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The Tower of Babel: A Case Study in the Competing Methods of Historical and Modern Literary Criticism

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Since the rise of modern literary criticism of the Hebrew Bible in the 1970s, its proponents have sought to use the results of this method to argue for the compositional unity of the biblical text, particularly in regard to the Pentateuch. They have held up the literary structures they find in the text—alliteration, repetition, and other forms of wordplay, as well as larger structures such as chiasm—as proof of a conscious artistry on the part of the biblical author, an artistry that, in their opinion, belies any attempt to separate the text into constituent documents or layers. That these literary observations are useful in reading the final form of the text is hardly in question; but whether they are, in fact, an effective means of countering the results of historical criticism remains in doubt. In this article I will address this very issue by means of a detailed examination of a particular passage, the Tower of Babel narrative, and the ways in which modern literary critics have attempted to prove its unity. The results of this case study will lead to a discussion of the relationship between the two methods of modern literary criticism and historical criticism.

In his commentary on Genesis, Hermann Gunkel proposed a novel analysis of the Tower of Babel narrative in Gen 11:1–9.[1] He argued that this brief story actually comprises two originally independent recensions: one about the building of a tower, and one about the building of a city; the first explaining the dispersion of humanity, the second the confusion of languages. This analysis was intended to resolve what Gunkel considered to be inconsistencies in the narrative: the appar-

[1] Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (3rd ed., 1910; trans. Mark E. Biddle; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 94–102.

ent double mention of brick-making in v. 3; the double descent of God in vv. 5 and 7; and the alternation between city and tower, language and location. His two recensions are as follows:[2]

The Babel Recension	*The Tower Recension*[3]
(a) ויהי כל־הארץ שפה אחת ודברים אחדים: (b) ויאמרו איש אל־רעהו הבה נלבנה לבנים ונשרפה לשרפה ותהי להם הלבנה לאבן והחמר היה להם לחמר: (c) ויאמרו הבה נבנה־לנו עיר ונעשה־לנו שם: (d) ויאמר יהוה הן עם אחד ושפה אחת לכלם: (e) הבה נרדה ונבלה שם שפתם אשר לא ישמעו איש שפת רעהו: (f) [lacuna] ויחדלו לבנת עיר:(g) על־כן קרא שמה בבל כי־שם בלל יהוה שפת כל־הארץ:	(a) ויהי בנסעם מקדם וימצאו בקעה בארץ שנער וישבו שם: (b) ויאמרו (נבנה) מגדל וראשו בשמים פן־נפוץ על־פני כל־הארץ: (c) וירד יהוה לראת את־המגדל אשר בנו בני האדם:(d) ויאמר זה החלם לעשות ועתה לא־יבצר מהם כל אשר יזמו לעשות: (e) ויפץ יהוה אתם משם על־פני כל־הארץ: (f) (על־כן קרא [שם המגדל פיץ] כי) משם הפיצם יהוה על־פני כל־הארץ:
(a) All the earth had the same language and the same words. (b) Each said to his neighbor, "Come, let us build bricks and burn them." They had brick for stone and bitumen for mortar. (c) They said, "Come, let us build a city and make a name for ourselves." (d) Yhwh said, "Look, it is one people, and one language for all of them. (e) Let us go down and confuse their speech there, so that each will not understand the language of his neighbor." . . . (f) They ceased building the city. (g) Therefore it was called Babel, because there Yhwh confused the language of all the earth.	(a) When they traveled from the east, they found a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. (b) They said, "(Let us build) a tower, with its head in the heavens, lest we be scattered over the face of all the earth." (c) Yhwh came down to see the tower that the humans had built. (d) He said, "This is the beginning of their acting; nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them." (e) Yhwh scattered them from there over the face of all the earth. (f) (Therefore [the tower was called Pitz,] because) from there Yhwh scattered them over the face of all the earth.

With the prominent exception of John Skinner, Gunkel's suggestion found little acceptance in the mainstream of critical scholarship, with most commentaries simply assuming the unity of passage.[4] Only recently has there been a renewed

[2] I have taken the liberty of making one change to Gunkel's analysis, by reuniting the two halves of v. 3; it is clear that v. 3b is explanatory to v. 3a, rather than a doublet thereof. See P. J. Harland, "The Sin of Babel: Vertical or Horizontal?" *VT* 48 (1998): 515–33, here 517.

[3] Text in parentheses indicates reconstruction based on the parallels in the Babel Recension; text in square brackets indicates Gunkel's invention.

[4] John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (2nd ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1930), 223–24. Cuthbert A. Simpson (*The Early Traditions of Israel* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1948], 67–68) saw here not two parallel strands, but an original J narrative and a redac-

attempt to argue against the unity of the tower of Babel narrative, notably by Christoph Uehlinger in his monograph on the subject.[5] Yet this attempt, like that of Gunkel, has found little support; a review by Ronald Hendel and an article by P. J. Harland have both effectively countered Uehlinger's argument.[6] The focus of this study, however, is specifically Gunkel's source-critical breakdown of the text and the method of those who rejected his proposal. The major counterarguments to Gunkel, whether explicit or implicit, have come almost exclusively from the ranks of the modern literary critics. The first significant blow was struck by Umberto Cassuto in his commentary on Genesis; he was followed by Isaac Kikawada, in a paper entitled "The Shape of Genesis 11:1–9," and Jan P. Fokkelman, in his *Narrative Art in Genesis*.[7] These scholars have gone to great lengths in arguing for the unity of this pericope by demonstrating that it contains wordplay, alliteration, chiastic structure, and other literary features. These features, it is claimed, prove that these nine verses are the product of a single artistic mind and must therefore be considered a unified text.

Cassuto said of Gunkel's recensions, "It is unnecessary to enter into elaborate arguments in order to show that no intelligent Hebrew writer would have produced such insipid texts . . . after pointing out . . . the beauty and harmonious structure of the story in its present form, it is perhaps superfluous to examine in detail the reasons advanced for partitioning it between two sources."[8] Cassuto began by examining what he called the "constantly recurring melody" of the letters *bet, lamed,* and *nun*.[9] These consonants appear in the constructions להם, הבה נלבנה לבנים, הלבנה לאבן, הבה נבנה לנו, ונבלה, ויחדלו לבנת, בבל, and בלל (vv. 3, 4, 7, 8, 9) This impressive collection is indeed difficult to explain as mere chance. Yet all of these words and phrases occur in Gunkel's Babel Recension ([b], [c], [e], [f], [g]). The only similar word in the Tower Recension is the reconstructed נבנה in (b).

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tional overworking. On the relatively sparse scholarship that dealt with Gunkel's theory, see Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 536–37.

[5] Christoph Uehlinger, *Weltreich und "eine Rede": Eine neue Deutung der sogenannten Turmbauerzählung (Gen 11, 1–9)* (OBO; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1990). See also Klaus Seybold, "Der Turmbau zu Babel: Zur Entstehung von Genesis XI 1–9," *VT* 26 (1976): 453–79; and most recently Christian Rose, "Nochmals: Der Turmbau zu Babel," *VT* 54 (2004): 223–38.

[6] Ronald S. Hendel, review of Christoph Uehlinger, *Weltreich und "eine Rede*," *CBQ* 55 (1993): 785–87; Harland, "Sin," 517–19. Their objections respond effectively also to the arguments of Seybold and Rose (see previous note).

[7] Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis,* vol. 2, *From Noah to Abraham* (trans. Israel Abrahams; 1964; repr., Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992); Isaac Kikawada, "The Shape of Genesis 11:1–9," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (ed. Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessler; PTMS 1; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1974), 18–32; Jan P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis* (2nd ed.; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 11–45.

[8] Cassuto, *Genesis*, 236.

[9] Ibid., 232–33.

Cassuto cited two examples of paronomasia: נלבנה לבנים, and ונשרפה לשרפה (v. 3).[10] Both are in the Babel Recension ([b]). He cleverly suggested a relationship between the verb פוץ (vv. 4, 8, 9) and the phrase פני כל־הארץ (vv. 4, 8, 9), "whose initial and final letters constitute the chief consonants of the verb."[11] This wordplay, if accepted, is nevertheless entirely located in the Tower Recension ([b], [e], [f]). He pointed also to the alliterative phrases הלבנה לאבן and והחמר היה להם לחמר (v. 3).[12] These are undoubtedly examples of literary art; both are in the Babel Recension ([b]).

Cassuto noted the repetition of various words and phrases throughout the text: שפה, which occurs five times (vv. 1, 6, 7 [2x], 9)—all in the Babel Recension —and כל־הארץ, which also occurs five times (vv. 1, 4, 8, 9 [2x]).[13] But we can be more precise: twice it appears simply as כל־הארץ (vv. 1, 9), and three times in the phrase על־פני כל־הארץ (vv. 4, 8, 9). The simple כל־הארץ occurs in the first and last lines of the Babel Recension ([a], [g]), forming a beautiful *inclusio.* The phrase על־פני כל־הארץ occurs exclusively in the Tower Recension ([b], [e], [f]). Note also that in the Babel Recension, כל־הארץ refers to the people; in the Tower Recension, it refers to the land. Cassuto's final proof of the unity of the narrative is the sevenfold repetition of שם, as either "name" (*šēm*) or "there" (*šām*) (vv. 2, 4, 7, 8, 9 [3x]).[14] Cassuto, here and elsewhere, pointed to the significance of the number 7, calling it earlier in his commentary "the golden thread that binds together all the parts . . . and serves as a convincing proof of unity."[15] If we break up the narrative into two recensions, we destroy this sevenfold repetition. We are left, however, with two distinct uses of the word in the two proposed recensions. The real meat of the wordplay with שם is found only in the Babel Recension, where the people are concerned about making a name for themselves; there we find *šēm* twice ([c], [g]) and *šām* twice ([e], [g]). In the Tower Recension, there is but one *šēm*, and it is reconstructed ([f]). There are three occurrences of *šām*, however, and they occur only in the verses relating to the settling in and dispersal from Shinar ([a], [e], [f]). This, it can be argued, is a fine example of narrative artistry, in which the keyword *šām* guides the reader to the great reversal in the story. This is perhaps even more the case if we include, as Cassuto did not, the word שמים ([b]).

It seems, then, that virtually every example of literary art that Cassuto adduced to demonstrate the unity of the text can be just as easily brought to demonstrate the literary art *of the individual recensions*. This would seem to be a major blow to Cassuto's rejection of Gunkel's theory. In order to use these wordplays and alliterations to prove textual unity, one has to show that in dividing the text the wordplay

[10] Ibid., 234.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis,* vol. 1, *From Adam to Noah* (trans. Israel Abrahams; 1961; repr., Jerusalem: Magnes, 1998), 15.

is lost, or the alliteration broken up between the two recensions. In short, at least in terms of the types of analysis used by Cassuto, we can argue that the Babel Recension and the Tower Recension each contain distinct and varied examples of literary art. When they were combined, the art was *retained*—but in almost no case can it be said to have been *improved*.

The work of Kikawada and Fokkelman is of a different nature from that of Cassuto. Whereas Cassuto dealt mainly in individual words, phrases, and even consonants, in repetition, alliteration, and wordplay, Kikawada and Fokkelman deal mainly with the larger structures of the text.[16] Kikawada describes the overarching plot structure of the story first in terms of content: vv. 1–4 describe humanity's intentions and actions; v. 5, the axis of the story, is God's descent; and vv. 6–9 describe God's intentions and actions.[17] Structurally, this is very sound; so, however, are the recensions. Note the structure of the Babel Recension:

(a) the general situation
  (b)-(c) humanity's intentions
    (d)-(e) God's intentions
      (f) the result of the interface between humanity's and God's intentions
        (g) the new general situation

Unlike Kikawada's analysis of the unified text, the Babel Recension does not exhibit a chiastic structure. It seems evident, however, that the structure exhibited in the Babel Recension is just as artistically valid (chiasm, after all, was not the sole narrative structure available to the biblical authors[18]); it could certainly be supposed that this structure is intentional, designed to propel the story toward its etiological conclusion. One could, with little difficulty, make a serious argument for the theological meaning inherent in this structure.

If a chiasm is desired, however, the Tower Recension provides one:

(a) description of humanity's movement
  (b) humanity's actions
    (c-d) God's response
  (e) God's actions
(f) description of humanity's movement

[16] Fokkelman also notes many of the verbal features already pointed out by Cassuto. For a critical examination of Fokkelman's study of Gen 11:1–9, see Yitshak Avishur, *Studies in Biblical Narrative: Style, Structure, and the Ancient Near Eastern Literary Background* (Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publication, 1999), 282–88.

[17] Kikawada, "Shape," 19. This structure is not explicitly noted by Kikawada, but is evident in his structural outline of the text. He refines this analysis somewhat, following Radday, in Isaac Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was: The Unity of Genesis 1–11* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 73–74.

[18] For an argument against chiasmus as a significant aspect of biblical style in general, see David P. Wright, "The Fallacies of Chiasmus: A Critique of Structures Proposed for the Covenant Collection (Exodus 20:23–23:19)," *ZABR* 10 (2004): 143–68, esp. 143 n. 2.

Again, there would be no difficulty in finding theological meaning in this structure.

Kikawada further states: "If we note such grammatical categories as indirect and direct discourse, we discover an identical distribution of quantitative balance, with respect to narrative character."[19] This can be displayed as follows:

vv. 1–2: indirect discourse
  vv. 3–4: direct discourse
v. 5: indirect discourse
  vv. 6–7: direct discourse
vv. 8–9: indirect discourse

But the same distribution is found in both recensions individually. In the Babel Recension:

(a) indirect discourse
  (b-e) direct discourse
(f-g) indirect discourse

In the Tower Recension we find an even fuller chiasm:

(a) indirect discourse
  (b) direct discourse
(c) indirect discourse
  (d) direct discourse
(e-f) indirect discourse[20]

Kikawada, like Cassuto, provides arguments for unity that can be equally applied to Gunkel's individual recensions.[21]

Fokkelman, for his part, finds in the text both parallel symmetry and concentric symmetry. He lays out the parallel symmetry of the unified text as follows:[22]

[19] Kikawada, "Shape," 20.

[20] Kikawada's distribution is perhaps more aesthetically pleasing, insofar as the nine verses of the story are divided up into vv. 1–2, 3–4, 5, 6–7, and 8–9, whereas the Tower Recension, at least, comes out as (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e-f). But this serves to highlight a more general problem with Kikawada's entire structural analysis: it is apparently based primarily on the verse divisions in the text. Given that the versification of the biblical text was a relatively late development, however, it is illegitimate to use the verse as a meaningful textual unit when doing any sort of analysis, including modern literary criticism.

[21] One might even say that it is remarkable that these two recensions, which have, after all, different structural features, could have been combined in such a way that they create an entirely new structural pattern. This, however, falls under the category of redaction criticism.

[22] Fokkelman, *Narrative Art*, 20.

שפה אחת ודברים אחדים A vv. 1–4 about man
(2x) coh. + הבה B
נבנה C
נעשה שם D
פן נפוץ על־פני כל־הארץ E
עם אחד ושפה אחת A′ vv. 5–9 about YHWH
coh. + הבה B′
ויחדלו לבנת C′ ויפץ אתם על־פני כל־הארץ E′
שמה בבל D′
הפיצם על־פני כל־הארץ E′

On first glance, this analysis looks promising; upon closer inspection, however, there are some difficulties. Even within Fokkelman's own layout, the element labeled E′ is out of place.[23] Furthermore, and perhaps more critically, this analysis takes into account only those elements that fit it; undoubtedly the words and phrases Fokkelman has selected for inclusion work within the structure he has suggested, but the rest of the narrative is left aside.[24] Accepting Fokkelman's structural analysis for the time being, however, we may turn to Gunkel's recensions and ask whether they, too, demonstrate parallel symmetry, using precisely the same elements as Fokkelman. In doing so, we find that, in the Babel Recension at least, the parallel symmetry is maintained:

שפה אחת ודברים אחדים A
(2x) coh. + הבה B
נבנה C
נעשה שם D
עם אחד ושפה אחת A′
coh. + הבה B′
ויחדלו לבנת C′
שמה בבל D′

Furthermore, the difficulty of the misplaced E′ element of Fokkelman's analysis is removed. As for the Tower Recension, one would be hard-pressed to call this parallel symmetry:

[23] David P. Wright has labeled this phenomenon "chiastic interference" (Marc Z. Brettler, *The Book of Judges* [Old Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 2002], 118 n. 6).

[24] It is thus somewhat problematic for Fokkelman to claim that "the objectivity of this parallelism of series of words precedes all interpretation, so much so that any reader, not knowing Hebrew but with a transcription of the story at his disposal, can be shown that the members of the series correspond because of the identity of words and he can inspect their order" (*Narrative Art*, 21).

E פן נפוץ על־פני כל־הארץ
E′ ויפץ אתם על־פני כל־הארץ
E′ הפיצם על־פני כל־הארץ

This is simply repetition, which should, of course, not be dismissed as stylistically void; rather, it would surely be considered a feature of the literary artistry of the proposed narrative. But the parallel symmetry that Fokkelman describes is really found only in the Babel Recension.

Fokkelman finds concentric symmetry in the text as follows:[25]

כל־הארץ שפה אחת A vv. 1–4 about man
שם B
איש אל־רעהו C
הבה נלבנה לבנים D
נבנה־לנו E
עיר ומגדל F
וירד יהוה לראת X
את־העיר ואת־המגדל F′ vv. 5–9 about YHWH
אשר בנו בני האדם E′
הבה . . . נבלה D′
איש שפת רעהו C′
משם B′
שפת כל־הארץ (בלל) A′

Insofar as this analysis takes into account considerably more of the text than the concentric symmetry above, Fokkelman seems to be on surer ground here.[26] But we find this concentric symmetry in varying degrees in the two recensions as well. Again, using Fokkelman's notations, the Babel Recension has:

כל־הארץ שפה אחת A
איש אל־רעהו C
הבה נלבנה לבנים D
הבה . . . נבלה D′
איש שפת רעהו C′
שפת כל־הארץ (בלל) A′

And see the Tower Recension on the next page. Though neither of these chiasms is as full as the one Fokkelman finds in the unified text, both are perfectly acceptable narrative structures. Further, every element of Fokkelman's chiasm is present in exactly one of the two recensions; in no cases is an element in one recension and its chiastic partner in the other. If we assume, for the moment, that these two recen-

[25] Ibid., 22.

[26] Though see the incisive criticism of Fokkelman's proposed chiasm in Gen 11:1–9 by Brettler (*Judges*, 10–12).

sions did exist, and that both were chiastically structured, the combination thereof would undoubtedly result in a larger chiasm. The redactor, who, being a competent reader, would have seen these chiasms as easily as we do, would presumably have striven to preserve them in his combination of the two independent stories. Fokkelman, then, falls into the same category as Cassuto and Kikawada: he has tried to demonstrate textual unity by pointing out features of narrative artistry that are equally present in Gunkel's independent recensions.

The Tower Recension:

B שם
E (נבנה)
F ומגדל
X וירד יהוה לראת
F′ את־המגדל
E′ אשר בנו בני האדם
B′ משם

The result of the foregoing analysis is that modern literary critics have failed in this case to achieve their desired effect: to prove the unity of the story of the Tower of Babel.[27] This does not, however, mean that Gunkel was correct in his division of the text. On the contrary: Gen 11:1–9 is a single, unified literary unit. The two themes of city and tower are stylistically distinct because the author has, as a good literary artist can, linked the various themes of his narrative with specific vocabulary and structural features, such that if one chooses to separate the themes, one also separates the literary features. What Gunkel achieved was in fact to highlight the artistic linking of theme and style on the part of the J author, while, ironically, those literary critics who oppose him have attempted, though perhaps not intentionally, to obscure this narrative technique. The more effective argument against Gunkel's theory is a simple source-critical one. Genesis 11:1–9 shows none of the hallmarks of a composite text: contradictions, doublets, or other narrative inconsistencies.[28] Gunkel's analysis here, as elsewhere, is overly fragmentary, as was unfortunately typical of source-critical scholarship of that period. It is not a com-

[27] The more recent attempts to suggest a composite origin of this passage (see n. 5 above) do disrupt the narrative features noted by Cassuto, Kikawada, and Fokkelman; the literary critics can be said to have succeeded, then, in making a case against *some* divisions of the text—but not Gunkel's.

[28] Scholars who favor a composite text in Gen 11:1–9 commonly cite two ostensible doublets: the repeated ויהי in vv. 1–2 and the double descent of Yhwh in vv. 5, 7. Neither is in fact problematic. The two uses of ויהי represent the two functions of this verb: in v. 1 it is the verbal predicate to כל־הארץ (contra Skinner, *Genesis*, 224 n. 1), while in v. 2 it introduces a temporal clause. This sequence is attested elsewhere in J (without any suggestion of composite authorship), notably in the very next chapter, Gen 12:10–11. As for the ostensible double descent, in v. 5 Yhwh goes down to see what the people have been doing, as he does elsewhere in J (Gen 18:21); upon

bination of independent sources that accounts for the dual themes of Gen 11:1–9, but more likely the combination, by the J author or perhaps even before him, of much older independent *traditions*. Gerhard von Rad's assessment is worth noting: "[Gen 11:1–9] consists of older material which had first to be boldly hewn and recast. . . . Yet one may not draw literary conclusions from such irregularities (as, for example, the presence of a secondary source to J); our narrator has freely welded single traditions."[29] One is tempted to think that had Gunkel lived to see the rise of tradition criticism, which of course derived almost entirely from his work, he would have come to this same conclusion.

At issue in this study, then, is not the correctness of Gunkel's theory per se, but rather the method of the modern literary critics who claim to have proven textual unity. We may extrapolate from this situation, where there is no real source-critical issue, to one where there is an authentic need to maintain a textual division. For a brief example, we may take Fokkelman's analysis of Gen 37:18–33.[30] This passage represents one of the classic cases for source criticism: the factual conflict between accounts of Joseph being stolen by the Midianites and subsequently sold to the Ishmaelites, a conflict that is entirely resolvable by dividing the text.[31] Fokkelman's discussion of this passage, however, does not even mention this contradiction; he wonders only the following:

> Why does Reuben appear twice, and what is the significance of the fact that he finds the pit empty? There is also a striking repetition: the terrible message "a savage beast devoured him" not only occurs in v. 20, but is repeated *verbatim* in the middle of v. 33. What is the point of that?[32]

The solution, for Fokkelman, is chiastic: "Everything falls into place when we discover the structure of vv. 18–33."[33]

Fokkelman's chiasm is indeed very attractive:

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seeing the beginnings of the tower and city, he speaks to his divine council—which in itself suggests that he has returned to the divine realm—and suggests that they descend *again* and confound the people's speech. On the divine council and the use of the first person plural here and elsewhere in J, see W. Randall Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness: Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 15; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 45–83.

[29] Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 148.

[30] Jan Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 79–82.

[31] This conflict was central to the discussion of this passage by the rabbinic sages; see *Gen. Rab.* 84.22; Rashi and Rashbam on Gen 37:28. For a source-critical solution, see Richard E. Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View into the Five Books of Moses* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003), 93–95.

[32] Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative*, 79–80.

[33] Ibid., 80.

A	18–20	conspiracy by the brothers: kill Joseph! *"A savage beast devoured him!"*
B	21–22	speeches by Reuben: no, throw him into the pit
C	23–24	brothers cast Joseph into the pit
D	25	a caravan passes by
X	26–27	proposal by Judah: sell Joseph
D′	28	Joseph sold to caravan
C′	29	Reuben finds the pit empty, rends his clothes
B′	30	and mourns; speech to his brothers
A	31–33	they deceive Jacob with the coat, Jacob concludes: Joseph must be dead. *"A savage beast devoured him!"*

Though Fokkelman finds significant meaning in this structure, for example, the centrality of Judah's role in the Joseph story, he utterly fails to solve—moreover, he completely ignores—the narrative problem in the passage that is basic to the source-critical analysis or, it seems safe to say, to any plain reading of the text. It seems that in his attempt to prove the unity of the text, Fokkelman has privileged structure, that is, verbal and thematic repetitions and echoes, over the simple coherence of the story itself.

"Structural arguments can be and in fact have been used to prove the unity of a given narrative."[34] Here we get to the heart of the methodological issue: How do we disprove the results of one method, in this case source criticism, by using another, in this case modern literary criticism? It is by no means impossible, but neither is it as straightforward as the literary critics would have us believe. As has been shown above, it is not enough simply to demonstrate that a given block of text has certain literary features. It must also be shown that the individual texts resulting from source criticism, or any other historical-critical method, do *not* show any of these features. It is this step that has not been taken by those modern literary critics intent on proving textual unity. When applying the results of the literary analysis of a unified text to the constituent elements of a divided text, as was done above, there are three possible outcomes: the feature in question is found in only one of the two recensions, as with Cassuto's "recurring melody" of *bet, lamed,* and *nun;* the feature in question is found in both of the recensions, as with Kikawada's discourse analysis; or the feature in question is found in neither recension. Only when the comparison between the canonical and separated texts has been undertaken, and only when the result is the third of these options, can it be said that modern literary criticism has made a case for textual unity.[35] Even then, however,

[34] Shimon Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations on the Analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative," *VT* 30 (1980): 154–73, here 172.

[35] Kikawada and Quinn ostensibly take into account the results of source criticism, specifically in their analysis of the flood narrative (*Before Abraham Was*, 83–106). Yet their refutation

there are caveats: literary-critical arguments about wordplay and structure cannot overshadow or ignore the actual content of the narrative (see Fokkelman's analysis of Genesis 37 above); and the demonstration that a particular source-critical division breaks up a literary structure does not mean that the source-critical enterprise has failed: only that that particular source-critical division may be problematic.

Cassuto's opposition to source criticism was rooted in his a priori belief in the unity, if not the divinity, of the Torah. His biblical analysis was consistently detailed and erudite, taking into account the Near Eastern background of the text, but he was simply prejudiced toward the unity of the text and never really viewed the source-critical approach as a plausible alternative.[36] Fokkelman, on the other hand, attacks source criticism because it seemingly stands as a barrier to the type of literary criticism he wishes to undertake.[37] He states that "'higher' criticism had stubbornly ignored the intersubjective truth that meaning and sense are constituted on the ground where text and reader meet in a process of profound communication with one another that has a mutual effect on both parties."[38] Though he claims to be tolerant of historical criticism as an independent enterprise,[39] Fokkelman explic-

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of the documentary solution does not follow the lines of attack suggested above; rather than examine the individual sources of the flood narrative for signs of literary artistry such as they claim to have found in the canonical text, they are content merely to point out the literary artistry of the final form. Frequently they rely on chiasms, some plausible, others significantly less so (e.g., their discussion of Gen 6:8–9 [p. 86]), and some absolutely without merit (e.g., the proposed chiasm in Gen 7:22–23 [p. 95], which seems to ignore a cluster of words in v. 23, claims "every man" in v. 22 as one element, but "every" and "man" in v. 23 as separate elements, and, most strikingly, seems to be based entirely on the English translation, insofar as it has as its central axis the pronoun "he," which is represented in the Hebrew only by the prefix on the verb "blotted out"—which, they argue, constitutes a separate element unto itself!).

[36] See Cassuto's dismissal of source criticism in his book *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch: Eight Lectures* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961). Note particularly his comment regarding the foundational scholars of the Documentary Hypothesis: "Since we are nearer than they to the spirit of the Bible . . . we may perchance . . . solve some riddle to which they strove in vain to find a solution" (p. 13).

[37] I focus on Fokkelman in the following discussion, though there are other modern literary critics who have been similarly antagonistic to historical criticism. See especially the strong language of Meir Sternberg, who laments the "over two hundred years of frenzied digging into the Bible's genesis, so senseless as to elicit either laughter or tears" (*The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* [Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985], 13), and see the rebuttal to Sternberg's dismissal of the diachronic perspective by Bernard M. Levinson ("The Right Chorale: From the Poetics to the Hermeneutics of the Hebrew Bible," in *"Not in Heaven": Coherence and Complexity in Biblical Narrative* [ed. Jason P. Rosenblatt and Joseph C. Sitterson; Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991], 129–53).

[38] Fokkelman, *Narrative Art*, viii.

[39] Ibid., 2 n. 7: "Diachronic study needs no justification; the origin and transmission of texts are in themselves worthwhile and form an independent object of research." This claim is difficult

itly sets up the showdown between source and literary criticism. First, he argues that if one can show that a text, in this case Gen 11:1–9, exhibits literary features, then this proves the "working hypothesis" that the text is a unity.[40] It has been shown above that this is not necessarily the case. Moreover, Fokkelman claims that historical criticism is based on "the tacit presupposition that the text is not to be interpreted from itself, because it is stratified or composite, and that to understand it we must first reconstruct its genesis and its process of growth."[41] This is to denigrate and dismiss the lengthy process by which scholarship arrived at the historical-critical method, as well as to misrepresent the origins and aims of historical criticism.

Fokkelman makes the methodological distinction between reading the text as an end or as a means. He claims that historical criticism reads the text as a means, whereas his literary approach sees the text as an end. He accuses historical critics of having an underlying belief that the text is not a unity, and he states that "it is necessary that the validity of such an a priori judgment be tested by granting the texts a painstaking and unbiased examination [focused on it as an end]; this is the only equitable treatment one can accord these texts."[42] Yet this sharp division between the two approaches represents a mistaken view of the history of scholarship. Source criticism did not arise out of a predetermination that the Pentateuch was not a unity; quite the contrary: it came about precisely because of the enormous difficulties encountered in attempts to read the Torah as a coherent, consistent whole; this is why it was called, in its earlier incarnations, "literary criticism."[43] The theories of Wellhausen and others about the religious and intellectual development of the Israelites, which have now unfortunately been so closely linked to the purely textual method of source criticism, do indeed see the text as a means to a historical end.[44] But the source analysis itself derives from the attempt, and failure, to read the Pentateuch as a unity, because it is riddled with the kinds of narrative contradictions and inconsistencies that Fokkelman glosses over by claiming, rightly or wrongly—or irrelevantly—to have found "structure."

Only after trying and failing to read a text as an end unto itself can we attempt

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to square with Fokkelman's insistence on the historical unity of the text as "proven" by modern literary criticism.

[40] Ibid., 12.

[41] Ibid., 4.

[42] Ibid.

[43] See the discussion of this similarity between source and literary criticism in John Barton, "Historical Criticism and Literary Interpretation: Is There Any Common Ground?" in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Studies in Honour of Michael D. Goulder* (ed. Stanley E. Porter, Paul M. Joyce, and Davie E. Orton; Biblical Interpretation Series 8; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 3–15, esp. 5–10.

[44] This combination of literary and religious-historical inquiry has been so dominant that the two are now considered one enterprise; hence the statement of Sternberg: "Source-oriented inquiry addresses itself to the biblical world as it really was" (*Poetics*, 15).

to reconstruct its history; so says Fokkelman.[45] But this is to commit against source criticism the very crime against which Fokkelman protests when it comes to literary criticism. For Fokkelman, the *presumption* is that if a text has any literary artistry, it is therefore a unity; more important, the presumption is that the text is a unity.[46] But neither he nor any of his comrades-in-arms have taken the necessary step to *prove* this to be the case through a rigorous, evenhanded dialogue with the historical-critical approach. That is the step I have tried to take above in examining the story of the Tower of Babel. Fokkelman has demonstrated literary *artistry* in the Pentateuch; but he has not demonstrated literary *unity*.

The question necessarily becomes: Can source criticism and modern literary criticism coexist? The answer is a cautious yes. Both methods begin from the same place: the final form of the text. For source critics, the next step is back in time, to determine how the canonical text came to look as it does. For modern literary critics, the goal is to find a way, through literary-critical means, to understand the final form of the text on its own merits.[47] There is no inherent conflict here, as the two methods move in absolutely opposite directions.[48] The conflict, such as it is, comes

[45] "Not until the interpreter's structural means have been exhausted does the method of genetic explanation seem to me indispensable to an interpretation of texts" (Fokkelman, *Narrative Art*, 2).

[46] "My intuition told me that the narratives from the Hebrew Bible which I knew were more than a patchwork resulting from traditionary and redactional meddling. And second, it was my firm conviction that I would need to trust myself to and surrender to the guidance and manipulation of biblical narrative" (Fokkelman, *Narrative Art*, vii). This is strikingly and perhaps ironically similar to Wellhausen's famous statement: "[I]n the summer of 1867, I learned through Ritschl that Karl Heinrich Graf placed the Law later than the Prophets, and, almost without knowing his reasons for the hypothesis, I was prepared to accept it" (Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* [1883; Scholars Press Reprints and Translations; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994], 3). Additionally, both statements are preceded by short accounts of the authors' educational experience and disenchantment with the contemporary standard presentation of biblical scholarship.

[47] The methodology of modern literary criticism is, of course, applicable to both the final and pre-final forms of the text, but though the methodology remains the same across these levels, the results are crucially different. To demonstrate the literary features of the canonical text is knowingly to work with a composite text, at least in those passages that have been demonstrated to be composite. This does not diminish the power of the final form, as is evident from the religious and literary influence of the Bible over the millennia. But it speaks only to how a modern reader, whether in a religious or secular setting, interacts with the text. It has nothing to say about the chronologically earlier levels. Literary criticism of the sources that make up the final form can demonstrate the artistry of a particular author or school of authors and can allow us to say something about *the meaning they intended* for the text. It is precisely this second application of modern literary criticism that was brought to bear in the analysis of Gunkel's theory on Gen 11:1–9 above.

[48] This is essentially the point of view espoused (albeit one-sidedly) by David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell (*Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* [Oxford Bible Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993], 11): "We do not think that historical-critical analysis, interesting as it might

about when one method is used to address the questions for which the other was intended—that is, when modern literary criticism, the goal of which is to provide the modern reader with the tools to understand and appreciate the difficult canonical text, is applied to the question of the compositional history of the Bible.[49] The literary-historical background of the final form and the meaning the reader can find in it do not stand in opposition to each other; rather, they are complementary parts of a total reading of the biblical text. John Barton's words of advice to biblical scholars are well worth heeding: "most of the texts they interpret need *both* historical *and* literary skill if they are to be adequately interpreted."[50]

One may wonder how practitioners of modern literary criticism have come to view their method as exclusive of the historical approach, rather than as one possible way of reading and interpreting the Bible. It may be useful to recognize the parallel developments of other methods, such as form and tradition criticism. The great originators of these methods, Gunkel, von Rad, and Martin Noth, all accepted source criticism as a basic part of biblical criticism; they considered their methods complementary, further explorations of the prehistory of the individual sources. Yet the current incarnations of these subfields take a very different approach, claiming that form and tradition criticism necessarily lead to the obliteration of the Documentary Hypothesis.[51] Has this happened also with literary criticism? It may be too early to tell, but the difference in approach between Robert Alter, for example, who seems to accept—but recognizes the irrelevance of—the results of source criticism, and Fokkelman, who actively tries to undermine the historical-critical approach, is instructive.[52]

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be, is a necessary major precondition of our reading." Gunn and Fewell do not deny the methodology or, necessarily, the results of historical criticism, but, since they are focused explicitly on reading the final form of the text, they have, as they note, "other fish to fry" (p. 12). See also the astute observations of Barton ("Historical Criticism," 4): "The two positions thus do not clash head on, differing about what the text means; they slide past each other without real engagement."

[49] The converse also is generally true: the source-critical deconstruction of the final form of the text should not be claimed as determinative for the "meaning" of the final form (if, in this postmodern intellectual climate, such a thing any longer exists); the canonical text is not interpretable only through the historical-critical lens. Modern literary critics have every right to chafe at such a claim, if and when it is made. See the comments by Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative*, 8: "[It was assumed that] what was being expounded by the historical critics was, if not the correct meaning of the text, at least a step towards the correct meaning. There are two questions here. One is whether critics (readers) think of texts as having ultimately only a single right meaning. The other is whether critics think that there is a single right method of interpretation." It is fallacious, however, to say that an attitude of objectivity among some source critics condemns the entire source-critical enterprise; it condemns only those practitioners who arrogate to themselves the sole right to interpret the canonical text.

[50] Barton, "Historical Criticism," 15.

[51] See prominently Rolf Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (BZAW 147; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977) and his successors.

[52] See Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic, 1981), 20.

Modern literary criticism is a method meant to help us appreciate the Bible as literature; that is, a priori as a unity. Source criticism is meant to explain why, historically, such a reading is so difficult. If, miraculously, an archaeologist were to discover a long-lost copy of the book of J, would this render the modern literary approach obsolete? By no means: modern literary criticism is as unaffected by—indeed, is as fundamentally unconcerned with—the history of composition of the Bible as it is by the historical accuracy of the stories related therein. Just as source criticism gives us insight only obliquely into how we can meaningfully read the canonical text as a whole (by helping to point out contradictions, seams, varying viewpoints, etc.—and these can be ignored or explained away by a skillful literary critic), literary criticism is not a tool built for proving or disproving anything about the history of a given text. It is, rather, an important and effective means of helping a reader enter into a deeper and more enriching experience of the text as literature, with all the intellectual and emotional power that literature contains. When these methods are forced into confrontation nothing is accomplished, nothing proven; it is as if we are arguing in different languages: a veritable scholarly Tower of Babel.

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Abraham as Paradigm in the Priestly History in Genesis

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The intent of this essay is to argue that the story of Abraham, as an important segment of the Priestly History in the Hexateuch (Genesis to Joshua),[1] was composed with the purpose of providing those who survived the disaster of 586 B.C.E. with a religious basis on which they could rebuild their lives. More specifically, the component of the History dealing with Abraham was intended to provide a paradigm or model for those who aspired to return, or actually did return, to Judah once this became possible after the fall of the Babylonian empire in 539 B.C.E. I am aware that the considerable amount of ritual law in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers associated with or in secondary derivation from this narrative source is an important aspect of the theological profile of P. But since all biblical law is presented in the context of an unfolding historical process, an understanding of the function and intent of the legal material will require, or at least be greatly facilitated by, a prior understanding of the History. I therefore propose to deal with the legal material only where it impinges directly on the understanding of the History and the Abraham segment of the History in particular.

I. The P History

A critical consensus now exists that the P History was composed after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 and subsequent deportations. This preliminary conclusion, which will call for further definition in due course, goes back to the early pioneers

[1] This is generally designated with the siglum P^G (P *Grundschrift*), the foundational element in the *Priesterkodex* or *Priesterschrift;* in this paper the historical part will be referred to simply as the P History or the History *tout court*.

of the critical study of the Pentateuch—Eduard Reuss, Karl Heinrich Graf, A. Kuenen, and Julius Wellhausen, in particular—and will be confirmed by a glance at the standard introductions.[2] The task of disengaging this source from the other narrative strands with which it has been combined is rendered less arduous than it might otherwise be on account of P's distinctive style, idiom, vocabulary, and theological orientation. The P historian makes generous use of lists and genealogies, which generate narrative in their own way, and for the most part the narrative itself is succinct and descriptively economical. The author has no great interest either in populating his narrative with an abundance of minor characters, as is the case, for example, in the account of intrigues at the court of David in 2 Samuel, or in developing the characters of the principal *dramatis personae*—Sarah, Lot, Hagar, Ishmael, and Abraham himself. The focus throughout is on the unfolding drama of divine–human interaction and the destiny of Abraham.[3] All the more striking, then, are the two junctures in the Abraham narrative at which we are given an extensive account complete with human interest and dialogue: the covenant of circumcision (Gen 17:1–27) and Abraham's purchase of a burial plot (23:1–20). Here and elsewhere in P—the dispositions for the new world following the deluge (Gen 9:1–27) and the call of Moses (Exod 6:2–7:7)—such expansive accounts mark defining moments in the History with notable consequences for the future.

The further question, which has proved not so easy to answer, is whether the History is an independent source or a redactional layer added to existing narrative; whether, in other words, it is meant to be read together with an existing narrative line to which it has been added, or is fully intelligible when read on its own as a self-standing text. In his *Prolegomena,* Wellhausen described P (for which he used the siglum Q) as concerned primarily with narrative links and articulations rather than content. It is, he continued, "as if Q were the scarlet thread on which the pearls of JE (the Yahwist and Elohist sources combined) are hung." It is, therefore, little more than "a genealogy with explanations."[4] This reading was accepted by

[2] Otto Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1956), 246–47; Eng. trans. *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), 207 (sixth or possibly fifth century); Georg Fohrer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1965), 201–2; Eng. trans. *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville/New York: Abingdon, 1968), 185–86 (fifth century; later than Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, Malachi, but earlier than Chronicles); J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament: From Its Origins to the Closing of the Alexandrian Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 138–44 (close to the time of Ezekiel); Walther Zimmerli, *1 Mose 12–25: Abraham* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976), 7–9 (sixth to fifth century); Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 21 (fifth century). In the matter of dating, confusion is sometimes caused by failure to distinguish between the narrative and legal material, and between the origin of legal and ritual traditions and their written compilation.

[3] On the stylistic characteristics of P, see Sean E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* (AnBib 50; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971).

[4] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1885; Scholars Press Reprints and

many scholars, often without argument. One of these was Frank Moore Cross, who read P as a systematic reworking of traditional source material available at the time of writing. If, therefore, we find no explicit reference to a Sinai covenant in P, the reason must be—since it is incredible that P would not have a covenant at Sinai—that the author assumed it to be known from the JE form of the Sinai story which P took over.[5]

The problem with this reading can be illustrated by reference to the extensive and detailed accounts of the two P covenants, the first with all living creatures after the deluge (Gen 9:8–17), the second with Abraham (Gen 17:1–22). If the author had wished to represent the Sinai event in terms of covenant-making, complete with the accompanying rituals, we would have been left in no doubt about it. In the generally accepted division of sources, according to P all that happened was that the Israelites arrived at Sinai (Exod 19:1), Moses went up the mountain alone, he received specifications from God for the construction of the wilderness sanctuary and the establishment of its cult (Exod 24:15b–18a; 25–31), these instructions were duly carried out (chs. 35–40), further ritual laws were given, and after a stay of rather less than a year the tribes departed from Sinai in solemn procession (Num 10:11–36). The covenant language in the P version of the Sinai event comes at the conclusion of the instructions for setting up the wilderness shrine, where Sabbath observance is inculcated as a perpetual covenant (Exod 31:16–17). This language is somewhat deceptive, however. Sabbath is not presented as one of several stipulations of a covenant contingent on the observance of which God would do certain things for the human partner, in the manner of the standard Deuteronomic covenant. It is not part of a bilaterial agreement, and it is not a stipulation but a sign pointing back to creation. It is therefore analogous to circumcision in Genesis 17, which is also a perpetual covenant (vv. 13, 19) indicating a relationship already in existence (v. 11). Another problem with this hypothesis of P as a narrative layer superimposed on existing narrative is that it tends to assume that all the non-P material is earlier than P and—in the version argued by Cross and others—that P is to be identified with the final redaction of the Pentateuch or Hexateuch. This last point in particular cannot be taken for granted. As the final redactor, P would not have retained the distinction between clean and unclean animals in

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Translations; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 332. Wellhausen's siglum Q stood for *Quattuor Foedera* ("four covenants"), since he held that Genesis 1 was the first of four covenants in the Priestly text, a conclusion no longer in favor.

[5] Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 293–325; and, more recently, idem, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 30–31. Similarly Henri Cazelles, "Textes sacerdotaux," in *DBSup* 39:833–34; Rolf Rendtorff, *Die Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (BZAW 147; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977), 112–42; Eng. trans. *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch* (JSOTSup 89; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 169–70.

Noah's ark and the sacrifice after the water subsided (Gen 7:2–3, 8; 8:20–21). He would also very likely have omitted the dubious role of Aaron in the golden calf incident (Exodus 32).[6]

If this is accepted, we may read the Abraham story in Gen 11:27–25:11 as one chapter in a broadly ranging composition by a temple scribe from sometime in the mid to late Persian or early Hellenistic period. This composition would have skillfully combined available written sources into a compelling narrative, and the most prominent of these would have been the P History from the early post-destruction period. The *Endredaktor,* who should also be regarded as an author, made use of the P History, no doubt selectively and no doubt with modifications and adaptations, as structurally and thematically the central strand of his narrative.

Another disputed issue is the extent of P. There is no question as to where it begins, but the same cannot be said for its conclusion. The issue was raised around the middle of the last century by Martin Noth, who inaugurated a new chapter in the history of pentateuchal criticism by detaching Deuteronomy from the Pentateuch and attaching it to Former Prophets, to which, Noth argued, it serves as a kind of theological introduction in addition to narrating the first stage of the history during the lifetime of Moses. Noth maintained that J and E, fought over since early modern times, do not continue beyond these four books (Noth's Tetrateuch) as many scholars had argued. He entertained no doubt that P is a well-defined, independent narrative source that concludes with the death of Moses in Deut 34:1, 7–9 and is therefore not represented in Joshua. But he then went on to weaken his case by admitting the presence in Joshua of a considerable amount of language and themes characteristic of P. In the latter part of the book, for example, Eleazar son of Aaron plays a dominant role alongside of Joshua (Josh 14:1; 19:51; 21:1), and the book concludes with the notice about his death (24:33). In another incident, the crisis over the Transjordanian altar (22:10–24), his son Phinehas plays an equally important role. Terminology characteristic of P appears quite frequently,[7] and the

[6] For Martin Noth (*A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* [trans. Bernhard W. Anderson; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972], 8–19), P provided the narrative framework for the final redactor, who, while quite distinct from P, employed similar idioms and terminology. Along the same lines: Norbert Lohfink, "Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichte," in *Congress Volume: Göttingen 1977* (VTSup 29; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 196–97; Erich Zenger, *Gottes Bogen in den Wolken: Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Theologie der priesterschriftlichen Urgeschichte* (SBS 112; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983), 32–36; Klaus Koch, "P—Kein Redaktor! Erinnerung an zwei Eckdaten der Quellenscheidung," *VT* 37 (1987): 446–67; Ernest Nicholson, "P as an Originally Independent Source in the Pentateuch," *IBS* 10 (1980): 192–206; John A. Emerton, "The Priestly Writer in Genesis," *JTS* 39 (1988): 381–400; Baruch J. Schwartz, "The Priestly Account of the Theophany and Lawgiving at Sinai," in *Texts, Temples and Traditions: A Tribute to Menachem Haran* (ed. Michael V. Fox et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 103–34. Schwartz also argues against a P covenant and covenant ceremony at Sinai.

[7] אהל מועד (18:1; 19:31); עדה (9:15–27; 18:1; 20:6, 9; 22:12–31); ארון העדות (4:16). The list is not exhaustive.

distribution of land to the tribes (chs. 14–21) is strongly reminiscent of P. Noth maintained nevertheless that these are *Zusätze* (additions) that in no way add up to a distinct P layer in the book.[8]

Noth was correct to the extent that evidence for the activity of the P author is more sporadic and sketchy in Joshua than in Genesis and Exodus. Yet he was obliged to acknowledge that the long section on the distribution of land (Joshua 13–22) was not originally part of his Deuteronomistic History (Dtr), and it is precisely there that we find the clearest indications of P irrespective of the ultimate origin of the topographical data that these chapters contain.[9] The conclusion that the P History ends with the occupation of the land, the setting up of the wilderness sanctuary in it, and the allotment of tribal territory will appear unavoidable if we take in the character and structure of the work as a whole. Such a conclusion would seem to be required by the promise of land to the ancestors and Abraham's purchase of a plot of land narrated at length in Genesis 23. There is the further point that the overall structure of the work pivots on the creation of the world as a cosmic temple and the construction of the wilderness shrine, narrated at length in Exodus 25–30, and it is this shrine that is finally set up at Shiloh in the promised land (Josh 18:1; 19:51). Formulaic statements of closure characteristic of P round off the successful completion of these respective tasks. These statements of closure are concentrated at the three key points of the narrative: creation of the cosmic temple, construction of the wilderness sanctuary, and setting up of the sanctuary in Canaan.[10]

The most we can say about the authorship of the History is that it bears all the marks of a priestly and scribal hand. Unlike some ancient Mesopotamian compositions—*Gilgamesh,* for example[11]—neither P, nor any other biblical text for that matter, concludes with a colophon giving the name of the author or the scribe who copied it. Our text is therefore anonymous—or rather pseudonymous, since the entire Pentateuch is traditionally attributed to Moses. Rather than imagining some priest writing or dictating the work in isolation in the manner of a modern author,

[8] Martin Noth, *Das Buch Josua* (2nd ed.; HAT 7; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1953), 10–11.

[9] Ibid., 13–14; idem, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien: Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1957), 45–47; Eng. trans. *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 40–41. Similarly Karl Elliger ("Sinn und Ursprung der priesterschriftlichen Geschichtserzählung," *ZTK* 49 [1952]: 121–43), who argues that P ends with the death of Moses in Deut 34:1a, 7–9.

[10] Compare "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished. . . . On the seventh day God finished the work that he had done" (Gen 2:1–2) with "Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished. . . . So Moses finished the work" (Exod 39:32; 40:33), and "God finished the work that he had done" (Gen 2:2) with "They finished dividing the land" (Josh 19:51). On these formulaic P expressions, see my article "The Structure of P," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 275–91.

[11] The *Gilgamesh Epic* was copied, and probably also put together out of existing material, by the scribe and incantation priest Sin-leqe-unnini. See A. R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* (2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1:31–33.

we might do better conjuring up the image of a center of learning attached to the Jerusalem temple, a small-scale version of the Mesopotamian *bīt ṭuppi* (scribal workshop, literally, "tablet house") or the Egyptian *pr-ᶜnh* ("house of life"),[12] where learned priest-scribes drawing on the same traditions, sharing more or less the same theological ideas, and using the same professional idiom and vocabulary were occupied in the task, perhaps over several generations.

To return, finally, to the date of composition: We noted earlier the broad critical agreement that the P History was composed after the fall of Jerusalem and subsequent deportations. That the narrative structure pivots on the place of worship suggests a connection of some kind with the rebuilt Jerusalem temple completed, according to Ezra 6:15, in the sixth year of Darius, presumed to be Darius I, therefore 516/515 B.C.E. The land promise would also have been of immediate relevance to those who aspired to return to Judah in the late Neo-Babylonian or early Persian period. Emphasis in Isaiah 40–55, from the late Neo-Babylonian period, on Israel's God as cosmic creator deity should also be given due weight. The verb ברא occurs with reference to God's creative activity often in Genesis 1–6 (eleven times), even more often in Isaiah 40–55 (sixteen times), and with relative infrequency elsewhere. The god invoked by this prophet is, more clearly than in any other prophetic writing, a universal deity, creator of the world.[13] It is moreover of interest to note that the title אלהי השמים, "the God of heaven," used only from the time of the Persian period (Ezra 1:2; 5:12; Jonah 1:9; etc.) and in the Abraham cycle (Gen 24:3, 7), corresponds to the title of the supreme Zoroastrian deity Ahura Mazda. There may also be a thematic link between the creation of the human being in the image of God (Gen 1:26–27) and the insistent polemic against the manufacture of images as objects of worship in Second Isaiah.[14] A further indication, easily passed over, is the prediction in the P History that kings will be among the descendants of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 17:6, 16; 35:11). This notice helps to set a *terminus ante quem,* since it is difficult to suppose that such expectations could be realistically entertained after the disappearance of Zerubbabel from the scene in the early years of Darius I. A final complicating factor is the disputed origin of the Aaronite priests, who feature prominently in the story beginning with the ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood in Leviticus 8–9. With few and uncertain exceptions, these "sons of Aaron" are conspicuously absent from the biblical record before the composition of Chronicles in the late Persian or early Hellenistic period, as they are also from the Elephantine archive. This whole issue is almost impenetrably obscure and cannot be taken up here, but if the Aaronite priesthood began to establish itself in

[12] Alan Gardiner, "The House of Life," *JEA* 24 (1938): 164–67, 175; Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 51–73.

[13] Isaiah 40:12–17, 22, 25–26; 44:24; 45:12, 18; 48:12–13; 51:13.

[14] Isaiah 40:18–20; 41:6–7; 44:9–20; 45:20; 46:1–2, 5–7.

Judah only between the destruction of the first and the erection of the second temple, as some have argued, this would be compatible with the date of compositon I have proposed.[15]

II. The Biblical Portrait of Abraham

Narrative traditions about Abraham may have been circulating orally from an early time, comparable to the traditions about Jacob in Hos 12:3–5, 12. The allusion in Isa 29:22 to the redemption of Abraham may reflect such a tradition, one that would be taken up by later authors. The *Apocalypse of Abraham* (ch. 8), for example, tells how Abraham was saved from the punishment by fire inflicted on the people of Ur on account of their sins.[16] But with the possible exception of the triad "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" or, when Jacob is speaking, the dyad "Abraham and Isaac,"[17] Abraham is not attested in any biblical texts clearly datable prior to the Babylonian exile. Allusions to Abraham in Isaiah appear in the later sections of the book (41:8; 51:2; 63:16), the only exception being 29:22, which occurs in a post-exilic addendum to a woe saying (29:17–24). The restorationist saying in Jer 33:23–26, which mentions the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, comes from a time when the monarchy was no longer in existence. The allusion to Yahweh's loyalty to Abraham in Mic 7:20 concludes a passage that speaks of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. The first prophetic text that says anything about Abraham apart from his name is Ezek 33:23–26, in which the indigenous Judeans who had survived the fury of the Babylonians lay claim to the land as his authentic descendants. This silence of the early sources has strengthened the case of those scholars who have concluded that we owe the rich narrative about Abraham in Gen 11:27–25:11 not to oral tradition handed down from before the formation of the kingdoms, much less from the Middle Bronze period, but to literary circles during the Neo-Babylonian or early Persian periods.

The most explicit structural feature in the book of Genesis is the series of *tôlĕdôt* arranged in two pentads. In spite of its prominence, not much attention has

[15] For references to early scholarship on this "mystery of the missing sons of Aaron" and restatement of the old hypothesis of a connection between the "sons of Aaron" and Persian-period Bethel, see my "The Judaean Priesthood during the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods: A Hypothetical Reconstruction," *CBQ* 60 (1998): 25–43, and "Bethel in the Neo-Babylonian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 93–107.

[16] For other traditions about Abraham in Mesopotamia, transmitted or invented, see *Jub.* 11:4–17; 12:1–8; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.155; Philo, *Abr.* 70–80; Qurʾan sura 37:83–98.

[17] The three ancestors are invoked more often than not in connection with the land promise, especially in Deuteronomy (1:8; 6:10; 9:5; 30:20; 34:40). Jacob invokes the God of Abraham and Isaac in Gen 28:13; 31:42; 32:10; 48:15–16.

been paid in recent commentary on Genesis to the significance of this feature. Among those who have acknowledged the structural and exegetical significance of the *tôlĕdôt*, some have argued for an independent *tôlĕdôt*-book that was edited into the P narrative strand at a late juncture in the formation of Genesis, while others have read the *tôlĕdôt* as indigenous to the P History.[18] If the series was not originally part of the P History, as a genealogical history in outline it is entirely compatible with it.

The Abraham story occupies the first place in the second of the two *tôlĕdôt* series arranged in pentads. The arrangement of this second pentad is as follows:

1	Terah (Abraham)	11:27–25:11
2	Ishmael	25:18
3	Isaac (Jacob)	25:19–35:29
4	Esau (Edom)	36:1 (9)–43
5	Jacob (his sons especially Joseph)	37:2–50:26

The titles of the first, third, and fifth units refer to the family eponyms, even though the attached narratives deal with immediate descendants. In the fourth unit, the *tôlĕdôt* superscript is repeated in 36:9 after the listing of Esau's wives and sons, but 36:9 is clearly one of several subordinate headings and therefore structurally insignificant. A further point may be made. The paradigmatic character of the Abraham narrative fits the larger pattern of the ancestral history as a whole. This narrative in its turn runs parallel to the historical experience of Israel in one significant respect: the land is a major theme in both, but the story in Genesis begins and ends outside the land, and its midpoint, the great divide, is Jacob's twenty-year exile in Mesopotamia. The first pentad (Gen 2:4a; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10) has a similar if less overtly paradigmatic character, in that it too ends in Mesopotamia (11:10–26) and the central position is occupied by the deluge (6:9–9:29). It is well known that inundation can be metaphoric for defeat and subjugation.[19] This paradigmatic character of the Genesis narrative as a whole encourages us to look more closely at the Abraham story in the expectation of uncovering similar patterns.

[18] Representative of the latter opinion are Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis. A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961 [1956]), 68; Peter Weimar, "Die Toledot-Formel in der priesterschriftlichen Geschichtsdarstellung," *BZ* 18 (1974): 65–93; and Sven Tengström, *Die Toledotformel und die literarische Struktur der priesterlichen Erweiterungsschicht im Pentateuch* (ConBOT 17; Lund: Gleerup, 1981), who held that the seven Genesis formulas (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 11:10, 27; 25:19; 37:2), corresponding to the seven days of creation, constituted P's own contribution. The most recent addition to the debate, to my knowledge, is that of Andreas Schüle, *Der Prolog der hebräischen Bibel: Der literar- und theologiegeschichtliche Diskurs der Urgeschichte (Genesis 1–11)* (ATANT 86; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2006), 41–58.

[19] For example, the Sumerian *Lament over the Destruction of Ur* (*ANET,* 455–63); Ps 124:4–5; and Isa 54:9–10, where the phrase "the waters of Noah" occurs in a context referring to exile. The point has often been noted; see, e.g., Karl Elliger, "Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung," *ZTK* 49 (1952): 121–42; and Erich Zenger, *Gottes Bogen in den Wolken,* 43–49.

III. Abraham, Ideal Immigrant

In his treatise about Abraham (*Abr.* §§66, 68, 72, etc.), Philo describes Abraham's journey from southern to northern Mesopotamia and thence, in the course of time, to the land of Canaan, as a migration or immigration. The word in question is *apoikia,* used also by Josephus with reference to the Jewish Diaspora in Alexandria (*C. Ap.* 2.38), and in Ezra-Nehemiah LXX with reference to the גולה (*gôlâ*) or בני הגולה (υἱοὶ τῆς ἀποικίας) who made the same journey as Abraham from the same point of departure to the same destination. The movement of the Terahite group from Ur Kasdim to Harran and of Abraham from Harran to Canaan forms the first chapter in the story of Abraham (Gen 11:27–12:5). This P component has been combined with an account of a revelation from Yahweh that anticipates the assurance of blessing and the theme of the great nation, made solemnly at a later point and often repeated (Gen 12:1–4a). This passage, still attributed by most commentators to the Yahwist (12:1–4a), interrupts the P account of the journey, which moves smoothly from the death of Terah in Harran at the age of 205 (11:32) to the departure of Abraham from Harran at the age of 75 (12:4b–5). In doing so, it overlooks the notice that Canaan was the destination from the outset (note the phrase ללכת ארצה כנען [11:31], repeated resumptively in 12:5b after the insertion). The intent was, no doubt, to give the journey a more explicitly religious motivation while introducing the theme of blessing, fundamental in this strand of the narrative.

The journey, which begins in southern Mesopotamia[20] where the Judean deportees were settled, is interrupted by a stay of indeterminate length in Harran on the Balikh River in northern Mesopotamia, where the patriarch Terah died. His life span of 205 years intimates his position as a link between the archaic world and the world of "historical" realities in which no one, not even the most deserving, would ever again attain such an age. The message is that, in the damaged postdiluvial world, powerful negative forces are at work against which Abraham is called by God to launch a new initiative and counterforce.

It is perhaps not coincidental that Harran, which lies too far north to be a logical stage on the way to Palestine, is in the same region as Gozan (*Guzāna,* Tell Ḥalāf) on the river Khābûr, one of the places where the deportees from Samaria were settled by the Assyrians (2 Kgs 17:6; 18:11; 1 Chr 5:26) and where Israelite names have come to light in excavations at the site.[21] This is the homeland of the

[20] "In Ur of the Chaldeans" (באור כשדים) or, in the LXX, "in the land of the Chaldeans" (ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ τῶν Χαλδαίων). No reason is given in P for the initial departure.

[21] An inscription on the Nimrud Prism of Sargon II claims to have settled the deportees from Samaria "in the midst of Assyria" (*ina qereb aššur*). For references, see Michael Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11; New

ancestors, variously identified as Naḥor (Til Naḥiri near Harran) (Gen 24:10), Harran (Gen 28:10; 29:4), Paddan-aram (Gen 28:2, 6–7; 31:18), Aram-naharaim (Gen 24:10); hence, it was here that Abraham sought a wife for his son Isaac. In the absence of information, we can only speculate whether this might suggest contacts between the southern Diaspora and whatever remained of the Samarian Diaspora in the north. However this may be, the intermediate settlement of the Terahites in the north connects more overtly with the enhanced importance of Harran as a religious center during the reign of Nabonidus, last of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty (556–539 B.C.E.). Nabonidus, a native of Harran and son of Adad-guppi, priestess of the Ehulhul shrine of the moon deity Sîn located in Harran, expended a great deal of energy in promoting this cult alongside that of Marduk, the imperial deity, for political and no doubt also religious reasons.[22] The Judean survivors in the south would no doubt have known that Nabonidus rebuilt the temple of the god Sîn in Harran, which had been destroyed by the Medes in 610 B.C.E. Nabonidus attributed the destruction to Sîn's anger against his own people, just as the destruction of the Jerusalem temple was attributed to the anger of Yahweh (e.g., Lam 2:1, 6–7).[23] Whatever the P author may have had in mind in describing the journey in this fashion, the settlement in Harran would have given contemporary color and relevance to this opening chapter in the Abraham story read in the Neo-Babylonian or early Persian period.

On his arrival at his destination, Abraham found the land occupied by Canaanites (12:6b) and Hittites (23:5, 7, 10, etc.), but the narrative gives us the impression that it was poorly inhabited and under no central local authority. Nor is there a trace of Egyptian control or presence, which incidentally militates against a background in the Middle or Late Bronze period. The note about Canaanite inhabitants is probably an editorial addendum, but it will remind us how the indigenous peoples are stereotyped as Canaanites in Ezra (9:1). The designation "Hittite" (בני־חת) corresponds to the description of Syria-Palestine as "Hatti land" (*māt ḫattu*) in Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions.[24] The P historian also refers to a section of the population as עם־הארץ (23:7, 12, 13), which we would suppose identifies them as the dominant population group. Here, too, we will be reminded of the same term, or a variant, in the Ezra narrative, where, however, it is used pejoratively.[25] We do not find any further details about the land and its boundaries in P,

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York: Doubleday, 1988), 197; K. Lawson Younger, Jr., "The Deportations of the Israelites," *JBL* 117 (1998): 201–27.

