reader's active or formative role in the process of biblical interpretation (cf. Combrink 1996a:299). Communities assert authority over the particular way and manner of biblical appropriation in their claims for possession of the Bible: "communities and traditions of interpretation construe unity within the diversity of the Bible and call their construct 'the Bible'" (Smit 1991, 61–63).[20] In South Africa the Bible has become a "site of struggle" (De Villiers 1993, 13–16; West 1994, 273–89) between various communities, and "the struggle is fought over the power, the authority, to be able to determine the contents and the message of 'the Bible.'"[21]

3. The Bible as Common Property? The Role of Translated Bibles

> Who owns the Bible? The fact is that nobody "owns" the Bible . . . none of the Christian churches own or are in control of the Christian Bible. (Betz 2000, 10)

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interpretations by those in power, just as feminist interpretations can be [*sic*] as ideological as patriarchal interpretations" (Bauckham 1989, 18).

[19] Amidst the accompanying ambiguity: In SA, biblical scholarship with its "scientific ethos of detached enquiry" has had a negative role regarding the public ethos: "it has stayed clear from the corridors of power in both church and society" (1991, 61–63). On the other hand, scholars are found to use the Bible "to entrench the norms and values of the upper classes thereby creating their exclusive ideological institutions like journals, manners, and morals" (Mazamisa 1995, 12). Cf. Brenner (2000, 11): "Although the Bible's democratization was greatly enhanced by translations into vernaculars, it remained confined in elite secrecy," and biblical scholars have a vested interest in this, "hoping to perpetuate our own influence in the texture of our culture." Translators and translation work face similar ambiguities.

[20] While Smit asks questions about the nature of the Bible, he in fact answers questions pertaining to the ownership of the Bible: communities construct their own Bibles for their own particular purposes.

[21] In SA public, and especially political life, the Bible is often used in a sanctioning role: "appeals to the Bible . . . significantly contributes to the effectiveness of an argument" (Botha 1996, 335).

A perception perhaps more common to the Western world in general than Southern Africa, is that the Bible is common *property*, belonging to all, and therefore, not the property of anyone. Indeed, "the Bible belongs to Africa as well as the Western world" (West 1999, 45). It is the *public,* cultural property of those who read it and wish it to be theirs, belonging to everyone or every community who claim it for themselves in religious, spiritual, cultural or other senses. Printed and more recently, electronic, copies of the Bible abound, while bookstores and libraries stock various translations and versions of the Bible, and although this is no good reason for doing so (Betz 2000, 10), communities, institutions and people do not refrain from claiming to be *the* owners of the documents, whether in the original or processed format.

In the end, the impossibility of owning the Bible probably dispels the claims to ownership of its interpretation and meaning in equal measure to making it more prone to such claims. Unlike the ancient Hebrew and Greek versions, or Bibles in the languages of the colonisers, translated Bibles relativise all claims to the ownership of the Bible as much as it offered (and still does!) the opportunity to various peoples to lay claim to the Bible.

3.1 Linking Translation and Ownership

> The unquenchable desire of Americans for the possession of the Bible and a willingness to accept a translated Bible combine to proliferate translations. (Frerichs 1988, 2)

At times the notion of the Bible as belonging people to all people, is supplemented by a claim that it shows a predilection for a certain context, or group of people. Some instances in this regard are the debate about the greater receptibility of the Hebrew Bible in Africa, and the consideration of the "Africanness" of the Bible. Claiming ownership of the Bible in African Christianity today assumes many forms, ranging from the insistence that the conceptual framework of Hebrew is closely aligned with those of African languages in general (Rabin 1972, 115; Turkson 1994, 74–80) to the more widespread demand that the African cultural context should be acknowledged as analogous to the setting portrayed in the Bible, in particular that of the Hebrew Bible. The oral context of the first century is evoked with the claim that "on the African scene the Bible relives a large part of its original setting with regard to the channels of communication and uses of language" (Mbiti 1994, 30).

The desire of Christian communities and individuals to own their own, readily understandable Bible has stimulated translating activities over many years, in America as Frerichs points out, but also in Africa where the largest variety of languages is found. And, conversely, it was translated

Bibles which led directly to a shift in the ownership of the Bible, which, once translated, is no longer seen as an outlandish and foreign book since it can then be read widely, in the vernacular and generally in accordance with the worldview of its readers. As expressed so often, people in Africa now find God addressing them in their own language and not that of the coloniser or invader.[22] In ceasing to be a European book—the white man's book—the Bible now became the people's book, and therefore on the African continent, it has also become an African book (Schaaf 1994, 204–10). Where biblical translation work in Africa took the indigenous particularity serious translated Bibles contributed to the fostering of cultural pluralism within Christianity on unprecedented scale (Gallagher 1996, 238–39). And translated Bibles inevitably impinged not only on a monolithic approach to interpretation, a missionary reading as it were, but necessarily challenged the control of these texts.

Vernacular translations meant that the control and ownership of the Bible were wrestled away from missionaries in the nineteenth century Africa (cf. West 2001, 212). From the perspective of India, Niranjana claims that "missionaries, anthropologists, and colonial administrators systematically collaborated in the consolidation of colonial domination, through their involvement in translation of both Indian and Christian texts". Colonialism as an ideology, and a hegemonic culture, was bound up in missionary translations (Johnston 2001, 28). It was, ironically though, also the translation of the Bible into other, vernacular languages which "opened up a space for colonial difference to emerge" (Johnston 2001, 27). Translations in colonial contexts permitted and even stimulated the possibility of a wide-ranging field of interpretations, and so dislodged the powerful position of the European missionary as the only interpretive authority. "The key issue here, though, is one of authority to interpret the words of God. Translation opens up the potential for destabilising European authority; the response to such destabilisation is to reinforce dominant modes of interpretation or definition" (Johnston 2001, 29).

As is illustrated in an anecdote recounted by Sugirtharajah (1998, 123), a translated Bible claimed as the benevolent gift from the West to indigenous peoples whether in India or elsewhere, generally ensured that it remained under European control and maintained its Western character. But when indigenous people claim the translated Bible as originating among themselves, they not only register a claim for a different biblical

[22] The African context is different from the Asian which Sugirtharajah (1998, 123–41) describes, in one aspect in particular, namely the existence of other Scriptures. In Southern Africa, at least, the introduction of the Bible was not so much accompanied by competing scriptural claims as by questions regarding the relationship of the Bible vis-à-vis traditional African religions, beliefs and practices.

genealogy in their identification with the Bible and its content, but they simultaneously deny Western control and assert their own ownership of the Bible.[23]

4. Translating and Owning a "Rewritten" Bible: On Control

The governing image of the Bible in Africa for many is related to the adage that the missionaries traded the Bible for the land of the Africans. Whether the indigenous people of Africa got the better deal (Tutu) or not,[24] the Bible was indeed the "time-bomb" which would eventually help to blow colonialism apart (Schaaf 1994, 166), not only, but also, by providing subversive texts and readings. One should be careful with the anecdote, since in its metaphorical way, it hides as much as it exposes and to take it too literally or to focus on a single aspect of the whole, would certainly distort its meaning and render Tutu's retort incomprehensible. Nevertheless, it helps to recognise how the availability of vernacular Bibles enabled a powerful onslaught against colonialism's particular effectiveness in intellectual and cultural control (discursive colonialism), which surpassed its territorial and political domination.

4.1 Rewriting: The Ultimate Translation

Vernacular Bibles which were the tools of the trade in indigenous reactions and responses to colonialism, as well as in fostering a new identity and self-awareness in its aftermath, could not escape accusations of imperialist complicity when the anti-colonialist argument turned full-circle. Not surprisingly then, critical voices both from within and outside the Christian tradition were raised against translated Bibles and their

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[23] Not forgetting that such a translated Bible can also become pivotal in forms of postcolonial nationalism, mimicking the ideological power of the colonisers, and their mechanism of exclusion.

[24] Most recently during early March 2002, in the run-up to the presidential elections in Zimbabwe, the Secretary of the (then) ruling ZANU-PF party, Mr Didymus Matase, also recalled the metaphorical trade-off of the Bible for the land of the indigenous people. He added that the people of Zimbabwe now want the land (referring probably to white-owned commercial farms rather than the large tracts of land handed out to the party faithful) back, and that the erstwhile colonial rulers can have the Bible back, should they want it! (As reported on *Special Assignment,* SABC3 on Tuesday 5 March 2002). Cf. West's recent attempt to understand ownership of the Bible in Africa with reference to this anecdote (2002, 23–37).

influence on indigenous and traditional beliefs and practices in Africa. Some of the strongest claims regarding biblical ownership have been made in the rereading or rewriting of the Bible-debate, a debate closely linked with translation. Certain African theologians have been making very strong claims for the revising of the biblical canon and texts to more adequately reflect African sensitivities, to disclaim texts deemed oppressive to the African mind, and to render a Bible which will be *African user-friendly.*

In Africa the name of Canaan Banana is often the first to be linked to the call for a rewritten Bible,[25] promoting "The case for a new Bible" (1993, 17–32). In short, Banana argues in this essay that the Bible has yet to be liberated from its culture-specific views, points to the use of the Bible as oppressive instrument,[26] and insists on the continuing revelation of God, and that Christ supercedes the Bible. He claims that the purpose of the Bible was to unite Christians against forces that wanted to divide them and that we need to recreate the Bible into such a "unifying element" again. "This [rewriting of the Bible] would include revision and editing to what is already there, but would also involve adding that which is not included" (Banana 1993, 30). In short, what amounts to the modification of the existing historical texts is proposed. Although there is much to commend about his concerns about the Bible and its use today, Banana needs to be questioned on his insistence that "re-writing is a necessary component to liberating the Bible" (1993, 17).

The rewriting appeals originate in the translation venture no less, go beyond a tailor-made Bible however, and are indicative of the effort to produce a text which would reflect the identity and sentiments of its readers in a particular context. "Translation in a postcolonial context is not merely seeking dynamic equivalence or aiming for linguistic exactness, but desires to rewrite and retranslate the texts, as well as the concepts, against the grain. Rewriting and retranslating are not a simple dependence upon the past, but a radical remolding of the text to meet new situations and demands" (Sugirthrajah 1998, 97). As argued above,

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[25] Cf. also Mofokeng (1988, 40). Parratt (1995, 148–53) provides a short biographical sketch and brief introduction to Banana's theological views. Cf. the introduction of Mukonyora, Cox and Verstraelen (1993:x–xiii) for a historical account of Banana's call, claiming that it became a "catchword that inflamed an intense controversy."

[26] On the other hand, cf. Pollard's three reasons for holding on to the Bible in its current form even though it was used in the past as instrument of oppression (1995, 47–50); also Punt (1998, 279–80). In the US context, Cone argued that the notion of the Bible as "Word of God" limited Whites' use of the Bible in the oppression of Blacks (Mosala 1989, 15).

translated Bibles contributed to and fostered the development of an independent consciousness and nationalism, often connected to the establishment of a literary language and legacy which in turn contributed to increasing independence from the coloniser's ideology and worldview, as well as imperialistic attitude and hegemonic practices.[27]

The challenge for all attempts at rewriting the Bible is that once the rewritten text is actually produced, the quest for the next rewriting will begin, guided as it is by historical (temporal and spatial) contingencies and given our fast-changing global village. More importantly, this debate is prominently about control and canon, about ideology and power, rather than about a nostalgic notion of (re)discovering Africa in the Bible, or the Bible in Africa. Rewriting is about re-inscribing the Bible once again as all-powerful, self-contained repository of truth, and the lingering effects of such perceptions of the Bible might outlast other, more material hegemonies, in the wake of dispossessing the colonising and still imperial West from the control of the (their) Bible.

4.2 Canon and Control

> As I have become more aware of Christianity's claim to ownership of the biblical texts, I have wanted to dispute that claim, to "steal" away the texts and to allow them to sink or float on their own in the secular cultural currents of our times, just like any noncanonical text does. (Aichele 2001, 11–12)

Viewing the biblical canon as a neutrally aligned set of documents, each written in its particular circumstances and eventually gathered in the form available to us today, is no longer—if it ever was—possible (Barr 1990, 156; Cormie 1991, 185ff.; Mosala 1989, 9).[28] However, as much as the naive acceptance of the biblical documents in canonical form as ideologically neutral is frightening, it is alarming that another selective, interest-laden if not exploitative, process of composing a biblical canon might become its substitute.[29] Such an all-consuming and determining

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[27] Vernacular translations became vehicles of "epistemic transformation," rather than signs of imperialism, since it provided the means for transforming thought and expression (cf. Sugirtharajah 1998, 129, referring to Spivak).

[28] "[T]he canon . . . [is] an ideological vehicle for domination and oppression" (Van Aarde 1994, 578). It has been pointed out how a "the Bible says-theology" was and is used to justify patriarchy and the oppression of women in African society at large (Oduyoye 1995, 173–76; 189–92; cf. Smit 1994, 275).

[29] E.g., Banana's proposal includes a Bible which is not culture-specific (1993, 17), imposing the modernist ideology of neutrality on the culture of his choice, as his insistence on having other materials included in the Bible might go beyond

selection of biblical texts may in the end, and notwithstanding whatever good intentions, only succeed in emulating and thus perpetuating the practices which the colonisers and oppressors of Africa were guilty of in this regard.

The question of *the canon* inevitable arises when thinking about biblical ownership, taking into consideration that the documents of both the Old and the New Testament were in circulation and in use before the Jewish and Christian canons were fixed. And it is in the canon that the ownership and translation link is cemented, since "Christianity seeks to possess the biblical contents in the form of . . . a 'work' . . . a self-identical, ownable thing . . . a canon" (Aichele 2001, 70). Although the canon makers considered earlier developments towards canon formation, it was second to fifth century theological criteria as well as legal and social concerns of the time which governed the final compilations. With both the Church and Synagogue facing tremendous growth in movements and literatures, writings suitable for liturgical worship, for authoritative proof-texts for decisions and doctrines and for establishing religious-social boundaries between orthodoxy and heresy ruled the day (Betz 2000, 10). In the Christian church, the canon gradually but increasingly became an instrument to control meaning.

The real struggle concerning the Bible in Africa is the struggle for its *control,* especially in order for "contemporary Blacks to assert their claim on the Bible as a weapon of ideological and spiritual struggle for liberation," and viewing the Bible "[i]n the absence of a better storeroom of ideological and spiritual food . . . for an undeterminable period of time to be the haven for the black masses par excellence" (Mofokeng 1988, 39). The debate on the form of the biblical canon, on the texts contained therein and especially the interpretation thereof cannot be divorced from power relations as it also emerges in the Afrocentricity and Eurocentricity debate.

Translation leads to either a loss of control or a shift in the control of the texts, since through vernacular translations ecclesial and related institutions, although initially often controlling the translation processes, lose such influence upon completion of the project, and as control of the translated Bibles shifts to the Bible-using communities.

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their accessibility (1993, 18), to impose a kind of bibliolatry through the Bible of his choice.

5. Recolonising Translations: Owning up

Bible translation is important in Africa among the cultural and linguistic variety and richness of the continent, and serves the obvious, if not neutral, purpose of making the Bible available to an increasing number of its peoples. However, amidst the largely foreign funded Bible translation activities in Africa—a condition which is exacerbated by African governments and organisations who do not seem to see the need for investing in them—"foreignness" in Bible translation seems set to remain an abiding feature of many translations in the foreseeable future (cf. Obeng 1997, 19–21). In fact, the contribution of translated Bibles in general and certain translations, in particular, to the decolonisation of African society and theology has been challenged, primarily on the grounds that the coloniser's ideology was often maintained in the translated product.[30] Rather than subverting the oppressive legacy, translated Bibles re-imposed an ideology both foreign to and repressive of African people. Translators as well as the theory and practice of translation are blamed for continuing an imposing if not imperial legacy exacted primarily by the wide-ranging influence of translated Bibles in Africa.

Postcolonial sensitive translations not only have to consider the original language-receptor language relationship, and debates on translation theories such as whether literal or ideolectic or functional-equivalent translations are more appropriate. Breaking with the notion of the universal validity of Anglo-American English, even English translations will do well to accommodate vernacular idioms, syntax and poetics, and celebrate the hybridical and multicultural nature of our postcolonial world (Sugirtharajah 1998, 94). In Africa where a translated Bible often marked the first excursion of a language into the literary world, a reality is nevertheless interpreted in different ways. It is the translated Bible which becomes the vehicle through which a language is moulded in literary sense,[31] simultaneously enriching the language through neologisms and new concepts and expressions (Mbiti 1994, 28). Such imported terminology often becomes part of the vernacular to such an extent that when newer translations use more contemporary and "politically correct"

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[30] In many parts of Africa, English literature came to replace the Bible, and the evangelical ambitions of Christian missionaries were "to become the most influential medium for the colonial civilizing mission" (Gandhi 1998, 144). Cf. Sugirtharajah 1998, 86–98) for the role of translation in both colonial and postcolonial India.

[31] Cf. also Ntamburi and Waruta (1997, 42–43), who add that literacy itself was encouraged, with the ability to read often being a requirement for baptism.

terminology, they are viewed with suspicion. However, the treasured elements of earlier Bible translations often end up disabling the traditional conceptual framework manifested in that language.[32]

When people claim affinity for a specific translation of the Bible, both in terms of its texts and canonical forms as well as its terms, concepts and language style, it not only has implications for new translations but require negotiation with ownership claims. The use of language to create reality, to mould the world necessarily has implications for the use and importance of indigenous concepts. Indigenous categories are important not only for theologising, but even more so for Bible translation.[33] However, it is a finely-poised balance since the danger of ethnocentrism (cf. Sze-Kar Wan 2000, 107–11) also looms large, in the attempt to recover elements from the ancient past ("mummified figments," Fanon) rather than to try and modernise and accommodate to new economical, political and cultural contexts locally and globally (Sugirtharajah 1998, 134). Although a literalist "transliteration" hardly contributes to a meaningful translation, especially when foreign terms and expressions dominate, the preference for literal above dynamic or functional-equivalent translations (Aichele 2001, 68–74; Van der Merwe 1999, 297–99) may eliminate (potential) cultural impositions with the universalist subtext of Western and Christian imperialism from the side of the translators.

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[32] Cf. also the so-called "union literary language," a syncretistic mix of different dialects (Schaaf 1994, 109). A related problem is that biblical terms are often translated with words and concepts, which operate in the context of traditional African religious experience. Employing Geertz's distinction between "experience-near" (emic) and "experience-distant"' (etic) concepts or symbols, Van der Jagt explains how a particular African context (the Turkana of Kenia) highlights the problem of the equivalence of religious terms across cultures and its related difficulty for Bible translations (1990, 131–53). The extension of this argument is the propagation of Africa's "primal religions" as *praeparatio evangelica* (Bediako 1994, 247–51), which ironically and inevitably leaves very little of these religio-cultural frameworks intact. It is not so consoling to argue then that the translatability of Christianity is a counter-measure against cultural idolatry or romanticism (so Sanneh 1989, 112), when the boon of Christianity's translatability may also be its bane of an imposing hegemony. Indeed, the pluralism which follows in the wake of translatability ("the source of the success of Christianity across cultures," Sanneh 1989, 51) too often fits into the Christian master (imperialist) narrative. Cf. Aichele (2001, 80–83).

[33] Cf., e.g., Mugambi (2001, 13–17 & 22–24). Dube's strong reaction regarding the translation of *Badimo* in the Setswana Bible is not only about reclaiming ownership of a translated Bible, but attests to how such claims play out in the use of indigenous concepts (Dube 2001, 145–63).

One of the most important results of vernacular translations in Africa was the loosening of the controlling grip of the missionaries and their societies (Bediako 1994, 246). But such claims are eroded when the close supervisory role of the United Bible Societies' (UBS) role in the translation projects they are involved in, is considered.[34] The UBS would insist, for example, on having one of their consultants on the translation team and that their "recommended and supplied" commentaries be consulted (cf. Nida and Taber 1974, 174–86). Meanwhile, negative perceptions surround some Bible translations in Africa, because local Christians are often not included in the translation activity.[35] The ideological influence of translation agencies is not lessened when it is claimed that some represent the "extreme right wing Protestant missionary society."[36] Amidst the difficulty of decisively proving or disproving such allegations, the perception that outside agencies peddle a particular ideology in their involvement with Bible translation in Africa, is often determinative for the evaluation and acceptance of such translations by their intended receptors.

It has to be admitted and accounted for in Bible translation work, that translators—even when denying such intentions—inevitably "operate not only with theological assumptions about their place in God's scheme but also with *political* assumptions about their place in society and the world" (Lee and Arapović 2001, 388, emphasis in original). The minimum requirement for Bible translators, and Africa and elsewhere, would certainly be a critical self-awareness and an ethical approach to the use of their power, in which an alertness to the notion of biblical ownership can greatly assist.

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[34] In a recent article which praises the UBS for its effort towards indigenising Bible translation, it is lamented that "[t]ranslation work is still predominantly in the hands of the West and true communion is an idea which has perhaps not yet fully come true" (Kanyoro 1991, 56). This is despite Nida's claim that in 90% of UBS translation projects, the translators are nationals and the missionaries resource persons (1991, 5).

[35] Related concerns emerge, e.g., regularly throughout Kinoti and Waliggo (1997: esp. 1–2). Cf. Obeng's (1997, 21) insistence that meaningful translations for Africa require "African translators who combine a good command of their language and culture with a thorough knowledge of biblical sciences and languages." Schaaf's optimism that "now almost all translators are Africans" (1994, 142) might not be wholly appropriate.

[36] E.g., Isichei (1995, 336) on the Wycliffe Bible translators! Schaaf (1994, 198, cf. 233) questions their translation policy of focusing on the New Testament.

6. Conclusion: A Debt Owed— The Challenge of Bible Translation Work

The ambiguous value of Bible translation in Africa cannot be collapsed in the claims, either that translated Bibles became fully-fledged covert agents of the Empire, or that their role was essentially liberatory, fostering a sense of nationalism. Whatever else, Bible translation never was and never will be neutral. The interrelationship between claims to the ownership of the Bible and its translations, redirects the focus of Bible translation work to this relationship and their implications for translation theory and practices in Southern Africa, some of which might also be valuable to consider for Bible translation elsewhere. The appropriation of the Bible in Africa cannot be divorced from a whole range of ideological issues concerning power, which naturally impact on the translation and interpretation of its texts in different ways in different communities. "Controlling, owning, and operating the Bible . . . have become strategic appropriations of power to be deployed against a white man's faith that has systematically disempowered blacks in South Africa" (Chidester 1991, 25).

It will certainly be interesting to see how, in the future and as the gravity point of Christianity moves further south, the twin but opposite forces of increasing secularization on the one hand, and higher levels of literacy in Africa on the other hand, will affect the development of Christianity and the appropriation of the Bible in Africa. However, the demographic shift of the Church to the South might leave the thought processes and cultural awareness, which are still rooted in the North and which are often sustained by Bible translations and translation practices, untouched.

Following the example of countries of the former Soviet Union, Bible translation in Africa will be able to avoid polarisation and conflicting aims to biblical ownership by deliberately eschewing a competitiveness, confessionalism and evangelisation[37] (cf. Lee and Arapović 2001, 387). In keeping translated Bibles' close link with claims to ownership of the Bible in mind, other aspects have to receive greater attention in Bible translation work on the African continent. The utilitarian notion that a translated Bible have become its linguistic community's property, and can therefore be used in ways that a community sees fit, can lead to empowerment as much as to disastrous ethnocentrism. An existential identification

[37] Pearson (1999, 81) argues that the large majority of biblical translators do their work with religious or evangelisation reasons in mind; Walls (1992, 24–39) posits an analogy between translation and conversion; and, Carson (1993, 57–60) comments that Bible translation's missionary involvement puts the emphasis on simplification and clarity.

with a translated Bible might equally see the Bible inscribing and proscribing identity, stimulating claims to exclusivity.

The ownership of the Bible is underlined by the simple fact that for the majority of people there is only one Bible rather than a plethora of translated Bibles, and that its translated nature is not even considered unless a particular detail of the text is to be contested. The challenge for Bible translation today is to deal with the fact that for the majority of Bible-readers their *particular* translation simply constitutes *the* Bible.

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Art as Text – Text as Art: Apparatus as a Translation Tool

Ilona N. Rashkow

The Rheims-Douay translators write, "in the Old Testament the New lieth hidden: & in the New the Old lieth open." For the translators the two books, the "Old" and "New" Testaments, are meant to be read together. Because these translators viewed the Hebrew Bible as incomplete, one needing the Greek New Testament to become comprehensible, it was necessary to make changes to the source text to make the "Old Testament" more of a precursor and prelude to the New Testament. Some of these changes are subtle: word-choices which have Christian associations. Other changes are overt, such as the marginalia and other accompanying apparatus which purport to explain portions of the Hebrew text the translators thought too difficult for the reader to comprehend. The marginalia and annotations of the English Renaissance translations constitute a running commentary on the religious/political situation of the day, and emphasize the translator's ability to shape a new text. Rather than depending upon the Hebrew text as the source text, the translators use the new English *translation* as the source text for their marginalia and woodcuts, and the translation itself becomes the proof-text to justify ideology—Protestant *and* Catholic. Thus, although translators holding widely divergent world views may frequently translate using the same words, they reveal their biases in the marginalia and annotations. Often the note is only slightly related to the text, if at all.

That the accompanying apparatus should be read as text is made clear in the preface to the Geneva Bible where the translators explain that the purpose of the marginalia and woodcuts is to elucidate passages "so dark that by no description they could be made easy to the simple reader."[1]

[1] I have changed the Renaissance spelling to modern in the body of this paper but retained the original in the notes.

What I would like to do is examine some of the apparatus surrounding the Tyndale, Coverdale, Geneva, and Rheims-Douay Bibles as a critical aspect of English Renaissance translation theory and practice.

The sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, often referred to as the "classical" period of English biblical translations, and certainly the most political, begins with William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament in 1525, and ends with the King James Version (1611). Despite Henry VIII's displeasure at Tyndale for having translated the New Testament, Tyndale began work on a translation of the Hebrew Bible and in 1530 produced a particularly provocative Pentateuch.

His marginal glosses and prefaces to the five books emphasize his perceived contradiction between "official church practice" and the "laws of God". His translation in general, and his marginalia in particular, are subjective in outlook and, as a result, it became politically impossible for the bishops not to condemn his work.[2] For example, in the "Prologue to Genesis," Tyndale lists the reasons given by the Church against vernacular translation, including the impossibility of the task, the illegality, the risk of increasing the number of heretics, and the potential for civil rebellion. However, he claims that the real reason is "to drive you from the knowledge of the scripture, & that you shall not have the text thereof in the mother tongue, and to keep the world still in darkness, to the intent they might sit in the consciences of the people, through vain superstition and false doctrine, to satisfy their filthy lusts, their proud ambition, and insatiable covetousness, and to exalt their *own* honor above king & empire, yea & above God himself."

Tyndale outlines his theories of reading in his Prologues to each of the books of the Pentateuch, and "law" dominates his thinking, probably as a rebuttal to charges by Catholics that all Protestants were antinomians.[3] It is within this framework that Tyndale gives detailed

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[2] James Gairdner, in *Lollardy and the Reformation in England,* claims that in translating Scripture, Tyndale wished to hold Bishops up to "opprobrium as murderers," and that ". . . his works . . . [were] intended to produce an ecclesiastical and social revolution, of a highly dangerous character, aided by mistranslations of Holy Writ and sophistical glosses in the margin . . . there is a perverse and bitter spirit running through the whole design" (1/228; 2/367).

[3] Although charges of antinomianism had evidently begun in the first century (as appears from the arguments and warnings in the epistles of the New Testament—see Rom 6, 8; 1 Pet 3:5), the term was first used during the Reformation by Martin Luther to describe the opinions of the German preacher Johann Agricola. The Antinomian Controversy of this time, in which Luther took a very active part, terminated in 1540 in a retraction by Agricola. Views more extreme

directions to the reader: "Seek therefore in the scripture as thou readest it first the law, what God, not the Pope, commandeth us to do." Throughout Tyndale's Pentateuch, he equates "image" and "idol," particularly in the marginalia, and always with an anti-papal comment. For example, Exod 32:33, which refers to the golden calf, includes the marginal comment: "O pitiful Moses, and likewise O merciful Paul, and oh abominable pope with all his merciless *Images.*" Tyndale then goes on to say that "the pope's bull slayeth more than Aaron's calf, even a hundred thousand for one hair of them." And in Deut 27:15 (which reads "Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image, an abomination to the LORD, a thing made by the hands of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret.") Tyndale comments, "Hereof take the popes an occasion to curse four times in the year."

Although biblical translation was favored by humanists such as Tyndale because it enabled them to combine their penchant for *ad fontes* with the enrichment of their native language, it was, of course, against the law. Translating the Bible could mean charges of heresy, exile, or even death. So too for Tyndale whose translation was judged to be heretical, a version to be burned along with its translator.

Fortunately for Coverdale, the political ramifications of his using English as the new text were somewhat different. In December 1534, the Synod of Canterbury, under the leadership of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, petitioned Henry VIII "to decree that the holy scripture shall be translated into the vulgar English tongue by certain upright and learned men to be named by the said most illustrious king." Encouraged by Cranmer and Cromwell, Miles Coverdale translated the entire Bible and published it in 1535 without formal authority, but with a dedication to Henry VIII and the "most virtuous Princess, queen Anne." This might have proven dangerous, however, since by the time the sheets reached the printer, the "virtuous princess" Anne Boleyn had been executed. Being more politically acute than Tyndale, Coverdale realized that some change had to be made, with the result that in the British Museum copy "Anne" has been altered with a pen into "JAne."

Next, Coverdale markedly emphasizes in the dedication how scripture teaches the pre-eminence of the temporal sword, and the king in his realm is "under God the chief head of all the congregation and church of the same." He then outlines Henry's defense of the faith against Rome and speaks critically of the Pope whom he compares to Caiaphas. Henry, according to Coverdale's dedication, had proved himself a worthier Defender of the Faith than even the Pope had imagined since he had

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than his were afterward advocated by some of the English nonconformists and by the Anabaptists.

translated in "the true faith of Christ, no dreams, no fables, no heresy, no papistical inventions, but the uncorrupt faith of Gods most holy word."[4] Coverdale claims that his translation is actually a result of the king's *own* wishes: "Josias commanded straightly (as your grace doth) that the law of God should be read and taught unto all the people."

Having received Henry's permission to translate, Coverdale assures the reader that the new text is wholly English, with no papal overtones. He accomplishes his goal in two ways. The first (and more obvious), is marked by a significant bibliographical fact. The original title-page, printed in the same type as the Bible, reads "faithfully and truly translated out of Dutch [i.e., German] and Latin into English." Again, his political acuity came to the fore: since the use of "Dutch" was a dangerous confession of Lutheran heresy, later copies merely stated, "faithfully translated into English."

Coverdale's second method of assuring Henry that this was an "English" text was his use of the wood-cut on the title page as "text," thereby conforming to the sixth-century directive of Gregory the Great: ". . . in the same thing [i.e., picture] they read [the truth] who do not understand the letters. Whence and especially to the [common] people the picture is in place of reading."[5] At the top of the woodcut, appearing in a burst of heavenly light, is the Tetragrammaton, symbolizing the direct revelation of the Word to the sovereign. Lower on the page, Henry VIII is depicted on his throne distributing Bibles to the kneeling bishops, with various crowned heads admiring his action. In case the reader is still unclear as to the appropriate role and power of King Henry, figures of harp-playing David and sword-bearing Paul, representing the Old and New Testaments, flank Henry, who is armed with the Sword and the Book, a personification of the Reformation ideal of evangelical kingship at the moment of transition from Old Law to New Law. Two scrolls issue from the Tetragrammaton, one directed towards the terror-stricken Adam and Eve, the other towards the risen Christ trampling on the serpent.

The direct politics of producing a new biblical text in the vernacular and the use of apparatus as a translation tool is most apparent in the case of the two exilic versions, the Geneva Bible and the Rheims-Douay. With the accession of Queen Mary in 1553, the printing of vernacular Bibles in England came to an abrupt stop. No official use of the English Bible was

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[4] "And the trueth of oure Balaams prophecie is, y your grace in very dede shulde defend the Fayth, yee euen the true fayth of Christ, no dreames, no fables, no heresie, no papisticall inuencions, but the vncorrupte fayth of Gods most holie worde, which to set forth (praysed be the goodnes of God, and increace youre gracyous purpose) your hyghnes with youre most honorable councell applyeth all his studye and endeuoure."

[5] Quoted in King 40.

allowed, and no printers were allowed to print English versions. Henry's proclamation that "Bibles . . . be fixed and set up openly" was repealed, and those already "set up" were burned. The works of Coverdale and Tyndale were specifically forbidden by the "Proclamation for restraining books and writings against the Pope" issued in 1555. Protestants in England were in a precarious position, particularly those who had urged biblical translation, and as a result, colonies of English exiles were established in Germany and Switzerland.

In April 1560, the exiles in Geneva published one of the most overtly political English translations of the Bible. Because of its popularity, it became the "People's Bible." (It is also called the "Breeches Bible" based on the reference in Gen 3:7 to Adam and Eve clothing themselves in "breeches" made from fig leaves.) In the Introduction, the translators say they are motivated because biblical textual scholarship has advanced to such a new level that there is a significant need to prepare a new translation.[6]

The Geneva Bible was the only English translation to appear during the reign of Queen Mary. In fact, in the Preface, the translators comment that "the time then was most dangerous and the persecution sharp and furious." Interestingly, the translators do not identify themselves anywhere in the text, the Prologue, or the Dedication. One explanation for the anonymity is that they were "several and perhaps not the same during the whole time."[7] Perhaps a better explanation is that the notes of the Geneva Bible are so outspokenly anti-Roman and blatantly Calvinistic in doctrine, that it was dangerous to advertise authorship and these translators chose anonymity. Indeed, the marginal notes of the Geneva Bible were the reason for its demise. These strongly Protestant notes so infuriated King James that he considered it "seditious" and made its ownership a felony. Not surprisingly, James I was particularly worried about marginal notes such as the one in Exod 1:19, which allowed disobedience to Kings. Consequently, King James eventually introduced the King James Version, which drew largely from the Geneva Bible (of course, minus the marginal notes that had enraged him). During the reign of James I and into the reign of Charles I the use of the Geneva Bible steadily declined as the Authorized King James version became more widely used. In 1644 the Geneva Bible was printed for the last time.

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6 ". . . diuers heretofore haue indeuored to atchieue [the translating of the Bible into English] . . . yet considering the infancie of those tymes and imperfect knollage of the tongues, in respect of this ripe age and cleare light which God hath now reueiled, the translations required greatly to be perused and reformed."

7 Westcott 91.

Despite the 1408 prohibition of vernacular translation, there were some *Catholic* humanists, such as Erasmus, who urged biblical translation for the lay-reader.[8] Erasmus' views notwithstanding, as late as 1546 the Council of Trent declared the Vulgate "only of all other translations to be authentic."[9] Yet a Catholic vernacular translation *was* made, and for purely political reasons. Just as the Geneva Bible was the result of political exile, so too the Rheims-Douay.

Of course (and for good reason), Catholics felt no safer in England during the reign of Elizabeth than had Protestants during the reign of Mary. As a result, in 1568 Catholic English colonies were established in Douay. In a major break from tradition and theology, Cardinal William Allen explained how Catholic preachers were at a disadvantage compared with the Protestants who were familiar with the English Bible and were therefore not required to translate extemporaneously from the Vulgate when preaching to a popular audience.[10] Thus came the Rheims-Douay

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[8] "I totally dissent from those who are unwilling that the sacred Scriptures, translated into the vulgar tongue, should be read by the unlearned, as if Christ had taught such subtle doctrines that they can with difficulty be understood by a very few theologians, or as if the strength of the Christian religion lay in men's ignorance of it. The mysteries of Kings at war perhaps better to conceal, but Christ wishes his mysteries to be published as widely as possible. I could wish even all women to read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul . . . and that the farmer engaged at his shuttle, that the traveller with their stories beguile the weariness of the journey" (Peter 205).

[9] *Canons* 19.

[10] "On every Sunday and festival English sermons are preached by the more advanced students on the gospel, epistle or subject proper to the day. . . . We preach in English, in order to acquire greater power and grace in the use of the vulgar tongue. . . . In this respect the heretics, however ignorant they may be in other points, have the advantage over many of the more learned Catholics, who having been educated in the universities and the schools do not commonly have at command the text of Scripture or quote it except in Latin. Hence when they are preaching to the unlearned and are obliged on the spur of the moment to translate some passage which they have quoted into the vulgar tongue, they often do it inaccurately and with unpleasant hesitation, because either there is no English version of the words or it does not then and there occur to them. Our adversaries on the other hand have at their fingers' ends all those passages of Scripture which seem to make for them and be a certain deceptive adaptation and alteration of the sacred words produce the effect of appearing to say nothing but what comes from the bible. This evil might be remedied if we too had some catholic version of the bible, for all the English versions are most corrupt. I do not know what kind you have in Belgium. But certainly we on our part, if his Holiness shall think it proper, will undertake to produce a faithful, pure and genuine

translation whose Preface states that its very being was deemed necessary by the circulation of many "false translations" by Protestants who corrupted the truth, "adding, detracting, altering, transposing, pointing, and all other guileful means: specially where it serveth for the advantage of their private opinions." The argument then becomes *ad hominem* and links the Protestants with the other "syncretisantes"—the Jews: "Protestants having no lawful generation, but proceeding of bastards race, upstarts of unknown progeny, are no less at discord among themselves, only agreeing against Catholics, like syncretisantes against their common enemies, or Herod, Pilate, and the Jews against Christ."

This was not the only comment against Jews—*by far*. According to the title page of the Rheims-Douay, the text was "faithfully translated out of the authentical *Latin*" and the "To The Reader" says that the "name of Jews shall be execrable" because of "their avarice, and perjury" and that and the "the ancient and most learned Fathers and Doctors of the Church do much complain, the testify to us, that both the Hebrew and Greek and editions are foully corrupted by the Jews and Heretics." Thus, according to the translators, although the appearance of an English Bible for Catholics may be required by political exigencies, this does *not* imply that Scripture *must* be available in the vernacular, and certainly not available to *all* readers. The translators are quite clear on this point: "we must not imagine [putting] the translated Bibles into the vulgar tongues in the hands of every husband-man, artificer, apprentice, boys, girls, mistress, maid, man: that they were sung, played, alleged, of every tinker, taverner, rhymer, minstrel: that they were for table-talk, for ale benches, for boats and barges, and for every profane person and company."

This fact is emphasized by the new text itself: the translators make a statement by keeping so much of it in Latin, effectively preventing it from reaching the hands of "profane person[s] and company."

The biblical translator was a powerful figure in Renaissance England, since it was he who made a conscious decision to wield his pen either for or against the establishment, attempting to rally support for his political position. The translator's "view of the world" was reflected to such an extent that some translators were put to death because of specific word choice and other interpretive practices held to be not only political, but also heretical, monarchist, or anti-monarchial. Actual textual word choices as well as the accompanying apparatus *became* the Bible. Significantly, pictures and commentary had overtaken the text, or at least become part of it. Indeed, even now in the twenty-first century, the biblical text with

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version of the bible in accordance with the edition approved by the Church, for we already have men most fitted for the work" (Allen, 64–65).

which most English-speaking readers are familiar is the King James Version, influenced in great part by the Tyndale, Coverdale, Geneva, and Rheims-Douay translations and the accompanying apparatus.

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On the Road to Duhm: Isaiah in Nineteenth-Century Critical Scholarship

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I

Bernhard Duhm's commentary on the book of Isaiah, initially published in 1892 as part of the Göttingener Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, clearly constitutes the foundation of modern, critical Isaiah research.[1] In keeping with the historical-critical perspectives that dominated the field in the late-nineteenth century, Duhm holds that Isaiah constitutes three discrete prophetic collections, each based in the work of an individual prophet who wrote in relation to a distinct historical setting.[2] Thus, the work of the eighth century prophet to whom the book is attributed, Isaiah ben Amoz or Proto-Isaiah, appears in Isa 1–39. Although these chapters contain a great deal of later material, particularly the Babylonian oracles of Isa 13:1–14:23; 21:1–10 and the so-called Isaiah apocalypses of Isa 24–27; 34–35, they generally presuppose the historical

[1] Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia* (5th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968). For discussion of Duhm (1847–1928), see Walter Baumgartner's comments on pp. v–xiii of the fifth edition of Duhm's commentary; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Geschichte der Historisch-Kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart* (Neukirchen: Kreis Moers, 1956), 250–57; Rudolph Smend, "Duhm, Bernhard," *EncJud* 6:264.

