

Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism



Social and Literary Contexts
for the New Testament

EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN
ITS HELLENISTIC CONTEXT
VOLUME 2

EDITED BY

Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts

TEXTS AND EDITIONS FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDY (TENT) [10]

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VOLUME 10

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PREFACE

This is the second of three volumes that we have compiled focusing on the ancient world and the New Testament. We have given them the collective name of Early Christianity in Its Hellenistic Context. The three volumes will appear in two different series from Brill. This and the first volume will appear in the TENTS—Texts and Editions for New Testament Study—series, and the third volume, because it focuses upon matters of language, will appear in LBS—Linguistic Biblical Studies.

This second volume focuses in particular on Christianity and its Hellenistic Jewish backgrounds and related origins. This involves both the social and the literary and religious backgrounds of the New Testament. As a result, this volume has a wide range of articles that explore connections that early Christianity has with Hellenistic Judaism, including its relationship to surrounding Jewish thought, the texts of Second Temple Judaism, and the controversies and issues that embroiled both of them. Like volume one, this volume is not a small volume. This is because it not only includes a large number of essays, but some of these essays are significant efforts in their own right to address their chosen topics. We are glad that the authors have felt free to undertake such significant work in this volume.

The first volume focuses upon the origins of Christianity and its relationship to its Greco-Roman environment. It is entirely appropriate, as those essays will demonstrate, that Christianity in its relations to the Greco-Roman world was also a part of the larger world of its Hellenistic context. This volume also appears in the TENTS series, and includes a large number of essays.

The third volume is devoted to the language of the New Testament, and hence its appearance in LBS. This volume, though not quite as large as its two related volumes, itself contains significant work in the area of Greek language and linguistics as it is relevant to the origins of Christianity within its Hellenistic context.

The editors are appreciative of the contributions of the authors, and appreciate the opportunity to work with them in publishing their work. We also apologize for the delay in their publication, which was unavoidable due to personal circumstances. In any case, we believe that the material included here will provide much to contemplate in future research on the New Testament in its relation to its Hellenistic context.

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HELLENISTIC JUDAISM AND
NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION:
AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts

New Testament scholars have shown varying levels of interest in the Jewish roots of early Christianity, usually depending upon the era in which they have lived. Albert Schweitzer criticized previous generations for divorcing Jesus almost entirely from his Jewish apocalyptic setting in his celebrated *Quest of the Historical Jesus*.¹ In many ways ahead of his time, Schweitzer leaned on a wide range of Second Temple literature for his reconstruction of the theological world of Jesus, Paul, and later Christianity.² Rabbinic Judaism, however, remained the most consistent Jewish foil against which primitive Christianity was placed in the first half of the twentieth century, an approach embodied in the work of scholars like Henry St. John Thackeray, Solomon Schechter, C.G. Montefiore, Rudolf Bultmann, W.D. Davies, and especially the notorious Strack-Billerbeck Rabbinic lexicon,³ a successor

¹ A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (trans. W. Montgomery; London: A & C Black, 1936 [1906]).

² A. Schweitzer, *The Psychiatric Study of Jesus: Exposition and Criticism* (trans. Charles R. Joy; Boston: Beacon, 1948 [1913]); A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (trans. W. Montgomery; London: A & C Black, 1931 [1930]); A. Schweitzer, *The Kingdom of God and Primitive Christianity* (ed. U. Neuenchwander; trans. L.A. Garrard; London: A & C Black, 1968 [1967]).

³ H.St.J. Thackeray, *The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1900); S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (London: A & C Black, 1909); S. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism* (London: A & C Black, 1896–1924); C.G. Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul: Two Essays* (London: Goschen, 1914); C.G. Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings* (London: Macmillan, 1930); C.G. Montefiore and H.M.J. Loewe, eds., *A Rabbinic Anthology* (London: Macmillan, 1938); R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. K. Grobel; London: SCM, 1951–1955); W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1955); W.D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Pantfyedwen Trust Lectures 1968; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (6 vols.; Munich: Beck, 1922–1961). In some ways, an exception was G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927).

to John Lightfoot's *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*.⁴

Moving into the second half of the twentieth century, a number of developments began to undermine the value of rabbinic study for shedding light on Christian origins. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls allowed New Testament scholars to explore a strand of Judaism contemporary with earliest Christianity, which subtly began to shift attention away from late antique and medieval rabbinic documents. This discovery, combined with the devastating analysis of Samuel Sandmel, softly initiated what would turn out to be a massive paradigm shift in the way that scholars undertake study of the Jewish context for early Christianity. Sandmel exposed rabbinic interpretations of Jesus and Paul as anachronistic and referred to the industrious work of Strack-Billerbeck as sheer "Parallelomania," asking questions like why "pile up the alleged parallels, if the end result is to show a forced, artificial, and untenable distinction even within the admitted parallels?"⁵ Although Sandmel's criticism made its mark as a predecessor to the paradigm shift away from the once-held emphasis on rabbinic sources in New Testament research, Jacob Neusner's (one of the authors in this volume) seminal contribution on the nature of the sources we possess for reconstructing the Pharisees drove the final nail in the coffin.⁶ Neusner showed that we can seldom be certain that a tradition found among the Rabbis goes back to traditions extant prior to AD 70 due to the vastly differing natures of the sectarian Judaism of the first century and the standardized rabbinic Judaism of the Byzantine era. Many scholars, therefore, grew skeptical of early rabbinic assessments of Paul and Jesus while studies published in the 1960s that still employed a primarily rabbinic model met with sharp criticism.⁷ Therefore, contemporary work focuses much more on literature from the Second Temple era rather than the rabbinic period. When citing a rabbinic passage, scholars today typically feel the need to show why readers should believe

⁴ J. Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae* (Cambridge: Joannes Field, Edovardi Story, 1658–1674).

⁵ S. Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13, here 10.

⁶ J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70 AD* (3 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1971).

⁷ E.g. B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998 [1961]). Neusner was one of the most significant critics of Gerhardsson's work, but writes the forward to the most recent edition, retracting his overreaction to Gerhardsson's use of rabbinic traditions.

that the tradition preserved in the passage dates to a time contemporary with or prior to the New Testament.

The work of Sandmel and Neusner marks one significant paradigm shift in the study of Judaism of the first century and its relation to early Christianity. The work of Martin Hengel inaugurated a second. Hengel's impressive *Judaism and Hellenism* attempts to treat the influence of Hellenism upon Judaism from 330 BC to 168 BC. Hengel's argument has two premises: (1) the distinction between Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism in the first few centuries before Christ is a false disjunction—in other words all Judaism during this time is Hellenistic Judaism, including especially the brands of Judaism represented in Palestine; and (2) the influence of Hellenism in Palestine can be detected much earlier than had previously been assumed, at least since before the Maccabean revolt.⁸ His first premise was quickly established as a canon in New Testament scholarship, even if not always incorporated into research findings. Hengel almost single-handedly made it no longer appropriate to talk about Palestinian Judaism as distinct from Hellenistic Judaism,⁹ a framework upon which entire theories of Christian origins had been based. A number of scholars followed in Hengel's wake, expanding and confirming his analysis in a wide range of areas.¹⁰

⁸ M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period* (trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974). See also M. Hengel, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (trans. J. Bowden; London: Trinity Press International, 1989).

⁹ Nevertheless, some contested Hengel's conclusions. For a critique of his two theses and their supporting evidence, see L.H. Feldman, "Hengel's *Judaism and Hellenism* in Retrospect," *JBL* 96 (1977): 371–382.

¹⁰ Hengel of course had a number of important predecessors as well. Among those representing a similar viewpoint, see S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the 1 Century B.C.E.–IV Century C.E.* (TSJ TSA 18; New York: JTSA, 1950); S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II–IV Centuries C.E.* (2nd ed.; New York: Feldheim, 1965); J.N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (NovTSup 14; Leiden: Brill, 1968); G. Mussies, "Greek in Palestine and the Diaspora," in S. Safrai and M. Stern, eds., *Jewish People in the First-Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions* (CINT 1–2; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974–1976), 1040–1064; J.W. Voelz, "The Linguistic Milieu of the Early Church," *CTQ* 56 (1992): 81–97; S.E. Porter, "Jesus and the Use of Greek in Galilee," in B. Chilton and C.A. Evans, eds., *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (NTTS 19; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 123–154. A series of recent studies assesses the issue of diglossia in first-century Palestine, giving support and application to previous research. See J.M. Watt, "The Current Landscape of Diglossia Studies: The Diglossic Continuum in First-Century Palestine," in S.E. Porter, ed., *Diglossia and Other Topics in New Testament Linguistics* (SNTG 6; JSNTSup 193; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 18–36; S.E. Porter, "The Functional Distribution of Koine Greek in First-Century Palestine," in Porter, ed., *Diglossia*, 53–78; C.B. Paulston,

Even within the current volume, *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism*, one can detect the legacy of these paradigm shifts and the scholars that contributed to them, not only by the title of the book but also by the shape taken by the analyses in these essays. The focus of the essays remains upon Second Temple literature rather than rabbinic sources as the basis for comparative material in constructing models of Christian origins. And the primary, though not only, frame of reference for first-century Judaism is the broader Hellenistic world rather than strictly Hellenistic-Palestinian. Each of the essays explores, with these developments in mind, how Hellenistic Judaism can better inform our understanding of Christian origins. The first half of the volume collects essays on Hellenistic Jewish social contexts for Christian origins and contains essays ranging from the influence of Hellenistic Judaism on canon to early Christology to concepts of resurrection and immortality. The second half of the volume explores Hellenistic Jewish literary and religious contexts for Christian origins and includes investigations on the Dead Sea Scrolls rhetoric, rabbinic versus philosophical dialectics, ancient science fiction, historiography, synagogue homilies, and ancient Jewish-Christian dialogues.

Several theories on the composition of the biblical canon have been proposed, many of which are controversial. In the opening chapter, Lee McDonald traces the connections of Hellenistic literary culture and the canon of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. He considers the potential literary influence on the canonization of these holy writings. McDonald explores the milieu within which early Jewish and Christian thinking about canon was embedded, outlining parallels found in ancient Greco-Roman canons and giving specific attention to works of Homer. He suggests that because of awareness of these other literary collections within Jewish and Christian communities, they may have served as a model for the formation of the biblical canons. Though he does not come to decisive conclusions, he does hope to encourage further studies on the topic.

“Language Repertoire and Diglossia in First-Century Palestine: Some Comments,” in Porter, ed., *Diglossia*, 79–89. On the impact of Hellenism on Jewish apocalyptic forms, see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 210–218; T.F. Glasson, *Greek Influence in Jewish Eschatology with Special Reference to the Apocalypses and Pseudepigraphs* (London: SPCK, 1961); J.J. Collins, “Jewish Apocalyptic against its Hellenistic Near Eastern Environment,” *BASOR* 220 (1975): 27–36; J.J. Collins, “Cosmos and Salvation: Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Age,” *HR* 17 (1977): 121–142; J.J. Collins, “Jewish Apocalyptic,” in J.J. Collins, ed., *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (*Semeia* 14; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 21–59. cf. also A.Y. Collins, “Early Christian Apocalyptic,” in J.J. Collins, ed., *Apocalypse*, 61–121. The work of Barr and others in showing the fallacy of positing different modes of thought for Jews and Greeks may also be relevant in some cases. See J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

Adam Marshak gives a multifaceted historical portrait of Herod the Great, depicting him as a successful king who was able to gain much support from the subjects over whom he ruled. Throughout his reign, Herod cultivated many relationships and erected many structures to advance his position and credibility among his people. Marshak successfully illustrates how Herod asserted himself as a well-respected and highly-esteemed ruler among the Greeks by appealing to the past. Herod associated himself with the Hasmoneans, advancing his political propaganda with inscriptions, and with the Jews, identifying himself with the past heroic biblical kings. All of the tactics Herod used contributed to successful rule into the time of the early Christian era.

Reconsidering Palestinian Judaism, Preston Sprinkle turns his attention to E.P. Sanders' covenantal nomism and sets it in relation to Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*. Sprinkle sheds light on this under-researched text overlooked by Sanders, conveying its significant contribution to Sanders' thesis concerning early Judaism and the covenant. Sprinkle suggests a reading of *Biblical Antiquities* that highlights major theological themes pertaining to God's covenant in the Hebrew Scriptures. Sprinkle concludes that *Biblical Antiquities* offers a soteriological view that aligns with and, in some sense, surpasses that of Sanders, showing that Pseudo-Philo depicts God's faithfulness to Israel not merely as the basis of the covenant but also as the means of remaining within it.

C.D. Elledge explores the complex relationship of the concepts of a bodily resurrection and the immortality of the soul. He devotes his study to examining the infiltration of Greek philosophical thought into that of the Jews, as displayed within Hellenistic Jewish texts and in early notions of resurrection from Jewish Palestinian writings with overlapping perceptions. Remarkably, Elledge shows that these ancient documents only mention one of these two concepts, diverging in how they define the nature of the soul and the resurrection. This makes it difficult to see exactly how these two concepts interact. Nevertheless, these notions did converge as the Jews sought to position themselves within their Hellenistic environment.

Challenging traditional understandings of monotheism, Andrew Pitts and Seth Pollinger advance a position found within Second Temple Judaism that explains the role and relationship of the Spirit in early christological understandings. They argue for a more flexible notion of monotheism than is commonly accepted. Pitts and Pollinger propose what they call functional Spirit-monotheism as the fertile and flexible soil out of which exalted messianic beliefs could have emerged. This view is supported by writings from the Second Temple era and the letters of Paul assuming a functional

Spirit-monotheistic framework that allows for Jesus to assume the role of exalted Messiah while not compromising Jewish monotheism.

Christopher Stanley gives attention to Pauline writings through an ethnic lens and draws out the rhetorical and theological features embedded in Paul's conscious use of ethnic language. By investigating the notion of ethnicity within the social sciences, Stanley gives an account of the ethnic diversity and tensions pervasive in Paul's cultural environment. Stanley explains the ways Paul employs ethnic terminology to address issues in the early church while being sensitive to his readers' ethnic understanding and background. Stanley does not attempt to address any particular issue that pertains to ethnicity in the New Testament, but does lay the groundwork for further biblical exposition based on ethnic interpretations.

In a chapter focusing on Paul's apostleship, Tony Costa parallels Paul's apostolic calling with the prophetic calling of the Old Testament prophets, asking whether Paul understood himself within the Hebrew prophetic tradition. His case for an affirmative answer to this question refers to Paul's divine calling in his encounter with the resurrected Christ. Paul's mission to the Gentile nations closely follows the prophets of the Old Testament and the way they were viewed in the Second Temple period. Costa points out that Luke views Paul as a prophet in Acts. Paul, however, does not explicitly identify himself as such but implicitly situates himself in the context of the prophets by using prophetic rhetoric.

In Chapter 9, Peter Frick investigates whether Paul implemented Greco-Roman philosophical models in his theology of God, particularly in Rom 1:18–21. He compares Paul's theology with that of Philo, who offers a Jewish philosophical description of God, and notes the ways in which these philosophical concepts may have influenced Paul's writings and theology. Paul's Pharisaic background may have coalesced with this strand of Greek thought, contributing to the development of his views within a christocentric framework. Frick concludes that Paul is much less concerned with abstract philosophical ideas of God than is Philo, writing the discourse in Rom 1:18–21 with the intention of calling the sinner to salvation by acknowledging and worshiping God.

Scholars seem to have dealt inadequately with the subject of Paul's anthropology, resulting in a unique, albeit inconsistent, view of humanity. Emma Wasserman provides an alternative approach that seeks to present Paul as one who creatively synthesizes various anthropological views. Past treatments find tension between Hellenistic and Jewish traditions on the nature of the human being and the soul. Wasserman discusses the places in Romans 7 and 2 Corinthians 4–5 where the apostle's thought is consis-

tent with Platonic traditions, allowing for the reconstruction of a coherent anthropological view in light of Jesus' second coming and judgment. Wasserman presents Paul's depiction of the follower of Christ as compatible with Platonic principles, while still maintaining a distinct understanding of God's plan of redemption for his people.

The second major part of this volume begins with two essays addressed to the relationship between early Christianity and the Qumran community. In the first essay, Stanley Porter addresses the recurring question of the relationship of John the Baptist to Qumran. This topic has had an upsurge of revived interest in recent research, addressing again such issues as John's situation and personal traits, his being in the "desert," his use of Scripture, and, of course, his concept of baptism. As Porter shows, however, the major issues satisfactorily resolved in earlier scholarship make it, still, unlikely that John the Baptist was part of the Qumran movement.

In the second essay on Qumran, Wally Cirafesi addresses the question of the origins of John's Gospel and similarities to and differences from the Qumranites. He concludes that both reflect a situation in which they are barred from access to the Temple, one because of religious reasons (the Qumran community) and the other because of the destruction of the Temple (the readers of John's Gospel). Thus, rather than having a relationship of origins, John's Gospel and the Qumranites reflect a common situation in Judaism of the time.

In an analysis of the rhetoric employed in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, Leo Perdue argues that the author was educated in Greek rhetoric and wrote to a Jewish audience by means of the use of rhetorical devices. With the union of Greek literary devices and Jewish teachings, the author of this text exhorts his Jewish audience based on the hope of salvation in the midst of violent persecution.

Jacob Neusner, in evaluating the *Bavli*, recognizes its dialectical approach to argumentation and seeks to determine why the Talmud resorts to this kind of approach to persuasion. Neusner devotes a section of his essay to the exploration of the concept of dialectical argumentation and in particular the *Bavli's* use of dialectics in specific texts. The use of dialectics, as it serves to form the character of the *Bavli*, invites the reader to participate in the thought processes that occur in the sustained argumentation for a given proposal, as many obstacles are dealt with that would normally be overlooked.

Catherine Hezser opts for a broad definition of the science fiction genre, examining the motifs of otherworldly journeys, encounters, and ascension accounts. She illuminates ancient Greco-Roman literature, extra-biblical

Jewish rabbinic documents, and early Christian texts that express these themes. Hezser, in surveying a wide array of ancient writings, discusses the science fictional elements that were extant at the time of the writing of the New Testament. She argues that some of these literary elements can be found in the New Testament, especially in the Gospels and Revelation, and to a lesser extent in other places.

Discussion continues to surround ancient historiography and the formation of Luke-Acts. In Chapter 16, Sean Adams evaluates the distinct genre of apologetic historiography to determine the validity of categorizing the writings of Luke and Josephus within this domain. Adams constructs a nuanced definition of apologetic historiography and provides an examination of Josephus and Luke in light of the conventions practiced within this framework. He tentatively concludes that neither of the authors fits within the context of apologetic historiography.

Beth Stovell attempts to advance our understanding of the Johannine corpus in her assessment of the use of the metaphorical language of “living water.” Stovell gives a thorough analysis of the history of linguistic usage of this term from the contexts of the ancient Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Second Temple literature. She illustrates the evolution and transformation of the varied meanings of the “living water” metaphor in antiquity, and concludes that John understands living water largely in continuity with how the Hebrew Scriptures depict it, with a hope in God’s coming reign.

In Chapter 18, Jarvis Williams considers Paul’s view of the death of Jesus as articulated in Rom 3:21–26. Jarvis argues that Paul’s understanding of Jesus’ death was molded by Hellenistic Jewish martyr theology. Linguistic evidence of parallels found in 4 Maccabees on martyr deaths and Paul’s writing on the death of Jesus, as well as evidence found in other Jewish documents, further strengthens his argument. According to Williams, elements of martyr atonement theology found in these traditions are implemented by Paul in order to communicate to his Christian and Hellenistic Jewish audiences the significance of Jesus’ death on their behalf.

Carl Mosser exposes the failures of previous research into the synagogue homily. Mosser show that, in contrast to recent scholarship on the topic, homiletic instruction in the form of a sermon in the first century was not a common practice. He sustains this claim by appealing to descriptions of the synagogue services from Philo, Josephus, and Luke-Acts. Interestingly, Mosser is able to identify some common synagogue practices that show that the service format offered opportunities for Jesus and his disciples to proclaim the gospel message. The format was later altered in an effort to silence them, if they were not expelled from the synagogue altogether.

Turning to the Jewish-Christian debates from the early centuries of the church known as *Contra Judaeos*, William Varner focuses on the contents of two fragmentary dialogues—the *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus* and an untitled dialogue. He seeks to observe how these dialogues may have influenced other Jewish-Christian discussions, as well as examining what they tell us about the character of other early dialogues in the first centuries of the church. Varner notes that these debates were often extensive and rigorous, creating a guideline of how not to carry on discussions between Jews and Christians.

Although there clearly is much more that has been, can be, and no doubt will be said about the relationship of early Christianity, especially in its social dimension, to its Hellenistic context, these essays cover a broad range of topics that reflect areas of continuing research and importance. Within these essays, we witness the reaffirmation of some previously formulated positions, the disputation of others, and new argumentation for constructive and innovative proposals. Each essay, we trust, invites further critical thought on the specific topic at hand, as well as the larger issue of the New Testament in its Hellenistic context.

HELLENISTIC JEWISH SOCIAL CONTEXTS
FOR CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

HELLENISM AND THE BIBLICAL CANONS: IS THERE A CONNECTION?

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a result of many important advances in our understanding of late Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity in recent years, there is renewed interest in the impact of Hellenistic thought and culture on the context and religious traditions of both Jews and Christians. Hellenistic influences in the land of Israel and throughout the Greco-Roman world were widespread and the Greek language and culture was known in aristocratic and military circles of Judaism as early as 260–250 BCE in Palestine. Martin Hengel argues that the use of the Greek language was widespread among the Jews before the accession of Antiochus IV in 175 BCE and that it was not suppressed even after the Maccabean victories over the Seleucids in the land of Israel.¹ I will provide several examples below of this Greek influence both among the Jews and later among the Christians with the aim of providing the context for stating that this influence may have been a contributing factor for both Jews and Christians in establishing their fixed biblical canons.

More than two hundred years ago, Friedrich August Wolf in his *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795), suggested that the parallels between Jewish and Christian biblical canons of sacred literature and the Hellenistic literary canons were both natural and obvious, but not much research on these parallels has been accomplished since. Wolf observed that the *text* of the Jewish sacred Scriptures was viewed and treated in similar ways as the Homeric poems and that the two canons, biblical and literary, were viewed from a canonical perspective.² Because of this, it is strange that only a few

¹ Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (2 vols.; trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 1:103.

² For a brief discussion of this, see Margalit Finkelberg, "Introduction: Before the Western Canon," in Margalit Finkelberg and Guy Stoumsa, eds., *Homer, the Bible, and Beyond: Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World* (Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 2–3.

comparative studies of Jewish and Christian Scripture canons with the Hellenistic literary canons have emerged subsequently. In what follows, I will explore the possible relationship between the Jewish and Christian biblical canons with the Hellenistic literary canons that flourished in the first centuries BCE and CE. I will begin more broadly by focusing first on the Hellenistic influences on Judaism and early Christianity, but then look more specifically at the Hellenistic literary canons and their parallels to the Jewish and Christian biblical canons. I will conclude by assessing the evidence for Jewish and Christian dependence on the Greco-Roman literary canons.

There is little doubt about the considerable Hellenistic influence both among the Jews in the land of Israel in the time of Jesus and (especially) among the Jews in the Western Diaspora (west of the land of Israel) who were regularly exposed to Greek culture and ideas. The best-known influences were, of course, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which have been described as equivalent to the "Bible of the Greeks" in the ancient world.³ More importantly for our purposes, however, is the question of whether Homer was a model for Judaism and early Christianity in forming a biblical canon. How did the Greek classics influence the Jewish and Christian communities in antiquity? Several New Testament writers as well as the early church fathers show considerable familiarity with Greco-Roman literature (some of these are listed below).⁴ Indeed, Dennis R. MacDonald contends that several books in the New Testament collection were written as a Christian imitation of Homer.⁵ The rabbinic sages also assume that Homer is

³ This conclusion is drawn by Margalit Finkelberg, "Homer as a Foundation Text," in *Homer, the Bible, and Beyond*, 75–96 (91).

⁴ A helpful and easily accessible resource on these parallels can be found in C.A. Evans, ed., *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary* (3 vols.; Bible Knowledge Series; Colorado Springs: Victor, 2003–2005). Extensive citations are found in Lee M. McDonald's work on Acts, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians in this series as examples of Hellenistic influence in early Christianity, but also in the other works throughout these three volumes. Also helpful in showing parallels is M. Eugene Boring, Klaus Berger, and Carsten Colpe, eds., *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995); and Clinton E. Arnold, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary* (4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002). These resources show numerous parallels between early Christianity and its sacred writings and the ancient Hellenistic literary sources.

⁵ See his *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), in which he claims that Mark imitated Homeric epic to depict Jesus as superior to Homer; see also his *Christianizing Homer: "The Odyssey," Plato, and "The Acts of Andrew"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), to show that early Christian writers made use of the models in Homer; and more recently his *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer? Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Yale University Press, 2003), in which he argues that the Acts of the Apostles imitates four famous passages in Homer, namely the visions

widely known among the Jews since they compare their sacred Scriptures with the writings of Homer and do not clarify who Homer is. In the Mishnah we read:

The Sadducees say, "We cry out against you, O ye Pharisees, for ye say, 'the Holy Scriptures render the hands unclean,' [and] 'The writings of Hamiram [Homer] do not render the hands unclean ...' Even so the Holy Scriptures: as is our love for them so is their uncleanness; [whereas] the writings of Hamiram [Homer] which are held in no account do not render the hands unclean".⁶
(*m. Yad.* 4.6)

Josephus was especially familiar with the writings of Homer, including the traditions about an earlier edition of Homer and other Greek writers. With a touch of sarcasm he argues for the superiority of the Jewish writings over Homer and other Greek writers in terms of the accuracy and specificity of books involved (see later in *Ag. Ap.* 1.37–46, to which we will presently turn). Josephus refers to the poor quality of the earlier edition of Homer's writings, even if he does not mention by name the famous legend of the Peisistratus⁷ recension (ca. 550–525 BCE). He writes:

The land of Greece, on the contrary, has experienced countless catastrophes, which have obliterated the memory of the past; and as one civilization succeeded another the men of each epoch believed that the world began with them. They were late in learning the alphabet and found the lesson difficult; for those who would assign the earliest date to its use pride themselves on having learned it from the Phoenicians and Cadmus. Even of that date, no record, preserved either in temples or on public monuments, could now be produced; seeing that it is a highly controversial and disputed question whether even those who took part in the Trojan campaign so many years later made use of letters, and the true and prevalent view is rather that they were ignorant of the present-day mode of writing. *Throughout the whole range of Greek literature no undisputed work is*

of Cornelius and Peter (*Iliad* 2), Paul's farewell at Miletus (*Iliad* 6), the selection of Matthias (*Iliad* 7), and Peter's escape from prison (*Iliad* 24). While not everyone agrees with as clear a dependence as MacDonald asserts, he has demonstrated awareness of the Homeric tradition.

⁶ Translations from the Mishnah are from *The Mishnah* (trans. Herbert Danby; Oxford: Clarendon, 1933).

⁷ Peisistratus—or Peisistratus (Greek = *Peisistratos*), frequently referred to as the tyrant of Athens—is reportedly the first to bring the various uncollected texts from Homer's writings together to form an early edition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and he employed grammarians to edit those texts and produce the standard text of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The stories of this recension are clouded with propaganda, so care must be given to discern any historical facts related to it. It does appear that Peisistratus was anxious to produce a standardized text of Homer's works and to make them available in a public library.

found more ancient than the poetry of Homer. His date, however, is clearly later than the Trojan war; and even he, they say, did not leave his poems in writing. *At first transmitted by memory, the scattered songs were not united until later;* to which circumstance the numerous inconsistencies of the work are attributable. (Ag. Ap. 1.12–13; Thackeray, LCL; emphasis mine)

Josephus's purpose here, of course, is to show the superiority of the Jewish sacred writings over those of their literary rivals, the Greeks, and especially Homer—note the comparison of Homer with sacred literature in his *Against Apion* 1.11–19 and 37–43. Josephus is also aware of Peisistratus, the “tyrant of Athens” (ca. 650–625 BCE), and probably also of the story of his legendary recension of Homer. As we just saw, he refers to the problems in it. We will return to this recension below.

While there were many ancient standards of art, grammar, music, architecture, and philosophy, in the ancient world there were also standard collections of lyric and epic poets who were acknowledged as the standards in that field. These standards were listed and categorized in the famous libraries in Alexandria and Pergamum. Poets did not comprise a *closed* or *fixed* list, but, as we will see, they were *the* models to follow. Those who followed the established patterns in writing had the opportunity of having their writings added to the highly esteemed list of authoritative writings. Those who did not were largely marginalized or ignored. I have observed elsewhere the possible influence of these lists or catalogues (or πίναξ) at Alexandria⁸ on the Christian notion of a canon of sacred literature.⁹ We will re-examine that possibility below.

2. CANONS IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

The notion of canon in antiquity—that is, models, regulatory factors, and guidelines—is well established in almost every sphere of life. For instance, the Egyptians early on had canons of art by which the artisans were guided in their craft. The cartouche, for example, an almost rectangular, closed circle with the Pharaoh's name in hieroglyphics inside is uniform in almost all paintings, inscriptions, and statuary of the ancient dynasties in Egypt.

⁸ Πίναξ (pl. = πίνακες) is the Greek term that originally referred to a board or plank or tablet. Tablets were often used to create lists, catalogues, or indexes. Eventually, the term was widely used in reference to lists or catalogues, especially in Alexandria, Egypt.

⁹ Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 39–48.

Similarly, the temple at Karnack in Egypt demonstrates a common feature of capitols on colonnade, namely the open and closed papyrus plant design. There were also numerous other canons of art dating from the time of the Old Kingdom (ca. 2700–2060 BCE) and the Middle Kingdom (2060–1580 BCE). These common patterns are well represented in the Cairo Archaeological Museum in Egypt and include uniform shapes of human figures, especially of the perfect torsos of the Pharaohs and members of the royal families, and the color of the skin—women were uniformly given a lighter skin color than men. Likewise, crossed arms over the chest pointed to the death of the person portrayed, and a foot extended forward accompanied by one extended hand and one at the side indicated that the person portrayed by the painter or sculptor was still living at the time the sculpture was created. One also regularly finds the symbols of the cobra and/or the falcon god, Horus (a deity that became associated with kingship), on the headdress of the kings or within the design of the art objects related to kingship.¹⁰

Other standards, or canons, existed in antiquity as in the cases of architecture,¹¹ music, philosophy, art, grammar, and literature.¹² Canons of art can be seen throughout Greece and Asia Minor today in the various surviving temples, theatres, and ruins and archaeological museums in the Mediterranean world. The style of grave stele from roughly 600 BCE to 300 BCE, for instance, is also largely uniform in the period of time in which it appears, and it regularly displays the same figures represented on the stone carvings, including a larger human form of a local deity. The stele are often topped first by a sphinx and finally by a “palmette finial”¹³ with widespread uniform relief decoration on the shaft. These and other ancient artifacts are on display today in a progressive series of grave stele (from the simple to the complex) in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, Greece as well as in the famous Istanbul Archaeological Museum next to the Ottoman Topkapi Palace.

¹⁰ It appears that only in the New Kingdom in Egypt (1580 BCE and following) was there a temporary loosening of some of the more rigid patterns of art that allowed for more realistic depictions of the actual torsos of the Pharaohs with larger stomachs and weaker or even odd looking torsos.

¹¹ An excellent discussion of the ancient architecture, especially the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman architecture is found in Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), esp. 67–215.

¹² Some of these canons are discussed in McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, 38–48.

¹³ An ornament with divisions resembling a palm-leaf, a “palmette,” as the completion symbol on its “finial,” that is, the apex, top, or corner.

The notion of a standard was also employed in evaluating philosophy and epic poems advancing the criteria by which one discovers what is true and false. Beyer has shown that Epicurus himself argued that logic and method in thought stemmed from a canon (*kanon*), that is, a basis by which one could know what is true or false and what is worth investigating or not.¹⁴ Epicurean philosopher, Diogenes Laertius (200–250 CE), identifies one of the writings of Epicurus (341–270 BCE) as “Of the Standard, a work entitled Canon” (Gk = Περὶ κριτηρίου ἢ Κανών), calling it “canonic” (Gk = κανονικόν) (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 10.27–28, 30; Hicks, LCL). He later explains the substance of this work saying “Now in *The Canon* Epicurus affirms that our sensations and preconceptions and our feelings are the standards of truth; the Epicureans generally make perceptions of mental presentations to be also standards” (10.31, LCL).¹⁵ Epicurus of Athens argued that logic and method in thought stemmed from a canon (κανών), or criterion (κριτηρίου), by which one could measure and determine what was true or false and what was worth investigating or not. This use is similar to the way that the term “canon” came to be used as the standard of truth applied to the early Christian faith (the *regula fidei*), and without using the term, the same is true for rabbinic Judaism.¹⁶

By around 25 BCE, many Roman grammarians were following the model of Virgil’s *Aenid* in their writing, but also the examples of Cicero and Sallust. These Latin grammarians, in the tradition of the Greeks, deemed it very important to follow certain models in their writing. According to Suetonius, they were also actively involved in training the rhetoricians of the day in the best principles of grammar. The importance of strict adherence to these rules of grammar can be illustrated with two examples from Suetonius’s *De grammaticis*. One writer by the name of Marcus Pompilius Andronicus was more interested in his Epicurean sect than in giving special attention to matters of grammar in his writing. The resulting grammatical criticisms of his work by his colleagues, however, forced him to leave Rome. Suetonius writes:

Marcus Pompilius Andronicus, a native of Syria, ... was considered somewhat indolent in his work as a grammarian and not qualified to conduct a school. Therefore, realizing that he was held in less esteem at Rome, not only than

¹⁴ Beyer, “Κανών,” *TDNT* 3:596–598.

¹⁵ For similar examples, see also 10.27, 30; and Seneca, *Ep.* 89.11–12.

¹⁶ The rabbinic sages use the expression “defiling the hands” to identify Jewish sacred literature. Literature that does not “defile the hands” is not sacred.

Antonius Gniphio, but than others of even less ability, he moved to Cumae, where he led a quiet life and wrote many books. (*Gramm.* 8; Rolfe, LCL)

Similarly, one of the worst insults of the day was to be accused of ignorance of proper grammar. In the story of Lenaeus's response to Sallust's criticism of Pompey, Lenaeus, the freedman of Pompey, criticized Sallust with biting satire and several debasing adjectives, concluding with this final salvo: "and who was besides an ignorant pilferer of the language of the ancients ..." (Suetonius, *Gramm.* 15; Rolfe, LCL)!

Epictetus (ca. 50–130 CE) argued that the goal of philosophy is to determine a "standard of judgment" and whatever subject needs to be investigated, one needs to "subject it to the standard [ἀντὶν τῷ κανόνι]" (*Diss.* 2.11.13, 20; cf. 2.23.21). Aeschines of Athens (ca. 397–322 BCE) earlier said essentially the same thing: "In carpentry, when we want to know whether something is straight, we use a ruler (κανών) designed for the purpose. So also in the case of indictments for illegal proposals, the guide (κανών) for justice is this public posting of the proposal with accompanying statement of the laws that it violates" (Aeschines, *Ctes.* 199–200).¹⁷ Porter and Pitts draw our attention to several ancient references to the standard canons of literary compositions, including Caecilius, who wrote *On the Character of the Ten Orators*.¹⁸

Both Homer and Hesiod were widely revered among the Greeks and were used as standards or models for literary writings, but even more, they were highly revered. According to William Graham, Alexander the Great recognized Homer as much more than an epic poet. He states:

Homer and Hesiod had long been regarded by the Greeks "with reverence," and Alexander himself, perhaps under Aristotle's influence, virtually worshipped Homer. Alexander's veneration even went so far as to lead him to found a cult of Homer at Alexandria, which was to become the home of the study of "the classics" in the next two centuries.¹⁹

It is worth noting that the gods mentioned in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are the ones that became "canon" for the Greeks, that is, they became the recognized and honored deities. Homer supremely functioned *par excellence*

¹⁷ Translation from F.W. Danker, *II Corinthians* (ACNT; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 160.

¹⁸ Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, "Paul's Bible, His Education and His Access to the Scriptures of Israel," *JGRChJ* 5 (2008): 9–41. They also note that Quintilian (*Inst.* 10.1.76), Lucian (*Scyth.* 10), and Pseudo-Plutarch (*Vit. Xorat.*) all make similar comments about these standards in Greco-Roman literature.

¹⁹ William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 52. See M. Hadas, *Ancilla to Classical Reading* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 13, 137, 142.

as canon in the modern sense, that is authoritatively, among the Greeks. This included the special religious significance that was not lost on the Jews, who contrasted their sacred literature with the sacred texts of Homer (see Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.10–13 and *m. Yad.* 4.6). Scholars of Hellenism regularly use the word “canon” to describe the collection of literary examples or models for the Greek culture, beginning, of course, with Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as the most important canon for the Greeks.²⁰

In the Roman world, Virgil especially became the standard or model for various forms of Latin writing. Even Tacitus, perhaps “the most individualistic and most psychological of ancient historians,”²¹ who was writing between 78–115 CE, was still guided by the model of Virgil’s *Aenid*, as well as by Cicero and Sallust. Among the Greeks, Plato and Aristotle were the canons or models for subsequent philosophers.

The notion of a written *canon*, or standard literary collection of authors and their works, has been discovered among the Alexandrians in Egypt both in reference to their grammar and in the literary models for writers to follow. They did not use the term “canon” to describe their activity, however, but rather *πίνακες*, that is, “lists” or “catalogues” to describe the books in the library of Alexandria. However, the very selectivity that they used in compiling the famous lists of works in their library showed the high standards that were employed. They produced a canon of writers whose grammar and style were used as a model for other writers. The grammarians serving at the great library of Alexandria sought to preserve an accurate and faithful text of the classics in literature and applied this canon to the Old Greek classics. Among the most commonly recognized “canons” or ancient

²⁰ See, for example, John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 51, 134–135; John Guillory, “Canon,” in Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, eds., *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 233–249, where the term “canon” is applied to the Alexandrian collection of works listed by Callimachus in his *Pinakes*, and also the works of Homer and other epic poets. See also James E.G. Zetzel, “Re-creating the Canon: Augustan Poetry and the Alexandrian Past,” in Robert von Hallberg, ed., *Canons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 107–129, esp. 111, 122–124, and 127 n. 1 and n. 7. He specifically speaks of the literary “canons” in antiquity, naming the list or catalogue, or *πίνακες*, of Callimachus, and the works of Homer and Latin literary collections as well. See also the discussion of Callimachus and his works in Albin Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature* (trans. James Willis and Cornelis de Heer; New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1963), 700–718. See also, Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968).

²¹ Clifford H. Moore, “Introduction to Tacitus,” *The Histories* (trans. Clifford M. Moore; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930), 2: xiii.

classics and models to follow were the works of Homer, Euripides, Menander, Demosthenes, and later Hesiod, Pindar, Sappho, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Aesop. Porter and Pitts have listed some of these standard classical writers that are cited or have significant parallels in the New Testament, most of whom were among the “canonical” collections at Alexandria and were at the core of the educational system of that day.²² At the core of the educational system in the Greco-Roman world were the classic writers and the most important among them was always Homer.

Alexandrian grammarians, who set forth a “canon” of texts and writers whose Greek was used as a model, may well have influenced both the Jews and later the Christians who sought to identify the books that established the “standard” guidelines of their faith and practice. The gathering together of an authoritative collection of classical writings in the great library at Alexandria, Egypt has some parallels with the canonical processes of the Jews and Christians. In an unpublished address at the Society of Biblical Literature, J. Van Seters argues more forcefully that the act of gathering and copying the classical texts in the library at Alexandria was the direct ancestral tradition of the biblical canons of both Judaism and early Christianity. He states:

The scholarly tradition of the Alexandrian library was likewise concerned with the listing and classification of its works. In this regard it established tables, i.e. lists (*πίνακες*) of writers and classical works from the past, and excluded spurious works whose creation was very common in the Hellenistic period. These tables are the ancestors of the “canons of writers” that one encounters in the Roman and Byzantine periods. I think it is obvious that the concern to establish a canon of Scripture in Judaism and Christianity draws directly upon this scholarly tradition.²³

It is interesting that even the order or sequence of the classic writers was considered important. It is reported that Aristophanes had a total recall of the classics in terms of their canonical sequence or order and that he was able to expose false poets by relying on his knowledge of the canonical sequence of the books stored in the library. Nagy recalls this ancient

²² See Porter and Pitts, “Paul’s Bible,” 9–41. They include Menander, *Thais* frg. 218 in 1 Cor 15:33; Aristotle, *Pol.* 3.8.2 1284a14–15 in Gal 5:22; Aeschylus, *Eum.* 1014–1015 in Phil 4:4; Pindar frg. from Strabo, *Geogr.* 6.2.8 in 2 Tim 2:7; Epimenides in Titus 1:12; Aratus, *Phaen.* 5 or Epimenides in Acts 17:28; Epimenides, *Ion.* 8 in Acts 21:39; Euripides, *Bacch.* 794–795 in Acts 26:14.

²³ James C. VanderKam, *Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (JSJSup 62; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 30, supplies this quote.

reference to Aristophanes' ability at recall. He writes: "relying on his [Aristophanes'] memory, he had countless scrolls brought out from their respective shelves [*armaria*], and then, by comparing them with the recited texts, he compelled the men to admit about themselves that they stole them."²⁴ Nagy also observes that the sources reporting the possession of Homeric poetry by the Peisistratids emphasize the fixed order of performance and even performers and this finds expression in archaic Greek oral poetics.²⁵

The best known classic writers and a few others besides became the standards in the Alexandrian library. Not everything written in the ancient world was placed in distinguished collections in the Alexandrian library, but those that were included were copied with great care by people selected and trained to preserve the accuracy of their texts and to order or classify them for identification and location. The selective list of poets among the Old Greek classics is obvious and the Greek grammarians at Alexandria selected Homer, the author of *The Iliad* and *Odessey*, along with Hesiod, author of *Theogony* and *Erga*, as the standards of epic poetry. Likewise, Pindar, Bacchylides, Sappho, Anacreon, Stesichorus, Simonides, Ibycus, Alcaeus, and Alcman became the standard lyric poets and were sometimes referred to as "the Nine." Although the order differed in the various epigrams that listed these works, the names were all the same. It was a standard list. These names, as well as those of the ten great orators, circulated widely not only in Alexandria, but also in Pergamum, Rhodes, Athens, and Rome, the other important learning centers and locations of major libraries in the ancient world. Those who departed from these standards were soon criticized and either marginalized or ignored.

After listing the orators and writers with the best skills, Quintilian (born ca. 35 CE) explains the value of imitating them:

It is from these and other authors worth reading that we must draw our stock of words, the variety of our Figures, and our system of composition, and also guide our minds by the patterns they provide of all the virtues. It cannot be doubted that a large part of art consists of imitation. Invention of course came first and is the main thing, but good inventions are profitable to follow. Moreover, it is a principle of life in general that we want to do for ourselves what we approve in others. Children follow the outlines of letters so as to become accustomed to writing. Singers find their model in their teacher's voice, painters in the works of their predecessors, and farmers in methods

²⁴ See Gregory Nagy, "The Library of Pergamon as a Classical Model," in Helmut Koester, ed., *Pergamon, Citadel of the Gods: Archaeological Record, Literary Description, and Religious Development* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 210–211.

²⁵ Nagy, "Library," 211–212.

of cultivation which have been tested by experience. In a word, we see the rudiments of every branch of learning shaped by standards prescribed for it. We obviously cannot help being either like the good or unlike them. Nature rarely makes us like them; imitation often does. (*Inst.* 10.2.1–3; Butler, LCL)

In other Greco-Roman literature, these standards were employed both as a means of determining the quality of something, and whether something “measured up.”²⁶ This again, is similar to the references to a “canon of faith” (the *regula fidei*) or the religious beliefs that were the guidelines of faith and practice in the early church. This standard was often equated with what we today call “orthodoxy” or, in the case of second-century church fathers, “proto-orthodoxy.”

Those who acknowledged a biblical canon believed that their writings came from God and consequently they were not likely to criticize them or stand in judgment over them as some ancient literary writers were prone to do. On the other hand, aside from Plato, there is little widely known criticism of Homer and his works. In fact, a “fence” was put around his work using the tool of allegory to protect it from criticism. We will discuss this subject below.

Upon request from Alexander the Great, Aristotle set forth the standard “rules” or guidelines for the practice of rhetoric in the political arena. In his introduction to Alexander, he called his enterprise “principles of political oratory,” and purposed to present them “with a degree of accuracy that has not yet been attained by any other of the authors dealing with it” (Aristotle, *Rhet. Alex.* 1420a; Rackham, LCL). Ancient writers had standards for writing, and the classical writers who formed the “canon” by which those after them produced their own writings conformed to them.²⁷

Pfeiffer identifies the various terms used in antiquity to classify and order the variety of books placed in the ancient libraries. The more common term for cataloging, as noted above, was *πίναξ*. It is used in a manner similar to Cicero’s Latin term *classici* (“classes”), and Quintilian’s Latin term *ordo*. Indeed the very word *classic*, when applied to the ancient writers, suggests that these writers were among those who had reached a certain standard of excellence and thought that others imitated.²⁸ While *κατάλογος* did not originally have the sense of a catalogue or list, as did the word *πίνακας*, it eventually came to be used of a fixed list of sacred books by the Christians.

²⁶ For example, see Euripides, *Hec.* 602; Demosthenes, *Cor.* 18.18, 296; Aeschines, *Ctes.* 88; Sextus Empiricus, *Pros Logikous* 2, 3; Epictetus, *Disc.* 1.28.28.

²⁷ Pfeiffer, *History*, is a very useful study on this subject.

²⁸ Pfeiffer, *History*, 206–207.

Awareness of *standard* collections of literary texts was widespread in the Greco-Roman world, but a *fixed* or closed canon of sacred Scriptures appears to be unique to Judaism (initially in the late first century CE and subsequently in the mid to late second century in rabbinic Judaism) and subsequently to early Christianity (from the fourth century and later). An investigation of the use of the term *κανών* in antiquity is not parallel to the way the church eventually used it to describe a fixed collection of sacred writings. However, there are some early parallels to the practice of establishing a collection of standard texts that others needed to follow if their work was to be accepted or even added to that standard collection.

While the church father Eusebius did make use of *κανών* to identify what was specifically Christian, he did not use it to identify his list of sacred Scriptures (not even in *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.3). His favorite terms for recognized and approved Christian sacred literature were *ὁμολογουμένων* (“recognized”) and *ἐνδιθήκως* (“covenanted”), or more accurately “encovenanted” (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.3 and 3.25.6, respectively; see also 3.24.2).²⁹ Eusebius’s usual term for describing a *list* of sacred Scriptures is *καταλόγος* (“catalogue;” *Hist. eccl.* 3.25.6; 4.26.12). When he uses the term *κανών*, he is generally referring to the church’s traditions or its rule of faith. Of the ten times Eusebius uses *κανών*, there are only two possible (but unlikely) candidates for an exclusive list of sacred Scriptures (*Hist. eccl.* 5.28.13; 6.25.3). Although he provides the first *datable* list of the New Testament canonical books of the church (*Hist. eccl.* 3.25.1–7), he does not use the term *κανών* to refer to it. He apparently used *κανόνα*, however, in reference to a *list* of the four Gospels (*Hist. eccl.* 6.25.3). Also, setting forth what he claimed was Origen’s canon of Scriptures, Eusebius writes: “In the first of his [commentaries] on the Gospel according to Matthew, defending the canon [*κανόνα*] of the Church, he gives his testimony that he knows only four Gospels” (*Hist. eccl.* 6.25.3; Lake, LCL; emphasis mine). The question here is whether “canon of the church” refers to the rule of faith or to a body (or list) of sacred Christian literature, that is, a list of Scriptures. While the context deals with a collection of writings, Eusebius is clearly speaking here about a rule of faith presented in a collection of sacred writings (see also *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.1, where he cites Origen’s “encovenanted books” [*ἐνδιθήκως βιβλους*]).

²⁹ See Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 292, who translates *ἐνδιθήκως* as “contained in the covenant” (i.e. not apocryphal).

In an annual Easter letter of 367 CE, commonly referred to as his *Thirty-ninth Festal Letter*, Athanasius made use of the verbal form of “canonized” in reference to a collection of sacred literature that he wanted to distinguish from a collection of apocryphal writings commonly read in the churches in Egypt and elsewhere.³⁰ This is the earliest use of *κανών* for a collection or listing of the church’s Scriptures.

The word *canon* was not regularly used in reference to a closed collection of writings until David Ruhnken used it this way in 1768. In his treatise entitled *Historia critica oratorum Graecorum*, he employed the term *canon* for a selective list of literary writings. According to Rudolf Pfeiffer, “his coinage met with worldwide and lasting success, as the term was found to be so convenient.” Pfeiffer suggests that this unusual use of the word *canon* for a Scripture collection came from the biblical tradition, even though the biblical canons consist of a list of writers rather than books that are accepted as genuine and inspired.³¹ He concludes, however, that Ruhnken’s use of the term *canon* to identify literary lists is closer to the biblical tradition than it is to how the ancients used the term, who did not use it in reference to a standard list. Pfeiffer rightly observes that *πίναξ* and *πίνακες* are more commonly used of catalogues or lists, but nevertheless concedes that while he himself avoids using the term, it is appropriate to speak of an “Alexandrian canon” of the nine lyric poets. He concedes that the term will continue to be used, even if inappropriately. He contends that “the expression is sanctioned by its age and convenience, and will, I am afraid, never disappear. But if one calls such lists ‘canons,’ one should be aware that this is not the proper significance of the Greek *kanon* but a modern catachresis that originated in the eighteenth century.”³² While it is tempting to think that what has become commonplace in modern religious jargon was also true in antiquity, that is simply not the case. The ancient terms *πίναξ* and *πίνακες* were regularly used to identify standard or classic writings of antiquity, and in several respects these lists are different from the sacred collections of Scriptures of the Jews and Christians. Generally, they were not only used of sacred lists or catalogues, but other literary texts as well. They often identified models to emulate, but that was not true of the biblical literature. It was also common to criticize the listed literature in the *πίνακες*, but that was never true of the biblical literature.

³⁰ I have listed the books in Athanasius’s biblical canon in McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, 379–381.

³¹ Pfeiffer, *History*, 207.

³² Pfeiffer, *History*, 207.

The significance of this for our purposes is that some scholars are beginning to acknowledge interesting parallels between the development of lists or catalogues of highly influential literary texts in the Hellenistic world and the development of canonical lists of sacred Scriptures that emerged later in both early Judaism and early Christianity. Establishing direct dependence on the Hellenistic world for canon formation is more complex, but interesting parallels and similar developments in the Greco-Roman world and in Judaism and early Christianity suggest Hellenistic influence in the formative notions of early Christianity as well as Second Temple and early rabbinic Judaism. I will explore some of these parallels below, but first we should note some of the sacred literary collections among ancient Jews and Christians.

It is not difficult to find collections of sacred texts in Second Temple Judaism. We begin, of course, with Moses' writings, which formed the core of the Jewish sacred Scriptures. This collection (or book) is mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, but it may only refer to the book of Deuteronomy or simply to the laws themselves as in the case of the Decalogue (e.g. Ezra 3:2; 6:18; Neh 8:1–8, 13, 18; 9:13–14; 10:29), though possibly also to the whole Pentateuch. When the Jewish Scriptures were translated into Greek (ca. 281–280 BCE), it was only the Pentateuch at first. Second, and possibly as early as 400–350 BCE, there existed an unspecified collection of prophetic writings. According to 2 Kings 17:13, Moses and the Prophets were placed side by side in an authoritative collection for the Jews. Later, Sirach (ca. 180 BCE) makes mention of the collection of the Twelve (Minor Prophets, see 49:9–10), and his awareness of other well-known prophets is suggestive of some collection, albeit not well defined at that time (chs. 44–49). By the late second century BCE (ca. 130 BCE), the grandson of Sirach referred in the Prologue to his translation of his grandfather's book of wisdom and to at least two collections of sacred texts among the Jews, namely the Law and the Prophets, and a broad collection of other religious texts that probably were not yet viewed as sacred literature. These "other" texts were circulating among the Jews first in Palestine and subsequently in collections of books in the Septuagint among Jews living in the Diaspora. This amorphous "other" collection may not have been considered Scripture at the time of the Prologue to Sirach. Based on his investigation of Sirach 38:34–39:1 and 44:1–50:24, Martin Hengel believes that Sirach was aware of all of the Old Testament books except Ruth, Canticles, Esther, and Daniel, but says Sirach "anticipates" the later divisions of the Jewish biblical canon that are noted in the Prologue, namely the Law and the Prophets. Sirach was only familiar with two major categories of sacred texts, namely

Law and prophets, and the growing collection of others religious texts had not reached this capacity in his time and were clearly not well defined even by the time of Sirach's grandson. Hengel is correct in saying that the "others" listed in the Prologue to Sirach betrays uncertainty and that a third division of the Jewish Scriptures "was by no means definitely delimited even in the grandson's time."³³

It appears from the New Testament that generally whatever sacred literature was not in the Mosaic Torah were "Prophets." Otherwise, one would expect to see a third category regularly used in first-century CE Judaism and early Christianity, but that is not the case. *Only* Luke 24:44 in the New Testament refers to a third scriptural category, "psalms," which is far from the later broader collection that comprised the Jewish Writings (*Ketubim*). Referring to more than two categories of Old Testament Scriptures was rare for several centuries in the church. There is a long precedence for appealing to the authority of the Law and the Prophets in Judaism and in the church as well.

In early Christianity, several collections of Christian writings besides the Jewish Scriptures were present. Clearly the categories of "memoirs of the apostles" or Gospels (Justin, *1 Apol.* 64 and 67) and collections of letters (of Paul, Peter, and John especially) did emerge. It is not difficult to show that there were sacred collections of inspired literature informing the faith of Second Temple Judaism in pre-Christian times as well as in the Christian churches, but were such collections inspired by or modeled after collections of literary texts in the Hellenistic world?

3. HOMER AND BIBLICAL CANONS

The oldest report of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek is preserved in the universally acknowledged legendary document known as *The Letter of Aristeas* (ca. written sometime around 127–118 BCE),³⁴ which is widely acknowledged as Jewish propaganda. The document may, however, retain some historical features surrounding the origin of the translation,

³³ Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002), 96–97.

³⁴ Natalio Fernandez Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 40–41, suggests that the dating of this document best fits between those two dates, but the latest possible times are ca. 35 CE when Philo refers to the Aristeas tradition (*Mos.* 2.32–40) and after 70 CE when Josephus rewrites the letter in *Ant.* 12.12–118.

namely that the translation was only of the Pentateuch, that it was produced in Alexandria, Egypt, and that it was based on Hebrew manuscripts and produced by Jewish translators from Jerusalem. The translation may have been sent by the High Priest Eleazar in Jerusalem to the Pharaoh, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (282–246 BCE), as the legend goes, because the Pharaoh wanted to have a copy of every book in the world in his famous library, including a copy of the Jewish Law.³⁵ The supposed number of translators, seventy-two, or six from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, is likely legendary and intended to add veracity and sacredness to the translation.³⁶

It is worth remembering that Alexander established a cult of Homer in Alexandria and a recension of Homer's works were produced there under the direction of Zenodotus, Aristophanes of Byzantium, and Aristarchus who compared the various versions of Homer's works and commented on the text with annotations that appear in the margins (*scholia*).³⁷ It was reported that earlier (ca. 550–525 BCE) Peisistratus, the "tyrant from Athens," employed *seventy-two* editors or grammarians to produce an edition of Homer's *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* from the various fragments he was able to recover and with the goal of putting them in perfect condition. Various traditions claim that until that time (ca. 550–525 BCE) Homer's works were somehow either lost or destroyed or were victim of some other disaster, but portions of these works were circulating largely by oral tradition and memory in song.³⁸ Peisistratus, according to the tradition, collected various parts of Homer's works and then assembled seventy-two grammarians to produce an acceptable edition of them.³⁹ The grammarians, according to the tradition, worked in isolation from each other and like in the case of the *Letter of Aristeas*, they agreed completely on the new edition. This tradition

³⁵ For a more sympathetic assessment of some historical aspects of the *Letter of Aristeas*, see Nina L. Collins, *The Library in Alexandria and the Bible in Greek* (VTSup 82; Leiden: Brill, 2000). I follow her dating of this translation (55–56).

³⁶ I have discussed this legendary text in McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, 118–124.

³⁷ *Scholia* (Greek = σχολίον, "notes") often refers to any critical notes from one word to a commentary on a text and often written around the text in the margins in smaller and less formal script. The term used in this way is first found in Cicero (*Att.* 16.7.3). The scholia to Dionysius Thrax dates to the sixth or seventh century CE, but the legend in it likely dates earlier from the third to the fifth century CE. Some elements of the legend may have their origin in historical facts from the second century BCE or earlier.

³⁸ See *Scholia Marciana in Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem Grammaticam. Grammatici graeci recogniti et apparatus critico instructi, partis* (ed. Alfred Hilgard; Leipzig: Teubner, 1901), 316. Josephus also refers to the circulation of Homer by memory and in song (*Ag. Ap.* 1.13).

³⁹ The primary ancient source reporting this activity include the late Byzantine legendary scholia to Dionysius Thrax (7th century).

is generally only cited by the citizens of Pergamum to advance their own literary standing in the ancient world, especially in the famous rivalry between Pergamum and Alexandria. Several scholars contend, however, that the tradition of an edition of Homer in the time of Pseustes has some legitimacy even though it was largely ignored by the grammarians in Alexandria so they could make claims to an authoritative text of Homer.⁴⁰ Jed Wyrick has assembled a large collection of texts that support the notion that Pseustes was widely recognized as the one who rescued the writings of Homer and produced an early edition of them.⁴¹ The part of the legend that involves the seventy-two grammarians is widely recognized as late and likely dependent on the similar legend in the *Letter of Aristeas*, but by at least the late second century BCE or early first century CE, the story of Pseustes's involvement in rescuing the works of Homer was well known. As the legend grew, additions to the story about the seventy-two grammarians were added to support the claim of perfection and perhaps divine inspiration, but widespread knowledge of Pseustes's involvement in this new edition of Homer probably has some merit. Cicero, for instance, affirms Pseustes's involvement in a recension of Homer (*De or.* 3.34.137).

The Greek translation of the Pentateuch is more consistent than the rest of the books in the LXX, and it is likely that each book of the Pentateuch was translated by a different translator, or group of translators, since the style varies considerably from book to book.⁴² In the rest of the books of the Hebrew Bible, no two books appear to have been translated by the same person. While some of the books are more literal in translation, Würthwein observes that Daniel and Job are among the freer or less literal translations. The Greek version of Jeremiah lacks some 2,700 words that are in the Hebrew Bible and the order of the text varies as well! This may also support

⁴⁰ See Gregory Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); and also his earlier work: *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979). See also Gregory Nagy, *Homeric Questions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996) and more recently Gregory Nagy, *Homer's Text and Language* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004). This discussion is also researched at length in Jed Wyrick, *The Ascension of Authorship: Attribution and Canon Formation in Jewish, Hellenistic, and Christian Traditions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 138–280.

⁴¹ Wyrick, *The Ascension of Authorship*, 203–280.

⁴² Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; trans. E.F. Rhodes; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 52–78, esp. 53–54, supports this view and suggests that the rest of the LXX is something of a Greek Targum of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is often very loose in the translation, but sometimes rather precise.

the view of some that the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX is older than the proto-Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible. Würthwein concludes that the LXX is not a single version, but rather a “collection of versions made by various writers who differed greatly in their translation methods, their knowledge of Hebrew, their styles, and in other ways.”⁴³

We should add here that collections of Scriptures among Jews and Christians differ in terms of their titles, number of books, and arrangement or order, even though there is considerable overlap in the text of the books themselves. The text of the Hebrew Bible varies considerably also from the chapters and verses found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. The Jews have a three part biblical canon (Law, Prophets, and Writings), the Christians have at least four and sometimes five major parts in theirs (Pentateuch, History, Poetry, Wisdom, Prophets). Protestants who recognize the value of the Apocrypha generally include these books between the Old Testament and New Testament in a separate collection, unlike the Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, who include the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books among the other Old Testament books. In the oldest uncial manuscripts of the Greek Old Testament, namely Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Alexandrinus, the so-called apocryphal books are mixed in with the Old Testament books and are not differentiated from them.

Scholars have observed the parallels between the legendary origins of the LXX according to the *Letter of Aristeas* and the Peisistratus Recension of the writings of Homer (*Iliad* ca. 750 BCE and *Odyssey* ca. 725 BCE). The latter is described in the *scholia* to Dionysius Thrax (ca. 170–90 BCE),⁴⁴ a student of Aristarchus⁴⁵ who edited his recension. The legendary *scholia* about the seventy-two grammarians involved in the recension probably date from the third or fourth century CE and in several details depend on the *Letter of Aristeas* and the tradition of the LXX.

Later, guided by Zenodotus of Ephesus (ca. early 3rd century BCE) and Aristarchus of Samothrace (ca. 217–145 BCE), an apparatus of critical signs for reconstructing original texts was developed that was later used by Origen (ca. 185–254 CE) in his famous *Hexapla*. Origen produced a synopsis of parallel columns of texts of the Old Testament Scriptures to try to show

⁴³ Würthwein, *Text*, 53–54.

⁴⁴ Dionysius Thrax lived ca. 170–90 BCE, but the legend in the *scholia* is much later.

⁴⁵ Aristarchus of Samothrace (ca. 216–144 BCE) became head librarian at Alexandria, teacher of Ptolemy VII, son of Ptolemy Philometor, and he produced a critical text and treatises on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

the variants in the then current Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old Testament with the goal of correcting the many textual traditions current in his day. Zenodotus, Aristophanes, and Aristarchus all lived in Alexandria centuries after Peisistratus and in succession took responsibility for the library at Alexandria. They produced an authoritative text of Homer, especially Aristarchus.

The additions to the Peisistratus legend, in which Peisistratus appoints seventy-two grammarians to edit and produce an authoritative text of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, is legendary, of course, but the additions show that the edition of Homer was viewed as a sacred text among the Greeks who perpetuated this tradition. Nevertheless, the tradition of a corrected collection of the writings of Homer in the Alexandrian library, primarily under the direction of Aristarchus in particular, may have earlier roots and have been a source for the author of the *Letter of Aristeas*, who wanted to show the relationship between restoring the lost text of Homer to that of the construction of a perfect Greek text of the Torah in Alexandria—or *vice versa*! In its current form, the Peisistratus recension legend of Homer appears to depend on the *Letter of Aristeas*. Earlier translations of the LXX (Pentateuch) were deemed inferior and in need of revision (*Let. Aris.* 30 and 314 allow for this possibility).⁴⁶

The primary source of the “seventy-two” grammarians appears to be the *scholia* to Dionysius Thrax in the seventh century CE and depends on the Aristeas legend. This shows that influence in antiquity was not always one way, namely from pagan sources to the Jewish or Christian ones, but suggests a mutual use of the traditions that supported a dominant belief. Philo, for instance, claims that the Greek lawgivers depended on Exod 32:1 and that they had a knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures (*Spec.* 4.61). In this case, what is borrowed argues for the superiority and sanctity of the works of Homer. The most that we can say here is that influence in antiquity was not all a one-way street from Athens to Jerusalem, but rather that Jews borrowed from the Greeks and occasionally Greeks borrowed from the Jews.

⁴⁶ See Giuseppe Veltri, *Libraries, Translations, and ‘Canonic’ Texts: The Septuagint, Aquila and Ben Sira in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (JSJSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 79–89, for an interesting discussion of these parallels, including the later additions to the story that include the editing by the seventy-two grammarians. The legends about the LXX and Peisistratus's recension are strangely fused in Isidore of Seville's “On Libraries” and “On Translators” in his *Etymologies* 6.3.3–4.

The ancient reports that writings of Homer were either lost or destroyed and that his works were later reassembled from memory by various credible individuals were known to Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 1.10–11). Perhaps this part of the legend correctly reveals that there was a need to collect the various parts of Homer's works together and edit or correct them and make them available to others. There is nothing far-fetched about this part of the legend, and it has other ancient parallels. Veltri is pessimistic about the authenticity of any part of the Peisistratus recension of Homer's works before the time of Aristarchus at Alexandria (216–144 BCE), but there may be an element of truth in it besides the fact that it simply substantiates a rivalry between Athens and Alexandria.⁴⁷

Josephus's negative assessment of the edition of Homer and other Greek writings (*Ag. Ap.* 1.10–13) is supported by Strabo (ca. 64 BCE–25 CE) who criticizes the Greeks' handling of their literary texts, especially those of Aristotle and Theophrastus:

But Apellicon was a bibliophile rather than a philosopher; and therefore, seeking a restoration of the parts that had been eaten through, he made new copies of the text, filling up the gaps incorrectly, and published the books full of errors. The result was that the earlier school of Peripatetics who came after Theophrastus had no books at all, with the exception of only a few, mostly exoteric works, and were therefore able to philosophise about nothing in a practical way ...
(*Geogr.* 13.1.54; Jones and Sterrett, LCL)

Josephus knew of Peisistratus and mentioned him by name in the following location of Draco:⁴⁸

Even among the Athenians, who are reputed to be indigenous and devoted to learning, we find that nothing of the kind existed, and their most ancient public records are said to be the laws on homicide drafted for them by Dracon, a man who lived only a little before the despotism of Peisistratus.
(*Ag. Ap.* 1.21, Thackeray, LCL)

Knowledge of the inconsistencies in the Greek manuscripts was well known and unlike the later Jewish and Christian understandings of their sacred literature, Quintilian urges caution when reading the best authors. He stresses that they were merely human and could make mistakes. He encouraged his readers to keep that in mind when reading the best orators and writers:

⁴⁷ Veltri, *Libraries*, 88–89.

⁴⁸ Draco was the Athenian lawyer credited with introducing new laws to the Greeks and being the first to put Greek laws into writing, ca. 621–620 BCE (Aristotle, *Ath. pol.* 4 and Plutarch, *Sol.* 17). He reportedly wrote these laws in blood rather than ink. The term "draconian" reflects the ancient tradition about the severe penalties that Draco imposed.

The reader must not let himself be automatically convinced that everything which the best authors said is necessarily perfect. They do sometimes slip, stagger under the load, and indulge in the pleasures of their own ingenuity. They do not always concentrate, and they get tired from time to time. Cicero thinks Demosthenes sometimes drops off to sleep, and Horace thinks the same even of Homer. Great men they are, but they are only human, and it can happen that people who make everything they find in them into a law of oratory come to imitate their less good features (which is easier) and fancy themselves sufficiently like them if they attain to the great men's faults. However, we should be modest and circumspect in pronouncing judgment on men of such stature, and avoid the common mistake of condemning what we do not understand. If we must err on one side or the other, I should prefer readers to approve of everything in the masters than to find many things to disapprove.