[22] Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon 556–539 B.C.* (Yale Near Eastern Researches 10; New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1989), 43–65; J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd ed., Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 489–90.

[23] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus,* 58–62.

[24] Donald J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626–556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1961), 68–75.

[25] Ezra 3:3; 4:4; 9:1–2, 11; 10:2, 11; Neh 9:24, 30; 10:29, 31–32.

but it is worth noting that in the "covenant of the pieces" in Genesis 15 the boundaries, from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates (15:18), correspond to the extent of the Transeuphrates section of the Babylon-Transeuphrates satrapy (*Babirush-Ebernari*) before the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses in 525 B.C.E.

That the land is ארץ מגורים, the land of Abraham's sojournings (17:8), and that Abraham is therefore a גר־ותושב, a resident alien (23:4) needing the protection of local dignitaries, is kept firmly in view throughout. In the bargaining for land he insists that he is living among them (23:4–6). He is not an intruder, a carpetbagger coming in from outside to exploit the locals or steal their land. Though entitled to take precedence, he gives Lot first choice where to settle (13:11b–12). This is a critical moment, since it seems that Abraham, who knew Sarai was infertile, took Lot along with him as his heir designate. Lot's decision to settle in the *kikkar,* the Jordan plain, effectively put him outside of the land of Canaan and therefore disqualified him as presumptive heir to Abraham. This Lot tradition also introduces the reader to his descendants, the Moabites and Ammonites (Gen 19:30–38), who were excluded definitively from membership in the assembly of Israel in Deut 23:4–7.[26] Abraham bargains for land and obtains it legally rather than trying to seize it by force (23:1–20). In another incident, not from the P source, he resolves disputes about property peacefully and fairly with a local ruler in the Beersheba region (21:32). We hear nothing about the "abominations" of the indigenous peoples; in fact, Abraham does not comment on their morals at all. His choice of a wife for Isaac is motivated by a preference, traditional in that kind of society, for cross-generational (uncle–niece, aunt–nephew) or cross-cousin marriage. There is none of the intransigent cultic ethnicity characteristic of Ezra and Nehemiah in their attitude to the local inhabitants. It seems, then, that in his social relations Abraham could have served for the Judeo-Babylonian immigrants as a model of how to relate to the indigenous peoples. This would be expressive of what has been called a soft ideology in contrast to the hard variety represented by the conquest and ethnic cleansing mandated in Deuteronomy and implemented in the book of Joshua.[27]

IV. The Covenant of Circumcision (Genesis 17)

This chapter records one of the defining moments in the P History signified by the giving of new names to Abram and Sarai in preparation for the miraculous

[26] The presentation of Moab and Ben-Ammi as Lot's sons may therefore be relevant for the disputed location of the Jordanian *kikkar.* See Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 177–78; Larry R. Helyer, "The Separation of Abraham and Lot: Its Significance in the Patriarchal Narratives," *JSOT* 26 (1983): 77–88.

[27] The language of hard and soft ideology ("ideologia dura, morbida") is borrowed from Mario Liverani, *Oltre la Bibbia: Storia antica di Israele* (2nd ed.; Rome/Bari: Laterza, 2004), 283–87.

birth of a son in their old age. In P this is Abraham's first communication with the deity, a deity who here appears to him under a name previously unknown. In the archaic period the name was the generic Elohim, meaning "deity," "divinity." The new name now revealed is El Shaddai (Gen 17:1); and only with the third phase of divine revelation, to Moses in Egypt, is this deity, previously unknown by a proper and personal name, revealed as Yahweh, God of Israel. ("I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name Yahweh I did not make myself known to them" [Exod 6:2–3]). At this point it is explicitly noted that the name is revealed in Egypt (Exod 6:28–29), whereas the alternative account locates this event in the Midianite wilderness (Exod 3:13–15). The change reflects the deterritorialization of Yahweh after the liquidation of the Judean state, manifested symbolically in the mobile chariot throne and the movement of the כבוד from Jerusalem to Babylon in Ezekiel. The author will occasionally, as here at the beginning of this important chapter, speak of Abraham's divine interlocutor as Yahweh, but we must bear in mind that he knows this but Abraham does not. Whatever the origin and original significance of the name Shaddai or El Shaddai, its usage is largely, perhaps entirely, restricted to the period after the disasters of the early sixth century B.C.E. In particular, it is the most frequently attested divine title in the book of Job.[28]

The basic question in the P narrative at this point, which was also the basic question for the survivors of the liquidation of the Judean state, is about the possibility of a future. The first and necessary stage is for Abraham to have a legal heir. By this point Lot has been set aside (13:11–12), as also Eliezer in the alternative strand (15:1–4). Since, according to P, Sarai has not borne a child for Abram (16:1a), ten years after their arrival in Canaan she gives him her Egyptian maid Hagar as a surrogate wife (16:3), a procedure contemplated in ancient Mesopotamian legal praxis (Hammurapi ##144–145), and in due course Ishmael is born (16:15–16). After thirteen more years had passed, El Shaddai appeared to Abram in a vision urging him to conduct himself blamelessly in the presence of God, as his forebears Enoch and Noah in the archaic period had done, and promising him a covenant that would ensure him abundant progeny (17:1–2). This would represent an indefectible relationship (ברית עולם)—good news for the survivors of the disaster—and his new name signified that nations and kings would proceed from him (vv. 3–8). Circumcision is to be the sign of the covenant and is incumbent on all members of the patrimonial household, including slaves or dependents not belong-

[28] An ingenious rabbinic interpretation takes the title to mean "the All-Sufficient One" (*še-day*). In biblical usage it is associated with extreme meteorological phenomena (Ezek 1:24; 10:5; Job 6:4), divine anger (Job 21:20; 29:5), destruction (Joel 1:15; Job 19:29) and disaster in general (Ruth 1:20–21). It has also been explained by assonance with the verbal stem שדד ("destroy"), as in Isa 13:6 = Joel 1:15: כשד משדי יבוא ("it approaches like destruction from Shaddai"); cf. the *šadayîn* ("avenging deities"?) of the Deir ʿAllah texts. See E. Axel Knauf, "SHADDAY," in *DDD,* 2nd ed., 749–53; Jo Ann Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā* (HSM 31; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980), 85–89.

ing to the kinship group (vv. 9–14). That infants are to be circumcised at eight days, a requirement attested only here and in the ritual law (Lev 12:3), could be seen as another indication of an exilic or postexilic date. The climax of the vision is the promise of a child for Sarai, now renamed Sarah. Abraham, understandably incredulous in view of Sarah's age, makes a counterproposal in favor of Ishmael, but the deity insists that Sarah will have a child who is to be called Isaac. Ishmael is also blessed and will become a great people, twelvefold like Israel (vv. 15–22). The chapter concludes with the circumcision of Abraham, Ishmael, and the entire household on that very day (vv. 23–27).

Two observations relevant to our theme are in order at this point. The first is about the radically original character of covenant in the Priestly History. This author uses the same term as previously (ברית) and some of the same language associated with making and maintaining a covenant relationship including injunctions to observe the covenant, but the reality is quite different from the classic Deuteronomic model. There are no stipulations conditional on the fulfillment of which God commits to doing certain things in favor of the human partner. Circumcision is not such a stipulation. Like the rainbow in the primeval covenant, it is a sign of a promise already made, a relationship already in principle established. The sign is also attached to Passover (Exod 12:13), as it is to the Sabbath with reference to creation (Exod 31:12–17). In terms of Greek usage, it is more a συνθήκη than a διαθήκη. We shall return to this central concept of the P theology at the conclusion of the essay.

The second observation concerns the status and role of Ishmael, which could hardly have failed to be of interest to a reader in sixth- or fifth-century B.C.E. Judah. Kedar is a "son" of Ishmael (Gen 25:13), and we recall that by the Neo-Babylonian period the Kedarite Arabs had displaced the Edomites from much of their territory and had settled a broad swath of land from the Transjordanian plateau to the Nile delta. The sheik Geshem (Gashmu), head of the Kedarite confederacy, was a leading opponent of Nehemiah (Neh 2:19; 6:1–2, 16). His name is attested in a roughly contemporary Lihyanite inscription and on a dedicatory bowl from Tell el-Maskhuta in Lower Egypt.[29]

What, then, is Ishmael's status with respect to the covenant? In the P historian's account of this first and decisive revelation to Abraham, it is initially clear that the covenant is made with Abraham and all his descendants without exception, therefore including Ishmael. It is stated, redundantly (vv. 4, 5, 6, 16), that Abraham is to be the ancestor of peoples, in the plural, and the circumcision of Ishmael makes it clear that he entered the covenant "on that very day" (vv. 23, 26), a year ahead of Isaac. This conclusion is called into question only in vv. 15–22 with the announcement of Sarah's childbearing, to which Abraham, who understandably finds this incredible, makes the counterproposal in favor of Ishmael: "Would that Ishmael

[29] See my *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 225.

might live in your presence" (v. 18). If we are not to conclude that the reply to this implicit proposal (vv. 19–21) cancels out the original revelation, we must suppose that Ishmael and his Arab descendants remain under the covenant and promise though not in the same way and to the same degree as Isaac: "I bless him, I make him fruitful, I give him exceeding increase" (v. 20).[30] And for the immediate future, it is assumed in the alternative narrative strand that Ishmael would have had the right to inherit alongside Isaac if Sarah had not felt obliged to expel Hagar from the household and disinherit her son.[31]

The disconcerting problem created by the juxtaposition of vv. 1–14 and 15–22 may, however, be explained in the context of the redactional history of the chapter. The second of these passages begins with a new revelation of Yahweh to Abraham dealing for the first time with Sarai/Sarah. Two considerations suggest that it has been appended subsequently to the circumcision commandment, the natural sequence of which is its implementation in vv. 23–27. The first is the close parallelism with the preceding section vv. 1–14. The one revelation deals with Abraham, the other with Sarah. Both receive new names, and nations will be numbered among their descendants. On both occasions Abraham reacts to the revelation by falling on his face, and the establishment of the covenant is described in practically identical terms in both (vv. 7 and 19b). The second consideration is the close affinity with the announcement to Sarah in the following chapter (18:9–15). Abraham is addressed, but the revelation has to do with Sarah. Here, too, the promise of a son is greeted with laughter and incredulity; nevertheless, she will give birth at the appointed time (למועד) in the following year (בשנה האחרת [17:21]; כעת חיה [18:14]). However these parallels are explained, they reinforce the impression that Gen 17:15–22 has been added to remove any doubt about the ascendancy of Isaac and his line over that of Ishmael. Ishmael remains, nevertheless, a pivotal figure, intimating a broader and more inclusive idea of the Abrahamic covenant, one entirely in keeping with the universalism of the Priestly History.[32]

[30] I mention here the interesting proposal of Konrad Schmitt of the University of Zurich to interpret Abraham's wish that Ishmael might live in God's presence (v. 18) as implying that Ishmael, though within the Abrahamic covenant, will not belong to the Israelite cult community. (Private communication).

[31] In the parallel version (Gen 16:1–6) Hagar was expelled for treating her mistress with contempt, which, in keeping with the Mesopotamian legal tradition (Hammurapi #146), led to her demotion from surrogate wife to slave status. What is not clear is the legal status of the male child born to the surrogate wife in the event that the primary wife bears a child after the birth of the surrogate son.

[32] In the Qurʾan we find the reverse of the situation relative to Isaac and Ishmael in Genesis 17. Ishmael (Ismaʾil), one of the righteous and a prophet (sura 4:163–64; 6:84; etc.), is named before Isaac, and it is he rather than Isaac whom Ibrahim is commanded to sacrifice (37:101–10). The father and son then raised the foundations of the Kaʿbah and founded its cult (2:125–40), as the biblical pair founded the cult of Bethel.

V. Abraham Purchases a Plot of Land (Genesis 23)

The second incident narrated at length in the Abraham story is the death of Sarah at the ripe age of 127 and Abraham's purchase of a site for her burial at Machpelah in the Hebron region. Abraham's anxiety that the burial site be purchased is in keeping with the immemorial custom of burial on the family's patrimonial domain. Ephron's field with the cave is also, so to speak, the first installment of the land promised to Abraham. The most striking feature of the story is the insistence on the complete and detailed legality of the purchase. The proceedings unfold in three stages (vv. 3–6, 7–9, 10–18). In the initial phase, after clarifying his status as a גר־ותושב residing among the indigenous Hittites, Abraham expresses his desire to purchase a burial plot (אחזת־קבר [vv. 4, 9, 20]). Unwilling to alienate their patrimonial domain, the Hittites deflect the request first with flattery ("You are an awesome sheik among us" [v. 6]), then with the offer of the best of their own plots for Sarah's burial. In the second phase Abraham, no doubt anticipating this answer, was ready with a backup plan, a request for them to lobby on his behalf Ephron ben Zohar, a local dignitary, with a view to purchasing a plot at the extremity of his property (vv. 7–9). They apparently agreed, and the third and final phase (vv. 10–16) saw the parties reconvene in the open space at the town gate, a traditional venue for legal proceedings which allowed for the presence of a large number of witnesses (cf. Ruth 4:1–6). After Abraham made his request, Ephron responded by offering to put the property with the cave at his disposal at no expense for Sarah's burial, obliging Abraham finally to make a direct offer to pay the going rate for it. By casually mentioning a price that he took to be far beyond Abraham's means, Ephron intended to bring the proceedings to a rapid conclusion.[33] But then, no doubt to his surprise and dismay, Abraham at once came up with the amount. Ephron could not back down in the presence of his fellow Hittites and the townfolk, and the property passed to Abraham.

In describing this incident with great finesse, and not without a touch of humor, the author is at pains to emphasize that the field and cave were obtained in a fully legal fashion. Abraham's status as a גר־ותושב, and therefore as living among them (בתוככם [v. 9]; בתוכנו [v. 6]) is clearly stated, thus establishing his eligibility as a purchaser of land. Legal terminology is used throughout. "Listening" (שמע) in legal terms means agreeing to the terms proposed (vv. 6, 8, 11, 13, 15); in agreeing to Ephron's offer, Abraham therefore "listened" to him (v. 16). An offer or tender (with the verb נתן) could mean either an offer to sell outright or to donate the land on condition that the beneficiary become a dependent client of the vendor

[33] With the four hundred shekels offered by Ephron, compare the field purchased by Jeremiah for seventeen shekels (Jer 32:9) and Arauna's threshing floor, with a yoke of oxen thrown in, which went for fifty shekels (2 Sam 24:24).

(vv. 9, 11). The property itself is carefully described (v. 17), and the full sale price (כסף מלא [v. 9]), according to the standard recognized by merchants (עבר לסחר [v. 16]), is specified. There is great insistence on witnesses: the proceedings take place in the sight and hearing not only of the בני־חת (vv. 10, 11, 16, 18) but also of citizens who happened to be present in the gate plaza (v. 18). Then, at the completion of the transaction, the property passed (קום) to the purchaser (vv. 17, 20). The only missing element can be supplied from Jeremiah's purchase of a parcel of land in Benjamin: the preparation of two copies of the deed of purchase, duly signed and notarized, one sealed the other open (Jer 32:9–10).

A date for the P History in the later Neo-Babylonian or early Persian period, as proposed earlier, would permit the suggestion that in this incident Abraham is being proposed as a model for immigrants from the Babylonian Diaspora in their relations with the indigenous peoples, and this with special reference to the crucial issue of the acquisition or recovery of land. The suggestion is given substance by parallels that have been noted between the legal proceedings in Genesis 23 and land contracts from Mesopotamia of the Neo-Babylonian and early Achaemenid periods. In these "dialogue documents" one party makes an offer either to buy or sell land; the second party agrees (literally "listens"); an agreement is reached; and the sum is paid in silver.[34] If this is correct, Genesis 23 would be an example of the "soft ideology" mentioned earlier.

VI. Conclusion

When we step back and take in the Priestly work as a whole, we cannot help being impressed by its remarkably irenic and universalist character. In the legislation there is one and the same law for the resident alien (גר) and the native born (אזרח), and the latter is even commanded to love the former (Exod 12:49; Lev 19:34; 24:22). In the creation recital, all humanity, without distinction or exception, receives a religious qualification, being created in the divine image (Gen 1:26–28) with a mandate to represent God on earth and continue God's work. In the postdiluvian world, all humanity, indeed all living creatures, are the recipients of the first covenant, which is followed by the first *torah,* the so-called Noachide laws (9:1–17). The remarkable originality of the P concept of covenant was noted earlier. P has moved covenant making back into the pre-Israelite and pre-Yahwistic period (Gen 9:8–17; 17:1–27) precisely to place this central Israelite concept in a universal context. In contrast to the standard Deuteronomic model, the P covenant is uni-

[34] John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1975), 98–101; H. Petschow, "Die neubabylonische Zwiegesprächsurkunde und Genesis 23," *JCS* 19 (1965): 103–20; Gene M. Tucker, "The Legal Background of Genesis 23," *JBL* 85 (1966): 74–84.

lateral, a disposition arising out of the absolute freedom of God. It is also indefectible, an "everlasting covenant" (ברית עולם), which means that it neither requires nor allows for periodic renewal as was the case with covenants during the time of the kingdoms. All it requires is that God remember it when the need arises, and the greatest need arose with the destruction of the state and the deportations. This can be seen as one aspect of the transcendent nature of the God of the Priestly work. This is not an interventionist God, a God who micromanages human affairs. In moving away from the kind of direct involvement in the affairs of their devotees characteristic of national and ethnic deities, the God of the priests leaves space for the hallowing of human life along the spatial (temple worship) and temporal axis (the liturgical calendar, Sabbath). If we are right about the time and circumstances of the composition of this work, we may read it as embodying a realistic conviction, arising out of collective experience, of the limitations of human moral capacity in a damaged world calling for damage control. As such, it provides a paradigm and a program for action for those who survive disaster and are looking for a way into the future out of present disorientation and Godforsakenness.

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Corpse-Blood Impurity: A Lost Biblical Reading?

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The sources of direct contamination caused by the dead, according to Numbers 19, are touching the corpse itself (vv. 11, 13), presence in the same tent with the dead (vv. 14, 18), and touching in the open בחלל חרב או במת או בעצם אדם או בקבר, "a person who was killed or who died naturally, or human bone, or a grave" (v. 16; see also v. 18).[1] There is no mention of the blood of a corpse in the entire chapter. Yet tannaitic literature took it as given that corpse-blood conveys impurity, and disputes addressed only details of minimum quantities. Thus the Mishnah, listing what defiles in a tent, reports:

> A quarter-*log* of blood [that issued after death], a quarter-*log* of mixed blood from one corpse—R. Akiva says: Even from two corpses—, the blood of a newborn child all of which has flowed out—R. Akiva says: Any quantity soever. But the Sages say: A quarter-*log*.[2]

The starting point of the Mishnah is the agreed assumption that corpse-blood defiles by a quarter-*log* minimum.[3] The dispute is limited to the questions of whether this minimum quantity of corpse-blood, less than which does not defile, must be from a single corpse, and whether even a smaller quantity defiles if it con-

[1] Translations of Scripture, Mishnah, and Babylonian Talmud are adapted, with greater or lesser freedom, from NJPS; Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933); and Isidore Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud* (London: Soncino, 1961), respectively. Translations of other works when not identified are my own.

[2] *M. ʾOhal*. 2:2. See Abraham Goldberg, *The Mishnah Treatise Ohaloth, Critically Edited and Provided with Introduction, Commentary and Notes* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1955), 15–16. Other laws concerning corpse-blood are found in *m. ʾOhal.* 3:2, 3, 5.

[3] The quarter-*log* has been variously estimated as ca. 125 grams. See also *m. Naz*. 7:2–3; *m. Nid*. 10:5; *t. Naz*. 5:1; *t. ʾOhal*. 4:13–14; *Sifre Zuta*, as discussed below; *b. Ḥul*. 72a.

stitutes all the blood of a (minor) person.[4] Other sources reveal that this rule was considered an ancient one even by the Tannaim themselves.

> R. [E]liezer says: At first the elders were divided. Some said: A quarter-*log* of blood and a quarter-*kav* of bones [defile]; and some said: A half-*kav* of bones and a half-*log* of blood. A later court said: A quarter-*log* of blood and a quarter-*kav* of bones [defile] *terumah* and *kodashim;* A half-*kav* of bones and a half-*log* of blood [defile] the *nazir* and the Temple. (*t. Naz.* 5:1)[5]

In early times ("at first"), we are told here, the "elders" disputed the matter of the minimum amount of corpse-blood that defiled, and after several generations it was decided that for some purposes the minimum would be a quarter-*log*, and for others, such as the impurity of a *nazir*, it would be a half-*log* (see *m. Naz.* 7:2). The terms "at first" and "elders" seem to point to early halakic traditions, at least from the perspective of R. Eliezer or the Tosefta.[6] According to both Talmudim as well, the sages of the second, later stage in the sequence (the "later court") delivered their opinion as a "midrash" or as an "oral tradition" from "Haggai, Zecharia and Malachi" (*y. Naz.* 7:2 56c; *b. Naz* 53a).[7] In other words, both Talmudim report a tradition that these halakot are ancient and rooted in the earliest days of the oral law. Jacob Nahum Epstein went so far as to date the dispute of the "elders" to the second generation of the "Pairs" (*m. ʾAbot* 1).[8] This assignment is indeed a mere speculation. However, both stages in the evolution of corpse-blood impurity preceded R. Eliezer, a member of the Yavne generation (late first century C.E.). This early halakah addresses only the issue of the minimum quantity of blood that imparts impurity; the rule itself that blood imparts impurity was axiomatic for those elders as well, and required neither statement nor justification. The rule, then, that blood conveys impurity is earlier than the earliest stage of the halakah documented in our sources.

What, then, is the source of this rule, unmentioned as it is in Scripture? Remarkably, no homily, דרשה, deriving the rule from any verse in Numbers 19, the chapter on corpse impurity, is found in the *Sifre*, the main surviving midrash on Numbers. The discussions in the *Sifre* are devoted rather to secondary issues related to blood impurity and assume that the fundamental rule on blood impurity is already known.[9] An explicit homily deriving it from the main scriptural passage on corpse impurity, Numbers 19, is found only in the Babylonian Talmud:

[4] For the reasoning behind each opinion, see *t. ʾOhal.* 3:2–3. There is an allusion to the dispute in *y. Naz.* 7:2 56c.

[5] See also *t. ʾOhal.* 4:13–14 and parallels.

[6] Jacob. N. Epstein, *Introduction to Tannaitic Literature: Mishna, Tosephta and Halakhic Midrashim* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1957), 507–8. In *b. Naz.* 53a the reading of the *beraita* is "the first elders."

[7] See the discussion in J. N. Epstein, *Introduction,* 507–8.

[8] Ibid.

[9] See the dispute concerning the blood of a baby born after eight months of pregnancy, *Sifre Num.* 125.

> R. Oshaia said [explaining R. Akiva's opinion cited earlier, that a dead fetus in his mother's womb is rendered impure], Scripture says: הנוגע במת בנפש (האדם) *Whoever touches a dead body in a human body* (Numbers 19:13). Now what can a dead body in a human body refer to? You must say it refers to a [dead] fetus in the womb of its mother. And R. Yishmael? He requires this verse to establish that quarter-*log* of blood from a dead body conveys impurity, as it is said: הנוגע במת בנפש האדם *Whoever touches a corpse, a body* [lit., בנפש, *a soul*] *of a person*. What is the נפש (soul) of a person which defiles? You must say it is a quarter-*log* of blood. (*b. Ḥul.* 72a)[10]

Whereas R. Akiva derives the impurity of a dead fetus from the compound phrase במת בנפש האדם ("a corpse, a body of a person," as if "a corpse *in* the body of a person"), R. Yishmael, disputing R. Akiva's conclusion, uses the verse to affirm the impurity of blood. His homily rests apparently on an inference from the similar language (גזרה שווה) in Deut 12:23, כי הדם הוא הנפש, "for the blood is the life" (lit., "the soul"),[11] that the word נפש in the context of the corpse's impurity also implies blood, and hence that blood conveys impurity.[12] Accordingly, the sense of R. Yishmael's question, "What is the נפש (soul) of a person that defiles?" is "What is the quantity of blood that the life of a person depends on?" And the answer is that sages estimated that amount at a quarter-*log*.[13] Now, since it is R. Oshaia, the collector of *baraitot*, who transmitted the homiletic source for R. Akiva's view concerning the impurity of a dead fetus, cited earlier in the talmudic passage, we can take the source to be tannaitic. However, R. Yishmael's homily on the same verse, deriving from it the impurity of *blood*, is *not* brought as a tannaitic text. It is the *stam*—the anonymous discourse of the Talmud that constructs the homily ("And R. Yishmael, he would expound the verse . . .") in order to provide an alternative to the homily of R. Akiva. Nonetheless, a similar tannaitic homily does survive elsewhere, in the context of priestly impurity in Leviticus:

> *And say to them: None shall defile himself for any [dead] person* (לנפש) *among his kin* (Lev 21:1). I have here only the dead person. From where do I know to extend

[10] In the plain sense of the phrase הנגע במת בנפש האדם אשר ימות the ב in both במת and בנפש indicates transitivity (Joüon-Muraoka, 448), and the phrase בנפש האדם אשר ימות is in apposition to במת. The homily ascribed to R. Akiva takes the ב of בנפש האדם in a spatial sense ("in") (ibid., 486), the phrase בנפש האדם as subordinate to במת, and אשר ימות as modifying במת. The homily ascribed to R. Yishmael takes the ב as in the plain sense of the phrase.

[11] Or similar verses that associate נפש with blood, such as Lev 17:14: "For the life [נפש] of all flesh—its blood is its life. . . . for the life of all flesh is its blood."

[12] This homily is used by Maimonides (*Mishneh Torah, Tum'at Met* 2:12) as the source for the rule on the impurity of a quarter-*log* of blood. See more on this below.

[13] Jacob Milgrom sees in this quantity and its justification evidence that the rabbis took the root of all impurity to be death and the risk of death. He fails to note, however, that the rabbis identified only the blood of a corpse, not the blood of a living person, as a cause of impurity. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (3 vols.; AB 3, 3A, 3B; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 3:767.

> the rule to include blood? Scripture teaches: לנפש, and it says: *for the blood is the life* (נפש) (Deut 12:23). (*Sifra* Emor 1:2)

In fact, there is only one tannaitic homily that derives the rule of blood impurity from the main biblical section devoted to corpse impurity, Numbers 19, and that is in the *Midrash Sifre Zuta* on Numbers.[14] Nearly eighty years ago, Jacob Nahum Epstein published, in the first volume of *Tarbiẓ*, a large Geniza fragment of the *Sifre Zuta* in which a long continuous midrash on *parashat Parah* (Numbers 19) was preserved.[15] A fresh reading of this section is included in a collection of Geniza fragments of halakic midrash published recently by Menahem I. Kahana.[16] It includes a homily concerning corpse-blood impurity that does not use the word נפש at all, but takes a different route.[17] This route, however, is problematic, as we shall see. Nonetheless, a careful reading reveals what may be the true source of the ancient rule of corpse-blood impurity.

The *Sifre Zuta* expounds the opening words of Num 19:11:

> [א] "הנוגע במת"—
> יכול כל שהוא? אמר[18] שוב: "במת". [...][19]
> הא מה הדבר, אחר שריבה הכתוב, מיעט.
> אמרו: כזית מן המת טמא, שכן היא תחילת יצירתו.
> [ב] אין לי אלא הנוגע בכזי[ת] מן המת ומנ׳ אף הנוגע בעצם? תל׳ לו׳ "או בעצם".
> יכול כל שהוא? אמר[20] שוב: "בעצם". [ ][21]

[14] On the special character of this work, see esp. Solomon Schechter, "Fragments of Sifre Zuta," *JQR* 6 (1894): 656–63; H. S. Horovitz, *Siphre D'be Rab: Fasciculus primus: Siphre ad Numeros adjecto Siphre zutta* (Leipzig: Libraria Gustav Fock, 1917), XV–XXI (his edition is on pp. 227–336); Jacob N. Epstein "Sifre Zuta Parashat Parah" (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 1 (1930): 46–78; idem, "A Rejoinder" (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 3 (1932): 232–36 (both reprinted in Jacob N. Epstein, *Studies in Talmudic Literature and Semitic Languages* II [ed. Ezra Z. Melamed; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1968], 141–73); idem, *Introduction,* 741–46; Saul Lieberman, *Siphre Zutta (The Midrash of Lydda)* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1968); and most recently Menahem I. Kahana, *Sifre Zuta on Deuteronomy: Citations from a New Tannaitic Midrash* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2002).

[15] Epstein, "Parah."

[16] Menahem I. Kahana, *The Geniza Fragments of the Halakhic Midrashim, Part I* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2005), 214–23.

[17] The word נפש is used there only as a source for the impurity of "mixture" blood: "From where do I know to extend the rule to mixture blood? Scripture teaches: נפש" (Kahana, *Geniza,* 217).

[18] In the Geniza fragment: א׳, abbreviation for אמר.

[19] The omitted section raises, and rejects, the possibility that the minimum measure for flesh from a corpse conveying impurity is the size of a lentil.

[20] In the fragment: א׳.

[21] At this point in the Geniza fragment there is a sentence that Epstein considers out of place. See Epstein, "Parah," 62, note to lines 28–29.

הא מה הדבר, אחר שריבה הכתוב, מיעט.
אמ[רו: עצם] כשעורה מטמא במגע ובמשא.
[...][22]
[ג] אין לי אלא הנוגע במת ובעצם, ומנין[23] אף הנוגע בדם? [תל׳ לו׳]: "או בדם".
יכול כל שהוא? [א׳][24] שוב: "בדם".
כמה הוא דמו שלאדם, שיעורו [בבינוני]ת רביעית.[25]

[1] *He who touches the corpse* (19:11) —
Could it be that this is the case for any quantity whatever? He said again: *corpse* (19:13). […]
How so? After scripture extended it restricted.
They said: An olive size of a corpse is impure, for so is the beginning of its creation.
[2] This accounts for one who touches an olive-size of a corpse. How do we know that this applies even to one who touches a bone? Scripture teaches: *or human bone* (19:16).
Could it be that this is the case for any quantity whatever? He said again: *bone* (19:18) […].
How so? After scripture extended it restricted.
They said: A bone as large as a barleycorn conveys impurity by touch and by carrying […].
…
[3] This accounts for one who touches a corpse or a bone. How do we know that this applies even to one who touches blood? [Scripture teaches]: *or blood*.
Could it be that this is the case for any quantity whatever? [He said] again: *blood*.
How much blood does a person have? Its minimum measure is, on the average, a quarter-*log*.

In each of the three sections, the homilist addresses one of the sources of corpse impurity—[1] flesh, [2] bone, and [3] blood—and the minimum measures for each. The structure of each of the sections is the same—the key word for the source of impurity is taken from one verse; the question is raised whether there is a lower limit on the quantity that would cause impurity; it is answered in the affirmative by reference to the repetition of the key word in another verse, according to the prin-

[22] The omitted section addresses the issue of the impurity of a limb from a living person.

[23] Kahana, *Geniza*, 217: ומכ; Epstein, "Parah": ומנ׳. However this may be, what is intended is clearly an abbreviation of ומנין, attested also in the *Yalkut Shimᶜoni*, probably written inaccurately in the Geniza fragment.

[24] Epstein ("Parah," 63, note to line 3) suggests that the א, the abbreviation for אמר, was erroneously attached to the preceding כלשהו.

[25] *Sifre Zuta* 19:11. Kahana, *Geniza*, 216–17. Cf. Horovitz edition, 306–7, where the text is poorly and incompletely reconstructed from *Midrash Hagadol*, *Yalkut Shimᶜoni* and the commentary of Rabenu Shimshon of Sens to *m. ʾOhal.* 2:1.

ciple of "ריבוי ומיעוט, extension and restriction";[26] and finally the assertion that the sages established a particular limit for that source. (Sections 2 and 3 open with links to the previous section; sections 1 and 3 provide brief justifications for the particular limits established.)

The last section of the midrash, however, is most astonishing. The purported quotation that justifies the very existence of blood impurity, "Scripture teaches: *or blood*," and the repetition that implies the minimum measure, "He said again: *blood*," do not exist at all in the entire biblical chapter![27]

A solution to the riddle is provided by the Dead Sea Scrolls. Impurity conveyed by the blood of a corpse appears in several sources in this literature. We find it twice in the *War Scroll*:

> When the slain fall down, the priest shall keep blowing afar. They shall not come to the midst of the slain (so as) to become defiled in their unclean blood, for they are holy. They shall [no]t profane the oil of their priestly anointing through the blood of nations of vanity. (1QM 9:7–9)[28]

> And when they have departed from the slain in order to enter the camp, they shall all sing the hymn of return. In the morning they shall wash their clothes and cleanse themselves of the blood of the guilty corpses. (1QM 14:2–3)[29]

And once in the *Temple Scroll* (11Q19 50:4–7):

4 וכול
5 איש אשר יגע על פני השדה בעצם אדם מת ובחלל חרב
6 או במת או בדם אדם *מת* או בקבר וטהר כחוק המשפט
7 הזה[30]

[26] The terms are characteristic of midrashim from the school of R. Akiva. See Epstein, *Introduction,* 529.

[27] Indeed, in the quotation of this midrash in the commentary of Rabenu Shimshon to *m.* ʾ*Ohal.* 2:1, the first quotation of the word "blood" is deleted, and there remains only, "Scripture teaches: *or*." On the other hand, the second quotation does remain, "He said again: *blood*." However, the Gaon of Vilna deletes the word "blood" and emends: "He said again: *or*." See *Hagahot Hagra* 4, on R. Shimshon to *m.* ʾ*Ohal.* 2:1, printed in the Vilna Talmud with *Seder Tohorot,* after Tractate *Nidah.* Epstein suggested that the homily is on the similarity of the word אדם meaning "person," which does appear in the verse, with אדם (*idam*), Aramaic for blood, and reads the words in v. 16 או בעצם אדם, "or a human bone," as if it were או ב־אדם, "or blood." The quotation of the repeated reference to blood, "You say again: *blood*," would accordingly refer to בנפש האדם in v. 13, but this suggestion is, in my opinion, rather forced. See Epstein, "Parah," 63, note to line 3.

[28] Trans. Jean Duhaime, in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations,* vol. 2, *Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 115.

[29] Trans. Duhaime, 125.

[30] Elisha Qimron, *The Temple Scroll: A Critical Edition with Extensive Reconstructions* (in Hebrew; Beer Sheva/Jerusalem: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press and Israel Exploration

> And every man in the open field who touches the bone of a dead man, or one who is slain with the sword, or a dead man, *or the blood of a dead man,* or a grave—he shall cleanse himself according to the statute of this ordinance. (My emphasis.)

This is a paraphrase of the list in Num 19:16 of contacts "in an open field" which cause impurity (וכל אשר יגע על פני השדה בחלל חרב או במת או בעצם אדם או בקבר, "And in the open, anything that touches a person who was killed or who died naturally, or human bone, or a grave"). However, the *Temple Scroll* adds to that list "the blood of a dead person" (בדם אדם מת). Yigael Yadin proposed that the impurity of blood in the *Temple Scroll* was derived from the use of the phrase נפש אדם in the chapter of the Torah under discussion: כל הנגע במת [...] הנגע במת לכל נפש אדם בנפש האדם אשר ימות, "He who touches the corpse of any human being (נפש) . . . . Whoever touches a corpse, the body (נפש) of a person who has died" (Num 19:11, 13). This phrase, Yadin argued, was interpreted as referring to blood in accordance with the verse כי הדם הוא הנפש, "for the blood is the life" (נפש) (Deut 12:23), in the same manner as in the homily in the Babylonian Talmud discussed above. In his view, the phrase "blood of a dead person" in the *Temple Scroll* is none other than an interpretative paraphrase of the verse "Whoever touches a corpse, the body (נפש) of a person who has died" (Num 19:13). This reconstruction, however, produces two serious difficulties. First, whereas Yadin reconstructed the homily from the language of Maimonides, and Maimonides in turn derived his language from the anonymous discussion of the Babylonian Talmud mentioned above, tannaitic sources contain not a trace of such a homily on the verses of Numbers 19.[31] Second, Yadin's proposal deriving blood impurity from the phrase נפש אדם in v. 13 leaves unexplained the presence of this rule in the *Temple Scroll*'s paraphrase of v. 16, listing bone, corpses, and grave, but where the word נפש does *not* appear.[32]

Now, these added words in the *Temple Scroll* are precisely the words in the phantom quotation of Scripture in the passage in *Sifre Zuta*. Moreover, the context is also identical. The *Temple Scroll* inserts the words או בדם אדם מת, "or the blood of a dead person," into its paraphrase of v. 16, "And every man who in an open field should come into contact with the bones of a dead person, or one slain by a sword, or a corpse, *or the blood of a dead person*, or a grave." The *Sifre Zuta* seems to read the words או בדם, "or blood," in the context of v. 16 as well, since its phantom quotation includes the word או ("or"), typical of the list of the contaminating objects in this verse.

Society, 1996), 73. Trans. Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the Shrine of the Book, 1983) 2:389.

[31] Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tum'at Met* 2:12.

[32] Yadin, *Temple Scroll,* 1:335. Yadin's own answer to this difficulty is that by this placement the author of the scroll intended to extend the rule of blood impurity to contact in the open field.

In light of all the above, we may assume that both sources, the *Temple Scroll* and *Sifre Zuta*, had in their text of Num 19:16 a reading that included in the list "or a corpse, or a human bone or a grave" also the words או בדם, "or blood." Such a reading indeed does not survive in any other witness, direct or indirect, for the biblical text, but the fact remains that two independent and reliable witnesses seem to testify to that reading. If this is indeed the case, this gloss would have penetrated the Bible prior to the composition of the *Temple Scroll*. The words או בדם אדם, "or human blood," may have eventually disappeared as a result of *homoioteleuton*, because of their similarity to the words או בעצם אדם, "or human bone."[33]

Another possibility is that the *Temple Scroll* and *Sifre Zuta* both preserve a shared paraphrastic tradition, an early "midrashic" integration of a halakic addition into the verse. The location of this addition is not identical in the midrash and in the *Temple Scroll*. In *Sifre Zuta* the order is corpse, bone, blood; in the *Scroll,* bone, one who is slain, corpse, blood. However, what we find in the *Temple Scroll* is a paraphrase that changes the order of the verse at the outset, making it difficult to reconstruct the exact biblical text it used.

The language of the midrash implies that the words או בדם, "or blood," appeared twice in the passage, for it expounds on the doubling of the words, אמר שוב: או בדם, "said again: *or blood*." The exegete may have had these words again in his reading, or exegesis, of v. 18, ועל הנגע בעצם או בחלל או במת או בקבר, "on him who touched the bone or the person who was slain or died naturally or the grave"; alternatively this may be merely a mechanical repetition of the structure of the previous parts of the homily.

That rabbinic literature generally, and halakic midrashim specifically, occasionally preserve scriptural readings varying from those of the MT is well known.[34] Preservation of such a variant reading here in *Sifre Zuta* is certainly possible, for, as Epstein demonstrated, this section of *Sifre Zuta* contains some exceptionally early material, both important historical references and early linguistic features.[35]

[33] I owe the last suggestion to Michal Bar Asher-Siegal.

[34] Victor Aptowitzer, *Das Schriftwort in der rabbinischen Literatur* (Vienna: Alfred Hodler, 1906–15); David Rosenthal, "The Sages' Methodical Approach to Textual Variants within the Hebrew Bible" (in Hebrew), in *Isac Leo Seeligmann Volume: Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World* (ed. Yair Zakovitch and Alexander Rofé; Jerusalem: Elchanan Rubenstein, 1983), 2:395–417, and the literature cited there; Menahem Kahana, "The Scriptural Text Reflected in MS Rome 32 of Sifre to Numbers and Deuteronomy" (in Hebrew), in *Talmudic Studies* (ed. Yaacov Sussman and David Rosenthal; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990), 1:1–10; Vered Noam, "Rediscovered Fragments of Variant Biblical and Midrashic Texts" (in Hebrew), in *Issues in Talmudic Research: Conference Commemorating the Fifth Anniversary of the Passing of Ephraim E. Urbach, 2 December 1996* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2001), 66–79; idem, *Megillat Taʿanit: Versions, Interpretation, History with a Critical Edition* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2003), 257–59.

[35] Epstein, "Parah," 52–53.

He observed further that the anonymous midrash in the pericope he published transmits without comment the early halakah of the "elders" concerning the minimum amounts of bone and blood that defile—half-*kav* for bones and half-*log* for blood, not as was settled later a quarter each—before the rule was changed by the "later court."[36] This rule, not a trace of which remains in the Mishnah, reflects, as we have already seen, the earliest glimmerings of the tannaitic period. Our own neighboring homily may have also preserved an ancient variant text of the Scripture, as well as a primordial exegetical tradition.

The *Temple Scroll* from Qumran, then, solves the riddle of an enigmatic tannaitic midrash; the rabbinic homily sheds light on the source of an obscure rule in the Qumran writings. The two together provide us with either a common ancient biblical exegesis or a variant reading of scriptural text that has long since disappeared.

[36] Epstein, *Introduction,* 508; idem, "Parah," 67 and note to line 67.

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Ruth and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Case of 1 Samuel 25

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In the last generation of scholarship on Ruth, the book's allusions to earlier biblical stories have become fundamental to its interpretation. Above all, similarities between Ruth, on the one hand, and the narratives of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) and Lot and his daughters (Genesis 19), on the other, have occupied discussions of the book's inner-biblical relationships. From the outset, scholars have described the role of such allusions in apologetic terms, favorably contrasting the restraint displayed by Ruth and Boaz on the threshing floor with Tamar's entrapment of Judah and with Lot's daughters' seduction of their drunken father. Thus, in his pivotal 1982 study, Harold Fisch already concluded that "the Ruth-Boaz story is the means of 'redeeming' the entire corpus [of these narratives] and of inserting it into the pattern of *Heilsgeschichte*."[1] If this now popular perspective is correct, then at its core, the book of Ruth seeks to generate a more positive conception of the ancestry of King David, and in turn, a more favorable attitude toward his descendants and the institutions of leadership that they occupied in Israel.

I have recently argued that the author of Ruth had an eye on the David-Bathsheba story (2 Samuel 11) as well, with the goal of framing David's conduct as a departure from the more wholesome qualities of the bloodline modeled by his ancestors Ruth and Boaz. The two narratives, I suggested, share some subtle yet highly distinctive motifs that serve to underscore the contrast between the behavior of David and that of his forebears.[2] In the present study, I wish to extend this argument to the story of David and Abigail in 1 Samuel 25. As will be seen, a strik-

[1] Harold Fisch, "Ruth and the Structure of Covenant History," *VT* 32 (1982): 436. For a list of works that adopt this basic approach, see Yitzhak Berger, "Ruth and the David-Bathsheba Story: Allusions and Contrasts," *JSOT* 33 (2009) forthcoming.

[2] Berger, "Ruth and the David-Bathsheba Story."

ing number of linguistic and thematic parallels, some of which have been noted recently, point to a connection between the Abigail narrative and the book of Ruth.[3] I will suggest that by means of this correlation, too, the author of Ruth seeks to offset a morally problematic portrait of the king that emerges from the text of Samuel.

I. Methodological Considerations

I begin with a few observations on method. As many have noted, the probability that one text alludes to another will generally depend on the distinctiveness and frequency of their common features.[4] Thus, if the features in question are unexceptional, or if we observe just a handful of similarities distributed over large expanses of text, an argument in favor of allusion will most often fall short. At the same time, a particularly striking parallel might suggest allusion all by itself. More important, an especially dense cluster of similarities might prove decisive even where each of them, taken individually, could otherwise have been seen as coincidental: the larger the number of moderately suggestive parallels, the more compelling they become when considered together.

This last point bears emphasis, as it shall prove important to our discussion in more than one respect. Benjamin Sommer puts the matter as follows:

> an author may repeatedly allude to certain texts, and the author's preference for those texts increases the probability that additional parallels with them result from borrowing. The argument that an author alludes, then, is a cumulative one: assertions that allusions occur in certain passages become stronger as patterns emerge from those allusions.[5]

Most straightforwardly, this principle will be relevant to our evaluation of the parallels to be observed in and of themselves. Some of these are quite striking, others less so; yet the accumulation of evidence suggests that even those similarities

[3] Yair Zakovitch alludes briefly to a possible connection between these two narratives (*Ruth: Introduction and Commentary* [in Hebrew; Mikra LeYisra'el; Tel Aviv: Am Oved; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990], 35). A more substantial list of parallels, which I cite accordingly in the next section, appears in Amnon Bazak, "The Influence of the Idea of Loving Kindness in the Book of Ruth on the Kingship of David" (in Hebrew), *Megadim* 40 (2004): 54–57, and in revised form in idem, *Parallels Meet: Literary Parallels in the Book of Samuel* (Alon Shevut, Israel: Tevunot, 2006), 132–35.

[4] See recently Jeffery M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case," *JBL* 127 (2008): 246.

[5] Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusions in Isaiah 40–66* (Contraversions; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998): 35.

that might have appeared inconsequential when considered independently could well have been intended. The full array of common features between Ruth and 1 Samuel 25, it will be seen, presents a strong case that the text of Ruth alludes to the earlier narrative.

Of equal importance, the cumulative nature of my argument extends beyond the quantity and suggestiveness of links between the two texts. Scholars have argued persuasively that the author of Ruth makes significant use of allusion—to a wide range of biblical stories.[6] This alone, it may be said, adds to the probability that a newfound, putative allusion *to yet another text* is in fact genuine. Just as linguistic and thematic parallels between two texts may be mutually confirming, the presence of allusions to multiple texts will render an additional suggested relationship that much more persuasive—particularly where the various relationships might be seen to share a common purpose.[7]

Consider the following relatively minor example, one that is peripheral to my main argument. The phrase ותלכנה שתיהם ("The two of them walked on") in Ruth 1:19, which appears after Ruth prevails in her insistence on staying with Naomi, attests to the strong personal bond that the young widow has created: after Ruth has steadfastly devoted herself to her mother-in-law, the women are now a twosome, inseparable for life. Might it be, though, that ותלכנה שתיהם underscores this point in an even more poignant way—by calling to mind the phrase וילכו שניהם יחדו ("The two of them walked on together"), which appears twice in the story of the binding of Isaac (Gen 22:6, 8)?[8] There, as here, a young individual, displaying remarkable dedication, follows an aging parent figure to an unknown fate. The second appearance of that phrase, after Isaac has received an evasive and hardly reassuring explanation regarding the whereabouts of the sacrificial animal, highlights his unwavering devotion to his father and to God. Indeed, Isaac's commitment to following Abraham has not diminished in the slightest: "the two of them walked on

[6] Most extensively, see the recent article by Zipora (Zipi) Yavin, "Ruth, the Fifth Mother: A Study in the Scroll of Ruth (The Semantic Field as a Ground of Confrontation between Two Giants —The Judean Writer and the Ephraimite Writer)" (in Hebrew), *Jewish Studies* 44 (2007): 167–213.

[7] Leonard rightly affirms that where two texts exhibit a relationship, the direction of influence might be more easily determined if one of the authors shows a wide tendency to employ allusion ("Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," 258, 262). But I would also suggest adding this to Leonard's useful list of methodological parameters for the *initial* identification of an allusion (p. 246): if an author can be shown to allude to multiple texts, it becomes substantially more plausible that he or she alludes to still another text.

[8] Without making this particular point or suggesting any purposeful connection, Kirsten Nielsen compares the text's terse description of the journey to Bethlehem undertaken by the characters in Ruth 1 with the similarly reticent account in Genesis 22 of the three-day trip of Abraham and Isaac to the mountains of Moriah (*Ruth: A Commentary* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997], 50–51).

together," now as before. If the formulation in Ruth in fact alludes to this episode, then Ruth's personal sacrifice might be seen to rival that of Isaac, and to provide an early signal of her emergence as a mother in Israel equivalent to the nation's ancestral founders. In keeping with the blessing of the townspeople in 4:12–13, Ruth's status will ultimately match that of Rachel and Leah, who "built the house of Israel," when the line of Ruth and Boaz—like that of "Perez whom Tamar bore for Judah"—gives rise to Israelite kingship.

Now there are no other apparent connections between Ruth and Genesis 22, and it could well be argued that this parallel, standing alone, seems only mildly suggestive of a purposeful allusion.[9] Yet, when we consider the full range of texts in Genesis to which the book of Ruth alludes, the picture changes considerably. I have already mentioned the stories of Tamar and the daughters of Lot, whose experiences closely resemble that of Ruth, but whose successful enticements of Judah and of Lot contrast sharply with Ruth's request for a permanent, legal union with Boaz—an initiative that the older man calls her greatest display of devotion yet (3:10). Beyond this, scholars have observed a range of parallels between Ruth and Genesis 24, where a matriarch of Israel, Rebekah, is chosen for her selfless character.[10] At least one such parallel is unmistakable: Naomi's reaction to Boaz's benevolence, "Blessed be he of the Lord who has not abandoned his kindness" (Ruth 2:20), recalls the uniquely similar reaction of Abraham's servant to Rebekah's helpfulness and goodwill: "Blessed is the Lord . . . who has not abandoned his kindness" (Gen 24:27). Furthermore, it is quite reasonably suggested that the phrase "there was a famine in the land" at the beginning of Ruth, followed by a journey to another land to seek sustenance, recalls the similar experiences of each of the patriarchs; but while in those instances the sojourn in foreign territory produces vast riches by the end, Naomi, by contrast, returns empty, dependent on Ruth's extraordinary sacrifice in order to achieve a measure of redemption.[11]

On the strength of all these correlations, most of them quite suggestive even when considered individually, the probability that ותלכנה שתיהם in Ruth is intended to recall וילכו שניהם יחדו in Genesis would appear to rise markedly. All of these other allusions, by means of either comparison or contrast, underscore Ruth's selfless character—possibly even her standing as a matriarch—and the parallel to Isaac would do the same in linking Ruth's personal sacrifice for Naomi to Isaac's willingness to make a sacrifice of himself. The accumulation of allusions to the ancestral narratives thus adds appreciable weight to the argument in favor of this connection to Genesis 22.

[9] Yavin concludes her study by proposing some very general connections between Ruth and Isaac that do not bear seriously on our discussion ("Ruth, the Fifth Mother," 212–13).

[10] See the extensive list of possible correlations in Yavin, "Ruth, the Fifth Mother," 185–86.

[11] See, e.g., Yavin, "Ruth, the Fifth Mother," 181–88.

It will be helpful, then, to bear in mind this principle when we evaluate the possibility of purposeful allusion to 1 Samuel 25 in Ruth. If, indeed, the author of Ruth alludes to multiple texts in pursuing a key objective of recasting the royal lineage in a more favorable light,[12] this enhances the likelihood that a newly specified text providing a troubling portrait of the first Judean king served as one more point of reference for the author's ideological program. If we find any substantial indication of a connection between Ruth and the Abigail narrative, this could well suggest that here, too, the goal is to offset a compromised portrayal of David, whose conduct in 1 Samuel 25 is widely seen as deeply problematic.[13]

II. Parallels

In what follows, I present the many similarities between the stories of Ruth and Abigail that might be seen as purposeful, at least when taken together. I address their function and interrelationship in the next section.

The opening verse in Ruth introduces an unidentified man, indicating only his provenance—איש מבית לחם יהודה ("a man of Bethlehem in Judah")—while the next verse provides the names of both the man and his wife: ושם האיש אלימלך ושם אשתו נעמי ("the man's name was Elimelech and his wife's name was Naomi"). The Abigail story begins similarly, ואיש במעון ומעשהו בכרמל ("There was a man in Maon whose possessions were in Carmel" [1 Sam 25:2]), and in the next verse, using the same formula as that in Ruth 1:2, provides the names of the man and his wife: ושם האיש נבל ושם אשתו אבגיל ("The man's name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail"). As these are the only two instances in the Bible where this formula appears, there arises the legitimate possibility of an intended connection. Elimelech then dies (Ruth 1:3), as will Nabal near the end of 1 Samuel 25 (v. 38). In ch. 2 of Ruth, the text introduces "a man of distinction (איש גבור חיל) of the family of Elimelech" who will soon assume the responsibilities of his deceased relative, and provides his name in the next clause (ושמו בעז—"and his name was Boaz"). In 1 Sam 25:2, the text likewise indicates that "the man was very great [in wealth]" (והאיש גדול מאד) before identifying him as Nabal in the verse that follows.

In Ruth 2, the young widow then goes out to the fields on behalf of Naomi to seek sustenance from someone "in whose eyes [she] will find favor" (אשר אמצא חן בעיניו [v. 2]). Similarly, in 1 Samuel 25, David sends servants to the fields of Nabal to request sustenance, hoping that they "will find favor in [his] eyes" (ימצאו הנערים

[12] It bears mentioning that such allusions, which are central to the story's objective, go hand in hand with those that underscore Ruth's selfless character more generally.

[13] Citations appear in the ensuing discussion.

חן בעיניך [v. 8]). Boaz asks his servant (נער), למי הנערה הזאת ("Whose girl is that?" [Ruth 2:5]); Nabal asks David's servants (נערים) dismissively, מי דוד ומי בן ישי ("Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse?" [1 Sam 25:10]). Boaz's servant, in his response, calls attention to the devoted Ruth "having rested but little in the hut" (זה שבתה הבית מעט [Ruth 2:7]),[14] whereas David's servants are said—albeit by means of different verb—to have "rested" (וינוחו) after making their request (1 Sam 25:9). Boaz compliments Ruth for selflessly abandoning her homeland to join a people אשר לא ידעת תמול שלשום ("that you did not know beforehand" [Ruth 2:10]); Nabal complains about the prospect of helping people אשר לא ידעתי אי מזה המה ("that come from I do not know where" [1 Sam 25:11]). Concerning Ruth, Boaz instructs his servants לא תכלימוה ("Do not harm her" [Ruth 2:15]); concerning Nabal's men, David asserts in his initial request that לא הכלמנום ("we did not harm them" [1 Sam 25:7]), and one of the men later confirms the matter, stating לא הכלמנו ("we were not harmed" [1 Sam 25:15]).[15] These are the only instances in the Bible where the word לא ("not") precedes a causative form of this verb. Boaz calls Ruth "my daughter" (בתי [Ruth 2:8]), whereas Ruth, when responding to Boaz, humbly calls herself "your maidservant" (שפחתך [v. 13]); by contrast, in his opening request to Nabal, David deferentially refers to *himself* as "your son" (בנך [1 Sam 25:8]), while Nabal, in his response, crassly places David in the category of "servants" (עבדים) who run away from their masters and beg for food (vv. 10–11).

One of Boaz's servants advises him of Ruth's dedication, and Boaz responds with a commitment to provide sustenance for Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 2:6–9). Likewise, "one servant among the group" (נער אחד מהנערים) testifies to the initial kindness of David and his men—and to the threat that they pose in reaction to Nabal's ingratitude—prompting Abigail to provide sustenance for them (1 Sam 25:14–18). Boaz instructs Ruth to note where his servants (נערותי) are reaping and to follow them (אחריהן [Ruth 2:8–9]); Abigail tells her servants (נעריה) to go before her, so that she might follow them (אחריכם [1 Sam 25:19]). Nowhere else in the Bible does anyone follow אחרי a נער or a נערה. Ruth is carefully isolated from Boaz's נערים (male servants [Ruth 2:8–9, 22–23]); Abigail carefully isolates herself from her own נערים (1 Sam 25:19–20). Whereas Ruth, at the outset, had expressed her devotion to Naomi with the oath formula "so may the Lord do for me and so may he continue to do" (Ruth 1:17), David, just before Abigail's arrival, invokes the same terminology when promising to annihilate Nabal's household (1 Sam 25:22). Ruth falls on her face and prostrates herself before Boaz (ותפל על פניה ותשתחו ארצה [Ruth 2:10]); Abigail falls on her face and prostrates herself before David (. . . ותפל על פניה ותשתחו ארץ [1 Sam 25:23]).[16] These are the only instances of ותפל על פניה

[14] "Rested but little in the hut" appears in the NJPS translation, of which I make substantial use here and elsewhere in this study.

[15] Bazak, *Parallels Meet*, 134.

[16] Ibid., 133.

in the Bible. Naomi reacts to Boaz's benevolence with the phrase "Blessed (ברוך) is he of the Lord אשר לא עזב חסדו (who has not/in that he did not abandon his kindness)" (Ruth 2:20)—the latter, ambiguous clause referring to the kindness of the Lord, Boaz, or possibly both;[17] David reacts to Abigail's speech with the phrases "Blessed (ברוך) is the Lord" and "Blessed (ברוך) is your effort and blessed (ברוכה) are you . . ." (1 Sam 25:32–33). Ruth responds that Boaz's kindness will extend until the "end" of the reaping season (עד אם כלו את כל הקציר [Ruth 2:21]), and she indeed reaps in his field until this "end" arrives (עד כלות קציר השעורים [v. 23]); in David's blessing of Abigail, he expresses his gratitude for her putting an "end" (כליתני) to his vengeful plan (1 Sam 25:33).

In ch. 3, Ruth descends (ותרד) to Boaz and waits for him to drink to his contentment (וישת וייטב לבו) after he performs a function in his fields, concealing her presence and her mission from the now light-hearted man until the most strategic moment (Ruth 3:6–7). Similarly, Abigail descends (ותרד) to David on a concealed part of a mountain (1 Sam 25:20) while an oblivious Nabal, having performed a function in his own fields, drinks to his contentment (והנה לו משתה . . . ולב נבל טוב עליו [v. 36]); and she continues to hide her mission from her inebriated husband until the most strategic moment.[18] Ruth lies at Boaz's feet (מרגלותיו [Ruth 3:7]); Abigail falls on David's feet (רגליו [1 Sam 25:24]). Ruth bids Boaz to marry her (ופרשת כנפיך על אמתך [Ruth 3:9]); it is widely understood that Abigail bids David to marry her (וזכרת את אמתך [1 Sam 25:31]).[19] When speaking to Boaz, Ruth had first called herself שפחתך ("your maidservant" [Ruth 2:13]), then immediately asserted that "לא אהיה (I am not even/will not be) as one of שפחתיך (your maidservants)," and now calls herself אמתך ("your handmaid" [3:9]); Abigail, by contrast, when speaking to David, first calls herself אמתך (1 Sam 25:24–25), then שפחתך (v. 27), then again אמתך (vv. 28, 31), and in the end asserts הנה אמתך לשפחה ("your handmaid shall be a maidservant for you" [v. 41]). Boaz responds to Ruth, ברוכה את ("blessed are you" [Ruth 3:10]); David responds to Abigail ברוכה את (1 Sam 25:33).[20] These are the only instances of the word ברוכה in the Bible, let alone the phrase ברוכה את. Finally, Boaz and David each marry the widow who prompted him to do the right thing: in Ruth the text states, ויקח בעז את רות ותהי לו לאשה ("Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife" [Ruth 4:13]); 1 Samuel 25 states וישלח דוד . . . לקחתה . . . ותהי לו לאשה ("David sent . . . to take her . . . and she became his wife" [vv. 39–42]).[21]

[17] On the possibility of deliberate ambiguity here, see most extensively Mordechai Z. Cohen, "*Ḥesed*: Divine or Human? The Syntactic Ambiguity of Ruth 2:20," in *Ḥazon Naḥum: Essays in Honor of Dr. Norman Lamm* (ed. Yaakov Elman and Jeffrey S. Gurock; New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1997), 11–38.

[18] Compare Bazak, *Parallels Meet*, 134 n. 8.

[19] Ibid., 133.

[20] Ibid., 134.

[21] Ibid.

Arguably, none of these similarities would imply an intended connection when standing alone. Nevertheless, I submit that the full picture does point to a high probability of allusion. As I have said, this claim will gather additional strength if the parallels may be shown to generate a more wholesome conception of Judean royalty, thereby sharing a common purpose with other key allusions in Ruth.

III. Interpretation

It will immediately be noted that the parallels I have presented connect both Boaz and Ruth to multiple characters in 1 Samuel 25. Indeed, in one form or another, both show correlations with each of the story's three central figures: Nabal, David, and Abigail. I recognize the need for caution in making this argument, but I believe that it ultimately proves convincing, particularly in light of other, equally complex characterizations in the Bible that employ multiple allusions. The Abigail narrative itself provides an example. Scholars have argued persuasively that by generating a variety of inner-biblical connections, the text of 1 Samuel 25 presents "composite portrayals" of key players in the story—including a characterization of David that links him, on the one hand, to a cunning Jacob escaping from Laban (Genesis 31) and, on the other, to a marauding Esau who *threatens* Jacob in the very next chapter.[22] Accordingly, if the text of Ruth appears to link both Boaz and Ruth to multiple figures in 1 Samuel 25—even ones that stand in opposition to one another—the fluidity of the correlations need not stop us from following the evidence where it leads.[23]

What, then, might the author of Ruth have wished to accomplish by produc-

[22] See Mark E. Biddle, "Ancestral Motifs in 1 Samuel 25: Intertextuality and Characterization," *JBL* 121 (2002): 624–25, 631–32, and the literature cited there.

[23] This point bears additional emphasis in light of the arguments of Paul R. Noble, "Esau, Tamar, and Joseph: Criteria for Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," *VT* 52 (2002): 219–52. Noble raises a number of important methodological caveats in the identification of allusion, including the problem of assigning a character "more than one counterpart" (p. 225). In turn, he insists on stricter criteria for attributing significance to apparent resemblances (p. 232) and proceeds to offer one such set of criteria that yields legitimate conclusions. Noble's objections to the methods found in some prior studies are generally well taken, and the application of his own more restrained approach to several texts in Genesis indeed produces some highly suggestive exegesis. At the same time, studies like that of Biddle and my own present one, which link individual characters in one story to multiple ones in another *contained* narrative, produce some similarly compelling results, and so the reality of such complex allusions must inevitably be incorporated into the hermeneutical endeavor. To be sure, how *precisely* to interpret such fluid correlations becomes a challenge, and many of the individual judgments I make in the present section will be open to debate.

ing all these associations? To answer this question, it is first necessary to consider the text's depiction of the key characters in the Abigail story.

