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The Poetics of Adam: The Creation of אדם in the Image of אלהים

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I. The *Status Quaestionis*

Karl Barth pushed the discussion of the *imago Dei* in a new direction when he suggested that the divine plural in Gen 1:26 and the creation of אדם as male and female in Gen 1:27 indicated that the very relationality of human beings constituted the divine image.[1] His position has met with both enthusiasm and skepticism. While it emphasizes the profound social, sexual, and relational nature of human beings—realities highlighted by the recent emergence of the social sciences—some have questioned whether this "truth" came out of the text of Genesis or was being read into it. Was Barth importing his own theological concerns and the spirit of his age into his interpretation? Scholars have noted the philosophical influence of Martin Buber's *I and Thou* in Barth's thought on the *imago Dei*.[2] Likewise, con-

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[1] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (trans. Harold Knight, G. W. Bromiley, J. K. S. Reid, and R. H. Fuller; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960). Barth writes: "'In our image' means to be created as a being which has its ground and possibility in the fact that . . . in God's own sphere and being, there exists a divine and therefore self-grounded prototype to which this being can correspond" (III/1, 183). He goes on to speak of the creation of humankind (in the divine image) as distinct from the rest of creation in that only here exist "the true confrontation and reciprocity which are actualised in the reality of an 'I' and a 'Thou'" (III/1, 184). Gunnlauger A. Jónsson suggests that Barth is the most important figure in *imago Dei* studies for the period from 1919 to 1960 (*The Image of God: Genesis 1:26–28 in a Century of Old Testament Research* [trans. Lorraine Svendsen; ConBOT 26; Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1988], 146 n. 6).

[2] David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), 187. Dieter Becker, *Karl Barth und Martin Buber: Denker in dialogischer Nachbarschaft? Zur Bedeutung Martin Bubers für die Anthropologie Karl Barths* (Forschungen zur systematischen und ökumenischen Theologie 51; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

nections between Freudian psychology (with its emphasis on human sexuality) and Barth's anthropology as derived from his exegesis of Gen 1:27 have been noted.[3] In Barth's own words: "we cannot say man without having to say male or female and also male and female. Man exists in this differentiation, in this duality."[4] Even though the theological and philosophical underpinnings of Barth's exegesis were called into question, his dialectical model would prove to be the most influential interpretation of the *imago Dei* for almost half a century, and its influence can still be seen today in the work of a number of exegetes.[5]

A second major movement in the interpretation of the *imago Dei* may be found in the work of James Barr.[6] Perhaps Barr's chief contribution was in shifting the focus of the discussion of the *imago Dei* onto the role of the Priestly writer. Barr insists that the concept of the image of God must be understood in the literary context of the Priestly source in which it is found.[7] But Barr's way proves to be principally a *via negativa*. His insistence on the single context of the P source is a negation of interpretations such as Barth's that go beyond this narrow historical-literary focus. But, if he plays a key role in critiquing Barth for allowing an undue influence of systematic theology on biblical exegesis, he does not construct a new hypothesis to hold the day. Rather, his answer to the question of the nature of the *imago Dei* is that "there is no answer to be found."[8] While there is perhaps an apophatic truth and beauty to such a response, Barr has not discouraged a new generation of scholars in the past forty years from seeking that elusive answer.[9]

Two developments of Barth's dialectical understanding of the image of God

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[3] Daniel J. Price, *Karl Barth's Anthropology in Light of Modern Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 197.

[4] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/2, 286.

[5] The most notable being Claus Westermann (*Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984; German ed., 1974]) and Phyllis Trible (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* [OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978]).

[6] James Barr, "The Image of God in the Book of Genesis: A Study of Terminology," *BJRL* 51 (1968): 11–26; idem, "The Image of God in Genesis: Some Linguistic and Historical Considerations," *Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap van Suid-Afrika: Proceedings of the 10th Meeting, 1967* (1971): 5–13; idem, "Man and Nature: The Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament," *BJRL* 55 (1972–73): 9–32.

[7] See Barr, "Image of God," *BJRL* 51 (1968): 12.

[8] Ibid., 13.

[9] Yet his influence is unmistakable. The move away from speaking of a specific "content" of the image of God is evident in the works of Westermann and Trible cited above. Even Barth, while defining the image as an "I–Thou" relationship, was moving away from a content-focused understanding of the *imago Dei*. In his own words: "It is not a quality of man. Hence there is no point in asking in which of man's peculiar attributes and attitudes it consists. It does not consist in anything that man is or does" (*Church Dogmatics* III/1, 184).

Barr's focus on the Priestly writer, which is so central to his argument and influential on subsequent scholarship, is pronounced in the work of Phyllis Bird, "Male and Female He Created Them": Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation" *HTR* 74 [1981]: 129–59).

worth noting are found in the works of Claus Westermann and Phyllis Trible. In them one can note something of the daring of Barth tempered by the caution of Barr. Westermann follows Barth in stressing the relational nature of human beings in God's image. What he adds to the discussion of Gen 1:26–28 is an emphasis on event rather than definition. That is to say that, according to Westermann, the text does not attempt to define for us in what the image of God might consist (evidence perhaps of Barr's agnostic influence), but rather describes the *action* of God's creation of אדם as being in his image.[10] Trible highlights the sexual differentiation of the dialectical understanding by stating that "'male and female' is the vehicle of a metaphor whose tenor is 'the image of God.'"[11] By employing the language of metaphor, she, like Barr, avoids any definition of the image of God. But, like Barth, she sees a connection or association between the image of God and humankind as male and female. In human sexuality she sees not a description but a clue to perceiving divine transcendence. In her own words: "To describe male and female, then, is to perceive the image of God."[12]

One of the most thorough critiques of the Barthian position (including Trible's and to a lesser extent Westermann's variations on it) was made by Phyllis Bird in her very influential article "'Male and Female He Created Them': Gen. 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation."[13] She argues persuasively that sexual distinction and reproduction are not connected to the theme of the image of God but simply set the stage for the blessing of fertility in the following verse. Instead she sees the theme of dominion as the content of the *imago Dei*. Although some disagreements remain, the position articulated by Bird has at times been cited as the "historical-critical consensus."[14] Even among very recent works (such as J. Richard Middleton's *The Liberating Image*) that seek to steer the discussion in new directions, the "virtual consensus" of the functional interpretation of the image as ruling or dominion is still strongly affirmed and taken as a starting point.[15]

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[10] Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 155. Bird ("Male and Female," 138 n. 22) challenges the subtle distinction made by Westermann stating that "the alternatives are too exclusively drawn. What describes the act or mode of construction cannot be excluded from an understanding of the product."

[11] Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 20.

[12] Ibid., 21.

[13] See n. 9 above. Bird refers to the third line of Gen 1:27 as 1:27b. Throughout this article I refer to the lines of Gen 1:27 as follows:

So *ʾĕlōhîm* created *hāʾādām* in his image	1:27a
In the image of *ʾĕlōhîm* he created him	1:27b
Male and female he created them	1:27c

[14] Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Historical-Critical and Feminist Readings of Genesis 1:26–28," in *Hebrew Bible or Old Testament? Studying the Bible in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Roger Brooks and John J. Collins; Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 5; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 197–99.

[15] J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in the Symbolic World of Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), 25-29. Middleton does not challenge this virtual consensus,

Bird's argument proceeds along historical and literary lines. Historically, she notes that the expression "image of God" is found in several examples of Egyptian and Mesopotamian literature in reference to the king. From these she posits an unknown Canaanite tradition that incorporated and mediated the Egyptian and Mesopotamian sources and subsequently influenced the Priestly writer.[16] Hence, the historical context suggests a meaning for the "image of God" related to the function of ruling or dominion, which is made explicit in the biblical texts of Gen 1:26 and 1:28. Literarily, Bird examines the poetry of Gen 1:27, arguing that the third line of the tricolon—"male and female he created them"—is to be dissociated from the idea of the divine image in the first two lines.[17] Furthermore, she claims that "the grammar of the parallel clauses in verse 27 (i.e. the switch from the singular pronoun אתו to the plural pronoun אתם) prevents identification or interchange of the defining terms."[18] Instead she views the statement of sexual differentiation as the necessary prerequisite to the blessing of fertility that follows. Thus, according to Bird, this line is stating more how humans are like animals (Gen 1:22) than like God.[19]

While Bird has greatly contributed to the understanding of this text in its ancient Near Eastern context, one should exercise caution in asserting that the biblical writers are using Egyptian, Mesopotamian, or Canaanite concepts in precisely the same way as their ancient Near Eastern neighbors.[20] That the author of Genesis 1 is conveying the concept of dominion with the expression "image of God" seems irrefutable, but must one limit the author's meaning to this? It seems that more often the biblical writers use the same building blocks as their ancient Near Eastern neighbors—the myths, symbols, language, and literature—but they arrange these in a most distinctive and unique way. To follow Barr's sage advice, we must

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which he describes as nearly unanimous, but uses it as his point of departure in describing the critique that Genesis 1–11 presents of the Mesopotamian ideology that limits this functional image of God to royal and priestly groups.

[16] Bird, "Male and Female," 140–43.

[17] Ibid., 134. See also pp. 148–50, where she considers its possible secondary nature but does not fully commit to this hypothesis. Others will go further in attempting to apply a general pattern in poetic tricola in Hebrew, stating that the third line departs semantically from the first two. (See, e.g., Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 49, where he cites as his authority for this principle Robert Alter's *The World of Biblical Literature* [San Francisco: Basic Books, 1992], 177–78. Middleton fails to take into consideration, however, the marked structural differences between Gen 1:27 and the examples used by Alter.)

[18] Bird, "Male and Female," 159.

[19] Ibid., 148.

[20] Bird does point out that the Priestly account of creation can be viewed as a counter myth in the use of Mesopotamian (-Canaanite) terminology to counter its anthropology, which sees humans as servants of the gods ("Male and Female," 143–44). I would extend the argument one step further, claiming that one need not limit the content of the expression "image of God" to the royal status expressed in the ancient Near Eastern texts.

be guided by usage rather than mere etymology if we are to determine what the biblical writers intend. "The question is not what is meant by the root, but what is meant by the words in actual usage."[21] The expression "image of God" in its Near Eastern context indeed points to the function of ruling; the language as used in Genesis appears to point to this as well as something more.

To perceive something of the distinctiveness of the biblical account of the creation of אדם in the image of God, one has to pay careful attention to the details not only of words but of grammar and syntax. Bird has greatly enhanced our understanding through her analysis of the language of "image" in the ancient Near East. To move the discussion further, however, I would like to change the focus from the point of comparison—"the image of God"—to the parties being compared—אלהים and אדם. I hope to demonstrate that this simple shift in perspective, examining how the two points of comparison are related in terms of their number, gender, and definiteness, sheds new light on the larger syntactical and poetic structure of Gen 1:27 and its surrounding verses.

II. Parallelism: Synonymous and Progressive

At the center of much controversy over the meaning of the *imago Dei* is the third line of v. 27—whether it is primary or an addition to the text, and whether it explicates the preceding line(s) by way of synonymous parallelism or represents a progressive parallelism, not explicating but adding to the first line(s).[22]

When examining the poetical structure of the lines in Gen 1:27, too often, it seems, general assumptions about the "rules" of Hebrew poetry have been allowed to ride roughshod over the particular circumstances of this text. What may be plain and obvious is dismissed for not abiding by the rule. First, suspicions are thrown up as to the existence of synonymous parallelism in the text. After all, "Robert Alter claims that by his count synonymous restatement characterizes less than one-quarter of all the poetic doublets in the Bible."[23] Never mind that Alter also points out the rather common occurrence of versets "shaped on a principle of relatively static synonymity."[24] As an example he cites Prov 19:5:

> A false witness will not get off,
> A lying testifier will not escape

No one will deny a similar synonymity (with the added element of chiasm) in the first two lines of Gen 1:27:

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[21] Barr, "Image of God: Terminology," 18.
[22] So Bird, "Male and Female," 149–50.
[23] Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 49, citing Alter, *World of Biblical Literature,* 177–78.
[24] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 22.

> So *ʾĕlōhîm* created *hāʾādām* in his image
> In the image of *ʾĕlōhîm* he created him

The real problem comes into play with the third line. Here again, attempts are made to deny any element of synonymous parallelism. Bird, as previously mentioned, does so by suggesting that the third line might be an addition. Middleton does so by referring a general rule or percentage in Hebrew poetry. "[I]t is clear that the third line in three-line Hebrew poetic units typically does not repeat a previous idea, but more usually serves a progressive function, introducing a new thought."[25] Let us examine the case to see if the rule applies.

There are indeed many examples of Hebrew poetry in which the third of three lines serves a progressive function. Alter gives several examples from Psalm 39 of the rogue third line:

> 1a   I said: let me keep my way from offending with my tongue
> 1b   let me keep a muzzle on my mouth
> 1c   as long as the wicked is before me
>
> 2a   I was mute, in stillness
> 2b   I was dumb, cut off from good
> 2c   and my pain was stirred
>
> 3a   My heart was hot within me
> 3b   in my thoughts a flame burned
> 3c   I spoke with my tongue

In each of these cases there is indeed a type of synonymous parallelism in the first two lines and the lack of such in the third. One cannot simply apply this general "rule" to Gen 1:27, however, because there one finds a repetition of elements from the first two lines in the third. This significant detail is entirely lacking in the examples given by Alter of a progressively functioning third line.

> 27a   So *ʾĕlōhîm* created *hāʾādām* in his image
> 27b   In the image of *ʾĕlōhîm* he created him
> 27c   Male and female he created them

The parallelism continues through all three lines in terms of *ʾelōhîm* creating *hāʾādām*.

> 27a   *ʾĕlōhîm* created *hāʾādām*
> 27b   he created him
> 27c   he created them

This is an element that is not found in any of the examples of so-called progressive parallelism in which the third line departs entirely from the first two. The so-called rule invoked by Middleton to justify a sharp break in meaning between Gen 1:27ab

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[25] Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 49.

and 1:27c simply does not fit the circumstances of the text. The logical assumption in cases where the third line echoes the first two is that the parallelism continues in the other half of the line as well.[26]

> 27a   in his image
> 27b   in the image of *ʾĕlōhîm*
> 27c   male and female

A more fitting example of a tricolon that is similar to Gen 1:27 with corresponding parallelism is Ps 1:1.

> 1a   Blessed the man who does not walk in the counsel of wicked ones,
> 1b   and in the way of sinners does not stand,
> 1c   and in the assembly of scorners does not sit.

This verse parallels Gen 1:27 on a number of levels. John T. Willis cites it as an example of a tricolon "in which cola a and b are arranged chiastically and b and c synonymously."[27] This is precisely the pattern of chiasm and synonymous parallelism encountered in Gen 1:27. And while in Ps 1:1 (as in Gen 1:27) a progression of thought may be noted (i.e., from walking to standing to sitting), one would be hard-pressed to argue for a progression in the third line that somehow sets it semantically apart from the first two.

By breaking down Ps 1:1 and Gen 1:27 into their constitutive elements, one can readily see the similar chiastic and synonymous parallelism in each.

Ps 1:1 Blessed the man who

(i) does not walk	(ii) in the counsel	(iii) of wicked ones
(ii) and in the way	(iii) of sinners	(i) does not stand
(ii) and in the assembly	(iii) of scorners	(i) does not sit

Gen 1:27

(i) So *ʾĕlōhîm* created	(ii) *hāʾādām*	(iii) in his image
(iii) In the image of *ʾĕlōhîm*	(i) he created	(ii) him
(iii) Male and female	(i) he created	(ii) them

In each instance one witnesses a parallelism that is both synonymous and progressive. The third colon is not simply restating the first, but neither is it introduc-

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[26] Although I do not share his general skepticism about the prevalence of tricola in the Hebrew Bible, Mowinckel is perhaps on target when he insists that the primary rule for discerning a real tricolon is "that all the three cola (membra) show more or less exact parallelism between each other" (*Real and Apparent Tricola in Hebrew Psalm Poetry* [Oslo: I kommisjon hos Aschehoug, 1957], 17).

[27] John T. Willis, "The Juxtaposition of Synonymous and Chiastic Parallelism in Tricola in Old Testament Hebrew Psalm Poetry," *VT* 29 (1979): 475–76. Some other examples of tricola cited by Willis that follow the same pattern as Gen 1:27 are Ps 10:10; 18:9, 36; 35:8; 46:10; 62:11; 74:9; 77:19, 20; 117:5b–d.

ing an entirely new subject as Bird and Middleton suggest. As Willis states: "Tricola gave the psalmist an opportunity to build a thought or emotion to a climax. By using tricola, he could keep his hearers or readers in suspense, and thus gain or hold their attention and have them thinking with him as he attempted to drive home the concept that he desired to convey."[28] Thus, the statement "male and female he created them," far from being dissociated from the concept of the image of God, stands at the very crux of its interpretation.

III. Number: Singular, Plural, and Collective

Toda traducción es una traición. Every translation is a betrayal. The maxim is proven by its translation from Spanish to English, where in the most literal translation (given above) the poetic alliteration and assonance have been lost. Poetry is often the first victim sacrificed to the gods of translation. Polyvalence is the second.

<div dir="rtl">ויברא אלהים את־האדם בצלמו</div>

So God created humankind in his image (Gen 1:27a NRSV)[29]

The translation of האדם as "humankind" is both right and wrong. Rightly, this translation brings out that האדם is a collective noun including all of humanity both male and female. Wrongly, "humankind" limits the meaning of האדם to the collective sense, disregarding the fact that it can also be taken as a singular noun and ignoring entirely the presence of the definite article attached to it. What is created is not an abstract concept but a concrete being, which may be understood both individually and collectively. Commentators rightly point out the collective sense expressed in the context of Gen 1:26–28.[30] What is often overlooked is the potential singular meaning of האדם. Perhaps this is due to the contemporary focus on the context of the Priestly account of creation, ignoring the immediate juxtaposition of the Yahwist account in which האדם is quite clearly used in the singular sense.[31] While we do need to come to grips with how the creation accounts function together in their canonical context, there is also a basis within the Priestly account itself that suggests both a collective and a singular reading of האדם. This will be addressed shortly.

[28] Willis, "Juxtaposition," 480.

[29] The translation of אדם as "humankind" used in the NRSV (1989) is also favored in contemporary scholarship, especially since Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (1978).

[30] Trible (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality,* 18) does a more careful job than most in noting the consequences of the use of both singular and plural pronouns for the grammatically singular collective noun אדם. Humankind exists in an original unity that is at the same time an original duality.

[31] This may be inferred throughout the narrative of Genesis 2, but perhaps nowhere so clearly as in 2:18, which describes האדם as being "alone" (לבדו).

First, however, it will be worthwhile to consider the more original question concerning number in Gen 1:26–28. Much of the ancient and modern discussion of the creation of אדם in Genesis 1 has focused on the use of the first person plural by God in v. 26: "Let us make אדם in our image according to our likeness." Gerhard Hasel summed up the various viewpoints under six main headings: (1) the mythological interpretation, (2) address to earthly elements, (3) address to heavenly court, (4) plural of majesty, (5) plural of deliberation, and (6) plural of fullness.[32] While Hasel believed that there was an emerging quasi consensus for the plural of deliberation,[33] he supported what he calls a plural of fullness, which comes rather close to the traditional trinitarian interpretation that he had previously called into question. Why the first person plural is used in v. 26 is a question that perhaps may never be answered satisfactorily. The plural of deliberation and the address to the heavenly court are currently the most popular interpretations, but there remains no full consensus. What I wish to emphasize is that, for whatever reason, the first person plural is used in the divine address. The fact in and of itself is significant in looking at Gen 1:26–28, for it creates a correspondence between אלהים (here taking a plural verb) and אדם (here functioning in a plural sense as a collective).

Continuing on the grammatical level, one may note that the use of the cohortative plural verb and the first person plural possessive pronouns in Gen 1:26a is consistent with the grammatical form of אלהים. If we have defined the Priestly writer partially by his use of אלהים to refer to God, we should not forget that this is not the only term available to him. We do not do the passage full justice if we simply and circularly state that this is the Priestly writer so therefore he uses אלהים, and he uses אלהים so therefore this is the Priestly writer. The fact that אלהים is used as opposed to שדי, אלה, אל, יהוה אלהים, יהוה, or other names of the deity is significant. To put it another way, Gen 1:26–28 would not and could not function in the same way if it were the product of (or used the vocabulary of) the Yahwist. Once again, the question of why the plural form of God is used here and throughout the Bible

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[32] Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Meaning of 'Let Us' in Gn 1:26," *AUSS* 13 (1975): 58–66.

[33] For the plural of self-deliberation, see Paul Joüon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1947), §114e. This interpretation has been followed by (among others) Werner H. Schmidt (*Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift* [WMANT 17; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967], 128–30), Trible (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 13), Westermann (*Genesis 1–11*, 145), and Francis Martin ("Male and Female He Created Them: A Summary of the Teaching of Genesis Chapter One," *Communio* 20 [Summer 1993]: 240–65). Alternatively, Johann J. Stamm claimed back in 1956 that the consensus position was that the divine plural referred to the heavenly court ("Die Imago-Lehre von Karl Barth und die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft," in *Antwort: Festschrift Karl Barth* [Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1956], 84–98). In spite of difficulties that have been pointed out by Hasel ("Meaning of 'Let Us,'" 62–63) among others, this position is not without its supporters (e.g., Patrick D. Miller Jr., *Genesis 1–11: Studies in Structure and Theme* [JSOTSup 8; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978], chap. 1; and Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 55–60).

simply "has not yet been explained satisfactorily."[34] It is for the moment and the argument at hand once again sufficient to note that the grammatically plural form of the noun is used and that the plural verb and pronouns it takes in v. 26 will revert to the usual (by biblical standards) singular forms in the following verse. The grammatical flexibility of אלהים is played out in these few verses in which it takes both plural and singular verbs and pronouns.

One discovers a parallel ambiguity or flexibility in the number of that which is created. Here we come to the translation problems encountered by English versions of this text. The Hebrew word אדם is found only in the singular and is predominantly used as a collective[35]—hence the now preferred translation "humankind." But we should not overlook the fact that אדם is used also of individuals. One clear instance of this individual usage of אדם is no more than one chapter away. And while we do well to maintain a distinction between the two accounts of creation, willfully to ignore a certain complementarity and unity may be as grievous an error as attempting to harmonize the two.

One need not, however, even venture beyond the first chapter of Genesis or the central verse of this study to see the potential significance of the double meaning of אדם—the collective and the singular. This double reality is indicated by the very grammar of Gen 1:27. In the three lines of this mini-poem, the noun אדם in the first line is replaced by a singular pronoun in the second line and a plural in the third.[36] The subtlety is often lost in translations that have either already decided on a meaning that must be exclusively collective or else wish to avoid the awkward necessity of using either a masculine or feminine pronoun in the singular since the grammatically masculine Hebrew noun is semantically inclusive of both male and female.

What the Hebrew text of Gen 1:26–27 gives us is a remarkable comparison between אלהים and אדם in which there is an ambiguity in number with regard to both terms. אלהים speaks as many and acts as one in creating אדם, who is simultaneously one and many. What the author intended by all this is a puzzling question indeed. While it may be true that the rise of the modern social sciences led Karl Barth and others to see in this passage something of the essentially relational nature of human existence, it does not seem fair simply to dismiss this insight as eisegesis or the undue influence of dogmatic (or constructive) theology on biblical (or historical) theology. After all, the fundamental question of the one and the many and a basic awareness of the personal and communal aspects of human being are noth-

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[34] Helmer Ringgren, "אֱלֹהִים, ˀᵉlōhîm god; God," *TDOT* 1:272.

[35] F. Maass, "אָדָם, ˀādhām man(kind), Adam," *TDOT* 1:75.

[36] Trible stands out among commentators in paying attention to the potential meaning in the shift in pronouns from singular to plural and the corresponding shift in divine pronouns (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 21). I question somewhat her conclusion that this "signifies variety, freedom, and fullness within God," but fully agree with her assessment that unity and plurality are somehow here related "in both the human and the divine realms."

ing new under the sun.[37] One need not make of the Priestly writer either a poly-
theist or a trinitarian in order to allow him to have some basic insight into human
nature.

In a significant article examining the logic of concord in the biblical usage of
collective nouns, E. J. Revell noted that "a pronoun coreferent with a collective
which does not act as a subject [the case in Gen 1:27 with the pronominal substi-
tutions for אדם] is usually plural. . . . Singular pronouns are common only within
the same clause as the collective."[38] According to this tendency, one would expect
the pronoun for אדם in Gen 1:27b to be "them" rather than "him." (Perhaps one
could understand the preferred English translation to be a suggested textual emen-
dation on this score.) But we are in fact dealing with a tendency and not an absolute
rule. It may be significant that among the sporadic occurrences of singular pro-
nouns in such contexts, Revell notes the distributive value they sometimes have.[39]
If such is the case in Gen 1:27b, the meaning of the second line in relation to the
first becomes clearer.

Studies in Hebrew poetry frequently point out that in most instances of so-
called synonymous parallelism the second of two lines does not merely repeat the
meaning of the first, but rather intensifies or focuses what has been said.[40] At first
glance it might appear that the first two lines of Gen 1:27 constitute one of the occa-
sional instances of a "relatively static synonymity."[41] The only changes that take
place are the chiastic inversion of order, the switch from the *waw*-consecutive to the
perfect form of ברא, and the substitution of noun for pronoun (אלהים) and pro-
noun for noun (אדם). None of these changes carries any immediately self-evident
change in meaning. From a semantic point of view, there is no new element intro-
duced and hence no progression in the second line. However, the subtle changes
introduced by the use and non-use of pronouns is worth looking at more closely.
First of all, the use of אלהים is dropped from the subject and added to the preposi-
tional phrase. "God created" becomes "he created" while "in his image" becomes "in
the image of God."[42] The second change is the more significant here inasmuch as
the antecedent of "in his image" could grammatically (if not contextually) be אדם

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[37] Bird's critique of Barth is a bit extreme on this point when she speaks of "the distinctly
modern concept of an 'I–Thou' relationship, which is foreign to the ancient writer's thought and
intention" (Bird, "Male and Female," 132).

[38] E. J. Revell, "Logic of Concord with Collectives in Biblical Narrative," *Maarav* 9 (2002):
85.

[39] Ibid., 87.

[40] See Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry,* 19. James L. Kugel (*The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism
and Its History* [Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981], 8) also speaks of the
emphatic character of line B as "going one better" than line A.

[41] Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 22.

[42] Bird ("Male and Female," 148) notes the useful ambiguity of אלהים here, further blurring
or obscuring the closeness of creature to deity by using the plural noun for the singular pronoun.

rather than אלהים. More significant still is the change from אדם to אתו. The unexpected singular pronoun for a collective noun as a direct object does modify how we understand אדם in this passage. The intensification or specification of this second poetic line suddenly becomes more clear if we consider the likelihood of a distributive value. This would indicate a meaning of the passage along the following lines: "So ʾĕlōhîm created hāʾādām in his image / In the image of ʾĕlōhîm he created each one." A true specification and intensification have taken place.

In the third poetic line of Gen 1:27 the expected plural pronoun for the collective אדם is finally found. The collective sense is self-evident not only in the pronoun but also in the fact that they are created male and female (unless one wishes to return to a conflationist reading of Genesis 1 and 2 whereby an original androgynous humanity [ch. 1] is subsequently divided into distinct sexes [ch. 2]). This line has become somewhat controversial since the analysis of Bird and others who wished to dissociate it from the preceding two lines, which speak of the image of God.[43] Is it related to the previous statements on the creation of אדם in the image of God, or is it, as Bird claims, moving forward to say something quite different? Grammatically speaking it flows better from Gen 1:27a than does its immediate predecessor in Gen 1:27b. It shows clearer evidence of the type of poetic development or specification that one would expect by the actual introduction of new terminology rather than the more subtle substitution of pronouns. Further, the use of the plural pronoun for the collective אדם is more common than the singular in the preceding line.

One possible way of interpreting the third line is to read "male and female" as a merism.[44] The emphasis in this line would then be on the totality of human creation by God, with the idea of "in the image of God" being carried over implicitly from the previous lines by way of ellipsis (or what Alter calls "hidden" repetition).[45] The emphases in lines 2 and 3 would then be on "each" and "every" human being as created in God's image, yielding an intensification or specification as follows:

> So ʾĕlōhîm created hāʾādām in his image
> In the image of ʾĕlōhîm he created each one
> [Thus] he created them all

Whatever its meaning might be, "male and female he created them" is a continuation of the poetic parallelism of the previous lines.[46] This is a point I shall

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[43] Bird, "Male and Female," 134. She also notes the analysis of Schmidt (*Die Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 146–47), who considered the line an addition. Bird sees it more as a link or transition by way of progressive parallelism to the following verse's blessing of fertility.

[44] This was suggested to me by my colleague Corrine Carvalho.

[45] Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 23.

[46] A seemingly self-evident point, yet one so frequently missed. Trible stated it well: "Clearly, 'male and female' correspond structurally to 'the image of God' and this formal parallelism indicates a semantic correspondence" (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 17). However much scholars may wish to deny a semantic correspondence, a structural correspondence is irrefutable.

return to in the next section dealing with gender. To conclude the discussion of number, however, it appears that a case can be made that the use of both singular and plural pronouns for אדם in Gen 1:27b and 1:27c is a deliberate two-pronged development of the assertion in Gen 1:27a that "*ʾĕlōhîm* created *hāʾādām* in his image." The third line does not so much build on the second, but both second and third lines are expansions upon the first. The author has exploited the double meaning of אדם as a singular and collective noun by using singular and plural pronouns.

IV. Gender: Relationality and Procreation

One of the immediate objections to construing the third line of Gen 1:27 as explanatory of the first (or first two) in defining (at least in part) the content of the image of God is that the author could not possibly mean that. That is to say, the argument is based largely on presuppositions of either a theological or historical nature (or perhaps both). As Adela Yarbro Collins put it, "The idea of God having any quality corresponding to sexuality or sexual differentiation would have been utterly foreign to the Priestly Writer."[47] Such arguments frequently tell us more about ourselves than they do about either the texts we are studying or the ancient writers who composed them, and should therefore be judged accordingly. There are, however, also arguments from the grammar and context of the passage for dissociating the statement concerning the creation of אדם as male and female from the idea of the image of God. It was once again Bird who provided the most thorough and clear arguments in this vein. These arguments deserve a careful examination.

Looking at the broader context of vv. 26–28, and indeed the entire Priestly account of creation, Bird sees v. 27c, "Male and female he created them," as linked to, and dependent on, the subsequent blessing of fertility in v. 28 and dissociated from the idea of the divine image understood as dominion.[48] Defining the primary concerns of the Priestly account of creation as emphasizing "the dependence of all creation on God" and describing "the order established within creation," Bird sees the creation of אדם as involving a "dual relationship" to God and to the rest of creation.[49] The double cohortative in v. 26 is key here: "Let us make *ʾādām* in our image" and "Let them have dominion." Nature and function in creation are closely related.[50] *ʾĀdām*'s rule over the rest of creation is inseparable from the creation of

[47] Yarbro Collins, "Historical-Critical and Feminist Readings of Genesis 1:26-28," 197–99. Trible rightly points out that we need not assume that the Priestly writer had such an idea. She stresses both the similarity and otherness between the vehicles and the tenors of the metaphors. "In other words, 'male and female' is the finger pointing to the 'image of God.' Yet this tenor itself, 'the image of God,' is also a pointing finger" (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 20).

[48] Bird, "Male and Female," 134.

[49] Ibid., 136–37.

[50] Ibid., 138.

ʾādām in the divine image. Given what we have already noted concerning the ancient Near Eastern language of "image" in association with ruling and the context of the Priestly account of creation with its emphasis on human dominion (1:26 and 1:28), a solid case can be made for connecting the image of God to the function of ruling.[51]

With regard to the connection between dominion and the image of God, I am inclined to agree. The explicit link stated in v. 26 and repeated in vv. 27–28 is clear enough. Perhaps the debate among scholars whether the image "consists" in dominion or dominion is merely a "consequence" of being created in the divine image is off the mark. To borrow the language of Trible and apply it to the thesis of Bird, I am prepared to say that human dominion over creation is a "finger pointing" to the image of God. What I find less convincing is the desire to dissociate v. 27c from the theme of image and reduce it to a mere necessary antecedent for the divine blessing to be fruitful and multiply. My reasons are twofold: (1) the circular reasoning often used to achieve this divorce, and (2) the naïve assumption that the "image of God" can have one and only one definite meaning or referent in the text.

First, there have been a number of suspect assertions regarding what is "primary" or "secondary" in the text of vv. 26–28.[52] The resulting analyses are often explications not of the text at hand but of some hypothesized reconstructed text. Circular argumentation takes hold as the text is adjusted to fit the interpretation that the text requires. Not surprisingly, the frequent conclusion is that v. 27c is an addition.[53] Attempts to read the whole of v. 27 as a unity are dismissed as "faulty syntactical analysis which isolates verse 27 as a unit of speech/thought."[54] The shift in pronoun between v. 27b and v. 27c is cited as proof that they either come from different stages or hands or that what is said in these two lines is unrelated.[55] This

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[51] A striking contrast to this quasi consensus is Westermann, who states with regard to the identification of the image and likeness of God with dominion: "A whole series of studies has shown quite correctly that this opinion is wrong, and that according to the text dominion over other creatures is not an explanation, but a consequence of creation in the image of God" (*Genesis 1–11*, 155). Martin also notes the purpose clause in the volitive sequence of Gen 1:26, "so that they may rule," as indicating dominion as a consequence of creation in the divine image rather than content ("Male and Female," 247–48).

[52] See, e.g., Schmidt, Westermann, et al. in Bird, "Male and Female," 149 n. 51.

[53] Schmidt purportedly comes to this conclusion on the grounds of vocabulary, style, and meter (*Die Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 146–49). The claim seems to go well beyond the evidence since there appear but two new words—male and female—not present in the immediate context, and these are certainly part of the Priestly writer's lexicon. Rather, his conclusion seems to be based on historical and theological arguments. He notes that only in Gen 1:27 and 5:1–2 are the themes of divine image and sexuality connected. One finds this close association neither elsewhere in the OT nor in the ancient Near East (ibid., 146–47).

[54] So Bird ("Male and Female," 150 n. 53) in her critique of Trible.

[55] Bird, "Male and Female," 159. Her otherwise excellent analysis falls short here. She fails

ignores the fact that collectives can and do take both singular and plural pronouns, and that the use of both singular and plural pronouns might provide a clue to the very meaning of the passage, as indicated in the previous discussion of number.[56]

Commentators claim that the phrase "male and female he created them" "must not be understood as distinguishing humans from other creatures."[57] Obviously it does not in fact, but in the literary world of Genesis 1 it does. Although the same vocabulary is used elsewhere by the Priestly writer with reference to animals (e.g., in the story of the flood in Gen 6:19 and 7:9), it is significant that it is precisely not used of them in Genesis 1, not even where one might expect it preceding the blessing of animal fertility in Gen 1:22. It is not consistent to claim that this statement of sexual differentiation is a necessary prerequisite for the blessing of human fertility in 1:28 but not for animals in 1:22. The phrase is unique to the creation of humans in God's image and is functioning positively in defining humankind in God's image.

Also missing the point somewhat are attempts to dismiss the phrase's connection to the image of God by stating that the terms זכר and נקבה are biological and not social.[58] First of all, one may note that the biological terms are as relational as (if not more so than) the social terms איש and אשה. Second, what might the alternative suggest? If the writer had used איש and אשה, would this be connecting human sexuality more closely with the divine image? Perhaps, but if so, by way of restriction, since the principal denotation of that word pair is "husband and wife." It would be considering human sexuality only in a restricted legal sense. Third, what if it is precisely the biological aspect that the writer wishes to emphasize? This seems to be the case, since the phrase is closely connected with the blessing of fertility. But why dissociate it from the idea of the image of God on this count? Is this not also God's image? Has God not been bringing forth life throughout Genesis 1?[59] It would seem that the will and the power to create/procreate are a significant parallel that the author draws between God and humans.[60] In the event that one misses the connection here, it is repeated in Gen 5:1–2.

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to recognize אתם in relation to אדם and אתו. Thus, she claims that "the grammar of the parallel clauses in v 27 prevents identification or interchange of the defining terms."

[56] In addition to the study by Revell, which gives numerous examples of collectives (e.g., איש, עם) taking both plural and singular pronouns ("Logic of Concord," 82–88), Jack Collins provides a detailed analysis of the pronominal usage with the collective זרע ("A Syntactical Note [Genesis 3:15]: Is the Woman's Seed Singular or Plural?" *TynBul* 48 [1997]: 139–47). He notes that the noun always takes plural pronouns when used in a collective sense (e.g., Gen 17:9), but when singular pronouns are used the noun functions in its singular sense (e.g., 1 Sam 1:11).

[57] Bird, "Male and Female," 148 n. 50.

[58] Ibid.

[59] The connections to Gen 4:1 and 5:1–3 are significant here. Eve creates (קנה) new life with God's help, and Adam begets new life in his likeness, according to his image.

[60] This point had been sharply contested by Gerhard von Rad and Walther Zimmerli, whom

Polyvalence is the soul of poetry; it is the touchstone of typology; it is the tool of prophet and sage alike. Contemporary interpretations appear torn between the very modern quest for the one literal historical meaning of the text and the post-modern multiplication of meanings. Lost somewhere in the fray is the possibility that the historical-critical meaning may itself be multiple. The context of Gen 1:26–28 speaks quite clearly of dominion; it also speaks quite clearly of the creation of אדם as male and female and the blessing of fertility. Indeed, the broader context of the entire Priestly account of creation speaks of God's dominion—"the dependence of all of creation on God."[61] But even more so it speaks of the creative energy and power of God. Indeed, one could consider the six-day account of creation as imaging God quite explicitly under the two aspects of (1) dominion—subduing the forces of chaos and creating an orderly world in days 1–3; and (2) generation—bringing forth life to inhabit the world in days 4–6.[62]

Taking v. 27 as a unity, but not in isolation from the surrounding context, one sees a duality of meaning unfold. As noted in the discussion of number, there are two lines explicating the original statement in v. 27. The first highlights the singularity of אדם as the human race (undifferentiated collectivity) or the individual human person. The second highlights the plurality of אדם created as male and female (differentiated collectivity). This two-pronged development continues in v. 28 with a twofold blessing: (1) to be fertile, multiply, and fill the earth, and (2) to have dominion over all other creatures on earth. The double blessing to bring forth life and to exercise dominion mirrors God's activity throughout the six days. Perhaps overlooked in Bird's listing of the primary concerns of the Priestly creation account was this—it is God who creates and brings forth life. The blessing upon humans to continue creation through their procreation and expansion is no mere prerequisite for exercising dominion. It is rather an equal expression of the divine

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Bird follows closely. "One must observe, however, that man's procreative ability is not here understood as an emanation or manifestation of his creation in God's image. . . . It is noteworthy that procreative ability is removed from God's image and shifted to a special word of blessing (Zi.)" (Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* [rev. ed.; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972], 60–61). There are once again theological concerns in play here, as von Rad wishes to distinguish the account in Genesis from "heathen myths" and "Canaanite cult" (p. 60). It is true that procreative activity is not explicitly identified in connection with the image of God, but it is also true that the word pair "male and female" strongly implies such reproductive activity. This is clear, for example, in Gen 7:3 as well as in the close connection between Gen 1:27c and 1:28, which Bird herself points out.

[61] Bird, "Male and Female," 136.

[62] Innumerable authors have outlined the basic structure of the days of creation in Genesis 1. Among these, Michael Guinan (*The Pentateuch* [Message of Biblical Spirituality 1; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990], 23–25) draws the clearest and tightest connection between the structure of Genesis 1 and the implications for understanding the meaning of the image of God in 1:26–28.

image in the context of the Priestly story of creation. It is another "finger pointing" to the image of God.[63]

Key to the discussion is the repetition of the motif of the creation of אדם in the image of God in Gen 5:1–2, where it is once again made explicit that "male and female he created them." This double association of the creation of אדם in the image of God and the creation of אדם as male and female should cause one to pause before dismissing any connection between the two statements. The theme of procreation is further highlighted in the genealogy of אדם that follows, in which the terms "image" and "likeness" are directly associated with the act of human procreation. "Adam . . . became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image" (Gen 5:3). Werner Schmidt noted the association between the divine image and sexuality in these two passages, but seemed to regard the rarity as an accident to be dismissed rather than a significant connection that the Priestly writer makes.[64] Only in Gen 1:27 and 5:1–2 are the themes of human sexuality and the image of God associated. The absence of such a confluence elsewhere in the ancient Near East suggests a unique insight in the text of Genesis. The act of creation (or procreation) of its very nature implies the imparting of some image or likeness from the creator to the created.[65]

The double theme of creation and dominion seems therefore unmistakable in connection with the concept of the image of God. Perhaps at the heart of a certain unwillingness to recognize the obvious is the theological objection to thereby ascribing gender to God, as if God were male and female. Or perhaps it is the historical argument that whatever God might be, such was not the ancient Israelite view of God. It would be useful to recall here that the terminology "image and likeness" implies difference as well as similarity. Just as no one would identify human dominion with divine, so too one should not ascribe too much to the comparison

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[63] The primary objection to recognizing human procreation as pertaining to the image of God is that a similar statement is made in Gen 1:22 with regard to the procreation of birds and fish, yet these are in no way associated with the image of God. The same phrase is found in both v. 22 and v. 28: פרו ורבו ומלאו ("be fruitful, multiply, and fill") with the object of the final verb changing from "the waters of the seas" to "the earth." The significant difference pointed out by Martin ("Male and Female," 248) is that only in v. 28 does God speak "to them" (להם); only here do we have a direct address. In v. 22, although the plural imperative is used with regard to the fish, a jussive is used for the birds. The imperative here is not stating a command to the fish but rather is expressing a wish (see *IBHS*, 571, §34.4b). Its association with the jussive in the verse makes this clear. So God extends a blessing and expresses the desire for the increase of animal life, but only to humans are the blessing and desire communicated through a direct address.

[64] Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 146–47.

[65] One could argue that the text implicitly recognizes an image of God in all of creation (e.g., the recurring refrain that "God saw that it was good" or the blessing of fertility on fish and birds). Echoes of this thought can be seen also in many Psalms (e.g., Psalms 8 and 19). But there, as here, the human holds a preeminent place in creation and a unique relationship to God.

the Priestly writer suggests in referring to human gender and procreation. But just as there is an analogy made between human and divine rule, there is also an analogy between divine creation and human procreation drawn out in Gen 1:27 and 5:1–3.

V. Definiteness: More Trouble with Translation

Lost in translation, and often in the discussion of Gen 1:27, is the presence of the definite article on אדם. The use or non-use of articles across languages is one of the most idiomatic aspects of language, and therefore the need to omit the article in smooth English translation should not be surprising. The disposable nature of the article in translation, however, should not lead one to assume that it serves no function in the Hebrew text. Its presence is all the more significant when one considers that in poetry (and this certainly looks like a poetic text) there is a tendency to "omit" the article that would otherwise be present in prose.[66] Yet in the broader context of Gen 1:26–27, one finds the anarthrous אדם in the more prosaic v. 26 and האדם in the poetry of v. 27.

The most likely explanation for this seeming reversal of usage with regard to the definite article is found in the syntactical relationship between the verses. In v. 26 אלהים proposed to create an אדם, and in v. 27 the creation of this aforementioned אדם (האדם) is carried out.[67] One can see a similar pattern throughout Genesis 1, for example: "God said, 'Let there be light' [אור]. . . . And God saw the light [האור]." The relationship between the two usages, however, does not seem to be limited to the realm of syntax. The syntax corresponds to a relationship in reality between the idea of אדם conceived in the mind of אלהים, and the actualization of that idea in the creation of האדם. To borrow a word from Duns Scotus, the *haecceitas* (or "thisness") of אדם is expressed by the use of the definite article. Bruce Waltke and Michael O'Connor point out this connotation of the anaphoric use (i.e., based on previous mention of the thing or person) of the definite article. Such usage, they claim, is "weakly demonstrative."[68] We might thus translate: "So God created this *ʾādām* in his image." The article identifies the אדם with the previously mentioned proposal of God, and it also points to the concrete expression of the divine deliberation. Put another way, one cannot say האדם until there is a specific, concrete אדם in the world to which one can point.

Again, the limitations imposed by language require that something be lost in

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[66] *IBHS,* 250, §13.7a.

[67] Waltke and O'Connor refer to this as the anaphoric use of the article (which they address both under referential features [§13.5.1d] and syntactic features [§13.5.2b] of the use of the definite article).

[68] *IBHS,* 243, §13.5.1d.

translation. If we work to preserve the definiteness or the *haecceitas* in English, it seems we are squeezed and forced to choose a singular or collective reading of אדם. Either "God created *the* human being" or "God created *the* human race."[69] As we have seen, Hebrew need not commit to one or the other since האדם can mean both, and in fact Genesis clearly uses האדם in both singular and collective senses (see, e.g., 1:27; 2:7).

The definiteness of אדם gives to it a concreteness and a tangibility that fit in well with its correspondence to the image of God, especially when we consider the ancient Near Eastern context of צלם. The most basic meaning of the root in Hebrew and Akkadian (*ṣalmu*) indicates a statue as a visible sign of a god or person, and in Mesopotamia the term is most frequently used to designate such a statue.[70] As Bird states, "[T]he term is basically concrete. It does not refer to an idea, nor does it describe a model, pattern or prototype."[71] So too האדם created in the image of God is concrete, taken both singularly (the human person) and collectively (the human family).

VI. Conclusions

Given what we have noted about the poetic parallelism, number, gender, and definiteness expressed in the account of Gen 1:26–28 concerning the creation of אדם in the image of אלהים, what can be said about the confluence of these elements in the mini-poem of v. 27 and in the poetics of the surrounding narrative? First of all, the singular and collective meanings of אדם (coupled with the plural and singular verbal forms used with reference to אלהים) point to a twofold development of the central statement that God created אדם in his image. The use of the singular and plural pronouns for אדם in v. 27b and v. 27c highlights this double explication. Both the individual human being and humankind in its differentiated collectivity are related to the image of God.

Second, the statement regarding the creation of אדם as male and female is not to be dissociated from the statement concerning the creation of אדם in the image of God. Rather, this reading is supported by the internal logic of the mini-poem in v. 27, in which the phrase "male and female" structurally corresponds to the image of God. It is supported also by the context of Gen 1:26–28, in which the double blessing of v. 28 follows upon the dual development of the image of God in lines 2 and 3 of v. 27.[72] It fits with the Priestly account of creation by paralleling human

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[69] Saying simply "God created the human" will not do either since as an adjective it remains abstract and nonspecific, while as a noun it denotes the singular human being.

[70] Bird, "Male and Female," 142.

[71] Ibid.

[72] The dual blessing of (1) be fruitful and (2) have dominion would correspond chiastically to the dual development of the image of God in Gen 1:27. The third line—"male and female he

procreativity with the creative will and action of God. And it is supported by the Priestly source in its broader context, in which sexual differentiation and procreation are associated with the image of God in the genealogy of אדם (Gen 5:1–3).[73]

Finally, the definiteness of האדם in the mini-poem of v. 27 connects this verse syntactically and semantically to v. 26, in which אלהים proposes to create an אדם in his (or "their") image according to his (or "their") likeness. אדם, as this image, is necessarily a concrete being, not an idea or model. This specificity (the "this-ness") of God's masterpiece of creation applies to אדם understood both as a singular and as a collective.

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created them"—clearly corresponds to the blessing of fertility (a point on which all agree; I differ with Bird in associating the statement and its corresponding blessing with the image of God). The second line—"in the image of God he created him"—does not seem to specify rule. Yet it is closely associated with power, since אלהים, when combined with a noun in construct, denotes greatness or strength (a prerequisite for exercising dominion). This usage is evidenced perhaps in the opening verses of Genesis 1 in the רוח אלהים (often translated as "a great wind"). If this is so, the phrase "image of God" (צלם אלהים) is by its very nature closely associated with dominion, but not exclusively so. The power of creation is also closely connected with it.

[73] The Priestly writer's emphasis on male and female would thus seem to point more toward procreative capacity as being related to God's image rather than the relationality emphasized by Barth and his followers. The latter is not to be excluded, however, since the writer recognizes the obvious link between the two.

אִישׁ עִתִּי (Leviticus 16:21):
A Marginal Person

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In a short note published in this journal,[1] Raymond Westbrook and Theodore J. Lewis looked into the possible meaning of the designation אִישׁ עִתִּי (*ʾîš ʿittî*) in the law of the scapegoat in Lev 16:21 and the identity of the person behind it. They rejected, as being of no consequence in the context, the common understanding of the phrase based on the derivation of עתי from עֵת, "appointed time," in the sense of "a timely person," "someone designated for the task," someone ready at hand. Instead they reviewed a few parallel rituals (Hittite and Greek) in which the person chosen for the task was not just any person who happened to be around and happened to agree to carry out the task, but a person having a specific quality, supposedly required by the very nature of the ritual at hand.

Thus, in one Hittite ritual, it was a woman, who—properly adorned and dressed—was sent out with the rams into the steppe, carrying the plague from the camp. In another ritual, a prisoner of war and a captive woman are charged with the task of removing the plague and taking it away to the enemy territory. In first-millennium B.C.E. Greece, a criminal, a slave, or a poor man served as the designated scapegoat that would be driven out of the country to rid it of sins and plagues.

The common denominator in the parallel rituals with regard to the identity of the persons charged with the removal of the sins or plagues from the country is that they are marginal or liminal persons, and this fact is duly underlined by Westbrook and Lewis.[2] Thus, being marginal (or liminal) seems to have been a basic

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[1] Raymond Westbrook and Theodore J. Lewis, "Who Led the Scapegoat in Leviticus 16:21?" *JBL* 127 (2008): 417–22.

[2] The difference envisaged between marginals, on the one hand, and liminal persons, on the other, seems to be in terms of the duration of the state: the first term denotes a permanent state of being on the margins of society, while the later reflects the temporality of the state of limbo. See

requirement for a person to be appointed to the delicate task of freeing the country or camp from defilement, and therefore איש עתי could not be just any person.

Indeed, the linguistic analysis of עתי carried out by Westbrook and Lewis seems to point in the same direction. On the basis of cognate roots from other Semitic languages (Syriac, Arabic, and Aramaic), the authors find in the term the meaning "to defraud, be fraudulent, dishonest, wicked" (pp. 420–21), and איש עתי would then mean a criminal of some sort.

In the following, however, I wish to address the meaning in context of this designation and its suggested parallels, rather than the linguistic-etymological identity of its components.

Now, although Westbrook and Lewis do place due emphasis on the fact that we face here a group of marginal people, they also seem to accord, in my view, too much significance to the fact that in certain cases a criminal was chosen for the task. And although the ritual was not some kind of punishment for the crimes of the person chosen to serve in it, it did, in some sense, function to allow the criminal to atone for her/his crime. Whereas the "biblical criminal" was expected to return to society, the crime supposedly having been atoned for by the (dangerous?) task that the criminal had carried out for the health of society, none of the designated emissaries in the external parallel rituals is said to have been allowed back into society after her/his job was done. In the Greek ritual mentioned by Westbrook and Lewis (p. 420) the criminal, serving as the scapegoat carrying away the city's defilement, was in fact totally expelled from the territory.

It is therefore my belief that we should look at matters from a broader point of view, for we seem to be facing here a general category of (marginal/liminal) persons rather than an allusion to a specific kind of person, a criminal.[3] In my view, just as a woman, a slave, a poor person, a leper, an unclean person, or even an *assinnu* (for the latter three, see below) was not a criminal expecting to atone for her/his crime by participating in the ritual, so also the participation of a true criminal in the ritual was due to that person's sharing with the others the same common

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Meir Malul, *Knowledge, Control and Sex: Studies in Biblical Thought, Culture, and Worldview* (Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publication 2002), 272 and n. 46. Since the איש עתי charged with removing the defilement outside the camp is expected to return to the camp after duly undergoing a purification ritual (Lev 16:26) (on this point, see Westbrook and Lewis, 422), his state seems then to be that of a liminal person. On the other hand, the state of the other persons mentioned in the available evidence (a woman, a slave—and later I shall mention an *assinnu* and a leper) seems to be that of marginality, that is, a permanent state. This may mean that whether the emissary on behalf of society may return to society after carrying out her/his services was not of significance in the process of appointing such a person.

[3] For the use of the term "category" here and its implications in the context of biblical thought, see Westbrook's remark in the final footnote of the present contribution and my response to it.

quality of being entities "betwixt and between."[4] This quality of being marginal and liminal persons made them suitable to carry out the basic requirement of removing sins, plagues, curses, afflictions, and the like to the outside lawless sphere of the steppe or the desert.

I wish to delve a bit more into this quality and its place in the context of the rituals reviewed by Westbrook and Lewis. First, however, I wish to call the reader's attention to some interesting Akkadian rituals of atonement and purification, in the framework of which impurities may be transferred to persons who either serve as scapegoats carrying away the afflictions of another sufferer or act as emissaries carrying away the evils to the outside sphere. Thus, in a standard Babylonian ritual intended to free an afflicted person from his diseases, the *āšipu* ("exorcist") is instructed, among other things, as follows: "You pull wool from its [the sacrificial sheep's] forehead and put it either on an unclean person or on a leper."[5] The afflicted person is then considered to have been freed from his afflictions and he is instructed to go directly to his house without looking behind him (line 100). In another ritual of purification it is specified that all sins and afflictions are to be symbolically loaded on an *assinnu,* who would then be driven outside the city gate.[6]

I have discussed elsewhere at length the grim fate of lepers in the societies of the ancient Near East—biblical societies included—as well as the identity of the person designated as *assinnu* in ancient Mesopotamia.[7] Lepers were stigmatized persons, considered anathema to civilized society, forced to live outside the camp or the city gates, on the steppe. They were, then, typical outcasts who occupied the

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[4] See Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures 1966; Chicago: Aldine, 1969), 90–130; also Malul, *Knowledge, Control and Sex*, 272–78.

[5] *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery* (ed. L. W. King; London: Luzac, 1896), 12:97–98, quoted in *CAD* M/2, 239b. Note the presence of a sacrificial beast in the framework of this ritual, recalling of course the two goats in the biblical ritual, one serving as a sacrifice while the other is sent out to the desert, supposedly carrying the sins of the people.

[6] *KAR* 42:29, 48–57 ("May your [Ishtar's] *assinnu* stand by and carry my affliction! The illness that is holding me may he carry out of the window! May he drive out the disease of my body! May he remove the paralysis and the *lubāṭu*-disease of my flesh!"), and especially lines 66–67: "After you have recited this (incantation) three times, you have the *assinnu* carry the *kamānu*-cakes, offered to Gula and the scales, and drive him out of the gate." See Erich Ebeling, *Quellen zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion* (Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft 23/2; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1919), 21–32. See my remarks in Meir Malul, "David's Curse of Joab (2 Samuel 3:29) and the Social Significance of *mḥzyq bplk*," *AuOr* 10 (1992): 49–67, here 58–59 and n. 65. It is interesting that in the Hittite ritual cited by Westbrook and Lewis, three thick loaves of bread (and a jug of beer) are prepared to be sent with the person (a woman in this case) who is charged with leading the rams outside.

[7] Malul, "David's Curse," 51–56, 64–67 (*assinnu*), and 58–61 (the leper). For lepers and leprosy in biblical thought, see also Malul, *Knowledge, Control and Sex*, passim (see index, p. 563).

outside lawless sphere of the steppe. This was true also for the unclean person, who, like an unclean (e.g., menstruating) woman, was in the state of (temporary) taboo.[8] The *assinnu* seems to have been a sort of effeminate person, perhaps a hermaphrodite, or a person devoid of a clear-cut sexual identity, who most probably engaged in homosexual relations and seems to have been employed, among other things, also as a (male) prostitute.[9] The *assinnu* is listed and mentioned in the available evidence in the company of quite a few persons considered to be "deviant" who seem to have occupied the margins of society.[10]

The leper, the unclean person, and the *assinnu,* then, were chosen to serve as carriers of the sins and afflictions out of the city precisely because of their existential quality of being persons who occupied marginal positions, persons who strode both the sphere of the city—the sphere of law and order, of civilized society—and the sphere of the steppe—the sphere of chaos and disorder, the lawless sphere—where other denizens like them, as well as other dark forces of chaos, roam.[11]

One could delve a bit deeper in the attempt to divine the rationale behind the choice of such marginal/liminal persons for carrying out the specific task of removing the evil from society's borders. I once was puzzled by the story of the acculturation of Enkidu, the creature born on the steppe, half beast half man, who was first introduced into civilized society by his sexual encounter with the woman *Šamḫat,* the *ḫarimtu,* prostitute.[12] Since this woman was sent to him specifically for the purpose of initiating him into the way that leads from "beasthood" to humanity, and the first, and fundamental, act inaugurating the process of this transformation was the sexual act,[13] why did the woman have to be specifically a prostitute? In the light

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[8] See *CAD* M/2, 239–40, *s.v. musukku.*

[9] The Sumerian ideogram for *assinnu* is UR.SAL, which means literally "female dog." In "David's Curse" (p. 54 n. 37), I quote a verbal communication by Jeffrey H. Tigay about the possible relation between this "female dog" and the dog mentioned next to the prostitute in Deut 23:19.

[10] They all were part of the cult of Ishtar and seem to be an integral component of her entourage. Being herself the prostitute par excellence, it is not surprising to see her surrounded by colorful and sexually deviant people, who all are depicted as frequenting together the *bīt aštammi,* the "alehouse, tavern," where all sorts of lewd behavior took place. See in detail Malul, "David's Curse," 51–56.

[11] For the lawless sphere in the *Weltanschauung* of the ancients, see Malul, *Knowledge, Control and Sex*, passim (see index, p. 563).

[12] For the process of acculturation of Enkidu, see Malul, *Knowledge, Control and Sex*, 290–93, and the citation there of the relevant lines from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

[13] Sex acquired, in the thought of the ancients as well as among primitive people, the quality and significance of a civilizing act; and a sexual act, properly carried out in a proper context, would carry symbolic, even legal-dispositive significance and effects. See Malul, *Knowledge, Control and Sex*, 290–92, 298–312. The other acts along the way of acculturating Enkidu were eating cooked food, drinking beer (i.e., a processed drink), bathing, and anointing with oil. At the end

of the foregoing discussion, the reason seems clear: the prostitute, like the other figures mentioned above, was a person considered to be living on the margins of society.[14] Only a prostitute could approach a being of the outside places such as Enkidu, for only she could communicate with him. Similarly, only criminals, slaves, unclean persons, lepers, *assinnu*s, and those considered to occupy places outside society could safely stride the steppe and come into such lawless spheres with no danger. Therefore, these were the persons chosen as suitable emissaries of society to the lawless places.

Having said that, however, one must address the fact that in the first Hittite ritual quoted by Westbrook and Lewis, an (ordinary?) woman was appointed for the task, rather than a prostitute, as we would have expected. In the authors' words, the "woman, the symbol of weakness, held the lowliest possible status," and thus she acted "as a buffer between the king and the rams" (p. 419). One could hypothesize that the "lowliest status" of the woman may have been dictated by the military context of the camp, the king, and his warriors. But one could also fall back on the general situation of women in the worldview of these ancient cultures as the "Other" par excellence, in which case she could be counted among persons considered suitable for the task at hand.[15] At any rate, Westbrook and Lewis seem to be right in pointing to the woman's "lowliest status."

Looking at the foregoing from the opposite point of view, let us explore briefly the concepts of *kilʾāyim,* "mixing together" (Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9) and *tebel,* "confusion" (said of the crime of bestiality [Lev 18:23; 20:12]), in the biblical worldview. Like the thinking of other primitive peoples, biblical thought was clearly structured, which means that all phenomena were assigned their clear and defined place and status within a given world order and social matrix. "For a thing to transgress its borders and to get mixed up with other things not of its kind meant to the ancient man a blurring of the order and an injury to the world—on the same level as bringing chaos again to rule the world."[16] Marginal and liminal entities of the kind discussed in this article found their natural place within the lawless sphere outside structured society; therefore, they were the most suitable beings to carry

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of the whole process it is said *awīliš īwi,* "he became a man!" Enkidu had finally completed his journey and become fully human. See ibid., 292 and n. 116, with previous literature.