(*Inst.* 10.1.24–26; Butler, LCL)

As noted above, the legend of Peisistratus employing seventy-two grammarians to produce an edition of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is clearly a late development perhaps promoted by the rivalry between Athens (or Pergamum) and Alexandria over the care for the writings of Homer and other literary standard bearers in the third and second centuries BCE. Veltri is no doubt correct when he speaks of the Peisistratus legend, which emerged in the Christian era, as not Christian, but that it "testifies to a historical rivalry between Greece (the mother of Hellenistic culture) and Alexandria (the forum of Hellenistic fusion and diffusion). The legend of Peisistratus, or better of a Homeric edition before Aristarchus, is nothing but an apologetic answer directed against the Alexandrian editorial function and supremacy."⁴⁹ The legend of the seventy-two grammarians does let us know, however, that not only were Jews familiar with Hellenistic culture and traditions, but the Greeks were also aware of Jewish traditions and sometimes made use of them.

The fact that three legends (Aristeas, Peisistratus, Ezra in *4 Ezra*) of a new edition of sacred texts emerge in the same general period is also remarkable. Veltri has brought to our attention that there were three legends about the canonization of writings that emerged at roughly the same time, namely (1) the Aristeas story of the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek; (2) the story of the emergence of a perfect edition of Homer through the efforts of Peisistratus; and (3) the story of the restoration of the Law by Ezra in forty days (*4 Ezra* 14). He claims that all three legends have much in common: they all came from roughly the same period of time, they all

⁴⁹ Veltri, *Libraries*, 87.

came from roughly the same area, and there was a contamination of the details one with the other.⁵⁰ In the first and second cases, it is interesting that there were seventy-two scribes from Jerusalem who came to Egypt to translate the Pentateuch and they did so without being in contact with one another, but their work was the same. In the Peisistratus legend, seventy-two grammarians were commissioned to produce an edition of Homer and they did their work in isolation from each other and all agreed with the end product. In the third instance, Ezra is given a restoration of the Law that included twenty-four books and seventy other books inspired by God and completed in the notable forty days, the special number reserved for a period of God's special activity in the world, namely the flood on the earth, Moses at Mt. Sinai, Elijah at Mt. Horeb, the children of Israel in the wilderness, the time of Jesus' temptation, and the time of his appearances in Luke. In Ezra's case, a new edition of the Law was necessary because of the destruction of Jerusalem and copies of the Law with it. In the case of Peisistratus, Homer's writings were destroyed by fire and other elements such as rain, and so on. While no one seriously accepts the historicity of these three accounts today, their similarities and overlapping of tradition are remarkable. The purpose of these legends is clear in all three cases, namely to legitimize the works highlighted in them, that is, the Law, Homer, and all of the Jewish sacred texts. Veltri contends that the legend of Aristeas, like that of Peisistratus, intends to present the new edition of the Law in Greek as equal to the redaction of Homer that was also carried out under the direction of the editors (Aristarchus especially) at Alexandria.⁵¹

4. THE *LETTER OF ARISTEAS*, HOMER, AND ALLEGORY

The legendary story about the origins of the Greek translation of the Law presented in the *Letter of Aristeas* (ca. 150 to 100 BCE) is in harmony with this theory. In what follows, its author gives a reasonable account of how the library began and how the Jews wanted to add their sacred collection to it:

⁵⁰ Veltri, *Libraries*, 79–80.

⁵¹ Veltri, *Libraries*, 88–89. Veltri has a careful discussion of the origins of these three traditions and contends that the Peisistratus legend emerged as a defense of the Athenian domination of literary canons when in fact the Alexandrian editions were supreme in the third and second centuries CE.

On his appointment as keeper of the king's [= Ptolemy II (Philadelphus), 285–247 BCE] library, Demetrius of Phalerum undertook many different negotiations aimed at collecting, if possible, all the books in the world. By purchase and translation he brought to successful conclusion, as far as lay in his power, the king's plan. We were present when the question was put to him, "How many thousand books are there (in the royal library)?" His reply was, "Over two hundred thousand, O King. I shall take urgent steps to increase in a short time the total to five hundred thousand. Information has reached me that the law books of the Jews are worth translation and inclusion in your royal library."
(Let. Aris. 9–10; Schutt, OTP 2:12)

The *Letter of Aristeas*, though generally and rightly acknowledged as Jewish fictional propaganda, probably reflects an element of reliable history such as its claim that individuals in Alexandria sought to collect the important literary volumes of their day as well as all literary productions including the Jewish Scriptures (Pentateuch).⁵² It is also likely, as the text states, that that the translators of the Law of Moses from Hebrew into Greek came from Jerusalem to Egypt, which assumes a standard text of Jewish Scriptures in Jerusalem, but it also assumes some relationship between the Jews in the land of Israel and those in Alexandria. Further, it may also reflect knowledge of the Aristarchus recension of the works of Homer, since it claims the king's authorization of the translation and its widespread welcome among the Jews and the leaders in Egypt.

The notion that this tradition of collecting the standard or classic writings in one library collection was a model for the Jews is enhanced by the reference that the Jewish "law books" are worthy of translation and inclusion in the royal library. Obviously, not everything written was considered worthy of inclusion and the selectivity on the part of the librarians at the Alexandrian library, witnessed to by the *Letter of Aristeas*, may well give the context or background necessary to understand why both Jews and Christians adopted the notion of a fixed standard of sacred writings. What the translators translated, of course, was the "law books" (the Pentateuch, see *Let. Aris.* 9–10, 30–39, 311) and not the whole of the Old Testament and this translation is commonly referred to as the "Septuagint" (or LXX).

It is not yet possible to draw clear lines of dependence, but both the proximity and influence of Alexandria in the Land of Israel in the third century BCE and thereafter suggests this possibility. Indeed, the Ptolemies

⁵² Pfeiffer, *History*, 99–104, discusses the importance of the *Letter of Aristeas* with its other ancient parallel, Tzetes' *Prolegomena to Aristophanes*, and while acknowledging the fictitious nature of the former, he nevertheless accepts a number of its features as reflective of the origins and development of the library at Alexandria.

from Egypt controlled the land of Israel during the time of the translation and later, until they lost control of it during the battle at Pan⁵³ (198 BCE). It is significant that there is no record of a fixed or stabilized collection of Scriptures in Judaism before the existence of the *πινάκες* in Alexandria. The development and production of standards for a variety of human activities, including standard lists or collections of writings, is not far from what is implied in the Christian use of the term *canon* when it is applied to a collection of sacred books. It is not a great leap in logic to see how the influence of the librarians at Alexandria might well have influenced the Alexandrian Jews, especially when their sacred writings were translated, given to the king, and placed in his royal library at Alexandria.

As we have seen, notions of canon were widespread in the Greco-Roman world well before Jews and Christians began talking about fixed collections of sacred Scriptures and those notions may have had some influence on both the Jewish and Christian communities' understanding of their biblical canon. Literary canons were widespread in the ancient world and continue to this day, but what appears to be unique to Judaism, and was subsequently adopted by the Christian community, is the notion of a *fixed* collection of sacred or theological books that defines the will of God, sets forth the identity of God and the people of God, and that are considered inviolable (Deut 4:2 and Rev 22:18–19). Nothing else quite parallels this focus in antiquity, although special religious significance was given to Homer and a perfect edition of his works, as we observed above.

The processes of canonization have striking parallels in the Greco-Roman world and in modern times, including the selective “decanonization” that biblical canons often undergo when the times, culture, and community needs change. For example, over time the formal literary styles of language that once were dominant in one culture inevitably change and the former standards of literary activity become no longer the same as those in the emerging culture. In times of change and transition, educational institutions become the primary custodians of the classical literature of the past. Through a variety of interpretive measures that regularly introduce the previous “standard” styles to the contemporary culture, the educational institutions seek ways of enabling the classical literature to remain relevant to the emerging communities.⁵⁴

⁵³ The site is later called Caesarea Philippi in the New Testament, and subsequently Banias.

⁵⁴ John Guillory offers an excellent summary of how literary canons emerged in the ancient world and how they were maintained both in antiquity and in the modern world in

In the case of Judaism and Christianity, the “institutions” are the synagogue and the church respectively, and they use a variety hermeneutical skills to bring the past into the present and to show the relevance of the “standards” of church and synagogue for the contemporary communities of faith. Historically, the oldest hermeneutical skill that sought to bridge the gap between the old and sacred standards was allegory. Both Judaism and early Christianity utilized allegory to show the continuing relevance of their Scriptures. Just as the ancient literary canons often spoke differently than did the educators of the day, the educators contemporized classical literature so those canons could address the people of their day. This act of contemporizing the ancient texts also took place and continues to take place in the Jewish and Christian communities. Changing times and circumstances always pose a problem for literary canons as well as biblical canons.

By the fifth century BCE, the notion of the Olympian gods expressing human behavior was problematic to a growing number of philosophers and Xenophanes of Colophon challenged whether the gods were capable of human jealousy, wrath, lust, and anger. Such behavior was not appropriate to a god (τὸ θεοπρεπής) or worthy of a god (Latin, *dignum deo*). Human affections and emotions, it was believed, were unjustly ascribed to the gods in the mythical tales of Homer and Hesiod. Euripides, for instance, claimed that it was unseemly for the gods to be like mortals in matters like fits of anger (*Bacch.* 1348).⁵⁵ Sexus Empiricus also concludes that it has been established by all philosophers that the gods cannot be subject to emotions or passions. They are “apathetic” as we see in his *Pyrrhoneiai Hypotpouiseis* (1.162).

The role of allegory, invented to counter the negative attacks on the questionable practices of the characters (the gods) in Homer, became an important means of defending the sacred texts of Homer. Theagenes of Rhegium (ca. 525 BCE) was perhaps the first to apply allegorical interpretation to the Homeric religion when he described the battle of the gods—the so-called Theomachy⁵⁶ of the *Iliad* (books 20 and 21)—in terms of the conflict

his “Canon,” in Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, eds., *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 233–249.

⁵⁵ For further expansion of this point, see Pieter W. van der Horst, *Jews and Christians in Their Greco-Roman Context* (WUNT 196; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 129–130.

⁵⁶ Theomachy (Greek = θεομαχία), refers to the striving or battle against God. In the *Iliad* it is a battle among the gods.

between the physical or natural and cosmic elements. Metrodorus of Lampascus (331–278 BCE), who was the most thoroughgoing allegorist, called the practice *ὑπόνοια* (“hidden meanings”), but it was the early stages of allegory. Allegory was initially rejected by the grammarians at Alexandria, but as a result of Crates, head librarian of Pergamum (ca. 170–165 BCE), they followed the Stoic doctrines and used allegory as a means of gaining Homeric support for those doctrines. In seeking to justify Homer’s reputation and fame, allegory continued to spread. Most of the best known uses of allegory by the Homeric scholiasts are in the first century CE collection known as “Heraclitus’ *Questiones Homericae*.” The Neoplatonists and Neopythagoreans revived allegory in the first century CE also to defend Homer against the criticisms of Plato, and this practice reached its climax in the fifth century in the work of Proclus (410–485 CE).

Allegory was later applied to the biblical texts to deal with the doubtful or questionable activities of God (the wrath of God), or the outstanding personalities involved in human characteristics unbecoming of God. Initially, the goal of allegory’s users was to protect or defend the integrity of Homer, but later Philo defends “the story of its [Scripture’s] greatest and most perfect of men” (*Mos.* 1.1). In the New Testament, Paul also makes use of allegory in Gal 4:24–26. Philo appears to have been in full agreement and found the allegorical tool of interpreting the sacred texts that were developed in Alexandria to defend the Greek gods helpful in defending the Jewish Scriptures that spoke frequently of the wrath of God. For him, a literal interpretation of these texts could not be valid because they challenged the *dignum deo* or the *theoprepes* of God. Challenging the tendency of humans to make God in their own image, Philo argues:

In us the mortal is the chief ingredient. We cannot get outside ourselves in forming our ideas; we cannot escape our inborn infirmities. We creep within our covering of mortality, like snails into their shells, or like the hedgehog we roll ourselves into a ball, and we think of the blessed and the immortal in terms of our own natures. We shun indeed in words the monstrosity of saying that God is of human form, but in actual fact we accept the impious thought that He is of human passions. And therefore we invent for Him hands and feet, incomings and outgoings, enmities, aversions, estrangements, anger, in fact such parts and passions as can never belong to the Cause.

(*Sacr.* 95–96; Colson and Whitaker, LCL)

Van der Horst claims that here the immutability of God in Plato triumphed over Moses’ anthropomorphic conception of God, and his view was later adopted by two prominent Alexandrian church fathers, namely Clement and Origen, especially when Origen challenged the pagan philosopher Cel-

sus (*Cels.* 4.71–72).⁵⁷ Clement of Alexandria even claimed that the literal sense of Scripture was for “babes in religion” (*Strom.* 5.4). Allegory was not only a tool for rescuing the Greek gods from human likeness, but also a tool used both by Jews and Christians for the same purpose in interpreting their Old Testament Scriptures. Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine were influenced by this method of interpretation of sacred texts. This Alexandrian influence on the interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures, according to Sawyer, was first seen in Philo, but subsequently in the Greek Fathers and eventually affected all of Christianity, both East and West.⁵⁸

How can that which has become canon for one generation remain that way for the next? Just as the ancient teachers of the Hellenistic literary canons developed interpretive processes that allowed their established canons to remain relevant to the present generation, so historically the educators or teachers of Judaism and Christianity have done the same. They sought to engage and interpret their sacred traditions in order to make them more relevant to the emerging communities of faith, though periodically the canons of one generation ceased being relevant to the needs of the next and some of the selected literature became “decanonized.”

These overlaps are not inconsequential for a study of canon formation. There are considerable differences between the ancient literary canons and the formation of the biblical canons, namely the former did not have permanently closed boundaries, and the leaders of the next generation of literary writers did not hesitate to criticize or imitate the “canons” of the previous generations. In the case of biblical canons, Jews and Christians believed that their biblical canons came from God, reflected the will of God for all times, and were therefore perfect as well as sacred. Eventually they did not see the need for changing the sacred text or adding to it, but rather only for interpreting it. As fixed boundaries in the biblical canons took root in the synagogue and in the church, “decanonization” was harder to accomplish and consequently more creative ways, that is, hermeneutics, were introduced to make the biblical literature relevant to contemporary generations. This is not unlike what took place with the classics and especially the writings of Homer. The similarities as well as the differences between the biblical

⁵⁷ Van der Horst, *Jews and Christians in their Greco-Roman Context*, 131–133.

⁵⁸ John F.A. Sawyer, *Sacred Languages and Sacred Texts* (Religion in the First Christian Centuries; London: Routledge, 1999), 148–149.

canons and the ancient literary canons are the subject of several significant works on literary canons, and future advances in canon formation will of necessity need to be informed by them.⁵⁹

Another feature that accompanies both the works of Homer and the biblical literature is the commentaries on these works that were generated both by the Greeks and the Jews and Christians. To my knowledge, commentaries on sacred books began with Aristarchus of Samothrace (216–144 BCE), also known as the “most scholarly scholar” (*grammatikotatos*) and sometimes even called “the Prophet” (*ho mantis*), who is reputed to have written the first commentaries (called *hupomnemata*) on classical works beginning with Homer and Hesiod, then Aeschylus, Euripides, and other classical books. He discussed the meaning of words, style, form, and metre, and made comparisons of the literature in his commentaries. His well-known rule of interpreting a writer by use of his own words and in that context, “interpreting Homer with Homer” (*Homeron ex Homerou saphenizein* = “explain Homer from Homer”) was regularly used by rabbinic Jews, which is found in the seven hermeneutical rules attributed to Hillel (*ke-yotze bo be-maqom aher* = “like something similar in another passage”).⁶⁰ Historically, Jewish and Christian commentaries follow the commentaries of Aristarchus. Some of the earliest Jewish commentaries are the *pesharim* (commentaries) from Qumran,⁶¹ and those closer in distance, namely the commentaries of Philo (of Alexandria).⁶²

⁵⁹ For a more thorough examination of the social context of literary canons, see John Guillory’s more recent investigation, *Cultural Capital*. See also Robert von Hallberg, *Canons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), who has a collection of essays on the wide range of canon formation, including the formation of the Hebrew Bible. One of the standard and still relevant discussions that deals with the origin and perpetuation of literary canons is Leslie Fiedler and Houston Baker, eds., *Opening Up the Canon: Selected Papers from the English Institute* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

⁶⁰ This comparison was brought to my attention in Sawyer, *Sacred Languages and Sacred Texts*, 147–149.

⁶¹ Namely, commentaries on Habakkuk, 1QpHab; on Micah, 1QpMic; on Isaiah, 4QpIsa^a, 4QIsa^b, and 4QpIsa^c, 4QIsa^e; on Hosea, 4QpHos^b; on Nahum, 4QpNah; on the Psalms, 4QpPs^a, 4QpPs^b.

⁶² See, for example, his commentary on the days of creation of the world (*Opif.*) and his allegorical interpretation of Genesis 2–3 (*Leg.*), as well as his commentaries on the Decalogue (*Decal.*) and Special Laws (*Spec.*).

5. LISTS OR CATEGORIES OF LITERARY TEXTS AT ALEXANDRIA

Callimachus was born in Cyrene ca. 300 BCE and educated in Athens and later he was credited with writing some 800 books, the most famous of which are *Aetia* and *Hecale*. While living near Alexandria, he was commissioned to produce a catalogue of the volumes in the library, which was comprised of 120 volumes that he titled the *Pinakes* (tables), or more specifically, “Tables of Those Who Have Distinguished Themselves in Every Form of Culture and of What They Wrote.” The estimated number of volumes in the Alexandrian library during the time of his major literary productivity (ca. 285–246 BCE) was around 500,000 volumes. He was never the head librarian at Alexandria, but produced the first known catalogue of literary works in it, dividing them into subject categories (rhetoric, laws, miscellaneous prose, etc.), and he also included biographical notes and the first line of each of the works catalogued. He also arranged the poems of Pindar and Bacchylides.⁶³

The fact that the Alexandrians listed their most esteemed writings and grouped them at the same time is telling. There are no other known precedents for this activity for Jews and Christians. James VanderKam in fact suggests that the Alexandrian *πίνακες* are the ancestors to the biblical canons. He writes:

The scholarly tradition of the Alexandrian library was likewise concerned with the listing and classification of its works. In this regard, it established tables, i.e. lists (*pinakes*) of writers and classical works from the past, and excluded spurious works whose creation was very common in the Hellenistic period. These tables are the ancestors of the “canons of writers” that one encounters in the Roman and Byzantine periods. I think it is obvious that the concern to establish a canon of Scripture in Judaism and Christianity draws directly upon this scholarly tradition.⁶⁴

The notion of a written canon has been discovered among the Alexandrians in Egypt both in reference to their grammar and also in the literary models for all writers to follow. The selectivity that they used in compiling their famous lists (*πίνακες*) of works to include in their library shows the high standards that were employed in the selection. They produced

⁶³ See Albin Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature* (New York: Crowell, 1966), 5, 700–717; Pfeiffer, *History*, 123–151; and James E.G. Zetzel, “Re-creating the Canon,” in von Hallberg, ed., *Canons*, 122–125; and P.W. Pirie, “Callimachus,” in Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 276–278.

⁶⁴ VanderKam supplies this quote in his *Revelation to Canon*, 30.

a canon of writers whose Greek was used as a model for other writers. The grammarians serving at the great library of Alexandria sought to preserve an accurate and faithful text of the classics in literature. Among the most commonly recognized “canons” or ancient classics and models to follow were the works of Homer, Euripides, Menander, Demosthenes, and later Hesiod, Pindar, Sappho, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Aesop. In antiquity, those who wrote literary works did not move far from these models or examples whether in subject matter, style, or grammar. Those who departed from these standards were soon criticized and often ignored.

6. THE ALPHABET AND THE TWENTY-FOUR BOOKS OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

Unlike other ancient Greek writings, Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are divided into twenty-four parts (books or chapters), and each book is identified by a letter of the Greek alphabet. The use of each letter in the Greek alphabet for each book in the *Iliad* and also in the *Odyssey* signifies not only completeness, but also divinity and was used in reference to literature that was viewed as having divine origin. The deities mentioned in these volumes are the ones that became normative in the religion of the Greeks. This is helpful for us to understand the New Testament references to God and Jesus as the “Alpha and Omega,” namely as the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (Rev 1:1:8; 21:6; 22:13). This also helps us understand the Jewish practice of dividing chapters of the Psalter (Psalms) into the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, for example, Psalms 25, 33, 34, and 103, which have twenty-two verses each. Psalm 119 has twenty-two sections, each beginning with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Psalms 25 and 34 are an acrostic, each line beginning with a letter of the *twenty-three* letter alphabet, a situation reflecting the time (roughly 400–300 BCE) when the Hebrew alphabet distinguished two letters (*sin* and *shin*). Like those who revered Homer and used the alphabet to designate chapters in his works, some Jews initially (Josephus) identified the number of books in their sacred collection with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet (22), but later adopted the number of the Greek alphabet (24) to identify the number of books in their Scriptures.

The number of letters in the alphabet returned to twenty-two letters and that was evidently what was operative in Judaism during the first century when Josephus was still living in the land of Israel (prior to the destruc-

tion of the Temple). Comparing the Greek writings to the Jewish Scriptures and writing from Rome, he states: “we do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other. Our books, those which are justly accredited [δικαίως πεπιστευμένα], are but two and twenty, and contain the record of all time” (*Ag. Ap.* 1.38). He fashioned the scope of his twenty-two book canon of Palestine sacred Scriptures after the Hebrew alphabet, but that did not hold sway in Palestine or Babylon. Interestingly, at about the same time and from Palestine, the author of *4 Ezra* speaks of two collections of sacred texts, both inspired by God and twenty-four of them are to be read publicly, but the other seventy books are reserved for the wise. The author of that text writes: “Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and unworthy read it; but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people” (*4 Ezra* 14.45–46, NRSV).

The number twenty-four, of course, prevailed in Judaism, though the same books were included in the number. It is not certain that the books were different, but rather the use of the Greek alphabet demonstrated both completion or fullness and the divine origin of the writings. Rabbinic Judaism opted for the twenty-four letter Greek alphabet as a sign of the completeness, with various combinations of books to achieve that number, such as the combination of Ezra and Nehemiah, which prevailed among the leaders of rabbinic Judaism. The Amoraim from the third to the sixth centuries CE preferred this number.⁶⁵ While the number of inspired books stayed the same, some rabbis contested the scriptural status of several biblical books, including the Song of Songs (*m. Ed.* 5.3; *m. Yad.* 3.5; *b. Meg.* 7a; *t. Yad.* 2.14), Ecclesiastes (*b. Šabb.* 100a; see also Jerome, *Comm. Eccl.* 12.14), Ruth (*b. Meg.* 7a); Esther (*b. Sanh.* 100a; *b. Meg.* 7a. cf. *t. Meg.* 2.1a), Proverbs (*b. Šabb.* 30b), and Ezekiel (*b. Šabb.* 13b; *b. Hag.* 13a; *b. Menah.* 45a).⁶⁶

Later, some Christians acknowledged the importance of the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet to enumerate the books of their Old Testament Scripture canon using various combinations of books, but keeping the number the same. At the same time, the number twenty-four was also quite common. The author of the *Gospel of Thomas* (ca. 100–140 CE), for instance, says that “Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel, and they have all

⁶⁵ See, for instance, *b. Taanith* 8a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13.16; 14.4, 18; 18.21; *Sir Ha-Shirim Rabbah* 4.11; *Koheleth Rabbah* 12.11, 12.

⁶⁶ For other examples, see Sid. Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1976), 82–108.

spoken of you [Jesus]" (*Gos. Thom.* 52).⁶⁷ If this passage refers to the books of Scripture acknowledged among early Christians, this is the earliest Christian document that identifies a limited number of books in the Christian Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures). Interestingly, Hilary of Poitiers (367 CE) mentions the twenty-two books of the Old Testament in accordance with the Hebrew alphabet, but then added Judith and Tobit because the Greek alphabet has twenty-four letters!⁶⁸ Victorinus (ca. 280 CE), in his commentary on the book of Revelation 4:7–10, writes: "The twenty-four elders are the twenty-four books of the law and the Prophets, which give testimonies of the Judgment ... The books of the Old Testament that are received are twenty-four, which you will find in the epitomes of Theodore" (*Comm. Apocalypse* 4:7–10; *ANF* 7:348). In the early fifth century CE, Jerome compared the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Scriptures with the twenty-four elders of the book of Revelation (*Prologus in Libro Regum* [= *Prologus Galeatus*]). He acknowledged the same number of sacred books, but like other Christians of his time, he was able to accept a variety of additional materials into his collection.⁶⁹

Shortly before his death around 100 CE, Josephus defended the Jewish people against the earlier attacks by Apion from Egypt, the leading interpreter of Homer in his day, who represented the Greek citizens of Alexandria against the Jews before Caligula, the Roman Emperor. He made many unsubstantiated charges against the Jews, including their hiding a Greek in the temple awaiting sacrifice by the Jews. During his defense of the Jews, Josephus claims that the Jews' sacred Scriptures, unlike the literary texts of the Greeks, were twenty-two books in number and he identified them by classification or grouping, not by name. He claimed that they were "justly accredited" by the Jews and that the matter had been settled for most all Jews for a long time. The text is as follows:

It therefore naturally, or rather necessarily, follows (seeing that with us it is not open to everybody to write the records, and that there is no discrepancy in what is written; seeing that, on the contrary, the prophets alone had this privilege, obtaining their knowledge of the most remote and ancient history through the inspiration which they owed to God, and committing to writing a clear account of the events of their time just as they occurred)—it follows,

⁶⁷ Translation from *New Testament Apocrypha* (eds. Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher; trans. R.M. Wilson; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963).

⁶⁸ Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture*, 62 n. 13, makes this observation and cites Hilary of Poitiers's commentary on the Psalms (*Instructio Psalmorum* 15).

⁶⁹ See Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture*, 57–74, for other examples.

I say, that we do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other. *Our books, those which are justly accredited, are but two and twenty, and contain the record of all time.*

Of these, *five are the books of Moses*, comprising the laws and the traditional history from the birth of man down to the death of the lawgiver. This period falls only a little short of three thousand years. *From the death of Moses until Artaxerxes*, who succeeded Xerxes as king of Persia, *the prophets subsequent to Moses wrote the history of the events of their own times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life.*

From Artaxerxes to our own time the complete history has been written, but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records, *because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets.*

We have given practical proof of our reverence for our own Scriptures. For although such long ages have now passed, *no one has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable*; and it is an instinct with every Jew, from the day of his birth, to regard them as the decrees of God, to abide by them, and, if need be, cheerfully to die for them. Time and again ere now the sight has been witnessed of prisoners enduring tortures and death in every form in the theaters, rather than utter a single word against the laws and the allied documents. (Ag. Ap. 1.37–43; Thackeray, LCL; emphasis mine)

Although Josephus does not specify which books he has in mind, only the divisions in his three or four division Scripture collection, some of the books can probably be assumed, namely Genesis to Deuteronomy, Joshua to Kings, and the Psalms or at least parts of the Psalms. One wonders, however, on what basis Leiman boldly asserts that Josephus included the precise books of the Hebrew biblical canon that are later found in the Talmud. He combines Ruth with Judges and Lamentations with Jeremiah,⁷⁰ but on what basis? There is nothing here that justifies Leiman's identification of the books in Josephus's list with the books that finally obtained in the Jewish Bible. It is clear that he works backwards in anachronistic fashion from a closed collection first identified in the second century, but not on the basis of Josephus's writings. His conclusions are inferences drawn from later witnesses to the biblical canon when such matters were of more interest both to Judaism and to the early Christian church.

Zevit acknowledges the difficulty of finding any room in Josephus's list for Song of Songs (= Canticles) and Lamentations. Observing the difficulty that many scholars have in identifying the books in Josephus's list he states:

⁷⁰ Leiman, *Canonization*, 32–33.

Scholars usually try to squeeze all books of the extant canon into these numerical references [in *C. Ap.* 1.39–40]. It appears to me, however, that since most of the essay *Against Apion* is concerned with the issue of whether or not the Jews possess authentic, accurate historical records written in terms that a contemporary historian may appreciate, Josephus is referring to historical compositions exclusively. The 13 books were Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. The four books tacked on at the end were Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes. Prophetic books, i.e., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve, would have contributed nothing to his argument at this stage of its development in the essay and were not implicit in his enumeration. So too, Canticles and Lamentations were ignored.⁷¹

It is also important to observe how Josephus's divisions of the twenty-two books differs considerably from the later threefold divisions that obtained in later Judaism, especially in regard to the contents of the *Hagiographa* (Writings). The twenty-two book biblical canon may well depend on a tradition in *Jubilees* that says in part:

There were twenty-two chief men from Adam until Jacob, and twenty-two kinds of works were made before the seventh day. The former is blessed and sanctified, and the latter is also blessed and sanctified. One was like the other with respect to sanctification and blessing. And it was granted to the former that they should always be the blessed and sanctified ones of the testimony and the first law just as he had sanctified and blessed sabbath day on the seventh day.⁷² (*Jub.* 2:23–24; Wintermute, *OTP* 2:57)

By the late first century, however, we see a change in the making in *4 Ezra* 14:45, which states: “And when the forty days were ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying, ‘Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and unworthy read them ...’” The text goes on to mention the seventy other books reserved for the “wise among your people.” Likewise, the number twenty-four is carried over into the second century in the well-known Jewish text, *b. Baba Bathra* 14a–15b (ca. 140–150 CE), that recognized twenty-four sacred books that were divided into three categories (Law, Prophets, and Writings). From that time, the number twenty-four

⁷¹ Ziony Zevit, “The Second-Third Century Canonization of the Hebrew Bible and its Influence on Christians Canonizing,” in A. van der Kooij and K van der Toorn, eds., *Canonization and Decanonization* (SHR 82; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 133–160, 140 n. 20.

⁷² This text was discovered at Qumran, but there is a *later* edition of it in Epiphanius's (315–403 CE) book, *On Weights and Measures*, that states: “As there were twenty-two letters and twenty-two books and twenty-two chief men from Adam until Jacob, so twenty-two kinds of works were made before the seventh day.”

held sway in Judaism. While the combinations of books sometimes varied, and especially their sequence, the number remained the same. Since the list of sacred books is tied to the letters of the Greek alphabet (24) and not the Hebrew alphabet (22), it is obvious that the influence of the Greeks' perspective of sacred writings influenced the Jewish tradition. Why else would there be a change from the obvious number that included the same books to the number of the books in each of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*?

7. CONCLUSION

In the foregoing, I have shown a number of parallels between Hellenism in the Greco-Roman world and before with the subsequent Jewish and Christian traditions in regard to the selection and listing of sacred Greek writings—especially Homer, and the development of Jewish and Christian Scriptures. The number of the books in the Hebrew Bible and those in each of the books of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is interesting since they correspond in number to the letters of the Greek alphabet, and the books in each of Homer's works begin with a sequential letter of the alphabet. It appears that for a time the Jews also followed this practice in several of the Psalms (119, etc.) as well as the number of books in their sacred collection (Josephus) using their own alphabet, but in time they came back to the number of sacred books corresponding to the Greek alphabet (4 *Ezra* 14:45, *b. B. Bat.* 14b).

The above parallels suggest that both Jews and Christians were aware of the Greek canons of sacred and literary collections, and it is difficult to believe that the Jews or Christians were unaffected by them. While different criteria were used to establish these collections, and because the Jewish and Christian collections eventually were closed, there is not a perfect overlap, but the basic notion of select collections is clear in all three traditions.

The listing and categorizing of the biblical books historically follows the same practice found among the Greeks, and the production of commentaries by the Jews and Christians likewise follows the example set by Aristarchus in Alexandria. The similarities between Callimachus's *Pinax* at Alexandria and the later Jewish and Christian listing of their sacred texts is also especially interesting. There are no other earlier known models that were in as close proximity to either the Jews or the Christians as the works of Homer.⁷³ The Jews, of course, ordered their biblical canon with Law,

⁷³ I am aware that there were other lists of activities and writings produced both in Babylon and in Asia (China), but these do not have the same proximity either in time or

Prophets, and Writings, and the Christians welcomed the categories of Law and Prophets, but ordered their own books first by Gospel and Epistles. Both canons (Old Testament and New Testament) expanded to include other books, but the basic outline remained. Callimachus may well have made use of Aristotle's earlier listing of plays at the Athenian festivals of the City of Dionysia and Lenaea (*Didaskaliai*) and Aristotle may have depended on the historian Hellanikos of Lesbos (ca. 450–400 BCE). Hellanikos made a list of the victors in the Karneian (*Karneonikai*) games at Sparta that were devoted to Apollo and included not only athletic games, but also contests in poetry and music. Hellanikos also produced a catalogue of the mythical and historical priestesses of Hera in Argos (*Hiereiai tes Heras Hai En Argei*).⁷⁴ Callimachus, however, produced a list that was historically and geographically closest to both Jews and Christians in the land of Israel and his was the most popular one that influenced both Jewish and Christian scholars in antiquity.

Jewish and Christian awareness of Greco-Roman philosophy and practices—including the references made by Josephus and the rabbinic sages when comparing their own sacred literature with Homer's works, and the fact that Alexander himself set up a cult of Homer in Alexandria—suggests that the parallels with the Alexandrian literary canons of antiquity may have been more than coincidental.

Given the profound influence of Hellenism on Jews and Christians, is it possible that the very notion of a sacred collection, a biblical canon if you will, along with the allegorical methods of their interpreting sacred texts owes much to the influence of the Greek sages of Alexandria? Possibly, but there are still some loose ends to tie up that are not obvious. For the most part, Callimachus's *Pinax* deals with literary texts, not sacred writings, as in the case of the Jewish and Christian biblical canons. Jed Wyrick may be right in asserting that “the Greek poetic contest is not the model by which the drawing up of definitive lists of Scriptures can be analyzed,”⁷⁵ but that may not be the end of the story and more study of the parallels and the differences are warranted. As I have shown, Homer was about as close to

geographical distance as the ones produced in Alexandria or Athens. For a discussion of these other lists, see the useful articles by Niek Veldhuis, “Mesopotamian Canons,” 9–28, and Andrew H. Plaks, “Afterword: Canonization in the Ancient World: The View From Farther East,” in *Homer, the Bible, and Beyond*, 267–276.

⁷⁴ See the discussion in Nagy, “Library,” 185–232. For a discussion of these earlier lists, see also Wyrick, *Ascension of Authorship*, 285–291.

⁷⁵ Wyrick, *Ascension of Authorship*, 353.

a Bible for the Greeks as one could get in antiquity and any listing of books that included those works could not be negligible, especially since the Jews contrasted their own sacred texts with Homer's writings (*m. Yad.* 4.6 and *y. Sanh.* 10.1, 28a).

Because the Greeks did not have a *fixed* listing of the classics, suggesting that other texts of sufficient quality and contribution could be added to the lists, the kind of texts involved easily compared to Jewish or Christian sacred collections, but there was a time initially for both Jews and Christians when their sacred collections were open for the inclusion of more writings. That time closed sooner for rabbinic Jews than it did for Jews in the Diaspora and for Christians, but there was no notion of a closed or fixed sacred collection until the end of the first century for some Jews and much later for most Jews and Christians. Their formative time of inclusion and exclusion in Jewish and Christian Bibles lasted at least until the mid-third century and for some even longer. The time came when Jews stopped producing "Scripture-like" texts, such as we find at Qumran, and so did Christians. When that happened, the act of interpreting a fixed list of sacred texts occupied much of the labors of both Jews and the church fathers. Because the works of Homer are considered somewhat sacred among most Greeks, the parallels that were seen in antiquity by both Jews and Christians cannot be ignored. David Stern has noted the slowness among scholars to appreciate this when he concludes that "the status of the Bible in Rabbinic culture was, in fact, more similar to that of Homer in the Late Antique pagan world than is commonly acknowledged." He goes on to show through comparison how Homer was "an inspiration rather than a model for imitation" in the Roman schools, and subsequently how "the Bible also formed the base text of the Rabbinic curriculum." He notes that the students of the rabbis did not learn the Bible to imitate it or to write more biblical texts and observes that subsequently the rabbis, as can be seen in their rabbinic texts, did not produce any literature similar to the biblical literature.⁷⁶ There can be little doubt about the influence of the Hellenistic world on the leaders and shapers of early Judaism and early Christianity, and this leads to questions about whether that influence also affected the shaping of the Jewish and Christian biblical canons. Hopefully this chapter will contribute to further explorations of this possibility.

⁷⁶ David Stern, "On Canonization in Rabbinic Judaism," in *Homer, The Bible, and Beyond*, 239.

GLORIFYING THE PRESENT THROUGH THE PAST: HEROD THE GREAT AND HIS JEWISH ROYAL PREDECESSORS

Adam Kolman Marshak

Throughout his reign as King of Judaea, Herod the Great (40–4 BCE) struggled for legitimacy and recognition from his Jewish subjects. He began his reign as a bankrupt usurper, who had succeeded in seizing the throne mostly through the aid of Roman military might. He ended it as a wealthy and powerful king, who founded a dynasty and brought Judaea to its greatest prominence and prosperity. This article focuses on how Herod achieved legitimacy among his Jewish subjects, specifically how he used the historical past to strengthen his hold on the present. By appropriating past sources of legitimacy through multiple media, he positioned himself as a rightful Jewish king. Although not all of his subjects accepted his claims, he managed to acquire enough support to rule successfully for over thirty years and to pass on his kingdom to his chosen successors.

1. HEROD THE HASMONEAN

When Herod first received the kingdom of Judaea from the Roman Senate in 40 BCE, he had an extremely tentative claim to the throne. His grandfather and father had served as important officials in the Hasmonean court (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.124–226; *Ant.* 14.8–284). Herod himself had been στρατηγός of Galilee, but he had no real royal connections. In addition, because Herod was an Idumaeon with an Arab mother (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.181; *Ant.* 14.121), many Judaeans did not even consider him entirely Jewish.¹ Almost immediately upon receiving his crown, Herod began establishing his credibility and legitimacy as king. In this attempt, he naturally turned to the most recent source of authority, the Hasmoneans. Through his use of dynastic maneuvering, architecture, and coins, he linked himself with this dynastic family and asserted his legitimacy as their successor.

¹ For a discussion of whether Herod was really a Jew, see Shaye J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 13–24.

1.1. *Marriage, Family, and the Hasmoneans*

1.1.1. *Mariamme*

In the late 40s BCE, Herod was betrothed to Mariamme, the granddaughter of both Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.241; *Ant.* 14.300). Hyrcanus, who was high priest and Ethnarch, likely made the match in order to stabilize his regime by ensuring the loyalty of Herod and his family. Although Herod was in his twenties when he was betrothed, he had already proven himself by governing Galilee (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.203–241; *Ant.* 14.158–184, 268–300). This betrothal was a huge boon for the Idumaeen. Mariamme was a woman of surpassing beauty and intellect. She was also the granddaughter of two sons of Alexander Jannaeus. Herod's betrothal was, therefore, a public declaration of his importance to Hyrcanus and his regime.

Herod's marriage to Mariamme in 37 BCE was a powerful signal that he was claiming the position of Hasmonean heir, especially since Hyrcanus had no sons. Hyrcanus's daughter, Alexandra, was Mariamme's mother. Mariamme's father was Alexander, the eldest son of Aristobulus II (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.241, 344, 432; *Ant.* 14.467). Thus, once Herod had married Mariamme, his war against Aristobulus's other son, Mattathias Antigonus, became a civil war over control of the Hasmonean family and the Kingdom.

Herod was madly in love with Mariamme, but her openly hostile attitude, her plots, and conflicts with her Idumaeen in-laws led to her arrest and execution in 29 BCE (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.436–444; *Ant.* 15.65–87, 202–236).² It is noteworthy that Herod did not order her death until Octavian had confirmed him as King of Judaea in 30 BCE, after most major members of the Hasmonean family were dead. One interpretation, therefore, is that Herod used his marriage for political gain. When he achieved his goal, he no longer needed either his marriage or his wife.

1.1.2. *Hyrcanus II*

While Mariamme may have been the lynchpin in Herod's attempts to connect himself with the Hasmonean family, his relationship with Hyrcanus II was also central to this aim. In the first place, Herod rose to promi-

² For Josephus's (and possibly Nicolaus's) assessment of Mariamme's character, see *Ant.* 237–239. Tal Ilan, "Josephus and Nicolaus on Women," in her *Integrating Women into Second Temple History* (TSAJ 76; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 105–124, argues that the portrayal of Mariamme in Josephus's texts is taken directly from Nicolaus's writings in which he depicted her as a tragic heroine, who fell prey to the wiles of the evil Alexandra and the even wicked Salome. While I find Ilan's hypothesis to be rather persuasive, it does not change the fact that Herod did execute her, and it seems likely that he did so because he feared her plotting.

nence through the patronage of Hyrcanus, even if it was mostly through his father's maneuvering. After his father became ἐπίτροπος of Judaea in 47 BCE, Herod was appointed στρατηγός of Galilee (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.199–203; *Ant.* 14.156–160). Herod's relationship with Hyrcanus during this period seems reasonably close and friendly, although there was some tension between the two over Herod's execution of the Galilean bandits. Such tension, according to Josephus, was caused by rivals of the Antipatrids, who hoped to arouse Hyrcanus against the family. These attempts clearly failed, given that we see the Antipatrids retaining their high rank within Hyrcanus's court (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.208–215; *Ant.* 14.163–184).³

After the Parthians invaded, captured, and mutilated Hyrcanus, they took him back to Parthia as a captive. When Herod had secured Judaea, he sent for Hyrcanus and invited him back to Judaea to share power with him (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.433–434; *Ant.* 14.365–366; 15.11–22). Bringing Hyrcanus back from exile would have aided Herod's attempts to solidify his rule in two ways. First of all, his offer would be seen as a benevolence, which would place him in a superior position as Hyrcanus's patron. Because of this benefaction, Hyrcanus would be obligated to support Herod and be loyal to him. Second, such an action would strengthen Herod's claim of being a legitimate successor to the Hasmoneans, as the Kingdom would perceive Hyrcanus as approving of Herod's usurpation. This gesture would

³ The two accounts of Herod's trial differ in significant ways, in particular, in their depiction of Hyrcanus's role in the affair. While *J.W.* shows Hyrcanus actively working to secure Herod's acquittal, *Ant.* states that he merely aided Herod in fleeing jurisdiction. In both accounts, Sextus Caesar, the governor of Syria, urges Hyrcanus to acquit Herod of the charges (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.213; *Ant.* 14.170). A. Gilboa, "The Intervention of Sextus Julius Caesar, Governor of Syria, in the Affair of Herod's Trial," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 5 (1979/80): 185–194, argues that Sextus Caesar was pressuring Hyrcanus to acquit Herod because he was a Roman citizen and thus had the right to a trial in front of a Roman magistrate. Caesar's actions, therefore, should be, seen in the context of a proconsul's duty to protect Roman citizens living abroad. Tal Ilan, "King David, King Herod and Nicolaus of Damascus," *JSQ* 5 (1998): 231–232, argues that Nicolaus modeled the narrative in *J.W.* on the life and career of King David. Like David, Herod is the blameless victim of an older king's jealousy and paranoia. Ilan also theorizes that Josephus is responsible for the reworking in *Ant.*, which depicts Herod being clearly guilty of murder. Further, the narrative in *Ant.* does not mention Hyrcanus's jealousy, and in this version, Herod's armed escort frightens the Sanhedrin into submission. Finally, Ilan rightfully observes that a version similar to what is found in *Ant.* appears in rabbinic literature (*b. Sanh.* 19a–b), which suggests that the account in *Ant.* originally came from a Jewish source and not from Nicolaus. For rivals of the Antipatrids instigating Herod's trial, see e.g. Josephus, *J.W.* 1.208–209; *Ant.* 14.163–167. Although *J.W.* is more explicit that those impugning Herod were rival courtiers, Josephus's use of the term in *Ant.*: οἱ δ' ἐν τέλει τῶν Ἰουδαίων does not preclude a similar interpretation.

have had very low cost for Herod because Hyrcanus, being mutilated, could not return to his former position as high priest. It is true he could have claimed his former position as Ethnarch, but since the Romans had given him this title, it would be very difficult for him to claim it without their support, something that presumably they would not have given.⁴ Further complicating this would have been the reality that the Hasmoneans, even when they were crowning themselves kings, based their kingship and rule on their occupation of the high priesthood. Without this honor, Hyrcanus had no power base from which he could have attempted to regain his former influence and authority.

Hyrcanus, like Mariamme, seems to have been discarded as soon as Herod could afford to do so and once he became a potential threat. Before setting out to Rhodes to meet Octavian, Herod “discovered” a plot of Hyrcanus to flee to the Nabataeans. He arrested Hyrcanus on charges of treason and ordered his execution (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.433–434; *Ant.* 15.161–178).

1.1.3. *Aristobulus III*

Mariamme’s brother, Aristobulus III, was only a young man when Herod became king in 37 BCE. Nevertheless, Herod appointed him high priest to succeed the Babylonian Hananel, whom he had appointed to succeed Hyrcanus (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.22).⁵ Although Aristobulus became the most impor-

⁴ For Hyrcanus holding the title of Ethnarch as evidenced by the various decrees and letters that Josephus quotes, see e.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 14.148, 151, 191, 196, 200, 226. On the other hand, all of these decrees and letters, which mention titles for Hyrcanus, describe him as being the high priest of the Jews. Further, Josephus states that Pompey and Caesar confirmed Hyrcanus as high priest, but no mention is made of also appointing him Ethnarch (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.153, 194; *Ant.* 14.73, 143). The Jews, however, seem to have called him king (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.157, 172). The evidence suggests that Hyrcanus first inherited the titles of King and High Priest that his father, Alexander Jannaeus, had held. After Pompey’s settlement in 63 BCE, Hyrcanus was only high priest, even though his subjects still referred to him as king. This is hardly surprising given the high priest’s political role as chief magistrate. After his civil war with Pompey, Julius Caesar confirmed Hyrcanus as high priest but also added the office of Ethnarch.

⁵ Herod must have known that the Judaeans would never have accepted him if he had tried to claim the priestly office. For Herod deposing Hananel and appointing Aristobulus high priest, see, for example, Josephus, *J.W.* 1.437; *Ant.* 15.31–40. *J.W.* 1.437 offers no reason why Herod appointed Aristobulus high priest, but *Ant.* 15.31–40 states that he did so to appease his wife and mother-in-law. Josephus claims that Herod appointed Hananel the Babylonian because he wanted to avoid giving the high profile office to somebody who could be a political threat to him. For a discussion of the advantages for Herod of appointing non-Judaeans high priests, see Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt AD 66–70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 29–50.

tant religious official in the kingdom and occupied the office his ancestors had used to solidify their hold over Judaea, Herod effectively controlled the young man and strove to make sure that Aristobulus did not become a rival for the loyalty of the people.

This became an issue when Aristobulus offered the sacrifices at the Feast of Tabernacles in 35 BCE, and the crowd responded positively to him because of his regal appearance and Hasmonean bloodlines. Herod instantly became alarmed at the prospect of having to compete with another Hasmonean. After the festival, he invited Aristobulus to the palace at Jericho and there had him drowned in the swimming pool (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.437; *Ant.* 15.50–56).

Like his grandfather and his sister, Herod used Aristobulus as a tool for solidifying his hold on power. By appointing Aristobulus high priest, Herod publicly reasserted his ties to the Hasmonean family and thus his own legitimacy. He also was able to make a public display of brotherly piety in his advancement of Aristobulus. He accomplished these two things while at the same time minimizing Aristobulus's ability to exert any real power. Thus, Aristobulus became a religious functionary under Herod. Indeed, it was only when Herod saw that the people's affection for Aristobulus might weaken this Antipatrid hierarchy that Herod decided to murder the youth.

1.1.4. *Herod's Children*

Herod's maneuvers to strengthen his own standing and that of his family also extended to his children. His children by Mariamme had a distinct advantage over him in right to succession. Unlike Herod, his sons, Alexander and Aristobulus (born ca. 36–35 BCE) could reasonably claim Hasmonean blood and right of rule (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.435; *Ant.* 14.300). This dynastic claim was actively advertised by the names Herod chose for them. Alexander recalled Alexander the Great and, more immediately, Alexander the father of Mariamme and Alexander Jannaeus. Jannaeus had reigned for about thirty years, and although he had died forty years earlier, his memory likely still loomed large. He had been king when Judaea reached its greatest territorial expansion, and his coins were also the most numerous and widespread of all Jewish coinage (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.85–106; *Ant.* 13.320–404).⁶

⁶ For the coins of Jannaeus, see Ya'akov Meshorer, *A Treasury of Jewish Coins: From the Persian Period to Bar Kokhba* (Nyack, NY: Amphora, 2001), 37–42, 45–46, 209–217; pls. 25–39. Meshorer argues that the coins of Groups S and T were struck by John Hyrcanus II,

Further, his coins were still in circulation during the reign of Hyrcanus II and possibly into Herod's reign as well. Aristobulus was the name of three Hasmoneans, most notably Aristobulus I and II. Aristobulus I was the first Hasmonean to claim the title of King (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.70; *Ant.* 13.301), and Aristobulus II was the grandfather of Mariamme and rival to his brother Hyrcanus II.⁷

By naming his two sons after Hasmonean royals, Herod connected himself with the Hasmonean dynasty as its legitimate successor. He also appropriated its popular following and legitimacy. Finally, he positioned his sons as legitimate Hasmonean/Herodian royalty in their own right. Herod likely relied on popular sentiment surrounding the Hasmonean family and hoped that if his subjects did not approve of him *per se*, they at least would approve of his sons who had Hasmonean blood in their veins.⁸ Although in the end, he executed Alexander and Aristobulus, we must remember that in the early years of Herod's reign, this tragedy was not at all foreseeable. His hopes for dynastic succession rested on the sons of Mariamme and their Hasmonean and Roman connections.

whose Hebrew name Meshorer believes was Yonatan as opposed to Yehonatan (Alexander Jannaeus). See Meshorer, *Treasury*, 26–27 45–46. Although this is an interesting idea, no conclusive evidence exists to support this theory, and until some appears, Meshorer's theory should remain merely conjecture.

⁷ E.g. Josephus, *J.W.* 1.109, 117–184; *Ant.* 13.407, 416–418, 422–429; 14.4–124.

⁸ Such support for the Hasmoneans is illustrated by a number of factors: (1) the continued status and prestige of Hyrcanus II even though he was mutilated and living in exile in Babylon (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.15); (2) the persistence of the celebration of Chanukah, the festival commemorating the Hasmonean purification of the temple (and seizure of power); (3) the difficulty Herod experienced in conquering and pacifying Judaea; and (4) Josephus's appeal to his familial connections with the Hasmonean family (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.264–357; *Ant.* 14.352–491). This suggests that even a hundred years after the demise of the last Hasmonean, there remained nostalgic affection for the dynasty. The campaign against Mattathias Antigonus took him three years and bankrupted him (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.358; *Ant.* 14.378). Surely if the Hasmoneans had no popular following, Herod's campaign would have been much simpler. Josephus also cites Strabo as claiming that the Judaeans were especially attached to Antigonus and his family (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.8–10). Further, Aristobulus III was a threat precisely because he was the only male Hasmonean left (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.437; *Ant.* 15.50–56). Finally, the fact that Herod would have tried so hard to be seen as a quasi-Hasmonean speaks to the level of popular support for the dynasty. For a discussion of the popular support enjoyed by the Hasmoneans in the late first century BCE, see Gedalyahu Alon, *Jews, Judaism, and the Classical World: Studies in Jewish History in the Times of the Second Temple and Talmud* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1977), 1–15. Cf. Goodman, *Ruling Class*, 121.

1.2. *Herod's Architecture and the Hasmoneans*

1.2.1. *Reconstruction of Fortresses*

Herod also laid claim to Hasmonean legitimacy through his architecture. He is most famous for his building projects, such as Caesarea and the reconstruction of the temple. However, in his early reign, he was more concerned with strengthening his hold over the country. As part of this project, he renovated and reconstructed old Hasmonean fortresses, such as Alexandrion and Hyrcania. For example, Josephus mentions that Herod, while engaged in his war with Antigonus, sent his younger brother Pheroras to fortify Alexandrion (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.419).

The Hasmoneans left Herod a series of strong and easily defensible fortresses, which also served as treasuries and strategic places of refuge. Herod, however, was not merely content to rebuild the fortifications. Instead, he both refurbished the defenses and also added pools, peristyles, reception rooms, and baths. In essence, he found fortresses and he created fortified palaces.⁹ Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Herod chose to keep the Hasmonean names, even though he had recently usurped the throne from their direct descendent, Antigonus.

At Alexandrion, for instance, excavators found the remains of impressive fortification walls. These walls, probably Hasmonean in date, were built on the summit of the mountain. On the mountain slope, however, excavators discovered a peristyle courtyard with Corinthian columns and heart-shaped columns in the corners. These columns were painted red, green, and black, and the courtyard was paved in mosaics. A vaulted structure, possibly a cistern, was found on a terrace higher than the courtyard. A cistern, which was small and vaulted was found below the courtyard. All of these remains suggest that the Hasmoneans built a fortress at the site, but that later Herod refurbished and expanded it.¹⁰

The strategic value of these fortresses is obvious and is probably the major reason for the refurbishment. However, Herod decided to move beyond simple repairs, and such a decision speaks to his desire to improve upon the

⁹ Ehud Netzer, *The Palaces of the Hasmoneans and Herod the Great* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2001), 68–69.

¹⁰ Achim Lichtenberger, *Die Baupolitik Herodes des Grossen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 17–20; Yoram Tsafrir and Itzhak Magen, "Sartaba-Alexandrion," *NEAEHL* 1318–1320. Cf. Netzer, *Palaces*, 69–70. Sarah Japp, *Die Baupolitik Herodes des Grossen: die Bedeutung der Architektur für die Herrschaftslegitimation eines Römischen Klientelkönigs* (Rahden: Leidorf, 2000), 34–35, 96–98.

Hasmonean foundations he found. Further, he also consciously chose not to rename the fortresses, although we do see him later changing names of cities in order to honor a member of his family. In the ancient world, names and the choice of names for public places had great political significance. As we see in Herod's later reign, the king used the renaming of cities to honor important individuals (e.g. Augustus and Agrippa) and members of the Herodian family such as his brother Phasaël and his father Antipater. He even renamed one of the desert fortresses after his mother Cypros (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.417; *Ant.* 16.143.).¹¹ Given this, the fact that Herod did not change the names of the fortresses Hyrcania (named for Hyrcanus I) and Alexandrion (named Alexander Jannaeus) suggests a desire to honor these Hasmoneans and connect himself to them as their legitimate successor.

1.2.2. Herodian Palaces

Although his most spectacular palaces were built later in his reign, in these early years, Herod did construct a few palaces of his own. Most importantly for our purposes, these structures resemble Hasmonean palaces in building style, material, and location. For example, certain early structures at Masada resemble contemporary Hasmonean palaces. According to Josephus, Jonathan Maccabaeus built the first fortress at Masada (Josephus, *J.W.* 7.285.). Most scholars, however, attribute this activity to Alexander Jannaeus. The nucleus of the Western Palace so strongly resembles the Twin Palaces in Jericho that excavators, such as Ehud Netzer, once believed that the Hasmoneans had constructed some of the buildings on Masada.¹² Both the nucleus of the Western Palace and the Twin Palaces at Jericho share a similar layout with the inner courtyard at the center of the complex and the open *triclinium* at the courtyard's southern end. Both complexes also make use of a main entrance as well as a side one.

Both sites also have bathhouses that contain an entrance cum-dressing room, a bathroom with a bathtub, which was entered via a narrow corridor. These bathrooms also have a stepped pool, which was used as a מקוה. Even

¹¹ For the archaeological analysis of this fortress, see Ehud Netzer, *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces at Jericho: Final Reports of the 1973–1987 Excavations* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2004), 2:233–280. Cf. Netzer, *Palaces*, 72–75; Lichtenberger, *Baupolitik*, 71–73; Japp, *Baupolitik*, 135–136.

¹² Netzer, *Palaces*, 80; Ehud Netzer, *Masada*. Vol 3: *The Buildings: Stratigraphy and Architecture* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1991), 646–649.

some of their wall decorations are similar. Both buildings share a use of triangular niches for oil lamps and red-painted decorative grooves in the wall plaster about 2 meters above the floor.¹³

Finally, both have pilasters on the ground floor to support the walls of an upper floor. These pilasters were found in the northwestern corner of the western mansion of the Twin Palaces, the northeastern corner of the eastern mansion (the kitchen), and in two rooms, which were part of and adjacent to the bathhouse in the Western Palace at Masada.¹⁴

The three small palaces (Buildings 11–13) shared a similar layout to the Western Palace, which were all built around an inner courtyard with an open reception room opening onto it in the south via a *distylus in antis* portico. Because of this similar layout, excavators believe that these palaces were built at the same time as the Western Palace (around 35 BCE).¹⁵

While it is certainly possible, and perhaps even probable that the architects who constructed the Western Palace and other early buildings had previously served in the Hasmonean court, we cannot entirely rule out Herod's own desire to connect himself visually to the Hasmoneans by building similar palaces. Architecture is a reflection of culture and taste, and a king, even one who is not entirely secure on his throne, could choose to design his palaces in a number of ways. His decision to construct his first palace at Masada in such a way that it looked Hasmonean speaks to his desire to link himself visually with that family.

Herod's first palace in Jericho, which he built around 35 BCE, also has architectural features that look Hasmonean. The palace, which is a rectangular building (87 × 46 meters) built around a central peristyle courtyard, has two bathing complexes. The one east of the entrance room served as a ritual bath. Interestingly, it looks remarkably similar to some of the מקווה revealed in the nearby Hasmonean palaces. It is also the only מקוה containing an ארזר (storage cistern) that has been exposed in any of Herod's palaces. These similarities in design make sense if we remember that he was still married to Mariamme and still interested in being a Hasmonean when this palace was constructed.¹⁶

¹³ Netzer, *Palaces*, 87. Cf. Lichtenberger, *Baupolitik*, 23–24.

¹⁴ For the site reports on the Western Palace, especially the core of the palace, see Netzer, *Masada*³, 235–263.

¹⁵ Netzer, *Masada*, 3:319–359, 599–604. Cf. Netzer, *Palaces*, 85–87; Japp, *Baupolitik*, 144.

¹⁶ James B. Pritchard, "The Excavations at Herodian Jericho, 1951," *The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 32–33 (1958): 1–13, 56–58; Netzer, *Palaces*, 40–42. Cf. Netzer, *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces at Jericho*, 1:338–339; Lichtenberger, *Baupolitik*, 59–60;

In 36 BCE, Antony gave Cleopatra control of Jaffa and the Plain of Jericho. In response, Herod leased the land and its estates from her (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.361–362; *Ant.* 15.93–96, 106–107). It is likely that he did not want to lose the potential wealth of Jericho, but he may also have been motivated by his desire to have a palace on the Jericho plain. This is strengthened by the location of his First Palace in the very near vicinity of the older Hasmonean complexes.¹⁷ Such a location suggests a desire to connect himself architecturally with the Hasmoneans. Visitors to Jericho would have seen the two complexes near each other and could visually connect Herod with his in-laws.

1.2.3. *Building in Honor of Mariamme*

Herod also conspicuously connected himself with the Hasmonean family by naming a prominent building after Mariamme. This building, a tower, was one of the three towers built to protect the western side of Jerusalem where Herod's palace in the Upper City was situated. According to Josephus, Herod named the three towers, Phasaël, Hippicus, and Mariamme in memory of "three people to whom he was most fondly attached ... his brother, his friend, and his wife" (Josephus, *J.W.* 5.162). The Tower of Mariamme was a square tower, fifty cubits high and twenty cubits long and wide. Its base rose twenty cubits, and its upper storey was the remaining thirty cubits. Josephus states that its upper buildings were more magnificent and luxurious than the other towers, because Herod thought that a tower named after his wife should be more beautiful than one named after a man (Josephus, *J.W.* 5.161–162, 170–175). By building such a prominent tower in his capital and naming it after his wife, Herod made a powerful public statement of his affection for her. He was also reiterating his connection with her and thus with the Hasmonean family.¹⁸

Herod may also have built a city in Ituraea and named it after his wife. According to Nikos Kokkinos, thirty kilometers west/northwest of Homs in Syria is the modern town Mariamin, which was known in antiquity as

Japp, *Baupolitik*, 121. Pritchard mistakenly identified the First Palace as a gymnasium. Subsequent work on the nearby palaces and comparisons with other Herodian and Hasmonean palaces has confirmed that this was indeed an early Herodian palace.

¹⁷ Pritchard, "Excavations," 1, 58; Netzer, *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces at Jericho*, 1:332, 338–339. Cf. Netzer, *Palaces*, 40–42; Japp, *Baupolitik*, 121.

¹⁸ For a scholarly discussion of the towers, see Lichtenberger, *Baupolitik*, 93–95; Netzer, *Palaces*, 127–128.

Mariamme. Such a female name in a Syrian context is somewhat surprising, especially given its almost exclusive use within Jewish culture. Nikos Kokkinos argues in his 2002 article in *Mediterraneo Antico* that this city might be named after the Hasmonean queen Mariamme.¹⁹ We know that Herod had strong, friendly connections with Syria. For example, when he was στρατηγός of Galilee, his defeat of the brigands ravaging the Syrian frontier was extremely popular (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.204–205; *Ant.* 14.159–160). When he became king, his influence in this neighboring region would have only increased. Further, Herod was an active benefactor in the region, and these munificent activities would have only enhanced his standing. According to Josephus, Herod built, among other things, a gymnasium in Damascus, a colonnade and pavement of the broad street in Antioch, a gymnasium in Ptolemais, market places in Tyre, a theater in Sidon, and a basilica in Berytus (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.422). He also seems to have lightened the tax burden for the inhabitants of Balanaea, which belonged to the same region as Mariamme (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.428). In return, the recipients of these benefactions would have thought it necessary to honor the King publicly. One way in which they might have done so was to name a town after his wife.

It is also possible that Herod owned the land that became the city of Mariamme. We know that Hyrcanus II owned estates in Syria and Phoenicia, which no doubt passed to Herod, either when he became king in 40 or when he executed Hyrcanus in 30 BCE (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.209). Further, he might have acquired lands either by purchasing them or by receiving them from wealthy friends and minor dynasts. Herod “dedicated groves and meadows” (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.422), as well as “grants of land” (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.423) to many foreign cities, and it is possible that the area, which would later become the town of Mariamme, was one such donation. If so, the town must have been named before 29 BCE, when Herod executed Mariamme. It is unlikely that the town would want to honor its benefactor by naming itself after his now dead and disgraced queen. Such a naming could not have occurred without at least his tacit approval. This approval could therefore be seen as another attempt by Herod both to honor his wife, Mariamme, and highlight his Hasmonean credentials through his connection to the Hasmonean queen.

Although the evidence for this identification is somewhat speculative, it would fit well into Herod’s pattern of city founding and naming these newly founded cities after individuals important to him. In his later years,

¹⁹ Nikos Kokkinos, “The City of ‘Mariamme’: An Unknown Herodian Connection?,” *Mediterraneo Antico* 5 (2002): 715–746.

he renamed a number of cities after members of his family. These towns include Antipatros and Phasaelis (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.417–418; *Ant.* 16.142–145). More importantly, he also named two cities after Augustus and one, Agrippium, after Marcus Agrippa (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.416; *Ant.* 13.357). Naming cities was a clear political signal of one's connections and loyalty, and thus if Herod did indeed build and name a city in honor of his Hasmonean wife, it would further strengthen my theory that he was advertising his quasi-Hasmonean status.

1.3. *Herod's Coins and the Hasmonean Family*

Herod's matrimonial and familial maneuverings as well as his early building projects suggest he was drawing on his connections, real or argued, with the Hasmonean dynasty. His numismatic program provides further evidence that this connection was a conscious move by the Idumaeen.

I believe that certain undated issues, specifically the inscription/anchor coins (*TJC* Coins 60–64; H498–499) were struck in the early parts of Herod's reign. If this is the case, it would seem that he used his coinage to advertise his connection to the Hasmoneans. This use of coins to articulate public policy and political presentation is a feature of all Herodian coinage from Herod until his great-grandson Agrippa II.²⁰ Additionally, coinage was an extremely useful medium for spreading political messages and propaganda, because it was somewhat open-ended and could advertise multiple messages and associations at the same time.

1.3.1. *Date and Interpretation of the Anchor/Inscription Coins*

In a recent article in *Israel Numismatic Journal*, Donald T. Ariel establishes a relative chronology for the Herodian undated coins. At the end of this article, he proposes a few possible absolute dates for the coin types. Ariel argues that the inscription/anchor coins are the third issues of Herod the Great, following his cross/diadem and diadem/table series.²¹ In the past, scholars have associated the inscription/anchor coins with both the construction of Caesarea Maritima and with its inauguration. Ariel suggests that

²⁰ Throughout their rule, the Herodians struck coins to advertise important events such as the founding of the city of Tiberias (Meshorer, *Treasury*, 81–82), Agrippa's signing of a treaty with the Emperor Claudius (Meshorer, *Treasury*, 100–101), and Agrippa II's promotion to kingship in 67/68 CE (Meshorer *Treasury*, 102–106).

²¹ Donald T. Ariel, "The Jerusalem Mint of Herod the Great: A Relative Chronology," *Israel Numismatic Journal* 14 (2000–2002): 99–124.

this series might also be associated with the addition of the four ports of Gaza, Anthedon, Joppa, and Strato's Tower (the future Caesarea Maritima).²² The fact that these coins are some of Herod's earlier ones supports this suggestion. If these coins were struck in 30 BCE, we can use them as evidence for our assessment of Herod's political self-presentation at this crucial period in his reign. As we will see, he used these coins to connect himself visually with his predecessors, the Hasmoneans, and specifically with Alexander Jannaeus. He achieved this through his utilization of the anchor image.

1.3.2. *Anchor*

The anchor was an extremely common symbol on coins of the Hellenistic East. Indeed, it was the dynastic symbol of the Seleucids, tracing back to a story about the dynasty's founder, Seleucus Nicator, having an anchor-shaped birthmark on his thigh.²³ The anchor was often used to advertise maritime interests, events, conquests, or simply sea power in general.

The anchor also appeared on Hasmonean coins, specifically the coins of Alexander Jannaeus, for which it was used on about half of the coin types. It is also a central image for Herod's undated issues. Seven of nineteen undated issues have an anchor on either the obverse or the reverse.²⁴ As David M. Jacobson has observed, the anchors on Jannaeus's coins are inverted, probably in imitation of the Seleucid emblem.²⁵ If we examine the anchor on Herod's coins closely, we can see that they are remarkably similar to those of Alexander Jannaeus. Like those of Jannaeus, Herod's anchor is usually inverted. Also, both his anchor and Jannaeus's have two crossbars, one on the top of the anchor and one towards the middle.²⁶

How are we to explain these similarities? It is possible that Herod simply used a common numismatic symbol and that he made no attempt to allude to the Hasmoneans or Alexander Jannaeus. However, I think it is far more likely that Herod was consciously connecting himself to Jannaeus and

²² Ariel, "Relative Chronology," 123. Ariel also proposes that this series might have commemorated the beginning of construction at Caesarea (22 or 20 BCE).

²³ For the Seleucid claims and the stories of Seleucus's birthmark, see *OGIS* 219, 227; Diodorus Siculus, 19.90.4; Marcus Junianus Justinus, 15.4.