[2] For an assessment of Duhm's commentary, see the unpublished version of my dissertation, *Isaiah 1–4 and the Post-Exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (Ph.D. dissertation; Claremont Graduate School, 1983), 6–10.

setting of the late-eighth century BCE when the Assyrian empire advanced into the Syro-Israelite region, destroying the northern kingdom of Israel and subjugating the southern kingdom of Judah. The work of an anonymous sixth century prophet, Deutero-Isaiah, appears in Isa 40–55. Deutero-Isaiah wrote in Phoenicia, but the prophet observed the rise of the Persian empire under the Achaemenid monarch, Cyrus the Great, and portrayed the impending downfall of Babylon as an act of YHWH. The work of an even later anonymous prophet, Trito-Isaiah, appears in Isa 56–66. Duhm contends that this prophet wrote in Judah during the mid-fifth century BCE shortly before the time of Nehemiah. These collections originated as independent works, which were expanded and brought together into the present form of the book over the course of several centuries by a redactional process that concluded in the Hasmonean period.

Although Duhm's three-part division of the book is facing serious challenges in contemporary scholarship, it has defined discussion of Isaiah throughout the twentieth century.[3] It continues to provide the basis for scholars who are interested in the diachronic questions of Isaiah's compositional history, and it also continues to influence those who are concerned primarily with synchronic literary analysis of the book in its present form. Nevertheless, it is clear that Duhm's hypothesis is not entirely original, insofar as it draws upon a longstanding recognition that the book of Isaiah could not have been composed by a single author. Although most modern *Forschungsberichten* on Isaiah begin with Duhm, a number point to earlier works which argue that the present form of the book of Isaiah is the product of multiple authors.[4] The identification of the sixth century BCE Persian monarch, Cyrus, as YHWH's messiah and Temple-builder in Isa 44:28 and 45:1, as well as other features of the book, had already prompted many interpreters to argue that Isaiah ben Amoz could not have composed the entire book, particularly chapters 40–66. Indeed, this recognition appears already in the Babylonian Talmud Baba Batra 14b–15a, which identifies "the assembly of Hezekiah and his colleagues" as the authors of the book, and employs thematic grounds to place it in the third position among the prophetic books following Jeremiah and Ezekiel despite the recognition that Isaiah ben Amoz lived prior to his two colleagues. It likewise appears in the twelfth century commentary on Isaiah by Abraham ibn Ezra, who remarks,

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[3] See my discussion in *Isaiah 1–39, with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William Eerdmans, 1996), 39–62.

[4] See esp. Christopher R. Seitz, "Isaiah, Book of," *ABD* 3:472–88, 501–7.

> About the last section of the book there is no doubt that it refers to a period yet to come, as I shall explain.—It must be borne in mind, that the opinion of the orthodox, that the book of Samuel was written by Samuel, is correct as regards the first part, till the words "And Samuel died" (1 Sam. xxv. 1); this remark is confirmed by the fact that the book of Chronicles contains the names (of the descendants of David) in genealogical order down to Zerubbabel.—The words "Kings shall see and arise, princes shall worship" (xlix. 7) support this view, though they might also be explained as follows: "Kings and princes will arise, etc., when they hear the name of the prophet even after his death". The reader will adopt the opinion which recommends itself most to his judgment.[5]

Brevard Childs's survey of Isaiah scholarship identifies the late-eighteenth century scholars, J. C. Döderlein and J. G. Eichhorn, as the first to argue that the book of Isaiah could not have been written entirely by Isaiah ben Amoz himself, but must instead presuppose an exilic-period author in chapters 40–66.[6] Indeed, several other influential works that shared this view appeared immediately before or after Duhm's commentary, including the 1891 introduction to the Old Testament by Samuel Rolles Driver, the fourth edition of Franz Delitzsch's commentary on Isaiah published in 1889, and the 1895 expositional commentary on Isaiah by George Adam Smith.[7]

In order to clarify the scholarly and historical context of Duhm's contribution to Isaiah scholarship, the balance of this paper examines several influential works published on Isaiah during the course of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including the introduction by Eichhorn, the commentaries by Gesenius and Hitzig, the study of prophetic literature by Ewald, and the commentary by Dillmann. Such a survey is hardly comprehensive, as it is limited to works published in German that are readily available to the present author. Nevertheless, one may note a chain of scholarly tradition insofar as Hitzig was a student of

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[5] See M. Friedlaender, editor, *The Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah. Volume 1. Translation of the Commentary* (New York: P. Feldheim, undated repr. of the 1873 ed.), 170–71.

[6] Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 316–18.

[7] Samuel Rolles Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Cleveland and New York: World, 1965), 236–46 (first published in 1891); Franz Delitzsch, *Biblische Commentar über das Buch Jesaja* (4th ed.; Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1889); George Adam Smith, *The Book of Isaiah* (Expositer's Bible; 2 vols.; New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1905), 2:3–25 (first published in 1895).

Gesenius, H. Ewald was a student of Eichhorn, and both Dillmann and Duhm were students of H. Ewald.

II

Interpreters identify J. C. Döderlein's 1775 Latin translation of Isaiah with notes and J. B. Koppe's notes to the 1780 German edition of Lowth's commentary on Isaiah as the beginning of critical assertions that portions of Isaiah were written by someone later than the prophet.[8] Döderlein claims that Isaiah could not be the author of chapters 40–66, but perhaps was the work of an exilic poet who was also named Isaiah ben Amoz.[9] Koppe's claim was limited to chapter 50, which he attributes to Ezekiel or another prophet living in Babylon.[10] The first full discussions of the criteria for distinguishing genuine from non-genuine portions of the book, however, appear in E. F. C. Rosenmueller's 1791–1793 notes on Isaiah and especially in J. G. Eichhorn's widely influential 1780–83 introduction to the Old Testament.[11]

Volume four of the 1824 fourth edition of Eichhorn's introduction contains his discussion of Isaiah.[12] Eichhorn, who lived from 1752 to 1827, was a student of J. D. Michaelis. An overview of his discussion demonstrates that he is fundamentally concerned with the historical setting of

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[8] Theodore Friedman, "Isaiah," *EncJud* 9:45; Seitz, "Isaiah, Book of," *ABD* 3:473.

[9] *Esaias ex recensione textus hebraei ad fidem codd. manusciptorum et versionum antiquarum latine vertit notasque varii argumenti subiecit Jo. Christoph. Doederlein D.* (Altdorf, 1775. Ed. 2. 1780. Ed. 3 1789); N.B., this volume is not available to me. It is cited from Wilhelm Gesenius, *Philologisch-kritischer und historischer Commentar über den Jesaia. Ersten Theiles, erste Abtheilung enthaltend die Einleitung und Auslegung von Kapitel 1–12* (Leipzig: C. W. Vogel, 1821), 140n. 21; see also p. 17. For a thorough history of research through the early nineteenth century, see 107–42.

[10] Seitz, "Isaiah," *ABD* 3:473, citing D. Robert Lowth, *Jesaias, neu übersetzt, nebst einer Einleitung und critischen philologischen und erläuternden Annmerkungen. A. d. Engl. (von Richerz). Mit zusätzen und Anmerkungen von J. B. Koppe, Prof. zu Göttingen* (4 vols., 1779–1781), 2:43. Not available to me (bibliographical citation from Gesenius, *Jesaia* 135–36n. 2.

[11] So Friedman, "Isaiah," *EncJud* 6:45. See E. F. C. Rosenmüller, *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum. T. III. Jesaiae vaticinia complectens* (3 sections; Leipzig, 1791–1793). Not available to me; cited from Gesenius, *Jesaia* 137n. 6.

[12] Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (5 vols.; 4th ed.; Göttingen: C. E. Rosenbusch, 1820–24; first edition in three volumes published 1780–83), 76–146. For discussion of Eichhorn, see Kraus, *Geschichte* 120–40; M. Z. Segal, "Eichhorn, Johann Gottfried," *EncJud* 6:517.

the Babylonian exile and its implications for reconstructing the authentic oracles of Isaiah ben Amoz. In addition, he presupposes that the authentic oracles of the book, arranged in roughly chronological order, constitute the cores of the various collections that he postulates. Later, anonymous oracles from the exilic and post-exilic periods tended to accumulate within the core oracular collections, especially as appendices.

Eichhorn's first section (§ 523, pp. 76–81) provides an overview of Isaiah's life, in which he states that unauthentic materials from the period of the Babylonian exile are mixed in with the prophet's own authentic speeches. He begins by noting third person chronological notices and narrative accounts concerning the prophet. The superscription to the book in Isa 1:1, which dates Isaiah to the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, naturally stems from an unknown hand from the exilic period. The reference to the death of Uzziah at the beginning of Isa 6 must also be the work of an unknown exilic hand, although the first person narrative of the prophet's call is the work of the prophet himself. Isaiah 7, which narrates Ahaz's actions during the Syro-Ephraimitic war is clearly written by a later hand, although the truth of its contents is not to be doubted. Isaiah 36–39, which relates Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah, is likewise the work of another hand, although it, too, is historically certain. He clearly recognizes third person literary form and a concern with chronology as evidence of a later hand, but he shows little inclination to read the contents of the narratives critically, not even the account of the slaying of 185,000 Assyrian troops by the angel of death. He does raise the question as to whether any material may be dated to the time of Jotham's reign, but concludes that Isa 2 must stem from this period. He offers an interesting twist on an old debate that appears in R. David Kimhi's commentary, i.e., is the book arranged chronologically or is Isa 6 the prophet's call narrative?[13] Eichhorn accepts Isa 6 as the prophet's call narrative, but holds that Isa 2 must stem from an early period in the prophet's career.

Eichhorn defines the criteria by which oracles are to be judged authentic to the prophet or unauthentic. He states that oracles from various times and from various prophets appear throughout the book under the name of Isaiah. His first criterion is the extent to which portrayed events are consistent with the time of Isaiah. The oracle concerning the impending downfall of Moab in Isa 15–16, which concludes in 16:14 with a statement that the downfall will take place in three years, stems from a later prophet insofar as it is not realized until the time of the

[13] See Louis Finkelstein, editor, *The Commentary of David Kimhi on Isaiah* (Columbia University Oriental Studies 19; New York: Columbia University Press, 1926) vii–viii (Introduction to Kimhi's commentary, Hebrew section).

Babylonians, and indeed elements of the oracle appear also in Jer 48 (cf. Isa 21:16 concerning the impending downfall of Babylon in one year). Inconsistencies in the use of language also play a major role in identifying the work of later prophets, such as Isa 24–27, which displays "unmanly (*unmännliche*)" word plays and other forms of expression that contrast with Isaiah's authentic oracles in chapters 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; and 8, and Isa 58:5, 6, 7; 59:4, 13, which pile up infinitives in contrast to Isaiah's authentic style.[14] Finally, conformity to the circumstances known to exist in Isaiah's time points to the authenticity of oracles, particularly those that explicitly mention the Assyrians or other events relevant to the Assyrian period, e.g., Isa 10:5–27; 14:24–27; 17:12–14; 18:1–7; 29:1–6, etc. Most important is his observation that Isa 40–52 do not presuppose the circumstances of the Assyrian period, but presuppose those of the Babylonian exile instead. Especially pertinent is the observation that these chapters call for exiled Jews to return to their fatherland. The references to Cyrus likewise provide support for the exilic dating of these oracles, and Eichhorn points to Isa 21:1–10 as a similar example of exilic period prophecies in the midst of Isa 1–39. Indeed, the impending downfall of the Chaldean/Babylonian empire points to the end of the exilic period.

Overall, Eichhorn postulates that the process of the book's formation takes place as small collections of Isaian oracles, particularly those with moral themes, are brought together and supplemented with later oracles and glosses during the Babylonian period to form prophetic anthologies. Whereas Isaiah's authentic prophetic oracles focus on moral themes, the oracles concerning the nations express a nationalistic concern with the punishment of foreigners. The oracles in chapters 40–52 themselves form a prophetic collection that attracted its own largely undefined supplements as this material in turn supplemented the Isaian collections that appear in the first part of the book.[15]

III

Based upon the work of Eichhorn and others who had pointed the way, Wilhelm Gesenius's 1821 commentary on Isaiah is the first full-scale treatment of the book that posits an exilic author for the second half of the book.[16] Like Eichhorn, Gesenius begins with a treatment of Isaiah's

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14 *Einleitung* 4:86.

15 *Einleitung* 4:88–108, esp. 4:89.

16 Wilhelm Gesenius, *Philologisch-kritischer und historischer Commentar über den Jesaia* (2 parts; Leipzig: C. W. Vogel, 1821). I am indebted to Prof. John T.

life circumstances, which extend from 759 BCE, the year of King Uzziah's death according to Gesenius,[17] through the reigns Jotham (759–743 BCE), Ahaz (745–728 BCE), and Hezekiah (728–699 BCE). Although the chronology differs from that employed by modern scholarship, the basic events pertaining to the Assyrian advances into Israel and Judah remain much the same. He notes that Isaiah has suffered the unhappy fate typical of prophetic works in that a considerable number of oracles that, due to differences in language and historical circumstance, could not come from the times of Ahaz and Hezekiah have been worked into the prophet's collection. The first example of such material is the whole of the last portion of the book in chapters 40–66, but it also includes chapters 13; 14; 21; 24–27; 34; and 35 from the first part of the book as well as many smaller passages left to be discussed in the commentary.[18] At the outset, he attributes all of these materials to the last years of the Babylonian exile. Although he provides a separate introduction for chapters 40–66, he initially states that chapters 13; 14; 34; 35; and 40–66 and at least 24–27 indicate that the "anthology" or book of Isaiah presupposes the work of two authors. He refers to the second author as "Pseudo-Jesaia," and places him in Babylon at the end of the exilic period. He rehearses several explanations for the inclusion of this material in the book of Isaiah ben Amoz, including the need to fill out the original Isaiah scroll (Eichhorn), that the exilic prophet was also named Isaiah ben Amoz (Döderlein), that the Isaiah collection constitutes an analogy to the Zechariah collection (Bertholdt), that the collector observed similarities of viewpoint between the two collections (Augusti), or similarities in style. In the end, he attributes the inclusion of the work of Pseudo-Isaiah with that of Isaiah ben Amoz as one book to the uncritical and limited intellectual perspectives of the exilic period.

His discussion of the organization of the book is crucial for understanding his hermeneutical perspectives.[19] Whereas earlier scholars had argued that the book is organized according to chronological principles (Michaëlis; Rosenmüller; Jerome) or according to similarities in content (*Sachordnung;* Jahn; Bauer; Vitringa), Gesenius maintains that the present form of the book displays both of these concerns. Because no historical viewpoint follows through the entire work, it resembles works such as Psalms and Proverbs that comprise various sub-collections of somewhat

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Fitzgerald, Jr., who provided a photocopy of this work from the University of Miami library.

17 See Isa 6:1; Gesenius, *Jesaia* I/1:4.

18 He does have reservations about Isa 21; see *Jesaia* I/2:648–50.

19 Gesenius, *Jesaia* I/1:18–24.

disparate material. Consequently, Gesenius argues that the book of Isaiah comprises four primary parts or books, each of which includes smaller sub-collections of oracles.

The first book appears in chapters 1–12, which contains a variety of materials from Isaiah's earliest periods that is organized largely on chronological grounds. Chapter 1 is later insofar as it is an assemblage composed of material from the times of Ahaz (vv. 1–9, 21–31) and Hezekiah (vv. 10–20),[20] but Isa 2:1–5:7; 8:1–9:6; 9:7–10:4; stem from the time of Ahaz, and Isa 10:5–34 stems from the time of Hezekiah. Chapters 11 and 12 are not from the time of Isaiah. Isaiah 11 employs later vocabulary influenced by Aramaic, and it envisions a messianic time of peace beyond that envisioned for the reign of Hezekiah in Isa 9:1–6.[21] Isaiah 12 employs hymnic forms like those of the Psalms and Isa 40–66.[22] The superscriptions in 1:1 and 2:1 are the work of collectors.

The second book appears in chapters 13–23, which apart from chapter 22 contain oracles against foreign nations. Analogies with the oracles against the nations in Jer 46–51 and Ezek 25–32 and the typically formulated superscriptions, *maśśāʾ PN,* found throughout this collection point to the work of a later collector. The collection clear mixes authentic with unauthentic oracles, e.g., the oracles in chapters 21 and 22 may presuppose inscriptions, and those in chapters 13; 14; and 21:1–10 are all concerned with Babylon. His discussion of Isa 13:1–14:23 emphasizes its concern with Babylon, its world-wide perspective, and its lexical links with material from Isa 40–66 and the book of Job.[23] His dating of the oracle against Babylon in Isa 21:1–10 is heavily influenced by the references to the Persians (sic) and Medes in vv. 1–2, but he holds to the possibility of prophecy prior to the event.[24] Interestingly, he defends the authenticity of much of the oracle concerning Moab (Isa 15–16), based upon a thorough survey of Moab's history, the relation of many details from these chapters to that history, and the appearance of parallel materials in Jeremiah's oracle concerning Moab in Jer 48. He does concede that the oracle has been updated to account for the Babylonian period.[25] The collection displays no discernable order. It was formed by an exilic collector, who attributed it to Isaiah. The fragment concerning Assyria in Isa 14:24–27 is authentic and likely belongs to Isa 10:5–34.

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[20] See his discussion of the setting of this chapters, *Jesaia* I/1:146.

[21] *Jesaia* I/1:415–20.

[22] *Jesaia* I/1:444–45.

[23] *Jesaia* I/2:447–51.

[24] *Jesaia* I/2:648–50.

[25] *Jesaia* I/2:500–514.

The third book appears in chapters 24–35, which is based upon a core of authentic oracles from the time of Hezekiah. Nevertheless, the collector included two major exilic collections in chapters 24–27 and 34; 35. Gesenius's dating of Isa 24–27 to the exilic period depends heavily upon its contents and its hymnic forms.[26] These chapters depict a wasted Jerusalem and land of Judah as well as the imminent freeing of the people from the oppression of an enemy (which must be Babylon although it is not explicitly named). In addition, the reference to the resurrection of the dead corresponds to Ezek 37:1–14, which stems from the exilic period. His dating of the anti-Edom oracle in Isa 34 is heavily influenced by the condemnation of Edom in exilic-oriented texts, such as Ps 137; Obadiah; Jer 49; Ezek 25, Isa 63:1–6, etc. Isaiah 35 is closely tied to Isa 34 as a single unit. It therefore relates the impending restoration of the people following the defeat of the Edomite enemy, and must date to the late exilic period.[27] In addition, the collector appended a historical segment in chapters 36–39 based upon the analogy of Jer 52.

The fourth book appears in chapters 40–66, which contains the exultant writings of Pseudo-Isaiah at the end of the exilic period. Gesenius claims that the Talmud places Isaiah after Jeremiah and Ezekiel because chapters 40–66 appear to post-date the work of the other two prophets. He notes that the subdivision of oracles in these chapters is heavily disputed, and they may be attributed to various times.

Gesenius's commentary on Isa 40–66 appears in a separate volume of his commentary, and he provides it with its own introduction. He states at the outset that Isa 40–66 form a unit that must be dated to the exilic period.[28] He provides an overview of the characteristic themes of these chapters. The prophet begins with announcements of comfort to his unfortunate people; he promises that they will return to their fatherland; he describes the new fatherland to which they will return; he speaks about the downfall of Israel's enemies; he asserts YHWH's sovereignty throughout the book; he engages in polemics against idol worship; he focuses on the figure of Cyrus; he notes that the people now recognize their good fortune which the prophet announced long ago; he speaks of the praise and glorification of YHWH by the prophet; and he announces YHWH's servant(s). Gesenius also provides a discussion of the linguistic features of chapters 40–66 that support their identification as a unified segment from the exilic period. The language and phraseology employed is distinct from

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[26] See his discussion in *Jesaia* I/2:756–61.

[27] *Jesaia* I/2:904–9.

[28] *Jesaia* II:3.

that found in the work of Isaiah ben Amoz. Examples of characteristic terms include, עבד-ה׳; איים; צדק; צמח; ראשונה; אספי ארץ; עורי עורי, etc.

He states that there are five basic grounds for dating Isa 40–66 to the later period of the exile. All historical references point to this period rather than to the time of Isaiah, viz., Jerusalem lies in ruins; the land is wasted; the city (Jerusalem) and Temple are destroyed, but will be rebuilt, etc. The same applies to references to other peoples, e.g., the Babylonian empire had already eclipsed and is about to fall to Cyrus. The prophet refers back to earlier prophecies to announce the return of the people from exile. The prophet is able to employ a historical basis for his announcements concerning the truth of the future restoration of the people. These chapters employ characteristic language that Isaiah ben Amoz does not know and that conforms to the language employed in later books, such as Jeremiah and Psalms. Much of the language employed in Isa 40–66 corresponds to late (rabbinic) Hebrew and to Aramaic. Finally, he maintains that these oracles were attributed to Isaiah so that the great prophet could be seen as one who would anticipate the future misfortunes of his people.

Gesenius concludes his introduction with the assertion that these chapters presuppose the victory of Cyrus over Babylon. He notes that the rebukes and warnings of the last chapters of the work, with their precise descriptions of idol worship, their ideal depictions of the new Jerusalem, the downfall of the enemy Edom (not Babylon), presuppose a nation that has not yet realized its hope of deliverance and the emergence of its wise national teacher. He presupposes that the author of these oracles ordered and arranged the material himself, but that a later redactor joined it to the earlier work of Isaiah ben Amoz.

When one considers Gesenius's overall model for the layout and composition of the book of Isaiah, it appears that—apart from the hypothesis of a Trito-Isaiah collection—he has already established the basic parameters of Duhm's later commentary, particularly with his assertions of the late dating of Isa 13–14; 24–27; and 34–35; the appended character of the historical narrative in Isa 36–39; the organization of the book into collections; and of course the exilic dating of Isa 40–66.

IV

Although Gesenius's work has been noted recently in scholarly treatments of scholarship on Isaiah, the 1833 commentary on Isaiah by Ferdinand Hitzig (1807–1875) is less well-known.[29] Hitzig was the great-

[29] Ferdinand Hitzig, *Der Prophet Jesaja* (Heidelberg: C. F. Winter, 1833).

great grandson of Isaac ben Daniel Itzig (1723–1799), the banker and leader of the Berlin Jewish community, who envisioned the Jüdische Freischule of Berlin founded by his son Isaac Daniel (1750–1806) for the education of poor children. Ferdinand Hitzig's grandfather, Elias Daniel (1756–1818), changed the family name to Hitzig because Itzig was employed as a pejorative name for Jews, and his father, Julius Edward Hitzig (1780–1849), converted to Christianity.[30] Ferdinand Hitzig was a student of both Wilhelm Gesenius in Halle and G. Ewald in Göttingen. Writing some twelve years after the publication of his teacher Gesenius's commentary, Hitzig states that his goals in publishing such a work were to place a convenient, not so detailed, and inexpensive tool in the hands of students, and to take account of the latest advances in the study of Hebrew grammar for the interpretation of Isaiah.[31]

Hitzig begins his introduction to the commentary with a statement that a full understanding of Isaiah can be achieved only by placing him the context of Hebrew prophecy, including consideration of the standpoint of the prophets, the upper echelons that the prophets addressed, and the worth of their message. Consequently, his introduction includes three major portions that are intended to identify the "essence" of Hebraism, i.e., the Hebrew spirit, which the prophets in general and Isaiah in particular expressed: Hebraisim (*Hebraismus*), especially "the Hebrew spirit/intellect"; "Prophecy"; and "Isaiah."

Hitzig employs a Hegelian framework to trace the development of Hebraism's consciousness of a world soul or creator, which is identified as Israel's national G-d. He maintains that the Hebrew spirit includes two sides, the higher notions of the oriental spirit, expressed in the Hebrew people, and the higher substance in the history of the Spirit in general. The Hebrew spirit grows out of an oriental spirit that is focused upon the immediate experience of the objective world, but it attempts to develop abstract thinking on the basis of its concrete experience. Such development may be observed, for example, in the Hebrew language, in which the concrete לשון, "tongue," comes to mean "language," and חיים, "living," comes to mean "life." Due to its this-worldly, pragmatic focus, the Hebrew spirit lacks a sense of art or esthetics; Mosaic law therefore lacks a sense of the ideal and or any measure of beauty. Lacking true discernment of an inner principle, ideal, or spirit, Hebraism is able to produce annals or chronicles, but it is not able to produce true history. The highest physical existence is the highest good to the Hebrew, who can not know

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[30] See Editor, "Hitzig, Ferdinand," *EncJud* 8:790–91; S. Liptzin, "Hitzig, Julius Eduard," *EncJud* 8:791; Editor, "Itzig, Daniel," *EncJud* 9:1150–52.

[31] *Jesaja* v.

higher spiritual peace. Nevertheless, the desire for tranquility and peace and the focus on the natural world motivates the development of such ideals as a life-force or soul, derived initially from blood, within the body. The recognition of the principle of causality points to the necessity of a world soul or creator that must be identified as Israel's national G-d.

Whereas Hebraism understood its national G-d to be the world creator, prophecy was able to develop this notion into the concept of the universal G-d. Such a development entailed the inner recognition of G-d by the individual, not the externally recognized particular or corporate deity. Such a development took place in three stages. The first is expressed in the early experience of ecstatic prophecy, a form of divine inspiration in which the divine spirit takes complete control of the body and suppresses the self consciousness of the prophet (see, e.g., Num 24:4, 16; 1 Sam 19:24). A second stage is speaking in tongues, a moderate form of inspiration in which the self consciousness of the prophet is not absorbed, but is identified with the divine self consciousness. Here, the divine spirit of enlightenment and holiness brings about a wholly new inner human being, forms its intelligence and will, and instills a new heart and new spirit. Such a person, instilled with divine inspiration, truth, morality, and justice, then emerges as a true prophet, who responds to the divine call to speak inspired oracles on behalf of G-d. A third stage takes up the recording and reading of past prophecy, with a concomitant dogmatic self consciousness and loss of inspiration, as the prophet becomes less prophet and more of a writer. The foundational principle of prophecy is that YHWH requites deeds, so that the righteous is rewarded, and the wicked is punished. Ultimately, such a conceptualization raises questions concerning the limitation of an infinite world spirit to a specific people, and points instead to the possibility of eternal life.

Having laid the hermeneutical framework by which to read Isaiah, Hitzig proceeds to his discussion of Isaiah. He focuses especially on the reconstruction of the historical Isaiah and his authentic oracles along lines similar to those of his teacher Gesenius, although he sometimes takes some rather idiosyncratic positions (see, e.g., Isa 15–16; 24–27 below). He begins with the year of Uzziah's death in 759 BCE, and lays out the historical background of Assyria's successive campaigns through the reign of Hezekiah that ultimately placed all of Israel and Judah under Assyrian control. Isaiah 1 is an introduction to Isa 6, but Isa 2–5 represent the oldest oracles of the book. The oracles follow in general chronological order in Isa 7:1–9:6; 9:7–10:4; Isa 17 was moved to its present position by Isaiah. Isaiah 10:5–12:6 is from the time of Hezekiah, but Isa 13:1–14:23 presupposes the downfall of Babylon to the Medes.[32] Isa 14:24–27, 28–32

[32] *Jesaja* 153–55.

are Hezekian; Isa 19:16–25; 21:1–10 are unauthentic; Isa 22 is from the time of Sennacherib. Isaiah 15–16 are originally an oracle of Jonah delivered during a campaign of Jeroboam II;[33] Isa 18 presupposes a campaign by Sargon;[34] Isa 19 is an authentic Isaian oracle from the time of Sargon, but it points to the later downfall of the Ethiopians to the Saites;[35] and Isa 20 presupposes Sargon's campaigns.[36] Isaiah 23 presupposes Nebuchadrezzar's siege against Tyre,[37] and Isa 24–27 show sufficient analogies to Nahum to indicate that they presuppose the downfall of Nineveh.[38] Isaiah 28–33 are an original part of Isaiah's canon from the time of Sennacherib, although some verses of chapter 33 are later. Isaiah 34; 35 stem from the later phases of the exile,[39] and Isa 36–39 are an historical appendix ultimately drawn from Kings, although both the Kings and Isaian versions have suffered from the interference of later redactors.[40] Isaiah 40–66 is the product of an author, who was heavily influenced by psalmic poetry and who wrote at the conclusion of the exile.[41] The exilic chapters are organized into three parts or books: Isa 40–48; 49–57; and 58–66, which are indicated by the concluding formulas in Isa 48:22 and 57:21, "there is no peace says YHWH/my G-d for the wicked." The first looks forward to the fall of Babylon and its idols; the looks forward to a happy future of restoration; and the third takes up problems of continuing sin that impede full restoration. All three books are written by the same author (although later editing is evident) shortly before the fall of the Babylonian empire.

Hitzig portrays (the authentic) Isaiah as speaker with a spirit like no other whose feelings and thoughts are permeated by the basic idea of Hebraism, which lives within him and prompts him to become a theocratic individual.[42] He sees himself both in the thoughts of G-d and of human beings as he sees the greatness and power of YHWH in opposition

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[33] *Jesaja* 178–84; N.B.: Hitzig cites his earlier study, *Des Propheten Jonas Orakel über Moab, kritisch vindicirt u.s.w.* (Heidelberg: Mohr, 1831). This work is not available to me.

[34] *Jesaja* 209–10.

[35] *Jesaja* 217–23.

[36] *Jesaja* 236–37.

[37] *Jesaja* 269–79.

[38] *Jesaja* 291–99.

[39] *Jesaja* 394–96; cf. 403–4.

[40] *Jesaja* 409–13.

[41] *Jesaja* 454–75, esp. 469, 472.

[42] *Jesaja* xxxix–xl.

to idols, and attempts to express the essence of G-d through his visions. Citing purported messianic and eschatological passages (e.g., Isa 4:2–6; 9:1–6; 10:33, 34; 11:1–16; 30:19–33; 32:15–19), Hitzig maintains that the height of Isaiah's ideas that live within him and the power of truth that he has seen kindle new inspiration within him that guides him to its highest flight and looks forward to it true time. The literary Isaiah therefore points to something beyond, and Hitzig's frequent references to citations of the "true" Isaiah in the exilic portion of the book indicate that this would be the achieved in the second part of the book.[43] Although Hitzig makes it clear that the exilic chapters frequently contradict the religious and moral ideas of the "authentic" Isaiah, his attempts to draw out the relationships between the first and second parts of the book, especially with regard to the downfall of Babylon and the restoration of Israel following punishment, both looks back to pre-critical readings of a unified Isaiah and anticipates current critical attempts to read Isaiah as a whole.

V

Heinrich Georg August Ewald (1803–1875) published a very influential study of the prophets, initially in 1840, that followed his teacher Eichhorn in postulating that significant portions of the book of Isaiah are not authentic, and he followed his contemporary Hitzig by reading the components of Isaiah in relation to a Hegelian hermeneutical framework.[44] Kraus states that Ewald, together with Herder, remains the "decisive" (*massgebend*) interpreter of prophecy in nineteenth century scholarship.[45] Indeed, Kraus illustrates Ewald's standpoint by quoting his statement concerning the universal nature of prophetic truth, "the universal truths which govern the world, or (to say the same with other words) the ideas of G-d, always exists invariably and inviolably, fully independent from the change of that which is base as from the will and the deed of humans."[46] For Ewald, the task of human life is to take up this

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[43] E.g., *Jesaja* 469–70.

[44] For discussion of Ewald, see Kraus, *Geschichte* 182–90, esp. 188–90; S. E. Loewenstamm, "Ewald, Heinrich Georg August," *EncJud* 6:1006.

[45] Kraus, *Geschichte* 190.

[46] Translation mine, "Die allgemeinen Wahrheiten, welche die Welt beherrschen, oder (um dasselbe mit andern Worten zu sagen) die Gedanken G-ttes liegen stets unwandelbar und unantastbar vor, ganz unabhängig vom Wechsel der niedern Dinge sowie vom Willen und (von) der T(h)at des Menschen." See Kraus, *Geschichte* 188, who quotes a stylistically updated statement by Ewald, *Die*

eternal truth of the divine spirit and to express it in thought and in deed so as to enable the divine spirit and history to achieve its fullest expression.[47] Of course, true prophecy finds its purest expression in the orally spoken word of the original prophet, and later writers who transmitted those words often limited their impact by the very act of writing. In order to express his notions of historical progress in the manifestation of the truth of the divine spirit, Ewald's work differs from that of his predecessors. He does not treat Isaiah as a book; instead, he isolates the passages of the book according to his understanding of their authorship. Thus, separate chapters are devoted to the authentic Isaiah and to the unknown Isaian authors whose work is found in Isa 21:1–10; 13:2–14:23; 40–66; 34–35; and 24–27.

Ewald maintains that prophetic literature reaches its highest peaks in Isaiah in its power and beauty of expression; indeed, Isaiah's ideas, the circumstances of his speeches, and the forms of his expression reveal him as the prophet par excellence.[48] From the time of his call, Isaiah portrays YHWH as the sovereign and holy G-d, who calls for recognition in the past, present, and future, who brings the threat of the Assyrian empire that will leave the people and the house of David with only a remnant, and who shows the light of a better future under the righteous king. Ewald presents Isaiah's oracles in chronological order. Isaiah's earliest oracles appear in Isa 2:2–5:25; 9:7–10:4; and 5:26–30 (arranged according to their original order!) during the reign of Ahaz when Assyria first began to move into the Syro-Israelite region. The second stage of Isaiah's oracles appears in Isa 6:1–9:6; 17:1–11, when the Assyrians destroyed Samaria and northern Israel. The third stage includes the great accusation of Isa 1; the oracles against the foreign nations in Isa 14:28–32 (Philistia), 15–16 (Moab), 21:11–12 (Edom), and 21:13–17 (the Arabs). The fourth stage includes oracles from Isa 22:1–14 (the oracle against Jerusalem); 23 (against Tyre). The fifth stage includes Isa 28–32, and the sixth stage includes oracles from the time of Sennacherib's invasion, i.e., Isa 10:5–12:6; 14:24–27; 17:12–Isa 18; 20. Additional oracles concerning the Assyrians appear in Isa 33; 37:22–35, and the last writings of Isaiah take up the Egyptians and all nations in Isa 19.

A series of later, anonymous oracles from the time of the downfall of the Babylonian empire have been included together with Isaiah's writings.

Propheten des Alten Bundes (1840), 2 (see *Die Propheten des Alten Bundes* [3 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1867–68], 1:2).

47 For Ewald's discussion of prophecy in general, see *Propheten* 1:1–86.

48 For Ewald's treatment of (the authentic) Isaiah, see *Propheten* 1:271–489. His treatment of the unknown sections of Isaiah appears in *Propheten* 3:7–140, 159–76

Isaiah 21:1–10 is the earliest, and looks forward to the Persian assault against Babylon. A second, anonymous oracle concerning the impending fall of Babylon appears in Isa 13:2–14:23, and the great, anonymous series concerning the fall of Babylon to Cyrus and the impending restoration of Israel appears in Isa 40–66. Three books appear within these chapters, including Isa 40–48, which are concerned with the old and the new; Isa 49–60, concerning Israel as model and caricature; and Isaiah; a conclusion to the two books in Isa 61:1–63:6, and later supplements in Isa 63:7–Isa 66. Additional anonymous oracles from a later time appear in Isa 34–35, which presuppose judgment against Edom, and Isa 24–27, which (like Isa 63:7–Isa 66) envision the new Jerusalem and the punishment of Babylon at the time of Darius.

Although Ewald clearly represents a powerful theological voice, his focus on the individual oracles clearly points to the importance of the man rather than the book. His reading clearly points to the powerful voice that originates the Isaian book, but it portrays the later writers as far less talented and important imitators or followers who never quite attained the height laid out by the original prophet. Ewald furthermore presents a very fragmented reading of the book that does little to explore its interrelationships (in contrast to Hitzig's attempts), and fosters the notion of accidental or mechanical combination of sources into a present whole that becomes an obstacle to the interpretation of the true prophetic message. Such work prepares the way for his student, Duhm, to emphasize collections of individual oracles that seemingly have only limited thematic or chronological relationships.

VI

The last work to be treated is the 1890 commentary on Isaiah by August Dillmann (1823–1894) which appeared two years prior to the first edition of Duhm's celebrated work.[49] Like Duhm, Dillmann was a student of Ewald, although he is far better known for his work in Ethiopic studies than in Bible.[50] Nevertheless, Dillmann published major commentaries on the Hexateuchal books as well as a posthumous Handbook to Old Testament Theology. His Isaiah volume replaced the commentary by Knobel which had appeared in four editions (1843, 1854, 1861, 1872) in the Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament series.

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[49] August Dillmann, *Der Prophet Jesaia* (KHAT 5; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 5th ed., 1890).

[50] See Zev Garber, "Dillmann, August," *EncJud* 6:47–48.

In keeping with the historical interests of his time, Dillmann takes special care to identify the historical background of the prophet Isaiah in the events of the late-eighth century BCE, from the death of Uzziah in 758 BCE through the conclusion of Hezekiah's twenty-nine year reign in 696 BCE. Major events during this time include the Syro-Ephraimitic War and Tiglath-Pileser's punishment of Damascus and Samaria in 740 BCE, the downfall of Samaria in Hezekiah's sixth year (721 BCE), and Sennacherib's campaign in Hezekiah's fourteenth year (712–711 BCE). The discrepancy in dates from those more conventionally accepted in modern scholarship is due to Dillmann's acceptance of the authenticity of 2 Kgs 18:10, which states that Samaria fell in the sixth year of Hezekiah and the ninth year of Hoshea of Israel.[51] Thus, Isaiah's career spans the years 758–711 BCE. He portrays Isaiah as a "hero of religion,"[52] who envisioned G-d's other-worldly highness and holiness as the basis for the ruling power that guided his life. Isaiah emerges as a figure who proclaimed YHWH's divine majesty as "the holy one of Israel" and YHWH's battle from Jerusalem against all impurity and idolatry. The great sin of the people was, of course, the rejection of YHWH's holiness and teaching, which required the manifestation of YHWH's power to bring down such arrogance through the use of the Assyrian empire as a tool of divine punishment. Such punishment would demonstrate YHWH's power to Israel and the world at large, and call for the proper response of human faith. Dillmann maintains that Isaiah envisioned an era of paradisal peace in which an ideal Davidic king would rule in Jerusalem and the nations of the world, beginning with Egypt and Assyria, would recognize YHWH's sovereignty at Zion.

Like Duhm, Dillmann maintains that the book of Isaiah comprises a collection of collections of prophetic oracles in which unauthentic material from other prophets or writers is mixed in with Isaiah's authentic oracles. Some elements of the book, such Isa 2:2–4; 15–16; and 21:11–12, 13–17, are older prophetic writings that have been introduced into the book, particularly since the prophet was often dependent upon the perspectives of earlier prophets, such as Amos, Hosea, and even Joel.

The first major collection appears in Isa 1–12, which includes a series of smaller speech groups. Isaiah 2–4 constitutes a closed collection of the prophet's speeches, to which Isa 5 is also attached as a sort of appendix.[53] The oracles deal largely with the period of security prior to Syro-Ephraimitic War, although Dillmann's analysis frequently breaks them down into very small sub-units that have been collected, supplemented,

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51 *Jesaia* viii–ix.

52 *Jesaia* xv.

53 See *Jesaia* xxi–xxii, 17–19, 42–43.

and assembled into their present form. Because Isa 2:2–4 also appears in Mic 4:1–5, it is an earlier oracle taken up in both books. A second sub-collection appears in Isa 6:1–9:6, which takes up the events of the Syro-Ephraimitic War and Tiglath Pileser's invasion. Isaiah's vision of G-d in Isa 6 introduces the whole as a means to emphasize the people's obstinacy as the cause for divine judgment. A third collection appears in Isa 9:7–11:16(12) from the period of Sargon's rule through ca. 716/5 BCE, which looks forward to Assyria's final defeat and the triumph of the messianic kingdom of G-d. Whereas the first three sub-collections were chronologically arranged, the fourth collection in Isa 1 is a repentance speech assembled from various oracles, especially those with affinities to Amos and Hosea, to function as an introduction to the whole.