Characterization in 1 Samuel 25

Far from presenting a contrast to the unsympathetic figure Nabal, David emerges from this story as anything but a moral beacon. Abigail states explicitly that if David were to carry out his intention of killing Nabal, this would amount to needless bloodshed (1 Sam 25:31), and David himself, in his response, appears to accept this assessment (v. 33). What is more, David's very expectation that Nabal provide food for him and his men draws sharp criticism from a number of scholars. Baruch Halpern's formulation is representative:

> 1 Sam. 25 finds [David] extorting payment from Nabal of Carmel, a gentleman in the wilderness of Judah. David is working a protection racket. His claim is that he has refrained from preying on Nabal's sheep. Nabal refuses to pay, and David angrily declaims his intention to kill Nabal. . . . [Abigail's] plea puts the matter in its proper perspective, and David complies with it. But the world he occupies lends itself to violence not required by the circumstances, violence out of proportion to the provocation.[24]

This unflattering portrait of the emerging leader finds confirmation in scholarly evaluations of the role played by the Abigail story in the wider narrative of David's rise. Jon Levenson first proposed that David's marriage to Nabal's widow is important for his assumption of power in the Calebite city of Hebron, much as his marriage to Ahinoam, recorded in the following verse (1 Sam 25:43), amounts to an assertion of his right to Saul's throne—this Ahinoam being none other than the wife of Saul who bears the name Ahinoam.[25] Accordingly, for Levenson, "it may well be that David picked a fight with Nabal with precisely [this] marriage [to Abigail] in mind."[26] Steven McKenzie, following this lead, sums up his own view of David's responsibility for the demise of Nabal:

[24] Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Bible in Its Context; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 22. Compare Marti J. Steussy, *David: Biblical Portraits of Power* (Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 75: "Is this a protection racket? Perhaps this is why the local people want to be rid of David."

[25] Jon D. Levenson, "1 Samuel 25 as Literature and History," *CBQ* 40 (1978): 25–28; see also Jon D. Levenson and Baruch Halpern, "The Political Import of David's Marriages," *JBL* 99 (1980): 507–18.

[26] Levenson, "1 Samuel 25," 27.

> if we ask who had motive, that is, who benefited from Nabal's death, the first answer is David. It is hard to overstate how important this episode was for him. He got the dead man's wife, property, *and position* [emphasis added]. Overnight he became the richest and most powerful man in Judah. As mentioned, the same *modus operandi* will appear several more times in the David story—an important figure who stands in his way dies under questionable circumstances.[27]

Mark Biddle's more general verdict on David's character in the story is equally severe: the soon-to-be king is "heavy-handed and loutish," "shortsighted," "greedy and opportunistic," the "angry leader" of a marauding band of four-hundred men—reminiscent of Esau—whom the text declines to exonerate in the matter of Nabal's death.[28] Finally, I return to Levenson:

> The episode of Nabal is the very first revelation of evil in David's character. He can kill. This time he stops short. But the cloud that chap. 25 raises continues to darken our perception of David's character.[29]

If it requires some effort to apprehend fully this troubling picture of David that emerges from the story, the same cannot be said about Nabal, whose speech, conduct, and very name plainly attest to his one-dimensionally churlish character. His reaction to David's request for food speaks for itself:

> "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many slaves nowadays who run away from their masters. Should I then take my bread and my water and the meat that I slaughtered for my own shearers, and give them to men who come from I do not know where?" (1 Sam 25:10–11)

Nevertheless, it is important that we acknowledge briefly one additional aspect of the text's depiction of Nabal—for its relevance to the story's portrayal of David himself. I refer to the link between Nabal and King Saul, whom David likewise falls short of killing in the narratives that precede and follow.

Scholars have identified numerous parallels, involving both language and theme, between David's aborted pursuit of Nabal, on the one hand, and his encounters with Saul in the surrounding narratives, on the other;[30] and these similarities, in my opinion, only intensify the harsh portrait of David cast by the Abigail story. To wit, the correlation suggests that David's violent intentions toward Nabal extend

[27] Steven L. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 101.

[28] Biddle, "Ancestral Motifs," 634–35.

[29] Levenson, "1 Samuel 25," 23.

[30] See Robert P. Gordon, "David's Rise and Saul's Demise: Narrative Analogy in 1 Samuel 24–26," *TynBul* 31 (1980): 37–64; Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History,* part 2, *1 Samuel* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 205–16; and the summary in Biddle, "Ancestral Motifs," 626.

in principle toward Saul also, while in all probability, his ultimate refusal to kill his predecessor owes not to any principled moral stand, but to his self-interested desire not to set a precedent for assassinating "the Lord's anointed."[31] Indeed, David's unwillingness to kill Saul in ch. 26 appears to be guided by his confidence that, in any case, "the Lord will strike [Saul] (יגפנו)" or that the Benjaminite king will otherwise die (v. 10), the language recalling the account of Nabal's death in the preceding chapter: "the Lord struck (ויגף) Nabal and he died" (1 Sam 25:38). If David, without Abigail's intervention, would not have hesitated to take the lives of Nabal and his men, then by the same token it is probable that he would have indeed killed Saul had the political calculus been different.

Mindful, then, of the broader significance of David's aggressive pursuit of Nabal, we are in better position to capture the far-reaching effect of this story on the book's portrait of the first Judean monarch. If the repulsive Nabal, *at once a Calebite leader and a Saul figure*, signifies the power establishment that David will eventually displace, the aspiring king's violent pursuit of this aristocrat—together with his attendant longing for Saul's demise—raises no less troubling questions about his own moral suitability for the throne. For all the young warrior's heroism and other worthy traits, we have caught a glimpse of his darker side, one that will resurface when an older David carries through with the execution of Bathsheba's innocent husband. If the text of Samuel yields a picture of a David with moral shortcomings, the Abigail story, it may fairly be said, is as responsible as any other for producing it.

And what of Abigail herself? It is hard to overlook the positive qualities of this industrious woman: as David confirms, she not only provides for him but saves him from murdering an entire household of innocents. And yet, already in ancient interpretation, we encounter criticism of Abigail for what is seen as a premature

[31] As noted by Polzin, David utilizes this phrase no fewer than seven times in chs. 24 and 26, so that "his motivation, like Saul's, is shown to be repeatedly self-serving" (*Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 212). To be sure, Polzin's reading of those two chapters does not yield an entirely negative portrait of David. Still, the insertion of ch. 25 between them would appear, in light of the parallels between the episodes, to affect the portrait of David in the entirety of chs. 24–26 rather adversely: as the first half of ch. 25 suggests, David would have killed his adversary had he not been stopped—a reality that does not change even if he is seen to have subsequently learned his lesson. In connection with this last point, see Gordon's argument that David's cutting off the corner of Saul's garment in ch. 24 implies his willingness to usurp Saul's throne aggressively, while his hands-off policy in ch. 26 reflects his absorption of the lesson taught him by Abigail. (See also the especially David-friendly reading in ch. 4 of Paul Borgman, *David, Saul, and God: Rediscovering an Ancient Story* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008].) As far as parallels to Ruth are concerned, I am, of course, assuming that this sequence of chapters in Samuel was essentially in place before Ruth was composed, an assumption consistent with the majority view among scholars that sees Ruth as postexilic or late preexilic.

gambit to marry David, her favorable traits notwithstanding (*b. Meg.* 14b). More significantly, recent treatments present Abigail as a profoundly flawed character. For Marti Steussy, Abigail, employing "loquacious flattery" in order to ingratiate herself with David, resorts to fabrication when she affirms that David will show no evil proclivities for his entire life (1 Sam 25:28).[32] McKenzie makes the case against Abigail in still stronger terms: seeking personal gain, she effectively murders her husband on David's behalf, having successfully predicted the man's death only because of her own cunning involvement. "Ruthless, or at least desperate," writes McKenzie, Abigail "was willing to conspire with David to murder her husband in order to forward his career and secure her own future."[33]

In contrast, then, to the idealized characterization of Abigail that might emerge from a more restrained reading of the story, these perspectives yield a decidedly mixed picture. David consolidates his rule by marrying a woman who shares his drive for personal status and who, it might even be argued, joins forces with him to attain it by ensuring that her husband will die without the aspiring king's personal involvement. If David seeks power and will do what is necessary to gain it, then if this reading is correct, he finds a fitting partner in the clever wife of Nabal.

Boaz, Ruth, and the Characters in 1 Samuel 25

We should not, therefore, be surprised to find that the book of Ruth, in its concern for the reputation of Davidic kingship, casts its sights on 1 Samuel 25. For if David emerges from this chapter hardly more compelling a moral figure than those whom he supplants, what justifies his emergence as the leader of Israel? How, indeed, might the reader, having digested this story and considered its implications, maintain a suitably favorable impression of the moral foundation of Judean royalty?

The pristine character of Boaz and Ruth, I suggest, pointedly offsets this problematic portrait of the bloodline. Whereas the marauding David might emerge no better than the ungrateful, loutish Nabal from whom he usurps money and power, the forebears of Davidic kingship in the book of Ruth, chiefly Boaz, embody a sharp contrast to the Carmelite landowner. Of arguably greater significance, the same morally upright characters in Ruth stand in stark opposition to David himself as he is cast in 1 Samuel 25, while exhibiting a more nuanced relationship to the ambiguous character Abigail.

[32] Steussy, *David*, 75.

[33] McKenzie, *King David*, 101.

A. Allusions in Ruth 2 to David and Nabal

We begin with Ruth's initial venture into the fields of Boaz. When seeking produce in these fields, Ruth maintains a genuinely deferential posture, far different from that of David, who sets out to obtain food from Nabal with no intention of taking no for an answer. Simultaneously, Boaz's obliging reaction to Ruth's initiative, in contrast to Nabal's dismissive response to David's men, provides immediate testimony to the moral stature of this Davidic ancestor.

To be sure, the polite tone of David's request in 1 Samuel 25 does not immediately betray his high-handedness. At first, David, like Ruth, might be seen to place the landowner in control, so that all the supplicant can do is hope for a positive outcome:

> When you come to Nabal, greet him in my name. Say as follows: "To life! Greetings to you and to your household and to all that is yours! I hear that you are now doing your shearing. As you know, your shepherds have been with us; we did not harm them, and nothing of theirs was missing all the time they were in Carmel. Ask your servants and they will tell you. So may these servants find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a festive occasion. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can." David's servants went and delivered this message to Nabal in the name of David, and they rested. (1 Sam 25:5–9)

On the surface, there is nothing overbearing about David's petition, and his seemingly humble request that the servants "find favor in [Nabal's] eyes" might suggest that he sees himself in no position to demand anything. And yet, from the fierce reaction he later provides to Nabal's impertinent response, it becomes apparent that, in fact, David protected Nabal's assets with the expectation of remuneration, making him the proverbial offer that he can't refuse. The tone of David's message, for all its civility, evidently conceals far less congenial designs. If David's men "did not harm [Nabal's shepherds], and nothing of theirs was missing all the time they were in Carmel," then the landowner, on penalty of the annihilation of his entire household, must not refuse to pay for David's unbidden services. In reality, then, David has little need for his servants to "find favor in [Nabal's] eyes"; and whereas he spoke of himself as Nabal's "son" and of his men as Nabal's "servants," this depiction of the hierarchy is about to change dramatically. Indeed, the narrator's peculiar assertion that these servants "rested" after completing their remarks might now be seen to carry a fitting implication: having laid out the deal, they need do nothing more for Nabal in return for the expected recompense.

Strikingly different, however, are both the sincere humility that Ruth displays in the fields of Boaz and the older man's benevolence toward her. When Ruth, at the outset of ch. 2, seeks sustenance in the fields of a Judean landowner "in whose eyes [she] will find favor," unlike David, she displays humility that is entirely genuine.

In contrast to David's servants, who "rested" smugly after their deceptively obsequious appeal to Nabal, Ruth exerts herself uninterruptedly, "resting but little in the hut." Unlike David, who expects payment merely for "not harming" Nabal's servants, Boaz, anticipating nothing in return, instructs his own servants not only to "not harm" Ruth but to ensure that all her needs are met.

Whereas Nabal asks mockingly, "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse?," Boaz puts forth what proves to be a well-intentioned query regarding Ruth's identity—"Whose girl is that?" If Nabal sees no need to help people "who come from [he does] not know where," Boaz extends his generosity to a foreign woman, noting that she herself left everything behind to care for Naomi among "a people that [she] did not know beforehand." And while Nabal, in reaction to a request that he feed his "son David," compares the erstwhile warrior to a servant on the run from his master, Boaz tenderly refers to Ruth as "my daughter," and it is the deferential Ruth who, in turn, identifies herself as a mere "foreigner" (Ruth 2:10); then calls herself Boaz's "maidservant"; and, finally, pointedly insists that she "is not even as one of [his] maidservants."

B. Allusions in Ruth 2 to David and Abigail

With these parallels still in play, a new set of correlations already begins to surface. The first hint of this emerges when Boaz expresses his initial, favorable sentiments toward Ruth in reaction to the testimony of one of his servants. Boaz's response not only sets him apart from Nabal but also places him in parallel to Abigail, who, likewise responding to "one servant among the group," exemplifies Nabal's opposite by setting out to provide food for David. Indeed, while Naomi will wish that Boaz be "blessed . . . of the Lord" for his benevolence, David will bless Abigail (and "the Lord") in similar terms. Furthermore, just as Abigail puts an "end" to David's murderous designs, Boaz will sustain Ruth and Naomi until the very "end" of the reaping season.

Far more important, however, is the connection between Ruth and Abigail that arises next. To a point, these further allusions to Abigail serve to enhance the text's favorable portrait of Ruth by generating a comparison between the two characters, just as in the case of the Boaz–Abigail connection. Thus, the expression ברוכה את in Boaz's blessing of Ruth recalls the identical phrase in 1 Samuel 25, where David blesses Abigail for having saved him from massacring Nabal and his men.

Nevertheless, it will be recalled that even though Abigail provides for David and stops him from committing murder, her objectives appear to be far from untarnished. Indeed, her character in the entire story emerges, to one degree or another, seriously compromised. Accordingly, I propose that by linking Ruth to Abigail, the text of Ruth, as in the case of other correlations we have seen, ultimately seeks to

underscore an essential contrast.[34] On the one hand, David's marriage to Abigail in 1 Samuel 25 might be seen to contribute to his rise to power, in conjunction—arguably—with her shrewd efforts to assure her husband's death without the direct involvement of the would-be king. For the author of Ruth, on the other hand, what shapes the fundamental character of the Davidic bloodline and ensures that kingship will arise from it is, rather, the moral integrity of a young widow from Moab. In stark contrast to the shady machinations of the wife of Nabal, the impeccable qualities of Ruth facilitate her marriage to Boaz, and guarantee that, in the end, an illustrious member of their progeny will ascend to the throne in Israel.

The transition from Boaz = Abigail to Ruth = Abigail occurs when Boaz, displaying characteristic kindness and concern, insists that the young woman follow אחרי his נערות, taking pains to isolate her from his נערים. In similar fashion, while Abigail indicates that she will follow אחרי her נערים, she ultimately isolates herself from them. However, this effort by Abigail to separate herself from her gift-bearing servants presents the first indication that there is something clever about her initiative: by means of this plan, she will ensure a more personal audience with David in the service of attaining her objective. When the meeting then takes place, Abigail, like the effusively grateful Ruth, falls on her face and prostrates herself on the ground, showing servility comparable to that of Ruth even as she is really about to engage in some crafty diplomacy. From this moment on, in my opinion, the shrewdness of Abigail's character becomes increasingly apparent; and, I suggest, it is this portrait of David's soon-to-be wife to which the book of Ruth pointedly reacts in its third and climactic chapter.

C. Allusions in Ruth 3 to David, Nabal, and Abigail

The Ruth–Abigail parallel picks up in ch. 3 with Ruth's furtive descent to the threshing floor of Boaz, which recalls Abigail's descent toward David on a concealed part of a mountain. At this point, the parallel takes a sharp turn, one that is short-lived but crucial.

At Naomi's behest, Ruth takes steps to have her way with an unsuspecting Boaz when his defenses are down, just as Abigail—in much the same way—seeks to control the fate of Nabal later in 1 Samuel 25. Each of these men has drunk to his heart's content after performing a function in his field; and just as a calculating Abigail bides her time until morning and then paralyzes her groggy, hung-over husband with fear, Ruth, following Naomi's instructions, exercises comparable

[34] While I find myself in agreement with those who conclude that Abigail's character is problematic, others who see her as an ideal character (see, e.g., Levenson, "1 Samuel 25," 17–20) will likely be inclined to interpret all the Ruth–Abigail parallels as part of a favorable characterization of Ruth achieved by means of comparison rather than of contrast.

restraint before creeping next to the supine and light-hearted Boaz in the middle of the night. Indeed, Abigail's conduct here is the clearest indication of her craftiness, even, perhaps, implying her active participation in killing Nabal toward her goal of marrying David; and this association with Ruth, who seeks her own union with an unguarded Boaz, would appear at this stage to be anything but complimentary to the young widow.

Carrying this further, the text returns to the primary Ruth–Abigail correlation, which links Ruth's encounter with Boaz to Abigail's meeting with David. Abigail begins by prostrating herself on the ground and falling "on [David's] feet," and then launches into a lengthy speech, delivered in a submissive tone that belies the clever designs implied by much of the speech's content. The wife of Nabal mocks her husband (1 Sam 25:25); hints that he will soon die (v. 26); calls attention to the largesse that she sent with her servants (v. 27); seeks absolution for *herself* while flattering David with hyperbole (v. 28); predicts his conquest of his enemies and his assumption of power (vv. 29–30); and, as is commonly understood, makes a preemptive request to marry him in stating "you shall remember your maidservant" (v. 31). When Ruth, then, with apparently crafty designs of her own, proceeds to lie on the ground at the "feet" of Boaz in a manner that recalls Abigail's deceptively fawning appeal at the feet of David, this ongoing allusion to 1 Samuel 25 makes Ruth's moral fate even more ominous in the eyes of the reader.

And yet, at the moment when Ruth, like Abigail, expresses a wish for marriage by stating "you shall spread your wing over your maidservant," one can only draw the very opposite conclusion. On the one hand, Abigail, purportedly reaching out to David in order to *prevent* him from killing innocent men, ironically—and suspiciously—predicts her husband's death and makes a premature and audacious play for the fast-rising king's hand in marriage. Ruth, on the other hand, in asking for marriage, likewise recasts the tone of her encounter with Boaz, but in a way that brings lasting merit to herself and her descendants. For, according to Naomi's plan, Ruth, like Tamar and the daughters of Lot, was cunningly to seduce an older family member in order to become the mother of his offspring. As is widely observed, however, at the crucial moment, Ruth abandons the attempt at seduction and instead requests a permanent, *legal* union with Boaz, emphasizing that he is "a redeeming kinsman."[35] This request, said by Boaz to be Ruth's greatest kindness yet, leads to the ironic scene of Ruth lying *chastely* at Boaz's feet until the day approaches, at which point a marriage will take place only after the proper steps are taken.

If we eventually learn, then, by means of expressions strikingly similar to one another, that David marries Abigail and that Boaz marries Ruth, these unions could not be more different in what they suggest about the moral underpinnings of

[35] See n. 1 above.

Davidic royalty. David's marriage to Abigail enables him to usurp power, even murderously, while she—to one extent or another—acts as a scheming accomplice. In sharp contrast, the restraint and integrity displayed by Ruth when seeking Boaz's hand in marriage set a moral standard for kings of Israel, who will now inevitably rise from the Moabite convert's own progeny.[36]

D. Allusions in Ruth 1 to Nabal and David

Finally, I return to the opening chapter of Ruth, where the text introduces Elimelech in language that recalls the uniquely similar introduction of Nabal at the beginning of the Abigail story. Ultimately, of course, the primary counterpart to Nabal is Boaz, whose description in Ruth 2 as an איש גבור חיל provides the initial hint of his correlation to the איש גדול מאד in 1 Samuel 25. But if, indeed, the author of Ruth wished at first for Elimelech to correspond to Nabal, and only later for him to give way to Boaz in this respect, it remains for us to explain the purpose of this fleeting Elimelech–Nabal connection.

[36] In connection with these two marriages, there remains one parallel on our list that, if intended, is most fascinating. The effort to understand its significance, however, will inevitably produce a wide range of speculation, and so I offer the following with appropriate caution. The standard term by which Abigail refers to herself is אמתך ("your handmaid"), although she refers to herself by the more obsequious term שפחתך ("your maidservant") when speaking of the actual service she is performing for David (1 Sam 25:27). Then later, in response to David's request for marriage, she emphasizes her subservience to him by affirming that "your handmaid (אמתך) shall be a maidservant (שפחה) for you to wash the feet of the servants of your master" (v. 41). In keeping with my inclination to question Abigail's motives, this affirmation of servility strikes me as highly suspicious: in her ongoing effort to remain in David's good graces, Abigail responds to his very marriage proposal with an excessive and hardly credible commitment to occupy a rank in his household beneath that of his servants. In Ruth's case, on the other hand, the situation is reversed: Ruth initially calls herself "your maidservant" (שפחתך [Ruth 2:13]), but when requesting marriage she properly switches to the more dignified "your handmaid" (אמתך [3:9]). The transition, however, might well already be implied by the earlier verse, where Ruth continues to assert ואנכי לא אהיה כאחת שפחתיך. The straightforward meaning of that clause, as suggested by context, is "when I am not even as one of your maidservants." However, as Tod Linafelt has astutely argued, every one of the clauses in this verse might well carry a double meaning, the primary one expressing Ruth's subservience, and a secondary one suggesting her willingness to marry Boaz in response to some hints of his own indicating an interest in her as a wife (*Ruth* [Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999], 34–38). Accordingly, the particular clause in question, its verb appearing in the imperfect, would yield "and I will not be merely as one of your maidservants"; and, as Linafelt proceeds to suggest (p. 54), this gives way to Ruth's reference to herself in ch. 3 as a "handmaid" fit for marriage. In accordance with this reading, I propose that this transitional clause, thus understood, stands in pointed opposition to Abigail's avowal—of doubtful sincerity—that "your handmaid shall be a maidservant for you to wash the feet of your master's servants," and rather signifies Ruth's consent to a more upright kind of relationship with Boaz.

Allow me to speculate. While the names that appear in Ruth generally yield meanings appropriate to the characters that bear them, the significance of the name Elimelech, which means "My God is king," has proven hardest to explain.[37] In response to this problem, Tod Linafelt offers the intriguing suggestion that the book of Ruth, as a bridge between the period of the Judges and the emergence of kingship, marks the abandonment of an ideal—expressed most sharply in 1 Sam 8:7—that calls for Israel to recognize God as its exclusive king. Eventually, by way of its characterizations of Ruth and Boaz, the book seeks to provide an idealized portrait of the bloodline selected for royalty, a bloodline capable of producing kings whom God might willingly countenance. Still, Linafelt suggests, the author of Ruth saw fit to underscore the fall of the old standard by means of the death of a character whose very name signifies divine kingship.[38]

And yet, is there no more concrete justification for Elimelech's death? Might there be something in his character that makes him an appropriate symbol for the collapse of this ideal? The text provides no clear answer to this question, telling us only that in response to a famine Elimelech left Bethlehem with his family, made his way to Moab, remained there, and died. Nevertheless, this paucity of information about Elimelech has not deterred some interpreters from seeking a plausible explanation for his abrupt demise.

Many have observed the irony of Elimelech finding it necessary to leave Bethlehem, literally the "house of bread," for lack of food. Indeed, the Midrash sees Elimelech as a potential provider of sustenance who, during a period of famine, abandoned the public in favor of greener pastures for himself (*Ruth Rab.* 1:4); and a minority of critical scholars have concurred that the man's death is linked to his desertion of Israel. Thus, for example, writes André LaCocque:

> "Elimelek" (אלימלך) means "my God is king." . . . the author certainly wants to indicate that the spouse of Naomi was a pious man, by which his name, in this context, fits the bill. His "defection" to Moab is therefore shocking; his name's promise was not accomplished. The Jewish tradition imagines that Elimelek left Bethlehem with bag and baggage to avoid dividing his wealth with the remaining population who were victims of the famine. Moreover, his name fits the temporality of the book of Ruth, since the period of the judges precedes the Davidic monarchy.[39]

[37] Thus, for example, writes Edward F. Campbell, Jr., *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 7; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 52: "[Elimelech] is the one name in the Ruth story that seems incapable of being explained as having a symbolic meaning that is pertinent to the narrative."

[38] Linafelt, *Ruth*, 3. The identical suggestion appears in Irmtraud Fischer, *Rut* (HTKAT; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2001), 125.

[39] André LaCocque, *Ruth* (trans. K. C. Hanson; CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 39.

In this final sentence, LaCocque takes a step toward Linafelt's proposal concerning Elimelech's name, suggesting that "My-God-is-King" expresses an idea befitting the premonarchical era. But is this association with kingship unrelated to the other, unflattering implication of the name that he proposes, the one that underscores the irony of this "pious man" deserting his people?

LaCocque, I believe, is circling very near the target. Following Linafelt, I am inclined to see Elimelech's name as representing the concept of God-as-king *the realization of which dies with the character* in a manner befitting "the temporality of the book." It is no accident, however, that Elimelech is the individual who signifies this concept. Abandoning both reliance on God and responsibility to his people, Elimelech, seeking financial security, "defects" to a nation that carries with it associations that, for Israel, are almost entirely unfavorable.[40] His death, in turn, punctuates not only the demise of the ideal of exclusive divine kingship but also the Israelites' spiritual and social deterioration—exemplified by events in the latter portion of the book of Judges—which spawned the undoing of that very ideal.[41] When My-God-is-King of the House-of-Bread of Judah abandons his countrymen to seek food in Moab, what follows is the death of the man, together with the very concept that he represents.

All of which brings us back to Nabal, the Judean lout who callously declines to sustain a group of his own countrymen in need of provisions. The apparent connection drawn by the text between Elimelech and this wealthy Calebite, I propose, provides important support for the suggestion that Elimelech, himself a landowner (Ruth 4:3), failed precisely as did Nabal. For by absconding to Moab, Elimelech likewise leaves needy members of the tribe without a ready means of sustenance. Moreover, Elimelech's death, like that of Nabal, follows inexorably from this flaw in his character while spawning a fateful development in the formation of Israelite kingship.[42]

But if this means that Israel, for better or worse, will now have a flesh-and-

[40] See Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth* (NAC 6; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 627.

[41] In connection with the social and religious decline exemplified by the stories in Judges 17–21, its relationship to the emergence of Judean kingship in 1 Samuel, and the attendant role of the book of Ruth as a transition, see, e.g., Linafelt, *Ruth*, xiii–xxv. This conception of the book's function is especially consistent with my argument that in casting an idealized portrait of King David's origins, the author of Ruth is concerned with offsetting not only the unfavorable associations generated by the Judah–Tamar story, but also the troubling portrayals of the first Judean monarch in the book of Samuel itself.

[42] In making this suggestion, I depart from the sharp affirmation of Frederic W. Bush that "especially there is not the slightest hint that the tragic deaths of Elimelech and his sons in any way resulted from their having forsaken their people in a time of trouble or their having moved to Moab where their sons married Moabite women" (*Ruth, Esther* [WBC 9; Dallas: Word Books, 1996], 67).

blood king, what then serves as a model for conduct befitting a monarch acceptable to God? If the demise of Elimelech, a Nabal figure, triggers the emergence of human kingship, then who might be seen to present a favorable contrast to him? Emphatically, it is not the David of 1 Samuel 25, who blithely takes an oath to kill every male in Nabal's household with the intent of taking over his powerful position. The standard is set, rather, by the main protagonists in the book of Ruth, from whom Davidic leadership descends. Boaz, for one, the anti-Nabal, faithfully discharges Elimelech's responsibilities, both providing for the dead man's widow and ensuring the continuity of his family. At least equally important, however, is the example set by Ruth already in the book's opening chapter. In stark opposition to her father-in-law, this illustrious young woman renounces her Moabite origins in favor of Bethlehem; embraces the God of Israel; and, most consequentially, takes an oath of her own to dedicate herself unconditionally to the welfare of her kin.

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The Babylonian Background of the Motif of the Fiery Furnace in Daniel 3

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The third chapter of the book of Daniel forms a richly textured narrative, often ascribed to the genre of the court legend.[1] The royal order to worship the golden image, the refusal of the three Jewish youths to comply with Nebuchadnezzar's demands, their ordeal in the fiery furnace and miraculous salvation, followed by their reinstatement in royal favor, all raise fascinating literary and theological questions. The themes and motifs that make up this narrative underwent a long process of oral and written transmission that is extremely difficult to reconstruct.[2] Indeed, any proposal in that direction is bound to remain speculative. Changes inevitably occurred in the tale during the long process of its elaboration, a time span covering more than three centuries. This means that the original historical background remains partly concealed behind the final redaction. How much does Daniel 3

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[1] The main study of the genre in a Jewish context is Lawrence M. Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King: Ancient Jewish Court Legends* (HDR 26; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

[2] An interesting and fresh look at the oral features of the Aramaic Daniel stories is Frank Polak, "The Daniel Tales in their Aramaic Literary Milieu," in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (ed. A. S. van der Woude; BETL 106; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 1993), 249–65. He argues that the diction of Daniel 2–6 betrays an Aramaic oral source originating well before the Hellenistic period, possibly as early as the sixth century B.C.E.

reflect the situation of Jewish exiles at the Babylonian court in the sixth century, and the political and theological debates which took place at that time?[3] I propose in the next few pages to address one aspect of this question, the motif of the punishment in the fiery furnace.

I. The Account in Daniel 3

The episode related in Daniel 3 allegedly took place at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, the conqueror of Jerusalem who reigned from 605 to 562 B.C.E. Following the deportations he ordered, Jewish exiles settled in Babylonia in substantial numbers in the early decades of the sixth century. The fate of some exiles is now documented by a group of cuneiform contract tablets stemming mainly from two localities in the region of Nippur, one of them called "city of Judah/of the Judeans" (Al Yahudu/Yahudayu), the Babylonian name of Jerusalem.[4] As the majority of the people appearing in the documents bear West Semitic and Judean names, it seems certain that this new Jerusalem in Babylonia had been founded by recent exiles. Those Judeans integrated to various degrees into the life of their new home. Some even gravitated around the royal court. Indeed, such a group of Judeans appearing in cuneiform tablets has been known since 1939, when Ernst Weidner published administrative documents discovered in Babylon at the beginning of the twentieth century in the storeroom area of the royal palace and datable to the thirteenth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.[5] A few tablets record deliveries of rations to groups

[3] Shalom M. Paul, "The Mesopotamian Background of Daniel 1–6," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint; VTSup 83; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2001), 55–68; see also idem, "Daniel 3:29: A Case Study of 'Neglected' Blasphemy," *JNES* 42 (1983): 291–94, which also anchors the story in the Babylonian reality of the sixth century.

[4] Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 399–411. A few tablets from that group have so far been published; see Francis Joannès et André Lemaire, "Trois tablettes cunéiformes à onomastique ouest-sémitique," *Transeu* 17 (1999): 17–33; Kathleen Abraham, "West Semitic and Judean Brides in Cuneiform Sources from the Sixth Century BCE: New Evidence from a Marriage Contract from Al-Yahudu," *AfO* 51 (2005/2006): 198–219; eadem, "An Inheritance Division among Judeans in Babylonia from the Early Persian Period," in *New Seals and Inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean, and Cuneiform* (ed. Meir Lubetski; Hebrew Bible Monographs 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007), 206–21.

[5] Ernst F. Weidner, "Jojachin, König von Juda, in babylonischen Keilschrifttexten," in *Mélanges syriens offerts à Monsieur René Dussaud, secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, par ses amis et ses élèves* (Hautcommissariat de la République française en Syrie et au Liban, Service des antiquités, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 30; Paris: Geuthner, 1939), 923–35. That archive and the dating of the four texts partly published by Weidner are discussed by Olof Pedersén, "Foreign Professionals in Babylon: Evidence from the Archives in the Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II," in *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th*

of foreigners, some of them obviously state prisoners. Among the recipients one finds Jehoiachin, the king of Judah exiled in 597, and a number of unnamed Judean men and princes who presumably belonged to Jehoiachin's retinue. 2 Kings 25:27–30 tells us that in the twenty-seventh year of the exile, the Babylonian king Evil-Merodach (= Amēl-Marduk, son of Nebuchadnezzar II, reigned 562–560 B.C.E.) released him from prison, provided him with a regular allowance and received him every day at his table. Therefore the story of Daniel and his three companions being taken to the court of Babylon, given rations from the king's table, and educated in the lore and manners of the Chaldeans, fits remarkably well with the evidence available from contemporary documents.[6]

While the general historical context of Daniel 3 seems relatively easy to assess, some aspects of its setting remain foggy. It has long been accepted that behind the Danielic Nebuchadnezzar lurks a memory of the historical Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, who reigned from 556 to 539 B.C.E. The figure of Nabonidus emerges most clearly in Daniel 4 and 5. It is now generally accepted that the story of Nebuchadnezzar's madness and his expulsion among beasts originates in a recollection of Nabonidus's eccentric behavior, especially regarding religious issues, and of his withdrawal to the north Arabian oasis of Teima. The Babylonian king Belshazzar in Daniel 5 reflects the historical Bēl-šar-uṣur, eldest son of Nabonidus and regent of the kingdom during his father's ten-year absence in Arabia. The Daniel tradition erroneously makes him the actual king and portrays him as the son of Nebuchadnezzar. This latter interpolation constitutes the strongest argument for tracing the Danielic narratives about Nebuchadnezzar to a cluster of historical memories of Nabonidus. This has led some scholars to seek in cuneiform sources relating to Nabonidus historical data that might provide a background to the story of the worship of the golden statue in Daniel 3. Such data came to light with the publication of the Verse Account of Nabonidus in 1924.[7] This polemical account, probably written at the behest of the Persian conquerors of Babylon, largely focuses on Nabonidus's promotion of the cult of the moon-god Sîn at the expense of Marduk, the city-god of Babylon. It claims that Nabonidus made a horrifying new cult image of the god Sîn. The Verse Account probably refers in this case to the statue of Sîn that the king claims to have returned to the temple Ehulhul in Harran. Sidney Smith, the original editor of the text, did not fail to see the relation that this episode

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Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1–4 July 2002 (ed. W. H. Van Soldt; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2005), 267–72; and a general description of the texts can be found in Olof Pedersén, *Archive und Bibliotheken in Babylon: Die Tontafeln der Grabung Robert Koldeweys 1899–1917* (ADOG 25; Berlin: Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, 2005), 111–27 (Archive N1).

[6] Also Karel van der Toorn, "Scholars at the Oriental Court: The Figure of Daniel against Its Mesopotamian Background," in *Book of Daniel*, ed. Collins and Flint, 37–54.

[7] The most recent edition of the Verse Account is by Hans-Peter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros der Großen* (AOAT 256; Münster: Ugarit, 2001), 563–78.

bears to the tale of the fashioning and compulsory worship of the gold statue in Daniel 3.[8] The suggestion was later taken up by Wolfram von Soden and several other scholars since.[9] John J. Collins views the suggestion favorably, stressing, however, that "it is not suggested that Daniel 3 preserves an accurate account of an event in the reign of Nabonidus, only that such an event may have provided the starting point for the growth of a legend."[10]

Significant differences exist between the Verse Account's version of historical events and the theological elaboration on the worship of the golden image in Daniel 3. The Verse Account parodies a king who intervenes in religious matters, fashions a cult image allegedly departing from accepted canons, and proposes it for worship to his subjects. Daniel 3, on the other hand, does not specify the nature of the statue fashioned by Nebuchadnezzar. In some ways, the matter is laid out with purposeful ambiguity. One might think it is a god, considering that the king orders his subjects to worship it. However, the fact that the statue is set up in the plain of Dura seems to preclude this. Statues of Mesopotamian gods were not publicly displayed in this manner. Yet the episode could have been revised to reflect the conditions prevailing later, for instance, in parts of the Hellenistic world.[11] The statue might also be the image of a king, perhaps Nebuchadnezzar himself, or a symbol of his regal power. In ch. 2 of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar receives a dream vision of such a statue. Some ancient exegetes clearly saw a connection between chs. 2 and 3. In the second century, Hippolytus of Rome already interpreted the statue fashioned by Nebuchadnezzar as a reminiscence of his dream:[12]

> For as the blessed Daniel, in interpreting the vision, had answered the king, saying, "Thou art this head of gold in the image," the king, being puffed up with this address, and elated in his heart, made a copy of this image, in order that it might be worshiped by all as God.[13]

[8] Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts Relating to the Capture and Downfall of Babylon* (London: Methuen, 1924), 51.

[9] Wolfram von Soden, "Eine babylonische Volksüberlieferung von Nabonid in den Danielerzählungen," *ZAW* 53 (1935): 85–86.

[10] John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 181.

[11] Hellenistic cults could be the target of derision in this case, as the story told in Daniel 3 still underwent literary revision during that period. This is obvious when one considers the appearance of Greek words in the list of musical instruments repeated in four passages of the book. The orchestra has been interpreted as an allusion to Hellenistic pagan cults by Pierre Grelot, "L'orchestre de Daniel iii, 5, 7, 10, 15," *VT* 29 (1979): 23–38; while Hector Avalos ("The Comedic Function of the Enumerations of Officials and Instruments in Daniel 3," *CBQ* 53 [1991]: 580–88) has connected them with theatrical practices, thus stressing the staged nature of the entire episode.

[12] Collins discusses this ancient interpretation and some of its echoes in modern times, yet points out that "there is no explicit suggestion of worship of the king in the Aramaic text of Daniel 3" (*Daniel*, 181–82).

[13] *ANF* 5:188 (Scholia on Daniel, Chap. III, 1).

In ch. 2, Daniel warns Nebuchadnezzar that his dream vision symbolizes the decay of worldly power until eschatological time. Hippolytus's interpretation of ch. 3 extends this warning to a condemnation of hubris and a radical critique of idolatry. This is not the idolatry of worshiping images of gods, so familiar from prophetic utterances, but the idolatry of substituting some human endeavor for God, in this case turning temporal power into an object of worship. Such interpretation makes sense only if one reads ch. 3 in conjunction with ch. 2. However, Daniel is absent from ch. 3, which focuses solely on the travails of his three companions. In the opinion of most scholars, Daniel's absence suggests that the tale of the worship of the gold statue originated separately and was joined to the other tales of the cycle—including the story of the dream vision of the fourfold statue in ch. 2—at a later date. The meaning of the worship of the gold statue must therefore have changed when the cycle took shape more or less in the form we now have it. Originally, the tale focused on the memory of Nabonidus's crafting of a new image of the moon-god Sîn for the temple of Harran and his effort to impose it as state cult in the Babylonian empire of the sixth century. The tradition eventually substituted Nebuchadnezzar for Nabonidus and transformed the episode into an edifying theological tale of the arrogant attempt of a pagan king to impose the worship of a statue of his own design, a statue embodying imperial hubris. The Danielic tradition transmuted this memory of Nabonidus's failed attempt at religious reform into a timeless critique of idolatry.

Forced worship of the statue, however, merely sets the background for the other elements in the drama to unfold. As in most court tales, peer envy ushers the heroes into royal disgrace. Refusing to bow down to the statue, the three Jewish youths are denounced for impiety and are sentenced to the punishment prescribed by the king for defying his order: to be thrown alive into a furnace of blazing fire (אתון נורא יקדתא). Burning as a death sentence occurs occasionally in the biblical and Near Eastern worlds. However, commentators have repeatedly pointed out that death by burning in a furnace finds no real antecedent. In his commentary on Daniel, Collins remarks that the closest parallel to the method of execution proposed in Daniel 3 is recorded in 2 Macc 13:4–8, which reports that Antiochus V Eupator sent the high priest Menelaus to an execution tower where he was thrown into a pit of ashes.[14] This, however, did not involve burning. He also comments that the only biblical allusions to a fiery furnace as an instrument of destruction occur in Ps 21:10, where the allusion is, however, metaphorical and subject to alternative interpretations. Therefore, the origin of the motif of the fiery furnace as instrument of punishment remains open to investigation.

[14] Collins, *Daniel*, 185.

II. Punishment by Fire

Punishment by Fire in the Bible

The Bible contains few allusions to execution by burning. In spite of their small number, they indicate that punishment by being burned alive was part of the legal system of ancient Israel. For example, this punishment is prescribed for prostitution or fornication in the episode of Judah and Tamar (Gen 38:24) and, more specifically, for prostitution by the daughter of a priest in the laws of Leviticus (Lev 21:9). Leviticus also prescribes that punishment for the particular form of incest committed by a man who weds both mother and daughter (Lev 20:14). The same end befalls the thief of sacred paraphernalia and his family according to the episode of the sin of Achan (Josh 7:13–19), although Achan himself is stoned to death before being burned. The verb שרף occurs in all these passages to describe the act of burning. In the prophetic and apocalyptic literature of the postexilic period, burning is sometimes mentioned as a form of eschatological punishment, notably in Daniel 7:11, where the beast of the fourth kingdom is killed and given over to be burned with fire.

For the interpretation of Daniel 3, the most interesting mention of death by burning in the Bible is the execution of the false Jewish prophets mentioned in the letter sent by Jeremiah to the first wave of exiles in Babylon (Jer 29:1–23).[15] The time frame of the letter should be 594–593 B.C.E., between the two captures of Jerusalem, when many in Judah still entertained hopes of casting off the Babylonian yoke. Yet Jeremiah encourages the exiles to settle in their new country and patiently await the term of seventy years prescribed for their return; he warns them against false prophets who predict Judah's impending liberation (Jer 29:21–23 NRSV):

> Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying a lie to you in my name: I am going to deliver them into the hand of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon, and he shall kill them before your eyes. And on account of them this curse shall be used by all the exiles from Judah in Babylon: "The Lord make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire," because they have perpetrated outrage in Israel and have committed adultery with their neighbor's wives, and have spoken in my name lying words that I did not command them; I am the one who knows and bear witness, says the Lord.

[15] Jack R. Lundbom assigns the contents of Jer 29:1–23 to the first letter of Jeremiah to the exiles (*Jeremiah 21–36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 21B; New York: Doubleday, 2004], 342–61).

Ahab, son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, son of Maasiah, both occur in a list of false prophets from Qumran (4Q339).[16] They proclaimed the end of Babylonian hegemony over Judah. Therefore, fear of their spreading a spirit of rebellion appears to be Nebuchadnezzar's most likely motive for ordering their execution. Consonant with Jeremiah's interpretation of history, Nebuchadnezzar acts here as a mere instrument of God's plan. However, it is interesting that Jeremiah further indicts the two prophets for fornication, a crime that in some circumstances entailed death by burning in Israel and is listed here as the primary reason for their execution. Jeremiah provides a biblical rationale for their condemnation, a rationale that conceals the political motives of the Babylonians in carrying out that sentence. As I will discuss below, death by burning occurs a number of times in Babylonian sources from the eighth to the third centuries B.C.E., in some cases as a sentence imposed by the king. The punishment mentioned in Jeremiah 29 involved roasting in fire, but it does not say explicitly how, and therefore burning in a furnace cannot be excluded, even if death at the stake seems more likely. Be that as it may, Jeremiah 29 provides a crucial parallel to Daniel 3 and may yield some clues as to how the tale originated and expanded. Both narratives portray Nebuchadnezzar imposing capital punishment on rebellious Jewish exiles, and the punishment involves death by burning in the two cases.[17]

Punishment by Fire in Ancient Egypt

Burning as a form of capital punishment is attested a few times in texts from the pharaonic and Hellenistic periods in Egypt.[18] Anthony Leahy has reviewed the various allusions to such punishment in Egyptian sources.[19] Burning is attested for adultery, murder, conspiracy to murder, sacrilege, and rebellion. It is uncertain whether legal codes prescribed it, but in some cases it could be ordered by royal decree. Execution by burning usually involved placing the condemned on the *ḫ* (“brazier, open furnace”). The *Instructions of Ankhsheshonqy,* a Demotic text from the first century B.C.E., describe how the king ordered a group of conspirators to be burned in this manner; however, there is no agreement on whether the text refers

[16] The list is in Aramaic and contains the two names, restored as follows: 5. [And Aha]b son of K[ola]iah 6. [And Zed]ekiah son of Ma[a]seiah (Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, 330).

[17] Robert P. Carroll tentatively argued for a common background of Jer 29:21–23 and Daniel 3: “The legends about Nebuchadrezzar collected and circulated in the Aramaic half of the book of Daniel include stories about his predilection for roasting people, so the tale about Ahab and Zedekiah may belong to the same provenance” (*Jeremiah: A Commentary* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986], 560).

[18] Andrea G. McDowell, “Crime and Punishment,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (ed. Donald B. Redford; 3 vols.; Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1:317b.

[19] Anthony Leahy, “Death by Fire in Ancient Egypt,” *JESHO* 27 (1984): 199–206.

to an open fire or an enclosed furnace.[20] Leahy points out two possible examples of large furnaces that could accommodate several individuals.[21] At Edfu a relief shows the king condemning four prisoners to be tied together in a type of box that is depicted also in *Papyrus Salt* 825, where it is identified as a "furnace" (*ḫw,* the plural of *ḫ*), with two men tied back to back inside it. He also gives examples of punishment by burning in the metaphysical realm; for instance, the *Book of Gates* depicts some large furnaces called *ḫw*. In Demotic the word *ḫ* means both a censer or brazier and a large furnace.[22] The ritual burning of wax figures in Egyptian magic is a cultic analogue to similar executions on earth and in the netherworld.[23] Egyptians may have viewed the types of offenses that were punishable by burning as rebellion against Maat, a most inconceivable crime, which necessitated the destruction of the entire physical and spiritual body.[24] This evidence shows that the most striking Egyptian parallels to the Danielic motif of the fiery furnace come from texts dating to the Hellenistic period. Therefore the possibility of an Egyptian influence on the elaboration of Daniel 3 cannot be dismissed offhand. Egypt housed a substantial Jewish population during the Persian and Hellenistic-Roman periods, and some learned Jews could have introduced motifs from the Egyptian literary heritage into their own tradition. Rainer Albertz has recently argued for an Egyptian or Alexandrian setting for the redaction of Daniel 4–6.[25] If Daniel 3 and other parts of the court narratives were also redacted in Alexandria, then the possibility of Egyptian influence could be considered. Yet there is at present no compelling evidence to support such an argument.

Punishment by Fire in Ancient Mesopotamia

Execution by burning occurs in Mesopotamia both as a provision of the legal system for certain crimes and as a punishment imposed by the king.[26] It is attested

[20] See the recent translation by Miriam Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context: A Study of Demotic Instructions* (OBO 52; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 69: "As soon as he had said this, Pharaoh (4) had an earthen pyre built at the door of the palace. He had Harsiese son of Ramose placed (5) in the fire together with all his people and every man who had assented to the misfortune of Pharaoh."

[21] Leahy, "Death by Fire," 202.

[22] Walter E. Crum, *Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939), 22a.

[23] Robert K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 54; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1993), 157–58.

[24] Harco Willems, "Crime, Cult, and Capital Punishment (Moʿalla Inscription 8)," *JEA* 76 (1990): 42–43; and Katja Goebs, "*ḫftj ntr* as Euphemism: The Case of the Antef Decree," *JEA* 89 (2003): 30–31.

[25] Rainer Albertz, "The Social Setting of the Aramaic and Hebrew Book of Daniel," in *Book of Daniel*, ed. Collins and Flint, 181–83.

[26] Mariano San Nicolò, "Feuertod," *RlA* 3:59. Quotations from many of the texts cited below can be found in *CAD*, Q, s.v. *qalû* and *qamû*.

already in the Old Babylonian period. The Code of Hammurabi prescribes death by burning for three offenses: for thefts committed during a fire (the thief is cast into that same fire [CH 25]); for a *nadītu* or *ugbabtu* woman who does not reside in the cloister and opens a tavern or goes to a tavern for beer (CH 110); and for a man and his widowed mother engaging in incestuous relations (CH 157).[27] The Old Babylonian omen *CT* 6, 2 (case 14) envisages the following situation: EN *a-sa-ka iš-ta-na-ri-iq i-*[*ṣa-ba*]*-tu-ši-ma i-qa-lu-ši,* "the high priestess will steal the taboo offering, but she will be captured and burned."[28] A letter from the archives of Mari, contemporary with the preceding text, rhetorically alludes to death by burning simply for harboring forbidden thoughts; sacrilege or lèse-majesté might be involved.[29]

Burning occurs also in later sources from the first millennium. A few years ago Francis Joannès published a Babylonian judicial chronicle from the Hellenistic period in which three separate cases of sacrilege are reported, one dated to year 34 of the Seleucid era, the other two to the year 90. The chronicle was obviously compiled from excerpts of astronomical diaries.[30] Indeed, the astronomical diary for the year 278 B.C.E. preserves the first case reported in the judicial chronicle with exact parallels of wording. Similar cases can be culled from other diaries. The cases reported always involve thefts of sacred jewelry and other paraphernalia from temples. The punishment involved is almost invariably death by fire (*ina išati qalû,* "they were consumed by fire").[31] A few other sources report death by burning upon royal command. According to another text from the Hellenistic period (SpTU III, 58), the Babylonian king Nabû-šuma-iškun, who reigned in the middle of the eighth century, burned alive sixteen residents of the city of Kutha at the gate of

[27] For a recent transcription and translation of the Code of Hammurabi, see Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (SBLWAW 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 71–142.

[28] Moshe Anbar, "Le châtiment du crime de sacrifice d'après la Bible et un texte hépatoscopique paléo-babylonien," *RA* 68 (1974): 172–73, with citations of unpublished parallels.

[29] The letter is ARM III, 73, with recent edition and commentary by Jean-Marie Durand, *Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari* (3 vols.; LAPO 16–18; Paris: Cerf, 1997–2000), 3:242–43, no. 1076.

[30] These diaries stem mostly from Babylon and record daily observations of the motions of celestial bodies, together with notations of meteorological phenomena, variations in the market prices of basic commodities, and occasional events of historical or anecdotal importance. They are published by Abraham J. Sachs and Hermann Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, vols. 1–3, 5 (Denkschriften; Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1987–2001).

[31] Francis Joannès, "Une chronique judiciaire d'époque hellénistique et le châtiment des sacrilèges à Babylone," in *Assyriologica et Semitica: Festschrift für Joachim Oelsner anlässlich seines 65. Geburtstag am 18. Februar 1997* (ed. Joachim Marzahn and Hans Neumann; AOAT 252; Münster: Ugarit, 2000), 193–211. English edition and translation of the chronicle in Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (SBLWAW 19; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2004), 256–59.

Zababa in Babylon.[32] In a passage warning against the brazen confidence of strength and wealth, the Babylonian Theodicy remarks how the prominent citizen can be burned in fire by the king "before his time," that is to say, before the natural end of his life.[33] In addition, the astrological series *Enuma Anu Enlil* mentions a royal condemnation to be burned.[34] There is also evidence in mythology and magic for burning as metaphysical punishment.

Punishment by the Fiery Furnace in Mesopotamia

The precise manner of execution in the texts discussed so far cannot be determined. Although death at the stake seems the more likely possibility, one can envisage a number of different ways in which a sentence of death by burning can be carried out. It is fortunate that we have three instances in Mesopotamia where the manner of execution by burning is specified, and all three cases involve being thrown into an oven or a furnace. However, these sources have not been discussed in previous commentaries on Daniel 3. The earliest text (BIN 7, 10) is a letter of King Rīm-Sîn of Larsa, who reigned from 1822 until 1763 B.C.E. according to the middle chronology:

> 1. *a-na* [L]Ú-^{d}*nin-urta* 2. ^{I}bal-mu-na[m-ḫé] 3. ^{I}*ip-qú-èr-r*[*a*] 4. *ù ma-an-nu-um-ki-ma-*^{d}[EN.ZU] 5. *qí-bí-ma* 6. [*u*]*m-ma* ^{d}*ri-im-*^{d}EN.ZU *be-*[*e*]*l-k*[*u*]*-nu-ma* 7. *aš-šum ṣú-ḫa-ra-am a-na ti-nu-r*[*i-i*]*m* 8. [*i*]*d-du-ú* 9. [*a*]*t-tu-nu* [S]AG.ÌR *a-na ú-tu-nim* 10. *i-di-a*
>
> Speak to Lu-Ninurta, Balmu-namḫe, Ipqu-Erra, and Mannum-kīma-Sîn: Thus says Rīm-Sîn, your lord. Because he cast a boy into the oven, you, throw the slave into the kiln.[35]

The context of this letter cannot be reconstructed and remains enigmatic. Is the king quoting a proverb or some other form of saying, or is he ordering these offi-

[32] Steven W. Cole, "The Crimes and Sacrileges of Nabû-šuma-iškun," *ZA* 84 (1994): 220–52, lines 12′. *ina* <1>*-en* u_4*-mi* 16 *ku-ta-a-a ina* KÁ.GAL ^{d}*za-ba*$_4$*-ba*$_4$ 13′. *šá qé-reb* TIN.TIR.KI *ina* IZI *iq-lu*$_4$, "in one day he burned alive sixteen Kuthaeans at the gate of Zababa in Babylon."

[33] Wilfred G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 74–75, section VI, 63. *gi-is maš-re-e* EN *pa-ni šá gur-ru-nu ma-ak-ku-ru* 64. *gi-riš ina* u_4*-um la ši-ma-ti i-qa-am-me-šú ma-al-ku,* "the opulent nouveau riche who heaps up goods will be burnt at the stake by the king before his time."

[34] Charles Virolleaud, *L'astrologie chaldéenne*, Fasc. 1 (Paris: Geuthner, 1908), Sin I, 17. LUGAL LÚ.MEŠ *ana qa-le-e* È-*ma* LÚ.ME *šú-nu šá ina la an-ni-šú-nu zak-ru* KAR.MEŠ, "the king will send some men to be burned, but those men who were accused without being guilty will be spared."

[35] Transliteration and translation by Marten Stol, *Letters from Yale* (AbB 9; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 126–27, no. 197.

cials to carry out an execution? The two words for "oven" and "kiln" are *tinūru* and *utūnu*. The latter derives from Sumerian UDUN, and occurs more rarely as *atūnu*, the form under which it entered the Aramaic language (אתון in Daniel 3). The second occurrence comes from a palace edict of the Assyrian king Aššur-rēša-iši I (1130–1113 B.C.E.). It was originally published by Ernst Weidner, who noted with his usual acumen the parallel between the edict and the motif of the furnace in Daniel 3.[36] The relevant part of the edict reads as follows:[37]

> Section 19, line 94. [o o o o]-*a-šu a-na* EN-*ša kat-ma-at lu-ú* MUNUS *lu-ú* LÚ *a-me-ra-na a-na* Š[À U]DUN *i-kar-ru-ru-šu-nu*
>
> [o o o] x x she is veiled for her lord. They shall throw them, either the woman or the man, the eye-witness, in the oven.

The word for oven is again *utūnu*/*atūnu*, written here with the logogram UDUN. Unfortunately the edict is not fully preserved, so it is not entirely clear which transgression results in death in the oven. Many provisions in Middle Assyrian edicts sanction inappropriate behavior by palace women and personnel. Thus a misdemeanor of sexual nature seems probable.

The third and final example occurs in a Neo-Babylonian school text from the Sippar temple library. It is datable to the first half of the sixth century and is therefore contemporaneous with the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus. The text may well have been composed earlier, however, since it purports to reproduce a letter of the Old Babylonian king Samsu-iluna (1750–1712) to a certain Enlil-nādin-šumi, who is given the title of governor (*šākin ṭēm māti*). The king orders the governor to inscribe on a stela an encyclical address to the superintendents of all cult centers of Babylonia. The encyclical is fully quoted in the text of the letter:

> 1. *a-na* $^{\text{Id}}$*en-líl-na-din*-MU $^{\text{lú}}$GAR-UŠ$_4$ KUR [o o] ⌜x x⌝ [o]-⌜x⌝-*bit-tu*$_4$ 2. *a-pil su-ú-nu ru-bu-tu* $^{\text{lú}}$GÌR.NÍTA ⌜x⌝ [*ma-ha-zi*? *a*]*k-ka-di-i* 3. *ma-la ba-šu-ú qí-bi-ma um-ma* [$^{\text{I}}$*sa-am-su-i-lu-n*]*a* LUGAL *kiš-šat* [o o o]-⌜x-*ma*!⌝4. *um-ma a-na na-re-e gi-mir ma-ḫa-*⌜*zi* KUR URI⌝ [$^{\text{ki}}$ *šá*?] 5. *ul-tu ṣi-it* $^{\text{d}}$UTU-*ši a-di e-reb* $^{\text{d}}$UTU-*ši* [o] 6. *nap-ḫar-šú-nu a-na* ŠU.MIN-*ka uš-tag-m*[*i*?-*ru*?] 7. *áš-me-e-ma* $^{\text{lú}}$KU$_4$-É! *ki-na-al-tu* $^{\text{lú!}}$NU.ÈŠ $^{\text{lú}}$*pa-ši-š*[*i*? o] 8. *ù* $^{\text{lú}}$DINGIR.GUB.BA.MEŠ *šá ma-ḫa-zu* KUR URI$^{\text{ki}}$ *ma-la* ⌜GAL⌝-[*ú*?] 9. *sar*!?-*ra-a-tu*$_4$ *i-ta*!-*ḫaz an-zil*!-*lu*$_4$ *ik-tab-su da-me il-*⌜*tap-tu*⌝ 10. *la šal-ma-a-tu*$_4$ *i-ta*!-*mu-ú šap-la-nu* DINGIR.MEŠ-*šú-nu ú-ḫa-an-na-pu*!? 11. *ú-šá-an-na*!-*pu i-ṣab-bu-ru i-sur*!-*ru a-mat* DINGIR.MEŠ-*šú-nu la iq-bu-ú* 12. *a-na* UGU DINGIR.MEŠ-*šú-nu šak-nu*
>
> To Enlil-nādin-šumi, governor of the land, x x x x x x x, son of the loins of princeship, superintendent of all [the cult centers of A]kkad, speak, thus [Samsu-ilun]a,

[36] Ernst Weidner, "Hof- und Harems-Erlasse assyrischer Könige," *AfO* 17 (1954–56): 285–86, no. 19.

[37] Recent edition by Roth, *Law Collections*, 204–5.

> king of the world, [o o o o] x, thus for the stela: "(Concerning) all the cult centers of the land of Akkad, all of those from east to west [which] I have given entirely into your control, I have heard (reports) that the temple officials, the collegium, the *nešakku*-priests, the *pašīšu*-priests, and the *dingirgubbû*-priests of the cult centers of the land of Akkad, as many as there are, have taken to falsehood, committed an abomination, been stained with blood, spoken untruths. Inwardly they profane and desecrate their gods, they prattle and cavort about. Things that their gods did not command they establish for their gods."

After having thus chastised local priests and officials for impiety and sacrilege, the king concludes his remonstrances with a series of curses, and instructs Enlil-nādin-šumi to enforce them:[38]

> 5′. *at-ta ub-bit-su-nu!-tú qu-mi-šú-nu-ti qu-liš-šú-nu-ti e-ra* ID ⌈x⌉ 6′. *a-na ki-ri* ^{lú}MUḪALDIM ⌈*x x*⌉ *šuq-ter qu-tur-šú-un ina i-šat a-šá-gu ez-ze-tú* 7′. *šu-kun ma-aq-la-šu-un*
>
> You now, destroy them, burn them, roast them, . . . to the cook's oven . . . make their smoke billow, bring about their fiery end with the fierce flame of the boxthorn!

In spite of the gap in the text, it seems clear that the punishment by burning and roasting envisaged in the curses is effected by means of a cook's oven. The term for oven here is *kīru*, which refers normally to a lime kiln rather than the oven used by cooks and bakers. Remarkably, in his classic commentary on Daniel, James Montgomery noted that the furnace of Daniel 3 "must have been similar to our common lime-kiln, with a perpendicular shaft from the top and an opening at the bottom for extracting the fused lime."[39]

The Letter of Samsu-iluna provides the closest known parallel to Daniel 3, not only in the manner of execution but also regarding the context in which it is envisaged, that of a royal order on the correct performance of cultic duties. The text belonged to the curriculum of Babylonian schools. Apprentice scribes who joined the royal administration were required to copy and study it. The Letter propagates an idealized view of the Babylonian monarch as religious leader and custodian of traditional rites. Given its status as official text, it is hardly surprising that elements of its ideology resurface with a slightly different formulation in the Harran Stela of Nabonidus. The Harran Stela openly propagandizes Nabonidus's devotion to the moon-god Sîn of Harran, whom he sought to promote as imperial deity. In a passage that recalls the tone and thematic content of the Letter of Samsu-iluna, Nabonidus chastises the administrators and citizens of the cult centers of Babylo-

[38] The text was published more than a decade ago by Farouk N. H. al-Rawi and Andrew R. George, "Tablets from the Sippar Library III: Two Royal Counterfeits," *Iraq* 56 (1994): 135–38.