²⁴ Meshorer, *Treasury*, 221–224 (Coins 59–65; Pls. 45–46). Cf. David Hendin, *Guide to Biblical Coins* (4th ed.; New York: Amphora Books: 2001), 167–168 (H498–500, 502).

²⁵ David M. Jacobson, "The Anchor on the Coins of Judaea," *BALAS* 18 (2000): 73–81, esp. 74.

²⁶ Meshorer, *Treasury*, pls. 25–27 (Alexander Jannaeus), 45–46 (Herod).

the other Hasmoneans through his coinage and using symbols that would resonate with his internal audience. He used the coins and their symbols to position himself as the legitimate successor to the Hasmoneans. This similarity in design fits well with the familial evidence I discussed earlier in which Herod connected himself with the Hasmoneans, especially with Alexander Jannaeus, through the naming of his children. A further possibility is that the anchor is also making a connection with the Seleucids in a larger sense. This would make sense because it was a Seleucid, Alexander Balas, who first bestowed political power and legitimacy on the Hasmoneans. Herod's connection to the Seleucids strengthened the image of him as a legitimate king in a long line of Judaean rulers.

How do these three aspects of Herod's political self-presentation fit into the larger historical picture? When Herod took Jerusalem in 37 BCE after a three-year war with Mattathias Antigonus, he quickly purged the country of many of Antigonus's supporters through confiscation and execution. However, Herod understood he could not eliminate all of the Hasmoneans nor was it even desirable to do so. Some had defected to his side, while others had supported him throughout the war. For example, the Hasmonean ancestors of Flavius Josephus survived Herod's rise to power. According to Josephus, he was related to Jonathan the Hasmonean through his mother (*Vita* 1–6). Perhaps Josephus's ancestors had switched sides after Herod's victory or had supported him during the war.

Even after the civil turmoil of the mid-first century BCE, which saw Hyrcanus and Aristobulus fighting for supremacy, the Judean populace had a positive memory of the Hasmoneans. The people likely remembered how this family had led Judaea to political and religious autonomy and independence. Rather than try to destroy this memory, Herod drew on it and co-opted it to suit his own purposes. He depicted himself as the logical successor to the Hasmoneans, indeed as a quasi-Hasmonean king in his own right.

Although he ultimately shed this identity (most likely after the execution of Mariamme in 29), in his early years, when legitimacy was a serious concern, he actively promoted his Hasmonean connections and attempted to persuade those with political agency that his war with Mattathias Antigonus was not that of a usurper and a rightful king but one of two rival Hasmonean claimants to the throne. Even after he himself ceased to advertise his Hasmonean connections, he still evoked them for his children, Alexander and Aristobulus. The difference is that these heirs to the throne were not just Hasmonean princes, but they were also Herodians ones as well.

2. HEROD THE BIBLICAL HERO

Association with the Hasmoneans had brought Herod relative peace and security, but he desired more. He wanted a glorious reputation among the Jews to rival the status that he enjoyed among the Greeks. This standing required a conscious effort to insert himself into Jewish history as a rightful and legitimate successor to the heroes of the Jewish past. During this later part of his reign, when basic security needs had been satisfied, he attempted to link himself with the Jewish models of leadership, David and Solomon. He hoped that a close association with them would enable him to surpass his predecessors, the Hasmoneans, who had not claimed connection with such Biblical heroes, and he hoped that such a connection would enshrine him in posterity as the most magnificent Jewish king of the post-Biblical world.

2.1. *Herod and David*

Herod seems to have had a two-pronged plan to connect himself with David, the most famous of Jewish kings. He linked himself architecturally by building a monument to the Jewish monarch, and literarily, with a biography crafted so that he would appear as a new David, a king of humble origins who rose to power through his skill and charisma, a king destined to rule.

2.1.1. *Honoring David through Architecture*

According to Josephus, around 10 BCE, Herod constructed a memorial to David at the entrance of his tomb in Jerusalem (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.182–183).²⁷ This edifice, reportedly built of white marble, was a costly and conspicuous monument on the Jerusalem skyline.²⁸ Josephus accuses Nicolaus of concealing Herod's true motive for building the tomb. He writes that Herod had built the monument only after plundering David's tomb. Further he states that Herod had the tomb opened at night to avoid detection and only took a few close friends to the event. The King did not find any money but did

²⁷ Lichtenberger observes that Josephus puts the discussion of this structure before his narration of the palace intrigue of Antipater and before Herod's war with the Nabataeans but after his discussion of the completion of Caesarea Maritima (10/9 BCE). Since the Nabataean minister Syllaeus was executed in 6/5 BCE (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.351–353), we can place the construction of the memorial between 10–5 BCE. See Lichtenberger, *Baupolitik*, 154.

²⁸ David M. Jacobson suggests that the monument might have looked similar to Herod's other monuments to Jewish heroes, such as the enclosures at Hebron and Mamre. See David M. Jacobson, "King Herod's 'Heroic' Public Image," *RB* 95 (1988): 399.

find several items of gold and other valuables, which he took away. Josephus then asserts that Herod would have gone deeper into the tomb and even opened the graves of David and Solomon, but suddenly a supernatural flame appeared and killed two of his bodyguards (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.179–184).

Josephus's story is not credible and is more likely an attempt by the historian to further attack Herod and his biographer, Nicolaus. Even if David's tomb was still standing during the Herodian period, it is hard to believe that it would not have been plundered of all of its wealth during one of the many conquests of Jerusalem beginning with Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE.²⁹ Second, a story of the plundering of David's tomb also appears during the reign of Hyrcanus I (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.61; *Ant.* 13.249), and therefore this story of Herod's theft could possibly be a doublet. Further, the two mentions of the event seem to contradict each other. In the earlier section, Josephus says Herod opened up a chamber of David's tomb and took away a large sum of money (Josephus, *Ant.* 7.394), but in the later account he states that Herod found no money in the tomb (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.1179–182). Moreover, in the earlier section, Josephus makes no editorial comment about Herod's actions. It is only when he wants to attack Nicolaus's bias and partiality that he concocts this dramatic story of divine punishment and warning.³⁰

Jacobson has suggested that Herod might have built the monument as a Hellenistic ἡρώειον, honoring David as the κτίστης of Jerusalem. According to this theory, Herod's building was another expression of his desire to hellenize Judaea further and to turn Jerusalem into a true Hellenistic metropolis.³¹ As Jacobson says, it was common practice for hellenized cities to honor a hero-founder and to fill these tombs with treasure.³² This would explain how David's tomb managed to retain its treasures even after the destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians.

²⁹ We know that the site of David's tomb was known to Nehemiah (Neh 3:16), and it was still known during the first century CE (Acts 2:29). However, what was located at the site prior to Herod's construction is unknown.

³⁰ Lichtenberger states that the story describes a prompt punishment for the grave robbers (death for two bodyguards) and, because of its placement before Antipater's palace intrigues, suggests that Herod's family problems were a result of his impiety. Such narrative traits, Lichtenberger argues, are typical traits of Jewish folklore, and this casts further doubt on the story's historicity. See Lichtenberger, *Baupolitik*, 155.

³¹ Jacobson "Heroic' Public Image," 397–399.

³² Such practice periodically led to the plundering of the tomb by monarchs in financial straits. For example, Strabo recounts how one of the later Ptolemies, probably Ptolemy X Alexander I, stole the gold sarcophagus of Alexander the Great from his mausoleum in Alexandria (Strabo, *Geogr.* 17.1.8).

Jacobson makes a good point, but I think we can expand on his theory and suggest that in addition to honoring David as the *κτίστης* of Jerusalem, Herod also wanted to link himself visually with David and to set himself up as the new model of Jewish kingship.³³ In the Hellenistic world, kings who significantly rebuilt and refounded old cities were able to declare themselves the new *κτίστοι* of the city. Herod would have known that he could not accomplish such a feat. However, he could adorn David's sepulcher with costly decoration and, by so doing, suggest visually that he was a pious king and a worthy successor to the Davidic monarchy.³⁴

2.1.2. *Herod and David in Literature*

Not long before Herod sailed to Rome to visit Augustus and his children (ca. 19–16 BCE), he commissioned Nicolaus of Damascus to write a history in which he would figure prominently. The history referred to in the passage is likely either Nicolaus's *Universal History* or the memoirs of Herod, which Josephus claims existed. The *Universal History* appears only in a few short fragments embedded within other works such as *Jewish Antiquities*.³⁵ If Herod's memoirs did exist, it is likely that Nicolaus, his closest advisor and φίλος, wrote it. It is only by examining later texts such as Josephus that scholars have pieced together bits of Nicolaus's masterpiece. Tal Ilan, in her article entitled, "King David, King Herod and Nicolaus of Damascus," has argued persuasively that Herod recognized a similarity between his career and that of David, and he encouraged Nicolaus of Damascus to use David (as in the Book of Samuel) as a model for his story in hopes of appearing Davidic. Herod was always worried about his standing with his Jewish subjects, and he hoped that the good publicity such a story would bring would endear him to future generations.³⁶

³³ Lichtenberger argues that Jacobson's theory is a little far-fetched, and that it is more likely that Herod's building is part of a larger trend, beginning in Jerusalem around the time of Herod, of decorating graves with Hellenistic motifs. In this case, Lichtenberger suggests, an influence of private representation was fastened onto a public building. See Lichtenberger, *Baupolitik*, 155. He may be right to connect this decoration of David's tomb with the larger trend in funerary architecture. Nevertheless, I think he ignores the political and propagandistic possibilities available to Herod through the construction of a monument to Jerusalem's most famous king, and the reality that Herod used public buildings of all types to articulate political messages and motifs.

³⁴ Jacobson "Heroic' Public Image," 398–399.

³⁵ For a brief introduction to Nicolaus and his *Universal History* as well as a discussion of *History's* chronology, see Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Science and Humanities, 1974), 1227–232, 249–250.

³⁶ Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 195. As I will explain in more detail below, when I use the

How do we know that Nicolaus was responsible for the following narratives? It is entirely possible that Josephus is the primary author for all of these stories and that the literary connection between David and Herod is a creation of Josephus's pen. Josephus, as a learned Jew, would certainly have been familiar with David's story—one could argue even more familiar than Nicolaus would have been. He might have used a connection between Herod and David as a way of explaining Herod's story to a Jewish audience. Nevertheless, we must ask ourselves, what would Josephus have gained through such a presentation? Surely a reverent Jew such as Josephus would not have associated just any ruler with the icon of Jewish kingship, especially not one towards whom Josephus was extremely ambivalent. Nicolaus, on the other hand, who as Herod's official biographer would certainly want to praise him as much as possible, would find David an attractive model on which to base the portrayal of Herod's regime. Such a depiction would have pleased Herod, as it would enable him to explain away many of his failures as king while simultaneously exalting himself above all but a few past Jewish kings and leaders.

A further support for my theory that Nicolaus was the author of the Herod/David material is that, as we will see, his story mirrors in several crucial ways David's story, as it appeared in the books of Samuel. Louis H. Feldman has argued persuasively that Josephus's version of the Bible, which appears in *Jewish Antiquities* 1–11, is actually a careful paraphrase and rewrite.³⁷ If Josephus were the author of the Herod/David material, one would think that Herod's story would follow David's as it appears in *Jewish Antiquities* almost exactly.

Finally, scholars such as Steve Mason have argued successfully that Josephus wrote both *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities* for a Roman audience.³⁸ If true, and assuming that Josephus was the author of the Herod/David material within these two works, we can rightly ask, what effect could Josephus have hoped for associating Herod with David? Would a Roman audience, who needed explanations of basic Jewish concepts and major historical figures, really have comprehended an intended literary link between Herod

term Davidic, I do not mean to imply that Herod believed he was the Messiah or a messiah-like figure. Rather, I mean that he was interested in emulating David as a temporal king and model of good Jewish kingship.

³⁷ Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Louis H. Feldman, *Studies in Josephus's Rewritten Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

³⁸ Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (2nd ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 94–99, 99, 119.

and David?³⁹ On the other hand, if Nicolaus were writing this text for a Jewish elite audience, he could have relied on their ability to see the Davidic elements in Herod's story without him having to mention them explicitly.

How can we assume that Nicolaus was familiar with the books of Samuel? When discussing a campaign of King David against the indigenous population of Damascus, the Arameans, Josephus cites and even quotes Nicolaus (Josephus, *Ant.* 7.101). In addition, in Josephus's commentary on Herod's monument to David, he breaks off from his narrative to discuss Nicolaus and his writings. While these facts do not prove conclusively that Nicolaus knew of the books of Samuel, they are suggestive. It also seems unlikely that a man like him, who was so involved in Judaeen politics, would not have been at least aware of the books of Samuel. He did not need to be an expert in Torah to be aware of David's history and its significance. Moreover, any facts with which Nicolaus was not familiar could have been provided either by Herod (who was a Jew) or another member of the court.⁴⁰

Ilan elucidates several similarities in the narratives of the two kings: (1) in order for David (and later Herod) to seize the throne, the old dynasty (Saulides for David, Hasmoneans for Herod) had to be discredited; (2) both men married into the previous dynasty, and both assumed power through the intervention of the previous dynasty's enemies. In both cases, the last member of the previous dynasty was removed by those same enemies; (3) once both David and Herod had seized the throne, they eliminated any remaining members of the previous dynasty. Once their positions were secure, both removed the queen whom they had married for political reasons (Michal for David and Mariamme for Herod); and (4) both had succession problems resulting in the death or execution of three of their sons.⁴¹

This theory does not argue that there were no actual historical similarities between David and Herod. In some ways, any usurper's rise to power involves many of these common characteristics, especially the marrying into the previous dynasty and the ruthless elimination of its potential heirs. Although there may indeed have been real similarities, it is more

³⁹ For a discussion of some of the basic Jewish concepts, geography, and people that Josephus feels obligated to explain, see Mason, *Josephus*, 96–97. In contrast, Josephus seems to assume that his audience has a firm understanding of Roman affairs and important individual Romans.

⁴⁰ Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 198–199.

⁴¹ Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 196–197, 201–215.

important that Nicolaus shaped the events of Herod's story so that his connection with David and David's rise to power would be obvious and undeniable.⁴²

We can see this conscious move by Nicolaus to create a Davidic history for Herod in several key events in Herod's biography, such as his utilization of narrative features similar to those employed by the author of Samuel. For example, both Samuel and Nicolaus seek to discredit the previous dynasty and therefore establish their king as a rightful and legitimate successor.⁴³ Further, the extended narrative describing Saul's madness and his subsequent unjustified persecution of David elicits the reader's dislike for Saul and pity for David (1Sam 18:10–16; 19:1–20:42). Thus, by the time David defects to the Philistines (1Sam 27:1), the reader is already convinced of Saul's injustice and David's victimization. Samuel's attempt to discredit Saul and position David as the more righteous choice to be King of Israel is so subtle that the reader barely notices it.⁴⁴

Nicolaus behaved similarly in the crafting of his narrative on the Hasmoneans and especially on Herod's early days as a Hasmonean courtier. Although the narrative on the early Hasmoneans, which seems to be based at least in part on 1 Maccabees, is rather positive; as the story progresses, the Hasmoneans become increasingly despotic, and the family degenerates into feuding factions and finally civil war.⁴⁵ Interestingly, modern historiography seems to have accepted Nicolaus's portrayal wholeheartedly. For instance, Victor Tcherikover, completely conforming to Nicolaus's line, argues that the early Hasmoneans enjoyed the support of the unified Jewish people, while the later Hasmoneans strained this alliance and eventually destroyed it with their petty squabbles and power struggles.⁴⁶ As for Herod's immediate predecessor and former patron, Hyrcanus II, Nicolaus cleverly portrayed him as an effeminate political non-entity, who was dominated first by his mother and then by various factions within his own

⁴² Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 197–198.

⁴³ For Samuel, discrediting David's predecessor, Saul, requires an unambiguous violation of God's commandments by Saul (1Sam 15:33) and a direct intervention by God in which God openly regrets his appointment of Saul as king and explicitly rejects him (1Sam 15:10–11, 15:35–16:1). Only after this event does David appear in the narrative (1Sam 16:11–13).

⁴⁴ As Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 201, states: "We are almost oblivious of the treasonous connotations of this action (David defecting to the Philistines)."

⁴⁵ E.g. Josephus, *J.W.* 1.67, 71, 88–89, 120–122; *Ant.* 13.288, 296, 299, 302, 320–323, 372–383; 14.4–6.

⁴⁶ Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1959), 251, 257.

court. As I have argued above, Nicolaus's portrayal was designed to show the incompetence of Hyrcanus and argue for the necessity of Herod's usurpation.⁴⁷

Both Samuel and Nicolaus also portray their heroes as individuals with exceptional natural abilities, who are destined to rule. Samuel offers three different stories of David's arrival at court. As Hans Wilhelm Herzberg has argued, these stories likely originated from different sources.⁴⁸ The first story (1 Sam 16:1–13) recounts God's choice of David and his anointing by Samuel. The second story discusses David's employment as a court musician of Saul, hired to sooth the King's depression (1 Sam 16:14–23). The final story is the famous one of David's battle with Goliath (1 Sam 17:12–58). In all of these, David is presented as a "golden boy," whose personality traits and physical appearance mark him out as an individual destined to rule.

Like Samuel's David, Nicolaus's Herod displays exceptional talents and personality traits. He was not only incredibly intelligent, but he was also a skilled athlete, horseman, and hunter. *Jewish War* even claims that Herod killed forty wild beasts in one day (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.429)!⁴⁹ Furthermore, he also was a mighty warrior who could accurately throw a javelin and shoot a bow, and who "rarely met with a reverse in war" (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.430). This adheres to Hellenistic political theory, which praised these same physical traits and natural talents. While Nicolaus's depiction of Herod as a gifted man of action certainly would have appealed to Herod's hellenized audiences, there is no reason why such a description could not also function as a reference to David and his physical prowess.⁵⁰ Herod's natural talents and abilities enable him to perform great deeds of heroism while still a young man. For example, Nicolaus framed his early exploits as στρατηγός of Galilee to associate him with David, who, while still a νεῖρ (youth) was

⁴⁷ For a discussion of Nicolaus's charges of effeminacy and incompetence against Hyrcanus, see Daniel R. Schwartz, "Josephus on John Hyrcanus II," in Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers, eds., *Josephus and the History of the Greco Roman World: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 227–232. Cf. Ilan, "Josephus and Nicolaus," 237–242, for Ilan's discussion of Nicolaus, seeing the reign of Salome Alexandra as the ultimate depth to which the Hasmoneans had sunk.

⁴⁸ Hans Wilhelm Herzberg, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 146–148.

⁴⁹ Compare this to David, about whom who 1 Samuel says "killed both lions and bears" (1 Sam 17:36).

⁵⁰ For the importance of physical beauty and martial prowess in Hellenistic political thought, see Adam Kolman Marshak, "Herod the Great and the Power of Image: Political Self-Presentation in the Herodian Dynasty" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2008), 88–89, 104–110.

anointed by Samuel and slew Goliath.⁵¹ Nicolaus even borrows Samuel's language, referring to Herod as a νεόν (youth) when Antipater appointed him to the position in Galilee (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.203; *Ant.* 14.158). Moreover, like Saul with David, Hyrcanus both loves and hates Herod. He has great affection for the young Idumaeen, but at the same time, he fears his ambition and is jealous of his accomplishments (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.208, 211; *Ant.* 14.168, 177–179).

In their respective narratives, Herod and David quickly rise in the court of their predecessor. Soon, however, each falls under suspicion and is forced to flee. David hides in the desert of Judaea and eventually seeks refuge with King Achish of Gath (1Sam 27:1–28:2). This period as a fugitive from Saul's court marks the low point of David's public career. Samuel's hero fled from place to place, gathering only the most desperate and discontented men as followers. In other words, he became a bandit (1Sam 20–27). As a brigand, he attempts to extort food and supplies from Nabal in exchange for not harming his shepherds (1Sam 25:2–35, esp. 7–8).⁵² He even joins forces with the Israelites' major enemies, the Philistines. Samuel narrates two separate episodes of his defection to Saul's enemies (1Sam 21:10–14; 27:1–28:2). Scholars such as Herzberg have proposed that these two stories represent two different sources used by the author of Samuel. The author attempts to obscure the level of David's disloyalty. First, he depicts Saul unjustly persecuting the youth. Then, he portrays the Philistine king Achish as succumbing to pressure from his generals and dismissing David before the battle at Mt. Gilboa, in which the Philistines defeat the Israelites and kill Saul and his sons (1Sam 29:1–11). Nevertheless, despite Samuel's best efforts to rationalize and minimize David's alliance with the Philistines, he clearly chose to fight against Saul by supporting Saul's enemies precisely when the fighting between the two sides was most fierce.⁵³

Like David, Herod too suffered great setbacks in his rise to the throne. Indeed, Nicolaus did not have to alter or elaborate the story of his flight in order to highlight the similarities between Herod and David. Like David, Herod fled into the wilderness of Judaea. Samuel writes that David took his family into exile with him and placed them under the protection of the King of Moab out of fear that Saul would exact retribution on them (1Sam

⁵¹ In both of these episodes (1Sam 16:11, 17:23), Samuel explicitly refers to David as a נער.

⁵² As much as Samuel attempts to mitigate David's crime, he cannot avoid depicting David demanding food from Nabal in exchange for "protection."

⁵³ Herzberg, *I and II Samuel*, 182–183, 212–213.

22:3–4). Herod, in this historical account, behaves similarly. His mother, sister, and wife all fled with him, and before leaving for Nabataea (Moab), he placed his family in the fortress of Masada for their safety (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.263–267; *Ant.* 14.352–362). Samuel states several times that David hid from Saul in a fortress (מצודה),⁵⁴ and scholars such as F.M. Abel connect this מצודה with Masada. Ilan suggests that when Herod rebuilt the fortress where his family had sought refuge, he might have given it the name associated with David's stronghold.⁵⁵

David's association with the Philistines provided Herod a positive model to which he could allude and a perfect model to explain his alliance with Rome. Unlike many of the Hasmoneans, especially the family of Aristobulus II, he was always a reliable ally and friend of Rome. Rome became the new Philistia, an enemy who ultimately enabled the hero king to return to Judaea and take his rightful place on the throne (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.281–295; *Ant.* 14.380–389).

The elimination of the wives David and Herod married to legitimize their position also follows a similar trajectory, although Herod's story has a more violent end. Indeed, these two stories are not only historically similar, but the two authors, Samuel and Nicolaus, similarly describe the origin of the rift between spouses. In both stories, the queens come to scorn and despise their husbands, and this disdain is the cause of their eventual fall from power (and in the case of Mariamme, her execution). For Michal, David's dancing in honor of God before the Ark of the Covenant was too demeaning for a king, and she bitterly upbraided him for his lack of "decorum" (2Sam 6:16–20). Implicit in this criticism is Michal's scorn for David and his lowly status as compared to her royal background.

Nicolaus described Herod's marriage to Mariamme in a similar way. Like Michal, she was of royal blood, and like David, Herod had used his marriage to increase his status and further his ambitions (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.241; *Ant.* 14.300). Further, both usurpers' marriages had begun as political alliances, which nevertheless seem to have had an element of genuine affection, at least in the beginning (1Sam 18:20, 28; Josephus, *Ant.* 15.218–219).

⁵⁴ E.g. 1Sam 22:4, 23:19, 29, 24:22; 2Sam 23:14.

⁵⁵ Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 207. For the identification of David's stronghold with the plateau of Masada, see F.M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1933), 2:380. This is not to say that the current fortress on Masada was present during the Saulide period. However, given the strategic utility of the plateau on which Masada is built, it is certainly possible that some kind of fortification existed prior to the Herodian phase, although no such remains have been found.

Finally, both women are depicted as headstrong, stubborn, and arrogant about their noble lineage, and it is this arrogance of a royal wife for her commoner husband that causes their downfall. Josephus emphasizes Mariamme's contempt for her commoner husband three times. In the first instance (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.81), her arrogance is directed towards Herod's family, in particular, his sister Salome, whom the Hasmonean lady reproached for her lowly background. As Salome was Herod's sister, any attack on her birth was also implicitly an attack on his. Later, Mariamme even reproaches him directly, taunting him with his low status relative to her. The text makes clear that only his great love for her kept him from punishing her (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.209–212).⁵⁶ She, according to the text, continues to act haughtily toward him, not realizing that the power dynamic between her and Herod had changed (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.218–219). He no longer needed her to achieve legitimacy, especially now that Octavian had confirmed him as king and expanded his kingdom (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.393, 396; *Ant.* 15.195, 217). Some of Nicolaus's portrayal of Mariamme may have been exaggerated and even false. However, by shaping his narrative so that she appeared as a new Michal, Nicolaus associated Herod with David and thus justified Herod's execution of his queen.⁵⁷

For all of the two kings' successes, both still experienced great internal turmoil and court intrigue, especially among their sons. Moreover, Nicolaus seems to have modeled his portrayal of Herod's internal problems on the conspiracies and plots within David's court. The books of Samuel describe the deaths of three sons of David: Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah. Amnon died as a result of a feud between him and David's favorite, Absalom (2 Sam

⁵⁶ This passage may come from the pen of Nicolaus, who would have wanted to depict Herod as a loving husband driven to execute his wife because of her hatred and treason. For Ilan's analysis of Nicolaus's portrayal of Mariamme as a tragic figure whose hubris leads to her downfall and his depiction of Herod and Mariamme as lovers doomed by the scheming of their female relations, see Ilan, "Josephus and Nicolaus," 105–115.

⁵⁷ Interestingly, Mariamme was much more of a threat to Herod than Michal was to David. This seems to be a true historical difference between the two kings. Davidic queens must not have wielded as much power and influence as Hasmonean royal women did. This is likely a reflection of the increase in the status and power of female royals during the Hellenistic period, and especially in the Ptolemaic dynasties. For a discussion of the increased status and power of Hasmonean royal women as compared to their predecessors, see Joseph Sievers, "The Role of Women in the Hasmonean Dynasty," in Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata, eds., *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 132–146; Joseph Geiger, "The Hasmoneans and Hellenistic Succession," *JSJ* 53 (2002): 1–18; Tal Ilan, *Silencing the Queen: The Literary Histories of Shelamzion and Other Jewish Women* (TSAJ 115; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 35–72.

13:1–33). Absalom, although being his father's favorite, still rebelled against him and died in an attempt to usurp the throne (2 Sam 15–19:9). Adonijah also plotted against his father, and he attempted to seize the throne while his father was old and sick (1 Kgs 1:5–53). David's chosen successor, Solomon, resisted Adonijah's attempts and killed him days after the old king's own death (1 Kgs 2:13–25).

Second, Samuel's account of David's conflicts with his son Absalom follow a tripartite structure. While the first two episodes end in reconciliation between father and son, the final episode ends in the rebellion of Absalom and his subsequent defeat and death. In the first stage of the drama (2 Sam 13:1–33), David and Absalom quarreled because Absalom had murdered his stepbrother Amnon.⁵⁸ Fearing David's wrath, Absalom fled to his maternal grandfather Talmai, son of Ammihud, King of Geshur (2 Sam 13:34, 37–38). Joab, David's general, effected the return of Absalom and his pardon by resorting to a ruse. He sent a woman to David, who pretended to seek his advice for an awful dilemma she was experiencing. This predicament was in reality a parable regarding David and his son, and through this parable, she persuaded David to recall Absalom (2 Sam 14:1–24). In the second stage of the drama (2 Sam 14:28–33), David forgave Absalom after Joab persuaded the King to summon Absalom into his presence. In the final stage of the story (2 Sam 15–19:9), Absalom rebelled against his father and sought his overthrow. This time, Joab, the agent of the previous reconciliations between father and son, became the executioner, as he struck the deathblow to Absalom, while the youth was hanging from a tree.

As with Samuel's story of Absalom, Nicolaus's account of the "conspiracies" of Alexander and Aristobulus has a three-part structure. In the first phase, Herod suspected his sons of plotting against him and brought them before Augustus, who effected reconciliation (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.445–466; *Ant.* 16.66–135).⁵⁹ In the second phase, Archelaus, King of Cappadocia and Alexander's father-in-law used a ruse to mend the breach between Herod and his sons (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.467–512; *Ant.* 16.188–213, 229–270).⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Amnon had raped Absalom's sister Tamar, and Absalom was angry because David had not punished Amnon sufficiently (2 Sam 13:21). It is likely that some of the tension implicit within the story came from the amphimetric struggle within the Davidic court. For a discussion of the possible role that amphimetric struggle played in the later Hasmonean court, and the light this could shed on the tensions within the Davidic court, see Geiger, "Hasmoneans," 1–18.

⁵⁹ In *J.W.*, Herod brings only Alexander before Augustus.

⁶⁰ Archelaus pretended to be even angrier at Alexander than Herod was, and through his exaggeration, managed to show Herod the absurdity of his belief.

In the final phase, reconciliation was no longer possible, and Herod executed his sons (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.513–551; *Ant.* 16.300–334, 356–394).⁶¹ In all three phases of the drama, Herod's other son, Antipater, his sister Salome, and his brother Pheroras slandered Herod's other sons and plotted against them. Indeed, Nicolaus paints Salome and Antipater as the ultimate villains of the Herodian family. Such a portrayal seems to have stemmed from a real animosity felt by Nicolaus, although the origins of this hatred are unclear.⁶²

Even with all of these literary similarities, Nicolaus still had one major problem. Although David may have come from a relatively insignificant family, he was still a Judaeen. Herod, on the other hand, was an Idumaeen with an Arab mother. Such a doubtful lineage might explain why Nicolaus went to such great lengths to create a false but glorious family lineage for Herod, one in which he was a descendant of leading Jews from Babylon (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.9). As Ilan rightly observes, David himself had a somewhat checkered lineage, considering his descent from the Moabite Ruth. Nicolaus could have compared Herod's Idumaeen (and therefore quasi-outsider) identity favorably with David's Moabite background. However, Nicolaus chose not to adopt this approach. Perhaps, as Ilan suggests, Nicolaus chose not to mention Herod's Idumaeen background when comparing Herod to David because of the possibility that such a comparison might have recalled for his readers the villainy of Doeg the Idumaeen, who had slaughtered all of the priests in the city of Nob (1Sam 22:6–19).⁶³ Such an unwillingness to recall the murderous actions of one of Herod's fellow Idumaeans could well explain why Nicolaus created a fanciful lineage for Herod.⁶⁴

⁶¹ The way the third stage is narrated, it is never entirely clear whether Alexander and Aristobulus really were plotting against their father or whether the accusations are fallacious.

⁶² E.g. Nicolaus of Damascus, *De Vita Sua* (*FGrH* 90 Fr. 136). Cf. Josephus, *J.W.* 1.567, 582–643; *Ant.* 17.1–9, 16–18, 32–37, 61–145, 185–187. For a discussion of Nicolaus's dislike of Salome, see Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 214–215; Ilan, "Josephus and Nicolaus," 115–125. Previous scholars such as Jones, Perowne, Schalit, and Grant have all taken Nicolaus's portrayal of Salome at face value, rather than questioning its historical veracity. For their assessments, see A.H.M. Jones, *The Herods of Judaea* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1938), 111; Stewart Perowne, *The Life and Times of Herod the Great* (New York: Abingdon, 1959), 104; Abraham Schalit, *König Herodes: Der Mann und sein Werk* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969), 571–573; Michael Grant, *Herod the Great* (New York: American Heritage, 1971), 84.

⁶³ Samuel had already connected Esau, the ancestor of the Edomites (Idumaeans) with David by using the same word אַדְמוֹנִי (ruddy) to describe David as Genesis used to portray Esau (Gen 25:25; 1Sam 16:12). Cf. Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 224.

⁶⁴ Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 224–225.

2.1.3. *Possible Gains*

Since David was the paragon of heroic Jewish kingship, any association with him would only increase Herod's legitimacy and status. If Herod could persuade readers of his biography that there were numerous similarities between him and this model Jewish king, then they might be more inclined to accept his rule and support him.

Who was his target audience? It seems most likely that his target audience for his allusions to David was the local Jewish elite of his court. This is not to say that other potential audiences did not exist. However, given that he was attempting to connect himself with David and seems to have been referring to Davidic stories that appear in the books of Samuel, a Jewish audience, who would have understood the references and been familiar with the stories, seems more probable than a Gentile one.⁶⁵

When did Nicolaus compose these stories? Because our knowledge of his text is fragmentary at best, it is hard to ascertain for certain when he penned these stories. A *terminus post quem* for the Herod/David material seems to be the period when Herod first commissioned Nicolaus to write a historical account of his reign (ca. 19–16 CE). Since most of the Herod/David material was from Herod's early reign, it is possible that Nicolaus wrote most of these stories in the first years of his commission. The execution of Alexander and Aristobulus (7 BCE) provides a *terminus post quem* for that particular episode. Other than that, it is hard to be more precise about the chronology.

It is entirely possible that Nicolaus wrote all of the material when he was living in Rome after Herod's death in 4 BCE.⁶⁶ However, given the usefulness

⁶⁵ For Ilan's discussion of Nicolaus's familiarity with Samuel, see Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 222–224.

⁶⁶ One episode, which must have been written after Herod's death, is Nicolaus's account of the last days of Herod and his son Antipater. This episode is relevant to our discussion here because it contains a few Davidic elements. Like Adonijah, Antipater attempted to usurp control of the throne from his father while his father was sick and on his deathbed. In 1 Kgs 1:5, Adonijah, hearing that his father was sick, became bolder and declared that he would be the next king. A struggle for control and the throne ensued between Adonijah and Solomon, but in the end, Solomon prevailed (1 Kgs 1:5–53). He waited until his father was dead, and then he ordered Benaiah son of Jehoiada to kill Adonijah (1 Kgs 2:25). Adonijah's boldness and willingness to claim the throne while his father was still alive mirrors Nicolaus's portrayal of Antipater. Nicolaus writes that Antipater, hearing that his father was sick and believing that he had died, "began to speak boldly, as though he were now wholly released from his chains and could receive the kingdom in his hands without a struggle" (Josephus, *Ant.* 17.185. Cf. *J.W.* 1.663). It is merely a reflection of the historical reality that Adonijah was not in prison at the time of his rebellion but Antipater was. Ilan persuasively notes that this depiction seems more like a literary invention than an accurate description of events. Antipater was in prison,

that such a literary connection would have for the King as well as his use of architecture to honor David, I suggest that Nicolaus wrote much of the Herod/David material around the same time that Herod was constructing the monument to David in Jerusalem. This would mean that Nicolaus penned his literary associations in the period between 10–5 BCE.⁶⁷ At this time, Herod had reigned for over twenty-five years. However, due to his current strained relationship with Augustus because of the Syllaeus affair, he might have felt it necessary to remind his local elites of his greatness as king and equality with other Jewish heroes of the past. His primary patron, Agrippa, also unfortunately had died in 12 BCE and could not be relied on to smooth over any problems Augustus and Herod might have been experiencing. Further, given his age (he was in his sixties), he might also have been interested in how posterity would view him.

2.2. *Herod and Solomon*

Association with David was not enough for Herod. He also desired to be connected with David's son and successor, Solomon. Proof of this desire is illustrated in Josephus's narrative of Solomon. As Samuel Rocca has observed, at first glance, Josephus's Solomon looks similar to his biblical counterpart in 1 Kings. However, some of the modified passages might reflect a created Solomon, whose narrative was inspired by Herod and his kingship.⁶⁸ For example, the Josephean Solomon sacrifices at Hebron and rebuilds Jerusalem's city walls, while such events do not appear in 1 Kings (Josephus, *Ant.* 8.21–25, 150). Herod, on the other hand, constructed an enclosure at Hebron and rebuilt much of Jerusalem, including possibly the Second Wall.⁶⁹ Further, Josephus's superlative-laden descriptions of the Solomonic

and even though his father's death might have ended the legal proceedings against him, he had to have known that Herod had changed his will and disinherited him. Such a portrayal thus serves a literary purpose (associating the Herodian story with the Davidic one), and its similarity with the wording of 1 Kings is strongly suggestive. See Ilan, "King David, King Herod," 215.

⁶⁷ This proposed chronology would fit into the timeline that we already know in which Herod executed his sons Alexander and Aristobulus in 7 BCE. We can imagine Nicolaus beginning his history in the period from 19–16 BCE, but perhaps, due to his many official duties and responsibilities, he did not have the time to write more until later in his life, around the last decade of the first century BCE.

⁶⁸ Samuel Rocca, "Josephus and the *Psalms of Solomon*," in Zuleika Rodgers, ed., *Making History: Josephus and Historical Method* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 323.

⁶⁹ For Herod building an enclosure at Hebron, see Marshak "Political Self-Presentation,"

temple and the royal palace (Josephus, *Ant.* 8.61–140), may also have been inspired by the sheer magnificence of Herod's temple and main palace.⁷⁰

This connection with Solomon was also achieved visually. Herod's rebuilding of the temple enabled him to depict himself as the pious Hellenistic king who built awe-inspiring shrines to his personal deity, and how such a display would also have resonated with his Jewish audience. In addition to these results, Herod could also use the rebuilding of the temple to link himself with the great Jewish builder Solomon and even attempt to surpass him by expanding the temple Mount and making it more lavish and beautiful than ever before. According to Josephus, Herod wanted to rebuild and expand the temple because he knew that this would be the most notable of his accomplishments and the one that would earn him eternal fame (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.380). Further, as Herod himself emphasized in his speech before the people, the rebuilding would be a tremendous and conspicuous act of piety (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.382–387).⁷¹ Moreover, as Josephus observes, Herod made a point of publicizing his funding of the entire enterprise, which only further highlighted his glory as king (Josephus, *J.W.* 1.401; *Ant.* 15.387, 389).⁷² Perhaps more importantly, his rebuilding would enable him to emulate King Solomon and even surpass him, since Herod's temple complex was larger and more lavish than Solomon's.

The rebuilding was a major success. It significantly enhanced Herod's status as a pious king. It also employed tens of thousands of laborers, and since work on the temple was never fully completed until 64 CE, his reconstruction provided lifetime employment for thousands of workers and even their descendants.⁷³ Because of all of this, he could claim responsibility for a new

415–420. Although there is no consensus, many scholars attribute the construction of the Second Wall to Herod. See Hillel Geva, "Jerusalem," *NEAEHL* 2:716.

⁷⁰ E.g. Josephus, *J.W.* 1.402, 5.184–247; *Ant.* 15.318, 391–402, 410–420.

⁷¹ For Peter Richardson's discussions of Herod's piety, see Peter Richardson, "Religion and Architecture. A Study in Herod's Piety, Power, Pomp and Pleasure," *Bulletin of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies* 45 (1985): 3–29; Peter Richardson, "Law and Piety in Herod's Architecture," *SR* 15 (1986): 347–360. Cf. Jacobson "'Heroic' Public Image," 391–393.

⁷² While it is unlikely that Herod paid for the entire enterprise, he would most likely have paid for much of it, since he would have wanted to monopolize credit for the rebuilding.

⁷³ At the "Herod and Augustus" conference at University College in London in 2005, Mark Toher suggested that Herod's employment of thousands of laborers on the temple would have made him extremely popular among the urban masses, many of whom would have

“golden age” of economic prosperity and piety towards God. Indeed, in his speech before the rebuilding, Herod emphasized the prosperity and wealth of the kingdom under his stewardship and the piety of his project (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.384, 387).

Herod clearly was interested in emulating and even surpassing Jewish biblical heroes. The reconstruction and expansion of the Temple Mount enabled him to achieve this goal and to further assert himself as a legitimate and worthy successor to David and Solomon. Furthermore, he accomplished this project at the most important and conspicuous site in his entire kingdom. No other initiative during his reign accumulated more prestige and fame for him among his Jewish subjects than his work on the Temple Mount. It solidified his position as a Jewish king in his own right, elevated the status of the Temple Mount in the Roman world, transformed it into the largest sanctuary site in the ancient world, and embellished it to such a degree that the rabbis would state, “He who has not seen the temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building” (*b. B. Bat.* 4a).

3. CONCLUSION

What picture emerges from all of these historical vignettes? Herod the Great faced a complex political situation upon ascending to the throne. He responded to this volatile environment by presenting a sequence of political images and identities that satisfied his present political needs. When he needed to establish legitimacy with his local elites, he focused on presenting himself as a Hasmonean. When his political objectives changed, so too did his presentation. With the establishment of his regime and the satisfaction of basic security needs, Herod was free to assert himself in a way previously unavailable. In the realm of Jewish politics, he could shed his Hasmonean identity, an image which was no longer necessary, and, with the execution of Hyrcanus and Mariamme, no longer suitable. He could transform himself into a glorious Jewish king, a rightful and appropriate successor to the Davidides.

In the end, what remained constant throughout his reign was his ability to assess his political needs and present a public image that achieved his

enjoyed lifetime employment. I agree with Toher, but I would go even further and argue that an additional motive for Herod's larger building program was to employ the unskilled laborers of his kingdom and secure their support for his regime.

goals. His success at these endeavors seems rather self-evident since he managed to reign in relative peace for over thirty years and pass on his kingdom to his chosen successors.

BEYOND COVENANT NOMISM:
REVISITING PALESTINIAN JUDAISM IN LIGHT OF
PSEUDO-PHILO'S *BIBLICAL ANTIQUITIES**

Preston M. Sprinkle

1. INTRODUCTION

The impact that E.P. Sanders has had on the study of early Judaism, especially among New Testament scholars, is well known. I am referring, of course, to the publication of his book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* in 1977,¹ and to the thirty year wake of variegated responses. Sanders argued that Palestinian Judaism (viz. from 200 BCE–200 CE) did not degenerate into a religion of legalism, where obedience to the law was conceived as a means of earning God's grace; rather, grace and works were held in a healthy—one may say *biblical*—tension: obedience to the law within a covenantal framework was the proper response to God's prior grace. While obedience may preserve one's salvation within the covenant, it does not cause it. Sanders labeled this pattern of religion "covenant nomism," which he defines as "the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression."² Scholars from various disciplines were quickly aroused by Sanders' work in general, and his concept of "covenant nomism" in particular. The responses have been both positive and negative, culminating in the two

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¹ E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977); cf. also E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983).

² Sanders, *Palestinian Judaism*, 75, cf. 422.

volume work, *Justification and Variegated Nomism*³ and in several monographs published around the year 2000.⁴

In this chapter I would like to revisit this discussion by examining Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* (*L.A.B.*) in light of Sanders' concept of "covenant nomism." While the discussion is well worn, the current investigation will be advantageous for three reasons. First, Sanders did not discuss *L.A.B.* in his survey of Jewish literature even though this document exemplifies the type of soteriology that he was arguing for, perhaps even better than the works that he did examine.⁵ Second, in the first volume of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, which was a reassessment of virtually all Jewish documents of the Second Temple period in light of Sanders' view, only four pages were devoted to *L.A.B.*⁶ While I think that the analysis there is for the most part correct, the broad-brushed overview ignored many key topics necessary for understanding the document's soteriology. And third, *L.A.B.* has been misunderstood, I will argue, by scholars who have used the book in order to refute Sanders' view. Chris VanLandingham's recent monograph in particular, while stimulating to be sure, is flawed on numerous accounts in its treatment of *L.A.B.*; thus, he will be my main dialogue partner in this essay. Others such as Kent Yinger and Simon Gathercole have also examined *L.A.B.* to support divergent views of early Jewish soteriology. I will, therefore, also interact with their readings of *L.A.B.*

In the following, I will first summarize the soteriological structure of *L.A.B.*, arguing that it exemplifies a type of "covenant nomism." I will then

³ D.A. Carson, Mark A. Seifrid, and Peter T. O'Brien, eds., *Justification and Variegated Covenant Nomism*. Vol. 1: *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (WUNT 2.140; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2001; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

⁴ See, for example, Friedrich Avemarie, *Tora und Leben: Untersuchungen zur Heilsbedeutung der Tora in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur* (TSAJ 55; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996); Kent Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgement according to Deeds* (SNTSMS 105; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Mark Adam Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); Simon J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Chris VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification in Early Judaism and in the Apostle Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006).

⁵ Why Sanders did not examine this work is puzzling. Among the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Sanders examined Ben Sirach, *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, *The Psalms of Solomon*, and *4 Ezra*, necessarily leaving out other important Palestinian works "partly to save time and space and partly to avoid needless repetition" (*Palestinian Judaism*, 25). The two neglected works that he mentions are *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and *2 Baruch*. *L.A.B.* is never noted.

⁶ Peter Enns, "Expansions of Scripture," in Carson, Seifrid, and O'Brien, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 1:88–92.

look at four theological themes in the book that have been recently disputed among scholars: (1) the conditionality of the covenant; (2) the necessity of repentance in restoration; (3) the basis of God's election of, and covenant with, Abraham; and (4) whether or not God will judge the righteous on the basis of their deeds.

2. INTRODUCTION TO PSEUDO-PHILO

L.A.B. is a rewriting of Israel's history covering Genesis to the beginning of 2 Samuel.⁷ Although the author follows the general storyline of the biblical narrative, many of the individual pericopes are significantly reworked to express the author's own interpretive and theological agenda. Regarding the provenance, most scholars agree that *L.A.B.* is Palestinian and reflects the theology of non-sectarian Judaism.⁸ The date of the document, however, is highly debated.⁹ Most agree that it was written sometime between 135 BCE and 135 CE,¹⁰ though disputes usually centre on whether it is a pre-70 CE¹¹ or

⁷ *L.A.B.* ends rather abruptly, which has led most scholars to believe that the original ending is lost, though Fredrick J. Murphy makes a case for the present ending as original (*Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993], 17–18).

⁸ Cf. Daniel J. Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," in *OTP* 2:300: "Pseudo-Philo seems to reflect the milieu of the Palestinian synagogues at the turn of the common era" (cf. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 7). Louis Feldman, "Prolegomenon," in M.R. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo* (New York: Ktav, 1971), xxxiii–xlvi, examined all the possible sectarian motifs in *L.A.B.* in an attempt to attribute the document to a specific community and has found all the evidence inconclusive.

⁹ For a good summary, see Bruce Fisk, *Do You Not Remember? Scripture, Story and Exegesis in the Rewritten Bible of Pseudo-Philo* (JSPSup 37; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 34–40.

¹⁰ The date 135 BCE is based on *L.A.B.* 39.8–9, where the Amorite king who confronted Jephthah is named "Getal," a possible Semitic variant of "Kotylas" who is the ruler of Philadelphia (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 13.235; *J.W.* 1.60; Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 6). For the terminal date of 135 CE, see Christian Dietzfelbinger, *Pseudo-Philo: Antiquitates Biblicae* (JSHRZ 2/2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/Gerd Mohn, 1975), 95–96. A terminal date of 100 CE is proposed by Harrington and based on various factors, including (1) commonalities with *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*; (2) evidence of a Palestinian text-type (Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," *OTP* 2:299; Daniel J. Harrington, "The Biblical Text of Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*," *CBQ* 33 [1971]: 1–17); and (3) the decline of the genre of "rewritten Bible" in the second century CE. Alexander Zeron, "Erwägungen zu Pseudo-Philos Quellen und Zeit," *JSJ* 11 (1980): 38–52, has dated *L.A.B.* to the third or fourth century CE, but his thesis has been more novel than persuasive.

¹¹ Supporters of this date include: Daniel J. Harrington, "The Original Language of Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*," *HTR* (1970): 503–514; Harrington, "Biblical Text," 1–17; P.M. Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques* (SC 230; Paris: Cerf, 1976), 2:66–74; Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 3, 6.

post-70 CE¹² work. The main argument in favour of a pre-70 CE date is that there is no indisputable reference to the Jewish War or the destruction of the temple.¹³ While this is probably true, we will be more cautious and simply assume that it was written sometime in the latter half of the first-century without positing a pre- or post-70 CE date.¹⁴

3. THE SOTERIOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF PSEUDO-PHILO

As a non-sectarian work, *L.A.B.* exhibits a nationalistic soteriology. That is, God has committed himself to save the nation as a whole and there is nothing that anyone can do to thwart this. Not only does God's covenant¹⁵

¹² Supporters of this date include: Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum with Latin Text and English Translation* (2 vols.; AGAJU 31; Leiden: Brill, 1996); Richard Bauckham, "The Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum of Pseudo-Philo and the Gospels as 'Midrash,'" in R.T. France, ed., *Gospel Perspectives*. Vol 3: *Studies in Midrash and Historiography* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 33; M. Wadworth, "A New 'Pseudo-Philo,'" *JJS* 29 (1978): 186–191. George W. Nickelsburg, "Good and Bad Leaders in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*," in John J. Collins and George W. Nickelsburg, eds., *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980), 63, proposes a 70 CE date.

¹³ Cf. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 6. To counter this, supporters of a post-70 CE date argue that such a reference does occur in *L.A.B.* 19.7: "And it will be on that day as it was on the day I smashed the tablets of the covenant that I drew up for you on Horeb; and when they sinned, what was written on them flew away. Now that day was the *seventeenth day of the fourth month*." The "seventeenth day of the fourth month" (i.e. Tammuz) was believed to be the date of the destruction of the Jewish temple, although there is some debate about whether this refers to the first temple or the second. However, despite the valiant efforts of Jacobson, *Commentary*, 1:202–205, who argues that *L.A.B.* 19.7 refers to the destruction of the temple, this reference is ambiguous and his arguments have been strongly challenged (see esp. the bibliography in Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 37 n. 70). Other arguments for a pre-70 CE date include: (1) *L.A.B.* defines the covenant in terms of people rather than place, which is characteristic of pre-70 CE works; (2) *L.A.B.* exhibits what may be called a "free attitude" to the biblical text. Again, this is a characteristic of pre-70 CE works; and (3) various remarks about the temple and sacrifice demonstrate that the temple cult is still in operation (cf. esp. *L.A.B.* 22).

¹⁴ Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 39–40. Cf. also Eckart Reinmuth, *Pseudo-Philo und Lukas: Studien zum Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum und seiner Bedeutung für die Interpretation des lukanischen Doppelwerks* (WUNT 74; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1994), 17–26.

¹⁵ For *L.A.B.*, there is a collocation of the Noahic and Abrahamic covenants, which culminate in the covenant made with Israel at Sinai (see John Levinson, "Torah and Covenant in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*," in Friedrich Avemarie and Hermann Lichtenberger, eds., *Bund und Torah: Zur theologischen Begriffsgeschichte in alttestamentlicher, frühjüdischer und urchristlicher Tradition* [WUNT 2.92; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996], 111–127). Thus, I will be using the term "covenant" broadly to refer to God's commitment to his people, with Sinai as the centerpiece.

remain with the nation as a whole, but it is irrevocable. Howard Jacobson represents the majority of scholars when he states:

If there is a single predominant theme in *L.A.B.*, it is the following: No matter how much the Jewish people suffer, no matter how bleak the outlook appears, God will never completely abandon His people and in the end salvation and triumph will be the lot of the Jews.¹⁶

Notably, the assurance of their salvation lies not in their obedience but in God's faithfulness in spite of their continual disobedience, as seen in the following passages:¹⁷

- For even if my people have sinned, nevertheless I will have mercy on them (31.2).
- But he will have mercy, as no one else has mercy, on the race of Israel, though not on account of you but on account of those who have fallen asleep (35.3).
- Even if our sins be overabundant, still his mercy will fill the earth (39.6).
- For even if our sins are many, nevertheless his long-suffering will not fail (49.5).
- I know that you will rise up and forsake the words established for you through me, and God will be angry with you and abandon you and depart from your land. And he will bring upon you those who hate you, and they will rule over you, *but not forever, because he will remember the covenant that he established with your fathers* (19.2, italics mine).

This last statement is noteworthy in light of its scriptural source. It is drawn from Deut 31:14–29, where God predicts through Moses that Israel will rebel, break the covenant, and provoke God's wrath. God's restoration of the nation, however, is not mentioned in the Deuteronomy passage, so *L.A.B.* inserts the final statement (drawn from Lev 26:42, 45) about God's ultimate faithfulness to the covenant. In rewriting Deuteronomy 31, the author uses Leviticus 26 to assure his audience that God's wrath on the

¹⁶ Jacobson, *Commentary*, 241–242. Cf. *L.A.B.* 18.10: "It is easier to take away the foundations of the topmost part of the earth and to extinguish the light of the sun and to darken the light of the moon than for anyone to uproot the planting of the Most Powerful or to destroy his vine" (cf. also 4.11; 7.4; 9.4, 7; 10.2; 13.10; 19.2; 30.7; 35.3 and 49.3). Cf. esp. Levinson, "Torah and Covenant," 111–127; F.J. Murphy, "The Eternal Covenant in Pseudo-Philo," *JSP* 3 (1988): 43–57; Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 244–246; Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 45–50; Enns, "Expansions of Scripture," 73–98 (88–92).

¹⁷ Translations of *L.A.B.* are from *OTP* 2:304–377.

nation will never be the final word. This priority of mercy over wrath is emphasized again at the end of Moses' speech, "And when they sin, I will be angry with them but I will recall your staff and spare them in accord with my mercy" (*L.A.B.* 19:11). While listing passages apart from a detailed look at the context is not conclusive, it is at least suggestive that God's covenant with Israel is irrevocable. Even though the nation is largely disobedient, God's promises will not fail. We will expound on this further when we examine other related theological themes.

Now in spite of the ubiquitous emphasis on the irrevocable covenant, the book also regularly portrays a Deuteronomic, or retributive, view of sin and punishment.¹⁸ When Israel sins, God's anger is aroused and the nation (or the guilty party within the nation) is punished. But this tension between punishment and mercy is eased when one considers that the retributive scheme of sin and punishment is limited to individuals, families, or even generations, but is *never applied to the survival of the nation or the consistency of the covenant*.¹⁹ God may discipline his people at various points in history, but his covenant with them is eternal.

This is further supported by *L.A.B.*'s understanding of the resurrection of Israel, where in the eschaton God will resurrect the entire nation—the obedient and disobedient. In Joshua's final speech to the nation, he says:

But also at the end of the lot of *each one of you* [i.e. the nation] will be life eternal, for you and your seed, and I will take your souls and store them in peace until the time allotted the world be complete. And I will restore you to your fathers and your fathers to you, and they will know through you that I have not chosen you in vain.²⁰ (*L.A.B.* 23:13)

Throughout Joshua's address, he stresses that *all* Israel will receive the promise made to the fathers (several statements in this speech underscore the fact that the promise is true for all Israel: "all the people ... woman and children" [23:1, 2, cf. 4]; "each one of you" [23:13]; "you and your seed" [23:13]). God will not, therefore, resurrect only the obedient ones within the nation, for these are few and far between; rather, he will resurrect the entire nation.²¹

¹⁸ E.g. *L.A.B.* 3:9–10; 12:4; 20:3–4; 30:4; 43:5; 44:10; 45:3, 6. Cf. Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," *OTP* 2:301; Murphy, "Eternal Covenant," 43–44; Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 247–248; Nickelsburg, "Good and Bad Leaders."

¹⁹ God is often pleased with individuals but rarely with groups (cf. *4 Ezra* 3:36; Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 225, 246).

²⁰ Two passages that may suggest otherwise will be discussed below (e.g. 3:10; 6:4.7).

²¹ The only exception to this may be those who commit radical apostasy, thus forfeiting their place in the covenant.

This is illustrated again in the fabricated story about Kenaz and the wicked Israelites (*L.A.B.* 25–26).²² When Kenaz assumes leadership after Joshua, God reveals to him that there are some Israelites from every tribe “whose heart has turned away from the LORD” (25.3). They are then revealed (25.3–6), they confess their sin (25.9–10), and then Kenaz burns them with fire as punishment for their sin (26.5). Despite their wicked behaviour—including idolatry, sorcery, cannibalism, and child sacrifice (23.9–10)—Kenaz holds out the possibility that God may still resurrect them in the end: “And who knows that if you tell the truth to us, even if you die now, nevertheless God will have mercy on you when he will resurrect the dead?” (25.7).²³ The hope of Kenaz suggests that God may resurrect even the disobedient, thus underscoring God’s irrevocable commitment to save the nation.²⁴

From this initial sketch, we can deduce that *L.A.B.*’s soteriology is akin to Sanders’ category of “covenant nomism,” in that obedience to the law does not earn God’s mercy but is a response to God’s prior grace in establishing the covenant. In fact, God will save the nation at the eschaton in spite of their disobedience. This will be further confirmed by looking at four theological themes that have been recently disputed among scholars.

4. THE CONDITIONALITY OF THE COVENANT

I stated above that not only is God’s covenant with Israel irrevocable, but that this is one of the most prominent themes in the book. This conclusion, however, is contrary to the recent work by Chris VanLandingham, who argues that several passages emphasize “the conditional aspect of the

²² Kenaz is “the most mystifying and astonishing figure in the *Antiquities*” (Nickelsburg, “Good and Bad Leaders,” 54). He is only mentioned in Judg 3:9, 11 as the father of Othniel, yet he is given more attention in *L.A.B.* than any other biblical character apart from Moses.

²³ Latin: *Et quis scit quoniam si dixeritis veritatem nobis, etsi modo moriamini, miserebitur tamen vobis Deus cum vivificabit mortuos?* A similar statement is made in *L.A.B.* 30.4: *Et quis scit si replacabitur Deus hereditati sue, ut non disperdat plantationem vine sue?* (“And who knows, perhaps God will be reconciled with his inheritance so as not to destroy the plant of his vineyard?”). This latter question is rhetorical, expecting a positive answer: yes, God will be reconciled to his inheritance. This may lend support for Kenaz’s statement in 25.7 being rhetorical as well. God will resurrect even these disobedient Jews.

²⁴ Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 119, notices that “Kenaz does not presume to know what God’s judgment will be but extends to the sinners the hope that their confession will evoke God’s mercy at the Resurrection.”

covenant.”²⁵ VanLandingham looks to passages in *L.A.B.* where the author uses the conditional “if ... then,” reminiscent of Deuteronomic theology, to accentuate the conditional theology of the book. “Obedience leads to and produces eternal life just as disobedience leads to and produces damnation.”²⁶ God desires obedience from Israel and gives them the covenant, yet the covenant does not ensure Israel’s salvation. “[B]y giving the covenant, God does not thereby grant the blessings of it—the covenant provides only the instruction and assurance that following it leads to blessings.”²⁷

But VanLandingham has incorrectly understood the relationship between the temporal retributive scheme and the eternal unconditional covenant. While it is true that disobedience leads to temporal punishment, this does not affect the overarching irrevocability of the covenant. God has committed himself to bless Israel, and their (continual) disobedience will not interrupt this.

L.A.B. 13.10 is a case in point. Here, God speaks to Moses²⁸ concerning “the salvation of the souls of the people” (13.10). The speech consists of a lengthy paraphrase of Lev 26:2–5, a passage that explicates the conditional “if ... then” of covenant blessing.

L.A.B. 13.10

If they walk in my ways, I will not abandon them but will have mercy on them always and bless their seed; and the earth will quickly yield its fruit, and there will be rains for their advantage, and it will not be barren. But I know for sure that they will make their ways corrupt and I will abandon them, and they will forget the covenants that I have established with their fathers; *but nevertheless I will not forget them forever*

Lev 26:3–4 (ESV)

If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit

The author of *L.A.B.* begins his paraphrase by following the biblical text, but then supplants the conditional “if ... then” with the notion of God’s uncon-

²⁵ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 148, cf. 146–147. He cites *L.A.B.* 11.6; 13.10; 16.5–6; and 23.12–13.

²⁶ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 148.

²⁷ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 148.

²⁸ Or possibly to Noah (Harrington, “Pseudo-Philo,” *OTP* 2:322).

ditional mercy.²⁹ It is striking that VanLandingham cites this same passage to support his view that the covenant is conditional,³⁰ yet his citation does not include the last clause italicized above (“*but nevertheless I will not forget them forever*”). So while *L.A.B.* does indicate that sin will be punished, the author is not at all comfortable with the notion that “the salvation of the souls of the people” is dependent upon their obedience. In rewriting Leviticus 26, the author of *L.A.B.* reconfigures the conditionality of the biblical passage in order to reinforce his belief that the covenant is unconditional. This is further supported by our next theme, the author of *L.A.B.*'s understanding of repentance.

5. THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE IN RESTORATION

Another theme that I believe is misunderstood by VanLandingham is the role of repentance in the restoration of the nation. It is clear, as we have seen, that the book endorses a retributive scheme: God punishes the sin of Israel with temporal judgment (often death). This is clearly evinced in the lengthy reflection on the book of Judges (*L.A.B.* 25–48), where the sin-punishment-restoration chain is most prominent. But unlike the Bible, where repentance usually precedes restoration (e.g. Judg 10:10–16; cf. also Deut 29–30; Lev 26; Neh 9–10), *L.A.B.* rarely makes mention of it. Fredrick Murphy, in an important article, surveys the theme of retribution in the book and affirms: “More often than not the people are completely passive, even when repentance or appeal for help is present in the biblical text. Israel’s deliverance usually does not depend on its own action in any way.”³¹ *L.A.B.* is not of course suggesting that Israel should not repent from sin; rather, the author is affirming that God’s commitment to save them does not necessitate it. The people’s actions “may affect the fate of a particular individual, group, or generation, but God’s covenant with Israel will always endure.”³²

²⁹ See Murphy, “Eternal Covenant,” 47; Betsy Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting the Bible: Land and Covenant in Post-Biblical Jewish Literature* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 85–86.

³⁰ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 147.

³¹ Murphy, “Eternal Covenant,” 43.

³² Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 246. A similar Deuteronomic pattern with no mention of repentance is found in *T. Mos.*, see esp. chs. 3–4. For a comparison, see Halpern-Amaru, *Rewriting*, 59, 62–64, 83–85, 91, 123.

The account of Deborah is typical. Judges 4 is retold, emphasizing that the wicked deeds of the people have provoked God's punishment. The people then declare: "And now who has done all these things to us? Is it not our own wicked deeds, because we have forsaken the LORD of our fathers and have walked in these ways that have not profited us?" (30.4). God then raises up Deborah, who in her speech declares: "And behold now the LORD will take pity on you today, *not because of you* but because of his covenant that he established with your fathers and the oath that he has sworn not to abandon you forever" (*L.A.B.* 30.7). What is most striking here is that Deborah's affirmation that God's mercy is not based on them comes *after the people repent* (30.4–5).³³ So even though we have a somewhat rare occasion in *L.A.B.* where the people of Israel do repent,³⁴ the author is quick to show that their repentance is not the basis of God's restorative action. The covenant with the fathers is.

Another example of *L.A.B.*'s relative neglect of repentance is found in its account of Jephthah (*L.A.B.* 39; cf. Judg 10–12). As in the biblical passage, the people of Jephthah's day are wicked and in need of restoration. However, according to *L.A.B.* God delivers the people even though there is no record of their repentance, *despite the fact that repentance is present in the biblical story* (see Judg 10:10–16). In fact, the people even presume upon God's grace and are confident that God will not hold their sin against them:

If the God of our fathers, when we had sinned against him and he had delivered us up before our enemies and we were hard pressed by them, was not mindful of our sins but freed us, why do you, mortal man, want to remember the iniquities that happened to us in the time of our distress?

(*L.A.B.* 39.4)

Not only does "God ... not hold the sins of the people against them," but "they presume upon that here and use it as an argument."³⁵ Contrary to VanLandingham, who suggests that "God's salvation ... depends on the nation's repentance,"³⁶ *L.A.B.* does not believe that repentance is a precondition for God to save them.³⁷

³³ Murphy, "Eternal Covenant," 51.

³⁴ For repentance in *L.A.B.*, see 21.6; 33.2, 5. Repentance is also present in 13.10, though it is not emphasized, and in 19.2–5 and 25.7 it is downplayed.

³⁵ Murphy, "Eternal Covenant," 53.

³⁶ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 31.

³⁷ *L.A.B.* 39.11 explicitly states that God delivered Israel because they prayed to God, a prayer which evoked God's covenant promises (cf. 39.7).

As a brief digression, we should take note of VanLandingham's overarching argument in order to gain a better understanding of his reading of Pseudo-Philo. He is trying to show from various texts that early Judaism generally believed that, "good behavior is rewarded with eternal life [and] bad behavior with damnation ... God's grace and mercy may be present throughout a person's life, working on his or her behalf; but one's deeds determine approbation at the final judgment."³⁸ This of course "stands in direct opposition to Sanders' notion that in Palestinian and Diasporic Judaism obedience does not earn God's grace, election, or 'salvation.'³⁹ More pointedly, VanLandingham states:

Over and over in early post-biblical Jewish texts, salvation is earned, at least in the sense that there is a *quid pro quo* or cause and effect relationship between obedience to God in this age and eternal life in the next.⁴⁰

Whether or not this claim can be vindicated from other early Jewish texts is for another day, but I find it most incredible for *L.A.B.* As I have argued thus far, the author of *L.A.B.* does not emphasize the conditionality of the covenant, nor does he hold repentance as a basis for God's future restorative action. The next theme that we will discuss is central to VanLandingham's claim; in many ways, his thesis stands or falls on this point: the election of Abraham.

6. THE BASIS OF GOD'S ELECTION OF ABRAHAM

One of VanLandingham's main arguments, and his primary contention with Sanders, is that God's election of Abraham was not gracious but based on Abraham's prior deeds. "God elected Abraham and his descendants as a response to Abraham's obedience" and this forms "the axiom that God rewards the righteous."⁴¹ For "election is a reward for obedience to God's will, not the unmerited gift of God's grace."⁴² According to VanLandingham, then, if God's election of Abraham is a response to his prior obedience, then Sanders' claim that the covenant with Abraham is prior to Israel's obedience is trumped, and the concept of "covenant nomism" crumbles. That is, in VanLandingham's reading, obedience *is* a cause of salvation

³⁸ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 15.

³⁹ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 15.

⁴⁰ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 333.

⁴¹ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 16.

⁴² VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 333.

in that Abraham's works elicit his election. He states: "I find divine grace remarkably absent in Jewish accounts of Abraham's election, or of election in general;" rather, "God elected Abraham and his descendants as a response to Abraham's obedience."⁴³

To support his thesis, VanLandingham begins with Genesis 12–17,⁴⁴ arguing that the biblical text states plainly that God elected Abraham *because* he was obedient. He then looks at several Second Temple documents⁴⁵ to show that they all agree with (his reading of) Genesis 12–17. He then examines the story of Abraham in *L.A.B.* (primarily 6.1–7.4) and deduces that Abraham is a "model of piety" before God chooses him, and that he "deserves God's favor" in light of his obedience. Again, in *L.A.B.* as in the biblical text, God is "impressed with Abra[ha]m's piety."⁴⁶

VanLandingham's reading is provocative and deserves careful consideration. However, I believe he has overstated his case. Even though Abraham is central to the book, *L.A.B.*, unlike other Second Temple Jewish authors, does not exploit Abraham's deeds. In fact, Abraham's deeds are hardly mentioned. *L.A.B.*'s retelling of the Abraham story centres on his call from "the land of Babylon," where Abram refused to participate in the scheme of those building the tower of Babel. The people of the land decided to burn their names in the bricks for the tower, but Abram and eleven others refused (*L.A.B.* 6.3–5) and thus were to be killed in a fiery furnace. Joktan, one of the leaders of the people who was favourable toward Abram and the other rebels, devised a plan to allow the twelve to escape and not die. But Abram refused. He chose rather to stay in captivity and wait on God to intervene, stating: "And now as he in whom I trust lives, I will not be moved from my place where they have put me. If there be any sin of mine so flagrant that I should be burned up, let the will of God be done" (*L.A.B.* 6.11). Throughout the story, Abraham's "trust in God" is his primary attribute (6.9, 11; cf. 23.5), but his active obedience remains subsidiary.⁴⁷ The only explicit reference to Abraham's moral character comes in the prediction of his birth where he is described as "perfect and blameless" (4.11). The emphasis in the Abraham story, however, falls heavily on God's action and his establishment of

⁴³ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 16.