[14] One recalls here Enkidu's curse of the harlot (*Gilg.* VII iii: 5–32), who had torn him from his serene state as a beast of the steppe and started him on the path of civilization, which turned out to be his doom. The curse is clearly etiological in nature, for in it the fate of prostitutes is decreed: they occupy the fringes of society; they are to be found near city walls, on crossroads, and in the wasteland; they do not establish a house and thus do not fulfill the destiny of every woman; they are open to the abuse of other people; etc.

[15] For the woman as the epitome of the Other in the ancient Near East and in other primitive cultures, see Malul, *Knowledge, Control and Sex*, passim, esp. ch. 8, pp. 347–74.

[16] Malul, "David's Curse," 67.

outside evil, sins, plagues, afflictions, impurities, and other elements that disturbed the integrity of society and threatened its very existence. The איש עתי in Lev 16:21, according to Westbrook and Lewis's convincing analysis, was definitely one of these marginal and liminal entities.[17]

[17] I submitted this note to Prof. Raymond Westbrook, who kindly provided the following remark in an e-mail communication (dated September 9, 2008): "The only observation I would make is that liminal is our modern category. They did not think in terms of category but of a specific person for the specific task. The translation has to be prostitute, leper, criminal, hermaphrodite, according to the demands of the context and the ritual. They were not interchangeable. If the ʾîš ʿittî is not a criminal, then another specific "profession" has to be attributed to him." I generally agree with Prof. Westbrook. However, talking of "modern categories" applied to ancient thought would carry me too far afield, more than I intended in my short response to Westbrook and Lewis's contribution. Let me say here simply that I think that the ancients did perceive matters in terms of such categories, albeit not referring to them in explicit terms. This recalls the observation made by previous scholars regarding the lack of explicit general principles in "primitive thought," biblical and general ancient Near Eastern thought included. See Malul, *Knowledge, Control and Sex*, 446–49. I leave off at this point, hoping to pursue matters further elsewhere.

Foreignness and Poverty in the Book of Ruth: A Legal Way for a Poor Foreign Woman to Be Integrated into Israel

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Two important topics in the book of Ruth are foreignness and the acceptance of foreigners by Judahite society. In order to integrate a Moabite woman into Israel, the biblical author refers to the laws of the Torah to protect the poor—especially widows, orphans, and aliens—as well as to levirate marriage. Thus, it becomes possible to argue convincingly for the integration of a foreign woman into Israel. This article will take a closer look at the legal status of Ruth, with particular regard to Deuteronomic law.[1] It will show that Ruth as "foreign woman," a נכריה, takes the place of an immigrant holding the status of a גר, an alien, in Israel. She, as a woman on her own, as "the wife of the dead," achieves a legal status that is not applied to any other woman in the OT.

First, I will discuss the status of Elimelech and his family in Moab and then analyze the situation of Ruth in Bethlehem, focusing on four terms that describe her

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[1] For the intertextual connection between Ruth and Deuteronomy, see Georg Braulik, "The Book of Ruth as Intra-Biblical Critique on the Deuteronomic Law," *AcT* 19 (1999): 1–20. Irmtraud Fischer (*Rut* [HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2001], 89–91) dates the book of Ruth to the second half of the fifth century B.C.E. at the earliest. She follows Yair Zakovitch (*Das Buch Rut: Ein jüdischer Kommentar* [SBS 177; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1999], 62–64), who argues for a date of composition in the middle of the fifth century B.C.E. Both assume that Ruth was written as a response to Ezra and Nehemiah. Both presuppose the authoritative status of Deuteronomy at the time the book of Ruth was written. For the authority of Deuteronomy and its early interpretation within the Ketuvim, see Georg Braulik, "Das Deuteronomium und die Bücher Ijob, Sprichwörter, Rut: Zur Frage früher Kanonizität des Deuteronomiums," in *Die Tora als Kanon für Juden und Christen* (ed. Erich Zenger; Herders biblische Studien 10; Freiburg: Herder, 1996), 61–138.

status: Moabite, נכריה, גר, and אשת המת. Finally, I will draw some conclusions about the status of a poor foreign widow in Judah.

I. Elimelech and His Family in Moab

Two parallel situations with opposite preconditions can be found in the book of Ruth: Elimelech's and Ruth's.[2] The first chapter narrates the story of an Israelite, Elimelech, and his family. Owing to a famine, these people are forced to live in a foreign country—Moab. Later, Ruth arrives as a foreigner in Bethlehem in Judah. Both situations are described in different terms. Even though Elimelech's and Ruth's legal status are not the same, the author of the book tends to relate these two situations to each other. To be sure, everything the book of Ruth tells us about the status of Elimelech in Moab or that of Ruth in Judah is seen from an Israelite perspective. There is no reference to foreigners in ancient Near Eastern legal codes.[3] The book of Ruth reflects an exclusively inner-biblical discussion that relates to the Deuteronomic concept of the גר in Israel and uses terminology to denote a social reality that is not envisaged in Deuteronomy.

Elimelech's sojourn in Moab is presented in only a few sentences (Ruth 1:1–3). The author describes Elimelech's stay in Moab with the Hebrew verb גור. José Ramirez Kidd points out that in the Hebrew Bible this verb most often refers to Israelites who live as strangers in other countries; that is, it refers to emigrants.[4] Therefore Elimelech is not called a גר, because the *noun* is used only for immigrants who live in Israel. It seems, however, that Elimelech has an assured status in Moab.[5] This suggests that the author of Ruth assumes that what Deuteronomy requires concerning the גר in Israel is equally valid for the Israelite in a foreign country. Obviously, Moab is hospitable.[6] Elimelech's sons marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. The author of the book does not consider this problematic, although such unions are not without problems in other biblical texts. As argued by Irmtraud Fischer (and others before), the book of Ruth is written deliberately

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[2] Fischer, *Rut*, 64–65.

[3] See José E. Ramirez Kidd, *Alterity and Identity in Israel: The גר in the Old Testament* (BZAW 283; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 111.

[4] Kidd, *Alterity*, 20–21. According to his analysis, the verb גור occurs mainly in narrative nonlegal texts, whereas the noun גר refers to a legal status (p. 15).

[5] According to R. Martin-Achard, the גר who lived in Israel in most cases was poor and thus had the right of gleaning ("גור," *THAT* 1:410). He was protected by Yahweh, was not to be oppressed but loved (Lev 19:34). He profited from the tithe, the sabbath year, and the cities of refuge. In fact, there was no barrier between *gērîm* and Israelites, neither in everyday life (p. 410) nor in religious matters (p. 411).

[6] The opposite is said about Moab in Deut 23:4–5 and in the Balaam story (Numbers 22–24).

against a certain interpretation of Deuteronomy that can be found especially in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.[7] Deuteronomy 23:4 rules out the incorporation of Ammonites and Moabites into the assembly of Israel (קהל יהוה), and Deut 7:3 forbids marriage between Israelite men or women and women or men of the nations who live in Canaan.[8] These marriages are exactly the kind of relationship that is strictly forbidden by Ezra and Nehemiah.[9] The author of the book of Ruth, in contrast, does not comment on this fact,[10] which shows that the situation of the Israelite family in Moab does not seem to pose a problem for him/her.[11] The men live as aliens in Moab. The women have husbands and sons who provide for their legal status.

However, the situation changes after the death of the male family members. Without a male head of the family the status of the Israelite woman in Moab as well as the status of her daughters-in-law is no longer assured. Therefore, Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem, probably because she has male relatives there who are obliged to help her. Obviously, her legal status in Judah is better than in Moab, where she is alone, on her own, and a foreigner. Now, as a widow without sons, she lacks the legal status that she formerly held through her husband and/or her sons.[12]

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[7] Fischer, *Rut*, 61–65.

[8] Deuteronomy 7:1 lists by name "the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations mightier and more numerous than you" (NRSV). The Moabites (and Ammonites) are not among them. Ezra 9:1 explicitly names the Moabites in its list.

[9] This is corroborated by the rabbinic interpretation. For examples, see Zakovitch, *Rut*, 80, and an overview in Erich Zenger, *Das Buch Ruth* (ZBK; 2nd ed.; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1992), 103–15. Marriage to Moabite women is seen as a sin. The Targum comments on Ruth 1:4–5 as follows: "They transgressed against the decree of the Memra of the Lord and they took for themselves wives from the daughters of Moab. The name of one was Orpah and the name of the second was Ruth, the daughter of Eglon, king of Moab, and they dwelt there for about ten years. And because they transgressed against the decree of the Memra of the Lord and intermarried with foreign peoples, their days were cut short and both Mahlon and Chilion also died in the unclean land" (D. R. G. Beattie, *The Targum of Ruth* [ArBib 19; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994], 19). Others suppose that the women converted to Judaism (Ibn Ezra and R. David Qimchi).

[10] For the author of Ruth, what happens in the land of Moab obviously does not matter so much. Similarly, the worship of (an)other god(s) in Moab is not a problem. See James A. Loader, "Yahweh's Wings and the Gods of Ruth," in *"Wer ist wie du, HERR, unter den Göttern?" Studien zur Theologie und Religionsgeschichte Israels. Für Otto Kaiser zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Ingo Kottsieper et al.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 389–401.

[11] There is an intertextual connection to Gen 12:10 (Abraham and his family live as strangers in Egypt) and Gen 26:1 (Isaac in Gerar), two texts about the unproblematic sojourn of the patriarchs in a foreign land. See Fischer, *Rut*, 47–48.

[12] Regarding the situation of widows, see Willy Schottroff, "Die Armut der Witwen," in *Schuld und Schulden: Biblische Traditionen in gegenwärtigen Konflikten* (ed. M. Crüsemann and W. Schottroff; Munich: Kaiser, 1992), 54–89; F. Charles Fensham, "Widow, Orphan, and the Poor

Her argument to send her daughters-in-law back to their mothers' houses is that there they would be able to find a new husband. One has to bear in mind that a woman without a husband or son found herself in a precarious situation. In fact, a woman without male relatives was not granted any legal status.[13] Therefore, in Naomi's opinion—which seems quite realistic—it is hardly possible for a woman to come through on her own. A widow (without sons) in ancient Near Eastern society, and thus in Israelite society, was most likely placed among the poor.[14] Poverty and the lack of legal status are closely linked. Therefore, Ruth's case calls for attention, because she proves that it is possible for a foreign widow to obtain her rights, even in Israelite society. Actually, she prepares the ground for a possible new interpretation of the Deuteronomic law, as the Torah itself provides means for poor women to survive. One has to admit, however, that in the end a woman will still have no chance to be accepted into society without a man, as the limits of patriarchy were not exceeded in the book of Ruth.

Elimelech, as an alien, lives in Moab without any further problems, and so do his sons. However, it is impossible for a woman on her own to claim an assured legal status. Therefore Naomi returns to Bethlehem, but Ruth does not go back to her mother's house. She deliberately takes on the role of a single woman alone in a foreign country.

II. The Situation of Ruth in Bethlehem

Ruth's legal status at the time of her arrival in Bethlehem is now the center of our attention. Ruth deliberately chooses to accompany Naomi to become part of her people and to accept her God (Ruth 1:16: "Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God" [NRSV]). However, we still do not know if the people with whom she wants to live will accept her.

In view of Elimelech's situation in Moab, one might expect that Ruth would attain the status of a גר, the usual term applied to an immigrant in Israel, according to Kidd. It is a legal term, especially in Deuteronomy, but there is a problem. As Kidd notes, in Biblical Hebrew the term גר exists only as a masculine noun.[15]

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in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature," *JNES* 21 (1962): 129–39; and for Ruth, see esp. Fischer, *Rut*, 56–57.

[13] For instance, she obviously could not claim the status of a גר, which is important for Ruth in Bethlehem. Although the perspective of the narrative seems to be that of a woman, it remains within the limits of a patriarchal society.

[14] Not only in the Bible but also in Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and other documents widows and orphans are often mentioned in the context of poverty. See Fensham, "Widow, Orphan."

[15] Kidd states: "It is interesting to note that the noun גר does not occur at all in the book of Ruth. . . . The book opens with the verb גור, it tells a story of Israelites abroad (i.e. emigration).

Consequently, a foreign woman cannot live on her own in Israel, as she does not enjoy the same legal status as a man. Therefore, Ruth cannot be called a גר. If the author nevertheless wishes to argue for a legal status for Ruth as a foreigner in Israel, he/she has to find a way to ascribe to her the status of a גר without explicitly using this term. So the author describes the circumstances of Ruth's sojourn in Judah and her actions according to what Deuteronomy stipulates for the גר. Readers familiar with the Deuteronomic law would understand that Ruth should be regarded as a גר. Nonetheless, the term itself is never applied to Ruth. Instead, the author uses three different terms to describe her status: "Moabite" (מואביה), "foreign woman" (נכריה), and "the wife of the dead" (אשת המת).

Ruth is often called "Moabite."[16] This term expresses clearly what she primarily is: a woman from Moab. Some hostility against Moabite women has to be presupposed, although this is never stated explicitly in the book of Ruth. Knowing all relevant biblical stories and laws concerning Moabites, one might not be surprised.[17] Deuteronomy 23:5 gives reasons for and explains the refusal of the Moabites in the story of Balaam (Numbers 22–24) and during the events on Israel's way from Egypt to the promised land when the Moabites do not meet Israel with bread and water. However, now they actually do: Elimelech's family obviously receives bread and water during their sojourn in Moab.[18] Another problem is addressed in Gen 19:30–38, when the daughters of Lot lie with their father and give birth to sons called Moab and Ammon, who are the ancestors of the peoples of the same names. So the writer traces the origin of these peoples to incest. Furthermore, Num 25:1–5 accuses the Israelites of having illicit relationships with Moabite women. These women seduce the Israelites into worshiping the Moabite gods. The reader needs to bear in mind all these connotations when coming across the word "Moabite." Only in Ruth 3, in the scene of the threshing floor of Boaz, which is full of erotic allusions,[19] the name "Moabite" is not mentioned. One can conclude that the author wants to avoid creating the image of the Moabite woman having illicit sexual relations. The author tries to dissociate the Moabite Ruth from the bad reputation of her foresisters. This is accomplished by the legal solution of the marriage between Ruth and Boaz mentioned in ch. 4. Unquestionably, Ruth as a particular Moabite in no way corresponds to the Moabite women depicted in the texts of the

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This excludes, consequently, the use of the noun גר which presupposes the Israelite law. The noun גר *could* have been used in the case of Ruth during her sojourn in Bethlehem . . . but the noun גר designates a legal status and is, therefore, restricted to *men*" (*Alterity*, 24). See also Fischer, *Rut*, 58.

[16] This designation of Ruth appears six times in the book: 1:22; 2:2, 6, 21; 4:5, 10. The term "Moabite" (feminine form) appears seven times in Ruth (see Braulik, "Ruth," 5–6).

[17] Although Israel's relations to Moab are ambivalent (see Braulik, "Ruth," 7), all occurrences of female Moabites have negative connotations.

[18] Fischer, *Rut*, 62; Braulik, "Ruth," 10–11.

[19] Braulik points out the allusions to Deut 23:1, where incest is prohibited ("Ruth," 14–15).

Torah. It is the intention of the book of Ruth to neutralize these negative connotations.[20] Therefore, the texts of the Torah referring to Moabite men and women cannot be applied to Ruth, as her behavior seems to be rather different.[21]

To conclude, Ruth is called Moabite in the text, but this designation does not indicate a legal status for her. On the contrary, this name evokes a lot of negative connotations that the author wishes to refute. He/she tries to convince the readers that it is in fact impossible to reject Ruth as being an incestuous and idolatrous Moabite.

III. A Poor Foreign Widow in Judah

Ruth speaks about herself as a "foreign woman," נכריה. When Boaz approaches her in the field in a friendly manner, she answers him, "Why have I found favor in your sight, that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?" (2:10 NRSV). Ruth recognizes and acknowledges her status as a foreigner and wonders why Boaz even takes notice of her.[22] By falling down on her face and bowing before the older man of higher social status she expresses her own inferior position. While this behavior is a form of social convention of communication in the ancient Near East, it realistically depicts Ruth's situation.[23] Obviously, she herself is aware of it. She is a woman, young, poor, and foreign. But the only term she actually uses in regard to herself is נכריה, "foreign woman."

Therefore, the overall use of the term נכריה in the Hebrew Bible has to be considered. Although גר very often occurs in connection with widows, orphans, Levites, and the poor, נכריה never does.[24] A נכריה is at no time defined as poor in

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[20] See Fischer, *Rut*, 61.

[21] Moreover, "Moabite" does not designate a legal status within Israel at all. But the book of Ruth annuls the reasons for her possible exclusion from Israel.

[22] Jack M. Sasson interprets the term "foreigner" in the speech of Ruth to Boaz as her wish to be accepted by Boaz's family (*Ruth: A New Translation with a Philological Commentary and a Formalist-Folklorist Interpretation* [Biblical Seminar 10; 2nd ed.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 51). According to Sasson, "foreigner" in Ruth 2:10 refers to someone who does not belong to the family.

[23] Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., writes: "The statement betrayed Ruth's strong feeling of vulnerability as a non-Israelite. Her survival was totally dependent upon the goodwill of Israelite farmers" (*The Book of Ruth* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 163). The author of Ruth actually stresses, on the one hand, the legal status of Ruth as one who has certain rights (gleaning) and, on the other, the generosity of Boaz beyond any legal commandments.

[24] Bernhard Lang describes נכר as a term expressing a relation ("נכר," *ThWAT* 1:454–62). Foreigners hold the most inferior status of all groups in biblical Israel. For example, they are excepted from the sabbath year and the prohibition against lending at interest (Deut 15:3; 23:21; see ibid., 457). Kidd remarks that the term גר in the Hebrew Bible never occurs synonymously with זר ("different") and נכרי (*Alterity*, 28).

biblical texts, whereas the גר and the widow are. It is remarkable that Ruth is characterized as a poor foreign woman in this story. "Foreign woman" has a negative meaning in most biblical contexts.[25] Two particular groups of texts that use this term several times have to be mentioned. The first one is the discourse about the adulterous foreign woman in Proverbs. In these texts "foreign woman" clearly has negative, especially sexual, connotations.[26] Another context is the discussion about marriage between Israelites and foreign women in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.[27] These books show very clearly that foreign women are a danger to post-exilic Judahite society and therefore have to be rejected. Ruth, on the contrary, is not rejected. Her story is told to convince the reader that a Moabite woman is not dangerous at all, but can be a valuable member of Judahite society. Thus, the book of Ruth is an answer to Ezra's and Nehemiah's politics of demarcation against foreigners and their interpretation of Deuteronomy.[28] As a result, Israelite identity is not endangered by a Moabite like Ruth.

How can this line of argument be in accordance with the Torah? How can a foreign woman attain a positive legal status in Israel that incorporates her into Judahite society? The author of the book of Ruth provides a possible solution: Ruth must be treated as a גר, although she is a woman. There are no laws referring to a foreign woman in a positive way. The story of Ruth provides two parallel situations: in the same way that Elimelech lives as a sojourner in Moab, Ruth has to be accepted as a sojourner, a גר, in Israel. She, being a woman alone in a foreign country, actually is in the situation of a גר and therefore has to be treated as a foreign man living in Israel would be treated. This is the first step toward her acceptance in Bethlehem.

One can further notice that Ruth and Naomi are never addressed as אלמנה, "widow," or described by any term meaning "poor."[29] This is due both to the narrative character of the book and to its focus on foreignness. The author wants to define נכריה in a new way. He/she ascribes the status of a גר to Ruth, the נכריה, in a narrative manner, without stating it explicitly. Chapter 2 views Ruth as a foreigner,

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[25] See Fischer, *Rut*, 58–59.

[26] Christl Maier, *Die "fremde Frau" in Proverbien 1–9* (OBO 144; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1995). Lambertus A. Snijders states concerning Prov 23:27: "It seems to us that *nokriyya* . . . hints at the particular place which a *zona* occupies in society. . . . Not so much her origin but her position viz. outside the normal order will be indicated by the term *nokriyya*" (*The Meaning of זר in the Old Testament* [Leiden: Brill, 1953], 67–68).

[27] נשים נכריות are mentioned in Ezra 10 (six times) and Neh 13:27.

[28] Fischer, *Rut*, 61–65.

[29] Deuteronomy itself does not denominate widows, orphans, and aliens as "poor." They are protected by special laws and thus are singled out from the poor. Laws in favor of widows, orphans, and aliens are found in Exod 22:21; Deut 10:18; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:17, 19–21; 26:12–13; 27:19. Nevertheless, widows' poverty is presupposed. None of these laws is explicitly limited to Israelite widows, so they could be interpreted as applicable to foreign widows as well.

specified by the use of the term נכריה in 2:10. Ruth has the right of gleaning,[30] and, according to Deut 24:19, the alien (גר), the orphan, and the widow are the ones entitled to this right. Ruth therefore benefits from this law as a גר.[31] The parallel situations of Elimelech in Moab and Ruth in Bethlehem strongly suggest that Ruth should attain the status of a גר. Nevertheless, the text is ambiguous, since it does not use the term explicitly.

There is another term for a widow that is applied to Ruth (Ruth 4:5): she is called אשת המת, "the wife of the dead." This term occurs in only two passages in the Hebrew Bible: Ruth 4:5 and Deut 25:5. The latter text contains the law relating to levirate marriage. Thus, the term אשת המת marks the turning point of Ruth's legal status. Finally, the author refers to a law that can be applied to a woman exclusively. Through levirate marriage Ruth gains an assured status within the Bethlehemite society.

אשת המת is the first expression in the book of Ruth that explicitly ascribes to her a secure legal status in accordance with Deuteronomic law. She is never referred to by any other Deuteronomic legal term, such as גר or אלמנה or any term for "poor." But as "the wife of the dead" she can claim her rights. This is the second step of her incorporation into Israel. Chapter 4 of the book of Ruth, dealing with levirate marriage, supposes that from now on Ruth's relevant status is that of a widow, particularly that of "the wife of the dead." She is portrayed not as a poor widow but as one who is entitled to levirate marriage. This is the reason why she is never called "widow" or "poor." The author chooses a legal term that was not a priori connected to poverty. The creative connection between the laws on redemption and levirate marriage has often been discussed,[32] and there is no need to repeat the information here. Strictly speaking, although this legal construction is not in full accordance with the law, it does not contradict it either.[33] However, this

[30] Kidd gives the following examples of the rights of a גר: "the rest during the day of atonement (Lev 16,29); the right not to be oppressed (Ex 22,20); the right to gather fallen grapes (Deut 24,21); the right to benefit from the communal meal during the offering of the first fruits (Deut 26,11); the right to make use of the cities of refuge (Num 35,15); the right to receive the protection of the law (Deut 1,16); the right to benefit from rest during Sabbath (Deut 5,14); the right to receive free meat (Deut 14.21) and the tithe of the third year (Deut 14,29)" (*Alterity*, 16).

[31] Braulik notes that "[a]lthough Ruth is a foreigner and a widow, she obviously cannot naturally make use of the right to glean the ears" ("Ruth," 13). The problem is that she is a foreign woman. The gleaning law apparently has not been naturally applied to a נכריה. Braulik obviously does not see a difference in the legal status between גר and נכריה ("Ruth," 13–14).

[32] See, e.g., Frederic W. Bush, *Ruth, Esther* (WBC 9; Waco: Word Books, 1996), 6–248; Braulik, "Ruth." For a critical view, see James A. Loader, "Gerste, Bullen, Land und Levirat," in *Begegnung mit Gott: Gesammelte Studien im Bereich des Alten Testaments* (Wiener alttestamentliche Studien 3; Frankfurt a. Main: Lang, 2001), 167–83.

[33] According to Deut 25:5–10 (see also Gen 38:12–26) Elimelech's brother, who lives in the same house, would have had to marry Naomi. But that makes no sense in this case because we do

new interpretation is a halakah in favor of the two women without husbands. The newborn child is related to Naomi by the women of Bethlehem (4:14–17). Thus, ch. 2 deals with Ruth's status as a foreigner, and ch. 4 with Naomi's and Ruth's status as widows, with Ruth as "the wife of the dead" in particular.[34] Naomi, too, is a "wife of the dead," but she is old. She can no longer bear children. Ruth has to take her place in the levirate marriage.

This sophisticated description of the situation of these two women is due to the fact that they enjoy different legal statuses. Both are widows; Naomi, however, lives in her hometown, whereas Ruth is seen primarily as a Moabite and thus as a "foreign woman." The author of the book of Ruth has found a way to provide a legal status for both of them—an old widow without sons and a foreign woman—namely, as "the wife of the dead." This is the point where they are brought together and at the same time the starting point for the author's conclusive solution to their (legal) problems. The close association between the different laws corresponds to the close relationship of the two women and their vital needs. In the end, both gain a secure legal status, yet again with a husband and a son.[35] They are no longer the "wives of the dead" but of the "strong" Boaz.

The implicit application of the status of a גר and the explicit application of the levirate marriage to Ruth both provide the possibility of her being incorporated into Israelite society. Ruth's foreignness and poverty are overcome by attributing a legal status to her in the context of the Torah. This is possible because of the sophisticated narrative presentation of her double status as a widow and a foreigner. In Israel there is no law to support a Moabite woman such as Ruth, but there are laws protecting the גר and the אשת המת. By ascribing the status of a גר to the Moabite woman, the exclusion of Moabite women practiced by Ezra (Ezra 9–10; cf. Deut. 23:4–5) is actually overruled. Evidently, the author of the book of Ruth has shown that it is possible to interpret the Torah in favor of a foreign woman. As a גר, this Moabite woman is a part of Israel in everyday life. Moreover, she has become a worshiper of Yʜwʜ, at least according to her actions.[36] Ruth willingly endures the situation of foreignness and lack of a husband in order to become an integrated

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not know anything about such a brother und Naomi is too old to bear children. The situation around the redeemer who buys Naomi's field is anything but clear.

[34] Chapter 3 talks about the critical situation of transition: the foreign woman meets the Israelite on the threshing floor at night and prepares the legal solution for her and Naomi.

[35] This solution shows that in the end women will depend on men in the patriarchal society of Judah. Even if Ruth and Naomi manage their lives without male help for some time (a tough time, indeed), their final aim is to gain a "rest," מנוחה, for themselves (see Ruth 3:1).

[36] Loader points out that Ruth's principal concern is to accompany Naomi and not to convert to another faith: "Ruth does not follow Naomi in order to become Judean, but becomes Judean as a consequence of following her mother-in-law. Then this applies to the statement on religion as well" ("Yahweh's Wings," 398).

member of Judahite society, the society to which her beloved mother-in-law belongs. In the end, she is an accepted member of Israelite society and no longer a foreign woman or widow.

The book of Ruth argues that this foreign woman is not primarily a danger-ous subject who seduces Israelites sexually and religiously. The narrative shows that a נכריה obtains the legal status of a גר in Judahite society because she is "the wife of the dead" and has a legal claim to protection in Israel. Although the book of Ruth never mentions poverty, it is a fact that Naomi and Ruth are poor. The author of Ruth and the author of the Deuteronomic material know that poverty is a conse-quence of lacking legal status. The author of Ruth is aware that the Torah provides the means of both integrating a Moabite woman into Israelite society and guaran-teeing the survival of poor women, and so he/she refers to Deuteronomic law to address Naomi's and Ruth's situations.[37] The book of Ruth tells readers that the Torah is able to transform even a poor foreign woman without a husband into the great-grandmother of the most famous king of Israel.[38]

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[37] The author of Ruth uses the same biblical text for his/her arguments as his/her opponents do in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, namely, the Deuteronomic law.

[38] This story, of course, is told from an Israelite perspective. It neglects any question about Ruth's Moabite identity, which she completely changes for an Israelite one. It is not possible to live in Judah and adhere to a Moabite identity and faith. On this, see Bonnie Honig, "Ruth, the Model Emigrée: Mourning and the Symbolic Politics of Immigration," in *Ruth and Esther* (ed. A. Brenner; FCB, Second Series; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 50–74.

The Frustration of Wisdom: Wisdom, Counsel, and Divine Will in 2 Samuel 17:1–23

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Centered on a son's attempted usurpation of his father's throne, the narrative of Absalom's rebellion in 2 Sam 15:1–19:5 involves issues of family dynamic and generational conflict, and thus thematically resonates with other ancient tales such as *Enuma Elish*, the *Shahname*, and the Greek myths of Oedipus and Zeus. In these stories, the vigorous, younger sons attempt, usually forcibly and successfully, to take the throne of their aged, otiose fathers. In this enterprise, fate, which neither participant can escape, is usually on the side of the young aspirant. The inevitable defeat of the father, though foretold, is rarely avoided.[1] Interestingly, in contrast to these other myths, the narrative of Absalom's rebellion does not conclude with the victory of the young challenger. Instead, Absalom is summarily defeated and killed, and David reinstated as king. Indeed, the closest to the idea of fate that we have in the Hebrew Bible, divine will, actually favors and predestines the triumph of David over Absalom (2 Sam 17:14). That the outcome skews from the expected, that David

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[1] Stories that follow the usual pattern of the triumph of the son over the father include, for example, the well-known tales of Oedipus and of Zeus. Interestingly, a tale with an outcome similar to that of Absalom and David is the Persian tale of Sohráb and Rostám in the *Shahname*, a compilation of stories that constitutes the Iranian national epic. Unfortunately, a discussion of the many uncanny thematic similarities, including that of fate, between the Persian epic and the story of Absalom's rebellion is beyond the scope of this article. See *The Tragedy of Sohráb and Rostám from the Persian National Epic, the Shahname of Abol-Qasem Ferdowsi* (trans. Jerome W. Clinton; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987).

and not Absalom survives, whether historically accurate or not, literarily speaking, conveys interesting and complex statements about fate, or God's will.

These subtle, intricate messages concerning divine will are evident in the story of the dueling counselors in 2 Sam 17:1–12, the focus of this paper. This story, which acts as the preamble to the defeat of Absalom during his rebellion against his father, David, dramatically illustrates the power of language, especially as it intersects and interacts with the planned will of God. In this article, I will argue that a careful analysis of the language of 2 Sam 17:1–23 reveals deeper theological meanings and struggles; this story not only wrestles with the nature of proper advice giving but also questions the nature of wisdom, divine will, and human volition.

I. Summary and Thesis

This story initially appears simple: Hushai, a longtime advisor of David, agrees to enter as a spy into Absalom's camp (2 Sam 15:32–37). Absalom, at this point, is guided by Ahithophel, his father's old advisor and Bathsheba's grandfather (2 Sam 11:3; 23:34), who shrewdly advises him, first, to sleep with David's concubines (2 Sam 16:22–23), thereby irrevocably terminating Absalom's relationship with his father, and then quickly to pursue and kill David (2 Sam 17:1–3). Hushai, David's spy counselor, now enters the scene and advises Absalom to wait until a large troop can be gathered to attack, thereby giving David time to escape. Hushai's eloquent advice is favored over Ahithophel's succinct, rather flavorless counsel, and Absalom is summarily defeated. Hushai's advice thus precipitates Absalom's downfall. The narrator adds a theological twist to this tale, first, by having David pray for the frustration of Ahithophel's advice (2 Sam 17:31), and then by presenting Yahweh's affirmative answer to his prayer in 2 Sam 17:14: "The Lord had decreed that Ahithophel's sound advice be nullified, in order that the Lord might bring ruin upon Absalom."[2]

While this story, which comes at an important juncture in the larger narrative of Absalom's rebellion, immediately preceding the fall of Absalom, appears straightforward and simple, a careful analysis of the language of 2 Sam 17:1–23 reveals deeper theological complexities and struggles. These deeper struggles are reflected in the subtle usage of language, an element that has generally escaped detection by biblical scholars. While scholars have noted the beauty of Hushai's advice—a "masterpiece of oriental eloquence,"[3] and an "example of highly cultivated rhetoric, of a precious use of language"[4]—in contrast to the straightforward speech of

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[2] Unless otherwise noted, all biblical quotations are from the JPS translation.

[3] Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964), 351.

[4] Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 104.

Ahithophel, few scholars have fully elucidated the significance of the speeches' stylistic differences. Indeed, only Shimon Bar-Efrat and J. P. Fokkelman have done a thorough examination of the rhetorical aspects of the two counsels.[5] In the same vein, few scholars aside from Gerhard von Rad have commented on the theological importance of the assertion of divine preordainment in 2 Sam 17:14.[6]

Moving beyond Bar-Efrat's thorough literary analysis of 2 Sam 17:1–23, I will argue that Hushai's speech defeated Ahithophel's counsel in 2 Sam 17:1–12 "not because of *what* he said . . . but because of the *way* he said it."[7] Carefully analyzing Hushai and Ahithophel's counsels, I will show that the eloquence, the rhetorical power, *the form* of Hushai's advice was responsible for its adoption over Ahithophel's "wiser" yet more sparsely worded counsel. Hushai's counsel was more persuasive because of the association between form and content, between heightened speech and the semblance of wisdom. Hushai's counsel, though ultimately harmful to Absalom, *sounded wiser* than Ahithophel's truly wise advice because it was put into a "wise" form. The form of his speech thus worked to make the content sound more sagacious, thereby leading to its adoption. The implications of this analysis of language, I propose, then intersect with larger theological issues of fate and wisdom.

II. The Literary Style of the Counselor's Speeches

The idea that this story of the dueling counselors centrally concerns wisdom is not a wholly new argument.[8] A number of scholars, R. N. Whybray being the most famous, have noticed the thematic similarities between wisdom literature and

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[5] Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (JSOTSup 70; Sheffield: Almond, 1989); J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses* (4 vols.; SSN 20, 23, 27, 31; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981–93), esp 1:203–23.

[6] See von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel,* 103.

[7] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible,* 223.

[8] Wisdom literature in the Hebrew Bible, for the most part, usually refers to the books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. The three books share not only the frequent use of the term "wisdom" but also thematic similarities (see Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* [2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,1996], 111–31; idem, "Wisdom in the Old Testament," *ABD* 6:920–31). However, the boundaries of wisdom literature are highly debated among scholars, as are most genre classifications, because wisdomlike language and themes are not exclusive to wisdom literature. By "wisdom," I mean the shared, broad, sapiential view of reality that was eventually written down, collected, and codified into books of "wisdom literature." It is important to clarify that I am not arguing for the inclusion of 2 Sam 17:1–23 in the wisdom genre, nor am I stating that there is conclusive evidence of direct sapiential influence. My argument is rather simple: while this narrative might not be part of wisdom literature, its central theme does concern wisdom. The main dilemma of this narrative involves the ability of Absalom to judge between the wisdom of the two counsels.

parts of what has been deemed the Succession Narrative.[9] Whybray, arguing for the influence of wisdom traditions in the Succession History, states:

> There seems to be good ground for concluding that on many fundamental matters—the importance attached to human wisdom and counsel both in public and private affairs; the acknowledgment of their limitations and of the unseen, all-embracing purpose of God and of his retributive justice; the relatively small attention paid to the cult; and the stress on the importance of ethical conduct, humility and private prayer—the Succession Narrative agrees closely with the scribal wisdom literature as represented by Proverbs. . . .[10]

Whybray notes that there are both thematic and linguistic correspondences between wisdom literature, especially the book of Proverbs, and the Succession History. He states: "There is . . . a particularly large concentration of similes in the speeches of the two professional counselors, Ahithophel and Hushai, which in other respects also betray the author's intimate acquaintance with and mastery of the wisdom school."[11]

Whybray's argument has been criticized, most notably by James L. Crenshaw, who finds his contention of a link between Deuteronomic writers of the Succession History and wisdom writers rather dubious. Crenshaw argues that, notwithstanding the linguistic and thematic parallels, there is not enough proof that wisdom literature affected the writing of the Succession Narrative.[12] While it is probable that there were advisors in the royal court who were affiliated with wisdom-teaching educational institutions, and though it is possible that folkloric traditions of Solomon as the patron and champion of wisdom reflect some aspect of historical reality, it is difficult to ascertain the exact nature of the relationship between the monarchy, the writers of the court history, and the sapiential educators/authors.

Indeed, Crenshaw's critique is at points valid. There is no way to prove that the writers of the Davidic narratives were "intimately acquainted" with wisdom or were members of wisdom schools, as Whybray contends. Likewise, not only is it difficult

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 [9] Though the purpose and the exact boundaries of what has been deemed the Succession History or Succession Narrative are debated, most scholars follow Leonhard Rost's designation of this narrative as consisting of 2 Samuel 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2 (Rost, *The Succession to the Throne of David* [trans. Michael D. Rutter and David M. Gunn; Historic Texts and Interpreters in Biblical Scholarship 1; Sheffield: Almond, 1982]). For connections between the Succession History and wisdom themes, see von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 103–4; Murphy, *Tree of Life*, 4–5; and R. N. Whybray, *The Succession Narrative: A Study of II Samuel 9–20; I Kings 1 and 2* (SBT 2/9; London: SCM, 1968).

 [10] Whybray, *Succession Narrative*, 71.

 [11] Ibid., 82.

 [12] James L. Crenshaw, "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon 'Historical' Literature," in *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions: Collected Writings on Old Testament Wisdom* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995), 312–25.

to prove the existence of wisdom schools during the time of the monarchy, but the nature of Israelite educational institutions, in general, remains cloaked in mystery. More likely, the correspondences between the Succession History and wisdom literature demonstrate that wisdomlike themes and language were part of the larger cultural milieu from which both types of literature emerged. As Roland Murphy states:

> It is not a question of the direct influence of the sages or of the wisdom literature, but rather of an approach to reality which was shared by all Israelites in varying degrees. . . . Such understanding was not a mode of thinking cultivated exclusively by one class; it was shared at all levels of society that interpreted daily experience. It came to be crystallized in a recognizable body of "wisdom literature," but the mentality itself was much broader than the literary remains that have come down to us. I think this approach is what Whybray was struggling for in his study on Israel's intellectual tradition.[13]

Murphy's conclusions are important because the idea of a shared reality allows one to make use of Whybray's findings—findings that I believe are quite meaningful—without necessarily having to adopt or prove Whybray's severe conclusions about the direct influence of wisdom literature on the Succession History. Indeed, as I will show in this analysis of 2 Sam 17:1–23, it is this more general understanding of wisdom that is reflected in the tale of the dueling counselors.

Although Whybray's final conclusions might be a bit too strong, his observations about the heavy use of similes in 2 Samuel 17 do point to something quite interesting. Unfortunately, while Whybray correctly notices the style of the counsels, he fails to distinguish and compare them. In his focus on the *overall* significance of the usage of similes, Whybray overlooks the fact that the two counsels are not stylistically equivalent. Only Hushai's advice contains rich figurations and imageries: Hushai describes David as "enraged as a bear bereaved of her cubs" (2 Sam 17:8) and as "a brave man with the heart of a lion" (2 Sam 17:10). Hushai advises that Absalom gather troops, "as numerous as the sands of the sea" (2 Sam 17:11) in order to descend on David "like dew falling on the ground" (2 Sam 17:12). He concludes by stating that if David were to withdraw into a city, all of Israel should "bring ropes to that city and drag its stones as far as the riverbed, until not even a pebble is left" (2 Sam 17:13).

Aside from 2 Sam 17:3a, a verse of uncertain meaning, which most scholars view as an insertion, Ahithophel's advice is straightforward, terse, and, in contrast

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[13] Roland E. Murphy, "Wisdom—Theses and Hypotheses," in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien* (ed. John G. Gammie, Walter A. Brueggemann, W. Lee Humphreys, and James M. Ward; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for Union Theological Seminary, 1978), 40.

to Hushai's counsel, almost completely lacking in similes.[14] His advice is an unembellished string of verbs:

> Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me *pick* twelve thousand men, and *set out* and *pursue* David tonight. I *will come upon* him when he is weary and disheartened, and I *will throw him into a panic*; when all the troops with him flee, I *will strike down* the king alone. I *will bring back* all the people to you. . . ." (2 Sam 17:1–3)[15]

Indeed the forms of the counsels match their respective contents.[16] Ahithophel's advice is not only terse in form, containing only four verses, but he also advises "terse" and immediate action; Ahithophel believes that Absalom and his troops should raid and assassinate David and his entourage that very night. Hushai's advice, on the other hand, is nearly triple the length of Ahithophel's. Semantically, Hushai urges Absalom to slow down and take time to gather his troops instead of rushing to attack David. Not only is Hushai's counsel lengthy in form, but his advice is also that Absalom and his troops be slow to act.

Likewise, as Bar-Efrat has noted,[17] Hushai, through his flowery, descriptive language, conjures up rich imageries that serve to contradict and subtly undermine Ahithophel's advice: David and his men are not "weary and disheartened" (17:2), as Ahithophel argues, but courageous and "enraged like a bear bereaved of cubs" (17:8). David is not easily attackable, as Ahithophel suggests, but an experienced "man of war" (17:8) who will be prepared, not even spending the night with his people but hiding "in one of the pits or in some other place" (17:9). Indeed, an attack will not throw David into a panic, allowing Ahithophel and his men to assassinate David, as Ahithophel argues (17:2), but any sign of Absalom's failure during this attack will throw even those with a "heart of lion" into a panic (17:10).

As Bar-Efrat has shown, Hushai's speech contains many phrases and terms (e.g., "mighty men" [2 Sam 23:8], "enraged" [1 Sam 22:2], "bear" [1 Sam 17:36], and "man of war" [1 Sam 16:18]) that appear in the narrative of David's early years.[18] In other words, Hushai's rhetoric serves to evoke images of a different David of a bygone age—not the weary, lusty, old king who stays at home to seduce another

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[14] Various versions read 2 Sam 17:3 differently. The LXX reads, "to you as a bride comes back to her husband; you seek the life of but one man and . . . ." In the LXX, then, Ahithophel's counsel does contain one simile.

[15] My own translation; emphasis added.

[16] For more information on the relationship between form and content, see Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (New Accents; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Robert M. Polzin, *Biblical Structuralism: Method and Subjectivity in the Study of Ancient Texts* (Semeia Supplements; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

[17] See Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 226–37.

[18] Ibid., 231–32. Bar-Efrat writes, "Hushai may be referring associatively to the heroic period when David showed quite clearly that he had both courage and initiative and was able to prevail in difficult and highly dangerous situations" (p. 232).

man's wife, but the mighty and cunning warrior who wrested the throne from Saul. Hushai argues that the only thing that will defeat such a warrior is not speed but quantity—an army that is as numerous as the "sands of the sea" (17:11) and as "dew falling on the ground" (17:12)—an army that will take time to organize. And if David flees, then they will go to that city and drag it "as far as the riverbed until not even a pebble is left" (17:13). And all this, Hushai notes over and over again, is well known by Absalom and all of Israel (17:8, 10). Hushai's speech thus reaches a climax in the utter destruction of David, which is exemplified in the total decimation of the city to which he has fled.

Hushai's use of figurations and similes thus works to enhance and dramatize the correctness of his counsel. For example, Hushai's statement in 2 Sam 17:8 that David and his men are enraged like a "bear bereaved of her cubs" emphasizes and vividly portrays the toughness of David. David's warriorlike status is further reiterated by Hushai's statement in 17:10 that David's heart "is like the heart of a lion." The similes apparent in Hushai's advice to Absalom, to gather troops "as numerous as the sands of the sea" (2 Sam 17:11) so that they can descend on David like "dew falling on the ground" (2 Sam 17:12) again paint a vivid mental picture and, hence, clarify the size of the army that will be needed to fight against David. This simile also depicts the natural, easy, victorious manner in which Absalom's troops will advance—they will fall on David like dew.

In Hushai's statement one finds not only similes but also instances of paronomasia of verbal roots, for example, שמע השמע in 2 Sam 17:9, המס ימס in 17:10, and האסף יאסף in 17:11. In 17:10, there are two indirect metaphors—"heart" and "melt"—and Fokkelman has noted the use of chiastic structure in the last part of Hushai's speech.[19] Further, there is some use of oppositions; for example, v. 10 states that one who has a "heart of lion" will melt with fear. All these literary features aid in the creation of a speech that is persuasive not only because of what it says but also because of how it says it—because of its style. It is language that is filled with imagery and layered with meaning, language that plays on the psychology and emotions of the listeners. In short, Hushai is using heightened or inflated speech.

Given the rather apparent stylistic and semantic differences of the two counsels, it is surprising that scholars have only superficially noted the eloquence of Hushai's advice without attempting to elucidate its significance. If, as Whybray states, the heavy use of simile—the literary style—is somehow connected with wisdom, these differences can signify a disparity in the "level" of wisdom in the two sets of advice and, hence, can be of semantic importance. Considering the fact that these similes are used in only one counsel—the counsel that is eventually adopted—it is not far-fetched to believe that the language of the advice played a role in its acceptance. In other words, the formal differences might shed light on the semantic

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[19] See Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry*, 217–18.

nuances in this narrative. This is especially true if, as von Rad notes about the proverbs, there is a "close connection, even unity, between content and form," whereby the "process of becoming aware of the perception and of giving linguistic expression to it in word and form are one and the same act."[20]

III. Heightened Speech and the Divine

A deeper examination of the two counsels' structures reveals that Whybray was correct in recognizing an affiliation between the heavy use of similes and wisdom. While he does not fully examine his findings—again, because his goal is to establish a link between the wisdom literature and the Succession Narrative—his conclusions indicate that wisdom and the literary form in which wisdom writings usually occur, namely, poetry,[21] are connected.

This connection between wisdom and heightened language is most evident when one looks at the places where heightened discourse occurs in the Bible—the most heightened, of course, is poetry. Poetry, like all literary categories, has rather imprecise, fuzzy boundaries. However, as James Kugel states, where exactly poetry begins is difficult to decipher, but the "extremes of heightened and unheightened speech in the Bible are visible enough."[22] Kugel argues that the classification of biblical poetry and similar genre delineations too strictly and easily positions those poetry/prose elements that form the "'middle ground' between these extremes" into one or the other category.[23] It is not that there is *no* difference between prose and poetry, but that these differences range along a continuum. Following Kugel, then, I am not arguing that Hushai's advice *is* poetry—his speech does not contain parallelisms, which form the basis of biblical poetry—but merely stating that, according to Kugel's poetry-prose continuum, the use of similes and imagery tilts Hushai's advice in a more poetic direction than Ahithophel's counsel. As I have tried to show in my preceding analysis, Hushai's speech is, at the very least, more heightened than that of Ahithophel.

The most obvious examples of heightened discourse in the Hebrew Bible are prophecies, divine speeches, songs, praises, and wisdom writings. This is unsur-

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[20] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel,* 11.

[21] The nature of biblical poetry, a topic that has been much discussed, is beyond the scope of this paper. On biblical poetry, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (trans. G. Gregory; London: T. Tegg, 1835); and James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

[22] Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 94.

[23] Ibid.

prising, since inflated speech with its "system of complex linkages of sound, image, word, rhythm, syntax, theme, and idea, is an instrument for conveying densely patterned, and sometimes contradictory meanings, that are not readily conveyable through other kinds of discourse."[24] The complexity of elevated language, its ability to hold and convey complicated semantic connections and implications, lends it a spiritual weight, making it the perfect medium for psalms, divine speeches, prayers, prophecies, and wisdom literature. Von Rad writes that the "frequency of paronomasia . . . of assonance and alliteration, still shows us something of the magical, incantatory function possessed by the resonance of the word."[25] The usual casting of divine speeches, prayers, and prophecies in poetry, in the most heightened of speeches, is most likely related to this connection between poetry and spirituality. Alter writes, "Since poetry is our best human model of intricately rich communication, not only solemn, weighty, and forceful but also densely woven with complex internal connections, meanings, and implication, it makes sense that divine speech should be represented as poetry."[26]

This connection between heightened speech and the divine also correlates with the liminality inherent in this type of discourse. As a dense, elevated linguistic medium, heightened speech is characterized by impenetrability and ambiguity. Heightened language is mystifying—since countless imageries, connotations, and correspondences exist and are created within it—yet also clarifying, since through its descriptions it redefines, focuses, and dramatizes. Interestingly, this clarifying and mystifying duality inherent in heightened speech matches the duality inherent in the very idea of the divine. The divine has to be both approachable and, to a degree, understandable, yet also esoteric and impenetrable. A god that is too esoteric would make a relationship between the divine and the human impossible. However, a god that is too understandable and penetrable would no longer be a god. Heightened language thus mimics God's double nature. It makes sense, then, that when God speaks in the Bible, whether directly or via a prophet, it is through this type of speech. Likewise, it also makes sense that songs, prayers, or psalms to God are put into this structure. The idea of God matches the form through which the divinity speaks or is spoken about. There is a type of semantic equivalence between the idea of the divine and heightened speech. Hence, heightened language, such as poetry or song, was viewed by many ancient cultures as having its provenance in God.[27] The esoteric yet clarifying aspect of heightened discourse, thus, captures the nature, the semantics, of the divine.

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[24] Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 113.
[25] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel,* 30.
[26] Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 114.
[27] For example, the idea of the muses expresses this connection between the creative arts and the sacred.

IV. Wisdom and the Divine

Von Rad notes that when "we approach the teachings of Israel's wise men," the peculiarity that strikes the reader is that they "are all composed in poetic form, they are poetry."[28] There is a reason why wisdom literature is also usually put into a heightened form. Murphy writes that wisdom is usually associated with the interpretation of dreams, a sense of cleverness or cunning, an ability to cope with life, and proper speech, behavior, and action.[29] Wisdom is the discernment of the order, the pattern by which the world and its denizens operate. Therefore, wisdom is something accessible, discoverable, and teachable. On the other hand, wisdom is also esoteric and opaque. What is wise, at times, is unclear because the world is complex and chaotic.

Part of the dilemma concerning the ambiguity of wisdom is resolved by rooting it in the divine. As so eloquently stated in God's whirlwind speech to Job, God is the root, the source of wisdom, the wisest being (Job 38–40). Therefore, to be wise is to recognize God's wisdom and hence to fear and respect this being whose wisdom is beyond human knowledge (Prov 1:7; 9:10). God is the source of wisdom, and therefore wisdom, which springs from God, is at times not completely lucid (Eccl 3:11; 8:17; 11:5) but esoteric, mysterious, and impenetrable. Thus, ultimate wisdom is to know the limits of wisdom, to understand that, while humans might attempt to make plans and arrange life, life is punctuated by the "activity of God, an activity which completely escapes all calculation."[30]

Thus, wisdom has a dual nature; it is accessible and inaccessible, clarifying and mystifying, rooted in the divine and rooted in the human plane. Heightened speech again is the best medium to express this kind of duality, this type of layered understanding, because, as I have discussed above, as a form it is able to express and hold a similar duality. There is a certain alignment with form and content when divine speech and wisdom are put into the form of heightened discourse. The expression of wisdom or "spiritual" speech through elevated discourse, especially poetry, aligns form and content. Interestingly, to simplify a rather complex process, there is some recognition of this connection in the manner in which a proverb is deciphered or figured out; in the proverbs, the "solution," the answer, the discoverable tidbit of wisdom in a proverbial saying lies in figuring out the relationship of the two parallel clauses. In other words, the deciphering of the poetry is the attainment of wisdom; or, to put it differently, the elucidation of the formal relationship *is* the exposition of the semantic meaning.

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[28] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel,* 24.

[29] Murphy, "Wisdom in the Old Testament," 920–31.

[30] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel,* 101. See Prov 16:1, 2, 9; 19:21; 20:24; 21:30 for sayings expressing the limits of human wisdom.

It is in light of this connection between heightened speech, divinity, and wisdom that the full significance of Hushai and Ahithophel's speeches becomes evident. Whybray is not completely misguided when he posits that there is some connection between the heavy use of similes and wisdom. Hushai's speech, full of similes, imagery, and paronomasia, is much more elevated and denser than Ahithophel's speech. Heightened speech, as I have argued, because of its complicated, dual nature is the perfect medium for wisdom and spiritually related forms of communication. Thus, what this means is that Hushai, by speaking in this high, eloquent manner made his advice sound more poetic and spiritual, and thus more akin to divine speech; his speech, therefore, sounded wiser. God is the source of wisdom, and, as I have argued above, there are reasons why divine speech or speeches addressed to God are put into this form. Hence, the use of similes, imagery, paronomasia and other elements of heightened speech "caused" Hushai's counsel to appear wiser because of the association between heightened speech and wisdom. Thus, Hushai's presentation of his counsel in a certain stylistic form caused it to be regarded as containing wiser (better) content and, hence, was more convincing and persuasive.

As a result, Absalom and his men are duly persuaded and Hushai's counsel is espoused over Ahithophel's straightforward advice. Ahithophel spoke wisely in content, for, if adopted, his advice would have led to the triumph of Absalom; however, Ahithophel did not speak "wisely" in form. Therefore, his counsel was rejected, for the form lessened the effect, the reception of his counsel. In other words, while Ahithophel's speech was semantically wise, it was not formally wise. Indeed, it was not "wise" in another way: God had ordained the fall of Absalom (2 Sam 17:14), thereby affirmatively answering David's prayer for the frustration of Ahithophel's counsel (2 Sam 15:31). Hence, Ahithophel's advice was "unwise" from the divine point of view, since God had decreed its nullification.

V. Volition, Divine Will, and Theological Implications

In 2 Sam 17:14 the reader is told: "The Lord had decreed that Ahithophel's sound advice be nullified, in order that the Lord might bring ruin upon Absalom." As I have pointed out above, not only was Hushai's argument more poetic and, consequently, more persuasive, but its ultimately disastrous appeal and reception also had the divine stamp of approval. While the formal linguistic elements that I have explicated delineate the human reasons for the adoption of Hushai's counsel, the writer of 2 Sam 17:14 adds a theological reason for its acceptance. This small theological statement, however, complicates the relationship between form and content and brings out the complex semantic messages that are embodied in the narrative.

The increased poeticism of Hushai's speech made it sound wiser, but was it really the wiser advice? In what ways were Ahithophel and Hushai's counsels wise or unwise? How was it that the wise-sounding advice led to Absalom's demise while the adoption of the unwise-sounding advice would have presumably led to his success? Is the reader to assume that Hushai's advice was actually wiser because it was theologically in line with what God had ordained (i.e., the destruction of Ahithophel's advice), as 2 Sam 17:14 notes? If so, is wisdom merely the alignment of human perception with divine decision? Who actually caused Absalom's fall, then? Did Absalom fall because he acted unwisely by following Hushai's wise-sounding counsel? Or did Absalom fall because God wanted him to fall? At the end of the narrative, the reader is left in doubt about the sagacity of Absalom's decision and about wisdom in general.

The reader is given ambivalent and complex answers to these questions. One element involved in the fall of Absalom is something akin to retributive justice or determinism: bad actions lead to bad results, good actions to good results; or, in other words, what goes around, comes around. This notion of retribution pervades wisdom literature (Prov 10:24; 11; 13:21).[31] This element is certainly apparent and at work in the Succession Narrative. David's affair with Bathsheba not only causes the murder of Uriah, her husband, but also leads to the death of David and Bathsheba's first child (2 Samuel 11–12). This terrible incident is followed by David's mismanagement of Tamar's rape (2 Samuel 13), which eventually leads to Absalom's revenge on Amnon, his rapist half-brother, and, subsequently, to the rebellion against his father. David's entire family history seems to embody this determinism:

> No amount of shrewdness can enable the wicked man to avoid the inevitable consequences of his wickedness. . . . [W]ith regard to the Succession Narrative, von Rad's remark that "the motive of retribution . . . pervades the whole work" is illustrated in scene after scene; indeed the whole book from II Sam 11 onwards might be described as "David's sin and its consequences."[32]

This belief in a comprehensible and patterned universe undergirds a belief in human independence and volition. People set into motion good or bad results by

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[31] For example, one of the main dilemmas wrestled with in the book of Job is the failure of this retributive order: Why is Job suffering if he did nothing wrong? One of Job's friends, Zophar the Naamathite, is so convinced of Job's misdeeds that he tells him to repent so that his troubles will end (Job 11). Reflected in Zophar's speech is the belief that the universe runs by a just, logical pattern. This notion of retributive justice is found also in the patriarchal narratives. Jacob, who dupes his brother (Genesis 27), is in turn duped by his uncle (Genesis 29); Rebekah, who helps Jacob steal the blessing from his brother Esau, is doomed never to see her favorite son again (Genesis 27); and Joseph's brothers, who sell Joseph into slavery, in turn, are tormented and then saved by the very brother (Genesis 37) whom they bullied and sold into slavery.

[32] Whybray, *Succession Narrative*, 61.

what they do and, therefore, as Job's friend Zophar notes (Job 11), must deserve what happens to them. Thus, Absalom's downfall was caused by Absalom's sins; he kills his half-brother Amnon, prematurely tries to take his father's throne, and sleeps with his father's concubines. Absalom is the one who is deceived by Hushai's wise-sounding advice and chooses to follow it over against Ahithophel's "wiser" advice. Absalom, in other words, acts unwisely and, consequently, causes his own downfall.

However, the theological statement of God's ordination of Absalom's downfall unsettles this more volitional viewpoint, for it posits that neither fate nor Absalom's immoral or unwise acts in themselves were ultimately responsible for his ruin. In one fell swoop, the statement pushes God, a character who until this point remained passively in the background, to the forefront as the ultimate director of this drama. In other words, no matter how attractive or poetic Hushai's advice might have been—indeed, it might have been more poetic and wise-sounding because the Lord was on Hushai's side—it might not have swayed Absalom or his men, had it not been for God. The precariousness of the situation is skillfully set up by the biblical author in the previous chapter: "In those days, the advice which Ahithophel gave was accepted like an oracle sought from God; that is how all the advice of Ahithophel was esteemed both by David and by Absalom" (2 Sam 16:23). Why would the counsel of a man whose advice was so esteemed suddenly be rejected? It was because not only did Ahithophel's counsel sound unwise and Hushai's, extra-poetic, but the Lord himself had ordained Absalom's failure.[33] Hence, the theological statement in 2 Sam 17:14 unbalances and obscures the idea of human volition.

While upsetting the notion of volition, however, this passage does not wholly do away with it. To see how this story holds up both the idea of human volition and also the belief in God's omnipotence and control, one has to return to the question about the wisdom of Absalom's action. Absalom adopted the counsel that sounded the wisest. However, because God had ordained Absalom's fall and made Hushai's "unwise" counsel sound wiser, Absalom, by following what initially appeared and *sounded* wise, was really acting unwisely.[34] What sounded wisest was not wise for Absalom and yet was wise from the viewpoint of the deity, who had predetermined Absalom's fall. Notice, then, how 2 Sam 17:1–23 mixes up the correspondences: Hushai's advice sounded wise and was wise according to God. Yet

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[33] Fokkelman writes that the "comparison [of Ahithophel's giving of advice with the word of God] even implies that Hushai the man would not be successful in this by his own efforts alone" (*Narrative Art and Poetry*, 205).

[34] Clever Ahithophel, of course, recognizes this and puts his house in order and commits suicide when he discovers that Absalom followed the advice of Hushai over his counsel (2 Sam 17:23).

because it led to Absalom's downfall and was deceptively wise, it was unwise advice for Absalom.

It is through these complexities that the narrative is able to leave room for both God and Absalom to work together to bring about Absalom's downfall. I stated above that 2 Sam 17:14 seems to push God onto the scene as the primary actor. In one sense, God is the primary actor because he "allows" Hushai's advice to sound wiser, thus inducing Absalom to follow Hushai's counsel. In another sense, however, human volition is not lost, as Absalom, deceived by Hushai's wise-sounding advice, chooses to follow it over Ahithophel's actually wise but formally unwise-sounding counsel. In other words, Absalom is deceived by God, who has in mind a pre-ordained plan; yet even in God's deception, Absalom's volition in choosing is not lost. The human role is not absent, but neither is God's ordained plan nullified.

VI. Conclusion: Struggling with Divine Will and Wisdom

Was Absalom acting wisely or unwisely, then? Absalom acts both wisely—he follows the wiser-sounding counsel and follows the plan of God—and also unwisely, since he chooses to follow the counsel that is really unwise and leads to his downfall. Both God and Absalom play a part in Absalom's downfall. Was Hushai's advice truly the wiser? It was both wise and unwise. According to God, it was wise because it was in line with the divine plan and sounded wiser and, hence, accomplished what it was suppose to do; according to Absalom, it was unwise because it led to his defeat.

Now though the word "wisdom" never occurs in this passage, wisdom is one of the major themes of this story, which, after all, is about a battle between two counselors, two wise men, two *ummānu*, if you will. Moreover, if P. Kyle McCarter is right and the Succession Narrative is political propaganda used to justify Solomon's rise to power,[35] then it is interesting that this narrative so vividly points out that Absalom cannot discern what is wise from what is unwise. This deficiency shows that Absalom is unfit to rule. In contrast, Solomon, the king renowned for his wisdom, must *really* be fit to rule.