[39] James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927), 202.

nia for behaving sinfully, committing blasphemy and sacrileges, and disregarding the true nature and worship of Sîn:[40]

> 10. ^{d}30 *ana* LUGAL-*ú-ti* 11. [*i*]*m-ba-an-ni ina šá-at mu-ši* MÁŠ.GE$_6$ *ú-šab-ra-an* 12. *um-ma* É.ḪÚL.ḪÚL É ^{d}30 *šá* ^{uru}KASKAL *ḫa-an-ṭiš* 13. *e-pu-uš* KUR.KUR.MEŠ *ka-la-ši-na a-na* ŠU.MIN-*ka* 14. *lu-mál-la* UN.MEŠ DUMU.MEŠ TIN.TIR^{ki} BÁR.SIP^{ki} 15. EN.LÍL^{ki} ŠEŠ.UNUG^{ki} UNUG^{ki} UD.UNUG^{ki} ^{lú}SANGA.MEŠ 16. UN.MEŠ *ma-ḫa-zi* KUR URI^{ki} *a-na* DINGIR-*ú-ti-šu* 17. GAL-*ti iḫ-ṭu-'i-i-ma i-še-ti u ú-gal-li-lu* 18. *la i-du-u e-ze-ez-su* <GAL-*tú*> *šá* LUGAL DINGIR.MEŠ ^{d}NANNA-*ri* 19. *par-ṣi-šú-nu im-šu-'i-i-ma i-dab-bu-bu sur-ra-a-tú* 20. *u la ki-na-a-tú ki-ma* UR.GI$_7$ *it-ta-nak-ka-lu* 21. *a-ḫa-míš di-'u u* SU.GU$_7$-*ú ina* ŠÀ-*bi-šú-nu* 22. *ú-šab-šu-ú ú-ṣa-aḫ-ḫi-ir* UN.MEŠ KUR
>
> The god Sîn called me to kingship. He revealed to me in a night dream (what follows): "Build quickly Eḫulḫul, the temple of Sîn in Harran, and I will deliver all lands into your hands." (But) the people, the citizens of Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, Ur, Uruk, (and) Larsa, the temple administrators (and) the people of the cult centers of the land of Akkad, offended his (Sîn's) great godhead and they misbehaved and sinned, (for) they did not know the great wrath of the king of the gods, Nannar. They forgot their rites and would speak slanders and lies, devouring each other like dogs. (Thus) pestilence and famine appeared (*ušabšû*) among them, and he (the moon-god) reduced (*uṣaḫḫir*) the people of the land.[41]

Although it displays striking parallels with the Letter of Samsu-iluna and Daniel 3, the Stela contains no provisions for punishing the king's rebellious subjects. Instead it is the moon-god Sîn himself who carried out the punishment normally meted out by the king, this time in the form of famine and epidemics that killed off a large number of rebellious subjects. Yet the Letter certainly provided the inspiration for the Stela. Not only do the two texts exhibit striking thematic correspondences, but the Stela fulfills in effect the command issued in the Letter, to inscribe the king's encyclical reprimand on a *narû*, a stone monument or stela, which is precisely the medium chosen by Nabonidus for his Harran inscription, instead of the clay cylinder, which was the usual medium for royal inscriptions in Babylonia.

III. From Nabonidus to Daniel

This material provides a compelling historical background for the tale of Daniel 3. In the time of the Babylonian empire, there clearly existed an official tra-

[40] I have discussed this question extensively in "Nabonidus the Mad King: A Reconsideration of His Stelas from Harran and Babylon," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Marlies Heinz and Marian H. Feldman; Winona Lake, IN; Eisenbrauns, 2007), 137–66.

[41] There is a slight grammatical problem with the verbs in this passage. I understand the verb *ušabšû* to be an impersonal third person plural, and the subject of *uṣaḫḫir* to be the moon-god Sîn.

dition that regarded the king as supreme authority in religious and cultic affairs. Schools maintained this tradition with the study of such literary compositions as the Letter of Samsu-iluna. Relying on this, Nabonidus attempted to impose a new theology of the moon-god Sîn on the population of the Babylonian empire. According to the Verse Account, this reform included the making of a new statue of Sîn for the temple Ehulhul in Harran, a cult image deemed improper and sacrilegious by Nabonidus's opponents. That acts of rebellion against the king's order became widespread seems obvious not only from the tone of the Verse Account but also from the fact that Nabonidus alludes to them openly in his Harran Stela. The Stela seeks to reassert his royal prerogatives in religious matters with a tone that is closely reminiscent of the Letter of Samsu-iluna. Even if the punishment by roasting in the oven prescribed in the Letter is absent from the Harran Stela, it seems most likely that threats of such a punishment circulated widely in the empire, even if only in the form of jests deriding the king's pretensions. One can easily imagine opponents of Nabonidus exclaiming in mockery: "If you do not worship this new horrifying image of Sîn, the king will roast you in an oven!" Thus may have arisen the legend of the forced worship of the blasphemous image, and of the infamous punishment inflicted on transgressors.

There are two other striking points of resemblance between the Letter of Samsu-iluna, the Harran Stela, and Daniel 3. In all three cases the Babylonian king addresses his subjects by means of an encyclical proclamation, and the individuals most specifically targeted by the anticipated punishment are the priesthood and high officials, who were generally royal appointees. Daniel 3 records that Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation is addressed to "the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces" (Dan 3:2, 3), and the biblical material further emphasizes that the Jewish companions of Daniel had been nominated by the king to oversee "the affairs of the province of Babylon" (Dan 3:12). The motif of the Chaldeans denouncing the three Jewish appointees stems from the paradigm of the court tale, but the story of officials falling into disgrace because they contravened the king's religious pronunciamentos very probably originates in actual conflicts that erupted during the reign of Nabonidus.

IV. Real or Metaphorical Punishment?

Should we assume that death by roasting in a furnace constituted an actual mode of execution, or should we understand it as merely metaphorical? Of the three Mesopotamian attestations of the punishment, two come from literary and nonlegal contexts. The context of the letter BIN 7, 10 remains obscure, and the mention of throwing slaves and boys in ovens and furnaces most likely reflects a saying, proverb, or literary topos. Similarly, the rhetorical inflation that distin-

guishes the punishments detailed in the curse formula of the Letter of Samsu-iluna suggests metaphorical rather than actual executions. The provisions of the edict of Ašur-rēša-iši I instill greater confidence in their factualness, given that they appear in a legal context. Yet the severity of some punishments prescribed by the Middle Assyrian laws and edicts has led some scholars to doubt that they were ever enforced.[42] Others have issued similar warnings concerning some extreme examples of punishments occurring in Neo-Assyrian sources.[43] Execution by throwing into a furnace seems most gruesome, but arguments based on morality or feasibility should not be considered. The annals of world history record even crueler and more outlandish modes of executions. True, the details of the execution in Daniel 3 seem difficult to picture in reality. A furnace able to accommodate three walking men, with the addition of a fourth miraculous apparition, seems too large in view of all available examples of ancient Mesopotamian kilns and ovens.[44] But this could simply exaggerate a real mode of execution where the condemned was bound and fit in a smaller oven. Egyptian sources do envisage the binding and throwing of a few men together in a large furnace, but again these passages come from literary and religious texts and may reflect rhetorical punishments. At any rate, there is no reason to doubt that execution by burning did take place in Mesopotamia, often by express royal decree. Whether this included burning in an oven cannot be decided.

Similar questions can be raised concerning Daniel 6, which parallels Daniel 3 in many ways. Early interpreters often linked the two chapters, especially because these edifying tales of Jewish martyrdom under the duress of pagan kings seemed to herald the persecutions suffered by Christian converts.[45] The executions recorded in Daniel 6 and in the story of Bel and the Dragon, effected by throwing the condemned into a lion's pit, appear more feasible and on the surface more believable than the punishment in the fiery furnace. However, such a mode of execution finds no parallel in the ancient world. Karel van der Toorn argued that the story probably originated in the literalization of an ancient metaphor that is recorded in a let-

[42] Guillaume Cardascia, *Les lois assyriennes: Introduction, traduction, commentaire* (LAPO 2; Paris: Cerf, 1969), 84.

[43] An example that is relevant to the present topic is a clause appearing in a few Neo-Assyrian contracts. It stipulates that the transgressor to the legal agreement must, as punishment, give away his firstborn son to be burned in the *ḫamri*, or *bīt ḫamri* of the god Adad. Joannès numbers this among the "clauses irréalisables" of late contracts (Joannès, "Chronique judiciaire," 207 n. 25). The *hamri* of the god Adad is a sacred building known since Old Assyrian times; it is extensively discussed by Daniel Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialen und Studien nach den schriftlichen Quellen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 245–56; and see 606–7 for the stipulation in Neo-Assyrian contracts.

[44] Armas Salonen, "Die Öfen der alten Mesopotamier," *BaghM* 3 (1964): 100–124; and more recently Peter Miglus, "Ofen," *RlA* 10:39–42.

[45] Jan Willem van Henten, "Daniel 3 and 6 in Early Christian Literature," in *Book of Daniel*, ed. Collins and Flint, 149–69.

ter addressed by the scholar Urad-Gula to the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal.[46] The scholar complains that he has unexplainably fallen into disgrace, and in a broken passage states that he prays to the king day and night "in front of the lion's pit." Earlier in the letter Urad-Gula had said that he used to eat "lion's morsels," which can be understood to mean the fine food apportioned to members of the staff of scholars who advised the king. Urad-Gula's "lion's pit" probably refers to his former colleagues, and the throwing of Daniel to the lions in ch. 6 may well follow up on this metaphor, except that here Daniel's former colleagues, the Chaldeans, have turned hostile to him and in their resentment set out to devour him metaphorically. A similar yet more simple process of literalization probably took place with the motif of the fiery furnace. Even if the punishment was known in Babylonia only as metaphorical or hyperbolic, it became real in the mind of the propagators of the legend.

V. Nabonidus and Nebuchadnezzar

A very important element in the elaboration of Daniel 3 is the transformation of the figure of Nabonidus into that of Nebuchadnezzar. This could have happened any time before the court narratives of Daniel 1–6 reached their final form. However, the discovery of the *Prayer of Nabonidus* among the Qumran manuscripts (4Q242) shows that even after the compilation of Daniel in the first decades of the second century, there continued a parallel tradition that correctly ascribed to the historical Nabonidus the episodes of the royal disease and the residence in the oasis of Teima. These episodes appear in Daniel in the form of the sudden madness, animalization, and exile of Nebuchadnezzar among the beasts. The Danielic figure of Nebuchadnezzar does not entirely depend on a memory of Nabonidus, however. The book accurately portrays Nebuchadnezzar as conqueror of Jerusalem (Dan 1:1–2) and builder of Babylon (Dan 4:30). Thus, in Daniel, various memories of the two kings were woven together into one archetypal figure.

It seems difficult to deny that there is a very close relation between the story of the two false prophets burned by the historical Nebuchadnezzar in Jer 29:21–23 and the story of the three Jewish exiles thrown into the fiery furnace by the fictionalized Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3. The books of Daniel and Jeremiah share many more traits. For one thing, the two prophets were allegedly near contemporaries. The final redactors of Daniel highlighted this connection in their prophet's reinterpretation of Jeremiah's prediction of the length of the exile (Daniel 9). One

[46] Karel van der Toorn, "In the Lion's Den: The Babylonian Background of a Biblical Motif," *CBQ* 60 (1998): 626–40. The letter was edited by Simo Parpola, "The Forlorn Scholar," in *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to Erica Reiner* (ed. Francesca Rochberg-Halton; AOS 67; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1987), 257–78.

very obvious, if seldom discussed, aspect shared by the two traditions is their elaborate theologization of the figure of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar emerges as the unwitting instrument and servant of God in Jeremiah. In Daniel, he becomes cognizant of his role and even experiences a conversion, ultimately recognizing the power of the God of Israel.[47] The motif of conversion also seems to be present in the *Prayer of Nabonidus*. The motif probably originated in the sixth century, when some Jewish exiles may have perceived real affinities between their religion and the theological speculations of Babylon's last king. The burning of the two false prophets is reported in Jeremiah 29. Jeremiah 27–29 has long been recognized as a distinct unit within the book. The three chapters display a number of peculiarities, including shorter spellings of Yahwistic names, the frequent use of titles with personal names, and the spelling of the name Nebuchadnezzar with an *n* rather than the more accurate *r* found in the rest of the book.[48] The spelling with *n* is in fact the more common one in the Bible and the only one attested in the book of Daniel. Yet this is not a sufficient reason to assume an influence of Jeremiah 27–29 on Daniel. More suggestive in this regard could be the fact that the short spelling of the name Jeremiah (ירמיה instead of ירמיהו), which characterizes Jeremiah 27–29, occurs elsewhere only in Daniel 9 and Ezra 1.

Jeremiah 29:21–23 probably reports an actual incident. We have seen that several Babylonian sources of the first millennium chronicle the burning of individuals upon royal command for crimes of rebellion and sacrilege. Therefore the probability of a Babylonian setting for the redaction or editing of these chapters must be seriously considered. This is further supported by the fact, recently pointed out by Jack Lundbom,[49] that, oddly, Jer 29:22 uses the root קלה ("to burn, roast") to refer to the execution of the condemned prophets, rather than שרף, which is the verb that normally refers to the burning of individuals in the Bible. The use of קלה here derives in all probability from Babylonian usage. The usual verbs referring to burning as death penalty in cuneiform sources are *qalû*, which is the cognate verb of קלה, and less frequently *qamû*.[50] We have seen that the story of the forced worship of the statue in Daniel 3 does not depict the historical Nebuchadnezzar. The legend originated in the attempt by Nabonidus to manufacture a deviant image of the god Sîn of Harran and introduce it as an object of worship. The motif of the punishment by burning may go back to actual threats of roasting in the oven

[47] The motifs of conversion and prophetic reinterpretation suggest that Daniel fulfills Jeremiah, providing Israel with a sense of closure and the end of its spiritual exile.

[48] Adriaan van Selms, "The Name Nebuchadnezzar," in *Travels in the World of the Old Testament: Studies Presented to M. A. Beek on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (ed. M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss; SSN 16; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 223–29.

[49] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, 358.

[50] See Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 554: there may have been wordplays on *qlh,* "to roast," *qll,* "to curse," and the family name of the false prophet Ahab, *bēn-qōlāyāh,* "son of Kolayah." This, however, does not reduce the probability that Jer 29:21–23 refers to an actual event.

hurled, whether in fact or in jest, at recalcitrant Babylonians who refused to acknowledge the king's wisdom in the cultic realm. However, it is the story of the burning of the false prophets by the real Nebuchadnezzar that may ultimately have given its final shape to the motif of the fiery furnace, especially at the crucial point in the elaboration of the legend when the historical figures of Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus were merged into the exemplary and elaborately theologized Nebuchadnezzar who appears in the canonical version of Daniel.

VI. Conclusion

The evidence just detailed indicates that the motif of punishment in the fiery furnace can be traced back to a common ancient Near Eastern background, with very close parallels in both Egypt and Mesopotamia. Although the hypothesis of Egyptian influence in the elaboration of the motif cannot be discounted, the Babylonian setting of the tale induces us to seek preferably Mesopotamian antecedents. Indeed, the recent publication of a compelling Babylonian parallel from the same historical period in which Daniel 3 is set provides one of these rare instances where the point of origin of a legend can be identified. When precisely all the elements constitutive of Daniel 3 cohered into one unified narrative and assumed their final shape remains impossible to answer. The legend originated independently and was joined, possibly at quite a late date, with the rest of the Daniel court stories. Death by burning carried important symbolic connotations in the ancient Near East. In the final redaction of Daniel 3, the motif became a powerful symbol of the travails facing those faithful to God, and was integrated into a perennial tale of the fall and ultimate vindication of the righteous.[51]

[51] George W. E. Nickelsburg views the stories of Joseph and his brothers, of Ahiqar, of Esther, of Daniel 3 and 6, and of Susanna as examples of the story of the persecution and exaltation of the righteous man or woman (*Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* [HTS 26; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972], 48–58).

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Divine Titles and Epithets and the Sources of the *Genesis Apocryphon*

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Already from the time of the initial publication of the *Genesis Apocryphon,* it was clear that the entire composition was not cut from one cloth. The editors of the *editio princeps* wrote a half century ago, "The work is evidently a literary unit in style and structure, though . . . it may perhaps be divisible into books—a Book of Lamech, a Book of Enoch, a Book of Noah, a Book of Abraham."[1] Column 2,

Presented at the New York University–University of Notre Dame Joint Program: Jewish and Christian Scholars on Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity, held at New York University, New York, New York, May 29–31, 2007. Several colleagues from both near and far were kind enough to read this paper during the various phases of its development (some of them more than once) and to offer constructive criticism. Among them are Dr. Shani Berrin, Professor George J. Brooke, Dr. Alex Jassen, Dr. Aaron Koller, Dr. Daniel Machiela, Professor George W. E. Nickelsburg, Dr. Michael Segal, and Professors Mark S. Smith and James C. VanderKam. Professor Smith deserves particular thanks for subjecting the penultimate version of the essay to a meticulously detailed and careful critique, above and beyond that which could be expected from any colleague, which made a significant impact on the final version. Since I have not accepted all of their suggestions for improving the essay, I alone remain responsible for whatever errors in fact or judgment remain. My readings of the *Apocryphon* are based on all the images that have been available to me over the past several years, during which period I had several opportunities to study them and read the text together with Dr. Esther Eshel of Bar Ilan University, who is not, however, responsible for the conclusions of this essay. As I approached the final stages of my rewriting, Dr. Machiela was kind enough to furnish me with a copy of his recently completed Ph.D. dissertation, "The Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20): A Reevaluation of Its Text, Interpretive Character, and Relationship to the Book of Jubilees" (University of Notre Dame, 2007), which was of significant value to me, although I was not able to assimilate all of his new textual data (some of which remain speculative in my view) into my tabulation and conclusions.

[1] Nahman Avigad and Yigael Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon: A Scroll from the Wilderness of*

describing the reaction of Lamech to the (apparently) miraculous birth and/or appearance of his son Noah, was related to the biblical narrative of Genesis differently from the way that cols. 19–22 that describe the adventures of Abram from Gen 12:8–15:4 were. The Abram material adhered much more closely to the biblical story line, while the earlier section presented considerably freer composition. With the publication of the remains of the other columns in the early 1990s, the dichotomy between the two major sections of the *Apocryphon* appeared even sharper.[2] Even in places in cols. 3–17 where the *Apocryphon* comes closer to the biblical story than in col. 2, the narrative never seems to be as closely linked to the Bible as some of the Abram material. The decipherment of the words כתב [פרשגן] מלי נוח, "[copy] of the book of the words of Noah," toward the end of col. 5 of the *Apocryphon,* shortly before Noah's appearance on the scene in the midst of delivering a speech at the beginning of col. 6, raised further qualms among scholars that the *Apocryphon* was not an integral whole.[3] The suspicions of the initial editors that it had been put together by its "author" out of the "Book of Lamech," "Book of Noah," and "Book of Abram" seemed to have been vindicated.[4]

Judaea (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of the Hebrew University and Heikhal Ha-Sefer, 1956), 38. We are less ready today to claim the literary unity that they asserted, and more ready to divide the work into sources, perhaps for better reasons. The presentation of further arguments for one such division is the aim of this study.

[2] Jonas C. Greenfield and Elisha Qimron, "The *Genesis Apocryphon* Col. XII," in *Studies in Qumran Aramaic* (ed. Takamitsu Muraoka; AbrNSup 3; Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 70–77; and Matthew Morgenstern, Elisha Qimron, and Daniel Sivan, "The Hitherto Unpublished Columns of the *Genesis Apocryphon*," *AbrN* 33 (1995): 30–54. The most extensive study of these columns to date is Moshe (Matthew) Morgenstern, "העמודות שטרם נתפרסמו מן המגילה החיצונית לבראשית" ("The Hitherto Unpublished Columns of the Genesis Apocryphon" [M.A. thesis, Department of Hebrew Language, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1996], hereafter, Morgenstern, "MA").

[3] For a discussion of that phrase, see Richard C. Steiner, "The Heading of the *Book of the Words of Noah* on a Fragment of the Genesis Apocryphon: New Light on a 'Lost' Work," *DSD* 2 (1995): 66–71.

[4] Regarding the hypothetical "Book of Noah," see Devorah Dimant, "Noah in Early Jewish Literature," in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible* (ed. Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 123–50; Michael E. Stone, "The Axis of History at Qumran," in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Second International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12–14 January, 1997* (ed. Esther G. Chazon and Michael E. Stone; STDJ 31; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 133–47; Cana Werman, "Qumran and the Book of Noah," ibid., 171–81; Moshe J. Bernstein, "Noah and the Flood at Qumran," in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: New Texts, Reformulated Issues and Technological Innovations* (ed. Eugene Ulrich and Donald Parry; STDJ 30; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 199–231; Michael E. Stone, "The Book(s) Attributed to Noah," *DSD* 13 (2006): 4–23; and Devorah Dimant, "Two Scientific Fictions: The So-called *Book of Noah* and the Alleged Quotation of *Jubilees* in CD

Regardless of whether we can identify the sources upon which the author/composer of the *Apocryphon* drew, and from which he apparently stitched together or integrated the composite document into a whole, both the early and later observations about its somewhat disjointed nature still ring true. I believe that I have discovered a pattern, in the course of my current work on the *Apocryphon,* that supports the broadly impressionistic view that the work does not stem from a single hand. The goal of this article is to present that evidence. In light of the very fragmented nature of many sections of the *Apocryphon* in the pre-Abram section, cols. 0–17,[5] some of these observations and their analysis could be questioned, but I feel that it is methodologically sounder to proceed from the position that the surviving material is representative than to argue that it is anomalous and atypical of the whole.

In the same ways that God participates in the narratives of the Hebrew Bible, he plays roles in the stories of the "rewritten Bible" as well. He may be a character in the narrative; other characters may address God or pray to him; they may swear oaths by God or refer to him in other ways in their dialogue. Sometimes those references to God are made by replacing or supplementing the divine name with titles or epithets, while on other occasions characters may string together in a series various divine titles or epithets. Even if the *Genesis Apocryphon* were an indubitably integral work, it would be valuable to investigate the pattern revealed by the different ways in which it refers to God. The possibility that this examination can contribute to our understanding of the *Apocryphon*'s composition makes the undertaking of such a study mandatory.[6] Since most of the *Apocryphon* is first-person narration by one character or another, we should like to know whether different characters employ the same terminology in addressing or referring to God. It is also important to observe how the *Apocryphon* handles, in its Aramaic adap-

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16:3-4," in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint Presented to Eugene Ulrich* (ed. Peter W. Flint et al.; VTSup 101; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), 230–49, esp. 231–42.

[5] The rather unusual designation col. 0 is employed for the fragments of the first extant column of the *Apocryphon,* which extends to the right of what had been referred to as col. 1 since the initial publication. The term, which has been adopted by all current students of the *Apocryphon,* was suggested by Michael Wise and Bruce Zuckerman when they presented these data at the 1991 SBL Annual Meeting.

[6] Jonas C. Greenfield and Michael Sokoloff discuss "Divine Names and Epithets" in Qumran Aramaic (based almost exclusively on the *Genesis Apocryphon*) ("The Contribution of Qumran Aramaic to the Aramaic Vocabulary," in *Studies in Qumran Aramaic,* ed. Muraoka, 92–94). From their list (pp. 93–94), which makes no claim to exhaustiveness, it appears that they did not yet have available cols. 0–1, 3–6, 8–11, or 13–17. For that reason, and since the focus of the article is on vocabulary, we should not be surprised that the distribution of epithets within the *Apocryphon* is not of interest to the authors. The following observation is quite telling, in my view: אלהא is said by Greenfield and Sokoloff to be found "passim" (p. 93), but it actually is not found in the surviving material of cols. 0–17, rather only in 19–22.

tation, names of or epithets for God whose equivalents appear already in the Hebrew biblical text as compared with those that are elements of its free composition.

What will immediately become clear from our examination is that not all sections of the *Apocryphon* use the same set of titles and epithets. In particular, there is a fairly clear dichotomy between all of the material up to the Abram narrative, namely, the Lamech-Noah portion in cols. 0–17 (hereafter Part I), and the story of Abram told in cols. 19–22 (hereafter Part II). This distinction points to yet another difference between these two parts of the story, beyond the divergent ways in which they relate to the biblical text. Anticipating our results in this fashion, we shall therefore present the evidence from cols. 0–17 and 19–22 separately.[7]

This study will be a strictly formal one, listing and classifying the names and epithets of God employed throughout the *Genesis Apocryphon.* Other Second Temple texts will serve for comparison or contrast with the *Apocryphon.* Since the goal of this presentation is its implications for the sources of the *Genesis Apocryphon,* we must defer, for the present, any discussion of what we can learn about the mind-set of the authors or compilers of any portion of these texts from the ways in which they refer to God. The "theological" implications of the distribution of divine titles in these works are undoubtedly significant, but must be deemed to lie beyond the boundaries of this article. A further study of that topic should probably not be limited to the *Apocryphon* but should be a part of a much-needed comprehensive study of divine titles and epithets in Second Temple literature.[8]

[7] This essay, unsurprisingly, began not as an exercise in source criticism but as a study of the epithets for God in conjunction with my ongoing research on the *Genesis Apocryphon.* When I listed the epithets and plotted their distribution, the source-critical issue emerged immediately.

[8] In "The God of the pre-Maccabees: Designations of the Divine in the Early Hellenistic Period," in *The God of Israel* (ed. Robert P. Gordon; University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 64; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 246–66, James K. Aitken provides preliminary data that may prove valuable to such a study, although he examines very few terms and limits his study, as the title indicates, to pre-Maccabean material. One of the difficulties in the broad treatment of Second Temple texts is that we do not have most of the texts in their original languages. We therefore shall limit ourselves, for the most part, in this discussion to parallels from the Aramaic material at Qumran. Significant conclusions can be drawn for our limited goals from even this restricted corpus of texts. I note here that my treatment of Enoch is based on George W. E. Nickelsburg's magisterial translation and commentary, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108* (ed. Klaus Baltzer; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), and on Josef T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), as well as on the earlier translations of Robert H. Charles in *APOT,* and of Matthew Black in idem, *The Book of Enoch or I Enoch: A New English Edition* (SVTP 7; Leiden: Brill, 1985). Black's index, s.v. "God, names of" (p. 461a-b) was a particularly useful tool in my investigation. Because of the choices from the different ancient versions and manuscripts thereof made by different editors and translators in their translations of Enoch, it is difficult to present an indisputable

The Distribution of Divine Titles and Epithets in the *Genesis Apocryphon*[9]

Divine Epithet or Title	*Part I (cols. 0–17)*	*Part II (cols. 19–22)*
קדישא רבא	0:11; 2:14; 6:[13], 15 7:7, 20; 12:17	
קדישא	6:[2]	
עליא	2:4; [2:6]; 6:9, 24; 10:18	
מרה רבותא	2:4; [2:6]; 15:[11]	
מלך כול עלמים	2:[4], 7; 10:10 (למלך כול עלמיא לעלם ולעד עד כול עלמים)	
מרה עלמא	0:18	21:2 מרה עלמיא (cf. מרי לכול עלמים 20:12–13)
מלך ש[מיא]	2:[14]	
מרה שמיא	7:7; 11:12–[13], 15; 12:17	(cf. 22:16, 21 מרה שמיא וארעא)
מרה כולא	5:23	(cf. 20:13 מרה ושליט על כולא and 20:15–16 מרה לכול מלכי ארעא)
אל עליון	12:17	20:12, 16; 21:2, 20; 22:15, 16 (*bis*), 20–21
אלהא		19:[7], [7–8 ?]; 21:2–3 (*ter*), 8; 22:27, 32
מרי	(cf. 10:9 למרכון)	20:12–13, 14, 15; 22:32

picture of the divine epithets employed in *1 Enoch,* and some of my specific remarks may require minor modification. Furthermore, there appears to have been some fluidity in the way that epithets for God were reflected among the different ancient versions of *Enoch,* as there were in the Greek recensions of Tobit, and this is another obstacle to sketching systematically the broader picture of divine epithets in Second Temple literature. Thus, in Tob 10:11 the texts vary between "God of Heaven" and "Lord of Heaven," and in 13:10 between "Lord of eternity" and "King of eternity." I believe, however, that the overall picture that I have drawn is accurate and will stand up to scrutiny.

[9] I acknowledge the tenuousness of many of the readings in this manuscript, but shall not be indicating them with the customary dots and circlets above the letters, believing that it would distract the reader from the argument.

I. Part I (Columns 0–17)

Part I shows an extremely strong tendency to avoid the terms אל and אלהא for God in the narrative, so strong that in all the text that survives from these columns there is only one example of אל, in 12:17, והוית מברך למרה שמיא לאל עליון לקדישא רבא,[10] and none of אלהא.[11] This passage places the familiar "biblical" Hebrew title אל עליון between the two "Second Temple" titles, מרה שמיא, "Lord of Heaven," and קדישא רבא, "Great Holy One."[12] Furthermore, throughout both portions of the *Apocryphon,* אל is employed only in conjunction with עליון. That limitation is not to be found in other Aramaic texts from Qumran.[13] The Aramaic term parallel to

[10] Machiela finds a second example of אל עליון in Part I in 12:21; if my argument requires modification in light of that, I take solace in the fact that both of these "anomalous" occurrences are found in the same context.

[11] In light of this fact, the restoration by Joseph A. Fitzmyer (*The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave 1 [1Q20]: A Commentary* [BibOr 18B; 3rd ed.; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2004; hereafter, Fitzmyer] 68) of [גיג אלהא]ור, "favorite of God," in 2:20 as a description of Enoch by Methuselah is almost certainly to be rejected, especially since he adduces no parallels for it. I unfortunately have no suggestion that can be made with confidence to fill that lacuna. The same argument can be made against Qimron's restoration of אלה עליא in 6:9 ("Toward a New Edition of *1QGenesis Apocryphon*," in *Provo International Conference,* ed. Ulrich and Parry, 107).

[12] אל עליון can really be called a biblical title only in contrast to the other two titles in this phrase, since it actually occurs in the Hebrew Bible only five times: four in Genesis 14, as we shall see, and once in Ps 78:35. In point of fact, we shall conclude that, despite those antecedent occurrences, this idiom in the *Genesis Apocryphon* should perhaps be identified not as a "biblical" one but as one quite at home in Second Temple literature. In the Hebrew Bible, אלהים עליון occurs in Ps 57:3 and 78:56, and ה׳ עליון in Pss 7:16; 11:15; and perhaps 97:9. For discussion of עליון in the Bible and its ancient Near Eastern context, accompanied by bibliography, see Eric E. Elnes and Patrick D. Miller, "Elyon," *DDD,* 2nd ed., 293–99. References to Second Temple literature occupy less than a paragraph on p. 298. See also Cilliers Breytenbach, "Hypsistos," ibid., 438–43.

[13] See the data in Martin G. Abegg et al., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance,* vol. 1, *The Non-Biblical Texts from Qumran* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), 2:782b–83a, s.v. אל. In Biblical Aramaic, עליון is found four times in Daniel 7, always as the *nomen rectum* of קדישי. It is more than a little noteworthy that the combination אל עליון appears nowhere outside the *Genesis Apocryphon* in the Aramaic corpus at Qumran according to the *Concordance* except for 4Q552 frg. 3, line 10 in an unintelligible context (in the absence of a DJD edition, see Edward M. Cook's in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader,* part 6, *Additional Genres and Unclassified Texts* [ed. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov; Leiden: Brill, 2005], 76). Three occurrences of the idiom, however, are to be found in Jonas C. Greenfield et al., eds., *The Aramaic Levi Document* (SVTP 19; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 66 (4:7), reconstructed from minimal traces in 1Q21 (a reading not included in the *Concordance*); p. 70 (5:8), from the medieval Geniza manuscript; and p. 83 (8:6), from the medieval Geniza manuscript and the Greek text from Mt. Athos. Émile Puech's aggressive restoration [כהן קדיש הוא לאל עליון] at 4Q545 frg. 4, line 16 (*Qumrân Grotte 4, XXII: Textes Araméens, Premier Partie: 4Q529–549* [DJD 31; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001], 342–43) is itself based on the first of those passages in the *Aramaic Levi Document*, and therefore needs to be weighed against the virtual absence of this title from

עליון, עליא, is used four times to refer to God (and can reasonably be reconstructed a fifth time) in Part I (2:4, [6]; 6:9,[14] 24; 10:18). One of these occurrences is used in a series of divine epithets in an oath; one of them refers to God as prescriber of law, and two unfortunately lack context. Part II, in contrast, has no occurrences of the epithet עליא.[15]

The most common epithet for God in Part I of the *Apocryphon* is קדישא רבא, which occurs five times (with a sixth virtually certain because it duplicates an idiom found two lines later but has a lacuna where רבא should be). Although one of the

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Aramaic texts other than the *Apocryphon* at Qumran. For a discussion of this title (albeit not a fully comprehensive one), see Friedemann Schubert, "ʾEl ʿÆljôn als Gottesname im Jubiläenbuch," *Mitteilungen und Beiträge: Forschungsstelle Judentum an der Theologische Fakultät Leipzig* 8 (1994): 3–18. Hartmut Stegemann touches on אל עליון in the *Apocryphon* in the course of his remarks on divine titles at Qumran, but he does not address the issue in a way that is relevant for our study ("Religionsgeschichtliche Erwägungen zu den Gottesbezeichnungen in den Qumrantexten," in *Qumran: Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* [ed. Mathias Delcor; BETL 46; Leuven: Leuven University Press; Gembloux: Duculot, 1979], 195–218, esp. 214–16). Aitken's remarks (n. 8 above) on "God most high" are focused on earlier Second Temple material ("God of the pre-Maccabees," 264–65). After this essay had been submitted and accepted for publication, Dr. Jassen brought to my attention Richard Bauckham, "The Nature of the 'Most High' God and the Nature of Early Jewish Monotheism," in *Israel's God and Rebecca's Children: Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado and Alan F. Segal* (ed. David B. Capes et al.; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 39–53 and 378–86, whose observations I have not had the opportunity to integrate into my discussion.

[14] Machiela does not read עליא at this point, but I nevertheless believe that the reading is more than defensible.

[15] It appears in its ordinary sense as an adjective in the *Apocryphon* in 20:7. As far as I can tell, neither עליון nor עליא is a divine epithet in any of the texts that are cited in *DNWSI* (although the phrase אל ועלין is found in Sefire I A 11; see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* [rev. ed.; BibOr 19/A; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1995], 75, with bibliography on אל עליון). The only other occurrence of עליא referring to God in the Aramaic corpus from Qumran is in 4Q550c 1 iii 1 עא[בול אר]לחין הו שליט ב[פ]עליא די אנתון דחלין ו (ed. Cook in *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader,* 6:76). *Pace* Fitzmyer (p. 127), 4QVisAmram^{b} 2:6 (= 4Q544 frg. 2, line 6) does not contain a divine epithet, even if it reads מן]עליא עד ארעיא אנה שליט as García Martínez and Beyer have it; the first letter, however, is most probably צ, as Puech reads it. In Biblical Aramaic, all ten occurrences of עליא refer to God, four of them in the idiom אלהא עליא, the Aramaic equivalent of אל עליון. The term "Most High" is employed as a title for God more than a dozen times in *1 Enoch* (excluding the Parables), standing alone, unaccompanied by any other term in all but one (98:11, "the Lord the Most High") or possibly two (99:3; see n. 48 below) of the cases; unfortunately, none of these passages survives in the Aramaic fragments from Qumran. Nickelsburg, commenting on *1 En.* 9:3 writes, "Most High (*hypsistos*) is the first of a number of divine appellatives in this context that stress the supremacy of God. In the Hellenistic period, the title is especially popular as a designation for the God of Israel" (*1 Enoch 1,* 208). The relative infrequency of עליא in the surviving Aramaic material from Qumran vs. the slightly more common presence of עליון in those texts raises an important question regarding the appellation "Most High" in *1 Enoch:* Did the original Aramaic have the Hebraism עליון or the Aramaic form עליא (cf. n. 48 below)?

epithets lacks any context, we can see from the ones that are located in a recognizable framework that this epithet is not particularly limited by context. An oath is taken by "the Great Holy One" (and [מיא]מלך ש; 2:14); Noah receives an emissary of the "Great Holy One" (6:13, 15); he rejoices at the words of the "Lord of Heaven" (employed in parallelism with the "Great Holy One"; 7:7); and, as we saw above, his blessing of God is directed toward "the Lord of Heaven, God Most High, the Great Holy One" (12:17).[16] Furthermore, in his self-introduction to the scene at 6:2, Noah asserts that "the Holy O[ne] was with me" (6:2), a usage of קדישא without modifier that obviously must be classified with the foregoing examples.[17] The ubiquity of קדישא רבא in Part I stands in stark contrast to its complete absence from Part II of the *Apocryphon*.

This shared use of קדישא (רבא) as a divine title clearly points toward some sort of link, perhaps a common tradition, between this portion of the *Genesis Apocryphon* and *1 Enoch.* Nickelsburg writes, "The main title for God in chaps. 1–36 is 'the Great Holy One.'"[18] Thus, the narrative of *1 En.* 1:3 begins with "The Great Holy One will come forth," which survives at Qumran in 4Q201 1 i 5, ה]רב. The use of קדישא without modifier is found less frequently in *1 Enoch,* as it is rare in the *Apocryphon*. The opening of *1 Enoch,* however, employs this title in 1:2, "who had the vision of the Holy One."[19]

The remainder of the divine titles in Part I are combinations employing the epithets מרא, "Lord," and מלך, "King," with the former dominating. מרה שמיא, "Lord of Heaven," occurs twice for certain, and is a likely reconstruction in two other passages. In the former examples, Noah rejoices at the words of the Lord of

[16] The reference without context is 0:11. Machiela would add to this list a possible appearance of קדישא רבא in 4:12.

[17] Morgenstern ("MA," 55 n. 90) suggests that]ועמי קדיש may be a reflection of את האלהים התהלך נח, an observation that would point to what appears as a divine name in the biblical text being replaced by an epithet in the *Apocryphon*.

[18] Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 139. See further his discussion of this epithet (p. 144 and nn. 3–4), where he lists as its occurrences 1:3; 10:1; 14:1; 25:3; 84:1; 92:2; 97:6; and 98:6. He suggests that "'Great Holy One' may have originated as a conflation of the common title 'the Holy One' and the rare title 'the Great God' (Ezra 5:8; Dan 2:45)." In "Patriarchs Who Worry about Their Wives: A Haggadic Technique in the Genesis Apocryphon," in *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12–14 May 1996* (ed. Michael E. Stone and Esther G. Chazon; STDJ 28; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 141, Nickelsburg writes of 1QapGen 1–5, "Traditions preserved in the early strata of 1 Enoch, some of them about Enoch, are a major component in this story's interpretation of Genesis." Among them he notes (pp. 141-42) the divine epithets "Great Holy One" and "Lord/King of all the ages."

[19] Nickelsburg comments that "the simple title 'Holy One' occurs elsewhere in 1 Enoch only in 37:2; 93:11; 104:9, always in the expression, 'the words of the Holy One'" (*1 Enoch 1,* 139). This Enochic usage may militate against Morgenstern's remark, "the reading of [this] word [in 6:2] is very difficult, and it is likely that it is not correct" ("MA," 53).

Heaven (7:7) before the flood, and blesses him after his successful wine production (12:17). The more certain of the two reconstructions has Noah blessing "the Lord [of Heaven]" when he has seen the earth resume its agricultural productivity after the flood (11:12–13); a couple of lines later, it is very reasonable to reconstruct, "[the Lord] of Heaven [appeared] to me" (11:15).[20]

Lamech demands of Bitenosh that she swear to him בעליא במרה רבותה במלך בול עלמים, "by the Most High, by the Lord of Majesty, by the Eternal King" (2:4, 6),[21] that the child is his. This expression "Lord of Majesty," almost certainly occurs in 15:11 as well.[22] The only other possible appearance of this idiom at Qumran is in 4Q205 1 xi 2 רבותא [ולהוה בריך מרה], "May the majestic Lord be blessed" (= *1 En.* 22:14). This shared usage is another probable indicator of the ideological and linguistic connections between these works.[23]

Other occurrences of מרא in Part I are מברך למרה כולא, "blessing the Lord of all,"[24] in 5:23, probably spoken by Enoch, since Methuselah "hears" in 5:24, and קודם מרה עלמא, "before the eternal Lord," with no context in col. "0" (0:18 in Fitzmyer).[25] Finally, Noah tells his children to praise or thank (the verb is missing)

[20] The other possible restoration is שמיא [מלך], but its only appearance in Part I (2:14) is in a (partially reconstructed) oath, while מרה שמיא appears in several different narrative contexts. The title "Lord of Heaven" appears in Dan 5:23, and once in *1 Enoch* (13:4), according to Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 238 and n. 2. It also appears in the Ethiopic version in 106:11, but there Nickelsburg (p. 538) prefers "Lord of eternity," the reading of the Greek and Latin versions. Nickelsburg's reference to "God of Heaven" in Dan 2:18, 37, and 44 seems to imply that he sees "Lord" in the idiom "Lord of Heaven" as replacing biblical "God." Dr. Segal pointed out (communication of November 26, 2006) that in the first of those passages in Daniel, the LXX has *kyriou tou hypsistou*, which may indicate the same sort of flexibility in the treatment of divine epithets that we have observed if it does not reflect a different original reading. Machiela suggests reading שמיא מרה in 0:14 as well, and, although I would not be inclined to reject the possibility of that reading, I am less confident of the viability of his reading שמיא [ואתחזי לי מרה] in 6:11 for reasons of both spacing and syntax. It is nevertheless possible that a divine epithet was found in the lacuna there. On the other hand, Machiela is skeptical of my reading שמיא [מרה] in 11:15.

[21] There are lacunae in both formulas, but the repetitive nature of the language of the *Apocryphon* makes the restorations virtually certain.

[22] My thanks to Dr. Machiela for pointing out to me that this reading is not merely a reconstruction.

[23] It appears in *1 Enoch* also in 12:3, where Nickelsburg renders "Lord of majesty" (*1 Enoch 1,* 234), and in that passage, like this one in the *Apocryphon,* it is joined with "King of the ages."

[24] Machiela suggests this epithet in 10:1 as well. The Hebrew equivalent of this term appears twice in the very fragmentary 4QLiturgical Work A (4Q409) 1 i 6 and 8, with the latter probably reading בר]ך את אדון הכול, "bless the Lord of all," a fairly striking parallel to this passage. It may also appear in 11QPs[a] (11Q5), depending on how the syntax of col. 18, line 7 is analyzed.

[25] Machiela reads מן מרה עלמא in 0:17, the previous line, as well. מרא עלמא occurs outside the *Apocryphon* at Qumran in 4Q202 1 iii 14 and probably six times in 4Q529 frg. 1, lines 6–12.

למרכון, "your Lord" (10:9).[26] The latter term is followed almost immediately by למלך כול עלמיא לעלם ולעד עד כול עלמים (10:10), "To the king of all ages, forever and ever, until all eternity." It thus appears that this lengthy epithet stands in apposition to למרכון. In addition to the employment of "King of all ages, forever and ever, until all eternity" as a divine title in this context of thanksgiving, we find in oaths "eternal King" (מלך כול עלמים; 2:4, 6) and [מיא]מלך ש, "King of He[aven]," the latter paired with קדישא רבא in Bitenosh's oath to Lamech (2:14).[27]

II. Part II (Columns 19–22)

Compared with Part I of the *Apocryphon,* Part II exhibits a completely different pattern of divine names and epithets. Since this difference is due in part to a closer connection with the biblical text than Part I demonstrates, we must take that textual proximity into consideration in our analysis. It appears, however, that even when the *Apocryphon* is not closely modeled on the biblical text in Part II, it manifests significant differences from the pattern of divine names and epithets that we discerned in Part I. Two terms stand out most sharply: the first, אלהא, the Aramaic word for "God," which we did not encounter at all in Part I, occurs at least six times (without counting reconstructions) in Part II; the second, אל עליון, occurs eight times in Part II, and only once in Part I.

All of the certain occurrences of אלהא are in cols. 21 and 22. After building an altar upon his return to Canaan from Egypt, Abram describes (using three different titles for God) how he made offerings, called on God's name, and, finally, in a triple expression of praise והללת לשם אלהא וברכת לאלהא ואודית תמן קודם אלהא, "And I praised the name of God and blessed God and gave thanks there before God" (21:2–3). A few lines later, he describes God's appearing to him with ואתחזי לי אלהא, "And God appeared to me" (21:8). It is particularly noteworthy that these are cases where the narrative of the *Apocryphon* is not following the biblical story closely, and the employment of אלהא can therefore not be ascribed to adherence to biblical phraseology.[28] The author of this segment is using words of his own choosing at this point in the story. It is also interesting to note that the language of 21:8 is parallel to that of 11:15 if we accept the editors' plausible contextual reconstruc-

[26] As Fitzmyer notes (p. 152), the spelling of this word, with no indication of the *yod* following the *resh*, is anomalous.

[27] Machiela suggests the plausible, but acontextual, reading [א]במלך שמי in 8:10 also.

[28] It should be noted that וירא, the Hebrew equivalent of ואתחזי, is found three times (with the Tetragrammaton as subject) in the Abra(ha)m narratives: Gen 12:7; 17:1; and 18:1, and it is well known that in the Second Temple era there is a tendency to avoid the Tetragrammaton and replace it with, among other terms, אל or the equivalent. Thus, אלהא is not at all unexpected in this context and formula.

tion in the latter passage שמיא מלל עמי [מרה] לי [ואתחזי]. The author of Part II, however, uses אלהא where Part I would have used an idiom with שמיא.[29]

The other two certain appearances of אלהא lie at the very end of Part II, and both occur in passages modeled on the biblical text. In 22:27, we find בתר פתגמיא אלן אתחזי{ו} אלהא לאברם בחזוא ואמר לה, "after these things, God appeared to Abram in a vision and said to him," representing Gen 15:1, אחר הדברים האלה היה דבר ה׳ אל אברם במחזה לאמר, "after these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying." The *Apocryphon,* by replacing "the word of the Lord" with אלהא, actually rewrites the verse more anthropomorphically than the biblical original had it; God's "word" is not the subject of the action in the *Apocryphon,* but God, who "revealed himself" in a vision. Note the similarity to the language of 21:8 and the divergence, once again, from the reconstructed formula of 11:15.[30]

Abram's response to the divine revelation, parallel to Gen 15:2, אדני יהוה מה תתן לי, "Lord God, what will you give me?" is מרי אלהא שגי לי עתר ונכסין, "My Lord God, I have much wealth and property."[31] The *Apocryphon* replicates exactly in Aramaic the double terminology of the biblical address, reading (or understanding) it as the MT does, rendering it as "Lord God" (as opposed to "Lord, Lord" found in Ethiopic *Jubilees*[32]). Only in this last instance can the employment of אלהא by the author of Part II be claimed to be directly dependent on the biblical text he was following.

There remains one significant passage pertinent to Part II's employment of אלהא and similar terms for God—19:7–8. The poor state of preservation of the text at that point, however, constitutes a serious impediment to drawing any definitive conclusions. At the same time, this passage raises in a pointed fashion a significant question regarding the relationship of Part II of the *Apocryphon* to its biblical model. The first legible line of col. 19, and hence of the Abram story, begins [ובנית תמן מדבח]א וקרית תמן בש[ם א]ל[הא], "[I built there an alta]r and called there on the na[me of G]o[d]." It reflects Gen 12:8, ויבן שם מזבח לה׳ ויקרא בשם ה׳, "He built there an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord," with the expected shift from third-person narrative to first, and with אלהא once again replacing the Tetragrammaton in a near verbatim citation.[33] Line 7 continues ואמרת אנתה הוא, "I said, 'You are,'" while the beginning of line 8 cannot be read

[29] We note that the expression אלה שמיא, which occurs a dozen times in the Aramaic portions of the Hebrew Bible and a number of times in the Elephantine papyri, is not found in nonbiblical Aramaic texts at Qumran, making it unlikely that it should be restored at 11:15.

[30] *Jubilees* 14:1 reads, "The word of the Lord came to Abram in a dream," as does the MT.

[31] That the *Apocryphon* mitigates the apparent inappropriate tone of Abram's question has been noted.

[32] Segal suggested that the Geʿez translator is most likely following a Greek translator who probably rendered *kyrie kyrie* as in Deut 3:24.

[33] *Jubilees* 13:8 also has "he called on the name of the Lord."

with confidence.[34] All the proposed restorations have a form of either אל or אלהא, which can thus be added to the count for Part II.

Fitzmyer observes correctly that Abram's words in *Jub.* 13:8 are "You (are) my God, the eternal God," or "Thou, the eternal God, art my God," so that the *Apocryphon* here may be employing *Jubilees* as its source and the reconstruction can be supported with that evidence.[35] It is also possible, however, that both *Jubilees* and the *Apocryphon* (independently or not) have here leveled their language with Gen 21:33, ויקרא שם בשם ה׳ אל עולם, "He called there on the name of the Lord, eternal God." In their rewritings of Gen 13:4 as well, אל מקום המזבח אשר עשה שם בראשנה ויקרא שם אברם בשם ה׳, "to the place of the altar which he had made there originally, and Abram called there upon the name of the Lord," both the *Apocryphon* (21:2, "I called there on the name of מרה עלמיא") and *Jubilees* (13:18, "Thou, the most high God, art my God for ever and ever") introduce language that might be linked to Gen 21:33.[36]

Unlike its employment of אלהא, the *Apocryphon*'s use of אל עליון in Part II is partly dependent on the underlying biblical text, and this closeness to the biblical model can be said to emphasize one aspect of the style of the original author of Part II.[37] Thus, all four of the appearances of this divine epithet in 22:15–16, 21, which narrate the scene between Abram, Melchizedek, and the king of Sodom, replicate the four occurrences of the term in the biblical narrative and dialogue, Gen 14:18–20, 22.[38] This portion comes close to resembling an Aramaic targum of the Biblical Hebrew passage.

[34] Fitzmyer (p. 98) reads לי א[ל ע]ל[מא וה]לל[ת] לה לעלמים (note that because of the height of the *lamed* in the hand of the scribe of the *Apocryphon,* it is often the case that it is the only letter that has left readable traces in lacunae in the *Apocryphon*); the *Concordance,* 2.783a, has אל[הי א]ל[ה ע]למיא; Esti Eshel and I have read with much diffidence לי [א]ל על[מ]א. Machiela reads אל...ומלך עלמ[י]ם. The fact that אל is not used in the *Apocryphon* except with עליון may militate against the restoration of אל and recommend some form of אלהא as the reading.

[35] The Syriac Chronicle preserves אלהא דעלמא for "eternal God" in *Jub.* 12:29, which is identical to 13:8.

[36] Dr. Segal pointed out to me (e-mail of June 26, 2006) when I inquired about the Ethiopic of the verse in *Jubilees,* that "for ever and ever" modifies the verb, not God, and that the surviving Latin "tu es deus excelsus deus meus in saecula saeculorum" points in the same direction. But it is still possible that the Hebrew אל עולם underlies the formula. Combinations of divine epithets with עלם occur in both Part I and Part II of the *Apocryphon.* In Part I, we have במלך כול עלמים (2:2, 7) and למלך כול עלמיא לעלם ולעד עד כול עלמים (10:10). In Part II, we have 19:8, however we reconstruct it, as well as מרה עלמיא (21:2) and מרי לכול עלמים (20:12). On the form מרי in the latter, see below.

[37] Fitzmyer (p. 162) speaks of the "frequent occurrence of אל עליון in the Old Testament," but, as we noted above (n. 12), the two words appear conjoined as an epithet only in Ps 78:35, outside the four occurrences in Gen 14:18–22. They appear, however, in parallelism in Num 24:16 and Ps 73:11.

[38] It is worth noting that in 22:20–21 || Gen 14:22, the *Apocryphon* omits any representation

The other four appearances of אל עליון in Part II, on the other hand, cannot be attributed to a slavish imitation of the underlying Hebrew text. Abram's plea to God, after Sarai has been taken from him, begins with a blessing formula, בריך אנתה אל עליון מרי לכול עלמים, "Blessed are you, most high God, my Lord for all ages" (20:12–13), and the narrative description of the punishment of Pharaoh reads, שלח לה אל עליון רוח מכדש, "the most high God sent a crushing spirit against him" (20:16). Both sets of Abram's offerings, upon his return from Egypt and following his circumambulation of the land, are directed to ואקרבת עלוהי עלואן ומנחה לאל עליון: אל עליון, "and I offered on it burnt-offerings and a meal offering to God most high" (21:2) and ואסקת עלוה[י] עלא ומנחא לאל עליון, "and I offered up on i[t] a burnt offering and meal offering to God most high" (21:20), respectively. So it is evident that this epithet is one readily used by the author of Part II even where it does not appear in his biblical *Vorlage*.

If we may speculate on the nonbiblical connections of this title, its most likely link would appear to be to *Jubilees* or the circles that produced that work, since the titles "God Most High" and "Most High" occur over twenty times in *Jubilees.*[39] We have observed above some other slight convergence between the *Apocryphon* and *Jubilees* in their employment of epithets, and we shall suggest tentatively that if Part I of the *Apocryphon* shows connections in its employment of divine epithets to the Enoch literature, Part II may be linked in a similar, if slightly less demonstrable, fashion, to the world of *Jubilees.*[40] The ramifications of this limited observation, if

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of the Tetragrammaton in its "translation." Fitzmyer (p. 251) writes, "The author of this text has either omitted the tetragram, or, more likely, translated merely what was in his text of Genesis." The former possibility would likely be due, he suggests, to the reverence for the Tetragrammaton found so often at Qumran. But Fitzmyer prefers the second option, writing, "[B]ecause the omission in this text agrees with the LXX . . . and the Peshitta against the targums, it is more likely that יהוה in the MT of Gen 14:22 is a later gloss introduced into MSS of biblical tradition." There is a third possibility, however, that at some point in the textual transmission, the Tetragrammaton was omitted, not out of reverence, but by leveling this verse with the three proximate occurrences of אל עליון, whether consciously or unconsciously.

[39] Schubert ("ʾEl ʿÆljôn," 3) lists fourteen occurrences of אל עליון in *Jubilees,* but Professor James C. VanderKam was kind enough to examine the Ethiopic text on my behalf, and he confirmed my observations that there are twenty-four combinations of the equivalents of עליון preceded by the equivalent either of אל or of the Tetragrammaton in Ethiopic *Jubilees:* twenty of the former, and four of the latter (the Latin translation, where it survives, follows the same pattern with *deus* and *dominus*, with one variation in each direction). The Hebrew manuscripts of *Jubilees* at Qumran unfortunately preserve only a few of these passages: 4QJub^{d} (4Q219 frg. 2, line 21) has the whole term in Hebrew in 21:20; 4QJub^{d} (4Q219 frg. 2, line 32), ליון[in 21:25; 4QJub^{f} (4Q221 frg. 1, line 5), the second half in 21:23; and 4QJub^{g} (4Q222 frg. 1, line 4), the whole in 25:11. Although Schubert unfortunately did not include the *Genesis Apocryphon* in his discussion ("ʾEl ʿÆljôn," 15–16) of "Die Verwendung von ʾEl ʿÆljôn in Qumran," he does remark (p. 12) on the use of the Hebrew term in Aramaic Levi "das ja mit dem Jub verwandt ist."

[40] Nickelsburg ("Patriarchs," 149–51) suggests that there are points of contact between Enochic traditions and the Abram material in the *Apocryphon.* Even if we accept all of his claims,

it is correct, go well beyond tendencies in the employment of divine epithets. We shall return to this matter toward the end of this essay.

One of the differences between the two segments of the *Genesis Apocryphon* is that Abram addresses God directly several times in Part II, while none of the characters in cols. 0–17 do so.[41] We therefore can observe how divine epithets are treated in Part II in contexts of direct address that do not occur in Part I. In his speech beginning in 20:12, Abram twice addresses God as מרי, presumably to be understood as "my Lord"—in 20:14, קבלתך מרי, and 20:15, וינדעוך מרי.[42] The final segment of the epithet in 20:12, however, has been disputed by translators and interpreters. How is מרי לכול עלמים to be analyzed? Earlier translations, beginning with Nahman Avigad and Yigael Yadin, understood מרי as a construct, and hence rendered the phrase "Lord of all worlds/ages," or the like.[43] Fitzmyer, however, insists for good reason that the *yod* suffix is the first person singular possessive, and that the word is to be rendered "my Lord."[44] Accepting Fitzmyer's argument, we have three occurrences of the direct address to God as מרי, in addition to the appearance of מרי in the last surviving lines of the document, in the rendition of a biblical verse.

In addition to these occurrences of מרי, "my Lord," which we have just observed, there are four instances of מרא in Part II of the *Apocryphon*. One (21:2), which we noted earlier, וקרית תמן בשם מרה עלמיא, stands at the location of Gen 13:4, but has apparently been influenced by the language of Gen 21:33, ויקרא שם בשם ה׳ אל עולם. The result is either that מרה עלמיא stands in the place of the Tetragrammaton of Gen 13:4 or, more likely, that the Tetragrammaton has been omitted, and מרה עלמיא stands in the place of אל עולם of Genesis 21. A second instance, מרה ושליט על כולא, which occurs in Abram's prayer to God after Sarai has been taken from him (20:13), may not be a "divine" epithet, since מרה may be the equivalent of "lord" and not "Lord."[45] It stands in a relative clause describing God and is not part of a direct address to him.

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it does not vitiate our arguments that the two parts of the *Apocryphon* derive from two differing sources and types of tradition.

[41] We perhaps should not be surprised at the absence of such direct address, since neither Enoch, nor Methuselah, nor Lamech, nor Noah, addresses God in the Hebrew Bible. It is possible that in Part I of the *Apocryphon* unnamed speakers address God in 0:5–6.

[42] Fitzmyer (p. 201) points out that מרי in the *Apocryphon* always has the sense "my Lord." It is used, beyond addresses to the deity, by human beings to one another in 2:9, 13, 24; 20:25; and 22:18, 32.

[43] See Fitzmyer, 201, for full discussion and references.

[44] Ibid. The entire blessing formula בריך אנתה אל עליון מרי לכול עלמים, "Blessed are you, God Most High, my Lord for all ages," bears a strong resemblance to *Jub.* 13:16, discussed above, "You, God Most High, my God forever and ever."

[45] Cf. Fitzmyer's note (ad loc., p. 202), following Greenfield, that the idiom is judicial in nature and may therefore not fall under the rubric "divine epithet."

Finally, the epithet מרה שמיא וארעא (22:16, 21) as a translation of Gen 14:19 and 22, קנה שמים וארץ, is of unique interest. It is not a literal translation, although it might be said to capture the sense of the Hebrew well. All the extant Jewish Aramaic versions as well as the Peshitta employ a nominal or verbal form of Aramaic קנא to represent Hebrew קנה in both of these verses, and it is worth considering whether the nonliteral translation adopted here by the *Apocryphon* is due to the influence of the "Second Temple" epithet מרה שמיא.[46] We would then not conceive of מרה as an Aramaic "translation" of קנה, but rather think of the title מרה שמיא וארעא as a unit, a term that the author has introduced out of his "thesaurus" of divine epithets to render a biblical term that to his ears sounded similar to it.

III. Conclusions

Let us review our specific observations to this point beyond the obvious one that Parts I and II of the *Apocryphon* do not employ parallel designations for God. Part I does not employ אלהא; Part II does. Part II does not use מרה, קדישא רבא, רבותא, עליא, or any combination with מלך; Part I does. The first three titles in the latter group are characteristic of *1 Enoch.* אל עליון, a Hebraism[47] not found in Ethiopic *Enoch,*[48] but found frequently in *Jubilees,* occurs almost exclusively in Part II. There are no direct addresses to God in Part I, so that we cannot compare the two segments of the *Apocryphon* in that way. When Abram addresses God, he does so using the term מרי, "my Lord" (four times, with one of those further modified by לכול עלמים).[49] Part II does not have the rich variety of terms compounded with מרא that Part I does, with only one מרה עלמיא and one מרה ושליט; Part I has four

[46] Noting the several occurrences of מרה שמיא in Part I that we observed above, I prefer this alternative to Fitzmyer's suggestion (p. 250) that "the *Genesis Apocryphon* thus witnesses to a contemporary Jewish understanding [of קנה שמים וארץ], when the force of קנה became obscure." Segal pointed out (e-mail of October 30, 2007) that the epithet מרה שמיא וארעא is reminiscent of 1 Esdr 6:12, τοῦ κυρίου τοῦ κτίσαντος τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν, where Ezra 5:11 has אלה שמיא וארעא, noting that κτίζω is the verb used by the LXX to render קנה in Gen 14:19 and 22.

[47] I think that we can speak of the combination אל עליון as a Hebraism, despite the fact that, as Moshe Bar-Asher pointed out ("Regarding Vocalization Mistakes in the Kaufman MS of the Mishnah," [in Hebrew], *Mesorot* 1 [1984]: 6–7), biblical Aramaic as well as Syriac maintain the ending *ōn* side-by-side with *ān*. (I thank Aaron Koller for this reference.)

[48] At *1 En.* 99:3, Nickelsburg translates based on the restoration of a lacuna in the Greek text to τοῦ ὑψίσ[του θεοῦ], although all the Ethiopic manuscripts have only "Most High" (communication of July 27, 2006, for which I thank Professor Nickelsburg), which might very well represent Aramaic עליא standing alone. The Greek reading should perhaps be understood either as a gloss (Nickelsburg) or an unconscious harmonization with the biblical Hebrew title (Bernstein).

[49] In the fragmentary remains of 19:7–8 Abram refers to God in direct address with a form of אלהא or (less likely) אל.

different compounds of מרא, occurring a total of about ten times (with one of them being מרה עלמא, perhaps an equivalent of Part II's מרה עלמיא).[50]

Given the radically different terminology that they employ in referring to God, it is evident that Part I and Part II of the *Apocryphon* derive originally from different sources.[51] This argument correlating the employment of specific divine epithets with the hypothetical sources of the *Genesis Apocryphon* does not imply that the "author" of the *Apocryphon* took a number of pre-existing works and copied them out sequentially without any editorial activity whatsoever, or that these sources diverged stylistically in an absolutely rigorous fashion. Indeed, the "anomalous" appearance(s) of אל עליון in col. 12 of the *Apocryphon* may be due either to greater flexibility in choice of epithets by the source of Part I than we have seen (since, after all, it is a perfectly good Second Temple title for God) or to the editorial hand of the composer of the *Genesis Apocryphon*. In either case, the editorial hand was light enough in its broad treatment to allow the overall distinction to stand otherwise.

Part I of the *Apocryphon* is itself composite, since it clearly contains at least Lamech material and Noah material, with the clear transition between the parts marked toward the end of col. 5 by the words כתב מלי נוח. Yet it would appear that, from the standpoint of the employment of divine epithets, both of these segments

[50] Florentino García Martínez made the following observation ("*4QMess Ar* and the *Book of Noah*," in *Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran* [STDJ 9; Leiden: Brill, 1992], 41), which dovetails nicely, although unintendedly, with our analysis of the epithets in the Apocryphon: "*1QapGn* VII, 7 and XII, 17 use the divine title מרה שמיא which never appears in *Jub*, although it shows a great variety of divine titles. Among them God of Heaven (*Jub* 12, 4; 20, 7) and Lord of the World (*Jub* 25,23) are the most similar ones to the Lord of Heaven. This title, however, is found in *1 Enoch* 106,11, in a summary of the *Book of Noah*, not elsewhere in *1 Enoch*."