⁴⁴ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 20–23.

⁴⁵ Aside from *L.A.B.*, he examines *Jub.*; Philo; Josephus, *Ant.*; and *Apoc. Ab.*

⁴⁶ VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 29.

⁴⁷ *L.A.B.*'s view of "faith" often seems close to Paul's understanding of faith as "trust," rather than the more standard view of "faithfulness."

the covenant with Abraham.⁴⁸ Throughout Chapter 6, Abraham is rather passive in comparison to the biblical account,⁴⁹ and in the summary of the Abraham story, the deeds of Abraham are not mentioned. There is no mention, for instance, of Abraham having “kept the law of the Most High” (Sir 44:20), or his “keeping the commandments of God” (CD 3.2). The law and its commandments, in fact, are not mentioned in *L.A.B.*'s account of Abram. The focus, rather, is on God's merciful choice of him (7.4; 8.1–3). Moreover, despite being “perfect and blameless” (4.11), Abram admits that he has sin in his life that may elicit God's punishment—a fate he is willing to endure (6.11).⁵⁰

The author of *L.A.B.*'s retelling of the Abraham story is most striking when considered against the backdrop of the biblical account. The Genesis account bristles with statements highlighting Abraham's obedience (Gen 17:1–2, 9; 18:19; 22:16–18; 26:3–5), and while early Jewish (Sir 44:19–21; 1 Macc 2:52; *Jub.* 23.10; CD 3.2; *Lev. Rab.* 2.10) and Christian (Jas 2:14–24) exegetes were attentive to this, *L.A.B.* fails to make much of it. If the author of *L.A.B.* wanted to underscore the priority of Abraham's deeds, he certainly let a prime opportunity slip through his fingers.⁵¹ God's faithfulness through the covenant is unilateral.⁵²

7. JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO WORKS

We come now to our fourth and final theme that has undergone much discussion recently: final judgment according to works. This is important

⁴⁸ See Fredrick J. Murphy, “Divine Plan, Human Plan: A Structuring Theme in Pseudo-Philo,” *JQR* 77 (1986): 5–14 (5–10).

⁴⁹ In *L.A.B.*'s story, Joktan is initially presented as a good character, but unlike Abraham, who patiently waits for God to act, Joktan “combines trust in God with practical action involving cooperation with sinners” (Murphy, “Divine Plan,” 10). Human initiative is not praised in the Abraham narrative. This is also seen in the lack of any reference to Abraham's obedience in circumcision, which is highlighted in the biblical account (see the next note). In *L.A.B.*, “circumcision is no product of human hands, of obedience to the stipulations of the covenant with Abraham ...; rather, Moses was miraculously ‘born in the covenant of God and the covenant of the flesh’ (9, 13)” (Levison, “Torah and Covenant,” 113).

⁵⁰ Other model leaders, such as Kenaz and Elkanah, admit to having sin in their life (27.7; 49.5).

⁵¹ Contra VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification*, 29, *L.A.B.* 18.5 and 32.4 do not say that “everything Abraham receives from God he deserves.”

⁵² The Abraham story is evoked again in 23.4–7 where it is stated that “Abraham believed in me and was not led astray” (23.5). While Abraham's belief is mentioned, his deeds are not, and God is, again, the main actor in this latter rendition of the Abraham story.

for our discussion since many recent monographs have challenged the notion of “covenant nomism” in light of a supposed widespread belief within Judaism that a positive verdict on the judgment day will be rendered on the basis of one’s obedience. If one’s deeds are the primary basis of future life, then obedience does more than maintain one’s position in the covenant; rather, it effects one’s final salvation.⁵³ There are numerous recent studies that draw on passages in *L.A.B.* that refer to the final judgment in order to support their respective theories about early Jewish soteriology. Kent Yinger, for instance, surveys *L.A.B.* among other documents to show that the righteous are not rewarded according to their deeds on judgment day. Their identity will be revealed by their deeds, but those deeds do not determine their status or final justification.⁵⁴ Thus, Yinger agrees with Sanders. Simon Gathercole, however, disagrees. He argues that according to *L.A.B.* the righteous will be saved at the eschaton “on the basis of their obedience.”⁵⁵ Both agree that the primary passage in *L.A.B.* regarding this issue is 3.10:

But when the years appointed for the world have been fulfilled, then the light will cease and the darkness will fade away. And I will bring the dead to life and raise up those who are sleeping from the earth. And hell will pay back its debt, and the place of perdition will return its deposit *so that I may render to each according to his works and according to the fruits of his own devices (ut reddam unicuique secundum opera sua et secundum fructus adinventionum suarum)*, until I judge between soul and flesh. (L.A.B. 3.10)

The crucial question is this: Does the italicized phrase (“*so that I may render to each according to his works and according to the fruits of his own devices*”) refer to judgment according to deeds for both the righteous and unrighteous, or only to the judgment and condemnation of the unrighteous? Yinger leans toward the latter. The “works” and “devices” (*adinventionum*) refer exclusively to evil deeds performed by the unrighteous. If this view is correct, then this passage does not say that the future life and resurrection of the righteous hangs in the balance and will be determined on the basis of their good deeds. For, according to Yinger, the passage refers “only to the punishment of the wicked, since the phrase ‘fruits of his own devices’ hints at *evil* deeds.”⁵⁶ However, Gathercole argues against Yinger that the

⁵³ See, for instance, R.H. Gundry, “Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul,” *Bib* 66 (1985): 1–38; T. Eskola, “Paul, Predestination and ‘Covenantal Nomism’—Re-assessing Paul and Palestinian Judaism,” *JSJ* 28 (1997): 390–412; Gathercole, *Boasting*.

⁵⁴ Yinger, *Judgment*, 79–83; cf. 89–90, 93–94.

⁵⁵ Gathercole, *Boasting*, 90; cf. 78–80.

⁵⁶ Yinger, *Judgment*, 81.

passage refers to the vindication of the righteous and the judgment of the unrighteous, and both verdicts are rendered on the basis of deeds. Gathercole argues this since “the Latin word *adinventiones* [“devices”] ... need not be negative;⁵⁷ rather, the word is neutral referring to thoughts whether good or bad.

Gathercole correctly argues that the word is often used in a neutral sense in the Vulgate.⁵⁸ He has not noticed, however, its exclusively negative connotation elsewhere in *L.A.B.*⁵⁹ For instance, in *L.A.B.* 25, Kenaz exhorts Achan to “declare to us *your wicked deeds and schemes (nequitas vestras et adinventiones)*” (25.7). Achan responds: “But I tell you, sir, the *schemes (adinventiones)* that we have done *so wickedly (nequiter)* are not all alike” (25.8). In *L.A.B.* 44, God denounces idolatry saying: “The skill of a man has produced them, and the hands have manufactured them, and imagination has *invented (adinvenit)* them” (44.7). Later in the same chapter in the context of future judgment, God says that, “the race of men will know that they will not make me jealous by their *inventions (adinventionibus)* that they make, but to every man there will be such a punishment that in whatever sin he shall have sinned, in this he will be judged” (44.10). This judgment scene in 44.10 only depicts recompense for evil deeds, not reward for good deeds. In *L.A.B.* 52, Eli warns his wicked sons of the consequences for not “restrain[ing] their wicked schemes (*adinventiones*).”⁶⁰ In all of these passages, *adinventio* and its cognates are used negatively, thus favoring Yinger’s view that *adinventiones* in 3.10 refers exclusively to the evil deeds of the wicked, not the good deeds of the righteous.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Gathercole, *Boasting*, 148–149.

⁵⁸ For a neutral sense, see Judg 2:19; Isa 3:8, 10; for a negative sense, see Isa 3:8. It is used positively in Isa 3:10 and 12:4 (Gathercole, *Boasting*, 80).

⁵⁹ The Hebrew term behind *adinventiones* was probably מַחֲשָׁבָה; cf. Jer 6:19: “Hear, O earth; I am going to bring disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes (מַחֲשָׁבָה),” following Yinger, *Judgment*, 81 n. 84.

⁶⁰ See the discussion in Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 251, who makes a similar point. My discussion here is more of an argument *against* Gathercole than it is *for* Yinger. Given the fact that we are two translations removed from the original Hebrew text, the payoff for examining the use of a Latin word is certainly limited.

⁶¹ Gathercole’s student Kyoung-Shik Kim, “God Will Judge Each One according to His Works: The Investigation into the Use of Psalm 62:13 in Early Jewish Literature and the New Testament” (Ph.D. diss., Aberdeen University, 2005), 133–140, argues further for Gathercole’s view in light of the apparent allusion to Ps 62:13 in *L.A.B.* 3.10. Psalm 62:13 (“For you repay a man according to his work”), Kim argues, refers both to the recompense of the righteous and the wicked. Its allusion in *L.A.B.* 3.10, conflated with Jer 17:10 (“the fruit of his deeds”), refers both to reward for good deeds and punishment of bad deeds since Ps 62:13 originally includes the notion of reward for the righteous (Kim, “God Will Judge,” 137–140). But it is

This view is supported (more importantly) by the context. *L.A.B.* 3.10 is the culmination of the flood narrative, and the author's retelling of the event is shaped by one concern: judgment for wicked deeds.⁶² Unlike Genesis 6–9, where judgment *and salvation* are intertwined, in *L.A.B.* we have only the former—God's judgment of the wicked for their "evil deeds" (*operum malorum* 1.20; *operari iniqua* 2.8; *iniqua operari* 2.10; *opera malignitatum* 3.3; *iniquitatem operum* 3.6). In fact, the very establishment of God's covenant with Noah was designed "to destroy all those inhabiting the earth" (3.4), not to reward the righteous for their good deeds. Therefore, when the judgment of God in 3.10 speaks of recompense "according to deeds," it is more likely that these "deeds" refer back exclusively to the evil deeds of the flood-generation. It is not the case that 3.10 refers to a time when "God's mercy will be shown to individuals who are righteous and blameless."⁶³ The rest of *L.A.B.* makes clear that Israel will receive salvation by God's mercy *in spite of* not being righteous and blameless.

There are other passages in *L.A.B.* that refer to judgment according to works, but these only refer to the punishment of the wicked for evil deeds, not a reward for obedient Israel (30.4; 33.3; 44.10).⁶⁴ The one anomalous passage that may refer to recompense for good deeds is *L.A.B.* 64.7. Here, Samuel is conjured up by Saul and says: "I thought that the time for being rendered the rewards of my deeds had arrived." Both Yinger and Gathercole agree that this passage refers to a future recompense for the righteous according to their good deeds,⁶⁵ although they quibble over whether deeds are the *basis* for a positive verdict (so Gathercole) or simply the *evidence* of covenant loyalty (so Yinger). In any case, if *L.A.B.* 64.7 does say that Samuel's future salvation hangs in the balance and will be determined on the basis of his good deeds, this certainly cuts against the grain of the

not altogether clear that *L.A.B.* has employed Ps 62:13 here. It seems that *L.A.B.* is alluding primarily to Jer 17:10 ("I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, *even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds;*" cf. Jer 32:19), which only refers to judgment not vindication (Jacobson, *Commentary*, 324).

⁶² Levison, "Torah and Covenant," 112, affirms that "Despite this clear biblical antecedent [viz. God's salvific covenant with Noah], Pseudo-Philo invests the Noachic covenant with rather more somber hues. While in Gen 6:18, the covenant is established to preserve Noah and his family, in LAB 3.4 God establishes a covenant with Noah in order 'to destroy all those inhabiting the earth.'"

⁶³ Kim, "God Will Judge," 140.

⁶⁴ Again, throughout *L.A.B.*, punishment for disobedience is a main theme, but future reward for obedience is rarely mentioned.

⁶⁵ Yinger, *Judgment*, 83; Gathercole, *Boasting*, 79.

rest of the book. And while we should be careful not to place modern demands of consistency on this ancient author, I do think that there are other possible ways to understand this passage that make it cohere with the many other passages that highlight God's irrevocable grace as the sole basis of salvation. First, *L.A.B.* 64.7 does not explicitly indicate that the future life of the *nation* depends on their obedience. The statement applies to an individual, Samuel, and there is no indication here that Samuel is in some way representative of the nation as a whole. And second, it is possible that in speaking of his "rewards," *L.A.B.* is not thinking of future life and salvation, but some sort of recompense *in addition to* eternal life. But even if we grant that *L.A.B.* 64.7 does speak of good deeds as the basis for eschatological salvation, this certainly does not convey the dominant trend of the book.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our examination of *L.A.B.* has lent support to Sanders' understanding of Palestinian Judaism in the first century. Despite some recent attempts to suggest otherwise, and even though Sanders himself does not mention the document, *L.A.B.* exhibits a soteriology similar to "covenant nomism." We may go a step further and say that *L.A.B.*'s view of salvation is *beyond* "covenant nomism."⁶⁶ That is, Sanders' somewhat synergistic model of "covenant nomism" may be inadequate for *L.A.B.*, where God's faithfulness to the covenant promise is not only the sole basis of the covenant, but also the primary means of one's preservation in it. As such, the "covenant" takes center stage while "nomism" becomes a subsidiary prop. And yet I do not think that this warrants the criticism by D.A. Carson, that "in this case⁶⁷ one of the pegs of covenantal nomism does not fit," since God's grace, not one's obedience, assures one's standing in the covenant. Fair enough. But this seems to strengthen Sanders' case against those who view Judaism as legalistic, synergistic, or downright proto-Pelagian.

Furthermore, my reading of *L.A.B.* alleviates the very important criticism that the notion of "staying in" through nomism is simply an "eschatological

⁶⁶ I am using the phrase "beyond covenant nomism" quite differently than A. Andrew Das in his article, "Beyond Covenantal Nomism: Paul, Judaism, and Perfect Obedience," *Concordia Journal* 27 (2001): 234–252.

⁶⁷ Carson is here referring to James Kugler's analysis of the *Testament of Moses* ("Testaments," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 1:189–213), though both Kugler and Carson recognize the same soteriological structure in *L.A.B.* (see Carson, "Summaries and Conclusions," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 1:520, cf. 1:510, 1:544).

‘getting in’.⁶⁸ As such, the initial “getting in” is by grace, while the “eschatological ‘getting in’” is by human effort; and thus we are back to square one. If one’s staying in the covenant is maintained through nomism, then this may mean that human deeds play a very vital role in *final* salvation. But as we have seen from various angles, in *L.A.B.* the eschatological getting in is also generated and assured by God’s grace. Israel will “get in” *finally* the same way they got in *initially*—by God’s unconditional commitment to the fathers, and by his ongoing unilateral action in maintaining his promise.

⁶⁸ Eskola, “Predestination,” 410.

RESURRECTION AND IMMORTALITY IN HELLENISTIC JUDAISM: NAVIGATING THE CONCEPTUAL BOUNDARIES

C.D. Elledge

In his popular study of the afterlife in Jewish thought, Neill Gillman describes how resurrection of the dead and immortality of the soul within Second Temple Judaism would later merge and complement one another in the rabbis' classic conception of "revivification of the dead" (תחיית המתים):

From their predecessors, then, the talmudic rabbis inherited two doctrines about the afterlife: The first taught that at some point after death, God would raise the body from the grave. The second taught that, at death, the body disintegrates and returns to dust, but the soul leaves the body and lives eternally. The first, of uncertain provenance, is articulated in three biblical texts. The second, which originated in Greek thought, is not in the Bible. Both appear in the literature of the intertestamental period.¹

Harry Wolfson described a parallel, if independent, development among the church fathers, who arrived at their own synthesis of resurrection and immortality:

... to the Fathers of the Church these two beliefs were inseparably connected with each other. To them, the belief that Jesus rose on the third day after the Crucifixion meant that his soul survived the death of the body and was reinvested with his risen body. Similarly the belief that in the end of days there will be a general resurrection of the dead meant the reinvestment of surviving souls with risen bodies.²

These developments reveal the crucial context of the second-fourth centuries of the Common Era as a great age of synthesis for Judaism and Christianity, in which earlier afterlife traditions were reinterpreted into classic affirmations of faith.

¹ Neil Gillman, *The Death of Death: Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought* (Woodstock, VA: Jewish Lights, 1997), 134–135. The "three biblical texts" are Dan 12:1–3; Isa 26:19; and Ezek 37:1–14.

² Harry A. Wolfson, "Immortality and Resurrection in the Philosophy of the Church Fathers," in Krister Stendahl, ed., *Immortality and Resurrection: Death in the Western World: Two Conflicting Currents of Thought* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 55–56.

Prior to this age, however, the literature of Hellenistic Judaism often displays a more complex relationship between resurrection and immortality.³ While the two could potentially coexist, a significant number of earlier traditions noticeably gravitate toward one conception or the other. Indeed, as Jon Levenson perceptively comments, the two ideas “can be different in critical ways, and it can be profoundly misleading to subsume them under some simplistic master category, such as ‘afterlife’”:⁴

The expectation of an eschatological resurrection coexists easily with immortality so long as the latter is defined as the state of those who have died and await their restoration into embodiment, that is, into full human existence. ... But if immortality is defined in connection with an indestructible core of the self that death cannot threaten (and may even liberate), then resurrection and immortality are at odds. ... Whereas history in the classical Jewish vision of resurrection will culminate in God’s supernatural triumph over death, this second idea of immortality assumes a very different scenario: individuals at various times and without relationship to each other quietly shed their perishable casings to continue in an unbroken communion with their benevolent creator.⁵

Where they exist in their radicalized forms, apocalyptic resurrection of the dead and philosophical immortality of the soul assume very different conceptualizations of anthropology, creation, and history. While this distinction casts greater appreciation on how later sources synthesized these two beliefs, it equally demands sensitivity to precisely where earlier sources stand along this important conceptual divide.

³ George W.E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity* (exp. ed.; HTS 56; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 219–226; Alan F. Segal, *Life after Death: A History of the Afterlife in Western Religion* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 704–718; James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 94–116; James H. Charlesworth, “Where Does the Concept of Resurrection Appear and How Do We Know That?,” in J. Charlesworth et al., eds., *Resurrection: The Origins and Future of a Biblical Doctrine* (FSC; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 1–21; Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 1196–202; Martin Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the pre-Christian Period* (trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 124–125; Maurice Gilbert, “Immortalité? Résurrection? Faut-il choisir?,” in Philippe Abadie and Jean-Pierre Lémonon, eds., *Le Judaïsme à l’aube de l’ère chrétienne: XVIIIe congrès de l’association catholique française pour l’étude de la bible* (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 271–297.

⁴ Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 20.

⁵ Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 21. See also R.H. Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, in Judaism, and in Christianity* (2nd ed.; Jowett Lectures; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913), 155–156.

The Greek literature of Hellenistic Judaism presents important sources for understanding how Jews navigated this important conceptual dividing line in antiquity. Without explicitly mentioning a resurrection of the body, Philo of Alexandria, Wisdom of Solomon, Josephus, and 4 Maccabees enthusiastically declared the soul's immortality through a moderate synthesis of Greek philosophy with Jewish tradition. Other Greek sources equally insisted on a surprisingly physical resurrection that has more in common with apocalyptic traditions like Daniel than with Pythagoras or Plato.⁶ Bodily resurrection is well attested in the Greek Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, as illustrated in 2 Maccabees, Pseudo-Phocylides' *Sentences*, and the Fourth *Sibylline Oracle*. A conceptually diverse Hellenistic Judaism could,⁷ therefore, selectively appropriate Greek thought on the soul or, in some cases, insist on forms of physical resurrection that differentiated it from its larger cultural environment.

1. IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL IN HELLENISTIC JEWISH WRITINGS

Hellenistic Judaism will rightly be identified as a principal context in which Jews first came to adapt Greek philosophical understandings of immortality to their own ancestral religion. By the Hellenistic and Roman eras, the soul and the question of its immortality had already comprised a major volume in the history of Greek philosophy, including the views of Pythagoras and Plato, as well as Orphics, Stoics, and Epicureans.⁸ These Greek philosophies

⁶ Cf. Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:200.

⁷ On the diversity of afterlife conceptions in Hellenistic Judaism, see A.D. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (ed. Z. Stewart; Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 1:507; E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE – 66 CE* (London: SCM, 1992), 303; Robert Martin-Achard, "Résurrection dans l'Ancien Testament et le Judaïsme," in L. Pirot et al., eds., *Dictionnaire de la Bible Supplément* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1985), 10:477; Joseph Bonsirven, *Palestinian Judaism in the Time of Jesus* (trans. W. Wolf; New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 163; Claudia Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity: Doctrine, Community, and Self-Definition* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 20; Joseph Park, *Conceptions of Afterlife in Jewish Inscriptions: With Special Reference to Pauline Literature* (WUNT 2.121; Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 60.

⁸ Erwin Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks* (trans. W. Hillis; International Library of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Method; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950); Jan N. Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 197–199, 293–295; Franz Cumont, *The Afterlife in Roman Paganism* (Silliman Memorial Lectures; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922); Werner Peek, *Griechische Grabgedichte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960); Martin P. Nilsson,

had already deeply impressed the anthropological consciousness of many sectors of Hellenistic Jewry, making it entirely natural to think of life and death in terms of the soul. Philo of Alexandria, Wisdom of Solomon, Josephus, and 4 Maccabees confirm the attractiveness of the soul's immortality among Greco-Jewish authors apart from any explicit mention of bodily resurrection.

1.1. *Philo of Alexandria (ca. 15 BCE–ca. CE 50)*

A few focused observations may define the contours of Philo's conception of immortality, even if the full subtlety of his anthropology can only be grasped in specialized studies.⁹ While interpreting Gen 2:7, Philo describes the creation of humanity as a "composite" (σύνθετον) of "earthly substance" (γῆδου οὐσίας) and "divine spirit" (πνεύματος θείου) (*Opif.* 134–135):

... for that which he breathed in was nothing else than a divine breath (πνεύμα θεῖον) that migrated here from that blissful and happy existence for the benefit of our race, in order that, even if it is mortal according to its visible part, it may be rendered immortal in regard to that which is invisible. Hence it may with propriety be said that man is the borderland between mortal and immortal nature, partaking of each insofar as is necessary, and that he was created at once mortal and immortal—mortal in body, but in mind immortal.

(*Opif.* 135) (revised from Colson and Whitaker, LCL)

The soul itself, as "inspired" by God, contains "mind" (νοῦς), the noetic element that is its governing power (*Leg.* 1.39–40, 161; *Spec.* 4.123).¹⁰ Philo calls the body itself a "prisonhouse" (*Migr.* 9) and a "tomb" (*Spec.* 4.188; *Leg.* 1.108), according to Platonic convention (Plato, *Gorg.* 492e–f). Death is not the destruction of the righteous soul, but rather its "separation" from the mortal body (Philo, *Abr.* 258). At death, the virtuous will experience a *palingenesia* in which the noetic element of the soul is reborn into the intelligible world and thus "rendered immortal" (*Opif.* 135);¹¹ but souls that pursue temporal

"Die astrale Unsterblichkeit und die kosmische Mystik," *Numen* 1 (1954): 106–119; Martin P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 5.2.2; Munich: Beck, 1974), 1:678–691, 2:231–242, 543–557.

⁹ Tomas H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (CBQMS 14; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983); Dieter Zeller, "The Life and Death of the Soul in Philo of Alexandria: The Use and Origin of a Metaphor," *SPhilo* 7 (1995): 19–55, who provides a further bibliography on p. 20 n. 7; David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Philosophia Antiqua 44; Leiden: Brill, 1986), 330–338.

¹⁰ Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 77–87.

¹¹ Fred W. Burnett, "Philo on Immortality: A Thematic Study of Philo's Concept of *Palingenesia*," *CBQ* 46 (1984): 456.

goods will be extinguished (*Opif.* 77; *Gig.* 12–15; *Post.* 39).¹² The immortalization of the soul, then, remains conditional upon human virtue;¹³ the punishment of the wicked, on the other hand, is immediate and fully carried out within the human frame.¹⁴ As Dieter Zeller observes, Philo is so adamant about the extinction of the wicked soul with the death of the body that he conspicuously avoids mentioning cosmic realms of eternal punishment popular in Platonic (and apocalyptic) thought.¹⁵ Perhaps Moses provides the ideal type of immortalization among Philo's works: at death, God transforms Moses from a "double being, composed of soul and body, into the nature of a single body," which exists as "a mind (νοῦν), pure as the sunlight" (*Mos.* 2.288) (revised from Colson and Whitaker, LCL). As an incentive to virtuous conduct, conditional immortality features prominently in Philo's ethics.

Philo is emphatic that the noetic dimension of the spirit/soul is a "divine fragment" (ἀπόσπασμα θεῖον) (*Leg.* 3.161; *Somn.* 1.34; *Det.* 90).¹⁶ It is pre-existent, but only in the sense that it was God who originally breathed it into humanity (*QG* 3.11).¹⁷ The soul is, therefore, neither un-generated nor indestructible, an assumption that distinguishes Philo from Plato.¹⁸ Thomas

¹² Cf. also *Sacr.* 5; *Leg.* 2.4–55; *Cher.* 75–78, 113–115; *Virt.* 205; *QG* 1.16, 45; 3.11; *Somn.* 1.152; *Her.* 45; *Congr.* 57; *Det.* 84; *Spec.* 1.345; *Mos.* 2.288–291; *Plant.* 37. On these passages, see H.C.C. Cavallin, *Life after Death: Paul's Argument for the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Cor 15. Part 1: An Inquiry into the Jewish Background* (Lund: Gleerup, 1974), 135–140; Émile Puech, *La croyance des esséniens en la vie future: immortalité, résurrection, vie éternelle? Histoire d'une croyance dans le judaïsme ancien* (EB 21–22; Paris: Gabalda, 1993), 1163–166; Émile Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* (Études de philosophie médiévale 8; Paris: Librairie Philosophique, 1925), 45–66; Erwin R. Goodenough, "Philo on Immortality," *HTR* 39 (1946): 85–108; Erwin R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), 246–256; Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo* (2 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 1:404–406; Samuel Sandmel, *Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1956), 141–185; N.T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 3; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 144–146; Burnett, "Philo on Immortality," 447–470; Zeller, "Life and Death of the Soul in Philo," 19–55.

¹³ Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 136–137; Zeller, "Life and Death of the Soul in Philo," 24–25.

¹⁴ An "apocalypse now and within," according to Zeller, "Life and Death of the Soul in Philo," 38.

¹⁵ Zeller, "Life and Death of the Soul in Philo," 38–39. The parenthetical comment is mine.

¹⁶ On the interchanging terms, see Richard Horsley, "Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos: Distinctions of Spiritual Status among the Corinthians," *HTR* 69 (1976): 271–273; Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 135–136; Erwin R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1963), 114–118; Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 100–101, 117; Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 77–134; Zeller, "Life and Death of the Soul in Philo," 49–50.

¹⁷ John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 177.

¹⁸ E.g. *Resp.* X 610a; *Phaedr.* 246a; *Phaed.* 81d–e, 95b, 106b–c, 107c–108c.

Tobin also calls attention to how Philo's thinking both adopted and differed from Stoic teaching on the soul as an ethereal substance by ultimately describing the soul as transcending substance (*Her.* 283).¹⁹ Philo was also keen to preserve the distinction between human and divine that was threatened by those aspects of Stoic monism that tended toward pantheism (*Plant.* 18–20; *Mut.* 223).²⁰ Although Harry Wolfson once suggested that bodily resurrection may underlie Philo's thinking,²¹ Fred Burnett strikes closer to the mark, commenting, "If Philo is dealing with traditional Jewish conceptions of a corporeal resurrection, then he has restated them in terms of an incorporeal body/soul separation."²² Without resurrection, one senses an exclusive attraction for immortality.²³

Erwin Goodenough judged that Philo's conception of the soul eventually envisioned its re-assimilation into the divine spirit and the loss of personal existence;²⁴ yet nothing disqualifies personal immortalization,²⁵ especially if it is conditional upon individual human virtue in the body. Personal survival is apparent, for example, in the death of Abraham:

When Abraham left this mortal life, "he is added to the people of God," in that he inherited incorruptibility (*ἀφθαρσία*) and became equal to the angels (*ἴσος ἀγγέλους*), for angels—those unbodied and blessed souls—are the host and people of God.

(*Sacr.* 5; cf. *QG* 3.11) (revised from Colson and Whitaker, LCL)

This interpretation of Gen 25:8 may imply afterlife traditions that assume personal existence. Not only did contemporary writings envision the afterlife of individual Jewish ancestors,²⁶ but the belief that the righteous would live an angelic existence was also a popular apocalyptic tradition.²⁷ Even

¹⁹ Diogenes Laertius, 7.138–139, 7.156–157. Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 82–87.

²⁰ Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 90–93.

²¹ Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:404–406.

²² Burnett, "Philo on Immortality," 463.

²³ With Segal, *Life after Death*, 369.

²⁴ Goodenough, "Philo on Immortality," 101–103. Stoics varied on this issue (*SVF* 1:146, 522; 2:624, 81).

²⁵ Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:402–413; Burnett, "Philo on Immortality," 464.

²⁶ The tradition of the Israelite ancestors' life after death was a popular one in contemporary writings (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.229–231; *T. Sim.* 6.7; *T. Jud.* 25; *T. Zeb.* 10.1–2; *T. Ben.* 10.6–10; Luke 16:19–31; Heb 11:17–19; cf. Matt 27:52–53).

²⁷ On angelification of the righteous, see *1 En.* 39.4; 104.2–4; *2 Bar.* 51.5–12; cf. Luke 20:36; Acts 23:6–8. Elsewhere, Philo paints Abraham as a believer in Sarah's personal immortality (*Abr.* 258); and he comments that Jews courageously risk their lives with the hope of personal immortality (*Legat.* 117, 369).

with this deep investment in “personal eschatology,” Philo could still describe final rewards and punishments in the form of a more “corporate, this-worldly” eschatology that envisioned the future restoration of the Jewish people to their land, as illustrated in *De Praemiis et Poenis* (162–172).²⁸ Indeed, Philo’s thought seems to have embraced both a vertical axis that envisioned the individual soul’s immediate immortalization and an horizontal axis that envisioned the collective restoration of the people of God in future history.²⁹

1.2. *Wisdom of Solomon (First Century BCE/CE)*³⁰

The popularity of immortality in Philo’s Alexandrian Judaism is also well illustrated in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, a document often identified with the same intellectual context. In *Wisdom*, a simple hope in immortality highlights an extended textual unit (1:1–5:23) concerned with the divine response to human evil,³¹ a traditional concern in Jewish wisdom of the Hellenistic era.³² After an extended meditation upon the evils that the wicked inflict upon the righteous (1:16–2:20), the author explores the divine response to this problem. The wicked have deceived themselves in their plots against the righteous:

They did not know the mysteries of God,
nor did they hope for the wage of holiness,
nor did they discern the reward of blameless souls.
For God created the human for incorruptibility
and made him the image of his own eternity,
but through the envy of the devil death entered into the world,
and those who are of his lot experience it.
But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,

²⁸ Thomas Tobin, “Philo and the Sibyl: Interpreting Philo’s Eschatology,” *SPhilo* 9 (1997): 84–103.

²⁹ I borrow this axial terminology from discussions with Émile Puech, who used this imagery when describing realized and future eschatology at Qumran.

³⁰ The precise date remains disputed, although a first century CE dating has gained recent momentum. See David A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 131–133. David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (AB 43; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 23, dates *Wisdom* to the reign of Caligula (37–41 CE). John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 179, prefers 30–70 CE.

³¹ John J. Collins, “The Root of Immortality: Death in the Context of Jewish Wisdom,” *HTR* 71 (1978): 177–192. David Winston, “Wisdom of Solomon,” *ABD* 6:120–127, charts the end of this unit at 6:21.

³² Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 80–95, 183–193.

and no torment shall ever touch them.
 They seem to have died in the eyes of the foolish,
 and their departure was reckoned a disaster,
 and their journey from us to be their destruction, but they are at peace.
 For even if they were punished in the eyes of men,
 their hope is full of immortality. (2:22–3:4; revised from NRSV)

Wisdom reasons its way to a creative understanding of life, death, and divine justice, which C.C. Torrey called “the finest fruit of the Jewish theology of its time.”³³ God created humans “for incorruptibility” (ἐπὶ ἀφθαρσίᾳ) and made them “the image of his own eternality” (εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας ἀϊδιότητος) (2:23), “inspiring an active soul” (ἐμπνεύσαντα αὐτῷ ψυχὴν ἐνεργούσαν) and “living spirit” within them (15:11). The divine intention for creation never involved death: “God did not make death” (1:13); the creation contains no destructive poison within itself: “There is no dominion of Hades upon the earth” (1:14).³⁴ Wisdom even denies that the righteous have truly died (3:2–4).³⁵ Rather, their death only seems final to those unlearned in the mysteries of God: for “the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God” (δικαίων δὲ ψυχαὶ ἐν χειρὶ θεοῦ), “they are at peace,” “their hope is full of immortality” (ἡ ἐλπὶς αὐτῶν ἀθανασίας πλήρης) (3:1–4); and they enjoy “the wage of holiness,” which is “the reward of blameless souls” (2:22).³⁶ The author’s theodicy rests heavily upon immortality.

Recently, Émile Puech has argued that hope in resurrection of the body may also be assumed by the author.³⁷ A number of passages, for example, advance a this-worldly eschatology in which the deceased righteous reign on earth and judge the wicked (3:8; 4:16; 5:1–8)—a hope that may perhaps be fulfilled only through a physical resurrection.³⁸ Indeed, at the time of judgment, “the righteous *shall stand* with great boldness” (στήσεται ἐν

³³ C.C. Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature: A Brief Introduction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), 98.

³⁴ Cf. Wis 12:1, “your incorruptible spirit is in all things.”

³⁵ Karina Martin Hogan, “The Exegetical Background of the ‘Ambiguity of Death’ in the Wisdom of Solomon,” *JSl* 30 (1999): 1–24.

³⁶ Elsewhere, the soul may be deceived through wickedness (4:11); God will examine souls (3:13); wisdom cannot dwell in the soul of the wicked (1:4); thus, the author can claim that “righteousness is immortal” (1:15) and kinship with wisdom brings immortality (8:17; cf. v. 13, 4:7; 5:15; 15:3).

³⁷ Puech, *La croyance*, 1:92–98; Émile Puech, “La conception de la vie future dans le livre de la ‘Sagesse’ et les manuscrits de la Mer Morte: un aperçu,” *RevQ* 21 (2003): 209–232; see further, Gilbert, “Immortalité? Résurrection? Faut-il choisir?,” 271–297; Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 162–175.

³⁸ Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 172.

παρρησία πολλῆ ὁ δίκαιος), an expression that may imply a “rising” from the grave (5:1).³⁹ If so, however, Wisdom veiled this hope at the implicit level,⁴⁰ avoiding explicit mention of physical resurrection.⁴¹ Instead, Wisdom proposes the soul’s immortality; and death is even envisioned as the return of the body to the earth, as the dead “return their borrowed souls” (15:8; cf. v. 16).⁴² Where Wisdom refers to the exalted righteous ones “among the sons of God,” “among the holy ones” (5:5; cf. 2:13–18), an everlasting existence among angelic beings seems further to be assumed.⁴³

Wisdom’s use of immortality is apparent, yet this work makes an ultimately limited use of philosophy. Wisdom 8:20 (“Being noble, I entered an undefiled body”) has been cited as evidence for the pre-existence of souls; and the language of 9:15 does assert a strong anthropological dualism.⁴⁴ In these cases, the author perhaps employs popular Platonic commonplace.⁴⁵ David Winston, however, explains the reference in 8:20 as an expression of Lady Wisdom’s role in the creation of the human, rather than pre-existence of the soul.⁴⁶ If this is so, then Wisdom advances a much simpler hope in immortality, one that has blended “a mixture of Hellenism and a modified Jewish tradition.”⁴⁷ The author also attacks the Epicurean meditations of the wicked who deny an afterlife: they wrongfully claim, “Short and sorrowful is

³⁹ Puech, “La conception,” 224–225, proposes that Wisdom 5:1 implies physical resurrection by use of the verb *στήσεται* (Heb. *קם*), which may designate resurrection. He further argues that physical resurrection may be required for the fulfillment of 5:1, 2, 4, 5, 15. I would add to this list 16:13 (cf. 2:1), where God leads humans down to Hades and brings them out again.

⁴⁰ So Puech, “La conception,” 226: “C’est la manière de l’auteur de traiter de la resurrection sans employer le mot dans ce milieu culturel des juifs en Égypte.”

⁴¹ Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 183–186; Émil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175BC–AD135)* (rev. ed.; ed. M. Black et al.; trans. T. Burkill et al.; London: T&T Clark, 1979), 3:572; Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 127.

⁴² Cf. Gen 3:19; Ps 104:29; Sir 17:1–2; 40:11; Job 10:9; 34:15; Eccl 3:20; 12:7; 4 Ezra 7:78; Plato, *Tim.* 42e; Josephus, *J.W.* 3:372–374.

⁴³ Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 81. See further 5:15.

⁴⁴ Rohde, *Psyche*, 569 n. 117: “Pre-existence of the soul, return of the souls of the good to their home with God, punishment of the wicked, complete *ἀθανασία* of all souls as such—all this belongs to the wisdom of Solomon.” See also Charles, *History of the Future Life*, 307–309; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 141.

⁴⁵ Winston, “Wisdom of Solomon,” 6:123; Puech, *La croyance*, 1.92.

⁴⁶ Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 26; Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 131. The reference may perhaps refer, more epistemologically, to the entrance of wisdom into the soul of those who seek it (see 7:27; 10:16).

⁴⁷ Bonsirven, *Palestinian Judaism* 165.

our life, and there is no remedy when a life comes to its end, and no one has been known to return from Hades" (2:1); "Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that exist ... Let us take our fill of costly wine ... and let no flower of spring pass us by" (2:6–7, NRSV). Thus, Wisdom may oppose philosophical traditions that deny an afterlife.⁴⁸ Despite these occasional tangents with philosophy, however, the author's ultimate pursuit is not philosophy *per se*, but rather a theodicy in which the deity's plan for human life is realized even among the suffering righteous, whose souls now live on at peace in the presence of God.⁴⁹

1.3. *Josephus (37–Post 100 CE)*

Flavius Josephus remains the only Jewish author of his era to have provided a kind of systematic historiographical description of what Jews believed about life after death. In so doing, he avoids any explicit mention of physical resurrection; instead, he defines the beliefs about death that characterize Essenes, Pharisees, and Sadducees in terms of the immortality of the soul, following the lead of other Greek and Roman ethnographers who rendered the beliefs of their Barbarian contemporaries in analogous Hellenistic conceptions.⁵⁰ Among some ancient ethnographic traditions, the Jews, in fact, had gained a widespread reputation as defiant of death through their hopes

⁴⁸ See especially Job 14:1–22; *b. Sanh.* 11.1; *j. Sanh.* 10.1; Josephus, *J.W.* 2.165; *Ant.* 17.354; 18.16; Plato, *Phaed.* 70a, 86c, 88b; Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* 124–127; *Key Doctrines* 19–21; Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 3.417–462, 624–633, 806–911, 966–1023, 1087–1094; Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 51.20; Pliny, *Nat.* 7.190; Seneca, *Tro.* 371–408; Lucian, *Alex.* 38, 47, 61; Tacitus, *Ann.* 18.1; Diogenes Laertius, 10.124–125. On denial of afterlife, see Jocelyn M.C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 34–35; Franz Cumont, *The Afterlife in Roman Paganism* (Silliman Memorial Lectures; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), 6–12; Richmond Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Illinois Studies in Language and Literature 1; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1942), 74–81; Émile Puech, "Inscriptions funéraires palestiniennes: Tombeau de Jason et ossuaires," *RB* 90 (1983): 483–485; Puech, *La croyance*, 1:202–212; K. Strodach, *The Philosophy of Epicurus: Letters, Doctrines, and Parallel Passages from Lucretius* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1963), 58–60; Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 2:251–253; C. Segal, *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety: Poetry and Philosophy in De Rerum Natura* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 178–186.

⁴⁹ Puech, *La croyance*, 1:93; Puech, "La conception," 209–232; Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 185; Matthias Delcor, "L'immortalité de l'âme dans le livre de la Sagesse et dans les documents de Qumrân," *NRTh* 77 (1955): 614–615.

⁵⁰ Cf. Herodotus, 2.123; Poseidonius F 116 in Diodorus Siculus, 5.28.5–6; Strabo, *Geogr.* 4.4.4; Appian, *Gall.* 1.3. C.D. Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism: The Evidence of Josephus* (WUNT 2.208; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

in immortality, as Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.5) attests.⁵¹ Josephus makes effective use of this ethnographic stereotype.

His Essenes withstand the torments of the Jewish Revolt through their belief that “while bodies are corruptible and their matter not enduring, souls persevere, forever immortal” (φθαρτὰ μὲν εἶναι τὰ σώματα καὶ τὴν ὕλην οὐ μόνιμον αὐτῶν, τὰς δὲ ψυχὰς ἀθανάτους αἰεὶ διαμένειν) (*J.W.* 2.154). He further compares Essene beliefs with the Greeks, who “according to the same conception” set apart the Isles of the Blessed for their heroes and demigods (2.156). Similarly, Pharisees believe that every person possesses an incorruptible soul (ψυχὴν τε πᾶσαν μὲν ἄφθαρτον); souls of the righteous will migrate into a different body after death (μεταβαίνειν δὲ εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα), and they will enjoy “an easy passage for revivification” (ταῖς δὲ ῥαστώνῃν τοῦ ἀναβιοῦν) (*Ant.* 18.14), while those of the wicked suffer everlasting punishment (αἰδίῳ τιμωρίᾳ κολάζεσθαι) (*J.W.* 2.163). Sadducees, on the other hand, repudiate the survival of the soul and punishments in Hades (*J.W.* 2.165; *Ant.* 18.16). In *Against Apion* (2.218–219), Josephus comments more generally that Jews do not strive for rewards like the Greeks; instead, they believe that for those who die willingly for their laws “God has granted that they come into being again and receive a better life from the revolution [i.e., of the ages]” (δέδωκεν ὁ θεὸς γενέσθαι τε πάλιν καὶ βίον ἀμείνω λαβεῖν ἐκ περιτροπῆς).⁵² While not directly mentioning the soul, this passage still uses the recognizable Platonic terminology of *palingenesia* (*Phaed.* 70c–d, 72a; cf. also Philo, *Cher.* 113–115).⁵³ Other passages, including Eleazar ben-Jair’s stirring oration at Masada, betray similar features that accentuate Jewish hope in the immortality of the soul.⁵⁴

The descriptions of the Pharisees are as close as Josephus comes to making direct mention of physical resurrection.⁵⁵ The passage in *J.W.* does

⁵¹ Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5: “They think the souls of those killed by battle or torture are eternal: thus, (their) love of procreating, and contempt of death” (*Animosque proelio aut supplicis peremptorum aeternum putant: hinc generandi amor et moriendi contemptus*); cf. [Pseudo-] Hecataeus, 190–191; Philo, *Legat.* 117, 369.

⁵² Cf. Philo, *Legat.* 117, 369.

⁵³ Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism*, 107–109.

⁵⁴ *J.W.* 1.650, 653; 3.372–376; 7.343–349, 351–357; *Ant.* 1.229–231; 17.354; cf. *J.W.* 6.46–49.

⁵⁵ Many scholars read these passages as referring to resurrection: Louis H. Feldman in *Jewish Antiquities* (trans. Louis Feldman; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 13 nn c; Adolf Schlatter, *Die Theologie des Judentums nach dem Bericht des Josefus* (BFCT 2.26; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1932), 263; Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 141–142; Aimo T. Nikolainen, *Der Auferstehungsglauben in der Bibel und ihrer Umwelt. Bd. 1: Religionsgeschichtlicher Teil* (AASF 49; Helsinki: Der Finnischen Literaturgesellschaft, 1944), 174–175; James D. Tabor,

envision a return to the body; and *Antiquities* uses a term for “revivification” (ἀναβιοῦν) that is cognate with 2 Maccabees’ graphically physical portrait of resurrection.⁵⁶ These factors may indicate that resurrection of the dead underlies his surface description.⁵⁷ In their present forms, however, these descriptions imply a Pythagorean understanding of *metempsychosis* in which the soul leaves the deceased body and inhabits a “different” body; in fact, ἀναβίωσις and its cognates appear in a wide array of Greek philosophical reflections on the soul, including Pythagorean *metempsychosis*. Comparison between Josephus’s Pharisees and Poseidonius’s Druids provides excellent confirmation of this:

And while every soul is incorruptible, only the soul of the good migrates into a different body (μεταβαίνειν δὲ εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα), but the souls of the wicked are chastised by everlasting punishment. (J.W. 2.163)

They have faith that souls have immortal power, and there are punishments and rewards under the earth for those whose devotion in life has been either virtue or vice. For (wicked souls), there is appointed an eternal imprisonment; but for (good souls), (there is appointed) an easy passage for revivification (ἀναβιοῦν). (Ant. 18.14)

For the teaching of Pythagoras is strong among them, that the souls of men are immortal and after an ordained number of years they come to life again

“‘Returning to the Divinity’: Josephus’s Portrayal of the Disappearance of Enoch, Elijah, and Moses,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 225–238, esp. 232; Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 3:543; Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 175–177.

⁵⁶ Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism*, 48–51, 82–99. We should add here that similar terminology is used for the Persian Magi’s beliefs in physical reconstitution of the body (ἀναβιώσεσθαι ... τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ ἀθάνατους ἔσεσθαι) (Diogenes Laertius, 1.8–9). Martin Hengel, “Das Begräbnis Jesu bei Paulus und die leibliche Auferstehung aus dem Grabe,” in F. Avemarie and H. Lichtenberger, ed., *Auferstehung-Resurrection: The Fourth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium: Resurrection, Transfiguration and Exaltation in Old Testament, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Tübingen, September, 1999) (WUNT 135; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 162, further, perceptively observes that the term is used in *Ant.* 8.327, where Elijah raises the widow’s son.

⁵⁷ See, further, *J.W.* 2.153, where Essenes release their souls, “expecting to receive them back again” (τὰς ψυχὰς ... ὡς πάλιν κοιμιούμενοι), an expression that may imply a return to the body; cf. 2 Macc 7:11 (παρ’ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα πάλιν ἐλπίζω κομίσασθαι) and 7:29 (ἵνα ἐν τῷ ἔλξει σὺν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς σου κομισώμαι σε), which make overt reference to physical resurrection (see below). Yet a crucial difference emerges where Josephus’s Essenes expect to receive their “souls” back again, while the Maccabean martyrs will receive back the very members of their mutilated physical bodies (Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism*, 48–50). Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study* (StPB 39; Leiden: Brill, 1991), 169–170, has also suggested that *J.W.* 3.374, where the soul inhabits “undefiled bodies,” could imply a resurrection comparable to Paul’s “spiritual body” (1 Cor 15:44).

(πάλιν βιοῦν), as the soul enters into a different body (εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα τῆς ψυχῆς εἰσδυσμένης).⁵⁸ (Poseidonius, F 116 in Diodorus Siculus, 5.28.5–6)

Similar terminologies are also attested in descriptions of Pythagorean teachings⁵⁹ and those of Barbarian peoples like the Gauls.⁶⁰ Thus, even if physical resurrection underlies Josephus's account of the Pharisees, he has also carefully gilded this portrait with the pleasing veneer of popular Hellenistic philosophy. The New Testament evidence for both Pharisees and Hippolytus defines the beliefs of Pharisees in terms of "resurrection" (ἀνάστασις), rather than immortality of the soul alone;⁶¹ yet Josephus has completely sublimated any overt references to physical resurrection throughout the entire corpus of his historiography. This tendency provides a stark contrast to Josephus's rabbinical contemporaries who increasingly advanced the emerging formula of "revivification of the dead" (*m. Sanh.* 10.1; *Shemoneh 'Esreh* 2; cf. *b. Ber.* 60b).

Since Josephus was well aware that his works would go "among the Greeks" (*Ant.* 16.174; cf. 1.5–7; 20.262–263; *J.W.* 1.16), one is not so surprised, after all, to find him rendering Jewish eschatological hopes like resurrection in the philosophical idiom of the soul's immortality. In *Against Apion*, he could even argue that Moses and the Greek philosophers were "of the same sentiments, and had the same notions of the nature of God" (2.168). Such unity between Judaism and the philosophers permits Josephus to render Jewish eschatological hopes in the language of their Greek philosophical counterparts. This *interpretatio graeca* implies a kind of rough compatibility between immortality of the soul and Jewish eschatology, so much so that the former could represent the latter in his apologetic presentation of Judaism. The two, from Josephus's perspective at least, were perhaps not so alien to each other after all. Further, immortality was important to Josephus in a larger sense: it reaffirmed the providential control of history, the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the virtuous, as he himself com-

⁵⁸ Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923–1958), 2A:303.

⁵⁹ Plato, *Phaed.* 71e–72a (τὸ ἀναβίωσκεσθαι); Lucian, *Cat.* 13 (ἀναβιῶναι με ἕασον μόνον); *Gall.* 18 (ἤκουσα ταῦτα καὶ ὡς δόξαις ἀναβιῶναι ἀποθανόντων); *Vit. Auct.* 2 (τίς εἰδέναι τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἀρμονίαν καὶ ἀναβιῶναι πάλιν); cf. also Plutarch, *Luc.* 18; Aristophanes, *Ran.* 177; Appian, *Gall.* 1.3; Virgil, *Aen.* 6.748–751; see further Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism*, 50, 60.

⁶⁰ Cf. Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 6.14: "They wish to inculcate this as one of their leading tenets, that souls do not become extinct, but pass after death from one body to another (*sed ab aliis post mortem transpire ad alios*), and they think that men by this tenet are in a great degree excited to valor, the fear of death being disregarded;" and Strabo, *Geogr.* 4.4.4.

⁶¹ Mark 12:18–27; Matt 22:23–33; Luke 20:27–40; Acts 23:6–8; Hippolytus, *Haer.* 9.26–29.

ments at the end of *Ant.* 17.354. Alongside retribution in history, immortality affirms that the deity's justice extends even beyond history and is relentlessly engrained in the very structure of human existence.⁶² As with Philo, one must also recognize that immortality did not completely exclude future historical eschatology in Josephus's thought, as his presentation of Daniel strongly suggests (*Ant.* 10.277–279).

1.4. *Maccabees (First Century CE)*⁶³

In spite of having the graphically physical portrait of resurrection in 2 Maccabees at his apparent disposal,⁶⁴ the author of 4 Maccabees portrays the martyrs' hopes in the form of the soul's immortality.⁶⁵ Without making explicit reference to the fate of the body,⁶⁶ the martyred brothers "made haste toward death through torture, as if running the path toward immortality" (ὥσπερ ἐπ' ἀθανασίας ὁδὸν τρέχοντες), inspired to courage by "the immortal soul of piety" (ὑπὸ ψυχῆς ἀθανάτου τῆς εὐσεβείας) within them (14:5–6).⁶⁷ At death they "stand even now before the divine throne and live the life of everlasting blessedness" (17:17–19); they "do not die" but "live unto God" (7:19) in the presence of the ancestors (13:17, 16:25). The wicked King Antiochus, on the other hand, will endure everlasting torture "by fire, forever"

⁶² Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism*, 137–145.

⁶³ This date follows Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 3:591; Hugh Anderson, "Fourth Maccabees," *ABD* 4:453. Rationale for a later date is provided by John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 202–203.

⁶⁴ A relationship affirmed by Moses Hadas, *The Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees* (JAL; New York: Harper, 1953), 92–93; Hugh Anderson, "4 Maccabees," *OTP* 2:540–541; André Dupont-Sommer, *Le Quatrième Livre des Machabées: Introduction, traduction et notes* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1939), 26–32; Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 3:590; Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 138–139; David A. deSilva, *4 Maccabees: Introduction and Commentary on the Greek Text in Codex Sinaiticus* (Septuagint Commentary Series; Leiden: Brill, 2006), xxix–xxxi; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 278, 355; Charles, *History of the Future Life*, 321–322.

⁶⁵ Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 116; Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 139. Contesting this reading is Ulrich Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung im hellenistischen Diasporajudentum* (BZNW 44; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978), 97–105, who finds explicit reference to the soul's immortality limited to perhaps only 9:7 and 14:6. He also notes the absence of any severe anthropological dualism of body/soul from the work.

⁶⁶ One might conceivably read 9:21–22 and 17:17–19 as connoting a transformed bodily existence; yet there is no need to stretch these verses into veiled references to bodily resurrection.

⁶⁷ On athletic imagery, see deSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 244–245; Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung*, 98–99.

(9:8; cf. 9:32; 10:11, 15; 12:19; 13:15; 18:5, 22).⁶⁸ An especially enigmatic reference at the end of the work describes the martyrs as “having received souls pure and immortal from God” (18:23). This cryptic statement may imply that God gave the martyrs immortal souls at death,⁶⁹ yet these may also be the same souls God originally gave the brothers (13:13) and that have motivated them to righteousness (14:5–6). Although 4 Maccabees lacks much of the explicitly Greek literary and philosophical usage of Philo and Josephus,⁷⁰ it shares the basic portrait of immortality as the soul’s immediate presence with God at death. Rather than an essential property of the soul, immortality is, instead, presented as the prize that the martyrs will inherit for their suffering victory over the Greek king.⁷¹ Lacking physical resurrection, this portrait self-consciously contradicts its earlier source, 2 Maccabees, in its treatment of the afterlife.

Judaism’s exploration of immortality is a clear feature of each of these literatures. Yet they each employed an ultimately limited appropriation of Hellenism, and they did so in different ways. Philo and Josephus represent a more thoroughgoing integration of Greek philosophies of the soul, while Wisdom and 4 Maccabees more simply affirm that the righteous possess an immortal soul infused within them by God, granting hope of a blessed afterlife. These writings avoid any portrait of the soul as uncreated or as having powers of immortality independent from God. Even Philo insists that the spirit is breathed into the human by God (Gen 2:7) and returns at death to God who gives it a new life, rendering it immortal. The soul’s immortality, therefore, depends upon the animating breath of life that comes from Israel’s God. Moreover, Josephus, in spite of his grave hellenization of Jewish thought, does avoid certain radically Greek notions. Animal reincarnation, for example, is avoided in his description of Jewish beliefs.⁷² Where Josephus alludes to the “revolution [of the ages]” (*Ag. Ap.* 2.218–219; cf. *J.W.*

⁶⁸ R.B. Townshend, “The Fourth Book of Maccabees,” *APOT* 2:662; Torrey, *Apocryphal Literature*, 104.

⁶⁹ Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 118–119.

⁷⁰ If so, this would be typical of 4 Maccabees’ limited uses of Greek philosophy, as observed by Urs Breitenstein, *Beobachtungen zu Sprache, Stil und Gedankengut des Vierten Makkabäerbuchs* (Basel: Schwabe, 1978), 132–133; Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung*, 85–105.

⁷¹ Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung*, 98–99.

⁷² E.g. Plato, *Tim.* 42b–c, 91d; *Phaedr.* 249a–b; *Resp.* 10.620d; *Phaed.* 81e–82a. Jaap Mansfeld, “Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Others in a Middle Platonist Cento in Philo of Alexandria,” *VC* 39 (1985): 135, 139, notes that it is missing, as well, in Philo.

3.372), a Stoic conflagration of the cosmos may influence his thinking;⁷³ and yet he presents a final culmination of the ages more akin to Jewish apocalypticism than to the eternal return of Stoicism.⁷⁴ Philo and Wisdom likewise did not present the soul's immortality to the exclusion of a more this-worldly historical eschatology that would be lived out upon the earth. Rather than wholesale accommodation to Greek philosophy, Hellenistic Judaism reveals a more limited and moderate appropriation that resists easy generalizations. While affirming the justice of God through immortality, these authors' simultaneously promoted a cautious and complex synthesis with Jewish tradition.

2. BODILY RESURRECTION IN HELLENISTIC JEWISH WRITINGS

When the Greek Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha expressed hope in bodily resurrection, they did so in a context in which resurrection had already become a popular, if still somewhat emergent and contested, belief. If George W.E. Nickelsburg is correct in his reading of the Enochic *Book of Watchers* (22.1–13), then there is explicit literary evidence for resurrection as early as ca. 200 BCE in Palestinian Judaism.⁷⁵ Daniel's prophecy that "many who sleep in the dust shall awaken (ורבים מישני אדמת-עפר יקיצו)—some unto everlasting life (להיי עלם), and others unto everlasting reproach and shame" (12:2)—was, therefore, the author's own affirmation of a hope that had an extended prehistory in earlier apocalyptic Judaism in Palestine. An everlasting existence of celestial exaltation awaits the wise Torah teachers who turned the multitudes toward righteousness during the Hellenistic Reform;

⁷³ SVF 1:522, 2:811, 2:624; Diogenes Laertius, 7.156–157; Seneca, *Marc.* 24–26; Ioannes ab Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1905). On this possibility, see G.W. Trompf, *The Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 164–170; Roland Bergmeier, *Die Essener-Berichte des Flavius Josephus: Quellenstudien zu den Essenertexten im Werk des Jüdischen Historiographen* (Kampen: Pharos, 1993), 64.

⁷⁴ Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism*, 110–116; Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees*, 166–167; Hengel, "Das Begräbnis Jesu bei Paulus," 162. Perhaps one may compare the attitudes of Origen and Irenaeus toward Stoic eternal return, as in Carsten Peter Thiede, "A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter: Cosmic Conflagration in 2 Peter 3 and the Octavius of Minucius Felix," *JSNNT* 26 (1986): 85–87.

⁷⁵ Earlier, Puech, *La croyance*, 1:109–111, had argued in favor of resurrection at 1 *En.* 22.13. George W.E. Nickelsburg, 1 *Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36, 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 293; Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 5.

they will “shine like the shining of the firmament” (וַיִּהְיוּ כְּזֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ) and “like the stars forever and ever” (12:3).⁷⁶

The Dead Sea Scrolls have further contributed at least two additional writings that envision resurrection as the ultimate destiny of the suffering righteous in the generation after Daniel. In the *Messianic Apocalypse* (4Q521), which dates palaeographically ca. 100–80 BCE, God will raise the dead as one of the great eschatological signs that will inaugurate the messianic age, when the fortunes of the suffering righteous will turn from injustice to glory.⁷⁷ In those days, “the Lord will perform marvelous acts, such as have not existed, just as he sa[id], [for] he will heal the wounded and the dead he shall revive (וּמְתִימֵי יְהוָה), he will proclaim good news to the poor” (4Q521 2 + 4 II, 12). Additional fragments further hail the deity as the one who “revives the dead of his people” (הַמְחִייה מְתֵי עַמּוֹ) (4Q521 7 + 5).⁷⁸ Another manuscript from Qumran, dating to the late Hasmonean/early Herodian period, seems further to envision a future resurrection in its apocalyptic rewriting of Ezekiel 37,⁷⁹ an interpretation of this prophetic vision shared by other ancient readers.⁸⁰ In *Pseudo-Ezekiel*^a (4Q385), the vision of dry bones is rewritten precisely to address the author’s burning questions about theodicy: “I have seen many in Israel who love your name and walk on the paths of righteousness. When will these things be? And how will they be rewarded for their loyalty?” (4Q385 2 2–3). Resurrection is an important feature of the deity’s ensuing response, as “a large crowd of men will r[i]se (וַעֲמִד) and bless the Lord of Hosts wh[o] [causes them to live (חַיִּים)]” (4Q385 2 8–9). Whether or not these writings were composed at Qumran,⁸¹ they

⁷⁶ Cf. *Pss. Sol.* 3.10–12; Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 57–58.

⁷⁷ Émile Puech, *Textes Hébreux* (4Q521–4Q528, 4Q576–4Q579): *Qumran Cave 4.XVIII* (DJD XXV; Oxford: Clarendon, 1997); Puech, *La croyance*, 2:629.

⁷⁸ Puech restores a possible reference to resurrection in 4Q521 7 + 5 8–9, DJD XXV: וַיִּפְתַּח וְקִבְרוֹת; cf. Ezek 37:12 (MT): הֲנֵה אֲנִי פֹתֵחַ אֶת־קִבְרוֹתֵיכֶם. Puech, *La croyance*, 2:656–667.

⁷⁹ Devorah Dimant, *Qumran Cave 4.XXI: Parabiblical Texts, Part 4: Pseudo-Prophetic Texts* (DJD XXX; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 7–88; Devorah Dimant, “Resurrection, Restoration and Time-Curtailing in Qumran, Early Judaism and Christianity,” *RevQ* 19 (1999–2000): 527–548; with John Strugnell, “4QSecond Ezekiel (4Q385),” *RevQ* 13 (1988): 45–58.

⁸⁰ See, for example, *Lives of the Prophets* 3.11–12; *Gen. Rab.* 14.5; *Lev. Rab.* 14.9; Tertullian, *Res.* 29–30; *Apostolic Constitutions* 5.7; cf. 4 Macc 18:17; Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism*, 24. See also the later rabbinical interpretations in Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 156–165.

⁸¹ On this problem, see John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (LDSS; New York: Routledge, 1997), 110–129; George W.E. Nickelsburg, “Resurrection,” in L. Schiffman and J. VanderKam, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2:764–767.

certainly illustrate Qumran's palpable acceptance of resurrection as embodied in their incorporation of these manuscripts alongside copies of *1 Enoch* and *Daniel*.⁸²

These earlier Palestinian apocalyptic traditions declare that God's action of resurrection will bring new life literally to the bodies of those who are dead: for *Daniel*, God will raise into the heavens those who sleep in the dust; for the *Messianic Apocalypse*, the deity will revivify the dead, even as those physically wounded are healed; and for *Pseudo-Ezekiel*^a the deity's power to give breath and life extends even to those whose bones have literally been scattered. They do not rely upon the anthropology of the soul, as do Philo, Wisdom, Josephus, and *4 Maccabees*. In spite of this important difference, resurrection and immortality function in analogous ways to assert the deity's ultimate justice. The Greek Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha that assert resurrection were, thus, building upon a rich heritage of resurrection hope extant in earlier Palestinian circles. A crucial moment in the early history of resurrection transpires as this Palestinian apocalyptic hope circulates with acceptance in the Greek-speaking Diaspora.

2.1. 2 Maccabees (Late Second Century BCE)⁸³

Among Greco-Jewish writings, perhaps no work concerns itself more fully with a physical resurrection than *2 Maccabees*. An epitome of a larger history composed by Jason of Cyrene, *2 Maccabees* dates after *1 Maccabees*

⁸² In favor of the popularity of resurrection at Qumran, see further Puech, *La croyance*, esp. vol. 2; Puech, "Messianism, Resurrection, and Eschatology," in E. Ulrich and J. VanderKam, ed., *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 10; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 234–256; Chaim Rabin, *Qumran Studies* (Scripta Judaica 2; London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 73; Kurt Schubert, "Das Problem der Auferstehungshoffnung in den Qumrantexten und in der früh rabbinischen Literatur," *WZKM* 56 (1960): 154–167; E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE – 66 CE* (London: SCM, 1992), 302; Matthias Delcor, *Les Hymnes de Qumran (Hodayot): Texte hébreu, introduction, traduction, commentaire* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1962), 180–184; Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 27; Segal, *Life after Death*, 298–303; James VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus and Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), 245–246; Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism*, 19–26.

⁸³ On the date, see Robert Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees* (CBQMS 12; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 111–113; J.W. van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (JSJSup 57; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 50–52; Felix Marie Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabées* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1949), 34; Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 3:533; George W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 121.

but prior to the Roman conquest of Judaea. Three passages of the epitome (7:1–42; 12:38–45; 14:45–46) make reference to the resurrection, especially the extended narrative of Chapter 7, which John Collins has called the theological “centerpiece” of the book;⁸⁴ and it is a strong probability that these concerns with the resurrection represent the editorial activity of the epitomist, who abridged the earlier history of Jason while occasionally promoting his own ideals.⁸⁵ This strong concern with resurrection also distinguishes 2 Maccabees from its predecessor 1 Maccabees, which contains no evidence of hope in an afterlife, and its successor 4 Maccabees, which exclusively prefers immortality of the soul.⁸⁶ Immediately preceding the narrative of Chapter 7, a brief *excursus* on theodicy prepares the reader for the gruesome martyrdoms that will follow:

Now I urge those who read this book not to be depressed by such calamities, but to recognize that these punishments were designed not to destroy but to discipline our people. In fact, it is a sign of great kindness not to let the impious alone for long, but to punish them immediately. For in the case of other nations the Lord waits patiently to punish them until they have reached the full measure of their sins; but he does not deal in this way with us, in order that he may not take vengeance on us afterward when our sins have reached their height. Therefore he never withdraws his mercy from us. Although he disciplines us with calamities, he does not forsake his own people. Let what we have said serve as a reminder; we must go on briefly with the story.⁸⁷

(6:12–17, NRSV)

When the epitomist develops his theology of physical resurrection in the passages that follow, he does so largely in response to the crucial ques-

⁸⁴ John J. Collins, *Daniel, First Maccabees, Second Maccabees with an Excursus on the Apocalyptic Genre* (Old Testament Message 16; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1981), 310; cf. also George W.E. Nickelsburg, “1 and 2 Maccabees: Same Story Different Meaning,” *CTM* 42 (1971): 522.

⁸⁵ The entire chapter bears the marks of editorial insertion. See Doran, *Temple Propaganda*, 22; Robert Doran, “The Martyr: A Synoptic View of the Mother and Her Seven Sons,” in J. Collins and G. Nickelsburg, eds., *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980), 189–221; Ulrich Kellermann, *Auferstanden in den Himmel: 2 Makkabäer 7 und die Auferstehung der Märtyrer* (SBS 95; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1979), 13–17; Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life*, 99–103; Puech, *La croyance*, 1:85 n. 144.

⁸⁶ Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabées*, xxxiv, 370; H.W. Attridge, “Historiography,” in M.E. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (CRINT 2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 178–179; van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 24–25.

⁸⁷ Doran, *Temple Propaganda*, 53, refers to this passage as a “preface” to the martyrdoms of Chapter 7. See also van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs*, 137–138, 24–27, who calls this passage “a theodicy in a nutshell” and Attridge, “Historiography,” 179–181; Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life*, 92–96.

tions about divine justice that the deaths of the righteous martyrs raised. The martyrs will suffer for the legal transgressions of Israel in the ensuing narrative; yet through resurrection, 2 Maccabees affirms that God is a just disciplinarian and will ultimately show “mercy” without ever forsaking the chosen people. “Mercy,” in fact, resurfaces in the narrative of Chapter 7 as a characteristic of God’s covenant faithfulness in raising the dead martyrs (vv. 6, 23, 29).

The dramatically physical, even grotesque, understanding of the resurrection that characterizes this work places it in a category of its own as the most intensely material affirmation of resurrection in Second Temple Jewish literature. The narrative achieves this effect especially by heightening the physically violent deaths of the martyrs:

The king fell into a rage, and gave orders to have pans and caldrons heated. These were heated immediately, and he commanded that the tongue of their spokesman be cut out and that they scalp him and cut off his hands and feet, while the rest of the brothers and the mother looked on. When he was utterly helpless, the king ordered them to take him to the fire, still breathing, and to fry him in a pan. The smoke from the pan spread widely ...