The second collection appears in the oracles against the nations in Isa 13–23, many of which are the work of Isaiah. The oracle against Assyria in Isa 14:24–27 dates to Sennacherib's campaign, and the oracle against Philistia in Isa 14:28–32 probably presupposes Sargon's death. The oracle against Moab in Isa 15–16 is an earlier composition by an unknown author that also finds its way into Jer 48. The oracle against Damascus and Samaria in Isa 17:1–11 stems from the Syro-Ephraimitic War. The oracles against the Ethiopians in Isa 17:12–18:9 presupposes Sennacherib's campaign. The oracle against Egypt in Isa 19 is from a later period. The narrative concerning expected Egyptian help in Isa 20 presupposes Sargon's campaign against Ashdod. The oracles against the Idumeans and Arabs in Isa 21:11–17 is older material (cf. Isa 15–16). The oracle against Tyre in Isa 23 presupposes Shalmaneser's reign, although it includes a post exilic addition in vv. 15–18. The oracles concerning Jerusalem and the house of Shebna in Isa 22 presuppose Sennacherib's campaign, although the reason for their presence among the oracles against the nations is uncertain.

The third collection appears in Isa 28–33, which is based upon a sub-collection of Isaiah's political speeches, which condemned Judah's participation in the coalition that was forming against Shalmaneser in 726/5 BCE. As in the Syro-Ephraimitic War, Isaiah's understanding of divine sovereignty calls for a rejection of foreign alliances, particularly with the Egyptians, against the Assyrians. Later material in Isa 32–33 that presupposes Sennacherib's campaign, partly from Isaiah and partly from other writers, is appended.

In addition to his interest in defining the oracles of Isaiah ben Amoz, Dillmann turns his attention to the formation of the book as a whole. He maintains that there are two major parts to Isaiah, including Isa 1–35, which contains all of the prophet's oracles, and Isa 40–66, a composition written several centuries after the lifetime of Isaiah that forms a book unto itself. The two major portions of Isaiah are linked by the historical

narrative concerning Sennacherib's campaign and associated events in Isa 36–39, which ultimately originates in 2 Kgs 18–20 although both the Isaiah and the Kings narratives have undergone considerable editing.

Dillmann points to the exilic period as the impetus for the formation of the present form of the book. Although both Isa 1–12 and 28–33 contain Isaian oracles, the present collections were formed by later hands in the post-exilic period. Isaiah 13–23 forms a self-contained collection to which exilic prophecies concerning the downfall of Babylon in Isa 13:1–14:23 and 21:1–10 have been added. Isaiah 24–27 and 34–35 are eschatologically oriented, and originate in the post-exilic period. Each of these texts is appended to the preceding collection to form Isa 13–27 and 28–35 respectively. When considered together with Isa 36–39, the result is a prophetic collection that is structured much like the Septuagint form of Jeremiah and the book of Ezekiel. The material concerned with the downfall of Babylon in Isa 13–14, 24–27, and 34–35 plays a major role in preparing for the material in Isa 40–66. A variety of factors demonstrate that these chapters are the anonymous composition of an exilic prophet from the time immediately prior to the fall of the Babylonian empire to Cyrus. These factors include the historical background that presupposes the rise of Cyrus; the circle of ideas, which presupposes not the judgment of Isaiah's time but the (messianic) restoration of the late-exilic period; and the very different literary characteristics that are provided in detail. Although Isa 40–66 are written by an exilic author, a presentation of lexical relationships between the two parts of the book indicates the dependence of these chapters on the earlier material from the first part of the book. Isaiah 40–66 comprises two major portions that are chronologically arranged. Isaiah 40–48 represents the first fresh outburst of enthusiasm by the author at the rise of Cyrus, the nearness of redemption, and the fall of Babylon.[54] This section dates to approximately 545 BCE as Cyrus approaches Babylon. Because of the parallels between Isa 48:20f. and 62:10ff. and the common theme of the servants of G-d, Dillmann maintains that the second major section of chs 40–66 appears in Isa 49–62, which looks forward to the spiritual elevation of the entire people following their redemption from exile. This section dates to 539 BCE when Cyrus takes control of Babylon. Isaiah 63–66 constitute a series of appendices concerning the circumstances of the return to the land of Israel, viz., whether the Edomites present an obstacle, Temple building, the future of Jerusalem, etc.[55]

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54 *Jesaia* 362.

55 Curiously, Dillmann cites Duhm at various points in his discussion of Isa 40–66 (see esp. pp. 355–65), including Duhm's identification of the servant songs, despite the publication of Dillmann's volume in 1890 and the publication of

Dillmann's commentary is not cited by all major commentators,[56] perhaps because his work was overshadowed by that of Duhm. Nevertheless, he creates a model for understanding Isaiah that in many respects, viz., the overall understanding of the formation of the book's collections and the general dating of major components to the Babylonian exile (except for Duhm's Trito-Isaiah), resembles that put forward by Duhm.

VII

When viewed in relation to the works surveyed here—and indeed, this survey is not exhaustive—it would appear that Duhm's work represents the emerging consensus of nineteenth century critical scholarship on the formation of the book of Isaiah, particularly once the hypothesis of an exilic author for Isa 40–66 was accepted by scholars such as S. Driver, F. Delitzsch, and G. A. Smith.[57] Several features loom rather large, i.e., the attribution of Isa 40–66 to an anonymous prophet of the late-exilic period; the identification of Isaiah ben Amoz's oracle only in the first part of the book; the general organization of the work into two major parts demarcated by the historical narrative in Isa 36–39; the division of the first part of the book into sub-collections, such as Isa 1–12, 13–23, 24–27, 28–33, and 34–35, which are organized in various ways; and the dating of major components of this material to the exilic or post-exilic period, such as Isa 13:1–14:23; 24–27; and 34–35. Indeed, Duhm's primary original contributions appear to be the identification and isolation of the so-called servant songs in Isa 42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–9; and 52:13–53:12 and the identification of Isa 56–66 as the work of Trito-Isaiah from the time of Nehemiah.[58] Duhm's isolation of the servant songs and the identification

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Duhm's volume in 1892. A sixth edition of Dillmann's commentary, edited by R. Smend, was published in 1898. The original owner of my copy, identified by his signature as Otto Frank, wrote pencilled comments at various points throughout the volume, including several which are dated to 13 April, 1894 (p. 544); 18 August, 1895 (p. 533); 1 August, 1895 and 28 April, 1897 (both on p. 474). Dillmann's introduction notes no updated edition or sharing of page proofs by Duhm.

[56] It is not cited in the commentary list, for example, by Hans Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39* (BKAT X/3; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1982), 1714.

[57] See Smith, *Isaiah* 2:3–25; Driver, *Introduction* 236–46; Delitzsch, *Jesaja* (4th ed.; not available to me).

[58] For discussion, see Duhm, *Jesaia* 14–15.

of Trito-Isaiah as an individual are increasingly under question.[59] Nevertheless, recent studies point to the importance of the so-called Trito-Isaiah material in the form and formation of the book as a whole.[60] Although most scholars have focussed on the problems presented by the so-called "First" and "Second" Isaiah, it seems evident that scholars must turn their attention to Trito-Isaiah in order to gain a full understanding of the book as a whole.

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[59] See, e.g., T. N. D. Mettinger, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs: A Critical Examination of a Theological Axiom* (Lund: Gleerup, 1983); Seizo Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung (Jes 56–66) Redaktionsgeschichtlich Untersucht* (BZAW 175; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989); Odil Hannes Steck, *Studien zu Tritojesaja* (BZAW 203; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), esp. 3–45.

[60] See esp. my discussions in *Isaiah 1–39, with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William Eerdmans, 1996), 39–62; "Prophetic Exegesis in Isaiah 65–66," *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (VTSup 70/1–2; ed., C. C. Broyles and C. A. Evans; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 1:455–74; "The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in Isaiah," *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A. M. Beuken* (BETL 132; ed. J. van Ruiten and M. Vervenne; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 41–61.

Exile as Purification: Reconstructing the Book of the Four (Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah)

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1. Prior Work

In doing his pioneer work on the redactional history of Book of the Twelve, J. Nogalski discovered that the core of the four prophetic books, Hosea, Amos, Micah and Zephaniah, had probably formed an older redactional unit composed during the exilic period.[1] He named it the "Deuteronomistic corpus" taking Dtr phrases and topics of its redactional layer into account. In this assessment he takes up the observations, which W. H. Schmidt had made on a Dtr redaction of the book of Amos,[2] and J. Jeremias on an exilic edition of the book of Micah.[3] Additionally, J. Nogalski observed that the headings of those four books take a similar shape, set under the common title of דבר יהוה and dated along the reigns of Israelite and Judean kings. He noticed that two prophets from the North are followed by two from the South in an obvious systematic and chronological order. He pointed out, that these two phases of prophecy are deliberately linked in the beginning of the book of Micah (Mic 1:2–9).

[1] J. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 217; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 278–80; J. Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of Twelve* (BZAW 218; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 274–75.

[2] W. H. Schmidt, "Die deuteronomistische Redaktion des Amosbuches. Zu den theologischen Unterschieden zwischen dem Propheten und seinem Sammler," *ZAW* 77 (1965): 168–93.

[3] J. Jeremias, "Die Deutung der Gerichtsworte Michas in der Exilszeit," *ZAW* 83 (1971): 330–54.

Finally he uncovers several catchword links that connected these four books together. So, in his view the "Deuteronomistic corpus" comprised Hos 1–14, Amos 1:1–9:6, Mic 1–3+6, and Zeph 1:1–3:8a*. However, J. Nogalski was aware that his hypothesis was not yet fully founded, because he was not able to investigate all the text of the four books in detail.[4]

Fortunately, Nogalski's hypothesis was confirmed and further processed by A. Schart.[5] By calling the Book of the Four "D-Korpus," abbreviated "DK," he wanted to indicate that the composition has its own specific language and topics, which cannot simply be identified with those of the typical Dtr literature (DtrH, JerD).[6] Having investigated the book of Amos literary-critically in detail, Schart pointed out many more redactional links and was able to describe a particular set of theological intentions for this composition. In contrast to Nogalski, he supposed that the books of Hosea and Amos were already connected in the late pre-exilic period and presumed that the addition of the books of Micah and Zephaniah took place in two steps. However, in my view, these last two assumptions seem to complicate the thesis unnecessarily and are less convincing.[7] Anyhow, the "D-Korpus" reconstructed by A. Schart agrees mainly with Nogalski's Book of the Four, apart from some smaller modifications and uncertainties (Hos*; Amos 1:1–9:10*; Mic 1:1–3:12*; 6:1–16*; Zeph 1:1–3:8*[11–13?]).[8]

In spite of such impressive results, the redaction-historical work concerning the Book of the Twelve is still on shaky grounds. For example, E. Bossard-Nepustil, one of the co-founders of that work, in spite of his general agreement with Nogalski, disputes his thesis that the book of Zephaniah belonged to Deuteronomistic corpus.[9] Moreover, E. Ben Zvi

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[4] *Literary Processes,* 278.

[5] *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuches* (BZAW 260; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998).

[6] *Die Entstehnung,* 46.

[7] The linguistic and structural correspondences between Hosea and Amos (e.g., calls to hear Hos 4:1; 5:1; Amos 3:1; 5:1 and the opening sections Hos 4:1–3; Amos 3:1–2), already pointed out by J. Jeremias, "Die Anfänge des Dodekapropheton: Hosea und Amos," in J. Jeremias, *Hosea und Amos. Studien zu den Anfängen des Dodekapropheton* (FAT 13; Tübingen: Mohr 1996), 34–54, can sufficiently be explained by the assumption that the pupils of both prophets knew each other and do not call for literary dependence.

[8] According to A. Schart, *Die Entstehung,* 316–17, the DK-redaction can be identified in following verses: Hos 1:2b*; 2:6; 3:1*; 4:1*; 5:1–2*; 8:1b; 14:2–4; Amos 1:1–2, 9–12; 2:4–5, 10–12; 3:1b, 7; 4:6–11*; 5:11, 25–26*; 8:4–7, 11–12; 9:7–10; Mic 1:1, 2b, 5a, 6–7, 13b; 2:3*; 6,2–16; Zeph 1:1, 6, 13b, 17aβ.

[9] *Rezeptionen von Jesaia 1–39 im Zwölfprophetenbuch: Untersuchungen zur literarischen Verbindung von Prophetenbüchern in babylonischer und persischer Zeit* (OBO

raises several material and methodological objections that should be taken seriously.[10] I will only take up three of these because they seem to me of interest for our subject: First, neither the Book of the Twelve, nor the supposed Book of the Four ever got a comprehensive heading.[11] Thus none of the Minor Prophets are necessarily a part of the multi-volume composition, and each can still be read and interpreted separately. Second, use of the catchword-method to assert redactional links between different prophetic books appears doubtful,[12] since the mere fact that one more or less unspecific word occurs in two different literary units can be accidental in many cases. Interpreting such cases as deliberate links would be arbitrary and falls short in terms of its power to convince. Third, there is the danger that the interpretation on the wider redactional level can conceal the original meaning of a certain book and may lead to misunderstanding.[13] Thus, the question of how to interpret a big redactional unit properly, in which not only the redactor, but also the older voices edited by him say their own word at the same time, should be answered.

2. Methodological Reflections

When I was confronted with the decision few years ago, whether or not I should deal with the new thesis of the Book of the Four in my new textbook about the exilic period,[14] I was sceptical and hesitated for a long time. The whole enterprise seemed to me too difficult and too complex, the objections too serious against it. But I have to confess, J. Nogalski and A. Schart convinced me as far as the Book of the Four is concerned that there are basic pieces of evidence, which are not touched by E. Ben Zvi's objections. Moreover, I think it is possible to overcome most of the

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145; Fribourg & Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz and Vandenhoek & Ruprecht), 344–50. His argument that without the book of Zephaniah the supposed parallels with Isa 1–39 would fit better, is too hypothetical to be convincing.

10 "Twelve Prophetic Books or 'The Book of the Twelve:' A Few Preliminary considerations," in *Forming Prophetic Literature. Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve* (ed. P. R. House and J. W. Watts; FS J. D. W. Watts; JSOTSup 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1996), 125–57.

11 E. Ben Zvi, "Twelve Prophetic Books," 137; 151.

12 Ibid., 139–49.

13 Ibid., 126–27.

14 Cf. R. Albertz, *Die Exilszeit: Das 6. Jahrhundert* (Biblische Enzyklopädie 7; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2001), 164–85.

methodological and hermeneutical problems and to achieve more certainty.

First, I ask for a restriction of what we are entitled to call an intended link. The mere occurrence of the same word in two different literary units is not sufficient. Any claim for a catchword must involve a specific expression consisting of several words, a reiterated word, or a sample of words. Moreover, both literary units, or at least one of the units comprising the catchword must be literarily secondary in the context(s); only then we are allowed to speak of an intended redactional link.

Second, I demand that each of the four books under consideration should be investigated in detail. Only if the full range of tradition-historical and literary-critical levels of every book is clarified, will there be a chance to identify correctly those passages that probably belong to the Book of the Four redactional work. This is as more important as we cannot start any longer from the assumption, that this redaction speaks a language that can clearly be specified as Dtr. A. Schart had already noticed some differences. As far as I can see, the redactor's language, which undoubtedly shows many Dtr idioms of some kind, is also heavily influenced by Hosea, and less by Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah and even Isaiah. Thus, in reconstructing the Book of the Four we cannot look for Dtr stamped passages only. Dtr stamped passages can belong to the redaction, but must not. There are passages which do not show any Dtr features, that can belong to the common redactional work. It is not the language and the style that are decisive, but the redactional type of the passage, its intention, and its dating relating to the redaction history of the book.[15] Two examples will illustrate: On the one hand, the passage Mic 6:1–13, mentioned by Nogalski and Schart clearly shows Dtr features, but it cannot belong to the Book of the Four because its position and its motifs clearly point into the post-exilic period.[16] On the other hand, the passage Mic 5:9–13 speaks no typical Dtr language, but shows many

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[15] To weaken the stylistic criterion may be a danger, of course, I am aware of. So I argue for supporting the 'Tendenzkritik' with redactional, compositional, and literary-historical arguments.

[16] Micah 6–7 clearly constitute a later addition to the book. With 6: the chapters presuppose the framing of the earlier part in 1:2 and 5:14, which presents the book as YHWH's dispute with the foreign nations. This is a new perspective in contrast to the content of Mic 1–3. This perspective can be exilic at the earliest. Consequently, the disputation Mic 6:2–7 about Israel's proper offerings that presupposes the existence of the temple cult, must be post-exilic. For this dating see H. W. Wolff, *Dodekaproheton: Micha* (BK XIV/4; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), XXXII–III. 144–45; R. Kessler, *Micha* (HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 1999), 47. 255–56.

connections to all four prophetic books. Since it has clear features of a compositional text and is connected with other passages, which are already recognized as part of the redactional layer (Mic 1:6–7, 13b), it belonged probably to the Book of the Four. What can be learned from redactional history in other parts of the Hebrew Bible (Pentateuch, DtrH, Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah, Jeremiah) is also valid for the Book of the Four. Redactors should not be restricted only to smaller additions. They could also be authors who could contribute larger parts to the books they were editing.

Third, I plead for the use of both the composition-critical and the redaction-historical method in order to gain more certainty in reconstructing a redactional unit. If the Book of the Four ever existed, it has to be a sensible and structured composition, constituted by a programmatic beginning, a sequence of sub-units and a meaningful conclusion. Of course, a redactional composition like the Book of the Four which to a high degree depends on already existing prophetic books cannot be as clear in its structure as a literary unit that was independently formulated. Nevertheless, some kind of unity, some kind of progress, and some kind of a final solution should be discernible, if there was a rational editor at work, who wanted to give clear pieces of advice to his audience. Consider another example. Such a prophetic composition, presumably written in the later exilic period, could not end in total destruction and hopelessness, especially since it started with a much more hopeful perspective in the book of Hosea (2:16–17; 3:5; 11:8–11; 14:2–9). Thus, it is very unlikely that Zeph 3:8a—as J. Nogalski supposed—should be the end of the Book of the Four.[17] It seems to me that A. Schart is correct when he considers whether the end should not better be seen in the promise of Zeph 3:11–13.[18] On the basis of the composition-critical method the decision is clear: Zeph 3:11–13 must be the end of the Book of the Four or that book never existed. Additionally, because this decision can be literary-critically confirmed by the insight that Zeph 3:1–8bα, 10–13 constitutes a literary unit, we have a clear result with a high degree of probability.[19]

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[17] Cf. *Literary Precursors,* 175–78. It seems that Nogalski meant Zeph 3:8bα. He noted some uncertainty concerning 3:9–11.

[18] Cf. *Die Entstehung,* 214; Schart notes several links to central parts of Hosea, Amos, and Micah.

[19] Cf. the same address of Jerusalem and several verbal correspondences: מ/בקרבך Zeph 3:3, 5, 11, 12; על ילותך Zeph 3:7, 11, עשה עולה Zeph 3:13 cf. 3:5. God's judgment in Zeph 3:8 is directed against the officials of Jerusalem (3d pers. pl.!) accused in 3:3–4 and removed in 3:11. Zeph 3:8bβ.9–10 belongs to a later redaction with a universal horizon, cf. 1:3aβ.b.18b; 2:10–11.

Fourth, I argue for a tradition-historical interpretation of a complex redactional unit like the Book of the Four. In my view, the interpretation cannot be restricted on the redactional level, because the older levels of the prophetic traditions constitute the biggest part of the text and have to be recognized in some way. But the problem is, to what degree should the older levels be recognized and how much do they participate in shaping the theological profile of the whole composition? What shall we do with those passages which do not fit that profile properly or even oppose it in some way? I would like to propose, that the interpreter should start with the redactional passages in order to find out the main theological intentions of the editor, then he should study how far these intentions agree or differ with the messages offered by the older layers of the given prophetic books, and finally the interpreter should describe in detail what the editor has learned from the traditions of one prophet or the other, what he has altered, what he has interpreted in a new fashion, and what he has put aside. Thus, the result can be the description of a vivid dialogue between the editor and the prophetic voices that the editor wanted to present in a new shape.

3. My Own Proposal

3.1 The headings

As J. Nogalski and A. Schart have already shown, the best starting point for founding the hypothesis is constituted by the headings of the four books (Hos 1:1; Amos 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1). The four prophets are ordered in a chronological line, starting from the days of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. (Hosea, Amos), passing the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (Hosea, Micah) and coming down to the days of Josiah (Zeph). Hosea was set in the first position and given a long lasting effectiveness that overlapped Amos, the oldest of the four prophets, because of some reason that will be shown later. Apart from the book of Amos, which preserved an older type of heading ("words of Amos"), the other three books are all titled as "word of YHWH" (דבר יהוה). This heading means that the Book of the Four claims to comprise the one word of God, which was revealed to the four prophets in the course of about 150 years concerning Israel and Judah. In a first phase (Hosea, Amos) the divine word about Israel was uttered (Amos 1:1), in a second phase (Micah, Zephaniah) it shifted from Samaria to Jerusalem (Mic 1:1). Thus we can see the redactor's intention not only, to parallel YHWHs judgments on Israel with those of Judah, but also to indicate the common divine message of these four prophets that his exilic audience should hear.

3.2. Micah

As J. Nogalski already pointed out, the transfer of the word of YHWH from Samaria to Jerusalem, already intimated in Mic 1:1, is realized in Mic 1:2–9.[20] YHWH's theophany first caused a prophecy of doom over Samaria (vs. 6–7) and then met the gate of Jerusalem as an "incurable stroke" (vs. 8–9). J. Nogalski considered Mic 1:2–4 as a literary unit. That would lead to the consequence that the whole overture of the book of Micah must be considered redactional and could not be dated before the Persian period.[21] For proving that the Four-Prophets-redactor (FPR) actually connected a given book of Micah with the other three prophetic books, it is of crucial importance to realize the redactional traces in Mic 1:2–9. H. W. Wolff has pointed out that Mic 1:2, including the first two transitional words of vs. 3 (כי הנה), belongs to a later book edition that stresses the universal dimension of its message.[22] And already 1938 A. Jepsen has shown that the theophany originally runs directly towards Jerusalem and thus Mic 1:5b–7 is to be considered secondary.

Mic 1:5a For the crime of Jacob is all this,
for the sins of the house of Israel.
5b What is the crime of Jacob?
Is it not Samaria?
And what are the high places of Judah?
Are they not Jerusalem?
6 I will make Samaria into a ruin in the field
a place to plant vineyards.
I will pour out her stones into the valley,
and uncover her foundations.
7 All her images shall be smashed;
all her Asherah shall be burned by fire;
all her idols I will lay waste.
For she collected them as the fee of a harlot,

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[20] Cf. *Literary Precursors,* 129–37; he is followed by A. Schart, *Die Entstehung,* 177–81; R. Kessler, *Micha,* 80–94.

[21] So consequently R. Kessler, *Micha,* 80–85, who argues that Mic 1:2–7 must be considered as *vaticinium ex eventu* and presupposes ch. 6 (cf. the links between Mic 1:2 and 5:14; 6,1), which can clearly be dated in the Persian period, cf. note 16 above.

[22] H. W. Wolff, *Micha,* XXVIII–IX. 14–15. 23–24; cf. the doublet Mic 1:2b and 3a the lacking of any universal perspective in vv. 3–9. Both divergent perspectives are artificially connected by the term עד: YHWH's judgment over his people is a warning for the nations that something similar could happen to themselves (5:14).

so to the fee of a harlot they shall revert.[23]

The secondary character of this passage becomes clear if you realize that the two terms "Jacob" and "Israel" in vs. 5a, which in the book of Micah both clearly denote the Southern kingdom (Mic 3:1, 9; cf. 1:14–15; 2:7) are reinterpreted by the two questions of vs. 5b: the former—the audience should acknowledge—would mean Samaria and the latter Jerusalem. From this possible understanding the FPR concluded that Micah had also prophesied over the Northern Kingdom. Thus he found the possibility to add his view that YHWH had spoken a verdict on Samaria (1:6) similar to the one on Jerusalem (3:12). Moreover, he aligned the prophetic messages by introducing Hosea's accusation against idolatry (cf. Hos 1:2; 2:12, 14; 4:17; 11:2) into the prophecy of Micah. The redactor agreed with Hosea that the typical sin of the North had been idolatry, but he also argued that the people of the South, who trusted wrongly in the temple (Mic 3:11), turned the holy place into an illegitimate high place (cf. במה in 1:5b and 3:12).

In the view of the FPR, Zion's "chief sin" was her illusionary trust in weapons, especially horses and chariots as he introduced in Mic 1:13b, a passage which has long been considered secondary.[24] But his general statement about the sins of Jerusalem and God's judgment on the city can be found in 5:9–13, a passage that constitutes a foreign body in the context of the salvation oracles of Mic 4–5 and could have originally followed directly upon the concluding prophecy of doom in 3:9–12.[25] As already mentioned, the text is highly compositional. It has many connections to each of the other books, and the close links existing between Mic 5:9, 12–13 and 1:13b, 6–7 verify that it belongs to the same redactional layer.[26]

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[23] The English translation is taken from J. L. Mays, *Micah: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1976), 41. 45–46.

[24] See Ibid., 52; H. W. Wolff, *Micha,* 18; R. Kessler, *Micha,* 108.

[25] Cf. the same expression בקרב in Mic 3:11 and 5:9, 12; in the passage 5:9–13, with the addressee in the 2d pers., now punctuated as masc. gender according to 5:6–7, probably Jerusalem has been meant originally. Verse 5:14, concerned again with the nations, belongs to a later universal redaction (cf. 1:2; 6:1). Also the introduction 5:9aα modeled on 4:6, might be a later addition. Perhaps 5:8, understood as lament of the people, could have served as a bridging link to 3:12. In my view all the salvation oracles in between must be seen as later additions, cf. R. Albertz, *Die Exilszeit,* 170.

[26] Concerning the horses and chariots in Mic 5:9b cf. 1:13; Hos 10:13; 14:4; concerning the cities and fortresses in 5:10, 13 cf. Hos 8:14: 10:14; 13:10; Amos 5:9; Zeph 1:16. The sorceries and soothsayers are forbidden in Deut 18:10 and reminds one of Dtr topics (Jer 27:9). Concerning the idols, pillars and Asherim in

Mic 5:9 It shall be in that day, oracle of YHWH,
I will cut off your horses from your midst
and I will wreck your chariots.
10 I will cut off the cities of your land
and I will overthrow all your fortresses.
11 I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
and you have no soothsayers.
12 I will cut off your images
and your pillars from the midst.
You shall not bow down again
to the work of your hands.
13 I will root out your Asherim from your midst
and I will destroy your cities.

The thesis that Mic 5:9–13 is written by the FPR, which was overlooked so far, has two far reaching consequences. First, it reveals how the exilic redactor understood the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah in 587 BC. In the redactor's view, YHWH's judgment had to be understood as an act of purification. By his judgment YHWH wanted to separate Judah from all those things that had led the people to sin against him: weapons, fortresses, sorceries, idols and other cult symbols. Thus all these losses, which had been lamented after the catastrophe, must have happened for the benefit of Israel.

Second, the passage Mic 5:9–13, which once constituted the end of the exilic book of Micah, does not stand isolated. On the contrary, the concept a judgment of purification constitutes the redactional chain of the whole composition. Passages comprising the same concept can be also found at the end of the book of Amos (9:7–10) and at the end of the book of Zephaniah (3:11–13). Another passage occurs in the beginning of the book of Zephaniah (1:4–6), which shows close verbal and motive correspondences to Mic 5:9–13.[27] So all these passages are probably composed by the same redactor. If we have a look at the book of Hosea we can notice two similar passages: First Hos 3:1–5, where YHWH withdraws all its benefits from his adulterous wife for a long time, and second 14:2–4, where—after YHWH's judgment—a contrite Israel also confesses that it will no longer trust to weapons and idols, but only in God. These passages both belong to the given Hosea tradition and therefore do not fit the redactional concept totally, nevertheless the FPR integrated them into his composition. If we include consideration of the two Hosea passages, then

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5:12 cf. Hos 3:4; 10,1–2; Mic 1:7. The expression "work of your hands" in 5:12 reminds of Hos 14:4b.

[27] Cf. the typical והכרתי, four times in Mic 5:9–12 and one time in Zeph 1:4b; cf. also the long enumeration of objects, that will be wiped out.

the Book of the Four shows a clear compositional structure: We have one purification passage at the end of each of the four books (Hos 14:2–4; Amos 9:7–10; Mic 5:9–13; Zeph 3:11–13), and we have one additional purification passage in the beginning of the first and of the last book each (Hos 3:1–5; Zeph 1:4–6). The unifying concept of an ongoing purification, combined with that clear symmetric structure are—apart from the headings that Nogalski has shown—another strong argument for the thesis that a redactional composition, which comprises these four prophetic books, really existed. The following investigations will confirm this.

3.3 Zephaniah

As already mentioned, Mic 5:9–13 is closely linked with Zeph 1:4–6. This passage stands outside the "Day of the Lord"-composition (1:7–2:4) and is entirely redactional.[28] In the view of the FPR YHWH's purifying judgment in the days of Hezekiah was repeated in the days of Josiah. All the foreign cults, which invaded Judah during the 7th century would be wiped out, including their priests, idols and worshippers. A. Schart has already shown that the strange expression "rest of the Baal" (שׁער הבעל) can only be understood in the wider horizon of the Book of the Four.[29] The expression refers to what remained after the Hosea's damnation of Baalism (Hos 2:10, 15; 7:15; 11:2, 7; 13,1). As often noticed, there exist clear parallels between Zeph 1:4–6 and 2 Kgs 23 (cf. esp. vv. 4–5, 12).[30] So the FPR wanted to interpret Josiah's cult reform in the sense of a purifying judgment which had been announced by Zephaniah.[31]

However, the cleaning of cult from idolatry did not remove all the sins of Judah. At the end of Zeph 1:4–6 some people are mentioned "who have not sought (בקשׁ) YHWH or consulted (דרשׁ) him." With this idea the FPR created the possibility of appending Zephaniah's prophecy about a horrible day of wrath (1:7–2:4*) that would come over all the vain officials and the irresponsible riches of Jerusalem.[32] YHWH had to announce another judgment that would remove the corrupt upper class. In the view

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[28] A. Schart, *Die Entstehung,* 107–9, attributed only Zeph 1:6 to the "D-Korpus." But as K. Seybold, *Satirische Prophetie: Studien zum Buch Zephanja* (SBS 120; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1985), 85, has shown, the whole passage has Dtr. features and is redactional throughoutly.

[29] Cf. *Die Entstehung,* 209.

[30] Cf. M. Striek, *Das vordeuteronomistische Zephanjabuch* (BET 29; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1999), 95–106.

[31] Similar K. Seybold, *Satirische Prophetie,* 85.

[32] Zeph 1:13b (cf. Amos 5:11); 1:17aβ; 2:3a (cf. Amos 8:4) are insertions of the FPR into the older composition.

of the editor, only the pious poor who seek YHWH (בקשׁ) and obey his law perhaps would have a chance (2:3a).

This divine judgment is demonstrated in the second part of the book, Zeph 2:5–3:13*.[33] According to my literary-critical analysis, this part is thoroughly composed by the FPR using older materials like several oracles against foreign nations (2:5–6, 8–9a, 12, 13–15) or a hymnal verse (3:5).[34] Combining prophecies of doom over foreign nations with doom over Jerusalem, the redactor wanted to create a counterpart to Amos 1:3–2:16 and to give a similar message: YHWH's threatening word (דבר יהוה) came over the nations (Zeph 2:5) and caused heavy destruction, especially of the Assyrian empire (2:13–15). But the elite of Jerusalem did not learn their lesson (3:2) as YHWH hoped they would do (3:6–7). To the contrary, they continued with their cruel and corrupt activity (3:3–4); so God in his justice (3:5) decided to pour out his anger over this arrogant upper class (3:8abα) and remove it from Jerusalem (3:10). After this last purifying judgment, YHWH would start a new history with the "humble and poor people," who were left in Jerusalem (3:11). So, at the end of his composition the FPR draws an ideal picture of a totally purified society without any officials, palaces, fortified cities, arms, and idols. This purified society would have learned to trust only in God and to avoid any deceit and injustice (3:12).

3.4 Amos

Having established the end of the Book of the Four, it is possible to reconstruct its earlier parts with considerable probability. As far as the redactional portions in the book of Amos are concerned, a much broader consensus is reached. W. H. Schmidt, who discovered the Dtr. redaction in the book of Amos, ascribed to it the following verses: Amos 1:1*; 1:9–12; 2:4–5; 2:10–12; 3:1*, 7; 5:25–26.[35] H. W. Wolff considered the

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[33] The oracles in Zeph 3:14–20 does not presuppose a partial salvation any longer and are therefore later additions. 3:14–15 shows influences of Deutero-Isaiah and can be dated in the late exilic time (539–520 BC), the rest of the oracles is even later; for the dating of the first edition of Deutero-Isaiah in the year 521 BC see R. Albertz, *Die Exilszeit,* 296–301.

[34] M. Striek, *Zephanjabuch,* 169–71, 187, has ascribed Zeph 3:2, 7 to a Dtr redaction with sound reasons (cf. Jer 7:28, 35:13 both JerD). However, it is impossible to remove them from their wider context; consequently the whole composition belongs to that redaction. Only Zeph 2:7, 9, 10–11; 3:8bβ–10 are later additions.

[35] Cf. "Die deuteronomistische Redaktion," 169–90.

addition of Amos 8:11–12.[36] Examining these results in his detailed investigation, A. Schart came to a similar result. His major differences are the addition of Amos 4:6–11; 8:4–7; and 9:7–10 to the aforementioned texts.[37] If we examine these additional passages, we will get different results: As H. W. Wolff and J. Jeremias had already shown, Amos 4:6–13 constitutes a literary unit.[38] Thus this passage belongs to an exilic redaction which prepared the book of Amos for its use in the cult. This redactional layer to which also the other doxologies 5:8–9 and 9:5–6 belong, in my view, precede the Book of the Four.[39] In contrast to Schart's opinion, Amos 8:4–7 should be dated as preexilic,[40] because the Sabbath it mentions has still the shape of a full moon festival (par. החדש), celebrated every fortnight, and not the shape of a weekly celebration, separated from the moon cycle, that was introduced during the exilic period.[41]

However, A. Schart's insight, that the FPR created with Amos 9:7–10 a new final of the book of Amos is a very nice progress in our research, since J. Nogalski's opinion that the book should end in 9:1–6 with the purpose, "to pronounce the destruction of Israel"[42] would not fit the hopeful perspective, that we have found at the end of the books of Micah and

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[36] Cf. H. W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 2: Joel und Amos* (BK XIV/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 136–37.

[37] Cf. the listing in A. Schart, *Die Entstehung,* 317; he also mentions Amos 5:11, but that is uncertain.

[38] H. W. Wolff, *Amos,* 253; J. Jeremias, *Der Prophet Amos* (ATD 24/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 47–56. E. Bossard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen,* 348, therefore considers all the Amos doxologies as part of Book of the Four redaction, but that is even more improbable.

[39] Cf. R. Albertz, *Die Exilszeit,* 177–78. Schart's view is founded on the observation that Amos 8:8 constitutes a redactional link between 8:4–7 and the doxology in 9:5–6. Since he regards 8:4–7 as part of the Book of the Four redaction, he is then forced to conclude that the doxologies presuppose this passage. But Amos 8:4–7 is older, see below. On the contrary, by inserting the verb ודרך into Mic 1:3 the FPR likely establishes a link to the doxology Amos in 4:13.

[40] In my view the passage is part of a late pre-exilic edition of the book, to which the passages Amos 1:2; 3:13–14; 5:26; 8:4–7, 9–10, 13–14; 9:1–4 belong. I also reckon with an earlier edition of the late 8th century BC, which comprised Amos 1:1–8:3*. For more details see R. Albertz, *Die Exilszeit,* 177–78.

[41] Cf. the pre-exilic parallels 2 Kgs 4:23; Isa 1:13; Hos 2:13; Lam 2:6 in difference to the exilic praxis Dtn 5:12–15; for the probable development cf. R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (2 vol.; OTL; Louisville: Westminster, 1992), II: 408–10.

[42] *Literary Precursors,* 121.

Zephaniah. My compositional argument confirms A. Schart's redaction-critical decision very nicely: The passage Amos 9:7–10 deals again with a purifying judgment of YHWH, of course!

The main problem the FPR had to struggle with was the radical and total divine judgment that Amos and his early pupils had announced: Israel would come to its end (Amos 8:2), even the way into exile would not give a chance of survival (9:4). That seemed to exclude any hope. On the one hand, the redactor tried to explain this horrible judgment of God by stressing the sins that Israel had done. It had not only done injustice and oppressed the poor, but it had also—as could be seen in the expulsion of Amos—repressed the word of God proclaimed by the prophets (2:11–12). Therefore, in the present disaster, the word of YHWH (דבר יהוה) was no longer available, although Israel would need it now more than daily bread (8:11–12).[43]

On the other hand, the FPR tried to open the end of the book for a chance of survival by appending a new conclusion:

Amos 9:7 Are you not like the Cushites to me, Israelites?—oracle of YHWH—
Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt,
the Philistines from Caphtor, and Aram from Kir?
8 Behold, the eyes of Adonay-YHWH are on that sinful kingdom,
I will wipe it off the face of the earth.
However, I will not wipe out the house of Jacob totally.
9 Behold, I will give my orders
and I will shake [. . .][44] the house of Israel
as a sieve is shaken to and fro
and not a pebble falls on the ground.
10 By the sword all sinners of my people shall die,
who say: "You will not let the disaster come near and meet us."

First, the FPR rejected any attempt to avoid the terrible prophecy of Amos by referring to the election of Israel. What could be learned already from Amos 3:1–2, Israel had no privilege compared to its neighbors as far as sinning is taken into account. Second, the editor restricted the awful message regarding Israel that YHWH has fixed his eyes on evil (9:4) to the "sinful kingdom." This only would be wiped off from the earth (9:8a). Israel as a whole, however, the redactor interpreted the older prophecy, would not be wiped out totally (9:8b). But it would have to undergo a

[43] Notice the singular use in Amos 8:12 as in the headings. The plural in 8:11 is textually uncertain. Cf. the use of בקשׁ as in Zeph 1:6; 2:3; the clause might be modeled on Hos 5:6.

[44] Delete בכל־הגוים as a later addition, which spoils the parable. It interpreted the diaspora existence to be the purifying instrument.

purifying judgment. God would shake all Israel in a big sieve. All those who still denied the word of God prophesied by Amos would be kept in the sieve and killed by the sword. And only those—we can conclude—who accepted the prophetic message and correct themselves would have the chance to pass through the sieve and would constitute God's new people.

We must raise the question of how the abolition of the "sinful kingdom" is to be understood. A. Schart thinks that the kingdom of the northern state is meant, not only here, but in the Book of the Four throughout.[45] He can refer to the fact that most of the criticism against kings and kingship occurs in the books of Hosea (1:4; 3:4; 5:1; 7:7; 8:4; 10:7, 15; 13:9–11) and Amos (7:11); and of course, the post-exilic editor who appended Amos 9:11–12, announcing the reestablishment of the Davidic kingdom, understood verse 8b in such a restricted sense. At any rate, this understanding seems incorrect to me. We have to remember that some criticism is raised also against the Judean royal family in Zeph 1:8. Also, no Davidic king is mentioned in the vision of the ideal future society of Jerusalem at the end of the whole book (3:11–13). If we take into account that the FPR wanted to parallel the messages of the Northern and Southern prophets in order to present them as the "one word of YHWH" to his exilic audience, it is improbable to suggest that he wanted to underline a difference between them on only that crucial point of future kingship. I think, the Judah passage (Amos 2:4–5) in the overture (1:3–2:16), that the FPR inserted, testifies that he wanted to apply all his book of Amos to a Judean audience. Thus a verdict over the Northern kingdom alone, would be just a theoretical statement and so very unlikely.

We know from other texts that the question of whether the Davidic rule should be restored or not was hotly debated during the exilic and the early post-exilic period (2 Kgs 25:27–30; Jer 22:24–30; Hag 2:20–23; Isa 55:5).[46] Amos 9:8 can easily be understood as a vote in this discussion. Since all promises of a new Davidic kingdom in Hos 3:5, Amos 9:11–12, and Mic 5:1–2 are later additions, which never belonged to the Book of the Four, it is most probable that the FPR—which was just as radical as the Dtr. pupils of Jeremiah—intended to proclaim a general rejection of Israelite and Judean kingship. For him the monarchy belonged to the institutions that caused the people to sin against God.[47] Therefore YHWH

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[45] Cf. *Die Entstehung,* 227–29.

[46] Cf. R. Albertz, "In Search of the Deuteronomists: A First Solution to a Historical Riddle," in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. Römer; BEThL 147; Leuven: Leuven University Press & Peeters, 2000), 1–17; Idem, *Die Exilszeit,* 249–50.