[51] There is an alternative possibility to my source analysis that was suggested by Alex Jassen (e-mail of August 20, 2007) and that could account for the evidence, although I think that it is less likely. Acknowledging that Part I (like *1 Enoch*) follows the biblical text more loosely than Part II, Jassen argues that the choice of divine epithets may be generically determined, with Part II, which is closer to the Bible (like *Jubilees*), employing epithets, even when it is not following the biblical text closely, that are more biblical in nature than those in Part I. As a result, he is reluctant to follow my claim that Part I is related to *1 Enoch* in some sense and that Part II is connected to *Jubilees,* and he suggests instead that the phenomena in the two parts of the *Apocryphon* are merely parallel to phenomena in *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees.* I think that the generic and source-critical issues are related, and that the generic connections with *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees,* in terms of the closeness of each to the biblical text, still point in the direction of my hypothesis. Other evidence, moreover, appears to support these conclusions. I have demonstrated in a paper entitled "√קשט in the Genesis Apocryphon and the Remainder of the Qumran Aramaic Corpus" (presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in November 2003) that קשוט/קושט, a term that occurs frequently in *Enoch* and related works, appears almost twenty times in Part I of the *Apocryphon* but only once in Part II. I hope to publish these results soon.

belong to approximately the same tradition, especially when we compare them to the later Abram material. It is true that the only occurrences of מרה עלמא, מלך שמיא, and מרה כולא appear in the section before כתב מלי נוח, while all occurrences of מרה שמיא are found after that line. That is probably not sufficiently weighty evidence, however, to draw a sharp demarcating line in this regard between the Noah material and what preceded it. If more textual material had survived from Part I, perhaps a slightly different picture could be sketched, and we might have been able to distinguish between its individual components as well.

Part II, the Abram narrative, has also often been seen as falling into two parts whose dichotomy is also fairly clear: 19:7–21:22 and 21:23–22:34. In the first of those two segments, Abram is the first-person narrator, while in the second, beginning where the narrative is parallel to Genesis 14, but continuing into the equivalent of Genesis 15, the narrator is third person. We might have expected that these segments, if the shift in narrative technique derives from their belonging to different sources, would be distinguished in the ways that they refer to God.[52] There does not, however, seem to be any noticeable difference between the divine titles and epithets employed in the first-person and third-person sections of the Abram narrative. Perhaps the Abram material, therefore, should not be divided into sources at that point on the basis of the shift in narrative styles.

IV. Questions for Further Investigation

I indicated at the outset of this study that its goal was almost exclusively formal, despite the fact that it also presents a variety of opportunities for further investigation. In conclusion, I should like to touch on several avenues that are likely to prove particularly fruitful when analyzed further.

1. The Genesis Apocryphon and Jubilees

I have suggested that in the limited area of divine epithets the second section of the *Apocryphon* appears to be under the influence of *Jubilees* or the traditions reflected in *Jubilees.* The relationship between *Jubilees* and the *Genesis Apocryphon* has been the subject of discussion ever since the *editio princeps* of the *Apocryphon*

[52] Nickelsburg reminded me that the same shift in narrative technique takes place in Tobit, where there is a shift, in almost all versions of the story, between 3:6, where the first-person narrative ends, and 3:7, where the third-person narrative begins. See the discussion in Irene Nowell, "The Narrator in the Book of Tobit," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1988 Seminar Papers* (ed. David J. Lull; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 27–38. James E. Miller suggests parallels between the two works on the basis of this similarity of technique ("The Redaction of Tobit and the Genesis Apocryphon," *JSP* 8 [1991]: 53–61).

was published, with some scholars believing that *Jubilees* drew on the *Apocryphon,*[53] and others that *Jubilees* was a source for the *Apocryphon.*[54] My analysis could perhaps contribute to the resolution of that question, if the divergence between the two parts of the *Apocryphon* in this limited area is symptomatic of their possessing diverse lineages. But it is perhaps equally likely that the whole picture is more complex than the analysis on the basis of these restricted features would indicate. In addition to Nickelsburg's observation about Enochic elements in Part II (n. 40 above), it is also clear that there are strong parallels between some of the stories in Part I and *Jubilees.*[55] It is also possible that both *Jubilees* and the *Genesis Apocryphon* are drawing from a common source or sources, and at this point perhaps we can do no better than Fitzmyer's balanced remark, "The most we can say is that this scroll belongs to the same sort of literature as *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* and therefore probably dates from the same general period."[56]

2. The Genesis Apocryphon and Genre[57]

My conclusion regarding the composite nature of the *Genesis Apocryphon* based on these literary features and my further claim that its sources seem to derive

[53] Avigad and Yadin write: "For the time being, however, we may confidently emphasize the close connection between the scroll and many parts of the *Book of Enoch* and the *Book of Jubilees*, leading at times to the conclusion that *the scroll may have served as a source for a number of stories told more concisely in those two books*" (*Genesis Apocryphon,* 38; emphasis in the original). Geza Vermes, from his earliest edition of the scrolls in English to the latest, agrees: "I slightly prefer the theory that in its pre-Qumran version the Genesis Apocryphon precedes Jubilees, which would postulate for the former a date at least as early as the first half of the second century BCE" (*The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* [rev. ed.; London: Penguin, 2004], 481). More recently, Cana Werman has maintained this view as well; see "Qumran and the Book of Noah," 172 and 175–77, bringing her evidence from the "unjubileean" (from our standpoint) Part I of the *Apocryphon.*

[54] Fitzmyer writes in reaction to the original editors' remarks cited in the last note, "just the opposite seems to be more likely, viz., that the work in this scroll depends on *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*" (p. 20). He asserts that this view of Avigad and Yadin was subject to widespread skepticism in reviews (p. 20 and n. 38).

[55] For an impressionistic picture, see the references to *Jubilees* in Part I in the index to Fitzmyer's commentary (p. 338). It should go without saying that *Jubilees* is generally considered to have made use of *Enoch* as well, thus complicating matters further.

[56] Fitzmyer, 21.

[57] I initially raised some of the issues in the following paragraphs in "The Genre(s) of the Genesis Apocryphon," a paper read at the Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Los Angeles, California, December 2002, and then in greater detail in "The Genre(s) of the Genesis Apocryphon" at the International Conference entitled "The Aramaic Texts from Qumran" (Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme, Aix-en-Provence, France, June 30–July 2, 2008). The latter paper is to appear in the proceedings of that conference edited by Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra and Katell Berthelot.

from divergent traditions lead to a further, less easily soluble question pertaining to genre. How are we now to classify a work that is clearly made up of earlier materials that have been fused together? Is it meaningful to speak of the genre of the final product? The *Genesis Apocryphon* is certainly not the only work of Second Temple Judaism that is overtly composite—the book of *1 Enoch* is probably the best complete example of that phenomenon—but the *Genesis Apocryphon* is of a different nature from *1 Enoch* in this regard. *1 Enoch* manifests its five divisions fairly clearly, and does not give the impression of ever having been intended to be an integral whole, while the *Apocryphon* (granted its fragmentary *disiecta membra*) is a coherent sequential narrative.[58] *1 Enoch,* as a totality, is not at all easy to categorize generically, beyond such broad terminology as "parabiblical," while the *Apocryphon* has often been treated as a paradigmatic example of the genre dubbed by Geza Vermes "rewritten Bible."[59]

What are we to say now, however, that the *Apocryphon*'s component parts are more clearly distinguishable as a result of the analysis in this article, and now that the joins in that flowing narrative stand out more sharply? It has become clearer to us that this is not a work composed by an author sequentially *ab initio*, but is the product of the stringing together by an editor or redactor of originally separate compositions, or of the editor/redactor's adding of his own material to a preexisting work. How are we to characterize generically that composite whole? Can we indeed continue to speak of the *Apocryphon* as a whole, and can we demand of it whatever ideological consistency we might have expected in the past? Or should we continue to refer to it as "rewritten Bible" because that term is certainly descriptive of its overall outlines, while acknowledging that its separate sources need to be scrutinized individually to ascertain their possibly divergent *Weltanschauungen*?

It appears that even the rather restricted definition of "rewritten Bible" that I advocated in the *Textus* article is in need of further restriction or, at least, modification. We should probably distinguish, on some level, between two types of works belonging to this genre. *Jubilees* and Pseudo-Philo, for example, were composed as units, as far as we can tell, by an author whose controlling hand we can see throughout the work; the *Genesis Apocryphon* (and perhaps the *Temple Scroll* if we are willing to accept it as a uniquely legal exemplar of "rewritten Bible") exhibit clear marks

[58] Should the reference to the "Book of Noah" be taken as undermining that perception of the work? Should the shifts in narrator accomplish the same thing even without allusions to earlier sources?

[59] Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (SPB; 2nd ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1973), 95. See further my "'Rewritten Bible': A Generic Category Which Has Outlived Its Usefulness?" *Textus* 22 (2005): 169–96. I should stress that according to my narrow (and Vermesian) view of rewritten Bible, *1 Enoch* does not belong to that category because it strays much too far from the biblical story and is only minimally devoted to explicating the biblical text in the course of its rewriting of that story. For the "history" of the generic classification of the *Apocryphon,* see Fitzmyer, 16–22, "The Literary Genre of the Text."

of their composite nature. They manifest two fundamentally different sorts of rewriting, although each of them merits the generic label in its own way. The "rewritten Bible" of the *Genesis Apocryphon* is composed of a series of mini-rewritings of limited scope, which we could call the books of Lamech, Noah, and Abram, that, when juxtaposed, form a continuous narrative and, hence, what we might call a secondary form of "rewritten Bible." It remains to be seen whether these conclusions can contribute meaningfully to discussions regarding genre in Second Temple works, particularly those characterized as "rewritten Bible."

3. Implications for the Further Study of the Genesis Apocryphon and Related Works

If our analysis is accepted as having established the division of Parts I and II of the *Apocryphon* on a firmer footing, then the necessity of comparing them from a variety of different vantage points is made more evident. Other stylistic divergences between the two parts should be sought, and their narrative techniques can be contrasted with a greater degree of confidence. The reasons, beyond literary lineage, for the divergent divine epithets can begin to be sought; we can ask how the titles and epithets function in the narratives to which they belong. And, perhaps most significant, the fairly sharp dichotomy between the divine epithets in Parts I and II of the *Apocryphon* can now be set against the more complex picture of its sources that I suggested above. What further information about the streams of tradition that flow into the *Apocryphon* can be derived from the intersection of the data in this study and what may emerge from other ways of looking at them?

Finally, this study will, it is hoped, challenge some scholar or group of scholars to work on that larger picture of divine epithets in works of the Second Temple period that I suggested at the outset of this essay was a desideratum. As a first step, the pattern of divine epithets within each work should be laid out, with attention being paid both to the way in which the epithets are employed within the work and to what they might tell us about the literary or theological links they create with other works from this era. Then the overall picture that is created by the integration of the individual patterns should be studied, with the anticipated results being valuable in terms of both the literary and the theological stemmatics of the Second Temple era.

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The Tale of an Unrighteous Slave (Luke 16:1–8 [13])

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The consensus guiding the interpretation of the so-called parable of the Dishonest Steward was built around the effort to explain why the (L)lord in v. 8a should have praised the person whose actions were thought to be "dishonest" and who, in the parable itself, is called a "steward of unrighteousness" (οἰκονόμος τῆς ἀδικίας). In order to solve this puzzle, scholars recognized that it was crucial to understand and take into full consideration the sociohistorical assumptions underlying the parable.[1] W. O. E. Oesterley pointed out that the οἰκονόμος in the parable would "almost invariably be a slave," like his counterpart (*vilicus*) in a Roman household.[2] However, following the opinion expressed by J. Duncan M. Derrett,[3] the consensus continued to assume that the οἰκονόμος was an agent of free status.

Mary Ann Beavis broke with this consensus and returned to Oesterley's observation.[4] Her insistence on the centrality of Greco-Roman slave ideology for understanding the so-called NT "servant parables" in general is crucial. Her reading of the parable is, however, not satisfactory. She adopts a literary, reader-response perspective and compares the parable with the anecdotes of Aesop's life and fables and

[1] For a history of interpretation, see David Landry and Ben May, "Honor Restored: New Light on the Parable of the Prudent Steward (Luke 16:1–8a)," *JBL* 119 (2000): 287–94. According to these authors there has been no scholarly consensus.

[2] W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Gospel Parables in the Light of Their Jewish Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1936), 193.

[3] J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Fresh Light on St. Luke xvi: The Parable of the Unjust Steward," *NTS* 7 (1960–61): 198–219; repr. in *Law in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), 52–77.

[4] Mary Ann Beavis, "Ancient Slavery as an Interpretive Context for the New Testament Servant Parables with Special Reference to the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1–8)," *JBL* 111 (1992): 37–54.

with the characters in Plautus's plays.[5] With Dan O.Via and John Dominic Crossan, she concludes that the οἰκονόμος "is a comic, picaresque character, an attractive rascal."[6] Like Aesop, the οἰκονόμος, by "his audacity," tricks his master and escapes punishment. On the one hand, "[t]he steward, summarily dismissed by his master on false charges, avenges himself by doing exactly what he was fired for: mishandling his master's affairs to the benefit of the debtors." On the other hand, the master "realizes that he is blameworthy for his premature dismissal of the steward or for bad judgment in his selection of the οἰκονόμος." The slave-steward's "scheme succeeds beyond his expectations," since he regains "his master's regard." Thus, the parable provides comic relief, but it does not "criticize the institution of slavery per se."[7]

In what follows, I return to Oesterley's suggestion. I am reading the parable in the context of the social and ideological world of chattel slavery.[8] Let me begin by recognizing that, as Moses Finley extensively argues, in the Roman Empire, as in ancient Greece, free hired labor, though present and extensively documented, was "spasmodic, casual, marginal."[9] Slave labor was exploited wherever land was sufficiently concentrated in private hands, so that a permanent workforce was needed outside of what the family could provide.[10] We see this trend already in Xenophon, who writes casually of Greece in the fourth century B.C.E.: "Those who have the means buy slaves (οἰκέτας) so that they may have fellow workers" (*Mem.* 2.3.3).[11]

[5] Ibid., 43–53.

[6] Ibid., 44, 47; Dan O. Via, Jr., *The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967; repr., 1984), 157–62; John Dominic Crossan, "Structuralist Analysis and the Parables of Jesus: A Reply to D. O. Via, Jr., 'Parable and Example Story: A Literary-Structuralist Approach,'" *Semeia* 1 (1974): 206–8.

[7] Beavis, "Ancient Slavery," 50–54.

[8] Joseph Vogt, *Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975) has been duly criticized for its romanticized views of Greco-Roman slavery and Christianity's role in it by Moses I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (New York: Viking, 1980). See Dimitris Kyrtatas, *The Social Structure of the Early Christian Communities* (London: Verso, 1987).

[9] Finley, *Ancient Slavery,* 68, 81–82; idem, *The Ancient Economy* (updated ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 72–74; also G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 53, 204.

[10] Finley, *Ancient Slavery,* 81, 86–92; Keith R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (Brussels: Latomus, 1984), 15–16; see the debate in de Ste. Croix, *Class Struggle,* 179–82, 505–9; Finley, *Ancient Economy,* 70; Yvon Garlan, *Slavery in Ancient Greece* (rev. ed. trans. J. Lloyd; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 60–64; Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Xenophon Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary, with a New English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 315–16; N. R. E. Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1993), 37–47.

[11] My translation. For a discussion of the passage, see Finley, *Ancient Slavery,* 81.

In his *Oeconomicus,* slaves provide the permanent workforce for the "estate" of the protagonist, Ischomachus,[12] and they are supersived by an ἐπίτροπος, himself a slave.[13]

Pseudo-Aristotle (*Oec.* 1.5.1344a27) observes that "of slaves there are two kinds: the manager and the worker."[14] Writing in the mid-first century C.E., Columella sets over the estate a manager (*vilicus*), who, as a matter of first priority, should be appointed from among the slaves. He ought to have "been hardened by farm work from his infancy, one who has been tested by experience" (*Rust.* 1.8.2).[15] In the late first century B.C.E., Varro summed up the practice in Italy regarding "the means by which land is tilled" (*Rust.* 1.17.1–2):

> Some divide these into two parts: men, and those aids to men without which they cannot cultivate; others into three: the class of instruments which is articulate, the inarticulate, and the mute; the articulate comprising the slaves, the inarticulate comprising the cattle, and the mute comprising the vehicles. All agriculture is carried on by men—slaves, or freemen, or both; by freemen when they till the ground themselves, as many poor people do with the help of their families (cum sua progenie); or hired hands, when the heavier farm operations, such as the vintage and the haying, are carried on by hiring freemen.[16]

Consequently, although the Roman Empire cannot be said to have been uniformly a slave society, since the empire was a political (rather than an economic) unit in which various modes of production coexisted, chattel slavery, wherever possible, was the most usual mode of production.[17] For the Roman writers Varro and Cato

[12] Landed property: *Oec.* 1.3–4; 3.10; household: *Oec.* 7.30–34. On the wife's role in supervising the reproduction and training of young slaves, see *Oec.* 7.33–35; 9.5.

[13] *Oec.* 12.2–3; 13.6–10; 14.6, 9. The ἐπίτροπος is a slave "bought," "chosen," "appointed," and specifically trained for this function by the master (also 12.3, 9; 13.1–5, 10; 14.1; 15.1, 5). Against the suggestion (on the basis of *Oec.* 1.3–4) that the ἐπίτροπος could also have been a free (propertyless) man hired for a wage (1.4), three arguments have been made: (1) The discussion in *Oec.* 1.3–4 is certainly speculative. (2) Socrates' intimation here is as "radical" as his idea that freeborn women could make a living by working (Xenophon *Mem.* 2.7). (3) The actual prevalent view is expressed in *Mem.* 2.8.1–4 by the free but impoverished Eutherus, whom Socrates advises to take a paid job as an ἐπίτροπος: "I shouldn't like to make myself a slave, Socrates" (Pomeroy, *Oeconomicus,* 316–17); de Ste. Croix (*Class Struggle,* 181–82) notes: "When we meet indentifiable bailiffs or business managers in the sources, they are always slaves or freedmen" (p. 181).

[14] δούλων δὲ εἴδη δύο, ἐπίτροπος καὶ ἐργάτης. My translation; see 1.5.1344a28.

[15] See also *Rust.* 1.7.5; 1.8.1–14; 11.1.3–32.

[16] See also Varro, *Rust.* 1.5.4; 1.13.4; 1.14.1; 1.16.4; 1.17.3–6; 1.18.1–8; 1.19.3; 2.10.5; Cato, *Agr.* 2.2–7; 56.1.

[17] Finley, *Ancient Slavery,* 79–80; de Ste. Croix, *Class Struggle,* 52–53. Slavery not only created "the material means which makes it possible for individuals to subsist physically but also whatever allows them to exist socially." It was chattel slavery "that introduced the greatest degree of complexity into the social organism, made possible the highest degree of cultural development,

also the *vilicus* is a slave appointed over other slaves to manage the master's property.[18]

My discussion of the parable, therefore, falls into three parts. First, I argue that the οἰκονόμος here is, like Xenophon's and Pseudo-Aristotle's ἐπίτροπος, and Columella's, Varro's, and Cato's *vilicus,* a person of servile status: a managerial slave or freedman.

Second, I resolve the literary problem of the identity of the κύριος who praises the οἰκονόμος in 16:8a: Is the (L)lord the manager's master (16:1), called κύριος in 16:3, 5ab, or Jesus, who is the parable narrator in the Gospel? This problem raises the related and much-disputed question of the ending of the parable. It is clear that the story itself extends to 16:7. The problem is to know if 16:8 belongs to the story per se, forming its conclusion, or if it is a comment made by the parable narrator. If it is the narrator's comment, does it include the second comment (16:8b): "for the children of this age . . ."? Crossan, for instance, rejecting v. 8a, contends that "the master of 16:2 is rather unlikely to be the master of 16:8a."[19] I argue, on the contrary, that v. 8a is essential to understanding the story itself as it now stands. Let me note, besides, that the author of the Gospel seems to have intended vv. 8b–9 to be read as part of the comments by the parable narrator. It is more debatable why he tacked on vv. 10–12 (see Luke 19:17; Matt 25:21) and v. 13 (= Matt 6:24).[20] Accepting Joseph Fitzmyer's proposal, therefore, I consider 16:1–7 to be "the body of the parable," 16:8a "the parable's conclusion," and 16:8b–9 "a lesson on prudence."[21]

Finally, I read the story as a *Sondergut* in the Gospel of Luke, not as "a parable of Jesus."[22] Luke 16:9–13 suggests that the author of the Gospel inherited the story, in which he or she endeavored to find some meaning. The author, however, wants the readers to assume that Jesus told the parable, though we are not thereby informed of its ultimate origin.

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and constituted the archetypal form of non-free labor" (Garlan, *Slavery,* 201–3). Keith R. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 10–16.

[18] Varro, *Rust.* 1.16.5; 1.17.4, 5–6 (here called *praefectus*); 1.18.1–8; Cato, *Agr.* 2.1–2; 5.1–5; 142.1–143.3.

[19] Crossan, "Structuralist Analysis," 206; idem, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 108–11, esp. 109; against Via, *Parables,* 156–57; John S. Kloppenborg, "The Dishonored Master (Luke 16, 1–8a)," *Bib* 70 (1989): 476–77.

[20] See the discussion in C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (rev. ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 17–18.

[21] See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Story of the Dishonest Manager," *TS* 25 (1964): 26–30; idem, *The Gospel according to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (2 vols.; AB 28, 28A; 2nd ed.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), 1096–97.

[22] Earlier interpretations were driven mostly by the search for a meaning for the story in the life of the historical Jesus. I am aligned with those who take a literary approach to the parable.

I. The Οἰκονόμος

A. The Slave Agent and Greco-Roman Slave Ideology

The terminological landscape is complex, but it is safe to say that other Greek terms in the extant literature are πραγματευτής and ἐπίτροπος. The Latin terms are *actor, dispensator, vilicus,* and *praefectus.* The Greek word ἐπίτροπος is often used in first-century C.E. sources to translate the Latin word *procurator.* In Gal 4:2, Paul uses the terms ἐπίτροπος and οἰκονόμος interchangeably to describe those under whom the property of minor sons is subjected. He argues that such minor sons "are no more than slaves." Chuza (Luke 8:3) was Herod Antipas's ἐπίτροπος. In the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, the ἐπίτροπος is charged by the master with summoning the hired laborers and paying them their wages (Matt 20:8). In all these NT cases, although the status of the ἐπίτροπος/οἰκονόμος is not explicit (except in Galatians 4), these persons are agents who managed the property of their principals.

Assuming that the "[t]he keys to the problem [of the parable] lie in the Jewish law of agency," Derrett declared: "A heathen, and a slave have for various purposes defective capacities to be agents of a Jew."[23] Although he notes that stewards of households were "usually slaves," he dismisses the implications of this observation, noting instead that "in such a case their authority was limited, for a slave was not 'as the master,' and could not do many things which the master might wish done through an agent: hence a free man could be employed as a steward."[24] The one defect that Derrett finds in the slave-agent is that the slave does not "have the legal capacity which his master has."[25] He cites George Horowitz, who (contradicting Derrett's claims) writes: "A woman, even if married and subject to the authority of a husband, could act as an agent; and so could a Canaanite slave, male or female, in all matters except marriage or divorce."[26]

[23] Derrett, "Fresh Light," 200, 201 and n. 6. Derrett's evidence consists of anachronistic rabbinic passages considered to be "Jewish law" that "lets us directly into the questions which were still agitated in Jesus' time" (p. 200).

[24] Derrett, "Fresh Light," 203. Similarly, Fitzmyer, "Dishonest Manager," 35.

[25] Derrett, "Fresh Light," 201.

[26] George Horowitz, *The Spirit of Jewish Law: A Brief Account of Biblical and Rabbinic Jurisprudence with a Special Note on Jewish Law and the State of Israel* (New York: Central Book Company, 1953), 539. Horowitz depends on two encyclopedia articles (see p. 538 n. 1): L. N. Dembitz, "Agency, Law Of," *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (ed. C. Adler et al.; New York: Ktav, 1901), 1:232–33; and Israel H. Levinthal, "Agency, Legal," *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* (10 vols; ed. I. Landman; New York: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 1939), 1:115–17. According to Dembitz, "a woman as well as a man, and even a married woman, or the 'Canaanite bondman' or bondwoman of an Israelite, may be an agent and bind the principal, *sholeah* (sender), or *ba'al ha-*

A brief examination of the Mishnaic discussion of agency is enlightening. The legislation on slave-agents derives from the principle that "[a] Canaanitish bondman is acquired by money or by writ or by usucaption" (*m. Qid.* 1:3).[27] The Mishnah explains that a slave is a property, a thing (*m. Qid.* 1:5).[28] This principle is ambivalent, however, since, although the slave is a possession, he or she is also a human being, endowed with one of the qualities by which a human person performs legally binding actions: reason or, more precisely, the will which makes intention possible.[29] Slavery consists in the master taking over and exercising absolute control over this capacity. The slave's thing-ness is his or her inability to perform an act of the will (an intentional act) outside his or her master's will. The slave is a tool, an extension of the master's body.[30]

From this control of the will (intention) certain conditions result:

1. Relationships, the second quality[31] by which a chattel could have produced legal effects is negated: the slave's previous kinship and relationships become null and void. She or he is legally incapable of entering into new ones.

2. The slave becomes part of the master's household, through the property tie which binds him or her to the master. Being no longer a Gentile, the slave participates in Israel's covenant and is a בן־ברית. The slave's status is determined by the master's status.[32]

3. Like women and minor sons, slaves are exempt from those cultic obligations for which full (male and free) Israelite status is required. They are, however,

bayit (master of the house)" (p. 232). Levinthal writes that "a Canaanite slave is regarded as belonging to Judaism [i.e., *ben berit*]." Both agent and principal "must be competent to perform the action." Since a slave cannot enter into a legally valid marriage, the slave is "not competent to act as agent for a marriage or a divorce" (p. 116).

[27] English quotations are from Herbert Danby, ed. and trans., *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933).

[28] *M. Qid.* 1:1–4 opens with a discussion of four categories of property that can, and the means by which they can, be "acquired": the woman (wife), a Hebrew slave, the Canaanite slave, and cattle. The Canaanite slave falls into the subcategory of "property for which there is security," that is, immovable property, which "can be acquired by money or by writ or by usucaption [that is, by long uninterrrupted possession for a specified length of time]" (*m. Qid.* 1:5). See *m. B. Bat.* 3:1; 4:7; 9:7; *m. Giṭ.* 2:3; *m. B. Qam.* 4:5; also *m. Ket.* 2:7; 8:5; *m. B. Qam.* 8:1, 3, 4, 5; 9:2; *m. Yeb.* 7:1–3.

[29] See *m. B. Meṣ.* 7:6. On the centrality of intention in the Tanaitic conception of religious (legal) actions, see E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977), 107–10; Paul Virgil McCraken Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens? Slaves in the System of the Mishnah* (BJS 143; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 159–72.

[30] Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens?* 67–84; Horowitz, *Jewish Law,* 247–48.

[31] A slave could also produce legal effects by purely physical acts or by bodily conditions, for instance, impregnate a free woman, damage property, or contract leprosy (Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens?* 84–90).

[32] Ibid., 90–102.

permitted to perform them as secondary members of an Israelite household.[33] The slave may take the vow of a Nazirite, but the master can force him to break it or can cancel it (*m. Naz.* 9:1).[34]

This absolute control over the chattel's will and its consequences, apparent in the case of the Nazirite vow, stand out clearer, for instance, in the case of the slaughter and preparation of the Passover animal, an act that only the Israelite householder can perform. In general, the minor son cannot validly slaughter the "Most Holy Things."[35] He lacks the will necessary for the intention (*m. Zeb.* 3:6; 4:6). The slave and the Israelite woman can; the slave only if the master permits it (*m. Zeb.* 3:1).[36] Thus, "If a man said to his slave, 'Go and slaughter the Passover-offering for me,' and he slaughtered a kid, the master may eat of it; and if he slaughtered a lamb he may eat of it. If he slaughtered both a kid and a lamb he should eat of the first [that was slaughtered]" (*m. Pes.* 8:2). The householder's authorization enables the slave to produce the desired legal effects, binding not the slave but the householder. The validity and legal effects of the slave's cultic act depend not on the chattel's will but on the householder's will, with which the slave's will is identified.

Thus, the slave can represent the householder, as his agent, even at the highest point in the Mishnaic construct of Israelite life.[37] The slave is also an agent in transactions involving the householder, outside of the cult (see *m. B. Mes.* 8:3). The principle, cited by Derrett, that the agent must be like his principal, affects only a free Israelite.[38] It applies to the slave only in the cases of marriage and divorce contracts,[39] because the prerequisite for the validity of a marriage contract is the ability to produce legal effects by relations. The chattel has only a relation of property with the master. The slave cannot marry (*m. Giṭ.* 5:5; *m. Qid.* 3:12–13; 4:1; *m. B. Meṣ.* 8:4). Slave "marriages" are legally nonexistent, even though *m. Qid.* 3:13, *m. Giṭ.* 4:5, and *m. Yeb.* 7:5 refer to such unions using the verb "to marry." The chattel's reproductive acts are mere physical acts for the profit of the master. Hence, the householder could not order the slave to represent him in a marriage contract or to produce free children, any more than he could have asked his minor son validly to slaughter the Passover lamb.[40]

[33] Ibid., 119–27; Catherine Hezser, "The Impact of Household Slaves on the Jewish Family in Roman Palestine," *JSJ* 34 (2003): 386, 388–89.

[34] That is, until the slave is freed (Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens?* 82).

[35] That is, the bullock and he-goat of the Day of Atonement and other sin-offerings, guilt-offerings, whole (burnt)-offerings, and Pentecost peace-offerings (*m. Zeb.* 3:1; 5:1–5).

[36] Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens?* 123–24.

[37] Ibid., 127–31, 159–72.

[38] *M. Ber.* 5:5 ("a man's agent is like to himself"); see *m. Qid.* 4:9; *m. Giṭ.* 6:3.; Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens?* 130.

[39] See, e.g., *m. Qid.* 2:1, 4; 3:1, 9; *m. Giṭ.* 2:5–6. The Mishnah does not represent the slave in business activities. Most of the passages that pertain to things outside the household deal with the temple cult (Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens?* 111).

[40] Slaves have no family obligations; their unions can be broken and the partners disposed

The slave occupies a unique position in the Mishnah's Israelite household. The wife legally acquires and owns property, though the husband has usufruct. The minor (son or daughter) is capable of acquisition through others. An adult daughter (at twelve and a half) and an adult son (at thirteen) produce legal effects for themselves. The slave can neither acquire nor own property: all acquisitions, finds, and gifts belong to the master.[41] Whatever the slave holds is his master's.[42] Thus, in household and business management, the slave-agent has distinct advantages over a free Israelite. Potentially, the slave-agent would be the agent par excellence.[43]

The Mishnah's construct of the slave-agent may not be assumed to correspond to actual social practice, since it might reflect the ideology and preoccupation of a small and only relatively influential group rather than the concrete social relations within the wider society.[44] However, the Mishnah's slave ideology is the same as that underlying the practice of ancient slavery, which persists not only in the classical analysis by Aristotle but also in the copious and pluriform literature from the Greco-Roman world.[45] The slave occupies a unique position also in the Roman *familia,* defined by Ulpian (Justinian, *Digest* 50.16.195.2) as: "We talk of several persons as a household under a peculiar legal status if they are naturally or legally subjected to the power of a single person (sub unius potestate) as in the case of a head of a household (paterfamilias)."[46] Paulus specifies: "The word '*potestas*' has

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of at the householder's pleasure; and householders may use their female slaves (theoretically, as young as three years old) for their sexual gratification without facing charges of rape, seduction, or adultery (*m. Ket.* 1:2, 4; 3:1–2). The offspring of a female slave with a male slave or with a free Israelite male is a slave, assuming relations of ownership with the mother's master (*m. Qid.* 3:12–13; *m. Yeb.* 2: 5; 7:5; 11:5). The child of a male slave with a free Israelite woman is a ממזר (the product of an incestuous union), possessing family links with the mother's family (*m. Yeb.* 7:5) (Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens?* 90–102; Hezser, "Household Slaves," 411–18).

[41] Except the price of manumission and the *peculium* from the householder, but it includes the writ of manumission, which, for this reason, must be consigned to a third party. See *m. Qid.* 1:3; Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens?* 57.

[42] *M. Maʿaś. Š.* 4:4; *m. ʿErub.* 7:6; *m. B. Qam.* 8:3, 5; *m. B. Meṣ.* 1:5; Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens?* 57–58; Horowitz, *Jewish Law,* 248; Hezser, "Household Slaves," 382.

[43] The slave-agent cannot double-cross his master, whereas the free agent can undertake a transaction for his or her (a wife's) own profit (*m. Qid.* 3:1; *m. Ket.* 9:4; *m. Šebu.* 7:8). Third parties could presume the master's authority.

[44] That is, prescinding from the notorious problems arising from the dating of the sources.

[45] See Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[46] See the discussion in Justinian, *Digest* 50.16.195.2–4; Richard P. Saller, "Symbols of Gender and Status Hierarchies in the Roman Household," in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations* (ed. Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan; London: Routledge, 1998), 83–91. He notes that in everyday language, "*familia* usually meant only the slaves of a house, as distinct from freeborn mother and children, or sometimes a lineage sharing a *nomen* or a clan name" (p. 86). See also Saller, "Slavery and the Roman Family," in *Classical Slavery* (ed.

many meanings; . . . in the person of a slave it means ownership" (Justinian, *Digest* 50.16.215).

The existence of the slave as "a living possession" (or "a possession with a soul"), according to Aristotle's classical definition (*Pol.* 1.3.1253b–4.1254a), a productive property under the absolute *dominium* of the slaveholder, is the fundamental, undisputed, ideological condition for the existence of the institution of chattel slavery.[47] Kinlessness and sexual exploitation are expressions of the slave's status as a property.[48] It is this fact that the slave loses control, not only of his labor but also of "his person and his personality to the infinity of time, to his children and his children's children," that gave slave owners the flexibility to appropriate the slave's labor and to dispose of unwanted labor.[49] These conceptions enabled the person of servile status (slave and freed) to be the preferred agent for private household and estate management in the Roman Empire.[50]

Moses I. Finley; London: Frank Cass, 1987), 84–85; Holt Parker, "Loyal Slaves and Loyal Wives: The Crisis of the Outsider-Within and Roman *Exemplum* Literature," in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture,* ed. Joshel and Murnaghan, 154–55.

[47] Homer *Il.* 6.454–58 (Hector to his wife, Andromache): "some brazen-coated Achaean shall lead thee away weeping and rob thee of thy day of freedom. Then haply in Argos shalt thou ply the loom at another's bidding, or bear water from Messeïs or Hypereia, sorely against thy will, and strong necessity shall be laid upon thee." Pseudo-Aristotle, *Oec.* 1.5.1344a24–26: "Of property (κτημάτων), the first and most indispensable kind is that which is also best and most amenable to Housecraft; and this is the human chattel (ἄνθροπος). Our first step therefore must be to procure good slaves (δούλους)." Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.3.2; Cicero, *Off.* 3.89; Varro, *Rust.* 1.17.1–2, cited above; League of Nations' Slavery Convention in 1926: "Slavery is a status or condition of a person over whom any or all the powers attaching to the rights of ownership are exercised" (see Finley, *Ancient Slavery,* 165 n. 20).

[48] Plautus, *Capt.* 574: Quem patrem, qui servos est? ("Father! What do you mean, when he is a slave?"); the Elder Seneca, *Con.* 4. praef. 10: "Losing one's virtue (*impudicitia*) is a crime in the freeborn, a necessity in a slave, a duty (*officium*) for the freedman." The slave is not within the purview of one's family obligations and himself has no such obligations (see Cicero, *Off.* 1.41, 54). See Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: iusti coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 51–54; Annalia Rei, "Villains, Wives, and Slaves in the Comedies of Plautus," in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture,* ed. Joshel and Murnaghan, 99–104; Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 21–30; Finley, *Ancient Slavery,* 74–77, 95–96; Bradley, *Slaves and Masters,* 47–80; idem, "On the Roman Slave Supply and Slavebreeding," in *Classical Slavery,* ed. Finley, 53–81.

[49] Finley, *Ancient Slavery,* 77.

[50] W. W. Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery: The Condition of the Slave in Private Law from Augustus to Justinian* (New York: AMS, 1908), 131–86; Susan Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen during the Late Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 101, 106–7; Arnold M. Duff, *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge: W. Heffer, 1958), 90–92; Peter Garnsey observes that the presence in business of slaves, who were under their master's *potestas,* explains in part the absence of a law of agency in Roman commercial law ("Slaves in 'Business,'" *Opus* 1 [1982]: 106).

B. The Servile οἰκονόμος

In the classical Greek and Hellenistic periods, outside the domains of household and estate management, the title οἰκονόμος was borne also by individuals who were not servile.[51] In household and estate management, however, the title οἰκονόμος, like ἐπίτροπος, was used to designate people of servile status who, in Peter Garnsey's words, either were in the "non-productive personal service within the households of the propertied" (as household slaves) or were "active in the world of business and commerce as agents, or as managers of enterprises in which they themselves participated as bankers, shopkeepers, traders and craftmen."[52]

A. H. M. Jones has shown that in the later Roman Republic ἐπίτροπος (*procurator*) "was a term of private law" and remained so except when applied later to imperial posts. Even so, under Augustus and Tiberius, imperial *procurators* remained private agents of the emperor.[53] These were people of servile status from the imperial *familia.*[54] Peter Landvogt, from the inscriptional evidence, maintained that by the early Roman period the οἰκονόμοι were, without exception, servile.[55] Dale Martin, confirming Landvogt's findings, concludes that "for the Roman Empire as a whole and for the Roman imperial period, the oikonomoi were of servile status (slave or freed). Furthermore, in private life they were almost always of servile status and were mostly slaves."[56] Likewise, inscriptional evidence points to the conclusion that "the term *pramateutēs* usually indicates a slave or freedman

[51] For instance, Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.3.1406a27; *Pol.* 5.2.1314b7; and, for inscriptional evidence, Peter Landvogt, *Epigraphische Untersuchungen über den* Οικονομος*: Ein Beitrag zum hellenistischen Beamtenwesen* (Strasbourg: M. Dumont Schauberg, 1908), 8–21; Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 15–16 and 174-76, table 1.

[52] Garnsey, "Slaves in Business," 105; de Ste. Croix, *Class Struggle,* 145, 181–82, 505–6.

[53] A. H. M. Jones, "Procurators and Prefects in the Early Principate," in idem, *Studies in Roman Government and Law* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), 117–25; Fabian E. Udoh, *To Caesar What Is Caesar's: Tribute, Taxes, and Imperial Administration in Early Roman Palestine (63 B.C. E.–70 C.E.)* (BJS 343; Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2005), 134.

[54] See, in general, P. R. C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); idem, "Freedmen Procurators in the Imperial Administration," *Historia* 14 (1965): 460–69; Gérard Boulvert, *Domestique et fonctionnaire sous le Haut-Empire romain: la condition de l'affranchi et de l'esclave du prince* (Annales littéraire de l'Université de Besançon 151; Centre de recherches d'histoire ancienne 9; Paris: Belles Lettres, 1974); Duff, *Freedmen,* 143–86. Licinus, Augustus's *procurator* (ἐπίτροπος) of Gaul, was a freedman (Dio, *Hist.* 54.21.2–8). The most notorious imperial freedman in touch with Jewish Palestine was Felix, appointed provincial procurator of Judea by Claudius (Josephus, *A.J.* 20.137; *B.J.* 2.247; Suetonius, *Claud.* 28; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.9).

[55] Landvogt, Οικονομος, 13, 8.

[56] Martin, *Slavery as Salvation,* 17 and 174–76, table I. Duff, on the basis of *CIL* 6:9830–38, contends that the *procurator* "is always a freedman" (*Freedmen,* 90 and n. 3).

agent or manager employed by a private family."[57] Wherever the propertied class managed its agricultural estate "directly," it did so through an enslaved manager.[58]

One would expect to find these economic and administrative trends also in Jewish sources. NT scholars, however, are notoriously unwilling to confront the prevalence of slaves and slave ideology in the NT, particularly the Gospel parables.[59] Some scholars have emphasized, on the basis of biblical law, a presumed difference between Jewish and Greco-Roman slavery. The Mishnah's construction of the ideology of slavery, I argue, is the same as that which underlay Greek and Roman slavery. It is doubtful that the much-vaunted talmudic distinction between the "Hebrew slave" and the "Canaanite slave" had any consequences (beyond the elucidation of biblical law) for the ideology and practice of slavery among Jews.[60] Rather, as Louis Feldman concludes from his study of Josephus's use of slave terminology, "[s]laves were so much part of Josephus' world that he apparently never gave a thought to the theory and practice of slavery as an institution. . . . Details about the exact status of an individual slave, whether he or she was born slave, bought slave, half-slave, or the like, apparently did not often interest him."[61]

Propertied Jews, both inside and outside Palestine, owned and exploited slaves.[62] The households of upper-class Jews in Palestine had large slave *familiae,* serving the personal and economic interests of their owners, much like slaves and freedmen in other parts of the empire.[63] This can be illustrated by a brief canvas of Josephus's accounts of events. Herod: five hundred slaves and freedmen carried spices at his funeral (*B.J.* 1.673; *A.J.* 17.199); he sent slaves with orders to Roman

[57] Martin, *Slavery as Salvation,* 17–22 and 177, table J.

[58] Peter Garnsey and Richard P. Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 71–72; Finley, *Ancient Economy,* 75–76; Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen,* 106–8. On slaves in agriculture in the Roman Empire, see Ramsay MacMullen, "Late Roman Slavery," *Historia* 36 (1987): 359–83.

[59] Glancy, *Slavery,* 113–15, 122–29.

[60] Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens?* 11–26, 54–59. Of the 129 Mishnaic passages identified by Flesher that mention slaves, only six deal with the "Hebrew slave" (pp. 35–36, 201–3). See Dale B. Martin, "Slavery and the Ancient Jewish Family," in *The Jewish Family in Antiquity* (ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen; BJS 289; Altanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 113, 115–16; Hezser, "Household Slaves," 390–418; Glancy, *Slavery,* 6–7.

[61] Louis H. Feldman and J. G. Gibbs, "Josephus' Vocabulary for Slavery," *JQR* 4 (1986): 301.

[62] Martin, "Slavery," 123–28.

[63] Slaves might not have dominated economic production in Roman Palestine. However, Philo writes that "the law does permit the acquisition of slaves from other nations . . . [so] that that most indispensable possession, domestic service, should not be absolutely excluded from his commonwealth. For the course of life contains a vast number of circumstances which demand the ministrations of slaves" (*Spec.* 2.123). Hezser argues that slaves "formed an integral part of the Jewish household and played an important role within the family economy" ("Household Slaves," 375).

tribunes to murder Malichus (*B.J.* 1.233; *A.J.* 14.291); his slave agents collected taxes (*A.J.* 17.308); Simon of Perea, who, assuming the diadem, led a revolt after Herod's death, was one of his slaves (*B.J.* 2.57; *A.J.* 17.273).[64] Members of Herod's household owned slaves and freedmen: his wife Doris (*B.J.* 1.620; *A.J.* 17.93); his brother Pheroras and wife (*B.J.* 1.582–91; *A.J.* 17.61–65); his son Antipater (*B.J.* 1.592, 601–2; *A.J.* 17.69, 79–80); and grandson Agrippa.[65] Jews before and outside the Herodian dynasty owned slaves: Joseph the Tobiad,[66] the high priests,[67] Justus of Tiberias (*Vita* 341), and Philip, Agrippa II's lieutenant (*Vita* 48–51). The Essenes, according to Josephus, "neither bring wives into the community nor do they own slaves" (*A.J.* 18.21). The fact that they, as a group, rejected slavery (contending that it "contributes to injustice") and instead "performed menial tasks for one another" was an admirable departure from the norm.[68]

Two kinds of evidence confirm that propertied Jews exploited servile managerial οἰκονόμοι. First, among the ostraca receipts in the archive of "Nikanor's Transport," we find two from Hermias, the servile agent of Marcus Julius Alexander, who conducted business with the firm for his master.[69] Likewise, Gaius Julius Amarantus was the servile agent in landed property transactions for Gaius Julius Alexander "the great landowner in Euhereia."[70]

[64] Also, Corinthus (*A.J.* 17.55–56), and others in *A.J.* 16.230–34; 17.63–67, 69, 79, 93; *B.J.* 1.584–92, 601.

[65] Agrippa's freedman, Marsyas, borrowed money "on the written bond and security of Agrippa" from Protos, the freedman whom Berenice (Agrippa's mother) had passed on to Antonia, Emperor Claudius's mother (*A. J.* 18.155–56). Others included Stoecheus (*A.J.* 18.203–4, 228–30), Eutychus (*B.J.* 2.178–80; *A.J.* 18.168–91), Fortunatus (who bore Agrippa's presents and letters to Gaius accusing Antipas of plotting insurrection [*A.J.* 18.247–54]), and Thaumastus (see below).

[66] Tax farmer under the Ptolemies (*A.J.* 12.175–222). See also, e.g., Tob 8:9–14; 9:2, 5, 10; Jdt 8:9–10; 10:1, 5–10, 17; 12:15, 19; 13:3, 9–10.

[67] Their slaves collected tithes at the threshing floors (*A.J.* 20.181), those of Ananias showing singular recklessness and violence (*A.J.* 20.205–7) (Udoh, *To Caesar What Is Caesar's,* 270–73).

[68] *A.J.* 18.20–22; Philo, *Prob.* 79; see *B.J.* 1.479; *A.J.* 6.40–41. The rabbis saw the ownership of at least one slave as necessary, even for poor people, for preserving their honor (Hezser, "Household Slaves," 401).

[69] *CPJ* 2:197–99, nos. 419a, 419c. The "Nikanor Transport," operating from 6 to 62 C.E., was used by firms engaged in the Arabian and Indian trade. Marcus Julius Alexander was most likely the brother of Tiberius Julius Alexander, Philo's nephew and governor of Judea (ca. 46–48 C.E.). The agent's status is discerned from his name on the first receipt (dated June 9, 43 C.E.): Ἑρμίας Μάρκου Ἰουλίου Ἀλεξάνδ(ρου). The agent's status on the second receipt (dated July 14, 43 C.E.) is even more explicit: [. . .] ους Μάρκου Ἰουλίου Ἀλεξάνδρου . . . ἔχω παρὰ σοῦ ἐπὶ Βερενείκης εἰς τὸν Μάρκου Ἰουλιου Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ ἐμοῦ κυρίου λόγον.The beginning of the second inscription is fragmentary.

[70] *CPJ* 2:200–202, no. 420a. The master is probably Alexander the Alabarch, Philo's brother. The agent's status is discernible from his name.

Second, Josephus's treatment of the οἰκονόμος is revealing.[71] Managerial agents appear in both Josephus's paraphrase of biblical narratives and the narrative of the events in the lives of individuals. Joseph in Egypt is exemplary (*A.J.* 2.39–90). Noting Joseph's talents and that he was virtuous and of "a noble spirit,"[72] Pentephres his master gave him an education fit for a free person,[73] and, preferring him to his other slaves, appointed him οἰκονόμος (*A.J.* 2.57). Finally, Joseph rose to become Pharaoh's οἰκονόμος (*A.J.* 2.89; Philo, *Ios.* 37–38, 117). Obadias was Ahab's οἰκονόμος (*A.J.* 9.47) in charge of the king's estate (*A.J.* 8.329) (1 Kgs 18:3–6);[74] Siba was Saul's freedman (*A.J.* 7.263; cf. 1 Sam 9:1–8), a slave, whom David appointed manager (ἐπίτροπος) of Mephibosthos's estate (*A.J.* 7.267), with orders "to work his land and take care of it, to send all the yield to Jerusalem and bring the lad to his table everyday" (*A.J.* 7.115; cf. 2 Sam 2:9–12). The οἰκονόμοι whom Solomon ordered to set sail to Sōpheir in India in order to acquire gold were chosen from among the Canaanite slaves over whom Solomon had set five hundred and fifty officers "to instruct them in those tasks and activities for which he needed them" (*A.J.* 8.160–64).[75] In these elaborations, Josephus imposes on figures in the biblical narratives the servile roles in the propertied households of the Roman Empire.

As for the events in the lives of individuals, Josephus's fictitious tale of the encounter between Arion, Joseph the Tobiad's servile οἰκονόμος, and Joseph's son, Hyrcanus, reveals the usual tragic paradoxes of servile status, even for privileged

[71] Josephus uses title ἐπίτροπος imprecisely to cover a wide range of administrative functions. See Udoh, *To Caesar What Is Caesar's,* 57 n. 104, 169.

[72] Noteworthy were Joseph's "comely appearance," "dexterity in affairs," "the dignity of his features," "his diligence and fidelity," and unchanging character (*A.J.* 2.40–42, 61, 69, 78).

[73] *A.J.* 2.39: καὶ παιδείαν τε τὴν ἐλευθέριον ἐπαίδευε. On παιδεία ἐλευθέριος, see Aristotle, *Pol.* 8.3.1338a30–32: "a sort of education . . . not as being useful or necessary, but because it is liberal or noble." Seneca, *Ep.* 88.1–2: Quare liberalia studia dicta sint, vides; quia homine libero digna sunt. Certerum unum studium vere liberale est, quod liberum facit. Servile persons, in principle, were excluded from such education, except as a privilege (Seneca, *Ben.* 3.21.2). Joseph was held in extraordinary esteem by Pentephres (*A.J.* 2.39). Slaves and freedmen received the education appropriate to the managerial and wide-ranging professional roles they assumed, as Pseudo-Aristotle counseled: "And since it is matter of experience that the character of the young can be moulded by training (αἱ παιδεῖαι), when we require to charge slaves with tasks befitting the free, we have not only to procure the slaves, but to bring them up <for the trust>" (*Oec.* 1.5.1344a26–29). See Clarence A. Forbes, "The Education and Training of Slaves in Antiquity," *TAPA* 86 (1955): 321–60; Alan D. Booth, "The Schooling of Slaves in First-Century Rome," *TAPA* 109 (1979): 11–19.

[74] Josephus paraphrases 1 Kgs 18:5–6 to mean that Ahab sent Obadiah out "in order to cut any grass that he might find . . . and give it to the beasts for fodder" (*A.J.* 8.329). The king's οἰκονόμος, in this case, is not a high state official.

[75] The other slaves labored as household menials and agricultural slaves. Compare 1 Kgs 9:20–23, 26–28.

managers (*A.J.* 12.196–208).[76] I have already mentioned Agrippa's servile agents. After he obtained the slave Thaumastus from Gaius, Agrippa emancipated him and appointed him οἰκονόμος of his estate. Upon Agrippa's death, Thaumastus lived on to manage the estates of his son, Agrippa II, and daughter, Berenice (*A.J.* 18.192–94).

To conclude, except in three passages where Josephus repoduces the Septuagint's terminology, in which cases the status of the agents cannot be determined, Josephus does not mention any οἰκονόμος who is not servile.[77] This is because, in the Roman world that Josephus took for granted, the managerial agent of a private estate was servile. NT writers also took that reality for granted. Although managerial slaves appear elsewhere in the Gospel material,[78] in the Gospels and Acts the word οἰκονόμος, the office οἰκονομία, and the verb οἰκονομέω occur in only two sets of passages in Luke's Gospel.[79] The οἰκονόμος in Luke 12:41–48 is a slave appointed to the management of his master's property, including other slaves.[80] And so is his counterpart in Luke 16:1–8a. They would have risen from menial slavery to be managers of their masters' property.[81] Like Agrippa's Thaumastus, the manager in Luke 16:1–8a could have received emancipation and remained to serve the same master.[82]

[76] Arion managed all of Joseph's wealth in Alexandria, including remitting to the Ptolemies the taxes collected by his master (12.199–200). Josephus assumes that the οἰκονόμος could be called simply "the slave" (12.207). Hyrcanus explains to Ptolemy that he had imprisoned Arion to punish him "for disobeying the orders he had been given; for it made no difference . . . whether one were a small master or a great one. For if we do not punish such fellows, even you [Ptolemy] may expect to be held in contempt by your subjects" (12.207). For managerial slaves in the NT, see Jennifer A. Glancy, "Slaves and Slavery in the Matthean Parables," *JBL* 119 (2000): 72–79; eadem, *Slavery,* 113–15.

[77] *A.J.* 8.308 = 1 Kgs 16:8–9; *A.J.* 11.138 = 1 Esdr 8:64; *A.J.* 11.272 = Esth 8:9.

[78] See Mark 12:1–9 = Matt 21:33–41; Luke 20:9–16. Matt 18:23–34. Matt 24:45–51 = Luke 12:42–48. Matt 25:14–30 = Luke 19:11–27.

[79] Οἰκονόμος (Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8); οἰκονομία (16:2, 3, 4); οἰκονομέω (16:2). On Erastus, whom Paul (Rom 16:23) calls ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως (possibly of Corinth), see Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 75–83. Theissen, who argues that the title is Paul's Greek rendering of the Latin *quaestor,* concludes that "[i]t is quite possible that he was a freedman" (p. 83). Fitzmyer observes that "[t]he expression *oikonomos tēs poleōs* is often found as a title on Greek inscriptions . . . and usually denoted a slave or, more often, a freedman, the *servus arcarius* of a town, or *arcarius rei publicae*" (*Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993]), 750. See 1 Cor 4:1–2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 4:10.

[80] Called δοῦλος (Luke 12:43, 45, 46, 47). In the parallel passage, Luke's description, ὁ πιστὸς οἰκονόμος ὁ φρόνιμος (12:42), is replaced with ὁ πιστὸς δοῦλος καὶ φρόνιμος (Matt 24:45). He is placed over his "fellow slaves" (Matt 24:49).

[81] See the promise in Luke 12:44 (Matt 24:47).

[82] Glancy objects, citing no evidence, that although "many stewards were slaves, . . . many others were freedmen, and some were even freeborn men" (*Slavery,* 109). There are narrative

II. Who Is the Lord?

Critics disagree on whether ὁ κύριος in 16:8a is the householder or Jesus. This disagreement is rooted in the fact that in the Synoptic Gospels the absolute ὁ κύριος (the Lord) is used to refer to Jesus only in Luke's Gospel, about forty-two times[83] (twenty-eight in the Lukan *Sondergut*).[84] It is distinctive to Luke that in the narrative itself various characters refer to Jesus as ὁ κύριος.[85]

Moreover, in Luke the narrator frequently calls Jesus ὁ κύριος.[86] Three of these passages (12:42abc; 19:25ab; 18:6ab) are particularly similar to 16:8a–b.

A. Luke 12:42abc

(a) καὶ εἶπεν ὁ κύριος,
(b) Τίς ἄρα ἐστὶν ὁ πιστὸς οἰκονόμος ὁ φρόνιμος,
(c) ὃν καταστήσει ὁ κύριος ἐπὶ τῆς θεραπείας αὐτοῦ τοῦ διδόναι ἐν καιρῷ [τὸ] σιτομέτριον;

The narrative context of 12:42 is similar to that of 16:8: a parable about the conduct of a faithful, prudent managerial slave. Jesus is the parable narrator and the disciples, the narratees. Jesus is called ὁ κύριος first by Peter in v. 41, then by the narrator in v. 42a. The householder is also called ὁ κύριος by Jesus in vv. 42c, 43, 46, 47, and by the slave in v. 45b. The title ὁ κύριος (the master/householder) in v. 42c is absolute, like ὁ κύριος in v. 42a (Jesus). A narrative tension is thus set up between ὁ κύριος, Jesus, and ὁ κύριος, the householder. The reader risks confusing the one with the other.

This tension is not an instance of inaccurate characterization. It is deeply

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pointers in Luke 16:1–8 that suggest that the manager here should be seen as a freedman. In rejecting the parable as a "slave parable," however, she fails to appreciate the fact that it was as servile persons that freedmen participated in the "representations of . . . marginalized or lower-status persons," which her subsequent and general discussions affirm (pp. 114, 24 and n. 84).

[83] Luke 1:43, 76; 2:11, 26; 3:4; 5:8, 12; 6:46; 7:6, 13, 19; 9:54, 59, 61; 10:1, 17, 39, 40, 41; 11:1, 39; 12:41, 42a; 13:15, 23, 25; 17:5, 6, 37; 18:6, 41; 19:8, 31, 34; 20:42, 44; 22:33, 38, 49, 61; 24:3, 34. Luke 6:5 and 12:25 are uncertain; 6:8 is discussed here.

[84] Luke 1:43, 76; 2:11, 26; 5:8; 7:6, 13; 9:54; 10:1, 17, 39, 40, 41; 11:1, 39; 12:41, 42a; 13:15, 23; 17:5, 6a; 19:8; 22:33, 38, 49, 61; 24:3, 34. In the rest the author adds the title to material taken (probably) from identifiable sources; and seems to have derived it from a source in only two cases: Luke 3:4//Mark 1:3 = Isa 40:3; Luke 19:31//Mark 11:3.

[85] Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 202–3.

[86] Luke 7:13, 19; 10:1, 39, 41; 11:39; 13:15; 17:5, 6; 19:8; 22:61a,b; 24:3, 34. See Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 203. On the "narrator" in Luke, see James M. Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice: Confusion and Irony in the Gospel of Luke* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 15–32; Willem S. Vorster, "The Reader in the Text: Narrative Material," *Semeia* 48 (1989): 23–24, 30–32.

woven into the narrative structure and is essential to the narrative: the qualities and conduct that the householder approves and rewards are those that Jesus approves and recommends. The latent narrative confusion (and allegorical identification) is avoided, however, because, first, from v. 43 to the end of the narrative, ὁ κύριος, the householder, is always qualified.[87] Second, and significantly, since there is no indication of the intervention of the narrator's voice in vv. 44 and 46, the reader is quite certain that it is the voice of the parable narrator that he or she hears and, therefore, ὁ κύριος in the parable narrative per se (vv. 42b–46) refers only to the householder.

B. Luke 19:25ab

(a) καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ,
(b) Κύριε, ἔχει δέκα μνᾶς

This is the reaction of the astonished speakers in the parable of the Pounds ("And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten pounds!'"). Whether the κύριος addressed here is Jesus or the householder depends on whether the remark in v. 25a is by the narrator or by the parable narrator.

Although Jesus is not addressed as ὁ κύριος in 19:11–27, the narrator and Zacchaeus do so in 19:8. In the parable, the slaves address the householder with the vocative, κύριε (19:16, 18, 20). Now, if καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ in v. 25a is the narrator's comment, then the κύριος addressed in v. 25b is without doubt Jesus, and the speakers are Jesus' disciples. If, however, in καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ Jesus' voice is heard, relating the reaction of the other slaves and bystanders to the householder's order (v. 24), then the κύριος is the householder. In this second case, λέγω ὑμῖν in v. 26 (which characterizes Jesus' speech in Luke) and the accompanying saying (put in Jesus' mouth in 8:18) would have to be attributed to the householder, whose speech continues in v. 27.[88]

Actually, it is impossible conclusively to identify the κύριος in Luke 19:25, on account of the tension inherent in the narrative structure itself. Here, moreover, the latent confusion of characters has yielded to a quasi unity, such that at the crucial turn in the narrative (19:26) the householder speaks with Jesus' voice. This is an instance of Paul Ricoeur's "positive and productive use of ambiguity," that is, "that use of discourse where several things are specified at the same time and where the reader is not required to choose among them."[89]

[87] ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ (12:43, 47); ὁ κύριος μου (12:45); ὁ κύριος τοῦ δούλου ἐκείνου (12:46).

[88] Fitzmyer sees v. 25 as a "Lucan addition"; the speakers in v. 25b are "the attendants," which implies that the κύριος is the householder (*Luke,* 1238).

[89] Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 47.

This is, indeed, the case with Luke 16:8a: καὶ ἐπῄνεσεν ὁ κύριος τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας ὅτι φρονίμως ἐποίησεν. Even though Jesus is not called ὁ κύριος in 16:1–13, he was so addressed by the anonymous speaker in 13:23, a passage where also the unity of Jesus with the householder allows both to speak with one voice (vv. 25–27). In Luke 16:1–8, except v. 8a, ὁ κύριος always and clearly refers to the householder. The title is in each case qualified.[90] But it is absolute in v. 8a. Further, it is impossible to decide whether the voice in v. 8a is that of Jesus, continuing the story, or that of the narrator, introducing Jesus' reaction to the episode. The ambiguity so established is not open to a decisive resolution. As in the other two passages, Jesus has assumed the householder's sentiments and the householder speaks with Jesus' voice. At this point in the narrative there is but one "(L)lord."[91] This is what makes the parable meaningful.

C. Luke 18:6ab

(a) Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος,
(b) Ἀκούσατε τί ὁ κριτὴς ἀδικίας λέγει.

A brief consideration of the passage confirms this unity of narrative characters and perspectives. One may, rightly, assume that the κύριος (v. 6a) speaking is Jesus. However, if the parable were about a householder (κύριος), rather than a judge (κριτής), and if attention in v. 6 were focused on the widow's (χήρα) perseverance, rather than on the householder granting her request, in this event v. 6 might have read: εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος, Ἀκούσατε τί ἡ χήρα αὕτη λέγει ("And the (L)lord said, 'Listen to what that widow says' "); or, on the analogy of 16:8a: καὶ ἐπῄνεσεν ὁ κύριος τὴν χήραν ταύτην ("And the (L)lord praised that widow"). In either formulation, the householder's call to attention, or his commendation, would have coincided with Jesus' recommendation of the widow's conduct. As in 19:25 and in 16:18a, it would have been impossible to decide whom we were hearing, Jesus or the householder.