(1 Macc 7:3–5, NRSV; cf. 7:7)

Amid these dramatic death scenes, the seven martyrs and their mother defy the Greek king while declaring their hope in a radically physical resurrection that copes even with the dismemberment and vaporization of the body:

You, O Accursed One, send us away from living in the present, but the King of the Universe shall raise us up unto an everlasting renewal of life (εις αιώνιον ἀναβίωσιν ζωῆς ἡμᾶς ἀναστήσει), because we have died for his laws. (7:9)

I received these [his tongue and hands, 7:10] from heaven, and because of his laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to receive them back again (παρ’ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα πάλιν ἐλπίζω κομίσασθαι). (7:11; NRSV)

One cannot but choose to die at the hands of mortals and to cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him (ἐλπίδας πάλιν ἀναστήσεσθαι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ). But for you there will be no resurrection to life (ἀνάστασις εἰς ζωὴν)!

(7:14, NRSV; see also v. 36)

By far, the most stirring discourse of the chapter is delivered by the mother of the seven sons. Repeatedly, she exhorts them to endure the trials of martyrdom with trust in God:

I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of humankind and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again (καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν ζωὴν ὑμῖν πάλιν ἀποδίδωσιν), since you now

forget yourselves for the sake of his laws ... I beg you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. And in the same way the human race came into being. Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God's mercy I may get you back again along with your brothers. (7:22–23, 27–29, NRSV)

Completing the epitomist's concern with resurrection, the elder Razis declares his hope in resurrection in similar language:

Still alive and aflame with anger, he rose, and though his blood gushed forth and his wounds were severe he ran through the crowd; and standing upon a steep rock, with his blood now completely drained from him, he tore out his entrails, took them in both hands and hurled them at the crowd, calling upon the Lord of life and spirit [or breath] to give them back to him again (ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸν δεσπότην τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ταῦτα αὐτῷ πάλιν ἀποδοῦναι). (14:45–46, NRSV)

Even Judas himself is a believer in “resurrection,” offering sacrifices to atone for his fallen soldiers, that they may enjoy a blessed afterlife (12:38–45).

Several concentrated motifs, expressed by a concise vocabulary,⁸⁸ develop a sophisticated theology of graphically physical resurrection. Above all, the resurrection hope invests itself heavily in creation theology. Six times, the martyrs hail the deity's ultimacy as creator of heaven and earth, “the Lord of life and breath” (14:46), as the basis for hope in physical resurrection (7:9, 11, 22–23, 27–29; 14:45–46).⁸⁹ The same deity, therefore, who created the world “not out of existing things” (7:28) has power to restore physical existence even to the vaporized bodies of the martyrs.⁹⁰ In this understanding, the resurrection has become a new creation (*Neuschöpfung*).⁹¹ There is no hint, however, that these recreated bodies will be transformed into an altered or celestial existence.⁹² Instead, the resurrection will merely restore

⁸⁸ Kellermann, *Auferstanden*, 39.

⁸⁹ On the terminology “life and breath,” cf. Gen 2:7; Ps 104:29, 139:13.

⁹⁰ Jonathan Goldstein, “The Origins of the Doctrine of Creation Ex Nihilo,” *JJS* 35 (1984): 127–135.

⁹¹ To employ the terminology of Kellermann, *Auferstanden*, 86; Friedrich Nötscher, *Altorientalischer und alttestamentlicher Auferstehungsglauben* (Würtzburg: Becker, 1926), 170; Diego Arenhoevel, “Die Hoffnung auf die Auferstehung: Eine Auslegung von 2 Makk 7,” *BibLeb* 5 (1964): 36–42; Hengel, “Das Begräbnis Jesu bei Paulus,” 160–161.

⁹² Here, I disagree with Kellermann, *Auferstanden*, 63–67, 73, 86. See further, Nötscher, *Auferstehungsglauben*, 170; Arenhoevel, “Die Hoffnung auf die Auferstehung,” 36–42; Jonathan Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 41a; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 305; Günther Stemberger, *Der Leib der Auferstehung: Studien zur Anthropologie und Eschatologie des palästinischen Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*

the martyrs' mutilated physical bodies; and they apparently expect to live out the risen life eternally on the earth.⁹³ Finally, the deity's resurrection of the suffering righteous may have been accompanied by a corresponding punishment upon the wicked (6:26, 7:14);⁹⁴ yet it remains uncertain whether the wicked dead will actually be resurrected for punishment.⁹⁵ Above all, the resurrection ensures the deity's covenant faithfulness: as a quotation from Deuteronomy (32:36) affirms in the story of the seven martyrs (7:6), "The Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion upon his servants."

2.2. *Pseudo-Phocylides*, Sentences
(*First Century BCE–First Century CE*)⁹⁶

The pseudonymously composed *Sentences* of Pseudo-Phocylides promote a conflicted and interesting amalgam of afterlife beliefs, including a fairly literal affirmation of bodily resurrection. In Greek hexameters, the author, who writes under the pseudonym of the great sage Phocylides of Miletus (6th c. BCE), advances a number of ethical exhortations that include a distinctive balance of Jewish Scriptures and Greek moral philosophy. The purpose of this complex balance eludes certainty. The work may have attempted to inspire confidence among Jews that their own ethics could be lived out in a manner that was compatible with Greek and Roman morality; it could have been oriented toward outsiders, to motivate respect for Judaism; or it may embody the author's own synthesis of universal morals derived from Jewish and other sources.⁹⁷

The author's meditations on death and the afterlife emerge in a section dealing with mortality and the proper treatment of the dead:

(ca. 170 v. Cr.–100 n. Cr.) (AB 56; Roma: Biblical Institute Press, 1972), 25; Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 150.

⁹³ James Moffatt, "The Second Book of Maccabees," *APOT* 1:131.

⁹⁴ Robert Martin-Achard, "Résurrection dans l'Ancien Testament et le Judaïsme," in L. Pirot et al., eds., *Dictionnaire de la Bible Supplément* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1985), 10:462.

⁹⁵ Preferring the second option, D. Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (ed. H. Gressmann; HNT 21; 4. Auflage; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966), 272–273.

⁹⁶ On the dating, see P.W. van der Horst, "Pseudo-Phocylides," *OTP* 2:567–568; P.W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides with Introduction and Commentary* (SVTP 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 81–84.

⁹⁷ For attempts to weigh among these and other options, see van der Horst, "Pseudo-Phocylides," *OTP* 2:567–568; van der Horst, *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, 185–195; P.W. van der Horst, *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 16; Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 173–174.

Let the unburied dead receive their share of the earth.
 Do not dig up the grave of the deceased, nor expose to the sun
 what may not be seen, lest you stir up the divine anger.
 It is not good to dissolve the human frame;
 for we hope that the remains of the departed will soon come to the light
 (again) out of the earth; and afterward they will become gods.
 For the souls remain unharmed among the deceased.
 For the spirit is a loan of God to mortals, and (his) image.
 For we have a body out of earth, and when afterward we are resolved
 again into earth we are but dust;
 and then the air has received our spirit.
 When you are rich, do not be sparing; remember that you are mortal.
 It is impossible to take riches and money (with you) into Hades.
 All alike are corpses, but God rules over the souls.
 Hades is (our) common eternal home and fatherland,
 a common place for all, poor and kings.
 We humans live not a long time but for a season.
 But (our) soul is immortal and lives ageless forever.⁹⁸ (Sent. 99–115)

These lines compile at least three distinct claims about the fate of the dead, and their precise relationship to each other is not entirely clear.⁹⁹

First, the author affirms the resurrection of the deceased body from the earth (103–104). The bodies of the dead must be buried and their corpses must remain undisturbed, since “the remains of the departed will soon come to the light (again) out of the earth” (καὶ τάχα δ’ ἐκ γαίης ἐλπίζομεν ἐς φάος ἐλθεῖν λείψαν’ ἀποικομένων). A physical resurrection of the material remains of the deceased will bring the dead out of the earth and into the light.¹⁰⁰ The word “soon” (τάχα) may even imply an urgent fulfillment of this “hope.”¹⁰¹ In principle, this resurrection is as physical as that in 2 Maccabees.

⁹⁸ Translation is (revised from) van der Horst, “Pseudo-Phocylides,” *OTP* 2:577–578.

⁹⁹ Other treatments have been provided by van der Horst, *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, 185–195; P.W. van der Horst, “Pseudo-Phocylides on the Afterlife: A Rejoinder to John J. Collins,” *JSJ* 35 (2004): 70–75; Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 169–170; John J. Collins, “Life after Death in Pseudo-Phocylides,” in F. Garcia Martínez and G. Luttikhuisen, eds., *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst* (JSJSup 82; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 75–86; Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 151–155; Puech, *La croyance*, 1158–162; F. Christ, “Das Leben nach dem Tode bei Pseudo-Phokylides,” *TZ* 31 (1975): 140–149; Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung*, 125–143.

¹⁰⁰ In disagreement with Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung*, 134–135, 137, who restricts resurrection to “ihres seelischen Daseins:” “Ps.-Phokylides hat in diesen beiden Versen die vor allem jüdischem aber auch griechischem Denken vertraute Vorstellung aufgenommen, daß der—aus Erde gebildete—menschliche Leib im Tode wieder zu Erde zerfällt und sein Geist zu Gott aufsteigt.”

¹⁰¹ So also van der Horst, “Pseudo-Phocylides on the Afterlife,” 72–73.

A second claim about the deceased complicates this portrait: “Afterward they will become gods” (ὀπίσω δὲ θεοὶ τελέθονται). Here, in the very same lines in which the author has affirmed a distinctively “Jewish” resurrection hope, he diverges radically toward “Hellenistic” understandings of divinization. The exaltation of heroes to the status of demigods was a traditional feature of Greek mythological literature;¹⁰² one may further compare the *apotheosis* of the Caesars.¹⁰³ Among the mysteries, divinization features within the Gold Tablets.¹⁰⁴ Pseudo-Phocylides may blend these mythological traditions together with Jewish hope in the resurrection. Josephus, for example, could compare Essene beliefs in the afterlife with the Greek cult of divinized heroes (*J.W.* 2.153–158; cf. 6.46–49). While this hope in divinization may appear utterly contrary to Judaism,¹⁰⁵ one may at least compare Jewish traditions that portray an angelic exaltation for the righteous dead, as Philo did for Abraham (*Sacr.* 5).¹⁰⁶ Angelic beings were, after all, “sons of heaven” (1 *En.* 6.1–3; 13.8; 14.4),¹⁰⁷ “sons of God” (1 *En.* 69.4–5; 71.1; 106.5), and in some Qumran usage, simply “gods” (אֱלֹהִים).¹⁰⁸ This reference to becoming gods may, therefore, walk a delicate line between Greek understandings of divinization and Jewish traditions that emphasized the afterlife as angelic existence.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² E.g. Hesiod, *Op.* 109–122; Aeschylus, *Pers.* 620; Euripides, *Alc.* 1002; Virgil, *Aen.* 6.129–131; Plutarch, *Rom.* 28.4–8; *Numa* 2.3; cf. also Pindar, *Ol.* 2.68–80; Rohde, *Psyche*, 115–155, 475; Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 174–210; Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 1:185, 216–222, 701, 2:545; Werner Jaeger, “The Greek Ideas of Immortality,” in Stendahl, ed., *Immortality and Resurrection*, 100–103.

¹⁰³ Hengel, “Das Begräbnis Jesu bei Paulus,” 145–146.

¹⁰⁴ Gold tablets A1.3, 9; 2.3; 3.3; 4.4, Thuri; Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, “Reading” *Greek Death: To the End of the Classical Period* (Clarendon Paperbacks; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 195; Radcliffe G. Edmonds III, *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the ‘Orphic’ Gold Tablets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 29–110.

¹⁰⁵ J. Bernays, *Über das phokylideische Gedicht: Ein Beitrag zur hellenistischen Literatur* (Berlin: Hertz, 1856), 204; for commentary, see van der Horst, *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, 186–188.

¹⁰⁶ See further 1 *En.* 39.4; 51.1–4; 104.2–4; 2 *Bar.* 51.5–12; cf. also Mark 12:25; Luke 20:36, Acts 23:6–8. Cf. also references to “heavenly ones” and “blessed ones” earlier in *Sent.* 71–75.

¹⁰⁷ Among Qumran scrolls, 1Q19 13–14.3; 1QS V, 22; XI, 7–9, 22; 1QH^a XI, 19–22, XXIII, bot. 10; 4Q181 1.2; 4Q418 2–2.c.4.

¹⁰⁸ 1Q22 V, 1; 1QM I, 10–11; XV, 14; XVII, 7; 1QH^a XVIII, 8; 4Q181 1.4; 4Q286 2a–c.2; 4Q400 1 I, 20; II, 9; 4Q400 2 7; 4Q503 48–50.8. Cf. further Ps 138:1 and Wisd 5:5.

¹⁰⁹ See further Martin Hengel, *Der Sohn Gottes: Die Entstehung der Christologie und die jüdisch-hellenistische Religionsgeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1975), 67–89; van der Horst, *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, 186–188; Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 81.

Finally, Pseudo-Phocylides comments most extensively upon the immortality of the soul/spirit, a belief that is only loosely synthesized with resurrection and divinization. The author uses the terms “soul” (ψυχή) and “spirit” (πνεῦμα) without clearly differentiating between the two. For this reason, some scholars have advanced a reading in which Pseudo-Phocylides assumed a tripartite anthropology of “body,” “soul,” and “spirit” with a separate fate for each, until the reunification of all three in the resurrection.¹¹⁰ One can admire such efforts to harmonize Pseudo-Phocylides’ complex conceptual amalgam. Following P.W. van der Horst, however, the author may simply use the terms “soul” and “spirit” interchangeably in this miscellany of both Greek and Jewish ideals.¹¹¹ The “spirit” is a loan from the deity, the divine image (πνεῦμα γὰρ ἐστὶ θεοῦ χρήσις θνητοῖσι καὶ εἰκῶν), which will soar up into the air at death, even as the body returns to the dust from which it was made (107–108).¹¹² The soul is “immortal and ageless forever” (115). Souls remain alive after death “unharméd within the deceased” (ἀκῆριαι ἐν φθιμένοισιν), an expression which, if taken literally, seems at odds with the affirmation that “the air has received the spirit” (ἀήρ δ’ ἀνὰ πνεῦμα δέδεκται) of the dead. On the other hand, if this phrase means “among the deceased,” rather than “within” them, then there is perhaps greater harmony with the author’s description of Hades (106–115).¹¹³ Since Hades may exist somewhere within the cosmic realms of the upper air,¹¹⁴ one need not imagine two separate destinies for the “soul” in Hades and the “spirit” in the upper air. A common abode awaits all souls in Hades, which is not precisely the gloomy place of shadowy existence familiar to Greek mythology, but rather “our common eternal home and fatherland” (112). This passage, in particular, exhibits an intense compilation of commonplace Greek thinking on the soul together with language drawn from Gen 1:26 and 3:19. Perhaps most striking when compared to other Jewish conceptions of afterlife is the

¹¹⁰ As suggested by Collins, “Life after Death in Pseudo-Phocylides,” 185–195; and earlier by Paul Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter: jüdisch Eschatologie von Daniel bis Akiba* (Tübingen: Mohr Sibeck, 1934), 252; Christ, “Das Leben nach dem Tode bei Pseudo-Phocylides,” 145; Fischer, *Eschatologie und Jenseitserwartung*, 138–143.

¹¹¹ van der Horst, *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, 189.

¹¹² Cf. *Jub* 23:31; Cicero, *Resp.* 6.13–17; Virgil, *Aen.* 6.129–131; Josephus, *J.W.* 2.153–158; 3.372–376; 6.46–49; Lucian, *Peregr.* 33; for inscriptions, cf. Werner Peek, *Griechische Grabgedichte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960), no. 12: “The Aether has received the souls; the earth, here, their bodies” (see also no. 35); Nilsson, “Die astrale Unsterblichkeit,” 110–114.

¹¹³ One may compare the funerary inscription of Arsinoe at Leontopolis. See Puech, “La conception” 218.

¹¹⁴ As demonstrated by van der Horst, “Pseudo-Phocylides on the Afterlife,” 74, from Cornutus’s *Compendium of Greek Theology* 35.

absence of the judgment motif: for Pseudo-Phocylides all humans share the same ultimate fate without ethical distinction. Based upon this understanding, Pseudo-Phocylides admonishes the rich to be generous, mindful of their common mortal destiny with all who have lived.

The counterbalancing of Jewish and Greek traditions in Pseudo-Phocylides leaves a distinct impression upon the author's portrait of the afterlife. The author may simply be inconsistent in this amalgamation; or perhaps an intentional effort to merge both Jewish and Greek ideals into a more universalizing synthesis underlies these verses. In either case, a clearly physical understanding of resurrection held an important place in the author's complex of ideas, further attesting to its resiliency even in a work of Diaspora Judaism self-consciously aligning itself with Greek morality and philosophy.

2.3. *Fourth Sibylline Oracle (ca. 80–90 CE)*¹¹⁵

Finally, an emphatic declaration about physical resurrection concludes the *Fourth Sibylline Oracle*, a late first-century Jewish redaction of an earlier Hellenistic political oracle perhaps dating from the generation after Alexander (4.49–101).¹¹⁶ While the original oracle narrated the rise of great empires from the Assyrians to the Macedonians, the later Jewish redaction deals with the events of the late first century CE, including the temple destruction (116), the legend of Nero's flight and return (119–124, 138–139) (Tacitus, *Hist.* 2; 8; 11.18; Suetonius, *Nero* 57), and the irruption of Vesuvius (130–136).¹¹⁷ These, and possibly other,¹¹⁸ historical allusions most likely reflect the activity of

¹¹⁵ On the dating, see Valentin Nikiprowetzky, "Reflexions sur quelques problèmes du Quartrieme et du cinquieme livre des Oracles Sibyllins," *HUCA* 43 (1972): 29–76; John J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," *OTP* 1:381–382; John J. Collins, "The Place of the Fourth Sibyl in the Development of the Jewish Sibyllina," *JJS* 25 (1974): 365–380; David Flusser, "The Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl and in the Book of Daniel," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972): 148.

¹¹⁶ Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," *OTP* 1:381; Collins, "The Place of the Fourth Sibyl," 365–380; Johannes Geffcken, *Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula Sibyllina* (TUGAL; Leipzig: Hinrichs', 1902), 18–19. Geffcken identifies the original Hellenistic oracle, especially at lines 49–114. On the history of interpretation of the Fourth Sibyl, see Nikiprowetzky, "Reflexions sur quelques problèmes ... des Oracles Sibyllins," 33–75. H.C.O. Lanchester, "The Sibylline Oracles," *APOT* 2:372–373, however, treats the Fourth Sibyl as a unity under Jewish authorship.

¹¹⁷ The redactor may have interpreted Vesuvius as God's wrath upon Rome according to Nikiprowetzky, "Reflexions sur quelques problèmes ... des Oracles Sibyllins," 35. Collins, "The Place of the Fourth Sibyl," 368, questions this. Geffcken, *Komposition und Entstehungszeit*, 18–20, identifies the Jewish redaction as intermittent throughout passages of 76–138.

¹¹⁸ *Sib.* 4.115–118, for example, has been interpreted as an allusion to the defilements against the temple perpetrated by the Zealots during the Revolt (cf. Josephus, *J.W.* 6.3); Nikiprowetzky, "Reflexions sur quelques problèmes ... des Oracles Sibyllins," 66.

a Jewish redactor who expanded earlier oracles in the Sibylline tradition, weaving in his own interpretation of history and morality (1–48). Crowning the final redaction is a series of eschatological prophecies that includes the physical reconstitution of human life:

But if you evil minded ones do not obey me, but loving impiety
 you receive all these things with evil ears,
 then there shall be fire throughout the whole world and a great omen
 by sword (and) trumpet at the rising sun.
 The whole world will hear a bellowing noise and mighty sound.
 He will burn the whole earth, and will destroy the whole race of men
 and all cities and rivers at once, and the sea.
 He will destroy everything by fire, and it will become smoking dust.
 But when everything has already become dusty ashes,
 and God calms the unspeakable fire, even as he kindled it,
 God himself will again form the bones and ashes of men
 and he will raise up mortals again as they were before.
 And then there will be a judgment over which God himself will preside,
 judging the world again. As many as sinned by impiety,
 these will a mound of earth cover,
 and dark Tartarus in the stygian depth of Gehenna.
 But as many as are pious, they will live on earth again
 when God gives breath and life and grace
 to these pious ones. Then they will all see themselves
 beholding the delightful and pleasant light of the sun.
 O most blessed, the man who will live in that time.¹¹⁹ (4.171–192)

The destruction of the earth by fire, including the burning of rivers, is a frequent theme in other *Sibyllines* (2.196, 286; 3.54, 72, 83–85; 7.121; 8.243). As John Collins and David Flusser have shown, the Latin grammarian Servius recounts a similar conflagration of the earth that concluded a Cumean sibyl.¹²⁰ These comparisons suggest that the cosmic conflagration was a conventional element in many sibylla; and the Fourth Sibyl has certainly raised this convention to new heights of intensity.

At first glance, such an eschatological conclusion to the Fourth Sibyl fits well in the hands of the late first-century Jewish redactor. Belief in the physical resurrection of the dead would accompany God's judgment upon the Romans for the temple destruction (116, 136), prohibitions against idolatry (6–23), sexual immorality (33–39), eschatological judgment (40–48), and

¹¹⁹ Translation is (revised from) Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," *OTP* 1:389.

¹²⁰ Flusser, "Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl," 163; Collins, "The Place of the Fourth Sibyl," 371–375. Flusser quotes the vital passages from Servius: "... *reverti aurea saecula et iterari omnia quae fuerunt.*"

the oracle's prevailing monotheism as the most conspicuously "Jewish" elements of the final redaction. The precise language used for resurrection is also highly reminiscent of other Jewish sources, where "God gives breath and life" (188–190) to the pious ones, an expression common to 2 Maccabees (7:22–23, 14:45–46), yet otherwise rare among ancient writings.¹²¹ Since the phrase "breath and life" also appears in an earlier eschatological section attributed to the Jewish redactor (40–48), the probability increases that the final eschatological scenario, including resurrection, has seen his subtle hand as well.¹²² The direct reference to the deity resurrecting humanity by beginning with "the bones" (ὀστέα καὶ σποδιῆν αὐτὸς θεὸς ἔμπαλιν ἀνδρῶν μορφώσει) (181–182) may also be compared with Ezekiel 37, often read as a popular resurrection prophecy by the late first century CE (cf. *Pseudo-Ezekiel*^a).¹²³ Further, the raising of the wicked and the good to be judged has precedent in Daniel and other earlier Jewish texts mentioning resurrection. The oracle's emphasis that God is judging the world a second time (4.169, 184) may further imply a symmetry between the primeval deluge (4.51–53) and the eschatological conflagration (170–192)¹²⁴—a historical schema familiar to the Enoch literature.¹²⁵ Moreover, the equation between "Tartarus" and "Gehenna" likely reflects a Jewish perspective, as the same association is made in the originally Jewish section of the First *Sibylline Oracle* (1.97–103), which describes the fall of the Watcher angels and its consequences.¹²⁶ The destruction of the world by fire is also a frequently attested motif in Jewish apocalyptic literature,¹²⁷ as is the sounding of the eschatological trumpet.¹²⁸

¹²¹ See further the frequency of the "breath of life" in LXX Gen 6:17; 7:15; Ezek 1:20–21; 10:17; 37:5.

¹²² Cf. Geffcken, *Komposition und Entstehungszeit*, 20 n. 4. The role of fire in 171–192 has precedent in 43.

¹²³ Dimant, *Qumran Cave 4.XXI*, 7–88; Dimant, "Resurrection, Restoration and Time Cur-tailing," 527–548; Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 156–165; Elledge, *Life after Death in Early Judaism*, 24.

¹²⁴ On the symmetry of first and second judgment, see Geffcken, *Komposition und Entstehungszeit*, 20 n. 3; Collins, "The Place of the Fourth Sibyl," 376.

¹²⁵ 1 En. 93.4; cf. Matt 24:37–39. One may offer the same interpretation to the Sibyl's language that God will form the human "again" (181), an expression that may imply resurrection as a second creation.

¹²⁶ Cf. also 2.283–310. "Gehenna" features in other Jewish and early Christian compositions (4 Ezra 7:36, 25.1; Ass. Mos. 10.10; Matt 5:22, 29–30; 23:15, 33; *Soṭah* 22a; *Pes.* 94a); cf. also 1 En. 27.1 ("accursed valley"); 67.6 ("burning valley"); 54.1; 56.1.

¹²⁷ 1 En. 102.1; 2 Bar. 27.1; 48.39–43; 4 Ezra 13.10; 25.1; *Pss. Sol.* 15.4; cf. *Jub.* 9.15; 36.10. See additionally, Friedrich Lang, "πῦρ, πυρόω, πύρωσις, πύρινος, πυρρός," *TDNT* 6:928–952.

¹²⁸ Joel 2:1; Zeph 1:16; Isa 27:12–13; 4 Ezra 6.23; *Apoc. Zeph.* 9–11; cf. Matt 24:31; 1 Cor 15:22. Gerhard Friedrich, "σάλιγξ, σαλπίζω, σαλπιστής," *TDNT* 7:84–88.

These accents within the eschatological scenario may betray the Jewish redactor at work, fulfilling the Sibyl's earlier rendition of universal history with an apocalyptic conflagration, resurrection, and final judgment.¹²⁹

At the same time, the Jewish redactor may well have been building upon an original foundation provided by an earlier synthesis of Persian-Hellenistic eschatology.¹³⁰ A number of stylistic expressions in this section imitate Greek epic and mythological poetry; they need not have been composed by a Jew.¹³¹ The last identifiable lines of the original Hellenistic oracle present the Macedonian kingdom as a time of disaster (89–101), an indication that the oracle probably polemicized against Alexander's empire and may have included an eschatological conflagration that hailed its demise and restored order to the cosmos.¹³² Comparison between the Fourth Sibyl and non-Jewish sources may, in fact, reveal similarities between its own conflagration and those of Hellenized Persian wisdom and Stoic thought. Diogenes Laertius preserves the report of Theopompus (and Eudemus of Rhodes) that the Persian Magi believe "men will be revived and become immortal" (ἀναβιώσασθαι ... τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ ἀθανάτους ἔσεσθαι) (1.8–9), a detail that may offer a hellenization of the *frašo-kereti* of Zoroastrian thought (*Yasna* 48.2, 43.5).¹³³ Justin Martyr attributes to the Sibyl and to

¹²⁹ This cosmic conflagration does distance the Fourth Sibyl from the other Jewish Sibyl-lines (3, 5), in the sense that the present conflagration contains no hope of a renewed temple. This may support the arguments of Collins, "The Place of the Fourth Sibyl," 370, that the Fourth Sibyl rejected the Jerusalem temple.

¹³⁰ Collins, "The Place of the Fourth Sibyl," 373–377, regards 173–192 as "inherited material" that may have undergone some Jewish redaction, the basic approach taken in my treatment above. Yet it should be noted that my treatment above attributes moderately greater initiative to the Jewish redactor in emphasizing physical resurrection and final judgment within his redaction of the earlier oracle.

¹³¹ The Sibyl's expression for "dark Tartarus" (Τάρταρά τ' ἐρώμεντα μυχῶι), in fact, is standard poetic language in Hesiod (Τάρταρά τ' ἠερόμεντα μυχῶ) (*Theog.* 119) and numerous other sources that quote him. The Sibyl's expression for a "mound" "covering" the wicked "down in the earth" (χυτὴ κατὰ γαῖα καλύψει) is also recognizably Homeric (χυτὴ κατὰ γαῖα καλύπτει) (*Il.* 14.114), as is its expression (ἄμ' ἤελιῶ ἀνιόντι) for "the rising sun" (ἄμ' ἤελιῶ ἀνιόντι) (*Il.* 18.136).

¹³² Collins, "The Place of the Fourth Sibyl," 373–374; Flusser, "Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl," 150–152.

¹³³ On the *frašo-kereti*, see Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 3:364; Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, "Der iranische Auferstehungsglaube," in H.-J. Klimkeit, ed., *Tod und Jenseits im Glauben der Völker* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1978), 67–70. Klimkeit, "Der iranische Auferstehungsglaube," 70–72, identifies a physical resurrection as implicit within the *frašo-kereti* in the earliest Avestan literature (*Yasna* 30.7; 34.14). The later Avestan literature, post-dating 150 BCE, is more explicit (*Yasna* 19; 21); perhaps the belief in physical resurrection among Persian *magi* may be anchored to the fourth century BCE by Diogenes'

the *Oracle of Hystaspes* the belief in an end of the world by fire (γενήσεσθαι τῶν φθαρτῶν ἀνάλωσιν διὰ πύρος) (*Apol.* 1.20),¹³⁴ an idea alluded to in the *Gathas* (*Yasna* 47.6, 48.8, 51.9–13);¹³⁵ and Lactantius further offers *Hystaspes* as pagan evidence for divine judgment upon the wicked (*Divine Institutes* 7.18).¹³⁶ In the *Timaeus*, Plato recounts a tale in which an Egyptian priest discourses on the destruction of the earth by fire (διὰ μακρῶν χρόνων γιγνομένη τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς πυρὶ πολλῷ φθορά) (22d). The notion of a fiery conflagration to the cosmos, of course, had also become traditional to Stoicism by the time of the Jewish redactor (Seneca, *Marc.* 26.6; Cicero, *Nat.* 2.118).¹³⁷ As Martin Hengel notes, “In the Hellenistic period the notion of the burning of the world was held only in a strongly syncretistic form ... all themes of the burning of the world need not be derived from Iran.”¹³⁸ Perhaps the original oracle concluded with a fiery conflagration that reflected such a syncretism of Persian-Hellenistic conceptions.

reliance on Theopompus (1.8–9). See also Geo Widengren, “Leitende Ideen und Quellen der iranischen Apokalyptik,” in D. Hellholm, ed., *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 81.

¹³⁴ Nikiprowetzky, “Reflexions sur quelques problèmes ... des Oracles Sibyllins,” 40–41.

¹³⁵ Widengren offers a detailed comparison between *Bahman Yašt II* and *Hystaspes* (“Leitende Ideen und Quellen der iranischen Apokalyptik,” 119–127).

¹³⁶ John J. Collins, *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism* (SBLDS 13; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974), 105, 210 n. 47, follows Windisch in the conjecture that Lactantius’s references in *Divine Institutes* 7.21 could also be found in *Hystaspes*, including belief in the destruction of the cosmos by fire. John R. Hinnells, “The Zoroastrian Doctrine of Salvation in the Roman World: A Study of the Oracle of Hystaspes,” in E. Sharpe and J. Hinnells, eds., *Man and His Salvation: Studies in Memory of S.G.F. Brandon* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), 130–131, also included the same passage (along with 7.15, 17, 19, 20) with “Texts (from Lactantius) in which Hystaspes is not referred to but appears to be used.”

¹³⁷ Geffcken, *Komposition und Entstehungszeit*, 20, on the other hand, attributes the eschatological scenario to “ein von der Stoa beeinflusster Jude ... das ist die Lehre der Stoa ... Aber sie ist ganz jüdische zugerichtet.” See also Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:200: “The fourth Sibylline ... has the following passage after a description of the judgment by fire which has probably been taken over from the Stoic conception of *ekpyrosis*” (see also 2:128 n. 552, 135 n. 607). Cf. further Seneca, *Nat.* 3.29–30, where the form of conflagration is especially attributed to water, along with earthquake, fire, etc. Seneca further cites Berosus as an ancient authority on this matter. Heraclitus is an important antecedent of these traditions, with his physics of fire in which all things consist of and are ultimately dissolved into the element of fire (Diogenes Laertius, 9.7–8); Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (ed. W. Kranz. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1951), DK B30–31, 43, 64–66, 76, 90.

¹³⁸ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 2:128. Hengel follows Rudolf Mayer’s treatment of this problem in *Die Biblische Vorstellung vom Weltenbrand* (Bonner Orient. Studien 4; Bonn: Orientalisches Seminar der Univ. Bonn, 1956), 78. Cf. also James Barr, “The Question of Religious Influence: The Case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity,” *JAAAR* 53 (1985): 219; Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 3:492–493.

The Jewish redactor of the late first century may well have found in earlier Persian-Hellenistic eschatology a promising canvass upon which he could further accentuate his own understanding of resurrection and final judgment. If so, then the resurrection in the Fourth Sibyl stands where multiple ancient traditions converge and intersect with one another, including aspects of Persian, Hellenistic, and Jewish thought. Although physical resurrection from the dead defied the logic of the Greeks on most counts,¹³⁹ Jews and later Christians were at the same time not entirely without earlier precedents for resurrection in Hellenistic culture. The Jewish redactor of the Fourth Sibyl employs such favorable precedents that may have concluded the original oracle. This strategy was not lost on later writers. The redactor's work was well received by the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which found in the Fourth Sibyl proof that the Greeks should accept resurrection, since it was attested among their own oracles (5.7).¹⁴⁰

3. CONCLUSIONS

Most assessments of life after death in early Jewish and Christian literature have documented the diversity of conceptions that prevailed during the late Second Temple period. Many have, therefore, wisely admonished against superimposing later intellectual developments back into these earlier texts, in order to harmonize them with the eventual pronouncements of the rabbis and church fathers. This conceptual approach is well justified in the foregoing analysis. Philo, Wisdom of Solomon, Josephus, and 4 Maccabees speak only of immortality of the soul apart from resurrection. To the contrary, 2 Maccabees and the Fourth Sibyl contain remarkably physical descriptions of resurrection without reference to the immortality of the soul. Pseudo-Phocylides blends a loose concoction of physical resurrection, immortality of the soul, and divinization. Our sources also diverge on whether they accentuate the afterlife as personal existence or they envision a more collective survival of "all Israel" or humanity. For Wisdom, Josephus, 4 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, and (probably) Philo, the afterlife is primarily

¹³⁹ 1 Cor 15:12, 35; Acts 17:18; Justin, *Dial.* 80; *Apol.* 1.8, 18–21, 44; Athenagoras, *Res.* 3–4; Tertullian, *Res.*; Origen, *Cels.* 2.55; 4.58–61; 5.14; 7.28–32, 42–45; 8.54; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 5.3–4; 8.4; 11.3–8; 12.2–7; 13.4. See further Claudia Setzer, "Jews, Christians, and Pagans Debate Resurrection of the Body," in C. Bakhos, ed., *Ancient Judaism in Its Hellenistic Context* (JSJSup 95; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 171–173.

¹⁴⁰ Rieuwerd Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles and Its Social Setting* (SVTP 17; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 86–89.

assured for the virtuous individual, rather than the collective group. Pseudo-Phocylides and the Fourth Sibyl, however, envision the afterlife as a more collective existence for all humans. Other distinctions involve whether our sources envision a more celestial (Philo, Josephus, 4 Maccabees, Wisdom [?]) or terrestrial (2 Maccabees, Pseudo-Phocylides, Fourth Sibyl) context for everlasting life.

The lines separating “Judaism” and “Hellenism” converge, intersect, and separate in interesting ways among these writings. With sophistication, the texts that envision the afterlife exclusively through popular Greek belief in immortality also reinterpret that belief in light of Israel’s God, Jewish tradition, and the moral problem of divine justice. Writings, on the other hand, that emphasize the distinctively Jewish hope in physical resurrection could still stand at the intersections with Hellenism, as in the case of Pseudo-Phocylides and the Fourth Sibyl. Immortality was, therefore, conceptualized within a Jewish intellectual framework and the alien Jewish hope in resurrection could still assimilate itself to a syncretism with select Hellenistic traditions. In this regard, thought on the afterlife conforms to what Erich Gruen has argued regarding the ways in which Diaspora Judaism told the story of its ancestral origins: “In a world where Hellenic culture held an ascendant position, Jews strained to develop their own cultural self-definition, one that would give them a place within the broader Mediterranean world and would also establish their distinctiveness.”¹⁴¹

A final note proves necessary when observing the vibrancy of physical resurrection in Greco-Jewish literature. Harry Wolfson once offered the following generalization about afterlife beliefs in “Hellenistic” and “Palestinian” Judaism: “Resurrection of the body and immortality of the soul are the two forms that belief took, the former primarily among Palestinian Jews, the latter primarily among Hellenistic Jews.”¹⁴² Certainly, there is wisdom to this generalization. At the same time, one must acknowledge a more complex picture. Hope in physical resurrection dramatically exceeded the boundaries of Palestinian apocalypticism and could circulate with popularity among Jews who self-consciously interacted with Greek language, culture, and thought, as attested by 2 Maccabees, Pseudo-Phocylides, and the Fourth Sibyl. This flourishing popularity of physical resurrection in the

¹⁴¹ Erich Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 30; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), xv; see also Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Atheneum, 1977), 346; and esp. in regard to the afterlife, Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*.

¹⁴² Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:396; cf. also Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 124.

Greek Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha poses a development of no small significance for appreciating the later articulation of resurrection by the rabbis: not only did resurrection have strong roots in Palestinian popular traditions; but it also found a home in forms of Judaism that consciously appropriated varying degrees of Hellenistic culture.¹⁴³ Such broad appeal in multiple sectors of Judaism could only have accelerated “revivification of the dead” as a crucial feature of later Jewish and Christian conceptions of the future life. To state the matter another way, the famous Jew of Tarsus did not stand alone within his own Hellenistic Jewish context, when he asserted the strange and scandalous hope in resurrection of the dead with boldness among the Greeks (1 Cor 15:1–58; Acts 17:16–34).

¹⁴³ This recognition is implicit within Hengel’s “Das Begräbnis Jesu bei Paulus,” 159–165.

THE SPIRIT IN SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH MONOTHEISM AND THE ORIGINS OF EARLY CHRISTOLOGY

Andrew W. Pitts and Seth Pollinger

Following the last several decades, the rich and developing discussion continues over the nature of pre-Christian Jewish and Jewish Christian monotheism, especially with reference to the origins of christological doctrines. Until fairly recently, many believed that Jewish monotheism defined itself by numerical singularity and, consequently, allowed very little flexibility in identifying entities other than Yahweh, strictly defined, as God. A number of recent scholars have questioned these assumptions, pointing to personified attributes (e.g. wisdom, the Logos) or exalted intermediary figures as evidence of a “flexible” Jewish monotheism. They suggest that these divine qualities or mediatorial agents provided a monotheistic conceptual framework where high Christology could have naturally originated within the Jewish heritage of the earliest Christians. These scholars typically set such views in contrast to the old *Kyrios* christologies, which purported that Jesus’ divinity must have arisen due to polytheistic and henotheistic influences that penetrated Christian theology through the Gentile mission. While we agree that the new school Jewish christologies offer an improved assessment for the origins of early Christology over the old school Hellenistic models, we still find that their analogies are insufficient. First, in Jewish monotheism, the divine attributes were too ontologically similar with Yahweh to provide an adequate antecedent to the Christian Messiah, a separate agent. Attributes, no matter how they are personified, are too closely identified with Yahweh’s primary instantiation of the divine identity to form a convincing analogy with the incarnate Christ. Quite different from Jesus—an agent said by the New Testament authors to share in the divine identity—wisdom is one of Yahweh’s attributes. Yahweh cannot be reasonably distinguished from the essential attributes that constitute his essence. Second, mediating agents were too ontologically dissimilar to Yahweh to provide an adequate antecedent to the Christian Messiah. Angels, exalted patriarchs, and the like do not share in the divine identity, again, making an analogy with Christ hard to bear out. Consequently, we propose, that the development of what we call functional Spirit-monotheism within ancient and Second Temple Judaism provides a more suitable matrix for the origination

of early christological beliefs, especially when combined with messianic movements within early Judaism and their applications within first-century Christianity.

1. SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH MONOTHEISM

In relation to discussions of early Christology, three views on the nature of Second Temple Jewish monotheism have emerged within the last century. We shall refer to these as numerical monotheism, mediatorial monotheism, and functional monotheism. It is our position that only functional monotheism has the necessary explanatory resources to account for the nature of ancient and Hellenistic Jewish monotheistic belief, on the one hand, and the origins of early Christology, on the other. Unfortunately, up to this time, advocates for functional monotheism have not rigorously explicated or substantiated its precise theoretical structure from the primary sources. Consequently, its definitions and roles need further clarification and its evidence needs further evaluation. In addition, the current configuration of functional monotheism does not contain appropriate antecedents that help ground a belief matrix that would allow for the rise of high Christology within a strictly Jewish framework.

1.1. *Three Possible Configurations for Second Temple Jewish Monotheism*

Traditionally, historians of early Christianity have represented Jewish monotheism in terms of non-flexible numerical oneness. We shall refer to this view as *numerical monotheism*. Wilhelm Bossuet's *Kyrios* Christology, a classic representation of the old *religionsgeschichtliche* out of which so many of the nineteenth-century German christologies were generated, is based upon the assumption of this version of Jewish monotheism. Since his rigidly assumed structure was unable to locate belief in Jesus' deity within the Jewish Christ cult due to the assumption of its rigid structure, he was forced to look instead for its origins in Gentile Christianity, where, purportedly, Hellenistic believers related Jesus to Greek cult deities and heroes, and eventually exalted him to a state of divinity.¹ As a fairly contempo-

¹ Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921; orig. 1913). For Bousset's contribution to the study of early Christology, see Larry Hurtado, "New Testament

rary advocate of this position, but with less emphasis upon the link to Hellenistic elements, Maurice Casey asserts: “The function of this strict form of monotheism as an identity marker of the Jewish community is stated explicitly by ps-Aristeas, who declares that Moses in the law ‘went on to show that all the rest of mankind except ourselves believe that there are many gods’ (ps-Aristeas 134). This limitation was real and pervasive.”² Casey concludes, therefore, that (regardless of intermediaries) Jesus could have never been understood as deity during the earliest phase of primitive Christianity (where “purely Jewish evidence” is relevant)³ due to this strict numerical form of monotheism that was in place. This was not even possible in the second stage (where Gentiles enter the [Jewish] Jesus movement). Only within the third stage, according to Casey, when Christianity had become a “Gentile religion,” did high Christology become possible.⁴ During this third (early patristic) phase, an “assimilating Judaism” arose as a result of Johannine Christians being removed from the synagogues, in which the Johannine community took on a Gentile self-identification eventually shunning its Jewish monotheistic heritage so that Jesus could be understood as deity.⁵

This and related analyses are problematic on a number of fronts. To begin with, it is questionable whether there even is any “purely Jewish” evidence from the period under consideration, since Judaism and Hellenism had already merged in so many ways—the older approaches of the history of religions school, which base the origins of high Christology in pagan polytheism, are especially susceptible to this objection.⁶ More significantly,

Christology: A Critique of Bousset’s Influence,” *TS* 40 (1979): 306–317. Other older approaches include Heinz Eduard Tödt, *Der Menschenson in der synoptischen Überlieferung* (Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1959); Werner Kramer, *Christos, Kyrios, Gottessohn* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1963); Ferdinand Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel: Ihre Geschichte im frühen Christentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963); Horst Balz, *Methodische Probleme der neutestamentlichen Christologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967).

² Maurice Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 92. Burton Mack is another contemporary interpreter who has defended this position—more explicitly in the form that we find in Bousset though—in his *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

³ Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, 98.

⁴ Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, 97.

⁵ Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, 35–38, *passim*.

⁶ This point has been established substantially in Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1974); Martin Hengel, *The ‘Hellenization’ of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1989). See also S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in*

however, Casey and others who (exclusively) advocate numerically based conceptions of monotheism rarely prove to be persuasive because their definitions are not flexible enough to explain the array of monotheistic variations expressed in the primary sources from this period. Vogel, a modern Jewish scholar, further criticizes this view for casting the origins of monotheism against paganism (singularity vs. plurality) since such a dichotomy may not have existed and thus does not account for the uniqueness of biblical monotheism, deriving its meaning from external rather than internal influences.⁷

Among the “new” *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* there is a strong resistance to a pagan-Hellenistic *Kyrios* Christology in favor of an earlier Palestinian model. Alan Segal and Martin Hengel are often identified as the most significant forerunners of this newer approach to the origins of Christology.⁸ Advocates of this school typically claim that while the exclusive

Jewish Palestine: Studies in Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the 1 Century BCE–IV Century C.E. (TSJTS 18; New York: JTS, 1950); S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II–IV Centuries C.E.* (2nd ed.; New York: Feldheim, 1965).

⁷ Manfred H. Vogel, “Monotheism,” in Cecil Roth, ed., *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), 12:262. Similarly, Pinchas Lapide, “Jewish Monotheism,” in Pinchas Lapide and Jürgen Moltmann, eds., *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine: A Dialogue* (trans. Leonard Swidler; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 28–32, has defended the idea that monotheism is in essence and not in number. And yet, God’s essence is so absolute and exclusive that no other could possibly exist. By Lapide’s definition, two cannot be absolute, even if joined within a divisible composite.

⁸ Alan Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) and Martin Hengel, *The Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976). On this school and its investigation of early Christology, see Jarl Fossum, “The New *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*: The Quest for Jewish Christology,” in Euguen H. Lovering, Jr., ed., *SBL Seminar Papers 1991* (SBLSP 30; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 638–646; Jarl Fossum, *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), vii–xxi, 11–18. See also Jarl Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism* (WUNT 36; Tübingen: Mohr, 1985); essays in Carey C. Newman, James R. Davila, and Gladys S. Lewis, eds., *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (JSJSup 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999); Dieter Zeller, “New Testament Christology and its Hellenistic Reception,” *NTS* 46 (2001): 312–333, esp. 312–315; Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 11–18. Besides Fossum and Hurtado mentioned above, advocates of this school, following especially Hengel, include: Paul A. Rainbow, “Jewish Monotheism as a Matrix for New Testament Christology: A Review Article,” *NovT* 33 (1991): 78–91; Margret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel’s Second God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992); David B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh*

strains of Jewish monotheism mentioned by Casey and the older forms of *religionsgeschichtliche* certainly existed, inclusive variations (allowing for divine intermediaries to be incorporated within divine identity) were found as well. As Horbury sees it, in the Herodian period, “exclusive and inclusive types of monotheism were concurrent, and the inclusive type was also influential.”⁹ Advocates of the new school emphasize that Hellenistic elements were already present even within Palestinian Judaism, arguing for a flexible Jewish monotheism, demonstrated by a large number of divine intermediaries who sometimes seem to share in the divine oneness. We shall call this perspective on first-century Jewish monotheism *mediatorial monotheism*. Within this understanding, monotheism is to be understood in terms of uniqueness rather than numerical individuality and high Christology is an early Jewish-Christian mutation of this view, often said to be grounded in the primal experiences of early Christians.¹⁰ Divine

Texts in Paul's Christology (WUNT 2.47; Tübingen: Mohr, 1992); Timo Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne: Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse* (WUNT 2.142; Tübingen: Mohr, 1992); Carey C. Newman, *Paul's Glory Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric* (New York: Brill, 1992); Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (WUNT 2.70; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995); Peter R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels: Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Charles A. Giessen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998); Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E. Sproston North, eds., *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism* (London: Continuum, 2004); Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007). James D.G. Dunn, “Was Christianity a Monotheistic Faith from the Beginning?,” *SJT* 35/4 (1982): 303–336 (332–336), has points of contact with this view as well when he concludes that Old Testament minded believers could follow Jesus and still call themselves monotheists since people like the Angel of the Lord and the Son of Man closely resembled the Lord and did not threaten monotheism in the Old Testament. N.T. Wright is sometimes grouped among these scholars as a result of his work, for example, in *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992). Hurtado has probably provided the most impressive and exhaustive treatments along these lines and confesses to depending most directly upon Hengel in setting the trajectory for his studies (Hurtado, *Lord*, 2).

⁹ W. Horbury, “Jewish and Christian Monotheism in the Herodian Age,” in Stuckenbruck and North, eds., *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism*, 16–44 (43).

¹⁰ Larry Hurtado, especially in his works *One God and Lord*, is the primary representative of this view. Bauckham, *God*, represents an alternative view, which rejects the validity of divine intermediaries, but argues for an early Christology based in the nature of the divine identity within Jewish monotheism as opposed to the dominant functional or ontic models. Christology emerges, then, with the novel idea that Christ also shares within the divine identity. James D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: An Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), also falls outside of these

intermediaries may include personal agents, such as exalted patriarchs, angels, or personified divine attributes, such as wisdom and the Logos,¹¹ or even messianic figures.¹² These intermediaries, it is said, provide the explanatory link for understanding the development of a Jewish monotheism into a christological monotheism. As a fairly typical example of how angelic intermediate figures functioned in this way, Stuckenbruck explains how the Lamb of Revelation could have come to be worshiped in a Jewish monotheistic framework: “Perhaps the closest analogy to the veneration of an independent figure coupled with an express retention of a monotheistic framework is evident in some of the sources in which angles are honored alongside God as aligned and yet subordinate beings.” Of course, on this proposal, it must be admitted that “If this is true, then we may be faced with a religio-historical discontinuity as to the kind and intensity of worship between angels and Christ ...”¹³ Hengel, to cite an example from the second version of mediatorial monotheism, favors understanding early Christology as a development of personified wisdom traditions, especially within the creational context of Prov 8:22–36. Following Ernst Käsemann, he describes Jewish wisdom as “the mother of high christology.”¹⁴

While the proposals of Hengel, Segal, Hurtado, and their followers provide a more convincing assessment than that of the old school of *religions-geschichtliche* and its newer instantiations in scholars like Mack and Casey, their adherents often note the problems inherent in these views. As Stuckenbruck acknowledges, the analogy simply isn’t tight enough. Bauckham’s too often neglected critique is correct: “the monotheism of Second Temple Judaism was indeed ‘strict’ ... most Jews in this period were highly self-consciously monotheistic and had certain very well defined ideas as to how

categories in that he argues that high Christology was a later development while at the same time noting important criticisms for those advocating a Gentile origin for a high Christology.

¹¹ See Hurtado, *One God*, 17–92.

¹² On this view, see especially J.H. Charlesworth, “From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology: Some Caveats and Perspectives,” in W.S. Green, E.S. Frerichs, and J. Neusner, eds., *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 115–164; A. Chester, “Jewish Messianic Expectations and Mediatorial Figures in Pauline Christology,” in Martin Hengel and Ulrich Heckel, eds., *Paulus und antike Judentum* (WUNT 58; Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 17–89; William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998); H.I. Lee, *Aquila from Messiah to Preexistent Son: Jesus’ Self-Consciousness and Early Christian Exegesis of Messianic Psalms* (WUNT 2.192; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); Andrew Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation: Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology* (WUNT 207; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

¹³ Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 272.

¹⁴ Martin Hengel, “Jesus as Messianic Teacher of Wisdom and the Beginnings of Christology,” in his *Studies in Early Christology* (London: T&T Clark, 1995), 116.

the uniqueness of the one God should be understood.¹⁵ There was no ambiguity about intermediary figures in relation to Yahweh. He alone is God. At the same time, this strict brand of monotheism did not preclude the possibility of someone other than the Father sharing in the divine reality. Worship of other gods was inappropriate because they did not participate in the divine identity of Yahweh as the exclusive creator and ruler over all things. These two roles distinguished the God of Israel from all other reality and that is why henotheism or polytheism was such an abomination, according to Bauckham. Angels and other sorts of supposed intermediaries did not participate in creating and ruling roles and, therefore, were typically excluded from the divine reality. Exclusive worship of Yahweh was demanded of Jewish monotheists, not primarily because their God existed in numerical singularity (what God is), but as “a *recognition of and response to his unique identity*” (emphasis his) as creator and sovereign ruler (who God is).¹⁶ Bauckham does not claim that divine intermediaries have absolutely no relevance to the connection between Jewish and early Christian monotheism (especially as it relates to Christology), but he does insist that the large amount of emphasis given here often seems misdirected. He proposes instead that the continuity between first-century Jewish and primitive Christian monotheism should be described not in terms of intermediaries, but as an incorporation of Christ into the monotheistic divine identity by allowing Christ to share in the two unique roles of the divine presence—an extremely novel and radical development, by Bauckham’s own admission.¹⁷

Bauckham’s view seems to square, at least, with the Old Testament evidence. The covenantal context for the command in Exod 20:3 certainly prohibits a reading according to a strict metaphysical oneness. The demand is for covenant allegiance between God and his people. Though the key preposition is flexible, the command certainly restricts Israel from recognizing any other gods among Yahweh’s presence. And since His presence is absolute and all pervading, this restricts worship and honor directed toward anyone or anything else. Although the Shema in Deut 6:4–5 has been viewed as a statement of numerical singularity, several recent interpreters have argued that it more likely refers to the uniqueness of Yahweh among the pagan gods of the surrounding nations.¹⁸ Similarly, affirmations like those of

¹⁵ Bauckham, *God*, 3.

¹⁶ Bauckham, *God*, 14.

¹⁷ Bauckham, *God*, 25–79.

¹⁸ So N. Lohfink and J. Bergman, “ יהוה , *echâdh*,” *TDOT* 1:200. See also M. Peter, “Dtn 6:4—ein Monotheistischer Text?,” *BZ* 24 (1980): 252–262; H. Ben-Shammai, “Qirqisani on the

Isa 43:10, “Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me,” are strictly within the context of idolatry. Nowhere in the Old Testament does the language of monotheism directly exclude more than one instantiation of the divine monotheistic identity.

The Second Temple literature generally expresses a similar message. Philo (*Spec.* 1.167) and Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2.193) both insist on the worship of “one God” in “one temple.” This affirmation does not, however, rule out multiple levels within the divine being as we find in Philo, for example.¹⁹ We will develop the details of the metaphysical and theological configuration of Second Temple Jewish monotheism much more below.

Yet, in terms of the development of early Christology, Bauckham’s proposal remains problematic, since, by dismissing the significance of intermediaries, there is now no direct analogy for the origin of the christological doctrine.²⁰ So while we agree with Bauckham about the fundamental nature of the first-century monotheistic reality (it should be understood in terms of identity and roles instead of numerical singularity), he seems to overstate the point so that there no longer remains a substantial link between Christ and the monotheistic identity—thus, the portrayal is indeed, “radical.” The parallels he does make among early Christology wisdom, and logos in Second Temple Judaism are not sufficiently distinguishable from Yahweh’s essence. His study is also surprisingly underdeveloped in terms of substantiating the structure for Second Temple Jewish monotheism that he proposes within the primary sources. Therefore, these roles need further clarification and it remains to be explored what kinds of figures are said to participate within them in ancient and Second Temple Judaism.

Although surveys in the christological literature present him as such,²¹ Bauckham is not the first among recent scholars to suggest that first-century Jewish monotheism should be understood within a functional, identity-based framework. We shall call this view *functional monotheism* in contrast to the two prevailing views of numerical monotheism and mediato-

Oneness of God,” *JQR* 73 (1982): 105–111; J. Gerald Janzen, “On the Most Important Word in the Shema (Deuteronomy 6.4–5),” *VT* 37 (July 1987): 280–282; R.W.L. Moberly, “‘Yahweh Is One:’ The Translation of the Shema,” in John Emerton, ed., *Studies in the Pentateuch* (VTSup 41; Leiden: Brill, 1990), 209–215; Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 439–440.

¹⁹ See Marie E. Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and Its Bearing on the New Testament* (HM 1; London: Heythrop College, 1976), 53–58.

²⁰ See Talbert’s critique of Bauckham’s book to this effect. Charles H. Talbert, “Review of *God Crucified* by Richard Bauckham,” *PRSt* (2001): 309–310 (309).

²¹ E.g. Lee, *From Messiah to Preexistent Son*, 13–14; Chester, *Messiah*, 17–27.

rial monotheism. According to Sanders, for example, although first-century Jews believed that “there was only one real God,” the meaning of monotheism “was flexible, and Jews were by no means completely isolated from the pervasive influence of the rich and variegated world of their environment.”²² Sanders suggests that belief that “God created and rules over the entire world” was fundamental to Second Temple Jewish monotheism.²³ He also adds to these distinct features of God’s identity both the revelatory and redeeming work of the one God through the covenant.²⁴ As per usual, Wright follows Sanders’ analysis fairly closely. Wright says that first-century Jewish monotheism was understood in terms of (1) creational monotheism (it “spoke of a god who had made the world”); (2) providential monotheism (“god, the creator, works in and through what might be called ‘natural events’”); and (3) covenantal monotheism (when “the creator acts to restore and heal his world, he will do so through this people”). According to Wright, this threefold monotheistic framework is sufficient to rule out any competing pagan versions of monotheism and certainly various henotheisms, deisms, and polytheisms.²⁵

1.2. *Functional Monotheism in Ancient and Second Temple Judaism*

The connection between Yahweh’s monotheistic and creating/ruling/redeeming/revealing identities are clear in both ancient and Hellenistic Judaism. Though much could be said about each of these, in this study we will emphasize especially Yahweh’s creating and ruling roles with constant reference to redeeming and revealing functions. Revealing could also be given much more extensive treatment than what we will be able to do here (especially in relation to Torah and wisdom), but within this limited treatment, we will locate Yahweh’s revelatory activity within the context of the revelation of his covenant plan of redemption. We will consolidate Sanders’ last two categories into redemption-revelation, where revelation will come under the broader scope of redemption, with the caveat that it would be profitable in other contexts to explore Yahweh’s redeeming and revealing monotheistic functions independently. While liturgical forms like worship and prayer (the focus of most previous analyses of monotheism and Christology, especially in the work of Hurtado) should be directed to

²² E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985), 247.

²³ Sanders, *Judaism*, 247.

²⁴ Sanders, *Judaism*, 247–262.

²⁵ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 248–252.

Yahweh alone,²⁶ these constitute human responses rather than a feature intrinsic to divine identity—monotheistic identity is configured instead along the axis of divine functionality and exclusivity within these functions.

We do not have to look far in the Hebrew Bible to find statements affirming Yahweh's exclusive role as the creator of all things as the ground for his monotheistic uniqueness. The opening line of the Torah declares God as the creator of all things. The merismus in Gen 1:1 through the use of the compound terms "the heavens and the earth" (הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ) is intended to incorporate the creation of the entire cosmos, the details of which will be recounted in Genesis 1–2. From the beginnings of Israel's history, Jews esteemed their God through his unique status as divine creator. In Deut 4:32–39, Moses connects the day Yahweh created man on the earth (בְּרֵאשִׁית עֲלֵי-הָאָרֶץ) with the fact that besides Yahweh, "there is no other" (אֵין עוֹד). Isaiah fills his oracles with statements like "I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself and spreading out the earth all alone" (Isa 44:24; cf. also Isa 42:5; 45:12; 48:13).²⁷ Yahweh reveals himself to Jeremiah as the exclusive creator of all things, at the very least implying a strong connection between creation and monotheism: "Thus says Yahweh who made the earth; Yahweh, who formed it to establish it, Yahweh is His name" (Jer 33:2). The same idea is communicated in Jer 51:19: "For He is the Maker of all and of the tribe of His inheritance. Yahweh of hosts is His name." Similarly, the book of Malachi asks "Has not one God created us?" (2:10). The creator motif appears to be primary, but numerous passages tie creator and sovereignty motifs to monotheism. Jeremiah, for example, says: "But Yahweh is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes and the nations cannot endure His indignation" (10:10), since the "gods that did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens" (10:11), and it "is He who made the earth by His power, who established the world by His wisdom and by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens" (10:12). Hezekiah's prayer weds these elements as well when he says: "Yahweh, the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God and you alone, over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth" (2 Kgs 19:15). Nehemiah's prayer echoes

²⁶ Mediatorial agents, esp. angels, could be involved at some level here, particularly in the Second Temple period (e.g. Tob 11:14–15; 12:12, 15; 1 En. 9:1–11; 15:2; 40:6–9; T. Levi 3:5–7; 3 Bar. 11–16), but they also refuse worship (e.g. Tob 12:16–22; Apoc. Zeph. 6:11–15; 3 En. 1:4–8).

²⁷ Old Testament translations are our own, unless otherwise noted.

similar sentiments, tying these two fundamental functions to Yahweh's theistic exclusivity: "You alone are Yahweh. You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before you" (Neh 9:6). Amos brings these together as well when he affirms: "He who made the Pleiades and Orion and changes deep darkness into morning, who also darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth, Yahweh is His name" (Amos 5:8; see also Ezek 31:16 and Ps 146:3–6, where sovereignty and creation motifs appear together, and Hab 3:2–19, where sovereignty, creation, and redeemer motifs appear together). Monotheistic identity is linked to Yahweh's role as creator, ruler, *and* (covenant) redeemer-revealer in David's psalm of thanksgiving: "remember his covenant forever ... Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day ... For great is Yahweh, He is also to be feared above all gods ... For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but Yahweh made the heavens" (1 Chron 16:15, 24, 25–26). Yahweh makes the same claims of himself in Isaiah: "There is no one besides Me. I am Yahweh and no other ..., the one forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am Yahweh who does all these ... Let the earth open and let salvation bear fruit. I, Yahweh, have created it" (Isa 46:6–7, 8).

This pattern is carried over into Second Temple Judaism as well. Given the passion for monotheism within the Second Temple era (e.g. Wis 12:13; Jdt 9:14; Bel 1:41; Sir 24:24), there remains no shortage of evidence for the belief in Yahweh as the only creator, ruler, and redeemer. We can see this first by reviewing the relevant apocryphal literature. Before Judith's effort to assassinate the leader of the enemy, she appeals: "Hear, O hear me, God of my father, God of the inheritance of Israel, Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of the waters, King of all thy creation, hear my prayer!" (Jdt 9:10).²⁸ She now identifies the monotheistic God, who has been the focus of her appeal (esp.) in the previous two chapters, in terms of his role as creator. She then prays that the creator would promote monotheism among all Israel: "And cause thy whole nation and every tribe to know and understand that you are God, the God of all power and might, and that there is no other who protects the people of Israel but you alone!" (Jdt 9:12). She also blends creator and redeemer motifs in her praise to Yahweh for his exclusivity (see Jdt 13:18; 16:14). Similarly, in *Bel and the Dragon*, the author views Yahweh's

²⁸ Translations from the Old Testament Apocrypha are from the RSV throughout.

singularity in connection with his role as creator and ruler: “And the king said to him, ‘Why do you not worship Bel?’ He answered, ‘Because I do not revere man-made idols, but the living God, who created heaven and earth and has dominion over all flesh’” (Bel 1:5). Ecclesiasticus (Sir) expresses a corresponding belief. Throughout the text, Ben Sira puts forward scriptural faith (monotheism) as the righteous way to live because it was dictated by the creator or the one who creates, as in the following command: “Do not hate toilsome labor, or farm work, which were created by the Most High” (Sir 7:15; see also Sir 43, esp. 43:33).²⁹

In 2 Maccabees, the prayer of Nehemiah succinctly embodies the three major components of Jewish functional monotheism: “O Lord, Lord God, Creator of all things [creation], who is awe-inspiring and strong and just and merciful, who alone [monotheism] is King [sovereignty] and is kind, who alone is bountiful, who alone is just and almighty and eternal, who rescues Israel from every evil [redemption], who chose the fathers and consecrated them [revelation]” (2 Macc 1:24–25). Later, in 2 Maccabees 7, the God of Moses (7:6) (monotheism) is described as the “King of the Universe” (7:9) (sovereignty). Later in the story we find an exhortation to remember that “the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you [the seventh brother in the story] now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws” (7:25; cf. also 2 Macc 13:14). As a final encouragement, his mother pleads with him: “I beseech you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. Thus also mankind comes into being ...” (7:28). The monotheism that underpins the faith of these brothers and functions as a significant cause for their persecution is clear from the context (see 1 Macc 7:37).

The pseudepigraphal literature of the Second Temple period also makes these connections. In 3 Maccabees, the author binds the creator, ruler, and redeemer functions of Yahweh all to his monotheistic identity. The high priest begins his prayer by affirming: “Lord, Lord, king of the heavens, and sovereign of all creation, holy among the holy ones, the only ruler, almighty, give attention to us who are suffering grievously from an impious and

²⁹ On “Most High” and the “Most High God” as a monotheistic title in Hellenistic Judaism, see Richard Bauckham, “The ‘Most High’ God and the Nature of Early Jewish Monotheism,” in David B. Capes, April D. Deconick, Helen K. Bond, and Troy A. Miller, eds., *Israel’s God and Rebecca’s Children: Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007), 39–53.

profane man, puffed up in his audacity and power" (2:2). "For you," he says, "the creator of all things and the governor of all, are a just Ruler, and you judge those who have done anything in insolence and arrogance" (2:3). He then recounts God's redeeming faithfulness throughout the history of Israel (2:4–8) before reaffirming that "You, O King, ... [have] created the boundless and immeasurable earth" (2:9; cf. also 3 Macc 6:2). The *Letter of Aristeas* locates Yahweh's monotheistic (He is the God who gave the Jewish law [*Let. Aris.* 1.15]) identity (whom some know as Zeus or Dis) within his role as the one "through whom all things are endowed with life and come into being," who is also "necessarily the ruler and lord of the Universe" (*Let. Aris.* 1.16)³⁰—encapsulating creator and sovereignty themes. *Joseph and Aseneth* makes similar remarks: "Lord God of the ages, who created all (things) and gave life (to them), who gave breath to all creation, who brought the invisible things out into the light ..." (*Jos. Asen.* 12.1–2; cf. also *Jos. Asen.* 8.9). The author of *Jubilees* frequently identifies the God of the patriarchs or often "the Most High God" in his creational role as well: "there is no oath which is greater than it by the name glorious and honored and great and splendid and wonderful and mighty, which created the heavens and the earth and all things together—that ye will fear Him and worship Him" (*Jub.* 36.7; cf. also *Jub.* 3.8; 7.36; 12.4; 16.26; 22.6; 32.18).

Apocalyptic pseudepigraphal literature makes a distinct contribution to our understanding of Yahweh's monotheistic identity. Not only are Second Temple Jews informed by a creational monotheism, but also a *new* creational monotheism. The new creation motif is especially significant for understanding the functional monotheism being proposed here since new creation incorporates notions of all three functions within an eschatological context: (1) creation: through recreation and renewal; (2) sovereignty: through final judgement and eschatological rule; and (3) redemption-revelation: through the complete eschatological restoration of God's elect and the final fulfillment of his covenant promises, revealed from the beginnings of Israel's history. A number of texts highlight these connections. In *4 Ezra* (2 Esdras 3–14), Ezra laments that God's election has been reduced to futility because Israel is dominated and destroyed by pagan Rome, and Israel rarely faithfully observes Torah. In God's first response to Ezra, he reassures Ezra that the sovereign one who created the world will soon bring judgement and the new age: "Even then I had these things in mind; and through

³⁰ Translations of Old Testament Pseudepigrapha are (often revised) from *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (trans. R.H. Charles; 2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), unless otherwise noted.

me alone and none other they were created; as also the End (shall come) through me alone and none other" (4 *Ezra* 6.6). The connection between sovereignty, creation, and monotheism could not be more direct. But the redemption-revelation motif is present as well (cf. also *T. Job* 2.4), also in an eschatological form: "And it shall be whosoever shall have survived all these things that I have foretold to you, he shall be saved and shall see my salvation and the end of my world" (6.25). This is followed by a promise of new creation (6.26). In God's second reply to Ezra, he establishes similar relations in Yahweh's monotheistic identity. Ezra inquires whether creation is futile because election seems futile, given the present state of Israel (6.38–55). He asks "If the world has indeed been created for our sakes why do we not enter into possession of our world? How long shall this endure?" (6.59). Again, Yahweh reassures Ezra of his purpose in creation and the ultimate redemption through new creation (7.11; 7.13–14), leaving Ezra only with the question as to whether "we shall be kept in rest until those times come in which you shall renew the creation, or shall we suffer until then?" (7.75; see also 7.75–101).