What is this story saying about wisdom then? What is being so subtly explicated with these mixed-up correspondences—wise also equals unwise and vice versa—is the trickiness and complexities of wisdom and of God, the ultimate source of wisdom. Wisdom is not always what appears wise, especially in a system that has to leave room for divine interferences and interactions, a system that at any point can be turned upside down—wise can *become* unwise and vice versa—by the

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[35] P. Kyle McCarter, "'Plots, True or False': The Succession Narrative as Court Apologetic," *Int* 15 (1981): 355–68.

decisions and plans of the divine. As in the book of Job, what is being conveyed is not only the disparity between human and divine perceptions but also human frustration over the limits of their insight. In other words, this narrative acknowledges that the world does not run according to a totally recognizable order—bad things happen to good people and vice versa—and thereby reconciles and gives voice to the dissatisfaction that comes from having to live in a universe that is not completely fair or comprehensible.

This narrative is less about giving an answer to the question—what is one to make of a god who tricks and sends out deceptively wise-sounding unwise counsels?—than it is about expressing the confusion, complexities, and mystery of such a god and a world ruled by this divinity. In other words, the main goal is not to get an answer about what is wise or unwise, but to question, dialogue, and grapple with the notion of wisdom and the idea of the will of God, or fate. The answer to the question of wisdom and divine will is the very doubting of the wisdom of Absalom's decision and of the nature of wisdom and fate in general; it is understanding the very limits represented by such an unanswerable question. The answer, in other words, is the question.

Dealing with the Trauma of Defeat: The Rhetoric of the Devastation and Rejuvenation of Nature in Ezekiel

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The troops stole into the city that day as soldiers steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle. (2 Sam 19:3)[1]

In every war . . . the chances of becoming a psychiatric casualty—of being debilitated for some period of time as a consequence of the stresses of military life—were greater than the chances of being killed by enemy fire.[2]

When two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets hurt. (African proverb)[3]

In recent scholarship on Ezekiel, three interpretive perspectives have found an increasingly prominent place among the more standard approaches to the book.[4]

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[1] All scriptural quotations are from the NRSV, unless otherwise noted.

[2] Richard A. Gabriel, *No More Heroes: Madness and Psychiatry in War* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1987), quoted in Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1995), 43.

[3] Quoted in Donald E. Gowan, *Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death and Resurrection of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 14.

[4] For convenient examples of the long-standing approaches to the critical issues of Ezekiel, compare the seminal commentaries by Walther Zimmerli (*Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* [2 vols.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979, 1983]), Moshe Greenberg (*Ezekiel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [2 vols.; AB 22, 22A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983, 1997]), and Daniel I. Block (*The Book of Ezekiel* [2 vols; NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 1998]). For a more recent, and in many ways innovative, approach, see

These newer perspectives, like many of the more traditional approaches, attempt to deal in some way with the idiosyncratic and sometimes strange character of the book and its elements.[5] One recent interpretive approach emphasizes the cruciality of priestly perspectives and traditions for Ezekiel's identity, language, and actions.[6] The prophet's words reflect priestly ideology and terminology similar to the books of Exodus and Leviticus, with emphasis on the holiness of God, the separation of clean and unclean, and the consequences of defilement or pollution. Alongside this priestly perspective, and in light of Ezekiel's apparent setting in the exile, recent scholarship has also suggested the use of trauma studies as a window into Ezekiel's language and theology.[7] This way of reading need not make a psychological diagnosis of the ancient Judean prophet himself. Rather, it can foreground the traumatic nature of the experiences of war, destruction, and deportation suffered by Ezekiel and his audience in the early part of the sixth century B.C.E. as a possible explanation for some of the book's strange rhetoric and imagery.[8] A third interpretive perspective recently brought to bear on the study of Ezekiel focuses on the depictions of nature in the book, particularly as they relate to ecological hermeneutics.[9] This newer trajectory connects in many ways to the long-standing

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Margaret S. Odell, *Ezekiel* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005).

[5] The apparent "strangeness" of Ezekiel's rhetoric and imagery is well established in the critical literature and revolves around the book's bizarre descriptions, exotic visions, and graphic, perhaps even pornographic, language, as well as numerous actions of the prophet himself that seem beyond the pale of "normal" behavior (e.g., lying bound and naked for protracted periods [4:4–8], eating food cooked over dung [4:9–17], and refusing to mourn the death of his wife [24:15–24]).

[6] See Marvin A. Sweeney, *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature* (FAT 45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 125–43; idem, *The Prophetic Literature* (Interpreting Biblical Texts; Nashville: Abingdon, 2005); Terry J. Betts, *Ezekiel the Priest: A Custodian of Tôrâh* (Studies in Biblical Literature 74; New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

[7] Most recently see Nancy Bowen, *Ezekiel* (Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, forthcoming). See also Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587–539 BCE)," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (ed. James M. Scott; JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 7–36; idem, "Ezekiel on Fanon's Couch: A Postcolonialist Dialogue with David Halperin's *Seeking Ezekiel*," in *Peace and Justice Shall Embrace: Power and Theopolitics in the Bible: Essays in Honor of Millard Lind* (ed. Ted Grimsrud and Loren L. Johns; Telford, PA: Pandora, 1999), 108–44; David G. Garber, Jr., "Traumatizing Ezekiel, the Exilic Prophet," in *Psychology and the Bible: A New Way to Read the Scriptures,* vol. 2, *From Genesis to Apocalyptic Vision* (ed. J. Harold Ellens and Wayne G. Rollins; Praeger Perspectives: Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality; Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 215–35.

[8] For a recent attempt to offer a psychological "diagnosis" of Ezekiel himself, see David J. Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993).

[9] See Kalinda Rose Stevenson, "If Earth Could Speak: The Case of the Mountains against YHWH in Ezekiel 6, 35, 36," in *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets* (ed. Norman C.

inquiry into the destruction of cities, territory, and agriculture during warfare and the ways such destruction is reflected in biblical and extrabiblical texts.[10]

Scholarship has not yet taken full account of the combined import of these emerging perspectives and the ways in which they intersect with long-standing elements of Ezekiel study. To that end, this article aims to explore a unique aspect of Ezekiel's rhetoric that may connect not simply to priestly theology, traumatic experience, and ecological hermeneutics, but more specifically to the ways these elements bear on the identity, theology, and even psychology of the defeated and victimized, two experiential categories that characterize the book's presentation of its protagonist and audience. The rhetoric of Ezekiel contains a distinctive use of nature terminology. The devastation and rejuvenation of nature—crops, trees, vines, etc.—is a common motif in the prophetic literature. Ezekiel also contains this motif, but it looks markedly different. The devastation and rejuvenation of nature in Ezekiel have a characteristic emphasis on God's direct, personal, and harsh treatment of the earth and on the land itself as sinful, guilty, and polluted.

While a number of studies have noted these features,[11] in what follows I attempt to show that Ezekiel's nature terminology takes on a new rhetorical signif-

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Habel; Earth Bible 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 158–71; Julie Galambush, "God's Land and Mine: Creation as Property in the Book of Ezekiel," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality* (ed. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton; SBLSymS 31; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 91–108; eadem, "This Land Is My Land: On Nature as Property in the Book of Ezekiel," in *"Every City Shall Be Forsaken": Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; JSOTSup 330; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 71–94; Norman C. Habel, "The Silence of the Lands: The Ecojustice Implications of Ezekiel's Judgment Oracles," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World*, ed. Cook and Patton, 127–40; Keith Carley, "From Harshness to Hope: The Implications for Earth of Hierarchy in Ezekiel," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World*, ed. Cook and Patton, 109–26; idem, "Ezekiel's Formula of Desolation: Harsh Justice for the Land/Earth," in *Earth Story*, ed. Habel, 143–57.

[10] This investigation often revolves around the prohibition against the destruction of fruit trees in Deut 20:19–20 and its possible ancient Near Eastern backgrounds. For the most recent and comprehensive study, see Jacob L. Wright, "Warfare and Wanton Destruction: A Reexamination of Deuteronomy 20:19–20 in Relation to Ancient Siegecraft," *JBL* 127 (2008): 423–58. See also Nili Wazana, "Are the Trees of the Field Human? A Biblical War Law (Deut. 20:19–20) and Neo-Assyrian Propaganda," in *Treasures on Camels' Humps: Historical and Literary Studies from the Ancient Near East Presented to Israel Eph'al* (ed. Mordechai Cogan and Dan'el Kahn; Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2008), 275–95; Michael G. Hasel, *Military Practice and Polemic: Israel's Laws of Warfare in Near Eastern Perspective* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005); idem, "Assyrian Military Practices and Deuteronomy's Laws of Warfare," in *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (ed. Brad E. Kelle and Frank Ritchel Ames; SBLSymS 42; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 67–81; and Jeremy D. Smoak, "Siege Warfare Imagery and the Background of a Biblical Curse," in *Writing and Reading War*, ed. Kelle and Ames, 83–91.

[11] E.g., Stevenson, "If Earth Could Speak," 158–71; Galambush, "God's Land," 91–108; eadem, "This Land," 71–94; Habel, "Silence of the Lands," 127–40; Carley, "From Harshness to Hope," 109–26; idem, "Ezekiel's Formula," 143–57.

icance when viewed in light of priestly perspectives and the trauma of defeat and destruction. In particular, the following analysis suggests that such language serves as part of Ezekiel's effort to reshape the understanding of those who are victims and thus to deal with, or at least give expression to, the trauma of defeat. Ezekiel adds, it will be argued, two priestly dimensions to the motif of the devastation and rejuvenation of nature in order to interpret the trauma of Babylonian actions against Judah[12] as the outworking of divine holiness. First, Ezekiel's descriptions of destructive acts against nature in particular contain an explicit, overarching rationale not seen in other prophetic traditions, namely, that Yahweh undertakes these actions so that Israel and the nations will "know" or acknowledge his name and identity. Alongside this feature, what sets Ezekiel's formulation of the prophetic nature motif most apart from the other prophets is that he portrays the land itself as polluted, defiled, and even guilty of committing sinful actions. When examined in context, this rhetorical shaping suggests that Ezekiel employs his distinctive nature motif in order to integrate the people's trauma and defeat into the narrative plot line of priestly theology characterized by concern for Yahweh's sovereignty and holiness, thus rendering it understandable as part of a larger divine plan. Such a rhetorical strategy takes the actual ecological destruction suffered in war beyond the typical double agency found in other prophetic texts to a more innate understanding that acknowledges the reality of the people's trauma but simultaneously denies its apparent rationality.

I. The Devastation and Rejuvenation of Nature in the Prophets

A large number of prophetic texts employ the imagery of the devastation and rejuvenation of nature in proclamations of judgment and restoration (see table 1). Prophetic proclamations of judgment often include statements in which Yahweh threatens to render the land desolate, to lay waste crops, and to devastate trees and vines. Conversely, proclamations of restoration often include divine promises to replant trees, cause crops to grow, and multiply resources like grain and oil. This imagery establishes an inextricable link among human actions, divine responses, and the fate of natural world. Such depictions include not only the land but also elements such as plants, trees, vineyards, rivers, animals, and even weather.[13] These elements, which are envisioned as experiencing real, physical effects of devastation

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[12] The Babylonian location of Ezekiel's ministry has been a point of debate among interpreters, but the current consensus locates Ezekiel's ministry firmly in Babylonia. See Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 15–17; and Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (VTSup 76; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 38.

[13] See, e.g., the wide-ranging survey in Galambush, "God's Land," 91–108.

and rejuvenation, function as ideological symbols within the community's social and rhetorical systems. They become ways for the prophets to give expression to their experiences, as well as their tensions, needs, and desires.[14]

TABLE 1

Devastation of Nature in Prophetic Texts outside Ezekiel

Isaiah 5:10; 6:11; 7:24–25; 10:19; 11:15; 13:20–22; 15:6; 24:1–7; 32:10–14; 33:9
Jeremiah 1:10; 2:15; 4:23–28; 5:15–17; 6:6–8; 7:20, 34; 9:9[MT]; 12:4, 10–13; 14:4–6;
    21:14; 22:6–7; 23:9–12; 25:36–38; 48:32; 50:26
Hosea 2:14[MT]; 4:1–3; 8:7; 13:15
Joel 1:5–20; 3:19
Amos 1:2; 4:7–9; 8:8
Micah 1:4
Nahum 1:4–5
Zephaniah 1:2–3; 2:13–15
Haggai 1:10–11
Zechariah 7:14; 11:2–3; 14:15

Rejuvenation of Nature in Prophetic Texts outside Ezekiel

Isaiah 4:2; 29:17; 30:23–24; 32:14–20; 35:1–7; 41:18–19; 43:19–20; 51:2–3; 65:21–22
Jeremiah 31:2–6, 12; 32:15; 33:12–13
Hosea 2:23–24[MT]
Joel 2:19–26; 3:18
Amos 9:13–15
Zechariah 8:12; 10:1; 14:8
Malachi 3:10–12

The most frequent occurrences of nature imagery in the prophets appear in proclamations of judgment that envision the punishment of peoples, cities, and nations, both Israelite and otherwise.[15] In some cases, the texts make use of specific

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[14] See ibid., 92, and the examination of nature as a symbol for social norms and tensions in Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Pantheon, 1970).

[15] For studies that explore the connection of nature imagery with sin and judgment in the prophets in general, see Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (OBT; 2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002); Walther Zimmerli, "The 'Land' in the Pre-Exilic and Early Post-Exilic Prophets," in *Understanding the Word: Essays in Honour of Bernhard W. Anderson* (ed. James T. Butler et al.; JSOTSup 37; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 247–62; Norman C. Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); idem, *Earth Story*; Carol J. Dempsey, *The Prophets: A Liberation-Critical Reading*

motifs such as the reversion of a city or land to a wilderness (e.g., Isa 14:17; 27:10; Jer 22:6–7), or the reversal of creation imagery with a return to darkness and chaos (e.g., Jer 4:23–26; Zeph 1:2–3).[16] Overall, however, one typically finds several dimensions of general devastation imagery, including the earth mourning under the effects of the people's misdeeds (e.g., Isa 24:1–7; 33:9; Jer 23:9–12; Joel 1:5–20),[17] enemy armies and the destruction they bring as instruments used by Yahweh (e.g., Jer 2:15; 4:7–8; 5:15–17), and Yahweh striking the elements of the natural world directly in response to the people's disobedience (e.g., Jer 7:20, 34; Hos 2:14 MT; Zeph 1:2–3).

In nearly every case, the nonhuman elements of the natural world suffer because of human sinfulness. For example, commenting on the ethical wrongs and violent actions among the people, Hos 4:3 states, "Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing." Isaiah 7:23 imagines the coming of the Assyrians and concludes that "every place where there used to be a thousand vines, worth a thousand shekels of silver, will become briers and thorns." And texts such as Hos 2:14 MT and Amos 4:7–9 present Yahweh claiming direct responsibility for "laying waste" gardens, vineyards, and fig trees.[18]

In prophetic proclamations of divine salvation, the same natural elements that experienced devastation undergo rejuvenation.[19] Just as the judgment passages reflect a perceived link among human actions, divine responses, and the fate of the natural world, the rejuvenation texts envision all of creation as participating in the divine work of redemption in the world.[20] Hence, these texts describe divine salvation as including the flourishing of crops, the regrowth of plants, the replanting

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(Liberation-critical Reading of the Old Testament; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000); Katherine M. Hayes, *"The Earth Mourns": Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic* (SBL Academia Biblica 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

[16] See Michael DeRoche, "Zephaniah i 2–3: The 'Sweeping' of Creation," *VT* 30 (1980): 104–9; and idem, "The Reversal of Creation in Hosea," *VT* 31 (1981): 400–409.

[17] Nine passages contain the particular image of a mourning earth: Isa 24:1–20; 33:7–9; Jer 4:23–28; 12:1–4, 7–13; 23:9–12; Hos 4:1–3; Joel 1:5–20; Amos 1:2. For a study of these texts, see Hayes, *Earth Mourns*.

[18] The same type of imagery underlies a frequent curse formulation that also appears in a number of prophetic texts: "You will build a house, but not dwell in it; you will plant a vineyard, but not drink its wine" (e.g., Isa 5:8–17; Amos 5:11; Zeph 1:13). For a full investigation of this biblical curse and its background in siege practices, see Smoak, "Siege Warfare Imagery," 83–91.

[19] On rejuvenation imagery throughout the Bible, see Richard Cartwright Austin, *Hope for the Land: Nature in the Bible* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988).

[20] Dempsey, *Prophets*, 151. Dempsey analyzes the prophetic texts relating the devastation and subsequent rejuvenation of nature as depicting different uses of power—to dominate, liberate, or create harmonious relationships. She concludes that even God's acts of power designed to combat injustice are so violent that they are unjust in themselves (ibid., 16).

of vineyards, and the multiplying of grain, wine, and oil (see table 1). Isaiah 32:14–15 expresses the full movement from judgment to salvation with its effects on nature: "For the palace will be forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, the joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks; until a spirit from on high is poured out on us, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest." Similarly, Amos 9:13–14 proclaims a time of restoration when the "mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it . . . they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit." Joel 2:21–22 even envisions Yahweh speaking a word of comfort directly to the soil and animals: "Do not fear, O soil. . . . Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield."

Outside of Ezekiel, one characteristic seems constant in the prophetic literature's use of the motif of the devastation and rejuvenation of nature.[21] Although the sinful actions of human beings have a direct effect on the natural world, the land itself remains an innocent victim, not guilty of any sinful or faithless actions.[22] The preaching of Jeremiah, with its chronological proximity to that of Ezekiel, provides the most instructive example. Jeremiah envisions the land as Yahweh's special possession, sharing a close, symbiotic relationship with the deity and able to cause Yahweh himself to lament: "Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard . . . they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness" (Jer 12:10; see also 23:9–12; Isa 24:5–6).[23] Even when Jeremiah comes close to Ezekiel's priestly language and speaks of the land being defiled or polluted by the people's actions (e.g., Jer 2:7), the land itself is never seen as sinful. This common depiction of the land as an innocent victim illuminates the distinctiveness of Ezekiel's nature language.

II. The Devastation and Rejuvenation of Nature in Ezekiel

The rhetoric of Ezekiel, steeped as it is in priestly traditions and practices and addressed to a people needing to deal with experiences of destruction and exile (see Ezek 1:1–3),[24] offers a unique formulation, which, as we will see, draws the

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[21] See Galambush, "God's Land," 91–108; and Carley, "From Harshness to Hope," 109–26.

[22] A possible exception to this characterization is raised in the work of some scholars who interpret the personified female figures found in texts such as Hosea 1–3 as metaphors for the land (rather than the people, nation, or city). See, e.g., Laurie J. Braaten, "Earth Community in Hosea 2," in *Earth Story*, ed. Habel, 185–203. For critiques of this view, see Brad E. Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective* (SBL Academia Biblica 20; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 83–94; and John J. Schmitt, "Yahweh's Divorce in Hosea 2—Who Is That Woman?" *SJOT* 9 (1995): 119–32.

[23] Habel, *Land Is Mine*, 75–76, 84.

[24] For discussion of Ezekiel's priestly identity and background, see Sweeney, *Form and Intertextuality*, 125–43; idem, *Prophetic Literature,* 127–64; and Betts, *Ezekiel the Priest*.

devastation and rejuvenation of nature into the specific priestly categories of holiness/sovereignty and purity/impurity. As a first indication of this formulation, recent studies have observed that, whereas other prophetic texts envision elements of the natural world as innocent victims of human misdeeds and foreign armies, with only some attention to direct divine destruction, Ezekiel's depiction of nature places nearly all the emphasis on God's direct, personal, and severe devastation of the natural world. The earth appears almost exclusively as the "object of horrifying maltreatment meted out by God in the process of punishing human misdeeds."[25]

In conjunction with this intensified picture, Ezekiel narrows the locus of divine devastation from the variety of natural elements seen in the other prophets to a particular focus on the physical land/ground and the trees and plants rooted therein.[26] To this end, Ezekiel refers to the earth/land with the Hebrew terms ארץ and אדמה, yet he makes repeated use of an expression that is unique to him, אדמת ישראל ("the land of Israel"; see 11:17; 12:19, 22; 13:9; 18:2; 20:38, 42; 21:2, 3; 25:3, 6; 33:24; 37:12; 38:18, 19).[27] Although אדמה has a broad range of meanings, its frequent use as a designation for the actual ground elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Gen 2:5–6; Exod 3:5; Lev 20:25; Deut 28:4) suggests that Ezekiel uses it to imply the physical land that belongs to Israel.[28] Symbolically, the land becomes the physical body upon which the wounds of war are inflicted.[29] The land in these contexts retains its character as a metaphor for its inhabitants, but Ezekiel predominantly uses the land as the physical site of God's destructive activity.[30]

Three passages are representative in this regard. In Ezek 6:1–14, an extended judgment oracle against the mountains of Israel (v. 2), Yahweh speaks directly to the mountains and emphatically proclaims, "I, I myself will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places" (v. 3), and later adds that he will "make the *land* [הארץ] desolate and waste" (v. 14). Similarly, ch. 7 is a divine oracle of destruction addressed to the land itself: "Now the end is upon you [fem. sg.; i.e., the land,

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[25] Carley, "From Harshness to Hope," 109. For similar analyses of Ezekiel's nature language, see Galambush, "God's Land," 91–108; Habel, "Silence of the Lands," 127–40; Stevenson, "If Earth Could Speak," 158–71.

[26] See Galambush, "This Land," 71–94.

[27] The term ארץ can denote political, geographical, and physical territory, as well as the whole earth. The term אדמה, however, can be used for political territory but is not used to designate the whole earth and is often used to refer to the ground itself. See Stevenson, "If Earth Could Speak," 168.

[28] So Galambush, "God's Land," 99.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ezekiel's most frequent language for such divine destruction is to make the land "desolate" (שמם), and such activity is directed against Israel (e.g., 33:28; 35:12, 15), as well as against foreign nations such as Egypt (29:9; 32:15) and Edom (25:13). Note in particular the numerous references to the devastation of foreign lands in Ezekiel's oracles against the nations (e.g., 26:4, 20; 29:5, 9–12; 30:7, 10–12; 32:7–8, 13–15; 35:1–15).

אדמה; see 7:2], I will let loose my anger upon you [fem. sg.]. . . . My eye will not spare you [fem. sg.], I will have no pity" (vv. 3–4). And in perhaps the most explicit statement of the devastation of nature, Ezek 20:45–49 (21:1–5 MT) records Yahweh's intention to burn the forest of the Negeb: "I will kindle a fire in you and it shall devour every green tree in you and every dry tree. . . . All flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it" (vv. 47–48; cf. Jer 21:14).

Alongside the intensified emphasis on personal divine violence against the physical land and its elements, recent studies have also observed that Ezekiel's most significant formulation of the prophetic nature motif has two dimensions.[31] In the first place, many of the texts in Ezekiel that describe the devastation of nature as a part of divine judgment feature an explicit, overarching rationale to explain the destructive acts. The texts repeatedly assert that Yahweh takes these actions so that Israel and the nations will know and acknowledge his name and identity. This rationale is captured in the formula that recurs in many of Ezekiel's descriptions of God's destructive treatment of the land: "and they will know that I am the Lord"[32] (see table 2, p. 478). In Ezek 6:14, for example, after declaring the abominations of the people, Yahweh states that he will "make the land desolate and waste" and then the people "shall know that I am the Lord." Similarly, 12:20 expresses a causal link between destruction and knowledge: "The inhabited cities shall be laid waste, and the land shall become a desolation; and you shall know that I am the Lord." Perhaps most instructively, 33:29 affirms that the devastation of nature results from the people's sins, but the verse sees the ultimate goal of the devastation as the people's recognition of Yahweh: "Then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have made the land a desolation and a waste because of all their abominations that they have committed."[33]

The use of this phrase, "they/you shall know that I am the Lord," in statements of violence done to nature, a phrase that occurs more than fifty times in Ezekiel in a variety of contexts, provides Ezekiel with a way to explain such actions not primarily as punishment of sinners but as an effort to establish the divine reputation. In these texts, as in other prophets, the land itself is innocent. It suffers because of the people's misdeeds but for the primary purpose of solidifying the status of Yahweh's identity. Although traditionally labeled the "acknowledgment formula,"[34] as a first dimension of Ezekiel's nature texts, "they/you shall know that I am

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[31] E.g., Habel, "Silence of the Lands," 1217–40; and Galambush, "This Land," 71–94.

[32] This same motive is applied to acts of rejuvenation as well. See Ezek 36:33–38. For a fuller study of this motif in Ezekiel's devastation of nature passages, see Carley, "Ezekiel's Formula," 143–57.

[33] See also the presence of this dimension especially in the oracles against the nations, e.g., against Egypt (29:5–12; 32:7–8, 13–15), Egypt's allies (30:7–8), and Edom (35:1–15).

[34] See Walther Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh* (trans. Douglas W. Stott; ed. W. Brueggemann; Atlanta: John Knox, 1982).

the Lord" is perhaps more rightly thought of as the "divine ego formula," which removes "[a]ny hint of justice for Earth . . . in order to promote Yнwн's identity and satisfy divine jealousy for the name."[35]

TABLE 2

DEVASTATION OF NATURE IN EZEKIEL

a. Emphasis on Recognition of Yahweh's Name:	*b. Emphasis on Land as Polluted/Sinful:*
6:1–14	7:1–4
12:17–20	9:9
15:8	14:12–20
21:1–5, 7–8[MT]	22:24
33:28–29	
38:20	

c. Oracles against the Nations Containing Devastation of Nature Language:

25:12; 26:4; 29:5, 9, 10–12; 30:7–8, 10–12; 32:7–8, 13–15; 35:1–15

d. Texts with Devastation of Nature Language in the Service of Larger Metaphors or Allegories:

16:1–63; 19:10–14; 23:1–49; 31:1–18

REJUVENATION OF NATURE IN EZEKIEL

34:25–31
36:1–38
47:1–12

Texts with Rejuvenation Language in the Service of Larger Allegories:

17:22–24 (cf. Isa 27:1–6)

The second dimension of Ezekiel's formulation of the prophetic nature motif is theologically unique. Several scholars have observed that what sets Ezekiel's use of the nature motif most apart from the other prophets is the presence of a set of texts that portray the land itself as polluted, defiled, and even guilty of committing sinful actions.[36] As in other prophetic texts, these passages use the land in some sense to represent its inhabitants who are defiled and sinful, but, unlike other prophetic writings, Ezekiel's rhetoric gives the land a moral status, being guilty of

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[35] Habel, "Silence of the Lands," 136.
[36] See Carley, "Ezekiel's Formula," 143–57; idem, "From Harshness to Hope," 109–26; Galambush, "God's Land," 91–108; eadem, "This Land," 71–94; Habel, "Silence of the Lands."

its own sins and therefore suffering divine punishment through famine, death of animals, and so on. Ezekiel 7:2–3 provides a primary example, as Yahweh speaks an oracle of punishment directly to the land (אדמה): "The end has come upon the four corners of the land [fem. sg.]. Now the end is upon you [fem. sg.], I will let loose my anger upon you [fem. sg.]; I will judge you [fem. sg.] according to all your [fem. sg.] ways, I will punish you [fem. sg.] for all your [fem. sg.] abominations." Similarly, 14:12–20 describes the land as acting sinfully: "Mortal, when a land [ארץ] sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it, and break its staff of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it human beings and animals . . ." (vv. 12–13).[37]

This second dimension of Ezekiel's nature language partially reflects priestly texts like Lev 18:25–28; 26:32–35; and Num 35:33 (see also Isa 24:5–6; Jer 12:10–13). These texts state that the land has become defiled by its inhabitants and thus vomits them out in order to have a sabbath rest from them. As in the similar Jeremiah passages noted above, however, it is the inhabitants who have polluted the land, while the land stands as the innocent victim.[38] By contrast, Ezekiel portrays the land itself as acting sinfully, seemingly using rhetoric that blames the victim and pronounces guilt by association.[39] Even some of Ezekiel's proclamations of nature's rejuvenation portray the land as having previously been guilty of sinful actions (e.g., 36:8–15). As Julie Galambush summarizes, "In Jeremiah the land is a victim whose injury Yʜwʜ will avenge. In Ezekiel the land, representing the body politic, is the sinful body whose injury displays Yʜwʜ's power."[40]

Ezekiel's two-dimensional formulation of the nature motif continues in his prophecies of restoration, especially in the second half of the book (chs. 25–48). Expectedly, Ezekiel envisions the regrowth of trees, renewed fertility of crops, and repopulation of cities (see table 2).[41] Yet Ezekiel's descriptions of rejuvenation go

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[37] See also Ezek 9:9 and 22:24, which describe the land as full of bloodshed and impurity but do not contain explicit language of the devastation of elements of nature. See also some of the oracles against the nations in 26:4, 20 and 30:10–12. Although Ezekiel 16 and 23 contain language of the devastation of nature, these oracles seem primarily to be about sinful behavior by personified capital cities (see Brad E. Kelle, "Wartime Rhetoric: Prophetic Metaphorization of Cities as Female," in *Writing and Reading War*, ed. Kelle and Ames, 95–111). Similarly, Ezekiel 19 describes the devastation of trees but only as an allegory for Judean kings (cf. the allegory for Assyria in Ezekiel 31, esp. vv. 12–13).

[38] Some prophetic texts, particularly in Isaiah, describe the people's sin as violating the order of creation to the extent that creation itself turns from a place of order into a dangerous place of threat and disorder (e.g., Isa 7:23–25; 13:21–22; 34:11–15). Even so, these passages do not accuse the earth/land of committing sin. I thank Matthew R. Schlimm for his insights on this point.

[39] See Habel, "Silence of the Lands," 137.

[40] Galambush, "God's Land," 101.

[41] Ezekiel 40–48 envisions a completely new geography of the land based on the notion of Yahweh's kingship over the territory. See Kalinda Rose Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48* (SBLDS 154; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

beyond that envisioned by other prophets. Ezekiel 36:1–15, 28–36, for instance, draws on the covenant blessings in Leviticus 26 to portray Yahweh speaking directly to the mountains and land and proclaiming the total reversal of the original devastation, even to the point of the desolate land becoming "like the garden of Eden" (36:35).[42] Ezekiel 47:1–12 envisions a radical rejuvenation of nature that emerges from water flowing out of the new temple and results in the waters of the Dead Sea becoming a productive fishing venue. Throughout these descriptions, one repeatedly finds Yahweh's express purpose that "they/you will know that I am the LORD" (e.g., 34:25–31; 36:8–12).

There is little doubt that the treatment of the earth in Ezekiel's rhetoric can be dangerous, for it may foster images of domination and lead to the justification of harmful practices.[43] This is especially true if one forgets the theological and social contexts out of which Ezekiel's language comes and takes these words as representing God's unmediated attitudes toward the earth. If all portrayals of God are partial, those birthed out of attempts to cope with unstable social conditions are perhaps even more so. When placed in this context, however, Ezekiel's formulation of the devastation and rejuvenation of nature appears to be of a particular character and function within his rhetorical discourse.

III. Dealing with the Trauma of Defeat: A *Priestly* Response and a New Narrative Plot Line

Thus far we have seen that Ezekiel's formulation of the prophetic nature motif contains two unique aspects, one that emphasizes an overarching rationale related

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[42] Earlier scholarship understood the language of Ezek 36:8–15 as drawing on creation themes, but it more likely represents the application of covenant-blessing language from the priestly tradition (cf. Gen 1:22, 28; Lev 26:9). See Odell, *Ezekiel*, 440–41. Along these lines, Odell (ibid., 444) also suggests that the nature language in Ezekiel 36 may serve to indicate that the focus of Yahweh's salvific work is not humans but the land and that "Yahweh deals with human beings only for the sake of the land." If so, Ezekiel's language of rejuvenation challenges an exclusively anthropocentric understanding of salvation (see also Carley, "From Harshness to Hope," 118).

[43] See Carley, "From Harshness to Hope," 121. One need think only of the prevalent use of Ezekiel in Christian fundamentalist portrayals of violent destruction as part of God's ultimate will and plan. See Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Losing and Finding Creation in the Christian Tradition," in *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-being of Earth and Humans* (ed. Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press for the Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions, 2000), 3–21; and Sallie McFague, "An Ecological Christology: Does Christianity Have It?" in *Christianity and Ecology*, ed. Hessel and Ruether, 29–45. To counterbalance Ezekiel's rhetoric, one perhaps needs to search for new models that are based not on domination but on interaction and even interdependence between God and nature. See, e.g., Sallie McFague, *The Body of God*: *An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

to divine sovereignty, and another that stresses the pollution of the land itself. The character of this two-dimensional formulation emerges from its connections with Ezekiel's priestly theology and social context. The combination of the prophet's language and context suggests that he formulates the nature motif specifically to bring it into line with the primary categories of priestly thought (holiness/sovereignty and purity/impurity), and he does so as a means of dealing with the trauma of the past and present. His formulation is, at one level, a *priestly* response (i.e., historically "Priestly" from the traditions now represented in books such as Exodus and Leviticus). Ezekiel narrates a different plot line into Judah's story, which calls the people to understand their past, present, and future in a different light.

The first dimension of Ezekiel's formulation, in which he asserts that Yahweh devastates the land and its elements primarily, and often solely, so that people will "know" his name and identity, brings the nature motif into line with the priestly category of Yahweh's holiness/sovereignty. In priestly thought, the holiness of Yahweh means more than that Yahweh must dwell in a ceremonially clean environment.[44] It also means that Yahweh possesses a name, a reputation, and an authority that set him apart. To be holy is to be sovereign over and distinct from all human affairs in power and freedom.[45] In Ezekiel's cultural context, however, a deity's name and reputation depend on the deity's people's actions and status. The fact that Yahweh's land has been destroyed and his people sent into exile impugns his holiness by apparently demonstrating his weakness and even defeat by the patron gods of the enemy. For Ezekiel, his audience, and evidently other onlookers (see Ezek 36:20; 39:27–28), the destruction that has befallen Judah calls Yahweh's name, reputation, and sovereignty into question. In response, Ezekiel urges his hearers to understand that same destruction not simply as having been done by Yahweh but as having been done by Yahweh for the express purpose of demonstrating his power. Likewise, Ezekiel casts some of his hopeful predictions of rejuvenation for nature as outworkings of Yahweh's desire to vindicate his name in the eyes of the nations (see 36:22–32, 33–36, 37–38). The very events most naturally understood as revealing Yahweh's weakness are to be understood from the perspective of priestly theology as establishing Yahweh's holiness/sovereignty.

The second dimension of Ezekiel's formulation, in which he portrays the land itself as polluted, defiled, and even guilty of committing sinful actions and therefore suffering divine punishment, likewise brings the prophetic nature motif into line with perhaps the most distinctive category of priestly thought, namely, ritual purity and its connection to God's presence in the community. In priestly theol-

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[44] See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 35–58.

[45] See Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh,* 1–28; Walter Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 53; and Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48* (WBC 29; Dallas: Word Books, 1990), xxii.

ogy's view that all of life divides into the realms of clean, unclean, and holy (see Lev 10:10), special care must be taken to guard against the defilement of what is clean and to cleanse that which has become unclean (see Leviticus 1–12). These convictions are important because of priestly theology's conception that Yahweh's presence dwells in the temple in the midst of the community. Hence, the people's sins are not simply transgressions against God; they are agents of pollution that create an increasing level of defilement. Because the presence of a holy God cannot dwell in the midst of impurity, such defilement may force Yahweh to withdraw his presence from the community, ensuring its destruction (see Leviticus 16).[46]

Ezekiel, especially in his temple vision in chs. 8–11, understands the judgment experienced by Judah precisely as the result of Yahweh's withdrawal of his presence from the community because of the defilement caused by the people's sins. Yet he also sees Yahweh's overall goal as the cleansing of the people so that the divine presence may once again dwell in their midst (see Ezek 36:25–36; 48:35b). By describing the land itself as polluted and sinful, Ezekiel incorporates even the physical destruction of nature experienced at the hands of the enemy into priestly understandings, thus rendering it part of the larger sovereign plan to withdraw the divine presence, cleanse the people and land, and then return the divine presence to a purified community. The divine proclamation of restoration in Ezekiel 36 provides the most explicit example of this rhetorical move by combining descriptions of the pollution and destruction of the land (v. 18), the purification of the people, and the rejuvenation of nature: "Thus says the Lord God: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the towns to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. The land that was desolate shall be tilled" (36:33–34).

When read in light of the prophet's sociopolitical context, this priestly character of Ezekiel's nature language takes on a particular rhetorical function as part of his overall discourse. As noted above, Ezekiel scholars have begun to highlight the significance of trauma studies for interpreting Ezekiel's rhetoric and context.[47] Various elements of the words and actions in the book as a whole—even some of the bizarre imagery and disturbing language—are perhaps best understood as in some way symptomatic of the prophet's personal experience of the trauma of the exile, with its realities of terror, violence, shame, and loss.[48] Similarly, the experience and expression of personal and communal trauma may lie at the heart of Ezekiel's priestly formulations of the devastation and rejuvenation of nature motif.

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[46] See, e.g., Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16,* 440–91, 1009–79.

[47] E.g., Derek M. Daschke, "Desolate among Them: Loss, Fantasy, and Recovery in the Book of Ezekiel," *American Imago* 56 (1999): 105–32; Garber, "Traumatizing Ezekiel," 215–35; Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002); idem, "Ezekiel on Fanon's Couch," 108–44; idem, "Reassessing," 7–36.

[48] Such suggestions about the personhood and psyche of the historical prophet, however, remain debated by both historical and literary critics.

By definition, "trauma" designates an experience of one or more catastrophic events that can produce several kinds of disruptive responses, as well as both conscious and unconscious ways of reliving the experience.[49] Occurrences that produce trauma can be of varying types, including terror, death, warfare, and the like.[50] Clearly, the events experienced by Ezekiel and his Judean audience during the final years of the kingdom of Judah were "traumatic." The prophet and his immediate hearers endured firsthand the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem in 597 B.C.E., with its subsequent deportation of the upper crust of Judean society. Moreover, although not physically present, these first exiles also experienced the catastrophic nature of the ultimate destruction of Jerusalem, with the death and deportation of thousands of additional men, women, and children, in 586 B.C.E.[51] These events were traumatic because they were physically, psychologically, socially, and theologically destabilizing for the prophet and his hearers. The experiences were not simply those of a Babylonian siege and conquest; they were the loss of a divinely promised land, the destruction of a temple that represented God's presence, the end of a divinely sanctioned royal dynasty, and the apparent defeat of the very God on whose word the whole construct rested.

One of the primary characteristics of trauma is that such experiences often resist integration into the narrative of a community's or an individual's life. The victim is unable to make sense out of the experience within the normal categories of his or her life story, so the trauma exists as a force that remains outside the recognizable narrative of life and is unable to be coherently understood or articulated. Such nonintegrated trauma may then intrude into the victim's life in ways that are not fully conscious or controllable.[52] Thus, trauma theory in general suggests that, in order to deal with trauma, persons or communities must find ways to "emplot" such experiences within the story of their life and thereby make the experiences

[49] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 11.

[50] See Jay Geller, "Trauma," in *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation* (ed. A. K. M. Adam; St. Louis: Chalice, 2000), 261–67.

[51] Contemporary trauma studies observe that symptoms of trauma can result not only from direct experience of catastrophic events but also from so-called secondary trauma, that is, merely witnessing or hearing a report of an event (see Smith-Christopher, "Ezekiel on Fanon's Couch," 139–43).

[52] Modern medicine has come to identify these symptoms with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. See Michael G. Kenny, "Trauma, Time, Illness, and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Traumatic Memory," in *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* (ed. Paul Antze and Michael Lambek; New York: Routlege, 1996), 156. On the difficulty in bringing trauma to expression, see Garber, "Traumatizing Ezekiel," 222–23; Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routlege, 1991); Lawrence L. Langer, *Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982).

able to be comprehended, endured, and perhaps surpassed.[53] People must bring the trauma to coherent expression by reworking elements of their story in such a way that it incorporates the traumatic experience into a larger, meaningful context. The past then becomes comprehensible as part of the larger narrative plot of history, thus allowing victims to regain some measure of control over their experiences and reenvision the present and future.[54] While some perspectives on trauma resist the notion of being able finally to "deal with" trauma, the narrativizing of trauma at least enables victims to bring to expression such experiences or causes others to confront directly trauma that they may have experienced only indirectly.

By bringing the language of the devastation and rejuvenation of nature into line with the categories of priestly understanding, Ezekiel offers a way to deal with the trauma of defeat and destruction experienced by the Judean community.[55] He effectively emplots the traumatic experiences of war, especially the desolation of the land, into the priestly understanding of Yahweh's activity in the world. Ezekiel interprets such trauma not simply as Yahweh's doing but as the specific outworking of the priestly conceptions of Yahweh's enduring holiness, with its particular focus on vindicating Yahweh's name and ensuring the purity in which his presence must dwell. The nature language takes Judah's traumatic experiences of defeat, destruction, and deportation, which seemingly refuse to be integrated into the people's collective life in an understandable way, and re-narrates them into a plot line based on Yahweh's own sovereignty and purity.

The way in which Ezekiel formulates the priestly character of his nature language invests it with an additional rhetorical dimension. The experiences that

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[53] Antze and Lambek, *Tense Past*, xvi.

[54] For a full study of this approach, see Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (2nd ed.; New York: Basic, 1997). See also Kenny, "Trauma," 161.

In this context, which suggests that plot, narrative, and history are especially effective in dealing with trauma, it is important to note that these elements may not be the only means of dealing with trauma and, in some cases, such linearity may be less effective than other methods for making sense of trauma. For example, Walter Brueggemann has suggested that the poetic form of lament is a way to manage grief, a way that is not narratival or historical (see Brueggemann, "The Formfulness of Grief," in *The Psalms and the Life of Faith* [ed. Patrick D. Miller; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995], 84–97). In another vein, the emergence of apocalypticism around the time of Ezekiel or shortly thereafter perhaps indicates that some people found relief from traumatic experiences with a sort of flight from history. I am indebted to Brent A. Strawn for his insights on these points.

[55] For another examination of the issue of the possibility of theological interpretation and construction after disjunctive trauma, see Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading the Hebrew Bible after the Shoah: Engaging Holocaust Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), esp. 1–22, 128–46. Whereas I see Ezekiel's response to trauma as that of highlighting the direct role of Yahweh in certain events, Sweeney examines the textual representations of Holocaust theology's insistence that human beings must assume their own responsibility for doing justice and righteousness in the world.

Ezekiel emplots into a larger vision and broader terms connect to a particular type of trauma, but he emplots this trauma in a way that is different from other prophetic texts and that serves both to acknowledge the trauma's reality and simultaneously to deny its apparent rationality. A significant amount of biblical and extrabiblical evidence suggests the likelihood that the language of the devastation and rejuvenation of nature in Ezekiel and other prophets has a particular and identifiable connection to the actual practices of warfare known throughout the Assyrian and Babylonian periods and attested in ancient Near Eastern texts and iconography. Ezekiel's imagery need not be based on these actual experiences—perhaps only on collective cultural memory or imagination—but given his context, actual experiences seem likely.

Ancient Near Eastern sources indicate that the intentional destruction of trees, vineyards, crops, and other agricultural support systems was a frequent tactic of siege warfare.[56] Textual and iconographic evidence attests the destruction of agriculture during siege warfare as early as the second millennium B.C.E., especially among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Egyptians, and the practice has continued throughout the history of warfare in ancient and modern times.[57] Assyrian sources in particular depict the destruction of crops, trees, orchards, and grain in great detail, a tactic they apparently employed as early as the twelfth century B.C.E. and extensively from the ninth century forward.[58]

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[56] See Wright, "Warfare," 423–58; Hasel, *Military Practice*; and idem, "Assyrian Military Practices," 67–81. See also Erika Bleibtreu, "Zerstörung der Umwelt durch Bäumefällen und Dezimierung des Löwenbestandes in Mesopotamien," in *Der orientalische Mensch und seine Beziehungen zur Umwelt* (ed. Bernhard Scholz; Graz: RM-Druck and Verlagsgesellschaft, 1989), 219–33; Bustenay Oded, "Cutting Down the Gardens in the Descriptions of the Assyrian Kings—A Chapter in Assyrian Historiography," in *Michael: Historical, Epigraphical, and Biblical Studies in Honor of Prof. Michael Heltzer* (ed. Yitshak Avishur and Robert Deutsch; Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publications, 1999), 27–36; Steven W. Cole, "The Destruction of Orchards in Assyrian Warfare," in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995* (ed. Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 29–40; Israel Eph'al, *Siege and Its Ancient Near Eastern Manifestations* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1996); R. Bach, "Bauen und Pflanzen," in *Studien zur Theologie der alttestamentlichen Überlieferungen* (ed. Rolf Rendtorff and Klaus Koch; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), 7–32; Smoak, "Siege Warfare Imagery," 83–91; Carey Ellen Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (Harvard Semitic Museum Publications; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000).

[57] For discussion of the earlier periods, see Hasel, *Military Practice*, 95–123. For exploration of the ongoing aspects of this practice in ancient and modern warfare, see Wright, "Warfare," 424–45.

[58] Hasel, *Military Practice*, 61. One may designate these strategies and tactics with the term "ecocide," referring to the practice of devastating an environment. See Wright, "Warfare," 424–25; and Aaron Schwabach, "Ecocide and Genocide in Iraq: International Law, the Marsh Arab and Environmental Damage in Non-International Conflicts," *Colorado Journal of International Environmental Law & Policy* 15 (2003–4): 1–38. This aspect of Assyrian military practice has a long

In the earliest Assyrian reference, for example, Tiglath-pileser I punctuates his attack against Suhi with the simple statement, "Their orchards I cut down."[59] Later, Shalmaneser III's Nimrud Monolith elaborates, "Ahuni, son of Adini . . . I shut up in his city, carried off the crops of his (fields), cut down his orchards,"[60] and Shalmaneser's annals describe his actions against a Babylonian king: "I shut him in his city, I carried off the grain of his fields, I cut down his orchards, I turned aside [lit., *dammed*] his river."[61] Sargon II's description of his siege of Ulhu gives even more detail: "His great trees, the adornment of his palace, I cut down. . . . Their abundant crops . . . I tore up by the root and did not leave an ear to remember the destruction."[62] The iconography in Assyrian palaces provides a visual illustration of these textual descriptions, as a number of scenes show soldiers cutting down fruit trees in the context of the siege of a city.[63]

While there remains much debate over the exact purpose and sequence of this devastation of agriculture,[64] all available sources link the practice with a city's defeat

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history in scholarship. See, e.g., August Dillmann, *Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josua* (2nd ed.; EHAT; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1886), 334–35; Walther Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1933), 64; Samuel R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (3rd ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1951), 236. More recently, see Wright, "Warfare," 423–58; Wazana, "Trees of the Field," 275–95; Hasel, "Assyrian Military Practices," 67–81; Smoak, "Siege Warfare Imagery," 83–91; Oded, "Cutting Down Gardens," 27–36; Cole, "Destruction of Orchards," 29–40; and Eckart Otto, *Krieg und Frieden in der Hebräischen Bibel und im Alten Orient* (Theologie und Frieden 18; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1999).

   [59] *ARAB* 1:99 §310.
   [60] Ibid., 1:229 §620.
   [61] Ibid., 1:230 §622.
   [62] Ibid., 1:87, l. 161. For other examples from Assyrian texts and iconography, see Wright, "Warfare," 434–45; Hasel, "Assyrian Military Practices," 67–81; and Smoak, "Siege Warfare Imagery," 83–91. The full-length study by Hasel (*Military Practice*, 2) proposes that the legal prohibitions against cutting down fruit trees to make siege works in Deut 20:19–20 may also reflect such destruction of trees and crops during siege warfare, although in his view the imagery relates to the second-millennium practices of the Hittites and Egyptians. More recently, Wright ("Warfare," 423–58) has argued that the prohibition in Deut 20:19–20 does not constitute a polemic against Neo-Assyrian imperial ideology but reflects an intrasocietal discourse about appropriate military actions.
   [63] For examples, see Hasel, *Military Practice,* 51–94; and Smoak, "Siege Warfare Imagery," 83–91. We should note with Wright ("Warfare," 443), however, that none of the extant descriptions of the destruction of orchards in Assyrian texts and reliefs concerns southern Syria-Palestine.
   [64] For the debate over the purpose of the destruction of agriculture (to build siege equipment? to feed the army? to punish a rebellious city? etc.) and the sequence of such destruction (during or after the fall of the city?), see esp. Wright, "Warfare," 423–58; Hasel, *Military Practice,* 51–94, 125–28; and Smoak, "Siege Warfare Imagery," 83–91. While Wright's most recent and comprehensive study ("Warfare," 424) argues against reading the prohibition concerning the destruction of fruit trees in Deut 20:19–20 as a polemic against Neo-Assyrian practices (but cf. Wazana, "Trees of the Field," 275–95), he aptly demonstrates the prevalence of such ecocidal actions in

and destruction. The Assyrian evidence most strongly indicates that the destruction of agriculture was a practice undertaken after the successful capture of a city, and thus served as a further punitive action against those who had already been defeated.[65] The traumatic nature of such events becomes even clearer in texts that explicitly link the devastation of elements of nature with the simultaneous destruction of houses and deportation of peoples.[66] These kinds of actions had particular socioeconomic effects in ancient civilizations. Trees, crops, and vineyards represented an essential part of the economic superstructure of first-millennium agrarian societies, providing what may be designated as Life Support Systems.[67] Even the loss of a couple of olive trees would carry significant consequences for oil production and dietary needs.[68] Their destruction would take years to undo and be economically devastating for generations. Targeting these elements was akin to the modern practice of blurring the distinction between "civilian" and "military" targets—sometimes evident in the bombing of sewage plants, hydroelectric plants, and manufacturing centers. The consequences of this kind of destruction of agricultural support systems went beyond the physical to the psychological, being potentially damaging to the long-term psyche and morale of a people trying to survive in their land.

There are no explicit Babylonian references to the devastation of trees, crops, and lands among the surviving textual sources, yet it is clear that the Babylonians destroyed cities in a fashion similar to the Assyrians. Archaeological remains from Ashkelon, for example, demonstrate the severity of Babylonian tactics, and at least one Babylonian relief depicts the destruction of cedar trees.[69] Ezekiel and his Judean

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Assyrian and Babylonian military practice. From a different perspective, Smoak argues that the Assyrian textual and iconographic depictions may be intended as a rhetorical presentation that brings together as many of the curses from vassal treaties as possible against a rebellious vassal and thus do not necessarily depict a precise sequence of events (contra Hasel).

[65] Wright, "Warfare," 435. This apparent sequence of events is what leads Wright to conclude that Neo-Assyrian military practices do not form the background for the prohibition against the destruction of fruit trees in Deut 20:19–20, which, in his view, envisions the gradual destruction of fruit trees throughout the course of a protracted city siege (ibid., 435–37).

[66] See Smoak, "Siege Warfare Imagery," 83–91.

[67] See Wright ("Warfare," 427–28), who cites the definition from the *Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems* to describe Life Support Systems as "any natural or human-engineered system that furthers the life of the biosphere in a sustainable fashion. . . . together they provide all of the sustainable needs required for continuance of life."

[68] For example, Wright ("Warfare," 434) calculates that the loss of two olive trees in an ancient agrarian society resulted in "the permanent loss of 1.5 to 2.2 kilograms of olive oil per year, and this oil, in contrast to wine, represents a critical component of the diet in western Asia and Mediterranean lands."

[69] See ibid., 447; Lawrence E. Stager, "Ashkelon and the Archaeology of Destruction: Kislev 604 BCE," *ErIsr* 25 (1996): 61–74; and Franz H. Weissbach, *Die Inschriften Nebukadnezars II im Wadi Brisa und am Nahr El-Kelb* (WVDOG 5; Leipzig: Biblio-Verlag, 1906). Wright ("Warfare,"

audience likely experienced the devastation of nature in an even more intensified way. As several recent studies have noted, the Babylonians operated with an imperial policy different from that of their Assyrian predecessors, adopting what one might call a "devastated-earth policy."[70] Unlike the Assyrians, who made a regular practice of restoring cities and lands devastated by war, archaeological evidence indicates that the Babylonians did not rebuild the physical and economic structures of conquered territories in the west, conducting no operations other than war and leaving conquered areas devastated and impoverished.[71] Hence, Babylonian armies in Ezekiel's time left the lands around Jerusalem, especially the Negev, Jordan Valley, and Shephelah, as "dilapidated areas," likely with the goal of creating a buffer of wastelands between Egyptian and Babylonian territories.[72]

The likely connection between the devastation of agriculture in the practices of ancient warfare and the experiences of Judeans before and during Ezekiel's time suggests an added rhetorical dimension for Ezekiel's priestly formulations of the nature motif. Not only do these formulations render the people's experiences understandable within a larger narrative plot line, but they also speak to a particular kind of trauma, defeat, and victimization in a way that is somewhat different from other prophetic texts. Ezekiel throws into relief some of the intentional actions likely taken against Judah. Yet his language of the pollution/defilement of the soil/ground also resonates with the lasting and ruinous effects of war on the usefulness of the land and the sustainability of agriculture. One can perhaps hear in his language echoes of intentional acts such as sowing soil with salt, done by armies to pollute an enemy's land for years to come.[73] One can perhaps also hear echoes of simply unintended consequences of siege and warfare that devastate agricultural resources and result in a stripped land that is susceptible to insect infestation and whose inhabitants may suffer famine.[74]

At a general level, the use of imagery of the devastation and rejuvenation of nature in Ezekiel's context brings the collective memories of enemy actions into the purview of Israel's God, a rhetorical move made throughout prophetic literature

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447) notes also Jeremiah's descriptions of Babylon's destructive acts (see Jer 6:6; 7:20; 22:7; 46:22–23).

[70] For discussion of the details of Babylonian imperial policies during the sixth century, see Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 36–65; and Brad E. Kelle, *Ancient Israel at War 853–586 BC* (Essential Histories 67; Oxford/New York: Osprey, 2007), 57–75.

[71] See John W. Betlyon, "Neo-Babylonian Military Operations other than War in Judah and Jerusalem," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 263–83.

[72] Lipschits, *Fall and Rise*, 68.

[73] For examples of this practice in Aramean and Assyrian texts, see Wright, "Warfare," 429 n. 25.

[74] See ibid., 428–29.

(see table 1). By emphasizing Yahweh's control of the foreign armies, the prophets in some measure take the power away from the enemy conquerors and give it to Yahweh.[75] But Ezekiel's rhetoric goes further than his fellow prophets and pushes a different rationality for Judah's traumatic events. His increased emphasis on Yahweh's direct role in the destruction of nature does not merely reinterpret the Babylonians as instruments in the plan of Israel's god. In contrast to the apparent reality—namely, that the desolation of the land and destruction of the people had been accomplished by the Babylonian war machine—Ezekiel allows the Babylonians virtually no explicit involvement in the events, insisting that this was entirely Yahweh's doing from the beginning.[76] Hence, the rhetorical move Ezekiel makes with his formulation of the nature motif is not merely a second-order reflection in which Babylonia really perpetrated these actions but the prophet claims that Yahweh did them. Rather, Ezekiel's language is perhaps better understood as expressing something more innate—at least a blurring of the lines or a double agency, if not a more concrete conviction that Yahweh was the only one involved in Judah's defeat and trauma from the very beginning. As Galambush observes, the destruction done to the land functions symbolically in the same way as a war wound does in a human body.[77] Such wounds symbolize the conqueror's power over the defeated, but by attributing these wounds on the land of Israel to Yahweh alone, Ezekiel denies the Babylonians power over the victims and rhetorically reshapes Israel's identity from defeated warriors to survivors who continue to live under divine sovereignty.[78]

IV. Conclusion

The combination of Ezekiel's formulation of the devastation and rejuvenation of nature and the way in which it changes the expected rationality of the people's experiences of defeat suggests that the prophet uses these rhetorical means to offer a response to the people's trauma that is not simply *priestly* in the historical sense, drawing on the conceptions of the historical priestly tradition in the life of ancient

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[75] For example, Wright ("Warfare," 442 n. 79) notes that the language of destroying and rejuvenating agricultural systems in ancient royal inscriptions is "imbued with divine associations," which are then "appropriated extensively by the biblical authors when describing the dual character of Israel's God. . . . The clearest point of contact is when the Assyrian army serves as the instrument of divine wrath, as in Isa 10:5–19. In this way the power and ideology of Assyrian imperial rhetoric are subverted by one of its subjects."

[76] Compare Sweeney, *Reading the Hebrew Bible after the Shoah*, 1–22, 128–46.

[77] Galambush, "God's Land," 99.

[78] At the same time, Ezekiel's placing of the land under such dominating divine control provides his audience with a means to reverse the primary sense of loss of control over their land that comes with siege, destruction, and exile (see Galambush, "This Land," 90).

Israel. Read in the context of trauma, Ezekiel's formulation of the prophetic nature motif is also *priestly* in a pastoral sense, fulfilling a theological and pastoral function for his people. Ezekiel's words are the words of one who helps to shape the people's identity in a time of uncertainty and provide counsel for their theological understanding. By bringing the language of the devastation and rejuvenation of nature into line with the categories of the priestly tradition, Ezekiel offers a way to deal with the trauma of defeat and destruction experienced by the Judean community. He effectively emplots the traumatic experiences of war, especially the desolation of the land by the Babylonians, into the priestly understanding of Yahweh's activity in the world and so renders these experiences understandable and even meaningful for those who had lived through them. Ezekiel provides his people with a way to take the traumatic experiences of destruction and exile, which seemingly refuse to be integrated into the people's collective life in a comprehensible way, and to understand them differently as elements in a plot line based on Yahweh's own sovereignty and purity, which possess an altogether different rationality.

This same language also permits Ezekiel's audience to consider that the new narrative plot line of the past and present introduced by the prophet's rhetoric may extend into the future and yield the possibility of a changed existence. If the experiences of the past and present have been outworkings of divine holiness, the continued operation of that same holiness allows the people to imagine a future plot line of restoration to faithfulness before God and reconnection to communal identity. Ezekiel offers his audience an ongoing discourse of hope that envisions the continuous working of God in their life in the past, present, and future. He beckons his hearers (and readers) into a narrative that can endure destruction and envision restoration by affirming a divine holiness that did not fail in the past and will not fail in the future.

Unnoticed Resonances of Tomb Opening and Transportation of the Remains of the Dead in Ezekiel 37:12–14

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Whether Ezek 37:12–14 was an original component part of a larger narrative encompassing 37:1–14, or related to material in 37:1–11 in some other way, many commentators view these verses, like 37:1–10, as a response to the saying attributed to a dejected Judah in 37:11: "Our bones are dry, our hope has perished, we are utterly cut off" (יבשו עצמותינו ואבדה תקותנו נגזרנו לנו, *yābĕšû ʿaṣmôtênû wĕ ʾābĕdâ tiqwātēnû nigzarnû lānû*).[1] The narrative of 37:1–10 contests the saying's assump-

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[1] All translations in this article are my own. Approaches to the development of Ezek 37:1–14 are many and varied. One viewpoint has been to see vv. 1–14 as a single, original unit, with at most minimal expansion. The most influential exponent of this position, Walther Zimmerli, divides 37:1–14 into two parts: the vision of vv. 1–10, followed by the disputation of vv. 11–14, which experienced some minor expansion in vv. 13b–14. For Zimmerli, v. 11 has a double function: it interprets the vision of vv. 1–10 and introduces the disputation that follows (*Ezechiel* [2 vols.; BKAT 13; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969], 2:888). Zimmerli has been followed closely by Ronald M. Hals, *Ezekiel* (FOTL 19; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 269; Paul M. Joyce's approach is similar (*Ezekiel: A Commentary* [Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 482; New York: T&T Clark, 2007], 209); in addition, see Rüdiger Bartelmus, "Textkritik, Literarkritik, und Syntax Anmerkungen zur neueren Diskussion um Ez 37,11," *BN* 25 (1984): 55–64, who also defends the single-unit hypothesis. Finally, Moshe Greenberg treats vv. 1–14 as an original unit from the prophet: "The despondency of the exiles, betokened by their drastic death and burial metaphors, is met by the prophet's stunning counter-metaphors of resurrection and disinterment" (*Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1997], 747). Other scholars challenge the unity of vv. 1–14, taking a variety of approaches. Frank-Lothar Hossfeld divides the material into three original units of differing date and provenance: the vision of vv. 1–11a (including an expansion in vv. 7–10a), the disputation of vv. 11b–13a, and its expansion in vv. 13b–14 (*Einleitung in das Alte*

tion of hopelessness by envisioning a valley of human remains that are reconstituted and reanimated through Ezekiel's prophetic word and Yнwн's decisive actions. Similarly, 37:12–14 challenges the people's despondency with a prophetic word from Yнwн to the people:

> Thus says the LORD Yнwн, "I am about to open your tombs and raise you up [והעליתי, *wĕhaʿălêtî*] from your tombs, my people, and I will bring you to the land of Israel. You will know that I am Yнwн when I open your tombs and raise you up from your tombs, my people. I will put my spirit in you and you will live, and I will set you in your land, and you will know that I, Yнwн, have spoken and acted," oracle of Yнwн.