III. The (L)lord's Praise

Our understanding of Greco-Roman slavery is hampered by the complete absence of slave literature. Apart from this total silence of the enslaved, the extant literature represents the efforts of the free to negotiate and legitimize the social

[90] ὁ κύριος μου (v. 3), τοῦ κυρίου ἑαυτοῦ (v. 5a), τῷ κυρίῳ μου (v. 5b).

[91] Thus, no transitional phrase is needed to reintroduce Jesus' comments. Although, from the point of view of content, v. 8b seems to be Jesus' words more than those of the householder, this comment is founded on the (L)lord's approbation in v. 8a. Moreover, far from introducing a change of subjects, καὶ ἐγὼ ὑμῖν λέγω in v. 9 pursues the discourse already initiated in v. 8b.

structure of slavery and the meaning it generated. Thus, although this literature informs us about significant aspects of slavery in the Roman Empire, it cannot give us a complete picture of "how it really was."[92] This is true of the NT slave parables: they are literary contructs that transmit the slaveholders' fantasies, fears, ideals, values, and agenda.[93] The details of the parables, therefore, do not completely "reflect" the practice of slavery in the Roman Empire. In arguing that the οἰκονόμος in Luke 16:1–8a is servile, I do not mean to imply that he is "a literal slave."[94] He is a literary character—but a character, if he is to be comprehensible, with an underlying social reality.[95]

These two aspects must be held in balance. On the one hand, the literary character of the compositions must be recognized: the slave parables do not soberly depict Greco-Roman social reality. On the other hand, the slave parables are shadowed, to some extent, by that social reality.[96] The result is that, although the details of the parables can be plausible, they need not be representative or typical. The most fruitful approach to the parables, therefore, is from the world outside, rather than to construct that world from details derived from the parable.[97]

The context of Luke 16:1–8a is agricultural estate management (vv. 5–7). On the contrary—in particular if seen in conjunction with 12:35–38—the οἰκονόμος in Luke 12:41–48 probably functions in household management. The ideological prop of both parables is the topos of servile "virtues": loyalty or faithfulness (*fides*),

[92] William Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8–11.

[93] On the rabbinic material, see Hezser, "Household Slaves," 395–96.

[94] J. Albert Harrill (*Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006], 78) reproaches Beavis for insising that the manager is "a literal slave in the story." Harrill accepts that the manager is servile but contends that the parable is a "farce of the parasite *playing* the clever slave" (pp. 77, 78; emphasis in the original).

[95] Contra Harrill, who insists that the manager is not "an example of a 'real' person in ancient Mediterranean peasant society" but a dramatic fiction "of Roman slave comedy," whose "burlesque of farce . . . encouraged early Christians to laugh at slaves as moral inferiors" (*Slaves,* 74–83). As Fitzgerald has shown, the category "fantasy projections of the free" does not exhaust the ways in which literature about slaves and slavery may be read (*Slavery,* 8–50). See Kathleen McCarthy, "*Servitium amoris: Amor servitii,*" in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture,* ed. Joshel and Murnaghan, 174–92; eadem, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[96] Plautus's "farce" is shadowed by the social reality of the "clever, talented, educated slave occupying a position of responsibility" (Fitzgerald, *Slavery,* 25; Keith Hopkins, "Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery," *Past and Present* 138 [1993]: 6; Bradley, *Slaves and Masters,* 28–29).

[97] Glancy rejects this approach because, she says, it would be to assume that it is "easier to perceive the reality of a past world put together from a thousand historical documents than it is to probe the depths of a single literary work that is present to the critique studying it" ("Slaves and Slavery," 68 and n. 5). In *Slavery,* she more moderately rejects the reliance on "a seamless picture of ancient life" (pp. 3–4). On the "reality" of Trimalchio in Petronius's *Satyricon,* see Peter Garnsey, "Independent Freedmen and the Economy of Roman Italy," *Klio* 63 (1981): 371.

obedience (*obsequium*), goodwill (*benevolentia*), and dutifulness (*pietas*).[98] Between the slave and the slaveholder there existed a "paradoxical symbiosis" that expressed itself "in complementarities, reversals and appropriations": the slave, on the one hand, depended completely on the master's goodwill for his/her very being, and, on the other hand, the slaveholder was bound by intimacy with the slave and by the slave's "servile efficiency" and productivity.[99]

Since loyalty and productivity could not be assumed from one who was the ultimate outsider, both were exacted by cruel and ready punishment, "humane" treatment, and close supervision.[100] There is no doubt that there were faithful and obedient slaves.[101] As Finley argues, slaves would have survived by compromise and accommodation, from the fear of punishment and the hope of reward, or from having "positively" internalized "the meaning and necessity" of servile virtue.[102] However, the permanence in literature of the ideal of the obedient and loyal slave is an expression of the anxieties of the slave-holding classes and of the servile behavior that they, in order to negotiate these anxieties, considered desirable and recommendable. Servile subservience and loyalty were necessary for the personal safety of the slaveholder and the stability of slavery as a system of economic exploitation.

The social contentment projected by the ideology of the faithful and obedient slave finds its counterpoint in the topos of the clever, scheming slave, on which the Plautine *servus callidus* relies. The slave, by definition, is an intransigent property,[103] a criminal, capable of a long list of "crimes" and "misdeeds" (*flagitia, maleficia*).[104] The slave is greedy, a drunkard, venal, wanton, reckless, dishonest, lazy, cowardly, cruel . . . , and dangerous.[105] All intelligent slaves are "wicked."[106] Slavery has its risks: the loss of life and property. The ideal faithful and obedient slave, held up for emulation, is an exception to the normally expected servile resistance.[107] Both literary topoi are revelatory of the antagonistic relationship between slaves and slaveholders, and of the slaveholders' apprehensions about the stability of the system.[108]

[98] Among numerous authors, see Valerius Maximus 6.8.7. See further Vogt, *Ancient Slavery,* 129–45; Bradley, *Slaves and Masters,* 21–45; Parker, "Loyal Slaves," 156–63.

[99] Fitzgerald, *Slavery,* 13–31; Bradley, *Slaves and Masters,* 22; Hezser, "Household Slaves," 390–91.

[100] Bradley, *Slaves and Masters,* 21–26, 39–45.

[101] This is the preoccupation of the *exemplum* literature. See the lists in Valerius Maximus 6.8.1–7; Seneca, *Ben.* 3.23–27. See Parker, "Loyal Slaves," 152–63.

[102] Finley, *Ancient Slavery,* 115–17; Bradley, *Slaves and Masters,* 37–45.

[103] See Ulpian's *servus onerosus* in Justinian, *Digest* 17.1.18.4. Keith R. Bradley, "*Servus Onerosus:* Roman Law and the Troublesome Slave," *Slavery & Abolition* 11 (1990): 135–57.

[104] Columella, *Rust.* 1.1.20; 11.1.27; et passim.

[105] Bradley, *Slaves and Masters,* 26–31; Hezser, "Household Slaves," 391–92.

[106] Columella, *Rust.* 1.9.4: velocior animus est improborum hominum.

[107] Bradley, *Slavery and Society,* 107–31; Finley, *Ancient Slavery,* 103–4.

[108] Fitzgerald, *Slavery,* 24–25; Bradley, *Slaves and Masters,* 28–37.

Especially where servile subservience and loyalty were at stake, freedmen would not have escaped the ambivalence of these stereotypes.[109]

Luke's Gospel takes these topoi for granted.[110] Thus, in 12:35–38 the slaves, obedient and dutiful, are reinforced and made constant in their obedience by the promise of a meal served to them by their master.[111] In 12:41–48 the stakes are raised by Peter's question (v. 41), leading to a further elucidation of the structure of servile loyalty and obedience, with the concomitant threats of servile unfaithfulness (v. 46) and malfeasance, and of cruel punishments (vv. 45-48a). The loyalty demanded of the manager goes beyond servile obedience to explicit commands (v. 48b), in response to the threat of punishment or the promise of reward.[112] The faithful manager (ὁ πιστὸς οἰκονόμος [v. 42]) is defined by the symbiosis between him and the master, such that he knows, anticipates, and does the master's will, that is, what promotes the master's best interest (vv. 47–48a).[113] Paul's statement that one seeks nothing from managers (ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις) except that they be found to be faithful (πιστός) is an obvious truism (1 Cor 4:2).[114] The reward for

[109] Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen,* 80–81, 265–66. Freedmen were called "slaves" to stress their moral and physical dependence (Cicero, *Fam.* 5.20.2), or commonly in contempt (Cicero, *Acad. pr.* 2.144). Of Felix, governor of Judea, Tacitus writes that he "practised every kind of cruelty and lust, wielding the power of king with all the instincts of a slave" (*Hist.* 5.9).

[110] Luke 17:7–10; 19:12–26; for slaves in the Gospel, see 7:2–10; 12:35–48; 14:17–24; 15:22, 26; 20:10–12; 22:50–51, 56.

[111] This contrasts sharply with 17:7–9 and its rhetorical question: "Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded?" (v. 9). Beavis observes that Luke 17:7–9 "is rather conservative in that it casually assumes that the listener is a slave owner who treats his/her slaves without undue consideration" ("Ancient Slavery," 41–42). She thinks that 12:35–38 would have been considered "much more 'subversive.'" According to Macrobius, on March 1, "matrons would wait on their slaves at dinner, just as the masters of the household did at the Saturnalia—the women by this compliment calling on the slaves at the beginning of the year to give ready obedience, the men rendering thanks for services done" (*Sat.* 1.12.7; Percival V. Davies, trans. with an introduction, *Ambrosius Aurelius Macrobius Theodosius: The Saturnalia* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1969], 85). Similarly, Solinus, *Coll.* 1.35. Both authors are aware of the ancient custom of owners serving meals to slaves as a means of keeping them under control (Bradley, *Slaves and Masters,* 44). The difference, as Glancy argues (*Slavery,* 109–10), between the two parables is determined by the fact that "the welfare of chattel slaves depends on the caprice of the slaveholder and not on the intrinsic merits of the slave" and, one might add, by the demands of social control.

[112] Seneca, *Ben.* 3.21.1–2: "So long as what he [the slave] supplies is only that which is ordinarily required of a slave, it is a 'service (*ministerium*)'; when he supplies more than a slave need do, it is a 'benefit (*beneficium*)'. . . ."

[113] Fitzgerald notes that "Aristotle might have added that the slave is part of the master's *mind* as well as his body." In this regard, "it is manifestly *not* true that 'a slave does not know his master's business' (John 15.15)" (Fitzgerald, *Slavery,* 13; emphases in original). See also Glancy, "Slaves and Slavery," 115.

[114] Xenophon, *Oec.* 12.1–8; esp. 12.5: "'First of all,' I said, 'he should be loyal towards you and yours if he is to be capable of representing you in your absence. For what is the use of a foreman's

loyalty is being entrusted with the administration of all the master's property (12:44).[115]

Servile "virtues," I noted, are expressions, in moral terms, of slaveholders' anxieties about the stability of the system of slavery. It follows that the "good slave" is, by definition, obedient and faithful in the pursuit of the slaveholder's interests. Conversely, the "bad slave" is disobedient and unfaithful, prone to actions that are injurious to the master and his interests. Luke's groups of binary terms, "faithful" (πιστός)/"unfaithful" (ἄπιστος) :: "good" (ἀγαθός)/"bad" (πονηρός), are synonymous.[116] By the same token, the manager (16:8a) is said to be "unrighteous," not because his actions were "dishonest" by an extrinsic, universal, moral code but because he was disloyal and caused injury to his master's interests.[117] The comments in 16:10–13 build on and expand this notion, namely, that servile righteousness (honesty) is equal to servile loyalty and servile unrighteousness (dishonesty) is equal to servile disloyalty.[118] The comments begin by contrasting the loyal slave (ὁ πιστός) with the unrighteous one (ὁ ἄδικος) and end with the saying that no slave can be loyal to two masters.[119]

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having any kind of knowledge at all, if he has no loyalty?'" Columella, *Rust.* 11.1.7: "Therefore . . . your future bailiff must be taught and must be hardened from boyhood . . . and must be tested by many trials to see not only whether he has thoroughly learned the science of farming but also whether he shows fidelity and attachment to his master, for, without these qualities, the most perfect knowledge possessed by a bailiff is of no use."

[115] Matthew 24:47; Luke 19:16–19//Matt 25:20–23. *Pace* Beavis ("Ancient Slavery," 54), the parables are not "distinctive" in this respect. The complexity of the problem of "slaves as moral agents" is signaled by Seneca: "Does a master receive a benefit from a slave? No, but a human being from a human being" (*Ben.* 3.22.3–4). Glancy (*Slavery,* 116–18; eadem, "Slaves and Slavery," 70–71, 77–78) rightly rejects Beavis's assessment.

[116] Luke 12:42, 46; 19:17, 22. In the parallel to Luke 12:42–48, Matt 24:45, 48 (51) has the binary terms πιστός/κακός (ὑποκριτής). Matthew's binary terms ἀγαθός καὶ πιστός/πονηρός καὶ ὀκνηρός (Matt 25:21–23, 25) make the point even clearer. See Ulpian's discussion of making a "good slave" bad and a "bad slave" worse: if one persuaded the slave to run away, commit an injury or theft, mismanage his *peculium,* become a lover, play truant, practice evil arts, spend too much time at public entertainments, become seditious; or if "one persuades a slave-agent to tamper with or falsify his master's accounts, or to confuse accounts entrusted to him" (in Justinian, *Digest* 11.3.1.1–5). Paulus adds: "or if one makes a slave extravagant or defiant; or persuades him to be debauched" (*Digest* 11.3.2).

[117] See Glancy, *Slavery,* 133–52. She observes, astutely, that unlike Kant's categorical imperative (and its "stark modernity"), "which argues that moral laws are universal rather than rooted in particulars of class, caste, gender, or status," early Christian household codes, like ancient law codes, "distinguish between what is proper for free persons and what is proper for enslaved persons" (p. 140).

[118] See Col 3:22–25. Glancy, *Slavery,* 115: "Slave morality is inextricably identified with the master's interests."

[119] See Matt 6:24; Glancy, *Slavery,* 107–8.

The servile estate manager in 16:1–8a is first reported to have wasted his master's property. The fear of such injurious behavior was sufficiently commonplace for Cicero to use it in his rhetorical attack on Verres (*2 Verr.* 3.50.19):

> It is as if the manager of a farm [*vilicus ex eo fundo*] that was rich enough to bring a hundred pounds a year were to cut down and sell the timber, remove the roofing, sell off the equipment and live stock, and then send the owner two hundred pounds instead of a hundred, while pocketing another thousand for himself. The owner, knowing nothing of the damage done to him, would be much pleased at first, and delighted with his manager for making his farm bring in so large a return. But when he heard presently how everything on which the fertility and cultivation of his farm depended had been taken off and sold, he would think himself badly treated, and would punish the manager most severely.[120]

The master responds (16:2) by proposing to remove the manager from managing his estate. Scholars usually read into this response the view that the manager is an employee—a broker of sorts—in an honest employment from which he was about to be dismissed.[121] I join William Herzog in denouncing this interpretation of the parable from the point of view of "an economic morality rooted in capitalistic ideology" and for which reason scholars "side with the master and blame the steward for cheating the master by participating in some first-century version of a savings and loan scandal."[122] Glancy's objection is more pertinent: "A slave whose master believed that he had wasted household property would more likely fear corporal punishment, imprisonment, demotion within the household to menial tasks, or sale into a harsher slavery or away from loved ones."[123]

The fear of "demotion . . . to menial tasks" is already within the parable's narrative purview: "I am not strong enough to dig" (v. 3b). The manager's fears are related only to the specific punishment proposed by the master: the loss of the οἰκονομία (v. 3a). It would be vain, as I noted, to expect the parable to tell us "how it really was." Servile punishments depended on the whims of householders; writ-

[120] Without supervision, slave managers do estates "tremendous damage" and bring the land "a bad name" through incompetent farming, theft at the threshing floor "either by trickery or by carelessness," and by not entering "honestly in their accounts" the amount of produce stored away (Columella, *Rust.* 1.7.6–7). Xenophon, *Oec.* 14.2: The manager "must keep his hands off his master's property and not steal. For if the man who handles the crops dares to abscond with them, so that there is not enough left for the work to create a profit, what benefit would result from running a farm under his care?'"

[121] Recently, Landry and May, "Parable," 298: "His [the manager's] crime might best be described as misappropriation of funds, much as a modern executive with a budget at his/her discretion might illicitly spend some of these funds on personal items." See also Kloppenborg, "Dishonored Master," esp. 491 n. 58.

[122] William R. Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 245.

[123] Glancy, *Slavery,* 109.

ers in general pursued their own ideological goals. Glancy herself notes, accurately, that "Luke is less consistent than Matthew in representing the slave body as vulnerable to physical violations."[124] Although the wicked/unfaithful manager in Luke 12:46 is cut in pieces, the one in 19:20–25 is despoiled and not otherwise punished.[125]

In real life, would the master have inflicted further punishments? Almost certainly. What punishments? We do not know. We do know that in 16:3–7 the manager contemplates and makes preparations to leave. He does not undertake a job search for new "employment," as scholars usually assume.[126] He prepares to flee, and in such a way that he subsequently will not be reduced to begging (vv. 3–4).[127] If the crack in the wall that seems to open up here for the manager is seen as "freedom" to leave, although this is not necessary, I would agree with Glancy that "it is likely that ancient audiences would have understood the wily steward to be a freedman but not a slave."[128]

Cicero, who thought that his imaginary manager would be punished "most severely," had difficulties with real-life servile (freedmen) managers. He accused his *dispensator,* Terentius Philotimus, of (among other offenses) poor judgment and lying, playing truant, "cooking his accounts," and theft (*Att.* 10.9.1; 11.1.1; 6.4.3; 5.1; 7.3.1). He tried to remove Philotimus from the management of some of his affairs (*Att.* 7.1.9), but seems not to have punished him "most severely." Chrysippus, the literary freedman of Marcus Cicero, Cicero's young son, abandoned the young man and absconded. Cicero confesses to Atticus that the freedman's conduct "excites [his] surprise." He can, he says, "put up with other things," including even "embezzlement." But he "cannot put up with flight. It is the most scandalous [*sceleratius* = "most wicked"] thing [he] ever heard of." He denied, he says, "that those fellows ever were freed by me, especially as there were no legal witnesses to the transaction" (*Att.* 7.2.8).

Cicero might never have had the opportunity to punish Chrysippus by reimposing slavery.[129]

[124] Ibid., 111.

[125] Contrast Matt 25:28–30, where the "unprofitable slave" is also thrown "into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

[126] Kloppenborg, "Dishonored Master," 491 n. 58; Landry and May, "Parable," 296 (objecting to Beavis, "Ancient Slavery," 49–50); Glancy, *Slavery,* 109.

[127] Finley (*Ancient Slavery,* 111–14) takes a grim view of the odds facing fugitive slaves, and notes, however, that "[f]ugitive slaves are almost an obsession in the sources" (p. 111). Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.29.62: "I too am acting like a runaway slave who is a spectator in a theatre; I bathe, I drink, I sing, but all in fear and misery." Flight was, obviously, a primary act of servile resistance. See Bradley, *Slavery and Society,* 117–21; Glancy, *Slavery,* 88–92.

[128] Glancy, *Slavery,* 109. The difference between freedman and slave is insignificant here. I agree more with her caution against "the risk of exaggerating the differences between representations of slaves and representations of other marginalized or low-status persons" (p. 109).

[129] Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen,* 257–58, 263–64.

Did Chrysippus also make off with his master's funds? Cicero speaks obliquely of putting up even "with embezzlement." Fugitive servile persons were typically accused of theft.[130] The manager in Luke 16:4–7 provides for himself by falsifying his master's account. Whether and why he would, *in reality,* have been received into the households of his master's creditors is beside the point. The narrative focuses on his acts of unfaithfulness: accused of "squandering" his master's property, he contemplates flight, and he falsifies his master's accounts. He is the householder's nightmare.

IV. Concluding Summary

Based on the topos of the wicked/unfaithful slave, the parable lacks "the comic symbiosis of master and slave that is central to the economy of Plautine comedy."[131] The parabolic manager does not qualify as a Plautine comic *servus callidus.* His actions in vv. 5–7 provide no clues, no dramatic display of trick and wit, no rationale why he, like a *picaresque* comic character, would have evaded punishment and merited his master's praise. Generations of scholars, for this very reason, have built speculative scenarios in which the manager's actions would lead to a denouement that explains the master's praise. Plautus's *servus callidus* is often also a *servus fidus.*[132] If Plautine comedy brings "comic relief," it is because at the end of the plays, after the reversals and chaos, order is restored and the existing social and economic arrangements are legitimized: "the spectators are sent home with the satisfying notion that, at least in the world of happy endings, stability among the orders and within the family is not only desirable but also feasible."[133]

On the contrary, the parabolic manager persists in his disloyalty,[134] and it is precisely as "the unrighteous/unfaithful manager" (τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας) that he is praised (v. 8a). He acted "prudently" (φρονίμως ἐποίησεν) in the pursuit of his own interests.[135] If the author of the Gospel inherited this tale, we can-

[130] Ulpian, in Justinian, *Digest* 47.2.36.2; 47.2.17.3. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.26.1–2: "Don't they steal just a little bit to last them for the first few days, and then afterwards drift along over land or sea, contriving one scheme after another to keep themselves fed? And what runaway slave ever died of hunger?" Slaves on the run had every incentive to "steal."

[131] Fitzgerald, *Slavery,* 25.

[132] Bradley, *Slaves and Masters,* 38–39.

[133] Rei, "Villains, Wives, and Slaves," 104.

[134] *Pace* Landry and May, "Parable," 304–5.

[135] On prudent but dishonest action for the sake of one's interests in estate management, see Cicero, *Resp.* 3.19 (Lactantius, *Inst.* 5.16.5); also John Henry Paul Reumann, "Οἰκονομία as 'Ethical Accommodation' in the Fathers, and Its Pagan Background," *Studia Patristica* 3 (1961): 372. The οἰκονόμος in Luke 12:42–44, consistent with the topos of the loyal slave, was "prudent" in the pursuit of his master's interest.

not know how it originally ended or if and why the master would have praised the manager. As the tale now stands, and I have argued, the lord's (master's) praise has been overlaid with the Lord's (Jesus') praise. Why does the parabolic Lord praise the unfaithful manager? Perhaps, so that the Lord can urge the "children of light" similarly to be prudent "in their generation" (v. 8a–b). In so doing, however, he calls attention to the servile manager's unfaithful acts of resistance and commends them.

If the (L)lord's praise means that, in spite of the expectations and anxieties of the propertied classes, Justice is on the manager's side, then Luke has told a subversive tale. Subversive because this would be the only text in the NT that commends, even if incidentally, such servile behavior as would threaten the stability of the system of slavery itself:

> "What will cause great disturbance among men?" . . . .
> "If the dead arise and ask for the return of their property." *(Live of Aesop* 47)

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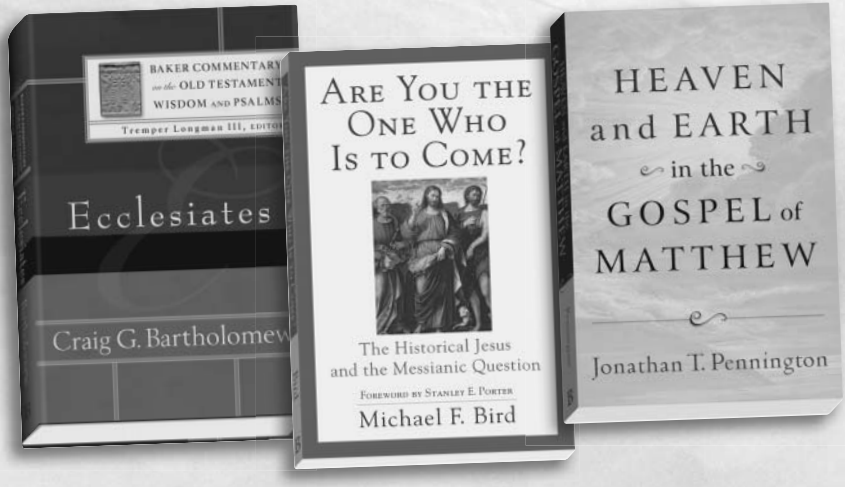

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2 Corinthians 4:13: Evidence in Paul That Christ Believes

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My interest in this text stems initially from its bearing on the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. 2 Corinthians 4:13 is not generally discussed in this connection in any detail, usually being mentioned briefly in passing, if at all,[1] by the debate's protag-

[1] Richard B. Hays has consistently noted its importance, along with the plausibility of a messianic and christocentric reading, without ever attempting a detailed analysis: see esp. his famous study *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (1983; 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 259 n. 44; but see also idem, "Postscript: Further Reflections on Galatians 3," in *Conflict and Context: Hermeneutics in the Americas* (ed. Mark Lau Branson and C. René Padilla; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 274–80, esp. 276–77; and idem, "Christ Prays the Psalms: Paul's Use of an Early Christian Exegetical Convention," in *The Future of Christology: Essays in Honor of Leander E. Keck* (ed. Abraham J. Malherbe and Wayne A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 122–36, reprinted with revisions as "Christ Prays the Psalms: Israel's Psalter as Matrix of Early Christology," in *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 101–18 (this latest version is cited in what follows).

Morna Hooker pays some attention to this text in "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," *NTS* 35 (1989): 321–42, esp. 335 (and she notes 2 Cor 1:17–22 as well in a convoluted but suggestive analysis on pp. 334–35). Veronica Koperski also notes its significance briefly in "The Meaning of *Pistis Christou* in Philippians 3:9," *LS* 18 (1993): 198–216, esp. 209, as do Gerald O'Collins and Daniel Kendall in "The Faith of Jesus," *TS* 53 (1992): 403–23, esp. 417 n. 57.

Moisés Silva makes an interesting concession on the basis of this text ("Faith versus Works of Law in Galatians," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism,* vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul* [ed. Donald A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid; WUNT 181; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 217-48, esp. 231). He states first in the body of his essay that "we cannot find even one *unambiguous* reference to the πίστις that belongs to Christ. To put it differently but more concretely, Paul never uses πιστεύω with Χριστός as its subject" (p. 231). This claim is part of one of his five principal arguments against the christological reading of πίστις

onists, although on one level this is understandable. The ambiguous constructions in 2 Cor 4:13 are not πίστις Χριστοῦ genitives. But this neglect is unfortunate, because this verse may offer clear evidence not merely of Jesus acting faithfully, but of his doing so as the subject of the verb. It is a common complaint by opponents of "the faithfulness of Christ" motif in Paul that Christ is never the subject of πιστεύω in a Pauline text, from which observation it supposedly follows that Paul could not therefore be suggesting Christ's own faithfulness when he uses the cognate substantive in a genitive construction such as διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ.[2] If Paul had intended this meaning, the objection runs, then he would have supplied us with at least one instance of Christ as the subject of the verb πιστεύω—so Χριστὸς ἐπίστευσεν or some such.[3] Hence the potential relevance of 2 Cor 4:13. I suggest that here Christ *is* the directly implicit subject of πιστεύω—and not once, but twice, also drawing the cognate substantive into this orbit of meaning. This is a

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Χριστοῦ (see pp. 228–34). But he admits that 2 Cor 4:13 is such a possibility if Ps 116:10 (LXX 115:1) is understood messianically by Paul (introducing 2 Tim 2:13 as well) (p. 232 n. 38). Hence, this contention weakens to the claim that "such language is not *typical* of Paul" (p. 232). This is an important concession, amounting in fact to a different argument; that is, such usage is "untypical" as against "unattested." Such advocates face their own challenges in relation to issues of typicality, since Paul seldom uses Christ as an object of the verb πιστεύω, and never in a genitive construction.

A distinctly minority tradition of earlier readers of 2 Corinthians urged a messianic reading: see H. L. Goudge, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Methuen, 1927), 41-42; and Anthony T. Hanson, *The Paradox of the Cross in the Thought of St Paul* (JSOTSup 17; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 51–53.

The first extended treatment of this question has appeared only very recently (at least at my time of writing): see Thomas D. Stegman, "Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα (2 Corinthians 4:13): Paul's Christological Reading of Psalm 115:1a LXX," *CBQ* 69 (2007): 725–45. Stegman's vigorous article is drawn from his doctoral dissertation (published as *The Character of Jesus: The Linchpin to Paul's Argument in 2 Corinthians* [AnBib 158; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2005]). It works from a particular reading of the broader context in 2 Corinthians toward a plausible possible reading of 2 Cor 4:13, finally endorsing Hays's original messianic suggestion. Of course, I concur with this conclusion exactly but argue for it here in the opposite direction. I focus on the localized data to suggest, in the light of various considerations there, that we *ought* to read this text christo-centrically (considerations largely absent from Stegman's study). I then go on to suggest that the wider context supports this localized judgment strongly. Hence, Stegman's analysis is an excellent complement to my suggestions—especially his rich and insightful account of the context. (My own extended treatment of related matters is *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009]; 2 Cor 4:13 is treated in ch. 21, §3.2).

[2] A construction found in this or closely related forms in Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16 (2x), 20; 3:22; and Phil 3:9.

[3] See, e.g., Koperski, "Meaning of *Pistis Christou*," 209, and 210 (noting on 209 n. 68 the comments of Silva, Jan Lambrecht, and David M. Hay—a list that could be greatly lengthened).

useful conclusion, if it can be established (although the underlying argumentative situation here is more complex than first meets the eye[4]).

The following analysis takes place in two main phases. First, I will carefully consider 2 Cor 4:13 itself, which is a subtle and complex text. Second, I will consider its contexts in a series of widening circles—the immediately following v. 14, which is part of the same sentence by way of a participial construction, then the preceding context, especially 2 Corinthians 4, then the following context, especially ch. 5.

By the end of these various discussions a participatory reading of 2 Cor 4:13 should be emerging,[5] that is, a reading emphasizing Paul's identification with Christ

[4] A caveat is necessary at this point. The objection by opponents of the subjective reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ that Christ is not the subject of the cognate verb in Paul, and therefore not of the genitive either, can be challenged on methodological and broader evidential grounds.

The objection is basically a conditional argument. *If* Christ was faithful in Paul *then* he would be the subject of the verb, but he is not the latter, so he cannot be the former (If A then B; not B, therefore not A). This is a valid logical argument overall, but logic cannot establish the truth of the initial premise (If A then B—here, if Christ is the subject of the genitive construction then he must also be the subject of the verb). And without the establishment of the initial premise, the argument's conclusion is invalid. Moreover, the initial statement must be true empirically, or in terms of the available evidence, for the conclusion to be valid; it is not *itself* a logical claim. At this point difficulties arise: (1) it is an *unreal* or *counterfactual* case, so there is no evidence for its truth, *and cannot be by virtue of the structure of the argument!* We can never know if A implies B. Moreover, (2) in methodological terms, it is simply false to demand that all readings of substantive constructions in Paul have a corresponding verbal cognate, especially given the limited data that we have firsthand from Paul. So, many of those making this demand in this relation do not themselves apply it to other notions and readings that they hold dear elsewhere. (Does Paul ever say that Christ "bled," thereby allowing us to speak of the blood of Christ? Is he ever the subject of the verb "to atone" [ἱλάσκεσθαι]? And so on.)

This false equation can then lead in turn to ignoring that the noun has a wider semantic spread than its cognate verb, which means that a substantive phrase might very reasonably not correspond to a cognate verbal one. This also means ignoring the reading that subjective advocates actually suggest is in play, thereby overlooking the parallel constructions that *are* offered to the disputed genitives (i.e., the relevant evidence), which are not cognate constructions but are nevertheless still legitimately introduced as parallels!

Thus, there are numerous good reasons for rejecting this objection. Hence, unfortunately, a detailed engagement with 2 Cor 4:13 as putative counterevidence runs the risk of affirming it, if only in a general, rhetorical way. But the possible reinforcement of a weak objection should not hinder the detailed consideration of a text that can ultimately yield important insights into Paul's thinking, especially about believing. So we will proceed to analyze 2 Cor 4:13 in what follows with this caveat in mind: the following investigation does not suggest that the cogency of the foregoing objection is actually being accepted. The evidence of 2 Cor 4:13 is simply being considered in its own right. It does turn out to be the case, however, that our conclusions will disprove that weak objection anyway.

[5] Participation is an important interpretative trajectory in relation to Paul's soteriology that

by way of the Spirit, with Christ as the original subject of the verb πιστεύω—a conclusion with intriguing implications not only for the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate but for how we understand the activity of "faith" in Paul more broadly, and the shape of his gospel in general.

I. 2 Corinthians 4:13

We should begin our more detailed analysis by noting that interpreters and commentators alike have not really known what to do with 2 Cor 4:13.[6] Certainly it does not play a prominent role in most explications of Paul's argument at this point, but I suspect that this is in part because the verse operates a bit like a Rubik's Cube. One senses that there is a coherent disposition in Paul's statements—a point at which all the presently muddled colors match—however, twisting and repositioning the components of his argument into that intelligible arrangement are strangely difficult. There are in fact three rather unusual subordinate elements that we must try to construe intelligibly, both in their own right and in relation to one another. We must: (i) discern the meaning of the phrase τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως [κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον κ.τ.λ.], "the same spirit of faith [that is in accordance with the scripture . . .]" (NRSV); (ii) account for Paul's citation of the

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underpins much of my analysis here. An elegant recent summary of the approach is Robert C. Tannehill, "Participation in Christ: A Central Theme in Pauline Soteriology," in idem, *The Shape of the Gospel: New Testament Essays* (Eugene, OR: Cascade [Wipf & Stock], 2007), 223–37; an earlier and fuller summary is provided by James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 390–95. Important treatments of this approach include William Wrede, *Paul* (1904; trans. E. Lummis; London: Green & Hull, Elsom, 1907), esp. 74–154; Gustav Adolf Deissmann, *St. Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (2nd ed.; trans. L. R. M. Strachan (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1912); Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (1931; trans. W. Montgomery; New York: Seabury, 1968); James Stewart, *A Man in Christ: The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935); E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), esp. 447–74; Morna Hooker, *Pauline Pieces* (London: Epworth, 1979), 36-52; eadem, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 13–69; and Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology* (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 410–505. (This brief exegetical study is not the place to explore the broader importance and cogency of this approach to Pauline soteriology in general, as it deserves.)

[6] Among the commentators, I have relied in what follows especially on Victor P. Furnish, *II Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32A; New York: Doubleday, 1984), esp. 57–59, 85–87, 252; Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 40; Waco: Word, 1986), esp. 81–84, 89–90, 94–95; and Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians,* vol. 1, *Introduction and Commentary on II Corinthians I–VII* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), see esp. 337–44.

three words from Ps 115:1 LXX (MT and NRSV 116:10[7]) ἐπίστευσα διὸ ἐλάλησα, "I believed and so I spoke" (NRSV);[8] and (iii) explain the underlying causal relationship between believing and speaking denoted by the inferential conjunction διό.[9] Indeed, Paul seems to be emphasizing the notion conveyed by διό at this point in his broader argument by repeating it and applying it to himself in the plural—καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν (the NRSV renders this rather weakly as "and so"; this should really be "therefore" or "for this reason").[10] Resolving these semantic components in relation to one another is a tricky interpretative puzzle. I suggest, however, that the best way to work initially toward a coherent interpretation of these disparate elements is to grasp the narrative dimension that is implicit in Paul's argument.

Somewhat characteristically, Paul has not supplied the easiest argumentative sequence of claims for his auditors, having apparently reordered them away from their most obvious substantive unfolding for rhetorical effect. However, his reasoning seems to be as follows:

A: It is written, "I believed therefore I spoke."
B: We have the same "spirit" of belief (for a reason as yet undisclosed).
C: Therefore, we too "believe and speak."

Hence, Paul seems to have supplied this argument to the Corinthians in the form B-A-C, although it works logically in a different order (at least, up to a point: on this see more shortly). And we might simplify it a bit further by saying:

Person 1 undertakes X and, for this reason, Y.
Person 2 shares X with Person 1.
Person 2 therefore undertakes X (already) but also, for this reason, Y.

It should be emphasized, moreover, that Paul has stressed the inferential connection between X and Y, or believing and speaking, with a double usage of a Greek

[7] Several questions arise at this point that are also difficult to answer, but fortunately they do not greatly affect my unfolding argument here. Paul is, as usual, citing the LXX. But beyond this it is difficult to say whether he is conscious of the alternative versification and division found in the MT, and what the significance of this might be. To avoid unnecessary difficulties, then, in the following argument I will concentrate on the LXX version (i.e., MT/NRSV 116:10–19).

[8] Paul also uses a unique citation formula—an arthrous participial construction (see τὸ γεγραμμένον above).

[9] Stegman supplies a slightly different, longer list ("Επίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα [2 Corinthians 4:13]," 731). But not all of his specified issues are pertinent to the resolution of the exact question before us at this point—whether Christ is the implicit subject of the verb in this quotation. Some of his listed concerns are treated later here.

[10] See BDAG, 250; also Rom 1:24; 2:1; 4:22; 13:5; 15:22; 2 Cor 1:20; 5:9; Phil 2:9—a contraction of δι᾽ ὅ, hence essentially an accusative with διά; see also BDF §§442.12; 451.5.

"therefore," which grounds his speaking, like the psalmist's, in a prior activity of believing, and probably causally: "I believed *therefore* [διό] I spoke." And—where it has been noted—this claim has troubled interpreters in the past. This sequence and possible causality are, strictly speaking, invalid unless the entire narrative of the suffering and vindicated psalmist is also in play, because Paul claims in v. 13a to have only the same spirit of belief as the psalmist. It does not follow from this shared *believing* that the psalmist's ensuing *speech* should *also* figure forth necessarily in Paul's life as well; they share only their belief. Hence, Paul's shared spirit of believing cannot ground the "therefore" in Ps 115:1 when it applies to his own life, unless the rest of the psalm's narrative that links believing and speech is somehow invoked as well.[11] (I suspect that it is in large measure the cognitive dissonance generated—perhaps subliminally—by this difficulty that has hampered much interpretation of this verse in the past.[12])

[11] So, for example, a wealthy philanthropist might have compassion on the victims of a hurricane and go on to build some of them new houses and neighborhoods. We could say then that this person had compassion and therefore gave. However, it does not follow from this—unfortunately—that other wealthy people who felt compassion for the same hurricane victims, thereby sharing a spirit of compassion with the wealthy philanthropist, *also* donated new homes and neighborhoods to victims. To share compassion in these other cases did not *necessarily* result in giving, justifying the use of a "therefore" connecting their compassion and donations (that is, unless some of the additional narrative present in the first donor's life was operative in the later philanthropists' lives as well, perhaps by way of imitation).

[12] Such confusions seem, then, to have led to various rather weak interpretative suggestions at this point that need not detain us further. So Furnish notes how Paul frequently correlates believing with *apostolic* proclamation (at least arguably)—see Rom 10:14–17; Gal 3:2, 5; 1 Thess 2:2; etc. (*II Corinthians*, 258). However, most of this evidence reverses the causality that Paul seems to be endorsing in 2 Cor 4:13–14, where believing leads *to* speaking; these alternative texts speak of apostolic preaching or speaking leading *to* believing. So this evidence actually exacerbates the difficulty! He goes on to note correctly that Paul is referring here, as in 1 Thess 2:2, to "[c]ourage to speak out despite adversity" (p. 285), but he has not of course provided interpretations of "believing" and the quotation of Ps 115:1 that actually deliver this notion.

Thrall explores a range of solutions. She considers first whether this text simply "provides scriptural warrant for Paul's assertion that because he believes the gospel he proclaims it," in which case "the identity of the speaker in the psalm is of no interest" (*Second Epistle*, 340). However, the identity of the speaker *is* foregrounded because Paul shares "the same spirit of fidelity" with him (2 Cor 4:13). So this explanation leaves us puzzled over the role of the psalm and the psalmist in Paul's argument. It is also a largely unheralded and unattested claim in context. In addition, it supplies unstated qualifications for the notion of belief—specifically that this "belief" *is* belief in the apostolic gospel. And Paul himself never really talks in these terms elsewhere in any case. His apostolic "belief" is a "call" to the "gospel." Presumably he then speaks, but "belief" terminology occurs through and at the end of this process, not at its inception: see esp. 1 Cor 15:1–11; Gal 1:10–24; 2:7–9.

Ultimately, then, Thrall is "compelled to the conclusion that . . . Psalm 115 (LXX) . . . was in Paul's mind as a significant exposition of the suffering righteous man, and so as relevant to his own situation" (p. 341). So she ends up with the fuller narrative reading that I am advocating here.

So it seems that the entire narrative of the psalm is in play in Paul's life or his argument at this point is incoherent; his quotation would be simply obtuse.[13] And we must now add an important unstated premise to our earlier sequence of claims.

A: It is written, "I believed therefore I spoke."
B: We have the same "spirit" of belief (for a reason as yet undisclosed).
B′: That shared "spirit" denotes a sharing of the writer's entire narrative of believing and speaking (etc.).
C: *Therefore*, we too "believe and speak."

But note also that, when it is taken into consideration, the echo of the narrative in Psalm 115 (LXX) is plausible, not to mention richly informative. The psalm speaks of the vindication of a righteous sufferer (discussed in German scholarship—although usually of a previous generation—as *der leidende Gerechte*).[14]

The psalmist has maintained his belief in God (etc.) and has spoken with integrity, even though he has suffered greatly (v. 1b LXX). And he has done so in part because he knows that the death of the Lord's holy ones and servants is pre-

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But to halt interpretation at this point does not explain why the righteous sufferer is relevant to Paul, grounding the assertions and connections that he makes to the Corinthians in turn; it is also not sensitive to the further clues supplied by the context of 2 Cor 4:13, which are so strongly Christocentric; and no cogent reason is thereby provided for denying a further identification—as Hanson suggested—of the righteous sufferer with Christ. (Perhaps Thrall opens the door—with the utmost caution and delicacy—to this possibility, conceding that the speaker of the psalm might be "representative of the righteous sufferer" and "[i]n this case the psalmist would prefigure, as well as predict, the sufferings of Christ" [p. 340]. She seems nervous about explicitly conceding the actual presence of Christ in relation to the psalm, however.)

These difficulties probably explain why various other commentators begin new subsections at this point, or speak of "loose connections," or traditional material, or some such. So Furnish notes—and dismisses—Vincent Wimbush's suggestion in these terms, which is clearly a counsel of despair (*II Corinthians*, 285). Martin also makes much of traditional formulations in v. 14, but this does not really solve any difficulties in v. 13. There he also posits "the opening up of a new section" (*2 Corinthians*, 89–90). But a christological reading again makes this unnecessary, facilitating a reading in direct continuity with vv. 12 and 13 and the rest of the text's context.

[13] It could be objected at this point that this is not unusual for Paul, and so we should not press on to any deeper level of putative coherence. However, this objection is weak on two principal grounds. First, Paul is often accused of citing texts unfairly, perhaps because he is insensitive to their original context, or shifts their wording, or the like. But he invariably (at least arguably) uses them coherently in his *own* contingent settings. Sustaining this objection then requires Paul to go to the trouble of citing a meaningless quotation, which is not his usual practice. To be sure, this possibility cannot be excluded at the outset, but, second, if a meaning*ful* account of this citation can be given, then this objection is falsified *in fact*. It would be invalid to assert that a quotation is incoherent and ought to be treated as such when a coherent—albeit alternative—construal has been presented. A charge of opacity or incoherence is an explanation of last resort and will not need to be used here.

[14] As noted among the commentators, especially by Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 329–31, 340–41.

cious in God's sight (vv. 6–7). Therefore the Lord has gifted him with life and salvation (vv. 3, 4a, 7c), freeing him from his bondage (v. 7c), and he is now able to thank God in the presence of his people, quite evidently alive, in the courts of Jerusalem (vv. 3, 8–10). His speech in the first part of the psalm is therefore an optimistic proclamation—among other things of the fact that "all people are liars" (v. 2)! He speaks despite his present suffering because of his underlying confidence—his belief—that God will ultimately vindicate him, and if necessary through and beyond death, which leads to further speech.[15] As we will see shortly, this echo makes excellent sense in context, although our principal concern at present is its cluster of implications for 2 Cor 4:13 itself.

It seems clear that Paul is assuming a resonance between his ministry and the figure described in this psalm; *his argument requires this broader implicit narrative dimension*, and Richard Hays was therefore quite right to point to it. But with this clarification, we must turn to consider the relationship that probably underpins it—a relationship Paul characterizes as "having the same spirit of belief" (ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως).[16] Why is Paul echoing the psalmist, and with "the same spirit of belief"? And what warrant does this echo bring to his present claims to the Corinthians concerning belief and speech?[17]

There are really only three possibilities at this point, although one can be dismissed almost immediately. Paul might be speaking in rather literal terms of some transmigration of souls, a possibility on which there is no need to dwell.[18] Paul

[15] Frank Matera gives a nice account of the psalm's resonances at this point: see *II Corinthians: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 112; Stegman's account is a little more slanted: see "Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα (2 Corinthians 4:13)," 732.

[16] "Belief/believing" seems the best translation here, especially in view of the participle of knowledge that coordinates v. 14 with v. 13. However, a case could also be made for "trust"; so Stegman, "Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα (2 Corinthians 4:13)," 732. That the psalmist believes in God's personal care for him despite present adversity suggests that the particular beliefs in question here amount to "trust." But since "trust" automatically involves various beliefs (as attested in fact by v. 14), the broader point of this investigation remains valid irrespective of which translation equivalent we ultimately endorse—that Christ "trusts" entails directly and automatically that he also "believes." Note also that certain beliefs, amounting to trust, if sustained under duress, are appropriately denoted as "faithfulness" or "fidelity." So my preference for "belief/believing" here should not be taken as indicating some disjunction from the πίστις Χριστοῦ genitives in Paul (Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16 [2x], 20; 3:22; Phil 3:9) that are usually translated by christological advocates as "the faithfulness of Christ." However, unlike Stegman, I do not detect "faithfulness" per se in Psalm 115 LXX or its echo in 2 Cor 4:13. He—to my mind a little unwisely—separates 4:13 from the verb of knowledge in 4:14: see Stegman, "Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα (2 Corinthians 4:13)," 734–35.

[17] "What has led Paul to join his witness to that of the psalmist?" Martin asks appositely (*2 Corinthians*, 89).

[18] It is not a ludicrous suggestion, but is unlikely given what we know of Paul's anthropology from elsewhere, not to mention how he actually distinguishes between his identity and the

might be speaking, rather, of an imitation of the psalmist's struggles and response, so the apostle's claim to share the same spirit of belief as the psalmist is just a metaphor for the emotional resonances between that narrative and Paul's life—the sort of identification that happens every day between a reader and a figure in a gripping text. ("I shared the rage that Romeo experienced on hearing of the death of his best friend, Mercutio.")[19] Alternatively, Paul might be speaking of a still stronger, participatory identification with a prophetic anticipation in this psalm of Christ's passion. These seem to be our only plausible options.

But as we seek to decide between our two main alternatives of mimesis or participation we must also connect them with the two main interpretative options for Paul's actual statement of similarity just noted, which is made in pneumatic terms. Is the "shared spirit of belief" a metaphor for a shared generic attribute or a reference to the work of the divine Spirit? At this point, then, two interpretative options lie before us. Nevertheless, it seems likely that any solutions to these interpretative alternatives align with one another, and this will surely help us. If Paul's language of "spirit" is metaphorical, then the merely imitative reading looks more plausible; Paul might be suggesting that we possess the same believing attitude or disposition as the text's hero. But if Paul's language of "spirit" is pneumatological, then a messianic and ultimately christological reading looks more plausible. Once it has been conceded that the Holy Spirit is identifying Paul with another person, it will be difficult to resist the further implication that this must be Christ; the Spirit is, after all, for Paul the Spirit *of* Christ![20] So complementary sets of contentions can now be brought to bear in support of the same exegetical solution—hints that suggest that this "spirit" is not a spirit of imitation but is *the* Spirit, and that this is not the language of imitation in the thin sense of mere copying, but of participation.

On the one hand, this verse is unlikely to contain a merely mimetic or imitative set of claims because (1) this is not Paul's language of mimesis (while the usual

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psalmist's clearly in this text. Paul is not characterizing himself here as Elijah redivivus, analogous to Mark 8:28 (i.e., "I *am* the psalmist")! See Christine E. Joynes, "The Returned Elijah? John the Baptist's Angelic Identity in the Gospel of Mark," *SJT* 58 (2005): 455–67.

[19] It needs to be emphasized that I am using the notion of "imitation" in a "thin" sense here, with no theological overtones, to denote a mere copying of someone else.

[20] Although some interpreters do actually seem—rather remarkably—to do this: see Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), esp. 323–24; and his *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), esp. 223–26 (the latter discussing πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in relation specifically to Gal 2:16 and 20, but by extension with reference to 2 Cor 4:13, where Fee does not detect Christology [see pp. 160–206]). This is not to deny the ultimate involvement of "the brothers" with Christ, through the Spirit, and thereby with one another. But a programmatic and largely unmediated identification with a key figure by the Spirit is unusual if not unique for Paul (that is, apart from Christ; see more on this just below).

examples cited in this relation are actually dubious);[21] (2) Paul's conception of mimesis is arguably participatory in any case, so this "thin" reading of imitation is just not present elsewhere in Paul;[22] (3) such an identification—at this intimate biographical level with an ancient psalmist—would really be unparalleled in Paul (i.e., not even Abraham is indwelled in this way by the apostle); (4) he does not ever claim explicitly that he is identifying fully with the life of the psalmist (i.e., this is only implicit in his argument, which we have yet to construe fully, so the only explicit claim of identification concerns believing by itself); (5) this position ultimately yields quite a weak broader argument and set of claims—"I believe and speak because I identify or resonate with an OT figure who believed and spoke too"; and (6) as Gordon Fee pertinently observes, the language of "spirit" is then actually redundant.[23] None of these difficulties is fatal to the reading, but they are all problems—and further problems appear as we progress into the context.

[21] Furnish (*II Corinthians*, 258) notes this opinion by Philip E. Hughes and Rudolf Bultmann, who cite 1 Cor 4:21 and Gal 6:1, and Thrall toys with it as well (*Second Epistle*, 338–39). These last two texts are intriguing. Both speak of "a/the spirit of gentleness" (πνεύματι [τε] πραύτητος) and hence arguably supply a generic meaning for "spirit" in terms of "disposition" or the like. However, these texts are not decisive for 2 Cor 4:13. They do not function in the broader setting of a parallel scriptural figure and narrative, linking Paul with those. Moreover, both of these exhortations are arguably grounded in the Spirit of Christ in any case, strengthening that identification here (see Gal 5:22–23). See Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 118–21 (1 Cor 4:18–21; see Gal 5:22–23), 458–64 (Gal. 6:1–3). (Fee actually sees Gal 6:1 as decisive for 1 Cor 4:21, and the contextual indications as especially strong for the former text since it occurs in "a context where πνεῦμα has always and only referred to the Holy Spirit" [p. 462].) So Furnish is also right to reject this essentially insipid suggestion, affirming the presence of the Spirit in 2 Cor 4:13, and commenting correctly that this "is in accord with what Paul has written earlier about the Spirit's work (3:3, 6, 8, 17, 18), and with what he will shortly reiterate about the Spirit's presence (5:5; see 1:22)" (*II Corinthians*, 286). (See more on this contextual argument below in relation to Fee.)

For mimetic texts and language elsewhere in Paul, see μιμητής in 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; see also Eph 5:1, and elsewhere in the NT only Heb 6:12; see also ὑπόκρισις and πρόσωπον in Gal 2:11–14.

[22] See esp. Susan G. Eastman, *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). She offers a significant correction of the important but rather neglected analysis of Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), which is perceptive but presuppositionally straitened.

[23] Fee supplies four arguments in support of this point, the first two of which seem especially cogent (*God's Empowering Presence*, 323–24). He observes (1) that the participle ἔχοντες has been a repeated and important feature of Paul's text from 3:4, occurring also in 3:12; 4:1; and 4:7. In each case it denotes a continuation, and so 4:13 should probably be read in the same way, pointing thereby to Paul's extensive earlier emphases on pneumatology (see esp. 3:3, 6, 8, 17 [2x], 18), and his immediate earlier emphasis on participation in the death and life of Christ. Given these preceding emphases "it is difficult to imagine that the word should now occur in some lesser sense as 'attitude' or 'disposition,' since the Spirit has been the crucial matter right along" (p. 323).

On the other hand, this verse *is* likely to contain a participatory rationale because (1) this is Paul's usual language for the work of the Spirit (i.e., the use of the signifier πνεῦμα in a suitable setting); (2) such a reading explains the implicit presence of the rest of the psalmist's narrative in Paul's life—that is, of other aspects of Christ's passion figuring forth; this would not need to be specified if the passage's rationale is participatory throughout (i.e., it could just be assumed); (3) there are numerous parallels from Paul elsewhere that suggest his intimate identification with Christ (see, e.g., Romans 6; Phil 3:7–17); and (4) a good argument results from such an identification, as we will see in more detail shortly (and this will also be strongly confirmed by the context).

It might be objected at this point that it is problematic to claim that Paul is identifying with a psalm, which is identified in turn with Christ's passion. But Paul does this demonstrably elsewhere on occasion, as Hays has shown—particularly in Romans 15—and this reading strategy seems to be rooted in still earlier church practice (because it is unexplained in Paul, and attested in other NT texts).[24] And at this point we can note further that the assumption that Paul is identifying with a prophetic anticipation of Christ in Psalm 115 generates a surprisingly satisfying reading of 2 Cor 4:13.

If the psalmist is a prefiguration of Christ, then the Spirit can identify Paul and his coworkers with Christ as Christ speaks prophetically through that text of his own suffering and resurrection—the additional move that commentators in the past have generally either overlooked or resisted.[25] And Psalm 115 LXX reads beautifully as a text that speaks of Christ's vindication after a period of rejection and suffering. Almost every line can be construed to evoke some aspect of the passion or its consequences. Hence, if Paul is assuming an early Christian reading of this psalm with reference in the first instance to Christ himself, then it speaks of Christ's ministry; his speech in spite of his impending death; his deep convictions about God; his suffering, death, and subsequent resurrection; and perhaps even his testimony to his community assembled in Jerusalem—in short, it fits that narrative

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Moreover, (2) he points out—in the argument I note here in the text—that the addition of the word "spirit" to the phrase is redundant if all Paul intended was to speak of having the same "faith" as the psalmist; he seems to intend, rather, to speak precisely of some sharing of the same *Spirit* of faithfulness (ibid.). These arguments are strengthened also by our earlier suspicions that the phrase "a spirit of gentleness" in Paul denotes more than a mere disposition. Pneumatology is almost certainly in view in this phrase elsewhere, viz., in 1 Cor 4:21 and Gal 6:1.

[24] See Hays, "Christ Prays the Psalms."

[25] As already noted, Hanson has urged this reading, although not in detail (see *Paradox*, 51–53), and so Thrall is well aware of it (*Second Epistle*, 340). Hanson also cites Goudge, *Second Epistle*, 41–42. Stegman asserts that the *risen* Christ is speaking, although it is hard to see the grounds for this, or indeed how it makes sense of the narrative of trust and suffering ("Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα [2 Corinthians 4:13]," 733).

very nicely indeed.[26] And this narrative can then undergird Paul's claims concerning believing and speaking in his own apostolic ministry. Because Paul participates in Christ's story, where speech in the midst of suffering is eventually vindicated, he too as an apostle can speak in similar terms, despite any present shame or suffering, and with the certain expectation of eventual vindication (i.e., in those beliefs)—this is the set of connected points that he is making here to his Corinthian auditors (and these will be elaborated on momentarily when we turn to consider the context).[27]

It seems, then, that we can explain the three distinguishable elements in v. 13 in a tidy and mutually coherent fashion; we can solve this textual Rubik's Cube. But *only* this participatory approach, with its rich implicit Christology and vigorous pneumatology, can explain it convincingly. A more conventional approach, in largely mimetic terms, leaves us with various problems—a weak argument, puzzling identification, substantive gaps, linguistic redundancy, and so on—while no such difficulties are apparent in an essentially participatory construal. But can we say more than this? In fact another distinguishable and rather important stream of evidence confirms just this judgment—the implications of the surrounding context. And these become apparent at several different points: immediately in v. 14; more broadly in the preceding context, in ch. 4; and more broadly again, in the material that follows vv. 13–14, in the first half of ch. 5. I will now briefly discuss in turn these widening contextual circles.[28]

II. The Contexts of 2 Corinthians 4:13

Verse 14

All the material in verse 14 is coordinated by way of a participle with Paul's claims in v. 13: Ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως κατὰ τὸ

[26] Hays adds some further possible resonances at this point—notably, with the Lord's supper, which may resonate with the psalm's "cup of salvation" (see Hays, "Christ Prays the Psalms," 108–9, endorsed by Stegman, "Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα [2 Corinthians 4:13]," 733). I am less confident of this resonance than they are.

[27] It might be objected at this point that the discussion of Christ's believing in God is strange; however, this is not the case at all. If Christ was (at least for Paul) a fully sentient, embodied, and communicating person, then he possessed—like all other sentient, embodied, and communicating people—beliefs. And the possession of certain beliefs or convictions about God would have been especially important. Here he possesses the unshakable conviction that he should continue to speak despite the prospect of death, because God will resurrect him—martyrological beliefs! And these beliefs are exactly what Paul also possesses—and what he urges in turn on his Corinthian auditors. We could note further that Paul knows that Christ *spoke* (i.e., actual words and sayings [e.g., 1 Cor 7:10; 11:23b–25])—an activity requiring a mind and beliefs (or concepts) as constituents for language. O'Collins and Kendall give a rich account of this point in "Faith of Jesus."

[28] In this regard, see esp. "Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα (2 Corinthians 4:13)," 726–31.

γεγραμμένον· ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν, [14] εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν [κύριον[29]] Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν[30] Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν. We must try to give *some* account of how Paul's claims in v. 14 relate to those of v. 13, since they are part of the same sentence.[31] At this point a participatory construal seems to enjoy a significant advantage over any alternatives. It can supply an account of this entire sentence that poses no difficulties (and also integrates easily with the broader context), whereas a more conventional, anthropocentric approach presupposing mere copying will struggle to do so.

According to the participatory reading, Paul is supplying further information in v. 14 about the knowledge that he and his auditors are said to share in v. 13 with the psalmist, who is in a sense also speaking as Christ. All these figures believe in the midst of suffering, speak, and ultimately are vindicated. Hence, this dynamic is ultimately underpinned by the paradigmatic narrative of Christ's passion, Easter Friday being followed inexorably by Easter Sunday. It makes perfect sense, then, for Paul to go on to suggest in v. 14 that the knowledge in question in the case of himself and his auditors, which has just been spoken of in v. 13, is grounded in that explicit narrative. Because Christ has spoken and has been resurrected and glorified, those who participate in his steadfast believing and speaking now are guaranteed that resurrection in the future, and this should fill them with hope.[32] The one who resurrected Christ will resurrect both Paul and his auditors (and this is of course God).[33] The participatory reading already suggested by a detailed consid-

[29] Some reasonably impressive witnesses omit this—principally $\mathfrak{p}^{46}$ and B—and this would accord with usage throughout the chapter (see vv. 10, 11, and 14b), so I incline toward its correctness. However, not much turns on this.

[30] Less impressive witnesses supply διά with the genitive here instead of σύν—principally $\aleph^2$, D^1, and Ψ^r. The minority reading disturbs the apparent sense of Paul's argument, which is christologically inclusive rather than instrumental at this point (not that instrumentality is absent from inclusion). It would shift from less attested usage to something recognizably Pauline, so this variant looks secondary.

[31] It is not easy to say exactly how the critical participle εἰδότες in v. 14 is functioning in grammatical terms, but it seems best to view both ἔχοντες and εἰδότες as parallel, and both consequently seem to be adverbial and essentially causal. That is, they both supply reasons for the main actions of the sentence—for believing certain things, and so speaking. Thrall (*Second Epistle*, 338) suggests that ἔχοντες in v. 13 is causal, following Alfred Plummer and Furnish; Stegman concurs ("Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα [2 Corinthians 4:13]," 736).

[32] Not all commentators have emphasized the eschatological sense of v. 14 and the verb παραστήσει, but this seems difficult to deny given the double instance of resurrection terminology that precedes it, supported by its future tense and its emphatic σύν; see also 1 Thess 4:14, 17. (That the initial σύν is original also seems most likely; see above.) These questions are well canvassed by Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 343–44.

[33] In doing so, as Thrall notes (*Second Epistle*, 343–44), God also ends up presenting his resurrected Son Jesus, Paul, and the converted Corinthians, to himself, but this is not *that* awkward

eration of v. 13 in isolation consequently continues directly on through v. 14, while any alternative construal equally clearly does not.

An imitative reading really has no way of explaining the transitions at this point from the relationship between the past and the present in v. 13 to the relationship between the present and the future in v. 14, and from an identification with an ancient psalmist in v. 13 to a communion with the risen Christ in v. 14. In addition, it lacks any specific markers *of* imitation in this clause. Indeed, if v. 14 was separated from v. 13—perhaps being relocated to another page by some bemused copyist—then no one would dream of interpreting it in imitative categories oriented toward the Psalter.

Consequently v. 14 seems to offer fairly decisive evidence that the participatory construal of v. 13 in relation to Christ's underlying believing is on the right track. But can our developing interpretation integrate with its broader settings in 2 Corinthians?

The Preceding Context: 4:1–15

A quick reprise of 2 Corinthians 4—especially vv. 10–12[34]—indicates that the verses leading up to v. 13 are explicitly participatory and Christocentric, in emphases that smoothly continue Paul's overarching rhetorical objectives in 2 Corinthians 4 as a whole. Since 4:1 the apostle has been concerned to stress both the integrity and the glory of his apostolic ministry (so ch. 3). He brings to the Corinthians nothing less than the glory of God that shone in creation and is now revealed more explicitly in his apostolic proclamation of the glory of Christ. However, Paul is also concerned to emphasize the concealment of this glorious ministry in "vessels of clay" (4:7); he is not now *obviously* glorious. Nevertheless this concealment ultimately demonstrates that this divine power is indeed from God, and not from any human source (see 1 Cor 2:5). The struggles that Paul faces—"afflicted," "perplexed," "persecuted," and "struck down" (vv. 8–9)—are therefore merely evidence of a more basic, underlying dynamic that runs from suffering to glory. As vv. 10–11 go on to assert, these difficulties are all informed by a familiar christological sequence within which resurrection follows suffering and death. Paul's emphasis on the actual life and death of Christ is signaled in this passage by his unparalleled use of the simple designation "Jesus" (v. 10 [2x]; v. 11 [2x]; v. 14

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for Paul. See 1 Cor 15:24–28, where a slightly different, although equally complex process is in view. See also Eph 5:26–27, where Christ presents his bride to himself.