A similar progression is found in the *Sibylline Oracles*. Yahweh is described there as "the Creator who has planted his sweet Spirit in all, and made him a guide to all mortals. There is one God, sole Sovereign, excellent in power ..." (*Sib. Or.* frag. 1.5–7), establishing a solid link between monotheism and Yahweh's function as creator and sovereign. Final judgment is emphasized soon after (frag. 1.19–31) (the flip side to new creation), before returning again to Yahweh's monotheistic identity as creator and ruler: "There is one God who sends rain and winds and earthquakes, lightnings, famines, pestilence and sad cares, and snow and hail: why should I detail them one by one? He is Lord of heaven, Sovereign of earth, the one Existence" (frag. 1.33–35). It is no surprise that in this passage on monotheism that creation, sovereignty, and judgement should figure so prominently within the discourse. Yahweh's sovereign rule is also seen as the ground for rejecting idolatry within these oracles (frag. 3.21–46, esp. 3.42). Sovereignty, creation, and redemption-revelation are also brought together in correlation with the rejection of idolatry when Yahweh is described as "the mighty, heavenly God, the World-Ruler," who "by his word created all, both heaven and sea ... the Eternal savior who created heaven and earth" (frag. 3.19–20, 35), as usual with a view to new creation: "[a]ll shall obey him as he ascends again upon the world, for as much as he first fashioned them, and his might" (frag. 3.95–96).

The *Assumption of Moses* connects Yahweh's monotheistic identity with new creation: "For the Most High will arise, the Eternal God alone ..." (*As.*

Mos. 10.7), and “you shall look from on high and shall see thy enemies in Ge(henna), and you shall recognize them and rejoice, and you shall give thanks and confess your Creator” (10.10). At the time of final judgement and new creation, Second Temple Jews clearly believed that it was an acknowledgement of Yahweh as creator that determined one’s final estate. *Second Baruch* makes this rejection of Yahweh as creator the basis for eschatological judgement in an even more direct way: “For long ago you commanded the dust to produce Adam, and you know the number of those who are born from him, and how far they have sinned before you, who have existed and not confessed you as their Creator. And as regards all these their end shall convict them, and your law which they have transgressed shall require them on your day” (2*Bar.* 48.46–47). Similarly, 1*Enoch* predicts that “the Most High”³¹ (1*En.* 94.8), “who has created you will overthrow you, and for your fall there shall be no compassion, and your Creator will rejoice at your destruction” (94.10).

The works of the Hellenistic Jewish scholars, Philo and Josephus, make similar correlations. Philo has literally written volumes on creation, so it will not be possible to do justice to his doctrine of creation in the limited confines of this chapter.³² A few passages will have to suffice as illustrative of his connection between monotheism and Yahweh’s role as creator-ruler-redeemer. He says, for example, that men ought not to believe in an eternal or creatorless universe, but should instead “marvel at the might of God as the creator and father of all” (*Opif.* 1.7).³³ Of the original creation event, he says that “it was a very appropriate task for God the Father of all to create by himself alone, those things which were wholly good” (*Opif.* 74). Similarly, he reasons that “the fact of God being alone one may receive in this sense; that neither before the creation was there anything with God, nor, since the world has been created, is anything placed in the same rank with him; for he is in need of absolutely nothing whatever” (*Leg.* 2.2), and that “in fact, the one God alone is the sole Creator of the real man” (*Fug.* 71). He goes so far as to say that only God has the ability to create and it is the height of arrogance to ascribe this divine attribute to any created thing: “Who ... could ... appropriate the especial attributes of the Deity to himself? Now it is an especial attribute of God to create, and this faculty it is impious to ascribe to any created being” (*Cher.* 77).

³¹ See Bauckham, “The ‘Most High’ God,” 39–53.

³² On Philo’s doctrine of creation, see especially Philo, *Opif. passim*; *QG passim*.

³³ Translations of Philo are (often revised) from Philo Judaeus, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (trans. C.D. Yonge; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996).

What Josephus has to say about creation is more limited,³⁴ but a few passages prove illuminating. Perhaps most significantly for our purposes, he attributes to Abram the origin of the belief “[t]hat there was but one God, the Creator of the universe; and that, as to other [gods], if they contributed anything to the happiness of men, that each of them afforded it only according to his appointment, and not by their own power” (*Ant.* 1.555). He states further that Abram came to this belief based upon his observation of the “irregular phenomena that were visible both at land and sea, as well as those who happen to the sun, and moon, and all the heavenly bodies,” leading him to reason that if “these bodies had power of their own, they would certainly take care of their own regular motions; but since they do not preserve such regularity, they make it plain, that in so far as they cooperate to our advantage, they do it not of their own abilities.” Therefore, Abram (in Josephus) says they must be “subservient to him that commands them, to whom alone we ought justly to offer our honor and thanksgiving” (*Ant.* 1.556). According to Josephus, then, Jewish monotheistic belief originates out of Abram’s reflection upon Yahweh’s creation and his sovereign rule over it. Josephus combines creator and redemption motifs in his version of Isaac’s blessing upon Jacob with a strong monotheistic undercurrent (*Ant.* 1.272). He also views it as “appropriate/fitting to the Divine nature” (τῆ θείας φύσει πρέποντας) for Solomon to exalt Yahweh by acknowledging with a creation-sovereignty doxology: “You have an eternal house, O Lord, and such a one as you have created for yourself out of your own works; we know it to be the heaven, and the air, and the earth, and the sea, which you pervade, nor are you contained within their limits” (*Ant.* 8.107).

Functional Jewish monotheism is also represented at Qumran. Unfortunately, many of the texts on creation found at Qumran are quite fragmentary, and the amount of material we do find combining creation motifs with monotheism is surprising given that the Qumran secessionists were so removed from the Hellenistic world of paganism and henotheism, not needing (as with the Diaspora Jews) to respond to threats upon their monotheistic belief. Perhaps the most direct correlation of monotheism with creation and Yahweh’s sovereign rule is found in 4QH^a VII, 17–18. Regarding the creation of every spirit, the sectarian states “you have established even before creating him. How can anyone change your words? You, you alone, have [created]” and “from the womb you determined him for the period of

³⁴ See esp. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.27–36; *J.W.* 3.354–379.

approval.”³⁵ The connections are also quite explicit in 1Q504 1–2 III, 4–5: “We have [in]voked only your name; for your glory you have created us; you have established us as your sons in the sight of all the peoples.” The first part of the first line has a direct focus on monotheism, having invoked “only your name,” followed by a combination of creation, sovereignty, and redemption motifs. The same is true in 4QH^a IX, 7–8: “In your wisdom [you] es[tabli]shed eternal [...]; before creating them you know {all} their deeds for ever and ever. [Without you no]thing is done, and nothing is known without your will.” It is said of “The God Most High”³⁶ that for man he “creates for him to perfect the path of the sons of Adam so that all his creatures come to know the strength of his power and the abundance of his compassion with all the sons of his approval” (4QH^a XII, 32–33), emphasizing creation and sovereignty motifs in connection with the monotheistic God of Israel. Similarly, the sectarian says of Yahweh: “For you created the just and the wicked [...] I will hold firm to your covenant until” (4QH^a XII, 38–39). Likewise, “the God of Israel” (1QS III, 23) is said to have “created the spirits of light and of darkness and on them established every deed,” again combining implicit monotheism with creation and sovereignty language. The tradition from the prophet Malachi (2:10) has been preserved at Qumran in the following form: “[Do we not all have the same father? Has not one God] created us” (4Q265 4, 1–2).

In both ancient and Second Temple Judaism a (fairly substantial) stream of a kind of functional monotheism emerges, represented throughout various locals, literary forms, and independent expressions of Judaism. Its literature most fundamentally projects Yahweh’s monotheistic identity as the exclusive creator of the world and derivatively as its sovereign ruler and the one who reveals and fulfills his covenant pledges to his people through redemptive acts. Sometimes these motifs converge around the theme of monotheism; at other times, they support it independently. In apocalyptic literature, monotheism is connected strongly with new creation, a motif that combines Yahweh’s roles as (eschatological) creator, ruler, and redeemer-revealer. Thus, ancient Jews, especially Jews within the Hellenistic period, conceptually configured monotheism in terms of unique

³⁵ Hebrew reconstructions and English translations from the Dead Sea Scrolls are from *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition (Transcriptions)* (eds. Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 1998) and *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (Translations)* (eds. Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

³⁶ See Bauckham, “The ‘Most High’ God,” 39–53 and esp. 52, for Qumran references.

identity through divine functionality. Yahweh reserves exclusive rights as the only true God precisely because He alone creates, rules, and redeems the world (or at least, his elect out of the world). His metaphysical (if we can use that term non-anachronistically) singularity is cast in terms of his unique roles or functions within the cosmos, but the picture can be filled out more still—not in terms of divine intermediaries, but in the Spirit’s functional relationship to this configuration of Jewish monotheism.

2. FUNCTIONAL SPIRIT-MONOTHEISM IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

In the context of current discussions of Christology, it is important to ask at this stage whether agents were allowed to share at any level in the functional monotheistic identity of Yahweh and if so, what kinds of agents? Sentient mediating agents certainly do not share these functions. The closest the literature comes to ascribing these functions to rational beings is when exalted patriarchs (Ps 45:6; Isa 40–55; Sir 45:1–5; 47:11; *As. Mos.* 11.16–19; *1 En.* 46.1–13; Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.155–159) or angels (*2 En.* 22.6; *Apoc. Zeph.* 6.11–15; *1 QM XVII*, 6–8; *11QMelch II*, 9–11; Jude 8–9) are given charge over some limited domain of the created order—having points of contact with Yahweh’s role as sovereign ruler³⁷—but these agents are never entrusted with governing the destiny of the universe or of God’s elect people, which is what the sovereignty motif truly entails. Creation and redeeming functions are not shared at any level with sentient mediatorial agents—at least not in a way that we have been able to discern in our readings of the relevant texts. Although Yahweh does entrust mediating agents with revelatory responsibilities, Yahweh is always the ultimate source of the revelation, not the revelatory agent. The same conclusions cannot be drawn concerning personified attributes or nonsentient agents. In Proverbs 8, wisdom appears to be present at creation (though the text does not require that wisdom was a creational agent [see also Sir 24:5–6]), but in Wisdom of Solomon (*Wis* 6:12–11:1) she is described as the “fashioner of all things” (7:22) and the one through whom God “formed man” (9:2; cf. also *Wis* 10:1–2). The logos, likewise, is said by Philo to be the “governor and administrator of all things” (*QE* 4.110–111) as well as the “creative power” of God (*Fug.* 94–105). But what

³⁷ For a discussion of these themes in the relevant literature, see Hurtado, *One God*, 51–92; John J. Collins, “Jewish Monotheism and Christian Theology,” in Hershel Shanks and Jack Meinhardt, eds., *Aspects of Monotheism: How God is One* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archeological Society, 1997), 81–96 (82–84).

is to be made of this data? For now it is sufficient to note that the personification of these divine attributes, a common practice in ancient Judaism, should not be understood to set up wisdom or logos as distinct entities from Yahweh but as images of his nearness to creation with respect to these specific (intellectual) aspects of his being. These attributes share in the divine identity, but they are not in any way distinct from Yahweh so that this is not at all surprising. We find ourselves in agreement with interpreters like Dunn, who concludes his study of the matter by asserting that “*it is very unlikely that pre-Christian Judaism ever understood Wisdom as a divine being in any sense independent of Yahweh*” (emphasis his).³⁸ And if such figures do not function as entities but as attributes described in literary terms, then the kind of intermediary monotheistic link that they provide still places a lot of pressure upon the earliest Christians to originate novel monotheistic conceptions in structuring their (high) Christology. The mutation—to use Hurtado’s terminology—must still be quite significant and one wonders how intelligibly these antecedents can render Jewish monotheism within a Christian theological framework.

Although sentient mediatorial agents do not participate in creating, ruling, or redeeming-revealing roles and personified attributes do not represent distinct instantiations of the divine identity, the Spirit seems both to participate within the exclusive activities of Yahweh and qualifies as (at the very least) a secondary expression of monotheistic deity.³⁹ We shall refer to this stream of early Jewish monotheism as *functional Spirit-monotheism*. Evidence for a functional Spirit-monotheism can be found in ancient and Second Temple Jewish sources, where the Spirit is said to operate within one, two, or all three exclusive divine functions and is viewed as at least a quasi-distinct instantiation of the divine identity.

A number of passages clearly convey the Spirit’s involvement in the divine identity through sharing in Yahweh’s roles as creator, ruler, and redeemer-revealer. The Spirit is incorporated in the creation event at the outset of Israel’s history. Although alternative interpretations have been

³⁸ Dunn, *Christology*, 176. So also Hurtado, *One God*, 46–47, including the secondary literature he cites.

³⁹ G.W.H. Lampe, *God as Spirit: The Bampton Lectures, 1976* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 122 and *passim*, argues that “the parallel concepts of Wisdom, Logos and Spirit were available as interchangeable models for the early Church’s Christology. They could be used as virtually synonymous expressions for God’s outreach towards man in Jesus.” So although Lampe recognizes the importance of the Spirit as an antecedent to early christological conceptions, his portrayal of the Spirit is problematic at this level since it collapses into Yahweh’s primary instantiation of the divine identity, as with the other attributes of wisdom and the logos.

suggested, Gen 1:2 has traditionally been understood to mean that the Spirit of God was moving over the unformed earth prior to creation: ורוח אלהים מרחפת על-פני המים (and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters). The traditional view assumes the Spirit's role as a creational agent by understanding v. 1 to be a summary statement for the rest of creation, while v. 2 explains the circumstantial setting for the beginning of creation in v. 3. This is the better attested view among Second Temple writers, being represented in sources such as *4 Ezra* (6.39), *2 Baruch*, (21.4; 23.5), and Philo (*Leg.* 33; cf. also *Opif.* 27) (see discussion of these texts below).

According to Ps 104:30, Israel was to extol Yahweh for creating the heavens and the earth in wisdom (vv. 1–6, 24–26) as well as for preserving the life of his works. After confessing that they would crumble into dust if without the sustaining power of Yahweh's breath (v. 29) (sovereignty), Israel would sing, "When you send forth your Spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the ground" (v. 30), where "they" clearly refers to all of Yahweh's creation (cf. 104:24). Echoing Gen 2:4, Yahweh sends his Spirit to breath both initial and renewed life (creation and new creation). The רוח is credited as the direct cause for creating and preserving all animate creatures.

Psalm 32:6 states that "By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made and by the breath/spirit (וברוח; LXX: τῷ πνεύματι) of his mouth were made all their host." Irenaeus took this to be a reference to the Spirit's work in creation (*Epid.* 5), viewing the verse as a dual mediation with the Son producing the substance of creation and the Spirit forming and adorning it. The words of Job are also insightful: "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4). Here, a clear distinction between God's spirit (רוח; LXX: πνεύμα) and God's breath (נשמה; LXX: πνεύμα) is maintained within the creation process. When creation is spoken Yahweh is always portrayed as the only God and creator, yet his Spirit is often said to be involved as well.

There is ample evidence from the Second Temple period suggesting that the Spirit was believed to be involved within the creation event. An important connection that emerges in these passages is the close association with wisdom imagery at many places. In the apocryphal literature we may turn to *Judith*, which states that God sent "forth his spirit" and made all things (*Jdt* 16:14). *Ecclesiasticus* also makes a direct association between Yahweh as creator and the Spirit, when it speaks of "the spirit of their [the creation's] creator" (*Sir* 39:28), and earlier in this passage wisdom and spirit motifs are brought together in affirming that the one who devotes himself to the study of the law "will be filled with the spirit of understanding; he will pour forth words of wisdom and give thanks to the Lord in prayer" (*Sir* 39:6). The

author also joins wisdom and the Spirit together in the creation act when Ben Sira says, “I will pour out my spirit by weight, and by measure will I declare my knowledge. When God created His works from the beginning, after making them, he assigned them (their) portions” (Sir 16:24–26). The passage goes on to bring in sovereignty themes as well (16:27). Wisdom of Solomon connects the Spirit with the cosmos and especially the providential functions of Yahweh in affirming that “the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world, and that which holds all things together knows what is said” (Wis 1:7). It is important in this text—where wisdom is tied more intimately to creation than in any other text, as noted above—to notice that the Spirit is used synonymously with wisdom. The previous verse states: “for wisdom is a kindly spirit” (φιλάνθρωπον γὰρ πνεῦμα σοφία) (Wis 1:6), because God is a true observer of the heart and since the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world (1:7) so that “no one who utters wicked things can go unnoticed” (1:8). This connection may give insight into why the author likely felt at liberty to portray wisdom as a creative agent (somewhat uniquely when compared to other wisdom traditions) later in his narrative (Wis 7:22; 9:2; 10:1–2)—strong correlations between the Spirit, wisdom, and the cosmos had already been established. But it is not just at the outset that this homogeneity of the Spirit with wisdom is made. The central discourse (Wis 6–8) concerned with creation weds the two very closely: “the spirit of wisdom came to me” (ἦλθεν μοι πνεῦμα σοφία) (7:7), wisdom is said to be the “fashioner of all things” because in her “there is a spirit (πνεῦμα) that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible” (7:22). The author further inquires, “Who has learned thy counsel, unless thou hast given wisdom and sent your holy Spirit from on high?” (Wis 9:17; see also Sus 45 and 62 for the correlation of Spirit and wisdom notions).

Turning to the Jewish apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple period we find similar beliefs. *Second Baruch* makes a connection between creation and the Spirit when it has Yahweh asserting that “My spirit is the creator of life” (2 Bar. 23.5), combined with sovereignty motifs through election (23.4–6) and redemption (23.7), all in the context of eternal judgment and new creation. In other passages, corresponding sentiments are echoed: “O you who have made the earth, hear me, who has fixed the firmament by the word, and has made firm the height of the heaven by the spirit, who has called from the beginning of the world that which did not yet exist, and they obey you” (21.4), incorporating the Spirit into the creating and ruling roles of Yahweh. *Fourth Ezra* interprets Gen 1:2 to be the work of God’s Spirit in creation rather than a wind (4 Ezra 6.38; cf. 6.41). In an important

discourse on monotheism and creation, “the creator ... has planted his sweet spirit in all” (*Sib. Or.* frag. 1.5). The Spirit also gives life (*Apoc. Mos.* 43.5) and is associated with new creation in other passages (e.g. *T. Jud.* 24.2), being depicted in a heavenly vision in *1 Enoch* as upholding various levels of the cosmos (*1 En.* 61.14–21). *First Enoch* also contains an abundance of the curious title “Lord of the spirits,” by whom it is said that Adam was first created (*1 En.* 60.8) (though not too much should be made of this reference, but cf. *2 Cor* 3:17). *First Enoch* connects Spirit and wisdom as well: “And in him dwells the spirit of wisdom, and the spirit which gives insight, and the spirit of understanding and of might, and the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness” (49.3; see also *T. Levi* 18.7). The Spirit also functions within the ruling identity of Yahweh within the apocalyptic literature from this period (*Sib. Or.* 3.629; *2 En.* 33.8).

Josephus and especially Philo significantly contribute to the configuration of Spirit-monotheism in Hellenistic Judaism. Philo translates Gen 1:2 as “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος). He makes a clear distinction here between “wind” and “the Spirit,” asking why Moses moves on from speaking of wind/breathe instead of the Spirit (πνοῆς νῦν ἀλλ’ οὐχὶ πνεύματος μέμνηται), since he has already mentioned “the name of the Spirit” (πνεύματος ὄνομα) in the previous context (Philo, *Leg.* 1.33). As Yonge notes, Philo “assumed the existence of a mass of lifeless matter, passive and primeval, destitute of quality and form, but containing within itself the four primary elements; and of this mass, he looked upon the Spirit of God as the divider and fashioner into distinct shape.”⁴⁰ Philo saw the Spirit as the agent that brought order to creation. Philo goes on to attribute the creation of life in man to the Spirit (see *Leg.* 1.33–42), as expressed in other passages as well: “for man was not created out of the earth alone, but also of the divine Spirit” (*QG* 1.51; see also Philo, *QG* 3.62; 4.5). He makes this same claim regarding the Spirit’s role in the creation of mankind when he says that “the great Moses has not named the species of the rational soul by a title resembling that of any created being, but has pronounced it an image of the divine and invisible being (τοῦ θείου καὶ ἀοράτου πνεύματος), making it a coin as it were of sterling metal, stamped and impressed with the seal of God, the impression of which is the eternal word” (ὁ ἀίδιος λόγος) (*Plant.* 18). The Spirit is said to be the model after which man’s own nature is made as well as its

⁴⁰ C.D. Yonge, “Preface,” in *Works of Philo*, 4.

source, viewing the Spirit himself as the ultimate expression of the divine logos. Philo makes further assertions regarding the Spirit's involvement in creation when he says that "the Spirit of God is spoken of in one manner as being air flowing upon the earth, bringing a third element in addition to water" (*Gig.* 22), which is followed by the same translation of Genesis represented in *Legum allegoriae* (1.33, cited above). He then connects the Spirit motif in creation with the Spirit of wisdom (in creation) when he says: "Since the air, as it is very light, is raised and borne aloft, having water, as it were, for its foundation; and, in another manner, unalloyed knowledge is said to be so, which every wise man naturally partakes of. And Moses shows us this, when speaking of the creator and maker of the holy work of the creation" (*Gig.* 22–23). He also cites the example of Bezaleel in Exod 31:1 whom God "filled with his Holy Spirit, and with wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, to be able to devise every work" so that "what the spirit of God is, is very definitely described in these words" (*Gig.* 23). The bond to the sapiential tradition is further established when he states regarding Moses, in a reference to Exod 31:3: "the spirit which is upon him is the wise, the divine, the indivisible, the undistributable, the good spirit, the spirit" and that he "is everywhere diffused, so as to fill the universe, which, while it benefits others, is not injured by having a participation in it given to another, and if added to something else, either as to its understanding, or its knowledge, or its wisdom" (*Gig.* 27; for a further wedding of the Spirit to the sapiential tradition, see Philo, *Plant.* 18–26;⁴¹ *Her.* 57; *Leg.* 1.36). Philo also associates the Spirit with the creation event when he attributes the cessation of the flood to the divine Spirit (πνεῦμα ... τὸ θεῖόν), but the association with sovereignty is even stronger when he says (in the same passage) that the Spirit is the means "by which the whole universe obtains security at the same time with the calamities of the world, and with those things which exist in the air, and in every mixture of plants and animals" (*QG* 2.28). It is not hard, therefore, to see how Isaacs reaches the conclusion that for Philo, "It is the divine πνεῦμα which is at work in the creation of the cosmos. What is more, creation is viewed by Philo, not only as an event in the past, but as a continuous activity Its presence is essential for life."⁴² Josephus has less to say, but he does fill the picture out a bit when he ties the Spirit to the created order and to God's rule and ownership over the universe

⁴¹ See John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 151–158, for a discussion of Platonic influences upon Philo's view of the Spirit and its relationship to wisdom in this passage.

⁴² Isaacs, *Concept*, 44.

in a prayer for the Spirit to inhabit the temple (*Ant.* 8.114). Levison locates the origins of Josephus's views here in the thought of Chrysippus: "the whole material world is unified by a spirit ($\pi\nu\epsilon\delta\mu\alpha$) which wholly pervades it and by which the universe is made coherent and kept together and is made intercommunicating ($\sigma\upsilon\mu\pi\alpha\theta\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$)."⁴³

Belief in the Spirit as a creative, sovereign, redeeming agent is attested among the Qumran community as well. Although the document is fragmentary, 4Q422, a paraphrase of Genesis and Exodus, clearly identifies the divine creative work with the Holy Spirit (מלאכתו אשר עשה ורוח [...] קודש) "his work which he had done, and [his] Holy Spirit" [4Q422, 7]; cf. 4Q22, 6: [השמים והארץ וכול] צבאם עשה בד "their host he made by ... [...]" . 4Q509 97–98 provides a strongly covenantal/redemptive context for the working of the Spirit and associates the Spirit with the work of Yahweh's hands. In 4Q511 30 we find a doxology about creation that consummates in expressing that since man cannot know creation, he cannot know the ways of the Spirit. 1QH^a VIII, 1–29 is highly fragmentary, but the compound phrase "heaven and earth," a catch phrase for incorporating all of creation (cf. Gen 1:1–2) and expressing the extent of Yahweh's sovereign rule, occurs twice in the document. Covenant is mentioned several times as well. More significantly, Yahweh's "Holy Spirit" is mentioned three times and "spirit" occurs six other times on its own, but the connection between these themes cannot be made out conclusively due to the condition of the text. It does nevertheless highlight the close association of these motifs, even if it does not explain their connection to one another. 1QH^a XXIII, 13 clearly incorporates the Spirit into the redeeming-revealing activities of Yahweh: "you have stretched out your [h]oly [spirit] to cover up guilt" (see also 1QS III, 5–8; 4Q258 VII, 4; 1Q343 3 II, 13). The scrolls also connect the Spirit to Yahweh's sovereign work in new creation: "For God has sorted them into equal parts until the appointed end and the new creation" and he "cast the lots of every living being according to his spirit" (1QS IV, 25–26). A tight correlation with the Spirit and sapiential traditions is maintained at Qumran (11Q5 XIX, 14; 1Q28b V, 25; 1QH^a VI, 25; 1QH^a XX, 11; 1QS III, 6; 4Q161 8–10, 12; 4Q213a 1 I, 14; 4Q444 1, 3).

There is evidence throughout ancient and Second Temple Judaism for belief in the Spirit as the source of life and new life. The life motif brings together themes of creation, providence, and redemption-revelation when the renewal of life is in view. This emphasis is carried forward in the book

⁴³ *De mixtone* 216.14–17, in Levison, *Spirit*, 145.

of Ezekiel. For the vindication of his own name's sake, God promised that he would give his rebellious people a new heart and place a new spirit into that new heart (36:26). God further defined this new dynamic of life as "My Spirit." Emphatically, God was pointing to his Spirit (רוח) as the creating cause for this new life (see also Ezek 37:1–14; 39:29; Isa 32:15–20; 44:3; 59:21; 66:22–24).⁴⁴ Within the new creation, the Spirit's presence brings fertility (Isa 32:15–16). In Pseudo-Philo's *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, Balaam says that his life is lessened because little of the Holy Spirit remains in him (*L.A.B.* 18.11). At Qumran, in CD VII, 4–7, not defiling "his holy spirit" will guarantee God's covenant and cause life for a thousand generations through taking women and having children. And there are, of course, numerous references to πνεῦμα as the life within a person (e.g. 3 Macc 6:24; Wis 15:11; 2 En. 30.7; *Ep. Jer.* 25; Philo, *Leg.* 4.217; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.240). Similar (esp. eschatological) trends are represented in post-Second Temple Judaism as well among rabbinic beliefs (e.g. *y. Šotah* 9.15, 17; *y. Šeqal.* 3.3; *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 1.20b; *Sir Has. Rab.* 1.1, 7–9; *b. Meg.* 14a).

The ancient and Second Temple documents evidence, at the very least, a clear stream of functional Spirit-monotheism. The Spirit was incorporated primarily into the creational identity of Yahweh, but into ruler and redeemer-revealer functions as well, especially through new creation. The Spirit was not an intermediary agent nor was the Spirit undifferentiable from the Father of Israel's unique instantiation of the divine essence. The latter part of this statement is perhaps the most contestable. Was the Spirit viewed as an agent within the divine identity or merely an analogy for describing God's relationship with the world? Before we investigate the nature of the Spirit's agency, we must consider how wisdom (or even the logos) is able to take on such specific agentive forms and yet not count as a distinct instantiation of the divine nature. Charles poses the same question (though in different language) and, from our perspective, he is onto something not too far from the truth when he says "[w]e perhaps see the first beginnings of [the personification of wisdom] in 2 Isaiah ... with respect to the Spirit of God. The belief in subordinate heavenly powers present at Creation (Gen. 1:26, Job 38:7) would help to give Wisdom its position in Prov. 8

⁴⁴ On the Spirit in Ezekiel, see John Levison, "The Promise of the Spirit of Life in the Book of Ezekiel," in Capes, Deconick, Bond, and Miller, eds., *Israel's God and Rebecca's Children*, 247–260. After considering the role of the Spirit in the book of Ezekiel, Daniel Block, "The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of רוח in the Book of Ezekiel," *JETS* 32.1 (1989): 49, concludes that the Spirit must be a "direct extension of His [God's] personality" rather than functioning independently in distinction from Yahweh.

and Sir. 24; though probably without Greek influence Wisdom would never have been personified as it is there.”⁴⁵ The intimate connection between the Spirit and sapiential traditions established during the Second Temple period certainly supports this conjecture. Although, given the Spirit’s direct incorporation into the exclusive divine identity, we must part ways with Charles when he suspects the Spirit to be understood as a subordinate being resulting in some kind of henotheism (though functionally this would certainly seem to be the case—with Yahweh sending the Spirit, etc.), it does seem correct to suggest that wisdom was enabled to gain many of its agentive functions through its connection (in many cases synonymity) with the Spirit during the Second Temple period. (Perhaps as Charles suggests, the logos gained its personal features this way too.) Due to its frequent connection with the Spirit, wisdom was eventually able to take on highly personified features of its own. It is too much to say that wisdom always stood for the Spirit, but in many instances it clearly did (e.g. Philo, *Leg.* 1.65). And even if this relation is not able to be established throughout the literature, the major passage where wisdom takes on creative agency (Wis 6–8; the tradition is fairly localized) is a direct metaphorical extension of Spirit theology. So while wisdom is described in some of the same personal ways as the Spirit (but is itself not an agent) in the Wisdom of Solomon, this probably relates to its deep tie to the Spirit notion.⁴⁶ The Spirit, then, seems to function as an agent, but not an agent independent of God since it shares in the divine identity with God. Yahweh, we might say, in Second Temple Jewish monotheism seems to be the first and principle instantiation of the divine identity—evidenced through his roles as creator, ruler, and redeemer—and the Spirit of Yahweh is the secondary instantiation of this identity by virtue of the Spirit’s *sharing* in Yahweh’s uniquely monotheistic functions.

A few scholars have suggested that the Spirit was understood among certain Second Temple authors as a distinct or independent entity from Yahweh.⁴⁷ Volz has put forward a thorough argument for understanding

⁴⁵ Charles, *Apocrypha*, 1:528.

⁴⁶ This entire study on the Spirit’s role in creation runs contrary to the conclusions of Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 326, who argues that wisdom was the sole creator in the Second Temple period. The creation wisdom tradition is very limited and local whereas the Spirit creation tradition is widespread and pervasive.

⁴⁷ For discussion, see H. Leisegang, *Hagion Pneuma: Der Ursprung des Geistbegriffs der synoptischen Evangelien aus der griechischen Mystik* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1922), 211–212; M. Pulver, “Das Erlebniss des Pneuma bei Philon,” *Eranos Jahrbuch* 13 (1945): 130; Helmer Ringgren,

the Spirit as a divine hypostasis.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Moore notes problems with invoking intermediaries in general and the Spirit as such an intermediary, in particular, but his analysis is based primarily in (post-temple) rabbinic Judaism.⁴⁹ Most others do not consider the Spirit in their lists of possible intermediate figures in discussions of mediatorial Jewish monotheism. Lampe and Dunn are an exception to this. Dunn, for example, following Lampe, devotes about three and a half pages to the option before dismissing it. He takes up analysis of a few of the important Second Temple sources and concludes that the Spirit of God was “simply a useful shorthand device ... which can express both the character of God’s immanence in a particular instance and safeguard his transcendence at the same time without more ado.”⁵⁰ This seems somewhat odd given his view that “pre-Christian Jewish writers preferred other concepts and phrases rather than ‘Spirit’ when they attempted to put into words their own experience or understanding of divine imminence ...”⁵¹ Maybe the Spirit is not used to express these elements of the divine character as often as other entities because that was not its sole function. In any case, according to Dunn, “*of the Spirit as an entity in any sense independent of God, of Spirit as divine hypostasis, there is nothing*” (emphasis his) within pre-Christian Jewish thinking.⁵² Concerning the Wisdom of Solomon he says $\pi\nu\epsilon\delta\mu\alpha$ is really just a definition of wisdom. By $\pi\nu\epsilon\delta\mu\alpha$, according to Dunn, Philo merely means “the divine breath which forms the soul (*Leg. All.*I.32 f.; III.161; *Plant.* 8) ... the rational part of the soul (*Heres* 55–57; *Qu. Gen.*II.59).”⁵³ He finds further support in Josephus’s suggestion that the Spirit represents God’s presence (*Ant.* 8.102, 106, 114).

What might we say of Dunn’s portrayal? Well, we would have to agree with Dunn that the evidence does not suggest that the Spirit is in any sense “independent from God.” That would compromise monotheism. That’s the problem with exalting intermediaries too highly. But the Spirit also seems to function differently than wisdom and logos motifs, which—although

Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East (Lund: H. Ohlssons, 1947), 165–171; Isaacs, *Concept*, 57; Dunn, *Christology*, 130, 315.

⁴⁸ Paul Volz, *Der Geist Gottes und die verwandten Erscheinungen im Alten Testament und im anschließenden Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1910), 145–194.

⁴⁹ George Foot Moore, “Intermediaries in Jewish Theology: Memra, Shekinah, Metatron,” *HTR* 15 (1922): 41–85.

⁵⁰ Dunn, *Christology*, 135; so also Lampe, *God as Spirit, passim*.

⁵¹ Dunn, *Christology*, 136.

⁵² Dunn, *Christology*, 136.

⁵³ Dunn, *Christology*, 134.

personalized in certain contexts—appear to merely be ways of describing Yahweh’s attributes. So while sentient divine intermediaries are too distinct, nonsentient intermediaries are not distinct enough. The Spirit, however, seems to possess agency on the one hand (as with sentient mediatorial figures) and yet shares in the divine identity through creation, sovereignty, and redemption-revelation on the other (as with nonsentient mediatorial figures). But to say that the Spirit has agency—to say that the Spirit is a creating, governing, redeeming-revealing agent—is not to say that the Spirit functions independently of Yahweh. As a second comment on Dunn’s analysis, he confuses Philo’s different nuances of πνεῦμα. It is certainly true that, for Philo, the πνεῦμα is the breath of God in man. However, as we showed in our analysis above, Philo also clearly distinguishes between this breath of God in man and the Spirit of God in creation, more generally (*Leg.* 1.33). Philo clarifies this further when he says: “therefore the mind, which was created in accordance with the image and idea of God, may be justly said to partake in his spirit” (*Leg.* 1.42). Persons merely “partake” (κοινωνέω) in God’s Spirit in the sense that the substance of the mind is the divine Spirit, just as the substance of the body is the blood (*QG* 2.59). Philo’s point seems to be that the Spirit simply sustains life by supporting the rational functions of the person so that these capacities literally consist of the Spirit. The Josephus references provided by Dunn merely show that the Spirit was understood synonymously with Yahweh, which we gladly concede. Josephus’s *Ant.* 8.114 is especially pertinent here, where Josephus has Solomon pray: “I humbly beseech you that you will let some portion of your Spirit come down and inhabit in this temple, that you may appear to be with us upon earth.” This passage further substantiates the point being made here, that the Spirit shared in the divine identity and through his share in the divine identity could manifest the presence of Yahweh in powerful ways (see also Philo, *Spec.* 4.123).

The wide range of materials already reviewed establishes the Spirit’s partnership in the divine identity and, derivatively, the Spirit’s agency through the roles occupied by the Spirit within the divine identity as a creative, ruling, redeeming, revealing (much more could be documented here in terms of prophecy, charismatic exegesis, and the like)⁵⁴ agent. Nevertheless, a few further passages will firm up the belief in the Spirit as an agent (at least by some) during the Second Temple period. In *Judith* (16.14), God sends the

⁵⁴ See Levison, *Spirit*, *passim*.

Spirit forth in creation. Such examples could be multiplied, cases in which God (agent¹) sends his Spirit (agent²) to accomplish a task (e.g. Judg 9:23; 1Sam 16:14–16; 1Kgs 22:19–23). One more will suffice. In Wis 9:17, the author asks, “Who has learned thy counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your holy Spirit from on high?” (see also Isa 48:16). Philo (*Mos.* 1.274–277), Josephus (*Ant.* 4.108), and some Qumran texts (e.g. 1QH II, 4; cf. also 1QM X, 12; 1QM XIII, 2; Jub 1:25; 1 *En.* 15.4, 7) describe the Spirit as the angel of the Lord. Philo and Josephus do this in their retelling of Numbers 22–24 (see esp. Num 22:35 and 24:2).⁵⁵ The Spirit and the angel of the Lord are used synonymously in their renditions. Notice how Josephus frames the story: “when the divine angel met him in the way, when he was in a narrow passage, and hedged in with a wall on both sides, the ass on which Balaam rode understood that it was a divine spirit that met him” (emphasis ours) (*Ant.* 4.108; cf. also *Ant.* 4.102–130). The Spirit was perceived to function in such an agent-like way that it was perceived as an angel in the initial encounter. Pseudo-Philo also describes prophetic activity through the Spirit in incarnational and quite animate language when he says regarding the prophets: “when they had sat down the holy spirit came upon Kenaz and dwelled in him and elevated his mind, and he began to prophecy ...” (*L.A.B.* 28.6). This angelic role of the Spirit is communicated in a number of texts within the Hebrew Bible (e.g. 1Kgs 22:19–24; Isa 63:7–14; Hag 2:5). Based upon such angelic motifs, Wolfson tentatively suggests that the divine Spirit in Philo functions as somewhat of an angelic intermediary figure.⁵⁶ According to Levison, Second Temple perception (at least in certain authors) is that “The divine spirit is an angelic being which can enter an ass or take bodily form.”⁵⁷ This angelic pneumatology is continued in the patristic writings.⁵⁸ Some fathers went as far as to speak of an incarnation of the Spirit (e.g. Hermas, *Sim.* 10.6.5; Tertullian, *Prax.* 26; Ignatius, *Eph.* 7.2).⁵⁹

⁵⁵ For further evidence of the perception of the Spirit as an angel, see A.E. Sekki, *The Meaning of Ruah at Qumran* (SBLDS 110; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 145–171; John R. Levison, “The Debut of the Divine Spirit in Josephus’ *Antiquities*,” *HTR* 87 (1994): 123–138; John R. Levison, “The Prophetic Spirit as an Angel according to Philo,” *HTR* 88 (1995): 189–207; John R. Levison, “The Angelic Spirit in Early Judaism,” *SBLSP* 34 (1995): 234–255; John R. Levison, “Josephus’ Interpretation of the Spirit,” *JJS* (1996): 234–255; Levison, *Spirit*, 27–55.

⁵⁶ Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 2:30–31.

⁵⁷ Levison, “Josephus’ Interpretation,” 237.

⁵⁸ See Bogdan G. Boccur, “The Angelic Spirit in Early Christianity: Justin, the Martyr and Philosopher,” *JR* 88 (2008): 190–208.

⁵⁹ These and other references are gathered in Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 211–213.

Although it is probably too far to insist that the Spirit was viewed as an *independent* hypostasis, the evidence enlisted from Philo by Volz does provide strong precedent for the Spirit as a distinct agent who shared within the divine identity (though not independent of it). The Spirit performs a number of localized concrete actions: it speaks with a voice and visits (*Som.* 2.252), leads into truth (*Mos.* 2.265; see also Ps 143:10); he takes on distinct qualities such as invisibility (*Som.* 2.252) and wisdom (*Gig.* 24).⁶⁰ Levison has further established the context of these actions as those indicating specifically “personal” functions, while adding Philo, *De Iosepho* 110–116 to the list as texts indicating “a common model of rational inspiration, according to which the receptive mind confronts something that it cannot fully comprehend, receives guidance by the divine spirit, and is led to truth that was formerly inaccessible.”⁶¹ He takes this as an additional evidence that the Spirit was viewed as an angel by Philo since this leading-inspiration function was angelic by nature. Several other such personal or agentive functions of the Spirit could be added here,⁶² but these—in combination with the preceding evidence for the Spirit’s role in creation, providence, and salvation-revelation—are sufficient to establish that within certain quarters, the Spirit was viewed as at the very least an agent-like being, intimately associated with the exclusive divine identity of Yahweh through especially creation, but also providence and redemption. Dunn points to several passages that equate the Spirit with Yahweh’s presence and power, but this should not be surprising since the Spirit shares in the divine identity with Yahweh. The preceding evidence supports not only the view Dunn sets up that the “*Spirit of God is in no sense distinct from God*” (emphasis his),⁶³ but also our contention that the Spirit of God shares in the divine identity of God.

3. FROM FUNCTIONAL SPIRIT-MONOTHEISM TO FUNCTIONAL CHRISTOLOGICAL MONOTHEISM

Perhaps one of the reasons that Bauckham’s reconstruction of early Jewish monotheism as a matrix for primitive Christology has not proved to be as convincing as competing mediatorial theories is that, in Bauckham’s por-

⁶⁰ Volz, *Geist Gottes*, 145–194.

⁶¹ Levison, “Prophetic Spirit,” 200.

⁶² E.g. grieved/rebelled against (Isa 63:10); departing (1Sam 16:14); an entity that can be fled from (Ps 139:7); the Spirit is said to be intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, and subtle (Wis 7:22–23); and so on.

⁶³ Dunn, *Christology*, 133.

trayal, there remains no antecedent for incorporating Christ into the divine identity. Although it is clear that monotheism was understood functionally in many quarters of Judaism, Bauckham does not perceive there to be a previous agent(s) who shared in the divine identity through functionality in the way that Christ appears to within the New Testament. Although he proposes wisdom and logos as such analogies, as noted above, these attributes are indistinguishable from Yahweh as the principle instantiation of the divine identity. At this stage, we want to discuss how the inclusion of the Spirit in the divine identity provides the kind of antecedent Bauckham's hypothesis lacks for the development of early Christology. Christ is incorporated into the divine identity through the use of the creator, ruler, and redeemer-revealer motifs, as the Spirit is in ancient and Second Temple Judaism. We shall focus below, however, on creator-ruler motifs with constant links to the latter two roles, but again noting that our case could be strengthened by independent analysis of Christ's participation in the redeeming and revealing functions of Yahweh—we shall save this for another time.

While the role and inclusion of these intermediaries within Second Temple Jewish monotheism continues to be debated,⁶⁴ what seems to us to be less contestable is that while Yahweh was clearly understood as the only creator, ruler, and redeemer-revealer, the divine or holy Spirit was included within the divine identity as a creational (and to a lesser degree providential and saving) agent in pre-Christian Jewish monotheism. What we want to suggest, then, is that the notion of the Spirit (especially) as a creational agent and the uniqueness of Yahweh as the exclusive cause of creation (as well as governance and the revealer of his redeeming plan) in Jewish monotheism provides a suitable context for the development of early high Christology within a specifically Jewish theological framework. When this Jewish monotheistic framework is combined with messianic beliefs connecting the Spirit with the Messiah and the Messiah with creation, we argue that it is highly likely that an exalted messiah could have emerged as an intelligible notion within Jewish Christianity at a very early stage. Against this

⁶⁴ For criticisms, see especially Bauckham, *God*, 16–22 and Casey, *Jewish Prophet*, 78–86. In his analysis of intermediary figures in Second Temple Jewish literature, Casey, *Jewish Prophet*, 92, for instance, states: "Where were the limits to the developments of these figures? The only limitation perceptible in our primary sources is Jewish monotheism. The function of this strict form of monotheism as an identity marker of the Jewish community is stated explicitly by ps-Aristeas, who declares that Moses in the law 'went on to show that all the rest of mankind except ourselves believe that there are many gods.'" For a detailed critique of the use of personified wisdom tradition to understand Pauline christology, see Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 596–630.

background, we will suggest that the earliest Christians and especially Paul incorporated a third agent—the resurrected Messiah—into especially the creational, but also ruling and redeeming, identity and activity of Yahweh. We shall give substantial attention here to Paul, as a representation of some of the earliest christological traditions and then we will pursue a few supporting lines of evidence as preliminary investigations of the implications that functional Spirit-monotheism might have for the origins of New Testament christologies in general. Our argument shall be that the first-century church has incorporated a christological element into the divine identity, initially based within the revelatory religious experiences of the earliest Christians, rendered comprehensible by the functional Spirit-monotheism of Second Temple Judaism, often in connection with pre-Christian Jewish messianic traditions.

3.1. *Messianism, the Spirit, and Creation in Pre-Christian Judaism*

Before pursuing the New Testament lines of evidence it will be beneficial to fill out a few further Jewish dimensions of the early Jewish-Christian belief matrix—especially in connection with messianism, the Spirit, and creation—out of which early christological conceptions emerged. Second Samuel 7:11–14 and its corollary, Ps 2:7 (esp. “You are my son, today I have begotten you”), is applied messianically by early Christians to Jesus (Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5).⁶⁵ These passages find a messianic interpretation among the Qumran scrolls as well. In 4QFloregium I, 17–19, in a midrash on Ps 2:1, the sectarian says “The kings of the earth t]ake up [their posts and the ru]lers conspire together against Yahweh and against [his anointed one (משיח)].”⁶⁶ Many scholars have reconstructed 1QSa II, 11–12 to read “when God will have begotten (ייליד) the Messiah (משיח) among them,”⁶⁷ representing interpretation and application of tradition found in 2 Sam 7:14, Ps 89:26–27, and Psalm 2:7. Rabbinic literature also renders this tradition along messianic lines, especially as it is located in Psalm 2 (e.g. *b. Sukk.* 52a). In connection with Ps 2:7, early Christians clearly identified Jesus’ resurrection as the basis for confirming that he had always existed as God’s Son, as we find in Paul’s words

⁶⁵ For analysis of the messianic function of Ps 2:7 in early Christian texts (including other references, which we do not find quite as convincing), see Lee, *From Messiah to Preexistent Son*, 240–283.

⁶⁶ On messianism in this text, see J.M. Allegro, “Further Messianic References,” *JBL* 75 (1956): 176–177; J.M. Allegro, “Fragments of a Qumran Scroll of Eschatological Midrashim,” *JBL* 77 (1958): 350–354.

⁶⁷ See Lee, *From Messiah to Preexistent Son*, 248, for discussion.

recorded in Acts 13:33 and twice in Hebrews (1:5 and 5:5). The reference to the Psalm found in Heb 1:5 clearly occurs in the context of creation and pre-creation existence. In 1:2, the Son is appointed heir of all things (sovereignty) and is the one through whom God created the world (creation)—while also upholding it (1:3; sovereignty/creation). The declaration of Ps 2:7 in Heb 1:5, showing the superiority of God's Son to the angels, is prior to the Son's being brought into the world in 1:6.⁶⁸ Similarly, in Heb 5:5, the citation of the Psalm is made in connection with the eternal nature of Jesus' priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek (cf. 5:6: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"). Again, we find a tight correlation between Ps 2:7 and the notion of eternal or at least pre-creation existence. The application of the Psalm, then, not only situates the Messiah's existence and reign in the eternal moments prior to creation, it puts him forward as the agent of God's creative activity.

Although its messianic application within early Judaism is not borne out, early Christians made extensive use of Ps 110:1 in connection with Ps 8:6 (Matt 22:44; Acts 2:34; Heb 1:13; cf. 1 Cor 15:25–27; Eph 1:22; Heb 2:8), which has implications for the Messiah's pre-creation existence, rule, and perhaps involvement in the creation act itself:

Psalm 110:1: Yahweh says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool."

Psalm 8:6: You have given him dominion over the works of thy hands; you have put all things under his feet.

Lee has shown that the previous assumption by many that the Messiah's resurrection-ascension conferred exaltation-sonship status upon Jesus is unfounded and that these events rather confirmed Jesus' previous occupancy of these statuses, which were already in place during the composition of these Psalms.⁶⁹ This is further confirmed by Jesus' pre-resurrection application of the Psalm to himself in Matt 22:44, the Jewish leaders apparently having no qualms with this messianic application of the Psalm—seemingly indicating a pre-Christian Jewish messianic reading of this text current in Jesus' day. In Heb 1:13 the citation of the Psalm seems to resume the pre-creation dialogue (where Ps 2:7 is quoted) by asking again: "to which of the angels did he ever say ...?" Psalm 8 is cited almost directly after this question is raised in Heb 2:6–8. The reference in Acts 2:34 will be discussed below because of its implications for Spirit-Christology.

⁶⁸ For further substantiation of this point, see Lee, *Messiah*, 272–278.

⁶⁹ Lee, *From Messiah to Preexistent Son*, 201–239.

Several other passages in the Hebrew Bible form further connections between the Messiah, the Spirit, and creation. In Isa 11:1–9 the promised Davidic ruler shall receive a special outpouring of the Spirit: “the Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh.” And Davidic traditions were strongly integrated within the apostolic kerygma, especially within messianic contexts.⁷⁰ Similarly, in Isaiah 61, which Jesus applies to himself at the inauguration of his public ministry in Luke’s Gospel (Luke 4:18), the Messiah affirms: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted” (Isa 61:1). It is significant for our discussion that within the context of Isaiah 61, a correlation between the Messiah, the Spirit, and new creation is maintained. Zechariah 12:10, another passage implemented messianically within early Christianity, ties the Davidic Messiah to spiritual outpouring where Yahweh promises: “I will pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication so that when they look upon him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him.” This passage is then taken up and applied within the Johannine tradition (John 19:37; Rev 1:7).

Distinct contributions to the understanding of the Messiah in connection with creation are provided by *4 Ezra*. In 13.25–26, the scribe interprets his vision in terms of the Messiah’s ultimate deliverance of his creation: “As for your seeing a man come up from the heart of the sea, this is he whom the Most High has been keeping for many ages, who will himself deliver his creation; and he will direct those who are left.”⁷¹ The Messiah up to this point has already been a theme in *4 Ezra*. He is identified as “my [God’s] son” who “shall be revealed with those who are with him” (7:28). The influence of Psalm 2:7 upon this sonship description of the Messiah is difficult to deny. Similarly, he says that “the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, who will arise from the posterity of David, and will come and speak to them; he will denounce them for their ungodliness and for their wickedness, and will cast up before them their contemptuous dealings” (12.32). What may be left up to implication here then is made certain in 13.26 where we are told that the Messiah has been kept for “many ages.” As Charles

⁷⁰ E.g. Matt 1:1, 6, 17, 20; 9:27; 12:3, 23; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9, 15; 22:42 ff., 45; Mark 2:25; 10:47; 11:10; 12:35.

⁷¹ Though “messiah” is not mentioned in this passage, most consider this an almost certain reference to a messianic figure. See Chester, *Messiah*, 346.

concludes regarding this phrase, “The pre-existent heavenly Messiah (= ‘the Son of Man’ of *1 En.* 37–70) is meant. His being hidden with God is referred to in *v.* 52 below. This heavenly pre-existence must be carefully distinguished from the earthly pre-existence which is attributed in various forms to the earthly Messiah in Rabbinic literature.”⁷² The restoration of creation through the Messiah is also significant, showing the Messiah’s function within the creative activity of God.

The books of *1 Enoch*, the *Psalms of Solomon*, and the *Testament of Levi* correlate the Messiah with the Spirit, and to a lesser degree creation. In *1 En.* 48:10 we are told that “there shall be no one to take them with his hands and raise them: For they have denied the Lord of Spirits and His Messiah. The name of the Lord of Spirits be blessed.” In 49:2 the Messiah or the “chosen one” is anointed with the Spirit, referring back to *Isa* 11:2: “And in him dwells the spirit of wisdom, and the spirit which gives insight, and the spirit of understanding and of might, and the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness.” The Messiah is before the Lord of Spirits (*1 En.* 49:3) and the readers are able to “recognize the Elect One ... the Lord of Spirits seated him on the throne of His glory, and the spirit of righteousness was poured out upon him” (*1 En.* 62.1–2). Enoch further predicts that the Messiah will receive his power through the Holy Spirit (*Pss. Sol.* 17.37; 18.7). In *T. Levi* 18.7, Levi foretells of “the glory of the Most High [that] shall be uttered over him [the Messiah], and the spirit of understanding and sanctification [that] shall rest upon him.” Levi later affirms that “he shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life, and the spirit of holiness shall be on them” (*T. Levi* 18.11)—again, portraying the Messiah in light of new creation and Spirit motifs.

3.2. *Christology and Functional Spirit-Monothelism in Paul*

A coverage of the full terrain of New Testament Christology is outside of the scope and purposes of this chapter, so we will limit ourselves to a few initiatory remarks concerning the insights that functional Spirit-monotheism seems to bring to a number of important Pauline texts. Paul’s Christology is an appropriate starting point since his literature preserves some of the earliest christological traditions. Our argument is that Paul viewed the risen Messiah as a sharer in the divine identity and the primary source for this exalted Christology was his revelatory encounters with the risen

⁷² Charles, *Apocrypha*, 2:218.

Messiah and that this belief is made intelligible within his Jewish monotheism through the functional-Spirit framework combined with contemporary messianic beliefs reconfigured, contextualized, extended, and applied within a distinctively Christian theology. This reshaping and renegotiating of the (biblical) messianic tradition clearly happened for the disciples—at least initially—when their resurrected Messiah opened their minds to see all that was written of him in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:28–37). Several other more extended encounters took place in Paul’s life (Gal 1:11–2; 1 Cor 15:8–9; 2 Cor 12:2–4). In Paul’s case, the apostolic kerygma, including the messianic application of passages from the Hebrew Bible contained therein, may have also factored in. Perhaps the lack of a consistent apologetic against the Jews defending Christianity’s commitment to monotheism (the debate in Acts and the New Testament letters [e.g. Hebrews] centers on whether Jesus was the Messiah, not whether this belief compromises monotheism) is evidence that the apostles’ Jewish opponents apparently did not consider the early Christian kerygma to be unintelligible within contemporary models of Jewish monotheism—at least, there is no evidence of this perception.

Paul directly incorporates Christ into Yahweh’s creational and providential identity in 1 Corinthians and Colossians. First Corinthians 8:6 is perhaps the earliest representation of christological tradition that we have preserved within the New Testament. The context for this passage deals with idolatry and so the statement on Christian monotheism here is entirely appropriate. That Paul’s conception of the uniqueness of the divine identity is grounded in Yahweh’s exclusive role as creator and ruler is clear from this passage. The Christian God is differentiated from idols on the basis of his being the sole sovereign creator of all and ruler over all that exists (ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν and the analogous statement made of Christ δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα, καὶ ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ). In terms of the structure and literary background of the passage, Paul apparently intended to divide the Shema by separating its divine references so that θεός now refers to God, the Father, and κύριος refers to Christ, from κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστίν (LXX Deut 6:4) to εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ ... εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (1 Cor 8:6).⁷³ The creational dimension is a new element and gives Paul the necessary warrant for including Christ within the divine identity. Since the uniqueness of God is defined by his role as Creator-Ruler-Redeemer, Paul can legitimately include Christ within his monotheistic framework by positioning him within the unique creational

⁷³ See Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 90–91.

and providential identity of Yahweh. That is why defining both the Father and Christ in terms of their creative agency—the Father as the source and the Son (by virtue of the Father's relation drawn here) as the goal⁷⁴—is significant to the argument of the text: it legitimates the inclusion of the Son within the divine identity. Waaler, in his monograph-length treatment of this passage, is, therefore, correct to conclude that in 1 Cor 8:6 Christ “enters into the theological structures associated with Yahweh. The Jews spoke of one God, Paul of one Lord Jesus Christ alongside of God.”⁷⁵ But why wouldn't such a move require argumentation within a strict Jewish monotheism? It probably would have if the move was entirely unprecedented, as Fee believes: “There is nothing like this to be found in Paul's Jewish heritage as such. That is, he has no prior frame of reference into which this modification of the Shema can be fitted.”⁷⁶ We disagree. It seems that the functional Spirit-monotheism of the Second Temple period and various pre-Christian Jewish messianic antecedents provide precisely such a frame of reference (see below). Colossians 1:15–20, likely a pre-Pauline christological hymn, provides us with similar evidence, though not with the same emphasis upon monotheism. Paul says that all things in the natural and supernatural realms were created by the instrumentality of Christ (the preposition ἐν probably indicating agency). The connection with sovereignty is also clear in that all things consist in Christ (1:17). That Christ creates all things assumes a pre-creation existence for the Messiah.

Further evidence for this thesis is found in the relationship among Christ, creation, and the Spirit in Paul's writings, which can also further clarify the track along which Paul's christological thinking may have developed out of his own religious experience, while at the same time remaining intelligible, given his commitment to (Second Temple) Jewish monotheism. There are two significant questions that need to be raised: (1) what role does Paul see the Spirit playing in creation, providence, and redemption-revelation, and (2) what relationship does the Spirit bear to Christ?

⁷⁴ On the prepositions used here, besides the commentaries, see Neil Richardson, *Paul's Language about God* (JSNTSup 99; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 296–304; Bauckham, *God*, 37–40; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 89–94; Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1963; orig. 1959), 247. There are significant implications for the use of a similar formula in Rom 11:36 and Col 1:16 discussed in these works.

⁷⁵ Erik Waaler, *The Shema and the First Commandment in First Corinthians: An Intertextual Approach to Paul's Re-Reading of Deuteronomy* (WUNT 2.253; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 437.

⁷⁶ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 92.

The first few verses of Genesis are only cited once by Paul (2 Cor 4:6) and the Spirit is not directly referenced. What is interesting here, however, is that the unveiling is accomplished by the Spirit (2 Cor 3:18) and God then removes the veil/blindness: “the one who said ‘Let light shine out of darkness’” (2 Cor 4:6). Although Paul has something more to say about Adam and Eve, due to the occasional nature of his letters, there is little else on original creation and, therefore, little opportunity for Paul to mention the Spirit in this connection. What Paul does discuss is the relationship between the Spirit and the new creation (which, recall, involves the entire cluster of functions associated with Yahweh’s monotheistic identity), both spiritual and physical. In the primary Pauline exposition of new creation/eschatological restoration, Rom 8:18–30, the Spirit is a central figure. He is also the source of the new life in Christ (2 Cor 3:6; Gal 4:29; cf. also 2 Thess 2:13), including the eternal life that it will consummate (Gal 6:8). In this respect, Paul’s pneumatology is an extension of the Second Temple belief in the Spirit’s creational involvement in giving life to man (e.g. Philo, *QG* 1.51; 3.62). As with Second Temple Jews, Paul understands the Spirit to be responsible for creating new physical life, both in Christ (Rom 8:11) and in the believer’s final resurrection (2 Cor 5:4–5; cf. also Eph 1:12–14; 1 Cor 15:45; Rom 5:5; 8:11, 23–24). He is appropriately called “the Spirit of life” (Rom 8:2) and to set one’s “mind on the Spirit is life and peace” (Rom 8:6), since “the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Rom 8:10).⁷⁷ Yet God remains the source of life in early Christian monotheism (Acts 17:25). Paul views the Spirit’s creative work both in relation to the physical renewal of creation and the creation of spiritual and physical life in the believer. These views correspond to the Second Temple pneumatological understanding of the Spirit’s involvement in original creation and in the original breathing of life into man. Paul’s theology, then, clearly has a place for the Spirit in the creational activity of Yahweh.

Paul apparently takes over the eschatological dimension of Second Temple functional Spirit-monotheism, which includes the Spirit’s role in the restoration of the original creation, but extends it to include the creation of new life in the believer—perhaps as a fulfillment of the new covenant

⁷⁷ Levison has also argued that a new Spirit-filled temple has been erected through the believer that can be understood against the background of the Qumran community. John R. Levison, “The Spirit and the Temple in Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians,” in Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Paul and His Theology* (Pauline Studies 3; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 189–215 (193–197).

spoken of by Ezekiel. Paul appears within his letters to then systematically integrate Christ into this framework. This can be observed at a number of levels.

In ancient and Second Temple Judaism, the Spirit is set in relation to Yahweh as a creating-ruling-redeeming agent who shares in the divine identity, often through a genitive relation (e.g. MT: יהוה-רוח; LXX: πνεύμα κυρίου). Paul pursues a similar strategy in the development of his christological doctrine, setting the Spirit now in relation to Christ. In Gal 4:6 Paul refers to the Spirit's activity in the following way: ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ. Philippians 1:19 uses similar language when it speaks of τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The most interesting examples, however, are found in Rom 8:9–11 and 8:14 since Paul moves from πνεῦμα θεοῦ to πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ in 8:9, then discusses the co-dwelling of Christ and the Spirit in the believer in 8:10 before finally speaking of τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν in 8:11.⁷⁸ Then, in 8:14, he returns to the designation πνεύματι θεοῦ, only shifting the case relation. It is significant that in this passage, where the most explicit pneumatological creational motifs are present, Paul sets the Spirit in relation both to God and to Christ.

Paul seems to blur the identities of Christ and the Spirit within the Corinthian correspondence. When Paul discusses the dispersal of the gifts within the church in 1 Corinthians 12 he seems to use Lord and Spirit simultaneously. He says there are varieties of gifts “by the same Spirit” (12:4) but varieties of services “by the same Lord” (12:5). Waaler convincingly argues that in this movement the “binatarian basis for unity in 1 Cor 8:6 is expanded to a triple basis of unity ...”⁷⁹ In the development of his Adam Christology in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says: ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν ὁ ἕχτατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν (1 Cor 15:45). As Dunn acknowledges in his article-length treatment of this curious complex of clauses, Paul's use of such language indicates that in the post-resurrection, “*Christ is now*

⁷⁸ On these three verses, see Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 404–412, 543–554, 736–743. Gabriel's essay is essentially a summary of Fee's critical points on these verses: Andrew K. Gabriel, “Pauline Pneumatology and the Question of Trinitarian Presuppositions,” in Porter, ed., *Paul and His Theology*, 348–362. See also Mehrdad Fatehi, *The Spirit's Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul* (WUNT 128; Tübingen: Mohr, 2000), 23–45; Gordon D. Fee, “Christology and Pneumatology in Romans 8:9–11— and Elsewhere: Some Reflections on Paul as a Trinitarian,” in Gordon D. Fee, *To What End Exegesis? Essays Textual, Exegetical and Theological* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 218–239; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 289–293. Fee also addresses the controversial passages on Christ as the Spirit in 2 Cor 3:17–18 and 1 Cor 15:45.

⁷⁹ Waaler, *The Shema and the First Commandment*, 439.

experienced as Spirit—that is true. But it is only because *the Spirit is now experienced as Christ* that the experience of the Spirit is valid and essential for Paul” (emphasis his).⁸⁰ Paul’s slotting Christ into the Spirit’s life-creating role in the context of eschatological resurrection (new creation) indicates the use of the Spirit-creation framework in incorporating Christ into Yahweh’s unique functions. The passage also appears to assume pre-creation existence for the last Adam. The first Adam was from earth, a man of dust (creation), whereas the second Adam is from heaven. In 2 Corinthians, in a similar fashion to what we find in Romans 8, Paul switches freely between the Lord who is the Spirit and the Spirit of the Lord: ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ὃ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐλευθερία (2 Cor 3:17) and κυρίου πνεύματος (2 Cor 3:18). In the context κύριος is clearly Christ (2 Cor 3:14). Again, Christ is now experienced through the Spirit—in this case through the Spirit’s *revelatory* functions in opening the believer’s mind to see the proper (christological) interpretation of the law of Moses.⁸¹

A final piece of evidence that must be taken into consideration is Paul’s clearly personal view of the Spirit. In numerous instances, Paul positions the Spirit within an agentive capacity. In many instances, he describes Christ with parallel language, but when these parallel descriptions are employed, Christ and the Spirit usually fulfill the single function in distinct ways (e.g. the Spirit intercedes in prayer, but Christ intercedes in atonement). The following parallels can be noted in Paul between the Spirit and Christ: they both intercede (Spirit: Rom 8:26–27; Christ: Rom 8:34); give life (Spirit: Rom 7:6; 8:2, 11; 2 Cor 3:6; Christ: Rom 5:17–21; 2 Cor 4:10); exercise volition (Spirit: 1 Cor 2:10–12; Rom 8:26–27; Christ: Phil 2:6–7); and they both have minds (Spirit: Rom 8:27; Christ: Phil 2:5). Other personal features are predicated of the Spirit, including revealing (1 Cor 2:10), searching (1 Cor 2:10), teaching (1 Cor 2:13), dwelling (1 Cor 3:16), witnessing (Rom 8:16), leading (Gal 5:18; Rom 8:14), desiring (Gal 5:17), raising Jesus from the dead (Rom 8:11), sanctifying (Rom 15:16), communicating (1 Cor 12:3; 1 Tim 4:1), giving (spiritual gifts) (1 Cor 12:8–9), activating (spiritual gifts) (1 Cor 12:11), filling (Eph 5:18), inspiring (1 Thess 1:6), and renewing (Titus 3:6). The Spirit can also be sent (Gal 4:6), grieved (Eph 4:30), and quenched (1 Thess 5:19). The Spirit functions very much like a personal agent in Paul.

⁸⁰ James D.G. Dunn, “1 Corinthians 15:45—Last Adam, Life-giving Spirit,” in Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley, eds., *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: In Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 127–141 (141).

⁸¹ For an analysis of other parallels in 1 Corinthians, see E. Earle Ellis, “Christ and the Spirit in 1 Corinthians,” in Lindars and Smalley, eds., *Christ and Spirit*, 269–277.