Both 37:1–10 and 37:12–14 respond to the metaphors of the saying in v. 11, which suggests the "death" of the people.[2] The first section (vv. 1–10) takes up the figurative expression "our bones are dry" and offers in response a vision of a reanimated people of great number; the second (vv. 12–14) responds to the claim that the people "are utterly cut off" with a promise that Yнwн will raise them from their tombs, reanimate them, and resettle them in their land. Each section, in its own way, challenges the notion that hope has perished for the Judeans in exile.[3] Though 37:1–10 has received much attention from scholars, 37:12–14 has been of less interest, even

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Testament [ed. Erich Zenger et al.; 3rd ed.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1998], 450, 454–55). See similarly Peter Höffken, "Beobachtungen zu Ezechiel XXXVII 1–10," *VT* 31 (1981): 305–17; and, with slight differences, Dieter Baltzer, *Ezechiel und Deuterojesaja: Berührungen in der Heilserwartung der beiden großen Exilspropheten* (BZAW 121; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971), 100–118. Harald Martin Wahl has also challenged the unity of 37:1–14, proposing a three-stage process of development: vv. 1–7a + vv. 11, 12–14 (including a gloss in v. 13) + vv. 7b–10 ("'Tod und Leben': Zur Wiederherstellung Israels nach Ez. XXXVII 1–14," *VT* 49 [1999]: 218–39). Finally, Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann understands vv. 11b–12a, 14 as the original core of vv. 1–14, with vv. 1–11a, part of v. 12 and v. 13 added later (*Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel (Ezechiel) Kapitel 20–48* [ATD 22; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001], 494). For further discussion of recent scholarship on the development of 37:1–14, see the survey of Franz D. Hubmann, "Ezechiel 37,1–14 in der neueren Forschung," in *Auf den Spuren der schriftgelehrten Weisen: Festschrift für Johannes Marböck anlässlich seiner Emeritierung* (ed. Irmtraud Fischer et al.; BZAW 331; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 111–28. My own preference is to see vv. 1–10 and 12–14 as originally separate units of differing provenance reacting creatively to the despondent saying of v. 11 sometime after 587. As others have pointed out, each unit reacts to a part of the saying. To attempt to assign a more precise date and provenance to each unit, or to break the units down further into subunits, or even to determine which unit preceded the other, as some are wont to do, strikes me as a largely speculative exercise. In any case, such questions are not the focus of my interest here.

[2] This interpretation of the content of the saying is almost universal. See, e.g., Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 745–47; Zimmerli, *Ezechiel,* 2:897; Walther Eichrodt, *Der Prophet Hezekiel: Kapitel 19–48* (ATD 22; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 357; Baltzer, *Ezechiel und Deuterojesaja,*104.

[3] A point made by Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 747.

given its strikingly unusual imagery and its message of restoration in the land.[4] It is my purpose to analyze the imagery of 37:12–14, particularly Yʜwʜ's promise to open the tombs of exiled Judeans, raise them up from their tombs, and bring them back to their land, in light of the resonances of tomb opening and the transportation of the remains of the dead back to ancestral territory and family tomb as witnessed in both biblical and cognate literatures.

Ezekiel 37:12–14 is a response specifically to the claim in the people's saying (v. 11) that Judeans are "utterly cut off." As I have argued elsewhere, this expression suggests that exiled Judeans view themselves as essentially "dead" as a people, separated from Yʜwʜ in a manner not unlike those who are literally dead in the underworld according to a text such as Ps 88:5–6:

> I am counted with those who descend into the Pit,
>   I am like a man without help,
>   Among the dead . . . ,[5]
> Like the slain, those who lie down in a tomb,
>   Whom you do not remember anymore,
> And as for them, from your hand they are cut off.[6]

The expression "we are utterly cut off" in Ezek 37:11 implies not only that the people view themselves as dead for all intents and purposes, but that their relationship to Yʜwʜ has been severed, not unlike the connection of the dead to Yʜwʜ according to Ps 88:6, where it is said that the entombed dead are no longer remembered by Yʜwʜ and are "cut off" from Yʜwʜ's hand, meaning that he no longer acts on their behalf. Psalm 88:11–13 elaborates on the idea that the dead are "cut off" from Yʜwʜ's hand with a series of rhetorical questions that suggest that Yʜwʜ no longer does wonders for the dead, that the dead cannot praise him, and that his acts of covenant loyalty (חסד, *ḥesed*) and faithfulness (אמונה, *ʾĕmûnâ*) are not spoken of by the dead, presumably because they are no longer remembered by them.[7] Simi-

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[4] See, e.g., Greenberg, whose comments on vv. 1–14 focus almost entirely on vv. 1–10 (*Ezekiel 21–37*, 747–49). Zimmerli's treatment also privileges the vision over the disputation (*Ezechiel*, 889–90), though to a lesser degree.

[5] The MT of the first colon of v. 6 reads במתים חפשי (*bammētîm ḥopšî*), the meaning of which is opaque. The LXX (87:5) is similar (ἐν νεκροῖς ἐλεύθερος).

[6] For my earlier treatment, see Saul M. Olyan, "'We Are Utterly Cut Off': Some Possible Nuances of *nigzarnû lānû* in Ezek 37:11," *CBQ* 65 (2003): 43–51.

[7] Other biblical texts expressing similar sentiments about the relationship of the dead and Yʜwʜ include Isa 38:11, 18; Pss 6:6; 28:1; 30:10; 115:17–18; and Sir 17:27–28. See my treatment of these texts in "'We Are Utterly Cut Off,'" 47–48. Note that Ps 6:6 states specifically that there is no memory of Yhwh in death (כי אין במות זכרך, *kî ʾên bammāwet zikrekā*). On חסד (*ḥesed*) as loyalty to covenant, see Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 5–9 and n. 12 (for citations).

larly, the saying of 37:11 may be suggesting that exiled Judeans, like the dead, can no longer worship Yʜwʜ; that they cannot hope for any kind of saving intervention from him; and that they cannot expect him to keep his covenantal promises. Thus, like the dead, exiled Judeans are "cut off" from Yʜwʜ according to Ezek 37:11. Texts of an exilic and early postexilic provenance suggest a lively debate about the fate of Yʜwʜ's covenant with Israel, with a number of passages suggesting that the covenant was terminated by Yʜwʜ, who rejected the people (e.g., 2 Kgs 21:14; Jer 12:7; Lam 5:20, 22), and others insisting that the covenant and its promises remain valid (e.g., Lev 26:44–45; Deut 4:31; Isa 54:7–8). If the saying of Ezek 37:11 addresses debate about the status of the covenant, which I believe it does, it belongs to the former group of what we might call "rejectionist" texts, while the responses to the saying in vv. 1–10 and 12–14 belong to the latter group of texts that advocate covenant continuity even in the face of disaster.[8]

The oracle of 37:12–14 responds creatively to the imagery of death and separation from Yʜwʜ suggested by the claim of 37:11 that exiled Judeans are "utterly cut off." It challenges the saying's assumption of the people's metaphorical death in exile and their separation from an indifferent, and even rejecting, god by envisioning Yʜwʜ's decisive action on behalf of the people in the figure of tomb opening and removal of the remains of the dead for a beneficent purpose. According to 37:12–14, Yʜwʜ will open the tombs of the exiles, raise them up from their tombs, and reanimate them; the figure seems to assume the physical reconstitution of individuals before their reanimation, as in the larger pericope's first section (37:7–8)—though this is not stated directly, nor is any mention made of the state of the remains in the tombs (bones? corpses?). The figure of 37:12–14 breaks down with its final promise—intended to be understood literally—that Yʜwʜ will return the exiles to their land.

The imagery of Yʜwʜ opening tombs and raising up the remains of the dead is striking in a number of ways. First, the association of the deity with tombs and the remains of the dead, even metaphorically, is not what one would expect, given the polluting nature of tombs, bones, and corpses according to passages elsewhere in the book of Ezekiel (e.g., 6:5–7; 9:7; 39:11–16; 43:7–9) and related materials of Priestly and Holiness provenance (e.g., Num 19:11–22).[9] Those who have been polluted by contact with tombs, bones, or corpses are prohibited from entering the sanctuary sphere and having contact with holy items until they are clean, for

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[8] For a more detailed discussion of the variety of positions on the Mosaic covenant witnessed in surviving texts, as well as treatment of debates about the Abrahamic, Levitic, and Davidic covenants during and soon after the exile, see my essay "The Status of Covenant during the Exile," in *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt. Festschrift für Rainer Albertz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Ingo Kottsieper, Rüdiger Schmitt, and Jakob Wöhrle; AOAT 350; Münster: Ugarit, 2008), 333–44.

[9] See also Lev 21:1–4, 11; 22:5; Num 5:1–4.

pollution, particularly that caused by death-related phenomena, is a profound threat to Yʜwʜ's continued presence in the sanctuary. Furthermore, the book of Ezekiel speaks frequently of Yʜwʜ's concern for the preservation of his holiness and that of his sanctuary (e.g., 20:39; 36:22–32; 39:25; 43:7–9). Yet in 37:12–14, Yʜwʜ himself chooses to have such contact with the pollution of death, albeit metaphorically. He does so in order to act beneficently for his people. Far from being "utterly cut off" from Yʜwʜ, exiled Judeans will benefit from their continuing relationship with their god when he removes them from exile and resettles them in their land. The striking image of Yʜwʜ opening the tombs of exiled Judeans and removing their remains for a beneficent purpose functions to underscore Yʜwʜ's continued willingness to act for his people and by implication, his enduring covenant bond with them and his loyalty (חסד, *ḥesed*) to them.[10]

The imagery of tomb opening and the transportation of the remains of the dead is striking in yet another way, for tomb opening and transportation can be acts either of malevolence or of beneficence, depending on the identity of the actors and the circumstances of the actions undertaken. That such acts could be construed malevolently is made clear by the many curses in tomb inscriptions and other literary contexts that survive from ancient western Asia, including Judah. Numerous tomb inscriptions warn potential grave robbers and others of the dire consequences of opening a tomb and disturbing or removing its contents. Some openly express a fear specifically of the removal of human remains from the tomb, and many mention that no valuables have been left with the dead.[11] The Royal Steward Inscription from Silwan, near Jerusalem (ca. 700 B.C.E.) is a Judean example of a tomb inscription that denies the presence of valuables and includes a curse on potential violators: "This is [the tomb of   ]yahu who was over the house. There is no silver or gold here. Only [his bones] and the bones of his female slave with him. Cursed be the person who would open this!"[12]

Why the fear of tomb violation and the illegitimate removal of the remains of the dead? Ashurbanipal's description of his treatment of the tombs and remains of the kings of Elam suggests that tomb opening (and destruction), as well as the removal of the remains of the dead to a far-off place (in this case, Assyria) could be undertaken purposefully in order to harm the ghosts of the dead by denying them care in the afterlife and imposing restlessness upon them: "I took their bones to the land of Assyria, imposing restlessness upon their ghosts. I deprived them of

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[10] The expressions חסד עולם (*ḥesed ʿôlām*) and ברית עולם (*bĕrît ʿôlām*) occur in exilic and early postexilic texts advocating continuity of the covenant (e.g., Gen 17:7, 13, 19; Isa 54:8; Ezek 37:26). Though these expressions do not occur in Ezek 37:12–14, Yʜwʜ's ongoing loyalty based on the covenant bond is implied by his willingness to act decisively for the benefit of the exiles.

[11] E.g., *KAI* 1:2; 13:3–8; 14:4–12, 20–22; 226:6–10.

[12] For this inscription, see Nahman Avigad, "The Epitaph of a Royal Steward from Siloam Village," *IEJ* 3 (1953): 137–52. My restorations mainly follow Avigad's suggestions.

ancestral offerings (and) libations of water" (*e-ṭém-me-šú-nu la ṣa-la-lu e-mì-id ki-is-pi na-aq mê* ^A.MEŠ *ú-za-am-me-šú-nu-ti*).[13] Similarly, *Gilgamesh* XII:151 states that the ghost of the unburied "is not at rest in the underworld,"[14] and Esarhaddon's succession treaty contains a curse associating preservation of the remains of the dead in one place and being at rest in the afterlife.[15] Both the Yaba and Mullissu-mukannishat-Ninua tomb inscriptions from Nimrud reflect the same set of ideas, calling for the denial of ancestral offerings in the afterlife to those who would remove the remains of these Assyrian queens (implicitly, tit for tat).[16] Jeremiah 8:1–2 envisions the removal of the bones of Judah's leaders from their tombs and their lack of reburial as a punishment for the transgressions of those leaders, perhaps assuming that such removal would disrupt the afterlife of those affected, as evidenced in various Akkadian texts—though no explicit evidence for this survives in biblical or other Judean materials. In short, both Akkadian and biblical texts bear explicit witness to the idea that tomb opening and removal of the remains of the dead could be understood to be acts of malevolence. Akkadian texts further evidence the notion that disinterment and transportation could be used to impose suffering on ghosts of the dead.

Yet tomb opening and transportation of the remains of the dead could also be understood as acts of beneficence under certain circumstances, as indicated by both Akkadian and biblical texts. At least one text suggests that the remains of the dead could be moved in order to protect them from abuses imposed by conquering enemies (e.g., Ashurbanipal's ill-treatment of the tombs, bones, and ghosts of the kings of Elam). The example I have in mind is Merodach-Baladan's flight from Babylon before Sennacherib, along with his gods and the bones of his ancestors, which he had removed from their tombs according to Sennacherib's account in the Nebi Yunus slab inscription.[17] Given that other Akkadian texts and material

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[13] Rykle Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals: Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 55 (Prism A vi 74–76 = F v 53–54).

[14] Andrew R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* (2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1:734.

[15] Donald J. Wiseman, *The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon* (Iraq 20 pt. 1; London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1958), 77–78 (8:637–40).

[16] See Abdulilah Fadhil, "Die in Nimrud/Kalḫu aufgefundene Grabinschrift der Jabâ," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 21 (1990): 461–70, esp. 461 (lines 15–18); and idem, "Die Grabinschrift der Mullissu-mukannišat-Ninua aus Nimrud/Kalḫu und andere in ihrem Grab gefundene Schriftträger," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 21 (1990): 471–82, esp. 471 (line A 3–4) and 474–75 (lines B 6–11).

[17] See Daniel D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (OIP 2; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), 85–86 (lines 7–11), with the corrections on line 8 by Eckart Frahm, *Einleitung in die Sanherib-Inschriften* (AfOB 26; Vienna: Institut für Orientalistik der Universität Wien, 1997), 129. My thanks to Jamie Novotny for directing me to Frahm's text.

remains bear witness to a conqueror's potential to abuse iconic representations of deities belonging to the vanquished as well as their burial places and the remains of their dead, such an explanation for Merodach-Baladan's acts in Sennacherib's account seems most fitting.[18] In any case, we have here an example of an heir portrayed as protecting the bones of his ancestors from abuse, just as he protects the images of his gods.[19]

Benevolent tomb opening and transportation of remains might also be motivated by a desire to confirm or establish a positive relationship (perhaps even a formal relationship of the treaty type) with the dead themselves and with constituencies invested in their fate, as Ashur-etel-ilani's transportation of the "tomb" (*kimaḫḫu*) of the Dakkurian Shamash-ibni from Assyria back to his native Bit Dakkuri shows.[20] Presumably, once the remains of Shamash-ibni were laid to rest

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[18] Sennacherib's description of the Assyrian looting of Babylon (689 B.C.E.) includes mention of the physical destruction of icons of divinities found there (Luckenbill, *Annals,* 83–84 [lines 48, 50–51]). Similarly, Ashurbanipal speaks of destroying the images of the gods of Elam (Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk*, 168 [Prism T v 1]). Winged genies with mutilated sensory organs from the reliefs of Nineveh provide physical evidence of concrete acts of mutilation imposed on divine images by foreign enemies (Silke Knippschild, "Spoils and Iconoclasm: The Ancient Near Eastern Tradition and Athens" [unpublished manuscript, 15]). To this evidence one might compare 1 Sam 5:1–4, a biblical counterpart to such acts of violence against the enemy's gods, except in this case, the narrative is an apologetic asserting the power of the losing side's deity over the god of the victor. Though the Israelite ark of the covenant was captured as a prize of war by the Philistines, Yнwн demonstrates his power over Dagon, the Philistine god, in Dagon's own temple. First, Dagon is found prostrated before the ark, Yнwн's throne, an unmistakable gesture of submission. After Dagon is returned to his place, he is found bowing down again, but this time his two hands and head have been cut off. Like gouging out an eye, cutting off ears or a nose, mutilating a beard, or severing one or both hands or the head communicates the powerlessness of the deity whose image is subjected to such violence, as well as that of the god's followers, and the power of those who are able to impose their will upon it. On the Ark Narrative as an apology from the perspective of the vanquished, see P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 23–26. On mutilation and power, see T. M. Lemos, "Shame and the Mutilation of Enemies in the Hebrew Bible," *JBL* 125 (2006): 240–41; and Knippschild, "Spoils," 11.

[19] Why would Sennacherib portray his enemy behaving in a pious fashion? Perhaps his intent was to suggest the permanence of his own conquest and the extent of the fear he inspired in Merodach-Baladan. He took those items most of value to him and ran, knowing he would never return because of Sennacherib's might. In any case, the fleeing enemy king is a topos in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, suggesting his unsuitability to rule. On this theme, see Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite–Assyrian Encounter* (HSM 62; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 33–38.

[20] See Grant Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia: From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157–612 BC)* (RIMB 2; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 266–67. I am grateful to Jamie Novotny for bringing this text and the bibliographic reference to my attention.

"in a tomb in his house" (*ina* KI.MAḪ *ina qé-reb* É-*šú*), his ghost would benefit in some way (e.g., receive *kispu* offerings that were possibly unavailable to it while in exile in Assyria).[21] (Recall that Ashurbanipal's motivation for taking the remains of the kings of Elam into exile in Assyria was to deprive them of ancestral cult and impose restlessness upon their ghosts.) At all events, Ashur-etel-ilani positions himself as a benefactor and protector of the tomb of the reburied Shamash-ibni, threatening with curses anyone who would disturb the tomb or its remains and calling upon all to protect them. A second, biblical example of this type is to be found in 2 Sam 21:12–14, the story of David's return of the remains of Saul and Jonathan from their burial place in Jabesh-Gilead to their ancestral tomb in the land of Benjamin:

> David went and he took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the lords of Jabesh-Gilead who had stolen them from the square of Bet Shan where the Philistines had hanged them on the day the Philistines defeated Saul at Gilboa. He brought up from there the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son . . . and they buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the land of Benjamin, at Sela, in the tomb of Qish, his father.

This gesture, described by David's apologists, makes David look as if he has a positive and even formal relationship with Saulides and Benjaminites, just as Ashur-etel-ilani casts himself as a friend of the Dakkurians by the beneficent acts he claims to have done on behalf of Shamash-ibni.[22] In both cases, non-family members are portrayed as responsible for the return of disinterred remains of the dead to their native territory for reburial in their respective ancestral tombs.[23] Such an act of generosity functions to support claims of a positive and even formal relationship between the benefactor and those who benefit from his largesse, including the dead

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[21] For the reading *ina* KI.MAḪ *ina qé-reb* É-*šú*, see Frame, *Rulers,* 267 (line 3). On the *kispu*, see recently Karel van der Toorn, "Family Religion in Second Millennium West Asia (Mesopotamia, Emar, Nuzi)," in *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity* (ed. John Bodel and Saul M. Olyan; Ancient World—Comparative Histories; Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 25–28.

[22] David's apologists seek to distance him from responsibility for the deaths of various Saulides, including those executed by the Gibeonites earlier in the narrative of the chapter. They also seek to present him as having formal, ongoing ties to Saul and his house (e.g., through his marriage to Saul's daughter Michal; by means of a personal covenant with Jonathan; and by public mourning of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan). For a general discussion of David's apologists and their goals, see, e.g., P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 9; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 445–46. On David's mourning as a statement of affiliation, see Saul M. Olyan, *Biblical Mourning: Ritual and Social Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 53–54.

[23] This is clear in the case of 2 Sam 21:14, which mentions reinterment in the tomb of Qish, and likely in the case of Ashur-etel-ilani's inscription, which speaks of the return of Shamash-ibni's "tomb" (bones?) to "a tomb in his house" (KI.MAḪ *ina qé-reb* É-*šú*).

themselves, who might reap concrete benefits (e.g., gifts of food and drink), and their living relations. For just as disinterment and exile of the remains of the dead could be used to impose suffering on their ghosts, according to Akkadian texts, so, presumably, transportation back to the ancestral tomb and reburial there could improve the lot of the dead. Though biblical texts are somewhat less clear than Akkadian materials regarding how, specifically, the fate of the dead might be improved, I suspect that they share the same set of assumptions.[24]

These examples of non-family members taking on responsibility for beneficent disinterment, transportation, and reburial of the remains of the dead in their native territory at the family tomb can be supplemented by several biblical narratives of family members who do the same. In Gen 49:29–32 and 50:12–14, P tells of Jacob's command to his sons that they should bury him in his family tomb at the cave of Machpelah, and the fulfillment of that command by Jacob's sons, who transport his remains from Egypt to Canaan.[25] A second example is the oath Joseph imposes on his family members ("the children of Israel") to bring up his remains to Canaan when the deity decides to return the people there (Gen 50:25–26).[26] According to Exod 13:19, Moses takes Joseph's bones with him, and Josh 24:32 tells of their eventual interment in ancestral territory at Shechem. Immediate heirs such as Jacob's sons are portrayed as obligated by blood ties to fulfill the wishes of their father. As for Joseph, his oath is respected by the descendants of the children of Israel, who were bound by it according to biblical narrative. In the case of David and Ashur-etel-ilani, formal ties may or may not have ever existed, but these non-family members seek to cast themselves as benefactors of the dead and their living relations, behaving not unlike those having formal, even familial, ties with the dead, as the examples from Genesis demonstrate.

I argue that Yнwн's promised acts on behalf of the exiles in Ezek 37:12–14 are best understood in light of what appears to be a biblical and extrabiblical literary topos of benevolent tomb opening and transportation of the remains of the dead, which, in one well-evidenced version of the pattern, are taken from a far-off, often foreign, place and reburied in the family tomb in ancestral territory.[27] When

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[24] Biblical evidence for ancestral cult practices, though not richly attested, includes 2 Sam 18:18, which suggests the erection of a memorial stela and the invocation of the name of the dead man by his son as a norm, and Deut 26:14; Tob 4:17; and Sir 30:18, which mention or allude to food offerings for the dead. Practices such as invocation of the name of the dead and presenting food offerings have their parallels in the Mesopotamian *kispu* (van der Toorn, "Family Religion," 25–26).

[25] A similar scenario, traditionally assigned to JE, is narrated in Gen 50:1–11.

[26] My thanks to Thomas Römer for reminding me of this example (oral communication).

[27] I suspect that the description of Merodach-Baladan's flight from Babylon reflects another version of the topos, in which remains are removed from the ancestral tomb in order to protect them from harm at the hands of an enemy.

Yнwн announces that he is about to open the tombs of the exiles and raise them up from their tombs, the reader is struck by Yнwн's voluntary association—even if metaphorical—with the precincts and realia of death. By utilizing this imagery, the writer of 37:12–14 seeks to draw the attention of the audience to profound changes in the offing. He interprets the saying in 37:11 ("we are utterly cut off ") to mean that Judeans are figuratively both dead and buried. (Their burial is signaled by the mention of their tombs in vv. 12–14.[28]) I suggest that the literary pattern of a benevolent family or non-family member opening a tomb, transporting the remains of the dead, and reburying them in the family tomb on ancestral land is in the background of Ezek 37:12–14. In a text such as 2 Sam 21:12–14 or the inscription of Ashur-etel-ilani, a non-family member seeks to confirm or establish a positive, and possibly formal, relationship with the deceased and his heirs, casting himself as a benefactor and protector of the dead man, who returns his remains from a far-off, or even foreign, burial place to his ancestral tomb. In narratives of Jacob's and Joseph's burials, it is family members who fulfill obligations by transporting the remains of the dead from an alien land to ancestral tombs in Canaan.

The writer of Ezek 37:12–14 has Yнwн present himself in the same way, using some of the same imagery. Like David, Ashur-etel-ilani, or Jacob's sons, Yнwн will demonstrate his loyalty (חסד, *ḥesed*) to exiled Judeans through tomb opening and transportation of their remains for a beneficent purpose. The text also speaks of Yнwн's reanimation of his "dead" people. Finally, metaphor gives way to a literal promise to return the exiles to their land. Yнwн, through his promised acts, both metaphorical and literal, confirms implicitly the continued validity of the covenant bond between himself and his people (he acts on their behalf), and challenges the implicit and explicit claims of the saying in 37:11, which seems to understand the covenant as having been terminated, and the exiled people's condition as hopeless.[29] Resettling the exiles in the land of Judah is not unlike transportation of exiled remains of the dead back to their native place, as in 2 Sam 21:12–14, the inscription of Ashur-etel-ilani, and the narratives concerning the transportation and reburial of the remains of Jacob and Joseph, except in this instance the "dead" transported from their "tombs" are to be restored to "life" by Yнwн, returning to Judah,

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[28] The assumption of entombment may also suggest a figurative association of exiled Judeans with Sheol. If this is the case, the statement of 37:12–13, "I will raise you up [והעליתי, *wĕhaʿălêtî*] from your tombs," is most striking, given that the same idiom is used of bringing up the dead from the underworld in texts such as 1 Sam 2:6: "Yнwн kills and makes live" // "He brings down to Sheol and he raises up [ויעל, *wayyāʿal*]." See also 1 Sam 28:8, 11, 15; Jonah 2:7; Pss 30:4; 40:3; 71:20. Obviously, texts that assert Yнwн's concern for the dead and his ability to raise the dead up from Sheol have a very different viewpoint from texts such as Ps 88:6, 11–13.

[29] Psalm 88:12, whose ideology of death is not unlike that assumed by the saying of Ezek 37:11, suggests that Yнwн's covenant loyalty (חסד, *ḥesed*) and faithfulness (אמונה, *ʾĕmûnâ*) are not spoken of in the tomb/underworld.

the land of their origin. Given the literary pattern of beneficent tomb opening, transportation of the remains of the dead, and their reburial in the family tomb on native territory, this outcome is striking, a creative adaptation by the writer, who abandons the metaphors of death, entombment, and transportation of remains in order to underscore Yʜwʜ's continuing interest in and loyalty to the "living" Judean community in exile.[30]

[30] On the exile as a period of creative literary adaptation, see, e.g., Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (Studies in Biblical Literature 3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 160–66, on hybrid psalmic genres.

A Critical Response to Karin Adams's Reinterpretation of Hosea 4:13–14

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From her first sentence, Karin Adams indicates her support for a movement in ancient studies to discredit any potential indications of sacred prostitution in the ancient world.[1] Her focus is on Hos 4:13–14 where the קדשה (*qĕdēšâ*) seems to be identified with the זונה (*zônâ*). There are three locations in the Hebrew Scriptures where the term קדשה occurs, and in each case the קדשה seems to be identified as a זונה: Gen 38:21–22; Deut 23:17–18; and Hos 4:14. A few additional texts may also be read as indicating sacred prostitution (e.g., Prov 7:10–20; Numbers 25), but without the term קדשה. Based on the meaning of term itself, the קדשה ("holy one," fem.) seems to be a priestess of some sort, and the only three texts in which this term occurs seem to associate it with the term זונה. Those who would deny the concept of sacred prostitution in this Hebrew literature have an uphill battle against apparent identity. Adams focuses her analysis on the text in Hosea.

I. קדשה AND זונה

An important part of Adams's argument assumes that the verb זנה is specific to prostitution, like the term זונה. Although זונה has the form of the *qal* participle of the verb זנה, it functions as an independent noun, for it has a semantic range distinct from זנה. זונה is a term that designates a prostitute, a female who exchanges sexual favors for payment. The stability of this definition is indicated in such texts as Ezek 16:34, where the זונה of the parable is contrasted with other זונות, for she pays her paramours instead of receiving payment from them. Only stable, restricted usage can stand up to such ironic use.

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[1] Karin Adams, "Metaphor and Dissonance: A Reinterpretation of Hosea 4:13–14," *JBL* 127 (2008): 291–305. On sacred prostitution, see, e.g., Stephanie Lynn Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

In contrast, the verb זנה indicates fornication, any of a variety of sexual relationships outside of the marriage contract. This verb does not seem to be restricted to prostitution. Likewise, the abstract nouns זנות (*zěnût*) and תזנות (*taznût*) do not seem to be restricted to prostitution and have the broader meaning of fornication. The verb זנה occurs six times in the parable of Oholah and Oholibah in Ezekiel 23, along with eleven occurrences of תזנות and one occurrence of זנות. In the Hebrew Scriptures only Ezekiel 16 can compete for such a concentration of these terms. At no point in ch. 23 is either woman accused of taking payment for זנה. The noun/participle זונה occurs only once in Ezekiel 23 (v. 44), in a statement that compares Oholah and Oholibah to a זונה while distinguishing them from the זונה of the comparison. In this chapter זונה has a semantic range distinct from that of the verb זנה and the abstract nouns זנות and תזנות.

If we understand זנה as having a broader semantic domain than זונה, certain texts become less problematic. Deuteronomy 22:20–21 is the case of the daughter who is married but is found by her husband not to be a virgin. She is said not to be a virgin because she did זנה while part of her father's household. There is no requirement here that she received payment for her sexual activity. Any form of fornication could be responsible for her loss of virginity. Likewise, Judg 19:2 need not require that the concubine sell her sexual services to another man. The verb זנה need indicate only that she had sexual relations with a man other than the Levite who holds her concubine contract. Genesis 38:24 may be understood as a play on these semantic ranges, because Tamar did indeed masquerade as a זונה, but the speaker knew only that she fornicated (זנה) and became pregnant from her fornications (זנונים).

There is one more use of זנה that is interesting in the controversy over sacred prostitution in antiquity. זנה is often used figuratively for inappropriate religious behavior among Israelites, especially idolatry and worship of other gods. In Num 25:1–2 the verb זנה does double duty, for the Israelites worshiped the god Baal of Peor, which is figurative fornication, and also fornicated literally with the women of Midian. The literal activity with the women is the first topic of this verb, "The people began to fornicate with the daughters of Midian. They [fem. pl.] called the people to do זבח sacrifices of their [fem. pl.] gods." The verb זנה could refer to either literal fornication or pagan sacrifice, but probably refers to both. If the scholar insists that the semantic range of זנה be restricted to prostitution, this verb would indicate sacred prostitution on the part of the women of Midian, for their sexual liaisons with Israelite men were directly tied to זבח sacrifices to Baal. In fact, something akin to sacred prostitution may still be understood in this event, even if זנה is understood as fornication, distinct from prostitution.[2] However, identifying זנה with prostitution in Numbers 25 would link sacred activity and prostitution more tightly than Adams might desire.

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[2] E.g., James E. Miller, *Raw Material: Studies in Biblical Sexuality* (2006), 71, online at www.othersheep.org.

II. A Double Standard

Adams makes an interesting comment on pp. 303–4. She questions the reading of Hosea 4 by various scholars who dismiss the idea of ancient sacred prostitution. Adams states that these interpreters "ironically apply an (unwarranted) double standard to male and female Israelites: males commit theological sins while females commit sexual sins." Although Adams comments extensively on the double standards of Israelite society, she does not seem to understand how this double standard could produce a double standard in the text.

Ancient Israelite society was a patriarchal society. For a married woman, any fornication, any sexual activity outside the bounds of her marriage contract to one man would be adultery. The man is not so restricted. He is free to fornicate, to have sex without a marriage contract, with any woman no longer in her father's house and not under marriage contract to another man. Many such women would be prostitutes, but not all. He can also have multiple wives, as many as he can afford. His fornication is adultery only when it involves a woman married to another man. This much Adams understands. A double standard is built into Israelite society, and any variety of double standards may appear in the various literary constructions found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Notably, the men of Hosea 4 are not accused of adultery, literal or figurative, but only of fornication.

First, the initial lines of Hos 4:10 are literal, not metaphorical. "They will eat, but not be sated. They will fornicate, but not multiply."[3] Just as they will be cursed with eating without receiving the desired outcome of eating, they also will fornicate without a desired (?) outcome of fornication—reproduction. This is followed by a metaphorical use of זנות, "for they have forsaken Yʜwʜ to keep fornication." This is not the last time the poet will cross the line between literal and figurative fornication.

The women of Hos 4:13–14 are under the patriarchal control of the men addressed in these verses. This control and the honor implied in these patriarchal social structures call for a double standard. As with Num 25:1, the poet of Hosea 4 is playing with the verb זנה and the noun זונה. If the men of Israel insist on idolatry, which may be described as figurative fornication, they will get literal fornication under their noses, for the women under their control will dishonor them with fornication and adultery.[4] The "double standard" provides the friction that gives power to these lines of poetry. But the men's fornication is literal as well as figurative. They do literal זבח sacrifices with קדשות, and therefore do literal fornication with זונות. The literal sacrifices are part of the referent of the figurative fornication.

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[3] פרץ; cf. 1 Chr 4:38; Gen 30:30.
[4] Adultery and fornication are not confused here, contra Adams, "ADULTERY IS PROSTITUTION" (p. 299). Their brides adulterate, but their daughters fornicate. Metaphor or not, the distinction remains.

But these literal sacrifices are in parallel with literal fornication. Thus, literal fornication also plays a role in the figurative fornication.

To review:

- In v. 10 they abandon Yʜwʜ to hold onto (figurative) fornication.
- In v. 12 they seek counsel from wooden objects, for a spirit of (figurative) fornication has misled them and they have fornicated (figuratively) against their God.
- In v. 13 they have done this with (literal) sacrifices on high places, which leads to the (literal) fornication of their daughters and the (literal) adultery of their brides.
- In v. 14 God will not punish their daughters for (literal) fornication nor their brides for (literal) adultery, because the men addressed here fornicate (literally) with prostitutes and sacrifice (literally) with קדשות.

This leaves us with the question of how tight is the parallel between sacrifice with קדשות and fornication with זונות. Part of the answer may be found in the other two texts where קדשה may be found. In Gen 38:15, 21–22, one term is substituted for the other. In Deut 23:18–19, they seem to be in parallel. This might imply an identity between the two terms in Hosea 4 as well. But there is one other factor. Fornication with a זונה is not itself an idolatrous offense. Somehow this fornication needs to be seen as participation in an inappropriate religious activity for it to fit in this context. In other words, in this context, the fornication with the זונה is a religious act; therefore it is sacred prostitution. It is sacred prostitution, whether or not the זונה is identified as a קדשה. Identifying the זונה here with the קדשה merely simplifies things.

Postscript:
The Argument against Ancient Sacred Prostitution

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not point out that the ancient literature preserved in the Hebrew Scriptures is mostly polemical, including a variety of attacks on alternate religious systems. Unless we assume that these texts are infallible (and I realize many readers do understand these texts as infallible), we should handle polemical material with caution. Because a writer attributes to Canaanite/pagan religion the practice of sacred prostitution does not mean we must therefore believe such practices were part of the ancient cultures indicated. It is at least possible that such claims were part of a polemical package that had only partial identity with the real world. Recognition of this factor could change the tone of some scholarly polemics on the issue of ancient sacred prostitution.

On the Rise and Fall of Canaanite Religion at Baalbek: A Tale of Five Toponyms

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The city of Baalbek, in present-day Lebanon, has been a subject of interest to students of the Bible for more than a millennium. Since the tenth century C.E., many have identified it with Baal-Gad (Josh 11:17) and/or Baalath (1 Kgs 9:18).[1] Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, others have connected it, in one way or another, with Bikath-Aven (Amos 1:5). In 1863, these and other suggestions were reviewed by John Hogg in a lengthy treatise.[2]

The etymology of the toponym, which appears as *Bᶜlbk* in classical Syriac and as *Baᵍlabakku* in classical Arabic, has been widely discussed since the eighteenth century. Many etymologies have been suggested, most of them unconvincing.[3] Part of the problem is that a combination of etymologies is needed, for the name of the place changed over the centuries as its religious significance evolved.

In this article, I shall attempt to show that the rise and fall of Canaanite religion at Baalbek from the Bronze Age to the Byzantine period can be traced with the help of five toponyms: (1) *Mbk Nhrm* (Source of the Two Rivers),[4] (2) בקעת און

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[1] See Richard C. Steiner, "The Byzantine Biblical Commentaries from the Genizah: Rabbanite vs. Karaite," in *Shai le-Sara Japhet* (ed. M. Bar-Asher et al.; Jerusalem: Bialik, 2007), *258; and Conrad Iken, *Dissertationis philologico-theologicae* no. 15: De Baal-hamon et Baal-gad (Hague, 1749).

[2] John Hogg, "On the Supposed Scriptural Names of Baalbec, or the Syrian Heliopolis; and on the Chief Heliopolitan Inscriptions, Temples, Deities, and Sun-Worship," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom* second series 7 (1863): 247–334.

[3] See appendix below.

[4] This is probably a "poetic toponym" rather than an ordinary toponym. This rhetorical figure, known as *utamakura* in Japanese, is common in Japanese poetry, e.g., *Arisoumi* (Rocky Coast Sea).

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(Valley of Idolatry), (3) בעל בכי (Baal of Weeping), (4) עין בכי (Spring of Weeping), and (5) *Bᶜlbk/Baᶜlabakku* (Baal-Bacchus). All of these are Semitic; the Greek name of Baalbek, *Heliopolis*, will not be discussed.[5]

I. *Mbk Nhrm* (Source of the Two Rivers)

Toponym 1, probably a *poetic* toponym,[6] is *Mbk Nhrm*. In the Baal cycle (*KTU* 1.4 IV 21 and parallels) and in a Ugaritic serpent incantation (*KTU* 1.100.3), Il's abode is said to be located there. A full review of the literature on this toponym is beyond the scope of this article,[7] but one piece of evidence should be mentioned. Othmar Keel, followed by Mark S. Smith, notes that a seal from the Akkadian period at Mari depicts "a god of the type El enthroned, between the springs of two streams, on a mountain."[8] If this is really a depiction of Il's abode, it suggests that the latter was above ground, even if the "source of the two rivers" was partly subterranean.

In my view, the Ugaritic toponym (and perhaps the seal from Mari) should be compared with modern descriptions of Baalbek, such as: "Baalbek was a natural centre for the upper part of the Beqaʾa, being located at its highest level, at *the source of two important rivers*. . . ."[9] The two rivers in question are Lebanon's greatest rivers, the Litani and the Asi (Orontes), which, according to Ellen Churchill Semple, "rise in a swampy, indeterminate watershed near Baalbek at an altitude of 3,500 feet."[10]

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[5] The significance of this toponym is disputed. According to Frank Moore Cross (*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973], 7 n. 13, cited in n. 85 below), it shows that Baal-Hadad had solar features at Baalbek. According to Youssef Hajjar (*La triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek* [3 vols.; Leiden: Brill (vols. 1–2); Montreal: Y. Hajjar (vol. 3), 1977–85], 3:216–17), the early Greek colonists mistakenly identified Baal-Hadad with Helios based on a trivial iconographic feature.

[6] See n. 4 above.

[7] For the literature up until a decade ago, see Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (VTSup 2; Leiden: Brill, 1955), 72–81; Dennis Pardee, *Les textes para-mythologiques de la 24e campagne (1961)* (Ras Shamra-Ougarit 4; Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1988), 206 n. 24; Baruch Margalit, *The Ugaritic Poem of Aqht: Text, Translation, Commentary* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 428–31; Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (VTSup 55; Leiden: Brill, 1994–), 225–30; and Dennis Pardee, "The Baᶜlu Myth," *COS* 1:244 n. 16.

[8] Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (New York: Seabury, 1978), 47–48; idem, "Ancient Seals and the Bible," *JAOS* 106 (1986): 309; Smith, *Baal Cycle*, 226.

[9] Friedrich Ragette, *Baalbek* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1980), 16 (emphasis added).

[10] Ellen Churchill Semple, "The Influence of Geographic Conditions upon Ancient Mediterranean Stock-Raising," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 12 (1922): 19. See also Erwin M. Ruprechtsberger, *Vom Steinbruch zum Jupitertempel von Heliopolis/Baalbek (Libanon)*

According to Richard F. Burton and Charles F. Tyrwhitt Drake, the true (scientific) sources of the Litani and the Asi are the ʿAyn el-Baradah and the Nabaʿ el-ʿIllá, located "within one short mile of each other" and only five or six miles west of the ruins of Baalbek.[11] The two sources "are separated by a mere ground wave; . . . whilst two distinct river-valleys, running north and south, have been formed by the erosion of the twin streams."[12] It has been argued that Baalbek's location explains its rise to prominence as a religious center:

> A more appropriate setting for the abode of gods who represented such material phenomena as rain and tempest, fertility and growth, would be difficult to imagine. Situated near the highest point of the Beqaʾa, controlling the watershed between the Orontes river to the north, and the Leontes river to the south, Baalbek combined aspects of a city in a plain with that of a high place, and was thus predestined to become a centre of religious worship.[13]

Since Baalbek was occupied already in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages,[14] it could well have been a religious center in the Late Bronze Age, when the Ugaritic texts were written (and even in the Akkadian period, when the seal from Mari was manufactured). I suggest, therefore, that Ugaritic *Mbk Nhrm* refers to the site of Baalbek.[15]

II. בקעת און (Valley of Idolatry)

Toponym 2 is בקעת און (Amos 1:5). It is generally agreed today that this toponym, like בקעת הלבנן (Josh 11:17; 12:7), refers to all or part of the Bekaa Valley

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(Linzer archäologische Forschungen 30; Linz: Nordico, Museum der Stadt Linz, 1999) 10: "Nahe Baalbek entspringen der Orontes und der weniger bekannte Leontes (Litanni)."

[11] Richard F. Burton and Charles F. Tyrwhitt Drake, *Unexplored Syria: Visits to Libanus, the Tulúl, el Safá, the Anti-Libanus, the Northern Libanus, and the Áláh* (2 vols.; London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872), 1:41, 53–58.

[12] Ibid., 1:59.

[13] Ragette, *Baalbek*, 22. So too Nina Jidejian, *Baalbek* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1975), 46–47.

[14] Jidejian, *Baalbek*, 15; Hajjar, *La triade*, 3:293.

[15] Ug. *mbk* ("source, spring") is believed to be derived from the same root as *nbk* ("fountain, spring") in Ugaritic and Hebrew. It is, therefore, remarkable that J. T. Milik has, for his own reasons, suggested deriving *Baalbek* from Phoenician **Bʿl-nbk,* "Baal of the source" ("Les papyrus araméens d'Hermoupolis et les cultes syro-phéniciens en Égypte perse," *Bib* 48 [1967]: 595); cf. Friedrich Ragette, *The Temple Triad of Baalbek* (Architektur der Welt 9; Weimar: VDG, 2004), 6; Hajjar, *La triade*, 1:141–43, 3:218–19; idem, "Baalbek, grand centre religieux sous l'Empire," *ANRW* II.18.4 (1990), 2479–80. It is a pity that phonetic problems and the rabbinic evidence (see below) make it impossible to accept this etymology. Otherwise, one might have claimed that the modern toponym derives indirectly from the Ugaritic phrase!

(*al-Biqā^c*) of Lebanon. This identification appears to have been made already by the Karaite exegete Japhet b. Eli in the tenth century: "'from Bikath-Aven': this is a place known as *al-Biqā^c*, in the vicinity of Damascus."[16]

In 1703, a new element was added to this theory when Henry Maundrell published the journal of a trip he had made from Aleppo to Jerusalem in 1697. In the entry for April 25, we read:

> Having gone one hour beyond *Meshgarah*, we got clear of the Mountain, and enter'd into a Valley called *Bucca*. The Valley is about two hours over, and in length extends several days Journey. . . . It is inclosed on both sides with two parallel Mountains, exactly resembling each other; the one that which we lately pass'd over between this and *Sidon*, the other opposite against it toward *Damascus*. The former I take to be the true *Libanus*, the latter *Anti-Libanus*. . . .[17]

After the book was printed, the author sent "Corrections and Additions," which, in the first edition, appear at the end. One of these afterthoughts contains a stimulating suggestion:

> After the words, *and enter'd into the Valley of Bocat*; add; This *Bocat* seems to be the same with *Bicath Aven*, mention'd *Amos* I.5, together with *Eden* and *Damascus*; for there is very near it in Mount *Libanus* a place call'd *Eden* to this day. It might also have the name of *Aven* that is *vanity* given it, from the Idolatrous worship of *Baal*, practised at *Balbeck* or *Heliopolis*, which is situate in this Valley; this Valley is also mention'd in the Journal of *Wednesday May* the 5. and in both places instead of *Bucca* I would have it *Bocat*.[18]

Maundrell's journal appears to have been an instant best-seller, with French, German, and Dutch editions following in 1705 and new English editions appearing every few years beginning in 1707. His suggestion concerning בקעת און quickly became the conventional wisdom, thanks to William Lowth's commentary on prophets and Augustin Calmet's dictionary.[19]

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[16] Ms London BL Or 2400 (Margoliouth catalogue 282), 160 line 2: מבקעת און והו מוצֹע יערף באלבקאע פי נאחיֹה דמשק.

[17] Henry Maundrell, *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter, 1697* (1st ed.; Oxford: Theater, 1703), 118.

[18] This afterthought appears on pp. 119–20 of the second edition (1707), "in which the Corrections and Additions, which were sent by the Author after the Book was Printed off, are inserted in the Body of the Book in the proper places." Maundrell substituted *Bocat* for *Bucca* to show the connection with *Bicath Aven*. It seems that both forms were used for בקעת הלבנון during the Ottoman period. *Bucca* is presumably the form heard from the local Arabs; in Arabic, *buq^cah* means "swamp" (see at n. 10 above). *Bocat*, used also by S. Ronzevalle ("Notice sur un bas-relief représentant le simulacre du Jupiter Heliopolitanus," *CRAI* [1901]: 469), is no doubt the form used by the Ottoman rulers. In Turkish, the Arabic feminine singular ending is pronounced with *t* in all positions, as in *kismet* and *sherbet*.

[19] William Lowth, *A Commentary upon the Larger and Lesser Prophets being a Continuation of Bishop Patrick* (London: R. Knaplock et al., 1727), 429: "*Bikath-aven*: The Word signifies the

Maundrell's suggestion has stood the test of time. Frank Moore Cross speaks of "the Baʿl of the 'Biqʿat Baʿl' (Baalbek; cf. Amos 1:5)."[20] Shalom M. Paul, in his commentary on Amos 1:5, writes: "The first location, 'the vale of Aven,' is a cacophemism referring to a deity (most likely Baal) worshiped in that region. Compare בֵּית־אֵל ('Bethel'), which is also designated בֵּית אָוֶן ('Beth-aven' = 'house of iniquity'). . . ."[21]

If בקעת און is indeed comparable to בית און = בית אל, it is legitimate to ask whether the original form of the toponym was *בקעת אל rather than *בקעת בעל. It appears that Hosea uses און exclusively for אל, just as he (like all biblical authors) uses בשת ("shame") exclusively for בעל (Hos 9:10); his dysphemisms preserve the initial consonant of the original.[22]

It is not unreasonable to suggest that Amos's usage was the same, especially in view of the alliterative wordplay in Amos 5:5 (ובית אל יהיה לאון). If so, we may conclude that בקעת הלבנון—or at least the portion of it near Il's abode at Baalbek (the Sahlat Baʿalbak or the Biqāʿ al-Baʿlabakkī)[23]—was known in Amos's time as *בקעת אל. It was this phrase that Amos changed to בקעת און.[24]

There is no reason to doubt that the connection of Baalbek with Il was still known in the time of Amos. Indeed, as late as the Roman period, a god named *Connaros* appears in three inscriptions (two Latin, one Greek) found at Baalbek.[25]

Plain of Vanity; from whence some conjecture it was a Place in *Syria* remarkable for Idolatry; as *Bethel* is called *Beth-aven* for that Reason, *Hos.* v. 15. . . . Mr. *Maundrell* in his *Travels* observes, that not far from *Damascus* there is a Plain still called the *Vally of Bocat*, which he supposes the same with *Bikath-aven* here mentioned . . . ." Augustin Calmet, *An Historical, Critical, Geographical, Chronological and Etymological Dictionary of the Holy Bible in Three Volumes* (trans. S. D'oyly and J. Colson; London: J. J. and P. Knapton, 1732), 1:668: "He calls that city *Bikath-aven*, which the Heathen called *Bikath-Baal*, and which at present goes by the name of *Baal-beck*, the Valley of Baal."

[20] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 7 n. 13.

[21] Shalom M. Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 52. Paul (p. 53) rightly rejects the notion that בקעת און means "the Valley of On (Heliopolis)." Even though Baalbek was called Heliopolis in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, there is no evidence that it was known to Semites as און at that time, let alone in the time of Amos. For the alleged evidence of the Septuagint, see C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (trans. J. Martin; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1868), 244.

[22] Contrast his nonderogatory substitute for בעל set forth in 2:18–19. Hosea seems to have worked out a system of substitutes in order to "make no mention of the name of other gods" (Exod 23:13).

[23] For the latter designation, see J. Sourdel-Thomine, "al-Biḳāʿ," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.; Leiden: Brill; London: Luzac, 1960–2009), 1:1214. For the former, see Burton and Drake, *Unexplored Syria*, 45–46.

[24] There is no way of knowing whether Amos (or Hosea) would have felt the need to change הררי אל (Ps 36:7) and ארזי אל (Ps 80:11) as well, but the fact that these phrases are grammatically plural may well have made them less specific and, hence, less objectionable.

[25] Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais, "Connaros le puissant," *Syria* 55 (1978): 361–70; Hajjar, *La triade*, 1:81–83, 3:241; idem, "Baalbek," 2483, 2504.

Connaros is believed to be the epithet of Il found in Phoenician *ʾl qn ʾrṣ,* "El, creator/possessor of the earth" = Hittite ᵈ*El-ku-ni-ir-ša* or Aramaic *ʾl qwnrc*.[26] The two Latin inscriptions from Baalbek record donations made in obedience to an oracular response of the god Connaros.[27] Thus, it appears that Il remained at Baalbek as an oracular deity until Roman times.

III. בעל בכי (Baal of Weeping)

Toponym 3 is בעל בכי, attested in rabbinic literature (*m. Maʿaś* 5:8; *t. Maʿaś* 3:15; etc.) in the phrase שום בעל בכי, "garlic of Baalbek." That בעל בכי is Baalbek was pointed out five centuries ago by R. Obadiah Bertinoro, but his discovery was forgotten, because his transcription of Baalbek (בעל ביך according to a manuscript reading) became corrupted (to בעל בין and then to בעל) in the printed editions of his Mishnah commentary.[28] The identity of בעל בכי was rediscovered by Joseph Schwarz (who cites Bertinoro's comment and, unaware of the corruption, rejects it!)[29] and accepted by later scholars of rabbinic literature.[30]

Unfortunately, Schwarz missed the significance of this identification because he took the *yod* of בעל בכי to be the relational (*nisbah*) suffix (י׳ ליחוס כמו ראובני שמעוני). According to his analysis, the mishnaic phrase is not שום בעל בְּכִי, "garlic of Baʿal-Bekī" but שום בעל בַּכִּי, "Baalbekian garlic." Now, the latter reading is highly unlikely because the vocalization in medieval manuscripts of the Mishnah is בְּכִי, the pausal form of the word for "weeping." The same vocalization is assumed by the medieval commentaries on the Mishnah.[31] Nevertheless, Schwarz's analysis appears

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[26] Rey-Coquais, "Connaros," 363–64; Hajjar, *La triade*, 3:241–42; Edward Lipiński, *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique* (OLA 64; Studia Phoenicia 14; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 59–60.

[27] Hajjar, *La triade*, 1:82–83 (*[ex] responso dei Conna[ri]*), 3:241; idem, "Baalbek," 2504 (*ex resp dei Connari*).

[28] See the commentary and the notes to the commentary ad loc. in משנה זרעים עם שינויי נוסחאות מכתבי יד של המשנה (ed. N. Sacks; Jerusalem: Institute for the Complete Israeli Talmud, 1972–75), 2:244, 246.

[29] Joseph Schwarz, תבואות הארץ (Jerusalem, 1845), 37a–37b. The discussion of Bertinoro is omitted in the English and German editions of the work: *A Descriptive Geography and Brief Historical Sketch of Palestine* (trans. I. Leeser; Philadelphia: A. Hart, 1850), 61; and *Das heilige Land* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kaufmann, 1852), 37.

[30] Adolphe Neubauer, *La géographie du Talmud* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1868), 298; Isidore Lévy, "Cultes et rites syriens dans le Talmud," *REJ* 43 (1901): 194; Immanuel Löw, *Die Flora der Juden* (4 vols.; Vienna/Leipzig: R. Löwit, 1924–34), 2:142; A. Sammter, *Die sechs Ordnungen der Mischna* (6 vols.; ed. E. Baneth et al.; 2nd ed.; Wiesbaden: H. Kanel; Berlin: Itzkowski, 1924–33), 1:149 n. 13; Saul Lieberman, תוספתא כפשוטה, באור ארוך לתוספתא (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1955–), 2:707.

[31] See, e.g., Elijah Menaham b. Moses of London, פירושי רבנו אליהו מלונדריש ופסקיו (ed.

to have misled his successors. Among modern scholars, only Rudolf Kittel, Stanley A. Cook, and Stefan Wild have recognized that בעל בכי means "Baal of weeping."[32]

The meaning of this toponym is unmistakable. It has long been known that ritual mourning for Tammuz was common in the ancient Near East. In his commentary on Ezek 8:14, Moshe Greenberg writes:

> Wailing for Tammuz (in his several forms) was a women's rite practiced widely over the Near East through centuries. A seventh-century b.c.e. Assyrian daybook ordains *bikitu* "weeping" on the second of the month of Tammuz. As late as the tenth century c.e., the pagan Sabaeans of north-Syrian Haran kept a wailing (*al-Bukat*) for Tammuz in his month. . . .[33]

But what of the Canaanites? In 1916, W. Carleton Wood was still able to write: "It is not known that the wailing for Tammuz, or Adonis, had any place in Canaanite worship; but if so, then, mourning was a method of disclaiming responsibility for the death of the agricultural god and of making supplication for his return at the time of the spring feast, as for instance at Byblos."[34]

The discovery and decipherment of Ugaritic shed new light on the question. Weeping for Baal appears in the Ugaritic Baal cycle. When Anat finds Baal dead, she weeps: ʿd tšbʿ bk tšt k yn udmʿt, "she drinks weeping until she is sated, tears like wine" (*KTU* 1.6 I 9–10). This weeping for Baal can hardly be separated from the toponym that means "Baal of Weeping."

IV. עין בכי (Spring of Weeping)

Toponym 4 is עין בכי. Like בעל בכי, it is a Phoenician toponym known only from rabbinic literature (*b. ʿAbod. Zar.* 11b).[35] This toponym, reminiscent of the

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M. Y. L. Sacks; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1956), 144: "Some interpret it as a toponym similar to Bochim in Judges [2:1, 5]." Most Jewish commentators took שום בעל בכי either as garlic from בעל בכי or as a variety of garlic that causes tearing of the eyes; see Isaac b. Melchizedek of Siponto, פירוש הריבמ״ץ לרבנו יצחק ב״ר מלכי צדק מסימפונט למשנה זרעים (ed. N. Sacks; Jerusalem: Institute for the Complete Israeli Talmud, 1975), 311, and the parallels cited there in nn. 79–81.

[32] Rudolf Kittel, *Studien zur hebräischen Archäologie und Religionsgeschichte* (BWANT 1; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908), 138 n. 2; Stanley A. Cook, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology* (Schweich Lectures 1925; London: Pub. for the British Academy by H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1930), 219 n. 1; Stefan Wild, *Libanesische Ortsnamen: Typologie und Deutung* (Beiruter Texte und Studien 9; Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1973), 222–23.

[33] Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 22; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 171.

[34] W. Carleton Wood, "The Religion of Canaan: From the Earliest Times to the Hebrew Conquest," *JBL* 35 (1916): 211.

[35] Cf. Lévy, "Cultes," 194.

biblical אלון בכות, "oak of weeping" (Gen 35:8) and perhaps עמק הבכא (Psa 84:7),[36] appears in an addendum to a list of five major idolatrous temples, a list that begins with the temple of Bel in Babylon and the temple of Nebo in Borsippa. The addendum lists two additional temples, including (according to one version) נדבכה שבעין בכי. This appears to be equivalent to what is today called the Acropolis of Baalbek, that is, the Sanctuary of Jupiter Heliopolitanus.[37]

In any event, it is clear that this temple is located in a place named after a spring (cf. עין גדי, etc.). The place in question is usually identified with בעל בכי = Baalbek, which is located near a spring whose Arabic name is Rās el-ʿAyn.[38] In the words of Jesaias Press, "the spring found in בעל בכי is called עין בכי, and after its name the city is sometimes called עין בכי."[39]

The identification of עין בכי with Baalbek is virtually certain, because there was no idolatrous temple complex in the ancient Near East that was more prominent in the time of the rabbis than that of Baalbek. Writing in Caesarea ca. 335, Eusebius points to Baalbek as a place where ancient pagan practices, including cultic prostitution, could still be seen in his last years:

> And, that such were the things which they did, when assimilating themselves to their Deities, we can readily shew from this, that the Phenicians our neighbors, as we ourselves have seen, are busied with these things, even now, in Baalbeck; the ancient injurious excesses and corrupting paths of vice, being persevered in there, even to this time; so, that the women there enter not into the bands of lawful marriage, until they have been first corrupted in a way contrary to law, and have been made to partake in the lawless services of the mysteries of Venus.[40]

A century later, Rabbula, bishop of Edessa, and Eusebius, bishop of Kenneshrin, went "to Baalbek, city of the heathens, and entered the house of their idols . . . in

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[36] So Yoshitaka Kobayashi, "Baca, Valley of," *ABD* 1:566.

[37] Ragette, *Baalbek*, 27. In Akkadian, *natbāku* is used of a course of bricks (*CAD* vol. 11 N2, p. 119). In Biblical Aramaic, נדבך refers to a course of stone or timber (Ezra 6:4). In later Jewish Aramaic, it probably came to refer to the topmost course of a temple podium and then to the entire podium. It was thus very similar to the term *stylobate*, which can be found used in both of these ways today. For a different view, see Lévy, "Cultes," 201–5.

[38] For this spring, see Edward Robinson, *Later Biblical Researches in Palestine, and in the Adjacent Regions* (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1856), 506; William M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book: Lebanon, Damascus and Beyond Jordan* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1886), 336–37; Theodor Wiegand, *Baalbek: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen in den Jahren 1898 bis 1905* (3 vols.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1921–25), 1:22–23; and see further below.

[39] Jesaias Press, ארץ ישראל: אנציקלופדיה טופוגרפית-היסטורית (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1946–55), 112. Cf. Pinchas Neaman, אנציקלופדיה לגיאוגראפיה תלמודית (Tel-Aviv: J. Chachik, 1972), 1:281; and B. Z. Segal, הגיאוגרפיה במשנה (Jerusalem: Ha-Makhon le-heker ha-mishnah, 1979), 46. I am indebted to Menachem Jacobowitz for the last reference.