[47] Cf. Amos' expulsion from Bethel, the monarchic sanctuary (Amos 7:13). It is pronounced by the priest Amaziah, but surely ordered by the king.

had to remove the monarchy along with other state features such as weapons and fortresses. Understood in this way, the book of Amos also fits in the series of purifying judgments investigated to this point (Mic 5:9–13; Zeph 1:4–6; 3:11–13).

3.5 Hosea

Finally, the FPR positioned the book of Hosea at the front of his work. This choice was by no means natural. It distorted to some degree the chronological order of the composition. Since Amos was the oldest prophet it should have been placed first. Probably this decision has theological reasons. As will be seen from many motifs and ideas that shaped the whole composition, the book of Hosea achieved paradigmatic significance for the editor. Moreover, Hosea has the most developed salvation perspective of all the four books. So it was suitable for the entrance of a work that aimed at having a look beyond the catastrophe.

A serious problem to this point is that nearly no traces of a Dtr. edition of Hosea have been found. Since L. Perlitt only Hos 8,1b was accepted to be an Dtr. addition.[48] A. Schart added additional verses; he considered Hos 1:1, 2b*; 2:6; 3:1*; 4:1*; 5:1–2*; 8:1b; 14:2–4 part of the "D-Korpus." However, some of his proposals are not as convincing as others. In 3:1bβ we can find a Dtr. expression ("although they resort to other Gods" cf. Deut 31:18.20). The intrusion of the term דבר יהוה into 4:1 may have been created by the FPR. Perhaps there might be a slight alignment in Hos 5:1–2*.[49] The verses Hos 1:2b and 2:6 are admittedly redactional, but they belong to the older composition of Hos 1–3*. Hosea 14:2–4 does play an important role in the Book of the Four, but cannot be ascribed to the FPR in my view, because vs. 2aα and 5aα are already cited in Jer 3:22a and must be dated earlier.[50] Thus only Hos 1:1; 3:1bβ; 4:1*; 8,1b can be considered certain in their relation to Dtr.

At any rate, several other verses considered secondary are generally ascribed merely to Judean redactions or have not been assigned to a

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[48] *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (WMANT 36; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 146–52.

[49] Die *Entstehung,* 186–87.

[50] J. Jeremias, *Der Prophet Hosea* (ATD 24/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1983), 171–72, ascribed Hos 14:2–9 to the pupils of Hosea, after they might have fled around 722 BC to Judah. I regard Jer 3:19–4:2 as part of Jeremiah's early prophecy, which was still directed to Northern Israelites, spoken before the death of Josiah, 609 BC, cf. R. Albertz, "Jer 2–6 und die Frühzeitverkündigung Jeremias," ZAW 94 (1982): 20–47.

particular redaction.[51] If we do not limit the redactional work solely to Dtr. features, these verses are appropriate candidates for the Book of the Four redaction because they treat appropriate topics. Hos 1:5, 7 prominently takes up the well known theme of breaking the weapons (cf. Mic 5:9); and Hos 8:14, a verse that can surely be dated as late exilic, accuses Judah of a special sin, the building of palaces and fortified cities, that is similar to Zeph 1:16 (cf. Mic 5:10).[52] The polemic against cult places outside Jerusalem in Hos 4:15 constitutes a redactional link to Amos 8:14; also the secondary polemic against idols in Hos 8:6a fit the topic of idolatry (cf. Mic 1:6–7; 5:12–13). Finally, the clearly editorialized remark about Israel's refusal to turn back in Hos 11:5b, which takes up Jer 5:3; 8:5 and reminds one of Zeph 3:2, may be ascribed to the FPR. Thus, in some probability, the intrusions of the Book of the Four redaction in Hosea can be seen in Hos 1:1, 5, 7; 3:1bβ; 4:1*, 15; 8:1b, 6a, 14; 11:5b. These verses are admittedly only traces, but they demonstrate how the book of Hosea was included into the Book of the Four.

Otherwise I agree with A. Schart's statement, that the small amount of redaction work in Hosea can be explained by the reason, that "Die D-Redaktion ihre theologische Konzeption in dieser Schrift auch ohne größere Eingriffe ausgesprochen fand."[53] Actually, in the book of Hosea, the FPR could find all topics, which were important to him: the basic evil of idolatry (Hos 2:4–17; 4:14–14 et al.; cf. Mic 1:6–7; 5:12–13; Zeph 1:4–6), the wrong trust to arms and allies (Hos 5:11–14; 7:8–9, 10–11; 8:9; 10:13–14; 14:4; cf. Mic 1:13b; 5:9–10, 13; Zeph 1:16) the criticism of kingship (Hos 1:4; 3:4; 5:1; 7:7; 10:7, 15; 13:10–11; cf. Amos 9:8) and of the officials (Hos 5:1–2; 7:3–7, 16; cf. Zeph 3:3–4); even social criticism, rather atypical for Hosea, is not lacking in the book (Hos 4:1–2); multiplied by Amos and Micah, this criticism founded the "social gospel" at the end of the Book of the Four (Zeph 2:3; 3:11–13). Finally the important topic of rejecting the prophets, that the redactor dealt with in Amos 2:10–11 (cf. 7:9–17; Zeph 3:2, 7), could already be found in Hos 9:7–9, 17.

The FPR did not need to add any substantial material to the Hoseanic prophecy. He merely needed to underscore some of its topics. Immediately, in the overture of the book he used Hosea's verdict on the Northern

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[51] Cf. the listing presented by J. Jeremias, "Hosea/Hoseabuch," TRE XV (1987): 586–98, esp. 592.

[52] Cf. the allusions to Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 44:2; 51:13). The compositional character of the verse can be seen in the fact that the announcement of judgment refers to Amos 1:4 et al.

[53] *Die Entstehung*, 169.

kingdom (Hos 1:4) to introduce his criticism of weapons (1:5): Not only Israel's kingship would come to an end, also its bows would be broken. And in contrast to Israel's condemnation symbolically pronounced by Hosea, the editor announced a divine rescue of Judah that would happen not by arms and war, but by mysterious God-like measures (1:7). This overture fits perfectly in a book that will tell about the removal of kingdom (Amos 9:8), arms, fortresses (Mic 5:9–10; Zeph 1:16), and arrogant officials (Zeph 3:11) by divine purifying judgments and will leave only a poor and humble people at the end.

The awful aberrations of the North charged by Hosea leads the FPR to teach his audience a lesson. With his warning to the Judeans in Hos 4:15 not to visit the cult places in Gilgal, Bethel and Beersheba, the redactor perhaps feared that the already achieved centralization of the cult would be lost again because of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem during the exilic period. By inserting the Dtn.-Dtr. term ברית in Hos 8:1b the redactor wanted to qualify all those misdeeds of Northern Israel that Hosea had condemned in this chapter to be transgression of God's covenant and violations of God's תורה written in the book of Deuteronomy. When the FPR repeated a similar accusation against Judah in Amos 2:4 (מאס תורת־יהוה), he wanted to equate Judah's transgressions on a fundamental theological level with the sins of Israel. Although the sins of Israel and Judah were different in some respect, they both had broken the covenant. The Judeans could not boast to their Northern brothers.

More than in the other three books the chance of a new beginning after the destruction is reflected in the book of Hosea. Several promises of salvation occur here, either originally included in prophecies of doom compositions (Hos 2:4–17; 11:1–11), or later attached (2:18, 21–22; 14:2–9). Most of the salvation oracles of the book can be dated as preexilic, and thus they preceded the FPR.[54] So we can imagine that they were of crucial importance for the redactor, who wanted to open future prospects for the exilic generation. It can be shown that he developed the entire theological conceptualization of his work around what is said about the relationship between divine judgment and salvation in Hosea.

In the book of Hosea one finds a repeated movement from judgment towards salvation (Hos 2:4–18, 21–22; 3:1–5; 4–11; 12–14). The FPR generally arranged his work in accordance to this structure so that those passages comprising the hopeful purifying judgments were set at the ends of the books (Amos 9:7–10; Mic 5:9–13; Zeph 3:11–13). In so doing, the redactor surely wanted to give his exilic audience a piece of advice: Any

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[54] The salvation oracles Hos 2:1–3, 20, 23–25 are considered post-exilic additions, cf. J. Jeremias, *Hosea,* 48–49.

chance for survival can be found only by accepting YHWH's judgment, not by denying its results.

From the book of Hosea, the FPR could learn that judgment and salvation are both part of God's lawsuit (ריב) with his unfaithful people (Hos 2:4; 4:1, 4; 12:3). Both are rooted in God's passionate love, and both aimed to bring God's beloved people back to him (2:4–17; 11:1–11). Thus, all YHWH's judgment was aimed at changing Israel's ways (2:9b; 5:15; 11:11; 14:2–4), having consequently a pedagogical target. The judgment never ended YHWH's relationship to Israel, but should always make a new start possible. For the FPR, this insight drawn from Hosea legitimated the alteration of the hopeless endings of the books of Amos and Micah.

Moreover, from Hosea the FPR could learn that God's judgment itself consists of saving elements. YHWH's removal of all his blessings (Hos 2:11, 14; 9:2) was intended to lead Israel to recognize to whom Israel owed all its wealth. And by removing all things that led Israel astray, from the baalized cult up to the bull icon of Bethel (2:13, 15, 19; 9:4–5; 10:5), Israel should be brought back to YHWH.

All of these elements are bound together in the symbolic act of Hos 3:1–5* where the prophet is ordered to marry an adulterous woman in order to keep her away from all her lovers and withdraw from her all loving care. This symbolic act comprises love and punishment simultaneously, and it aims at Israel's return to its divine husband. The second part of the passage runs as follows:

Hos 3:3 Then I said to her:
"Many days you will sit in my house
and not play the harlot
and have no intercourse with a man, nor I with you."
4 For the Israelites will sit there without king or official
without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim;[55]
5 but after that the Israelites will turn back
and will seek (בקשׁ) YHWH, their God, [. . .]
and will anxiously approach to YHWH and to his goods [. . .].[56]

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[55] Ephod and teraphim should be interpreted here as oracular instruments, see Judg 17:5; 18:14–20; 1 Sam 23:9–12; 30:7–8; Ezek 21:26 and J. Jeremias, *Hosea*, 56.

[56] J. Jeremias, Hosea, 57–58, ascribed Hos 3:5 to an early addition, because it was presupposed in Jer 2:19 (Syr., Vetus Latina). In any case it preceded the FPR. However, post-exilic additions to vs. 5 were according to him the ill-fitting "and David, their king" and the eschatological formula "at the end of the days."

The divine punishment consists of the withdrawal of everything that Israel has loved instead of God and that has seduced it to apostasy: the kingdom, the officials, the sacrifices, cult places, and all oracle instruments.

I think that the FPR developed his concept of purifying judgment directly from this Hoseanic idea of divine punishment, founded in God's love and aimed at Israel's education. Moreover, it seems to me that Hos 3:1–5* especially constitutes the textual basis on which he modeled his own purification passages. The stylistic feature of listing those things that YHWH would withdraw, reminds one of Mic 5:9–13; Zeph 1:4–6; 3:11. It is no accident that four of the six elements named in Hos 3:4 are literally taken up; and the remaining two elements have their material equivalent.[57]

Of course there is a little difference between the two concepts: Hosea spoke of withdrawal, the editor of purification. The latter used harsh words in order to stress the total destruction and complete removal of all the seducers.[58] However even this difference can be explained by the Hoseanic prophecy. Hosea underlines several times that Israel's reversal was difficult (Hos 6:1–6; 7:10, 16) or even impossible (11:7). Since Israel became so enslaved by its seducers, YHWH was forced to use severe measures to heal its apostasy (14:5). The FPR developed this idea a little further. Since Israel was incapable of dissociating itself from all those seductive powers, God himself would destroy them with all his might. By his purifying judgment the scene had to be so completely cleansed, that no relapse could happen. Thus the book of Hosea can indeed be considered the model that shaped the conceptualization and the structure of the Book of the Four.

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[57] Concerning מלך cf. ממלכה in Amos 9:8; concerning שׂר cf. Zeph 3:3, 11; concerning זבח cf. Amos 5:25; concerning מצבה cf. Mic 5:12. Concerning the oracular instruments, cf. the sorceries and soothsayers in Mic 5:12.

[58] Cf. הכרית Mic 5:9–12; Zeph 1:4; השמיד Amos 9:8; שׁבר Hos 1:5.

4. Concluding Remarks

The drastic way in which Israel's salvation is realized according to the Book of the Four excludes the idea that the new beginning could be done simply by restoring the pre-exilic conditions. On the contrary, by pronouncing that state attributes (e.g., kingship, officials, fortified cities, palaces, chariots, horses and other weapons) are all removed by God forever, the book pleads for a most radical new start. Not the old upper class, but the poor and humble, who should be immune to arrogance and injustice, would characterize the future society.

With this concept the FPR belonged to the most radical groups of the exilic period.[59] He stood in opposition to the group behind the DtrH, who pleaded for the full restoration of the pre-exilic state, though in the shape that it had found during the reforms of Josiah. Also the reform priests around Ezekiel wanted a radical new start, but they still reckoned with the old elites, the priest and the king, although the latter, according to this group, should be much more restricted in power. The authors of the Dtr books of Jeremiah were more radical than either of these. They rejected the restoration of the Davidic rule and pleaded for a religious and moral renewal of all the people, but they did not denounce the upper class at all.

As can be seen, the FPR was generally oriented toward Dtn and Dtr theology. But this orientation was in no way exclusive. His theology and language was also strongly influenced by the four prophets whose books he edited. As shown, he was most closely related to Hosea. Amazingly, the FPR referred also to the prophet Isaiah, especially to Isaiah's criticism of military enthusiasm (Isa 14:32; 30:1–5, 15–16; 31:1–3), which was only partly taken up by the pupils of Hosea (Hos 14:4).

Since the FPR seems to know the DtrH (cf. Zeph 1:4–6 and 2 Kgs 23:4–5, 12) and the first edition of JerD (cf. Zeph 3:2 and Jer 7:28) he can probably be dated in the later exilic period (after 550). Because of the relationship of Isa 47:8, 10 to Zeph 2:15, and of Ezek 22:25–31 to Zeph 3:3–4, 8 one could consider a location in Babylonia. But Hos 4:15 deals with a concrete Judean problem, so a location in Judah seems to me more likely. However, it is better to reserve a hypothesis until a more precise historical and social classification is possible.

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[59] For more details concerning the different exilic literature and their tradents cf. R. Albertz, *Die Exilszeit,* 163–323.

Summary

The hypothesis of the Book of the Four, developed by J. Nogalski and A. Schart, is further processed by proposing certain methodological clarifications. The book consists of the passages Hos 1–14 (without 2:1–3, 20, 23–25; 3:5aβ); Amos 1:1–9:10; Mic 1:1, 3–3:12; 5:8–13; and Zeph 1:1–3:13*. It constitutes an intentional composition, structured by a chain of passages that proclaim YHWH's ongoing purifying judgments: Hos 3:1–5* and 14:2–5 (already available); along with Amos 9:7–10; Mic 5:9–13; Zeph 1:4–6; and 3:1–13* (newly formulated). By his judgments YHWH separates Israel and Judah from all those things and persons that have led the people to sin against him: the cult, the idols, the kingdom, the weapons, the fortresses, and the upper class. Thus, in the view of the book, all those losses, which had been lamented between 732 and 587 BC, have happened to benefit Israel. Moreover, God's purifying acts radically determine Israel's new start after the exile.

The work of the Book of the Four redaction can especially be seen in: Hos 1:5, 7; 3:1bβ; 4:1*, 15; 8:1b, 6a, 14; 11:5b; Amos 1:1b, 9–10, 11f.; 2:4–5, 10–12; 3:1b*, 7; 5:25(?); 8:11f.; 9:7–10; Mic 1:1, 5b–7, 13b; 5:8(?), 9–13; Zeph 1:1, 3–6, 13b, 17aβ; 2:3a; 2:5–3:8bα*, 11–13 (without 2:7, 9, 10–11; 3:8bβ–10).

Forming the Twelve and Forming Canon[1]

Edgar W. Conrad

Introduction

In this essay I want to advance a reader-oriented position from which the formation of prophetic books is viewed from the perspective of text reception. My disagreements with a redactional-critical approach for understanding the formation of prophetic books, including the formation of the Twelve, have been published elsewhere,[2] and I do not intend to pursue these issues in this paper. I have argued earlier that redaction criticism downplays the active role of the reader in interpretation, that the external data necessary to outline the development of a book in terms of its inception is lacking, and that the recognition of "the unity" of a prophetic book undermines the recognition of the underlying sources that gives rise to the enterprise of redaction in the first place.[3]

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[1] I want to express my thanks to the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh. My time as an elected Research Fellow at the Institute (January to July 2001) enabled me to reflect on these matters. I am particularly grateful to Prof. John Frow, Director of the Centre and to Prof. Graeme Auld of the Divinity School whose conversations with me on these matters were particularly helpful.

[2] See, for example, my *Reading Isaiah* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 12–20; "Prophet, Redactor and Audience: Reforming the Notion of Isaiah's Formation," and *New Visions of the Book of Isaiah* (ed. R. Melugin and M. Sweeney; JSOTSupp 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 306–25; and *Zechariah* (Readings: A New Biblical Commentary; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 16–18.

[3] This is what John Barton calls "the trick of the disappearing redactor" [*Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984), 57]. See my *Reading Isaiah,* 18–20.

A reader-oriented approach is sometimes dismissed because of the assumption that it is subjective, dismissing both the text and the historical context underlying a text's production. To be sure, some reader response critics have advocated a radical reader-oriented approach in which textual meaning is understood to rest solely with the reader. Such a position may be said to be represented by Stanley Fish.[4] A reader-oriented approach, however, does not necessarily imply such a radical position. While in past studies I have appealed to Stanley Fish as providing theoretical insight into the role of community in interpretation,[5] I have always advocated the central role of the text as an object of interpretation.[6] In this paper I want to further develop more clearly my understanding of the role of the text in interpretation by appealing to Umberto Eco's theory of semiotics. In particular, I want to build on the ideas outlined in his book, *The Limits of Interpretation,*[7] especially his discussion of "the intention of the work" (*intentio operis*).[8] Eco's ideas have enabled me to develop notions of the formation of prophetic books, including the formation of the Twelve, from the perspective of the reader. I want to make it clear from the outset, however, that I am not pretending to be a semiotician. Nor am I appealing to Eco as a "canonical authority" on textual meaning. Rather, his work has become important as a dialogue partner in my own theoretical reflections on reading prophetic books.

In my paper I will also appeal to Philip Davies' work on canon, *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures,*[9] as providing insight into the formation of the Twelve as canon. However, while utilizing Davies' important ideas, I will depart from his diachronic discussion of canon to focus on the more synchronic activity of reading prophetic books as canonical formations.

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[4] *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

[5] See *Reading Isaiah,* esp. 3–33.

[6] *Ibid.*, 27–33, esp. 33.

[7] (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). In this book he argues that his reader response approach [which he developed in his *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (London: Hutchinson, 1981)] was not meant to exclude the notion that there are textual limits in interpretation.

[8] Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation,* 50.

[9] (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998).

Gunkel, Readers and Prophetic Books

There has been a long tradition in the critical study of prophetic books to regard them as unreadable. This position is outlined succinctly by Hermann Gunkel in his well-known essay, "The Prophets as Writers and Poets."[10] He offers the following advice to contemporary readers (italics mine):

> The prophets were not originally writers but speakers. Anyone who thinks of ink and paper while *reading* their writings is in error from the outset. "Hear!" is the way they begin their works, not "Read!" Above all, however, if *contemporary readers* wish to understand the prophets, they must entirely forget that the writings were collected in a sacred book centuries after the prophets wrote. *The contemporary reader must not read their words as portions of the Bible but must attempt to place them in the context of the life of the people of Israel in which they were first spoken.*[11]

He goes on to argue that literary context is of secondary importance and that the reader should question whether there is any such thing as the structure of a prophetic book. He observes that

> . . . in interpreting as well as in criticizing the prophetic books one must use the criterion of "context" only with great caution; and also that in attempting to indicate the structure of prophetic books such as Amos or Deutero-Isaiah one must first investigate whether such a thing exists at all.[12]

While Gunkel's contribution to the study of the Hebrew Bible has been immense, especially his challenge to appreciate it as literature, his observation that one should treat "the criterion of 'context'" with great caution and his questioning of whether prophetic books have a structure is, in the present climate of biblical studies, open to challenge. The significant redaction-critical work on prophetic books during the past decade, especially on Isaiah and the Twelve, has again brought literary "context" and structure to centre stage. Prophetic books are now being seen not simply as random collections of the once oral words of the prophets. In a growing number of studies, it is argued that prophetic books evince structural design providing a *literary* context for the collected material. At the end of the century it has become easier for scholars to

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[10] The article has appeared in English n *Prophecy in Israel: Search for Identity* (tr. J. L. Schaaf. Ed. D. L. Petersen.; Issues in Religion and Theology 10. Philadelphia: Fortress and London: SPCK, 1987), 22–73.

[11] Gunkel, 24.

[12] Ibid. 31.

speak about the "intentionality" of a prophetic book than it was for Gunkel in the first half of the century.

The issue I now want to address concerns how one understands "intentionality" when speaking about what redaction critics refer to as "the final form" of the text. How are we to understand this final form? I want to offer an alternative explanation to the notion that this intention can be explained by tracing the formation of a prophetic book by attempting to reconstruct its diachronic development. Such an approach, as I have argued elsewhere, perpetuates the central role of the "author."[13] In the last fifteen years or so in biblical studies the redactor has emerged from the former role as a simple collector to that of an "author" fully engaged in shaping prophetic books into intentionally structured wholes.

Recent redaction critical work on prophetic books has been open to criticism because there has not been unanimity on how the intentionality of a particular prophetic book is to be understood in its final form. The question posed is, "Why is there so much disagreement among redaction critics about what constitutes the 'unity' of Isaiah or the Twelve?" This is Jeoshua Gitay's criticism of the scholars of the Isaiah seminar.[14]

Both Gitay and the redaction critics he is critiquing are working on notions of the "intentionality" of prophetic books that differ from the understanding of intentionality that I am proposing in this essay. Contemporary literary theory has helped us see that no literature can provide us with a direct avenue to author intention. The author of a prophetic book, like the author of any piece of written literature, is absent; and meaning emerges in the interaction of text and reader. Because the reader is involved in interpretation, it should be no surprise that redaction critical readers disagree. However, the indeterminacy in reading that this disagreement exemplifies should not lead one to conclude that prophetic books lack intentionality.

Umberto Eco, Intention and Textual Formation

I am arguing for a way of talking about intention and textual formation that moves the discussion away from the author (or redactor) to the work itself. In making this move I am following leads of Umberto Eco's semiotic approach examining how communication takes place in writing. According to Eco, for communication to take place an author will

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[13] *Reading Isaiah,* 17–20.

[14] "Prophetic Criticism—'What Are They Doing?': The Case of Isaiah—A Methodological Assessment," JSOT 96 (2001): 101–27.

compose a text for a Model Reader who, the author expects, will employ codes and subcodes to decipher the text's intention. Eco says,

> To organize a text, its author has to rely upon a series of codes that assign given contents to the expressions he uses. To make this text communicative, the author has to assume that the ensemble of codes he relies upon is the same as that shared by his possible reader. The author has thus to foresee a model of the possible reader (hereafter Model Reader) supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them.[15]

For Eco, the Model Reader is not a real reader but exists in the mind of the author. In turn what is accessible for the real reader is not the real author but an encoded text, which is limited by codes employed by the sender (author) for the envisaged Model Reader. Just as a real author can envisage a Model Reader, so a real reader can envisage a Model Author who has encoded a text for reading.

But herein lies a problem. "In the process of communication, a text is frequently interpreted against the background of codes different from those intended by the author."[16] This situation is precisely the case with prophetic texts whose envisaged Model Reader is imagined against a different social context than that of a contemporary reader of a prophetic text. Such texts according to Eco "obsessively aim at arousing a precise response on the part of more or less precise empirical readers . . . and are in fact open to a possible 'aberrant' decoding. A text so immoderately 'open' to every possible interpretation will be called a *closed* one."[17]

My concern in reading prophetic books can be defined in terms of Eco's semiotics of reading. While I understand prophetic books to be closed texts and open to all sorts of aberrant decoding, I am arguing that it is legitimate for contemporary readers to focus on the intentionality of the book. This intentionality is related to the coded information a Model Author provides for the reader. In this essay I am particularly interested in how the beginnings of prophetic books provide coded information that the Model Author has provided for a reader of prophetic books.

Before discussing how the superscriptions can be understood as providing codes employed by a Model Author, I want to speak a bit more about how I imagine the Model Author of prophetic books. I understand that prophetic books have a compilational unity although they do not

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15 Eco, *Role of the Reader,* 7.

16 Eco, *Role of the Reader,* 8. And it is for this reason that Eco would say meaning is indeterminate since what an absent author intended is no longer available to a reader. What is accessible is only the encoded text.

17 *Role of Reader,* 8.

have the compositional integrity expected of authored works. In this sense they are more like a collage than a composition. Prophetic books are the result of the scribal activity of ordering, arranging and archiving material as well as composition not unlike that described in Philip Davies' *Scribes and Schools.*[18] However, unlike Davies, I assume that this ordered arrangement arose at a point in time rather than resulting from a diachronic development through time. I am not interested in how the particular text I am reading came to be, but how the codes, for example those employed at the beginnings of prophetic books, provide information for the reader. To put this in Eco's terms, I am interested in how a scribe, as a Model Author, compiled a prophetic book for a reader. I am also interested in the way these prophetic books as collections have been ordered and arranged by scribes for the Model Reader.

By creating a text for a Model Reader, according to Eco, the sender (author) has created a textual world.[19] In that textual world, codes are contextually based. This production of the text for the Model Reader is what Eco refers to as "the intention of the work" (*intentio operis*).[20] The "intention of the work" is not to be confused with "the intention of the author" (*intentio auctoris*), which is not available to the reader. What is available is a text encoded for the Model Reader, and it is the way the text works as a text that Eco identifies with "the intention of the work." As readers of these old texts we cannot get inside the head of the absent sender (author) to discover what the author might have had "in mind." As readers, however, we can get inside the text, which we bring to life as a message when we begin to read.

Because Eco wants to argue that the *intentio operis* limits interpretation, he makes a distinction between the *use* of a text and the *interpretation* of a text. Eco opposes radical reader response critics (such as Richard Rorty and one could include Stanley Fish mentioned above)[21] who take a pragmatic approach in understanding a text's meaning. For such critics a text's meaning is dependent entirely on the intention of the reader (*intentio lectoris*).[22]

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[18] Davies, 8–14, 57–59.

[19] Eco, *Limits of Interpretation,* 23.

[20] Eco, *Limits of Interpretation,* 50.

[21] For a taste of this debate see Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (ed. S. Collini; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. The exchange in this volume with Richard Rorty, whose essay, "The Pragmatist's Progress," appears on 89–108. Eco's response is on 139–51.

[22] Eco, *Limits of Interpretation,* 50.

According to Eco a pragmatic reading such as that of Rorty or Fish is designed "to use a text . . . in order to get something else."[23] He understands that radical reader response critics use the text in this way because they maintain that there are no limits to interpretation. When they "use" a text, they beat it into a shape to serve their own purposes.[24] One could also argue that a form critic such as Gunkel was using the text "to get something else." He was using the text to reconstruct oral settings outside the text (*Sitze im Leben* or institutional background). Indeed, one could argue that the historical critical enterprise from source analysis to redaction criticism "uses" the text in this sense. The text has been beaten into a variety of shapes for a variety of uses. Historical critics use the biblical text "to get something else": underlying sources, *Sitz im Leben,* the intention of redactors, or a history of tradition. The text is used and left behind in search of something other than the *intentio operis.* Seen from this perspective, historical critics ironically can be seen as radical reader-response from critics.

In summary, then, as a real reader of a prophetic book I imagine that a Model Author has coded a prophetic book to communicate something about the world of the prophets in ancient Israel. What is available to the reader is not an actual author's (redactor's) intention nor an actual history of a prophetic book's development but a written text. As a real reader interested in a prophetic book communicating from the past, I can respect the *intentio operis* by paying heed to textual limits.

Openings of Prophetic Books and the Model Author

I want to turn now to the openings of prophetic books in order to look at how they might be read as providing coded information from a Model Author. The so-called superscriptions of prophetic books (that is, the Latter Prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve) provide an interesting array of information. The beginning of Isaiah informs the reader that this is the "חזון (vision) of Isaiah, the son of Amoz." This חזון is something which he saw (חזה) concerning Judah and Jerusalem. The חזון is dated generally in the days of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

The beginning of Jeremiah provides the reader with similar but considerably different information. Here the reader is informed that what follows are "the דברי (words) of Jeremiah"—not a חזון as in Isaiah. While Jeremiah is identified as "the son of Hilkiah" just as Isaiah is identified as

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[23] Eco, *Limits of Interpretation,* 57

[24] Eco, *Limits of Interpretation,* 56.

"the son of Amoz," additional information is given, which has no correspondence in Isaiah. Jeremiah is among the priests (מן־הכהנים) who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. While both the "words" of Jeremiah and the "vision" of Isaiah are dated, the words in Jeremiah are identified as "the דבר (word/thing) of Yahweh," and the dates are given with more precision than they are in Isaiah:

> The word of Yahweh came to him in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It was also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah until the completion of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, son of Josiah, the king of Judah until Jerusalem went into exile in the fifth month.

The opening of Ezekiel provides the reader again with rather different information. The superscription opens by informing the reader about what happened: "and it happened" (ויהי). What happened is dated with even more precision than in Jeremiah to "the thirteenth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month." This date apparently refers to the period of time he was in exile. There is no mention of Judean kings at this point and no mention of his ancestry. The beginning of this book also is distinctive in that Ezekiel speaks in the first person and his name is not immediately mentioned as in Isaiah and Jeremiah. What happened, he says, is that "when I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the sky was opened and I had מראות (visions) of god." It is interesting to contrast this with Isaiah. The חזון of Isaiah is singular but is dated over a long stretch of time, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah kings of Judah. In contrast, what happened to Ezekiel is not identified as the חזון of Ezekiel but in the plural as מראות of god that came to him in a very specific period of time, the thirteenth year, the fourth month and the fifth day of the month. In 1:2–3 Ezekiel is referred to in the third person, and the fifth day of the month is further clarified as the "fifth year of the exile of Jehoiachin." Interestingly, Jehoichin is not identified as the king of Judah. Just as the "words" (דברי) of Jeremiah are referred to as "the דבר (word/thing) of Yahweh," so the "visions" (מראות) that came to Ezekiel are referred to as "the דבר (word/thing) of Yahweh." Ezekiel is now identified as the son of Buzi and, like Jeremiah, he is associated with priests. Ezekiel is not *among* the priests as was Jeremiah, but he *is* "the priest (חזון)." While Jeremiah was among the priests in "the land of Benjamin," Ezekiel is "the priest in the land of the Chaldeans." The opening information in Ezekiel concludes by saying that "the hand of Yahweh was upon him there."

How is a reader to understand this information at the beginning of prophetic books? What did an ancient author (scribe, compliler) expect his Model Reader to understand by this information coded at the

beginning of prophetic books? As contemporary readers of what Eco would call "closed texts," we can only attempt to construct an answer to these questions by reading these texts intertextually with other prophetic books. Interestingly, the opening of the "books" of the Twelve contain superscriptions that parallel the openings of the major prophets.

"The דברי of Jeremiah" is matched in the Twelve only by the ספר of Amos, which begins in exactly the same way as Jeremiah, "the דברי of Amos." The superscription to Amos, like the superscription to Jeremiah, also identifies Amos as belonging to some group other than the prophets. Just as Jeremiah was "among the priests" of Anathoth so Amos was "among the shepherds (נקדים) from Tekoa." The significance of the coded information of "the words of" associated with a figure who comes from a non-prophetic group will become apparent below. For now it is important to note that both Amos and Jeremiah are books about the "words" of these two characters and also that they are associated with groups other than prophets. Amos is dated in the days of Uzziah, the king of Judah, and unlike Jeremiah he is also associated with a king of Israel, Jereboam. Like Jeremiah, Amos' words are also dated with precision. However, rather than linking the precise date with the reign of kings, his words are dated as happening two years before the הרעש. This word is normally translated "the earthquake," but for reasons I will detail later, I think it is better translated as the "rumble" associated with war.

The significance of "the words of" is more clearly seen by focusing on what follows in Amos and Jeremiah. While the superscription informs the reader that Amos "saw" (חזה) "words" concerning Israel, Amos' words, like Jeremiah's words, are never identified as a חזון, as in Isaiah, nor as מראות of god, as in Ezekiel. Seeing in Amos and Jeremiah is of a different kind. When Amos and Ezekiel see "words," they see them in the visual world around them. Jeremiah sees such things as "a branch of an almond tree" (1:11), "a boiling pot facing away from the north" (1:13), a potter's house (18:2), a potter's earthenware jug (19:1), two baskets of figs (24:2) among other things. Amos sees two people walking together (3:3), a lion roaring (3:4), birds falling into snares (3:5), trumpets blowing in the city (3:6), locusts (7:1), fire burning the land (7:4), a plumb line (7:7), and a basket of summer fruit (8:1). Furthermore when seeing things, these two prophets take their words to the temple where they are confronted by priests since their words are a threat to kings. Amos goes to Bethel where Amaziah the priest says to Jeroboam, "Amos has conspired against you in the very center of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his *words*" (7:10). Jeremiah is instructed by Yahweh (36:2–3).

> Take a scroll and write on it all the *words* that that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations, from the day I spoke to you,

> from the days of Josiah until today. It may be that when the house of Judah hears of all the disasters that I intend to do to them, all of them may turn from their evil ways, so that I may forgive their inquity and their sin.

Baruch is instructed to take this scroll and read it in the temple (36:5, see Jer 7 and 26).

"The words of Amos" and "the words of Jeremiah" introducing prophetic "books" illumine one another when read intertextually. Both "books" speak of Yahweh roaring (שאג) and uttering his voice (נתן־קול) (Amos 1:2 and Jer 25:30) with the consequence that this will bring devastation to all the nations of the land. These unconventional prophets (one from among the priests and the other from among the shepherds) have the extraordinary role of prophesying the end of kingdoms and temples where Yahweh had been present. Amos announces the end of the northern kingdom of Israel including the sanctuary at Bethel and Jeremiah announces the end of Judah and its temple in Jerusalem.

The announcement of the end of kingdoms is characteristic of unconventional prophets and highlights an important feature of my thesis on reading prophetic books coded for the Model Reader, although I do not have time to develop the notion fully. Amos and Jeremiah are unconventional prophets who prophesy in extraordinary times concerning Yahweh who has made the decision to abandon his people, his land and his house (temple). Conventional prophets (like Isaiah whom I will look at below) receive vision (חזון) from Yahweh who is present in the temple. Conventional prophets go out from the temple with words of comfort and consolation. Unconventional prophets come to the temple deserted by Yahweh to announce the end.

Amos and Jeremiah are joined by Ezekiel, the other unconventional prophet, who is identified in the superscription as "the priest in the land of the Chaldeans" (1:3). Ezekiel will return to his role as a priest writing the torah of the temple at the end of the book (43:10–12; cf. Ezek 7:26–28; Jer 2:8; 18:18). This role as a unconventional prophet is suggested by the encoded information at the beginning of Ezekiel, "and it happened" (ויהי). What happened was that Ezekiel had "visions (מרעות) of god" in the land of the enemy, the land of the Chaldeans. Unlike Isaiah he did not have a "vision" (חזון) in the temple.

The only other book to begin with the phrase, "and it happened" (ויהי) is Jonah. Although Jonah does not have "visions (מרעות) of god," he is similar to Ezekiel in that Yahweh appeared to him in the land of the enemy.

What I am suggesting, then, is that Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and, to a lesser extend Jonah, are prophetic "books" about extraordinary times.

Amos, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who are from groups other than prophets (נביאים), are themselves presented as extraordinary prophets. The language of the books backs up this observation. The verbal form of the root נבא "prophesying," which occurs only in both *Niphʿal* and *Hithpaʿel binyanim,* is not evenly spread throughout the so-called Latter Prophets. It occurs once in Joel (3:1) and twice in Zechariah (13:3–4). In both cases it has to do with prophesying in the future and does not relate to the activity of either Joel or Zechariah. All the other references are found in the three books of the unconventional prophets: Jeremiah (over forty times), Ezekiel (over thirty times) and Amos (six times). In each of these "books"—and only in these three prophetic books—is the verb used to emphasise that Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Amos are engaged in prophesying. In the other prophetic "books," prophesying appears to be taken as a given.

This concentration of the verb "prophesying" is significant for understanding the encoded information in the "books" of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Amos for reading. In each "book" the superscription emphasises the non-conventional origin of the figure, and each "book" makes repeated emphasis that each of these individuals (Amos, Jeremiah or Ezekiel) is prophesying by repeatedly drawing attention to the activity of prophesying.

Isaiah, as a prophet of חזון, is a more conventional prophet. Other prophetic books, which have similar information in the superscription, are Obadiah ("The חזון of Obadiah") and Nahum ("An oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of the חזון of Nahum of Elkosh"). But I would also understand that "the oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw" is a חזון. In Hab 2:2–3 Habakkuk is told,

> Write down the חזון;
> make it plain on tablets,
> so that a reader may run with it.
> For there is still a חזון for the appointed time;
> It speaks of the end, it does not tarry.

These words in Habakkuk outline the main characteristics of a חזון. It is written down to be read out by a messenger who reads it. A vision is also something for which one waits. I understand that the vision of Isaiah shares these characteristics. See, for example, Isa 8:16 where Isaiah gives instructions to record his vision and to wait for it.

The notion that a חזון is written down so that a reader may run with it helps explain words immediately following the superscription in Isaiah. The announcement that this is the חזון of Isaiah in 1:1 is followed in 1:2 by imperative verbs summoning the sky and the land to "hear" and to "give ear."

Hear, O sky and listen O land;
for Yahweh has spoken:
I reared up children and brought them up,
but they have rebelled against me.

While I do have time to develop the arguments fully here, I would also understand that the books of both Micah and Joel should, like the book of Isaiah, be understood as a vision (חזון). While neither of these books uses the word חזון in the superscription, the verses following the superscriptions in both books, as in Isaiah, are a call to hear.

Hear this, O elders,
Give ear, all inhabitants of the land. (Joel 1:2)

Hear, you peoples, all of you;
listen, O land, and all that is in it
and let the lord Yahweh be a witness against you,
the lord from his holy temple. (Mic 1:2)

In summary, then, I have argued that the openings of prophetic books supply the reader with information that the Model Author has intended for the reader that expresses the intentionality of the material that follows. The openings are not to be understood as arbitrary information about an equally arbitrary compilation of material that follows. To read Jeremiah and Amos as "the words of" involves the reader in a different exercise than in reading Isaiah, Nahum, Obadiah, Habakkkuk, Mical and Joel as "vision" (חזון). Furthermore, to read Jonah and Ezekiel as narrative introduced with "and it happened," distinguishes the reading of these from the reading of other prophetic texts.

Forming the Twelve and Forming Canon

While an ancient scribe would have expected his Model Reader to understand how to read prophetic books beginning with the "the words of," "the vision of" and "and it happened," contemporary readers of these books do not have this information at their immediate disposal. I have suggested in this essay that the codes can become available by reading intertextually books that have similar beginnings. To understand the intentionality of a prophetic book is not to discover the particular process of text production but to learn how to read a prophetic book. Intentionality for a contemporary reader has to do with the reception of the text rather than its inception. Again I want to add that the prophetic book is not to be understood as a composition by a single author. Reading a prophetic book in its final form is reading it as a collection of materials arranged as a compilational whole—as a collage.

It is interesting that we have in the Twelve a collection of ספרים identified as "vision," "words of," and "and it happened." Collecting and ordering prophetic material are not only important for understanding the individual books with openings such as "vision," "the words of," and "and it happened"; they also are important for understanding the collection of books in canonical order. This observation is consistent with the notion of canon outlined by Philip Davies in his book *Scribes and Schools* in which he understands the canonical process as a scribal process of collecting, arranging and ordering not only material in a scroll such as the Twelve but also collections of scrolls themselves into a canonical order.[25]

While I do not have space to outline my arguments in full detail here, I want to point out that the prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are parallelled by The Twelve as a canonical collection of books brought together on one scroll. The Twelve is parallel to Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel in two ways. First, the books are introduced with similar superscriptions—the "vision of Isaiah" is parallelled by the "visions" of Joel, Micah, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah. "The words of Jeremiah" are parallelled by the "words of Amos"; the statement "and it happened to Ezekiel" is parallelled by "and it happened to Jonah." Second, just as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel provide prophetic background to the fall of Judah, including the temple in Jerusalem and the restoration of the community in Zion/Jerusalem with the construction of the temple, so also The Twelve provides a prophetic background to the fall of Israel (the northern kingdom) and the restoration of the community in Zion/Jerusalem. Let me be more specific. The Twelve begins with Hosea. Hosea does not sit easily with any of the major genres of prophetic books and acts as an introduction to the Twelve and, as "the beginning of Yahweh spoke," also serves as the time frame for understanding the prophetic corpus as a whole. Yahweh first spoke to Hosea about his intention to empty the land. A major theme in Hosea is the call to return.