Paul clearly views the Spirit as a creational agent and appears to have integrated Christ into the divine identity on this same basis, reconfiguring functional Spirit-monotheism in emphasizing the Spirit's role in realized (spiritual life within the believer) and future (the coming kingdom) new creation and the Son's role as the instrument of original creation. Paul's revelatory encounters with Christ must have been the source of such an adaptation, but what antecedents would have made this alteration intelligible to a first-century Jewish monotheist, such as Paul? Instead of attempting to force one stream of tradition to do all the heavy lifting in answering this question—as many have done—we propose that there must have been a confluence of factors at work. At least one monotheistic framework in place during the Second Temple period—functional Spirit-monotheism—would have allowed for the flexibility to incorporate Christ within the divine identity through participation in the roles that uniquely characterize Yahweh, and Paul seems to adopt something very close to this. There appears to be the appropriate incentive for such an inclusion in the Jewish development of early Christology given the messianic traditions concerning the Messiah's pre-creation existence and sovereign rule as well as the Messiah's close involvement with the Spirit in pre-Christian Judaism. The primal religious experiences of the earliest Christians certainly played a role as well. Along with Luke's account of the disciples on the Emmaus road and the Pauline references to his experiences with the post-resurrection Jesus, Jesus' reception from the Father of the "promise of the Spirit" in the confirmation of his messianic status in his exaltation (Acts 2:32–33), apparently part of the apostolic tradition, factors in at this level. The tradition communicated by Peter through Luke indicates that the ability to pour out the Spirit or for the Spirit to proceed from Jesus was associated with his exalted status. Thus, Luke can legitimately refer to the Spirit as the $\piνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ$ (Acts 16:7).⁸² Given the direct connection of these statements with Ps 110:1 in the immediate context, the final fulfillment of Jesus' messianic role seems to have involved a tightened pneumatological relationship. Given the sermon's proximity to the apostle's encounters with the risen Messiah, the most likely origin for this tradition is the disciples' interaction with the resurrected Lord in the preceding days. This newly conferred status and authority must have established the resurrected Lord in at least an equal

⁸² On these connections, see G. Stählin, "Τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ (Apostelgeschichte 16:7)," in Lindars and Smalley, eds., *Christ and Spirit*, 229–252.

place of primacy in relation to Yahweh within the minds of the disciples and other early Christians, accounting for the early Christian exaltation of Jesus within the *Spirit*-creation framework. The convergence of the Christ-as-creator tradition in the New Testament within Johannine (John 1:1–4) (if John is viewed as a public gospel for both ethnicities), Gentile (in Paul), and Jewish (Hebrews 1:1–15) Christianity (including hymnic material likely pre-dating the writings in which they are found) strongly suggests that this belief goes back to the earliest Christians' revelatory encounters with their resurrected Messiah. The Christ-as-creator belief would not, however, have been viewed by the early Jewish disciples or Paul as a radical alteration of their monotheistic framework, but as a logical extension of the functional Spirit-monotheism they had likely already come to accept. They moved from a functional Spirit-monotheism to a functional christological monotheism in which Christ shares in the divine identity in the same way that the Spirit previously had: through participating in the exclusive monotheistic roles of Yahweh.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, while we have not been able to cover the full terrain of early Jewish and Christian monotheism and Christology (we have left early Christian wisdom and logos christologies virtually untouched), we have at least sought to demonstrate functional Spirit-monotheism as one stream of monotheistic belief in Second Temple Judaism. This version of monotheism more adequately accounts for early christological beliefs because, unlike hypostatized divine attributes, the Spirit is distinct from Yahweh as a secondary instantiation of the divine identity, yet, unlike angelomorphic mediatorial figures, still shares in the divine identity. When this configuration of early Jewish monotheism is coupled with beliefs emerging within Jewish messianism regarding the pre-creation existence of the Messiah and his close association with the Spirit, there are a number of recognizable antecedents within the belief matrix of early Jewish Christians that render the origins of a high Christology intelligible. These antecedents, however, are insufficient on their own to explain the origins of early New Testament Christology. The revelatory experiences of the earliest Christians with their resurrected Messiah reconfigures, interprets, extends, and contextualizes these antecedents within their distinctively Christian theology, represented for us within the New Testament.

THE ETHNIC CONTEXT OF PAUL'S LETTERS

Christopher D. Stanley

1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of the so-called “New Perspective on Paul” in recent years has led to renewed interest in the “ethnic” dimension of Paul’s thought. According to the “New Perspective,” much of Paul’s theological reflection and argumentation can be traced to the dynamic interplay between his intellectual need to understand the place of Jews and Gentiles in God’s plan and his practical concern to address the many problems that arose as he struggled to set up multi-ethnic “alternative communities” of Christ-followers across the Greco-Roman world. This insight is usually accompanied by an insistence that Paul’s letters were written to address concrete social issues that were plaguing his churches, not to answer abstract questions such as how individual sinners can be made right with God or what will happen in the future. To supporters of the New Perspective, the “Jew-Gentile question” is not a peripheral issue for Paul; it stands at the heart of his theology.

While supporters of the New Perspective are to be commended for recognizing the importance of ethnic issues in Paul’s theology and rhetoric, their revisionist interpretation still leaves Paul and his churches too often in a social vacuum. One would never know from their studies that Paul and his followers lived in an ethnically diverse and complex society where ethnic identities were fluid and contested and interethnic tensions were woven deeply into the social fabric. When read against this background, their analyses of Paul’s letters raise as many questions as they answer. For example, proponents of the New Perspective generally fail to note that there was no actual social entity corresponding to the word “Gentiles” in the ancient world; this is a term used by Ἰουδαῖοι for non-Ἰουδαῖοι, not an ethnic self-designation.¹ How would the reception of Paul’s arguments have been

¹ The Greek word Ἰουδαῖοι is left untranslated here and elsewhere in order to avoid prejudging the question of whether the term is better translated “Jews” or “Judeans,” an issue that will be addressed later in this article.

affected by his use of this in-group terminology? In a similar way, the variety of meanings that accompanied the term Ἰουδαῖοι in the ancient world is regularly overlooked. Would the people in Paul's churches have understood him to be talking about a contemporary people-group that resided in the land of Judea, a local religious group that was marked by a number of unusual social and religious practices, the biblical "people of God" who had failed to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah and now stood under God's judgment, or some combination of these ideas? Where would they have placed individuals who had united themselves to the community of the Ἰουδαῖοι (i.e., proselytes) but had no ties to the territory of Judea? And what about Paul's occasional use of the term Ἕλληνας ("Greeks") as a counterpoise to Ἰουδαῖοι? Unlike the term ἔθνη, the word Ἕλληνας referred to a real people-group whose history and cultural influence would have been well known to everyone. What would Paul's audiences have thought about the sudden appearance of such an obviously ethnic designation in the midst of a theological argument? Would it have affected the way they interpreted the term Ἰουδαῖοι? Would they have been puzzled by Paul's failure to mention other well-known people-groups such as the Phrygians, the Syrians, or even the Romans? In short, how would Paul's ethnic language have been understood by an ethnically diverse ancient audience?

Proposing answers to such broad questions as these is beyond the scope of this article.² All that can be attempted here is to lay out some of the prolegomena for such an analysis. The presentation is divided into three sections. The first section will examine what contemporary social scientists mean when they use terms like "ethnic" and "ethnicity" in order to clarify the significance of applying these terms to social groups in the ancient world. The second section will provide a brief overview of the ethnic diversity and some of the interethnic tensions that marked the Greco-Roman world in which Paul and his followers lived and worked. The final section will highlight a few selected aspects of the use (and non-use) of ethnic categories and language in Paul's letters.

2. DEFINING ETHNICITY

Scholars who study what Paul has to say about "Jews" and "Gentiles" often use the adjective "ethnic" (along with the associated term "ethnic groups")

² These and related questions will be addressed in a monograph that the author is currently writing under the title, *Neither Jew Nor Greek: Ethnic Rhetoric in the Letters of Paul*.

as though its meaning were self-evident and unproblematic. Within the social sciences, by contrast, the idea of “ethnicity” has been subjected to intensive analysis and debate over the last several decades, with scholars developing sophisticated theories and models on the basis of careful field-work in a variety of cultures. Though differences remain, a remarkable degree of convergence has emerged among sociologists, social anthropologists, and social psychologists concerning the sociological and psychological phenomenon known as “ethnicity.” A brief review of the scholarly consensus in this area will shed light on the use of ethnic language in the letters of Paul.³

Social scientists define “ethnicity” not as a fixed quality that inheres in some objectively identifiable population group, but rather as a fluid aspect of individual and group self-definition that can be either highlighted or ignored as circumstances warrant. From the standpoint of the individual, ethnicity is a type of “social identity,” a term that social psychologist Henri Tajfel defines as “that part of the individuals’ self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.”⁴ What distinguishes “ethnic identity” from other forms of social identity is its orientation toward a reference group (whether real or imagined) that posits some kind of common origin or history for its members, often through the use of a narrative or myth about the group’s past.⁵

Whether “ethnic identity” is considered salient by a particular individual depends on a variety of factors, including the individual’s social location, the effects of social indoctrination, and the benefits or costs that are associated with asserting that identity. Ethnic identities are not exclusive; an individual can have multiple ethnic identities, with some being activated and others

³ A notable exception to the general lack of familiarity with social-scientific perspectives on ethnicity in the field of Pauline studies can be seen in Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 19–53.

⁴ Henri Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1982), 2.

⁵ According to Joshua Fishman, “Social Theory and Ethnography,” in Peter Sugar, ed., *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 1980), 84: “Ethnicity has always been experienced as a kinship phenomenon, a continuity within the self and within those who share an intergenerational link to common ancestors.” Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 57, comments on the social effects of this claim to kinship: “The idea, if not always the fact, of common ancestry makes it possible for ethnic groups to think in terms of family resemblances ... and to bring into play for a much wider circle those concepts of mutual obligation and antipathy to outsiders that are common to family relations.”

lying dormant at any given time. For example, an immigrant from the Central American nation of Guatemala who lives in the state of Texas and has become an American citizen might identify herself as an American, a Southerner, a Texan, a Latina (or Hispana), a Central American, a Guatemalan, or a Quiche (a Guatemalan indigenous group). Which of these identities she might choose to claim (if any) would depend on the social context in which the identification occurred.

Of course, the fact that an individual can claim a particular ethnic identity presupposes the existence of a reference group that can be distinguished somehow from other groups within a given society. In the past, social scientists thought of "ethnic groups" as perduring entities made up of people who possessed a common origin or history and shared a set of cultural practices that differentiated them from other groups in the same environment. That approach has been largely discarded as a result of the paradigmatic work of Frederik Barth and his colleagues in the 1950s and 1960s.⁶ Drawing on the results of extensive field-work performed by him and others, Barth observed that the cultural features of groups that defined themselves in ethnic terms could and did change from place to place and time to time without threatening the existence or identity of the group. Barth concluded from this that ethnic groups were grounded not in an objectively identifiable set of cultural characteristics but in the subjective belief of group members (often though not always supported by outsiders) that such a group exists. Virtually all scholars have followed Barth in acknowledging that ethnic groups are subjective, ascriptive entities whose existence cannot be verified by objective means.

Barth's investigations showed that two factors were essential for the development and maintenance of ethnic groups: (1) a collective judgment by group members that certain cultural characteristics (language, dress, religion, moral values, etc.) should be regarded as markers of group identity, and (2) the availability of an accepted set of rules for negotiating interactions with people beyond the group's boundaries. Any element of culture can serve as an identity marker, even features shared with other groups, as

⁶ Barth's most influential publication was the introductory chapter in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), from which the central ideas of this paragraph have been summarized. Barth continued to develop his ideas in a variety of books and essays that relied heavily on field-work conducted by himself and others, including *Process and Form in Social Life: Selected Essays of Fredrik Barth* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) and *Balinese Worlds* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

long as those who identify with the group are willing to embrace and be evaluated by the accepted standard.⁷ The same is true for boundary-support mechanisms: any system can work as long as it allows group members to interact with outsiders without compromising what they see as their cultural distinctives. As Barth puts it, "The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change; yet the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the changing cultural form and content."⁸ As long as people are willing to identify themselves as members of the group and comply with its identity markers, an ethnic group can continue despite major changes in its accepted beliefs and practices. At root, ethnic identity is a matter of performance, whether for the individual or the group.

Of course, ethnic groups do not normally have any kind of adjudicatory body to specify what type or level of performance is sufficient to be considered a member of the group, and it is not uncommon for people who identify with an ethnic group to disagree about what counts as a valid performance of ethnic identity. Like all forms of identity, ethnic identity can be contested. In mild cases, contestation can lead to the development of various "styles" of expressing one's identification with the reference group and its heritage. In more severe cases, it can lead to the rise of sectarian or even schismatic tendencies, with competing subgroups claiming to represent the most "genuine" or "true" form of group identity and deriding others as ethnic traitors.⁹

Finally, it is worth noting that ethnic groups do not exist in a vacuum. One of the basic presumptions of social scientific studies of ethnicity is that ethnic groups exist only in relation to other groups from which they seek to distinguish themselves and with which they must develop rules for interaction. Invariably those interactions involve questions of power. All ethnic self-categorizations are rooted in a distinction between "insiders" and "outsiders" that is reinforced by feelings of group pride. Ethnic categorization may also be performed by outsiders, in which case ethnic pride may be

⁷ As Barth, *Ethnic Groups*, 14, notes, "We can assume no one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities or differences Some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored, and in some relationships radical differences are played down and denied."

⁸ Barth, *Ethnic Groups*, 14.

⁹ A helpful summary of the literature on this point can be found in Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 27–28.

balanced or overwhelmed by the experience of stigmatization. In both situations it is common (though by no means universal) for group members to be socialized into holding negative attitudes toward outsiders, ranging from stereotypes and prejudice to violence and persecution.¹⁰ The nature of the interaction depends largely on the degree of social power possessed by various groups and their history of relations.¹¹ Even when relations are cordial, a significant shift in power-relations between ethnic groups can produce a souring of relations that spirals quickly into violence.

3. ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

So what do we know about ethnic groups and interethnic relations in the ancient world? The Greco-Roman world into which the Apostle Paul was born was highly diverse from an ethnic standpoint. The population of Tarsus, like that of other Greek *poleis* in Asia Minor, would have included at least four broad classes of inhabitants: (1) the native population, which would have been significantly hellenized by this time; (2) the “Greeks” (Ἕλληνας), a term that included both the lineal descendants of earlier Greek and Seleucid settlers and the hellenized members of the local elites; (3) the Romans, whose numbers would have been small as in other Greek cities that

¹⁰ As Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 55, notes, “Social categorization—the identification of others as a collectivity—is no less a routine social process than the collective self-identification of the group.” For a schematic analysis of the various stereotypes that ethnic groups typically hold about themselves and “outsiders,” see R.A. LeVine and D.T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes, and Group Behavior* (New York: John Wiley, 1971), 12, 173, 220. This latter study includes a critical overview of common theoretical approaches to the issue of ethnocentrism and a valuable history of research in the area.

¹¹ Comparative studies have shown that interethnic *cooperation* is more likely in contexts where interactions between groups are highly structured; where groups occupy different (and/or complementary) socioeconomic or territorial niches; where political power is distributed in a mutually acceptable (though not necessarily equal) manner; where groups have equally long histories of residence in the same area; and where they share a common language and worldview and a similar set of values. Ethnic *conflict* is more likely in settings where groups are competing for scarce social, economic, or territorial resources; where there are discrepancies or changes in the size or political power of competing groups; where one group has migrated into the territory of another; where there is a prior history of conflict between groups; or where groups in the same geographic area possess discordant systems of personal and social values. For more information, see the discussions in Barth, *Ethnic Groups*, 19–21; LeVine and Campbell, *Ethnocentrism*, 36–40, 216–223; and Richard A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations: A Framework for Theory and Research* (New York: Random House, 1970), 40–43, 68–73, 77–83, 238–242.

had been incorporated into the Roman Empire; and (4) immigrants from other lands, whether long-term or temporary residents, who represented a variety of ethnic traditions from across the Mediterranean world.¹² According to Strabo, Tarsus was renowned for its Greek educational system (*Geogr.* 14.5.13),¹³ but this does not negate the diversity of the local population. Paul grew up in a multi-ethnic city, though we know little about relations among the various ethnic groups in his day.

In Jerusalem (if we trust what the book of Acts says about Paul being educated there), Paul would have encountered a similar mix of people, though the proportions in each category would have been different, with a higher percentage of the population in the “native” category and smaller numbers in the others. Yet we must be careful not to underestimate the presence of “Greeks,” Romans, and people from other lands in the city. Two centuries of Greek rule under the Ptolemies and Seleucids had left their mark even on the Hasmoneans, and Herod the Great’s admiration for Greek and Roman culture is well known. In Paul’s day, the Ἰουδαῖοι of Jerusalem would have rubbed shoulders routinely with Greeks, Romans, and other “foreigners” whenever they attended performances in the theater, the amphitheater, or the hippodrome, not to mention the athletic games that were held every five years in honor of Caesar, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 15.267–279). Josephus also speaks of tensions and conflicts between Ἰουδαῖοι and Ἕλληνας in several cities around the land of Israel at the time of the Jewish Revolt.¹⁴ Thus, even if Acts is correct about Paul being educated in Jerusalem, he would not have escaped the presence of ethnic diversity during his years in the city.

If we were to survey the ethnic makeup of all of the cities, towns, and villages that Paul visited during the course of his later travels (insofar as we know about them from his letters and the book of Acts), we would find representatives of the same four ethnic categories in virtually all of them,

¹² As members of the local community of Ἰουδαῖοι (i.e. immigrants from Judea), Paul’s family would have fallen into the final group. This assumes, of course, that the book of Acts is correct in placing Paul’s origins in Tarsus. But few scholars today would question that attribution.

¹³ Strabo describes Tarsus as a center for both philosophical and rhetorical education and lists a number of famous philosophers who were natives of Tarsus.

¹⁴ Josephus gives lengthy descriptions of the conflicts at Caesarea (*Ant.* 20.173–184; *J.W.* 2.266–270; 2.284–291; 2.457–458; 3.409–410) and Scythopolis (*J.W.* 2.466–476; *Vita* 26–27), along with shorter notices of conflicts in various other Greek cities of Palestine (*J.W.* 2.458–465; 2.477–478; 7.367; *Vita* 42, 67, 410, etc.).

though again in differing combinations and proportions.¹⁵ The identity of the native population would have varied from region to region, but they would have been the majority in most areas.¹⁶ The Greek element would have been more visible in some communities than in others, reflecting their divergent experiences with hellenization, while certain towns and cities would have attracted more foreign residents and guests than others, due in part to the variability of business opportunities. The nature of the Roman presence likewise varied from permanent outposts to occasional visits.¹⁷ But natives, Greeks, Romans, and people from other territories (including those designated as Ἰουδαῖοι, or immigrants from Judea) would have lived and worked together on a daily basis in virtually all of the towns and cities where the Apostle Paul carried on his missionary activities. The only notable exception was the cities of Greece, where the bulk of the native population consisted of Ἕλληνας, or “Greeks.”¹⁸

If we ask how these different ethnic populations viewed and related to each other, we find that the answer varies depending on when and where we are looking. The limited evidence that is available suggests that ethnic prejudice was rampant in the ancient world, and not only toward Jews/Ἰουδαῖοι. The Roman elites universally admired Greek culture, but Roman authors spoke in highly disparaging tones about the Greeks whom they encountered on a daily basis, insisting that they fell woefully short of the standards

¹⁵ For a helpful summary, see Richard Wallace and Wynne Williams, *The Three Worlds of Paul of Tarsus* (London: Routledge, 1998), though their “three worlds” model ignores the substantial presence of immigrant groups in the Greek *poleis*.

¹⁶ For a glimpse into the bewildering ethnic diversity of the native population of Asia Minor in Paul’s day as viewed by a native of the region, see Strabo, *Geogr.* 12–14; cf. the helpful analysis by Stephen Mitchell in *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 1:171–176. Our knowledge of the native populations is rather limited for many parts of the Greco-Roman world, since most left little or no literary remains (the natives of Judea and Greece are obvious exceptions), and much of the information that we do have comes from biased or even hostile sources.

¹⁷ Even in Roman colonies, the extent of the Roman presence varied widely, depending on whether the colony was a new foundation or a reorganization of a native or Greek town or city.

¹⁸ The distinction here is more apparent than real; the native population of Greece in Paul’s day was the product of a long history of ethnic conflict and mixing that is veiled by the designation of its inhabitants as Ἕλληνας, a term that first came to prominence in the fifth century BCE as a rallying point for resistance to the Persian invaders. Regional ethnic identities remained salient for many of the residents of Hellas into the Roman period. A more nuanced study would show that the same was true for many of the other areas where Paul traveled.

set by their ancestors.¹⁹ Greeks and Romans both looked down on the various native populations as uncultured boors, though they made exceptions for groups like the Egyptians whose cultural accomplishments were well known.²⁰ At least some of the natives held similar views of the Greeks and Romans whom they encountered. Ἰουδαῖοι/Jews, many of whom would have been included in the “foreigner” category, were derided by Greeks, Romans, and natives alike for their strange practices and their refusal to participate in the worship of the local deities. Many Ἰουδαῖοι held equally negative views of the “idolatrous” and “immoral” conduct of their neighbors.²¹ In short, the communities in which Paul lived and worked were not only ethnically diverse but also rife with interethnic tensions.

Of course, this is not the whole story. Members of different ethnic groups interacted with one another on a daily basis without incident, and intermarriage was not uncommon. Individuals also varied widely in their attitudes toward members of other groups. For example, despite the history of tensions between Ἰουδαῖοι and Ἕλληνες, there were many Ἰουδαῖοι who were attracted to elements of Greek culture.²² Their views were matched by Ἕλληνες who admired the aniconic monotheism and strict moral lifestyle of the Ἰουδαῖοι.²³ Ethnic identity was also rather fluid in the Greco-Roman world; individuals could pass from one ethnic category to another by adopting the outward markers and behaviors associated with their new identity. For example, the native elites in areas dominated by Greek *poleis* often

¹⁹ For a good recent summary of the data, see Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 381–405. A somewhat older study that is still quite useful is J.P.V.D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 30–71.

²⁰ Isaac's study cited in the previous note provides a comprehensive survey of the negative attitudes of educated Greeks and Romans toward the major people-groups of the Greco-Roman world, including Phoenicians, Syrians, Egyptians, Parthians, Greeks, Gauls, Germans, and Jews.

²¹ A number of helpful studies of the tensions and prejudices that existed between the Ἰουδαῖοι and their “pagan” neighbors have appeared in recent years; see the titles listed in note 38.

²² On the mixed attitudes of Ἰουδαῖοι toward Ἕλληνες and their culture, see the helpful summary in Erich S. Gruen, “Jewish Perspectives on Greek Culture and Ethnicity,” in Irad Malkin, ed., *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity* (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, 1991), 347–373.

²³ The standard collection of sayings by Greek and Roman authors on Jews and Judaism is Menahem Stern, ed., *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974–1984). A study that highlights the positive side of Jew-Gentile relations is Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

went to great lengths to ensure that their sons received a Greek education and adopted Greek ways in the well-founded hope that they might eventually gain acceptance as “Greeks” themselves. In a similar way, “Greeks” and Romans could become Ἰουδαῖοι by accepting circumcision (if they were males), embracing Jewish religious and social customs, and affiliating themselves with the local Jewish community, while Ἰουδαῖοι could move in the opposite direction by embracing “Greek” ways and abandoning the practices and society of the Ἰουδαῖοι. Individuals with multiple ethnic identities were also quite common. A Greek-speaking Jew who had spent his entire life in Rome might identify himself as a Ἰουδαῖος while attending his local synagogue, a Ἕλληγν while watching a play in the theater, or a loyal *Romanus* while applauding a herald’s report announcing the Emperor’s latest military victory (even if he were not a Roman citizen). The availability of so many ethnic identities and the ability to move from one to another meant that an individual’s ethnic identity was always open to negotiation.

4. PAUL’S ETHNIC WORLDVIEW

As we noted earlier, the Apostle Paul grew up in a multi-ethnic environment and spent much of his adult life traveling and working among people representing a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and identities. It is thus surprising to note how circumscribed is the language that he uses in his letters when speaking of ethnic differences. Though he varies his terms from passage to passage, Paul consistently defines ethnicity in binary terms. For him, the world is divided into Ἰουδαῖοι and non-Ἰουδαῖοι (commonly described as τὰ ἔθνη, “the nations”). In the few places where he mentions Ἕλληγες (“Greeks”)—a term that any audience member would have recognized as an ethnic self-designation of a particular people-group—he invariably couples it with Ἰουδαῖοι to form a binary pair. The only exceptions to this pattern are Gal 3:1, where Γαλάται (“Galatians”) appears to retain its ethnic significance, and 2 Cor 9:4, where Μακεδόνες (“Macedonians”) could be taken in an ethnic sense.²⁴ (The mention of Σκύθης, “Scythian,” in Col 3:11 could also be included here if we accept Colossians as Pauline.) Other groups, even Ἰωρμαῖοι, simply do not exist within the ethnic world of Paul’s letters.

²⁴ For more on these points, see the final section of this article.

Scholars are virtually unanimous in attributing this pattern of usage to Paul's Jewish heritage, pointing to passages in other Jewish texts where the in-group is given an ethnic title (Ἰουδαῖοι) and outsiders are lumped together under a single generic heading. Closer inspection, however, reveals a number of problems with this explanation.

In the first place, it is not at all clear that Paul conceived of "the nations" in monolithic terms. Eleven times in his letters he uses the terms Ἑλλην/Ἕλληνας ("Greeks") in parallel with Ἰουδαῖος/Ἰουδαῖοι, and in one passage he evokes the standard Greek contrast between Ἕλληνας and βάρβαροι (Rom 1:14; cf. 1 Cor 14:11; Col 3:11). This latter verse presents problems for the common scholarly practice of interpreting "Greeks" in all of these texts as a synonym for ἔθνη. Paul's passing references to "Galatians," "Macedonians," and possibly "Scythians" also suggest that he was aware of ethnic diversity among "the nations."²⁵

Secondly, it is simply untrue that Jews in Paul's day routinely divided humanity into two camps without remainder. Philip Esler lists over forty people-groups to which Josephus refers in his treatise *Against Apion*,²⁶ and both Josephus and Philo describe social conflicts that involved people whom they label as "Egyptians" or "Syrians" alongside Ἰουδαῖοι and/or Ἕλληνας.²⁷ Both also make repeated use of the standard Greek division of the world into Ἕλληνας and βάρβαροι.²⁸ In fact, Paul's ethnic terminology seems remarkably restrained when compared with these Jewish near-contemporaries.

Thirdly, Paul's ethnic language is too varied and creative to support the assertion that he unreflectively adopted the worldview and terminology of his Jewish peers. Even when he speaks in bifurcated terms, he regularly changes the expressions that he uses to identify the two parties, as can be seen from the following list compiled from his letters.

Ἰουδαῖοι/Ἕλληνας: Rom 1:16; 2:9–10; 3:9; 10:12; 1 Cor 1:22, 24; 12:13; Gal 3:28
 Ἰουδαῖοι/ἔθνη: Rom 3:29; 9:24; 11:14; 1 Cor 1:23; Gal 2:12–14; 1 Thess 1:14–16
 Israel/ἔθνη: Rom 9:30–31; 11:11–25

²⁵ In a couple of instances Paul uses geographic place names metaphorically to refer to the Christian residents of a region (Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 9:2), but most such references are entirely geographic, with no evident ethnic overtones.

²⁶ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 59.

²⁷ E.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 18.9.9; 20.8.7; 20.8.9; *J.W.* 1.4.3; 2.13.7; 2.18.2; 7.8.7; Philo, *Leg.* 166, 200–201, 205.

²⁸ E.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.3.9; 4.2.1; 8.11.3; 11.7.1; 15.5.3; 16.6.8; 18.1.5; *J.W.* 5.1.3; 6.3.3; Philo, *Opif.* 128; *Ebr.* 193; *Conf.* 190; *Mut.* 35; *Abr.* 136.

“circumcision”/“uncircumcision:” Rom 2:26–27; 3:30; 4:11–12; 1 Cor 7:18

“circumcision”/ἔθνη: Rom 15:8–9; Gal 2:8–9

“those under law”/“the lawless:” 1 Cor 9:20–21

Ἐλλήνες/βάρβαροι: Rom 1:14

“saints” (i. e. Christ-followers)/ἔθνη: Rom 15:27; 1 Cor 5:1 (cf. 1 Thess 4:5)

These brief observations should be enough to show that Paul’s ethnic worldview and his use of ethnic terminology are more complex and situational than has generally been supposed. Paul’s letters are rhetorical works, and his use of ethnic language was shaped not only by his mental map of humanity but also by his rhetorical concerns. Certainly Paul’s Jewish heritage influenced the way he viewed and related to his own people and those outside his community, but it is equally clear that his vision of humanity was refracted through a Christian theological lens. Moreover, not every ethnic reference in his letters can be mirror-read as an unconscious reflection of Paul’s underlying worldview; some are better understood as momentary strategic attempts to elicit support for one of his arguments. Finally, there is no reason to limit Paul’s awareness of ethnicity to texts where he speaks explicitly about ethnic issues; many of his more general paraenetic statements can be read as attempts to counter the potentially damaging effects of ethnic prejudice in his churches, including his repeated calls for unity among his followers. Instead of repeating simplistic assertions about how Paul’s ethnic outlook reflects his Jewish upbringing, interpreters ought to pay more attention to the question of what rhetorical aims Paul’s ethnic rhetoric appears to be serving at a particular point in his letters.

5. ETHNIC CATEGORIZATION IN PAUL’S LETTERS

As we noted earlier, Paul uses very few ethnic labels in his letters. But Paul did not live in a vacuum; the terms that he employed had a prehistory in the minds of his audience. Whether he was aware of it or not, the meanings that his audiences attached to these terms would have affected the way they understood his message. We will never know what the actual recipients of Paul’s letters thought of his use of ethnic terminology, but we can form an educated guess about how they might have responded by reviewing the historical backgrounds of Paul’s terms in light of the information that we have gleaned so far about ethnicity and interethnic relations in the Greco-Roman world. In some instances we might even be able to infer a conscious rhetorical purpose behind some of Paul’s ethnic references.

5.1. Ἔθνη

All but one of the ethnic terms that Paul uses in his letters echo the in-group language of the people so designated. The one exception is the term ἔθνη, which is a Jewish out-group term for non-Ἰουδαῖοι. Though scholars have long recognized this point, its significance is frequently overlooked. Scholars who get caught up in heated debates over the nuances of Paul's statements about the place of "Jews" and "Gentiles" in God's plan can easily forget that, in social terms, there was no such thing as a "Gentile" in the ancient world. The term "Gentiles" (in Greek, ἔθνη or ἀλλόφυλοι) represents one pole in a bipolar social construction of reality that was developed by a particular people-group (the Ἰουδαῖοι, usually translated as "Jews") in a concrete historical situation.²⁹ Those whom the Ἰουδαῖοι designated as "Gentiles" (literally, "the nations" or "foreigners") would have identified themselves as Greeks, Romans, Phrygians, Galatians, Syrians, or members of various other ethnic groups. None would have used the term "Gentile" as a self-designation unless they had attended Jewish synagogues or otherwise spent time around Jews (or around Christians who had been influenced by Jewish ideas). When we encounter the word "Gentile" in a text, we can be certain that the author is writing from a Jewish in-group perspective that may or may not have been shared by those to whom the author is referring. Whether done consciously or as a matter of habit, the labeling of non-Ἰουδαῖοι as τὰ ἔθνη is an expression of ideology—an exercise in self- and other-definition—and not a description of social reality. Whether Paul's audiences would have accepted this view of reality depends on their prior level of socialization within Jewish or Christian circles.

5.2. Ἰουδαῖοι

As many scholars have noted in recent years, the term Ἰουδαῖοι originally referred to the inhabitants of the territory of Judah/Yehud/Judea, marking them as a distinctive population by comparison with other people-groups, including the other inhabitants of the land that was later known as

²⁹ According to Michael Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism and the East: Contacts and Interrelations from Alexander to the Roman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1978), 136: "The Egyptians, the Jews, and the Greeks are the only three nations of antiquity who, to our knowledge, drew a dividing line between themselves and all other people." This seems unlikely given the near-universality of this phenomenon; the shortage of written material from most of the other people-groups of the Mediterranean region renders any such broad generalizations suspect.

Palestine.³⁰ With the passage of time, the term was extended to include anyone who lived in any part of Palestine.³¹ As the residents of this area came to be dispersed throughout the Mediterranean world via emigration, enslavement, military service, and so on, their link to a particular territory was not forgotten. Like other groups who lived apart from their homeland, they called themselves after their place of origin (Ἰουδαῖοι = “Judeans”), and their neighbors used the same title to identify them. Following the model of other immigrant groups, many of them settled in the same part of town where they could follow their ancestral customs, including but not limited to their religious practices. Their residential districts were similar in many ways to the “Little Italies” and “Chinatowns” that arose in major American cities during the 19th century. Their emotional bond with their homeland was kept alive through a variety of channels, including the regular reading of sacred texts that told stories about their ancestors; the repetition of rituals, holidays, and other acts that recalled their collective past; the annual payment of the half-shekel “temple tax” that supported the operation of the Jerusalem temple; the periodic arrival of visitors and new immigrants from Palestine; and the tales of people who had returned from visits to their ancestral home, especially those who had made pilgrimages to Jerusalem. To their neighbors as well as to themselves, they remained “Judeans.”

In recognition of these developments, a number of scholars have suggested recently that the term Ἰουδαῖοι should be translated consistently as “Judeans” rather than “Jews” in order to preserve the geographic and ethnic dimensions of the term. Such a translation would certainly capture elements that are lost in the traditional rendering (i.e. “Jews”), at least when speaking of the Ἰουδαῖοι of the Diaspora.³² The fact that outsiders were allowed to join the group is not an argument against this position, since the identity of an ethnic group depends not on the purity of its membership but on the maintenance of its boundaries. As long as outsiders were willing to

³⁰ Among the many recent studies in which this subject is addressed, see Shaye J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 69–106; Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 62–74 (which includes a critical engagement with Cohen’s book); and Denise Kimber Buell and Caroline Johnson Hodge, “The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul,” *JBL* 123 (2004): 235–251.

³¹ According to Cohen, *Beginnings*, 72, Josephus employs the term in both a narrow sense, referring to the inhabitants of the traditional territory of Judea, and a broader sense, including the residents of Idumea, Samaria, Galilee, and Perea.

³² On the other hand, translating Ἰουδαῖοι as “Judeans” could be misleading and/or confusing when speaking of the residents of Palestine, since many of them lived outside the district of Judea.

adopt the identity markers that were accepted by the community and associate themselves with its members, the group's claim to have a common origin was not threatened.³³ At the same time, words are not restricted to a single meaning, and it is not hard to find texts in which Ἰουδαῖοι is used in a more abstract sense to refer to the "religious" aspect of Judean identity, including a number of verses in Paul's letters.³⁴ A parallel development can be seen with the word "Israel," which Paul uses as a synonym for Ἰουδαῖοι regardless of their place of residence. Here, too, the geographic sense is not wholly absent, but in virtually every case the literary context shows that Paul is using the term to evoke memories of the biblical people of Israel as a parallel (or foil) to the Ἰουδαῖοι of his day. To render the word as "Israelites" in these cases would be to import a geographic sense that has been sublimated in Paul's usage.³⁵

The same is true for the English word "Judean." As we noted earlier, Paul uses a variety of terms to designate the people commonly known as "Jews," including Ἰουδαῖοι, "Israel," "the circumcision," "my brothers," "my kinsmen," and so on. His choice of terms was dictated at least in part by the needs of his argument, which required judgments about the meanings that he could reasonably expect his audiences to apply to his language. The audience, for their part, would have based their understanding of Paul's language on their prior knowledge of and experience with Ἰουδαῖοι (including any ethnic stereotypes and prejudices that they might have picked up from their environment), the teaching that they had received in the Christian

³³ While it is common to say that circumcision was the identity marker *par excellence* for Ἰουδαῖοι, its usefulness for identification was in fact limited, since it would have been invisible most of the time and applied only to males in any case. Cohen, *Beginnings*, 25–68, has demonstrated from the historical record that there was in fact no reliable way to identify a person as a Ἰουδαῖος in the ancient world, so that ἔθνη could pass as Ἰουδαῖοι and vice versa when one status or the other offered more advantages.

³⁴ It would be awkward to say the least to substitute the word "Judeans" for "Jews" in texts like Rom 2:17–20, 3:1–3, and 1 Cor 1:22–24. The existence of words like Ἰουδαῖσμός (Gal 1:13–14) and Ἰουδαῖζειν (Gal 2:14) also points in this direction. This is not to suggest that religion and ethnicity can be separated in the manner that Cohen has been rightly criticized for doing in his recent book (see note 30). But it is equally fallacious to insist that words have a "root meaning" that must be carried through into all occurrences of a particular term. Meaning is dependent on context—both historical *and* literary.

³⁵ Even the term "Israelite" can be used in a non-geographic manner, as when Paul applies it to himself in Rom 11:1 and 2 Cor 11:22 despite the fact that he was born outside Palestine. Whether Paul's opponents in 2 Cor 11:22 were using the term literally or figuratively of themselves is impossible to say, though the literal sense seems more likely in light of Paul's defensive response.

community (which may or may not have been sympathetic to Judaism), and any other information or cues that they might have found in Paul's letters. Unless they had attended a Jewish synagogue or conversed with others who had done so (including other Christ-followers), they would not have been privy to "in-group" understandings of the term Ἰουδαῖοι. A thoughtful rhetor would have taken this into account when framing his arguments.

In reality, the potential for misunderstanding in such a situation was great, since there was a substantial gap between the way in which Ἰουδαῖοι viewed themselves and the way they were viewed by others. Opinions of Ἰουδαῖοι varied widely in the Greco-Roman world from admiration and respect to suspicion and hatred. On the positive side were individuals (mostly from the educated elites) who admired the aniconic monotheism and strict moral codes of the Ἰουδαῖοι, which reminded them of the best teachings of the Greek philosophers. Some of these people attended Jewish synagogues and followed various Jewish practices (typically Sabbath observance and food laws), and a smaller number accepted circumcision and joined the ethnic community of the Ἰουδαῖοι. Whether they were considered to be full and equal members of the community or held some lesser status is unclear.³⁶ But the consistently negative comments of the Roman satirists concerning such people indicate that many outsiders regarded them as Ἰουδαῖοι in the full sense of the word.³⁷

At the other end of the spectrum were people who held deeply negative opinions about Ἰουδαῖοι. Some of these negative views were based on misinformation and ethnic stereotyping: popular stories claimed that the Ἰουδαῖοι had been driven out of Egypt because they were lepers; that they worshipped an ass (or the head of an ass) in their temple; that their males had gigantic sexual organs and insatiable lusts; and so on. Others reflected

³⁶ Whether later rabbinic debates about the status of converts within the Jewish community should be read back into Paul's day is unclear, but the very fact that such debates took place indicates that there were Jewish leaders who saw a difference between embracing the "religion" of the Ἰουδαῖοι and becoming a member of their ethnic community. Similar debates about the status of people who wish to "cross the boundary" and become "insiders" are common in many ethnic groups, e.g. in the case of intermarriage.

³⁷ Here we see evidence of the mutability of ethnic identity that is emphasized by social scientists—even a person who had no ancestral ties to the Ἰουδαῖοι could adopt the identity of a Ἰουδαῖος and be regarded as one by people both within and outside the group. The fact that such people might also have other ethnic identities—as Greek, Roman, Syrian, and so on—does not mean that their affiliation with the Ἰουδαῖοι was a purely "religious" matter. As we noted earlier, social scientists recognize that an individual can have multiple ethnic identities that can be activated or ignored as circumstances warrant.

a clash of cultural values: the Judaic practice of circumcision was barbaric; their resting on the Sabbath was a sign of their laziness; their avoidance of pork and sacrificed meat was nonsensical. Still others were rooted in social or political concerns: the Ἰουδαῖοι threatened the welfare of the city by refusing to worship its gods; they hurt the local economy by exporting money to their temple in Jerusalem; they interfered with social harmony by keeping to themselves and avoiding regular intercourse with others, especially during religious festivals.³⁸ How far these negative attitudes affected daily relations between Ἰουδαῖοι and their neighbors is unclear, though there are reports of interethnic tensions breaking out into open conflict from time to time.³⁹

Similar attitudes can be seen on the side of the Ἰουδαῖοι. At one end of the spectrum are elite Jewish authors who voiced admiration for Greek philosophy and culture and whose writings are an amalgam of Greek and Jewish ideas. In fact, Ἰουδαῖοι could be found at all levels of the social and economic spectrum, where they interacted routinely with non-Jews and engaged in most of the ordinary elements of Greek life and culture. At the other extreme are Ἰουδαῖοι who held profoundly negative and prejudicial attitudes toward those whom they termed “the nations,” criticizing them for their use of images to worship a panoply of gods and goddesses (i.e., their “idolatry”); their loose sexual morality (including their abuse of same-sex relationships); their emphasis on physical beauty (and their related comfort with male nudity); and their generally low ethical standards and vulgarity (as measured by the standards of the Ἰουδαῖοι).⁴⁰

What matters for our purpose is not whether any of these charges and countercharges had any truth to them, but the simple fact that they were well known across the Greco-Roman world. When Paul used terms like Ἰουδαῖοι and ἔθνη, he was entering into a contested terrain where prejudice, suspicion, and fear ran rampant. For many (perhaps most) of the people to whom he was writing, these prejudices and stereotypes represented reality. The fact that Paul regularly calls on his audiences to lay aside their old attitudes and thought-patterns indicates that the act of becoming a Christ-follower did not automatically rid people of negative attitudes

³⁸ The literature on how Ἰουδαῖοι were viewed in the ancient world is vast. Recent treatments include Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); and Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*.

³⁹ For more on this point, see the discussion below under “Ἕλληνας.”

⁴⁰ For a good summary of the texts, see Gruen, *Diaspora*, 213–231.

toward people who differed from themselves. In short, Paul's letters were directed to people whose relations with others would have been tinged with ethnic prejudice.

This observation has profound implications for the way we interpret the ethnic language that is scattered throughout Paul's letters. Paul's words were not written in a vacuum; whatever his intentions, his repeated references to Ἰουδαῖοι and ἔθνη would have tapped into deep-seated thought-patterns and feelings on the part of many of the people in his audiences, especially those from "pagan" backgrounds where anti-Jewish prejudice was rife. This is not to say that everyone would have been infected by these attitudes—those who had attended Jewish synagogues before joining the Christ-movement or who had been part of the movement long enough to appreciate its Jewish roots might have dealt with these feelings at an earlier stage in their lives. But there were always new converts to be considered, not to mention the ongoing influence of friends and family members who retained their prejudicial ideas and no doubt heaped scorn upon non-Jews who joined a group that claimed to be rooted in Ἰουδαϊσμός.

As a Jew who grew up in a non-Jewish world, Paul could not have been ignorant of these matters. In fact, he had probably been a victim of anti-Jewish prejudice himself at various points in his life, and he could hardly have avoided being exposed to negative opinions about the ἔθνη as he was growing up. As a Christian missionary, he would have seen the tensions that flared up when he tried to bring together people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds in the close quarters of a house-church. We should thus be attuned to the possibility that Paul, as a thoughtful rhetor, might have had this problem in mind more often than scholars have supposed. A careful reading of his letters in light of these realities will show that his efforts to address it extend well beyond the passages in which he uses explicit ethnic categories or terminology.⁴¹

5.3. Ἕλληνας

The word Ἕλληνας ("Greeks") as a collective designation for the inhabitants of the Greek peninsula (Gk. Ἑλλάς) is attested as early as the 7th century BCE, but its usefulness was limited as long as the residents of Hellas were divided into a collection of warring city-states. The name entered the vernacular in the 5th century BCE, when a series of political leaders appealed to the com-

⁴¹ This point will be explored more fully in the monograph mentioned in note 2.

mon homeland and shared ancestry of the Ἕλληνες as part of their rhetorical effort to rally the Greek cities behind a collective military campaign against the Persian threat. The practice of deriding non-Greeks as “barbarians” (βάρβαροι) also dates to this period.⁴² The success of the united Greek front ensured that “Greekness” would henceforth be an important part of the ethnic identity of the residents of Hellas alongside their older identities as Achaians, Dorians, Argives, Phocians, and so on.

Under Alexander and his successors, the term Ἕλλην took on a broader meaning. With the spread of Greek rule and Greek cities across the eastern Mediterranean region, the door was opened for people with no ancestral ties to the Greek homeland to cross the ethnic boundary and become “Greeks.” Most of the cities had too few educated Ἕλληνες to meet their administrative needs, so they recruited the children of the local aristocracy to fill low-level positions and taught them the ways of the Greeks. After two or three generations, the Greek-educated descendants of these former “barbarians” might gain acceptance as Ἕλληνες, including grants of citizenship. To be accepted as a Ἕλλην, a person had to be able to speak flawless Greek (which usually required a Greek education) and embrace the culture and institutions of Hellas—in other words, they had to exhibit the identity markers commonly associated with Ἕλληνες.⁴³ The fact that “barbarians” could now become “Greeks” does not mean that the term Ἕλλην lost its ethnic significance, any more than permitting ἔθνη to become Ἰουδαῖοι negated the ethnic quality of the latter group.⁴⁴ As we observed earlier, the fact that individuals can

⁴² For a helpful summary of the evidence, see Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 54–61. More extensive treatments can be found in Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989); Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34–66, and Jonathan M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 173–225; T.J. Haarhof, *The Stranger at the Gate* (London: Longmans, Green, 1938), 6–59; and A. Diller, *Race Mixture among the Greeks before Alexander* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1937), 14–56.

⁴³ On the gradual redefinition of “Greekness” after Alexander, see Haarhof, *Stranger*, 60–117. The often-quoted statement of Isocrates on this theme (*Paneg.* 50) is actually earlier than Alexander: “So far has our city [Athens] distanced the rest of mankind in thought and in speech that her pupils have become teachers of the rest of the world, and she has brought it about that the name ‘Hellenes’ no longer suggests a race but an intelligence.” But it would be wrong to take this as a de-ethnicization of the term “Greek,” since even Isocrates remained an implacable foe of all things “barbarian:” in the very same text he speaks of the need to “reduce all the Barbarians to a state of subjection to the whole of Hellas” (*Paneg.* 131, quoted in Haarhof, *Stranger*, 60).

⁴⁴ This is a common assertion of scholars who are unfamiliar with social scientific understandings of ethnicity. Even Jonathan Hall’s well-documented studies of ancient Greek

enter or leave an ethnic group has no effect on the ethnic nature of the group as long as there are accepted mechanisms for regulating the crossing of group boundaries and identifying group members.

In reality, many of the people who identified themselves as “Greeks” in the cities of the East could trace their family trees back to Hellas when required, as when the wealthier families went to enroll their sons in the local gymnasium, the central institution where young men from Athens to Alexandria were molded into good “Greeks.”⁴⁵ In most cases their ancestors had left their Greek homeland to start a new life in one of the many new cities that had been established by Hellenistic monarchs across Asia Minor, Syria, Babylonia, and Egypt. Here they laid aside the social, political, and ethnic differences that had separated them in Hellas and embraced the duties of citizenship in a new *polis*. Here they pursued the traditional Hellenic way of life, with all of the social, economic, and political institutions that distinguished Greek cities from their oriental counterparts. And here, surrounded by a sea of “barbarians,” they nurtured a deep sense of Greek identity that included a profound disdain for the native population.⁴⁶

Among the people-groups whom the Ἕλληνες would have regarded as “barbarians” were the Ἰουδαῖοι. Not every Ἰουδαῖος was viewed in this way—the Greek cities included many elite Ἰουδαῖοι such as Philo who thought of themselves as Ἕλληνες, and there were some who would have been accepted as such by other Ἕλληνες. But the Ἰουδαῖοι as a class were clearly beyond the ethnic pale. Ἰουδαῖοι had their own stories, beliefs, and customs that differentiated them from the Ἕλληνες, and they traced their origins to a land that had actively resisted hellenization. In the cities, they tended to

ethnicity (see note 42) fail at this point as he attempts to document a shift from an “ethnic” to a “cultural” understanding of “Hellenicity.”

⁴⁵ As Michael Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism*, 129, rightly observed, “On the whole, the gymnasia did little to further an understanding between the Greek settlers and the native population, and did a lot to keep them apart. Locked up in their Hellenic pride, their alumni withstood for centuries the world around them.” On the central place of gymnasia as the guardians of Greek culture in the new cities, see A.H.M. Jones, *The Greek City From Alexander to Justinian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940), 220–226; Michael Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1941), 1059–1061; C. Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978), 2:562–565.

⁴⁶ Hereditary Greeks and Macedonians made up less than ten per cent of the population of the Hellenistic kingdoms, according to S.M. Burstein, “Greek Class Structures and Relations,” in Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger, ed., *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1988), 545. Michael Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism*, 131, has an even lower estimate: one million Greeks surrounded by fifteen to twenty million natives. Even this figure is probably too high.

congregate in the same neighborhoods and to stick together in a manner that "Ἕλληνας regarded as "clannish." The Ἰουδαῖοι for their part classed the Ἕλληνας among the ἔθνη, despite the admiration that many of them felt for Greek culture. Because Ἰουδαῖοι were ubiquitous in the Greek cities of the eastern Mediterranean, both groups had regular exposure to one another, and both developed highly stereotyped (and largely negative) views of the other on this basis. The conflicting values of the two groups, their competing attitudes of superiority, and their often-prejudiced views of one another invariably led to tensions between the two groups.

Ordinarily these tensions were kept beneath the surface, allowing Ἰουδαῖοι and Ἕλληνας to live together in peace, though ethnic prejudice no doubt led to negative interactions between individuals from time to time. Occasionally, however, these simmering tensions broke out into open conflict.⁴⁷ A number of ancient authors, including Josephus and Philo, tell of Ἰουδαῖοι and Ἕλληνας engaging in bitter public disputes that centered on the rights and obligations of Ἰουδαῖοι within the Greek cities. These battles continued off and on for nearly two centuries and involved cities in Asia Minor, Syria, Babylonia, Palestine, Egypt, and Cyrenaica. Some of the fights were carried on in the political arena among the elites, while others involved violent street gangs who acted at times with the encouragement of the elites. These conflicts further poisoned relations between Ἰουδαῖοι and Ἕλληνας in the Greek cities.

At the root of many of these struggles were the special privileges that the Romans had granted to the Ἰουδαῖοι, since the late 2nd century BCE Roman decrees gave Ἰουδαῖοι the right to live by their own laws and manage their own affairs within Roman-controlled territory, while exempting them from serving in the military, appearing in court on the Sabbath, and offering sacrifices to Rome and the emperor. Ἰουδαῖοι were also allowed to send money to their temple in Jerusalem. All of these privileges impinged on the administrative authority of the Greek officials who directed the daily affairs of the cities. This in itself was enough to foster negative feelings toward the Ἰουδαῖοι. But the resentment was intensified by the fact that the same Romans who had granted special protection to the Ἰουδαῖοι had also

⁴⁷ The following material is summarized from Christopher D. Stanley, "Neither Jew Nor Greek: Ethnic Conflict in the Graeco-Roman World," *JSNT* 64 (1996): 101–124, which includes additional references to primary and secondary sources. More recent treatments include John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996) and Mikael Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 26–63.

placed limits on the rights and freedoms of the Ἕλληνες in their own cities, transferring the powers of the *demos* to pro-Roman Greek oligarchs who were given authority over the cities. To the average Ἕλληγ, this was a blatant violation of all that the city stood for and a constant reminder of the city's subjection to Rome.

Challenging the Romans directly was out of the question; attacking their clients was not. Throughout the latter half of the first century BCE, various Greek cities in Asia Minor acted to deprive the Ἰουδαῖοι of their rights to assemble for worship, to provide for their dietary needs, to be excused from court on the Sabbath, to send money to Jerusalem, and to manage their own community affairs. Each time the leaders of the Ἰουδαῖοι sent envoys to Roman officials asking for protection and restoration of their rights. The Romans, following their usual conservative tendency, dutifully reaffirmed these rights in a series of ad hoc decrees addressed to Greek city officials. The fact that certain cities received multiple decrees suggests that the Greek authorities did not take kindly to Roman interference. In some parts of the empire, disputes over the civic status of the Ἰουδαῖοι led to outbreaks of violence.⁴⁸

There can be no question that Paul was aware of these disputes. Many of them happened in his home territory of Asia Minor, and a particularly virulent spate of conflicts swept across the cities of the Levant from 38–44 CE, during Paul's adult life. One late report suggests that the city of Antioch experienced such conflicts around the time when Paul was living there. Thus, when we see Paul placing the terms Ἰουδαῖοι and Ἕλληνες in parallel, as he does nearly a dozen times in his letters, we should remind ourselves that neither Paul nor his audiences would have understood these terms in a vacuum. Statements about Ἰουδαῖοι and Ἕλληνες would have been interpreted against the backdrop of a long history of uneasy relations between the groups, and it seems virtually impossible that Paul could have overlooked this fact. Equally unlikely is the common scholarly presumption that Paul used Ἕλληνες as an innocent synonym for ἔθνη in these passages. If we are to understand this aspect of Paul's language, we must be open to the possibility that Paul's passing references to Ἰουδαῖοι and Ἕλληνες are part of a subtle rhetorical strategy by which he seeks to ameliorate the ethnic tensions that lurked just beneath the surface of the ethnically mixed congregations that he had been creating across the Greco-Roman

⁴⁸ On the nature and timing of these disputes, see Stanley, "Neither Jew Nor Greek," and the sources cited there.

world.⁴⁹ We must also be careful about taking such language as evidence for Paul's familiarity with the circumstances of a particular church, since Paul could have surmised from his own experience that such tensions would be present in any multiethnic congregation.

5.4. *Γαλάται, Μακεδόνες, Σκύθοι*

For the remaining ethnic terms that Paul uses in his letters, a brief summary of how they were understood in the ancient world should suffice. The identity of the people whom Paul calls "foolish Galatians" (Gal 3:1) is tied up with the question of whether Paul was writing to churches in the historic heartland of the Galatian people-group in central Asia Minor or to the residents of the Roman province of Galatia, which covered a much wider territory. Fortunately, the answer to this question makes little difference for our study. All that matters is the fact that the term *Γαλάται* carried strong ethnic connotations. As portrayed in Greek and Roman literature, the Galatians were a Celtic people who came from a "barbarian" territory and differed sharply from other peoples in physical appearance, language, customs, and other markers of ethnic identity. They had a reputation for being brave and fierce in battle, but also undisciplined (i.e., "foolish").

By Paul's time, the cities of Galatia had been largely hellenized; in fact, several of the chief Galatian cities had been established as Roman colonies. But the traditional Celtic culture remained strong in rural areas, reinforcing the negative side of the popular ethnic stereotype.⁵⁰ Since Paul normally worked in cities, and since he wrote his letter in Greek, it seems probable that his intended audience came from the more hellenized segment of the population, even if they were from the lower social classes. If this is so, then Paul's reference to them as "foolish Galatians" could be viewed as an attempt to shame them by linking them rhetorically with the "backward" people of the Galatian hinterlands. Ethnic smears of this sort were a common rhetorical weapon in the ancient world.

⁴⁹ A modern example might help to make this point clearer. Imagine a Christian preacher in the American South in the 1920s who delivers a sermon about how much God loves everyone, no matter who they are, and mentions in passing that in God's eyes there is "no male or female, Jew or Greek, black or white." In the social context of the racially segregated South, this passing reference to "neither black nor white" would be the only visible clue to the anti-racist orientation of the message. But we can be certain that his audience would have gotten the point—and possibly run him out of town!

⁵⁰ For more on the Galatians, including the gradual hellenization and romanization of the elites, see Stephen Mitchell, "Galatia," *ABD* 2:870–872.

By the time of Paul, the region of Macedonia at the southern end of the Balkan peninsula, the historic homeland of Alexander the Great, had been part of the Roman Empire for some two hundred years. In ordinary parlance, the term referred primarily to the Roman province that was located in this area, which included the cities of Thessalonica and Philippi that Paul addressed in his letters. Paul clearly has this province in mind when he speaks repeatedly of “Macedonia” in his letters. Only once does he use the term “Macedonians” to designate the residents of this area (2 Cor 9:2; cf. Rom 15:26, where “Macedonia” is personified). It is noteworthy that this single reference appears in a context where Paul is using the Macedonian Christians as a rhetorical foil to shame the Christians of Corinth (here called “Achaia”) into fulfilling their commitment to contribute to his collection. Only a few years earlier, the Roman Emperor Claudius had divided the province of Macedonia from the province of Achaia, and there was a long history of rivalry between the two regions going back to the time of Alexander and his father Philip.⁵¹ In historic times, this rivalry had been cast in ethnic terms, with the “Greeks” of Achaia adopting an attitude of ethnic superiority toward their neighbors to the north. As with his reference to the Galatians, it is possible to see in Paul’s choice of words here (i.e., his use of “Macedonians” rather than “Macedonia”) a subtle attempt to play on the ethnic prejudices of the Corinthians by creating a shameful comparison between themselves and a people whom they had historically despised.

The Scythians, who appear only in the disputed text of Colossians (Col 3:11), were a nomadic pastoral people who inhabited the areas to the north and west of the Black Sea from at least the time of the Assyrians. In their heyday, they were known as fierce and savage warriors with distinctive customs who lived on the fringes of the “civilized” world. By the time of Paul, they had largely faded from the historical record, but their reputation remained alive (cf. 2 Macc 4:47, 3 Macc 7:5, 4 Macc 10:7).⁵² The fact that they are distinguished from other “barbarians” in Col 3:11 (alongside “Jews” and “Greeks”) suggests that the author is familiar with (and expects the audience to know) some kind of ethnic stereotype that sets “Scythians” apart from the other groups named in the passage. According to Frank Snowden, Scythians were often cited in Greek and Roman literature as emblematic of barbarians in the far north, just as Ethiopians represented

⁵¹ For a short overview of Macedonian history, including their conflicts with Greece and Rome, see F.F. Bruce, “Macedonia,” *ABD* 4:454–457.

⁵² See Karen S. Rubinson, “Scythians,” *ABD* 5:1056–1057.

barbarians in the far south.⁵³ By mentioning them in a context where he has been talking about “putting off” harmful attitudes and forms of speech (vv. 8–9) and “putting on” the new identity that is theirs as “chosen ones of God, holy and beloved” (vv. 10, 12), the author probably means for the Scythians to represent the kind of “extreme case” βάρβαρος toward whom prejudicial attitudes are no longer valid “in Christ.”⁵⁴ Whether the author or the audience actually knew any “Scythians” makes no difference; as long as the stereotype is recognized, the statement carries rhetorical weight.

6. CONCLUSION

This brief overview of the ethnic background of Paul's letters has hinted at some of the ways in which our interpretation of Paul's letters might be enhanced by a greater awareness of the ethnic diversity and interethnic tensions that characterized the Greco-Roman world. Reading Paul through an ethnic lens not only helps us to better appreciate the theological and rhetorical significance of his ethnic language but also sensitizes us to the possibility that some of his less obviously “ethnic” argumentation might have been crafted to address the problem of interethnic tensions within his churches. At this point, however, the evidence is merely suggestive; a fuller exposition of these points lies beyond the scope of this study. Still, these scattered observations should be enough to show the relevance of contemporary ethnic studies to the interpretation of Paul's letters.

⁵³ Frank M. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 171–182; cited in Charles H. Cosgrove, “Does Paul Value Ethnicity?,” *CBQ* 68 (2006): 274.

⁵⁴ As many scholars have pointed out, the reference to male and female that appears in the parallel passage of Gal 3:28 is absent here, leaving a list that is characterized by social tensions and negative or prejudicial attitudes and speech.

"IS SAUL OF TARSUS ALSO AMONG THE PROPHETS?"
PAUL'S CALLING AS PROPHETIC DIVINE COMMISSIONING

Tony Costa

Paul traces the origin of his calling and commissioning to his encounter with the risen Christ. Most would agree that Paul believed he had seen the risen Christ and that the genesis of Paul's mission as an apostle can be traced back to this experience. This christophany created a paradigm shift in Paul's worldview in which all things were now to be interpreted in and through Christ.¹ The christophany thus marks the starting point of Paul's ministry, a point Paul himself makes known in his letters (Gal 1:15–16; 1Cor 9:1; 15:8). Paul came to view the christophany not only as the origin of his calling, but he also came to interpret it in the light of the theophanies that marked the initial calling and commissioning of the Old Testament prophets. I will argue in this essay that Paul, in his cultural-theological world, perceived himself as a prophet, called and sent by God and his Son, and led by the Spirit. Paul's self-perception of his calling and mission seems to have the hallmarks of the Old Testament and Second Temple prophets. I hope to establish this by approaching Paul's prophet-apostolic calling from four perspectives: (1) Paul's calling and mission in light of the resurrection of Jesus; (2) Paul's calling as a divine prophetic commissioning; (3) prophetic calling and commissioning in Second Temple Judaism; and (4) Paul's calling and the Jewish-Gentile mission.

* I am taking the title for this essay from 1 Sam 10:11–12; 19:24 where it applies to Saul, King of Israel. It is possible that Paul's Hebrew name "Saul" (Acts 9:1, 4; 13:9) was derived from this Hebrew king who was the source of his namesake. Both King Saul and Paul were of the same tribe of Benjamin (1 Sam 9:21; Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5). A similar article on this topic with a similar title appeared in J.M. Myers and E.D. Freed, "Is Paul also among the Prophets?" *Int* 20 (1966): 40–53.

¹ In 2 Cor 5:16 (RSV throughout, unless otherwise noted) Paul says that at one time, "even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way." He indicates that he once viewed Christ differently prior to his calling. In the following verse (2 Cor 5:17) he notes that if anyone (Paul implicitly includes himself) is in Christ, that person is "a new creation" (καινὴ κτίσις) (cf. also Rom 1:3–4; Gal 1:15–16).

1. PAUL'S CALLING AND THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

A number of the Pauline letters provide an autobiographical sketch, often connected to the resurrection (e.g. 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8). Paul's calling, in fact, begins with his encounter with the risen Christ.² This point is supported by Luke's account of the calling of Paul (Acts 9:1–20; 22:3–16; 26:2–18). Paul believed that the risen Jesus appeared to him, and this christophany figures prominently in his letters. The christophany for Paul virtually becomes synonymous with his commissioning. To Paul, the risen Jesus was no longer viewed from a strictly human point of view, but was now “Messiah” (Rom 10:4), “Lord” (Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3; Phil 2:11), “Son of God” (Rom 1:3; Gal 1:16; 2:20), and “Savior” (Phil 3:20).³ The resurrection of Jesus created a profound paradigm shift in Paul's perspective.⁴ While Paul seems to have had some

² The event that transformed Paul's life has historically been referred to as the “conversion” of Paul. This term can be misleading. A better term to describe this transformative event is the “calling” of Paul, for a number of reasons. The term “conversion” carries with it a modern day idea that entails changing from one religion to another. Certainly by modern standards it is argued that if a Jew becomes a Christian he/she has undergone a “conversion” or has “converted” (i.e. from one religion [Judaism] to another [Christianity]). By modern day standards, Judaism and Christianity are two separate religions. However, to apply this definition of conversion to Paul's calling into the Christian movement is anachronistic. When the Pauline letters are examined, there is no indication that Paul believed he was abandoning his religion for a different one. Rather, it appears that in accepting Jesus as Messiah, Paul believed his religion had reached its fulfillment. In this sense, Paul saw Christian faith as “fulfilled” or “completed” Judaism. Paul's Jewish identity was important to him and he recalled this point of fact to his readers in at least three of his letters (Rom 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22; Phil 3:5). Paul continued to maintain hope that his Jewish brethren would eventually recognize Jesus as Messiah and he devoted a considerable portion of his writings precisely to this theme (Rom 9–11). The term conversion for Paul would only be justifiably applicable in an intra-religious context in that Paul “converted” from being a Pharisee (Phil 3:5) to being a member of the Christ movement or a disciple of Jesus. But this sect was perceived within the parameters of Judaism. For similar arguments, see James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 179; Raymond E. Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 427 n. 11; John A. Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity* (rev. ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 8–9. It is significant that Paul never uses the term for converting (ἐπιστρέφω) to describe his calling at the christophany. He does use this term, however, in 1 Thess 1:9 to describe how his Gentile audience in Thessalonica “turned to God from idols” (ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων). Paul also uses ἐπιστρέφω in 2 Cor 3:16, but the context (2 Cor 3:14–16) deals with the unbelieving Jews who continue to have a veil over their heart when the law of Moses is read.

³ Some would add possibly “God” based on Rom 9:5. We will not deal with Rom 9:5 in this essay, due to the contestable nature of the passage. See Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 143–172.

⁴ J. Christian Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 182. Beker dismisses psychological factors proposed by some scholars

knowledge of the earthly life, ministry, and teaching of Jesus,⁵ the two central foci for Paul are Jesus' death and resurrection—two events that become for Paul constitutive of the gospel (Rom 4:25; cf. 1 Cor 15:1–4). It is upon these twin events that Paul develops his christological outlook, but Paul clearly places emphasis on the latter. The resurrection becomes the *raison d'être* of Paul's Christology and his reference point for the justification of Christian worship (1 Cor 15:13–19). In the absence of the resurrection of Jesus, there would be no christophany for Paul since Paul defines the christophany itself within the context of the resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor 15:3–8; cf. 1 Cor 9:1). The christophany is the appearance of the *risen* Jesus to Paul. The resurrection of Jesus thus functions as the authenticating factor in Paul's calling and by extension, all of Paul's theology. Paul now sees all of God's actions through christological lenses—the past, the present, and the future are realized and accomplished “through” and “in” Christ and never apart from him (1 Cor 8:6; cf. Col 1:15–18).

The christophany, as noted above is the starting point for Paul, and Paul seems to view it as analogous to the theophanies of the Old Testament prophets. This is particularly apparent in Paul's description of his calling. The appearance of the risen Jesus to Paul becomes his commissioning in the same way the Isaiah theophanic encounter resulted in the commissioning event for Isaiah's prophetic ministry (Isa 6:1–10). The calling of the prophets in the Old Testament usually appear in the context of a period of apostasy, rebellion, imminent danger, spiritual demise/forgetfulness, and/or confusion among the people. Out of this context, the prophet is called and raised by God to function as a divine emissary to bring the people back to God and call them to repentance and religious restoration. A central theme in the commissioning of the Old Testament prophets seems to be a call to return to the true worship of God. A correlation between prophetic commissioning and worship can be drawn.

Paul comes to see his calling as a commissioning by *both* God and Jesus to be the apostle or emissary primarily to the Gentiles, in order to bring them to the worship of the true God (1 Thess 1:9–10).⁶ Paul saw himself as a new

to explain the experience of Paul's call or “conversion.” Beker asserts that psychological factors “do not adequately explain his conversion.” We will not examine the psychological perspective of Paul's calling, but will restrict ourselves to the exegetical-theological and the social-cultural method.

⁵ Rom 14:14; 1 Cor 7:10; 9:14; 11:24; Gal 4:4.

⁶ Even though Paul saw himself as primarily the apostle to the Gentiles, he did not ignore his responsibility to the Jews. Paul writes that the gospel is the power of God to salvation for

person, and he saw anyone who was “in Christ” as a new creation in which the old was now past, and all things become new (2 Cor 5:17). The reference to a new life in Christ may also be an implicit reference by Paul himself to his own new found life in Christ. The calling of Paul by the risen Jesus is set against the background of his former life as a violent opponent of the Christian movement, a persecutor, one who was intent on wholly destroying what he saw to be a deviant form of true Judaism. It is possible that Paul viewed Jesus of Nazareth as a false prophet who misled the people of Israel and who was justly condemned in accordance with the Torah’s command regarding the execution of false prophets (Deut 13:1–5). The violent reaction of Paul to the Christian movement was in all probability connected with Christian claims and practices that were made regarding Jesus, perhaps claims and practices that were deemed blasphemous by Paul. Hurtado makes the case that Paul’s attitude towards the Christian movement “is best accounted for as provoked by what he regarded as their undue reverence of Jesus.”⁷ In addition, the scandalous claim propounded by the early Jesus movement that an accursed criminal who was hung on a tree (cross) was in fact the Messiah of Israel (Deut 21:23; cf. Gal 3:13), and that God had raised him from the dead, probably indicated in Paul’s mind an assault upon the Torah, with God violating his own law by raising and vindicating a blasphemous criminal.