[40] Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, *On the Theophanīa* (trans. Samuel Lee; Cambridge: Duncan & Malcolm, 1843), 74. For the dating of this work, see Aryeh Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism* (Jewish and Christian Perspectives 3; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 276–77.

order to break them."[41] This probably refers to the temple of Bacchus. The temple of Jupiter was closed by Theodosius in ca. 380 C.E.,[42] but the temple of Bacchus resisted the Christians until it was destroyed by fire together with its idols in ca. 554.[43]

The prominence of Baalbek's main temple derived, in part, from the popularity of its chief deity, Jupiter Heliopolitanus. According to M. Avi-Yonah:

> This is one of the best known gods of antiquity, of whom we have scores of figural representations and more than a hundred inscriptions, scattered over the whole of the empire. It should be noted in this connection that the Phoenicians were particularly zealous in spreading this cult.[44]

> In the second century A.D. the worship of the Heliopolitan god assumed new intensity. The immense temples at Baalbek were completed in the time of Antoninus Pius; the worship of the god spread to Palestine, where coins were struck with his image at Neapolis, Eleutheropolis (Beit Guvrin) and Nicopolis (Emmaus) in the years 158–218.[45]

All of this makes it unlikely that the rabbis would have omitted Baalbek's temple complex from their list. In the words of Isidore Lévy: "if ʿEn-Baki is not Heliopolis, then the most famous of the holy cities of Roman Syria does not appear on the list that claims to enumerate them."[46]

There is reason to believe that the main spring of Rās el-ʿAyn was a sacred spring. The German excavators in 1898–1905 found semicircular niches, presumably for cult statues, next to the spring, at the spot where the water emerged from the ground with particular force.[47] Remains found in the 1970s by Haroutune Kalayan indicate that (1) the circular basin of the spring was constructed during the Roman period; (2) the basin was surrounded by a ballustrade; (3) there was a podium temple nearby; (4) a road led from the temple of Bacchus to Rās el-ʿAyn.[48] The spring may well have been consecrated to Jupiter Heliopolitanus, identified with Hadad-Baal, like the other spring that provides water to Baalbek, ʿAyn el-Jūj.[49]

I suggest that the spring of עין בכי was the site of ritual weeping for Baal. It is even possible that the spring was viewed as a weeping eye, perhaps the eye of the

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[41] *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae Episcopi Edesseni, Balaei, aliorumque opera selecta* (ed. J. J. Overbeck; Oxford: Clarendon, 1865), 169 line 26–170 line 1.

[42] Ragette, *Baalbek*, 68–69; idem, *Temple Triad*, 7; Hajjar, *La triade*, 3:382.

[43] Ragette, *Baalbek*, 71; Jidejian, *Baalbek*, 67; Hajjar, *La triade*, 3:382.

[44] M. Avi-Yonah, "Mount Carmel and the God of Baalbek," *IEJ* 2 (1952): 120. For details, see Hajjar, *La triade*, 2:523–58.

[45] Avi-Yonah, "Mount Carmel," 124.

[46] Lévy, "Cultes," 193.

[47] Wiegand, *Baalbek*, 1:22–23.

[48] Haroutune Kalayan, "Baalbek, un ensemble récemment découvert," in *Liban: Les grands sites, Tyr, Byblos, Baalbek = Dossiers d'Archéologie* [Paris: Archeologia S.A.] 12 (1975): 29–30.

[49] For the latter, see Hajjar, *La triade*, 3:275.

earth or of Baal himself.[50] In that case, עין בכי would mean "eye of weeping" as well as "spring of weeping," and בכי would refer to the weeping of the spring as well as the weeping of the Baal worshipers sitting beside it.[51] The Roman road leading from the temple of Bacchus to the spring of weeping at Rās el-ʿAyn may have been used for an annual funeral procession for Baal. According to Plutarch (*Is. Os.* 13.356B; 15.357A), when Isis was in mourning for Osiris, whom "the Greeks came to identify . . . with Dionysus," she "came to Byblus and sat down by a spring, all dejection and tears." Here we have another case of weeping at a Phoenician spring for a dead god.

V. *Bᶜlbk/Baᶜlabakku* (Baal-Bacchus)

Toponym 5 is *Baalbek* itself, vocalized *Baᶜlabakku* in classical Arabic. Most modern scholars derive this toponym from בעל בקעה. However, as demonstrated in the appendix below, this etymology is highly problematic. A far more plausible etymology was suggested in a footnote by Claude Reignier Conder in 1887:

> In the course of inquiry I have never met with any explanation of the name Baalbek, which is spelt with Caph. Possibly in this we should recognize Bacchus. . . . A Bacchic dance is shown on the interior of the smaller temple at Baalbek (on a bas-relief showing the thyrsus with Pan's-pipe, and horns, which I copied in 1881). . . .[52]

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[50] Cf. Ibn Ezra's commentary to Lam 1:16 and Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebräisches und chaldäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (2nd ed.; Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1823), 565: "Das Auge ist eine (Thränen-) Quelle, und diese Beobachtung mochte es seyn, die den sinnlichen Menschen bestimmte, beydes durch ein Wort auszudrücken. So im Pers. *čašm* Auge, *čašme* Quelle." So too *TLOT* 2:877, s.v. עַיִן *ᶜayin* **eye**: "The eye appears somewhat more frequently as the source of tears . . . , which early engendered the metaphor *ᶜayin* = 'spring.'" We are dealing with a very old metaphor with mythological overtones. It is attested in Akkadian as well as Hebrew and can thus probably be reconstructed for Proto-Semitic. In Hebrew, it appears to be a dead metaphor, but it is occasionally revived, e.g., Jer 8:23: וְעֵינִי מְקוֹר דִּמְעָה and *b. ᶜErub.* 19a: שבוכין ומורידין דמעות כמעיין . Cf. also the English expression "weeping spring."

[51] According to some, מספד הדד רמון בבקעת מגדון, "the mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo" (Zech 12:11), belongs here as well. For the controversy, see Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25C; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 343–44.

[52] Claude Reignier Conder, *Syrian Stone-Lore; or, The Monumental History of Palestine* (New York: Scribner & Welford, 1887), 70. Conder ties his etymology of *Baalbek* to an etymology of *Bacchus*, "whose name has been derived from Baku, to weep (cf. the Biblical Bochim (Judges ii. 1) and Baca (Psalm lxxxiv. 6)." The latter etymology probably derives ultimately from an entry in the lexicon of Hesychius, discussed in section VI below. Although there is no reason to believe that *Bacchus* has any etymological connection with the Semitic root for "weeping" (see n. 72 below), the Mishnaic Hebrew names of Baalbek show that Conder was not entirely wrong in comparing the toponym *Bochim*.

Conder's interpretation of the bas-relief in the smaller, better preserved temple of Baalbek has stood the test of time. During the German excavations of Baalbek in 1898–1905, Otto Puchstein once again noted Dionysiac motifs in the reliefs decorating the smaller temple and gave it the name that it still bears: "Temple of Bacchus."[53] The presence of Dionysiac motifs in the reliefs was reaffirmed by Henri Seyrig and C. Picard.[54] It is true that the attribution of the temple to Bacchus was questioned by some in the past,[55] but the most recent study, by Peter W. Haider, considers the attribution a proven fact.[56] According to Haider, there was even a small sanctuary dedicated to Bacchus at Baalbek before the temple of Bacchus was built (140/150 c.e., during the reign of Antoninus Pius). The sanctuary, which lies in the same *temenos* as the later temple, is decorated with a frieze depicting animals associated with Dionysus as well as the head of a youth with the label "Dionysos."[57]

Residual effects of the cult of Bacchus, with its wine-drinking rituals and competitions,[58] can perhaps be seen in a medieval description of Baalbek. In the introduction to his geographical treatise (tenth century c.e.), al-Muqaddasī writes: "There are no greater drinkers of wine(s) than the people of Baalbek and Egypt."[59] In his description of the city, he gives its ruins and its grapes equal billing: "Baalbek is an ancient city in which there are sown fields and wondrous things, the source of grapes."[60]

It is hard to imagine a closer phonetic match than that between *Baʿlabakku* and *Baʿal-Bacchus*, both with a geminated voiceless aspirated velar stop.[61] *Baal-*

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[53] Wiegand, *Baalbek*, 2:86.

[54] Henri Seyrig, "La triade héliopolitaine et les temples de Baalbek," *Syria* 10 (1929): 319–25; C. Picard, "Les Frises historiées autour de la cella et devant l'adyton, dans le temple de Bacchus at Baalbek," *Mélanges syriens offerts à monsieur René Dussaud, secrétaire de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, par ses amis et ses élèves* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 30; Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939), 1:319–43.

[55] For discussion and literature, see Jidejian, *Baalbek*, 30–31; Ragette, *Baalbek*, 40, 43–44; Hajjar, *La triade*, 3:339–40.

[56] Peter W. Haider, "Götter und Glaubensvorstellungen in Heliopolis-Baalbek," in Ruprechtsberger, *Vom Steinbruch zum Jupitertempel,* 127: ". . . dieses zweifellos Dionysos/Bacchus geweihten Tempels." Ragette's recent discussion (*Temple Triad*, 38–39), in contrast to his earlier one (see the preceding footnote), mentions no other possible attribution.

[57] Haider, "Götter," 126.

[58] John M. Dillon, "Dionysus," *ABD* 2:201–2.

[59] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsī fī Maʿrifat al-Aqālīm* (ed. M. J. de Goeje; Leiden: Brill, 1906), 34 line 11.

[60] Ibid., 160 lines 14–15. For other sources, see Seyrig, "La triade," 350.

[61] In Latin and Greek, such stops are often written *cch* and χχ, with the aspiration represented only in the second (released) half; cf. LXX Ζαχχουρ = זַכּוּר (Num 13:4), Σοχχωθ = סֻכֹּת (Num 33:5), etc. See also n. 72 below. Greek βάκχοι appears in the Syriac version of Pseudo-Callisthenes as *bkw;* see Karl Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1928), 73 s.v.

Bacchus may be compared with other double names such as *Zeus-Belos*, attested in Herodotus and Philo of Byblos.[62] Since Hadad-Baal and Bacchus-Dionysus are both fertility gods[63] portrayed (frequently) with bull horns,[64] syncretism between Hadad-Baal and Bacchus-Dionysus is by no means unnatural. Indeed, Julius Wellhausen seems to have viewed this syncretism as self-evident, speaking of "Baal-Dionysus" and "the Baal whom the Greeks identified with Dionysus."[65] Edward Lipiński believes that the Semitic god depicted as Dionysus on Sidonian coins from the Roman period is Baal: "A Baal, god of vegetation who dies and is reborn following the rhythm of the seasons and the stages of grain growing and viticulture, seems to be a better candidate for this fusion of the Greek god [= Dionysos] with an indigenous deity."[66] Seyrig conjectures that, like Bacchus, "the Baal of the Bekaa was regarded as the dispenser of vintages."[67]

This proposal raises new questions. How does it relate to the view that "the Greeks . . . considered Baal-Haddad [*sic,* for Hadad] as equivalent to Helios, the sun, and therefore called Baalbek Heliopolis."[68] And how does Baal-Bacchus relate to the other gods of Heliopolis, especially Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury? It is generally assumed that Baal-Hadad was identified at Baalbek with Jupiter. Some schol-

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[62] Philo of Byblos, *The Phoenician History* (ed. Harold W. Attridge and Robert A. Oden, Jr. (CBQMS 9; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 53; cf. "Melkarthos, who is also known as Heracles" (ibid., 53), "Zeus, called both Demarous and Adodos (= Hadad)" (ibid., 55), "The Phoenicians say that Astarte is Aphrodite" (ibid., 55), "The Phoenicians call him (Muth) Death and Pluto" (ibid., 57), "the goddess Baaltis who is also Dione" (ibid., 57), "Kronos, whom the Phoenicians call El" (ibid., 63).

[63] For Baal as the Canaanite god of fertility, see Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion according to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit* (trans. W. G. E. Watson; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 1999), 28; Alberto R. W. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (Biblical and Judaic Studies 8; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 191, 193, 195–96, 199, 205, 207, 214, 257, 267, 284, 291. For Dionysus as the Greek god of fertility, see *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (3 vols.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1:631, s.v. "Dionysos."

[64] See Green, *Storm-God*, 291 (Baal); Margit L. Süring, *The Horn-Motif in the Hebrew Bible and Related Ancient Near Eastern Literature and Iconography* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1980), 167, 170–71 (Baal); Ed Greenstein, "הפנתאון הכנעני והשקפתו בכתבי אוגרית," in *Ancient Gods: Polytheism in Eretz Israel and Neighboring Countries from the Second Millennium BCE to the Islamic Period* (ed. M. Kister et al.; Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2008), 62 (Baal); and Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (trans. J. Raffan; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 64 (Dionysus).

[65] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885), 414, 447.

[66] Lipiński , *Dieux*, 169.

[67] Seyrig, "La triade," 350.

[68] Ragette, *Temple Triad*, 19–20; cf. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 7 n. 13, cited in n. 85 below; Jidejian, *Baalbek*, 5: "The Ptolemies of Egypt who probably associated the Semitic Baal with the Egyptian Rê and the Greek Helios, the Sun, called the city Heliopolis"; Leisten, "Baalbek," 439.

ars believe that Bacchus was identified with Mercury.[69] I have no quarrel with any of these views, for they all relate to an earlier time period. I shall suggest below that Baal came to be identified primarily with Bacchus and that Heliopolis came to be called *Bᶜlbk* only after the temple of Jupiter was closed by Theodosius in ca. 380 C.E. and the priests of Baal-Jupiter presumably moved next door to the temple of Bacchus.

VI. Baal of Weeping > Baal-Bacchus

How did *Bᶜlbk*/*Baᶜlabakku* (Baal-Bacchus) replace the original Phoenician toponym בעל בכי (Baal of Weeping)? On one level this looks like a simple met-analysis: the final vowel of בעל בכי was reanalyzed as the relational (*nisbah*) suffix so that שום בעל בכי changed its meaning from "garlic of Baᶜal-Bekī" to "Baalbekian garlic." The Syriac and Arabic forms of the toponym would then be back-formations derived from the new adjective.

On another level, the replacement is a folk etymology that may reflect histor-ical events. The *terminus ante quem* for the change is 411 C.E., the date of the ear-liest Syriac manuscript (BL Add. ᴍꜱ 12150) in which the form *Bᶜlbk* is attested.[70] The *terminus post quem* is two centuries earlier, when the tannaitic sources that contain the form בעל בכי were edited. A more speculative *terminus post quem* is ca. 380 C.E., when the temple of Jupiter was closed and the pagans of Baalbek were left with only one major temple, the temple of Bacchus. It is reasonable to assume that, at that point, the cult of Baal-Jupiter was transferred from the temple of Jupiter to the temple of Bacchus, and Baal came to be identified primarily with Bacchus. Thus, the end of the fourth century would have been the perfect time to change the name of the city to Baal-Bacchus.

Evidence for a folk etymology around that time can be found in the Greek lexicon of Hesychius of Alexandria (fifth century C.E.). That lexicon lists an alleged Phoenician (Φοίνικες) noun βάκχος with the meaning κλαυθμός ("weeping")

[69] Seyrig, "La triade," 314 n. 1, 325, 348–53; Hajjar, *La triade*, 3:170–71, 340–41; idem, "Baal-bek," 2489, 2496–97.

[70] It appears in the Syriac translation (ca. 400 C.E.?) of Eusebius's *On the Theophania*; see n. 91 below. The Greek original presumably had the form *Heliopolis*. It is difficult to know what to make of Syriac *Bᶜldbk* in the Peshitta to Josh 19:45. The form is found in all manuscripts of the Peshitta, including one from 598/599 and three from the seventh century (*The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshiṭta Version* [Leiden: Brill, 1972–], part II, fascicle 1b, 49) and is tra-ditionally understood as a variant of *Bᶜlbk* (Hasan Bar Bahlul, *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano Bar-Bahlule* [ed. R. Duval; Paris: Reipublicae typographaeo, 1901], 1:416). But the fact that it ren-ders בני ברק, which is nowhere near Baalbek, makes *Bᶜldbk* look like an inner-Syriac corruption.

alongside the divine name Βάκχος = *Bacchus*.[71] Greek κλαυθμός is the regular translation equivalent for בכי in the LXX. It seems clear that Βάκχος = κλαυθμός = בכי cannot be separated from Baal-Bacchus = בעל בכי. Indeed, it would appear that Hesychius (or his source) deduced that βάκχος means κλαυθμός in Phoenician from the Semitic name of Heliopolis, at a time when the old form of the name still survived alongside the new form.[72]

VII. Conclusions

The prominence of Baalbek as a pagan religious center in the Roman period is based on a long tradition. Baalbek witnessed both the rise of Canaanite religion in the Bronze Age and its fall in the Byzantine period, a trajectory that can be traced with the help of five Semitic toponyms: (1) *Mbk Nhrm* (Source of the Two Rivers), (2) בקעת און (Valley of Idolatry), (3) בעל בכי (Baal of Weeping), (4) עין בכי (Spring of Weeping), and (5) *Bᶜlbk/Baᶜlabakku* (Baal-Bacchus).

Toponym 1, a poetic toponym describing the location of Il's mountain abode, is attested in the Ugaritic Baal cycle and in a Ugaritic serpent incantation. Very similar phrases (e.g., "at the source of two important rivers") are used by modern scholars to describe the location of Baalbek. The rivers that rise near Baalbek are Lebanon's greatest rivers, the Litani and the Asi (Orontes). This toponym must refer to Baalbek.

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[71] *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon* (ed. M. Schmidt; Jena: Sumptibus Frederici Maukii, 1858–68), 1:355.

[72] For the view that βάκχος is actually derived from the Northwest Semitic passive participle meaning "bewailed," see Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons* (1858; London: S. W. Partridge, 1903), 21; John Garnier, *The Worship of the Dead* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1909), 321; and Michael C. Astour, *Hellenosemitica: An Ethnic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 174–75. Astour argues that βάκχος can represent the form בָּכוּי because כ was frequently rendered χχ "without direct relation to whether or not the *kaph* had a dageš (forte or lene)." However, the evidence cited by Astour to prove that Greek geminated χχ (see n. 61 above) could be used to render ungeminated כ is not convincing. One piece of evidence cited by Astour, Ζακχου = זַכָּי (Neh 7:14) has a geminated כ despite Astour's erroneous transcription *Zakāy*. Another piece of evidence cited by him, (Βεελ)σεπφων = צְפֹן (בַּעַל) (Exod 14:2) is equally invalid, because the Greek is presumably a rendering not of the Hebrew toponym but of its Aramaic equivalent, which has a geminated פ; see, e.g., Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1990), 468b s.v. צָפּוּן, צִיפּוּן. For Aramaic influence on the transcription of proper names in the LXX (including perhaps the first half of בַּעַל צְפֹן!), see Jan Joosten, "The Septuagint as a Source of Information on Egyptian Aramaic in the Hellenistic Period," in *Aramaic in Its Historical and Linguistic Setting* (ed. Holger Gzella and Margaretha L. Folmer; Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission 50; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 97–99.

Toponym 2, from Amos 1:5, refers to בקעת הלבנון, the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon—or, at least, the portion of it near Il's abode at Baalbek. It is usually thought to be a cacophemism for *בקעת בעל (Baal's Valley), but Hosea's use of און for אל (and בשת for בעל), suggests that the real name was *בקעת אל (Il's Valley). Il's association with Baalbek appears to have persisted until the Roman period, for his epithet, *qn ʾrṣ*, "creator/possessor of the earth," appears as *Connaros* in Greek and Latin inscriptions from Baalbek.

Toponyms (3) and (4) are the original Phoenician names of Baalbek, preserved only in rabbinic literature. They allude to the weeping for Baal in Canaanite mythology, recorded in the Ugaritic Baal cycle and apparently recreated in a ritual at the sacred spring (modern Rās el-ʿAyn) near Baalbek. It is possible that the spring was viewed as a weeping eye, perhaps the eye of the earth or of Baal himself. If so, עין בכי means "eye of weeping" as well as "spring of weeping," and בכי refers to the weeping of the spring as well as the weeping of the Baal worshipers sitting beside it. Another case of weeping at a Phoenician spring for a dead god is known from Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*.

Toponym (5) is the later name of the city, known from classical Syriac and classical Arabic. It is usually thought to be derived from בעל בקעה (Baal of the Valley), but it is really a hyphenated name reflecting syncretism between Semitic Baal and Roman Bacchus. The name probably arose at the end of the fourth century, when the temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus was closed by Theodosius and the pagans of Baalbek were left with only one major temple, the temple of Bacchus. Hadad-Baal had previously been identified with Jupiter Heliopolitanus; however, the new fusion of Hadad-Baal with Bacchus-Dionysus was by no means unnatural, since both were fertility gods portrayed (frequently) with bull horns.

On the linguistic level, the change appears to be a folk etymology involving a simple metanalysis: the final vowel of בעל בכי was reanalyzed as the relational (*nisbah*) suffix so that שום בעל בכי changed its meaning from "garlic of Baʿal-Bekī" to "Baalbekian garlic." If so, the Syriac and Arabic forms of the toponym are back-formations derived from the new adjective. Evidence for this folk etymology is preserved in the Greek lexicon of Hesychius of Alexandria (fifth century c.e.), which lists an alleged Phoenician (Φοίνικες) noun βάκχος with the meaning "weeping" (κλαυθμός) alongside the divine name Βάκχος = *Bacchus*.

The change from toponym 4 to toponym 5 can thus be viewed as the product of a chain reaction. Political change in the Roman Empire led to the closure of the main temple of Baalbek and the consolidation of cults there. The consolidation of cults led to a theological change—the identification of Baal with Bacchus. The theological change in turn triggered a linguistic change—a folk etymology that changed the name of the city from בעל בכי (Baal of Weeping) to *Bʿlbk*/*Baʿalabakku* (Baal-Bacchus).

It was not until ca. 554 c.e. that the temple of Bacchus was destroyed by fire together with its idols. There is evidence that the celebration of pagan feasts and the

offering of sacrifices then shifted to private homes.[73] This continued until 579 C.E., when Tiberius sent an officer to Heliopolis who "arrested numerous heathens, recompensed them as their audacity deserved, humbling them and crucifying them, and slaying them with the sword. And on being put to the torture, and required to give the names of those who were guilty like themselves of heathenish error, they mentioned numerous persons in every district and city in their land . . . ."[74] This inquisition probably made it too dangerous to continue the ritual weeping for Baal-Hadad at the sacred spring. After two millennia or more, the last vestiges of Canaanite religion at Baalbek were eradicated.

Appendix:
Baal's Valley (*Biqᶜat Baᶜal*), Baal of the Valley (*Baᶜal Biqᶜāh*)

Since the eighteenth century, scholars have tried to uncover the etymology of *Baalbek*, but many of the suggestions that have been put forward are unconvincing. In 1856, Edward Robinson cited a few of them and wrote:

> . . . but as yet no satisfactory etymology or origin of the latter portion has been discovered. No ancient form is known, either in Hebrew or Aramaean, from which it can be well derived.[75]

This sentiment was echoed later by writers in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901), the *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (1912), and the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1960).[76]

The etymology cited most often today derives Baalbek from בעל בקעה, "Baal of the Valley." This etymology, frequently attributed to Ernest Renan or Otto Eissfeldt, is found already (in a slightly different form) in Campegius Vitringa's commentary on Isaiah (1714–1720). In discussing Isa 57:5, Vitringa refers to "Baalbeek h. e. בקעת בעל Baalis Vallis."[77] The etymology was subsequently included in

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[73] *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John Bishop of Ephesus* (trans. R. Payne Smith; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1860), 210–12.

[74] Ibid., 209–10.

[75] Robinson, *Later Biblical Researches*, 524.

[76] Frants Buhl, "Baalbek," *JE* 2:387: "The meaning of the second part of the name is inexplicable . . ."; A. Legendre, "Baalbek," *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (ed. F. Vigouroux; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1912), 1:1327: "Mais la seconde partie du mot n'est pas aussi facile à expliquer, et l'on n'a jusqu'ici trouvé aucune étymologie bien satisfaisante"; J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Baᶜlabakk," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 1:970: "Various hypotheses have been made as to the etymology of its name, in which the Semitic *Baal . . .* can be seen, but none seems entirely satisfactory."

[77] Campegius Vitringa, *Commentarius in librum prophetiarum Jesaiae* (Louvain: Franciscus Halma, 1714–20), 2:752 = (Herborn, Germany: Johan. Nicolai Andreae, 1715–22), 2:878.

the dictionaries of Augustin Calmet (1732) and John Brown (1759).[78] In later centuries it was adopted by Joseph Schwarz, Renan, Edward B. Pusey, S. Ronzevalle, Theodor Wiegand, Eissfeldt, and many others down to the present day.[79]

It did not take long for the flaws in this etymology to be noted. Already in 1749, Conrad Iken wrote that it "lacks any basis because Baalbek is written in Arabic with *k* and without [final] ʿ, whereas *valley* has *q* and ʿ—apart from the fact that it [the name] should not be *Bʿl Bqʿh* but rather *Bqʿt Bʿl*."[80] The first problem pointed out by Iken has proved intractable, and it has been cited by several scholars as a reason for rejecting the etymology.[81]

In fact, there are three phonological features of the Arabic form that are left unexplained by the etymology in question: (1) the unemphatic *k* (instead of emphatic *q*); (2) the gemination of the *k*;[82] (3) the absence of the second ʿ (made more inexplicable by the retention of the first ʿ). By contrast, the toponym בקעת הלבנון (Josh 11:17; 12:7) survives in Arabic in forms that exhibit none of these problems: *al-Baqʿah/Buqʿah* and *al-Biqāʿ*.[83] This contrast greatly magnifies the seriousness of the three problems.

Problems 2 and 3 have been largely ignored by proponents of the etymology; only problem 1 has received any attention at all. In response to problem 1, Renan,

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[78] Calmet, *Dictionary*, 1:668: "*Bikath-Baal*, . . . which at present goes by the name of *Baalbeck*, the Valley of *Baal*"; John Brown, *A Dictionary of the Holy Bible* (London: J. Beecroft, 1759), 115, s.v. Aven: "Aven, a plain in Syria. It seems to be the same with that of Baal-beck, or valley of Baal. . . ."

[79] Schwarz, *Descriptive Geography*, 61; Ernest Renan, *Mission de Phénicie* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1864), 320 n. 3; Edward Bouverie Pusey, *The Minor Prophets* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885), 1:241; Ronzevalle, "Notice," 471; Wiegand, *Baalbek*, 2:145; Seyrig, "La triade," 354; Otto Eissfeldt, "Die ältesten Bezeugungen von Baalbek als Kultstätte," *Forschungen und Fortschritte* 12 (1936): 51–53 = idem, *Ras Schamra und Sanchunjaton* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1939), 31–36; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 7 n. 13; Thomas Leisten, "Baalbek," *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2002–), 1:439.

[80] Iken, *Dissertationis*, 240.

[81] See Cook, *Religion*, 219 n. 1: "The Talmudic and Arab spellings are against any connection with the Beḳaʿ or valley"; René Dussaud, "Temples et cultes de la triade héliopolitaine a Baʿalbeck," *Syria* 23 (1942–43): 53 n. 3: "Cependant, come le dernier terme *BQʿ* n'a avec *BKK* qu'une lettre commune, il est difficile d'accepter cette identification"; Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1967), 32. Cf. B. Mazar, בעל חרמון in אנציקלופדיה מקראית, 289: "It is difficult to accept the view of Eissfeldt that Baalbek is none other than בעל בקעה." See also the sources cited in nn. 75–76 above. Ronzevalle ("Notice," 470) attempts to solve the problem by citing Mishnaic Hebrew בלבכ, but this a ghost form (see below).

[82] Ronzevalle ("Notice," 469) shows that the gemination is attested already in pre-Islamic poetry.

[83] See ibid. and Sourdel-Thomine, "al-Biḳāʿ," 1:1214. For our purposes, it hardly matters whether these forms were originally a transcription of the Phoenician name or a translation of it, using a native Arabic word for "swamp" (*baqʿah/buqʿah*) or "swamps" (*biqāʿ*). See also n. 18 above.

followed by A. Legendre in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, cited a form בעלבק from "Midrasch *Kohéleth*, IX."[84] The spelling *Baalbeq*, used by some prominent modern scholars,[85] appears to follow Renan and Legendre.

Unfortunately, בעלבק is a ghost form, the product of a series of errors. The form found in modern printed editions of *Eccl. Rab.* 9 is בלבקי (not בעלבק), and that is the form cited in 1868 by Adolphe Neubauer.[86] Neubauer takes בלבקי, a plant name, as a derivative of our toponym. He takes the words בלבקי יין in *Qohelet Rabbah* to mean "Balbekian wine."[87] Since Baalbek was later known for wine drinking,[88] this collocation might seem to be evidence for the identification of בלבק with Baalbek. However, this evidence is based on an egregious misreading of the text, since the two words in question belong to different phrases! In printed editions, the passage in question reads: . . . המרב מים ביין, בלבקי בשמן, "[a swindler] who mixes water into wine [or] *balbaqi* into oil . . . ." A manuscript of *Qohelet Rabbah* has מי בלבקיא for בלבקי, and the *Aruch* has an even better reading, citing מי גלבקיא ("glaucium juice") from the parallel passage in the *Sifra*.[89] It has long been agreed that גלבקיא < γλαύκιον is the correct reading of this lexeme, preserved by a number of witnesses.[90] In short, the alleged word for "Balbekian," בלבקי, is a corrupt form, which Renan corrupted even further to בעלבק.

It is clear, therefore, that there is no basis for the transcription *Baalbeq*. Our toponym has an unemphatic *k* in Arabic and Syriac, as does בעל בכי in Mishnaic Hebrew. Syriac *Bᶜlbk* cannot be attributed to Arabic influence, for it is attested in a number of early manuscripts: BL Add. ᴍs 12150 from 411 c.e. (the oldest dated Syriac manuscript),[91] BL Add. ᴍs 14652 from the sixth or seventh cen-

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[84] Renan, *Mission*, 320 n. 2; Legendre, "Baalbek," 1328.

[85] See, e.g., Pope, *El*, 75, 77; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 7 n. 13: "The Baᶜl of the 'Biqᶜat Baᶜl' (Baalbek; cf. Amos 1:5) evidently had solar features to judge by the Greek name of Baalbeq: Heliopolis"; Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24A; New York: Doubleday, 1989), 256. More recent examples can easily be found on the Internet.

[86] Neubauer, *La géographie*, 298 n. 1.

[87] Ibid.

[88] See at n. 59 above.

[89] Lieberman, תוספתא כפשוטה, 10:387.

[90] See Immanuel Löw's note in Samuel Krauss, *Griechische and lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum* (Berlin: S. Calvary, 1899), 2:155; and Jastrow, 243–44 s.v. גלבקיא.

[91] Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, *On the Theophania . . . a Syriac version edited from an ancient manuscript recently discovered* (ed. Samuel Lee: London: Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts, 1842) book 2, par. 14. For Lee's English translation of the passage, see at n. 40 above. For this manuscript, see William Henry Paine Hatch and Lucas Van Rompay, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2002), 152; Martin Bailey, "Fragments of the World's Oldest Christian Manuscript Found in Egyptian Monastery," *The Art Newspaper* (www.theartnewspaper.com), posted February 18, 2008.

tury,[92] and BL Add. ᴍꜱ 14640 from the late seventh century.[93] Arabic *Bᶜlbk* is attested on coins of the Omayyad caliphs minted at Baalbek in the seventh century.[94] The etymology that derives Baalbek from בעל בקעה, "Baal of the Valley," must be abandoned.

[92] *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae Episcopi Edesseni, Balaei,* xviii and 169 line 27.

[93] *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae Ecclesiasticae Pars Tertia* (CSCO 105; ed. E. W. Brooks; Paris, 1935), i and 154 line 13.

[94] Jidejian, *Baalbek*, 71–72. The earliest one, with the name of the city in both Greek and Arabic, still shows Emperor Heraclius and his son with the Christian cross.

Matthew 23–25: The Extent
of Jesus' Fifth Discourse

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Matthew's most prominent and best-known structural feature is the series of five discourses. Known variously as five books, speeches, sermons, or discourses, a good many scholars have proposed that these five sections form an integral part of the macrostructure of the book, or that Matthew intends for readers to use the five discourses as didactic material for discipleship. However, the extent of the fifth and final discourse is a matter of some debate. In the present study, I will examine the debate over the extent of the fifth discourse and show that it encompasses chs. 23 through 25. In my conclusion I will draw together ideas found throughout the article in order to show the significance of the extent of the fifth discourse for the interpretation of Matthew and for the structure of the Gospel. To be sure, many scholars have offered structural alternatives, such as Jack Dean Kingsbury's three-fold outline revolving around plot development and the phrase ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο.[1] Even if one takes such an alternative approach to the structure of Matthew, the discourses still stand out as a unique set of passages requiring attention, and I will suggest in my conclusion that what are often considered competing outlines may in fact be complementary.

I. The Problem

Despite the attention paid to Matthew's structure in the scholarly literature, the particular issue of the extent of the final discourse has not been addressed in a full-

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[1] Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (London: SPCK, 1975); Thomas B. Slater, "Notes on Matthew's Structure," *JBL* 99 (1980): 436; but see the caution and criticisms in Frans Neirynck, "APO TOTE ERXATO and the Structure of Matthew," *ETL* 64 (1988): 21–59 and Dale C. Allison, Jr., "Matthew: Structure, Biographical Impulse and the *Imitatio Christi*," in *The Four Gospels, 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (ed. F. van Segbroeck; BETL 100; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 1203.

length essay. The present study fills this lacuna. The absence of a full-scale critical analysis of the extent of the discourse has perhaps contributed to some confusion and ambiguity in the literature. Warren Carter identifies the extent of the discourse as chs. 23–25 on three occasions and chs. 24–25 on three occasions, both in the same text.[2] Ulrich Luz likewise offers opposing views. He states in the first install-ment of his commentary that chs. 23 and 24–25 "belong intrinsically together."[3] Elsewhere he says that "the last great discourse in Matthew's Gospel . . . [a]ctually consists of two discourses; Matthew has treated the two quite unrelated discourses of chapter 23 and chapters 24–25 as a single unit in order to keep the number of dis-courses down to five."[4] However, in two other texts Luz restricts the extent of Matthew's discourse to chs. 24–25 only and identifies ch. 23 as a "shorter discourse" belonging with those in chs. 11, 12, and 21–22.[5] D. A. Carson and W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison label ch. 23 "narrative" in the introductory outlines of their respective commentaries, but then call it "discourse" in the commentaries proper.[6] Kari Syreeni avoids such confusion with a vote for plurality: "Matthew could have it both ways."[7] Accordingly, he identifies the discourse throughout his work as "Matthew [23]24–25." In the current climate, one can even find misrepresentations of B. W. Bacon's influential thesis, ascribing to him the view that the range of the fifth discourse consists only of chs. 24–25.[8]

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[2] Warren Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 47, 60, 106, 137, 140–41, 150.

[3] Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary* (trans. W. Linss; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 44.

[4] Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew* (trans. J. B. Robinson; New Testament Theology; Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 121.

[5] Matthew 24:3 begins "the last of the five Matthean discourses" (Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21–28* [trans. James E. Crouch; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005], 178; cf. his *Stud-ies in Matthew* [trans. Rosemary Selle; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 22). To my knowledge Luz nowhere gives any indication of a reason for such a change.

[6] D. A. Carson, "Matthew," *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 8 (ed. F. Gaebelein; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 55, 469 ("it is essentially discourse"); W. D. Davies and Dale C. Alli-son, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentry on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97), 1:61 (B. W. Bacon's observation of the "alternation between narrative and discourse is firmly established, as is the number of major discourses, five") and n. 31; contrast 3:308 (ch. 23 is "a discourse addressed to disciples and crowds"). Similarly Paul Gaechter notes the discourse nature of ch. 23 and then in the same paragraph identifies it as *Erzäh-lung* material (*Das Matthäus Evangelium: Ein Kommentar* [Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1964], 16).

[7] Kari Syreeni, *The Making of the Sermon on the Mount: A Procedural Analysis of Matthew's Redactoral Activity,* part 1, *Methodology and Compositional Analysis* (AASF; Dissertationes Huma-narum Litterarum 44; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1987), 94–96, cited by David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel* (Reading the New Testament; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1999), 239.

[8] Young S. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd: Studies in the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and in the Gospel of Matthew* (WUNT 2/216; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 373.

A number of earlier scholars supported seeing Matthew 23–25 as a unified discourse, and a handful of recent interpreters continue to support this view.[9] More recently, however, those opposed to seeing the three chapters as a unified discourse now constitute an overwhelming majority of those taking a position, and, particularly among works published since 2000, one can see virtual unanimity on the question: in today's scholarship, Matthew 24–25 is, de facto, the fifth discourse.[10]

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[9] B. W. Bacon, "The 'Five Books' of Moses against the Jews," *Expositor* 15 (1918): 56–66; Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1974), 12–13; Craig Blomberg, *Matthew* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 23–27; Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 37, 535; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 10–11, 648; H. B. Green, *The Gospel according to Matthew in the Revised Standard Version* (New Clarendon Bible; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 17; Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium* (BET 33; Munich: Kaiser, 1966), 85–90; Jacques Dupont, *Les Béatitudes* (3 vols.; EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1958–73), 3:467–68; Eugene M. Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew," *NIB* 8:428–29; C. H. Lohr, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew," *CBQ* 23 (1961): 403–35, here 427; Carolyn Thomas, "Of Weeds and Wheat: A Literary Critical Study of Matthew 13:36–43," in *Literary Encounters with the Reign of God* (ed. Sharon H. Ringe and H. C. Paul Kim; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 150–51; Russell Pregeant, *Matthew* (Chalice Commentaries for Today; St. Louis: Chalice, 2004).

[10] Rolf Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium* (FRLANT 91; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 123–27; Gaechter, *Das Matthäus Evangelium*, 17, 721; Ernst Haenchen, "Matthäus 23," *ZTK* 48 (1951): 38–63; David L. Turner, *Matthew* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008); R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) and his earlier commentary; John Nolland, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 58–59; Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary,* vol. 1, *The Christbook Matthew 1–12* (rev. and exp. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 12; John Riches, *Matthew* (NTG; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 12; David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NCB; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972), 47, 316–18; Pierre Bonnard, *L'Évangile selon Saint Matthieu* (2nd ed.; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1970), 7, 345; Donald Senior, *What Are They Saying about Matthew?* (New York: Paulist, 1983), 21; Kingsbury, *Matthew*, 4–5; Ben Witherington III, *Matthew* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2006), 15–16, 421; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 571 n. 4; Terence J. Keegan, "Introductory Formulae for Matthean Discourses," *CBQ* 44 (1982): 415–30; R. B. Doyle, "Matthew's Intention as Discerned by His Structure," *RB* 95 (1988): 34–54, here 46; Jan Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse: Composition and Content in Mt., XXIV-XXV," in *L'Evangile selon Matthieu: Rédaction et théologie* (ed. M. Didier; BETL 29; Gembloux: Duculot, 1972), 309; John P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church, and Morality in the First Gospel* (New York: Paulist, 1979), 45 n. 1, 261; Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia: Jesus' Eschatological Discourse in Matthew's Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia Academic Press, 2000); Rollin Grams, "The Temple Conflict Scene: A Rhetorical Analysis of Matthew 21–23," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. Duane F. Watson; JSNTSup 50; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 41–65; Philippe Rolland, "From the Genesis to the End of the World: The Plan of Matthew's Gospel," *BTB* 2 (1972): 156–57; E. Levesque, "Quelques procédés littéraires de Saint Matthieu," *RB* 25 (1916): 398; Christopher R. Smith, "Literary Evidences of the Five Fold Structure in the Gospel of Matthew," *NTS* 43 (1997):

Although as observed above no studies of note address this issue, scholars do on occasion give reasons for holding this position. The following analysis describes and responds to the various arguments offered for the separation of Matthew 23 from the subsequent two chapters. After responding to criticisms of an extended fifth discourse inclusive of Matthew 23, positive arguments will provide additional support for the present thesis.

II. Arguments for Separating Chapter 23 from 24–25 Based on Location and Audience

The first and second arguments are related and may be addressed together. First, it is claimed that Matthew signals an important structural shift by a change of location from the temple to the Mount of Olives. Second, it is claimed that separating the "two" discourses is warranted by a change in Jesus' audience from the disciples and crowds, opponents, and "Jerusalem" in ch. 23 to a "private" audience with the disciples in chs. 24–25.[11] Both views rely on Matt 24:1–3a as a pivot that ruptures 23 and 24–25, thus ruling ch. 23 out of the final discourse.

Those scholars who argue on the basis of such changes, however, fail to appreciate adequately the consistent presence of the disciples throughout ch. 23.[12] An

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540–41; Willem S. Vorster, *Speaking of Jesus: Essays on Biblical Language, Gospel Narrative, and the Historical Jesus* (ed. J. Eugene Botha; NovTSup 92; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 350; Boris Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew: Their Redaction, Form and Relevance for the Relationship between the Matthean Community and Formative Judaism* (FRLANT 189; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Lena Lybaek, *New and Old in Matthew 11–13: Normativity in the Development of Three Theological Themes* (FRLANT 198; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002), 50 n. 164; J. R. C. Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew* (NovTSup 102; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 259; Talvikki Mattila, *Citizens of the Kingdom: Followers in Matthew from a Feminist Perspective* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 83; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 44; Alistair I. Wilson, *When Will These Things Happen? A Study of Jesus as Judge in Matthew 21–25* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 67–68, 79. Donald A. Hagner and Allison both affirm this view in multiple places in addition to their commentaries. See most recently Hagner, "Holiness and Ecclesiology: The Church in Matthew," in *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew* (ed. J. Nolland and D. Gurtner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 170; and Allison, *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 141–42; in the latter text Allison inexplicably labels ch. 23 part of the "narrative" section in Matthew 24–25.

[11] Joachim Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium* (HTKNT; Freiburg: Herder, 1986), 2:309; France, *Matthew*, 857; Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 93.

[12] Davies and Allison cite a "close parallel" in *1 Enoch* 91–107, where "such woes alternate with words to the faithful" (*Matthew,* 3:258 n. 3); contrast Hagner, who finds the shift in audience "puzzling" and considers instruction for disciples to be "at best a secondary application of the passage" (*Matthew* [2 vols.; WBC 33A, 33B; Dallas: Word Books, 1993, 1995], 2:654).

antecedent situation in Matthew's discourses can be found, for the change of location and the partial shift in audience on offer in 24:1–3 are paralleled in the discourse of ch. 13. In the middle of this third discourse, Matthew charts Jesus' movement from sitting in a boat by the sea (13:1–2) back into his house (13:36) after the addition of an interpretive comment and psalm citation (13:34–35); the audience changes with the move into the house (and perhaps also in 13:10–11). This move provides for a shift in Jesus' audience, from the crowds and the disciples to the disciples alone. The counter-response from Jeffrey A. Gibbs, that the change in Matthew 13 is, "physically speaking, *only* the move into a house," neglects the importance of household language in Matthew 13 and the surrounding context, where a significant "redefinition" of family and household occurs.[13] This redefinition is based on one's *response to Jesus' teaching* as presented in the Matthean discourses themselves, which arguably invests the shift in locale with theological nuance.[14]

As is the case with ch. 13, then, the heart of chs. 23–25 also contains a geographical shift that connects two parts of a discourse, precisely in order to indicate a slight shift in audience without a break in theme. Matthew 13 and 24:1–3 also share the addition of conversation partners (the disciples) who in both instances seek understanding and thus provide a reason for the extension of Jesus' discourse. Matthew does not cease to speak of judgment on God's people and on Jerusalem from ch. 23 to ch. 24. The shift in physical location provides an important theological comment in addition to the change in audience, just as the similar shift in ch. 13 arguably does. In 24:1–2 the comment is eschatological in nature as Jesus leaves the temple—which he has just declared would be left desolate—and proceeds to address the coming judgment (itself warranted by and predicted in ch. 23) while sitting on the Mount of Olives, which evokes the eschatological context of Zechariah 14. It is difficult to see how the transition in 24:1–2 constitutes a greater interruption than the citation and shifts in audience and location in 13:34–36.

Numerical data support this conclusion. There are sixty-one words in the non-discourse material in 13:34–37a, and sixty-one words in the non-discourse material in 24:1–3a. The latter tally grows to only seventy-eight if Jesus' words in 24:2 are included. Furthermore, the discourse in ch. 13 possesses additional narrative elements (13:10, 51–52; twenty-four words in Greek) that are altogether lacking in chs. 23–25. And in the middle of the fourth discourse, 18:21 seems to reflect a move to private conversation, while a larger group of disciples is present for the preceding discourse (18:1). A pure discourse, free from narrative elements and audience shifts, is apparently not a Matthean *desideratum*.

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[13] Jesus' *exit* from the house (13:1) follows immediately on the heels of a words about a post-demonic house (12:44–45) and the redefinition of family (12:46–50) and the subsequent discussions regarding one's "house" (13:51–58), where Jesus justifies his rejection by his own "house."

[14] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 222 n. 4.

A third negative challenge likewise falls. Matthew 23, it is claimed, cannot be part of Matthew's five discourses because the speech is like much smaller "controversy" material. Davies and Allison urge that ch. 23 "be considered the extension and conclusion of the polemical narrative in 21–2" since it is "like the debate material" found elsewhere in Matthew ("e.g. 12.25–27, 39–42").[15] But since there is no interlocutor, this "debate-like material" belongs outside the realm of narrative and dialogue. As they point out, other elements such as classic teaching material are found here side-by-side with so-called debate material and comments regarding eschatological judgment. At a later point in this essay I will note the high value placed on negative examples by Matthew and others in his cultural setting, as Allison himself observes. It is unlikely that one can legitimately sustain a strong distinction between teaching for disciples and polemic that is of little or no use for instructing disciples.

III. Positive Reasons
for Separating Chapter 23 from 24–25

A fourth argument against a final discourse inclusive of chs. 23 through 25 is that thematic considerations render ch. 23 as "best perceived as the climax of the preceding confrontations."[16] About this point there should be little debate, but it is unfortunately advanced with a concomitant assumption that Matthew's discourses connect only or primarily to what precedes and not to what follows.[17] Many scholars, however, would dispute this understanding of the discourses as a whole. *Thematically,* ch. 23 obviously connects *both* with the previous passages and the following material.[18] Despite arguing for the independent nature of ch. 23, Alistair Wilson concludes that "the solemn words of chapter 23 form the framework of judgment in which the predictions and parables of chapters 24 and 25 make

[15] Davies and Allison, *Matthew,* 1:61. Similarly, Gaechter (*Matthäus*, 16, 721) concentrates on the precanonical form of the materials, using it to rule ch. 23 out of discourse status (along with the lack of the stereotypical ending).

[16] Carson, "Matthew," 469; and in idem, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New Testament Studies; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 64.

[17] Most recently by Turner, *Matthew*, passim.

[18] See Wim J. C. Weren, "The Macrostructure of Matthew's Gospel: A New Proposal," *Bib* 87 (2006): 171–200, for the discourses generally; and David Barr, "The Drama of Matthew's Gospel: A Reconsideration of Its Structure and Purpose," *TD* 24 (1976): 352, who comments, "The discourses are not dividers, but connectors, linking two sections of narrative together." I. Howard Marshall helpfully notes the ambiguity in the literature, a majority tendency toward seeing chs. 24–25 as the extent of the discourse, and the thematic connection between ch. 23 and what follows (*New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004], 109).

sense."[19] The list of such connections is long, and their accumulation and evaluation depend in part on how one interprets Matthew's audience. The following illustrations constitute clear and adequate evidence.

Most obviously, the lament over Jerusalem (23:36–39) seamlessly flows from the woes (23:13–35) to connect with what follows (the whole of ch. 24). Particularly acute is the connection between 23:36 (ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἥξει ταῦτα πάντα ἐπὶ τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην) and 24:34 (ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται).[20] The woes, representing a considerable intensification of the conflict of chs. 21 and 22, likewise connect to what follows (cf. 24:16). Matthew 23:32 reflects an amplification of great, historic conflict, the ultimate consequences of which are presented in ch. 24. Being "sentenced to hell" (23:33 NRSV) connects clearly thematically and verbally to the following two chapters, as it does to the preceding two chapters. The loss of the kingdom in 23:13 and that of the "house" in 23:38 most clearly refer *both* to the parable of the wicked tenants (21:33–43) *and* to the destruction of the temple and judgment on the nation in ch. 24. Matthew 23:29–32 is foreshadowed by the parables of the wicked tenants and the wedding banquet, but all of these in context point to the destructive events addressed in ch. 24. Nor, given the use of the future tense in 23:12, 34–36, will it do to suggest that the following two chapters are about future events ("future judgment" or the normal nomenclature, "eschatological discourse") while ch. 23 is about the present ("earthly ministry").[21] Clearly, ch. 23 possesses strong connections with what follows as well as with what precedes, and its connections with chs. 24–25 are without doubt stronger than those with chs. 21–22.

Fifth, a narrative connection is said to exist between Matt 24:3 and 5:1 which renders ch. 23 non-discourse material.[22] Jesus' sitting on the Mount of Olives (24:3) is said to tie the beginning of the final discourse to the beginning of the first discourse, not least because 5:1b (καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ) and 24:3 (Καθημένου δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους τῶν ἐλαιῶν προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταί) both have genitive absolutes followed by the arrival of the disciples, although the latter adds a note regarding privacy more akin to Matt 13:36. In a similar way, Jesus sits not once but twice at the beginning of the third discourse (13:1, 2). The only "sitting" at the beginning of ch. 23 is that of Jesus' opponents. This element, then, functions as a point of disjunction, not conjunction, as it appears to run contrary to what one might expect at the beginning of a discourse on the basis of previous discourses (5:1; in 13:1, 2, Jesus sits twice; cf. 25:31 where the Son of Man *sits as judge*). Perhaps, then, this dis-

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[19] Wilson, *When Will These Things Happen?* 101.

[20] Ibid., 108: "[T]hese two verses . . . can therefore be used, I submit, to interpret each other."

[21] Ibid., 79.

[22] Davies and Allison, *Matthew,* 3:336.

junction could be taken as evidence that Matthew does not intend for his discourse to begin here.

But Mosaic or rabbinic imagery probably accounts for the idea of sitting, both for Jesus and for his opponents, warranting the conclusion that Matthew by now expects his readers to understand Jesus as the "real" or authentic teacher who really belongs in Moses' seat, in contrast to hypocrites (6:1–18). This implicit point is made explicit in 23:8, 10: "You have one teacher . . . you have one instructor, the Messiah." In light of this emphasis in the discourse and the hostile comment in 23:15 regarding the Pharisees' proselytizing, the reference at the beginning of ch. 23 to the Pharisees sitting on Moses' seat highlights the tension between Jesus as teacher and his opponents, who have just left the scene in shame but will continue to compete with him for disciples.[23] The context strongly suggests that the reference in 23:2 to "sitting" and the authority to teach that it represents are intended in ironic contrast to Jesus' own authoritative sitting (24:3; 25:31) and teaching here and elsewhere in the discourse. Matthew has earlier portrayed Jesus as contrasting his opponents with the truly righteous in the middle of a discourse (5:20–6:18); he now does so at the beginning of a discourse. Moreover, other links between chs. 5–7 and chs. 23–25 render the separation of ch. 23 unlikely; these links will be addressed below.

Sixth, references to Psalm 118 in Matt 21:9 and 23:39 are said to bracket "Jesus in Jerusalem" at his entrance and near his exit.[24] But again, there is no reason why Matthew cannot have overlapping constituent parts running through his text.[25] If the theory of the more extended discourse is accepted, 23:1–12 and the closing parable in ch. 25 bracket the discourse, as both address the antithetical behavior of the righteous and the unrighteous. Those facing "woe" and judgment (23:13–39) refuse to enter the kingdom and prevent others from entering (23:13), while those "*blessed by my Father*" will "inherit the kingdom" (25:34). Wilson notes that chs. 21–25 form an *inclusio* through the presentation of Jesus as the king coming in judgment (21:1–11 and 25:31–46).[26] These various literary connections suggest that it is wise to take a cautious stance against relying too heavily on any one link as a line of structural demarcation.

None of these six arguments provides adequate resistance to the notion that ch. 23 should be included with chs. 24–25 as Matthew's final discourse. The arguments to restrict the size of the fifth discourse therefore prove to be inadequate individually and collectively. The responses to the objections above broach the questions of Matthew's audience in ch. 23; the composition of the chapter and its

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[23] Keener notes the difference between Matt 24:3 and the Markan source, for in the latter Jesus appears to teach while walking—in Aristotelian fashion (*Matthew*, 563).

[24] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 168; Turner, *Matthew*, 561.

[25] A point also addressed below under "composition."

[26] Wilson, *When Will These Things Happen?* 79.

connection with chs. 24 and 25; and the literary connections with chs. 5–7. These three areas will now be addressed in an effort to buttress the claim that ch. 23 deserves inclusion in the fifth discourse with chs. 24 and 25.

IV. Matthew 23 Belongs with Chapters 24–25

Audience

Against those who hold to a firm difference in audience and intention between ch. 23, on the one hand, and chs. 24–25, on the other, a host of scholars urge that at least part of the function of ch. 23 is instruction.[27] On my reading, throughout Matthew Jesus employs *negative* examples, such as the "hypocrites" in ch. 6 (noted below), whom disciples should "not be like." Disciples in antiquity were frequently called to imitate the choices of teacher-leaders, as Allison has shown. Given the competition for allegiance in Jesus' day and Matthew's day, one can easily understand the call to avoid imitating the Pharisees and religious leaders, as Allison himself suggests.[28] Along these lines, David R. Bauer notes that the beginning of ch. 23 is clearly parenetic material: "Unlike the religious leaders, who insist on high-sounding titles and places of honor (23.1-7), the disciples are to assume the humility and servanthood of Christ (23.8-12)."[29] Jesus' opening words in this discourse reinforce the issue at hand: "do not do as they do" (23:3). The similarities and contrasts with the Beatitudes and the whole of the Sermon on the Mount, noted below, confirm this perspective on the intention of the whole chapter.

[27] *Pace* Gaechter (*Matthäus*, 16, 721), who disparages ch. 23 as discipleship or instruction material on generic grounds in order to limit Matthew's "*Unterweisungsreden*" to the five discourses, exclusive of ch. 23. See Carter, *Matthew: Evangelist,* 251; Hubert Frankemölle, *Biblische Handlungsanweisungen: Beispiele pragmatischen Exegese* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1983), 189; France, *Matthew,* 855; Keener, *Matthew,* 536–37; Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary,* vol. 2, *The Churchbook, Matthew 13–28* (rev. and exp. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 430–31. According to Garland, the same judgment potentially awaits Matthew's community; thus, the whole chapter is pedagogical in nature (*The Intention of Matthew 23* [NovTSup 52; Leiden: Brill, 1979], 117–23), a view conveniently summarized in his *Reading Matthew*, 232–34.

[28] Allison, "Matthew: Structure," esp. 1218–19.

[29] David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (JSNTSup 31; Decatur, GA: Almond, 1988), 107; cf. 133, where Bauer notes "Matthew's concern throughout chs. 21–25 to contrast the expectations for the disciples with the unfaithfulness of the religious leaders." Luz finds the whole of ch. 23 to be "a discourse still valid for [Matthew's] present" ("The Disciples in the Gospel of Matthew," in *The Interpretation of Matthew* [ed. Graham Stanton; 2nd ed.; Studies in New Testament Interpretation; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995], 139–40). He notes the function of the woes as a "negative contrasting picture to what Matthew has said positively in vv. 2-11" (p. 140 n. 20); Jesus is presenting "antitypes" and providing "'parenesis,' to exhort the disciples" (*Theology*, 122; cf. *Matthew 21–28*, 169–70). Such comments are superior to the challenges to the very same ideas Luz employs elsewhere (*Studies in Matthew*, 23).

The departure of Jesus' opponents from the scene at the end of ch. 22 renders ch. 23 significant with respect to the crowds.[30] Jesus teaches the disciples and the crowds who might listen that a decision to follow such leaders is a choice for hypocrisy, violence, and injustice. As such it is a choice of life or death, and this facet of the teaching makes the connection with chs. 24–25 even stronger.[31] The entire discourse raises the question (already known of course to Matthew and his readers) whether the crowds will succumb to hypocrisy (23:13–36) and destruction (23:36–24:51, which concludes with the destruction of "hypocrites") or whether they will follow the difficult path taught and illustrated by the "instructor," the "greatest among you" who "will be your servant" (23:10–11). Which example will win the day? Writing from the future as he does, Matthew knows the fate of both the (majority of the) crowds and the disciples. Nor does their fate catch Matthew's Jesus off guard: he knows that the crowds are to some extent lost (23:36–39). According to Matthew, this means that the judgment will fall not just on the leadership but on those they lead. Many in the crowd will *not* learn the lessons presented in ch. 23 regarding alternative leaders but will instead join the opponents and contribute to Jesus' death (chs. 26–27). Thus, the emphasis on interpreting ch. 23 as addressed to "Jewish leaders"[32] over and against the majority of the nation misses the point, for the struggle in the text is no longer about the leadership but about the crowds down to Matthew's day.

Nor is it merely the crowds who need to be warned. The serious possibility of judgment for those who consider themselves disciples appears throughout Matthew, and the possibility of deception and lack of preparedness *of disciples* appears throughout chs. 24 and 25.[33] Thus, Matthew 23–25 serves to foreground the ongoing experiences and praxis of the disciples themselves in an eschatological dimension. Matthew juxtaposes final judgment (ch. 25) and the judgment of Jerusalem (ch. 24), so that the latter event reinforces the reality of final judgment. The content of ch. 23 should serve as a warning, then, that the fully warranted judgment of Jerusalem is proof that fully warranted judgment is always possible, even for those regarded (by self and community) as disciples. The consequences of rejecting the Messiah *or* his teaching—including the requirements of humility, mercy, forgiveness, peacemaking, and perseverance in the face of violence—are dire indeed. Against Luz (cited above), chs. 23 and 24–25 are not "two quite unrelated discourses." They belong together, reinforcing the ongoing requirements of

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[30] In 22:46 Matthew "has implicitly removed the scribes and Pharisees from the scene" (Pregeant, *Matthew*, 165).

[31] Negative mimesis adds to the suggestion that the reference to the Pharisees sitting "on Moses' seat" may be ironic contrast, as suggested above.

[32] So Turner (*Matthew*, passim), no doubt wishing to soften the blow of the harshness of this chapter.

[33] Keener highlights the danger of being misled in 24:4, 11, 24 (*Matthew*, 567).

disciples and the possibility of judgment by pointing up the reality of judgment passed (on Jerusalem) given the failures of the leadership and the crowds.

Matthew also uses context to create contemporary value out of Jesus' time-bound observations in ch. 10, a technique similar to that found in chs. 23–25. Just as many of Jesus' concluding comments in 10:26–42 render aspects of the historical instruction for mission to Israel relevant for Matthew's contemporaries, the condemnations of the scribes and Pharisees and the destruction of Jerusalem are rendered *negative examples* and negative reinforcement, abiding tools for discipleship, in 23:2–12 and chs. 24–25. Similarly, ch. 13 features an amplification of the significance of teaching by creating boundaries on the basis of understanding the mysteries of the kingdom. In all of these instances, an explicit or implicit blend of audience does not reduce Jesus' comments to non-discourse material, but rather amplifies the significance of the discourse *for disciples*.

Thus, in no way can "Jesus' Verdict on Jerusalem and Its Leadership" be judged to be of limited importance to the disciples and the crowds, nor can ch. 23 be separated from the events of the near future in ch. 24 and the implications for discipleship in chs. 24–25.[34]

In passing, it may be granted that Matthew's composition of ch. 23 incorporates "dispute material." But this fact by no means removes the chapter from the category of discourse, particularly since those with whom Jesus "disputes" are not present, nor do they talk back. Furthermore, such a generic observation does not overturn the arguments presented here for seeing the relevance of this discourse for discipleship. One also notes the disparate genres employed in the Sermon on the Mount.

Composition

Close analysis of the composition of this passage suggests that if the discourse is broken into two pieces, there are negative effects from a compositional point of view. Insisting on a distinction between ch. 23 and the two following chapters creates a conundrum with regard to the role and audience of the former, as some of the remarks quoted in the second paragraph of this article illustrate. It cannot be seriously disputed that ch. 23 functions as "discourse material," which forces a number of scholars who deny that it belongs with chs. 24–25 to grant it status as a sixth discourse (in a few instances, it is regarded as one of seven).[35] A six-discourse

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[34] The title is taken from France, *Matthew,* 853; the argument is from Davies and Allison, *Matthew,* 1:61 n. 31. Throughout Davies and Allison's commentary on Matthew 23, they attempt (unsuccessfully, in my view) to hold in tension an acceptance of the parenetic function of Jesus' teaching and their opposition to seeing Matthew's intention as primarily focused on discipleship and instruction.