Following Hosea are books that emulate genres in the collection of the Major prophets: Isaiah ("vision"), Jeremiah ("the words of") and Ezekiel ("it happened"). Vision is represented in the books of Joel, Micah, Obadiah, Nahum, Habbakuk and Zephaniah, although the genre is not as clearly identified in the opening superscriptions of all of these books as in Isaiah. "The words of Amos" like "the words of Jeremiah," announce the end of Israel. "It happened to" Jonah narrates the appearance of Yahweh in Nineveh, the land of the enemy, mirroring the foreign element in Ezekiel. Whereas Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel refer to Judah the whole of

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[25] Davies, 115–17.

the Twelve has a northern focus. Even the last book in the collection (Malachi) is an oracle to Israel. However, in these books restoration has to do with Yahweh's return not to Israel but to Judah and Jerusalem.

The Twelve ends with extraordinary prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and My Messenger. These prophets have to do with the extraordinary situation of temple restoration. This is the period of return, when Jerusalem will be the centre of the whole land. Here Yahweh will dwell and all the nations of the land will pay allegiance to Jerusalem because of Yahweh's presence.

Summary and Conclusion

I understand the openings of prophetic books, then, as indications of intentionality in relation to the compilation of individual scrolls and also to the collection arrangement and ordering of prophetic scrolls in their totality. All this poses an important observation concerning canon. Reading the books intertextually, with attention to similarities and differences, enables us to recognise codes that give us clues to the literary integrity of a disparate collection of scrolls.

The Canonical Location of Habakkuk

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The book of Habakkuk provides only limited evidence for determining a historical setting against which to understand the message of this prophetic work. The superscriptions in 1:1 and 3:1 simply identify the author as "Habakkuk the prophet." Marvin Sweeney has summarized well the variety of historical settings that have been proposed for understanding Habakkuk. He points to the wide range of dates that have been suggested "from Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in the late 8th century (701 BCE) (Betteridge 1903) to Alexander the Great's conquest of the Near East in the 4th century (Duhm 1906; Torrey 1935)."[1] He cites other proposals including the work "Bel and the Dragon" (2d cent. BCE) which sees Habakkuk as a contemporary of Daniel during the Babylonian exile; the midrashic historical work "Seder Olam Rabbah" from the second to third century CE which locates Habakkuk in the reign of Manasseh (687–642 BCE), and Clement of Alexandria writing in the second to third century CE, who contended that Habakkuk was a contemporary of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.[2]

In recent years the work of the SBL Consultation on the Book of the Twelve and related publications has brought a new mode of analysis to these so-called "minor prophets."[3] Instead of presupposing that each work should be analyzed separately, scholars have been examining evidence suggesting that the Book of the Twelve should more properly be understood as a larger literary work. The purpose of this paper is to

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[1] Marvin A. Sweeney, "Habakkuk, Book of," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:1–6.

[2] Sweeney, *ABD* 3:2.

[3] See the collection of seminar essays collected in James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

explore the implications of the canonical location of the book of Habakkuk and to ask about the significance of its location and message for understanding the larger theological perspective seen by the editors of the Book of the Twelve. I suggest that both the location and the internal evidence in Habakkuk indicate that the book was remembered in conjunction with the tragic death of Josiah in 609 BCE.

I. The Book of the Twelve as a "Theology of History"

The evidence from Qumran is somewhat problematic for understanding the history of the Habakkuk scroll. The Habakkuk Pesher from Qumran (The Ain Feshka Scroll), which appears to date from the first century BCE, includes the text and a midrashic interpretation of chapters 1 and 2 in light of the early history of the Qumran sect.[4] Some scholars have contended that the Ain Feshka scroll provides evidence that chapter 3 was not yet a part of the Habakkuk literary tradition. And further, they have wondered whether this Qumran text suggests that a larger Book of the Twelve was not yet a reality?[5] What we know is that a Scroll of the Twelve was extant in the 2d century CE at Wadi Murrabbat, a scroll that included all three chapters of Habakkuk, at a time only a few decades after the probable determination of the MT Textus Receptus (Jamnia, about 90 CE). Similarly, we know that from earliest versions of the LXX (Aquila, Theodotian, Symmachus), as well as from the Scroll from Nahal Hever (8 Hev XIIgr), that Habakkuk was part of a book of the Twelve and in its present location by the early second century CE. The three chapter work became part of the standard accepted Greek translation tradition.[6] Our concern is to ask what the editors of the Twelve had in mind when they arranged the books in their present order. What specifically did they see as the function and theological message of

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[4] Burrows, Trever and Brownlee 1950, cited by Sweeney, *ABD* 3:2.

[5] Considerable discussion has been devoted to the questions of whether the twelve works were combined primarily because they fit together on one reasonably long scroll? Were they intended to imitate in size the approximate length of the Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel scrolls? See David L. Peterson, "A Book of the Twelve?" Nogalski and Sweeney, 5; Peterson writes: "As a scroll, probably a leather one, the Twelve would have been relatively long. For example, 1QIsa runs almost seven and one-half meters, whereas the Nahal Hever Minor Prophets scroll is more than ten meters long (Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 204). Relatively short books they might be, but when written together the Twelve filled a scroll of a length similar to the Major Prophets."

[6] Sweeney, *ABD* 3:2.

Habakkuk (including the third chapter) in the succession of prophetic writings?

I suggest first of all that there is a fundamental "theology of history" preserved within the collected anthology or "book" of the Twelve. The first six works, which open the scroll (Hosea–Micah), are preserved as reflections on the dramatic events that occurred in northern Israel and southern Judah in the 8th century BCE. This is evident from the superscriptions that introduce Hosea, Amos, and Micah, all of which all recall kings and events from the 8th century BCE.[7] Similarly, specific references to the post-exilic Persian emperor, Darius, in Hag 1:1; 2:1; Zech 1:1; 1:7; and 7:1 indicate that these last books, along with Malachi, are part of an intentional chronological ordering of the books of the Twelve. Set together, the Twelve preserve theological reflections from the eras of Assyria, Babylon and Persia.[8]

II. Day of Yahweh Rhetoric in the Book of the Twelve

With Rolf Rendtorff and David Peterson, I am convinced that in the theology of history preserved in these works, "day of Yahweh" (יום יהוה) rhetoric and imagery provide a fundamental unifying theme.[9] Motifs or allusions related to this prophetic theme permeate all twelve of the works. But instead of understanding or interpreting the "day" references as expectations of a distant future event, I suggest that it is helpful to stand

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[7] On the order of the writings, see Aaron Schart, "Reconstructing the Redaction History of the Twelve Prophets: Problems and Models" in Nogalski and Sweeney, 34–48. Schart suggests that "a meaningful superstructure points toward a deliberate ordering, for example, the historical ordering of the writings with Hosea first (because it mentions the "House of Jehu" in Hos 4) and Malachi last (because it presupposes an operative second temple)"(p. 37). In the Septuagint, the first six writings are Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah and Jonah; for the purposes of this paper, the different ordering is not significant.

[8] Helpful in this regard are the observations of David Peterson, "A Book of the Twelve?" 9–10.

He suggests that the Isaiah scroll encompassed a time frame of appx. 240 years (743–500 BCE), Jeremiah about 40 years (627–580 BCE), and Ezekiel, about 23 years (593–570 BCE). By contrast, the era embraced by the Book of the Twelve involves roughly 400 years (750–350 BCE).

[9] See R. Rendtorff, "How to Read the Book of the Twelve as a Theological Unity" in Nogalski and Sweeney, 75–87; David Peterson "A Book of the Twelve?" 3–10; A. Joseph Everson, "The Days of Yahweh," *JBL* 93 (1974)329–37 and "Serving Notice on Babylon: The Canonical Function of Isaiah 13–14" *Word and World* XIX,2 (Spring, 1999), 133–40.

with the editors and look backwards to see how ancient prophetic writers used this poetry to anticipate specific events. With the editors, we can discern patterns of promise and fulfillment.[10] In retrospect, there were specific events in history that allowed later generations to discern God's presence, either as punishment or as rescue.[11] They were events, usually of war, that seemed to turn history in one direction or another, often with enormous consequences for people or nations. When prophetic writers employed the rhetoric of Yahweh's "day," they could use various rhetorical tricks or patterns of dramatic reversal, and assume that their audience would have a preconceived understanding. Such a "trick" is seen, for example, in the bold reversal of expectations set forth in the well known announcement of a "day of Yahweh" in Amos 5:18–20. The day was announced as "darkness," not "light!" The anticipated event would not be what the people expected! Similarly, in Jer 46:2–12, an army of warriors was envisioned going forth to battle with great confidence; "proud Egypt" went up to fight at Carchemish, certain that their forces would have a day of victory over Babylon in support of the Assyrians! Then the poet exclaims "But what do I see?" (מדוע ראתי) (46:5) as he depicts a defeated army returning from Carchemish in devastation and disgrace.[12] Instead of a "day of victory," Egypt experienced a "day of judgment." The author declares: "That day is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, to avenge himself on his foes" (והיום ההוא לאדני יהוה צבות יום נקם להנקם מצריו) (46:10).

In retrospect, it seems clear that later generations and the editors of the book of the Twelve remembered the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel (721 BCE) as a "day of Yahweh" for the northern kingdom. The destruction brought by Assyria confirmed in retrospect the reliability of

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[10] I disagree with A. Schart when he writes "the reader may also infer that every reference to a decisive day, on which YHWH will punish sin and restore the true Israel—for example, "on that day" (Amos 2:6; 8:3) or "day of trouble" (Nah 1:7)—points toward the one Day of YHWH." Schart, "Reconstructing the Redaction History of the Twelve Prophets" 41. There is no "one" Day of YHWH. I am convinced that the poetic references need to be understood as prophetic rhetoric, which the authors could employ to refer to any number of important events, past, present, or future . . . events that had the potential of turning history in one direction or another.

[11] Peterson sees specific references to "day of Yahweh" (yom adonai) in Hos 9:5; Joel 3:4; Amos 5:18–20; Obad 15; Mic 2:4; Hab 3:16; Zeph 1:7–16; Hag 2:23; Zech 14:1 and Mal 4:1. He sees the theme explicitly in all but two of the Twelve (Jonah and Nahum). I believe the theme is also present in those books.

[12] On Jer 46: 2–12, describing the battle in 605 BCE, see John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 975), 324.

the words of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah and Micah. The events about which they warned had come to pass! While the warfare came at the hands of the Assyrian forces, the prophets declared that those events were the work of Yahweh, judging and punishing his own arrogant people.

In a similar manner, Assyria is remembered as being first warned and then taunted by Nahum for her arrogance. Like other ancient (or modern) empires, Assyria seems to have suffered from the disease of "arrogance of power," convinced that her gods had blessed her. Assyria seems to have believed that the ultimate reality about political power in the world is "might makes right!"[13] In the eyes of Israel's prophets, that belief contributed to her downfall. Nahum declares:

> The Lord is good,
> a stronghold in the day of trouble;
> He knows those who take refuge in him.
> But with an overflowing flood
> he will make a full end of his adversaries,
> and will pursue his enemies into darkness
> .....
> The Lord has given commandment about you (Assyria):
> "No more shall your name be perpetuated;
> from the house of your gods I will cut off
> the graven image and the molten image.
> I will make your grave, for you are vile."
> (Nah 1:7–8, 14)

Later generations clearly remembered the fall of Nineveh (612 BCE) as another "day of Yahweh," one that had now come for Assyria. In the overall arrangement of the Book of the Twelve, it is interesting that Habakkuk is located just after Nahum. From beginning to end, Nahum presented a fierce and bitter partisan tirade against the horrors of Assyria. Thus it seems that the editors are suggesting that the message of Habakkuk should be remembered in light of events after the fall of Nineveh (612 BCE), the event that confirmed the word of Nahum.

On the other hand, the book of Zephaniah, which immediately follows Habakkuk, is remembered primarily in conjunction with the traumatic events that resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the southern kingdom of Judah (military conflicts in 604, 598 and 587 BCE). The superscription (1:1) locates Zephaniah as a prophet from the era of King Josiah (640–609 BCE). While the "day of Yahweh" poetry in Zephaniah includes images of universal destruction, the focus is clearly on imminent destruction for Judah. Thus it seems equally clear that the

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[13] See further, Hab 1:5–11; Isa 10:5ff.

editors want Habakkuk to be understood within the world of Judah prior to the destruction and deportations brought by Babylonian (598 and 587 BCE), the events that confirmed the prophetic warnings of Zephaniah. By its canonical location, Habakkuk seems to be located after Nahum and before Zephaniah to recall a particularly difficult time in Judah's history between 612 and 598 BCE.

It is important to note that when prophetic writers used "day of Yahweh" rhetoric, they could still hold out hope for those who were faithful. From the earliest texts, it appears that "day" rhetoric had a dual meaning: events that proclaimed judgment for the arrogant could also mean "rescue" or "salvation" for those who were faithful. This perspective seemed to have been confirmed by the events that brought an end to Judah's "Babylonian captivity" era (539–520 BCE). The fall of Nebuchadnezzar's dynasty was viewed as a new "day of Yahweh," now for Babylon (see Isa 13–14; Jer 50:41–46; Jer 51:1–64). But while those events meant "judgment" for Babylon, they also signaled the beginning of a new era of hope for captive Hebrew people (See esp. Is 61 and 63).[14] In this sense, "day" rhetoric could be understood within the larger perspectives of Israel's covenantal theology.

III. "Theodicy" and the Day of Yahweh in Habakkuk

When compared with Zephaniah, "day of Yahweh" rhetoric in Habakkuk is muted but it is still readily evident. Chapter 1 is dominated by images of war. In 1:2–4, the world is portrayed as being filled with destruction (שד), violence (חמס), strife (ריב) and contention (מדון). What is most striking, however, is that this prophetic work begins with a lament about divine governance rather than with a more traditional judgment speech.[15] The enemy is at the center of the theological reflection and the fundamental question of the book is posed in the opening lines:

> O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?
> Or cry to you "Violence!" and you do not listen?
> Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble?
> Destruction and violence are before me;

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[14] Even Zephaniah includes words of hope and consolation (Zeph 3:11–20); see further, the hopeful words in Hos 14:5–9; Joel 3:1–17; Amos 9:11–15; Obad 17–21. The full field of evidence for discerning the prophetic use of the motif of the "day of Yahweh" should also include texts such as Isa 2:12–17, 13:1–22, 22:1–14, 34:1–17 and Ezek 13:1–16.

[15] See further, Theodore Hiebert, "The Book of Habakkuk," *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 7:632ff.

Strife and contention arise.
So the law becomes slack
And justice never prevails.
The wicked surround the righteous—
Therefore judgment comes forth from the perverted.
(Hab 1:1–4)

The portrait preserved in Habakkuk attempts to make sense of a tumultuous era in Judah's history that saw Assyria, Egypt and Babylon in conflict, with Judah and other small countries caught in the intrigue.[16] In the opening poem (Hab 1:5–11), it is clear that the rise of Babylon is the major puzzle within the Habakkuk scroll. The author sets forth Yahweh's word: "Behold I am rousing the Chaldeans . . ." (הנני מקים את הכשדים) describing in great detail the brutality and ruthlessness of this foreign invader, who is understood to be executing Yahweh's judgment. And yet, the scenario in Habakkuk also declares that in time, the Babylonian forces will also be punished. In 3:1–16, the writer envisions Yahweh coming in another event of war and declares: "I will quietly wait for the day of trouble" (אנוח ליום צרה) (Hab 3:16). This latter time will bring vindication for the ruthless invader. This pattern of thought is seen also in Lamentations, where the author reflects on the fall of Jerusalem as a "day of Yahweh" (1:12) and then a few verses later makes the request: "Bring the day you have announced, and let them be as I am" (הבאת יום קראת ויהיו כמוני) (Lam 1:21).[17]

What is remembered most in the book of Habakkuk is the anguish of oppression by a foreign power! The dominant theme is theodicy. How, amid the chaos of the world, was it possible to make sense of God's sovereignty in this era of history, especially when innocent people were caught in war and devastation?[18] I suggest that, in retrospect, the editors of the

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[16] For an analysis of the macrostructure of Habakkuk, see James Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 218; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 129–81.

[17] See further, the prophetic imagery in Isa 10:5–19. Note also the similar rhetoric in Isa 13:1–22. There a prophetic word announcing a "day of Yahweh" for Babylon (13:6) includes a word about the envisioned instrument of Yahweh's judgment with the declaration in v. 17: "Behold I am stirring up the Medes" (הנני מאיר על יהם את מדי).

[18] I see the memories preserved in the book of the Twelve as being more complex than is suggested by a simple scheme of "sin-punishment-restoration" (P. House, *Unity of the Twelve,* 63–109); as A. Schart has pointed out, those themes appear in Malachi as well as in Joel and other works remembered from pre-exilic settings. See Schart, "Reconstructing the Redaction History of the Twelve Prophets," 38–39.

Book of the Twelve were recalling an event such as the death of Josiah when they located the book of Habakkuk within the Twelve. Josiah's untimely death at Megiddo was clearly remembered as a puzzling contradiction by later generations. In the entire Deuteronomistic tradition, Josiah is remembered as the best of the reformer kings, the one who, probably before and after finding an ancient law code during a temple restoration, carried out massive reforms throughout the country.[19] No other king of Judah rivals the high marks given to Josiah:

> Before him there was no king like him,
> who turned to the Lord with all his heart,
> with all his soul and with all his might,
> according to all the law of Moses; nor
> did any like him arise after him.
> (2 Kgs 23:25)

Josiah had been designated as king when he was only eight years old; in 609, he was still only 39 years old when he was killed in battle attempting to slow the advance of an Egyptian army under Pharaoh Necho on the plain near Megiddo. That Egyptian force was heading north to assist Assyria in her defense against the new insurgent forces of Babylon. Josiah was evidently in league with Babylon, yet Babylon would turn out to be the great oppressor of Judah. The memories connected with Josiah's death raised precisely the kind of questions that seem to be addressed by the Habakkuk scroll.[20] When a king who "turns to Yahweh with all of his heart" still dies a tragic death at an early age, the words of the farmer's song at the end of Habakkuk take on a particularly appropriate focus. They are words of encouragement for the faithful:

> Even when there is no fruit on the vines;
> Even when the olive oil fails,
> And when the fields yield no food;
> When the flocks are cut off from the fold,
> And when there is no herd left in the stall,
> I will still rejoice in the Lord;
> I will exult in the God of my salvation!
> (Hab 3:17–18)

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[19] On Josiah, see Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (New York: Oxford, 2001) and "Josiah: Man of Torah" in Walter Brueggemann, *1 and 2 Kings* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 543–65.

[20] In the Chronicler's account, the author attempts to answer the theodicy question by suggesting that Josiah failed to listen to the word of God spoken to him through Necho (2 Chr 35:7).

The words are remembered as encouragement to people, urging patience and trust in the promises that God had given, even when the world does not make sense.

IV. Concluding Observations

I have suggested in this paper that the message preserved in the Habakkuk scroll comes into clearer perspective when viewed from the larger context of the Book of the Twelve and the rhetoric of the "day of Yahweh" tradition. There were decisive moments in Israel's history. There were particular times when the suzerain role or kingship of Yahweh was apparent to later generations. The book of the Twelve is arranged in such a way that one can discern particular times or "days" when God's presence seemed evident. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum and Zephaniah all attempted to provide a framework for understanding and affirming Yahweh's sovereignty over nations. Among the Twelve, two books provide a rather different focus: Jonah and Habakkuk. In a sense, they almost provide moments of respite from the relentless recitation of the horrors of war that came for northern Israel, for Assyria, for Egypt, for Judah, and then for Babylon and for other countries.

Jonah brings a word of caution about vindictiveness. That scroll includes a warning about the dangers of being consumed by feelings of hostility and revenge for an enemy nation! In Jonah, the author reminds the reader that all people are creatures of God, and that even their cattle are precious in the sight of God (Jonah 4:11)!

Habakkuk, on the other hand, focuses on the dangers of despair and disillusionment. Habakkuk calls the reader to a posture of patience and faithfulness, even amid the memories of past horrors. Events of history are not always such that people can readily discern covenantal blessings or punishments. Sometimes events simply defy explanation. The author encourages the faithful to remember the promises of the Torah even when events seem meaningless:

> . . . there is still a vision for the appointed time;
> it speaks of the end, and does not lie.
> If it seems to tarry, wait for it;
> It will surely come, it will not delay.
> Look at the proud!
> Their spirit is not right in them,
> But the righteous will live by their faithfulness!
> (Hab 2:3–4)

In Habakkuk, life is not simply a matter of the wicked being punished and the righteous prospering. The innocent also die! But the life of faith

has its own rewards. So people of faith are called to a vision of life that involves justice (משפט) (1:4), righteous life (צדיק) (2:4), faithfulness (אמונה) (2:4) and mercy (רחם) (3:2), all of which seem bound together with Habakkuk's vision of meaningful life and what it means "to know the glory of the Lord (לדעת את כבוד יהוה) (2:14). In locating Habakkuk after Nahum and before Zephaniah, the editors recall an era when chaos seemed to rule. The reader is encouraged not to despair when situations seem similar, especially in those times when Yahweh's sovereignty or righteousness does not seem readily apparent in the world.

Endings as New Beginnings: Returning to the Lord, the Day of the Lord, and Renewal in the Book of the Twelve

Paul R. House

When I began to write *The Unity of the Twelve*[1] in 1986 relatively few works on the Book of the Twelve existed. Of course, this situation has changed dramatically, as Paul Redditt, James Nogalski, Aaron Schart, Marvin Sweeney, and others have shown.[2] There are now several redaction-oriented studies of the Twelve that suggest how the corpus came to be in its present form.[3] There are also studies that stress the differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint,[4] and some that discuss

[1] Paul R. House, *The Unity of the Twelve* (JSOTSup 97; BLS 27; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990).

[2] Note the surveys of literature in Paul Redditt, "The Production and Reading of the Book of the Twelve," *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* (Symposium 15; ed. James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 11–33; James D. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 217; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993); James D. Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 218; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993); Aaron Schart, *Die Enstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs* (BZAW 260; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998); and Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000) 1:xv–xxxix.

[3] Representative examples of redactional studies of the Twelve include Nogalski, *Literary Precursors* and *Redactional Processes*; Schart, *Die Enstehung*; and Byron Curtis, "The Zion-Daughter Oracles: Evidence on the Identity and Ideology of the Late Redactors of the Book of the Twelve," *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* (Symposium 15; ed. James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 166–84.

[4] Barry Alan Jones, *The Formation of the Book of the Twelve: A Study of Text and Canon* (SBLDS 149; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

the appropriateness of reading the twelve separate books as a whole.[5] There are still others that analyze key themes that provide coherence or reveal possible redactional seams in the Twelve, or that debate the viability of synchronic *versus* diachronic readings.[6] In other words, in many ways scholarship on the Book of the Twelve now reflects the state of Old Testament scholarship in general.

There have been fewer studies of the Twelve's theological emphases, but treatments of this topic have appeared in the past few years. Led by Rolf Rendtorff and James Nogalski, some of this material has focused on the day of the Lord and related judgment metaphors.[7] Such interest is well founded, since this judgment motif spans the whole of the Twelve, and since other themes develop in relationship to it. After all, some form of the judgment motif appears in every separate book of the Twelve, whether as the "day of the Lord," "that day," or as sheer description of impending or accomplished divine punishment.

Quite significantly, as Rendtorff points out, in several of the individual books themes related to the concept of the need for changed behavior, whether in the form of "returning to the Lord," "seeking the Lord," or "taking refuge in the Lord," precede or stand alongside the judgment motif.[8] These connected ideas often emerge early in the books, develop as the text unfolds, then merge at the end of individual books to form a resolution to the problems that they have introduced. As they do so they produce a cumulative effect of stressing endings as new beginnings that marks the Book of the Twelve as a whole. This paper seeks to analyze these patterns in an introductory way. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between calls for change and the people's response to them, coming judgment, and renewal.

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[5] See especially Ehud ben Zvi's programmatic article "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* (JSOTSup 235; ed. James W. Watts and Paul R. House; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 125–56.

[6] For representative examples of these arguments, see Watts and House, *Forming Prophetic Literature,* 158–302.

[7] Rolf Rendtorff, "How to read the Book of the Twelve as a Theological Unity," *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* (Symposium 15; ed. James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 75–87; and James D. Nogalski, "The Day(s) of Yahweh in the Book of the Twelve," *SBLSP* (1999), 617–42.

[8] Rendtorff, "How to Read the Twelve as a Theological Unity," 86.

Methodology

As was noted above, the Book of the Twelve has been examined from a variety of methodological angles in the past several years. My own contributions to the subject have utilized a synchronic approach in order to grasp certain elements of literary unity that divulge theological themes, and this article will try to do the same. Thus, this article will apply a methodology that is similar to, though not identical with, that used in recent works by Marvin Sweeney and Rolf Rendtorff.

Sweeney's two-volume commentary on the Twelve utilizes at least five key methodological components. First, he "focuses on a synchronic literary analysis." Second, he "points to the Book of the Twelve as a collection of twelve individual prophetic books that were placed together to form as least two versions [Septuagint and Masoretic] of the Twelve." Third, he "treats the individual books as discrete units within the Twelve." Fourth, he "considers their interrelationships within the sequences of both the Masoretic and Septuagint forms of the book." Fifth, he "includes diachronic considerations in order for the synchronic analysis to make sense" (2000: xxxix).[9] This article adopts the same principles except that it offers no observations on the Septuagint order, a decision that in no way attempts to argue that the Masoretic text reflects the Twelve's original sequence. Rather, the attempt here is simply to work with one of the major traditions of the Twelve's order. In his "How to Read the Book of the Twelve as a Theological Unity," Rendtorff offers a very straightforward approach. First, he reads the text as a unity without referencing its compositional development.[10] Second, he traces the "day of the Lord" theme through the Twelve, and notes the relationships between the various books' presentation of this motif.[11] Third, having done his analytical work, he concludes:

> Finally, I point out that in studying the Book of the Twelve as a whole there is no simple alternative between "diachronic" and "synchronic" reading. The diachronic features are not only obvious but are marked explicitly by the different datings of a number of writings. On the other hand, those who gave the writings their shape (whatever we call them) obviously wanted the reader to read the writings as a connected whole and to reflect on their different messages.[12]

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9 Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets,* 1:xxxix.

10 Rendtorff, "How to Read the Twelve as a Theological Unity," 76.

11 Ibid., 76–86.

12 Ibid., 87.

Thus, like Sweeney, Rendtorff attempts to blend synchronic reading informed by diachronic textual markers that yields thematic results.

Of course, the procedures outlined above are based on the belief that interpreting the Twelve *as a whole* is a viable methodology. Ehud ben Zvi has argued that the redaction-critical studies of the Twelve have failed to yield the necessary data to conclude that the books *must* be read as a whole, though he grants that one *may* read the books this way if one wishes. Yet, he writes, "It certainly does not follow from this observation that the twelve prophetic books were intentionally written or edited so as to convey a sense of close unity among them that set them apart as a unit from the other prophetic books, that is, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel."[13]

Further, he claims, even if one grants the historical evidence that the Twelve were read as a single scroll from the second-century BCE onward, "this evidence is not necessarily helpful for the study of composition, redaction, and above all, for reconstructing the way in which these prophetic books were read and (re)read within the communities within which and for which they were written."[14] After a thorough defense of his position,[15] ben Zvi concludes by noting that perhaps a different sort of unity exists in the Twelve. He suggests:

Rather than assuming a unified book that is read and redacted as such, it is perhaps better to focus on the common repertoire of a relatively small social group consisting of educated writers and readers within which and for which prophetic—and other "biblical"—books were written, at the very least in their present form. Such a focus is likely to uncover a (largely) shared discourse, a common linguistic heritage, implied "intertextuality," and shared literary/ideological tendencies.[16]

In other words, the prophetic books share common literary motifs and common audiences that would have appreciated those motifs. Though the books share this sort of unity and may have come to be read together by communities as they read and reflected upon them over time, he concludes that there is no solid evidence to suggest that they were written or redacted for this purpose.

Writing about Obadiah in his commentary on Joel and Obadiah, John Barton basically agrees with ben Zvi's assessment. Noting ben Zvi in contrast to my work and to Nogalski's, he concludes, "At best, then, we should probably think of the positioning of Obadiah in the canon as a result of perceived similarities with the two books that precede it but not,

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[13] Ben Zvi, "Twelve Books or 'The Twelve,'" 130.

[14] Ibid., 131.

[15] Ibid., 132–54.

[16] Ibid., 155.

with Nogalski, suppose the text has actually been reworked to make it fit better in its present position—still less that is was designed to function as merely one chapter in a larger work, 'The Twelve.'"[17] Perhaps one correction is in order. If Barton thinks that I have argued that Obadiah was written to be "chapter four" in "The Twelve Prophets," then I need to be clearer. I do not think that such was the case, nor do I argue for this position in *The Unity of the Twelve*. Rather, like Barton I believe that Obadiah was probably placed in its current position because of the similarity of its content to the books around it. Still, I continue to conclude that the skillful placement of Obadiah and the other books results in a Book that has historical, thematic, and plot-like unity.

Ben Zvi and Barton make some excellent observations that aid a thematic approach to the Book of the Twelve. Barton focuses on how Joel and Obadiah contain material that led the collectors of the twelve prophecies to place the books where they did. Both he and ben Zvi insist on treating the separate books as important in and of themselves before then asking questions about how they fit into a larger picture. Ben Zvi's emphasis on the original readers offers insight into how prophetic books were written, read, and understood as *prophecies*, not just as general religious literature. In other words, his emphasis on literary features understood by a unique audience aids an awareness of how the prophetic genre operates. All these elements of analysis are appropriate characteristics of a careful reading of the Twelve. This being said, it is also proper to note that ben Zvi and Barton remain skeptical of reading the Twelve as a whole, or at least of reading them primarily as a whole.

Given these preliminary considerations, this paper utilizes the following methodology. First, the texts will be read primarily synchronically, yet with primary diachronic markers in mind. For example, the superscriptions and clear historical references will be noted at times to aid the discussion of thematic progression.[18] Second, each book's contribution to themes related to the need for returning to the Lord, the threat of the day of the Lord, the people's return to the Lord, the day of the Lord, and renewal will be noted briefly. Though this article cannot analyze these books in the depth they deserve, perhaps this attempt may at least be a good faith effort to treat each book's contribution to these themes as a separate part of an emerging whole. Third, the books will read as specific

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[17] John Barton, *Joel and Obadiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 117.

[18] For a study on the significance of the superscriptions in the Twelve consult John D. W. Watts, "Superscriptions and Incipits in the Book of the Twelve," *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* (Symposium 15; ed. James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 110–24.

examples of the prophetic genre that together form a larger, unified corpus of prophetic literature. The prophetic writers produced the books' themes, literary skill, and passion. Their audiences eventually placed them in their current order. Fourth, the books will be read synthetically for theological purposes. As was just stated, specific themes that clearly exist in the Twelve will be charted.

It is also important to state what this article does not do. It does not attempt to get behind the text to determine redactional layers. Nogalski, Redditt, Schart, and others are the experts to read on that subject. Like Rendtorff, despite having opinions on the matter I assume the development of the books and try to read the books as a unity. At the same time, I try to keep the value of each individual book in mind. This article does not argue that a specific book was written to fit into the whole, but operates as if the community of faith placed the books strategically in their current location. It does not deal with the Septuagint order. Sweeney and Jones offer excellent readings of the Greek order and they should be consulted by those interested in the topic. This decision simply means that this article attempts to work with themes as they unfold in the Masoretic tradition. Perhaps separate labors in both orders of the book will yield helpful results, especially in the last six books, where the orders are the same.

Calls for Change, the Day of the Lord, and Renewal in the Twelve

Every book in the Twelve depicts the sins of Israel (either Israel or Judah or both), the nations, or Israel and the nations. There is no debate among scholars that sin is the problem the prophets address in the most detail. Where the debate starts is on the subject of calls for change and their relationship to the books' many threats of judgment. Some scholars argue that the threats are primary to the text, and that the calls for returning to the Lord may well be additions to the text. The thinking is that the threats of punishment are so absolute that they by definition they eliminate the possibility for repentance and resultant forgiveness. Others conclude that the history of Israel proves that the possibility of repentance plays a minor role in the books. After all, Assyria and Babylon eventually defeated the people. How essential could the repentance theme be?

A synchronic reading of the Twelve yields a pattern found in other major segments of the Old Testament. This pattern includes threats brought about by covenant disobedience, calls for change, promises associated with change, larger threats for rejecting the opportunity to change, and promises of eventual renewal. In other words, this pattern is

similar to that found in Deut 27–30, 2 Kgs 17, and Isa 1–5, to name just a few texts. Due to the constraints of this paper these themes will be developed in more detail in the earlier books of the Twelve, while later books will be discussed in a more cursory manner.

Hosea

Hosea features statements about change in the beginning, middle, and end of the book. These statements are necessitated by explicit sin committed by Israel and Judah. Set in pre-722 BCE Israel according to the book's superscription, Hos 1–2 depicts Israel's sin as spiritual infidelity through the symbolic acts of Hosea in his marriage to Gomer. Because Israel has committed "great whoredom by forsaking the Lord" (1:2),[19] the Lord will "punish . . . will put to an end . . . the kingdom of the house of Israel" (1:4). Yet the text also promises that Lord will make them his people on "the day of Jezreel" (1:10–11), which is otherwise portrayed as a quite ominous day. Further, the Lord pledges to treat Israel in ways that will cause them to "return to" him (2:7, 9–10). At a time simply called "that day" (2:16, 2:21) the Lord will give Israel hope, security, prosperity, mercy, and a fresh relationship with their God (2:14–23).

A second episode between Hosea and his wife underscores how this redemptive process will occur. Hosea buys back his wife and does not have sexual relations with her for a set amount of time (3:1–3). Similarly, Israel will live without a king or prince—in other words in exile—for a time. But "afterwards" Israel "shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days" (3:5). This passage, like 1:2–11 and 2:1–23, follows a distinct, connected pattern. Israel's sins are declared, God takes action to bring them back, and on some distant difficult "day" the people "return and seek" their God. Coupled with God's work, this returning and seeking leads to a restoration of fortunes for the one formerly out of favor.

The renewal of Israel described in Hos 1–3 clearly occurs in the future. But the book also indicates that return and seeking had immediate relevance to the lives of eighth-century Israelites. Before the exile there was the ministry of the prophets, the compassion of God, and the opportunity to forestall punishment. Lodged within an extended description of the people's sins in chapters 4–5 is the telling comment, "Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. For the spirit of whoredom is within them, and they do not know the Lord" (5:4). Thus, the prophet, perhaps using words the priests commonly employ

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[19] Unless noted otherwise, all scriptural quotations are from the *English Standard Version.*

halfheartedly for this purpose, urges the people to "return" in 6:1–3. God has torn in order to heal. Returning to God, then, will stave off further pain and disaster. Sadly, Israel and Judah's love for God has been "like the dew that goes early away" (6:4). Thus, prophets must announce judgment (6:5).

God would heal, but "they deal falsely" (7:1–7). Because of their corruption "days of punishment have come" (9:7–9), which means that Ephraim will be bereft of her children (9:11–14), her king shall perish (10:7), and nations will gather against her (10:10). The only remedy for these impending punishments is a "seeking" of the Lord that results in sowing righteousness (10:11–12). In the text "seeking" has the same results as "turning." After all, without such seeking their sowing of wickedness will reap the horrors of war (10:13–15). The possibilities are clear: seeking and returning or war and loss.

God's most heart-rending appeal for change appears in 11:1–9. Here the Lord states, "When Israel was a child, I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son" (11:1). This reference to the exodus is similar to the one in 9:10, and will soon be joined by other references to the people's past. Tragically, the more God called his son the more the child rebelled, in this instance by running after Baal worship (11:2). Despite their rebellion, however, the Lord decides not to execute his "burning anger" because of his compassion for the "child" (11:8–9). Rather, the Lord will wait before acting. While waiting God "roars like a lion," a phrase that announces judgment here, in Joel 3:16, and again in Amos 1:2, against Judah and Ephraim (11:10–12:1). He also presents an indictment of their activities (12:2–9). The Lord reminds the people that a prophet brought them out of Egypt and that they are hearing from prophets now (12:10–14). Unfortunately, just as they rejected the Lord in the past, so they now reject the Lord by dismissing the word of the Lord sent through the prophets (13:4–11). Given this grim historical situation, Samaria can expect to bear her guilt eventually (13:15–16).

Thus, Israel's hope remains a "return" to the Lord as the book ends (14:1–9). This return amounts to an accepting of "what is good" (14:2), which requires looking to the Lord, not Assyria, for deliverance, rejecting idols, as well as a general movement away from iniquity (14:2–3). In response, God will "heal their apostasy" and "love them freely" (14:4; see 6:1–3). Renewal is not automatic; it requires a change of Israel's attitude and actions. Harvest and growth imagery adorns the pledge given, and the wise ones are counseled to accept this course of action (14:5–9). In other words, these promises fit with those made in 3:4–5 and 6:1–3, though they fit more closely with 6:1–3.

Read as a whole, the book of Hosea stresses the possibility of renewal based on returning/seeking. This possibility will become reality on "the

day of Jezreel" (1:10–11) and "afterward" (3:5). In the interim, while the Lord's compassion compels waiting before releasing disaster (11:8–9), the people may and ought to return. Though both Judah and Israel are in danger, the chief danger is to Israel (Ephraim). Therefore hope remains, however slender it may appear. With each reference to return and the promises associated with them there resides the possibility of a new beginning for the people the Lord brought out of Egypt.[20] As the book ends, readers are reminded that there was always a new beginning available to their ancestors. Yet as they read they recall that no such turning came and Samaria was destroyed in 722. At the same time they read that even when that new beginning was rejected there remained the new beginning forced by the "day of Jezreel."

Joel

As is well known and has been thoroughly discussed, it is virtually impossible to establish a certain date for Joel. The superscription offers the important notice that what follows is "the word of the Lord" (1:1), yet does not specify an era for the book. Rather, the text announces an unprecedented locust plague that deserves to be described to future generations (1:2–4). This plague transforms into a military invasion in chapter two, and thus becomes the impetus in the book for a lengthy call for returning to the Lord that runs alongside descriptions of the day of the Lord. Renewal emerges in the latter stages of the book as a result of human response and divine judgment. Thus, Hosea and Joel are joined thematically through these emphases.[21]

In 1:5–14, the prophet commands various segments of the population to realize what is occurring. The drunkards are told to "awake" (1:5–7), the farmers are counseled to "lament" (1:8–10), and the priests are admonished to "put on sackcloth and lament" (1:13–14). After all, because of the locusts' thoroughness the drunkards will have no wine, the farmers no crops, and the priests no offerings. Due to this coming "day of the Lord" their crops will be consumed (1:15–18). As all the pastures and trees suffer under this affliction, the prophet cries to the Lord (1:19–20). At this point in the book there is no overt admission of guilt expressed. At the very least, however, there exists an extreme need to receive help from the Lord. It is his "day" that is coming, and only he can help.

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[20] James D. Nogalski, "Joel as 'Literary Anchor' for the Book of the Twelve," *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* (Symposium 15; ed. James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 96.

[21] On this point see Ibid., 94–100.

The use of locust imagery to describe the day of the Lord does not just occur in Joel. As James Nogalski has observed, "Locust imagery unites diverse material presupposing threats from locust, drought, and enemy attack. Later in the Twelve, several passages (Amos 4:9; Nah 3:16b, 17; Hab 1:9; Mal 3:10) use locust metaphors to refer to divinely-initiated threats to Yahweh's people."[22] Apparently locust swarms were a typical part of the prophetic stock phrases for the day of the Lord.