[34] [10] . . . πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν περιφέροντες, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ [11] ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν [12] ὥστε ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν.

[probably 2x]), which is generally an indicator for him of a focus on—as modern scholars put it—"the historical Jesus."[35] In Paul's being given over to death, then, God's divine and resurrecting power is evident in him, as it was for Jesus himself paradigmatically, although this is something that clearly benefits the Corinthians ultimately as well. Because of this narratively expressed participation, *Paul's* sufferings are evidence of *their* eventual glorification. As v. 12 puts it—perhaps a little opaquely at first glance—"death is at work *in us*, but life *in you*." And we have just seen that v. 14 makes essentially the same point, also explaining it marginally more clearly: "we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence."

So it seems clear that the basic argument that Paul is developing from 4:1, and more specifically from 4:7, continues through v. 14, being applied to an even wider constituency in v. 15. Paul's sufferings are evidence of the fundamental dynamic of Christ being played out in his life and the lives of his communities, thereby guaranteeing at some future time the glory of resurrection. Moreover, this dynamic informs his ministry—his proclamation of this glorious, if temporarily hidden, reality in a "vessel of clay." These are good reasons then for affirming that ministry's integrity and truthfulness, as against deriding or abandoning it in favor of some other presentation and apostle superficially more glorious and attractive but not evidencing any participation in the crucified and resurrected Lord. A period of faithful speech and witness, which seems inevitably to incur suffering if not execution, is followed by divine vindication; the one who is presently derided is nevertheless the one who possesses a glorious future. It can now be seen that a christological reading of the psalm quotation in v. 13, along with Paul's participation in that prophetic anticipation of Christ's passion, confirms this broader argument exactly. Moreover, the emphasis in context on Paul's *speech* is also now readily comprehensible.

The speaking that Paul offers by way of participation in the believing speech of the suffering Christ is both an affirmation that this resurrection will come and a scripturally foretold element in the initial christological dynamic of suffering. Hence, Paul is really suggesting, through the utilization of this particular text, that true Christian speech is believing speech in the midst of suffering that is oriented, in spite of this, toward life and hope—as the Scriptures attest. It is speech that therefore corresponds to an apostle whose glorious ministry is presently concealed in an earthen vessel of suffering (as against an apostle who is not so constrained but is vastly more impressive in appearance and apparent success—one of the main contingent problems that Paul seems to face at Corinth).[36]

[35] This point is often noted in relation to Rom 3:26; Leander Keck surveys the issues especially clearly in "Jesus in Romans," *JBL* 108 (1989): 443–60.

[36] There is no need to press at this point into further details concerning the precise identity

It might seem, then, that enough has been said by this point to suggest the probity of a reading of 2 Cor 4:13 in participatory terms, but we have one more area of evidence to consider.

The Following Context: 4:16–5:7

We have just seen that, because Christ has spoken and has been resurrected and glorified, those who participate in his steadfast belief and speech now are promised that resurrection in the future (see esp. v. 14). The one who raised Christ will raise both Paul and his auditors—and this is of course God. The following context in 2 Corinthians now confirms that this is not just an imitative and narrative argument. That is, such hope rests on more than the fidelity of God (faithful as s/he is), who will kindly do to Christians what has already been done to Christ. Because these auditors possess the Spirit of Christ, the resurrected one—the implications of v. 13—they share *directly* in his life. Consequently, the experiences of his believing, suffering, and speech are now a *guarantee* that the resurrection is coming. *Those experiences are the concrete manifestation of involvement in that same trajectory, thereby guaranteeing its end point in resurrection and glorification*. Indeed, it is at this point that we begin to grasp the participatory dynamic that 2 Cor 4:13 supplies for the whole notion of belief in Paul. Belief as suggested by this text is not an appropriation of salvation not previously present as much as a marker of salvation present in those who have been appropriated by God, assuring believers that this salvation is real despite present suffering. Contrary to all appearances, the suffering will result in glory.

This argument is already familiar to Pauline interpreters since it is made at some length in Romans 8, especially vv. 18–39.[37] The same set of contentions is recapitulated—although more briefly—in the sentences that follow 4:14 in 2 Corinthians.[38]

In Romans 8, God works in the lives of suffering and groaning Christians (see especially the centrality of God in vv. 27–33, and of suffering and groaning in vv. 18–23), principally by way of the Spirit (vv. 2, 5–6, 9–11, 13-16, 23, 26–27). These figures do not walk by sight—in terms of the seen—but by hope and in perseverance (see v. 25: εἰ δὲ ὃ οὐ βλέπομεν ἐλπίζομεν, δι᾽ ὑπομονῆς ἀπεκδε-

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of this opposition: for a useful recent summary of debate, see *Paul and His Opponents* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Pauline Studies 2; Leiden: Brill, 2005).

[37] This connection is not to my knowledge much remarked on by commentators, although Murphy-O'Connor is alert to specific links between Rom 6:14; 8:11; and 2 Cor 4:13–14 ("Faith and Resurrection in 2 Cor 4:13–14," *RB* 95 [1988]: 543–50, esp. 543–44). See also Jan Lambrecht's remarks in R. Bieringer and J. Lambrecht, *Studies on 2 Corinthians* (BETL 112; Leuven: University Press, 1994), 336–37, 42–43.

[38] 2 Corinthians 4:14 and its context are not *reducible* to this set of contentions.

χόμεθα; see also 1 Cor 13:7, 13). But this suffering, which follows in the footsteps of the suffering son (vv. 17b), guarantees their eventual deliverance and glorification (vv. 28–39). Similarly, in 2 Corinthians the one working in the lives of suffering Christians (2 Cor 5:5a), who groan (5:2, 4) awaiting their permanent heavenly dwellings (5:1–4), is God, the one who has also given the down payment of the Spirit (5:5b). Consequently, Christian life is again lived not in terms of what is "seen" (4:18; 5:7) but "by means of fidelity" (διὰ πίστεως). Moreover, once more present suffering guarantees future glory.

That these various coordinated motifs appear in immediate explication of 4:13–14 in 2 Corinthians—all echoed by Romans 8—seems quite significant. In the first instance, this serves to draw the fourth occurrence of πιστ- language in this textual neighborhood, in 5:7, into the interpretation of 4:13–14, where the other three πιστ- terms in context occur. (See more on this just below.) But even more important, this all points again to the basis of the argument that has been emerging in terms of a pneumatologically effected participation.[39] There seems to be a common argument here by Paul—nuanced contextually—for present believing, speech, patience, and hope, within both Christian leaders and their communities.[40]

Hence, the following, as well as the immediately preceding argument in 2 Corinthians seems to confirm the participatory reading of 4:13 and 14 quite strongly, at which point I turn to examine a few of its implications. There are four in particular.[41]

III. Summary and Implications

The "Objectivist" Objection

Although the foregoing is a complex case, it is not for this reason necessarily an implausible one. A number of contentions, drawn from various overlapping areas of evidence, combine to suggest that Christ is implicit in Paul's citation of Ps 115:1 LXX, a text that the apostle is reading messianically. Hence, the Messiah is the

[39] See the studies of participation already listed in n. 5 above.

[40] Paul articulates this dynamic in 2 Cor 4:16–5:9 in distinctive terms as well, namely, a set of parallel dualisms: the perishing outer versus renewed inner person; the seen and temporal versus unseen and eternal; and an earthly tent or house versus a heavenly, permanent house not made by human hands (see also clothing in v. 4). These intriguing metaphors have important implications for the broader reconstruction of Paul's thought—especially his soteriology and anthropology—but do not affect my case here significantly. Several essays by Lambrecht are especially useful in this relation (*Studies on 2 Corinthians*, 257–361).

[41] Stegman provides a stimulating discussion of the reading's implications for other passages in 2 Corinthians ("῾Επίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα [2 Corinthians 4:13]," 737–45).

implicit subject of the verb πιστεύω when it is used here. Paul's Spirit-assisted participation in the Christ spoken of in Psalm 115 then grounds his assertions in 2 Cor 4:13 vis-à-vis the Corinthians—that he believes and therefore speaks to them about and in the steadfast hope of future vindication and resurrection, appearances notwithstanding. This is an intelligible and contextually integrated reading. However, any alternative construals struggle to deliver validity and even intelligibility to these statements by Paul, let alone contextually illuminating contentions. For these reasons I view 2 Cor 4:13 as useful evidence for—among other things—contesting the claim that Christ is never the subject of the verb πιστεύω in Paul. In this instance at least, he seems to be. But these realizations concerning 2 Cor 4:13 do more than undermine a standard objection to the subjective construal of πίστις Χριστοῦ; they move a broader agenda forward positively as well.

A Participatory Purview

This reading seems intelligible when it is pursued in participatory terms, and from this point onward we can grasp some of the basic constituents of that paradigm more clearly, which is now attested in 2 Cor 4:13 and its context. The participatory model of the Pauline gospel understands the person to be saved as she is included within the prototypical journey of Christ, sharing both his downward trajectory through suffering and execution, and his upward trajectory through resurrection and glorification. Moreover, the process of personal integration or participation is facilitated through the work of the Spirit, who effects this integration in a fundamentally creative and reconstitutive way, so the participation is overtly pneumatological. Participation should be understood in this "thick" sense, while each one of these elements seems to be either explicit or directly implicit in 2 Cor 4:13 and its context.[42] But where does such a discourse position the activity of belief?

The Function of Belief

An overarching participatory approach to Pauline soteriology views correct Christian belief as a post- rather than a pre-conversion phenomenon in the Christian—a disposition generated by participation in Christ's journey. A Christ–Christian resonance in this activity is expected by such a view, not resisted, and will function as a confirmation of the entire process's validity. Belief is *a marker of participation* in the salvation announced by the gospel; hence, it functions in terms of assurance more than appropriation (and consequently rather like circumcision: see Rom 4:11–12).

[42] This soteriology is especially apparent in Romans 5–8.

It is sometimes important to ask how Christians can be identified; what marks them out for resurrection and a share in the life of the age to come over against other people, some of whom might lay claim illegitimately to Christian identity? (This question may have been prompted especially by any challenges from rival teachers among Paul's communities.[43]) One scripturally attested and repeated answer in Paul is belief—that is, the presence of belief in the Christian that echoes the steadfast believing of Christ, the resurrected one (see Rom 10:9–10). Christians who participate in Christ should evidence, however faintly, some of his dispositions and activities, thereby assuring both themselves and any opponents of their identity and their destiny. It seems that 2 Cor 4:13 encourages this participatory interpretation of believing in Paul's writings.

The Involvement of Intertextuality

The language of belief is not especially common in 2 Corinthians as a whole.[44] This makes the sudden cluster of πιστ- signifiers in and around 4:13 all the more significant. It contains four of the total eleven instances of πιστ- terminology in 2 Corinthians (including 5:7 in that total), or just over 36 percent. (There are also three adjectival alpha privatives—ἄπιστος.) These data seem to confirm the theory that discussions of belief in Paul are often prompted by the citation of OT texts that use πιστ- terms, so there is usually an important intertextual relationship in play.[45] This means, further, that the meaning of πιστ- terms for Paul and his use of these antecedent texts are questions that stand or fall together; any explanations of his contingent rhetorical emphases on πίστις (and the like) must relate directly and plausibly to his contingent reasons for citing the relevant Scriptures as well. It follows from this that scholars cannot simply pass directly from instances of πιστ-

[43] This is one of the key elements in J. Louis Martyn's reconstruction of the Galatian situation, where much of the πίστ- data in Paul occurs; see his *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), esp. 14, 18, 117–26; also idem, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), esp. 7–24.

[44] See also further instances of the noun in 1:24 (2x); 8:7; 10:15; and 13:5 (that is, in addition to 4:13 and 5:7; note that the verb does not occur outside 4:13); the adjective in 1:18 and 6:15; and the alpha-privative in 4:4; 6:14 and 15. Stegman's comments on 13:5 are especially interesting ("᾽Επίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα [2 Corinthians 4:13]," 744–45).

[45] See my analysis in *Deliverance of God*, esp. chs. 15–20. Incidentally, this text arguably raises a problem for Francis Watson's brilliant thesis that Paul's intertextuality is primarily a narrative reading of the Pentateuch, although Watson certainly grasps the connection between Paul's πιστ- terminology and intertextuality, articulating many of these connections elegantly; see *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T&T Clark International [Continuum], 2004). 2 Corinthians 4:13 is discussed only as a parallel citation of Psalm 115 LXX to Rom 3:4 (p. 69 n. 80).

language and argumentation to Paul's coherent core or gospel.[46] The hurdle of what we might dub "circumstantial intertextuality" must first be negotiated.

In the light of all these judgments, it may also be clearer to translate 2 Cor 4:13–14 as follows, with certain substantive ellipses supplied:

> Having the same Spirit of belief [as Christ] in accordance with what was written [that he spoke], "I believed, therefore I spoke," so also we believed, therefore we also spoke [to you], knowing that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and will present us together with you.

Construed in these terms, this text provides an instance of the verb πιστεύω being used in Paul with Christ as its implicit subject, with a further application of his ongoing belief to the Christian by way of the Spirit, who is also specified in context. Consequently, this text contributes significantly to the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate even though its contributions might not be immediately apparent. Its implications, however, are ultimately no less clear for being subtle and implicit. Many considerations seem to suggest that this Christocentric, and ultimately participatory, reading of 2 Cor 4:13 is the correct one.[47]

[46] An allusion to J. Christiaan Beker's important programmatic methodology: see *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), esp. 11–36.

[47] See now Kenneth Schenck ("2 Corinthians and the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate," *CBQ* 70 [2008]: 524–37), who thinks that Paul presupposes Psalm 114 LXX as well as 115 LXX.

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The Jewish Messiahs, the Pauline Christ, and the Gentile Question

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For the most part, research into early Jewish messianism, on the one hand, and research into the Pauline letters, on the other, proceed apace in their respective spheres, rarely if ever meeting. Scholars in Jewish studies, who give due attention to Jesus of Nazareth as a data point on the graph of early messianic phenomena, typically do not adduce Paul in this connection, since it was, after all, the self-styled apostle to the Gentiles who launched a movement that in late antiquity increasingly became something other than, if not opposed to, Judaism.[1] Meanwhile, NT scholars have long observed that Paul never makes the claim, as the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John do, that Jesus is the Christ, suggesting that for Paul "Christ" is no longer a title but rather a surname.[2] For all parties concerned, Paul is a subject of interest principally for his views on Torah, not his views on messiah.[3]

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[1] See, e.g., the assessment of Harris Lenowitz: "Often thought the most successful messianic movement in Judaism, Christianity achieved its power and endurance largely by abandoning the goals and society of Jesus and his disciples following his death. . . . Christianity in fact ceased to be a messianic movement and became instead a revitalization movement" *(The Jewish Messiahs: From the Galilee to Crown Heights* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], 7).

[2] See, e.g., Werner Kramer, *Christ, Lord, Son of God* (trans. Brian Hardy; SBT 50; London: SCM, 1966), 203–14; James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 197–99; and most recently Magnus Zetterholm, "Paul and the Missing Messiah," in *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Magnus Zetterholm; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 33–55.

[3] Witness the tireless production of essays and monographs on "Paul and the law."

But upon further reflection, this state of affairs is passing strange. For one thing, as Alan Segal and Daniel Boyarin have insisted, Paul ranks alongside the Qumran covenanters, Philo, and Josephus as a first-order literary witness to the varieties of Judaism in the first century C.E.[4] For another, as John Gager has pointed out, messianic movements are as dependent on their followers as they are on their messiahs, and Paul must be counted among the most influential early followers of the messianic movement surrounding Jesus.[5] Paul is the Nathan of Gaza to Jesus' Sabbatai Svi, to borrow Gershom Scholem's suggestive analogy.[6] Not only, as Pauline interpreters have come to realize in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, does Paul belong to the conceptual universe of apocalyptic Judaism;[7] it is also the case that Paul's particular brand of apocalypticism is marked throughout by the agency of a messiah figure. Relative to the current state of the disciplines, then, the present study must be called "interdisciplinary," but relative to the sources themselves it is not so at all.[8] The purpose of this study is to make this connection, between Paul and messianism, from one passage and on one theme in particular, namely, the citation of Isa 11:10 LXX in Rom 15:12 and the matter of Paul's rationale for his own mission to the Gentiles.

[4] Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Paul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), xi–xvi; Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Contraversions 1; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 1–12.

[5] John G. Gager, "Messiahs and Their Followers," in *Toward the Millennium: Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco* (ed. Peter Schäfer and Mark R. Cohen; SHR 77; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 37–46, here 38: "The figures of Jesus and his early followers fall completely within the boundaries of first-century Jewish messianism. . . . The presence of the term *christos* in a first-century text, even attached to one put to death by his enemies, does not place that figure outside or even at the periphery of messianic Judaism." In the case of Paul, however, Gager understands him to have drastically reconfigured the messiahship of Jesus in the context of the Gentile mission: "For Paul Christ is the redeemer of the Gentiles—exclusively" (John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000], 143).

[6] Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, 1626–1676* (trans. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky; Bollingen Series 93; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 204, 207; see also W. D. Davies, "From Schweitzer to Scholem: Reflections on Sabbatai Svi," *JBL* 95 (1976): 529–58.

[7] For this line of interpretation, see especially Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (trans. William Montgomery; New York: Holt, 1931); W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1948); E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); Paula Fredriksen, "From Jesus to Christ: The Contribution of Paul," in *Jews and Christians Speak of Jesus* (ed. Arthur E. Zannoni; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 77–91; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997).

[8] On this sort of "interdisciplinarity," I am influenced by Geza Vermes, "Methodology in the Study of Jewish Literature in the Graeco-Roman Period," *JJS* 36 (1985): 143–58, esp. 157–58.

I. Messiah Language and the Problem of Meaning

To my proposal that Paul represents a particular strand of early Jewish messianism, there are two principal types of objections. One is that, for one linguistic reason or another, Paul does not mean "messiah" when he writes χριστός.[9] But another, equally forceful objection is that משיח/χριστός terminology itself does not mean anything in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The first order of business, then, is to establish what, and indeed whether, messiah language signified in our period. On this question, the present *communis opinio* is that messianic traditions at the turn of the era were so uncommon and so diverse as to be effectively indeterminate. Of course, previous generations of scholars, both Jewish and Christian, spoke with great confidence and verve about "the messianic idea in Judaism."[10] But all this began to change in the second half of the twentieth century. The process probably began in Enoch research, where the confusing variety of titles of exaltation in the Similitudes of Enoch (= *1 Enoch* 37–71), especially, seemed to give the lie to the idea of a uniform messianic hope.[11] As early as 1946, Gerhard Sevenster wrote that the word משיח/χριστός in the Second Temple period had no fixed content at all.[12] In a 1966 study anticipating his entry on χρίω, κτλ. in Kittel's *Wörterbuch,* Marinus de Jonge wrote that Sevenster's assessment was "on the right lines" and that in fact "[the evidence] requires us, I think, to go even farther than he did."[13]

[9] For this view, see the works cited in n. 2 above. This formidable objection requires an equally formidable response; in this essay, we will be able to make only some preliminary moves in that direction. But see the response of N. T. Wright, "The Messiah and the People of God: A Study in Pauline Theology with Particular Reference to the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans" (PhD diss., Oxford University, 1980).

[10] See, e.g., Joseph Drummond, *The Jewish Messiah: A Critical History of the Messianic Idea among the Jews from the Rise of the Maccabees to the Closing of the Talmud* (London: Longman, 1877); Abba Hillel Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel from the First through the Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Macmillan, 1927); Hugo Gressmann, *Der Messias* (FRLANT 43; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1929); Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in the Old Testament and Later Judaism* (trans. G. W. Anderson; New York: Abingdon, 1956); Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel: From Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah* (trans. W. F. Stinespring; New York: Macmillan, 1955); Gershom Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," in idem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism, and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 1–36.

[11] On the interpretive problems, see now the collected papers of the 2005 International Enoch Seminar: *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

[12] Gerhard Sevenster, *De Christologie van het Nieuwe Testament* (Amsterdam: Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1948), 75–78.

[13] Marinus de Jonge, "The Use of the Word 'Anointed' in the Time of Jesus," *NovT* 8 (1966): 132–48, here 132; see also Marinus de Jonge et al., "χρίω, κτλ.," *TDNT* 9:493–580.

Morton Smith underlined the indeterminacy of messianic traditions in an important article in 1959, arguing that halakah, not eschatological hope, was the basic principle of social cohesion in Roman-era Judaism.[14] In 1987, William Scott Green drew the historical-linguistic conclusion that the word "messiah" in Jewish antiquity was all signifier with no signified.[15] In short, apart from a few dissenting voices, the end of the twentieth century witnessed the disintegration of the "messianic idea" in Jewish studies.[16]

Relative to the older syntheses, this development was perhaps inevitable and was certainly salutary. But this now-standard claim, that messianic ideas in the first century were hopelessly diffuse and effectively nonreferential, is grossly overdrawn.[17] Let us take as an example the variety of messiah references among the Dead Sea Scrolls, about which de Jonge rightly observed that "one thing is clear: the use of the term משיח is not limited to the expectations connected with the son of David."[18] This is of course quite true, but neither is it the case that the word is expanded to refer to just anything. At the very most, it refers to a royal figure, a priestly figure, the classical prophets collectively, and in one instance Moses.[19] If we set aside for the moment the single reference to Moses and allow for the idiomatic use of the plural משיחים for the prophets, then even in the Scrolls משיח really only has two principal referents, one royal and the other priestly.[20] This certainly expands the semantic range of the word, but by no means does it explode it.

Likewise, the relative scarcity of instances of the word in the literature from our period has been widely taken to indicate "the relative unimportance of the term

[14] Morton Smith, "What Is Implied by the Diversity of Messianic Figures?" *JBL* 78 (1959): 66–72.

[15] William Scott Green, "Messiah in Judaism: Rethinking the Question," in *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (ed. Jacob Neusner et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1–13.

[16] For the *communis opinio,* see especially two important collections of essays: Neusner et al., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era;* and James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992). For the minority opinion, see N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 307–20; and William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998).

[17] See the objections of John J. Collins, "Messiahs in Context: Method in the Study of Messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects* (ed. Michael O. Wise et al.; Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 722; New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), 213–29.

[18] De Jonge, "Use of the Word 'Anointed,'" 139.

[19] So rightly Martin G. Abegg and Craig A. Evans, "Messianic Passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. James H. Charlesworth et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 190–203.

[20] The idiom משיחים for נביאים is certainly derived from Ps 105:15/1 Chr 16:22: אל תגעו במשיחי ולנביאי אל תרעו.

in the context of Jewish expectations concerning the future."[21] This is a much more defensible claim than the former. It is striking, indeed, that great swaths of Jewish literature, not only rabbinic but also earlier apocalyptic, wisdom, and halakic texts, get on quite well without any hint of a messiah figure, or indeed of future hope at all. There are methodological problems, though, with the notion of weighing the importance of an idea, whether by counting instances of a word or otherwise.[22] We do better to speak not about the importance of messiah language but rather about its meaning, that is, the particular things that it signifies. What the sparse distribution of the concept in the extant literature shows us is that a messiah figure was not a subject of extensive, concerted literary reflection in Judaism at the turn of the era. It does not follow, however, that the words משיח/χριστός do not themselves signify anything. Quite the contrary. The fact that the references are diffuse across literary corpora rather than highly concentrated is strong evidence that the words do signify a recognizable collection of concepts and are not simply the private language of a sectarian group. One did not have to be a disciple of the Enochic traditions, or a Qumran covenanter, or a follower of Jesus to know what was meant when messiah language was used in Jewish antiquity. All one needed was a familiarity with the Hebrew or Greek Bible, especially with a pool of passages associated with Davidic royal ideology.

Of course, the question of the extent and the degree of popular messianic expectation—how many Jews were expecting a messiah, and how earnestly the expectation was felt—is another matter altogether. On such questions we are at present largely ignorant, and it is possible that we will always be.[23] But this is no disaster; it is simply a feature of the nature of the sources. The fundamental error, which is disappointingly widespread in scholarship, is the assumption that to talk about what messiah texts mean we need to know the religious and political hopes of the general populace. The coherence and distribution of popular messianic hope are fascinating historical questions, but it is almost entirely irrelevant to the question of whether messiah words have meaning. A given author can mean something whether anyone else in the world shares her views or not.[24] It is only earlier, espe-

[21] De Jonge, "Use of the Word 'Anointed,'" 134.

[22] The objection of Richard Horsley and John Hanson, to the effect that the few literary references only mean that the idea is unimportant to the lettered elite, not necessarily to the populace more generally, is well taken. Horsley and Hanson's bandit-messiahs, known especially from Josephus's account of the First Revolt, may indeed be evidence of a popular, nonliterary messianism, even if the words משיח/χριστός are not used of these figures (see Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus* [Minneapolis: Winston, 1985]).

[23] But the approach of Horbury (*Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ*) to this very difficult sort of social-historical reconstruction is the best on offer to date.

[24] I say "almost entirely irrelevant" because the meaning of words is dependent on a socially established web of signification, a group of people who share a common grammar. My point is

cially Christian, reconstructions, which explained Christian messianic texts by appeal to a putative messianic longing among first-century Jews everywhere, that have made us think otherwise. In fact, messiah language does signify in Paul's first-century context. It is not entirely determinate; there is some diversity to the set of things signified. But this diversity is closely circumscribed; it includes just a handful of ideas. And users of messiah language typically indicate which of these ideas they have in mind by citing or alluding to particular biblical traditions rather than others. The really interesting work, then, has to do with parsing out the particular concepts being employed in any particular messiah text.

II. Messiah Traditions and the Gentile Question

Contrary to ancient charges of misanthropy and modern generalizations about Roman-era ethnography, it is now generally recognized that many, perhaps most, Jews in antiquity had extensive interaction with their pagan (and, later, Christian) neighbors both in the Diaspora and in the land of Israel.[25] A number of recent studies have made this point convincingly, opening up new approaches both to "the Jewish question" as pagans and Christians conceived it and to "the Gentile question" as Jews conceived it.[26] But these scholarly accounts of Jewish–Gentile relations in

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that, to grasp an author's point, the other members of the group need only know the meaning of the relevant words, not share the author's views. I presuppose here the basic linguistic scheme of Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (trans. W. Baskin; Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977; French original, 1916); and now see Saussure, *Writings in General Linguistics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006; French original, 2002).

[25] Per general scholarly convention, in the absence of any other equally convenient shorthand term, I use "pagan" to refer to ancient practitioners of traditional polytheistic religions, its ideological liabilities notwithstanding.

[26] See, *inter alia,* John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 31; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds., *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); Terence L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007). Per convention, I use the phrase "the Gentile question" as a convenient shorthand expression for a variety of ancient Jewish perspectives on the place of the Gentiles in God's plan for the world. The origin of the phrase in scholarly shorthand is not entirely clear. I have been able to trace it back as far as 1892, in an anonymous note contributed to the journal *The Old and New Testament Student:* "The Gentile question—how is it that it does not emerge in Matthew and Mark but is visible on every page of Luke and has, however, gone out of sight in John?" ("The Gospels and the Early Church," *The Old and New Testament Student* 14 [1892]: 304–6, here 306).

antiquity typically do not give close attention to messianic movements, presumably because the latter are understood to be concerned with the fate of Israel.[27] Louis Feldman's magisterial 1993 study is a happy exception. Among other things, Feldman shows how messianic strains in Roman-era Judaism probably contributed to the attraction of Gentiles to Judaism during that period.[28] In fact, the premise that messiah traditions and the movements that they spawned were concerned only with the fate of ethnic or territorial Israel is simply false. If messiah traditions could incite Gentiles to take an interest in Judaism, they could also provide a framework in which Jews could make sense of the role of the Gentiles in the world.

We know of one such case, roughly contemporary with Paul, in which a royal-ideology tradition from Israel's Scriptures became a rubric by which some Jews answered the Gentile question. From Josephus's perspective, the λῃσταί ("brigands") who were the messiah figures of the First Revolt against Rome, envisioned not just an independent Jewish state but a worldwide Jewish empire.[29] "What incited them to war more than anything else was an ambiguous oracle [χρησμὸς ἀμφίβολος], also found in their sacred writings [ἱεροῖς γράμμασιν], to the effect that at that time someone from their country would rule the whole world [ἄρξει τῆς οἰκουμένης" (Josephus, *B.J.* 6.312).[30] Josephus's oracle, which many modern interpreters have attempted to identify but which remains stubbornly ambiguous, speaks of a Jewish king who not only reclaims the land of Israel but also comes to rule the world.[31] In the early second century C.E., too, Tacitus witnesses to the perception

[27] So Lloyd Gaston can say, "Jesus is then for Paul not the Messiah. He is neither the climax of the history of Israel nor the fulfillment of the covenant, and therefore Jesus is not seen in relation to David or Moses. For Paul, Jesus is the new act of the righteousness of God in the inclusion of the Gentiles" (*Paul and the Torah* [Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987], 7), where the implied premise is that the messiah and God's solution to the Gentile question are patently different sorts of things.

[28] See Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World,* 326–27: "This period, beginning at least as early as the second century B.C.E., also saw the heightening of Jewish messianic expectations; and a connection between messianic-eschatological hopes and Gentile interest in Judaism developed. . . . It may well be that the spectacle of Gentiles flocking to join the Jewish nation helped to spur such expectations and in turn further aroused missionary activity to bring about the eschatological age in which all people would acknowledge the G-d of Israel."

[29] That Josephus's λῃσταί are messiah figures is now clear, especially thanks to the work of Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs,* esp. 88–134.

[30] Following the text and translation of H. St. J. Thackeray (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928; repr., 1997).

[31] See Wright, *New Testament and the People of God,* 312–13: "If there is one thing I wish Josephus had added to his entire corpus, it is the footnote to this text which would have told us which biblical passage he had in mind"; venturing his own conclusion that the χρησμὸς ἀμφίβολος is the book of Daniel, esp. chs. 2, 7, 9 (ibid., 314). But cf. the more cautious assessment of John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 200: "It is not clear what passage in the Scriptures Josephus had in mind."

that Jewish messianic convictions are universal in scope. "The majority firmly believed that their ancient priestly writings [*antiquis sacerdotum litteris*] contained the prophecy that this was the very time when the East should grow strong and that men starting from Judea should possess the world [*profectique Iudaea rerum poterentur*]" (Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.13).[32] At about the same time Suetonius, who probably shares a source with Tacitus, reports, "There had spread all over the Orient an old and established belief [*vetus et constans opinio*], that it was fated at that time for men coming from Judea to rule the world [*Iudaea profecti rerum potirentur*]. This prediction, referring to the emperor of Rome, as afterwards appeared from the event, the people of Judea took to themselves; accordingly they revolted" (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 4.5).[33]

These passages are of course well known among students of the First Revolt, but their particular relevance to the Gentile question has not been adequately recognized. According to this exegetical tradition, which is known not only to Josephus but also to pagan historians, the messiah not only restores the fortunes of Israel but brings the whole οἰκουμένη under his rule. This constitutes one possible answer to the Gentile question in the context of Roman rule, a particularly messianic answer. Its vision for the pagan nations is neither their destruction nor their conversion, but rather their subjection to the Jewish king.[34] Our point is not that Paul knows and shares this interpretation of the same ambiguous oracle, only that there is evidence for a contemporary strand of messianism that is Gentile-inclusive, albeit in a manifestly undemocratic way. That is, one of the things messiah language can signify in Roman-era Judaism is the rule of a Jewish king over the Gentile peoples.[35]

[32] Following the text and translation of Clifford H. Moore and John Jackson (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931).

[33] Following the text and translation of J. C. Rolfe (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914; repr., 1979). It seems most likely that Tacitus and Suetonius had in common a source who was not Josephus; see the discussion of Eduard Norden, "Josephus und Tacitus über Jesus Christus und eine messianische Prophetie," *Neue Jahrbücher für klassische Altertum* 31 (1913): 636–66.

[34] Also relevant here is the χριστός of *Pss. Sol.* 17:21–46, about whom it is said, ἕξει λαοὺς ἐθνῶν δουλεύειν αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τὸν ζυγὸν αὐτοῦ, "He will have the peoples of the Gentiles to serve him under his yoke" (17:30). Here the Gentiles "serve" (δουλεύειν) rather than "obey" (ὑπακούειν) the messiah, but in light of the psalm's literary dependence on Isaiah 11, the conceptual parallel is clear enough. Of course the psalmist expects the messiah to cleanse Jerusalem (καθαρίσαι Ιερουσαλημ [v. 22]), to regather the holy people (συνάξει λαὸν ἅγιον [v. 26]), and to rule over Israel (βασιλεῦσαι ἐπὶ Ισραηλ παῖδά σου [v. 21]). But for the psalmist this does not preclude the messiah's bringing the Gentiles under his yoke as well.

[35] In addition, the fact that this tradition is preserved in the Roman historians weighs against a point that is often made in the discussion of messiahship in Paul, namely, that Paul's Gentile auditors could not have understood what χριστός meant, that it could have suggested to them only an "oiled" athlete or a "plastered" wall. Quite apart from the consideration that Paul or other

III. Paul and the Gentile Mission

Paul is a famous anomaly in the history of Judaism, a self-styled Jewish apostle to the Gentiles. Understandably, no small scholarly effort has gone into explaining this anomaly. Previous generations of Christian scholars found in Paul the liberator of universal religion from its nationalistic Jewish fetters.[36] But what was always clear to some interpreters is now generally recognized, that this account of Paul is as historically absurd as it is morally repugnant.[37] Post–World War II scholarship has witnessed a number of much more promising intra-Jewish explanations of Paul's rationale for the Gentile mission. E. P. Sanders sees Paul working backward from the axiom that God saves everyone, Jew or Gentile, through faith in Christ, to his own call to preach this new message to the Gentiles. Boyarin understands the apostle to the Gentiles as a cultural critic, standing at the intersection of Judaism and Hellenism, driven by a vision of cosmic oneness. Terence Donaldson argues that Paul, both before and after his encounter with Christ, is a Jewish proselytizer of Gentiles, and that only the terms of admission into Israel change.[38]

The most satisfying explanation currently on offer, in my view, is Paula Fredriksen's version of the "eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles" motif.[39] Fredriksen situates Paul on the "arc" of early Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, which for her is one historical outgrowth of the biblical "divine comedy." In Tanak, Fredriksen says, God will win out in the end; in apocalyptic eschatology, God will do so soon. With this basic understanding of Paul's symbolic universe, Fredriksen

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Christian missionaries might have explained the term to their converts, there is also the fact that these Roman authors know the idea of a prophesied universal rule by a Jewish king. Jewish inspeak need not have sounded like utter gibberish to Gentile ears.

[36] See, e.g., F. C. Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teaching* (1845; 2 vols.; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:125–26: "The apostle therefore saw in the death of Christ the purification of the Messianic idea from all the sensuous elements which cleaved to it in Judaism, and its elevation to the truly spiritual consciousness where Christ comes to be recognised as (that which he was to the apostle) the absolute principle of the spiritual life."

[37] See George Foot Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism," *HTR* 14 (1921): 197–254; Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism,* esp. 1–12.

[38] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism,* esp. 431–522; Boyarin, *Radical Jew,* esp. 1–12; Terence L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), esp. 273–307.

[39] See Fredriksen, "From Jesus to Christ"; eadem, "Judaism, the Circumcision of the Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2," *JTS* n.s. 42 (1991): 532–64. Fredriksen is the best but not the first to advocate this position; see, *inter alia,* Halvor Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul's Understanding of God in Romans* (NovTSup 53; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 78–102, esp. 95; E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 171–206.

asks about apocalyptic eschatology, "Where are the Gentiles in this picture?" They are lots of places, she concludes, sometimes lots of places in the same source. But among the possibilities, there is a motif attested in the exilic and postexilic prophets in which the Gentiles, so far from being destroyed by God, actually participate in the blessedness of the age to come, and not as proselytes but as Gentiles. "Jewish apocalyptic hope . . . anticipates a double redemption: Israel (both the living and the dead) returns from exile, and the Gentiles turn from idolatry. . . . [But] the nations do not thereby become Jews."[40] This, Fredriksen argues, is the most plausible way to make sense of Paul's mission to the Gentiles. Paul understands himself to be living at the dawn of the new age. His Gentile mission is his own effort to bring about in reality the state of affairs that he believes to have begun with the resurrection of Jesus. The scattered children of Israel will soon be regathered, and the Gentiles, with Paul's help, will abandon their idols and turn to worship the one true God.

As I see it, Fredriksen's account is very close to Paul himself, more so than any other scholarly reconstruction on offer. But Donaldson, who formerly advocated a form of the eschatological-pilgrimage theory, has since raised one difficult objection to that theory, namely, that Paul cites few if any eschatological-pilgrimage texts. In response to Sanders's version of the eschatological-pilgrimage motif, Donaldson points to "the virtual absence of eschatological pilgrimage texts. Such texts were plenteous and close at hand. Given Paul's desire to ground the Gentile mission in Scripture, there would have been plenty of opportunity for him to cite such texts if he had so desired."[41] And yet he does not. For Donaldson, this objection is serious enough that he opts for another explanation entirely, namely, proselytization.

But there is another possibility, and herein lies the thesis of the present study. It is not that the eschatological-pilgrimage motif is all wrong, just that it is not quite right. It is true that Paul does not cite any of these eschatological-pilgrimage texts; but he does cite, in precisely this connection, texts having to do with the future hegemony of the Davidic messiah over the Gentile peoples. Whereas the eschatological-pilgrimage texts tend to imagine the Gentiles streaming to Zion in one way or another to learn Torah or worship YHWH, a different set of royal-ideology texts focuses instead on the political and military rule of the scion of the house of David over the pagan nations.[42] Both of these biblical traditions envision an eschatological future for the Gentiles that is neither destruction nor conversion. But one is Zion- and Torah-centered, while the other is geographically diffuse and militaristic. This brings us to the citation of Isa 11:10 in Rom 15:12.

[40] Fredriksen, "From Jesus to Christ," 83–86, citing Isa 2:2–4; 25:6; Zech 2:11; 8:20–23.

[41] Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles,* 194, but allowing that our citation, Isa 11:10 LXX in Rom 15:12, constitutes the lone exception. For Donaldson's older view, which he has since repudiated, see Terence L. Donaldson, "The 'Curse of the Law' and the Inclusion of the Gentiles," *NTS* 32 (1986): 94–112.

[42] As we shall see, *pace* Donaldson, Isa 11:10 is not an exception to the rule; it does not envision an eschatological pilgrimage at all, only the conquest of the root of Jesse over the Gentiles.

IV. Isaiah 11 and Romans 15

One of the few places at which most Paulinists will grant, more or less grudgingly, that Paul speaks of Jesus as messiah is the "root of Jesse" reference in Rom 15:12.[43] This reference is the last of a chain of four scriptural citations, all of which explain Paul's claim that "Christ became a servant of the circumcision for the sake of God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises to the patriarchs, and for the sake of his mercy, in order that the Gentiles might glorify God" (15:8–9).[44] By assuming his role as διάκονον περιτομῆς, "servant of the Jews," Christ both confirms the Abrahamic promises and turns the Gentiles to God. The four parts of the catena, which spans the Torah, the prophets, and the psalms (LXX Ps 17:50; Deut 32:43; Ps 116:1; Isa 11:10), all have in common the mention of the ἔθνη in connection with the people of Israel. The first of these, Ps 17:50 LXX, has messianic overtones insofar as it puts the words of David ὁ χριστός (Ps 17:51 LXX) in the mouth of Jesus ὁ χριστός (Rom 15:8). But what is allusive in Rom 15:9 becomes explicit in Rom 15:12:[45]

> καὶ πάλιν Ἡσαΐας λέγει·
> ἔσται ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαὶ
> καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν,
> ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν.
>
> And again, Isaiah says,
> "The root of Jesse shall [come forth],
> even he who rises to rule the Gentiles;
> in him the Gentiles shall hope."

In this citation, Paul follows Old Greek Isaiah almost exactly, departing from it only in the omission of the phrase ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.[46]

[43] E.g., Martin Hengel, "'Christos' in Paul," in *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 69; Nils A. Dahl, "Messianic Ideas and the Crucifixion of Jesus," in *Messiah,* ed. Charlesworth, 391; Christopher G. Whitsett, "Son of God, Seed of David: Paul's Messianic Exegesis in Rom 1:3–4," *JBL* 119 (2000): 661–81.

[44] On the difficult syntax of this sentence, see J. Ross Wagner, "The Christ, Servant of Jew and Gentile: A Fresh Approach to Romans 15:8–9," *JBL* 116 (1997): 473–85, whose conclusions I follow in part.

[45] For NT texts, I follow the text of Kurt Aland et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), noting variants where relevant.

[46] Per scholarly convention, I use "LXX" in the broad sense to refer to not only the Greek Torah but the Old Greek Bible more generally; for LXX Isaiah, I follow the text of Joseph Ziegler, *Isaias* (Septuaginta 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), noting variants where relevant.

Isaiah 11:10 LXX	Romans 15:12
ἔσται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαὶ καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν, ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν	ἔσται ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαὶ καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν, ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν

It is significant, too, that Paul follows the LXX in particular, rather than a proto-MT Hebrew text or a Greek version revised toward proto-MT, since the LXX itself represents a departure from its putative Hebrew *Vorlage*.[47]

Isaiah 11:10 MT	Isaiah 11:10 LXX
והיה ביום ההוא	ἔσται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ
שרש ישי	ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαὶ
אשר עמד לנס עמים	καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν,
אליו גוים ידרשו	ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν
והיתה מנחתו כבוד	καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἀνάπαυσις αὐτοῦ τιμή.

In Isa 11:10, the LXX differs from the MT in two significant respects.[48] First, the translator renders the prepositional phrase לנס, "for a sign," with the Greek purposive infinitive ἄρχειν, "to rule," putting the Davidic king in a more expressly dominant position in relation to the pagan nations.[49] Second, the translator renders the verb ידרשו, "they will seek," with ἐλπιοῦσιν, "they will hope," the only instance of this equivalency anywhere in the LXX/OG.[50] Paul makes much of this latter

[47] For MT Isaiah, I follow the text of Codex Leningrad as printed in *BHS,* noting variants where relevant. At Isa 11:10, Codex Aleppo (see the edition of Moshe H. Goshen-Gottstein, ed., *The Book of Isaiah* [3 vols.; Hebrew University Bible; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975]) agrees entirely with Codex Leningrad.

[48] In addition, the LXX opts for τιμή for כבוד, while the later Greek versions all use δόξα; but both of these are quite conservative equivalences. In addition, LXX MS 565 alone omits καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν, ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν, which is almost certainly a straightforward instance of haplography due to homoioarcton, the scribe's eye having jumped from the first καί to the next.

[49] Cf. the later Greek versions, all of which render לנס more literally with σύσσημον; Goshen-Gottstein (*Book of Isaiah,* ad loc.) is certainly right that the LXX rendering is an instance of "theological exegesis." It is possible that this exegesis resulted from a confusion of נשיא (sometimes written נסיא), "prince," with נס, "sign."

[50] Interestingly, all three later Greek versions agree with the LXX in this. Both the LXX and the later versions, either independently or together, may be reading intra-Isaianically with 42:4: ולתורתו איים ייחילו; LXX: καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν; Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion: καὶ τῷ νομῷ αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν, where all the Greek translators are apparently reading גוים for איים.

change, following this citation with the prayer that ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος, "the God of hope," would fill the auditors with joy and peace so that they may abound ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι, "in hope."[51]

This citation, and indeed the whole catena, is all the more remarkable in light of Richard Hays's demonstration that Paul's scriptural hermeneutic is characteristically ecclesiocentric, not Christocentric, contrary to a long-standing but unsubstantiated assumption.[52] In Rom 15:9–12, it is surely best to understand the first three citations, as most recent interpreters have done, as words spoken by Christ himself.[53] To paraphrase, Christ has become a servant of the Jews in order that the Gentiles might glorify God, *as Christ himself says,* "I confess you among the Gentiles"; "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles." Our citation, the fourth and last in the catena, differs from its counterparts in two important ways. First, it is not a word spoken by Christ, but rather a prophetic oracle about him. Second, although Paul reads the whole catena messianically, of the four citations, only Isa 11:10 LXX is expressly messianic, heralding as it does the coming ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαί. [54] What we have in Isa 11:10/Rom 15:12 is a rare instance of full-fledged messianic exegesis on the part of Paul. This represents an exception to Hays's rule, but only in part. Here as elsewhere, Paul reads in Isaiah a prefiguration of his own Gentile mission; but in this case the particular Isaianic image invoked is that of the subjection of the pagan nations to the root of Jesse. This is a Christocentric reading of Scripture that nevertheless falls within Paul's characteristically ecclesiocentric pattern.

Also relevant to our citation is one of the only other expressly Davidic references in all the undisputed Pauline letters, the epistolary introduction in Rom 1:3–4, with which Rom 15:12 forms a great *inclusio* around the body of the letter.[55] There Paul speaks of Jesus Christ, the son of God, τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, "who came from the seed of David according to the flesh," and τοῦ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, "who was appointed son of God in power according to the

[51] For thorough intertextual treatments of this citation, see Florian Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus* (FRLANT 179; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 146–58; J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul 'in Concert' in the Letter to the Romans* (NovTSup 101; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 307–40.

[52] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), esp. 84–87; and more recently idem, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

[53] See the references cited by Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News,* 312.

[54] Psalm 17:50 LXX is excerpted from a larger unit that is expressly Davidic-messianic, a fact of which Paul is probably aware (on which see below). But the same is not true of Deut 32:43 and Ps 117:1; in their case Paul himself supplies the messianic exegesis entirely.

[55] On the significance of this *inclusio* for the interpretation of Romans, see Whitsett, "Son of God, Seed of David."

Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead." From this Christ, Paul says, he himself has received a commission to bring about the ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, "the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles" (1:5; cf. 15:18; 16:26). For Paul, if not for most of his modern interpreters, the juxtaposition of the Davidic messiahship of Jesus and Paul's mission to the Gentiles apparently does not represent a logical or theological difficulty. It is the Christ from the seed of David through whom Paul has received his charge to bring about the obedience of the Gentiles.[56]

Nor is this a Pauline innovation; the ὑπακοὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν has a small but important place in the LXX tradition. There are two places in the LXX in which ὑπακοή, "obedience," and the ἔθνη, "Gentiles," are mentioned together in subject–verb relation. Psalm 17 LXX (= Psalm 18 MT) is expressly Davidic and messianic, being superscribed τῷ παιδὶ κυρίου τῷ Δαυιδ, "to David the servant of the Lord," and ending with the praise of God, μεγαλύνων τὰς σωτηρίας τοῦ βασιλέως αὐτοῦ καὶ ποιῶν ἔλεος τῷ χριστῷ αὐτοῦ τῷ Δαυιδ καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ ἕως αἰῶνος, "who magnifies the deliverances of his king and works mercy for David his 'christ,' and for his seed, forever" (17:51). The psalm begins with a hymn to the divine warrior; in response to the psalmist's prayer for deliverance, the Lord thunders from heaven, hurling arrows of lightning. But the psalm takes a turn in 17:35, where the divine warrior trains the psalmist's own hands for war, and the balance of the psalm recounts the latter's military victories over the enemies who had previously oppressed him. For our purposes, the relevant bit falls in the midst of this latter half of the psalm. In 17:44–45 the psalmist prays:

> ῥύσῃ με ἐξ ἀντιλογιῶν λαοῦ,
> καταστήσεις με εἰς κεφαλὴν ἐθνῶν·
> λαός ὃν οὐκ ἔγνων ἐδούλευσέν μοι
> εἰς ἀκοὴν ὠτίου ὑπήκουσέν μοι.
>
> You will deliver me from the disputes of the people,
> you will establish me as head over the Gentiles;

[56] In much modern critical interpretation, Rom 1:3–4 has been understood as an independent sense unit, perhaps a traditional christological formula included here by Paul to vouchsafe his own "orthodox" credentials to the Roman churches, to whom he was personally unknown (so, influentially, Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* [trans. Kendrick Grobel; 2 vols.; New York: Scribner, 1951], 1:49). That the unit is a pre-Pauline formula is by no means certain (see Vern Poythress, "Is Romans 1:3–4 a Pauline Confession After All?" *ExpT* 87 [1976]: 180–83), but even if it is, which seems to me more likely than not, there is still the problem of Paul's choice of this unit for inclusion at this point in the letter. Against Bultmann, the idea that Paul would say something that he did not mean simply in order to ingratiate himself with an audience is rather less than plausible. Pre-Pauline traditions, once used by Paul, become functionally Pauline and must be interpreted as meaningful parts of the texts in which they fall.

> a people whom I did not know served me,
> at the hearing of the ear they obeyed me.[57]

Psalm 17 LXX ends with the ἔθνη, "nations, pagans, Gentiles" in a state of ὑπακοή, "subjection, obedience," to the Davidic king of Israel. In its most ancient context, the psalm was surely a piece of Davidic royal ideology, which the superscription further expanded by associating it with the accession of David to the throne of Saul. But in the context of the Second Commonwealth, the psalm admits of use by authors, like Paul, who have in mind one or another latter-day χριστὸς κυρίου, to whom the Gentiles are to be subjected.[58]

The obedience of the Gentiles also figures in Isa 11:13–14 LXX, a passage that follows immediately after the saying about the root of Jesse that is cited in Rom 15:12. Verses 10 and 11 of Isaiah 11 both begin with the formula καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ, "and it shall be on that day." On the day that the root of Jesse rises to rule the Gentiles (v. 10), the Lord will also show his hand in order to claim the remnant of his people (v. 11). When the exiles return, they will plunder the nations from which they depart, and those nations will be subjected to the children of Israel.

> [κύριος] ἀρεῖ σημεῖον εἰς τὰ ἔθνη καὶ συνάξει τοὺς ἀπολομένους Ισραηλ καὶ τοὺς διεσπαρμένους τοῦ Ιουδα. . . . καὶ ἐπὶ Μωαβ πρῶτον τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιβαλοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ Αμμων πρῶτοι ὑπακούσονται.
>
> [The Lord] will raise a sign for the Gentiles and will gather the desolate of Israel and the scattered of Judah. . . . They will lay hands on Moab first, and the leaders of the Ammonites will obey (them).

In this oracle, the υἱοὶ Αμμων πρῶτοι, "the leaders of the Ammonites" (v. 14), are representative of the ἔθνη (v. 13) who previously oppressed God's people. Their obedience to the reconstituted children of Israel (v. 14) is an instantiation of the Davidic king's rule over the Gentiles (v. 10).

It is no accident that the two chapters in the Greek Bible that include references to the ὑπακοὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν, both of which are specifically "messianic" textual units (τῷ χριστῷ αὐτοῦ τῷ Δαυιδ καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ ἕως αἰῶνος,

[57] Or possibly, if we take εἰς to express result, "they obeyed me so as to listen with the ear"; cf. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News,* 313.

[58] This does not presuppose a messianizing program in the Old Greek Psalter, but is an interpretive possibility that arises for readers of Jewish Scriptures, whether in Hebrew or in Greek, in the post-monarchy situation (see Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 515–17). On the problem of royal ideology in the post-monarchy redaction of the Psalter, see Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985); and now idem, "King, Messiah, and the Reign of God: Revisiting the Royal Psalms and the Shape of the Psalter," in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller; VTSup 99; Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature 4; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 391–406.

"to David his 'christ' and to his seed forever" [Ps 17:51]; ῥάβδος ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης Ιεσσαι, "a scepter from the root of Jesse" [Isa 11:1]), both come up for citation in the same catena in Romans 15. Two conclusions follow. First, in the LXX itself, the ὑπακοὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν stands in a particular thematic connection with the rule of the χριστός κυρίου; the Gentiles obey the Lord's anointed.[59] Second, the confluence of these several texts in Romans 15 is evidence that Paul's understanding of his commission to bring about the ὑπακοὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν (Rom 15:18; cf. 1:5; 16:26) is dependent on his conviction that Jesus is the χριστός spoken of in the biblical oracles.[60] Perhaps, then, Pauline interpreters have ventured too far afield in search of the rationale for Paul's mission to the Gentiles. If Paul makes more mention of a χριστός than does any other ancient Jewish author, as he in fact does, and if he zealously labors to bring pagans into this χριστός movement and to train them in its ways, as he in fact does, then perhaps the former phenomenon itself explains the latter.

In light of Paul's overwhelming preoccupation with the χριστός whom he preaches, this interpretation practically suggests itself. But by ignoring or suppressing messianic overtones in Pauline χριστός language, interpreters have made the rationale for the Gentile mission a problem in Pauline theology. We should not be surprised to find that the several models of Jewish universalism on offer do not seem to fit Paul. If we allow Paul's χριστός to have its lexical sense, even if only in those passages in which that sense is patently clear, then the problem dissolves. Like the anonymous Jews mentioned by Tacitus and Suetonius, Paul believed that in his own time a man from the East was rising to rule the whole world; unlike those anonymous Jews, Paul believed that God had enlisted him to recruit pagan subjects for this Jewish king.[61]

[59] Here, too, we need not think of this as "messianizing translation" on the part of the LXX translator; it may simply be a reflection of the royal ideology of Tanakh itself; see the methodological warnings of Michael A. Knibb, "The Septuagint and Messianism: Problems and Issues," in *The Septuagint and Messianism* (ed. Michael A. Knibb; BETL 195; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 3–20.

[60] Of course, the question of precisely in what Paul understands the ὑπακοὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν to consist is a matter for further investigation. Paul's own expansion of the phrase, ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, "the obedience *of faith* among all the Gentiles" (Rom 1:5; cf. 16:26) undoubtedly points toward an answer. It is possible that Paul's conception of the ὑπακοὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν has been influenced by what he knows of Jesus and of the Jesus movement prior to his (viz., Paul's) initiation thereto. In any case, a facile classification of Paul under "spiritual" rather than "political" messianic traditions is certainly not a helpful way forward.

[61] *Pace* Robert Jewett, the parallel phrase in the textually questionable concluding doxology (ὑπακοὴν πίστεως εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη [16:26]), so far from being supersessionist, is consistent with this motif; see Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 997–1011.

V. Conclusion

We began this study with a historical and interdisciplinary plea to reopen the question of Paul's relation to early Jewish messianic phenomena. We showed that, despite scholarly ignorance of the degree and extent of popular messianic expectation, there certainly did exist linguistic conventions in Hellenistic- and Roman-period Jewish literature whereby some writers used biblical messiah language to refer to a recognizable set of ideas. We showed that within this set was one idea, suggested by Psalm 18 (= Psalm 17 LXX) and Isaiah 11 and attested by the Roman historians of the First Revolt, of a Jewish king who would not only reclaim the land of Israel but also rule over the pagan nations. Finally, we showed that Paul was one of a number of Jews (some of whom were Christian, others not) for whom this particular messiah tradition provided an answer to the Gentile question: The Gentiles are to be neither converted nor destroyed; rather they share in the blessedness of the age to come by virtue of their obedience to the Davidic king of Israel. This is the view attested in Paul's reading of Isa 11:10 in Rom 15:12.

Granted, late antique Christianity became a majority-Gentile movement standing over against Judaism, but this dynamic was not yet at work in the career of the apostle to the Gentiles. To paraphrase Schweitzer, Paul himself did not de-messianize a hitherto-messianic Jesus movement; he simply brought about the state of affairs in which such a thing could happen.[62] With Scholem, it is right to think of Paul as a Nathan of Gaza figure—not a messiah himself, but accessory to a messiah.[63] With respect to the state of the disciplines, this suggests that Jewish studies has failed to take advantage of a rich source for the study of Roman-period messianism, while Pauline research has ventured too far afield in search of Paul's rationale for the Gentile mission. In fact, these two quintessentially Pauline features, the proclamation of a χριστός and the mission to the Gentiles, turn out to interpret one another; Paul feels himself compelled to bring Gentiles into the ἐκκλησία of God because he believes that Jesus is the root of Jesse, the son of David, the χριστός who rises to rule the Gentiles.

[62] See Schweitzer, *Mysticism of Paul the Apostle,* 26–40, 334–75.
[63] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi,* 204, 207.

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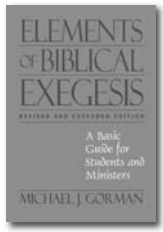

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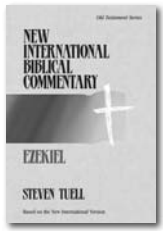

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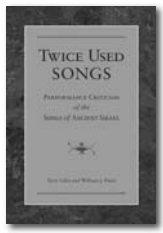

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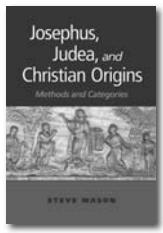

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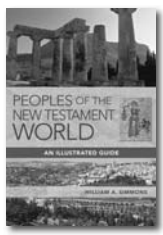

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A Reexamination of the Text of *P.Oxy.* 2949

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Recently, Paul Foster has pointed out several significant obstacles to equating *P.Oxy.* 2949 and the *Gospel of Peter* (Akhmîm Codex).[1] Foster's conclusions are based primarily on what he considers hasty and overly optimistic reconstructions of *P.Oxy.* 2949 in the *editio princeps* and subsequent studies.[2] Of particular importance in the discussion is whether line 5 of R. A. Coles's reconstruction, which includes the name Πειλάτου, is accurately reconstructed, or whether Coles was encouraged to restore the name to create a stronger parallel with the Akhmîm text.[3] Several other readings also are called into question in Foster's minimalist reconstruction, as well as the text of the smaller fragment, which Coles originally placed to the bottom left of the original fragment.[4]

[1] Paul Foster, "Are There Any Early Fragments of the So-Called *Gospel of Peter*," *NTS* 52 (2006): 1–28, with a response by Dieter Lührmann, "Kann es wirklich keine frühe Handschrift des Petrusevangeliums geben?" *NovT* 48 (2006): 379–83.

[2] As examples of this trend, he cites the works of Dieter Lührmann, *Fragmenta apocryph gewordener Evangelien in griechischer und lateinischer Sprache* (Marburg theologischer Studien 59; Marburg: Elwert, 2000), 55–104; R. A. Coles, "2949: Fragments of an Apocryphal Gospel (?)," *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XLI* (ed. G. M. Browne; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1972), 15–16; Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 216–17; John Dominic Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 8. For the *editio princeps,* see U. Bouriant, "Fragments du texte grec du livre d'Énoch et de quelques écrits attributes à saint Pierre," *Mémoires publié par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire,* vol. IX, fasc. 1 (Paris, 1892), 94.

[3] Foster, "Are There Any Early Fragments," 9–11. For example, Foster states (p. 10), "Coles is over-confident in his assessment that 'The larger of these fragments relates the story of Joseph of Arimathea's request to Pilate for the body of Jesus, in a version which is not that of the canonical gospels.'"

[4] Digital images of *P.Oxy.* 2949 are available at http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk.

This study will consider the issue in light of recent multi-spectral images of *P.Oxy.* 2949 that were completed in October 2006.[5] As a result of the new images, we are able to reconstruct the text with greater confidence as well as consider whether Foster's conclusions about the potential relationship to the *Gospel of Peter* are sound.[6]

I. The Text

It is important to see Coles's and Foster's reconstruction side by side to assess the level of divergence between the two editions, as well as Foster's radical pruning of the *editio princeps*. Dieter Lührmann has questioned whether Foster worked with the fragment of *P.Oxy.* 2949 itself; and, therefore, the validity of his reconstruction must face closer scrutiny.[7]

	Coles[8]	Foster[9]
	Recto ↓	
1	]τ̣[	
	abraded	
	]ν . .[	
	abraded	
5	]οφιλοϛπ̣[.]ι̣λ̣α̣[.]ο̣υ̣. [	φίλος
	].ι̣σοτιεκελευσεν[	ς ὅτι ἐκ σεν
	]θ̣ωνπροσπειλατο[	ων πρὸς Πειλᾶτ
	]..σωμαεισταφην[	μα εἰς ταφὴν
	]η̣νητησα[	ν ᾐτησα
10	]η̣ναιειπω[	η̣ναι εἰπὼ

[5] I would like to thank Dirk Obbink of the Sackler Library and Christ Church, Oxford, for granting access to the collection. Gene Ware of Brigham Young University completed the images using multi-spectral imaging technology.

[6] See Lührmann, "Kann es wirklich keine frühe Handschrift des Petrusevangeliums geben?" 383. Lührmann criticizes many of Foster's conclusions saying, "Bedauerlich, dass ein Aufsatz wie dieser die Sicherungsvorkehrungen einer so renommierten Zeitschrift überwinden konnte." Lührmann, his criticisms notwithstanding, did not address Foster's most basic premise that Coles's text was overly optimistic in its scope.

[7] Lührmann calls the claim "dubious" and notes that while Foster claims to have seen the fragments at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the actual fragments are housed at the Sackler Library in Oxford ("Kann es wirklich keine frühe Handschrift des Petrusevangeliums geben?" 381). This is more than likely a slip of the pen, so to speak, which Lührmann used to discredit Foster.

[8] Coles, "Fragments of an Apocryphal Gospel," 15–16.

[9] Foster, "Are There Any Early Fragments," 6, 10.