[35] Joachim Gnilka, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (HTKNT Supplementband 5; Freiburg:

arrangement, however, cannot be taken seriously, chiefly because the discourses have Matthew's signature transitional phrase at the end of the five discourses, and all follow blocks of thoroughly blended narrative material consisting of interwoven dialogue and narrative.

Another compositional feature, this time arising from redaction criticism, provides important support for the unity of chs. 23–25. Reinhart Hummel argues that Matthew's omission of Mark's story of the widow's mite (Mark 12:37–40) renders ch. 23 of a piece with chs. 24–25.[36] Surely this is a more pertinent Synoptic fact than that ascribed by R. T. France, who argues against the inclusion of ch. 23 with chs. 24–25 on the basis of Matthew's "classic discourse pattern in developing and expanding a shorter Synoptic discourse."[37] France has to admit, however, that the omission of this Markan story could work against his separation of ch. 23 from chs. 24–25. His only defense is that Matthew's quantity of information "hardly leaves room for this homey little story," and "*it would have interrupted the deliberate sequence from the diatribe and the lament over Jerusalem to the prediction of the end of the temple*."[38] This seems more the argument for the unity of the two passages, which France has just denied.[39] Gibbs, cited by France in support of the thesis that the discourse does not include ch. 23, simply states that such an argument "[f]or my purposes . . . has no validity. That is to say, however valid for redaction criticism the observation may be that Matthew has omitted Markan material, such an observation is really no observation of the Matthean narrative at all."[40] But granted that in such instances we have a clear picture of Matthew's source, this only reinforces Gibbs's observation that 24:1-2 is tied tightly to that which precedes and that which follows.[41]

Herder, 1994), 174. He sees them as distinct on the basis of audience and setting, though not necessarily in content (cf. idem, *Matthäusevangelium*, 2:269, 309). See also Hans Conzelmann and Andreas Lindemann, *Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction to the Principles and Methods of New Testament Exegesis* (trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 221; Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 168; Witherington, *Matthew*, 15–16, 421; Austin Farrer, *St. Matthew and St. Mark* (Edward Cadbury Lectures 1953–54; London: Dacre, 1954), 177–97; Edgar Goodspeed, *Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist* (Philadelphia: Winston, 1959), 27; Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium*, 146 n. 112; O. Lamar Cope, *Matthew: A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven* (CBQMS 5; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1976), 15.

[36] Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, 85–86; cf. Green, *Matthew*, 186.

[37] France, *Matthew*, 857.

[38] Ibid., emphasis added.

[39] France elsewhere allows that "certainly there is a continuity of theme" between ch. 23 and chs. 24–25 (*Matthew* [TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985], 333).

[40] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 168–69. This argument functions as an example of the phenomenon Bauer previously observed, that analyses of structure are to some extent "methodologically determined" (*Structure of Matthew*, 135, 12).

[41] A number of scholars see ch. 23 as a perfect introduction to chs. 24–25, yet do not allow this connectivity to support the notion that they constitute one discourse. See Ferdinand Hahn,

According to Hummel, a further change from Mark 13:2 in Matt 24:2 may signify a shift of attention from the buildings to Jesus' prediction regarding the same. Matthew has οὐ βλέπετε ταῦτα πάντα, changed from Mark's βλέπεις ταύτας τὰς μεγάλας οἰκοδομάς. According to Hummel the resulting neuter plural in Matthew is best explained as a reference to the words spoken in the previous chapter regarding the temple's destruction. After all, the disciples are still with Jesus, and the conversation quite easily flows from one topic to the next. This interpretation, though possible, cannot be regarded as definitive. Matthew might simply employ a neuter plural under the influence of τοῦ ἱεροῦ (neuter singular) in 24:1, that is, "all these things [related to the temple]." A parallel with Jesus' question in 13:51 (and the same phrase, ταῦτα πάντα, used in a way similar to Jesus' words in 6:33; 13:31, 56; 23:36) must be weighed carefully before Hummel's interpretation is rejected out of hand, but the use of βλέπετε in the end is probably not to be taken metaphorically.

One final element of composition should be considered. It is important to note that NT scholarship in general is increasingly open to seeing alternatives to rigid linear structure; features such as structural overlap and pivot texts render outlines less linear and compartmentalized.[42] In Matthean scholarship in particular there is some resistance to belief in one controlling structure exclusive of others.[43] I shall return to this point in the conclusion. Wim J. C. Weren claims that for Matthew, "the strict distinction between N[arrative] and D[iscourse] is rather artificial."[44] Bauer is even more insistent: "there is no alternation between narrative

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"Die Eschatologische Rede Matthäus 24 und 25," in *Studien zum neuen Testament*, vol. 1 (ed. F. Hahn, J. Frey, and J. Schlegel; WUNT 2/191; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 475–94; and in *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium: Festschrift für Wilhelm Pesch* (ed. L. Schenke; SBS; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988), 110–26; Ernst Haenchen, "Matthäus 23," *ZTK* 48 (1951): 38–63.

[42] See esp. Bruce W. Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries: The Art and Theology of the New Testament Chain-Link Transitions* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005); Weren, "Macrostructure," 171–200. Joanna Dewey speaks of "multiple overlapping structures" and "overlapping outlines" and "overlapping progression rather than discrete outlineable structure" ("Mark as Interwoven Tapestry: Forecasts and Echoes for a Listening Audience," *CBQ* 53 [1991]: 221–36). As David Barr notes (see n. 18 above): "The discourses are not dividers, but connectors, linking two sections of narrative together." See Ray Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles* (JSNTSup 280; London: T&T Clark, 2004); cf. George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (NovTSup 73; Leiden: Brill, 1994); G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 112–14; Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (HDR 9; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 15–18; Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 2–29.

[43] See Weren, "Macrostructure"; Gundry, *Matthew*, 11, who claims that Matthew is "structurally mixed"; Graham Stanton, "The Origin and Purpose of Matthew's Gospel: Matthean Scholarship from 1945 to 1980," *ANRW* II.25.3 (1985): 1905.

[44] Weren, "Macrostructure," 173.

and discourse material in Matthew."[45] But there does seem to be at least a clear difference between narrative material and discourse in Matthew, for there is nothing artificial about the way in which Matthew concludes each discourse with Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς λόγους τούτους (7:28) or a close variant thereof, which is surely intended to aid the reader in recognizing these five blocks of teaching. The material preceding each of the previous four discourses could in no way be described as a monologue and is much more accurately called narrative and/or dialogue, as is the material following each discourse.

Belief in multiple or fluid outlines should not prevent scholars from acknowledging the fivefold arrangement of Jesus' discourses in Matthew. Nor should the slight lack of clarity on the role and shape of each discourse be regarded as problematic for the claim that such a group of five discourses exists.[46]

Literary Connections

There are a number of significant links between chs. 5–7 and chs. 23–25, including the most important complex of links—the correspondence between the Beatitudes and the woes.[47] Although it is rarely noted, when viewed in tandem, the blessings of Matt 5:3–12 and the curses of 23:13–36 present an important cluster of parallels. The Beatitudes open with a reference to the reception of the kingdom (5:2); the woes open with a reference to the loss of, and prevention of entry into, the kingdom (23:13; cf. 5:20). The scribes and Pharisees are *cursed* "children of hell" leading their proselytes to become twice the same (23:15) and the "brood of vipers" (23:23), which contrasts with the parentage of Jesus' *blessed* followers, who are the "children of God" (5:9). The Beatitudes commend mercy (5:5) and inner purity (5:8), while the woes condemn the lack of both traits in Jesus' opponents (23:23–26). The Beatitudes conclude with an extended reference to the persecution the righteous will experience "for righteousness' sake" just as earlier generations "persecuted the prophets" (5:10–12). The woes conclude with an extended discussion of judgment on the scribes and Pharisees for joining their ancestors in bringing such miseries on God's representatives, those who "persecute" the "prophets" (23:29–35). Both passages identify the persecuting scribes and Pharisees with earlier generations. (With respect to the parenetic nature of ch. 23, how great then is

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[45] Bauer, *Structure*, 131.

[46] Keegan ("Introductory Formulae," passim) notes the diverse options for the beginning of the discourses. In the second discourse (more or less ch. 10), for instance, various verses from 9:35 to 10:5 are contenders for the opening verse in the literature.

[47] Lohr, "Oral Techniques," 427. This juxtaposition is played up creatively by N. T. Wright (*Christian Origins and the Question of God,* vol. 1, *The New Testament and the People of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], 386–87).

the leap to the opponents of Matthew's day?) Both conclusions are immediately followed by passages in which Jesus addresses a city. Moreover, as with the Beatitudes and woes, there is *contrast* between the two cities, with one describing the vocation of true disciples and the other describing the judgment of those who have rejected Jesus.[48]

Numerous other intertextual links with the Sermon on the Mount can be pointed out with relative ease in the woes, in the preceding material (23:1–12), and in the final two chapters of the discourse.[49] The general contrast between true and false teaching and practice (contrasting ch. 23 with 5:20–6:18) has been noted above. Aspects of Jewish law (e.g., swearing oaths) and religious praxis (e.g., length of prayers) are addressed in both discourses. Matthew's use of "hypocrite(s)" is heavily concentrated in the two discourses. It may be significant that the only two uses of "hypocrite" outside the first and last discourses (accepting chs. 23–25 as one discourse) derive from Mark. The two discourses incorporate judgment parables at or very near their conclusion, in which humans are judged on the basis of an obedient response to Jesus' words. The "wise" and the "foolish" are also contrasted in ch. 7 and in ch. 25. In both passages the foolish employ the passionate double use of "Lord, Lord" to no avail as those about to receive judgment (7:21–22; 25:11), which again reinforces the parenetic function of judgment in chs. 23–25. In both passages the "wise" is the one who actually does what is required and is saved (7:24; 24:44–47). "False prophets" are present in 7:11 and 24:11, 24, and lead those following them to catastrophe, which highlights the potential danger in following hypocrites in chs. 6 and 23.

Davies and Allison even begin their commentary on ch. 23 with this statement: "As in [the Sermon on the Mount] Jesus addresses the crowds and the disciples" a statement that combines with the data presented here sharply to contradict their conclusion that "we find no evidence that our author intended the reader to juxtapose [the Sermon on the Mount] and chapter 23."[50] The literary connections outlined above show that Matthew intends his readers to interpret the last discourse in light of the first. He drives home the point that to follow those who live in ways antithetical to the kingdom is to follow those who have ruined Israel and have received appropriate judgment, and underscores the importance of negative examples of those who have actually received judgment as an admonition for disciples

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[48] On the latter point, see Keener, *Matthew*, 563 n. 92.

[49] Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:266; Frankemölle, *Biblische Handlungsanweisungen*, 133–90, esp. 172–73. As Wright puts it, "Another indication of [the connection between the first and fifth discourses] may be found in the parable of the houses on rock and sand (7.24–7), which foreshadows the judgment parables of 25.1–12, 14–30 and 31–46 (cf. too 7.21–3 with 25.11f., 44f.), and which also, in speaking of the great house which is to fall, looks ahead to ch. 24 as a whole" (*New Testament and the People of God*, 387 n. 60).

[50] Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:267, 309, respectively.

to persevere in the wisdom of sincere, humble, and faithful obedience. Thus, literary connections reinforce the observations made above on the likely intent of Matthew for his audience: chs. 23 through 25 are intended to function as didactic material.

V. Conclusions: The Significance of the Unity of Matthew 23–25 for Matthean Studies

I have argued in this article for the unity of Matthew 23–25 and have hinted throughout at the relevance of the extent of the discourse for the interpretation of the Gospel. While the tasks of fully interpreting chs. 23–25 and the whole of the Gospel and its structure in light of the unity of the discourse lie outside the scope of this essay, a concluding summary is in order. The following comments will aid in the digestion of the observations made above, serve as suggestions for further study, and make a brief case that the argument for Matthew's structure may move forward significantly on the basis of the unity of chs. 23–25.

First, comprehending chs. 23–25 as a unit sheds light on Matthew's writing style. His willingness to vary his style leads to the insertion of a few narrative pivots in the middle of a discourse, in chs. 23–25 as in chs. 13 and 18; it similarly leads to variegated audiences in chs. 13 and 23–25 and the ongoing application of what appears to be a time-bound discourse in ch. 10 and chs. 23–25. Despite the way in which he "cleans up" Mark, and his clear interest in tidy patterns (such as triads[51]), Matthew is not rigidly smooth in every instance. The content of his teaching blocks, no less than the introduction to the formula citations; his arithmetic in the genealogy; and the content and attributions of his citations all suggest a certain "freedom within form."

Second, the present interpretation sheds light on and encourages investigation of the oft-ignored close correlation of chs. 5 and 23 (particularly the "blessings and curses" and their contexts) and the important correlation of the first and fifth discourses in their entirety.

Third, as observed throughout, Matthew wishes his audience to take ch. 23 and the following chapters both as teaching on the nature and judgment of their religious opponents, and as instruction relating expectations for Jesus' disciples in light of their certain judgment. Such an arrangement obviates otherwise unlikely interpretations of chs. 24 and 25, such as by those who take the discourse to refer primarily to Jesus' death and resurrection, those who take the discourse to address the parousia with little regard for Jerusalem and its destruction, or those who take the whole of chs. 24–25 as an extended reference to the destruction of Jerusalem.[52]

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[51] Allison, *Studies in Matthew,* 202–5.

[52] Further study might compare Matthew's view of the didactic nature of the destruction of

Finally, in regard to structure, the confirmation of chs. 23–25 as a unit encourages resistance to the impulse to downplay the teaching blocks as a significant feature of Matthew. For instance, ch. 23 should not be considered a separate or sixth discourse (as in Luz), an argument sometimes used against the suggestion that Matthew is infusing his portrait of Jesus with a Mosaic accent. Additionally, the confirmation of five blocks adds credence to the view that the discourses function as a structural tool, almost certainly serving to link the preceding narrative units to that which follows.[53] While Matthew's precise intentions for the resulting five-fold structure remain somewhat opaque, it appears that the grouping is meant to function in part as an aid to understanding, applying, or remembering the teaching of Jesus. There is also more than a hint of the New Moses about the arrangement.[54]

With respect to competing structures, it is worth noting that Matthew's dramatic portrayal of Jesus' conflict with his opponents nears its climax in the context before and after chs. 23–25. As the final and climactic discourse, these three chapters uniquely infuse Jesus' distinctive teaching on discipleship, Christology, and judgment with the dramatic tension running throughout Matthew's plot. In many structural proposals this narrative tension is tied by scholars to shifts in geography in chs. 4 and 19 (cf. ch. 2)[55] or Matthew's "from that time" sayings (4:17; 16:21). The synthesis of chs. 23–25 as the extent of the fifth discourse may well provide a means to unify the efforts of scholars who outline Matthew on the basis of plot and scholars concerned to grant the five discourses a central place in Matthew's structure. This suggestion is strongly supported by the fact that Matthew's first and fourth discourses, respectively, appear immediately after and immediately before major geographic pivots. Perhaps these approaches to Matthew's structure are not competitors but complements.

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the temple with the perspectives on the same events attributed to Johanan ben Zakkai and in Josephus. My teacher Dennis Ireland noted that the Sermon on the Mount constituted the most frequently cited three consecutive chapters of the Bible in the early church. Given the importance of the destruction of Jerusalem for first-century Jews and Christians, one wonders if Matthew 23–25 was not just as significant for Matthew's first hearers and readers.

[53] See n. 18 above. This is superior to the view that each discourse goes *primarily* with what follows or with what precedes it, a topic of some debate in the commentaries.

[54] It is certainly possible to agree with Luz regardless of one's views on the structure of Matthew: "[T]he arrangement of the logia material is a splendid and—as the history of interpretation demonstrates—successful didactic achievement" (Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 44). In any event, there seems to be more than a hint of the New (and greater) Moses, *pace* those who find this mitigated by the common fivefold arrangement of literature in the Jewish tradition. Even in some such instances (which include the Psalms; the Megilloth; *2 Enoch*; *Pirqe ʾAbot;* the Maccabean history of Jason of Cyrene, cited in 2 Macc 2:24; the later five books of *The Sayings of the Lord* by Papias), the possibility of a Mosaic pattern is suggested by Allison (*The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 296–97 and n. 19).

[55] See most recently France, *Matthew*, 5–8.

Mark's Interpretation of the Death of Jesus

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Two articles on the significance of Jesus' death in Mark appeared in this journal in 2006.[1] Each of these studies opens up intriguing perspectives on the topic, yet aspects of each are problematic. The article by Sharyn Dowd and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon is treated here first because of its more comprehensive character.

The most problematic aspect of their study is their interpretation of the ransom saying in 10:45, "for the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom in behalf of many." They rightly place this saying in the context of the request of James and John and the Markan Jesus' teaching on discipleship that responds to it. In focusing on the context, however, Dowd and Struthers Malbon infer that "what 'the many' need—and, in fact, what the Markan Jesus urges his followers to provide—is ransoming from 'their great ones who are tyrants over them' and 'those whom they recognize as their rulers [who] lord it over them' (10:42)."[2] They quote with approval Ched Myers, who argued:

> The phrase "as a ransom (*lutron*) for many" appears to be an allusion back to "slave" [at 10:43–44]. The term referred to the price required to redeem captives or purchase freedom for indentured servants. Jesus promises then that the way of "servanthood" has been transformed by the Human One into the way of liberation.[3]

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[1] Joel Marcus, "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation," *JBL* 125 (2006): 73–87; Sharyn Dowd and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "The Significance of Jesus' Death in Mark: Narrative Context and Authorial Audience," *JBL* 125 (2006): 271–97.

[2] Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "Significance," 281.

[3] Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 279, cited by Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "Significance," 281.

The problem with this interpretation is that it misconstrues the relation between the saying and its context. The speech of the Markan Jesus in 10:42–45 does not instruct the Twelve that their duty is to serve "especially those undervalued and 'lorded over' by the powerful," as Dowd and Struthers Malbon claim, however much such service is to be valued and encouraged.[4] Rather, he is teaching by means of a negative example: the actual relations of power among the nations involve mastery and the exercise of authority. Leadership among the followers of Jesus is not to be of that type. Instead, those who wish to be "great" or "first" ought to practice a leadership of service, based on genuine concern for the welfare of every member of the group. This ideal had already been articulated among the Greeks. For example, the Macedonian philosopher-king Antigonos Gonatas (ca. 320–239 B.C.E.) taught his son, "Do you not understand, my son, that our kingdom is held to be a noble servitude [ἔνδοξος δουλεία]?"[5] The issue is not the oppression of the followers of Jesus and others by the tyrants and rulers of Judea and Rome. The issue is how the alternative society constituted by the followers of Jesus will organize and conduct itself.

Dowd and Struthers Malbon rightly conclude that the links between the Son of Man saying in Mark 10:45 and the Greek version of the poem of Isa 52:13–53:12 signify only that both the Servant and Jesus lost their lives for the benefit of many.[6] The nature of that benefit is not illuminated by this intertextual relationship because the word λύτρον does not occur in the relevant poem in Isaiah—yet it is the controlling image in Mark 10:45.

They overstate, however, their next conclusion. They claim that all parties to the discussion admit that "the word group λυτρόω, λύτρον, λύτρα relates to the necessity of setting free those being held captive or enslaved by another."[7] All would agree that the word group concerns "loosing" or "setting free," but the question of "from what" or "from whom" depends on the context and shared cultural assumptions.

The Son of Man saying in Mark 10:45 clarifies the cryptic allusions to "the cup" that Jesus will drink and "the baptism" with which he will be baptized in vv. 38–39. The aim of giving his life makes clear that these two metaphors refer to the death of Jesus. The idea that he will give his life as a "ransom" (λύτρον), however, is a new image in relation to the context of Mark, as well as to the inter-text of Isaiah 53.

The usage of the term λύτρον in the LXX applies to a wide variety of contexts. The singular is used to signify "redeeming tithes" and paying "compensation"

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[4] Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "Significance," 281.

[5] Cited by Moshe Weinfeld, "The King as the Servant of the People: The Source of the Idea," *JJS* 33 (1982): 189–94, here 189. See also the treatment of this saying by Hans Volkmann, "Die Basileia als ἔνδοξος δουλεία," in idem, *ENDOXOS DULEIA: Kleine Schriften zur Alten Geschichte* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1975), 74–81.

[6] Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "Significance," 283.

[7] Ibid.

to a husband wronged by an adulterer (Lev 27:31; Prov 6:35). The plural (λύτρα) is used in these ways and also with regard to the manumission of a slave; the redemption of land; the redemption of an Israelite "sold" as a hired, resident laborer; and for the release of prisoners of war (Lev 19:20; 25:24, 51–52; Isa 45:13).

Other usages of the plural are more complex and have closer links to the saying of Mark 10:45. For example, according to Exod 21:29, if an ox is accustomed to goring people and the owner has been warned but fails to restrain it, with the result that the ox kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner shall also be put to death. According to v. 30, if the relatives of the deceased are willing to accept a ransom[8] for the life of the owner, he should pay the redemption money[9] in whatever amount they ask.[10] Here we have the notion of a "ransom," as a payment of money, substituting for the execution of a guilty person. The term used here for a monetary payment is used in Mark for the death of Jesus. The implication may be that he dies on behalf of many who are guilty in analogous ways.

The term λύτρον is used also in Exod 30:11–16 in the context of a census of the Israelites. Verse 12 stipulates that each of them shall pay a ransom[11] for his life, so that no plague may come upon them for being registered. The underlying idea is probably that the primary purpose of a census is to determine the number of men eligible for military service; military duty involved a complex set of laws of ritual purity. Therefore, an Israelite enrolled in a census was subject to these laws, and any infraction could lead to disastrous results. The plague, then, is the result of the violation of ritual taboos.[12] The ransom that each Israelite gives is a sum of money, which is also called an offering to the Lord.[13] The purpose of bringing the offering is "to make atonement for your lives."[14] The money is to be used for the service of the tent of meeting,[15] and it will be a memorial offering (μνημόσυνον) for the Israelites before the Lord to atone (ἐξιλάσασθαι) for their lives (Exod 30:16 LXX). The idea seems to be that the sum of money, the offering, takes the place of the deaths that the plague related to the census would cause. The phrase "to make atonement for your lives" apparently means to propitiate or conciliate God, to cause

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[8] Exod 21:30; כפר MT; λύτρα LXX.

[9] Ibid.; פדין MT; λύτρα LXX.

[10] Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 443, 473; Bernd Janowski, "Auslösung des verwirkten Lebens: Zur Geschichte und Struktur der biblischen Lösegeldvorstellung," *ZTK* 79 (1982): 25–59, esp. 32–34.

[11] Exod 30:12 LXX; כפר MT; λύτρα LXX.

[12] Cf. 2 Samuel 24; P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 9; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 512–14. E. A. Speiser argued that, in Israel and elsewhere in the ancient Near East, the very writing down of names was, in some circumstances, an ominous process and required prophylactic propitiation ("Census and Ritual Expiation in Mari and Israel," *BASOR* 149 [1958]: 17–25).

[13] εἰσφορὰ κυρίῳ; Exod 30:13–14 LXX.

[14] ἐξιλάσασθαι περὶ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν; Exod 30:15 LXX.

[15] εἰς κάτεργον τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου.

God to be favorably inclined in the matter of their lives. In other words, the census, or its results, potentially offends God, and the offering is a means of winning God's favor. This link of the notion of "ransom" to the notion of "propitiation" or "expiation" suggests that these ideas are synonymous or closely related, in some contexts at least.

Dowd and Struthers Malbon advocate a different interpretation. They conclude that "'the many' for whom the Markan Jesus gives his life as a λύτρον are captives of the enemies of God." This conclusion is based on a general claim, with no supporting references to primary texts, that it "accords with the social contexts of redemption [or] ransom in Greek and later in Roman culture."[16]

Since the usage of the word group related to λύτρον is varied and complex and since the term is used metaphorically in Mark 10:45, the saying may have evoked a variety of responses among its first audiences. The notion of redeeming captives may have been one of them. Dowd and Struthers Malbon elaborate on this reading in terms of bondage to unclean spirits, demons, and Beelzebul or Satan himself. Citing Gustaf Aulén, they argue that this understanding of the "ransom" continued among theologians from Irenaeus to John of Damascus.[17]

An equally good interpretation involves the need to make expiation or propitiation to God for offenses that "the many" have committed. As I have shown above, this usage of the word group λύτρον is represented in the LXX. Although the term "sin" is not used in these contexts, the idea, or a similar one, is surely implied.

The link of the term "ransom" in Mark to biblical passages that imply a transaction through which a guilty party attains removal of the guilt and reconciliation with other human beings or with God is attested also in the cultural context of the evangelist and his audience. Evidence for widespread awareness and practice of this type of transaction is found in a number of inscriptions from Asia Minor, called "confessional inscriptions" by modern scholars.[18] For example, an inscription dated to 148–149 C.E. reads:

> Alexander, son of Thalouse, with Julius and his sister paid to the god Men of Diodotos a ransom for things known and not known. Year 233 [= 148–149 C.E.]
>
> Μῆνα ἐγ Διοδότου Ἀλέξανδρος Θαλούσης μετὰ Ἰουλίου καὶ τῆς ἀδελφῆς ἐλυτρώσαντο τὸν θεὸν ἐξ εἰδότων καὶ μὴ εἰδότων. Ἔτους σλγ΄.[19]

[16] Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "Significance," 284.

[17] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement* (London: SPCK, 1945; copyright 1931), cited by Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "Significance," 285 n. 40.

[18] See Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Signification of Mark 10:45 among Gentile Christians," in *Jesus' Sayings in the Life of the Early Church: Papers Presented in Honor of Helmut Koester's Seventieth Birthday,* ed. François Bovon, special issue, *HTR* 90 (1997): 371–82, and the literature cited there.

[19] Yarbro Collins, "Mark 10:45," 375.

This inscription attests a ritual act whereby people secured their release from the effects of both deliberate and unwitting sins. The fact that the noun θεός ("god") is the direct object of the verb λυτροῦσθαι ("to pay a ransom," "to redeem") implies that this verb is synonymous here with ἱλάσκεσθαι ("to propitiate," "to cause a deity to become favorably inclined"). The implication is that the group who set up the stele had lost divine favor because of some offense for which the ritual act serves as expiation.[20] Once again, although the word "sin" is not used, the idea, or a similar one, is implied.[21] Although this inscription is later than Mark, the ritual practices and ideas to which it attests are considerably older.[22] The evidence thus suggests that the term λύτρον ("ransom") in Mark 10:45 is a synonym of ἱλαστήριον ("expiation" or "propitiation"). Jesus' death is interpreted here as a metaphorical ritual act of expiation for the offenses of many.

At the Last Supper Jesus declares that the cup of wine "is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many." Dowd and Struthers Malbon interpret this saying by commenting, "As the majority is in need of ransoming from the tyranny of the elite, so the majority is in need of a renewal of the covenant of God with the people of God."[23] They mention the allusion to Exod 24:8 in support of this reading. The allusion suggests that the death of Jesus is a metaphorical sacrifice of covenant making or renewal.

So far so good, but then they exclude any implication of the forgiveness of sins from the cup saying: "those whom God had liberated were in covenant relationship with God, not because their sins had been forgiven, but because God had liberated them. Their sins would have to be forgiven many times, just as Israel's had to be, but that was not accomplished by the 'blood of the covenant.'"[24]

In the saying over the cup, the phrase "my blood of the covenant" is followed by the phrase "which is poured out for many" (τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν). It is conceivable that the phrase "for many" refers to the benefit that many receive in becoming members of a renewed covenant with God.

It should be noted, however, that the Markan phrase is to pour *out* blood, whereas Exod 24:6 speaks about pouring blood *against* (πρός) the altar. The same

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[20] Ibid., 375–76.

[21] Dowd and Struthers Malbon ("Significance," 284 n. 38) infer from Yarbro Collins ("Mark 10:45") that the "confessional inscriptions" do not mention sin. This inference supports their claim that "[sin and] forgiveness [are] not connected in Mark with the death of Jesus" ("Significance," 285 n. 40).

[22] Franz Seraph Steinleitner, *Die Beicht im Zusammenhange mit der sakralen Rechtspflege in der Antike* (Leipzig: Kommissionsverlag der Dieterich'schen Verlagsbuchhandlung, Theodor Weicher, 1913), 122–23; Georg Petzl, ed., *Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens* (Epigraphica Anatolica: Zeitschrift für Epigraphik und historische Geographie Anatoliens 22; Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1994), xvii–xviii.

[23] Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "Significance," 292.

[24] Ibid., 292–93.

phrase as the Markan "to pour *out* blood," in contrast, occurs repeatedly in Leviticus 4 in relation to the expiation of sin (vv. 7b, 18b, 20b, 25b). With regard to the sin of the whole congregation, the text says, "And the priest shall make expiation for them, and their sin will be forgiven."[25] Similarly, with regard to the ruler, the text states, "And the priest shall make expiation on his behalf for his sin, and it will be forgiven him."[26] In these contexts a connection is made between "pouring out blood" and making expiation "on behalf of" a person or group. The preposition περί is used in Leviticus, whereas Mark uses ὑπέρ in this context. The underlying idea is the same in both texts.[27]

It seems likely, then, that the saying over the cup in Mark combines two images or metaphors. The death of Jesus is interpreted, on the one hand, as a sacrifice that renews the covenant established on Mount Sinai. On the other, it is a sin offering, a metaphorical sacrifice that expiates the sin of many. The author of Matthew understood Mark in this way and added the phrase "for the forgiveness of sins" after "which is poured out for many."[28]

Dowd and Struthers Malbon conclude that "the Markan narrative pulls the interpretation of Jesus' death in the direction of liberation from both demonic powers and human tyrants, seeming to regard the forgiveness of sins as part of the good news, but not necessarily connected with the death of Jesus."[29] In my view, the theme of liberation from human tyrants is a minor and subtle one in Mark. The liberation from demonic powers, in contrast, is a major theme, especially in the first part of Mark (1:1–8:26). I propose, nevertheless, that we not allow major themes to obscure variety in Mark. Rather than impose a conceptual coherence pleasing to systematic thinkers in our own time, we should appreciate the richness and multivalence of Mark's narrative.

Joel Marcus begins his fascinating and provocative article with a bold thesis: "The central irony in the passion narratives of the Gospels is that Jesus' crucifixion turns out to be his elevation to kingship."[30] It is generally recognized that such is the

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[25] Lev 4:20b: καὶ ἐξιλάσεται περὶ αὐτῶν ὁ ἱερεύς, καὶ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτοῖς ἡ ἁμαρτία.

[26] Lev 4:26b: καὶ ἐξιλάσεται περὶ αὐτοῦ ὁ ἱερεὺς ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ.

[27] Analogously, Dowd and Struthers Malbon take ἀντὶ πολλῶν in Mark 10:45 and ὑπὲρ πολλῶν in 14:24 as equivalent ("Significance," 293 n. 56).

[28] In Matt 26:28, εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν is added after τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον. It is also interesting, in light of the usage of Leviticus 4, that Matthew changes Mark's preposition (ὑπέρ) to περί. Dowd and Struthers Malbon argue that Matthew has changed Mark's meaning as well ("Significance," 293).

[29] Dowd and Struthers Malbon, "Significance," 294.

[30] Marcus, "Crucifixion," 73, citing Philipp Vielhauer, "Erwägungen zur Christologie des Markusevangeliums," in *Zeit und Geschichte: Dankesgabe an Rudolf Bultmann zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. Erich Dinkler; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964), 167.

case in the Gospel of John, where the verb ὑψοῦν is used to speak about Jesus being lifted up on the cross and, simultaneously and ironically, about his being exalted.[31] The ironic portrayal of Jesus as a king in chapter 15,[32] however, is strikingly different from the Jesus of John. The irony fits Mark's portrayal of Jesus as an unconventional and hidden king: he is mocked for being recognized by some as a king, yet the audience of Mark knows that he truly is the one chosen to rule as God's agent *when the full manifestation of the kingdom of God occurs.* In Mark, Jesus does not reign from the cross. Rather he will enter into his role as king when he is exalted to the right hand of God by his resurrection. This is clear from the response of Jesus to the high priest when he is asked whether he is the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One: "I am, and you will see the Son of Man sitting on the right of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (14:62).

Marcus's argument that Mark is doing something similar to John's ironic exaltation *in crucifixion* depends on the hypothesis that the association of crucifixion with exaltation was not new with John but was already part of the cultures in which Mark was written and to which it was addressed. He cites a passage from a late-second-century book by Artemidorus regarding the interpretation of dreams:

> It is also auspicious for a poor man [to dream of being crucified]. For a crucified man is raised high [ὑψηλός] and his substance is sufficient to keep [τρέφει] many birds. But it [a dream of being crucified] means the betrayal of secrets. For a crucified man can be seen [ἐκφανής] by all. . . . But it means freedom for slaves, since the crucified are no longer subject to any man [ἀνυπότακτοι]. . . . To dream that one has been crucified in a city signifies a magisterial position [ἀρχή] that corresponds to the place where the cross has been set up. (*Oneirocritica* 2.53)[33]

This passage, however, does not support the point that Marcus wishes to make. In Hellenistic and Roman cultures, dreams were often considered to be divine revelations of the future. Since dreams usually depicted future events indirectly, interpretation of dreams was allegorical. As is clear from the interpretations of Artemidorus, dreams of crucifixion do not represent actual crucifixion. Rather, they symbolize various things, depending on the social situation of the dreamer. The passage cited does not provide evidence of a social and cultural kind that the actual penalty of crucifixion was understood in terms of elevation, freedom, or

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[31] See Marcus, "Crucifixion," 74.

[32] Ibid., 73.

[33] Trans. Robert J. White, *The Interpretation of Dreams, Oneirocritica by Artemidorus: Translation and Commentary* (Noyes Classical Studies; Park Ridge, NJ: Noyes, 1975; repr., Torrance, CA: Original Books, 1990), 145, cited by Marcus, "Crucifixion," 75; see also ibid., n. 14, quoting Artemidorus *Oneirocritica* 4.49; White, 212: "In Greece, Menander dreamt that he was crucified in front of the temple of Zeus, Guardian of the City. He was appointed priest of this same god and became more well-known and wealthy as a result."

rule. Further, unlike John, the Gospel of Mark does not hint that the crucifixion of Jesus is symbolic in an allegorical sense.

Marcus compares the scene of the mocking of Jesus by the soldiers to a case heard by Claudius in which Roman citizenship was at stake.[34] He interprets the reported legal procedure as mockery of the man at the center of the case, but Suetonius cites it to show how Claudius had discredited himself and why "he was held in general and open contempt" (Suetonius, *Lives, Claudius,* 15.3).[35]

Marcus also compares the scene of mockery in Mark to a passage in Plutarch's *Moralia* (554b). The only similarities he finds between the two passages are the purple clothing, the crowns, and the flogging.

A more illuminating social and cultural context in which to understand the scene of mocking in Mark is the type of ancient mime that could be called "the mocking of a king." Evidence for such a mime is found in reports of two incidents that occurred in Alexandria, one by Philo and one in the *Alexandrian Acts,* a group of texts sometimes called the *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs.* The incident reported by Philo (*Flacc.* 6 §§36–39) occurred in 38 c.e.[36] Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, had just been made king by the emperor Gaius Caligula. The Alexandrian Greeks instigated a public mockery of Agrippa, taking a harmless simpleton to the gymnasium, setting him up on high, putting on his head a sheet of papyrus, spread out wide like a royal crown, clothing him in a rug as a mantle, and giving him a papyrus rush that had been thrown on the road as a scepter. Some approached him, pretending to salute him, others to sue for justice, and others to consult him on state affairs. Then the crowd hailed him as "Marin," the name by which it is said that kings are called in Syria. Philo described the whole affair as similar to the theatrical mimes.

The other incident is mentioned in the *Acts of Paul and Antoninus,* one of the *Alexandrian Acts.*[37] This work reports a speech by an Alexandrian about how the people of Alexandria had mocked a king by performing a mime. The king in question was probably the royal or messianic claimant who led the revolt in Cyrene.[38] This mime took place in about 117 c.e. The similarities between the mocking of Agrippa and that of Jesus are probably due to the widespread popularity of the mime.[39]

[34] Suetonius *Lives, Claudius* 15.2, cited by Marcus, "Crucifixion," 82.

[35] Trans. J. C. Rolfe, *Suetonius* (2 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 2:29.

[36] Herbert Box, *Philonis Alexandrini: In Flaccum* (London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), xl–xliii, 91–92. On Agrippa I, see also David C. Braund, "Agrippa," *ABD* 1:98–99.

[37] For an introduction, text, and translation, see Herbert A. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954).

[38] According to Eusebius, his name was Lukuas (*Hist. eccl.* 4.2); Dio Cassius says his name was Andreias (68.32.1–3).

[39] Elaine Fantham, "Mime," *OCD,* 982–83; Hermann Reich, *Der Mimus: Ein litterar-entwickelungsgeschichtlicher Versuch,* vol. 1, part 1, *Theorie des Mimus* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1903).

Marcus also argues that "crucifixion and kingship were sometimes conflated by the guardians of punishment."[40] He emphasizes that in "the Gospel passion narratives themselves, 'king of the Jews' is not a self-designation of Jesus or a title that his followers come up with but an epithet hurled at him by mocking outsiders as he makes his way to the cross and suffers on it."[41] He argues further that the inscription over the cross, "king of the Jews," also is mocking. The anonymous soldier who wrote it probably thought it a good joke.[42] He concludes, "[T]his joke was not just an accident or a private inspiration, but reflected a common understanding of crucifixion as enthronement."[43] The evidence cited by Marcus does not support the inference that there was such an understanding of crucifixion as enthronement.

It should be recalled that "messiah" was insider language and the equivalent outsider term was "king of the Jews." It should be recalled also that Pilate laid the sentence of crucifixion upon Jesus. In spite of the evangelist's attempts to minimize Pilate's role, Pilate's political decision to crucify Jesus is not entirely erased. Underlying the mocking and the irony, the placard sent a clear message: a warning to messianic enthusiasts and to willing or unwilling messianic pretenders that Roman authorities had the power and the will to quash such movements.

Marcus also raises the possibility that crucifixion as parodic enthronement "may turn into reality"; that is, the one mocked may be perceived as a truly royal figure if the presumptive monarch responds to his torture with dignity.[44] Such a claim can more easily be made regarding the Maccabean "martyrs," whose courage, mastery of their emotions, and perseverance transform their horrific tortures and executions into famous instances of the exemplary "noble death" (2 Macc 6:18–7:42; 4 Macc 5:1–18:24).[45] Although none of the martyrs was executed as a "presumptive monarch" or messianic pretender, the implied author of 4 Maccabees can say with regard to them, "O reason, more royal than kings and freer than the free!"[46] The later Christian martyrs achieved analogously noble deaths.

The death of Jesus in Mark, however, is much more anguished, human, and

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See also Laurence L. Welborn, "Μωρὸς γενέσθω: Paul's Appropriation of the Role of the Fool in 1 Corinthians 4," *BibInt* 10 (2002): 420–35; idem, *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1–4 in the Comic-Philosophical Tradition* (JSNTSup 293; New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

[40] Marcus, "Crucifixion," 83.

[41] Ibid. He admits (n. 44) that the crowd acclaims Jesus as king in Luke 19:37–38; actually, it is "the whole multitude of the disciples" who so acclaim him. He also admits that the crowd acclaims Jesus as king in John 12:12–13. The point, however, holds for Mark.

[42] Ibid., 83–84.

[43] Ibid., 84.

[44] Ibid., 86–87; quotation from 86.

[45] On 2 Maccabees, see Jan Willem van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People* (JSJSup 57; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

[46] Ὦ βασιλέων λογισμοί βασιλικώτεροι καὶ ἐλευθέρων ἐλευθερώτεροι (4 Macc 14:2; trans. NRSV).

realistic than these. Jesus does not sing songs of victory on the cross as the Cantabrians described by Marcus did.[47] He laments his fate in a way that expresses his suffering and disappointment, if not despair, by citing the first line of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Then he expires with a loud cry. The narrator introduces the centurion's declaration with the words, "When the centurion who was standing by opposite him saw that he had expired in this way." In spite of this introduction, the centurion's remark, "This man really was God's son," is made more in spite of the way that Jesus died than because of it. It is Mark's tour de force, Mark's way of making the point that Jesus' obedient though difficult death fulfills the plan of God and transforms the expected way in which the Messiah would come to power.

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[47] Marcus, "Crucifixion," 87, citing Strabo *Geogr.* 3.4.18. Strabo states that their singing showed them to be barbarians.

The Messianic Whippersnapper: Did Jesus Use a Whip on People in the Temple (John 2:15)?

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In the Fourth Gospel, in contrast to the Synoptics, the scene in which Jesus "cleanses" the temple is located near the outset of his public ministry (John 2:13–22). This is perhaps the most evident and problematic difference between the Johannine and Synoptic accounts, but in this episode several minor details also stand out as unique to the Johannine version. One of these is Jesus' use of a whip to clear the temple: καὶ ποιήσας φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων πάντας ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ (2:15). This action understandably precipitates an angry response, but only in John is the action of Jesus followed immediately by the reaction of "the Jews." They question his authority, ask for a sign, and scoff at his explanation. Jesus impresses them as presumptuous and arrogant, a whippersnapper.[1]

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[1] The passage has generated much scholarly literature. In addition to the commentaries, see the following representative essays and the literature they cite: Bruce D. Chilton, "[ὡς] φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων (John 2:15)," in *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple Presented to Ernst Bammel* (ed. William Horbury; JSNTSup 48; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 330–44; Craig A. Evans, "Temple Action of Jesus," in *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (ed. Craig A. Evans; New York/London: Routledge, 2008), 634–37; Paula Fredriksen, "The Historical Jesus, the Scene in the Temple, and the Gospel of John," in *John, Jesus, and History,* vol. 1, *Critical Appraisals of Critical Views* (ed. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher; SBLSymS 44; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 249–76; Mark A. Matson, "The Contribution to the Temple Cleansing by the Fourth Gospel," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1992 Seminar Papers* (ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 489–506; and Francis J. Moloney, "Reading John 2:13–22: The Purification of the Temple," *RB* 97 (1990): 432–52.

I. Discomfiting Image of Jesus

If medieval and Renaissance artists are any indication, the so-called temple cleansing must be one of the most important episodes in the life of Jesus.[2] But some readers of John's account have felt unease with the image of a violent, whip-cracking Jesus. This discomfort may have been heightened by the fact that the word employed by the evangelist, φραγέλλιον, can refer to a whip "consisting of a thong or thongs, freq[uently] with metal tips to increase the severity of the punishment."[3] It is a loanword from the Latin *flagellum* (whence the English "flagellate").[4]

The Greek noun appears only here in the NT and never in the LXX. The related verb φραγελλόω occurs only in the passion narratives (Mark 15:15; Matt 27:26), describing Pilate's scourging of Jesus prior to crucifixion. Surely Jesus himself had not inflicted a similar punishment on people and animals in the temple precincts! For both historical and narrative reasons, it is highly unlikely that Jesus did so. Historically, as commentators have often noted, weapons were forbidden in the temple area.[5] The Mishnah forbids one to bring a staff (מקל, *maqqēl*) into the temple (*m. Ber.* 9:5). While the Roman soldiers under Pilate's command certainly had *flagella,* Jews would not likely possess them and certainly not in the temple precincts. If Jesus had wielded such an instrument in a crowd at the Passover festival, his behavior would have been tolerated by neither Jews nor Romans. His arrest would likely have been immediate. "Whatever the degree of force that was used, the action took on nothing of the riotous character that would have attracted swift and sharp intervention from the Roman garrison in the Antonia fortress."[6]

More importantly, the narrative itself disallows the notion that Jesus bran-

[2] Jean Lasserre, "Un contresens tenace," *Cahiers de la Réconciliation* (October 1967): 3–21, here 3: "Les peintres, les tapissiers, les écrivains, à travers les siècles, se sont plu à décrire cette scène violente qui est, du coup, devenue une des plus populaires de la vie de Jésus."

[3] BDAG, 1064.

[4] The word derives from the vulgar Latin form *fragellum,* in which the first *l* in *flagellum* changed to an *r* through dissimilation. See Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 32, §129a; BDF, p. 4, §5, 1b and p. 23, §41, 2; and J. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek,* vol. 2, *Accidence and Word-Formation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), 103.

[5] So Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (2 vols.; AB 29, 29A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966, 1970), 1:115; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:521; and Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John* (3 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1982–90), 1:346.

[6] F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 75. Similarly, Martin Hengel states, "Although this event cannot be reconstructed in detail, it obviously could not have been too tumultuous or the cohort stationed in the Antonia would certainly have intervened" (*The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989], 216).

dished a *flagellum.* The instrument was fashioned (ποιήσας) on the spot from materials that were available. The latter did not likely include leather thongs, bone fragments, or bits of metal. Moreover, John describes the whip as constructed ἐκ σχοινίων, "from cords." Originally these were rushes or reeds, akin to rattan or wicker material. This material might have been available as the animals' bedding or perhaps was already fashioned into ropes or traces. Otherwise, σχοινία may refer to ropes of other material, as in the case of the lines used to attach a skiff to a larger, seagoing ship in Acts 27:32, the only other NT usage. (The word is used twenty-eight times in the LXX to refer to ropes, cords, or measuring lines.) In either case, the whip wielded by Jesus was clearly a makeshift tool, scarcely equal to the Roman instrument of torture.[7]

Nevertheless, it has been suggested that, beginning with the early manuscript tradition of the Gospel, some scribes felt constrained to qualify or soften the impact of the term φραγέλλιον. The two oldest textual witnesses, the Bodmer papyri 𝔓[66] and 𝔓[75] (dated approximately 200 and third century respectively), have the word ὡς before φραγέλλιον, indicating that Jesus fashioned "something like" a whip of cords. The reading with ὡς is further supported by a few Greek uncials ranging from the third to the eighth centuries, several minuscules, including Family 1, as well as the Vulgate and nearly all the Old Latin tradition. It would be hard to account for the *deliberate* omission of ὡς, since that would make the image harsher. On the other hand, the word might have been *accidentally* omitted through para-blepsis, the scribe's eye inadvertently skipping just two letters from the final sigma in ποιήσας to the sigma in ὡς, resulting in a reading that, although secondary, was perfectly intelligible.[8] The editors of the modern critical text have deemed the absence of ὡς more likely original, but whether it was absent or present, it would mean that someone—either the evangelist or later scribes—felt the need to soften the image.[9]

Some modern readers of the account have exploited the image of the whip-cracking Jesus as justification for various kinds of violent force. Jean Lasserre, a

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[7] M.-J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Jean* (EBib; 5th ed.; Paris: Gabalda, 1936), 65:"Cela n'a rien du redoubtable instrument de supplice employé pour Jésus (Mc. xv, 15)."

[8] *Pace* Bruce M. Metzger (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994], 173), who asserts, "If this word had been present in the original text, there is no good reason that would account for its having been omitted from the other witnesses."

[9] Metzger's "B" rating indicates that the editors regarded the text without ὡς as almost certain. But in fact, the reading *with* ὡς has better extrinsic and intrinsic support than is often acknowledged. In addition to the manuscript support and the possibility of parablepsis mentioned above, I would note that the evangelist himself had good reason to mollify the image with ὡς, given that he juxtaposed the words φραγέλλιον and ἐκ σχοινίων, a combination that nearly demands a qualification. The evangelist makes a similar use of ὡς in John 1:14, 32; 15:6; and perhaps 7:10.

mid-twentieth-century pacifist in the Reformed Church of France, laments that "partisans of militarism . . . cite the whip which Jesus used to chase the merchants and money-changers out of the Temple in Jerusalem," reasoning that Jesus thereby gave his sanction to violence.[10] Mennonite John Howard Yoder acknowledges that "the whip in the temple has been considered the one act in the life of Jesus which could be appealed to as precedent for the Christian's violence."[11] Donald Senior cites the temple cleansing, especially in its Johannine version, among the "problem passages" in the NT and urges that they "not be misconstrued as an endorsement of the means of violence or as a hedge on the biblical commitment to peace making."[12]

A few interpreters have seen in the temple episode evidence of a violent Jesus, an image largely effaced by the evangelists' censorship. Indeed, the scene has been called "the key witness for the representation of Jesus as a political revolutionary."[13] S. G. F. Brandon argued that Jesus and his disciples sympathized with the Zealot movement.[14] A crucial component in Brandon's theory was the "temple cleansing" episode, which he imagined was achieved not by Jesus alone but "by the aid of an excited crowd of his supporters and was attended by violence and pillage."[15] Another imaginative reconstruction suggests that "[w]e can hardly suppose that Jesus cleared the Temple court single-handed. His use of a whip and his upsetting of the tables suggest that his action was resisted, and that resistance was overcome by force, presumably with the help of his disciples and sympathisers."[16] The scholarly response to Brandon was largely critical, but his use of the temple scene shows how that incident was tinder for theories of a violence-prone Jesus.[17]

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[10] Jean Lasserre, *War and the Gospel* (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1962), 45.

[11] John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus noster* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 50–51.

[12] Donald Senior, "The New Testament and Peacemaking: Some Problem Passages," *Faith and Mission* (Fall 1986): 76. Others who acknowledge John 2:15 as an at least ostensibly problematic text include G. H. C. Macgregor, *The New Testament Basis of Pacifism and the Relevance of an Impossible Ideal* (London: Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1953), 17–18; Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 128; and Mark R. Bredin, "John's Account of Jesus' Demonstration in the Temple: Violent or Nonviolent?" *BTB* 33 (2003): 44–50, esp. 46–47.

[13] Martin Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* (Facet Books, Biblical Series 28; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 15.

[14] S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967).

[15] Ibid., 333. Brandon considered it "likely that some of the money from the overturned tables would have been purloined in the excitement and confusion of the attack" (p. 333 n. 4).

[16] J. N. Sanders, edited and completed by B. A. Mastin, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 116.

[17] For responses to Brandon, see Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* and the bibliography on pp. 5–6 n. 19; and *Jesus and the Politics of his Day* (ed. Ernst Bammel and C. F. D. Moule; Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

II. What Would Jesus Whip?

Since Jesus' use of some sort of improvised whip or lash seems certain, a question arises: Did Jesus use the instrument on the animals alone or on the people as well? The sellers of doves are sternly rebuked in 2:16. Did they receive a whip-lashing too or only a tongue-lashing? There is enough textual ambiguity on this point that the commentators are divided, although the majority seem inclined toward Jesus' application of the whip to persons as well as animals.

C. K. Barrett argues for the people as the object of Jesus' whip, based on the gender of the pronoun "all": "πάντας (masculine) indicates that Jesus drove out all the *men* engaged in trade; if τά τε . . . βόας . . . had been intended as a merely epexegetical phrase we should have had πάντα not πάντας."[18] George R. Beasley-Murray notes that τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας is often viewed as in apposition to πάντας, but he regards that meaning as "impossible . . . since πάντας must include the sellers of v 14."[19] Other scholars concur that a reference to the merchants is either certain[20] or likely.[21]

A smaller, but still impressive, group of interpreters favors the "animals only" construal of the verse. Craig Keener argues on the basis of the narrative logic: "That Jesus must address the sellers [of doves], who are still present in 2:16, suggests that he has not struck them with the whip."[22] C. H. Dodd more directly addresses the grammatical issue: "Here the τε . . . καί clause should, in accord with normal usage, be epexegetic of πάντας. . . . The masculine can be used where nouns of different genders are comprehended in a collective term. Thus the meaning would be 'he drove them all out, viz. sheep and oxen alike.'"[23] Others assume the exclusion of the merchants without any explicit argument.[24]

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[18] C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 197.

[19] George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; Waco: Word, 1987), 38.

[20] Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1972), 138; Senior, "New Testament and Peacemaking," 74; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 81.

[21] Brown, *Gospel,* 115; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to Saint John* (BNTC; New York: Continuum, 2005), 137; Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 194 n. 63; Harold K. Moulton, "PANTAS in John 2:15," *BT* 18 (1967): 127; and Ben Witherington III, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 87.

[22] Keener, *Gospel,* 522. See also *EDNT* 3:437, s.v. φραγέλλιον.

[23] C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 156 n. 3.

[24] Ernst Haenchen, *John: A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (2 vols.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1:183; Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (2nd ed.; London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 194.

It is apparent that the query about the precise targets of Jesus' whip involves questions of logic, narrative flow, and especially two specific grammatical issues: (1) the nature of the phrase τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας and its relationship to the clause preceding it, and (2) whether that phrase could refer back to the masculine pronoun πάντας. I will take up these issues in that order.

III. Is τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας Appositional?

An appositive is a noun or phrase that stands in parallel with another noun (or pronoun) and has the same referent and syntactical function in the sentence. An appositive thus is a grammatically parallel expansion, definition, or description of a substantive. A simple English example would be the words between commas in the following sentence: "Dr. Smith, the university president, expelled the students who had cheated on the exam." The appositive, "the university president," further defines "Dr. Smith."

A specific type of apposition is the "partitive apposition," in which the apposition delineates the parts of the whole.[25] An example of this type would be the following: "Dr. Smith expelled the students who had cheated on the exam, both those who received test answers and those who gave them." The subdivisions in the "both . . . and" clause specify parts of the larger group of "students who had cheated on the exam." Greek would express this idea with correlative conjunctions, such as τε . . . καί.[26] A more detailed consideration of this construction is in order.

The correlative construction τε . . . καί is common in Classical Greek, somewhat less so in the NT, with the exception of the book of Acts, which accounts for about 80 percent of the slightly more than two hundred NT uses of τε. The conjunctions join together two substantives (less commonly two phrases or clauses) more closely than a simple καί and typically join "words which have between themselves a close or logical affinity."[27] Thus τε . . . καί is common with contrasting pairs; hence, we find "men and women" (Acts 5:14; 8:3, 12; 9:2; 22:4), "Jews and Greeks" (Acts 14:1; 18:4; 19:17; 20:21; cf. Rom 1:16; 2:9–10; 10:12), "wise and foolish" (Rom 1:14), etc. With singular nouns, we find such noteworthy duos as "Mary and Joseph" (Luke 2:16), "Herod and Pilate" (Luke 23:12; Acts 4:27), Paul and Silas (Acts 17:10), and Adam and Eve (Gen 2:25).

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[25] Smyth, *Greek Grammar,* 266, §981.

[26] On Greek particles in general, see J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1959). For τε . . . καί in particular, see ibid., 511–15; BDAG, 993; and Raphael Kühner and Bernhard Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der Griechischen Sprache,* Teil II, Band 2 (Hannover/Leipzig: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1904), 249–52, §522.

[27] Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek,* vol. 3, *Syntax* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), 339; see also BDF, p. 230, §444 (2); and Kühner and Gerth, *Grammatik,* II.2, 249, §522.2.

The following examples show how the contrasting terms often serve to sum up the parts of a previously mentioned group:

Luke 22:66   "the elders of the people, both chief priests and [τε . . . καί] scribes"

Acts 8:38   "both of them, Philip and [τε . . . καί] the eunuch, went down into the water"

1 Esd 6:26   "the holy vessels . . . , both the gold ones and [τε . . . καί] the silver ones"

4 Macc 15:26   "two ballots, one bearing death and [τε . . . καί] one deliverance"

Matt 22:10   "*all* whom they found, both good and [τε . . . καί] bad"

Acts 19:10   "*all* the residents of Asia, both Jews and [τε . . . καί] Greeks"

Rom 3:9   "*all,* both Jews and [τε . . . καί] Greeks, are under the power of sin"

Rev 19:18   "the flesh of *all* people, free and [τε . . . καί] slave, both small and [τε . . . καί] great"

3 Macc 1:1   "he gave orders to *all* his forces, both infantry and [τε . . . καί] cavalry."

All of the above τε . . . καί constructions are partitive appositives in which "the unity of the conceptual pair is expressed through a more general term either preceding or following."[28] With regard to John 2:15, it is noteworthy that in the last five examples a form of the pronoun πάντες is explicated by the τε . . . καί construction.

Given the abundance of close grammatical parallels (the above list is selective), it is likely that the construction in John 2:15 is a partitive appositive. The whole would be πάντας, to which τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας would stand in apposition, giving the constituent parts, that is, "he drove *all* out of the temple, namely, the 'all' consisting of *both the sheep and the cattle.*" Edwin Abbott's thorough study of Johannine grammar devotes ten pages to appositional constructions in John.[29] Numerous types and examples are discussed. With reference to John 2:15, Abbott opines that "in a writer so fond of parenthesis as Jn the meaning might be, 'He cast them all out of the temple—both the sheep and the oxen [did he cast out] —and he poured forth the money.'"[30]

I would state it more strongly: it is very difficult to construe the Greek as meaning anything but "*both* the sheep *and* the oxen," "the sheep *as well as* the oxen," or perhaps "*not only* the sheep *but also* the oxen."[31] Harold K. Moulton vacillates

[28] *EDNT* 3:339, s.v. τέ, 3 c.

[29] Edwin A. Abbott, *Johannine Grammar* (London: A. & C. Black, 1906), 36–42. Abbott refers to the partitive apposition as the "subdivisional apposition" (pp. 37–38).

[30] Ibid., 37–38 n. 2.

[31] BDAG, 993, s.v. τέ, 2 cα, cites John 2:15 as having this meaning. Brooke Foss Westcott rightly says that "the . . . clause must be translated, *both the sheep and the oxen*" (see *The Gospel*

between interpreting the clause as "additional" or "explanatory."[32] The latter is equivalent to the appositional meaning argued for here; the former construes the clause as providing further objects for the verb ἐξέβαλεν, rather than clarifying the pronoun "all." Thus, the "additional" translation would be: "He drove all (the people) out . . . *along with* the sheep and the oxen." But this has converted a correlative construction into a prepositional phrase, and the Greek would almost certainly require μετά or ἅμα.[33] What the evangelist has written conjoins the two animal groups as closely related *to each other,* not in accompaniment or association with someone or something else.[34]

I would note that the above argument based on grammar is supported by arguments based on logic and narrative flow. The correlatives τε . . . καί join two plural articular nouns that make a very logical couplet, that is, the two types of animals listed in v. 14 that would normally be driven with a whip. The doves are logically excluded. They would certainly be caged or otherwise restrained; moreover, one does not "drive out" doves with a whip. (It is not coincidental that the only temple cleansing account that mentions the whip is also the only one that mentions sheep and cattle.) More importantly, the doves are excluded by the flow of the narrative. In v. 16 Jesus orders the sellers of doves, "Take these away from here!" The command itself presupposes the continuing presence of both the birds and their purveyors. They are addressed in v. 16 because they were not removed by the action of v. 15.

Likewise the money changers are probably still present. Spilling their coinage and overturning their tables disrupted their operation. Would they have fled from the area with their monetary resources scattered on the ground? More likely they would have hastened immediately to collect their currency, to gather up the spilled coinage. As for the sellers of the sheep and oxen, even if the whip had not been

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according to St. John [London: James Clarke, 1958], 41). For a survey of τε . . . καί constructions in the NT that reaches a similar conclusion, see Lasserre, "Contresens," 7–13.

[32] H. K. Moulton, "PANTAS," 126.

[33] This is precisely what Origen does twice in his commentary on John. He opts for the "additional" meaning, that is, Jesus drove out the people *along with* the animals, and removes the ambiguity of John 2:15 by paraphrasing the text and adding the preposition ἅμα. See Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John, Books 1–10* (trans. Ronald E. Heine; FC 80; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 10.137, 199. For the critical Greek text, see *Commentaire sur Saint Jean, Origène,* ed. Erwin Preuschen, 2nd ed. revised by Cécile Blanc (SC 120; Paris: Cerf, 1996).

[34] The difficulty of interpreting the verse has led some scholars to dismiss the phrase as an interpolation (Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971], 123 n. 8) or to question the text. BDF (p. 229, §443 [1]) asserts that τε in John (2:15; 4:42; and 6:18) is "always textually contestable." But only in 4:42 (erroneously cited as 4:32 in BDF) is there manuscript evidence for variation. The fact that a given construction occurs just once in an author is insufficient grounds for rejecting the text.

applied to them directly, they would likely have followed their livestock. In this way, Jesus' driving out of the animals would have simultaneously effected the removal of the sellers.