Next, Yahweh announces the nearness and terrible nature of the day of the Lord by commanding that a trumpet be blown in Zion (2:1). Like the Lion's roar the blowing of the trumpet signals disaster and the need to respond to it (see Hos 5:8; 8:1). The reference to Zion probably indicates that Judah is the nation under attack.[23] Whereas the first chapter warned of the danger to the countryside, the second chapter depicts the threat against Jerusalem.[24] This danger is immediate, for "the day of the Lord is near" (2:1; see Obad 15). It is a day of darkness (2:2; see Amos 5:18 and Zeph 1:14–16), one in which a great and powerful army stands ready to invade (2:2). These invaders turn a place as verdant as the Garden of Eden into a wasteland (2:3). They are a consuming fire (2:3–5), everyone fears them (2:6), and they are fiercely and horribly efficient (2:7–9). Indeed, this is God's army and God's day (2:11). Who can endure it, and under what conditions?

As in Hos 6:1–3 and 14:1–9, the only hope for the people is in returning to the Lord, in this instance with their whole hearts, with "fasting, with weeping, and with mourning" (2:12). They must rend their hearts and not their garments (2:13). God is "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster" (2:13). This conviction reminds readers of Exod 34:6–7, which follows the golden calf incident, and Jonah 4:2, which offers God's reasons for forgiving Nineveh. Thus, the Lord may turn and have compassion as in the golden calf incident or the Nineveh repentance (2:14). In other words, their returning may well lead to God returning to a favorable view of them.

Once again the prophet commands that the trumpet be blown (2:15). The priests must lead the people in prayer and fasting (2:15–17). They should pray in a manner similar to Moses after the golden calf incident

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[22] James D. Nogalski, "Intertextuality in the Twelve," *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (JSOTSup 235; ed. James W. Watts and Paul R. House; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 117.

[23] Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets,* 1:161.

[24] Barton, *Joel and Obadiah,* 70.

(Exod 32:11–14) in the sense that they should petition God based on Israel's status as the elect nation, yet more importantly based on the Lord's reputation among the nations (2:17). "Returning" therefore has a specific content here. It at least begins with humility, fasting, prayer, and intercessory lament. It is not simply a psychological crisis that does not result in changed behavior.[25]

When the people turn and seek in this manner the Lord will have pity (2:18). Yahweh will restore the produce (2:19), the invader will leave (2:20), the animals will revive (2:21–22), rains will fall (2:23), vats will be full (2:24), crops will be restored (2:25), and the people will be fed again (2:26). This positive agricultural imagery coincides with that found in Hos 14:4–9.[26] Most importantly, they will know that the Lord is their God and there is no other (2:27), a conviction shared with Deut 32:39 and Isa 40–48. Clearly, there is a direct connection between returning and renewal here. Either the proposed invasion does not occur or it is shortened. The threat was enough to move the people to appropriate action prescribed by the Lord, a pattern that occurs again in Jonah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi (see below).

Now the text moves farther into the future. At some point in time, which is simply described as "afterward" (2:28), God will pour out his spirit on all flesh, resulting in prophesying by all groups of people in Israel (2:28–29). Signs will accompany this "great and awesome day of the Lord" (2:30), a designation that ties this day of the Lord to the one mentioned in Joel 2:11.[27] But this day is different in at least one particularly significant way. As James Crenshaw writes, "Now Joel implies that other nations will undergo that same frightening experience, while God's people will escape the divine fury this time."[28] Zion will be the place where those who call upon the Lord will come for refuge (2:32). In the rest of the book Zion stands as the holy place where God dwells (3:16–17, 21), as it does in Mic 4:2–13, Zeph 3:14–16, and Zech 9:9. As for the other nations, however, they will be judged "in those days" (3:1–8). Whatever army comes will fail (3:9–12), for the Lord roars (3:16; see Amos 1:2) against the wicked, which means that their day of punishment is "near" (3:14; see Obad 15).

The result of this "day" is at least threefold. First, the nations will join Israel in the knowledge that the Lord alone is God (3:17; see 2:27).

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[25] Ibid., 78–79.

[26] On this imagery see Nogalski, "Joel as 'Literary Anchor' for the Book of the Twelve," 100–104.

[27] James L. Crenshaw, *Joel* (AB 24C; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 169.

[28] Ibid., 196.

Second, Jerusalem and Zion will be holy (3:17), and God will restore the land (3:18; see 2:18–27 and Hos 14:4–9). Third, God will make Egypt and Edom (see Obadiah) desolate (3:19), but Judah will be inhabited (3:20), for the Lord dwells in Zion (3:21). These renewal elements become staples in future texts such as Mic 4–5 and Zeph 3:6–20.

To summarize, in chapter one a terrible invasion is on the horizon. The prophet believes that a terrible locust swarm has prefaced this invasion. He seems to realize what the people in Amos 4:6–13 will not: such "natural" disasters constitute divine warnings. Thus, in chapter two he calls for and receives change based on the belief that the day of the Lord is near. This renewal brought on by returning is like the one described in 2:28–3:17, with the first day of the Lord threatening Judah and the second facing the nations. Thus, the renewal through returning spans the whole book, as it does in Hosea. In both books returning is the key to averting the day of the Lord, in both books agricultural imagery describes both punishment and blessing, and in both books renewal is the final word.[29] Either returning to the Lord or the onset of the day of the Lord can give Israel a new beginning, since either option produces the end of dominant sin and the beginning of divine favor.

Amos

Hosea and Amos' superscriptions place the books in the same era, the latter half of the eighth century. Though scholars have generally argued that Amos was written before Hosea, Jorg Jeremias has argued that the editors of Amos sought to read the book in light of Hosea's message.[30] According to Jeremias the disciples of both prophets "did not want the words of either Hosea or Amos to be read with historical interest for a distant past but with a current interest in their words as a help for present problems. They were asking about the one message of God by two messengers (but without creating something like Tatian's harmony of the gospel)."[31] If so, this audience was interested in the interaction of returning, renewal, and the future of God's people, since Amos continues the emphasis on these subjects begun in Hosea and Joel.

Amos starts with three connections to Hosea and Joel. First, the book opens with the Lord roaring from Zion (1:2; see Hos 3:16). Second,

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[29] See Nogalski, "Joel as 'Literary Anchor' for the Book of the Twelve," 97–98.

[30] Jorg Jeremias, "The Interrelationship between Amos and Hosea," *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (JSOTSup 235; ed. James W. Watts and Paul R. House; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 185–86.

[31] Ibid., 185.

1:2–2:3 describes the sins of the nations, a theme begun in Joel 3, and 2:4–16 continues with a description of Israel and Judah's sins, a theme that originates in Hos 1–3. Though this depiction of sin is more stylized than anything found in Hosea or Joel, historical summaries and similar themes such as rebellion against the law and covenant breaking are also prominent in Hosea (see Hos 11:1–12:14). Third, this rebellious behavior will bring punishment (2:4, 6) on "that day" (2:16). These connections may well be typical elements of prophetic literature, since they also appear in texts like Jer 2–6, though each prophet puts his own particular stamp on the chosen element.

God is angry at the "whole family" that he "brought up out of the land of Egypt" (3:1). He has chosen them out of all the nations of the earth, so their sin is presented as all the more heinous because of their privileged position (3:2). As in Hosea and Joel, the lion has roared and the trumpet has blown, both of which indicate approaching judgment (3:3–8). Why does judgment come? Because they do not listen to the prophets (3:7–8). Because the people "do not know how to do right" (3:10). As in Hos 9:7–10:15, such behavior can only bring an invasion by an "adversary" that will purge the land (3:11–15). Idolatrous altars such as Bethel will be destroyed (3:14), a theme also found in Hos 4:15–19 and 10:5, 15.

Amos 4:6–13 agrees with Hos 6:1–3, Hos 14:1–3, and Joel 2:1–17 that the key to avoiding terrifying judgment is to return to the Lord. Unlike the earlier books, however, Amos states the case negatively. That is, Amos 4:6–13 argues that no matter what the Lord did to awake them from their moral slumber they did not return to the Lord (4:7, 9, 10, 11). Thus, the text calls for a lament for fallen Israel (5:1–3). Despite this failure to return to the Lord, however, there remains time to "seek the Lord and live" (5:4, 5, 6, 14), a theme found earlier in Hos 3:5, 5:6, 5:15, and 10:12. In this passage "seeking" and "returning" amount to the same thing, since they require forsaking cultic centers such as Gilgal and Bethel (5:4–5) in favor of the Lord. Further, since they are to "seek good, and not evil" (5:14), to "hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate" (5:15), and to "let justice roll down like the waters" (5:27), returning to a previous behavior is more than implied. Indeed, it is required if the day of the Lord is to be avoided (5:18–20).

Sadly, Amos 6:1–9:10 offers no indication akin to that found in Joel that returning/seeking occurs. Amos' prayers for mercy delay the judgment for a time (7:1–9), but the book's penultimate promise is that the sword, or military defeat, awaits the disobedient nation (9:10). God's willingness to forestall judgment because of the prophet's prayers indicates that returning/seeking would have had the same effect. Israel cannot escape. The nation will go into captivity (9:4), a threat that the original readers of the Twelve knew came true in 722.

Having experienced God's wrath, Israel will eventually enjoy God's blessing again. "In that day" Yahweh will restore David's tent and subsume Edom under that authority (9:11–12). "Days are coming" for the renewal of land (9:13), returning of fortunes (9:14), and restoration of security in the land (9:15). In other words, the text uses language quite similar to that found in Joel 3:18 to describe the people's future. Returning is not mentioned directly in this segment, but by this point in Amos one has to wonder if some form of returning should be assumed.

In Amos, as in Hosea and Joel, the threat of the day of the Lord brings with it the chance for new beginnings. Those who heed the threats may seek the Lord, return to him, and thus find forgiveness and renewal. The prophets who carry the threat may pray and preach in a manner that forges a new beginning for the people. If the prophets' efforts fail due to lack of returning, the day of the Lord itself will effect a new beginning. The day purges sin from the people and leaves persons like the prophets as representatives of the living God. Post-exilic readers of the Twelve could decide for themselves if their own situation called for new beginnings, and they could also decide by what means they wished that fresh start to come.

Obadiah

Obadiah's superscription reveals only the prophet's name. The book probably references the fall of Jerusalem in 587, but the text is not explicit about that fact.[32] Ehud ben Zvi suggests that in this book Edom is a symbol for all nations that oppose God's people.[33] Edom opposed Judah at a number of junctures, so it is a historically based symbol at the very least.

Obadiah certainly mentions the day of the Lord, but lacks calls for returning/seeking. As in Joel and Amos, this foreign nation faces God's wrath, not God's forgiveness. At this point in time "the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations" (15), a phrase found in Joel 3:1–21, Amos 1–2, Nahum, and Zeph 2:4–15. Edom will suffer for all they have done against God's holy mountain, Zion (15–16). The nations that have drunk Jerusalem's destruction will soon drink their own (16).

But in Zion there will be some escapees, and Jacob will be fire to Edom/Esau's stubble (18). Jerusalem's exiles will possess Canaan again, and the northern tribes will go back to their places, so a new conquest will occur at that time (19–21). These escapees are not defined by any action of their own, for they need deliverers (21). This new beginning requires

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[32] Barton, *Joel and Obadiah,* 120–23.

[33] See Ehud ben Zvi, *A Historical-Critical Study of the Book of Obadiah* (BZAW 242; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996).

the judgment of Israel's foes, as is true in Joel and Amos. It also requires the repatriation of exiles. In Obadiah the day of the Lord falls on the nations for their joy at the day of the Lord falling on Israel. In this setting the lack of repentance on either side leaves the day of the Lord as the only possible new beginning.

Jonah

Jonah's superscription merely reveals the prophet's name and father, but a reference to a prophet by the same name having the same father in 2 Kgs 14:25 almost certainly indicates that the same person is intended in both passages. If so, then the eighth century is the setting for the book, as it is for Hosea, Amos, and Micah. The issue here is whether a nation as corrupt as Assyria could repent and find God relenting from the promised punishment. In other words, was it inevitable that Assyria become an instrument (see Isa 10:5–11) and recipient (see Isa 10:12–34; Nah 1–3) of wrath, or could this most vicious of nations have turned and sought the Lord?

Though Amos may be the book in the Twelve most discussed by scholars, it is likely that Jonah is the best known of the so-called Minor Prophets. As the familiar account goes, Jonah does not wish to preach to Nineveh, though when under divine punishment himself he truly wishes to be released from the belly of the fish (2:1–10). He seeks God and finds a new beginning, but does he now wish the same for the Assyrians? When he does preach in Nineveh he speaks only of judgment, and not in specific day of the Lord terminology (3:1–4). Certainly he offers no call for change and no hope for renewal.

Despite the lack of returning/seeking terminology the hearers respond, as they ought. They "believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them" (3:5). In other words, they acted just as the Lord asked Israel to act in Joel 2:12–13. The king calls for changes that include turning away from violence and evil, which in effect is what the Lord commands Israel to do in Amos 2:6–7, 3:9–10, and 5:24–27. The monarch's hope is that the Lord will "turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger" (3:9), language nearly identical to that found in Joel 2:12–14 and Amos 7:1–9, as well as in Jer 18:1–12. Indeed the Lord does exactly what the king hoped. God does relent based on their turning from their wicked ways (3:10), an action that angers the prophet, even as he confesses that the Lord is gracious and kind (see Exod 34:6–7 and Joel 2:12–14). God's response is that it was right for him to take pity on such an evil place when they turn from that evil (4:11).

Jonah deals with several issues vital to the Twelve's approach to returning and renewal. First, as Marvin Sweeney concludes, the book "takes up the question posed in Joel 2:12–14 as to whether YHWH will respond to repentance by relenting from an earlier decision to punish."[34] On the one hand, where God's willingness to forgive is concerned, the answer to the question is a resounding "Yes." At the same time, it may be important to question the question. In the book of the Twelve, and in the Old Testament as a whole, the Lord's "decision to punish" is not necessarily a punctiliar mental decision, nor is the Lord's "decision not to punish" a second, corrective decision. Rather, the Lord always and at all times threatens punishment for sin when a person or some persons do not repent. Such is the nature of the Lord's will. Disaster inevitably awaits those who do not return and/or seek the Lord. At the same time, forgiveness awaits those who return/seek.

Second, Jonah indicates that the offer of return and renewal applies to gentiles. Though other passages appeal to this same principle, this text is the only example of a large group of gentiles changing on account of a prophetic word. H. W. Wolff writes, "Jeremiah 18:7f. proclaims the doctrine that the message of judgment will be withdrawn from the Gentiles too, if it brings about repentance. The passage is unique in the Old Testament; and it is in our present scene alone that this message is shown as reaching fulfillment."[35] This message should have an effect on Israel. Wolff continues, "In presenting this the narrator does not merely take over Jeremian-Deuteronomistic doctrinal tenets; by doing so he also offers a challenge to life in Jerusalem as it was really lived. In this way the narrator introduces into his story an unheard-of hope for the Gentile world."[36] Though not as explicitly as in Jonah, the same theme will occur again in renewal passages like Zeph 3:9–20.

Third, the book's canonical placement asserts that God's mercy and God's justice work cooperatively. Sweeney notes that Jonah shows God's forgiveness of Nineveh, yet the book is followed later by Nahum, which relates God's punishment of Nineveh. Thus, Jonah "points to the necessary interrelationship of YHWH's justice together with YHWH's mercy. YHWH can show mercy to Nineveh when it repents, but YHWH will punish Nineveh when it sins."[37] This interrelationship means that

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[34] Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets,* 1:303.

[35] Hans Walter Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah: A Commentary,* trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 146.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets,* 1:303.

repentance is not a one-time event that precludes judgment for centuries. Sin must cease or be repented of for mercy to continue.

Fourth, Jon 3–4 follows the announcement of sin—seeking/returning—forgiveness/renewal pattern found in the earlier books of the Twelve. These chapters appear to stress that this pattern is ingrained in the text because it is ingrained in the character of God. New beginnings are possible for any nation or person that changes in the ways God desires.

Micah

Micah concludes the Twelve's emphasis on the eighth century. The superscription places the book in the last decades of that century, a time in which Samaria fell to Assyria and in which Assyria invaded and devastated Judah. Though the Sennacherib crisis (c. 701) was the most extreme case of that harassment, it was by no means the only instance of it. Without question, Micah reads these events as divine judgment that should inspire change. Only at the end of the book, however, is there any indication that the message has been heard. In Micah the Lord forges a new beginning primarily through the means of punishment, so in this way the book mirrors Amos more than it does Hosea, Joel, or Jonah. Yet it also stresses the importance of confession, which is a new emphasis in the Twelve.

Micah 1–3 details the people's sins and the consequences of those sins in what are familiar terms by this point in the Twelve. In 1:2, 3:1, and 3:9 the prophet warns the people to "hear" the message. Due to their "prostitution" (see Hos 1–3) with idols the Lord is coming with great wrath to judge (1:2–7). Now Judah, not just Israel, will be punished (1:8–9). Lamenting and mourning are appropriate at this time (1:10–16).

"Woe" awaits wicked oppressors on "that day" (2:1–5). They have wanted the prophets to preach about wine and strong drink (2:6–11), so the Lord will gather them for punishment (2:12). In fact, the Lord will marshal an army against them (2:13), a theme previously expressed in Joel 2:11. Corrupt prophets, priests, and officials will lead the nation into disaster (3:1–12; see Hos 4–5). Zion will be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins (3:12). The people want God's favor, but they do not return or seek in the manner prescribed earlier in the Twelve, nor in the manner set forth in Mic 6:1–8.

Micah 4–5 offers the same solution to these problems as Amos 9:1–15: defeat. Renewal flows from the day of the Lord only, not through any returning/seeking on the people's part. Unlike Amos, though, Micah begins with a description of renewal, then concludes with the effects of judgment. Renewal will be evident when "in the latter days" (4:1) the people of "many nations" (4:2) shall come to the "mountain of the Lord"

(4:2) to learn "the law" and hear "the word of the Lord" (4:2). God will judge them and lead them into a peaceful and secure way of life (4:3–4) based on worshiping the Lord alone (4:5). God's word and will for Israel will at that time become his word and will for the nations. In the meantime, Zion will mourn for lack of a king (4:9), shall go to Babylon (4:10), and will eventually be rescued (4:10). Current defeat will become certain victory in due time (4:11–13).

Such victory will only come after Judah has been struck on the cheek (5:1), a reference to the same exile noted in 4:8–10. In the future, a Davidic ruler "whose origin is from of old, from ancient days" will arise from Bethlehem and bring peace (5:2) and make the people secure (5:3–5a). In the short run, shepherds will deliver them from the Assyrians (5:5b–6). A remnant of God's people will live among the nations, yet will not be at the mercy of the nations (5:7–9). They will not perish in exile. Rather, the Lord will use their defeat to remove idolatry from them (5:10–15). Thus, defeat can serve the same purpose as returning/seeking.

Micah 6–7 offers a new twist on return and renewal by using first-person confession as a means of expressing change. Before offering this new option, the passage concludes God's case against his people (6:1–5), explains what God requires of the straying people (6:6–8), and notes that walking in Ahab's and Omri's ways has led to their punishment by the Lord (6:9–16). Then a first-person speaker declares, "Woe is me!" (7:1). Why? Because the punishment described in 6:9–16 has occurred (7:1–6). Though other options are possible,[38] it is probable that the prophet speaks here, either on behalf of the people or for himself only.[39] He states that he will "look to the Lord" and "wait for the God of my salvation," and confesses that "my God will hear me" (7:7). This confession of faith in God's willingness to hear those who wait for him leads to the confident assertion that "when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me" (7:8). The prophet is willing to bear God's indignation because he has sinned and because the Lord "executes judgment" on his behalf (7:9). Such confidence leads both to a declaration of future victory over enemies (7:10–17) and to a confession of faith in God's willingness to pardon sin and have compassion (7:18–20). God's covenant with Abraham and Jacob is the foundation for belief in these future blessings (7:20).

Micah 7:9 lies at the heart of the prophet's hopes for renewal. He looks to the Lord even as he confesses his sin. It is this turning from his

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[38] See James Luther Mays, *Micah* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 150–51.

[39] See Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Micah* (AB 24E; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 564–78.

sin, coupled with the Lord's forgiving nature, that evokes confidence in the speaker. In Joel and Jonah, fasting and mourning lead to returning and renewal, while here confession and waiting produce the same result. In Micah the Lord's punishment awakens the one confessing, while preaching effects that outcome in earlier books, as well as in later books such as Haggai and Malachi. Thus, by now the Book of the Twelve has announced several nearly identical avenues to renewal. One may return, seek, wait, or confess. Each term allows the people to receive a new beginning with the Lord. Throughout the books if these means of forging new beginnings fail, the day of the Lord will do what preaching alone did not effect.

Nahum

Nahum's superscription provides no specific date, yet most scholars think it prefigures or depicts the fall of Nineveh in 612. If so, the Twelve has finally moved out of the eighth century for good, and now proceeds to focus on messages that revolve around the momentous days when Babylon supplanted Assyria as the chief world power and threatened Judah while doing so. Samaria is no longer a political factor, which means that threats expressed in the first six books have come to fruition. Since Nineveh is the chief city both here and in Jonah it is apparent that returning and relenting are not actions that one generation can do and gain from God on behalf of their descendants. Each new generation must seek the Lord themselves. The fact that Nineveh, Judah and the whole of creation have failed to grasp this truth dominates Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.

It is important to note that Nahum begins this three-book emphasis on judgment by asserting the Lord's patience. Though he is jealous and avenging (1:2), the Lord is at the same time "slow to anger" (see Exod 34:6; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2), yet unwilling to clear the guilty (1:3). Because he can make Carmel wither (1:4; see Joel 3:16 and Amos 1:2) when he judges, no one can stand before his indignation (1:6). As Nineveh discovered in earlier days, the Lord is a refuge for those who seek him (1:7), but as they will now discover he can also be a terrifying judge. Nineveh may plot against the Lord, but will perish even if its armies are at full military strength (1:9–15).

Time has run out for change. Nineveh will be destroyed (2:1–13). But the Lord will restore "the majesty of Jacob" (2:2) at some future time. Nineveh has been a prostitute, and now she will be uncovered, stripped bare (3:1–7). Once Nineveh multiplied like grasshoppers (see Joel 1:4, 6), yet now will be devoured by fire (3:15; see Joel 2:3 and Amos 1:2–2:3). They will be scattered with no one to gather them (3:18). No message of returning/seeking is offered.

The only new beginning mentioned here is for those Nineveh has oppressed. God promises to break the Assyrian yoke (1:12–13), which will lead to Jacob's renewal (2:2). In other words, the day of the Lord may lead to a new beginning for Israel either because it leads Israel to a returning to the Lord or because it frees Israel from oppression. As the exile unfolded and continued both possibilities probably occupied the minds of the Twelve's readers.

Habakkuk

Habakkuk's date is impossible to fix with certainty, though its general time frame is possible to determine. The book announces the rise of the Babylonians, so the date may be in the last quarter of the seventh century or later, and may well revolve around one of the Babylonian incursions into Judah.[40] Regardless of the specific date, the fact is that Judah has little time before facing the same fate as Nineveh. Time is running out for real returning and seeking.

Like Mic 7:1–20, Habakkuk is dominated by first-person speech. Here the prophet asks questions of and receives answers from the Lord. When he asks if the wicked in Judah will remain free from judgment (1:2–4), he is told that Babylon will punish Judah's wicked (1:5–11). When he asks if wicked Babylon will go unpunished (1:12–2:1), he is told to live by faith (2:2–5), for the Babylonians will also be punished (2:6–20). Some day the plunderer will be plundered (2:9), so they will share the same fate as the old plunderer, Nineveh (see Nah 2:2).

In the concluding section, Habakkuk rejoices in the Lord. He uses creation imagery to express God's power to save and to judge. Indeed, the prophet will rejoice no matter how difficult the times may become (3:17–19). In this way Habakkuk demonstrates the same faith as that expressed by Micah. Both prophets return and seek through confessions of faith, though Habakkuk's includes no confession of sin. These prophets may speak only for themselves, yet even so they point the way to how others may likewise find renewal. The readers of the Twelve learned that this method is as old as Hos 6:1–3 and 14:1–9, and is available to individuals, to cities, and to nations. In Nahum and Habakkuk, the fact is that only individuals avail themselves of this opportunity. The larger groups opt to gain the opportunity for renewal the hard way—through the day of the Lord.

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[40] See Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 2:454–55.

Zephaniah

Set sometime during the reign of Josiah (640–609), the prophet Zephaniah concludes the Twelve's emphasis on the seventh century by stressing the coming of divine judgment on all creation. Human beings, animals, and idols will all be "swept away" in the wake of God's wrath (1:2–3). Despite the universal scope of this destruction, Judah remains the focal point of the prophet's message (1:4–6). Thus, Zephaniah continues the strong judgment themes found in Nahum and Habakkuk. At the same time, unlike Nahum and Habakkuk this book includes calls for change in Judah and includes the possibility of renewal for both Judah and the nations.

Zephaniah's portrait of the day of the Lord emphasizes the event's totality. All persons (1:3, 17, 18), all the earth (1:18), every idolater (1:9), every violent person (1:9), and every fortified city (1:16) will experience this dark and terrifying (1:14–16; see Amos 5:18–20) day. The reason for this judgment is that "they have sinned against the Lord" (1:17). As in Amos 1:2–2:6, this punishment will be shared by Judah and her enemies (2:4–15). Time seems to have run out for everyone concerned. All the gods of the earth and all the lands of the earth will bow down to the Lord (2:11).

Despite the fact that "the day of the Lord is near" (1:7; see Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 15, 31; Amos 5:18; and Obad 15), the prophet calls on the people to "seek the Lord" (2:3). Here seeking the Lord means "seek righteousness; seek humility" (2:3). Such seeking may lead to their being "hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord" (2:3). Interestingly enough, this seeking will not forestall the day of the Lord, as was true earlier in the Twelve. Now such seeking will merely hide the persons who seek the Lord in the midst of the inevitable day of the Lord. The "humble of the land" (2:3) should take refuge in the Lord, but this refuge pertains only to them. They will be preserved, but the nation will not. A text like this one may have helped early readers of the Twelve understand why the "humble of the land," people like Habakkuk and Jeremiah, for instance, suffered when the land was destroyed. The time has passed for a more general seeking and finding of the Lord.

Now the book begins its final movement towards the punishment that will bring renewal. The prophet declares "woe" (3:1) on the nation. This woe could have been avoided, as 2:1–3 has already indicated, had the people been willing to accept the Lord's correction (3:7). Given their evident eagerness to act corruptly (3:7), the Lord decides to pour out his indignation, with the result that "all the earth shall be consumed" (3:8). Never to this point has the Book of the Twelve offered such a picture or worldwide judgment.

Through this judgment the Lord will renew both the nations and Judah. The Lord "will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord" (3:9). Adele Berlin notes that "the idea seems to be universal worship of the Lord, reminiscent of, or actually going beyond, the idea in 2:11."[41] Further, exiles shall come from a distance to worship the Lord (3:10), and the Lord will leave in land "a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord . . ." (3:12). For these renewed people the Lord will do great things. He will gather them (3:18), deal with their oppressors (3:19), heal their lame (3:19), remove their shame (3:19), and renew them fully (3:20). Truly the renewal has been as thorough as the punishment. A truly new beginning has been forged out of the punishment inflicted on the nations and on Judah.

Both means of renewal unfold in Zephaniah. The people may either seek the Lord or experience the day of the Lord. The "humble of the land" are likely those who did seek God, and they will be joined by a purified group of people after the full force of the day of the Lord has been felt. In this way Zephaniah acts as a summary of how judgment comes to Israel and the nations without that judgment being the final word. Renewal is the final word, and that word may well have encouraged the Twelve's first audience.

Haggai

Haggai's superscription (1:1) places it in the Persian period. More specifically, it sets the book in the years 520–515, the period in which the temple was rebuilt. Thus, this book marks the Twelve's movement out of the seventh century and into the sixth, and thereby reminds readers that the people have begun to come back to the land. God has not left them in exile, just as the previous books promised (see Zeph 3:12–13). The book testifies to the Lord's ability to give Israel a new beginning. At the same time, this era was not kind to those who came to Jerusalem. The land was poor and the people felt keen disappointment at their circumstances. In this setting the prophet Haggai offers a familiar message of returning and renewal.

Probably due to their circumstances, the people have not felt able to rebuild the temple, though they have felt able to build their own houses. Haggai indicts them for this hypocrisy, and states that their hard times are due to their unwillingness to attend to God's house (1:2–6). He urges them to "consider" their ways and their situation and act (1:7–11). In this

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41 Adele Berlin, *Zephaniah* (AB 25A; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 133.

passage the word "consider" has much the same force as returning and seeking do in earlier books.

Though the word "return" does not appear, the people's consideration leads to fear of the Lord and work on the Lord's house (1:12–15). A finer response to a message could hardly be conceived. Based on their response, the Lord promises to renew the covenant promises made when Israel came out of Egypt (2:5; see Hos 11:1–9; Amos 3:1–8; and Mic 7:18–20). Covenant blessings will likewise emerge (2:6). In fact, the Lord will "shake all nations" so that the temple will be filled with wealth and glory. In the past the people did not respond to the Lord's message. In language clearly reminiscent of Amos 4:6–13, God claims, "'I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not return to me . . .'" (2:17). But now the people have indeed turned to the Lord, so they will indeed be blessed (2:18–19). The book concludes with a special blessing for the people's leader (2:20–23).

As in Joel and Jonah, turning to the Lord, not the day of the Lord, has led to renewal. In previous books returning/seeking meant fasting, confessing, changing behavior, and acting justly and faithfully. In Haggai the meaning of returning/seeking is "consider and build." In every context obeying God's specific commands is the chief way of knowing how to define the key terms. The people have a fresh start with the Lord, but it remains to be seen how well they will build on that new beginning.

Zechariah

Zechariah's superscription places its opening message at the same time as Haggai, the second year of Darius (Zech 1:1). Therefore, this book shares its immediate predecessor's historical context, and it also shares its interest in the restoration of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple. In expressing these interests, the book includes passages that stress returning to the Lord, God's mercy, the day of the Lord, and ultimate renewal.

The book begins with a strong statement about the people's past and their current opportunity. In the past the Lord was angry with their ancestors, and told them to "return to me and I will return to you" (1:2–3), a plea that was generally rejected (1:4–5). Thus, the prophets' threats overcame these ancestors (1:6). Judgment fell. But now the people repent and testify to God's just actions (1:6). Their attitude leads to prayer and to God's promise to return to them because they have returned to him (1:16).

In Zech 1:17–6:15, God's merciful turning to the people leads to renewal. Blessing will come in the future as surely as judgment came in

the past (1:17). When those days of blessing arrive, the Lord will plunder those who plundered Israel (2:8; see Nah 2:2), and many nations will "join themselves to the Lord" and become the Lord's people (2:11). Israel's repentance will inspire other countries to do the same. The high priest's sins will be forgiven and the temple ministry purified (3:1–10). Israel's civil leader will be empowered (4:1–14; see Hag 2:20–23). The wicked will be removed from the land (5:1–3), and the crown and the temple shall be restored (6:9–15).

Zechariah 7–8 reminds readers that these blessings result from a change in attitude and action that marks a clear break with earlier generations. In those days the people "made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the Lord of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets" (7:12). Thus, they experienced God's anger (7:12). Now the people have responded positively to the Lord's word, so God has returned to Zion, and the results will be astoundingly positive (8:1–13). Just as God had once sent disaster, so he will now send good things (8:14–17). The past days of the Lord have been the evidence the people needed to accept God's demand for change. Judgment has led to repentance, which has in turn led to renewal. Once more the text states that Israel's seeking of the Lord will lead other peoples to do the same (8:20–23; see Mic 4:1–5; Zeph 3:9).

After focusing on the coming king and subsequent days of salvation in chs. 9–11, the book concludes with descriptions of the coming day of the Lord and its results in chs. 12–14. In the past the day of the Lord only benefited Israel in a secondary way. That is, they benefited from the fall of Assyria because it gave them relief, but they were not protected by a day of the Lord. All this changes in this last section. Here the creator of the heavens and earth (12:1) will bring the day of the Lord to devour those who oppose Jerusalem (12:2–9). That day will cleanse Israel from idolatry and other types of sins (13:1–6). On that day the Lord will defeat all Jerusalem's enemies (14:1–5), be king over the whole earth (14:9), welcome worshipers from all lands to the Feast of Booths (14:16–19), and make Jerusalem "holy to the Lord" (14:20–21). This futuristic picture is forged by judgment on behalf of people who turn to the Lord.

In Zechariah, then, there is a virtually perfect blending of repentance, renewal, and the effects of the day of the Lord. Each one contributes to the remaking of Jerusalem into a holy city and to the restoration of creation. In many ways Zechariah is the high point of the Twelve's theological message. After all, the people are changed, Jerusalem is holy, and the Lord has returned to the people who have returned to him. The Book of the Twelve does not end here, however. It ends with a book that calls the nation once more to return to their God.

Malachi

Malachi's superscription offers no information on the prophet's date or family. He is certainly a post-exilic prophet like Haggai and Zechariah, but even this conclusion must be drawn from an analysis of the book's contents. These contents portray the people as questioning God's love (1:2–5), offering polluted offerings (1:6–14), countenancing priests who do not instruct them properly (2:1–9), profaning the covenant with God and the covenant made with their spouses (2:10–16), and robbing God in their offerings (3:6–14). Clearly, the glorious renewal described in Zechariah does not apply to Malachi's era.

Scholars have often associated this rather dismal picture with Ezra and Nehemiah's time,[42] though Paul Redditt rightly concludes that the Malachi's contents only fix a time span of 515–445 as the possible range for the book's composition.[43] Andrew Hill suggests that the book's linguistic data indicate that it was probably written c. 500, so Malachi addresses a situation nearer to the time of Haggai and Malachi.[44] If Hill is correct, then Malachi deals with the people's early attempts at worship and general disappointment with its failure to usher in the sort of glory promised in Haggai and Zechariah. He does so in part by utilizing calls for change and promises of renewal.

After the messages concerning the people's lack of confidence in the Lord's love for them (1:2–5) and their polluted offerings (1:6–14), the prophet uses new phrases to call for change. He tells them "take it to heart" (2:2), which seems to be a near parallel to Haggai's demand that they consider their ways (Hag 1:7). He follows this command with admonitions to "guard their spirits" and change their behavior (2:15, 16). This sort of action must replace false weeping and groaning (2:13). Though not identical with earlier *terms* for change, the *effects* are the same.

As in Joel, Jonah, Haggai, and Zechariah, some hearers do respond to the message. As in Hag 1:12, some persons fear the Lord, take stock of their situation, and receive God's forgiveness (3:16–18). These people will be God's special possession (3:17; see Exod 19:5), and God will spare them "as a man spares his son who serves him " (3:17; see Hos 11:1–9). As always, those who obey God's call to turn to him find that judgment is no longer necessary.

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[42] Marvin A. Sweeney expresses this point of view in *The Twelve Prophets: Volume Two*, 715–16.

[43] See Paul Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 150.

[44] See Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi* (AB 25D; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 80–84.

Malachi concludes the Book of the Twelve with one final reference to the day of the Lord. Wicked persons should fear the day (4:1; see Amos 5:18–27), but those who fear the Lord, another way of expressing the fact that they turn to God, will be blessed at that time (4:2–3). One last time the people are told to adhere to the covenant standards (4:4), and they are warned to avoid a future "utter destruction" prefigured by the appearance of a new Elijah (4:6). As before, what returning/seeking/fearing/considering/guarding does not do will be accomplished by the day of the Lord. Regardless of the people's choice, the Lord will remove sin and restore the humble of the land to their rightful place in Zion. Thus, the one who is Israel's father (1:6; 2:10), king (1:14), and judge (3:2–3) has an unshakeable love for those who respond to his covenant love (1:2–5).[45]

Conclusion

This article has sought to chart some of the ways themes such as returning to the Lord, seeking the Lord, considering one's ways, and fearing the Lord relate to the day of the Lord and promises of renewal. What seems clear is that Rendtorff's conclusion that these themes are tightly interrelated is correct.[46] These ideas intersect so often that it seems reasonable to conclude that they provide several unifying elements to the Twelve. They also indicate certain things about the Twelve's theology and about its audience.

To be sure, the Twelve stresses a God who defines and denounces sin, and who announces judgment for that sin. At the same time, it also claims that this same God is the creator, the king of the universe, and the one who forgives. The messages of condemnation are given through the prophets to effect returning to the Lord and his standards. Even judgment itself occurs so that renewal may be forged out of its fiery embers. In short, the Twelve presents a God whose pursuit of new beginnings will not be denied. This God loves Israel, and will not let them go (see Hos 11:1–9). Likewise, he loves the nations, and is concerned when they do not know their left hand from their right because of their sins (see Jonah 4:1–11). Thus, the Lord will bring Israel and the nations to his holy mountain, where sin is no longer relevant (Mic 4:1–5; Zech 14:20–21).

As for its audience, the Twelve offers a post-exilic readership a clear choice based on their spiritual heritage. Those who first held the whole corpus in their hands lived between the day of the Lord that brought exile

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[45] Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi,* 187.

[46] Rendtorff, "How to read the Book of the Twelve as a Theological Unity," 86.

and the day of the Lord that would bring them final security. They were people in the middle of times, people who had neither participated in the cataclysms of the past nor the glorious victories set for the future. Thus, they awaited a new beginning. As they waited, they had the chance to turn to the Lord and avoid the judgments of their day. In other words, they could read these prophets, consider their ways, and seek the Lord's favor, and thereby gain membership among the humble of the land.

The Celebration of Passover in Josephus: A Means of Strengthening Jewish Identity?

Federico M. Colautti

Introduction

The problem of "identity" is itself one of the most complicated issues of human existence. Whatever aspect of it is analyzed will result in many difficulties. Who am I? Where am I coming from? Where am I going? These are some of the most existential questions, which consciously or unconsciously pervade the life of each person in the world. This paper is certainly not an attempt to solve this problem. It is important, however, to realize from the very beginning that it is not evident what the "identity" of a given people or group is.

Actually, each serious study on this subject starts with an attempt to clarify what "identity" means for its author.[1] In this regard, the analysis of Uffe Østergård is truly illuminating and highly recommended as a starting point for a definition of "national" and "ethnic" identity.[2] Some sociological and anthropological approaches, which were set forth during the last centuries as possible explanations of this argument, are presented there. Finally, combining the results of different studies, he describes "ethnic

[1] Siân Jones and Sarah Pearce, eds., *Jewish Local Patriotism and Self-Identification in the Graeco-Roman Period* (JSPSup 31; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 13–28; Doron Mendels, *Identity, Religion and Historiography: Studies in Hellenistic History* (JSPSup 24; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 13–34; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999), 1–11.

[2] Uffe Østergård, "What is National and Ethnic Identity?" in *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (ed. P. Bilde et al.; Aarhus: Aarhus University, 1992), 16–38.

identity" as an ensemble of myths (*mythomoteur*), which defines the identity in relation to a specific polity.[3]

Without doubt, the presentation of Shaye Cohen is also very valuable and, in fact, does not diverge a great deal from that of Uffe Østergård.[4] For this paper, it should be enough to consider simply—not simplistically—the fact that Flavius Josephus (henceforward: FJ) actually makes a clear distinction between "*us*" and "*them.*" Consequently, the aim of this study is to delineate the role of Passover—according to FJ—in order to define who belonged in each category, and to determine whether this feast was a means to strengthen the bonds among those considered "*us.*"

Whether FJ represents the so-called common Judaism, only a given group or actually no one, is a question that cannot be addressed here. Certainly, the results of this study will be more or less significant according to the option assumed regarding this matter. This paper presumes that FJ wrote, particularly the *Jewish Antiquities* (henceforward: *Ant.*), with the intention of presenting himself as an authoritative representative of Judaism. Whether he was attempting to vindicate a leadership in a concrete community or whether he was successful in his endeavor also extends beyond the scope of this work.

That Passover was a means of strengthening the Jewish identity in the rabbinic literature is quite evident.[5] Even today it represents a very special celebration; what Shimon Peres states could be considered a very common conception:

> La sortie d'Égypte est ainsi devenue centrale dans l'identité juive. C'est un axe du calendrier. La Haggadah de Pâque, en particulier, en retrace l'histoire. «À chaque génération, dit la Michna, qui a été écrite au II^e^ siècle, l'homme doit se considérer comme s'il était lui-même sorti d'Égypte.» [. . .] Le souvenir de la sortie d'Égypte n'est donc pas une affaire purement historique. C'est une norme de conduite qui ne concerne pas seulement la communauté dans son ensemble. Elle revêt une signification personnelle, intime.[6]

FJ affirms a similar concept, in general, for all the pilgrimage feasts: Tabernacles, Passover, and Pentecost (*Ant.* 4.203–4); hence, the question proposed in the title could be considered as already solved. Nevertheless,

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[3] Uffe Østergård, "What is National and Ethnic Identity?," in *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (ed. P. Bilde et al.; Aarhus: Aarhus University, 1992), 37.