]ᾳ̣ιτησα.[	ιτησα
]αυτον[	αὐτὸν
].οτια[	ὅτι

Recto ↓

1 .μ̣ου[	.μ̣ου̣
πειλ[	πει
τισα[	τισ
μ̣ε̣ν̣[	μ

Apart from the obvious difficulties in mechanically removing nearly every letter from Coles's transcription that was originally included with hesitancy, Foster's reconstruction moves beyond a mere minimalist viewpoint. Therefore, I propose the following transcription of the larger fragment based on the new images and autopsy.[10]

1	τ
	abraded
	νᾳ̣ι̣
	abraded
5	ο̣φιλοσπ̣[ε]ι̣λᾳ̣[τ]ου̣
	υ̣ζοτιε̣κ̣ε̣λ̣ε̣υ̣σεν
	θ̣ωνπροσπειλατ
	σ̣ωμαεισταφην
	η̣νητησα
10	ηναιειπω
	ᾳ̣ιτησα
	αυτον
	οτια

Using the new images, in lines 5, 11, and 13, a portion of an additional letter can be seen but not restored; and therefore, to maintain the integrity of the inscription these letters have been excluded in light of Foster's criticism.[11] Only the slightest traces of *omicron* remain in line 5 (ὁ φίλος), but the curvature of the remaining

[10] The new images provided very little improvement for the reconstruction of the smaller fragment; therefore, the text of the smaller fragment is omitted from this discussion, although I prefer Coles's transcription to Foster's for the smaller fragment based on the new images of *P.Oxy.* 2949.

[11] What appears to be the remnant of η, ν, or π appears at the end of line 5. The remaining traces of ink make it possible at the end of line 11 that the letter could be η, λ, π, or ν; and in line 13 a letter precedes οτι and could be ν, η, or υ.

ink makes this reading probable. The most difficult reading in the entire fragment is σῶμα (line 8), where only the top of each letter remains and the ink has been smeared considerably; however, the traces of *omega* and *mu* are still very distinct in the new images. Line 6 contains a corrected reading from Coles's original *iota* to *upsilon,* but unfortunately not enough text survives to restore the entire word.

The most crucial piece of evidence is found in line 5, where Coles reconstructs the name Pilate, marking two letters as illegible and the remaining letters as questionable. Foster subsequently removed the reference to Pilate in line 5 completely, judging the reconstruction to be too hasty, although he did state, "While there may be traces of a lambda, the rest of the letters are totally abraded, although the vestiges of a pi may perhaps be made out."[12] The solution to this problem is fortunately preserved in line 7 of the text, where the name Pilate again appears, although quite visible in this instance and acknowledged in Foster's reconstruction.[13] What Foster does not concede is that the *omicron* is completely preserved and the final *upsilon* of line 5 es nearly complete; and both are visible without the aid of the new images. Additionally, traces of ink remain for each letter of the name Pilate, except for *epsilon* and *tau*.

By superimposing the name from line 7 on top of the traces of ink in line 5, it is obvious that the word is indeed the personal name Pilate. The ink traces align perfectly with the same name in line 7, including the spacing and relative size of the letters. What also becomes apparent using this process is the small trace of ink to the left of *lambda* that does not form part of the letter itself. Instead, this small remnant of ink likely belongs to a φ from line 4—the only letter that this particular scribe wrote that descended into the line below it.[14]

II. *P.Oxy.* 2949 and the Akhmîm Codex

Foster framed his argument in an either/or manner: if Coles's edition is correct, then the relationship between *P.Oxy.* 2949 and the *Gospel of Peter* is more easily established, but if Coles's edition is correctly emended, then the purported relationship between *P.Oxy.* 2949 and the *Gospel of Peter* falls apart. The either/or proposition, however, is unnecessary in this instance because Foster's overall conclusion that the Oxyrhynchus text is not conclusively an edition or recension of the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* is still valid even though Coles's transcription is quite accurate. The following reconstruction with parallel wording underlined points this out:

[12] Foster, "Are There Any Early Fragments," 10.

[13] Ibid.

[14] For an example of this, see line 8, ταφήν.

4		ἱστήκει δὲ ἐκεῖ Ἰωσὴφ
5	ὁ φίλος Πειλάτου	ὁ φίλος Πειλάτου καὶ τοῦ κυρίου
6	υς ὅτι ἐκέλευσεν	καὶ εἰδὼς ὅτι σταυρίσκειν αὐτὸν μέλλουσιν
7	ἐλθὼν πρὸς Πειλᾶτον	ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν Πειλᾶτον καὶ ᾔτησε
8	σῶμα εἰς ταφὴν	τὸ σῶμα τοῦ κυρίου πρὸς ταφήν καὶ ὁ Πειλᾶτος
9	Ἡρῴδην ᾐτήσατο	πέμψας πρὸς Ἡρῴδην ᾔτησεν
10	ηναι εἰπὼν	αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα. καὶ ὁ Ἡρῴδης ἔφη
11	αἰτήσα	ἀδελφὲ Πειλᾶτε, εἰ καὶ μή τις αὐτὸν ᾐστήκει
12	αὐτὸν	ἡμεῖς αὐτὸν ἐθάπτομεν, ἐπεὶ καὶ
13	ὅτι α	σάββατον ἐπιφώσκει.

Several significant obstacles prohibit an explicit identification between the Akhmîm text of the *Gospel of Peter* and *P.Oxy.* 2949. Of the twenty words or fragments of words contained in *P.Oxy.* 2949, half of them have an exact parallel in the Akhmîm text. If the list is expanded to include the same words in different form, the number is fourteen of twenty, or 70 percent. Each word in the Oxyrhynchus fragment appears in precisely the same order as it does in the *Gospel of Peter*. Additionally, the conceptual parallels between the two texts are significant: each refers to (1) a friend of Pilate, (2) a body, (3) a tomb, (4) a request, and (5) Herod.[15] The parallel material is particularly important because it includes the singular reading ὁ φίλος Πειλάτου. The other ideas all have parallels in the canonical Gospel accounts—Matt 27:57–59; Mark 15:43–45; Luke 23:50; John 19:38—but the singular reading recommends a strong textual parallel with the *Gospel of Peter*.

Against this association are a number of other significant factors. First, the line length of *P.Oxy.* 2949 will not allow for the possibility that the text included the report of Joseph of Arimathea's knowledge of Pilate's intent to crucify Jesus, the identification of the body as Jesus', nor Herod's response to Pilate (line 10). Additionally, substantive parallels seem to dissolve after line 9, where the two texts share αὐτόν, which hardly amounts to a meaningful parallel.

Given that *P. Oxy.* 2949 seems to have strong affinities with the *Gospel of Peter* as well as significant divergences, it may be wise to consider the text itself in closer detail. Both texts seem to be reporting basically the same story, with one containing an expanded version of a potentially early and shorter text, a position taken up and argued by Lührmann.[16] The textual relationship could then be explained as

[15] Foster ("Are There Any Early Fragments," 10) considers only the mention of Pilate, the tomb, and the friend as parallels because of his more restricted reconstruction of the text.

[16] Dieter Lührmann, "POx 2949: EvPt 3–5 in einer Handschrift des 2./3/ Jahrhunderts," *ZNW* 72 (1981): 218.

two separate witnesses to a developing textual tradition that culminated in the Akhmîm Codex of the *Gospel of Peter* or in some unknown text prior to the eighth century.[17] Certainly it is possible that *P.Oxy.* 2949 witnesses an earlier stage of the *Gospel of Peter*, one that was considerably condensed, but it also seems plausible that the Oxyrhynchus fragment is a patristic summary of or commentary on the *Gospel of Peter*.

The text of the *Gospel of Peter* was known to Serapion of Antioch, who was bishop of Antioch from 199 C.E., and who also reported that the text had circulated in Cilicia Secunda (Rhossus) at the end of the second century (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.12). Serapion read the text and commented that it could be read in the churches, although he sarcastically remarked that it could lead to childish or docetic notions.[18] Certainly, Serapion held the text in low esteem, believing that it had encouraged heretical beliefs, but not that it was solely responsible for them. Origen later attributed false notions concerning the family of Jesus to either the *Gospel of Peter* or the *Book of James* (thought to be the *Protevangelium of James*), while Theodoret claimed that the text was a favorite of the Nazareans.[19] Although Serapion dismissed the *Gospel of Peter*, giving it little attention or regard, later commentators looked at it with increasing disdain. It seems that a growing trend of negative attitudes was already developing at the turn of the third century.[20]

Interestingly, *P.Oxy.* 2949 originates in this same time period, with Coles advancing a date of the third century or perhaps the late second.[21] Two important pieces of evidence can be derived concerning the *Gospel of Peter*: (1) the text *was* in circulation in Syria already by 200 C.E.; and (2) the text was being denounced publicly in Antioch and North Africa, and by the fourth century rejection of the text was widespread.

Certain variances in the text of *P.Oxy.* 2949 may indicate that this is a patristic summary of the *Gospel of Peter* deriving precisely from the time period in which Coles originally placed it. Some of the important divergences from the canonical texts may receive particular emphasis in *P.Oxy.* 2949: that is, Herod's stewardship of Jesus' body and Pilate's request to hand the body over to Joseph of Arimathea. In the Akhmîm text of the *Gospel of Peter*, Joseph's request to Pilate is expressed as a common inquiry or plea (ᾔτησε) with the purpose of the request expressed in the accusative.[22] αἰτέω with the accusative is used in the NT period to express a for-

[17] Coles, "Fragments of an Apocryphal Gospel," 15.

[18] Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas conclude similarly; see *Das Petrusevangelium und die Petrusapokalypse: Die griechischen Fragmente mit deutscher und englischer Übersetzung (Neutestamentliche Apokryphen I)* (GCS n.F. 11; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2004), 13–16.

[19] Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 10.17: Theodoret, *On Heretical Fables* 2.2.

[20] See Kraus and Nicklas, *Das Petrusevangelium*, 16–23.

[21] Coles, "Fragments of an Apocryphal Gospel," 15.

[22] Similarly, Mark 6:24, Τί αἰτήσωμαι ἡ δὲ εἶπεν, Τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ

mal request or petition but does not convey the idea of a demand or order.[23] Unlike αἰτέω + acc., κελεύω + acc., the reading of the *P.Oxy.* fragment, insinuates a command or a demand, and thus envisions a fundamentally different relationship between the person making the request and the person hearing it.

The *Gospel of Peter* records Joseph of Arimathea's request (αἰτέω) for the body of Jesus but not his demand (κελεύω). In fact, Joseph's demand for the body of Jesus is never expressed in any of the canonical literature or extracanonical literature unless *P.Oxy.* 2949 is included, although language similar to the *P.Oxy.* fragment is preserved in Matt. 27:58—but in significantly different order.[24] Instead, it may be that the *P.Oxy.* reading, which changes the force of the verb (from αἰτέω to κελεύω), is not simply an earlier version but rather a commentary on it or a quotation of it for which the language of Matt 27:58 lies in the background.[25] Perhaps the author also relied on audience familiarity with the canonical story when such important subjects as the identity of the body and who requested it are left unspecified, thus explaining why these topics are absent from the *P.Oxy.* fragment.

After κελεύω, the text of *P.Oxy.* 2949 has a high degree of similarity to the *Gospel of Peter*, but then it oddly includes αἰτήσα, an unaugmented aorist form, in line 11.[26] This reading stands out because the text of *P.Oxy.* 2949 has already contained the augmented aorist form of αἰτέω. It is possible that this is a simple scribal mistake, but the appearance of the augmented aorist makes this conclusion more problematic. It is possible also that the author shifted from quoting a source (the *Gospel of Peter*) to commentary or reporting personal views on the text. The shift from source to the author's commentary may have taken place already in line 9, where *P.Oxy.* 2949 records ἠτήσατο instead of ἤτησεν, suggesting that the author may have been commenting on why Pilate asked Herod for the body, or perhaps why Joseph asked Herod for the body, although the fragment is too small to be conclusive on this point.

βαπτίζοντος, which is a fulfillment of Herod's promise to grant Herodias her wish. Therefore, the later request is a transaction carried out in light of the promise and is not a demand. Later, Ignatius writes, αἰτεῖσθε ἔσωθέν τε καὶ ἔξωθεν, where he also requests something, which is expressed in the accusative (*Rom.* 3:2).

[23] Gustav Stählin, "αἰτέω (αἰτέομαι)," *TDNT* 1:191–92.

[24] Cf. ἠτήσατο in Mark 15:43; Matt 27:58; and Luke 23:52; and ἄρῃ in John 19:38.

[25] The Gospel of Matthew's ironic portrait of Pilate is heightened when the author uses κελεύω (Matt 27:58) despite Pilate's declaration of innocence and his public display (v. 24). See W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (ICC; 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 3:553–55.

[26] This reading caught the attention also of Kraus and Nicklas (*Das Petrusevangelium*, 56 n. 112), who corresponded personally with Coles on the matter. They conclude, "Der finite Aorist (ἠτήσαμην) lässt sich hier mit den Resten am Anfang der Zeile nicht vereinbaren (αι– statt η–)."

III. Conclusion

Foster's analysis of the comparison between *P.Oxy.* 2949 and the Akhmîm text offers a compelling challenge to the views expressed by Helmut Koester, Lührmann, and John Dominic Crossan. However, his minimalist reconstruction of the text appears too radical, and new images of the fragment suggest that Coles's reconstruction is largely accurate. Based on a fresh examination and new photos, it seems conclusive that the author of *P.Oxy.* 2949 knew the text of the *Gospel of Peter*, as Lührmann originally proposed, but the conclusion that the Oxyrhynchus fragment is an earlier recension is not altogether convincing. Rather, the text of the *Gospel of Peter* known to the author of the Oxyrhynchus fragment may possibly derive from a patristic commentary on the text, or perhaps from an abbreviated or oral report of it, or possibly even from a patristic quotation of it. Lines 5–9 show a remarkable degree of verbal correspondence to the established text of the *Gospel of Peter*, which suggests that there is some genetic link between *P.Oxy.* 2949 and the later text of the *Gospel of Peter*.

If indeed Coles's dating of the fragment is accurate, then the fragment was copied in a time when attitudes toward the *Gospel of Peter* were growing increasingly negative.[27] Unfortunately, this particular fragment is rather small, but the surviving letters do provide enough text to challenge the viewpoint that this is an early recension of the *Gospel of Peter*, as well as to raise the possibility that the text may contain a patristic quotation of or commentary on the text.

[27] Kraus and Nicklas (*Das Petrusevangelium*, 55) confirm the dating offered originally by Coles but challenged more recently by Foster.

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An Elephant in the Room: Historical-Critical and Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible

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Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster.

—Nietzsche[1]

I. Embattled Camps?

As everyone in the Society of Biblical Literature knows, historical critics and postmodernists are entrenched, embattled groups that speak to one another across the field of biblical studies only in sniping, intellectually unengaged footnotes. Historical criticism has been the dominant approach in mainline biblical studies for at least the last century and was moving into that position for a century or more before

We thank those who reviewed our article for *JBL* for their insightful, constructive comments and suggestions, all of which substantially improved our article.

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (trans. Walter Kaufmann; New York: Vintage, 1966), 146.

that.[2] It comprises the congeries of well-known methods such as source criticism, form criticism, grammatical studies, and archaeology, and it attempts to combine them in ways that will produce assured and agreed-on interpretations of the biblical text, whether these be understood as the author's intention, the understanding of the original audiences, or reference to actual historical events.

Postmodernism is characterized by diversity in both method and content and by an anti-essentialist emphasis that rejects the idea that there is a final account, an assured and agreed-on interpretation, of some one thing—here the biblical text or any part of it.[3] Diversity in postmodernism includes not just different methods of reading and interpreting the Bible but also variety within any one method; narrative criticism, for example, is not a clear, defined approach that all narrative critics employ in the same fashion.[4] What unites this methodological jumble is agreement that no final or essential interpretation of the text is being produced. Other readings are always possible, and often invited. Postmodernism does not reject the need for rigor in the analysis of actual texts, but it does call for the acknowledgment of one's approach, including its underlying assumptions and its goals and limitations.

We draw here upon Jean-François Lyotard's well-known definition in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*:

> The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms,

[2] The majority of biblical commentaries and studies in both Judaism and Christianity, across the spectrum from conservative to liberal theology, are historical critical. Many Christian evangelical commentaries adopt the methods, especially form criticism and grammatical studies, and goals of historical criticism even though they strongly dispute many of the more liberal critics' historical and textual conclusions.

[3] See Kevin Hart, *Postmodernism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: One World, 2004). Hart offers a solid guide to postmodernism in general, including discussion of the main European and American scholars associated with the concept. He is concerned with the impact of postmodernism on religion and theology and deals with biblical studies as part of the latter. A. K. M. Adam deals more directly and in detail with biblical studies in *What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995). He collects forty essays on relevant terms and theorists in *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000); and twenty-one readings of specific biblical texts in his *Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible: A Reader* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2001). Finally, ten scholars, calling themselves The Bible and Culture Collective, survey and critique major aspects of postmodern biblical studies in *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

[4] For an example of such diversity, see Gale A. Yee, ed. (and contributor), *Judges & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007). The now-defunct journal *Semeia* titled itself "an experimental journal" and actively supported a wide range of methods and criticisms for biblical studies. Even if many of the issues and contributors were methodologically more at home in historical criticism, the overall diversity and pioneering efforts of the journal mark it as postmodern.

> the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable.[5]

The postmodern appears "in the modern," as Lyotard says, but in the form of radical critiques of modernist ideology. This includes a critique of modernist understandings of history and reality and of the production of meaning, on which historical criticism depends. According to Lyotard, postmodernism is "incredulity toward [traditional and modern] metanarratives"[6] such as those of modernist historical scholarship.

Postmodernism lives within the same modernist metanarratives, but it is not "at home" there. Moreover, it does not await the intrusion of some transcendence, and it knows of no "other place" to go. As Fredric Jameson says, "We are left with that pure and random play of signifiers that we call postmodernism, which no longer produces monumental works of the modernist type but ceaselessly reshuffles the fragments of preexistent texts, the building blocks of older cultural and social production, in some new and heightened bricolage."[7]

As an aside, we mention an issue whose full treatment is beyond the scope of this article: the explicit use of the term "postmodernism" and the claim that a book or collection is postmodern. Although we freely use the term "postmodernism," many of the works that we cite do not proclaim themselves to be postmodern even though they well exemplify the diversity and anti-essentialism of postmodernism. In contrast, evangelical Christian publishing houses now regularly issue books with "postmodernism" in the titles whose content may well not correspond to postmodernism as considered here. These evangelical titles are typically attempts to "baptize" postmodernism and to capitalize on current popular terms such as "postmodern" and "deconstruction" on behalf of evangelical theology.

Despite the divide between historical criticism and postmodernism, one rarely hears of direct confrontation between them. This impasse is unfortunate for us all, for the methodological and ideological issues that separate these approaches go without substantive critique, and no productive dialogue occurs. Major historical-critical journals, such as the *Journal of Biblical Literature* and the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, are readily available, now even on the Internet. Journals offering postmodernist approaches to biblical texts such as *Biblical Interpretation* and the more

[5] Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 81. Not all postmodern theorists agree with Lyotard's views. See, particularly, Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Post-contemporary Interventions; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).

[6] Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, xxiv.

[7] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 96.

recent ejournal, *The Bible & Critical Theory,* are also readily available. However, in our experience, few of those who subscribe to and regularly read either type of journal also regularly read the other type.[8]

Nevertheless, although historical criticism remains the dominant paradigm in the field, a recent perusal of the editorial board of *JBL* reveals a few names more often associated with postmodernism than with historical criticism. In addition, literary-critical approaches now sometimes appear in *JBL* articles or footnotes, although most of these take the form of modernist, not postmodern, forms of literary criticism.[9] On the other "side," some postmodernist scholars argue for their readings and interpretations with claims quite similar to those of historical criticism. Perhaps, then, the two camps are not so entrenched after all, and genuine conversation might be in the offing.

Two of the clearest signs of this possibility lie in feminist and postcolonial approaches, which sometimes cross the boundaries between historical criticism and postmodernism.[10] These hermeneutical strategies have consistently led the way in raising the question of the ethics or politics of interpretation, an issue very near to the heart of postmodern hermeneutics.[11] Specifically, postmodernists seek an open debate among interpreters in which all speakers acknowledge their perspectives, interests, and ideologies. Postmodernists practice what Paul Ricoeur called a "hermeneutics of suspicion,"[12] and this suspicion applies first and foremost

[8] Obviously, we speak anecdotally here. Our experience is hardly complete.

[9] By "modernist," we denote an unwillingness to recognize diversity in method and, particularly, in results. For a postmodern critique of modernist biblical literary criticism, see Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

[10] Of course, feminism in biblical studies includes a wide range of methods and interests. This diversity is apparent in the series *The Feminist Companion to the Bible*, now in its second series, published originally by Sheffield Academic Press and now by Continuum. Individuals who term themselves "feminist" sometimes fit quite comfortably into a historical-critical mold, sometimes into a postmodernist mold, and sometimes move back and forth between the two. Similar observations apply to postcolonial critics.

[11] See the discussions between Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas on responsibility to the other. In biblical studies, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Ethics of Interpretation: De-Centering Biblical Scholarship," *JBL* 107 (1988): 3–17; Daniel Patte, *Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: A Reevaluation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995); and John J. Collins, *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

[12] Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (Terry Lectures 38; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 32–36. Ricoeur himself is not a postmodernist, and a hermeneutics of suspicion is certainly not unknown among historical-critical scholars (e.g., Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" in *Existence and Faith* [trans. Schubert M. Ogden; Cleveland: World, 1960]), but it is often confined and restricted. See further below.

to their own hermeneutical assumptions and practices. As is particularly evident in its feminist and postcolonial forms, postmodernism seeks to open up spaces for other voices, especially those of the dispossessed and marginalized.[13]

The necessity of identifying different forms of postmodernism indicates that not all postmodernists speak as one. Neither, of course, do all historical critics. We used to speak of the differences between the Germans and the British. We now speak of maximalists and minimalists or of various "schools," which seem constantly to recreate themselves and their perspectives by placing their students in strategic teaching positions. Nevertheless, a defining characteristic and goal of postmodern hermeneutics is the desire for ideological self-criticism. Notably, wherever historical criticism has embraced feminism or postcolonialism, it also has become more critical of its own ideology. Perhaps if historical criticism and postmodernism could engage one another in more direct and substantial conversation, both would become more self-critical.

That said, the authors of this essay acknowledge that we are all products of graduate study in the 1960s and 1970s, when historical criticism was for all practical purposes the only paradigm in biblical studies. Despite that, in various ways and for various reasons each of us has found his way to postmodern readings of the Bible. As a result, we are intensely aware of the present division within biblical studies and are disturbed by the fact that it is rarely if ever openly discussed.[14] It is the proverbial "elephant in the room." This article is the result of a series of e-mail conversations among the three of us over a period of several years. Although it may sometimes sound otherwise, it is not our desire to prove that postmodern approaches to biblical texts are always superior to, or can do without the benefits of, historical-critical analyses. Nor do we aspire to overcome the gulf between historical criticism and postmodernism. Rather, we hope to make further conversation between these approaches more acceptable (or even desirable). We try to do this here by reflecting on each of them as exercises in mythmaking.

II. Making Myths

Scholars often define myths as sacred stories or stories about gods. The materialist truth in such definitions is that people—or, more accurately, cultures—define

[13] The bibliography and resources on "other voices," whether from within Western societies or from other societies around the world, are voluminous and growing. We point to the diversity and complexity seen only, for example, in the appearance and development of criticisms such as feminism, womanism, postcolonialism, queer theory and gender studies, and cultural criticism. This work and focus go far beyond Western societies and Western ways of reading and interpreting.

[14] There are other "unspeakable" divisions that we will not consider here: between Protes-

themselves in terms of some powerful, desirable other (a god, the sacred, or simply an ideal).[15] More recently, it has also become evident, particularly through the work of feminist and postcolonial interpreters, that as the mythic work of self-definition strives to draw believers closer to the sacred or the ideal, it also seeks to separate them from the monstrous other, or, more broadly speaking, from evil.[16] Thus, Christian mythic discourse establishes itself in the spaces between God and Satan, Christ and Judas, or orthodoxy and heresy. Jewish discourse positions itself between allegiance to YHWH and rejection of "pagan" polytheism or between its own natural religious (imperial) desires (in apocalypticism and Zionism) and the reality of various colonizing empires.[17] More generally, as Claude Lévi-Strauss famously concluded, myth is work done between being and non-being. Myth is adversarial self-creation vis-à-vis the doubled other, sketching out a living space between the desired and the demonized. Such work establishes boundaries that include and exclude, creating and defending the world in which mythic believers live.[18]

Myth is not merely a community's charter; it is the community's taken-for-granted common sense and the hermeneutic through which the community defines life, truth, rationality, and justice. Myth is the metanarrative (and attendant perspective) that establishes and defends the communal status quo. Such myth supports the interests of the dominant group in the community by repeating itself *ad nauseam* throughout society and by portraying the ideological preference for the elite in the society as part of the natural order of things.[19] Despite its very pub-

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tants and Catholics, Christian and Jews, Republicans and Marxists, men and women, gays and straights, whites and nonwhites, those who are academically employed and those who are not, etc.

[15] See Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (trans. Karen E. Fields; New York: Free Press, 1975), 424–25; and, in relation to biblical studies, Richard Walsh, *Mapping Myths of Biblical Interpretation* (Playing the Texts 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 13–53.

[16] Marcel Detienne comments on this point extensively in *The Creation of Mythology* (trans. Margaret Cook; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). See also Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (trans. Leon S. Roudiez; New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

[17] Daniel Boyarin's critique of Zionism in favor of Diaspora identity assays a more fantastic identity (*A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* [Contraversions 1; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994]).

[18] Walsh, *Mapping Myths*, 51, 10–12. Jackson Pollack's *Guardians of the Secret* is a nice visual image of the work of myth. The painting contains a box, ambiguously separated from its context and guarded or threatened by what might be monsters. This painting appears on the Internet at http://www.usc.edu/programs/cst/deadfiles/lacasis/ansc100/library/images/752.html.

[19] See, in particular, Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (trans. Annette Lavers; New York: Hill & Wang, 1972). Barthes explores this open, repeated mystery in the advertising and spectacles of a society that mythically supports the French bourgeoisie and French imperialism. In place of the

lic work, myth excludes or mystifies two important issues. First, myth occludes the ideological perspective of the mythmaker(s) in order to present that perspective as true or "natural." Second, as we have already seen, myth excludes the other who supplies the definitive mythic contrast. This other is always necessarily silent and even mysterious, because she is known only in the mythic discourse of the insider.[20]

Myth is not permanent or eternal. Just as it is constantly asserted, so it is constantly contested. The writings of Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu, among others, lay bare these local workings of power in the dynamics of myth construction. Following the lead of such analyses, we attempt here to drag the mythic desires and fears of historical criticism and postmodernism into the light.

III. Historical-Critical Mythology

We happily acknowledge the considerable gains in understanding made by historical criticism of the Bible, most notably in demonstrating the Bible's cultural difference and distance from us. Historical-critical archaeology and the discoveries of ancient texts such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi codexes have given us access to the ancient world of Israel and of early Christianity that is somewhat independent of the biblical texts. Further, because of historical criticism, we can no longer read the Bible, whether we think of the Hebrew Bible or of the Christian Bible, as if it were a unified and consistent work. The canon no longer holds authority for us as it did for earlier generations. It no longer regulates our sense of the texts' unity and consistency. However, our concern here is primarily with the mythology of historical criticism, not with the many valuable new insights that it has provided. As historical Jesus research has always been particularly at home in modernity, we include a brief analysis of this scholarship as myth work.[21]

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mysteries of myth, he advocates open politics. See the description of postmodernism in the text above. In relation to biblical studies, see John Dominic Crossan, *The Dark Interval: Towards a Theology of Story* (Niles, IL: Argus, 1975).

[20] On the construction of the self vis-à-vis the other, see, e.g., the classic works of Simone de Beauvoir (*The Second Sex* [trans. H. M. Parsely; New York: Vintage, 1974]) and Edward W. Said (*Orientalism* [New York: Random House, 1978]).

[21] For a more detailed analysis of the myth work of various NT interpreters, see Walsh, *Mapping Myths*, 89–132; and, more recently, Ward Blanton, *Displacing Christian Origins: Philosophy, Secularity, and the New Testament* (Religion and Postmodernism; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); and William E. Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus: Historical Scholarship, Judaism and the Construction of Identity* (Religion in Culture; London: Equinox, 2005). Some sociological approaches to biblical studies raise similar issues. See, e.g., James G. Crossley, *Why Christianity*

Christians have long believed themselves to be in possession of revealed truth, which differed from the myths, or vain imaginations, of others (cf. 1 Tim 1:3–4; 4:6–7; 2 Tim 4:3–4; Tit 1:13–14; 2 Pet 1:16). This view of myth differs markedly from the view among some of the intelligentsia of late antiquity who found hidden, allegorical truths in mythology. Christian interpreters have often defended their truth simply by denouncing the falsehood of the views—that is, the myths—of others, who themselves are cast as mythic opponents or enemies. Absent is any public argument for Christian revelation, meaningfully engaging the other in conversation. Absent also is any awareness that such Christian interpreters are creating their own mythic identities by excluding these others and naming their "false" views myths. The desired other is the divine truth/revelation that the Christian wishes to possess and manage. The despised other is myth, the false beliefs of others. The unacknowledged, undefended perspective is "true" Christianity, a "good" philosophy. Something like this pattern of mythmaking recurs often during the evolution of modernist historical-critical biblical scholarship and in its quest for the historical Jesus.

David Friedrich Strauss, for example, understood myth more positively than the Christians described above, but still saw it as a kind of picturesque story to be surpassed. After pitting "supernatural" (religiously conservative) interpretations and rationalist interpretations against one another in Gospel pericope after pericope, Strauss routinely judged the former better. In fact, he saw almost the entire NT as mythic; nonetheless, Strauss thought that intellectuals should prefer Hegelian philosophical truths (another "good" philosophy) to these stories. Thus, Strauss affirmed the modernist metanarratives of the Enlightenment and of Hegelianism at the expense of traditional religious mythology.[22] Even as he was dismissing myth and asserting his rationality, he was himself creating a mythic sense of identity. He was also acting as Marcel Detienne has argued that Enlightenment thinkers did when they created the notion of mythology as primitive stories and thought in order to exalt reason—that is, to identify themselves as properly rational, not barbaric men, and to dismiss myth from their sacred precincts.[23]

Happened: A Sociohistorical Account of Christian Origins (26–50 CE) (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2006).

[22] See Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 30, 73. The Enlightenment is explicitly in the forefront of Collins's critique of postmodernism in *The Bible After Babel*, while Hegelianism, though rarely mentioned, lurks near Collins's understanding of historical critical method as a conversation that gradually comes closer and closer to the objective truth of the text, uncovered through plausible exegesis of the text's "valid meaning" (17). For a critique of this notion of progress in biblical criticism, see Blanton, *Displacing Christian Origins,* 1–23, 62–66.

[23] The exclusive language is deliberate. Patriarchy is endemic to this Enlightenment perspective. Some of this period's work on myth also exalts Indo-Aryans at the expense of Semitic peoples. See Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). Shawn Kelley has made some similar observations about biblical

While the liberal historical critics who followed Strauss disagreed with his negative view of the historical value of the Gospels, they acted in a similar mythic fashion.[24] However, where Strauss's desideratum was Hegelian philosophical truth, the liberal historical critics desired historical truth. These scholars strove to discover whether actual events were depicted in the Gospels, most famously in the quest for the "historical Jesus," and to establish the authors and dates of NT books. Their attempts debunked in many cases the apostolic claims of tradition and critiqued the orthodox understanding of Christ.[25] In short, historical-critical scholars were still debunking myth—now in the form of the supernatural dogmas and apostolic tradition of the church—in order to establish their own mythic identity as rational men.

After the heyday of nineteenth-century liberalism and before its resurgence in the New Quest in the twentieth century, the history-of-religions school challenged the distinction between history and myth by stressing the mythological character of the NT documents themselves. Like Strauss, Rudolf Bultmann was convinced of the mythological nature of the NT and skeptical of modern scholars' ability to reconstruct an underlying history. However, where Strauss had advocated a mythological hermeneutic to recover philosophical truths from the NT, Bultmann advocated a demythologizing hermeneutic that would reveal fundamental statements about enduring human nature. The reader could then express those statements in terms of existentialism (yet another "good" philosophy). Like Strauss, Bultmann sought to replace ancient mythology and vain attempts at history with a philosophy that provided him with a modern mythic identity. His students, however, largely rejected his skepticism about history, and historical criticism to this day is more heavily indebted to them (and other critics of Bultmann) than to Bultmann himself. The theological influence noted above is also evident in the twentieth century in Bultmann's students' critique of what they considered his insufficient concern for history.

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studies in *Racializing Jesus: Race, Ideology and the Formation of Modern Biblical Scholarship* (Biblical Limits; New York: Routledge, 2002). See also Said, *Orientalism*.

[24] Hans-Herbert Stoldt (*History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis* [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1980]) argues that much of the success of the theory of Markan priority depended on historical critics' hostility to Strauss's mythic views and his assumption of Matthean priority. More recently, fiction serves as another "other" for historical criticism, as the irate historical-critical responses to recent popular films such as *The Passion of the Christ* and *The Da Vinci Code* indicate. For an intriguing consideration of the similarities between fiction and historical criticism of the Bible, see Roland Boer, *Novel Histories: The Fiction of Biblical Criticism* (Playing the Texts 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

[25] Reflecting on the concern for author and date in historical criticism, James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester observed that the basic questions of historical criticism were actually set for it by the theological positions of the church (*Trajectories Through Early Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971]).

Twentieth-century biblical criticism also included a powerful literary approach to the texts, which followed the lead of the scholar and poet Amos Wilder. A Romantic impulse generated much of the resulting narrative criticism, which is still widespread in biblical studies. Critiquing Bultmann, Wilder reasserted the value of myth as an alternative imagination desirable because of the demonic sterility of modern analytical rationalism. For Wilder, transcendence lay hidden in the poetic, religious language of myth; and he claimed that one could encounter God only through such myth and image. Wilder embraced what the historians had rejected (myth) and rejected what they had embraced (historical reason).

Nonetheless, Wilder's mythic work was not truly different from that of either premodern Christians or liberal historiographers, and theological influences continued to be present, perhaps even more so, in modernist literary approaches to the Bible. While the Romantic wishes to entice what others wish to exorcise, both still operate with the protected preserves of their own, occluded perspectives, on one hand, and powerful and feared others, on the other. Much biblical literary criticism during the last third of the twentieth century has simply continued this approach. For such criticism, the world of the text (Wilder's myth)—perceived as a stable, meaningful entity independent of institutional control—is the desired other that promised deliverance from the iron cage of modernity.[26]

Such desires are also obvious in much of historical Jesus research. In fact, it would not be too extreme to describe much of this research as markedly Christian or, at least, fundamentally religious.[27] While the historical Jesus was not born in Christian worship, as the Christ of faith was, it was born in the exegesis of the canonical Gospels. In fact, many scholars still reject the use of noncanonical Gospels to reconstruct the historical Jesus. Moreover, despite the traditional story that the historical Jesus is the fruit of a scholarly rebellion against the church, it is Christian discourse, and the shadow of Christ, that justify the quest. In fact, without the underpinning of Christian discourse, Jesus loses the uniqueness that justifies the focus and effort expended on this one antique figure.[28] Many Jesus researchers, then, are actually busy modernizing Christian discourse, denuding it of mythological elements so that it will appeal to modern rationalists. No wonder,

[26] On the common fascination with narrative among biblical critics who practice narrative criticism and certain "Third Quest" work on the historical Jesus, see Arnal, *Symbolic Jesus*, 41–44.

[27] While we begin here by noting the Christian aura of the mythmaking in much historical Jesus research, we are well aware that non-Christians participate in this endeavor and that other mythic desires are therefore sometimes in play. Instead of pursuing this diversity, we move gradually in our article to the more general religious desires of historical Jesus research and historical criticism. On this point, see also Blanton, *Displacing Christian Origins,* who has significantly nuanced previous secular critiques of the religious—rather than merely Christian—nature of historical criticism.

[28] Again, studies that deny Jesus' uniqueness have the potential to escape Christian discourse to some extent. See Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978); or more recently, Crossley, *Why Christianity Happened*.

then, that some recent critics have noted the fundamentally religious nature of historical criticism and have called for a more secular biblical criticism.[29]

Nonetheless, even the most conservative historical Jesus research adopts the standards and worldview of the modern discipline of historiography, rather than that of traditional Christianity. Peter Berger wryly caricatures the kind of "bargaining" that ensues: "'we'll give you the miracles of Jesus, but we'll keep his ethics'; 'You can have the virgin birth, but we'll hold on to the resurrection'; and so on."[30] In the process, Christianity loses its status as the taken-for-granted truth, and modernity becomes the final arbiter and judge of truth. This modern distance from Christian tradition is the quest for the historical Jesus' raison d'être, and the historical Jesus is a *modernized* version of Christ. These modern Jesuses are not aristocratic (or divine) Christs, but rather the all-too-human heroes typical of modern novels and films, who are inevitably out of place/time and at odds with their society. Thus, the pattern of the typical historical Jesus study, like that of the modern myth itself, revolves around the individual's tension vis-à-vis society and that tension's resolution, not the delivery of a heroic/divine message or salvation.[31] Thus, the (modern) historical Jesus is either a marginalized dropout from a particular culture—whether revolutionary, an apocalyptic doomsayer, or a cynic sage—or he is a universal ethicist rising above the fray of a particular society. Either type of historical Jesus idealizes the alienated, modern individual. No wonder, then, that many researchers have commented on scholars' tendency to reconstruct the historical Jesus as their own idealistic reflection.[32] As such, the modern historical Jesus is a myth, "a strategy for dealing with a situation"—namely, modernity.[33] In fact, the historical Jesus deals with the incongruity between the tradition and the present by

[29] For example, Hector Avalos, *The End of Biblical Studies* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2007); Jacques Berlinerblau, *The Secular Bible: Why Nonbelievers Must Take Religion Seriously* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Arnal, *Symbolic Jesus*; Blanton, *Displacing Christian Origins*; and Crossley, *Why Christianity Happened*.

[30] Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor, 1969), 159–60. Such apologies on behalf of Christianity, which begin with the Gospel of Luke, are fraught with potentially fatal paradoxes. See Richard Walsh, *Reading the Gospels in the Dark*: *Portrayals of Jesus in Film* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 121–46.

[31] Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* nicely dramatizes this modern Jesus. This may partly account for the film's high reputation among religious academics.

[32] See, of course, Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (trans. W. Montgomery; New York: Macmillan, 1968). For Jaroslav Pelikan, "Jesus" is an idealization, rather than a mere reflection, of Western thinkers (*Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985]). That analysis is closer to our mythic analysis here and to Durkheim's analysis of the genesis of religion.

[33] See Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religion* (SJLA 23; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 290–91, 299–302. Arnal presents a detailed discussion of the use of Jesus in recent historical debate to create academic, political, religious, and cultural identities (*Symbolic Jesus*, 39–72).

adapting Jesus Christ, the supreme icon/ideal of Western culture, to modernity in order to negotiate a modern, Christian space in which to live. In so doing, it provides modern Christians with a mythic (self-)identity.

Our discussion to this point has focused on Christian and NT concerns, for it seems to us that the desire for knowledge of "the historical Jesus" provides a particularly clear example of historical-critical mythic work. Within Christian circles, the NT simply must have some historical basis, if not in Jesus himself then at least in the earliest Christian communities. The history-of-religions school, which pointed out the affinity of the Bible with myth and the presence of history in other religions, has been largely ignored on this point. As the biblical theologians have never tired of repeating, history separates Christianity (and Judaism) from the myths of other religions.

Christian historical concerns regarding the OT (that is, the Christian version of the Jewish Scriptures) are driven to a great extent by concerns regarding the NT. Thus, for some Christian interpreters, such as Brevard Childs and Walter Brueggemann, the ultimate issues in the study of the Hebrew Scriptures come from Christian theological concerns about the canon and the relation of the two Testaments. Such Christian concerns may account for the fact that OT survey courses often give far more attention to Israelite history as imagined by the Former Prophets than to that imagined by 1–2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The former is more compatible with future Christian use and development than the latter.

Of course, many differences arise in historical criticism of the Hebrew Bible because of its greater size, diversity, and historical setting(s); nevertheless, for historical critics, questions of the history of ancient Israel or of the "history of the text" trump other textual and literary concerns. For example, the recent much-discussed maximalist–minimalist debates revolve around questions of the historical reliability of Hebrew narrative, particularly that of Samuel–Kings, and of the date of its composition, with options ranging from preexilic to Persian or Hellenistic times. If dated late and regarded as having little reliable historical information on preexilic Israel and Judah, the narrative corpus then is seen as providing reliable historical information on the political, mythic identity of this later Jewish community as it struggles with its place in a larger empire. The narrative history of ancient Israel defines a later community. Despite claims to the contrary, the minimalists are here no more postmodern than the maximalists: in either scenario, a historical meaning remains the goal of the historical critic.[34]

[34] For full bibliography and discussion in the context of debates about postmodernist historiography beyond biblical studies, see R. D. Miller II, "Yahweh and His Clio: Critical Theory and the Historical Criticism of the Hebrew Bible," *Currents in Biblical Research* 4 (2006): 149-68. The best-known spokesman for the maximalists is William G. Dever, particularly his *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001). Two of the main proponents of the minimal-

Mythically, historical criticism reveals a deep desire to get back to some original, an *archē* or First Signified, which is always theological or ideological, such as the real Jesus or the actual ancient Israel. This desire is fundamentally Romantic, and, as an expression of modernism, historical criticism is the product of both the Enlightenment and Romanticism. The former is most evident in the frequent attempts by historical critics to arrive at a rational or scientifically grounded self-identity. The latter is most evident in historical criticism's nostalgic desire for an *archē*. The scholar wants to make sense of the text, and, as the text by itself may not make sense, she replaces the text in its present form with other forms of the text from supposed, but highly speculative, earlier stages in its history (such as Q, or J, E, P, D). The text's truth, value, or meaning derives finally from its originating source, whether author(s), redactor(s), or historical milieu.

Regardless of how historically nuanced it may be, this desire for the origin is a fundamentally religious desire. More precisely, it strongly resembles the desires of the type of religion or myth that Mircea Eliade wrongly described as universal, which was rather the scribal religion of agrarian empires and of the so-called historic religions. Such religion posited a sacred other (known through a hierophany or its myth-ritual enactment) that gave the profane world its identity and meaning.[35] Moreover, historical criticism has worked hand in hand with the established churches, to the extent that both scholar and church person take history as the equivalent of religious truth.[36] Both use historical truth to separate themselves religiously and in terms of mythic identity from the opposed specters of fundamentalism and gnosticism.[37]

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ist position are Philip R. Davies (*In Search of "Ancient Israel"* [JSOTSup 148; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992]) and Niels Peter Lemche (*The Israelites in History and Tradition* [Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998]).

[35] The classic source is Eliade's *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion* (trans. Willard Trask; New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1959). For critique of the universality of this form of religion, see Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 289–309.

[36] For "the people in the pews," scholarly historical criticism appears in the form of "biblical theology" and numerous popular books on Jesus. Additional examples of this may now readily be found in numerous Internet discussion groups. Even in these more popular forums a historical focus dominates. Whether it is the exodus, David's kingdom, or Christ's passion that is discussed, the implicit and often explicit claims are that these events "really happened" and that their historical reality is essential to their significance.

[37] Such "positioning" defenses of historical research were common among Bultmann's many New Quest students and in the biblical theology movement. The recent resurgence of fundamentalism is well known. Some argue that a kind of gnosticism is the popular religion of the United States (if not the West generally). See, e.g., Harold Bloom, *American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992); and, more recently, N. T. Wright, *Judas and the Gospel of Jesus: Have We Missed the Truth about Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006). The latter uses the designation to castigate historical critics who do not

Historical criticism's long-standing dominance in both the academy and the churches makes it the "natural" method for interpreting the Bible today. Of course, multiple "schools" of historical criticism do exist. The maximalist–minimalist divide in Hebrew Bible studies is a vivid example. In NT studies, although there is widespread agreement that Jesus was a Jew, no agreement exists on what kind of Jew he was. These divisions indicate that historical criticism is not a single, scientific method, repeatable in different laboratories. Moreover, mavericks frequently arise with troubling questions that challenge the assumptions of historical criticism.[38] Their questions demonstrate that neither historical criticism's method nor its results are universal or objective.

In actual practice, however, historical critics normally dismiss these divisions and anomalies as mere human errors that will eventually be overcome by better historical criticism.[39] In Thomas Kuhn's famous discussion of normal science and its paradigm shifts, such attitudes are the backdrop of the normal practice of the era's dominant method.[40] This normal, understandable practice seldom provides opportunities for a consideration of the paradigm/method's philosophical or theoretical underpinnings or, in our terms here, of its mythic work. Nevertheless, at times self-criticism does emerge: Strauss, Bultmann, and Schweitzer spring immediately to mind. However, the critical insights of Strauss and Bultmann were quickly domesticated, and Schweitzer has been misread quite often.[41] To rethink our "natural" attitudes and practices—our paradigm—we have to adopt a more theoretical or more meta-interpretative stance. Postmodernism is one avenue to this possibility.

IV. Postmodern Mythology

Postmodernism became an important voice in biblical studies in the last third of the twentieth century, and its influence continues to grow. This time period is that of a much less confident modernity than that of the nineteenth century. To oversimplify, the nineteenth century is the century of liberalism and confident

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share his theological position. The former uses the term in order to portray himself as a latter-day gnostic.

[38] See, e.g., John A.T. Robinson's *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) or, more recently, Crossley, *Why Christianity Happened*, as well as Michael D. Goulder's critique of Q in works such as *Luke: A New Paradigm* (JSNTSup 20; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

[39] In *The Bible after Babel*, Collins repeatedly argues in this way. See Blanton, *Displacing Christian Origins*, 1–23, for a critique.

[40] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[41] See Blanton, *Displacing Christian Origins*, 129–65.

progress, and the twentieth century is a more apocalyptic and pluralist age. Not surprisingly, the liberal Jesus in various guises dominated nineteenth-century studies while the apocalyptic Jesus dominated twentieth-century work.[42]

The modernity of recent times is unsettled, disturbed. Indeed, one could argue that "postmodernism" is merely the name we give to this disturbance. As Lyotard says, the postmodern is "that which, *in the modern,* . . . denies itself the solace of good forms; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to *enjoy* them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the *unpresentable*."[43] Despite (and because of) the hegemony of global capitalism, the world today is fragmented by multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and fundamentalism. Even as an increasingly monolithic capitalist empire dominates our world, multiple cultural and psychological realities and desperate, polemical attempts to defend one ideology at the expense of all others increasingly fracture it. Postmodernism belongs to this world even as it questions the truth of any totalization of it.[44] Indeed, postmodernism revels in this multiplicity and in modernity's unsettled state. For that reason, many theorists describe postmodernism by using various words with the *para* ("alongside") prefix. *Parasite* is one of the more revealing of these words because it nicely expresses postmodernism's uneasy location within the modern.[45] Postmodernism is the static (French: *parasite*) inherent in the modernist message, the unwelcome guest who helps herself to the host's food.

Thus, postmodernism is not something "other" than modernism, as though they were two distinct historical eras or philosophical movements. Postmodernism cannot exist apart from modernism. Nevertheless, postmodernism does not uncritically accept the modern myth or its inclusions and exclusions. As noted previously, the basic mode of postmodernism is that of suspicion, and this includes, indeed it foregrounds, critical self-suspicion. It resists the desire for mythic meta-

[42] In the late twentieth century, the major exception to the apocalyptic Jesus has been the cynic Jesus of John Dominic Crossan and others, such as Burton Mack. For a discussion of the different mythic identities at risk in the debate between the apocalyptic and cynic Jesus, see Arnal, *Symbolic Jesus*. Perhaps Crossan found a cynic—one who challenges the propriety of custom and culture in favor of the natural—because of his postmodern literary work in the 1970s. Nonetheless, his historical Jesus work in the 1990s is predominantly modernist. See Walsh, *Mapping Myths*, 121–28. Arnal calls for a rejection of the quest for the historical Jesus and for a turn to research into the symbolic Jesus (*Symbolic Jesus*, 74–77).

[43] Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 81 (emphases added).

[44] The ethical conundrum here is whether postmodernism reinforces global capitalism. See Jameson, *Postmodernism*.

[45] See Michel Serres, *The Parasite* (trans. Lawrence B. Schehr; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); and also Richard Walsh and George Aichele, "Preface: Interpretative Thieves," in *Those Outside: Noncanonical Readings of the Canonical Gospels* (ed. George Aichele and Richard Walsh; New York: T&T Clark, 2005), vii–xvi.

narratives and prefers instead a multiplicity of partial, little narratives.[46] Postmodernism challenges the modern borders, plays on those borders, and finally demonstrates their arbitrary and fictional character. It challenges all binary oppositions—such as history and myth, or myth and truth, or even modern and postmodern!—uncovering the suppressed and recovering the marginalized. It is postmodernism's cultural location in an unsettled, multicultural modernity that makes this challenge possible, just as liberalism's cultural location in a confident modernity made it possible.

Following a distinction that Crossan made in the 1970s, we might use another *para-* word and say that postmodernism seeks parable, rather than myth.[47] According to Crossan, myth is a story that supports the cultural status quo (the dominant) while parable is a story that challenges the finality of that status quo without supporting another stand-alone story or counter-myth. Parable is a "little narrative" parasitically dwelling alongside the dominant metanarrative. The unruly presence of parable makes mythic totalizing impossible and thereby helps to create an awareness of the fictional status of myth. Parable dwells in but also exposes incoherencies and gaps in the dominant myth. It thereby points to the myth as a story and thus causes one to hesitate mythically.

Thus, postmodernists do not escape myth. To say otherwise would have postmodernism repeat the sort of mythic work that we have sketched above. It would imply an objectivity that is free from ideology, or perhaps seek some Romantic utopia as a desideratum. Instead, postmodernism knowingly dwells within the modernist metanarratives. It understands that to live in myth is the human condition. Unlike modernists, however, postmodernists desire parable as well.

Accordingly, postmodernists have a different relation to myth than modernists do. The modernist is an alienated individual locked in a struggle with larger, evil institutional or corporate forces. At least in modernist dreams, as reflected in many novels and films, the modern, heroic individual triumphs over these forces and finds freedom in a better, transformed world. Instead of living in an alienation that sparks dreams of triumph, the postmodernist lives in endless irony or parody. As such, she is no hero and expects no successful struggle. Most important, from a mythic perspective, the postmodernist does not label the modern world and its institutions evil. The world is "beyond good and evil," as Nietzsche said, and it is finally an artifice or fiction, even though a very powerful one. Furthermore, the postmodern experience of fragmented worlds is not simply part of culture; it is also part of our most "private" selves. Postmodernism dismantles the modern concept of the individual, treating the self as yet another narrative. As Foucault and others

[46] Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 60.
[47] Crossan, *Dark Interval*.

have shown, it is modernity that creates the individual self and our knowledge of the self.

Postmodernism emerges from a theory of creation and interpretation that is fascinated with surfaces. It concentrates on the signifier as opposed to the signified, and thus it pays more attention to that which disrupts the smooth readability of narrative and thereby exposes faults in the coherence of myth. Postmodernism explores gaps between the text and its official interpretations, including the understandings of historical criticism. Postmodernism uncovers unlimited semiosis, an endless play of intertextual signification, rather than a Final Signified or First Signifier. Meaning is not located *in* the single text, planted there perhaps by an originating author, but instead meaning is only found *between* texts, as they are brought together in the insight (and corresponding blindness) of their various readers.[48]

This is a disturbing thought to modernist critics, for whom postmodern *jouissance* is too playful.[49] True to their Enlightenment/Hegelian heritage, modernists desire a single Truth to define the texts. One often reads the modernist charge that postmodernism is "nihilistic," which seems to mean above all else that postmodern critics do not simply accept the dominant modernist mythology; therefore, modernists deem postmodernists "atheists" in rather the same way that pagan Romans viewed ancient Christians as atheists. As this language suggests, this charge is a matter of theology, and the fact that many regard biblical texts as "Scripture" or the "word of God" is relevant here. Postmodern critics are atheists in the sense that the Bible has no special status for them over against other texts, unlike many historical critics. Nevertheless, Jacques Derrida's words suggest the inappropriateness of the charge of nihilism:

> [T]he texts I want to read from the deconstructive point of view are texts I love, with that impulse of identification which is indispensable for reading. They are texts whose future, I think, will not be exhausted for a long time. . . . [M]y relation to these texts is characterized by loving jealousy and not at all by nihilistic fury (one can't read anything in the latter condition).[50]

[48] Cultural criticism offers a fine example of such play and tension between different texts and readings. Cultural criticism is a combination of history of interpretation, reader response theory, and history of reception that seeks to trace how a biblical text or parts of one have been commented on and treated across the centuries by any reader, not just professional or recognized scholars and experts. Playwrights, preachers, moralists, essayists, sculptors, and other artists are all possible sources for views on the Bible. The *Blackwell Bible Commentaries through the Centuries* series proposes to examine each book of the Bible in this way. The criticism is postmodern because of its diversity and because it offers many different voices without needing to decide which one is right and true to the biblical text.

[49] See, e.g., the criticisms offered by Collins in *Bible after Babel*, esp. chs. 1 and 6.

[50] Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other* (trans. Peggy Kamuf and Avital Ronell; New York: Schocken, 1985), 87.

However, it is correct that postmodernists prefer the bliss of a polysemic or even polymorphic text, as Barthes suggested in his distinction between the "work" and the "text."[51] Postmodernists do not share the historical-critical desire to resolve the text into an autograph or to clarify its meaning by means of purely hypothetical documents. That is not to say that postmodern critics are indifferent to questions of the history of the text, including the "corruptions" and "corrections" to be found in the various surviving manuscripts. Indeed, such evidence that we have of ancient textual alteration often points to instances of textual incoherence that are of great interest to postmodernists.

V. Postmodern Historical Criticism?

Thus, postmodernism does not reject the importance of history. Indeed, postmodern thinkers such as Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Barthes, and Gilles Deleuze have a great deal to say about "history" and its relationship to "reality." For these thinkers, history is a necessary function of consciousness, and we cannot think at all without thinking historically. What is needed, then, is a fundamental rethinking of history as a condition of thought itself as well as a deeper consideration of the profoundly ideological nature of whatever concept or understanding of "the past" we may form. Again there are massive theological implications involved!

"History" in the postmodern context becomes something very different from "what really happened"—in other words, postmodern history is not a question of locating some indisputable point of reference.[52] Claims about objective "historical truth" are problematic at best and always ideological. The specific details of an individual writing a book (such as her intentions) are difficult to assess no matter how well we know that individual, and, in the case of most biblical texts, we do not know the writer at all. We have no empirical access to the past except by way of such documents, relics, or other remains that have survived into the present; moreover, from a postmodern point of view, whatever "evidence" these remains provide can come only through such suppositions as we make about them, here and now. We assume that something actually happened in the past, a past that in some sense we all share (a "universal history"), but we can understand or describe that something only in terms of who/what we are now. As a result, history as a story of the past must always be constructed in the present—a present that is itself not a given, objective "real-

[51] Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Image Music Text* (trans. Stephen Heath; New York: Hill and Wang), 155–64.

[52] Perhaps the best single (albeit very brief) statement of postmodern historical criticism remains Fred Burnett's essay "Historiography" in *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Adam, 106–12.

ity," but also a construct produced in the fluid tension between numerous desires, interests, thoughts, memories, bodily states, and so on.

We could say that for historical criticism to be postmodern, it must become more secular, but that would only be to say that it must give up its Romantic desires.[53] We do not ask historical criticism to give up mythmaking, but simply to be more conscious of its mythmaking or to make a "shift from the present Romantic hermeneutics of symbol and poetic speech to that of legal-exegetical discourse."[54] Such mythmaking does not desire a utopian Eden of complete harmony, but sees human ideals best realized in the recognition and navigation of incongruity as we construct a place to live in the present.

Perhaps, then, it would be better for us to say that, for historical criticism to be postmodern, it must become more endlessly critical of itself and demythologizing of its own ideals. Of course, the same must be said to postmodernism, for the same mythic perils also attend postmodernism. After all, postmodernists also easily believe their own fictions. Specifically, in the dialogue with historical criticism, postmodernism faces the peril of demonizing historical criticism as the hated other to be excluded at all costs. When it does so, postmodernism becomes monstrously mythic. In this context, then, the Nietzsche quotation used as an epigraph for this article stands as a succinct warning about the perils endemic to all human mythmaking.

Nonetheless, historical criticism has a particular involvement with myth because of its Romantic desires. Historical criticism accepts with the dynamic equivalence theory of translation that a text is a conveyor of an important message or a window to a greater reality—some history or philosophy, and finally a great Truth buried within it. As such, historical criticism continues to look like the religious desire described by Eliade, which disenchants this world in favor of some sacred other (which may, because of historical criticism's modern location, be depicted instead as subjective depth or aesthetic creation).

In short, the fundamental problem in the way of a postmodern historical criticism is the human tendency to believe ourselves in possession of the Truth or at least in Truth's anteroom. This belief—whether it appears in historical criticism or modern science—bears a striking resemblance to the perspective of fundamentalism (or dogmatism). By contrast, postmodernism expects no ultimate signified. It does not claim possession of any final Truth, allowing instead only the always-provisional, pragmatic, transitory truths of day-to-day life. It may dissent and cri-

[53] See further Burton L. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament? The Making of the Christian Myth* (San Francisco: Polebridge, 1995); Philip R. Davies, *Whose Bible Is It Anyway?* (2nd ed.; London: T&T Clark, 2004); Berlinerblau, *Secular Bible*; and Crossley, *Why Christianity Happened*.

[54] Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 300. See also Walsh, *Mapping Myths*; Blanton, *Displacing Christian Origins*; Arnal, *Symbolic Jesus*; and the work of the SBL Seminar on "Ancient Myths and Modern Theories of Christian Origins."

tique, but it always lives parasitically. Postmodernism is forever restless, forever wandering. A postmodern historical criticism must be aware of its distance from the text and of its own ideological impositions of meaning.

Nevertheless, a postmodern historical criticism will always be first and foremost a postmodern criticism, and that will be a serious problem for some. Based on what we have said above, we do not think it likely, or even possible, that any one scholar could successfully combine both postmodern and modernist historical criticisms into a single coherent statement about the Bible (or anything else). Some scholars have oscillated back and forth between postmodern and historical criticisms at different points in their work—for example, Philip Davies, John Dominic Crossan—but this has done little to further the conversation that we call for here. A growing number of scholars, from both sides of this "divide," have incorporated elements from the other side into their writings, and that is very encouraging. (Indeed, it is impossible to do postmodern biblical scholarship without drawing upon modernist scholarship. Unfortunately, the converse is not true.) However, it seems to us that the most helpful bridging of this divide may occur in conversations among groups that include both scholars who take historical-critical approaches and scholars who take postmodern approaches. This is a challenge to the Society of Biblical Literature and other scholarly societies, as well as to universities and seminaries, to create programs and other opportunities in which such conversations will occur.

If any of us are to find conversation with anyone different from ourselves, we must hesitate in the beliefs and values that come "naturally" to us. We view this essay as an attempt—undoubtedly quite one-sided—to stimulate such a conversation, and we hope that others will take this incompleteness and one-sidedness as an invitation (or provocation!) to further that effort. In that light, we suggest some specific areas of further joint study and conversation in which historical critics and postmodernists might benefit from one another:

1. Physical aspects of the texts. Postmodernism is justly famous for "close readings" of texts, in which physical features of the text play very important roles, and historical text criticism has long focused on similarities and differences between the ancient manuscripts. Of course, the differences that we have described above operate here as well. While text critics often seek to repair the text or even to recover a lost original, postmodernists revel in textual disruption of meaning. The deeper question here concerns the unity or disunity of the text. Nevertheless, there may be an opening here for dialogue in which each side could learn from the other. Among other topics of mutual interest might be the significance of the scroll versus the codex, the use of *nomina sacra* and other textual markings, and the physical impact of printing (and more recently, digitization) on the written texts.

2. Intertextuality. For historical criticism this is more-or-less confined to seeking explicit and demonstrable examples of the historical influence of an earlier text on a later one, whether this is inner-biblical (within the Hebrew Bible alone, the NT alone, or spanning the Christian canon) or whether it involves extrabiblical texts as well. Historical criticism has achieved and continues to achieve solid results in this area; the Bible, in its many parts, is literarily dependent on both itself and on a myriad of extrabiblical texts from the ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman world. Postmodernism accepts this but is much more interested in the relations that *readers* (not writers) establish *between* texts (of whatever chronological order). The reader always understands the text as embedded in a world of texts through its use of language and literary form.[55] This applies also to meaningful tensions between biblical texts and a wide variety of other texts, ancient or modern, as "precursors" and "afterlives."

3. Ideology and translation. Postmodernists have played important roles in the effort to awaken modernist literary studies from the dogmatic slumbers of "dynamic equivalence." Given the importance of translation throughout the history of the Bible, this would be another topic well suited to joint investigation. In addition, we all have become increasingly aware of the impact on the traditions of the transition from oral to written forms, and more recently, from manuscript to printed and now digital forms, as other forms of "translation," and this too needs much further study. Finally, we have only begun to explore the role of the texts (and their translations) in constructing gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and social class.

4. The author and her or his intentions. Historical critics frequently stress the "author's intentions" as pointing to some extratextual reality or referent that determines the meaning of the text. For postmodernists, the historical author is inaccessible and we can at best know only the "implied author," which is a function of the reader's interaction with the text.[56] The author is thus an "intention" of the reader. This certainly is a major point of disagreement. Whether (or why) this disagreement is irreconcilable needs to be further clarified.

[55] See the collection edited by Danna Nolan Fewell, *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992); as well as George Aichele and Gary Phillips, eds., *Semeia* 69/70: *Intertextuality and the Bible* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). The idea of intertextuality is ascribed to Julia Kristeva. See her *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (European Perspectives; New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

[56] This point has been succinctly made by Adam in his entry on "Author" in his *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation*.

5. The semiotics of canon. Recent disputes over "biblical theology" and "canonical criticism" are by no means settled, and they impinge on the work of both historical critics and postmodernists. Again the privileged status (or lack of same) of the Bible is crucial. As the canon (but not necessarily the Bible) becomes less significant in an increasingly secular, pluralistic world, the question of the canon's influence on the history or meaning of its constituent texts becomes more important and more problematic.

Finally, we invite our colleagues (of all varieties) to lay out their disagreements with the view of the mythic work of historical criticism and of postmodernism that we have presented here. Others can point out our assumptions and ideologies far better than we can. We need others to help us see what we deify and what we demonize.

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