The structure of vv. 15–16 thus implies a threefold strategy: (1) Jesus drove off the livestock with the whip, an action that effectively routed the sellers; (2) he overturned the tables of the money changers and spilled their coinage on the ground; and (3) he ordered the sellers of doves to take them away, presumably by carrying off their cages. I readily acknowledge that this dramatic reconstruction involves filling the gaps of the narrative, but it is guided, I believe, by explicit and implicit elements of the text itself. The potential weakness in this interpretation is the issue of grammatical concord. Can a neuter noun (πρόβατα, "sheep") and a masculine noun (βόας, "cattle") have a masculine pronominal antecedent such as πάντας?

IV. Can τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας Refer Back to the Masculine Pronoun πάντας?

Some commentators insist that the evangelist would necessarily have written the neuter (πάντα) if he had intended the animals.[35] But the nouns in question are of two grammatical genders, so the writer must choose one or the other for any pronouns or modifying words that apply to both substantives. What would be the default gender in such a situation?

The grammatical "rules" in such cases are complex, if we can speak of rules at all.[36] More properly, there are tendencies or trends. When persons are involved, a masculine noun and a feminine noun are referred to with the masculine form of an adjective, pronoun, or participle.[37] Thus, when Luke writes that Jesus' "father and mother were *marveling*" at the things said about the child, the participle is masculine (θαυμάζοντες [Luke 2:33; cf. 2:48]). The masculine as the default gender for groups including men and women seems to be a rather consistent tendency. In Acts 9:40 when Peter sends all the people (πάντας) outside, the masculine is used even though the previous verse highlights the presence of widows (cf. Acts 9:2).

When two or more nouns of different gender are used, the adjective may be repeated, as in "I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1, εἶδον οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινήν). But a single adjective that takes the gender of one of the nouns is hardly uncommon.[38] But which of the two nouns is chosen, and what

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[35] See H. K. Moulton, "PANTAS," 126–27; as well as the commentries by Barrett and Morris, and Senior, "New Testament and Peacemaking."

[36] Lasserre ("Contresens," 15) rightly observes, "[D]ans la langue grecque, la règle des accords de genre n'est, hélas! ni très claire, ni très ferme."

[37] A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 412.

[38] Robertson, *Grammar,* 413; Turner, *Syntax,* 311.

"rules" govern the choice? Sometimes the noun that is nearer the adjective seems to determine the gender; sometimes the more important noun does. The statements in William W. Goodwin's grammar illustrate the complexity of the matter:

> An attributive adjective belonging to several nouns generally agrees with the nearest or the most prominent one, and is understood with the rest. . . . [With a predicate adjective, if] the nouns are of different genders, the adjective is commonly masculine if one of the nouns denotes a male *person,* and commonly neuter if all denote things. . . . But it [the adjective] sometimes follows both the gender and number of the nearest or most prominent noun.[39]

The whole matter is further complicated by the fact that nouns have both grammatical gender and biological gender. One of the best known "violations" of agreement in gender is the so-called *constructio ad sensum,* in which a modifying word slips into the biological (or logical) gender of the word modified.[40] For example, since a spirit is normally thought of as having personhood, the neuter word πνεῦμα is often modified by a masculine participle (Matt 9:26; Mark 9:20). Ancient Greek writers obviously understood that a grammatically neuter πρόβατον necessarily had a female or male biological gender. In Lev 22:28 feminine pronouns are used for a πρόβατον since the context pertains to a female sheep and her young. It is tempting to invoke the *constructio ad sensum* in John 2:15, since even the grammatically neuter πρόβατα would necessarily have been biologically male as Passover sacrifices (Exod 12:5). More relevant, however, is the simple fact an author who wanted to refer to (grammatically) neuter sheep and masculine cattle with a modifier of some sort had three choices: to repeat the modifier and use the appropriate gender with each word, to follow the gender of the nearest or most important substantive, or to use the masculine rather than the feminine or neuter.[41]

A series of examples will illustrate both the tendencies and the flexibility of Greek vis-à-vis concord and grammatical gender. In the following examples the gender of the modifier seems to be drawn to the closest noun.

1 Kgs 8:52	"Let your eyes and your ears be opened" (οἱ ὀφθαλμοί . . . τὰ ὦτα . . . ἠνεῳγμένα)
Ps 8:8 LXX	"all sheep and (female) cattle" (πρόβατα καὶ βόας πάσας)
Heb 9:9	"gifts and sacrifices that are not able" (δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίαι . . . μὴ δυνάμεναι)
Philo, *Spec.* 1.163	"Oxen and sheep and goats, for these are the most gentle" (βοῶν καὶ προβάτων καὶ αἰγῶν. ἡμερώτατα γὰρ αὗται)

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[39] William W. Goodwin, *A Greek Grammar* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1900), 202. See also Kühner and Gerth, *Grammatik,* II.1, 77–82, §370.

[40] BDF, p. 74, §134.

[41] Robertson, *Grammar,* 655.

Xenophon, *Anab.* 3.5.9   "I see many sheep and goats and oxen and donkeys" (πολλὰ δ' ὁρῶ πρόβατα καὶ αἶγας καὶ βοῦς καὶ ὄνους)

In the following example the gender of the modifier goes with the first (most important?) noun.

1 Kgs 8:5 LXX   "sheep and oxen without number" (πρόβατα καὶ βόας ἀναρίθμητα)

Sometimes the choice of gender seems whimsical and entirely dependent on the writer. In the following example a masculine pronoun refers back to two feminine nouns and a neuter noun, presumably because the male children implied in παιδία trump the feminine nouns.

Gen 32:23–24 LXX   "he took his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children . . . he took them" (. . . τὰς δύο γυναῖκας καὶ τὰς δύο παιδίσκας καὶ τὰ ἔνδεκα παιδία . . . αὐτούς)

Equally complex is the following verse, in which a masculine pronoun refers back to a neuter and a feminine. Here the masculine seems to be the default gender for a mixed group, perhaps influenced by the male persons implied in παιδία.

Gen 33:13   "the children are very tender, and the sheep and the cows with me are giving birth; if then I shall drive them hard one day, all the livestock will die" (τὰ παιδία ἀπαλώτερα καὶ τὰ πρόβατα . . . αἱ βόες . . . καταδιώξω αὐτούς . . . ἀποθανοῦνται πάντα τὰ κτήνη)

But other examples show that there are no hard and fast rules.

Deut 22:1   "when you see your brother's calf or sheep wandering in the way" (ἰδὼν τὸν μόσχον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου ἢ τὸ πρόβατον αὐτοῦ πλανώμενα ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ)

Philo, *Spec.* 2.35   "three classes of animals suited for sacrifice, an ox or a sheep or a goat, let him sacrifice it" (. . . βοῦς ἢ πρόβατον ἢ αἴξ, ἐκεῖνο καταθυέτω)

I offer three final examples as especially instructive for John 2:15. They all pertain to livestock; they all use plural forms of the nouns for cattle and sheep; and they all use a masculine adjective or pronoun to refer to the collective group. (I must acknowledge that word order in these examples may influence the choice of gender.)

Xenophon, *Anab.* 4.7.14   "but there were great numbers of oxen and asses and sheep" (βόες δὲ καὶ ὄνοι πολλοὶ καὶ πρόβατα)[42]

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[42] The English translations of this text and the next are from Xenophon, *The Persian Expedition* (trans. Rex Warner; New York: Penguin, 1949).

Xenophon, *Anab.* 7.8.16 "They seized all the oxen and sheep that were there" (λαβόντες ὅσοι ἦσαν βόες καὶ πρόβατα)

Antoninus Liberalis *Metam.* 20.1 "He had many cattle, asses, and sheep" (ἔχων πολλοὺς βοῦς καὶ ὄνους καὶ πρόβατα)[43]

So I return to the question of whether πάντας in John 2:15 could refer solely to the livestock rather than the sellers and money changers. It is without question *possible,* though it is not conclusively determinable by rules of grammar since there are no inviolable rules on such matters. John 2:15 is hard to fit into any of the patterns because it is so complex: a masculine pronoun (πάντας) preceded by five possible antecedents of various genders (sellers, cattle, sheep, doves, money changers) and followed by a likely appositional construction of two genders (sheep and cattle). What can be confidently asserted is that the gender of πάντας does *not* exclude the possibility that the phrase τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας refers back to it. If the masculine is indeed grammatically possible, why might the evangelist have chosen it? Perhaps he did so because the cattle, as the larger, more imposing animals, were the ones that would most naturally require a whip to be put to flight.

Difficult exegetical questions are best answered not on the basis of grammatical rules alone, but by a convergence of different types of evidence. In the present case, there are five important considerations: (1) the absence of stories elsewhere in the Gospel tradition in which Jesus engages in violence against people; (2) the narrative sequence in vv. 14–16, which excludes the doves and their sellers as targets of Jesus' whip; (3) the logic of the scene, which suggests that the money changers and the sellers of livestock were busy pursuing their scattered capital; (4) the fact that the τε . . . καί construction is almost certainly appositional; and (5) the fact that the gender of πάντας, rather than excluding the appositional interpretation, is within the range of grammatical possibilities for gender agreement. All these considerations support the conclusion that the fourth evangelist portrays Jesus as using the whip on the animals alone.[44]

V. A Patristic Coda

Cosmas Indicopleustes, an Egyptian merchant, monk, and geographer, wrote a "Christian Topography" (ca. 547) that includes a remarkably astute exposition of John 2:15–16. The text and translation are worth quoting at length.[45]

[43] Francis Celoria, *The Metamorphoses of Antoninus Liberalis* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 75.

[44] I am not concerned here primarily with the question of the historical Jesus, but I do not find John's portrait historically implausible. On the one hand, the element of the whip, as a unique Johannine feature, lacks multiple attestation. On the other hand, it is difficult to detect any motive for its invention. It may be a genuine historical datum that John draws from his own, non-Synoptic source, even though the general episode is paralleled in the Synoptics. Cf. John's mention of the lad in the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:9) and his naming of Malchus in the arrest of Jesus (18:10), both unique Johannine features in multiply-attested stories.

[45] The Greek text is that of Wanda Wolska-Conus, ed., *Cosmas Indicopleustes, Topographie*

Ἀπορήσειε δ᾽ ἄν τις λέγων· Πῶς μηδὲ ἓν αὐτοῦ σημεῖον πεποιηκότος πρὸς τιμωρίαν ἀνθρώπων, καθάπερ ἔφης, τὸ φραγέλλιον λαβὼν ἐτύπτησεν τοὺς ἐν τῷ ναῷ πωλοῦντας καὶ ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ;

Ἀπόκρισις· ψεῦδος τὸ λεγόμενον· οὐκ ἐτύπτησε γὰρ ὅλως ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ θαυμαστῇ καὶ πρεπούσῃ καὶ ἀκολούθῳ τάξει ἐχρήσατο· τὰ γὰρ ἄλογα μόνα ἐτύπτησεν, ὡς γέγραπται· Καὶ ποιήσας φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων ἐξέβαλε πάντας ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ, τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας, ἵνα εἴπῃ ὅτι ταῦτα ὡς ἔμψυχα μέν, ἄλογα δέ, ἐτύπτησεν, ἀπελαύνων πάντα ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τὰ καὶ προσφερόμενα εἰς θυσίαν κατὰ νόμον, . . .

Τὰ δὲ ἄψυχα καὶ ἀναίσθητα ὤθησε καὶ κατέστρεφεν, ὡς γέγραπται· Καὶ τῶν κολλυβιστῶν ἐξέχεε τὰ κέρματα καὶ τὰς τραπέζας κατέστρεφε. Τοὺς δὲ λογικοὺς οὐδὲ ἐτύπτησεν, οὔτε ὤθησεν, ἀλλὰ λόγῳ ἐπαίδευσεν, ὡς γέγραπται, καὶ τοῖς πωλοῦσιν τὰς περιστερὰς εἶπεν· Ἄρατε ταῦτα ἐντεῦθεν καὶ μὴ ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Πατρός μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου. (*Top.* 3.22–23)

But someone may raise a difficulty and ask: Since he had performed not even one sign with a view to the punishment of people, how then did he, as has been said, take the whip and strike those that were selling in the temple and drive them out of the temple?

Answer: What is alleged is false, for he did not in any way strike a human being, but he adopted an admirable and becoming and appropriate course, for he struck the brute beasts only, as it is written: *And having made a whip of cords he drove all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen,* as much as to say: He struck these as living but irrational creatures, driving also out of the temple even the things that were brought for sacrifice according to the law, . . .

But things that had neither life nor sensation he pushed away and overthrew, as it is written: *And he poured out the moneychangers' money and overthrew their tables.* But the rational beings he neither struck nor pushed away, but chastised with speech, as it is written: *And to those who sold doves he said: Take these things hence, and do not make my Father's house a marketplace.*

Cosmas has outlined Jesus' temple-clearing strategy in three steps: (1) drive out the beasts with the whip (sheep and cattle), (2) forcibly push aside and overthrow the physical objects (coinage and tables), and (3) chastise persons with speech as opposed to physical violence. Cosmas has not only correctly construed the grammar of John 2:15, but he has also sketched a sort of ontological hierarchy: inanimate creation, animate but irrational creatures, and animate and rational human beings. According to Cosmas, Jesus' threefold strategy involves a prudent application of force and persuasion to all three levels.

Without embracing every detail of his exposition, I agree with Cosmas's reading of John that Jesus did not apply the whip to persons in the temple precincts. If that interpretation is correct, it is thoroughly consonant with the broadly attested

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chrétienne (3 vols.; SC 141, 159, 197; Paris: Cerf, 1968–73). The translation is that of J. W. McCrindle, *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, An Egyptian Monk* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1897), 99–100, which I have corrected and revised slightly.

tradition of a non-violent Jesus.[46] When one compares this tradition with the checkered history of Christendom vis-à-vis violence, there might be occasion for at least some followers of Jesus to engage in a little *self*-flagellation.

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[46] Within the Gospel of John itself, one might point to aspects of the arrest and trial scenes that involve the rejection of violence: John 18:10–11, 22–23; 36. More broadly, see Hengel, *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?;* idem, *Victory over Violence: Jesus and the Revolutionists* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973); and John Dear, *Put Down Your Sword: Answering the Gospel Call to Creative Nonviolence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

Ὁμοίως and the Use of Parallelism in Romans 1:26–27

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Romans 1:26 has received much attention because it is possibly the only clear reference to, and condemnation of, female homoerotic activity in the biblical texts. However, female homoerotic activity is not explicitly mentioned in the passage; rather, this specific interpretation rests solely on the content of the subsequent verse (v. 27), in which Paul describes male homoerotic activity in the context of condemning it. Joseph A. Fitzmyer reflects the opinion of most biblical scholars on this matter when he writes, "Paul is thinking of lesbian conduct, or tribadism, as it was called in antiquity. This meaning is suggested by the adv. *homoiōs*, 'likewise,' with which Paul introduces the corresponding male vice in v 27."[1]

[1] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 285. C. E. B. Cranfield writes regarding the phrase τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν ("the natural use for that which is beyond nature") in Rom 1:26: "Precisely what is meant only becomes clear in light of v. 27, the ὁμοίως of which implies that these words must refer to unnatural sexual relations between women" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975, 1979], 1:125). Brendan Byrne notes that the phrase τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν . . . παρὰ φύσιν in v. 26 "by itself . . . could simply refer to forms of heterosexual intercourse regarded as uncommon. But the corresponding statement about males in v 27 (cf. the introductory *homoiōs te kai*) makes clear the reference to same-sex relations" (*Romans* [SP 6; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996], 76). Although Johann Peter Lange notes that Paul is probably referring to female homoerotic activity, he also suggests that perhaps Paul was including "the more secret sin of onanism" (*The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* [trans. John F. Hurst; ed. Philip Schaff and Matthew B. Riddle; New York: Scribner, 1870], 87). Some others who mention the function of ὁμοίως in the context of inter-

Thus, a primary key to the connection between v. 26 and v. 27 is the use of the Greek adverb ὁμοίως[2] and the type of connection this adverb establishes between its own clause and an antecedent to which the *homoiōs* clause is being compared. In this article I investigate more closely the nature of the connection established by the use of ὁμοίως and the types of parallelism it creates in the Greek New Testament (GNT), with particular attention to the effect (if any) the *homoiōs* clause has on one's understanding of its antecedent. A prominent place will be given to uses of ὁμοίως in other undisputed Pauline texts (1 Cor 7:3, 4, 22); however, because of the paucity of these occurrences I survey the use of ὁμοίως and resulting types of

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preting v. 26 as referring to female homoerotic activity include Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago Series on Sexuality, History, and Society; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 250 n. 99; James B. De Young, "The Meaning of 'Nature' in Romans 1 and Its Implications for Biblical Proscriptions of Homosexual Behavior," *JETS* 31 (1988): 429–41, here 439; Karl A. Kuhn, "Natural and Unnatural Relations between Text and Context: A Canonical Reading of Romans 1:26–27," *CurTM* 33 (2006): 313–29, here 316, 318; David E. Malick, "The Condemnation of Homosexuality in Romans 1:26–27," *BSac* 150 (1993): 327–40, here 338; Mark D. Smith, "Ancient Bisexuality and the Interpretation of Romans 1:26–27," *JAAR* 64 (1996): 223–56, here 243. James E. Miller also notes the importance of ὁμοίως and the questionable tendency among scholars to assume female homoerotic activity in v. 26 ("The Practices of Rom 1:26: Homosexual or Heterosexual," *NovT* 37 [1995]: 2–11, here 2–3); however, he concludes that v. 26 is likely a reference to non-coital female heteroerotic activity (pp. 10–11).

However, many scholars draw no special attention to ὁμοίως, perhaps because its presence and meaning are taken for granted and hence are overshadowed by the elements of the parallelism itself, or focus on a specific phrase or phrases; see James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word, 1988), 64; James R. Edwards, *Romans* (NIBCNT; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 55–56; Richard Hays, "Relations Natural and Unnatural: A Response to John Boswell's Exegesis of Romans 1," *JRE* 14 (1986): 184–215, here 192; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 47; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 175–76; David Lyon Bartlett, *Romans* (Westminster Bible Companion; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 30–31; Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 69; John Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (TPINTC; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 78. Moses Lard makes a general appeal to references to homoerotic activity in other ancient sources, such as Seneca, Martial, and Petronius, but without providing the specific passages (*Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Romans* [St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1914], 60–61). A few commentators do not specify any reason for understanding homoerotic activity as the subject of both verses but merely assume that it is; see Everett F. Harrison, "Romans," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (ed. Frank E. Gaebelein; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 10:25–26; William Hendriksen, *Romans* (New Testament Commentary 6; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 77–79; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (trans. Scott J. Hafeman; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 37.

[2] Throughout this article I use the Greek font when discussing the adverb itself; however, I use an English transliteration when referring to the clause in which it appears (i.e., "*homoiōs* clause") or when the word appears in transliteration in a quotation from another source.

parallelism and briefly consider the usage of ὁμοίως in the LXX, Philo, Josephus, and the apostolic writings. Using the results of these analyses, I then examine the use of ὁμοίως in Rom 1:26–27 in order to determine more precisely the nature of the parallelism established by the use of ὁμοίως in those verses. But first, let us look at the primary passage in question.[3]

I. Ὁμοίως in Romans 1:26–27

²⁶Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, αἵ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, ²⁷ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες.

²⁶For this reason, God handed them over to dishonorable passions, for their females exchanged the natural use [τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν] for that which is beyond nature [τὴν παρὰ φύσιν], **²⁷**likewise also the males, leaving the natural use of females [τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας], were inflamed in their lustful passion for one another, males with males performing a shameful act and receiving in their own selves the recompense necessary for their error.

As one can see, the antecedent clause in v. 26 and the *homoiōs* clause in v. 27 have a similar structure:

SUBJECT	+ VERB/PTC	+ THAT WHICH IS ABANDONED	+ THE REPLACEMENT
αἱ θήλειαι	μετήλλαξαν	τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν	εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν
οἱ ἄρσενες	ἀφέντες	τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας	ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους . . .

In comparing these clauses, one notices that, although the structure is clearly parallel, there are some differences, namely, the content of the *homoiōs* clause (v. 27) is much more specific than that of v. 26. In v. 27, τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν ("the natural use") is qualified by τῆς θηλείας ("of females"), while there is no corresponding genitive qualifier in v. 26. In addition, v. 26 lists the replacement as τὴν παρὰ φύσιν ("the [use] beyond nature"), whereas v. 27 does not use that phrase but instead describes an act that falls under the category of things that were considered by some ancient writers as παρὰ φύσιν.[4]

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[3] All passages from the GNT are taken from Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993). All English translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

[4] Some ancient writers who refer to male homoerotic activity as παρὰ φύσιν (often with-

Because θῆλυς (adj., "female") is used in both clauses (first as the subject in v. 26, then as a qualifier for the direct object in v. 27) and forms a common dualistic word pair with ἄρσην (adj., "male," v. 27), and because the structure of the argument is similar, creating a parallelism between the clauses, it might be tempting to use v. 27 to form a fuller basis for understanding v. 26. One possibility is to suggest that since the *homoiōs* clause mentions males abandoning the use of females, perhaps ἄρσην is implied in the abandonment of τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν by the females in the antecedent clause.[5] Another possibility is to view the more detailed description of the male acts in the *homoiōs* clause as a basis for understanding the type of acts mentioned for the females in the antecedent clause since the two are structurally parallel and refer to something similar, possibly even the same thing.

The question raised in this article is whether using the *homoiōs* clause to inter-

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out mentioning corresponding female activities) include Plato (*Leg.* 1.636b–c [includes female homoerotic activity]; 8.841c–e), Aeschines (*Tim.* 185), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. rom.* 16.4.3), Philo (*Spec.* 3.39 [pederasty]), Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2.273, 275), and Plutarch (*Mor.* 751c–d). It is important to note, however, that acts that could be described as παρὰ φύσιν were not necessarily limited to homoerotic activity, for example, a man living with a woman who was married to another man (Zeno, Fr. 244; Helmut Koester, "φύσις," *TDNT* 9:251–77). Artemidorus lists the following types of sexual activities as unnatural (in the context of interpreting dreams): a man having sex with himself, a man engaging in *fellatio* with himself, a woman who has sex with another woman, a human having sex with a god or goddess, a human having sex with a corpse, and a human having sex with animals; in many cases, Artemidorus distinguishes between active and passive roles, each of which has a different significance or interpretation associated with it (*Onir.* 1.80). Several of the ancient authors mentioned above linked "natural" sexual intercourse with procreation (sometimes using the phrase κατὰ φύσιν, an antithetical parallel to παρὰ φύσιν); see Plato, *Leg.* 1.636c; 8.838d–839b, 840d–e; Plutarch, *Mor.* 990d; Philo, *Spec.* 3.32–39. Many of the same sources also express concern, outrage, disgust, disapproval, and the like, about the idea of men (voluntarily or forcibly) being made effeminate (e.g., Plato, *Leg.* 8.836e; Aeschines, *Tim.* 185; Plutarch, *Mor.* 751d–e, 990c–991a [also includes male/female bestiality]; Philo, *Plant.* 157–58 and *Spec.* 3.37–41), including a passage in (Pseudo)-Lucian's *Erotes* in which the author asserts that Aphrodite created two sexes, the males to ejaculate semen with the females as a vessel to receive it, and that μήτε τὸ θῆλυ παρὰ φύσιν ἀρρενοῦσθαι μήτε τἄρρεν ἀπρεπῶς μαλακίζεσθαι ("neither should the female become masculine beyond nature nor the male unsuitably effeminate" [19]). Thus, sexual activity that is κατὰ φύσιν is frequently linked with procreation and/or not violating the "nature" of each gender, which could theoretically include heteroerotic, homoerotic, and possibly autoerotic activity.

    [5] See F. W. Stellhorn, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1918), 25; Murray, *Epistle to the Romans*, 47. However, William G. T. Shedd proposes that one should supply τῆς θηλείας instead after τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν in v. 26, based on the phrase in v. 27 (*A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* [New York: Scribner, 1893], 27–29); cf. Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistle to the Romans,* vol. 1 (trans. John C. Moore; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1881), 91–92. In my opinion, τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν probably refers to the natural use of the women's own bodies.

pret the antecedent clause is valid or does justice to the way in which the adverb ὁμοίως creates parallelisms between its own clause and the antecedent clause. In an attempt to answer this question, it is necessary to explore how ὁμοίως is used elsewhere in the GNT, starting with the undisputed Pauline letters.

II. Uses of ὁμοίως in Other Undisputed Pauline Texts

Aside from Rom 1:27, Paul uses ὁμοίως only three times—all three in 1 Corinthians 7. Since these are from the same author as the Romans passage, we will closely examine each of these passages.

1 Corinthians 7:3

τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω,
ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ τῷ ἀνδρί.

The husband must fulfill the duty to his wife,
likewise also the wife to her husband.

The same two nouns (γυνή and ἀνήρ) that appear in the antecedent clause occur also in the *homoiōs* clause; however, their grammatical function in the clause has been reversed, creating equivalent reciprocal duties between husband and wife. Moreover, the *homoiōs* clause lacks a few important components found in the antecedent clause (i.e., most notably a verb, but also the direct object, thus making the *homoiōs* clause grammatically and contextually dependent on the antecedent clause). In contrast, there is nothing new in the *homoiōs* clause that could be used to help interpret or clarify the meaning of the antecedent clause.

1 Corinthians 7:4

ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ὁ ἀνήρ,
ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ἡ γυνή.

A wife does not have authority over her own body, but her husband,
likewise also a husband does not have authority over his own body, but his wife.

As in 1 Cor 7:3, the same two nouns that appear in the antecedent clause (γυνή and ἀνήρ) appear also in the *homoiōs* clause, but they have switched functions in the sentences and once again create an equivalent, reciprocal relationship between the two nouns. Unlike in 1 Cor 7:3, however, the only difference between the clauses is the interchange of those two nouns; every other word is exactly the same except for the presence of ὁμοίως δὲ καί in the *homoiōs* clause. The result is that neither clause depends on the other in order for one to interpret its meaning correctly.

1 Corinthians 7:22

ὁ γὰρ ἐν κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου ἐστίν,
ὁμοίως ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς δοῦλός ἐστιν Χριστοῦ.

For the one who was a slave when called in the Lord is a freed person of the Lord,
likewise the one who was a free person when called is a slave of Christ.

As in the two preceding passages, we once again find two words that appear in both clauses, marked by a transposition in their function within the clause (here δοῦλος and [ἀπ]ἐλεύθερος). Unlike the other two passages from 1 Corinthians, however, these clauses show slight variation in their content. For example, the antecedent clause uses κύριος, while Χριστός is used in the *homoiōs* clause, both referring to the same person. Another difference is that the two substantives (δοῦλος and [ἀπ]ἐλεύθερος) that appear in each clause do not refer to different individuals in the same clause; rather, they refer to a single individual whose status has changed. In other words, the "freed person" (ἀπελεύθερος) in the antecedent clause is not the same person as the "free person" (ἐλεύθερος) in the *homoiōs* clause, nor is the "slave" (δοῦλος) of the antecedent clause the same person who is called a "slave" (δοῦλος) in the *homoiōs* clause.

As in 1 Cor 7:4, neither clause is grammatically or contextually dependent on the other clause; however, the antecedent clause includes an additional detail that may be useful, but perhaps not absolutely necessary, when interpreting the *homoiōs* clause. In the antecedent clause, the participle κληθείς ("being called") is modified by ἐν κυρίῳ ("in the Lord"); the same participle, κληθείς, appears in the *homoiōs* clause but without the prepositional phrase modifying it. Given the role reversal established by the use of the same two substantives in each clause, it would be reasonable to suppose that the prepositional phrase ἐν κυρίῳ modifying κληθείς in the antecedent clause is implied also in the *homoiōs* clause. Thus, the *homoiōs* clause is partially dependent on the antecedent clause to supply this additional detail that is useful for interpreting the *homoiōs* clause.

Thus far, we have found that Paul tends to use ὁμοίως in situations involving dualistic word pairs in which the two words are transposed between the two clauses, creating reciprocal relationships or a kind of reversal. As noted earlier, a similar word pair (θῆλυς/ἄρσην) is found in Rom 1:26–27; hence, this connection may provide a basis for using the fuller clause to interpret the one that is lacking in details. In each of the Corinthians passages, however, both words are explicitly mentioned in each clause, whereas only θῆλυς is used in the antecedent clause in Rom 1:26.

In none of the Corinthians passages is it ever necessary to use anything in the *homoiōs* clause to understand more fully or interpret the antecedent clause better; however, in two of the three passages the opposite is true (i.e., the antecedent clause is useful in interpreting the *homoiōs* clause). Thus, it is necessary to expand the search and consider how ὁμοίως is used elsewhere in the GNT in order to deter-

mine better whether the *homoiōs* clause ever contains an interpretive key necessary to understand the antecedent clause. As part of this survey, I will consider the relationship among the components in each clause that are being compared.

III. Survey of ὁμοίως in the Greek New Testament

The adverb ὁμοίως is used thirty times in the GNT, in eleven different books with ten different authors. Of the NT writers, Luke employs this adverb most often, with eleven occurrences of ὁμοίως in his Gospel (37 percent). Paul ranks second, even though he accounts for only four of the uses (13 percent). Matthew, John, and 1 Peter each use ὁμοίως three times; Revelation twice; and Mark, Hebrews, James, and Jude each once. Two passages are parallel, Matt 27:41 and Mark 15:31; thus, in order to have further statistics reflect independent uses of ὁμοίως, only one of these passages will be counted. Romans 1:27 will not be included in further statistics (unless otherwise noted), since it is the passage in question; this leaves a total of twenty-eight other independent uses of ὁμοίως in the GNT.

As our closer look above at the Pauline uses of ὁμοίως indicates, there are different approaches to exploring the relationship between the antecedent clause and the *homoiōs* clause. One approach is to examine any connections between the linguistic components that are being compared (e.g., substantives, verbs, etc.). Another approach is to analyze which clause, if either, holds an interpretive key to understanding the other clause; in some cases, as with 1 Cor 7:3, one clause (specifically, the *homoiōs* clause) may even be grammatically and/or contextually dependent on the other clause. Each approach will be considered below, starting with the relationships between the components of each of the clauses.

Relationships between Components in Each Clause[6]

As we have found in the Corinthians examples, one possibility is that the same two substantives are used in both clauses with a reversal in their respective positions between the clauses. However, this clearly occurs in only one other NT passage— the golden rule in Luke 6:31, which unlike the Corinthians passages, does not involve a common dualistic word pair.[7] Thus, consideration of some of the other

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[6] Similar uses of ὁμοίως in the LXX, Philo, Josephus, and the apostolic writings will be cited in footnotes throughout this section. If ὁμοίως is used in a similar manner fewer than ten times in a given source, the specific passages in which it occurs will be cited; otherwise, only the statistics will be provided. Note that ὁμοίως occurs 21 times in the LXX, 55 times in Philo, 125 times in Josephus, and 14 times in the apostolic writings, yielding a total of 245 uses of ὁμοίως (including GNT) that have been analyzed as part of this investigation. Any percentages given are internal statistics (i.e., specific to the source or collection of writings) unless otherwise noted.

[7] A reversal occurs also in Ign. *Pol.* 5.1 with ἀδελφαῖς ("sisters")/ἀδελφοῖς ("brothers")

types of relationships created by the use of ὁμοίως is merited. Priority will be given to those types of relationships that may provide further insight into Rom 1:26–27; however, other types will also be briefly considered in order to demonstrate the full range of uses of ὁμοίως in the NT.

General Statement to Specific Example

In the GNT, there is one instance of ὁμοίως where the antecedent clause contains a general statement and is followed by a specific example in the *homoiōs* clause.[8] It is found in Jas 2:24–25:

> ²⁴ὁρᾶτε ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον.
> ²⁵ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Ῥαάβ ἡ πόρνη οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη ὑποδεξαμένη τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ ἑτέρᾳ ὁδῷ ἐκβαλοῦσα;

> ²⁴ See that by works a person is justified and not by faith alone.
> ²⁵ Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent [them] out another way?

In this case, the subject of the *homoiōs* clause, Ῥαάβ, is a specific example of an ἄνθρωπος. The *homoiōs* clause also contains a specific example of how the subject is justified by works: Rahab took in the messengers and gave them safe passage through another route, and by this act she was justified by her works.[9] However, one would not try to make the argument that Rahab's specific action in the *homoiōs* clause is the only one that the writer had in mind in the antecedent clause when he discusses humans being justified by works.

The potential usefulness of this passage to illuminate Rom 1:26–27 is limited. The subjects of each clause in Romans are mutually exclusive (female and male), each being subcategories of human beings rather than one subject being a subset of the other. However, the act that the females were doing (i.e., things that are παρὰ φύσιν, "beyond nature") in v. 26 is formed as a general statement, whereas Paul specifies what kind of acts the men were doing in v. 27. Although Paul does not use the phrase παρὰ φύσιν for the male acts, both the immediate context in Romans and the use of this phrase elsewhere among other ancient writers would indicate that these acts constitute one type of activity that was labeled by some as παρὰ φύσιν.

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and σύμβιος ("living together"; husband/wife) as part of a command reminiscent of 1 Cor 7:3–4, but without using a common dualistic word pair. Similar, gender-appropriate terms are used for the subject (ἀδελφαῖς/ἀδελφοῖς) and the object (σύμβιος), rather than reversing the exact words themselves.

⁸ See also Pol. *Phil* 5.1–2.

⁹ Although the verse is formulated as a question, the presence of οὐκ in the question indicates that an affirmative answer is expected.

Specific Example to General Statement

In Matt 26:35, a specific example is given in the antecedent clause, followed by a more general statement in the *homoiōs* clause:[10]

> λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Πέτρος· κἂν δέῃ με σὺν σοὶ ἀποθανεῖν, οὐ μή σε ἀπαρνήσομαι.
> ὁμοίως καὶ πάντες οἱ μαθηταὶ εἶπαν.

> Peter says to him, "Even if it is necessary that I die with you, I will not deny you." Likewise all the disciples also spoke.

Here the subject of the antecedent clause, Πέτρος, could be considered a sub-category of οἱ μαθηταί in the *homoiōs* clause, and, although the other disciples may have said exactly the same thing as Peter, it is more likely that the author intends to convey that what they said was similar to Peter's statement. The *homoiōs* clause is contextually dependent on its antecedent clause in order to provide the general content of what the disciples said (and to whom); however, there is nothing new or different in the *homoiōs* clause that would affect one's interpretation of the antecedent clause.

Same Subject, Similar Action

On four occasions, one finds the same subject in the antecedent clause and the *homoiōs* clause, either explicitly or sometimes implied by grammatical or contextual dependence on the antecedent clause. An example is John 21:13:[11]

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[10] Related to this example are Luke 10:36–37 ("Good Samaritan") and 13:1–3 ("repent or perish"), in which a specific person or group is cited along with an associated action in the antecedent clause, followed by a command or statement about the audience to whom Jesus is speaking ("you") in the *homoiōs* clause. In these two passages, the subjects in the two clauses are mutually exclusive, unlike Matt 26:35; however, the movement from a specific example to general statement is present and, as in the case of Matt 26:35, it would probably be a mistake to try to limit the general statement on the basis of the specific one. (For example, in Luke 10:36–37, the point is to be a good neighbor and to show mercy to others; the method of doing so is not necessarily limited to helping out someone who has been robbed, beaten, and left for dead on the side of a road as in the case of the "Good Samaritan.") See also *Diogn.* 8.2–3. Esther 1:18 LXX may also be a case in point, with men fearing that other women may "likewise" disrespect their husbands similar to how Queen Vashti (LXX: Astin) disrespected King Ahasuerus (LXX: Artaxerxes); this detail is peculiar to the LXX's version of Esther as compared to the MT.

[11] See also John 6:11; Heb 9:19–21; and Rev 2:14–15. The addressee in Rev 2:14–15 is "you" in each clause; however, the focus in each case is a subgroup within the "you" who follow different, heretical teachings. The same subject in each clause occurs also eight times (38 percent) in the LXX (1 Chr 28:16; 1 Esd 6:29; 8:20; Tob 5:15(S); 12:3; 4 Macc 11:15; Ps 67:7 [Ps 68:7 MT]; and Job 1:16), three times (5 percent) in Philo (*Gig.* 16; *Migr.* 69; *Decal.* 38), fifty-two times (42 percent) in Josephus, and once (7 percent) in the apostolic writings (Ign. *Trall.* 13.2), compared to the GNT's 13 percent of its total uses of ὁμοίως.

ἔρχεται Ἰησοῦς καὶ λαμβάνει τὸν ἄρτον καὶ δίδωσιν αὐτοῖς,
καὶ τὸ ὀψάριον ὁμοίως.

Jesus came and took the bread and gave [it] to them,
and likewise the fish.

In this verse, the *homoiōs* clause is grammatically and contextually dependent on its antecedent clause to provide the subject (Jesus), the action ("took . . . gave") applied to the direct object, which is different in each clause, and the indirect object ("to them").

Different Subjects, Different—or Even Opposite(!)—Content

There are four passages in which the antecedent clause and the *homoiōs* clause not only have different, unrelated subjects but also different, or even opposite, apparent content associated with them. In these cases, what is similar (ὁμοίως) is a very broad generalization based on the overall content, which may or may not be specified in the passage but which yields specific differences when applied to the subjects of each clause. One example is found in Luke 16:25 ("the rich man and Lazarus"):[12]

εἶπεν δὲ Ἀβραάμ· τέκνον, μνήσθητι ὅτι ἀπέλαβες τὰ ἀγαθά σου ἐν τῇ ζωῇ σου,
καὶ Λάζαρος ὁμοίως τὰ κακά· νῦν δὲ ὧδε παρακαλεῖται, σὺ δὲ ὀδυνᾶσαι.

But Abraham said, "Child, remember that you received good things in your life, and Lazarus, likewise, bad things; now he is comforted here, and you are tormented."

In this passage, what is similar (ὁμοίως) is the action of receiving during one's life, which is mentioned only in the antecedent clause (ἀπέλαβες . . . ἐν τῇ ζωῇ); however, whereas the rich man had received good things, Lazarus received bad things.

In other passages, what is similar (ὁμοίως) is not mentioned at all; rather, in order to determine a similarity between the antecedent clause and the *homoiōs* clause, the reader must supply it on her/his own at a very generalized level. A good example is 1 Pet 5:1–5a (condensed below):[13]

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[12] A similar observation can be made about 1 Cor 7:22, already considered. See also two occurrences (10 percent) in the LXX (2 Macc 10:36; Sir 24:11), seven (13 percent) in Philo (*Opif.* 118; *Leg.* 2.75; *Migr.* 44; *Mos.* 2.233; *Spec.* 2.261; *Contempl.* 38; *QG* 2.2), three (2 percent) in Josephus (*Ant.* 4.206, 276, 288), and two (14 percent) in the apostolic writings (Ign. *Trall.* 3.1; Pol. *Phil.* 5.3 [taking 5.2 as its antecedent, not 5.1]), compared to 13 percent in the GNT.

[13] So also 1 Pet 3:1-7, describing a woman's role with respect to her husband, followed by the husband's role in the subsequent *homoiōs* clause (3:7). The clauses are completely different, since the duties listed are relative to the specific subject. One will note that ὁμοίως is used also in 1 Pet 3:1 with respect to the wives. The antecedent for the *homoiōs* clause in 3:1 most likely is found in

Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ . . . ²ποιμάνατε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ [ἐπισκοποῦντες] μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἑκουσίως κατὰ θεόν, μηδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως, . . . ⁵Ὁμοίως, νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις·

I exhort the presbyters among you . . . : ²Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, [overseeing] not by compulsion but willingly according to God, not for shameful gain but eagerly, . . .
Likewise, you younger ones, be subject to the presbyters.

In this passage, what is similar (ὁμοίως) is never stated; however, the implication would be that one should conduct oneself in a manner in accordance with God's will as is appropriate for one's status in the church.

Different Subjects, Same/Similar Content

Twenty independent uses of ὁμοίως in the GNT (71 percent, exclusive of Rom 1:27) involve different, mutually exclusive subjects in which the subject of the *homoiōs* clause does something that is the same, or at least similar, to the subject in the antecedent clause.[14] Whether the two actions are the same or similar in some cases is largely a product of one's interpretation; hence, same and similar acts have been included in the same category in an attempt to limit subjectivity. A clear example of the same action involving different subjects is found in Matt 22:25–26:

²⁵ἦσαν δὲ παρ' ἡμῖν ἑπτὰ ἀδελφοί· καὶ ὁ πρῶτος γήμας ἐτελεύτησεν, καὶ μὴ ἔχων σπέρμα ἀφῆκεν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ·
²⁶ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ δεύτερος καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἕως τῶν ἑπτά.

²⁵There were seven brothers: the first one had been married and died and, having no children, left his wife to his brother;
²⁶likewise also the second and the third until the seventh.

An example of what would be a similar action, but not the same because different words are specified for each group, is found in Matt 27:39–42:

³⁹Οἱ δὲ παραπορευόμενοι ἐβλασφήμουν αὐτὸν κινοῦντες τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν ⁴⁰καὶ λέγοντες· ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις οἰκοδομῶν, σῶσον σεαυτόν, εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, [καὶ] κατάβηθι ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ.
⁴¹ὁμοίως καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ἐμπαίζοντες μετὰ τῶν γραμματέων καὶ

2:18, where slaves are exhorted to be subject to their masters; a clear connection is that the verb ὑποτάσσω, used in both passages, is found also in the *homoiōs* clause in 5:5.

[14] Romans 1:26–27 would be included in this category, increasing the number to twenty-one (72 percent) of all twenty-nine independent uses of ὁμοίως in the GNT. See also four occurrences (19 percent) in the LXX (1 Esd 5:66; Esth 1:18; Prov 1:27; Ezek 14:10), ten (18 percent) in Philo, forty-one (33 percent) in Josephus, and ten (71 percent) in the apostolic writings.

πρεσβυτέρων ἔλεγον· ⁴²ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται σῶσαι· βασιλεὺς Ἰσραήλ ἐστιν, καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ πιστεύσομεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν.

³⁹Those passing by ridiculed him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, [and] come down from the cross."
⁴¹Likewise also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him saying,
⁴²"He saved others but is not able to save himself. He is the King of Israel, let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him."

Thus, the most common use of ὁμοίως in the GNT involves two mutually exclusive subjects in which the subject of the *homoiōs* clause is doing something similar to or even the same as the subject of the antecedent clause. In at least one case, there is a movement from a general statement to a specific example (Jas 2:25); in another case, the movement is from a specific example to a larger group (Matt 26:35). Sometimes the subject may be the same in each clause (e.g., John 21:13). The meaning of ὁμοίως is even diverse enough that the content associated with each subject may actually be different and relative to the specific subject (e.g., Luke 16:25; 1 Pet 5:5). Thus, what is similar (ὁμοίως) between the contents of the two clauses may be so precise that it can refer to the exact same act or so broad that only a vague connection is intended. What is similar (ὁμοίως) between the females and males in Rom 1:26–27 could be the specific type of acts (i.e., homoerotic) mentioned in v. 27 or the broader category (τὴν παρὰ φύσιν) expressed in v. 26. In an attempt to determine which is more likely, it is necessary to look for patterns of grammatical and/or contextual dependency of one clause upon the other.

Grammatical and/or Contextual Dependence?

Already in this article I have pointed out various examples in which the *homoiōs* clause is fully or partially dependent on the antecedent clause to supply information useful for interpreting the *homoiōs* clause. First, we will examine just how prevalent this trend is among the twenty-eight other independent uses of ὁμοίως (excluding Rom 1:27), and then explore whether there are any cases in which it is possible to use the *homoiōs* clause to help interpret the antecedent clause.

Dependence of the Homoiōs *Clause on the Antecedent Clause*

Four basic levels of relationship can be distinguished with respect to the dependence of the *homoiōs* clause on the antecedent clause. The strongest level of dependence occurs when the *homoiōs* clause lacks a verb and hence is completely dependent on the antecedent clause to receive its basic meaning; several examples have already been encountered above, including 1 Cor 7:3. Of the twenty-eight

other independent uses of ὁμοίως, eight (29 percent) of the *homoiōs* clauses are grammatically dependent on their antecedents to supply a verb.[15]

Closely related to the previous category are passages in which the *homoiōs* clause is grammatically complete but lacks some of the essential content necessary for the reader to understand fully the meaning of the *homoiōs* clause; a good example is Luke 3:11:

> ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἔχων δύο χιτῶνας μεταδότω τῷ μὴ ἔχοντι,
> καὶ ὁ ἔχων βρώματα ὁμοίως ποιείτω.
>
> In response, he said to them, "The one who has two coats must give to the one having none,
> and the one who has food must do likewise."

In order to know what precisely the subject of the *homoiōs* clause is commanded to do (ποιείτω), one must look to the antecedent clause (i.e., μεταδότω τῷ μὴ ἔχοντι). Five (18 percent) of the *homoiōs* clauses fit into this category.[16]

In some other passages, the antecedent clause contains fewer essential details that are not repeated in the *homoiōs* clause but may still be useful for interpretation of the *homoiōs* clause; we saw an example of this in 1 Cor 7:22, in which the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ modifying κληθείς in the antecedent clause is not repeated in the *homoiōs* clause but probably is implied. There are four passages in which these useful details occur in the antecedent clause, accounting for 14 percent of the eligible uses of ὁμοίως.[17]

In the fourth level of dependence, the *homoiōs* clause can be understood fully on its own without considering the content of the antecedent clause; a good example already examined above is 1 Cor 7:4, in which the content of each clause is exactly the same except that the two nouns have been transposed.[18] Eleven (39 percent) of the twenty-eight *homoiōs* clauses are not dependent on their antecedents.[19]

This means that seventeen (61 percent) of the *homoiōs* clauses are dependent in some fashion on their antecedent; of these, thirteen (46 percent of the total) require that one use the antecedent clause in order to understand and correctly interpret the *homoiōs* clause. The next question to consider is whether the content of any *homoiōs* clause is ever necessary in order to understand or correctly interpret its antecedent clause.

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[15] See Matt 22:26; Luke 5:33; 16:25; 22:36; John 6:11; 21:13; 1 Cor 7:3; Rev 8:12.

[16] See Matt 26:35; Luke 3:11; 6:31; 10:37; John 5:19.

[17] See Luke 17:28; Heb 9:21; Jude 8; Rev 2:15.

[18] Also including, for example, the passages in which the contents of the *homoiōs* clause are different from the antecedent clause (e.g., 1 Pet 5:5).

[19] See Matt 27:41//Mark 15:31; Luke 5:10; 10:32; 13:3; 17:31; 1 Cor 7:4, 22; Jas 2:25; 1 Pet 3:1, 7; 5:5.

Is It Possible to Use the Homoiōs *Clause to Interpret Its Antecedent Clause?*

The results of the survey for this question are not very promising for those who wish to use Rom 1:27 as a basis for interpreting v. 26. In sixteen (57 percent) of the twenty-eight relevant passages, it would be impossible to use the *homoiōs* clause to help interpret or clarify further something in its antecedent clause. In these passages, either the *homoiōs* clause lacks details found in the antecedent clause (e.g., 1 Cor 7:3) or the content is similar enough that nothing in the *homoiōs* clause would alter one's understanding of its antecedent clause (e.g., 1 Cor 7:4).[20] The *homoiōs* clauses of the remaining twelve eligible passages do contain details that are not mentioned in the antecedent clause; however, in nine of these passages, either it is not necessary to apply these details to the antecedent (e.g., the different titles Lord and Christ used for the same person in 1 Cor 7:22) or it would create a contradiction if one did attempt to use the content of the *homoiōs* clause to interpret its antecedent (e.g., 1 Pet 5:5).[21] The result is that, of the twenty-eight eligible passages for consideration, in twenty-five (89 percent) it would be impossible or illogical to use the *homoiōs* clause to interpret its antecedent clause. This leaves only three verses for consideration: Luke 17:28, John 6:11, and Jude 8.

Luke 17:26–29 (condensed; emphases mine):

[26–27]**καθὼς ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις** Νῶε, . . . **ἤσθιον, ἔπινον,** ἐγάμουν, ἐγαμίζοντο, ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας εἰσῆλθεν Νῶε εἰς τὴν κιβωτὸν καὶ ἦλθεν ὁ κατακλυσμὸς **καὶ ἀπώλεσεν πάντας.**
[28–29]ὁμοίως **καθὼς ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις** Λώτ· **ἤσθιον, ἔπινον,** ἠγόραζον, ἐπώλουν, ἐφύτευον, ᾠκοδόμουν· ᾗ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ ἐξῆλθεν Λὼτ ἀπὸ Σοδόμων, ἔβρεξεν πῦρ καὶ θεῖον ἀπ᾽ οὐρανοῦ **καὶ ἀπώλεσεν πάντας.**

vv. 26-27 **Just as in the days** of Noah . . . **they were eating, drinking,** getting married, [and] being given in marriage, until the day Noah **went** into the ark and the flood came **and destroyed them all**.
vv. 28-29 Likewise **just as in the days** of Lot: **they were eating, drinking,** buying, selling, planting, [and] building, but the day Lot **went** out of Sodom, fire and brimstone rained from heaven **and destroyed them all**.

In this passage, one could make a case that the content of daily activities in the *homoiōs* clause could be interpreted as probably applying to the antecedent clause, and vice versa. Although this passage has a nice parallel structure like that of Rom 1:26–27, there is a significant difference; namely, both the antecedent clause and the

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[20] See Matt 22:26; 26:35; Luke 3:11; 5:10, 33; 6:31; 10:37; 13:3; 22:36; John 5:19; 21:13; Heb 9:21; Rev 2:15; 8:12.
[21] See Matt 27:41//Mark 15:31; Luke 10:32; 16:25; 17:31; Jas 2:25; 1 Pet 3:1, 7.

homoiōs clause list specific types of activities common to daily life. Whereas the description of the females' activities in Rom 1:26 is broad, the males' activities in v. 27 are more specific. In addition, each list of daily activities in Luke 17:27–28 begins with the same two activities ("eating" and "drinking"), which provides an explicit textual connection between the two lists.

> John 6:11:
>
> ἔλαβεν οὖν τοὺς ἄρτους ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εὐχαριστήσας διέδωκεν τοῖς ἀνακειμένοις
> ὁμοίως καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀψαρίων ὅσον ἤθελον.
>
> Then Jesus took the loaves and, having said a blessing, distributed [them] to the ones who were reclining
> likewise also the fish, as much as they wanted.

In this example, the phrase ὅσον ἤθελον might be interpreted as applying to the loaves of bread in the antecedent clause, not just the fish in the *homoiōs* clause. Unlike Rom 1:26–27, in this verse both clauses are describing actions that took place during a single event and were performed by the same subject (i.e., Jesus). It is also interesting that the *homoiōs* clause in John 6:11 is dependent on its antecedent clause also in order to know what happened to the fish.

> Jude 6–8:
>
> ⁶ἀγγέλους τε τοὺς μὴ τηρήσαντας τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν ἀλλὰ ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας δεσμοῖς ἀϊδίοις ὑπὸ ζόφον τετήρηκεν,
> ⁷ὡς Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα καὶ αἱ περὶ αὐτὰς πόλεις τὸν ὅμοιον τρόπον τούτοις ἐκπορνεύσασαι καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας, πρόκεινται δεῖγμα πυρὸς αἰωνίου δίκην ὑπέχουσαι.
> ⁸Ὁμοίως μέντοι καὶ οὗτοι ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι σάρκα μὲν μιαίνουσιν κυριότητα δὲ ἀθετοῦσιν δόξας δὲ βλασφημοῦσιν.
>
> ⁶ And the angels who did not pay heed to their own domain, but abandoned their proper dwelling, he has kept under darkness in eternal chains until the judgment of the great day,
> ⁷as Sodom and Gomorrah and the nearby cities, which in a similar way indulged in immorality and chased after other flesh, serve as a warning by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.
> ⁸ Yet, likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, show contempt for authority, and revile the glorious ones.

In this passage, the contents of the *homoiōs* clause would not really alter one's understanding of the preceding verses if one chose to try to use the *homoiōs* clause as the key for interpretation. However, this passage could also be understood as

containing three separate, albeit similar, examples of various groups of beings who indulged in sexually immoral activity.[22]

IV. Summary of ὁμοίως in the LXX, Philo, Josephus, and the Apostolic Writings

The first thing that one will most likely notice when comparing the GNT's use of ὁμοίως to that of the LXX, Philo, Josephus, and the apostolic writings is that there are types of uses of ὁμοίως that occur in these other writings that do not occur in the GNT. Particularly in the case of Philo and Josephus, the differences in the use of ὁμοίως as compared with the GNT are significant enough to alter substantively the statistical analysis when compared with the GNT. The two major differences are the use of negative particles preceding ὁμοίως (47 percent in Philo's works) and uses of ὁμοίως in which it is not distinguishably in a separate clause from the preceding term of comparison or is, in effect, embedded within a larger unit (28 percent in Josephus).[23]

Of these other ancient sources, the use of ὁμοίως in the apostolic writings predictably comes the closest to that of the GNT, followed by the LXX. Whether Philo or Josephus comes closer to the GNT's use of ὁμοίως depends on how one analyzes the data and whether one accounts for the two significantly different uses of ὁμοίως noted in the previous paragraph.

Other Uses of ὁμοίως Not Found in the Greek New Testament

In the interest of making the survey of uses of ὁμοίως more comprehensive, a few examples will be given for the uses of ὁμοίως that differ from the GNT, with

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[22] Miller discusses a similar passage in *T. Naph.* 3:4–5: "In verse 4 the perversion of the natural order was done by Sodom, but in verse 5 the similar (ὁμοίως) perversion was done by the Watchers who transgressed the boundary between human and super-human beings by having (heterosexual) intercourse with human females. Though verse 4 may indicate a homosexual perversion, verse 5 indicates a heterosexual perversion" ("Practices of Rom 1:26," 4). Brooten questions the applicability of "heterosexual" to describe the activities of the "Watchers" ("sons of God") since the "unnatural" aspect is the transgression of human vs. divine (*Love between Women*, 249). Either way, what is similar in *T. Naph.* 3:4–5 is sexual perversion itself, not the specific type of sexual perversion.

[23] Because of the prevalence of these other types of uses of in Philo and Josephus, two internal percentages may be given for each: the first with regard to the total uses of ὁμοίως in each of those works, the second if one were to eliminate from consideration the cases in which ὁμοίως is used with a negative particle and/or when it is not found in a separate clause since these two uses are significantly different from the use of ὁμοίως in the GNT. If only one percentage is given, it will be with regard to the total uses of ὁμοίως in the given source (i.e., without using adjusted figures).

more details provided for the use of negative particles with ὁμοίως and the use of ὁμοίως when not in its own clause and/or when embedded within a larger unit.

Both Subjects in Antecedent (Also Continued in the *Homoiōs* Clause)

In a few cases, both subjects are specified before ὁμοίως, followed by a statement using ὁμοίως in which the essential meaning is that the same thing is applicable to both subjects, for example, 4 Macc 5:20-21:

> [20]τὸ γὰρ ἐπὶ μικροῖς καὶ μεγάλοις παρανομεῖν ἰσοδύναμόν ἐστιν
> [21]δι᾽ ἑκατέρου γὰρ ὡς ὁμοίως ὁ νόμος ὑπερηφανεῖται[24]

> [20]For breaking the law in matters small or great is of equal weight
> [21]for through either one the law is likewise despised.[25]

In some of these passages both elements are fully dependent on each other and thus may best be viewed as not constituting separate clauses, for example, Wis 11:11:

> καὶ ἀπόντες δὲ καὶ παρόντες ὁμοίως ἐτρύχοντο

> Those absent and those present were likewise distressed.[26]

Ὁμοίως *Not in Separate Clause*

As seen in the last example (Wis 11:11), sometimes ὁμοίως is not able to be considered as being part of a separate clause from the terms being compared. As with Wis 11:11, one type of structure involves two things being "equally [insert modifier]," either as subjects (as in Wis 11:11) or as the direct objects of another subject (e.g., Josephus, *J.W.* 2.142). Another possibility is the use of ὁμοίως in an attributive adjectival position as occurs, for example, in the phrase τοῖς ὁμοίως βουλησομένοις ("those who likewise desire") in Josephus's *Ag. Ap.* 2.296. In other cases, this phenomenon seems to rest on a tendency among some Jewish authors or translators to use ὁμοίως in the sense of a comparative particle or preposition, such as כְּ ("like," "as") in Hebrew or ὡς ("like," "as") in Greek.[27] The use of ὁμοίως

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[24] All LXX passages are taken from Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979).

[25] A more colloquial way of rendering the meaning here would be to translate ὁμοίως as "equally," as does the RSV.

[26] The meaning is that both subjects were equally distressed. The NAB includes the word "both" at the beginning of its translation, while the RSV translates ὁμοίως as "equally."

[27] In Prov 1:27, ὁμοίως corresponds to כְּ in כְּסוּפָה ("like a storm/whirlwind"); see also Prov 4:18. That ὁμοίως is sometimes used in place of ὡς is most clear in the variant traditions involving Tob 5:15: Alexandrinus and Vaticanus have τὰ δέοντά σοι ὡς καὶ τῷ υἱῷ μου, whereas Sinaiticus has τὰ δέοντά σοι ὁμοίως τῷ υἱῷ μου, both essentially meaning "the expenses for you as [also] for my son"; see also 1 Esd 5:66 (RSV 5:69).

as a comparative particle or preposition occurs four times (19 percent) in the LXX and at least eleven times (9 percent) in Josephus's writings. Regardless of the specific reason, cases in which ὁμοίως is not part of a separate clause from the preceding term of comparison occur thirty-five times in Josephus's writings, eleven times in Philo's writings, and four times in the LXX.[28]

Use of Negative Particle Immediately Preceding ὁμοίως

Although most commonly found in Philo's writings (twenty-six times), the use of a negative particle immediately preceding ὁμοίως also occurs eight times in Josephus, and once in the apostolic writings.[29] In fourteen cases, the meaning is that a single something is "no longer the same."[30] In nine passages, ὁμοίως with a negative particle is used to indicate that one thing is "not of the same/equal [insert modifier]" as something else (e.g., not of equal quality, height, loftiness, etc., even though the two may be close to the same).[31] The remaining twelve uses of ὁμοίως with a negative particle are used to create a simple negation (i.e., that two things are not the same, perhaps at opposite ends of the same spectrum but not necessarily).[32]

Grammatical and/or Contextual Dependence?

This section will explore the grammatical and/or contextual dependence of one clause on the other (antecedent vs. *homoiōs*) using the same analysis as with the GNT.

Dependence of the Homoiōs Clause on the Antecedent Clause

The *homoiōs* clause is fully and grammatically dependent on its antecedent in six passages in the LXX, ten in Philo, nineteen in Josephus, and three in the apostolic writings.[33] The *homoiōs* clause lacks essential details needed to understand it

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[28] LXX: 1 Esd 5:66; Prov 1:27; 4:18; and Wis 11:11.

[29] Josephus: *Ant.* 15.17, 370; 16.37, 110, 135; 18.124, 175; *J.W.* 5.273. Apostolic: *Barn.* 2.9.

[30] Philo: *Opif.* 128, 169; *Abr.* 240 (twice); *Spec.* 3.142; 4.7; *Praem.* 144; *Prob.* 156; *Flacc.* 16, 138; *Legat.* 327. Josephus: *Ant.* 18.124, 175; *J.W.* 5.273.

[31] Philo: *Opif.* 140, 141; *Spec.* 4.96; *Somn.* 2.164; *Abr.* 237; *Virt.* 155; *Contempl.* 75; *Aet.* 115. Josephus: *Ant.* 16.37. In many of these cases, ὁμοίως is not used in a separate clause as when it is used in a simple comparative context (e.g., as a comparative particle or preposition) often without an antecedent.

[32] Philo: *Leg.* 3.102; *Plant.* 160; *Somn.* 1.99; *Mos.* 1.173; *Spec.* 2.183; *Aet.* 8; *Prov.* 2:35. Josephus: *Ant.* 15.17, 370; 16.110, 135. Apostolic: *Barn.* 2.9.