[4] Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999), 1–10.

[5] Gary G. Porton, *Goyim: Gentiles and Israelites in Mishnah-Tosefta* (BJS 155; Atlanta: Scholar, 1988), 219–20, 302–5.

[6] Shimon Peres, *Que le soleil se lève* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1999), 22–23.

there are still possibilities for research as to how he develops and utilizes this conception of the feasts, in particular, of Passover, and whether this statement applies to the situation after the destruction of the Temple, when actually FJ produced his works.

Passover in *Jewish War* (henceforward: *J.W.*)

In this essay, due to brevity, the feast of Unleavened Bread and that of Passover are identified. Indeed this is what FJ does in his writings,[7] when he has no special reason to distinguish them.[8] This first opus of FJ was not intended as a presentation of the Jewish beliefs; consequently, the references to the Jewish festivities have a different purpose in its presentation. Passover is mentioned several times, and in some cases with a very specific purpose.[9]

The fact that FJ dates the fall of Masada as well as the previous slaughter of the Sicarii on the night between the fourteenth and fifteenth of Xanthicus (*J.W.* 7.401),[10] was already pointed out by some scholars.[11] The implied reference to Passover and to the slaughtered lambs appears quite evident.[12]

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[7] Cf. *J.W.* 2.10; *Ant.* 14.21

[8] Cf. *Ant.* 3.248–49.

[9] Cf. *J.W.* 2.10, 224, 244, 280; 4.402; 5.99; 6.290, 421, 423.

[10] It is well-known that the last book of *J.W.* was written later in more than one phase; cf. Seth Schwartz, "The Composition and Publication of Josephus's *Bellum Iudaicum* Book 7," *HTR* 79 (1986): 373–86. The Slavonic version of *J.W.* has another date for the fall of Masada, which could be a sign that FJ changed the date in a posterior re-working of his narrative.

[11] Albert Strobel, "Die Passa-Erwartung als urchristliches Problem in Lc 17 20f.," *ZNW* 49 (1958): 188–95; Irving Jacobs, "Eleazar ben Yair's Sanction for Martyrdom," *JSJ* 13 (1982): 186.

[12] Albert Strobel thinks that FJ conveys the true date of the events and, accordingly, he suggests that the event unfolded in that manner because it was Passover. Honora H. Chapman and the present writer, almost contemporaneously though independently during the elaboration of their respective dissertations, discovered the fact that it is most likely that FJ presents a reversal of Passover through this artificial dating; cf. Albert Strobel, "Die Passa-Erwartung als urchristliches Problem in Lc 17 20f.," *ZNW* 49 (1958): 188–95; Honora H. Chapman, "A Myth for the World: Early Christian reception of Infanticide and Cannibalism in Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.199–219," Josephus Seminar (2000): 11n. 51. Online: http://josephus.yorku.ca/pdf/chapman2000.pdf; Federico M. Colautti, *Passover in the Works of Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

When considering FJ's presentation of the outbreak of the war, it seems that a certain connection with this feast could be identified. Certainly, especially in this matter, for apologetic reasons, FJ is somewhat confusing. Even if he does not conceal completely that the decision to interrupt the sacrifice for the emperor was a formal declaration of war against the Romans (*J.W.* 2.409); he presents the event in Caesarea as the true beginning of the confrontations (*J.W.* 2.284).

These events are clearly dated during the period between Passover and Pentecost, i.e., in the month of Artemisius. Consequently, the beginning of the Jewish war is also connected with this celebration for FJ.[13] In this way, FJ manifests the first signs that Passover is not mentioned simply by accident in his works. The revolution appears as the betrayal of what this feast actually represented: the rebels trying to gain freedom brought the people into slavery instead. Since freedom is one of the essential requirements for vindicating a concrete identity, FJ, by contrast, seems to suggest that the identity pursued by the rebels was false, and that the real identity is derived from the facts celebrated in this feast.

The reference to Passover in *J.W.* 4.402–3 appears to play the same role in his narrative. There is no better way to show the intrinsic wickedness of the Sicarii than to recount their attack on a Jewish town during this feast. Their identity appears as opposed to that of the true Jews, who were probably in Jerusalem for the feast.

The majority of the signs foretelling the destruction of the City and the Temple, which FJ collects in a special section (*J.W.* 6.288–300), are dated during the time between Passover and Pentecost, and the others are more or less connected with them. Even if the distinction between the correct and incorrect interpretation of these omens is not always explicitly expressed, it seems clear that those who chose the war as a means of liberation were wrong and instead, the sacred scribes were right (*J.W.* 6.291–95). In this way again, an implicit opposition is suggested by FJ: on one hand, the rebels and their failure to correctly understand the omens—most of them related with Passover—on the other, the scribes who correctly predicted what would happen in the future. Passover is again use virtually as a means to distinguish between the two groups.

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[13] The incidents begin with a provocation, which seems to remind the Jews that they were expelled from Egypt because of their leprosy. This was one of the accusations that some non-Jewish authors alleged regarding the exodus. The previous episode is the narration of Cestius Gallus' visit to Jerusalem during a Passover (*J.W.* 2.280–83). Whether this Passover is that of 65 or 66 CE is a matter of debate, however, the close connection of these two events in FJ's presentation is quite clear through the use of the temporal expression "Meanwhile . . ." (Ἐν δὲ τούτῳ).

Finally, there is another occasion in which FJ takes advantage of a Passover celebration to shed a bad light on the rebels (*J.W.* 5.99–105). The rebels inside the walls of the city were divided in three parties. Those defending themselves in the Temple allowed the followers of John of Gischala to enter into the court to worship, since it was Passover. These rebels actually wanted to get inside in order to attack the others and the supposedly cultic act became a bloodbath. At the same time, Titus laid siege to the area around Jerusalem, no doubt taking advantage of the Jewish festivity (*J.W.* 128–35).[14] This Roman "incorrectness" is covered by FJ in a very cunning way, in order to excuse his patrons. This is also a tendency discernable in FJ's presentation of Passover.

The next passage to be considered is ostensibly the best known and the most frequently cited by modern scholars regarding Passover (*J.W.* 6.421–27). In reality, the description that FJ conveys in this text is incidental to the context, and he does not appear to attempt a complete description of the Passover celebration. Almost all the elements reported serve to justify the figures he provides regarding the number of people who died during the siege. This fact notwithstanding, this information is highly significant in different ways.

As far as the identity of the Jews is concerned, it should be emphasized that the participants form small groups around each paschal victim, the purity requirements are very strict, and all foreigners are excluded. The fact that this passage is not directly concerned with a description of Passover, bestows a greater value on the information, i.e., FJ is not worried about concealing some elements, as he will be in other passages: for example, the fact that strangers are not allowed to participate. In addition, it is noteworthy that the small groups seem to be a very effective way of avoiding intrusions, as well as a means of strengthening unity in a concrete manner. The importance of purity in relation to Passover will be analyzed in a separate section.

The other references to Passover in *J.W.* seem to be only a means of dating the events,[15] and in their parallel passages in *Ant.*, FJ will add some new aspects, which indicate how this author utilizes this feast in order to convey his message. Therefore, it is necessary to scrutinize more carefully his presentation of Passover in *Ant.*

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[14] Actually, in *J.W.* 5.567 FJ plainly affirms that this episode occurred on the fourteenth of Xanthicus.

[15] Cf. *J.W.* 2.10; 2.224, 244

Passover in the Jewish Antiquities

The Biblical Paraphrase

It is not surprising that in this work FJ mentions this feast more frequently and in a more significant way, since it represents his attempt to depict the entire history of the Jewish people up until the beginning of the Jewish war.

The biblical paraphrase could provide a relatively certain point of departure to understand what is more significant about this feast for FJ, since all that he preserves, subtracts, or adds to the biblical text may be appreciated. A detailed analysis of each pericope will not be provided in this paper,[16] so as not to overburden the reader, since a presentation of the main results will suffice for the aim of this study.

In the Pentateuch Passover is referred to several times and FJ reports most of these references, even if the omissions are also significant. The Passover of Egypt is described—as usual for FJ—in an abbreviated form (*Ant.* 2.311–19). According to his style and the nature of this work, he does not furnish many instructions regarding the way in which the feast should be celebrated. Nevertheless, precisely because of this brevity, the aspects that he maintains as well as those that he adds are highly significant. Among these are the following: the connection between the sacrifice and the departure from Egypt is emphasized; a reference to purification is added to the source; the familial character of the feast is preserved; the meaning of the unleavened bread is changed.[17]

The fact that in two glosses, FJ affirms that "*they*" celebrate these feasts (Passover and Unleavened Bread) in his days (*Ant.* 2.313, 317), in the same way as it was celebrated in Egypt merits particular consideration; the real meaning of this statement will be studied later. Among the omissions, it is noteworthy that he does not affirm that the uncircumcised are not allowed to participate in the feast (Exod 12:43–49), nor does he mention the laws regarding the consecration of the first-borns (Exod 13:1–2, 11–16).

The next occasion when FJ paraphrases the biblical text regarding Passover is in his presentation of all the feasts (*Ant.* 3.248–51). He combines the legislation of Lev 23:5–14 and Num 28:16–25 there. Although he is once again more succinct, he appears to stress the same elements as in the previous section, i.e., the connection with the

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[16] This analysis can be found in Federico M. Colautti, *Passover in the Works of Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

[17] The word "unleavened bread" will be capitalized only if it refers to the feast itself.

departure from Egypt, the familial character and, in addition, the fact that nothing from the meal should be left for the next day. In this passage, it is striking that FJ clearly identifies himself and his contemporaries with the generation that left Egypt (*Ant.* 3.248). This use of "*we*" seems to reflect a definite identity, however, who is included or not remains an open question. This sort of "actualization" of the feast is found, as is well-known, in the rabbinic literature as well.[18]

Concerning the date of the celebration, FJ provides all the necessary elements for its correct calculation. In regard to other instructions, occasionally he is very precise, as for the date of the presentation of the first sheaf (*Ant.* 3.256), and on other occasions, somewhat imprecise (*Ant.* 2.317). This behavior could be an indication that FJ attempts to avoid the issues that could have raised a polemic among the different Jewish groups.

Finally, regarding the other references to Passover in the Pentateuch, it is noteworthy that FJ attributes to the so-called pilgrimage feast the purpose of strengthening the fraternal bonds among the people (*Ant.* 4.203–4). In this respect, it is significant that the gathering place should be chosen by the people and not by God (*Ant.* 4.203),[19] which makes the centralization of the cult so strongly presented in Deut 16:5–6 relative. The possibility of celebrating a Passover in the second month for those not prepared for it in the first is systematically omitted in the entire work of FJ. This fact notwithstanding, he mentions the first celebration of Passover in the desert one year after the departure from Egypt, following Num 9:1–14, where the biblical text refers to the aforementioned exemption.

The book of Joshua contains the account of the first celebration of Passover in the promised land (Josh 4–6). In addition to many other interesting aspects, what concerns the subject of this study are the following elements: the references to the circumcision are avoided (Josh 5:2–9), and a strong connection between the Passover of Egypt and that of Gilgal is suggested by the manner in which FJ re-works his source(s) (*Ant.* 5.20–21). This last aspect confers a greater meaning on the celebration of Passover, since it seems to commemorate the entire process of liberation from Egypt to the promised land. The etymology provided for the name Gilgal, "freedom," appears as a way to emphasize this statement (*Ant.* 5.34). In the same manner, the fact that FJ never makes a

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[18] Cf. *m. Pesaḥ.* 10:5.

[19] In *Ant.* 4.200 FJ says that it is God who chooses the place for the city where the Temple shall be erected, but he specifies that it shall be made known through prophecy.

distinction—regarding Passover—between the laws that are in force before and after the entrance into the promise land reinforces the probability of this hypothesis.

FJ then continues to report the other instances in which the biblical text narrates the celebration of Passover during the monarchic period, namely, that of Hezekiah (*Ant.* 9.260–75), as well as that of Josiah (*Ant.* 10.68–73). In the first account, FJ again demonstrates his concern regarding purity in relationship to Passover, since according to his composition of the narration, all the participants of the festivity are already in Jerusalem when the rites of purification are accomplished (*Ant.* 9.268–70). Consequently, the need for a celebration in the second month—as stated above—disappears, as well as the fact that the Levites slaughtered the animal for those who were not purified. Furthermore, FJ does not record that the Israelites continued to celebrate for one week more, nor does he mention the participation of the foreign residents. At the same time, he carefully clarifies that Hezekiah's intentions when he summoned the other tribes of Israel to come to Jerusalem for the festivity, are not political at all (*Ant.* 9.264).[20]

In the case of Josiah's Passover, the utilization of the source(s) is quite complicated. At times he diverges significantly from them (*Ant.* 10.65–67), but in other occasions, he is very close to their account (*Ant.* 10.71). The relevance of purity is reiterated again, and the fact that the Levites slaughtered the victims is not mentioned; instead, FJ only affirms that the priests guided the people (*Ant.* 10.72). It could be noteworthy for understanding FJ's *modus operandi* that, even if he never mentioned before the necessity that the victims for the paschal sacrifice should be born in the same year (cf. Exod 12:5), he takes this for granted here (*Ant.* 10.70).

The celebration of Passover following the exile is the last reference that FJ conveys from the time before the Second Temple period (*Ant.* 11.109–11). In this case, his use of the sources is also quite complicated, and a more intensive transformation of the sources could be appreciated when he narrates the celebration of Passover. However, some of the aspects already pointed out, as well as new ones, also emerge in this section. One of these is the insistence on purity, which FJ stresses once again in his account of the first Passover after the exile (*Ant.* 11.109). Prior to this, FJ mentions, probably relying on 1 Esd 4:62–63, a feast before the return from Babylon to Jerusalem and seems to identify it with a Passover (*Ant.* 11.66).

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[20] It may be for this reason that, even if he mentions that the Israelites were supposed to return to their former way of life (εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἐπανελθεῖν συνήθειαν), he does not use the word πολιτεία in this context, since it could have a political meaning.

This hypothesis of identification is supported by the fact that FJ indirectly dates it on the first month,[21] and assimilates its motives to those he afterwards attributes to the first Passover in Jerusalem following the exile (*Ant.* 11.66, 110). The reason for celebration is that the Jews could return to their land and live according to their ancestral laws. The mention of the ancestral laws is not at all accidental, nor is the reference to the different forms of government (πολιτεία) under which the Jewish people have lived during their history (*Ant.* 11.111–13). This connection, however, will be analyzed in a separate section.

Second Temple Period

It is somewhat curious that for the rest of the Persian period and during the entire Hellenistic era, FJ does not make any reference to the celebration of Passover. It is true, however, that there are not many references in the other sources for this period to actual celebrations of this feast.[22]

The beginning of the Roman presence in Palestine will be the occasion for FJ to add a reference to Passover into the narrative of *Ant.*, which he did not mention in the parallel passage of *J.W.* This addition, which actually consists of two different elements combined, is highly indicative of the role Passover will play in the unfolding of the events, leading to the onset of the Jewish war (*Ant.* 14.19–28).

While FJ accounts the conflicts between the two Hasmonean brothers, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, to obtain political power, he mentions two episodes that happened during the celebration of Passover, which emphasize the wickedness of what transpired. The first incident is the stoning of a certain Onias—a person well-regarded for his ability to stop the drought through his prayers—since he refuses to curse Aristobulus and his followers, and offers a prayer for both parties instead (*Ant.* 14.21–24). The second is the request of an exorbitant sum of money in order to provide the necessary victims for Passover to those enclosed in the city during the siege. In addition to their iniquity, after taking the

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[21] This date could be deducted from the fact that in *Ant.* 11.75, FJ states that the deported arrived in Jerusalem after seven months and they celebrated the feast of Tabernacles. In 1 Esd 8:60 and Ezra 8:31 it is said that the third wave of those exiled returned with the priest Ezra.

[22] The papyri of Elephantine are among the most famous examples; cf. Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1997), 123–28. It could be significant that this letter is apparently due to tension between the Jewish community and the local people.

money, they did not supply the requested animals in exchange (*Ant.* 14.25–27).

Prior to the narration of the first iniquity, FJ adds a short note regarding the "best-reputed people" (δοκιμώτατοι), who leave the country to go to Egypt (*Ant.* 14.21). In addition to the fact that in all probability, this really happened, since it is improbable that either FJ or his source invented such a statement, it is noteworthy that FJ reports a sort of "anti-exodus" in the time of Passover, and seems to suggest the possibility of emigrating in order to celebrate the feasts.

Concerning the first episode itself, FJ endeavors to show the importance of unity, especially through the prayer of Onias, and that the beginning of the process that will bring the people into slavery is due to the attempt to change the traditional form of government (*Ant.* 14.41). Thus, the connection between Passover and the system of government (πολιτεία) emerges again. Evidently, the internal divisions and the supposed attempt to alter the traditional way of ruling the nation are a serious attack against the "identity" of the Jews.

The second misdeed in the account has a similar function to the previous one. The gravity of this evil, however, is greater because they offended God himself. Actually, the people not only missed celebrating Passover, but they also hinder the priest from doing it. This episode is also known from the rabbinic literature,[23] but there it is not set in the context of Passover. This augments the probability that FJ is purposely utilizing the Passover motif to accentuate his message.

Once again, during the reign of Herod the Great all references to Passover disappear until the moment of his death and succession by his son Archelaus. This episode is related in both *J.W.* 2.1–13 and *Ant.* 17.200–218, with minor divergences. In this case, it is highly improbable that FJ dates the events in Passover merely in an artificial manner. Indeed, the death of Herod occurred at the beginning of spring and the turmoil of his succession could well have coincided with the time of Passover. Nevertheless, it is significant that FJ augmented his narration in *Ant.* and takes this opportunity to stress that Passover was the most important feast of the Jews, since at this celebration they sacrificed more than at any other festivity (*Ant.* 17.213).

On the other hand, the wrath of the people was in part due to the fact that Herod, some days before his death, had ordered the execution of the "doctors of the law," which incited some young men to destroy the image of an eagle that Herod had placed in the Temple. The way in which FJ narrates this episode masks its connection to Passover. However, it is

[23] Cf. *b. Soṭah* 49b; *b. Menaḥ.* 64b; *b. B. Qam.* 82b.

temporally close to this feast and ostensibly caused by the desire to "purify" the Temple for the celebration. FJ cannot present these aspects clearly, because they could show the relation between Passover and some anti-Roman feelings. The eagle, in fact, was not a neutral symbol but represented the image of the Roman Empire.[24]

The next reference to Passover seems to correspond again to another sort of milestone regarding the Roman presence in Palestine (*Ant.* 18.29–30). After the deposition and subsequent exile of Archelaus, Judea became a Roman province and Coponius was its first procurator. In concomitance with this further step toward the total extinction of the Jewish political autonomy, the Samaritans will perpetrate an attack on the Temple during the time of Passover, which will result in stricter regulations—according to FJ—with respect to persons entering the Temple.

The account is somewhat intricate, but the message it conveys appears quite clear: the rigid regulations for the admittance to the Temple have a historical reason. In addition, FJ seems to endeavor to transmit other complementary ideas, among which the problem of identity is prominent. Who was admitted and who was rejected? How was it possible to distinguish between Jews and Samaritans? These are some of the questions which seem to emerge from this short passage. Consequently, Passover may have been the best period of time to set this episode into context, since the matters addressed correspond well with the themes implied by this festivity. A possible corroboration of this hypothesis could be found in the previous context of this incident, where FJ makes a summary of four Jewish "philosophies" that were followed at that time. The mention of the Samaritans could be a way of completing the portrayal of the situation in Palestine by depicting the position of the Samaritans as antagonists of the Jews. This attempt to contaminate the Temple is another indication of the importance of purity in relation to Passover for FJ.

The visits of Vitellius to Jerusalem have provoked a notable debate among scholars, since the given chronology does not fit well with other known events. Basically, there are two positions that can be offered as a solution: on one hand, it is possible that FJ tells the same event twice; on the other, FJ may have altered the chronology, purposely or not. According to the observations already proposed in this essay, it appears

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[24] It could also be significant that the possible source of FJ for these passages, Nicolaus of Damascus, narrates this account in his work, *De Vita Sua,* saying that the disturbance originated because the Jews attacked the Greek population; Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism.* I. *From Herodotus to Plutarch* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974), no. 97, lines 53–64; Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923–1958) II A 90, F 136 (8–9) lines 16–28.

possible that FJ purposely alters the chronology of the events to conceal some aspects and to manifest others. Concretely, the first visit (*Ant.* 18.90–95), which according to FJ happened during a Passover, should have happened some months before; the second (*Ant.* 18.120–24), which FJ connects with an unidentified feast, should have happened during Passover 37 CE, since he receives the news regarding the death of Tiberius at that time.

The reason to set, in an artificial way, the first visit during a Passover could be apparent, since the people received Vitellius joyfully and he granted many benefits to them. In this way, FJ shows that good governors and peaceful crowds could live together, and the religious practices are not an impediment for their mutual relationship. The basis for not mentioning the name of the feast the Jews are celebrating during the second visit of Vitellius could stem from FJ's desire to dissimulate the fact that during Passover the nationalistic feelings were more enkindled and the tolerance to the signs of the foreign domination diminished. Actually, they ask Vitellius not to march with the standards through their land (*Ant.* 18.121).

The last reference to Passover, in *Ant.* 20.106, is a passage parallel to the one in *J.W.* 2.224. The provocation of a soldier during this feast will unleash a sequence of turmoil that lasts until the next Passover, which is only explicitly mentioned in *J.W.* 2.244 and not in *Ant.* 20.133, where FJ simply says that the Jews were celebrating a feast. This year of disorders does not contribute greatly to the purpose of this paper. It is only noteworthy because it shows how the feasts, perhaps especially Passover, were an opportunity for disturbances and that FJ attempts to mitigate this bad impression by blaming a Roman soldier for his offensive behavior, and the masses for having abandoned the celebration to engage in the fight.

Of more relevance than the prior account is the way in which FJ concludes his narration in *Ant.* 20.255–57, and invites the reader to read his previous work, namely *J.W.*, in order to know what happened afterwards.[25] In that passage, as well as in the parallel passage of *J.W.* 2.279, he states that many Jews were forced to emigrate and to abandon their customs or their ancestral custom,[26] due to the terrible situation created by the rebels

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[25] If the intended reader would follow FJ's advice, he should begin reading *J.W.* with the passage that recounts the event which happened during Passover 65 or 66 CE.

[26] Henry St. J. Thackeray translates this word in *J.W.* 2.279 as "haunts," and Louis H. Feldman in *Ant.* 20.256 as "country." Either the word "custom" or "character" would seem preferable, in the sense of what characterizes something, because it agrees with the use of this term in the rest of FJ's work, and because it is the only meaning of the word ἔθος, which seems the most correct reading—

and the bad Roman governors. This sort of anti-exodus is a means of justifying, especially in *Ant.*, the beginning of the war, and also it manifests the concern FJ could have had that the Jews could be assimilated into the customs of their new countries.

Finally, *Ant.* 3.321 should be mentioned in order to report all the instances where FJ refers to this feast. The passage concerns the fidelity with which the Jews follow the law of Moses, and one example of this is that no priest dares to eat a crumb of wheat brought in during the days of the feast of the Unleavened Bread. The reason why did they not eat wheat is not clear. Henry St. J. Thackeray supposed that the wheat was brought in the form of leavened loaves, so for that reason, it was unlawful to eat them.[27] Another explanation could be that the wheat was of foreign origin, hence not kosher, and because of this, it was unlawful to eat it.[28] According to the second hypothesis, the relation between Passover, the law of Moses, purity, and—consequently—identity, appears more evident.

Passover and Purity

FJ is not normally considered an author who can contribute to a better understanding of the purity system and its importance for Judaism. Actually, he is ignored in virtually all the studies regarding this subject. Nevertheless, FJ demonstrates an interest in "purity," which justifies a more accurate study than could be accomplished in this essay. It should be sufficient for the scope of this work to show that the connection between Passover and purity is highly significant for him.

A brief survey of the texts concerning Passover and purity could be useful in appreciating the validity of the previous statement. The first text is precisely the account of the escape from Egypt (*Ant.* 2.312). Here the allusion to purification is brief but significant, considering that it is an addition to the biblical text. It deals with the purification of the houses, which could perhaps be an analogy to the purification of the Temple, i.e., a fitting environment for the manifestation of God's holiness. The need

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between ἠθῶν or ἐθῶν—from the point of view of textual criticism; cf. Henry St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus, J.W.* 2.279n. 2; Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus, Ant.* 20.256n. 1.

27 Cf. Henry St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus, Ant.* 3.321n. *d.*

28 Actually, the translation "crumb" seems to be more adequate in this context than "loaf." An analogous case would be that of the oil which the Jews apparently did not accept from foreigners (*J.W.* 2.591–92; *Ant.* 12.119–20; *Life* 74–76). cf. Martin Goodman, "Kosher Olive Oil in Antiquity," in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History* (ed. P. R. Davies and R. T. White; JSOTSup 100; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990), 227–45.

for purification can be explained simply by the fact that they found themselves in a foreign country, which provided a sure source of impurity.

The second consideration is that FJ systematically removes the possibility of celebrating a second Passover for those who are either not in a state of purity during the first month, or are unable to celebrate for other reasons. This omission is not easy to evaluate in relation to the problem of purity. On one hand, at times he contradicts his source(s), declaring that all were fit to celebrate (*Ant.* 9.268–72); on the other hand, he does not deny that some were excluded from the feast due to problems of impurity (*J.W.* 6.426). It could be assumed that FJ preferred to have the impure wait for a year, rather than having to devalue the feast by granting a second, low-key opportunity.

Continuing with the list of relevant passages, one finds the three celebrations in the pre- and post-exilic periods. The two reformer kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, celebrate the feast of Passover at the correct time, and each occasion lends itself to a purification of the people and of the land (*Ant.* 9.268–72; 10.68–72). Similarly, those who return from exile are not divided by this author into pure and impure, but all are portrayed as ready to take part in the sacrifice (*Ant.* 11.109–11).

In no way can these occasions be termed secondary. On the contrary, these are landmarks in the history of Israel, and examples as to how the people and their rulers should behave. Given the relevance of these events, the importance of purity on these occasions can be assumed, because FJ disregards other aspects, but does not wish to omit this one. It seems equally worth noting that, in the three cases when the people are in a state of purity, he avoids the divisions and distinctions among the people that are present in his source(s).

It is now necessary to proceed to an event occurring at Passover toward the beginning of this era. FJ recounts that a group of Samaritans scattered human bones in the Temple (*Ant.* 18.29–30). This incident, in spite of being exceedingly mysterious, is a further proof of the importance of purity at Passover, since one must suppose that the Samaritans, in their desire to do real harm, would have chosen the most significant moment to do it. Thus the impurity undoubtedly caused by the bones would have been a great scandal in connection with the celebration of that Passover.

On another occasion, the leaders (πρῶτοι) among the Jews ask Vitellius not to enter Jerusalem with foreign troops during a feast—as suggested above—most probably Passover (*Ant.* 18.120–24). This request indicates that purity at the celebrations of Passover was essential, not only for FJ, but for all in general, since the requirement does not seem

exceptional.[29] That FJ does not explicitly say this was a Passover could be explained by the fact that the petition would sound somewhat suspicious if it occurred precisely on the feast of the liberation of Israel.

The provocative act in Caesarea of a Greek, who sacrifices birds on an inverted jar at the entrance to the synagogue (*J.W.* 2.289–90), can be weighed equally. This is considered a profanation of the place (μεμιασμένων τοῦ χορίου), which unleashes the anger of some who are present. Once again, without being the central theme of the passage, the preoccupation with purity at the time of Passover reappears. It should be noted that, even though he is not dealing with Jerusalem or the Temple, he speaks, nevertheless, of impurity using a technical term such as μιαίνω (to profane).

The last text regards FJ's famous description of the requirements for celebrating Passover. Among all he lists, one of the most important is ritual purity, the absence of which automatically excludes one from participation in the Passover feast (*J.W.* 6.425–27). Foreigners, who cannot participate in the sacrifice, are treated in the same way as the impure (cf. *m. Ṭehar.* 7:6; *t. Pesaḥ.* 7:13).

FJ's tendency to rationalize the meaning of the laws is well-known. For this reason, it would be strange if he were to make an exception in the case of purity. Considering the sacred and profane use of the semantic derivations of καθαρεύω, the element most common to both areas seems to be that of "purity as an absence of mixture." Hence, for FJ it is probable that the essential element, which makes the whole system of ritual purity logical, is the absence of mixture.

Therefore, it is likely that ritual purity is viewed by FJ as a return to a primordial state (cf. *Ag. Ap.* 2.179–81), to an integrity dictated by the moral law (cf. *Ag. Ap.* 2.192). For this reason, another essential aspect of purity for FJ is the absence of foreign elements within the community (*Ag. Ap.* 2.210) and within the priestly families (*Ant.* 3.258, 276–79; *Ag. Ap.* 1.30–32). As a consequence of this, there is a severity in the laws against mixed marriages (cf. *Ant.* 11.139–43), and in the need for total acceptance of Jewish laws in order to become part of the Jewish community (*Ag. Ap.* 2.210).

The fact that he stresses purity in relation to Passover suggests that this feast especially requires no blend or mixtures. In this sense, even if he is not always clear when affirming the exclusion of the uncircumcised from Passover, he states this exclusion firmly though in an indirect manner. Consequently, what at a first glance appears as a certain laxity on

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[29] It says explicitly that it is a tradition (πάτριον) which establishes this prohibition.

the part of FJ regarding the admittance of the non-Jewish to the celebration, is actually a cunning way of presenting the prohibition in an acceptable form to his readers, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

The significance of purity for FJ as disclosed in this study is obviously connected with the theme of identity. The states of purity and impurity create a boundary that automatically excludes the non-Jews and place a condition on the Jews. The impure Jew could be excluded from the cult on some occasion, hence also from Passover, just as a non-Jew is on principle. Certainly, this impurity does not necessarily imply a moral transgression for the Jew.

Once the argument of "boundaries" is proposed, it is necessary to focus on the whole system, which actually established the borders of the community of those considered Jews, what FJ sometimes calls *politeia.*

The *Politeia* of the Jews and Passover

In contrast to the previous section, FJ is one of the most frequently utilized sources in regard to determining what the Jewish *politeia/politeuma* actually was.[30] The most debated question is whether the Jews in the Greco-Roman cities attempted to achieve a special status, in which their way of life was recognized, or whether they pretended to be equal to the other Greek citizens.[31]

G. Lüderitz, analyzing the epigraphic material at his disposition, endeavors to determine the meaning that the word *politeuma* would have had. According to him, it is time to forget the historiographic legend of

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[30] Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937–1980)* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984), 1027; Daniel R. Schwartz, "Josephus on the Jewish Constitution and Community," *SCI* 7 (1983–1984): 30–50; Hubert Cancik, "Teokratie und Priesterherrschaft. Die mosaische Verfassung bei Flavius Josephus, c. Apionem 2, 157–98," in *Religionstheorie und Politische Theologie* III: *Theokratie* (ed. J. Taubes; München: Wilhelm Fink, 1987), 65–77; Yehoshua Amir, "Josephus and the Mosaic 'Constitution'," in *Politics and Theopolitics in the Bible and Postbiblical Literature* (ed. H. Graf Reventlow et al.; JSOTSup 171; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 13–27; Lucio Troiani, "The ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑ of Israel in the Graeco-Roman Age," in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period* (ed. J. Sievers and F. Parente; StPB 41; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 11–22; Steve Mason, "'Should Any Wish to Enquire Further' (*Ant.* 1.25): The Aim and Audience of Josephus's Judean Antiquities/Life," in *Understanding Josephus. Seven Perspectives* (ed. S. Mason; JSPSup 32; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 64–103.

[31] Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus, Ant.* 19.281n. *d*; Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (TSAJ 7; Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), 358–64.

the *politeuma* being civil organizations recognized by the Greeks' *polis*. On the other hand, having considered the great variety of meaning that this term can entail, he seeks to provide an explanation for what would have been the *politeuma* of the Jews of Berenice, since it is the only true attestation to an organization with an apparent civil recognition inside a *polis*. Although he based his conclusions upon various deductions, which are not liable to an exhaustive verification—e.g., the meaning of the word "amphitheater" in the case of the city of Berenice—the *politeuma* is for him a kind of council (βουλὴ), similar to those of other cities of the Cyrenaica.[32]

Without pretending to resolve this difficult problem, the conclusions of Daniel R. Schwartz will be adopted, since they appear to be a balanced evaluation of the information. He demonstrates that FJ conceives the future of the Jewish community in the Roman Empire to be a *politeia/ politeuma,* guided by a high priest (προστασία). Consequently, in order to expose this form of government in the proper manner, FJ antedated it to the stages prior to the destruction of the Temple. Thus, his model does not appear as an innovation, which is exactly his criticism of the rebels.[33]

It is noteworthy that in *J.W.* only the word *politeia* is used and *politeuma* does not appear. The first word—in the few instances that it is mentioned—clearly possesses a technical meaning, which oscillates between form of government (e.g., aristocracy, monarchy, etc.; cf. *J.W.* 1.169) and right of Roman citizenship.[34] The verb πολιτεύω is present only once, and

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[32] Without questioning G. Lüderitz's hypothesis, from the analysis of FJ's references to the *politeuma,* it does not seem that this meaning would apply in his works. Christine Gerber's definition, i.e., a *politeuma* is a theocracy that includes all the people who follow the law of Moses, seems to fit better with FJ's conception; cf. Gert Lüderitz, *Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika mit einem Anhang von Joyce M. Reynolds* (BTAVA.B 53; Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1983), 151, 154, 158; Idem, "What is a Politeuma?" in *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (ed. J. W. van Henten and P. W. van der Horst; AGJU 21; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 183–222; ; Christine Gerber, *Ein Bild des Judentums für Nichtjuden von Flavius Josephus: Untersuchungen zu seiner Schrift Contra Apionem* (AGJU 40; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 338–59.

[33] Daniel R. Schwartz, "Josephus on the Jewish Constitution and Community," *SCI* 7 (1983–1984): 49–52.

[34] When the word *politeia* means "Roman citizenship," it is a technical term, which can be easily understood, since there is a copious information regarding the evolution of this institution. Part of the imperial policy was to grant citizenship to different people, as a strategy of expansion; cf. Adrian N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1980).

expresses the action of making a treaty or pact (*J.W.* 1.513).[35]

In *Ant.* the word *politeia,* while preserving the most technical meaning such as in *J.W.,* is opened to a series of aspects that reflect the constitutive reality of the Jews, i.e., what characterized the Jews as a distinct community (cf. *Ant.* 1.10). The word *politeuma,* which normally is analogous to *politeia,* excluding the concept of "citizenship," is also found in *Ant.*[36]

Christine Gerber maintains that a distinction can be made between the terms *politeia* and *politeuma,* since *politeuma* is never used to designate a "constitution" or "administrative organization," but rather a community of persons. In the case of the Jews, this *politeuma* is not united because of the place in which they live, but because of the law that they follow.[37] Even if this distinction is valid, it cannot be denied that in some contexts of FJ's works, the words *politeia* and *politeuma* are interchangeable (cf. *Ant.* 1.5, 10). For this reason, a strict separation of these two terms is not particularly useful in this study.

The use of this term occurs more frequently in *Ag. Ap.*, since the purpose of this work is to defend the antiquity and the value of the *politeia/politeuma* of the Jews (e.g., *Ag Ap.* 2.226).

Accordingly, when FJ refers to the *politeia/politeuma* of the Jews in *Ant.* and *Ag. Ag.*, these terms are often accompanied by a reference to the laws (νόμοι) (*Ant.* 3.213; *Ag. Ap.* 1.250), or more specifically to the laws of the Fathers (πάτριοι νόμοι; πάτρια) (*Ant.* 11.140; 12.240, 280; 13.3).

Taking into consideration all the instances in which FJ connects, directly or indirectly, the celebration of Passover with the law, the law of Moses, the ancestral laws, etc., it is fair to imagine that this connection is not at all accidental. The passage in which, after narrating the first Passover subsequent to the return from the exile, he enumerates the different forms of government of the Jewish people during their history merits particular attention (*Ant.* 11.111–12). The analogy between the situation after the exile and the one FJ probably desires to regain, after the destruction of the Temple, is obvious. Hence, the regime he presents as the best in this pericope could be the one he proposed for the reorganization of the Jews after the war.

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[35] In regard to the way FJ utilizes this verb in other parts of his works cf. Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 347–52.

[36] Bernhard Schröder, *Die 'väterlichen Gesetze.' Flavius Josephus als Vermittler von Halachah an Griechen und Römer* (TSAJ 53; Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 123n. 185.

[37] Christine Gerber, *Ein Bild des Judentums für Nichtjuden von Flavius Josephus: Untersuchungen zu seiner Schrift Contra Apionem* (AGJU 40; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 347–48.

The final question is whether this *politeia/politeuma* of the Jews was only a sort of universal brotherhood, as proposed by the stoics, or a concrete community with defined borders. Several scholars have demonstrated that the second option is the most likely one.[38] Consequently, the celebration of Passover most probably has played a role as one of the elements defining who was a Jew. In fact, it celebrates the beginning of this *politeia/politeuma* and several "rebirths" of it throughout Jewish history. The same evocative quality of this celebration depicted in FJ's writings indicates that it was not merely a utopian ideal, but a very concrete part of the common and communal Jewish life.

The fact that FJ stresses the theme of unity and harmony in relation to Passover could be considered as evidence of the probability of this hypothesis. Another clue supporting this suggestion is the fact that one of the daily practices that FJ presents as part of their *politeia* is to pray twice a day, and the content of this prayer is giving thanks to God for having brought them out of Egypt, as well as asking that he continue to bless them. Consequently, if each day the remembrance of the first Passover was so fundamental to the identity of the Jews, its annual celebration should have also been at least as important as this daily practice.

Passover after the Destruction of Temple in 70 CE

The two glosses already mentioned (*Ant.* 2.313, 317), regarding the celebration of Passover and Unleavened Bread at the time FJ wrote *Ant.*, should now be analyzed.

In these passages, FJ affirms that "*we*" sacrifice (θύομεν) up until his day, in the same manner as they did the time of the departure from Egypt. He continues that the feast is called "Passover," and "*they*" keep for eight days a feast called feast of "unleavened bread." The fact that he states that they eat unleavened bread did not raise any difficulty among the scholars, since it a custom not difficult to observe, but that instead they sacrifice the paschal victim was considered an anachronistic statement for the time when FJ is writing.

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38 Paul Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jews in Flavius Josephus' Paraphrase of the Bible* (TSAJ 69; Tübingen: Mohr, 1998), 217–30; Christine Gerber, *Ein Bild des Judentums für Nichtjuden von Flavius Josephus: Untersuchungen zu seiner Schrift Contra Apionem* (AGJU 40; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 367–79; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999), 341–49; Katell Berthelot, "Κοινωνία et Φιλανθρωπία dans le *Contre Apion* de Flavius Josèphe," in *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium Brüssel 1998* (ed. J. U. Kalms and F. Siegert; MJSt 4; Münster: LIT, 1999), 94–123.

The major obstacle to plainly accepting this assertion is that the end of the sacrificial cult is normally connected with the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.[39] Nevertheless, there are several clues suggesting that, perhaps, the sacrificial cult did not totally cease, but a minor form might have continued in an official and permanent way.[40]

Even if the arguments *ex silentio* should be employed carefully, in this case it is truly surprising that the NT does not echo the end of the sacrificial era, and lacks any reference to the polemics that were common from the middle of the first century CE on.[41] In addition, it is well-known that in the Diaspora, Passover was actually sacrificed as is demonstrated by the Elephantine papyri and the witness of Philo.[42]

Consequently, it is not absurd to think that in this passage FJ was indeed referring to an actual practice of his day or to a desire to implement it. In fact, his presentation of Passover does not contradict or create any impediment to the realization of this feast after 70 CE, it is enough to recall how he does not emphasize—as indicated above—the centralization of the cult.

The reference in the rabbinic literature to a certain man called Todos (*y.* Moʿed Qaṭ 3:1; 81d), probably Theodosious of Rome,[43] who seems to have attempted to perform the paschal sacrifice in Rome, is a good example of what FJ and the Jews in Rome actually did, or proposed to do, even if the identification of Todos with FJ is highly implausible.

Conclusions

What appeared at the beginning of this research to be an evident statement, i.e., the utility of the pilgrim feast—according to FJ—in

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[39] Cf. Emil Schürer et al., *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1973), 1:521–23; Alexander Guttmann, "The End of the Jewish Sacrificial Cult," *HUCA* 38 (1967): 137–48.

[40] Cf. Kenneth W. Clark, "Worship in the Jerusalem Temple after A.D. 70," *NTS* 6 (1959–1960): 269–80; repr. in *The Gentile Bias and Other Essays* (NovTSup 54; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 9–20.

[41] Actually, Justin is frequently adduced as a witness of the end of the sacrificial cult after 70 CE, but he reflects the situation after 135 CE when the sacrificial cult totally ceased.

[42] Cf. Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1997), 123–28; *Spec.* 2.145 where Philo affirms that the whole nation performs this rite; hence, it was also enacted in the Diaspora.

[43] Cf. D. Sperber, "Theodosius of Rome," *EncJud* 15:1102.

strengthening the Jewish identity, now appears as a manifold argument, which deserves attention in order to better appreciate FJ's message.

First of all it seems quite clear that Passover was already a literary *topos*, capable of serving as a background for one of the most important concepts that FJ desires to convey, namely, that those who attempted to gain political independence, in reality brought destruction to the people. A consequence of this presentation is that the correct or incorrect interpretation of the meaning of Passover outlines the boundary between the true and false members of the Jewish people.

This basic idea has other repercussions according to FJ's account of the events. He tends to disengage Passover from its political implications and show that this feast strives primarily to strengthen a religious identity. This fact notwithstanding, Passover serves in FJ's historiography—especially in *Ant.*—as a means to stake out the process of the gradual loss of political autonomy, which entails a correspondent crisis of identity.

FJ's exposition of Passover also seems to endeavor to conceal certain differences in the way of celebrating the feast, while in regard to other aspects, he displays a great precision, e.g., in the indication of some calendric matters. This tendency, together with a certain relativity regarding the centralization of the cult, suggests that FJ desires to present the feast as feasible, even after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

Bearing in mind that FJ insists on the significance of purity and of the *politeia/politeuma* in relating these arguments to Passover, it could be proposed that FJ considered Passover as one of the fundamental practices which were necessary to preserve and strengthen the Jewish identity. Hence, it is not at all surprising that he attempted to celebrate it in Rome, or at least, he proposed to observe it in order to invigorate the Jewish identity, which was most likely compromised after the great defeat in the war.

Josephus on the Burning of the Temple, the Flavian Triumph, and the Providence of God

Paul Spilsbury

Introduction

Josephus is frequently accused of being a shameless opportunist whose talent for self-preservation was matched only by his vainglory and his treachery. His remarkable escape from death after the fall of Jotapata is only the most famous example of his ability to squeeze personal advantage out of the rock of calamity (*J.W.* 3.351–54). However, there are numerous other places in both the *War* and the *Life* where he records an array of other measures, frequently including cruelty and deception, to extract himself from various kinds of difficulties. In the closing scenes of his *Jewish War* completed under Flavianic patronage, there are two additional incidents that seem to confirm the charges laid against him by modern historians. The first is his apparently sycophantic description of Titus' unwillingness to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem (*J.W.* 6.236–66), and the second is his cold and heartless description of the parade of Jewish captives and sacred objects during the ostentatious triumph of Vespasian and Titus in Rome at the conclusion of the war (*J.W.* 7.123–62). In both of these sequences Josephus appears to be little more than a Flavian puppet, a mere mouthpiece for the kind of official propaganda that the new imperial house required to establish its prestige in the eyes of a wary public.

This impression raises questions about the status of Josephus' relationship in later life with the people and values of his youth. Did his services for the Flavian house signal a profound apostasy from the traditions of his fathers, or do we find in Josephus a more complex example of the compromises and accommodations so often the portion of those whose misfortune it is to live under the yoke of empire?

Titus and the Burning of the Temple

The *Jewish War*'s description of the events surrounding the fateful burning of the Temple is notorious for its disingenuousness[1] Josephus reports that on the night before the event itself Titus held a council of war in which he argued against the advice of most of those present that the Temple should be spared. In the actual event, though, the temple was burned to the ground after an unruly soldier, "moved by some supernatural impulse," (*J.W.* 6.252) threw a firebrand into the sanctuary. Titus' personal efforts to extinguish the fire, we are told, were thwarted by the recalcitrance of his men (*J.W.* 6.260). The majority of modern historians find this account of events implausible.[2] G. Alon states unambiguously that "we cannot avoid the almost certain conclusion that *the Temple was put to the torch at Titus' behest.*"[3] His argument is based on: (1) comparison with other sources, most notably Sulpicius Severus' *Chronica,* perhaps derived from Tacitus' lost *Histories,* which attributes the decision to burn the Temple to Titus himself;[4] (2) examination of the events immediately preceding and following the burning of the Temple, which indicate that it was always part of the Roman intention;[5] and (3) reference to indications in other parts of Josephus' works where Josephus himself betrays that he knew Titus was to blame for the burning of the Temple (e.g., *J.W.* 7.1; *Ant.* 20.250).[6] Alon's conclusion is that Josephus distorted the truth and "adjusted" his history to meet "the demands of his benefactors."[7]

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[1] Price 1992 refers to some of the details of Josephus' story as absurd (170–71).

[2] See, for example, Alon 1977, 252–68; Barclay 1996, 353–54; Goodman 1987, 238; Jones 1984, 54–55; Montefiore 1962; Price 1992, 170–71; Weiler 1968; Yavetz 1975. A notable exception is Schürer 1973, 1:506–7.

[3] Alon 1977, 253. Emphasis original.

[4] On Sulpicius Severus' account, see Bernays 1885 and Montefiore 1962.

[5] Most notable are the facts that Titus executed all the priests (*J.W.* 6.322), gave permission for the sack of the city (*J.W.* 353), and did not punish soldiers who killed the inhabitants of Jerusalem indiscriminately (*J.W.* 6.404). Three years later Vespasian ordered the destruction of Temple of Onias in Egypt (*J.W.* 7.421).

[6] *J.W.* 7.1 indicates that Titus gave orders for "the whole city and the temple to be razed to the ground." In *Ant.* 20.250 Josephus states plainly that "Titus captured and set fire to the temple and the city."

[7] Alon 1977, 253.

H. Montefiore followed I. M. J. Valeton[8] in the suggestion that Titus ordered that the Temple should be spared while knowing full well that it would not be. In this way, so it is argued, Titus cunningly achieved the double purpose of appearing to be clement and at the same time of carrying out the requisite military objective, namely of destroying this strategic centre of Jewish resistance. According to this theory, then, Josephus' picture of the council was formally accurate, but "misleading in impression."[9] Z. Yavetz, has argued that Josephus' account of the burning of the Temple must be seen within his general tendency to portray Titus in a positive light.[10] Josephus emphasized three major qualities of Titus: political astuteness and diplomatic skill (*J.W.* 4.32, 498), organizational talent and distinction in military operations (*J.W.* 5.52, 53, 61; 3.485–503; 4.70, 112–20).[11] Josephus did not hide Titus' ruthlessness, but in general hoped to present him as a "true Roman who would punish rebels without pity but would do his utmost to spare the peace-loving population."[12]

Most of all, Josephus tried to depict Titus as τὸ φιλάνθρωπον φύσει (*J.W.* 6.324, 357). It is surely more than coincidence that in the late 70s in Rome (when Josephus must have been finalizing his work on the *Jewish War*)[13] Titus was trying to rehabilitate his own image "from obedient but dissolute son to pious and responsible successor."[14] Suetonius states that Titus' murder of Aulus Caecina "incurred such odium at the time that hardly anyone ever came to the throne with so evil a reputation or so much against the desires of all" (*Titus* 6.2). Later he adds, ". . . people not only thought, but openly declared, that he would be a second Nero" (*Titus* 7.1). Opportunities to establish a reputation for generosity arose very soon after his accession to the throne in the form of the eruption of Vesuvius on 24 August 79 and in the fire and epidemic in Rome that followed in

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[8] Valeton 1899, 94.

[9] Montefiore 1962, 162. Sulpicius Severus's account is seen to have the opposite effect. It was formally incorrect, but more accurate with regard to Titus' actual intention.

[10] Josephus' depiction of Titus is in marked contrast to the views expressed in the Talmud and Midrashim where the verdict is "unanimously negative" (Yavetz 1975, 413).

[11] Yavetz 1975, 414.

[12] Yavetz 1974, 418.

[13] On the date of publication for *J.W.*, see Schürer 1973, 1:47–48.

[14] Griffin 2000, 48. On Titus' poor public image in Rome before his accession see Yavetz 1974, 427–30. On Titus' status and circumstances in Rome from 71, see Crook 1951, 164–72.

short order.[15] More than generosity, though, "the attribute that Titus most needed to acquire in the public eye was *clementia*."[16] Suetonius describes various measures taken by Titus to bolster his claim to clemency among the Roman elite (Suetonius, *Titus* 9.1; see also Dio LXVI 19.1–2).[17] Even outside the elite circles in Rome, Titus would probably have appreciated any effort to change his image into *clemens*. As Z. Yavetz has stated, "Josephus must have know the situation and as a faithful client understood the hint."[18] The implication is that Josephus' portrayal of Titus reflects the needs of Titus in Rome at the time the *War* was written, rather than the historical reality in Judea a decade earlier.

Yavetz, however, is troubled by the observation that "history books were never a major means of propaganda." This leads him to the more dubious conclusion that Josephus "genuinely respected Titus and praised his benefactor on his own initiative."[19] More recently B. Chilton has offered a more compelling explanation for Josephus' praise of Titus. Josephus flattered both Vespasian and Titus with the hope that they would in due course allow the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and the reestablishment of a Jewish state under the general leadership of the priestly aristocracy.[20] According to Chilton, Josephus "deliberately frames his narrative so as to convey the conviction that the Flavians desired to preserve the Temple, and that only an orderly priesthood could maintain it."[21] Chilton imagines that Josephus hoped for an arrangement with the Flavians similar to the one the Romans had with the Hasmoneans. He adds, "Josephus openly imagines conditions under which sacrifice might be offered again in Jerusalem. It is for that reason that his own priesthood is crucial to him, and that Titus's innocence in the cultic arson must be stressed."[22] Whether or not these were indeed Josephus' motives is now impossible to know. However, the suggestion does alert us to the possi-

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15 On Titus' reputation for generosity, see Griffin 2000, 49–51.

16 Griffin 2000, 51.

17 Cf. Griffin 2000, 51–52. While Suetonius was apparently satisfied with Titus' rehabilitation, Seneca was of the opinion that Titus' reputation for clemency was preserved primarily by his early death, *De Clementia* 1.9.

18 Yavetz 1975, 430.

19 Yavetz 1975, 431.

20 Chilton 1992, 78. Chilton goes so far as to suggest that Josephus may have been "angling for actual appointment to the high priesthood" (77). On priestly aristocracy as Josephus' ideal constitution, see Spilsbury 1998, 161–70.

21 Chilton 1992, 77.

22 Chilton 1992, 79.

bility that there may have been other things on Josephus' mind besides crude self-preservation.

The Flavian Triumph

If an agenda to ingratiate himself with Titus, so as to win imperial support for the reestablishment of the Jewish state in Judea was what motivated Josephus to describe Titus' actions as he did, we are still left with the need to explain Josephus' rather cold description of the parading of the Jewish defeat in the triumph of Vespasian and Titus (*J.W.* 7.132–57).[23] Perhaps it might be argued that Josephus did not want to introduce any note of censure into his description of this most important of Roman vanities.[24] After all he had already absolved Titus of blame for the firing of the Temple—it would hardly take much greater effort to pass over in silence the parading of the Menorah, the table of shewbread and the golden trumpets through the streets of Rome. However, Josephus was in no way averse to expressing deep emotion at the tragedy of the war (e.g., *J.W.* 1.9–12).[25] And we can only but imagine the feelings of a priest at the sight of the sacred objects being subjected to such indignities.[26]

Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the importance of the triumph to the people of Rome. As R. Brilliant has shown, this kind of spectacle "provided all Romans with the opportunity to affirm their cohesiveness and their superiority over 'others' through the agency of the triumphator."[27] It is thus perhaps not entirely surprising that in the "presence" of such glorified and ritualized aggression designed in large measure to emphasize the humiliation of the vanquished[28] our narrator should have found he was able only to give a neutral description of events.

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[23] Rajak 1983, 218–21.

[24] On the Roman triumph, see Bergmann 1999; Brilliant 1999; Chapman 2001; Coleman 1999; Payne 1962.

[25] For an analysis and critique of Josephus' emotional outbursts and their effects on his reliability as a historian, see Mader 2000, 2–5.

[26] On the profound significance for Jews of the time of the Menorah especially, see Goodenough 1953, 86, 158, 216; 1954, 71–98. Also Eltester, 1957; Haran and Strauss 1972; Wischnitzer 1969.

[27] Brilliant 1999, 222.

[28] Coleman 1999: ". . . humiliation of the conquered enemy was a prominent feature: prisoners of war and hostages were on show, and sometimes the relatives of the conquering king were displayed in chains like slaves . . . . So degrading were these processions that some defeated monarchs attempted modes of escape of varying degrees of desperation . . ." (239–40). See also Brilliant 1999, 227.

For the triumph was indeed a kind of theatrical reenactment of the violence that destroyed Jerusalem. Moving platforms several storeys high wound their way through the streets of Rome displaying scenes from different stages of the campaign.[29] In many cases the actors were the vanquished themselves. And displayed along with the violence and subjugation were the *manubiae*—the spoils of war, including most dramatically, as we have already seen, the sacred items from the holy of holies itself. Indeed, H. H. Chapman has shown that by emphasizing the spectacle of the triumph Josephus was in effect drawing attention both to the grandeur of the temple and to the tragedy that had befallen the Jewish people and their city.[30]

When Josephus came to describe these events several years after the fact he would have been aware that the triumph was but part of a much larger picture. It is well known that Vespasian and his sons needed to convince the Roman people of the legitimacy of their claim to imperial power.[31] The Jewish revolt supplied them with some of the political capital they needed. M. Goodman has argued that Flavianic propaganda emphasized the restoration of the *Pax Deorum* by the defeat of the Jews. The implication was that the Roman pantheon had been disturbed by the Jerusalem Temple and now "rejoiced in its destruction."[32] By exaggerating the magnitude of the war they were able to highlight their own glorious victory. A great deal was made of the triumphal procession celebrating the victory over tiny Judea. New coins were stuck bearing the legend *IVDAEA CAPTA*.[33] A series of victory arches with graphic reliefs and inscriptions trumpeted the Flavian victory over the Jews.[34] The *fiscus*

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[29] On the *pegmata* used in the Flavian triumph, Brilliant 1999, 227.

[30] Chapman 2001. Rajak 1983, 219 suggests that Josephus ended his final book of *J.W.* not with the triumph, but with the story of Masada in an effort to bring some king of balance to the final stages of his account. Chapman finds this suggestion unconvincing.

[31] On Flavian propaganda after the war, see Goodman 1987, 236–38.

[32] Goodman 1987, 237. When the temple was captured the troops offered sacrifice to their standards in the outer court (*J.W.* 6.316) as a deliberate act of desecration (238).

[33] See Mattingly and Sydenham 1968, 68, 73–74, 127, 131 and Plate 2.29.

[34] See Dessau 1962, nos. 264 and 265. Also Brilliant 1999, 225–26; Colledge 2000, 970–71; Haran and Strauss 1972, 1363; Leon 1960, 29–30. Toynbee 1965, 55–56. On the significance of the various triumphal monuments erected by the Romans, Brilliant 19991 writes: "arches, columns, cuirassed and equestrian statues, narrative relief cycles, and paintings . . . proclaimed both the alleged *realia* and the symbolic truth of Roman victory and the vanity of the victors" (222).

Iudaicus, the tax imposed on all Jews throughout the empire, further emphasized their subjugation.[35] To add insult to injury, the Jews of Rome would then have witnessed how their former wealth was used not only on the rebuilding of the temple of Jupiter (Cassius Dio 66.7.2; cf. *J.W.* 7.218), but as now also seems likely, on the construction of the Colosseum as well.[36]

All of this emphasized the defeated status of the Jews. M. Goodman has shown that the Flavians treated the former Jewish aristocracy with a hostility usually reserved for foreign enemies (not subjects of the empire).[37] "Normal" Roman practice might have led Josephus and other Jews to hope for the restoration of the ruling class. Perhaps he expected the inclusion of the Jewish cult into the syncretistic cult of a Roman divinity. But neither of these expectations were realized. Which leads one to wonder which suffered the greater blow—Josephus' faith in God, or his faith in his own ability to get what he wanted.

Josephus and Providence of God

Whatever Josephus may have come to think about his own political prowess, it is evident that he did not ultimately lose his faith in divine providence. This is seen most clearly when we examine Josephus' attitude in his later work, the *Jewish Antiquities,* to the legitimacy of Roman rule. I have written elsewhere on Josephus' attitude to the providence of God in general, but I want to focus here specifically on Josephus' attitude in later life to the issue of the hand of God in the rise and fall of nations. Can we find in Josephus a persistent faith in the benevolence of a supreme patron?

1. The Rise and Fall of Nations

Josephus' classic statement on this subject is found in *Jewish War* Book 5, where, in his role as spokesman for the Romans, he counsels the rebels to lay down their arms and surrender. In the course of his oration Josephus states that, "God who went the round of the nations, bringing to each in turn the rod of empire (τὴν ἀρχήν), now rested over Italy." It is thus that he is able to say in the same context that Fortune (ἡ τύχη), that "unconditional, absolute, and predetermined divine favor,"[38] has passed

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[35] See Leon 1960, 31; Smallwood 1981, 375–78.

[36] Alföldy 1995; Feldman 2001.

[37] Goodman 1987, 235.

[38] Cohen 1982, 373.

over to the Romans (*J.W.* 5.367). God is the guarantor of Rome's world-wide hegemony.

The idea of the rotation of empire from one nation to another is one which S. Mason has shown Josephus probably derived from the biblical Book of Daniel.[39] In his paraphrase of this book in the *Jewish Antiquities* Josephus pays special attention to the story of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great statue. As in the biblical story, the Babylonian king sees a statue made of different metals: the head is of gold, the shoulders and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of bronze and the legs and feet of iron. And again in keeping with the biblical source, Josephus' Daniel interprets the different materials as successive kingdoms starting with Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon (*Ant.* 10.208–9). This is followed by a power with "two kings," followed by "another king from the west," which in turn is followed by a fourth kingdom with "an iron nature." The implication in all of this is that Daniel's divinely-given foreknowledge of these kingdoms demonstrates God's providence in their rise and fall.[40] As the biblical Daniel puts it: it is God who "deposes kings and sets up kings" (Dan 2:21; cf. 4:17, 25). "No matter how indomitable the gentile kings may appear, they rule by divine pleasure and can be removed in an instant."[41]

In yet another dream, this time given to Daniel himself, the prophet divines "what was to happen to his countrymen in the future after many generations" (*Ant.* 10.269). From a vision of a many-horned ram and a goat flying out of the west Daniel is forewarned of the kingdoms of the Medes and Persians, represented by the ram, and the Macedonians with their first great king (Alexander), followed by four successors, who are in turn followed by the arch-enemy of the Jews, Antiochus Epiphanes (*Ant.* 10.270–76). All of this inspires Josephus' famous reflection on the foolhardiness of the Epicureans who do not believe in divine control of history (*Ant.* 10.277–80). The point is that God guides the course of human affairs and the rise and fall of nations happens by his design.

This general point is made also in relation to specific kings in the Daniel cycle. At one point, so the biblical story goes, Nebuchadnezzar lost his rational capacities and was forced to live as a wild animal for seven years (Dan 4). As in the Bible, so also in Josephus' paraphrase, it is only "after praying to God that he might recover his kingdom" (*Ant.* 10.217) that the king is restored to the throne. Nebuchadnezzar, Josephus tells us,

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[39] On the importance of Daniel for Josephus' view of history, see Mason 1994, 190–91. On Daniel's wide-ranging influence in the first century, see Mason 1994, 165–67; Collins 1993, 90–112 (by A. Yarbro Collins).

[40] This is the message of the Book of Daniel itself as well; see Mason 1994, 163.

[41] Mason 1994, 163.

"until the day of his death praised God as the possessor of all power and the guardian of men" (*Ant.* 10.242). This piety was not displayed by the later king Belshazzar to whom the prophet Daniel reports that because he had grievously blasphemed the Deity by making menial use of the temple's sacred vessels "God had become wrathful with him and was making known beforehand . . . to what end he must come" (*Ant.* 10.243). The writing was (literally) on the wall for Belshazzar. As Josephus tells us, God had "numbered" the time of his life and reign; he had "weighed" the time of his kingship; and was about to "break up" his kingdom between the Medes and Persians (*Ant.* 10.243–44). It is striking that it was precisely the treatment of objects from the Temple which precipitated Belshazzar's demise.

In other places Josephus speaks of God's providence in relation to Cyrus and Alexander. Of the former, Josephus writes that God stirred him up to declare, "Since the Most High God has appointed me king of the habitable world, I am persuaded that he is the god whom the Israelite nation worships, for he foretold my name through the prophets" (*Ant.* 11.3). Josephus reveals that Cyrus had been reading the book of Isaiah written "two hundred and ten years earlier" (*Ant.* 11.5). When Cyrus read the words of the prophet, so Josephus tells us, "He wondered at the divine power and was seized by a strong desire and ambition to do what had been written" (*Ant.* 11.6). Later on, Alexander the Great is similarly impressed to find himself in the pages of the Jewish Scriptures (*Ant.* 11.337). Here it is the book of Daniel that is shown to the conqueror. Earlier Alexander had astonished his retinue by prostrating himself before the Jewish high priest. In explanation of his actions he relates a dream he had had in which the priest appeared to him as a spokesman of God and assured him that the deity himself "would lead (ἡγήσεσθαι) [his] army and give over to [him] the empire of the Persians" (*Ant.* 11.334). Here is clear example of God taking sides in a conflict just as Josephus argued that God was on the side of the Romans. It is thus another statement of the conviction of God's providence over the political and military fortunes of the nations of the world.

2. The Ascendency of Rome

We are now ready to look at Josephus' statements about the ascendency of Rome. The first point to make here is that Josephus very clearly identified the fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar's statue vision with Rome.[42] We have seen already that Josephus described the second

[42] For a useful summary of various theories about the identities of the four kingdoms in Daniel, see Collins 1993, 166–70. Josephus was not alone in identifying Daniel's fourth kingdom with Rome.

kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar's statue as having two kings.[43] This is apparently a reference to a Medo-Persian coalition in keeping with Josephus' view that Darius the Mede and Cyrus were relatives (*Ant.* 10.248).[44] The third kingdom Josephus describes as being "from the west" thus making clear that he identified this kingdom with Alexander the Great.[45] This leaves Rome for the fourth kingdom with the nature of iron.[46] Josephus also states explicitly at *Antiquities* 10.276 that Daniel predicted the Roman empire. Thus, there is no doubt that Josephus saw Roman ascendency as part of God's great "plan" for history. Indeed, we find in the mouth of the Jewish ruler Agrippa II during the early stages of the Jewish revolt the observation that "without God's aid so vast an empire [as the Romans'] could never have been built up" (*J.W.* 2.390).[47] God's "aid" (ἡγεμονία) in this context evokes the same image we saw in connection with Alexander the Great where God is depicted riding into battle at the head of the imperial armies. Thus it is that Agrippa can argue, as he does in this context, that God is the ally (σύμμαχος) of the Romans.

This is the first aspect of Josephus' explanation of the ascendency of Rome: it is divinely decreed.[48] The rod of empire now rests over Italy. No amount of protestation will be able to change that fact. However there is also a second aspect to Josephus' view, namely that in the Romans' defeat of the Jews in particular we have an example of the outworking of the principle of retributive justice.[49] Finding that his argument about God's alliance with Rome failed to convince, he resorted to another, also

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[43] Dan 2:39 refers only to "another kingdom inferior to yours."

[44] Cf. Mason 1994, 171. Some medieval rabbinic commentators apparently identified Darius the Mede as the father-in-law of Cyrus; see Marcus's note *d* in the LCL *Josephus* at this point.

[45] Mason 1994, 171.

[46] Cf. Collins 1993, 166n. 136. The author of Daniel no doubt intended Alexander as the iron kingdom with his successors as the feet of iron and clay. Josephus omits the biblical detail that the feet were made of both iron and clay, indicating inherent division and weakness (Dan 2:33, 42–43).

[47] For analysis of the subtleties of Agrippa's speech and its place in *J.W.* see Rajak 1991. A similar sentiment to Agrippa's may be detected in *b. Abodah Zarah* 18[a]: "'Brother Hananiah,' he said to him, 'Do you not realize that it is Heaven who has ordained this nation to rule? For even though they have laid waste his home, burnt down his temple, slain his saints and persecuted his servants, still [the empire] is firmly established.'" (cited by de Lange 1978, 268).

[48] See Edwards 1991, 189–91.

[49] See Attridge 1976, 71–108, 145–51.

designed to show the insurgents that they were "warring not against the Romans only, but also against God" (*J.W.* 5.378).

Taking up the mantle of the biblical prophet Jeremiah,[50] and with the aid of a highly tendentious recounting of biblical history,[51] Josephus argues that God has always honoured a pacifist response to military crises: "If they sat still they conquered . . . if they fought they were invariably defeated" (*J.W.* 5.390). This last point Josephus supports with a catalogue of military disasters from the time of Pharaoh Neco down to Pompey and Sossius in the first century BCE. The lesson of his history, Josephus insists, is that "arms have been refused to our nation" (*J.W.* 5.399). The Jews' best and only hope is always to entrust their cause to God.

Having said this though, he adds that God's alliance is only secured by scrupulous adherence to his laws. And this is precisely what the rebels have failed to do, thus making any hope of Divine aid utterly futile (*J.W.* 5.403).[52] God might normally be expected to preserve the sanctity of the temple, but the rebels' impieties nullify this possibility. "My belief, therefore," Josephus informs them, "is that the Deity has fled from the holy places and taken His stand on the side of those with whom you are now at war" (*J.W.* 5.412). Years later Josephus would reiterate this indictment in the *Antiquities:* ". . . God himself, for loathing of their impiety, turned away from our city and . . . brought the Romans upon us and purification by fire upon the city . . . for he wished to chasten us by these calamities" (20.166; cf. *J.W.* 4.323; 5.19).[53]

With this argument Josephus gives expression to the view that the Jewish rebels brought the Romans (and God) down on their own heads. It is important to realise, though, that Josephus is not explaining the fact of

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[50] On Josephus' identification with the prophet Jeremiah, see Cohen 1982, Mason 1994, 176–77.

[51] See Schwartz 1990, 28–32.

[52] Other Jewish writers also attributed Jewish national disasters to their own sins; e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 8:9–22 (which includes the line, "God declared war on Jerusalem and her land"); 1 Baruch 1:15–17. A similar attitude is reflected in rabbinic writings; e.g., *b. Shabbath* 119^{b}–120^{a}; *Tosefta Menahoth* 13.22; *y. Yoma* 38^{c}; *b. Yoma* 9^{b}; *Pesahim* 118^{b} (cited in de Lange 1978, 355n. 17).

[53] A slightly different perspective is placed in the mouth of Eleazar during his final oration at Masada: ". . . . it is by God's will and of necessity that we are to die. For long since, so it seems, God passed this decree against the whole Jewish race in common, that we must quit this life if we would not use it aright. Do not attach the blame to yourselves, nor the credit to the Romans, that this war with them has been the ruin of us all; for it was not their might that brought these things to pass, but the intervention of some more powerful cause has afforded them the semblance of victory" (*J.W.* 7.359–60).

Roman rule here. He is simply commenting on the disastrous effects of Roman rule for Judea. These effects arose because God was using the Romans to punish the Jews for their sins. The specific event of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was a result of the insurgents' many atrocities and sacrilegious acts. However, Roman rule did not have to mean disaster for the Jews. Like the prophet Jeremiah before him Josephus saw clearly that the Jews' future fortunes lay with the success rather than the failure of their imperial overlords. Since Roman hegemony was underwritten by God's decree, the best way forward now was in the direction of peaceful coexistence and collaboration with the Romans.[54]

3. The Demise of Rome

Josephus did not speak only of the rise of Rome. He also spoke, albeit allusively and cautiously, of the future fall of the empire. The picture of God moving the rod of empire from one nation to the other which Josephus used to explain Rome's current ascendancy is itself also an argument for Rome's eventual demise at some unspecified time in the future.[55] Indeed, the rise and fall of nations is a recurrent theme in Greek historiography.[56] Of particular relevance for us is the passage in which Polybius ascribes such thinking to Scipio when he contemplated the end of Carthage (*Histories* 38.22.1–3). In a similar vein Josephus has Titus reflect ruefully on "the power of fortune," "the quick vicissitudes of war" and "the general instability of human affairs" (*J.W.* 3.396).[57] In an unguarded moment we hear Josephus referring to the Romans as those who are "*now* lords of the universe" (*Apion* 2.41; italics added), thus perhaps betraying a conviction about the temporal finitude of Rome's rule.

a. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

But the point is made much more clearly than this in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the statue which we must look at yet one more time. As is well known, the king's dream concluded with the destruction of the

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[54] Barclay 1996 refers to *J.W.* as "the most forthright expression of Jewish-Roman political accommodation known to us" (356). Josephus was by no means alone in preaching a message of conciliation. Cf. 1 Baruch 1:11–12; Aboth de Rabbi Nathan A 4, B 6, 31; *m. Aboth* 3.2; *b. Abodah Zarah* 4[a] (cited by de Lange 1978, 355nn. 7, 19).

[55] Cf. Rajak 1991, 132; Mason 1994, 181.

[56] See de Romilly 1977, 1–9.

[57] I am indebted to Mason 1994, 173 for the references to Scipio and Titus. See also de Romilly 1977, 8–9.

composite statue by a great stone (Dan 2:34–35). Josephus' Daniel describes the scene to the king as follows:

> Then you saw a stone break off from a mountain and fall upon the image and overthrow it, breaking it to pieces and leaving not one part of it whole, so that the gold and silver and bronze and iron were made finer than flour, and, when the wind blew strongly, they were caught up by its force and scattered abroad; but the stone grew so much larger that the whole earth seemed to be filled with it. (*Ant.* 10.207)

Quite clearly the dream envisages the destruction not only of the first three empires represented by the different metals but of the fourth one as well since Daniel specifies that the "iron" too was made finer than flour and scattered abroad by the wind. A problem arises in Ralph Marcus' translation in the Loeb *Josephus* at this point, however, because he renders *Antiquities* 10.209 to say that the iron kingdom "will have dominion forever through its iron nature." This gives the impression that Josephus contradicted himself, saying at one moment that the iron kingdom will be destroyed by the stone and at the next that it will endure forever. However this impression is a false one because εἰς ἅπαντα which Marcus rendered "forever" should rather be translated "completely"[58] or, with William Whiston, "over all the earth." The iron nature of Rome, therefore speaks of the might of its imperial armies and Rome's world-wide kingdom, but says nothing of eternal duration. Thus it is not surprising that when Josephus came to the interpretation of the stone he invoked the historian's right to remain silent on things pertaining to "what is to be" (*Ant.* 10.210).[59] Even so, Josephus betrays his belief that the stone's destruction of the iron kingdom will occur. Then he adds that those who want "exact information" about "the hidden things that are to come" should consult the book of Daniel for themselves.

Thus there can be little doubt that Josephus anticipated the eventual downfall of the Roman empire,[60] though as has been astutely observed by S. Mason, his expectation was devoid of eschatological urgency.[61] We do

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[58] Mason 1994, 172; cf. Lindner 1972, 44. Thackeray's translation of the same phrase in *Ant.* 4.114 as "perpetual" should be similarly amended. In that context Josephus is emphasizing the world-wide spread and superiority of the Jewish people.

[59] Mason 1994 treats Josephus' argument here as largely genuine (173).

[60] Cf. Davies 1991, 174: ". . . in this most pro-Roman of ancient writers toleration, and even enjoyment, of Rome was sweetened by the belief that it was the master of the Jews only for the time being and that its fall and judgement awaited it."

[61] Mason 1994, 173. See also the comments of Rajak 1991, 132.

not get the sense that Josephus expected the events depicted by the destruction of the statue to happen any time soon. Nevertheless, Josephus clearly thought that the stone represented a definite future event. Thus we are left with the question of the identity of the stone. What did Josephus think would precipitate the downfall of the iron kingdom? This is a question to which Josephus was apparently loathe to give a direct answer. However, in a different context much earlier in the *Antiquities* we are given some clues as to what Josephus' answer might have been had be been pressed to give one.

b. Balaam's Oracles

In Book Four of the *Antiquities* Josephus relates the biblical story of the pagan prophet Balaam who was hired by the Moabite king Balak to pronounce curses against the Israelites (Num 22). Balaam, whom Josephus calls "the best diviner in the land" (*Ant.* 4.104), however, finds that God's favour for the Israelites hinders his imprecatory powers and that he is able only to pronounce blessings. His oracle reveals that God is their ally (σύμμαχος) and leader (ἡγεμών) (*Ant.* 4.114), and that he has granted them the possession of all good things, by which Josephus primarily means the law of Moses.[62] The oracle also assures the Israelites of perpetual possession of their land and a great increase in their numbers (*Ant.* 4.115). In times of peace they will be granted every kind of blessing, and in war they are guaranteed victory. The oracle ends with the assurance that God has the power both "to diminish what is in excess and to make good what it lacking" (*Ant.* 4.117).

In a subsequent oracle Balaam foretells the mixed fortunes of future kings. In this context we again encounter an ambiguous reference to what the future still holds. This time Josephus states that by comparing Balaam's prophecies with history we will be able to discern "what the future also has in store" (*Ant.* 4.125). Apparently Josephus divided the data in Balaam's oracle into two categories: those prophecies which had already been fulfilled by his own time, and those which were yet to be fulfilled. It is unlikely, of course, that Josephus expected any of his Roman readers actually to consult the biblical oracles of Balaam. As in the Daniel passage Josephus intends to invest the Jewish Scriptures with an aura of mystery and divine authority.[63] This does not mean, though, that we should doubt that Josephus had a genuine exegetical basis for his claim here. As in the Daniel passage, Josephus found in the Scriptures a prophecy that he could relate to a time still in the future. In the present

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62 Spilsbury 1998, 123.

63 Cf. Mason 1994, 173.

case, though, it is not at all a simple matter to discern which of Balaam's oracles in Num 24 Josephus regarded as already fulfilled and which ones (or one) he regarded as yet to be fulfilled.

There is evidence that Num 24:17–19 was regarded in Josephus' time as a messianic prediction:[64]

> I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near—a star shall come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites.

However, Josephus generally shows little approval for messianic hopes and so it is unlikely that he would have had sympathy for such a reading. Numbers 24:24 is thus perhaps a better candidate for the passage Josephus regarded as yet unfulfilled: "But ships shall come from Kittim and shall afflict Asshur and Eber; and he also shall perish forever."[65] Josephus may well have identified those "from Kittim" with the Romans in a manner similar to that known to us from the Qumran pesharim.[66] If this is true he may have read Num 24:24 as a prediction of the defeat of the Roman armies. In doing so, he would have been diverging from the interpretation of the Kittim (Xettiim) followed by the author of 1 Maccabees (1 Macc 1:1; 8:5)[67] who identified them with the Macedonians. However for our purposes it is more significant to note a connection between Num 24:24 and the Book of Daniel. In Dan 11:30, in a prophecy referring to the aggression of Antiochus Epiphanes the seer states that "ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall lose heart and withdraw." This is apparently a conscious echo of Num 24 which also speaks of the advent of the ships of Kittim. The Kittim in the Daniel passage, though, are clearly the Romans[68] as the translator of the Old Greek recognised—he rendered the term as Ῥωμαῖοι![69] We have already seen that a reading of Daniel was foundational for Josephus' under-

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64 Cf. *Targum Pseudo Jonathan*; *Fragmentary Targum*; Origen, *Sermons on Numbers* 13.7. Bar Kochba's followers apparently found in this passage justification for their view of him; see *Midr. Rab. Lam.* 2.2; *y. Taanith* 4.7 (68d). For discussion of these passages see Vermes 1973, 165–66, 173.

65 Brooke 1991 provides the following translation: "Sea-peoples shall gather from the North; and ships, from the district of Kittim. I look and they afflict Eber; but they too shall perish forever!" (156).

66 See Brooke 1991; Vermes 1975, 216.

67 For the origins of the term see Gen 10:4 and *Ant.* 1.128; cf. Collins 1993, 384.

68 Vermes 1975, 215; Collins 1993, 384; Davies 1991, 168.

69 Theodotion retained the term Κίτιοι.

standing of history.[70] What I suggest now is that Josephus likely read the prophecies of Balaam in the light of Daniel as well. It would have been a simple thing to read the כתם / Ῥωμαῖοι of Dan 11:30 back into the כתם of Num 24:24.[71] The identification of the Kittim with the Romans in Daniel, therefore, would seem to be decisive for Josephus' understanding of the Kittim in Numbers.

Josephus read Balaam's prophecy as a prediction of the demise of Rome. As with the similar prediction in Daniel, though, he exercised the utmost restraint when putting the conviction into writing. One place where he does allow himself a somewhat uncharacteristic flourish is *Antiquities* 4.127–28. In this passage Balaam reveals not only that, thanks to God's providence, "this race of Hebrews will never be overwhelmed by utter destruction," but even more dramatically that even though they will from time to time be temporarily defeated, they will always "flourish once more *to the terror of those who inflicted these injuries upon them*" (italics added). Thus Josephus places into the mouth of the pagan prophet a warning to those who "injure" the Jewish people. The Jews will one day rise up to wreak vengeance upon their enemies. This sentiment, I suggest, is the clue to the identity of the great stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. When the king's vision of the destruction of the iron kingdom is seen in the light of Balaam's warning it is difficult to escape the impression that Josephus harboured discreet expectations not only that the Roman empire would eventually be superseded, but that it would be the Jews themselves who would bring about its downfall.[72]

Before leaving Balaam's oracle we might note one further connection between what he says about the Israelites and Daniel's description of the stone. In *Ant.* 4.115–16 Josephus has the seer expatiate at considerable length on the future world-wide dispersion of the Jews. Not only will all earth and sea be filled with their fame, but even more, they will "suffice for the world, to furnish every land with inhabitants sprung from your race." Indeed, says Balaam, while your race is small enough at the moment to be contained by the land of Canaan, in the future "the habitable world . . . lies before you as an eternal habitation, and your multitudes shall find abode on islands and continent, more numerous even than the stars in

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70 Mason 1994.

71 Davies 1991, 168–70 suggests that the War Scroll was similarly influenced by Dan 11:30.

72 This kind of expectation eventually became widespread among the Rabbis; cf. de Lange 1978, 271–72.

heaven."[73] What is significant about this for our purposes is the way that it provides a striking parallel to the dream-stone: "but the stone grew so much larger that the whole earth seemed to be filled with it" (*Ant.* 10.207). Thus, the prediction of the world-wide spread of the Israelites in Balaam's oracle and the world-filling stone in the king's dream would seem to be a further indication that Josephus read Num 24 and the Book of Daniel in close connection with each other; and further, that Josephus interpreted the stone as the Jewish nation dispersed abroad throughout the world.[74]

Conclusion

Tessa Rajak suggested that Josephus concluded Book Seven of the *War* with an account of intense Jewish patriotism in an effort to rectify the imbalance created by his overly pro-Roman description of the Flavians. What our survey of Josephus' attitude to the hand of God in the rise and fall of nations has shown is that Josephus continued to redress that balance for the rest of his writing career. Undoubtedly there was a range of complex reasons why Josephus exonerated Titus of the deliberate burning of the Temple, and certainly he seems to go out of his way to glorify his patrons in their triumph at the conclusion of the war. But what his later work shows is that Josephus did not abandon the prospect of integrating these harsh realities with his faith in the ongoing providence of God. Nor did he give up hope of the resurgence of the Judean state.

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[73] Josephus' biblical source here is most likely Num 23:10 "Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the dust-cloud of Israel?" Josephus here places a positive interpretation on the phenomenon of the Diaspora. A similar view is expressed in *Ant.* 1.282 and *Apion* 2.279–86, but other passages display a more ambivalent attitude toward the Diaspora. On these matters see further Spilsbury 1998, 123–24; van Unnik 1993, 137–45. On Jewish attitudes to dispersion more generally, see Gafni 1997, 19–40.

[74] The author of 4 Ezra apparently also interpreted the stone carved from the mountain "without hands" to refer to the Jewish people, though with strong messianic associations as well. See 4 Ezra 13:6–7, 35–36.

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