[33] LXX: 1 Esd 6:29; 8:20; Tob (S) 5:15; Ps 67:7 (68:7 MT); Wis 15:7; 18:9. Apostolic: Ign. *Eph.* 16.2; 19.1; Ign. *Trall.* 13.2.

fully twice in the LXX, three times in Philo, fifteen times in Josephus, and never in the apostolic writings.[34] Useful details that can be read from the antecedent clause into the *homoiōs* clause occur in five passages in the LXX, four in Philo, twenty-four in Josephus, and three in the apostolic writings.[35] Including the GNT, 29 percent of *homoiōs* clauses are essentially dependent on their antecedent clauses (31 percent with adjusted statistics), and 46 percent of *homoiōs* clauses are dependent to some degree on their antecedent clauses (50 percent using adjusted statistics).

Is it Possible to Use a Homoiōs *Clause to Interpret Its Antecedent Clause?*

Of the twenty-one occurrences of ὁμοίως in the LXX, in six passages it is impossible to use the *homoiōs* clause to interpret its antecedent, while in eight passages it would be illogical to attempt to do so, yielding a total of 67 percent of cases in the LXX in which it would be impossible or illogical to use the *homoiōs* clause to interpret the antecedent.[36] In ten passages in Philo's works it would be impossible, while in twenty-nine passages it would be illogical, for a total of 71 percent in Philo's works. In twenty-four passages in Josephus's writings it would be impossible to use the *homoiōs* clause to interpret its antecedent, while in fifty-four passages it would be illogical to do so, yielding 62 percent of the uses of in Josephus's works. With regard to the apostolic writings, three times it would be impossible and ten times it would be illogical, constituting 93 percent (i.e., all but one!) of the uses of ὁμοίως in the apostolic writings.[37]

Including the uses in the GNT, in 24 percent of all considered passages it would be impossible to use the *homoiōs* clause to interpret the antecedent, and in 45 percent it would be illogical, for a total of 69 percent. If one takes into account the adjusted statistics for Philo and Josephus, the total percentage of impossible and illogical passages increases to 74 percent.

V. Conclusion

During this investigation, it has been observed that 61 percent of the independent *homoiōs* clauses in the GNT, exclusive of Rom 1:27, are somehow dependent on their antecedent clauses to supply details useful, or even necessary, for

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[34] LXX: Job 1:16; Ezek 14:10. Philo: *Decal.* 27; *Spec.* 2.34; *Prob.* 152.

[35] LXX: Esth 1:18; 2 Macc 10:36; 4 Macc 5:21; Wis 6:7; Ezek 45:11. Philo: *Decal.* 38; *Spec.* 1.123, 134; 4.96. Apostolic: *Barn.* 2.9; Ign. *Pol.* 5.1; *Mart. Pol.* 2.4.

[36] Impossible: 1 Chr 28:16; 1 Esd 8:20; Tob 12:3; Tob (S) 5:15; Ps 67:7 (68:7 MT); Wis 18:9. Illogical: Esth 1:18; 2 Macc 10:36; 4 Macc 11:15; Prov 1:27; Job 1:16; Wis 6:7; Sir 24:11; Ezek 14:10.

[37] Impossible: Ign. *Eph.* 16.2; 19.1; Ign. *Trall.* 13.2. Illogical: *Barn.* 2.9; 4.5; 10.10; 12.1; *Diogn.* 8.3; Ign. *Trall.* 3.1; Ign. *Pol.* 5.1; Pol. *Phil.* 5.2, 3; Herm. *Sim. 9* 4.3. The one exception: *Mart. Pol.* 2.4.

interpreting the *homoiōs* clause. In 89 percent of the twenty-eight other independent GNT passages in which ὁμοίως is used, it would be either impossible or illogical to attempt to use any part of the *homoiōs* clause to interpret the antecedent clause. For the remaining three passages, either the passage is different enough from Rom 1:26–27 that relying on it as a basis for using Rom 1:27 to interpret the preceding verse is questionable (Luke 17:28; John 6:11), or the passage itself may not even require that one use the *homoiōs* clause to interpret the antecedent clause (Jude 1:8). Despite some additional types of uses of ὁμοίως in other writings, an analysis of the LXX, Philo, Josephus, and the apostolic writings generally supports the findings in the GNT with regard to dependence (or lack thereof, as the case may be) between the two clauses (antecedent and *homoiōs*).

Further, in passages in which both clauses are describing the same or similar activity, one finds that what is similar (ὁμοίως) between the two clauses is clearly indicated in the antecedent clause. Sometimes this point of commonality is repeated or para-phrased also in the *homoiōs* clause; however, in no other GNT passage in which the same or similar acts are described would the contents of the *homoiōs* clause have the potential to alter significantly one's understanding of the antecedent clause (when understood on its own) as it would in Rom 1:26–27. It is true that ὁμοίως does tend to establish a parallelism between its own clause and its antecedent clause. However, the frequent dependence of the *homoiōs* clause on its antecedent for content (including two of the three Corinthians passages), as well as the inability to use 89 percent of the *homoiōs* clauses possibly or logically to interpret their antecedents in the GNT, indicate that the structure of an argument involving ὁμοίως is not only parallel but also linear (i.e., the argument tends to progress in one direction only).

Do these observations eliminate the possibility that Paul was referring to homoerotic female activity in Rom 1:26? No, they do not, because female homoerotic activities would fit the description of something that could be considered παρὰ φύσιν in the sociohistorical context. These observations do, however, call into question the practice of using v. 27 to limit the meaning of v. 26 to this one possible meaning of παρὰ φύσιν, when other activities also could qualify and would not require a second female. Moreover, it is possible that perhaps Paul did not have something specific in mind when he wrote v. 26.[38]

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[38] For example, the use of phallic devices, known as *olisboi* (sg. *olisbos*; sometimes called a *baubōn*), by which Greek and Roman women would be able to "exchange" their "natural" passive role in the sexual act to an active, more masculine one. These devices are often associated with tribadism in ancient writings; Pseudo-Lucian (fourth century c.e.) refers to them as reflecting the triumph of tribadic lechery (*Erotes* 28). The use of these devices in the Mediterranean world has been traced back to several centuries before Paul's lifetime, with Miletus being linked to mass production and distribution of the *olisboi* (Hans Licht [Paul Brandt], *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece* [1932; trans. J. H. Freese; New York: Dorset, 1993], 314–15, 317). The use of these devices does not require that two females be present, and it is quite likely that they were also enjoyed in private,

   The focus of this study is syntactical, not theological or hermeneutical (which would be further steps beyond the scope of this article). However, one must first understand the language and its syntax before one can draw out the meaning of any text. Thus, this essay does not represent an end to studies involving Rom 1:26–27 but only a new beginning unburdened by the commonly accepted (and highly questionable) practice of using the *homoiōs* clause in v. 27 to limit the meaning of its antecedent in v. 26.

Appendix

Figure 1. Statistics of Uses of ὁμοίως Not Found in GNT but Frequent in Philo or Josephus

Source	ὁμοίως Not in Separate Clause		Negative Particle Precedes ὁμοίως	
	Internal	External	Internal	External
GNT	-	-	-	-
Apostolic Writings	-	-	7%	3%
LXX	19%	8%	-	-
Philo	20%	22%	47%	74%
Josephus	28%	70%	6%	23%

Internal = internal to the source or collection of writings.
External = percent of the total instances analyzed among all sources.

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as indicated in Herodas's *Mimiambi* (6.19; 7.63; third century B.C.E.). There are also passages that mention women acting like men with men (Seneca, *Ep.* 95.21; cf. Lucian, *Dial. meretr.* 5.2 with regard to women on Lesbos who have intercourse with other women as if they were men), a possible allusion to women using *olisboi* to penetrate men?

   Other suggestions include women who seek oral or anal heterosexual intercourse, typically associated with the *hetairai*, adulteresses, or other females desiring to avoid pregnancy; see Miller, "Practices of Rom 1:26," 8–10. However, Brooten rightly notes that Miller cites no sources that specifically use παρὰ φύσιν to refer to anal or oral heterosexual intercourse; the language is always a little different (*Love between Women*, 248–49 n. 99).

   It could be that Paul is choosing to focus on male homoerotic activity, which is the primary emphasis in the writings of Philo (*Abr.* 133–36; *Contempl.* 59–60; *Spec.* 3.37–41) and Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2.199), perhaps as part of his rhetorical strategy in the early part of his letter to the Romans. For opinions regarding the order in which females and males are addressed, see Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:125; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 64; Edwards, *Romans*, 60; Hendriksen, *Romans*, 78; Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (1837; Grand Rapids: Louis Kregel, 1882), 63; Otto Kuss, *Der Römerbrief* (3 vols., Regensburg: Pustet, 1957–78), 1:50; Lange, *Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 87; Murray, *Epistle to the Romans*, 47.

Figure 2. Statistics Involving Dependence of *Homoiōs* Clause on Antecedent Clause

Source	Fully & Grammatically Dependent	Dependent for Essential Details	Dependent for Useful Details	Total Percentage of Dependence
GNT	29%	18%	14%	61%
Apostolic Writings	21%	-	21%	42%
LXX	29%	10%	24%	63%
Philo	18%	5%	7%	30%
Philo–Adjusted*	25%	13%	13%	51%
Josephus	15%	12%	19%	46%
Josephus–Adjusted*	21%	17%	29%	67%

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*Adjusted statistics exclude uses of ὁμοίως with a negative particle or when it is not in a separate clause, since these types of uses are not found in the GNT.

Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited

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He does not make gods who sculpts sacred faces into gold or marble; he makes gods who asks of them.

The humblest could hiss you at the games or piss on your statue. They could kill you.

Honour is always a question of ascription, not a matter of fact or individual right.[1]

That honor and shame were and (for the most part) remain pivotal cultural values in the Mediterranean is really beyond question. One can debate fruitfully how honor and shame work together and independently, and how they work differently in different locations, but there is more than enough evidence to defend the proposition that in the Mediterranean, past and present, these values remain pivotal.[2]

The broadly accepted anthropological definition of honor and shame has been distilled from two sources: the observation of human interaction in person[3] and

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[1] The first citation is from Martial, *Epigrams* 8.24.5–6; the second from Carlin Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 13; and the third from J. K. Campbell, "Honour and the Devil," in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (ed. John G. Peristiany; London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), 152.

[2] Most recently, see Barton, *Roman Honor*; Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); *The Mediterraneans: Reworking the Past, Shaping the Present, Considering the Future* (ed. Ina-Maria Greverus, Regina Römhild, and Gisela Welz; Anthropological Journal of European Cultures 10. Münster: Lit, 2001).

[3] *Honour and Shame,* ed. Peristiany; David D. Gilmore, *Honor and Shame and the Unity of*

ancient literary and epigraphical remains.[4] From the vast amount of modern ethnographic work and ancient primary sources, Bruce Malina developed a model of honor and shame that, while criticized,[5] has stood the test of time. Many scholars of biblical antiquity have benefited from the explanatory power of Malina's model, an influence not limited to those affiliated with the Context Group.[6] This much is admitted in the otherwise critical article by F. Gerald Downing.[7]

Yet, despite the obvious strengths of Malina's model, it is starting to show signs of its age and might benefit from some changes that would increase its heuristic power and longevity. It is always good to return periodically to look with fresh eyes at our models and the data we use to construct them, and I think we shall be rewarded by doing so here.

I. Reviewing Malina's Honor and Shame

Malina claimed that concerns of honor and shame are to be found where authority, gender status, and respect intersect. *Authority* is the ability to control others without force; *gender status* refers to the different standards of acceptable behavior that apply to males and females; *respect* refers to the attitude one ought to have toward those who control your existence (humans, gods, God). Where these three intersect, Malina situates his well-known definition of honor: "the value of a

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the Mediterranean (Special Publication 22; Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 1987); *Honor and Grace in Anthropology* (ed. John G. Peristiany and Julian A. Pitt-Rivers; Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 76; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Julian Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate of Shechem: or, the Politics of Sex: Essays in the Anthropology of the Mediterranean* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977).

[4] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981); N. R. E. Fisher, *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1992); Douglas L. Cairns, *Aidōs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

[5] Cyril S. Rodd, "On Applying a Sociological Theory to Biblical Studies," *JSOT* 19 (1981): 95–106; David A. deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintainance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (SBLDS 152; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); David G. Horrell, ed., *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999); David G. Horrell, "Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler," *JSNT* 78 (2000): 83–105; Louise Joy Lawrence, *An Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew: A Critical Assessment of the Use of the Honour and Shame Model in New Testament Studies* (WUNT 1/165; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

[6] Among many others, see John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000).

[7] F. Gerald Downing, "'Honor' among Exegetes," *CBQ* 61 (1999): 53–73.

person in his or her own eyes (that is, one's claim to worth) *plus* that person's value in the eyes of his or her social group."[8] Honor, for Malina (as for Julian Pitt-Rivers and John G. Peristiany before him), relies on claims to honor from a person and the assessment of that claim by a public court of reputation (hereafter PCR).

There are two types of honor; Malina calls them "ascribed honor" and "acquired honor." Ascribed honor is the honor with which one is born: by ethnicity, family reputation, gender, wealth, and so on. This honor tends to be less dynamic than acquired honor, which can be won and lost on a daily basis through acts of benefaction and the agonistic contest of challenge and riposte.

Honor cultures are not a unique feature of the Mediterranean area. Honor cultures appear also in Japan and South America and within subcultures in non-honor cultures (e.g., North American sports teams, military and police forces, and gangs). An honor culture is defined by the seriousness with which the people who inhabit it protect their honor and fight to retrieve it if it has been lost. This phenomenon can exist only in concert with the perception that access to honor is limited. If there were enough honor to go around, losing a little here and there would carry no consequences. This is an important distinction to draw, for it is also what distinguishes honor and shame cultures from non-honor and shame cultures: a non-honor and shame culture might well know honor and shame, but it does not see honor as a limited good and thus does not contest it with the same intensity.

It is Malina's understanding of the challenge and riposte contest that will be the focus of my critique of his model. Therefore, it is important to summarize the aspects of challenge and riposte as adumbrated by Malina. First, "nearly every interaction with non-family members has undertones of a challenge to honor."[9] This is because people within this cultural system tend to be keenly aware of exchanges that carry the potential to diminish one's honor. Second, in any exchange, somebody has to do or say something to someone; a decision must be made whether a challenge has occurred; if it is felt that a challenge has occurred a riposte must be delivered; and it must be evaluated by the PCR. Third, challenges and ripostes can occur only between "social equals," which I understand to be synonymous with *status equality*: a peasant does not threaten to take honor from the king by shouting an insult at him, and when the king beheads the peasant, it is for insubordination, not as a riposte designed to defend honor.[10] Fourth, there are gender double standards

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[8] Malina, *New Testament World*, 30; this definition is essentially the same as Pitt-Rivers's definition in "Honour and Social Status" in *Honour and Shame*, ed. Peristiany, 21.

[9] Malina, *New Testament World*, 33. Unfortunately, this measured statement (note the "nearly") is overshadowed by less measured statements a few pages later: "*all* social interactions outside the family or substitute family" and "*every social interaction* of this type" are contests for honor (p. 36; emphasis added). Understandably, these statements loom large in criticisms of the model.

[10] Malina, *New Testament World*, 35.

when it comes to honor and shame. There is behavior that is expected and appropriate of males and females respectively, and mixing them is inappropriate. Therefore, men can be said to embody honor and women to embody shame (quite literally, I might add).[11] In this sense, Malina argues, a woman embodies shame more than honor, where (and only where) shame is understood as passivity and concern for the honor of others, and honor is that which aggressively seeks out greater honor.[12]

The final aspect of Malina's model to which I wish to draw attention is his important, and too infrequently cited, caveat: "honor and shame patterns do not determine what is honorable and shameful. The determination of what specific behaviors or objects are of worth depends on factors other than these values."[13] Malina knew that these other factors were the PCR and local practices and expectations, but I have found this observation insufficiently built into his model.

II. Criticisms of the Model

The model of honor and shame adumbrated by Pitt-Rivers, Peristiany, and Malina has been criticized in some important ways. In the interest of brevity, I shall limit my focus here to the three scholars whose criticisms have pushed me most to reevaluate the model: Unni Wikan, F. Gerald Downing, and Louise Joy Lawrence.

Unni Wikan objected most strenuously to the claim that shame is essentially and implicitly a female quality while honor is essentially male.[14] In the words of Wikan:

> Would anyone seriously maintain that a woman cannot gain value in her own and others' eyes, and that this is a male prerogative? Moreover, does it seem plausible that men should regard a woman's value as wholly dependent upon her sexual conduct, so that if she misbehaves, she has no value at all, *and that women's ideas on this point should be identical with those of men?* Such extraordinary asser-

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[11] Ibid., 52. Malina never claims that women have no honor, only that a woman's honor resides in her sexual purity and exclusivity, her passive social role, and her motherhood. Malina is by no means alone in making this claim. Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers define "the Mediterranean concept of honor" with reference to "masculine honor" and "female sexual purity" (*Honor and Grace*, 6). This is carried over into Campbell's essay in the same volume (p. 133), and later into Pitt-Rivers's *Fate of Shechem,* 22. One example among many NT scholars is Halvor Moxnes, who reports the claims of many others that place a woman's honor exclusively in her chastity and modesty ("Honor and Shame," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* [ed. Richard Rohrbaugh; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996], 19–40).

[12] Malina, *New Testament World*, 49.

[13] Ibid., 51–52.

[14] Unni Wikan, "Shame and Honour: A Contestable Pair," *Man* n.s. 19 (1984): 635–52.

tions could only arise from the anthropologist's failure to observe the range of contexts and processes within which persons are granted honour, in different circles and sectors of a society (including its 50 per cent. of female members!).[15]

Almost by accident, Wikan discovered that the Sohari women of Oman did not reduce the entirety of a woman's honor to her sexual exclusivity. It was possible for a flagrant adulteress to retain honor in the eyes of her peers because she was faultless in other areas of her interactions with them. It was simply that in this one matter (her adultery) she was shameless. Yet this is a society that adheres perfectly to Pitt-Rivers's (and Malina's) claims of the sharply gendered division of morality: a woman should not appear in public alone, she should not show her face or hair, and she must take a "virginity test" on her wedding night. Indeed, the adulteress's friends would not ride alone with her in a taxi for fear of their own reputations, so it is not the case that the woman's behavior passed without censure. Wikan concludes: "A shameful act may affect the person's value, but some value derived from other behaviour remains, and other consequences of the act may also accrue."[16] In the end, then, if honor is marked by respect shown, then this woman retained a great deal of honor in the eyes of her PCR.

The perspective expressed by Omani men is what dominates in our models of honor and shame: a woman has little if any honor independently of her husband's or father's honor, and that honor is subsumed within her sexual exclusivity. Sexual promiscuity is supposed to be the end of honor. But the *other* side of this culture, represented by women, disagrees: people's honor might well be affected by, but it also extends beyond, sexual activity.

F. Gerald Downing is another scholar whose influential criticisms of honor and shame we must consider here.[17] He does not deny that honor and shame could be overwhelming concerns of ancient Mediterranean people and that this is indeed reflected in *some* NT passages. Downing's problem is with the claim that a concern for honor always precedes all other concerns; he argues that the concept of honor and shame "is *an* issue of which we need to be aware, but that it is only dominant, 'pivotal,' central (the 'core') when, and where, it is clearly shown to be."[18]

Reasonable though this may sound, Downing's complaints are largely founded upon three presuppositions that are not reasonable. First, he presupposes that "pivotal" means "exclusive," that calling honor and shame pivotal values is a claim that there can be no other meaningful values in a society. This is not a claim, nor even an implication, that can be found in Peristiany's, Pitt-Rivers's, or Malina's work. Second, Downing assumes that if honor and shame were pivotal values, they would

[15] Ibid., 639 (emphasis added).
[16] Ibid., 644.
[17] Downing, "'Honor' among Exegetes," 53–73.
[18] Ibid., 55.

be evident in every single social interaction and would in turn appear explicitly in every literary depiction of a social interaction. This is not a reasonable expectation. Societies, and their literary creations, will always be more subtle and complex than that. And finally, Downing presupposes that social values will be reflected in texts self-evidently. Michael Herzfeld makes this same mistake: it is not reasonable to demand that whatever values make a social exchange charged will always appear near the surface.[19] It goes without saying that outsiders will sometimes have to work very hard to interpret insider discourse (especially nonverbal discourse), since insiders rarely need to make subtexts explicit. In other words, practices of hospitality or gift exchange (per Herzfeld) do not *necessarily* rule out agonistic honor and shame just because on the surface hospitality and gift exchange appear to be generous and selfless.

Downing's criticism of the model is more sound when it concerns the equation of women with shame (e.g., womanly passivity limited by decorum to the private home). Downing cites Plutarch's discourse on γυναικῶν ἀρεταί ("womanly excellence"):

> Regarding the virtues of women, Clea, I do not hold the same opinion as Thucydides. For he declares that the best woman is she about whom there is the least talk among persons outside regarding either censure or commendation, feeling that the name of the good woman, like her person, ought to be shut up indoors and never go out. But to my mind Gorgias appears to display better taste in advising that not the form but the fame of a woman should be known to many. Best of all seems the Roman custom which publicly renders to women, as to men, a fitting commemoration at the end of their life. (*Mulier. virt.* 242EF; trans. Babbitt, LCL)

What is interesting about this quotation is the difference of opinion reflected in it. Thucydides claims that a woman's sphere is the home and that she should not aspire to honor beyond it (in keeping with Peristiany's, Pitt-Rivers's, and Malina's views of honor and shame), but Gorgias and Plutarch disagree with him. The opinions of Gorgias and Plutarch alone do not refute the traditional male position (nor does Downing present it as such), but they do suggest that the traditional position is not nuanced enough.

Likewise, Downing has trouble accepting Malina's claim that challenges to honor can occur only between parties of equal social standing. If this were the case, he wonders, how is it that the disciples could challenge Jesus when they charge him with ignoring the hunger of the crowds, and that Jesus could accept the challenge by suggesting that *they* feed the crowds (Matt 14:16 parr.). Would this not suggest that Jesus and his disciples have the same status?

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[19] Michael Herzfeld, "'As in Your Own House': Hospitality, Ethnography, and the Stereotype of Mediterranean Society," in *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean,* ed. Gilmore, 75–89.

Finally, we should consider Louise Lawrence's critique of the model. I shall focus here on Lawrence's *CBQ* article, since her book-length ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew has too many targets.[20] Once one gets past the caricature that typifies Lawrence's engagement with the work of the Context Group,[21] her suggestion that biblical scholars might benefit from distinguishing Honor Precedence from Honor Virtue is worth considering.

For the distinction between Honor Virtue and Honor Precedence Lawrence relies on an encyclopedia entry by Pitt-Rivers.[22] In this essay, Pitt-Rivers suggests that Honor Precedence is external, contested, and public. It is the agonistic honor in which honor changes owners by the evaluation of a judging public. By contrast, Honor Virtue is concerned only with the internal conscience. This kind of honor, to quote Lawrence, "is gained before one's own inner being or before an omniscient divine figure, from whom nothing can be hidden and in whose eyes honor is ultimately vindicated."[23] The benefit in drawing this distinction, she claims, is that it allows us to be more specific in how we understand the honor dynamic. For example, rather than label conduct that seems to reject the agonistic challenge and riposte as "counter-cultural"—which Jerome Neyrey has claimed to see among the earliest Christians[24]—we might more accurately label it "Honor Virtue."

The problem with Honor Virtue is how *introspective* it requires ancient Mediterranean people to have been. The whole idea of "individual conscience" is questionable in such a collectivistic culture. And to be sure, this is not a claim that they had no sense of self nor that they did not feel things internally. "Individual conscience," however, is much more than this; it refers to an introspective model of behavioral control that is not typical of collectivistic cultures.

Lawrence suggests that Honor Virtue is exemplified in the behavior of Cynics and Jesus' followers, but there is an easier way to understand the behavior of these people. All who theorize on honor recognize that what is honorable in one arena will not always be honorable in another. These different *arenas* can be geographical (the Greek East vs. Roman West), ethnic (Egyptian vs. Roman), "religious" (Cynic vs. Judean vs. imperial cult). It goes without saying that when people with

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[20] Louise Joy Lawrence, "'For Truly, I Tell You, They Have Received Their Reward' (Matt 6:2): Investigating Honor Precedence and Honor Virtue," *CBQ* 64 (2002): 687–702; eadem, *Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew.*

[21] One example must suffice: Lawrence complains that the model of honor as defined by Malina and/or the Context Group presupposes that it is "the sole value of the ancient world" (p. 689). But no one has ever made this claim. To say that some value is pivotal in no way implies that other values do not exist.

[22] Julian A. Pitt-Rivers, "Honor," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (19 vols.; ed. David Sills; New York: Free Press, 1968–79), 6:503–11.

[23] Lawrence, "Investigating Honor Precedence," 690.

[24] Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998).

different convictions come together, their values might clash. What we have among the Greek philosophical and Judean-Hellenistic writings are notions of honor that are at odds with society-at-large. Philo argued for an honor grounded in piety before God, as indeed did the Cynics and possibly even Jesus.

But do these differences really amount to a rejection of Honor Precedence? Hellenistic Judeans and Cynics set up notions of honor and honorable behavior that competed with notions of honor held by society-at-large, and Jesus is depicted in the Synoptic Gospels as doing the same. But they did more than that; they also *criticized* competing notions of honor (the honor of the Greeks, the honor of the Pharisees and scribes). Implied in such criticism is an agonistic claim of superior honor over others. This *is* Honor Precedence. All that has happened is that the court of reputation has been shifted away from the general public. Cynics shift the PCR toward God and their community, which knows the truth about human enslavement to convention. Judeans all over the Mediterranean shift the PCR toward God and Torah, while Jesus followers shift it toward God and Jesus. But they all participate in a *contest* over what comprises truly honorable and truly shameful behavior; their claims to virtue are fully embedded within an agonistic system of Honor Precedence.

Lawrence's emphasis on Honor Virtue, while problematic, nonetheless points us in the right direction: privileging the PCR above all else will be key. In other words, what Lawrence thinks is Honor Virtue is actually a shifting PCR. Lawrence in the end provides the key to solving the problems with the honor and shame model.

III. Honor and Status

Definitions of honor tend to give equal weight to the individual claim to honor *and* the public assessment of that claim. Despite this, the primary focus of honor arguably becomes the individual. For instance, Malina's two kinds of honor revolve around the individual: ascribed honor is the honor an individual is born with, and acquired honor is the honor an individual accumulates or loses throughout his or her life. Malina acknowledges the necessary presence of the PCR, but it acts only to confirm *individual* claims to honor. This focus on the individual is what is wrong with this approach.

Social scientists have long distinguished individualistic from collectivistic cultures, and the ancient Mediterranean was definitely collectivistic.[25] Calling people

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[25] See also Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations* (2nd ed.; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001); Harry C. Triandis, "Individualism and Collectivism," in *The Handbook of Culture and Psychology*

collectivistic does not imply that they have no sense of self, nor does it imply a total absence of individual aspirations. Collectivistic people tend to be governed *less* by individual desires than by communal expectations. These are tendencies: the ancient Mediterranean was no more 100 percent collectivistic than modern North American society is 100 percent individualistic. There are elements of each found in the other, but the occurrence of collective concerns among North Americans (e.g., peer pressure) does not diminish the dominance of an individualistic *ideology*. The opposite applies to the ancient Mediterranean. Clifford Geertz's oft-cited formulation still puts it best:

> the Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background is, however incorrigible it might seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures.[26]

In defining honor, we should not start with a focus on the individual. We should, rather, start with the focus on the collectivistic and relentless PCR. When this is accomplished, the PCR becomes the first, last, and only arbiter of honorable and shameful behavior. In what follows, I shall show why the PCR should be privileged, and what can be gained by adjusting the model in this way. This adjustment becomes necessary when we notice that, *pace* Malina, challenges and ripostes *did* occur between parties of unequal status, and between men and women.

IV. Inter-Status Honor Challenges

Tacitus is not alone in complaining about social inferiors insulting respectable citizens, and freedmen and slaves gesturing at or speaking rudely of their patrons or masters (*Ann* 3.36).[27] Tacitus (*Ann* 1.72) records how Tiberius revived the practice of charging with treason people who produced libelous writings directed at

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(ed. David Matsumoto; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 35–50; Harry C. Triandis, K. Leung, M. Villareal, and F. L. Clack, "Allocentric versus Idiocentric Tendencies: Convergent and Discriminant Validation," *Journal of Research in Personality* 19 (1985): 395–415; Harry C. Triandis, "The Self and Social Behavior in Differing Cultural Contexts," *Psychological Review* 98 (1989): 506–20; Richard A. Shweder, *Thinking through Cultures: Expeditions in Cultural Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[26] Clifford Geertz, "On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding," *American Scientist* 63 (1975): 48.

[27] See also Suetonius, *Domitian* 8.3; *Nero* 5.1; *Digesta* 47.10.15.32; 47.10.19; 47.10.20; 47.10.35; 47.10.45.

social elites. Pompeius Macer, praetor under Tiberius, supported the move for he too had felt the sting of criticism and mockery for his relationship with his mother. Aulus Gellius (7.14) refers to legislation intended to protect the honor of those insulted, "lest the omission of punishment bring [the person insulted] into contempt and diminish his honor" (7.14.3). Gellius goes on: "Where there is no need to fear loss of prestige . . . the desire to inflict punishment does not seem to be fitting at all" (7.14.4). In other words, not every insult from below is a challenge requiring a riposte, but every insult that *is* responded to must have been interpreted as a challenge by the recipient.

Cassius Dio (79.20) observes that Macrinus's emperorship (217–218 C.E.) started to deteriorate with a public shaming when people chanted that they were leaderless, calling upon Jupiter to provide leadership. The attempts of nearby equestrians and senators to drown out the insults with their own defensive praise were treated with scorn and were themselves drowned out. What was fatal here is that disaffection among the people led to disaffection among the soldiers. Likewise, Herodias describes the downfall of Didius Julianus (emperor in 193 C.E.) similarly, only here the initial lack of respect shown by the soldiers emboldened the citizens to deride the emperor in public.

Another sign that challenges from below could be treated as serious threats to honor is that the lower the status of the challenger, the more severe was the riposte. It did not matter whether the person insulted was an emperor or a governor; more often than not insults were met with savagery in order to make an important point. Dio (58.5.3–4) comments that to forgive an offense from someone of higher status is a virtue (it is also pragmatic!), but to forgive an offense from below is folly, a sign of weakness. Ramsay MacMullen concludes: "If you simply accepted insulting behaviour, you lost face. That was serious. You became Nothing—*as even an emperor might*."[28] Though Pliny (*Ep*. 8.24.6) delivers some idealistic advice—a holder of *imperium* need not fear contempt, for the only way he can be held in contempt is if he first feels contempt for himself—the historical record suggests that most elites did not feel impervious enough to ignore insults from the base.

If an emperor could not be influenced by public opinion, he could not be cajoled into action, which is the implication of Suetonius's account of an event during Claudius's reign (*Claudius* 18.2). After poor harvests resulted in a shortage of grain, Claudius found himself cornered in the forum by a mob who hurled insults and pieces of bread at him. After escaping, Claudius did everything he could to import food in time for the winter.[29] Thus Jon E. Lendon concludes that "the status

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[28] Ramsay MacMullen, *Changes in the Roman Empire: Essays in the Ordinary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 194 (emphasis added).

[29] Conversely, Tacitus (*Ann*. 12.43) attributes survival of that winter to the bounty of heaven and a mild winter.

or the identity of the critic did not matter: the shouted abuse of the base, anony-mous lampoons and verses, anonymous gossip, and anonymous slander all excited acute concern. Insult also argued weakness, the inability to defend honour."[30]

Inter-status challenges are depicted abundantly in the NT, namely, in the Gospel depictions of Jesus being challenged by and shaming his elite Judean inter-locutors, variously depicted as Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes. While historical reconstruction of these events is complicated, we can say with certainty that Jesus did not share status equality with his opponents as depicted in the Gospels. Crossan, K. C. Hanson, and Douglas E. Oakman all agree that Jesus was most likely a peas-ant farmer and artisan.[31] Richard Rohrbaugh strives for greater specificity, arguing that artisans were below even peasants in social stratification, for peasants at least were landed, while artisans were not. He places only "the degraded and expend-ables" (prostitutes, tanners, blind, lame, etc) below artisans.[32] By all accounts Jesus was non-elite, while many of his opponents would have been elite: the Sadducees, the scribes, and the high priests.[33]

In Mark 11:27–33 (//Matt 21:23–27; Luke 20:1–8), Jesus is confronted in the temple by the scribes, the chief priests, and the elders. They challenge Jesus to declare the source of his authority. Jesus ripostes by turning the question to John the Baptist: "Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human ori-gin?" The question stumps the authorities: they cannot say it was from heaven or that it was mere human authority. It is certain that no one in the crowd has the sta-tus of the scribes, chief priests, and elders, and yet these elites are rendered power-less by public opinion (Mark 11:32). The PCR has the final say: the artisan Jesus shames his elite challengers because the PCR allows it to happen. A less sympa-thetic PCR (or a less sympathetic author) could just as easily have shamed Jesus.

When Jesus forgives the sins of a paralyzed man (Matt 9:1–8; Mark 2:1–12; Luke 5:17–26), the scribes challenge Jesus with a charge of blasphemy. Jesus rebukes

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[30] Jon E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 51.

[31] Crossan, *Historical Jesus,* 125. Artisan and peasant also figure into Hanson's and Oak-man's depiction of Jesus (K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998], 125). See also Douglas E. Oak-man, *Jesus and the Peasants* (Matrix: The Bible in Mediterranean Context; Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008).

[32] Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *The New Testament in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2006), 27.

[33] I deliberately do not count the Pharisees in this list of Jesus' elite opponents. Such a des-ignation accords better with the literary Pharisees of the post-temple Gospel accounts, while the historical Pharisees, though elusive, were a popular grassroots movement. Most recently on the Pharisees, see *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees* (ed. Jacob Neusner and Bruce D. Chilton; Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007).

them, and we are told that the crowds "were filled with awe" (Matt 9:8). In this story the crowd is the PCR, and they do not hesitate to redistribute honor to Jesus from the scribes, who are elite by all standards. In Luke 20:19–26 (//Matt 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17) the scribes and the chief priests send clients to entrap Jesus in a question about taxes. The spies might be Jesus' peers, but because they represent elites, they share in their status, if only temporarily. Nonetheless, the spies lose the challenge and riposte: "they were not able in the presence of the people to trap him by what he said; and being amazed by his answer, they became silent." The PCR rules: the spies cannot persuade it to distribute shame to Jesus because Jesus keeps outwitting them, and they in turn are shamed (silenced).[34]

One need not assume the historical accuracy of these episodes. Yet, even from a purely literary perspective, the result is the same. Literarily, Jesus does not share the same status as his opponents because he is the Son of God. Jesus should not be able to shame his opponents, and they should not be able to challenge him because his status so vastly outranks theirs. Both approaches, then—historical critical and literary—are equally revealing. Either Jesus is a poor peasant from a backwater peasant village or he is the Son of God. In neither instance does he at all share the status of his opponents, yet he is depicted consistently as being challenged by them and shaming them before the PCR. It should not be concluded that *all* inter-status challenges could result in honor exchanges, but it must be admitted that some did.

Even the gods were not impervious to challenges, attacks, and insults from people, and here the status inequality between interlocutors could not be greater. Reciprocity was the backbone of exchange, and honor was the backbone of reciprocity. The expectation of reciprocity applied no less to the gods than it did to humans, and it applied to the gods of the Greeks and Romans, the gods of the Eastern mysteries, and the Judean god according to Second Temple and NT writers. All this is well documented.[35] What is less well documented is the role of the PCR in distributing honor or shame to the gods.

For H. S. Versnel this is the phenomenon of "deaf gods and angry men."[36] It is not at all uncommon for humans to excoriate the gods for failing to meet their obli-

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[34] Malina and Rohrbaugh (*Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], passim) recognize the three preceding episodes as challenges and ripostes, as I do, but in none of them do they recognize that Jesus' opponents are elite while he is non-elite. Thus, they never explain how Jesus can engage in this type of behavior with social superiors.

[35] James R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context* (WUNT 2/172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW 130; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2004).

[36] H. S. Versnel, "Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer," in *Faith, Hope, and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (ed. H. S. Versnel; Studies in Greek and Roman Religion 2; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 1–64. The data I present here are drawn from pp. 37–42.

gations of reciprocity. It goes without saying that, if humans could rebuke gods, then cross-status challenges *were* possible. Herodotus (7.34–35) reports that after the Persians built a bridge across the Hellespont, a great storm destroyed it. Outraged, Xerxes had the Hellespont scourged and shackled. What is more, Xerxes declared that no one could offer sacrifices to the god any more.

Herodotus seems to think that Xerxes' words are "βάρβαρά τε καὶ ἀτάσθαλα," but this is beside the point. Xerxes' punishment and prohibition of sacrifice might well be impertinent, but that either happened at all is significant, and this impertinence happened more commonly than Herodotus might have liked. Epictetus, in reflecting on how sporting fans could come into conflict with one another when cheering for different athletes, offers this telling analogy:

> Don't the farmers revile Zeus, when he stands in their way? Don't the sailors revile Zeus? Do men ever stop reviling Caesar? What then? Doesn't Zeus know about it? Isn't Caesar informed of what is said? What then does he do? He knows that if he punishes all who revile him he will have no one left to rule over. (*Disc.* 3.4.7–8; trans. Oldfather, LCL)

Neither the gods nor the emperors can punish all the people who dishonor them. And obviously, having people to rule over is not all that is at stake here. Ruling over people is a sign of power, and therefore a source of honor.

Suetonius (*Caligula* 1–4) relates that when the much-loved Germanicus was reported dead at the hands of Piso, people responded by throwing their household gods out into the streets, by stoning temples, and by smashing altars of the gods. What is more, the popularity of Tiberius dropped because people suspected him of instructing Piso to poison Germanicus. Such is the power of the PCR: the emperors and the gods alike need public support. The absence of public support threatens the survival of both.

In a very interesting letter found among the Oxyrhynchus papyri (VII.1065), a man relates to a friend his need for assistance because of what has befallen him. He closes the short letter with a promise that if he is left unaided, then "just as the gods did not spare [ἐφίσαντο] me, likewise neither will I spare the gods." The sentiment is sufficiently common to lead Arthur S. Hunt to comment, "If the gods neglected their duty and afflicted their devotees, the sufferers retaliated by turning their backs on the gods."[37]

Simon Pulleyn sees this also in Greek prayers of complaint. In the *Iliad* (12.163), the Trojans complain after the Achaeans have withstood their attack. Asius is indignant before Zeus and charges him with being a φιλοψευδής. Though Zeus is unmoved, Pulleyn is surely right that the implication is that Asius had a reasonable expectation that Zeus could be shamed into correcting his behavior. The

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[37] Cited in Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 41–42.

Greeks make the same complaints to Zeus concerning the successes of the Trojans: Agamemnon complains that never once did he neglect an altar to Zeus.[38]

Ancient people understood that the gods were nothing without them. Note for instance Orestes' reminder to Zeus in the wake of his father's death: "If you destroy the nestlings of a man who sacrificed and honored you greatly, from what hand will you receive the gift of a fine banquet?" (Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers* 255–57). Sophocles' chorus, having seen the state of affairs in the world, will conclude that there can be no point honoring the gods: "If such things are honorable, why should I dance?" (*Oedipus the King* 895). Examples abound in literary sources, but surely these suffice to illustrate that humans could rebuke the gods, they could remind them of their honor, they could attempt to shame them into right action, and they could remind them how they relied on humans to honor them.

One of Martial's epigrams makes this very point: "He does not make gods who sculpts sacred faces into gold or marble; he makes gods who asks of them" (8.24.5–6). According to Martial, the fact of human need and humans turning to the heavens is what makes (and later perpetuates the fantasy of) the gods. When enough people address the same god as a god, then that god has honor, reputation, even existence. But an important implication of this is that when people cease to ask of the gods, the gods cease to *be* gods. The history of religion betrays this very fact; time is littered with gods that presumably no longer exist. Isis, Asclepius, Dionysus, and Zeus, once the most popular and loved of the gods, are no longer because people ceased to worship and honor them. Humans are the PCR that designates whether a god is a god or a figment of someone's childish imagination.[39] It is the PCR that decides the fate of the gods, and not, in reality, the gods who control people. In every sphere, then, inter-status challenges and ripostes could occur.

V. Women and Agonistic Honor

The question of gender is related to the question of status, since, according to Malina, women do not compete for honor in the same way as do men. This is an aspect of Malina's model (and that of Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers as well) that has received the most criticism. Let us begin, as Downing did, with some examples from Plutarch. What is revealing about Plutarch's work is not that it shows honor being distributed to women: we already knew that happens. What is revealing is that

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[38] For other examples of prayers of protestation, see also Jules Labarbe, "La prière 'contestataire' dans la poésie grecque," in *L'Expérience de la prière dans les grandes religions: Actes du colloque de Louvain-la-Neuve et Liège, 22–23 novembre 1978* (ed. Henri Limet and Julien Ries; Homo religiosus 5; Louvain-la-Neuve: Centre d'Histoire des Religions, 1980), 137–48.

[39] Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 41.

honor was being distributed to women because they were witty, brave, aggressive, and loyal to the state. These are women who fought side by side with men on the field, who feigned loyalty to a conquering king but orchestrated attacks from without, and who offered sage advice to kings and despots and were heard. It is enough to make Plutarch claim that "man's and woman's virtues are one and the same" (*Mulier. virt.* 243A).

A few examples from Plutarch warrant a closer look. These are women who were held in wide public esteem, and who were in no way relegated solely to the home. First there is Pieria, a woman among the people of Myus who brokered peace between her people and a rival city. Plutarch claims that "both cities repute and honor Pieria" (*Mulier. virt.* 254B). There is Polycrite, a Naxian woman who was captured by the Milesians. When a Milesian festival approached, she cunningly sent word to her brothers alerting them to the opportunity for attack. When Polycrite arrived home to the city, she was "confronted by citizens who came to meet her, welcoming her with joy and garlands and giving expression to their admiration for her" (ibid. 254E).

Plutarch also discusses the appropriately named Aretaphila from Cyrene, who was forcibly married to Nicocrates. Like other brave women, Aretaphila threw off Nicocrates and freed her people. Plutarch relates that the people "had their fill of honours and praises for Aretaphila" and then they asked that she "as her proper due, should share with the best citizens in the control and management of the government" (*Mulier. virt.* 257D). Now, interestingly, we are told that she declined, preferring to withdraw to her own quarters and to her loom. Significantly, her desire for privacy and family recommend Malina's claim that the private home is the domain of women, yet the behavior of the people—the PCR—suggests that it would have been acceptable had she received the position of public power they offered her. Conversely, the wife of Pythes, a contemporary of Xerxes, was offered and did accept "the government and care of the whole city." After Pythes died, it is said that his wife "administered the government excellently, and gave the citizens relief from their miseries" (ibid. 263C).

That men could borrow honor from their wives suggests that all men did not have greater honor than all women (Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.39–40; Plutarch, *Galb.* 19.2). The wife could have greater honor, be the focus of public praise and lore, while the husband might be forgotten or ignored. Pliny the Younger remembers with fondness the story of Arria the Elder. Arria was publicly aggressive in supporting her husband when he was arrested; she was famous and laudable, according to Pliny. She had greater honor and fame, in retrospect, than her husband Caecina, about whom we know little. Caecina's deeds and identity are incidental to Pliny's story of Arria's heroics. And this was not the only honorable woman in the family. Pliny writes to a Roman lawyer expressing his concern for the health of Fannia (*Ep.* 7.19), the grand-daughter of Arria. Pliny worries that if Fannia succumbs to her illness,

"so great a woman will be lost to the sight of her country when her like may not be seen again" (7.19.4; trans. Radice, LCL). Pliny proclaims that men too can learn lessons in courage from this woman, exiled three times but never wavering in her reclamation of her executed husband's honor.

Valerius Maximus (*Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 8.3) offers three examples of women defending themselves, or others, before magistrates in public. Several things are interesting about this text. On the one hand, Valerius is by no means unequivocal in his support of these aggressive women. It does not seem to him natural; it is immodest. Yet, on the other hand, he finds some of the examples of this practice praiseworthy. So, Valerius allows that Maesia of Sentinum went through the forms and stages of defense thoroughly and boldly; that she won her case speaks to her skill, he suggests. Yet he claims she was, because of her lack of femininity, insultingly named "Androgyne." His words for Carfania are even more scornful: she is depicted as a dog barking incessantly and annoying everyone greatly. But in his third example, Hortensia nobly carries on the rhetorical eloquence of her widely respected father, something her brothers had failed to accomplish. These three records suggest that this practice was not common, but that it *did* happen, and that it could be met with mixed reactions—disapproval and praise simultaneously.

More examples of women being aggressive in public, and in some cases competing with men for public approval, are found in ancient Egyptian letters.[40] Most of the women authors (or authorizers) of these letters have at least some freedom to travel; some are using well-trained scribes, others poorly trained scribes, and some seem not to be using a scribe at all. Finally, while women might not be allowed to represent themselves in court (reflected in *P.Mich.* 8.507), they are frequently involved in litigation in other ways (*BGU* 3.827).[41] Cicero writes about Sassia, who after years of lobbying finally succeeded in bringing to court a case against Aulus Cluentius for poisoning his step-father. Cicero depicts Sassia as marshaling public opinion strongly against Cluentius before the trial even begins (*Cluent.* 7). Sassia's influence clearly suggests that she was collecting on reciprocity owed to her.[42]

In another Egyptian example, a woman letter-sender has been involved in a protracted dispute with a man named Anoup, who cheated her in some way involving her property (*O.Vind.Copt.* 258; p. 312 in Bagnall and Cribiore). The man has already appealed to the local cleric, so the woman is writing to the cleric claiming

[40] Roger S. Bagnall and Raffaella Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt: 300 BC–AD 800* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).

[41] According to Wayne A. Meeks, women in the Greco-Roman world "were active in commerce and manufacture and, like their male counterparts, used some of the money in ways that would win them recognition in their cities" (*The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983], 24).

[42] Suzanne Dixon, "A Family Business: Women's Roles in Patronage and Politics at Rome 80–44 B.C.," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 34 (1983): 99.

that she will abide by whatever decision he makes. At the same time, however, she appeals to having the support of the PCR: she claims the entire village is on her side. In other words, prior to the appeals to the local cleric, the contest between the woman and Anoup was public, and the woman was ascribed the greater honor by the judging public.

Other examples of women competing for and being awarded public honor are found in the arena of patronage and benefaction.[43] That women were presented with crowns, statues, honorific inscriptions, public expressions of gratitude, and seats of honor speaks volumes to this issue.[44] It is simply not reasonable to claim that women's life was limited to the home. Tacitus (*Ann.* 13.20) refers briefly to how Nero was compelled to remove Burrus from his command of the troops because he had been showing gratitude and reciprocity to Agrippina, who had been instrumental in his promotion. Eumachia was patron of an association of fullers, a trade associated with blacksmithing. She is presented with a statue and an inscription honoring her as patron. Most interesting is that fullers were exclusively male, yet they apparently had no qualms about having a woman patron.[45] Ross Kraemer argues based on epigraphical evidence that Hellenistic Jewish women also functioned as wealthy benefactors, donors, and patrons.[46]

Wendy Cotter studies 147 inscriptions from professional associations in Italy, and finds that twelve name a woman as patron, usually without reference to a male relative at all.[47] Of twenty-four inscriptions from professional associations in Rome itself, four name a woman patron, none of which names a male relative. Aware of

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[43] See, e.g., Archippe of Kyme, *SEG* 33, nos. 1035–41; Julia Severa of Acmonia, *CIJ* 2:766; statue of Eumachia in the Archaeological Museum of Naples.

[44] Riet van Bremen, *The Limits of Participation: Women and Civic Life in the Greek East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology 15; Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1996).

[45] Suzanne Dixon, *Reading Roman Women: Sources, Genres, and Real Life* (London: Duckworth, 2001). MacMullen concludes: "women in a town could come to the notice of large groups of fellow citizens, in ways bound to make observers look up to them, or at least not to look down on them" ("Women in Public in the Roman Empire," *Historia* 29 [1980]: 212). See also Susan Treggiari, "Jobs for Women," *American Journal of Ancient History* 1 (1976): 76–104; Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 233–55.

[46] Ross Kraemer, "Hellenistic Jewish Women: The Epigraphical Evidence," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1986 Seminar Papers* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1986), 183–200. See also eadem, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religion among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Bernadette J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* (BJS 36; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982); Carolyn Osiek, Margaret Y. MacDonald, with Janet Tulloch, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), ch. 9.

[47] Wendy Cotter, "Women's Authority Roles in Paul's Churches: Countercultural or Conventional?" *NovT* 36 (1994): 350–72.

the similar data, Sarah B. Pomeroy concludes: "Roman women were involved with their culture and were able to influence their society."[48]

Women in early Christian sources reflect this same pattern. Paul calls Phoebe from Cenchreae a patron (προστάτις) (Rom 16:2). He receives news from "Chloe's people," a phrase that must refer to her clients. Euodia and Syntyche are clearly two women of influence in Philippi, for, if they were not, it is unlikely their dispute would threaten the community enough to concern Paul. Cotter concludes that when Roman cultural standards are taken as the comparison, there is nothing countercultural in Paul's putting women in positions of authority.[49]

Another illustration of women contesting for honor comes from the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*. A wealthy virgin named Thecla dedicates her life to Paul, and while in Antioch she is embraced on the street by an aristocrat who is in love with her. We are told that Thecla resisted, and "taking hold of Alexander, she ripped his cloak, took off the crown from his head, and made him a laughing stock." She was brought before the governor by Alexander.[50] Why? Partly because he loved her and "partly in shame at what had befallen him."[51] The normative model of honor and shame cannot explain how it is that Thecla can challenge and shame Alexander. It turns out that it is irrelevant that Thecla is female and Alexander is male: the people on the street laughed, and Alexander's reputation was thereby diminished.

Another problem for Malina's contention that men and women could not compete for honor comes from the story of Jesus and the Syrophoenician/Canaanite woman (Mark 7:24–30 and Matt 15:22–28, respectively). Matthew and Mark agree on the general outline: Jesus is in Gentile territory when a woman approaches him and begs that he heal her daughter, who has a demon. In Matthew, Jesus initially ignores the woman, which is explained, on Malina's model, by their unequal

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[48] Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), 189.

[49] Cotter, "Women's Authority Roles," 372. See also Ute E. Eisen, *Women Officeholders in Early Christianity: Epigraphical and Literary Studies* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Michael Glazier, 2000); *Let the Oppressed Go Free: Feminist Perspectives on the New Testament* (ed. Louise Schottroff; Gender and Biblical Tradition; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992); Osiek et al., *Woman's Place*, 214–19.

[50] Malina claims: "it is considered highly dishonorable and against the rules of honor to go to court to seek legal justice from one's equals" (*New Testament World*, 44–45). Among other things, it is damaging to honor because it advertises that you are incapable of dealing yourself with your opponents. Malina stresses status equality here as elsewhere in his depiction of challenges and ripostes, but I cannot imagine that it would have been any less dishonorable for someone to take a socially inferior person to court. Should not the social superior have the means to defend his or her own interests without the aid of the courts?

[51] *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 26–27, in William Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha.* vol. 2, *Writings Related to the Apostles; Apocalypses and Related Subjects* (Eng. trans. ed. W. McL. Wilson; rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 244.

status. But that Jesus does eventually respond is not explained on the model. The woman reissues the challenge, and Jesus ripostes again. In Matthew, Jesus' first riposte is dismissive, while the second escalates to insult. In Mark, both components are contained in the one riposte: "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." But the challenge and riposte exchange does not end there. The woman's final challenge ends the exchange: "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table" (Matt 15:26). In a clever retort, the woman accepts the insult "dog," and turns it back on Jesus, thereby outwitting him. Having been outwitted, Jesus is obligated to give the woman what she wants; she has bested him.[52]

VI. Conclusions and Proposals

Malina's abstract model is built on the anthropological tradition that claims that the public sphere belonged to men while women were limited to the private sphere. The problem, as others have indicated, is that social "laws" and social practice do not always correlate. There appears to have been an ideal world and a lived world, and in the lived world women *did* participate in public life, *did* compete for honor, *could* have greater honor than their husbands, *did* act as benefactors, and *were* given crowns, statues, and seats of honor. The presence of women in areas *traditionally* demarcated as male, especially in the centuries on either side of the common era in Asia Minor, is too amply documented to be deemed countercultural or exceptional. Challenges across social boundaries *did* happen.

The model of honor and shame as adumbrated by Peristiany, Pitt-Rivers, and Malina creates a tension between ideal and practice, between what was supposed to happen and what did happen.[53] Peasants were not supposed to be able to shame their social superiors, but they did. Women were not supposed to be able to compete with men for public honor, but they did. This tension can be resolved simply, I submit, by privileging the public court of reputation in our analysis.[54] Some women succeeded in eclipsing the expectations society had of them. Others, of course, did not. It is, as we have seen consistently, the PCR alone that decides

[52] Malina and Rohrbaugh comment on these passages, but do not address the challenge and riposte in the story (*Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*).

[53] Lynda L. Coon, Katherine J. Haldane, and Elisabeth W. Sommer, "Introduction," in *That Gentle Strength: Historical Perspectives on Women in Early Christianity* (ed. Lynda L. Coon, Katherine J. Haldane, and Elisabeth W. Sommer; Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 10.

[54] There will be instances where the PCR is difficult to identify, or where there are competing public courts of reputation, but to my mind this only underscores the importance of the perceptual shift I am recommending here.

whether a woman is allowed to hold a public position of authority, whether she can compete for public honors as a wealthy benefactor, whether she can shame a man in public, or whether such actions bring shame on her and her house.

I have only one remaining proposal: in keeping with a perceptual shift toward the PCR as the sole and fickle arbiter of honorable or shameful behavior, we should also consider a terminological shift. In order to complete this shift in focus from the individual to the PCR, I recommend that we replace Malina's terms "ascribed honor" and "acquired honor" with new terms: *attributed honor* is the honor that the PCR attributes to people when they are born. A person's family name, ethnicity, and gender are attributes of each person. Conversely, *distributed honor* is the honor that the PCR distributes whenever someone outwits another, when a benefaction is made, or after any kind of public challenge and riposte.

Changing nomenclature is never easy, but there will be theoretical and practical benefits. First of all, by thinking of these two types of honor in this manner we acknowledge the absolute power of the PCR to define honor and shame as it pleases. Gender and status *can* be ignored by the PCR in its distribution of honor and shame. The claim here is not that status and gender are irrelevant, but rather that the PCR may or may not take them into consideration when distributing honor. Practically, this explains why there is not consistency in what constitutes honorable and shameful behavior across the Mediterranean, nor even in a single village. While power, wealth, and gender *do* figure into the "rules" of honor and shame, these individualistic characteristics matter much less than the opinion of the PCR, whoever that might represent in any given instance.[55]

The second benefit is that we move away from a binary model with honor on one end and shame on the other, with men on one end and women on the other, with the elite on one end and the non-elite on the other, with ascribed honor on one end and acquired honor on the other.[56] The binary nature of the model is *not* what Malina intended, but it is a clear result of the model as it stands.

Some theorists have complained about the assumption of pan-Mediterranean obsession with honor and shame. The approach suggested here sidesteps that problem by offering in its place a phenomenon that is not only pan-Mediterranean but also a component of *every* honor and shame culture (Japan, South America) and subculture (such as sports teams and the armed forces): the central and powerful role of the public court of reputation. From the Levant to the Far East, it is the PCR that distributes honor or shame. Brandes referred to this perceptively as the "*tyranny* of public opinion."[57]

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[55] The claim here is not that the PCR is completely unpredictable. Rather the claim is that, while there are broad patterns that we might construe as "rules," the PCR is in fact not governed by a rigid set of rules, but is autonomous and somewhat arbitrary.

[56] See Stanley Brandes, "Reflections on Honor and Shame in the Mediterranean," in *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean,* ed. Gilmore, 121–34.

[57] Ibid., 131 (emphasis added).

    In place of a linear and binary model of honor and shame, a model that focuses on the PCR results in a model that is more organic. A person makes a claim to honor by stepping out into the street: for example, he comes from a fine family. The PCR either maintains the honor claim, or, if the family's fortunes have fallen recently, it rejects the claim to honor. When a woman assaults a man in the street and makes him a laughingstock, she makes a claim to honor. The PCR responds either by shaming her or by laughing at the assaulted man. A woman appears in public to perform an act of patronage, or to serve in a religious office, and the PCR distributes honor or shame in their approval or disapproval. The PCR attributes honor to those with inherent honor, and distributes honor to people who stand out honorably. It is the final arbiter of all things honorable and shameful; it is answerable to no one. It is, ironically, not a democracy but a tyranny.

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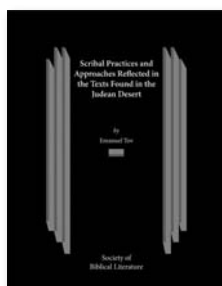
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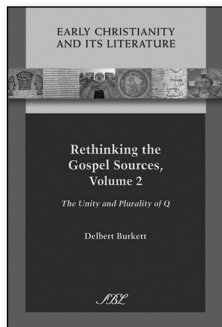
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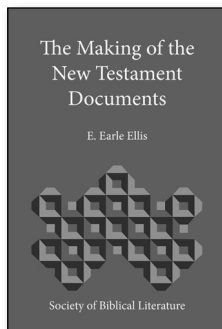
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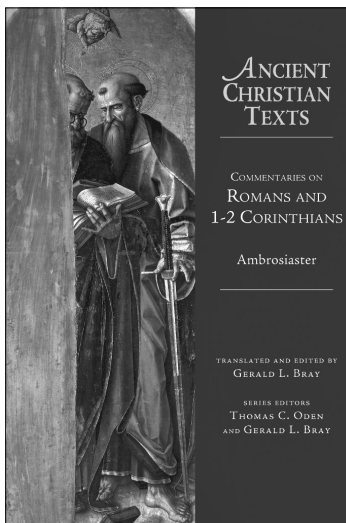
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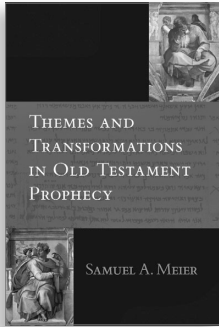
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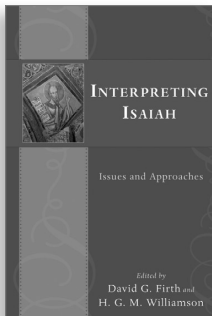
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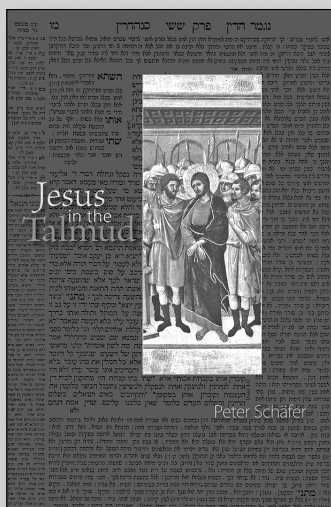
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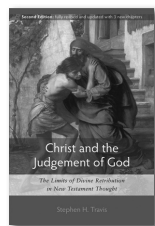
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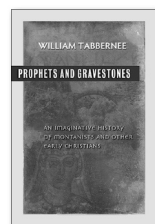
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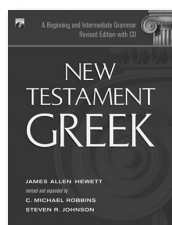
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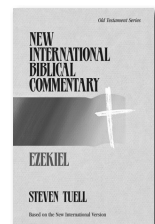
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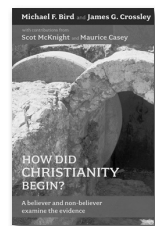
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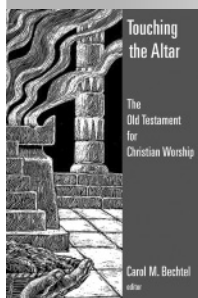
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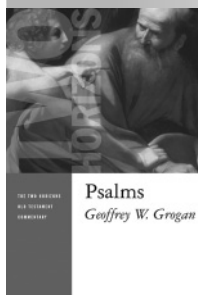
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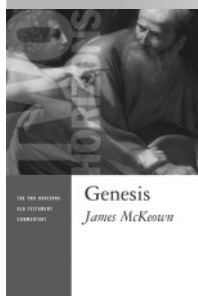
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