Another sensitive point may have been the claim that Jesus was the Son of God, a title that was not foreign to Second Temple Judaism,⁸ but given the theological content that Christians attributed to this title, Paul would have likely deemed it offensive. But this would be precisely how Jesus would be disclosed to Paul when God was pleased to “reveal his Son” to him (Gal 1:15–16). His personal description of himself as “extremely zealous” (Gal 1:14, RSV) for his religious convictions and the faith of his ancestors appears to recall the religious fervor and zeal of Second Temple Jewish heroes such as Phinehas, the proto-type zealot (Num 25:11), and Mattathias (1Macc

the Jew first (τε πρωτον) and then the Greek (Rom 1:16). Paul agonizes at the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the majority of his people (Rom 9:1–3). Paul’s desire and prayer to God is to see his people saved (Rom 10:1). Paul claims as his *modus operandi* that he becomes all things to all people so that some may be saved. Even though he acknowledges himself to be the apostle to the Gentiles, he nevertheless becomes a Jew to the Jews so that he may save some of them (1 Cor 9:20–22).

⁷ Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 176.

⁸ 2Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; Wis 2:13, 18. On the title “Son of God,” see Martin Hengel, *The Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), *passim*.

2:23–26). Both of these figures expressed their religious zeal to the point of killing apostate Israelites/Jews who were believed to have committed heinous sins against God. The basis of their zealotry was their desire to see false worship expunged from Israel and true worship restored. Worship plays a central and integral role in these stories. In the case of Mattathias, in particular, his zeal turned against the oppressive Gentile powers under Antiochus Epiphanes IV. The principal and initial cause for the zealous murderous acts was the idolatry performed by a fellow Jew (1Macc 2:23–24). Idolatry was false worship. In the eyes of Mattathias, idolatry was, therefore, apostasy and a betrayal of the covenant Israel had made with their God (1Macc 2:27). Thus, a religious purging by way of execution within a Jewish infrastructure was already in place by precedent, and this seems to parallel Paul's ready opposition to Jewish Christians through violent means. Concerning the nature of his antagonistic past, Paul is quite candid (Gal 1:13, 23; 1Cor 15:9; Phil 3:6).⁹

While Phinehas and Mattathias would serve as prominent examples of religious zeal and fervor in executing apostates, another contributing factor for executing apostates would be the proscriptions contained within the Pentateuch, primarily those dealing with the sin of idolatry (Deut 13:1–5) and blaspheming God or the name of God (Lev 24:16). It is highly probable that what may have disturbed Paul about early Christians was their Jesus-worship, which he viewed as idolatry, and the ascription of the divine title κύριος to Jesus, which Paul would have interpreted as blasphemy. James Charlesworth is probably on the mark, therefore, when he notes that Paul “believed that these [Christian] Jews have blasphemed and undermined the uniqueness of Yahweh.”¹⁰ That the worship of Jesus continued to be a sore point of unabated contention between Jews and Christians is attested in the middle of the second century CE, mainly in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. To add further to the point above that the early Christian ascription of the divine title κύριος to Jesus would have infuriated the religious sensibilities of Paul as well as the worship of Jesus constituting idolatry, it is significant that the same reaction is found in Trypho who accuses Justin of “many blasphemies” in ascribing the title of κύριος to Jesus and that he “ought to be

⁹ 1Tim 1:12–16 also carries and establishes this same tradition regarding Paul as a persecutor of the Christian movement.

¹⁰ James H. Charlesworth, “A Theology of Resurrection: Its Meaning for Jesus, Us, and God,” in James H. Charlesworth et al., eds., *Resurrection: The Origin and Future of a Biblical Doctrine* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 225.

worshipped” (Justin, *Dial.* 38.1).¹¹ Paul’s target audience for his persecution would have been Palestinian Jewish Christians, although according to Acts, he seemed intent on targeting the Hellenistic Jewish Christians as well, evidenced by his execution of Stephen and his travel to Damascus to arrest Diaspora Jews (Acts 7:58; 9:1–2). The concept of destroying or killing apostates was thought to have the effect of turning away God’s wrath from Israel due to apostasy and false worship (as in the Phinehas narrative in Num 25:6–13), and such killing was believed to have the impact of an atoning sacrifice.¹² At the time of Paul’s calling, the Jesus movement was still young and composed almost entirely of Jewish adherents, both Palestinian and Hellenistic Jews, as well as Gentile proselytes to Judaism. The Christian movement was Jewish in its nascent origins.¹³ Paul’s violent mission to destroy the Christian movement would, therefore, have been a form of intra-Jewish factionalism.¹⁴ At the center of Paul’s motives to extinguish the Christian movement would have also been his desire to see the proper worship of God honored and protected, a characteristic found in the message of the prophets. A false view of God would have been for Paul false, or at least misguided worship. In all likelihood, Paul conceived of the early Christians as false worshippers, which would have amounted to idolatry.

Paul argues that his calling by the risen Jesus was to bring his message to the Gentiles and that this calling forms the basis for his apostleship. Paul argues on this basis that his calling as an apostle was secure and legitimate, but which was challenged by his opponents (a theme that pervades 2 Cor), probably on the grounds that he had not been a personal disciple of Jesus

¹¹ See L.W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

¹² Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (WUNT 2.4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984), 42–43. This seems to be the idea behind John 16:2 (RSV), “They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.” For more on this with helpful bibliographic references, see Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 352–353 n. 8. Interestingly, Hurtado thinks that the passage “testifies to expulsion of believers in Jesus from the larger Jewish community, and it makes devotion to Jesus the defining issue in the expulsion.” In a similar vein, the zealous persecution of Paul was provoked by various Christian christological claims, including a crucified Messiah and Jesus’ divine sonship. This can be detected in Paul’s own writings, particularly where he alludes to these beliefs (Gal 3:13; cf. Gal. 1:15–16) but from a new and fresh perspective after his encounter with the risen Jesus.

¹³ The date of Paul’s calling is usually placed about 3 years after the death of Jesus, traditionally held to be 33 CE. This would place the date of Paul’s calling in ca. 36 CE. Depending on the date given for the crucifixion of Jesus, the date of Paul’s calling or “conversion” will vary. See Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 428–430.

¹⁴ James D.G. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*. Vol. 1: *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 283.

as was Peter. Paul thus found himself at times having to defend and justify his call and right to be an apostle on the basis of his encounter with the resurrected Christ. It is with these allegations circulating in the background that Paul frequently attributes his apostolic call not to a human source, but rather to a divine one. He occasionally speaks of his calling as an apostle as coming from either God (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1) or Jesus (Rom 1:1) or both God and Jesus (Gal 1:1). Equally relevant is Paul's insistence that he is fully qualified to be an apostle just like the others because he too saw the risen Jesus (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8). It is clear that in Paul's mind, the appearing of the resurrected Jesus to him figures prominently in his calling, which he saw as a specific mission given directly to him to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 1:16; Rom 1:5).

The resurrection of Jesus also entailed an eschatological significance for Paul that seems to have further convinced him of his prophetic status. The coming of Jesus, his death but especially his resurrection inaugurated the ushering in of the eschaton.¹⁵ The coming of Jesus for Paul is the apex of *Heilsgeschichte* in that the "fullness of time" had come (ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός [Gal 4:4]). Paul believed that the end of the ages had arrived (εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν [1 Cor 10:11]), and the starting point of the "ends of the ages" seems to be the resurrection of Jesus, who is now the "firstfruits" from the dead (1 Cor 15:20).

With the commencement of the last days or ends of the ages, Paul would have interpreted this time period in prophetic terms. The theme of **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים** (LXX: ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις/ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν), "the last days" was a central one in the prophets (Isa 2:2; Jer 23:20; 30:24; Ezek 38:16; Dan 2:28; 10:14; Hos 3:5; Mic 4:1), and a time in which God would take action to save his people and judge the nations. This understanding of the last days or ends of the ages would have influenced Paul's understanding of his calling as a prophet. The determining event that triggers the ends of the ages for Paul is the resurrection of Jesus, and thus it figures prominently in Paul's eschatological understanding of himself as a prophet.

¹⁵ Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*, 30, 74. Ziesler argues that the view of a period between the coming of the Messiah and the general resurrection was not unknown to Judaism and is attested in *4 Ezra*. This should not be construed as implying that all Jews believed in this eschatological model, but at least some of them did.

2. PAUL'S CALLING AS A PROPHETIC DIVINE COMMISSION

Paul never explicitly identifies himself as a prophet in his letters but that he believed that he functioned as a prophet seems evident.¹⁶ Paul spoke of prophets being appointed by God in the church, but while some were prophets, not all occupied this role (1 Cor 12:28–29; cf. Eph 4:11). Paul recognized prophets within the Corinthian community by virtue of the Spirit who had given the spiritual gift of prophecy (1 Cor 12:10; 14:29, 32, 37), and Paul encouraged more than anything else that the Corinthians eagerly desire to prophesy (1 Cor 14:5, 39). Paul sees the suppression of the exercise of the gift of prophecy in the Christian worship community as tantamount to quenching the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19). Paul, as he usually does, implicitly includes himself within the communities to which he writes and implies that he also possesses the gift of prophecy and hence indicates that he too functions in the capacity of a prophet (1 Cor 13:9).¹⁷

Paul's self-designation as ἀπόστολος has a close relationship with the notion of "prophet."¹⁸ The idea of ἀπόστολος as one who is sent describes the role of the Old Testament prophets as those who have been sent by Yahweh.¹⁹ The verb ἀποστέλλω is used in the LXX to describe the sending of the prophets (Isa 6:8; Jer 1:7; 7:25; Ezek 2:3; Mal 3:1),²⁰ as well as the sending of

¹⁶ In Luke's account of Paul's ministry in Acts he does identify him as a prophet. Luke includes Paul (although at this point Luke still uses Paul's Hebrew name "Saul") in a list of Christian prophets in the early Christian community (Acts 13:1; cf. 11:27), among whom was Agabus (Acts 11:28; 21:10), and Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32). It is interesting that it is after Luke's identification of Saul as a prophet in Acts 13:1 that Luke moves to begin identifying Saul as "Paul" throughout Acts beginning with Acts 13:9 where he first introduces Paul's Greco-Roman name and thus comments Σαῦλος δὲ ὁ καὶ Παῦλος ("But Saul, also known as Paul"). From Acts 13:9 on Saul is now identified as Paul. On elements of Paul's prophetic calling in Acts, see K.O. Sandnes, *Paul—One of the Prophets? A Contribution to the Apostle's Self-Understanding* (WUNT 2.43; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 73–76.

¹⁷ Note the first person plural in 1 Cor 13:9, προφητεύομεν ("we prophesy"). Paul here includes himself with his community.

¹⁸ See F.H. Agnew, "The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept: A Review of Research," *JBL* 105 (1986): 75–96; Sandnes, *Paul*, 17–20. Gordon Fee notes that Paul "seems to be arguing that he is first of all an apostle, that he is therefore also a prophet." Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 711. The order here reflects 1 Cor 12:28 where Paul states God has appointed in the church first of all apostles, and secondly prophets. The primary stress on apostles may explain Paul's self-identification as a legitimate apostle of Jesus (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8). This may also explain his overt defense of his apostleship in 2 Corinthians against other so-called apostles in the church.

¹⁹ Jesus is once called ἀπόστολος in Heb 3:1.

²⁰ In LXX Jer 1:7; 7:25, Ezek 2:3, and Mal 3:1 the verb ἐξαποστέλλω is used. This verb is

Moses (LXX Exod 3:10, 12–15; 4:28; 7:16; Deut 34:11), who is also identified as a prophet (Deut 18:15, 18; 34:10; Hos 12:13). In later rabbinic writings and traditions, prophets are called apostles.²¹ The relationship between apostle and prophet thus seems to support the view that Paul was a prophet as well.

That Paul conceived of himself as a prophet, however, appears to be supported most fundamentally by his own account of his calling. The language that Paul employs when he speaks of his encounter with the risen Jesus and his commissioning as an apostle is language that seems deliberately taken over from the Old Testament, particularly in the themes of theophanic appearances and the commissioning of prophets. Paul identifies himself primarily as an ἀπόστολος and that he was appointed as such not from or through any human authority, but he is rather an apostle διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν (Gal 1:1). When Paul affirms that his calling as an apostle comes through both Christ Jesus and God the Father, he seems to imply an equality here by way of a co-commissioning by both God and Christ. What is also important to note in Gal 1:1 is that Paul immediately alludes to the resurrection of Jesus. God is described here as the one who raised Jesus from the dead.²² This appears to be a descriptor for God by Paul.²³ This mention of the resurrection in passing by Paul does not seem to be incidental. Paul appears to want to establish the centrality and importance of the resurrection of Jesus right from the beginning.

Setting these first few verses of Galatians in relation to the christophany in Gal 1:12, 15–16, it seems that Paul was setting the stage by putting forth the resurrection of Jesus by God as a foundational precursor to the calling he would later describe. The language Paul employs in Gal 1:12, 15–16 is suggestive of prophetic status. Paul states in Gal 1:12 that he did not receive his gospel from a human source, nor was he taught it by a human source. Instead he states it was ἀλλὰ ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The language of revelation invokes the idea of a divine source for Paul, and this harkens back to the revelation given to the various prophets of the Old Testament. The origin of this divine source here is Jesus Christ, from whom Paul obtained the

also used by Luke to describe Paul being sent out (Acts 17:14; 22:21). Paul also uses ἐξαποστέλλω to describe God sending forth his Son and Spirit (Gal 4:4, 6).

²¹ See *Mekilta* on Exod 12:1.

²² The reference to God who raised Jesus from the dead is reminiscent of the Old Testament formula “the God who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” See Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (12th ed.; KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 127 n. 3.

²³ Paul identifies God as the one who gives life and raises the dead (Rom 4:17; 2 Cor 1:9).

revelation. While Yahweh is the source of revelation in the Old Testament, in Gal 1:12, Paul portrays Christ as the source of revelation. Paul further states in Gal 1:15–16:

ἔτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν ἐν ἐμοὶ ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εὐθέως οὐ προσανεθέμην σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι

For Paul, his calling was not based on a mere appearance of a heavenly being as in the case of an angelophany, but in his own words it was “his [God’s] Son” that was revealed to him whom Paul identifies as the κύριος. This christological designation is important when we examine the Old Testament calling of Isaiah, which I will address below. Paul reinforces his calling in the same tradition as the Old Testament prophets with the exception that in his case, the risen Jesus figures as the central agent in the theophany to Paul. Paul describes his message, his “gospel,” as originating with ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“a revelation of Jesus Christ”), in contrast to having received it from a human source, ἀνθρώπου (Gal 1:12). Frank J. Matera suggests that the expression ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ can be taken either as a subjective genitive (a revelation *from* or *of* Jesus Christ), or as an objective genitive (the revelation *about* Jesus Christ).²⁴ Matera argues on the basis of Gal 1:16 that by ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ Paul stressed that God revealed his Son to him, and that this is suggestive that ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Gal 1:12 should be taken as an objective genitive.²⁵ The phrase ἐν ἐμοὶ is parallel to ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (“among the Gentiles”) or “to the Gentiles” (NJB). On the latter rendering, “to the Gentiles,” the former should be translated “to me” rather than “in me.”²⁶ Paul viewed the revelation about Jesus as having a divine source, namely God who is the active subject who was pleased to reveal to Paul the content of the revelation, which was about his Son. This revelation that Paul received defined and molded his Christology, and the ultimate source of this revelation Paul posits is God himself.

This experience, which Paul calls a revelation about Jesus, would have been the point of origin for Paul’s paradigm shift concerning his views of

²⁴ Frank J. Matera, “Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology,” *TS* 67 (2006): 241 n. 12. See also Frank J. Matera, *Galatians* (SP 9 Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007), 53.

²⁵ Matera, “Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John,” 241 n. 12. See also Matera, *Galatians*, 56, 59.

²⁶ Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 106 n. 21.

Jesus. Paul traces his discovery of the identity of Jesus as God's Son to the christophany, which he places within the divine plan of God who had set him apart from his mother's womb. This experience was not only revelatory in nature, but it was also one of a profound discovery for Paul. The crucified Jesus, who would have most probably been considered accursed by Paul (Gal 3:13), was in fact God's Son, whom he raised from the dead (Gal 1:1). Paul links the title "Son of God" with Jesus, particularly in reference to his resurrection, which Paul appears to view as the point of disclosure of Jesus' true identity (Rom 1:3–4). However, as we saw in Gal 1:12, 15–16 Paul asserts vehemently that he received the revelation about Christ directly from God and not from any human source, and Paul explicitly states that following his experience of the christophany he did not consult with any human being to heighten it, which seems to highlight the revelatory nature of the christophany (Gal 1:16).²⁷ It appears that Paul is making a deliberate apologetic statement here in order to safeguard the uniqueness of his calling and appointment as an apostle. Paul further emphasizes this point in Gal 1:17 by asserting that following the christophany, he did not go to Jerusalem to consult with those who were apostles before him but only visited with Peter and James *three years after* his encounter (Gal 1:18–19), again distancing himself from any human influence. In his second visit to Jerusalem fourteen years later Paul asserts that his visit was prompted again by a revelation, ἀνέβην δὲ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν (Gal 2:2).

The linguistic parallels that Paul draws between himself and the commissioning of Old Testament prophets are evident in Gal 1:15–16. The parallel here fits with that of LXX Jer 1:5 where the prophet is told πρὸ τοῦ με πλάσαι σε ἐν κοιλίᾳ ἐπίσταμαί σε καὶ πρὸ τοῦ σε ἐξελεῖν ἐκ μήτρας ἡγιακά σε προφήτην εἰς ἔθνη τέθεικά σε. Paul seems to view his calling in the same prophetic tradition as that of Jeremiah. As Jeremiah was set apart or consecrated by God to be a prophet from birth, so Paul was set apart by God from birth—he was set apart ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς μου (Gal 1:15) by God for the purpose of revealing "his Son" to him. Paul's grammar further indicates an implementation of

²⁷ While Paul maintains that he received his gospel as a revelation directly from Christ apart from human intervention in Gal 1:11–12, 15–16, he nonetheless states in 1 Cor 15:1–3 that he received the gospel and passed it on to the Corinthians. There is no necessary tension between both statements. The *content* of the gospel, including the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the truths that follow from it, Paul claims to have received independent of human aid as he sets out in Galatians. In 1 Cor 15:1–3 Paul is passing on the *form* of the gospel, the *kerygma* as it was set out by the early Christians. See N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 3; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 319.

language from the Old Testament to describe his calling as a consecration, a setting apart for the service of God. The word ἀφορίζω is used in the LXX to describe the setting apart of something as holy to God.²⁸ Paul's description of his calling and being set apart from his mother's womb also carries a striking resemblance with that of the second Servant Song of LXX Isa 49:1. Paul, like the Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah, believed he was set apart and called ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου, the phrase here being identical in both LXX Isa 49:1 and Gal 1:15. The κύριος (Paul's preferred title for Jesus) in this passage may have been taken by Paul as a reference to the risen Christ.

Paul explains a journey he undertook into Arabia following the christophany experience (Gal 1:17) for which he does not provide an explanation. It is possible, although speculative, that this hiatus may have been a "time out" for Paul to reflect and ponder his experience and the consequences for his life. The significance of Paul mentioning Arabia in the context of the christophany is not explained by him. It may have been for geographical purposes and polemical reasons on the part of Paul to establish his status as a prophet. Arabia was desert land or wilderness, and it is quite possible that Paul is placing his calling in the context of the prophetic tradition where prophets like Moses and Elijah experienced theophanies and revelations in the desert (Exod 3:1; 1 Kgs 19:4).

Another important prophetic commissioning event that Paul may be identifying himself with is that of Isaiah. In Isa 6:1–10, the official calling and commissioning of the prophet is set out in detail. There are striking parallels in this passage with what Paul states about the risen Jesus and his own commissioning in his letters. This passage opens with the prophet's pronouncement, εἶδον τὸν κύριον ("I saw the Lord") in LXX Isa 6:1.²⁹ The title κύριος was Paul's main and preferred title for Jesus, while θεός is almost exclusively used by Paul for the Father or "God the Father." The creedal statement believed by some scholars to be a pre-Pauline baptismal creed, κύριος Ἰησοῦς ("Jesus is Lord"), appears in Paul's letters (Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3; 2 Cor 4:5; Phil 2:11). The confession κύριος Ἰησοῦς thus becomes the "distinguishing mark of a Christian."³⁰ The importance of this creed is evident here

²⁸ LXX Exod 19:23; 29:26; LXX Lev 20:25–26.

²⁹ The MT in Isa 6:1 does not use יהוה but rather את־אדני "the Lord." So also in Isa 6:8, where אדני/κύριος, "the Lord," is used again. However, the "Lord" of Isa 6:1, 8, is none other than Yahweh, as seen in the doxology of Isa 6:3. This grammatical distinction between אדני and יהוה is only evident in the MT. In the LXX, the same word κύριος is used for both יהוה and אדני.

³⁰ Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity*, 35.

in that it appears in three letters of the Pauline *Hauptbriefe*. What is equally important is that the creed κύριος Ἰησοῦς in these four Pauline letters is used in relation to the resurrection/exaltation of Jesus. In Rom 14:9³¹ Paul asserted that there was a correlation between the death and resurrection of Jesus and his position as κύριος. The ascription of the κύριος title to Jesus vis-à-vis the resurrection/exaltation is significant at this point when we consider Isa 6:1–10.

In 1 Cor 9:1 Paul questions: οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐώρακα (“Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?”). The clause functions as a rhetorical question, but attention should be given to the negative particle οὐχὶ in the passage. When οὐχὶ is grammatically employed as an interrogative, a negative answer is expected.³² In both these passages, Isa 6:1 and 1 Cor 9:1, there is a seeing of τὸν κύριον (“the Lord”). A comparative analysis between these two texts shows a similar parallel.

LXX Isaiah 6:1 1 Corinthians 9:1

εἶδον τὸν κύριον οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐώρακα;

That Paul was very comfortable and fond of attributing Old Testament passages dealing with Yahweh or its Greek equivalent κύριος to the risen Jesus is a point recognized by most scholars.³³ In some cases Paul understands the κύριος of some Old Testament passages to be a direct reference to Jesus himself without question, and he readily assumes his audience

³¹ In Rom 14:9 Paul implies a connection between the death and resurrection of Jesus and his position as “Lord” by using the conjunction ἵνα. Christ died and was raised *so that* (ἵνα) he might be Lord over the dead and living. The correlation between the death and exaltation of Jesus and his position as κύριος is also seen in the climax of the *Carmen Christi* in Phil 2:10–11.

³² This is equally true of the preceding question Paul asks in 1 Cor 9:1, οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος (“Am I not an apostle?”). When a negative answer is expected, the negative particle μή is employed. What should not be missed is the pragmatic way in which Paul elicits a positive response from his readers. If he has seen the risen Lord, then there is no question about his qualifications as an apostle. Note the importance of the resurrection of Jesus as the basis for Paul’s apostleship. Even though Paul alludes to the christophany here, he assumes the resurrection of Jesus as the basis of the christophany.

³³ Among the Pauline letters, Rom 9:32–33; cf. Isa 8:14; Rom 10:12–13; cf. Joel 2:32; 1 Cor 2:16; cf. Isa 40:13; 1 Cor 10:26; cf. Ps 24:1; Phil 2:9–11; cf. Isa 45:23. In the deuterio-Pauline letters, see Eph 4:8–10; cf. Ps 68:18. See David B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul’s Christology* (WUNT 2.47; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992); James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 249–252; Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology* (New York: Paulist, 1994), 189.

understands this. Paul sees the *κύριος* of various Old Testament passages he cites in his letters as the risen Jesus himself. In both these texts there is mention made of an encounter with the *κύριος*. Both of them appeal to a theophanic/christophanic experience in which the *κύριος* was seen by the subjects, in this case, Isaiah and Paul. The theophany/christophany appears to be the authentication event of the respective callings and commissioning of the respective subjects.

A parallel between Isaiah and Paul also occurs in each of their commissions, both being sent by the Lord:

LXX Isaiah 6:8

1 Corinthians 1:17

τίνα ἀποστείλω; ... ἀπόστειλόν με γὰρ ἀπέστειλέν με Χριστὸς ... εὐαγγελίζεσθαι

Isaiah hears the voice of the *κύριος* saying “whom shall I send?,” to which he responds, “send me.” Paul is similarly commissioned by the risen Jesus: “For Christ sent me ... to proclaim the gospel.” Perhaps in this sense, Paul saw himself as an *ἀπόστολος* of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1). The parallel is furthered by the visionary context for both callings: Isaiah is sent by the exalted Lord whom he sees in the vision, and Paul sees himself as also sent by the exalted Lord Jesus, whom he also claims to have seen in a divine encounter (Gal 1:1–17; cf. also Phil 2:9–11). As Yahweh sent the prophets in the Old Testament to proclaim his message (Jer 1:7; 32:15; Ezek 2:3), so the risen Jesus sends Paul to proclaim his message particularly to the Gentiles (Gal 1:15–16). Paul thus perceives his calling and commissioning in continuity with that of the Old Testament prophetic tradition. However—as a point of discontinuity—whereas the Old Testament prophets were sent by Yahweh alone, Paul sees himself sent by both God and the Lord Jesus.

The role that the Spirit of God plays in Paul’s calling and ministry also appears to be rooted in the prophetic tradition. An important component of the prophetic tradition was that the Spirit would be given and would fall upon Israel (Ezek 36:25–27; Joel 2:28–32), and the giving of the Spirit was clearly associated with the messianic age. As a member of the Jesus movement, a Jewish messianic sect, Paul understood the messianic age to have been inaugurated with the life, ministry, and especially the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus. Paul is aware of the prophecy of Joel 2:28–32 concerning the giving of the Spirit in “the last days” and cites it in Rom 10:13. The Old Testament prophets saw themselves as imbued and empowered with the Spirit of God to accomplish their ministry (Isa 61:1; Ezek 2:2). The coming of the Spirit on certain individuals resulted in revelations by way of visions and

prophetic utterances (Num 24:2; 1Sam 10:10–11;³⁴ 19:20, 23; Ezek 11:24). Paul also asserts that he too has the Spirit of God (1Cor 7:40) and is capable of issuing spiritual directives to the church. Yahweh spoke through visions and gave revelation to his messengers and prophets (Gen 46:2; 1Sam 3:1; Jer 23:16; Ezek 1:1),³⁵ as Jesus did with Paul, who was a recipient of *ὀπτασίαι* καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου (2Cor 12:1).³⁶ The prophets were generally called *via* visions and revelations (Isa 1:1; Ezek 1:1; 8:4; Obad 1:1; Nah 1:1; Hab 2:2) as was Paul, who not only believed himself to be a recipient of visions and revelations from the Lord, but also employed the technical language of revelation or the biblical prophetic formula used in the prophetic books of the Old Testament.³⁷

The common refrain used in the prophetic books is that דבר־יהוה (“the word of Yahweh”), λόγος κυρίου (“the word of the Lord”) came to the prophets.³⁸ The phrase used in the LXX λόγος κυρίου³⁹ was the manner in which the prophet indicated that the word he was about to speak came directly from Yahweh.⁴⁰ The same phrase found in the LXX is also used by Paul, but the referent is the κύριος, Christ.⁴¹ This appropriation of the λόγος κυρίου phrase to Christ is attested in Paul’s earliest letter, 1 Thessalonians, twice (1:8; 4:15), where the λόγος κυρίου is virtually the word of Christ.⁴² This word of the Lord

³⁴ The coming of the Spirit of God upon Saul and his ability to prophesy raised the question, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” (1Sam 10:11–12). The coming of the Spirit upon someone was seen as a prophetic function.

³⁵ Numbers 12:6 (RSV) specifies the way Yahweh reveals himself to prophets: “And he said, ‘Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream.’”

³⁶ Luke also presents Paul as receiving visions (Acts 9:11–12; 16:9–10; 18:9; 26:19). While Paul never speaks of angelophanies to him in his letters (other than the negative connotations given to a possible angelophany that brings another gospel that Paul anathematizes; Gal 1:8–9), Luke does present Paul as being privy to angelophanies (Acts 27:23–25). Angelophanies were also a feature of prophetic missions in the Old Testament (Ezek 40:3; Dan 10:13; 12:1; Zech 1:7–17) and in Second Temple Jewish literature (1En 17–36).

³⁷ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 150.

³⁸ Jer 1:2; Ezek 1:3; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1; Jon 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1; Hag 1:1; Zech 1:1; Mal 1:1.

³⁹ This phrase in the genitive occurs more than 50 times in the LXX of the Hebrew prophets. Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 45.

⁴⁰ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 45.

⁴¹ The identification of Christ as the κύριος is so certain that Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 150–151, remarks, “The ‘Lord’ here is clearly Jesus.”

⁴² Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 150–151, notes that it is widely thought that in 1Thess 4:15–17, Paul is citing “an oracle of the risen Jesus” or perhaps an oracle of “a saying of the exalted Jesus, probably delivered initially through a Christian prophet.” The phrase also appears once in 2Thess 3:1, “Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere, just as it is among you.”

or Christ is usually viewed to be a word that Jesus had spoken, either by way of the Jesus tradition that was passed down to Paul, or perhaps a prophetic word that Paul received from Christ.⁴³ In either case, the source of the saying or word is Christ.

Another feature of the prophets was their announcement of the coming eschatological day of Yahweh, or day of the Lord (Isa 2:11–12; 13:6–13; Ezek 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:32; 3:18; Amos 5:18–20; Obad 15–17; Zeph 1:7–18; 2:2–3; Zech 14:1, 13, 20–21; Mal 4:1, 5). Paul adopts parallel terminology, but applies it to Christ so that the *ἡμέρα κυρίου* or *τῆς ἡμέρας τοῦ κυρίου* (1 Cor 5:5) for him is the day of the Lord Jesus or the Parousia.⁴⁴ This application of the *ἡμέρα κυρίου* to Jesus is already evident in Paul's earliest letter (1 Thess 5:2). Elsewhere, Paul refers to this eschatological day as *τῆς ἡμέρας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (1 Cor 1:8); *ἡμέρας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (Phil 1:6); and *ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ* (Phil 1:10). As the prophets of the Old Testament spoke of the coming day of Yahweh, so Paul speaks of the coming day of the Lord, the Parousia, and in so doing functions in the capacity of a prophet.

3. PROPHETIC CALLING AND COMMISSIONING IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM⁴⁵

It appears axiomatic for Paul that the prophets of the Old Testament were divinely inspired by God. Paul describes God as having spoken through the prophets of Israel (Rom 1:1–2; 11:3; 16:26), and he regarded the writing of the prophets as authoritative alongside that of the Torah or Law.⁴⁶ Paul sees his message in continuity with the Old Testament prophets (Rom 1:1–

⁴³ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 45.

⁴⁴ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 46, notes that, “the phrase belongs altogether to the prophetic tradition, referring to the great future day of Yahweh” and that, “Paul is again appropriating and applying to Christ a well known Yahweh-phrase.”

⁴⁵ For a detailed study on this subject, see Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak, *Prophecy, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 427; New York; London: T&T Clark, 2006).

⁴⁶ This is seen in Paul's sole reference to “the law and the prophets” (Rom 3:21), which functions as a reference for the whole Old Testament as Scripture. The phrase “the law and the prophets” is also attested elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:23), but note Luke 24:44 where the Old Testament Scriptures are broken down into three categories: (1) the law of Moses (2) the prophets, and (3) the psalms. Paul includes the prophets *ἐν γραφαῖς ἁγίαις* (“in the holy Scriptures;” Rom 1:2).

2).⁴⁷ A high regard for the Old Testament prophets is also evidenced in Second Temple Jewish literature such as the Apocrypha. In Sirach 44–50, where we have the so-called *laus partum*, Ben Sira presents a praiseworthy report of many of the Old Testament prophets, their words, deeds, and contributions to the Jewish faith. Other Second Temple Jewish writings such as the Pseudepigrapha employ pseudonymity to various texts by attributing them to notable figures and prophets from the Old Testament such as Enoch (*1–3 En.*), Ezra (*4 Ez.*), Baruch (*2 Bar.*), and various apocalypses are attributed to Abraham and Zephaniah, including Testaments such as the *Twelve Patriarchs*, *Job*, and *Moses* among others.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Paul not only sees his gospel as being in continuity with the message of the Old Testament prophets, but he also views the violent treatment of both Gentile Christians by their own people, and the violent treatment of Jewish Christians by Jewish antagonists, as analogous to the violent treatment the Old Testament prophets received from their own people (1 Thess 2:14–15). The Jewish opposition to the prophets is reflected in the rabbinic text *Pesiq. R.* 26.2: “Jeremiah said, ‘Master of the universe, I cannot prophesy to them. What prophet ever came forth to them whom they did not wish to slay?’” Citation taken from Craig A. Evans, “Paul and the Prophets: Prophetic Criticism in the Epistle to the Romans (with special reference to Romans 9–11),” in Sven K. Soderlund and N.T. Wright, eds., *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 119. Hence there is continuity in the message and in the reaction by their antagonists against the message. In this text Paul calls the Thessalonian Christians μιμηταί (“imitators”) of the churches in Judea in respect to their persecution. As the Judean churches suffered from their Jewish compatriots, the Thessalonian Christians suffer from their compatriots. In 1 Thess 2:15 Paul indicts the Jewish antagonists with killing the Lord Jesus and the prophets and driving Paul and his companions out of Thessalonica (cf. Acts 17:1–9). Paul shows here a continuity of the prophets, the Lord Jesus, and Paul and his companions. Paul’s mention of Jesus first as a victim of the Jewish antagonists and then the prophets in second place seems to indicate the centrality and importance of Jesus over the prophets. In placing the death of Jesus first Paul seems to also want to show the height of rebellion and obstinance on the part of the antagonists. A Pauline passage such as 1 Thess 2:14–15 has been taken by some along with other passages as a reflection of an anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic sentiment. Paul’s polemical treatment in light of his Jewish antagonists should probably be understood against the biblical prophets’ reaction against their Jewish antagonists, which would in turn serve as Paul’s hermeneutical key. Paul was himself a loyal Jew (Rom 9:1–5; 11:1–2). On this suggestion, see D.A. Hagner, “Paul’s Quarrel with Judaism,” in Craig A. Evans and D.A. Hagner, eds., *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 128–150.

⁴⁸ Mitchell G. Reddish, ed., *Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 21, notes: “... the human recipient of the revelation is normally presented as a famous hero of the past (Abraham, Enoch, Daniel, Ezra, Adam, Elijah). In actuality, the author is a much later individual who writes pseudonymously—that is, in the name of some venerable figure from the past. The technique of pseudonymity was used to lend authority to the writing, to suggest that the work was not of recent origin but came from a respected figure or ancient time.”

Some of the writings of Second Temple Judaism do present an understanding of the absence or cessation of prophets.⁴⁹ Most famously are the passages in 1 Maccabees. First Maccabees 9:27 speaks of the time when prophets ceased to appear among the people of Israel. First Maccabees 4:46 and 1 Macc 14:41 speak of an interim period “until a prophet should come” (NRSV) and “until a trustworthy prophet should arise” (NRSV). Both these passages presuppose a temporal absence of prophets, but not a permanent absence.⁵⁰ They clearly presuppose the coming and restoration of a prophet or prophets. There was also the anticipated expectation of “the prophet,” one like Moses mentioned in Deut 18:15, and this in turn gave rise to the coming of an eschatological prophet.⁵¹ This idea appears to have been present in the Qumran community as Deut 18:15 is listed in the *Testimonia* or *Messianic Anthology* (4Q175) of the Qumran texts as a messianic proof text.⁵² The early Christians also identified Jesus as “the prophet” of Deut 18:15.⁵³

While Paul held the prophets and their writings in high esteem, he nevertheless believed that prophets and the gift of prophecy were still operative in his day. What the pre-Christian Paul believed on this point, however, is unclear, since Paul does not divulge this particular information to us. What can be stated is that following the christophany Paul did recognize the role of prophets in the Christian community (1 Cor 12:28; cf. Eph 4:11), including the operation of the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 12–14). The Gospel writers also believed that prophets and the gift of prophecy were evident in their

⁴⁹ The absence or cessation of prophets need not necessarily be a motif that is germane only to Second Temple Judaism. The Old Testament also contains references to the absence of prophets at certain intervals in Israel’s history (Ps 74:9; cf. Lam 2:9). First Samuel 3:1 notes that the word of Yahweh was rare in those days since there was no “frequent vision” (RSV). This text does not indicate a complete absence of prophetic activity but rather a rarity of such activity.

⁵⁰ Sandnes, *Paul*, 44 takes the position that this awaited prophet is “the eschatological prophet ... this ‘until-formulation’ is more frequently used with an eschatological reference.” Sandnes refers to a Qumran text (1QS IX, 11) in support of this point. While the sectarians may have had an eschatological prophet in view, given their apocalyptic emphasis, it is not necessarily the case that the same idea is in view in 1 Macc 4:46; 14:41.

⁵¹ Sandnes, *Paul*, 44.

⁵² Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 86–87.

⁵³ In John 6:14 (cf. John 7:40) Jesus is called ὁ προφήτης (“the prophet”) who is to come into the world. In John 1:21, 25 John the Baptizer is questioned by the religious leaders as to whether he is “the prophet” to which he responds in the negative. The reference to “the prophet” in its application is seen as an allusion to Deut 18:15. John Marsh, *The Gospel of Saint John* (London: Penguin, 1968), 286–287, 344. Also see Acts 3:22–23; 7:37 where Jesus is specifically identified with the prophet of Deut 18:15.

day.⁵⁴ Jesus was called a prophet and believed to be a prophet by many of the people of his day (Matt 16:14;⁵⁵ 21:11, 46; Mark 6:15; Luke 7:16; 9:8, 19; 24:19; John 4:19; 6:14; 9:17). Jesus' prophetic status was questioned by his antagonists (Luke 7:39; John 7:52). Jesus considered himself to be a prophet (Matt 13:57; 23:34, 37; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24–27;⁵⁶ 11:49; 13:33–34; John 4:44). At the same time, Jesus warned against false prophets, which presupposes there were some who made claims to prophetic status (Matt 7:15; cf. Matt 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22). This would also conversely indicate that true prophets as opposed to false prophets were active and present. John the Baptizer was also considered to be a prophet by many people (Matt 14:5; 21:26; Mark 11:32; Luke 20:6), including Jesus who called and identified John as a prophet (Matt 11:7–9; Luke 7:24–26).⁵⁷ This is indicative of the fact that Jesus himself believed that prophets were still being sent by God and were active in his day. John is predicted to be a prophet before his birth by the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:76).⁵⁸

⁵⁴ In Matt 10:40–42 Jesus speaks of the treatment of his disciples as reflecting treatment of himself. In v. 41 Jesus speaks of welcoming “a prophet,” which appears to be synonymous with Jesus’ disciples whom Matthew believes to be in continuity with the Old Testament prophets. See John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 444–446. In Matt 5:12 (cf. Luke 6:23), Jesus compares the treatment of his disciples in persecution with that of the treatment and persecution of the prophets who came before them. In this respect, a continuity is implied: the disciples of Jesus will be treated in the same way the prophets were treated. Conversely, Jesus warns that if his disciples are well spoken of this would indicate that they would be like the false prophets (Luke 6:26) who were gladly received by the people with no persecution. The sign of persecution is the way of the prophets and Jesus informs his disciples that they too must walk that path as they are in continuity with them.

⁵⁵ In Matt 16:14 (cf. Mark 8:28) the people place Jesus on par with Elijah and Jeremiah, ἢ ἕνα τῶν προφητῶν (“or one of the prophets”). The presupposition here is that prophets were considered still to be active. In Mark 6:15, the people consider Jesus to be a prophet “like one of the prophets of old” (NRSV). Here the prophetic status of Jesus is placed in the same category as the biblical prophets.

⁵⁶ Jesus’ understanding of himself as a prophet is furthered heightened in this passage when he compares his mission and consequent rejection by Israel to that of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Jesus clearly places himself here in the line of prophets and in continuity with them.

⁵⁷ When Luke records the beginning of John’s ministry he introduces a very familiar Old Testament expression of the word of God coming to the prophets. Luke 3:2 states ἐγένετο ῥῆμα θεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἰωάννην (“the word of God came to John”). The common refrain used in the prophetic books is that יהוה / דבר / λόγος κυρίου / “the word of YHWH/ the Lord” came to the prophets (Jer 1:2; Ezek 1:3; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1; Hag 1:1; Zech 1:1; Mal 1:1). See Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 45. Luke is identifying John as a prophet in the line of the Old Testament prophets. See G.B. Caird, *The Gospel of St. Luke* (London: Penguin, 1963), 70.

⁵⁸ Luke 2:36 also identifies the widow Anna, who fasted and prayed in the temple, as a προφῆτις (a “prophetess;” RSV). The NRSV has “a prophet.”

Since the literature of the Second Temple period is vast, I will restrict my examples of prophetic calling and commissioning briefly to the cases found in the first-century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus.⁵⁹ Since Josephus writes in the first century this has the advantage of placing him in a similar time frame as Paul. There are four figures in Josephus's writings in particular that I would like to consider. They are: (1) Theudas; (2) the Egyptian; (3) Jesus the son of Ananus; and (4) Josephus.

Josephus writes about an individual who claimed prophetic status named Theudas.⁶⁰

⁹⁷ Now, it came to pass, while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; ⁹⁸ and many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them; who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem.⁶¹ (Ant. 20.97–98)

The timing of this event is dated to about 44–46 CE during the rule of Fadus.⁶² This would place this event within the lifetime of Paul and certainly after

⁵⁹ For a detailed treatment of Josephus and prophetic figures in late second temple Judaism, see Rebecca Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁶⁰ Luke also mentions a Theudas and his uprising and consequent defeat in death (Acts 5:36). The difficulty between Luke and Josephus is the chronology of these events. Critics maintain Luke commits an anachronism by placing the insurrection of Theudas prior to 6 CE earlier than that of Josephus's account (44–46 CE). In this respect Luke has been charged with misdating the event. See Geza Vermes, *Who's Who in the Age of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 2005), 240. Some have suggested Luke misread Josephus, an unlikely situation as Josephus's writings come much later, being published about 93 CE. To resolve this chronological problem some have suggested that Luke may have had another "Theudas" in mind including the suggestion that Theudas was a common Jewish name and hence there may have been other rebels bearing that name. On the problem between Luke and Josephus, see I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 122–123. Early critics erroneously assumed Luke had access to Josephus and that he was dependent on Josephus's works in Acts 5:36. This notion is seen, for instance, in E. Schürer, "Lucas und Josephus" *ZWT* 19 (1876): 582: "Either Luke had not read Josephus, or he had forgotten all he had read." In Acts 5:37 Luke also mentions "Judah the Galilean" who led a revolt with a number of followers whom he incited to follow him. He too was consequently killed and his followers were scattered.

⁶¹ All quotations by Josephus are taken from William Whiston, *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974).

⁶² Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 116 n. 57.

his christophany. Josephus refers to Theudas as a magician, suggesting a negative outlook by Josephus since magic was condemned in the Torah (Deut 18:9–13). This negative perspective is evident in Josephus's statement that "many were deluded by his words." This would imply on Josephus's part that Theudas was a false prophet who misled the people (cf. Deut 13:1–5).⁶³ Theudas made claim to being a *προφήτης*. What is interesting is that there is no claim, according to Josephus, by Theudas to be the Messiah, even though the actions that he proposes to take do have messianic connotations, such as conquering Israel's enemies and delivering the people of Israel and liberating them. His claim to be a prophet apparently convinced a large number of people to follow him. This indicates that during this period claimants to prophethood were not summarily dismissed by the general populace but were rather successful in obtaining a following so much so that people took all their possessions in order to follow, in this case, Theudas. What is significant here is that in addition to claiming to be a prophet Theudas also made the claim that he would divide the Jordan river at his command and take them over dryshod. The parallel here is to the story of Joshua and the dividing of the Jordan river (Josh 3:1–17). The crossing of the Jordan river typified possession of the land as God promised Joshua (Josh 1:3–4). Theudas was clearly familiar with this story and he used it to advance his strategy. Theudas makes an indirect claim here to be like Joshua, the military leader who took Israel into Canaan and conquered their enemies.⁶⁴ Here we also see an association of a prophet with miraculous workings, a feature that is evident in the Gospels with Jesus.⁶⁵ The attempt of

⁶³ Josephus refers to Theudas as a magician, sorcerer, or an imposter (*γόης*), and one who claimed to be a prophet (*προφήτης*). It is interesting that in Luke's account of Paul (Saul) and Barnabas's confrontation with Bar-Jesus in Paphos (Acts 13:6), Luke describes Bar-Jesus as *τινὰ μάγον ψευδοπροφήτην Ἰουδαίου* ("a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet;" NRSV).

⁶⁴ Joshua is not explicitly called a prophet in the Old Testament, but because he was the successor of Moses and God promised that he would be with Joshua as he was with Moses the prophetic status of Joshua appears to be implied (Josh 1:1–10).

⁶⁵ See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 123; Paula Hendriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 114; Barry Blackburn, "The Miracles of Jesus," in Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, eds., *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 19; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 356–357; Reginald H. Fuller, *Interpreting the Miracles* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 39; Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 277; Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries: Comparative Studies* (AGJU 25; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 213–243; Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, eds., *Wonders Never Cease: The Purpose of Narrating Miracle Stories in the New Testament and its Religious Environment* (LNTS 288; London: T&T Clark, 2006).

Theudas and his followers was quashed and Theudas was summarily killed and humiliated with decapitation. Josephus mentions that Theudas's captors brought his decapitated head to Jerusalem (*Ant.* 20.98), probably to serve as an object lesson to other would-be prophetic pretenders. This story shows that within Second Temple Judaism prophets were still active and effective, and that they could perform miraculous deeds. Josephus rejected Theudas's prophetic claims, but many did not and were willing to follow him as a prophet and sacrifice their lives for his cause.

The second account by Josephus relates to another prophetic claimant known as "the Egyptian."⁶⁶

¹⁶⁹ Moreover, there came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem, one that said he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the Mount of Olives, as it was called, which lay opposite the city, and at the distance of about a half a mile. ¹⁷⁰ He said further, that he would show them from there how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down; and he promised them that he would procure them an entrance into the city through those walls, when they had fallen down. ¹⁷¹ Now when Felix was informed of these things, he ordered his soldiers to take their weapons, and came against them with a great number of horsemen and footmen, from Jerusalem, and attacked the Egyptian and the people that were with him. He also slew four hundred of them, and took two hundred alive. ¹⁷² But the Egyptian himself escaped out of the fight, but did not appear any more. And again the robbers stirred up the people to make war with the Romans, and said they ought not to obey them at all; and when anyone would not comply with them, they set fire to their villages, and plundered them.

(*Ant.* 20.169–172)

The event that Josephus recounts about the Egyptian occurred about 58 CE,⁶⁷ which like Theudas places it within the lifetime of Paul. In Act 23:38, Paul was mistaken for the Egyptian rebel Josephus writes about. Josephus records that he came "out of Egypt"⁶⁸ and that he came to Jerusalem. His coming to

⁶⁶ Luke is also familiar with this story of "the Egyptian." Paul is initially mistaken for this Egyptian by the commanding officer after his arrest in the Jerusalem temple (Acts 23:38). The fact that in this text Paul could speak Greek convinced the commanding officer that he was not the alleged Egyptian insurrectionist. This implies that this Egyptian was not fluent in Greek. Josephus recounts in *Ant.* 20.172 that this Egyptian insurrectionist escaped the clash with the opposing army and was not seen again. This would explain the query of the commanding officer to Paul in Acts 23:38 about whether he was the Egyptian perhaps because he was still wanted "dead or alive." Geza Vermes takes the title "the Egyptian" to be "the nickname of a Jewish rebel leader." Geza Vermes, *Who's Who in the Age of Jesus*, 80.

⁶⁷ Vermes, *Who's Who in the Age of Jesus*, 80.

⁶⁸ Is it possible that Josephus's reference to this figure "coming out of Egypt" is also meant

Jerusalem may indicate prophetic connotations as well as messianic connotations (cf. Zech 9:9; Isa 2:2–5). As in the case of Theudas, the Egyptian in this case apparently made no claims to being the Messiah, at least not from what we read in Josephus. However, his proposed actions do have messianic overtones. He advises the common people in Jerusalem to follow him to the Mount of Olives where he proposes to perform a sign: at his command the walls of Jerusalem would fall down. There are two notable observations to be made here. The first is the mention of the Mount of Olives. It is possible that the Egyptian led the people to that site based on the prophecy in Zech 14:4 where the Mount of Olives is described as the place where Yahweh's feet will stand when he goes out to battle against the nations that come against Jerusalem (Zech 14:1–5).⁶⁹ Zechariah 14:5 speaks of the coming of Yahweh and his holy ones. The scene in Zech 14:1–5 envisions the destruction of Israel's enemies and this may have been the reason behind the reference to the Mount of Olives. Second, the sign that the Egyptian seeks to show is one taken from the narrative of the falling of the walls of Jericho, a sign associated with Joshua (Josh 6:1–27). The implication is that the Egyptian would lead the people in victory against the Romans as king, which would definitely have messianic significance. Here we note a parallel with Theudas. Both the Egyptian and Theudas appeal to a sign reminiscent of Joshua, in the case of Theudas, the crossing of the Jordan river (Josh 3:1–17), in the case of the Egyptian, the falling of the walls of Jericho (Josh 6:20). Again we observe a correlation between prophetic status and miraculous workings. As in the case of Theudas, the Egyptian's plans were foiled in this case by Felix who ordered their execution and arrest. The Egyptian escaped and was not seen again. Josephus paints a picture of his followers as “robbers” who essentially terrorized those who would not side with their cause

to be taken pejoratively, as Egypt represented the house of bondage or slavery (Exod 20:2)? The reference by Josephus that he was also a “magician” or “sorcerer” is interesting, as Egypt is also depicted in the Old Testament as one of the places where magic and sorcery were practiced (Gen 41:8, 24; Exod 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18–19; 9:11). In the Exodus passages magic or sorcery is used in opposition to Yahweh and his servant Moses.

⁶⁹ Apart from Zech 14:4, the only other place in the Old Testament where the Mount of Olives is mentioned is in 2 Sam 15:30. The most likely reference that influenced the Egyptian would have been Zech 14:4, as it contains eschatological overtones whereas 2 Sam 15:30 does not. In the New Testament, the Mount of Olives (called “Olivet” by Luke in Acts 1:12) is the place from which Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9–12). The passage in Acts speaks of Jesus returning in the same manner in which he departed. Is it possible that Luke had Zech 14:4 in mind that mentions the Mount of Olives as the place where Yahweh's feet would rest when he comes to judge the nations and that Luke may have envisioned the Mount of Olives as the place where Jesus would return?

against the Romans. Josephus clearly appears to present both the Egyptian and Theudas as false prophets and doomed leaders.

Josephus's rejection of the prophetic claims of the Egyptian comes to the fore in another of his writings, the *Jewish War*.

²⁶¹ But there was an Egyptian false prophet that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat, and pretended to be a prophet also, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him: ²⁶² these he led all around from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place; and if he could but once conquer the Roman garrison and the people, he intended to domineer over them by the assistance of those guards of his that were to break into the city with him; ²⁶³ but Felix prevented his attempt, and met him with his Roman soldiers, while all the people assisted him in his attack upon them, insomuch that when it came to a battle, the Egyptian ran away, with a few others, while the greatest part of those who were with him were either killed or taken alive; but the rest of the multitude were dispersed everyone to their own homes, and there concealed themselves. (*J.W.* 2.261–263)

The figure of the Egyptian seems to have irked Josephus so much so that he mentions him twice in his works (*Ant.* 20.169–172; *J.W.* 2.261–263). In this second text, he clearly refers to him as not only a cheat but as a ψευδο-προφήτης (“false prophet”). He was able to amass a following of 30,000 whom he “deluded” according to Josephus. Josephus also notes that he led them around the wilderness, which may imply a prophetic identification on the part of the Egyptian with Moses who led the people in the wilderness (cf. Deut 1:19; 2:7). Interestingly, Josephus does not mention the sign of the falling down of the walls of Jerusalem, which he mentioned in *Ant.* 20.170. The defeat of the Egyptian is mentioned with some of his followers being killed, some taken prisoners, and others escaping and concealing themselves in their homes.⁷⁰ Josephus clearly paints a very negative picture of this prophetic pretender.

Josephus did not hold this view with another figure he mentions next, Jesus son of Ananus.

⁷⁰ The observation of Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 700, appears to be correct in regards to messianic movements of the Second Temple Jewish period. With the defeating and humiliating death of the messianic leader the followers would either abandon the movement altogether or they would find and join themselves to another messianic leader. The Christian movement is dissimilar in this respect in that their messianic leader, while suffering a defeating and humiliating death (Gal 3:13; cf. Deut 21:22–23), was believed to have been raised from the dead by God and thus vindicated (Phil 2:10–11). The Christian movement as a messianic movement was able to survive whereas its messianic contemporaries could not.

³⁰⁰ But, what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a common man and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for everyone to make tabernacles to God in the temple, ³⁰¹ began suddenly to cry aloud, 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, and a voice against this whole people!' This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. ³⁰² However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet he did not either say anything for himself, or anything peculiar to those who chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before. ³⁰³ Hereupon our rulers supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator; ³⁰⁴ where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet he did not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' ³⁰⁵ And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him, 'Who he was? and from where he came? and why he uttered such words?' he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not stop his melancholy dirge, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him. ³⁰⁶ Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near anyone of the citizens, nor was seen by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' ³⁰⁷ Nor did he give ill words to any of those who beat him every day, nor good words to those who gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come. ³⁰⁸ This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals; and he continued this dirge for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; ³⁰⁹ for as he was going around upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, 'Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!' And just as he added at the last, 'Woe, woe to myself also!' there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages he gave up the ghost.

(*J.W.* 6.300–609.)

In this account Josephus views this particular figure Jesus son of Ananus in a positive light. Josephus believed that he was inspired of God.⁷¹ He is described as a common and rural man who began predicting the doom of Jerusalem and the temple in 62 CE, four years before the first war with

⁷¹ Vermes, *Who's Who in the Age of Jesus*, 140.

Rome⁷² during the Feast of Tabernacles.⁷³ He began his dirge during a time of relative peace and security in Jerusalem.⁷⁴ His dirge lasted for 7 years and 5 months and his message contained an element of doom, “A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, and a voice against this whole people!” This dirge by Jesus son of Ananus has prophetic overtones like those found in the prophet Jeremiah who similarly proclaimed a message of doom against Jerusalem and the temple (Jer 7:34).⁷⁵ Josephus also recounts that he was taken first by the religious leader of Jerusalem and beaten with stripes to which he gave no reaction but continued on with his doomsday dirge. Afterwards the religious leaders handed Jesus son of Ananus to the Roman procurator who had him so severely beaten that his bones are laid bare. As he was whipped he continued his dirge with the words “Woe, woe to Jerusalem!,” a phrase that appears in Jer 13:27.⁷⁶ When he is questioned by the Roman procurator for his motives and his dirge he offers no reply⁷⁷ and is dismissed as a madman. Josephus notes that “This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals” (*J.W.* 3.308). Here we observe a remarkable parallel to that of Jesus of Nazareth. John 7:37 states that on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus “shouted out” (NET), “said in a loud voice” (NIV), “cried out” (NASB),⁷⁸ that those who were thirsty should come to him. Jesus son of Ananus died in 69 CE a year before the destruction of the second temple, uttering the dirge until he expired.⁷⁹

⁷² Vermes, *Who's Who in the Age of Jesus*, 140.

⁷³ In John 7, Jesus of Nazareth is also in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles, during which time he engages the Jewish religious leaders. It is interesting that it is during this same feast that some of the people state that Jesus is “the prophet.” Jesus was also dismissed by some people as “demon possessed” (John 7:20). The religious leaders also tried to lay their hands on Jesus to seize him but could not (John 7:30, 44). Similarly Jesus son of Ananus was denounced as a “madman.”

⁷⁴ It should be noted that during the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and his dirge against Jerusalem and the temple, the city of Jerusalem experienced relative peace and security as well.

⁷⁵ Vermes, *Who's Who in the Age of Jesus*, 140.

⁷⁶ Jer 13:27: “Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will it be before you are made clean?” (NRSV).

⁷⁷ Note that Jesus of Nazareth did the same in refusing to answer the governor (Mark 15:5).

⁷⁸ The verb *κράζω* in John 7:37 has the meaning of cry out, shout and to scream. J.P. Louw and E.A. Nida, eds., *Louw-Nida Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2nd ed.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), domain 33.83.

⁷⁹ Jesus of Nazareth also implicitly proclaims the destruction of Jerusalem on his way to his death (Luke 23:28–31).

Several scholars have noted striking similarities between Jesus son of Ananus and Jesus of Nazareth.⁸⁰ What is particularly striking is the prophetic imagery that appears with Jesus son of Ananus. Josephus's report on this individual is a positive one in comparison to his negative reports of Theudas and the Egyptian. This would indicate that Josephus understood Jesus son of Ananus as functioning as a prophet even though he never calls him a prophet. This at least indicates that Josephus believed that some could be gifted by God to announce or prophesy a coming judgment, in the case of Jesus son of Ananus, the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and its people. The fulfillment of the dirge of Jesus son of Ananus was later recognized by Josephus in 70 CE.

While we have examined what Josephus had to say about other figures and their prophetic roles, it is interesting that Josephus also wrote of himself in the role of a prophet, particularly in his account of his correspondence with Vespasian.

⁴⁰⁰ "You, O Vespasian, think no more than that you have taken Josephus himself captive; but I come to you as a messenger of greater tidings; for had not I been sent by God to you, I knew what was the law of the Jews in this case? and how it becomes generals to die.⁴⁰¹ Do you send me to Nero? For what reason? Are Nero's successors till they come to you still alive? You, O Vespasian, are Caesar and emperor, you, and this your son.⁴⁰² Bind me now still faster, and keep me for yourself, for you, O Caesar, are not only lord over me, but over the land and the sea, and all mankind; and certainly I deserve to be kept in closer custody than I now am in, in order to be punished, if I rashly affirm anything of God." ...⁴⁰⁶ [Josephus said] "I did foretell to the people of Jotapata that they would be taken on the forty-seventh day, and that I should be caught alive by the Romans."⁴⁰⁷ Now when Vespasian had inquired of the captives secretly about these predictions, he found them to be true, and then he began to believe those who concerned himself. (J.W. 3.400–407)

Josephus recounts his imprisonment by the Roman forces under Vespasian who was given orders by Nero in 67 CE to suppress the Jewish revolt.⁸¹ Josephus had requested a personal correspondence with Vespasian in which he foretold that Vespasian would become emperor. Josephus claims that he comes to Vespasian as an ἄγγελος ("a messenger" or "an angel") and that he has been sent by God to deliver a message to him. Josephus's reference

⁸⁰ Vermes, *Who's Who in the Age of Jesus*, 141; Craig A. Evans, "What Did Jesus Do?," in Michael J. Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, eds., *Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 107–109. Evans (108) provides a very helpful comparison between Jesus son of Ananus (or Ananias) and Jesus of Nazareth.

⁸¹ Vermes, *Who's Who in the Age of Jesus*, 250.

to himself as an ἄγγελος is interesting, as this term is also used of the prophets as messengers⁸² who are sent.⁸³ Josephus then predicts that Vespasian will become emperor and calls him his lord, and lord of land and sea and all people.⁸⁴ Josephus appears to employ prophetic language concerning himself and asserts that he deserves punishment if he speaks rashly of God. According to Josephus his prophecy was fulfilled while he was imprisoned and Vespasian did become emperor (*J.W.* 4.618–625). Vespasian consequently released Josephus and recognized his prediction as “a divine message” to him.⁸⁵ Vespasian even checked the validity of Josephus’s predictions from the captives and found them to be true thus giving credibility to what Josephus predicted about Vespasian (*J.W.* 3.407). The Roman historians Suetonius (*Vesp.* 5.6) and Cassius Dio (*Rom. hist.* 66.2–4) recognized that the elevation of Vespasian was foretold by Judean oracles, and both mention the fulfillment of Josephus’s prophecy. The fact that these two Roman historians mention this point indicates the impact Josephus’s predictions or prophecies had on Vespasian.

In addition to his prediction about Vespasian becoming emperor, Josephus also predicted that he would be taken captive alive by the Roman forces and that the people of Jotapata would be taken on the 47th day of the Roman incursion in Galilee (*J.W.* 3.406). This again reflects prophetic language also found in the prophets.⁸⁶

Josephus recognizes the existence of both false prophets and true prophets. While he has high regard for the biblical prophets, Josephus nonetheless is of the persuasion that prophecy is still available to certain people who are led and sent by God. Josephus viewed Theudas and the Egyptian as false

⁸² Note LXX Hag 1:3 where the prophet is referred to as Ἀγγαῖος ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου (“Haggai the messenger of the Lord”). He is also referred to as a prophet in Hag 1:1.

⁸³ On the sending of the prophets by God, see Isa 6:8; Jer 1:6; Ezek 2:3; Mic 6:4.

⁸⁴ There is a striking similarity with the words addressed to Vespasian by Josephus and that of Daniel to the king Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel addresses Nebuchadnezzar as “king of kings” and tells him that God has granted to him authority and sovereignty over all people and animals (Dan 2:37–38).

⁸⁵ Josephus records Vespasian as remarking, “It is a shameful thing (said he) that this man, who has foretold my coming to the empire beforehand, and been the minister of a divine message to me, should still be retained in the condition of a captive or prisoner.’ So he called for Josephus, and commanded that he should be set at liberty” (*J.W.* 4.626). There is a similarity with Vespasian’s contrition in releasing Josephus from prison to that of King Darius releasing Daniel from the prison of the lion’s den (Dan 6:20–23).

⁸⁶ See 1 Sam 10:1–9, where detailed accounts and a specified number of days are given as indicators of Samuel’s prophetic status. In 1 Kgs 21:19–24, a detailed prediction is made of Jezebel’s impending death, which is later fulfilled in exact detail (2 Kgs 9:30–37).

prophets, imposters who deluded and misled people to their own destruction. He seems to be more repulsed by the actions of the Egyptian as he mentions him twice in his works. On a positive note, Josephus seemed to view Jesus son of Ananus and his dirge against Jerusalem and the temple as someone who was inspired by God. The events of 70 CE with the destruction of the second temple would have confirmed the validity of the words and actions of Jesus son of Ananus. Lastly, we saw that Josephus believed himself to be a prophet, expressed primarily in his prediction concerning the elevation of Vespasian to emperor, a prediction that came true. Josephus also recognized himself as one who had been sent by God as his messenger, and in so doing he employed the language that was descriptive of the prophets in the Old Testament. The case of Josephus indicates that the commissioning and calling of a prophet was still very relevant and acceptable in Second Temple Judaism.

4. PAUL'S CALLING AND THE JEWISH-GENTILE MISSION

A further parallel between the ancient prophetic calling and Paul's apostolic calling is located within an equivalent target audience, the Gentiles. Paul saw himself in prophetic terms like Elijah, who appeared as a lone prophet (1 Kgs 18:22; 19:10, 14), at a time when the nation of Israel was under extensive apostasy from Yahweh in the worship of Baal. Elijah's ministry entailed a call for apostate Israel to return to Yahweh. As in Elijah's day, only a small remnant believed in Yahweh (1 Kgs 19:18), so too Paul sees his own day as analogous to Elijah's (Rom 11:2–5), in that only a small remnant within Israel believed in Jesus as Messiah (Rom 9:27). Paul finds justification for his remnant theology in the prophet Isaiah, who also spoke of a faithful remnant in his day (Isa 1:9; 10:22). As noted above, prophets appeared generally in times of national apostasy in Israel, and the faithful always constituted a remnant, a minority within the nation, and Paul likewise sees Israel in a state of deep apostasy in her rejection of Jesus as Messiah. Where Paul appears to differ in this respect is that while some Old Testament prophets were sent to their *own people* to call them to return to Yahweh, Paul's mission was a specialized one in which his calling entailed a special outreach to the Gentiles⁸⁷ and not directly to the Jews.⁸⁸ This may seem like a point of discontinuity

⁸⁷ Paul in recounting his second visit to Jerusalem specifically speaks of his ministry being for the Gentiles while Peter's ministry was for the Jews (Gal 2:7–8).

⁸⁸ Even though the Old Testament prophets were sent to their own people (i.e. the people

at first, but if we return to the analogy with Elijah that Paul appeals to in his own day, we note that Elijah also came into contact with Gentiles (1 Kgs 17:7–24).⁸⁹ Paul may, therefore, have viewed his mission to Gentiles as commensurate with the prophetic ministry of Elijah.

In the first-century social world of Paul, we have evidence of Jewish outreach to Gentiles for the purposes of proselytization.⁹⁰ While Paul defines his mission as mainly in terms of the Gentile mission (Rom 1:33; Gal 2:8), there is evidence in Paul's writings that he carried a tremendous anguish in his heart for his people Israel, being deeply burdened by their rejection of Jesus as Messiah (Rom 9:1–3). The overwhelming rejection of Jesus as Messiah by Israel posed a problem for Paul, and in Romans 9–11, he seeks to deal with this tension by arguing that Israel's rejection of Jesus falls within the purposes of God to bring salvation to the Gentiles, for whom Paul had been appointed an apostle. Paul believed nevertheless that God had not abandoned Israel, for he too was an Israelite (Rom 11:1),⁹¹ but that God would still save a remnant (Rom 11:5; cf. also Rom 1:16; 10:1).⁹² Paul continued to reach out to the Jews with the hope that he could at least save some of them (1 Cor 9:20–21).

Paul accepted the idea that the Jew ideally was responsible *ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει* (Rom 2:19), even though here Paul argues they have

of Israel), some of the prophets' oracles were addressed to the Gentile nations as well (see Isa 13–23; Ezek 25–32, 35; Amos 1–2:3). Jeremiah was called a prophet to the nations (Jer 1:5, 10).

⁸⁹ The story of Elisha and the Syrian leper Naaman provides a further parallel (2 Kgs 5:1–18). Both the stories of Elijah and Elisha having contact with Gentiles are cited by Jesus in Luke 4:24–27 to draw a parallel to his own rejection by his own people. In Luke 4:24, Jesus perceives himself as a prophet and thus compares his treatment as a prophet by his people to Israel's treatment of Elijah and Elisha.

⁹⁰ Matthew 23:15 makes the statement that the scribes and Pharisees will cross sea and land to make one convert. This passage at least infers that there was an interest in the first century to proselytize Gentiles to the Jewish religion. Luke also attests the presence of proselytes or Gentile converts to Judaism (Acts 2:10; 6:5; 13:43). He mentions the *φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν* ("God fearers") in Acts 13:16, 26 and *σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν* ("God worshippers") in Acts 16:14; 17:17; 18:7, who were attracted to Judaism but unlike the proselytes did not commit themselves to circumcision and full observance of the Torah. On the "God fearers," see Karl Georg Kuhn, "φοβούμενοι," *TDNT* 6:732–734, 743–744.

⁹¹ In Rom 11:1 Paul asks the question, *λέγω οὐκ μὴ ἀπίσωτο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ*, which parallels the question of the prophet Jeremiah in Jer 14:19, *הֲמֵאִס מֵאֵת יְהוָה* ("Have you [God] completely rejected Judah?").

⁹² Luke presents Paul as bringing the gospel first to the Jews in the synagogues and then subsequently to the Gentiles (Acts 9:20–30; 13; 14:1–7; 17:1–15; 18; 28:17–31). In his account of the christophany, Luke emphasizes Paul's calling as an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15).

failed in this respect.⁹³ Because the Jew was a member of the chosen people of God, s/he was responsible for making the knowledge of God and his worship known to the Gentiles. Paul calls attention to Israel's gift of *λατρεία* (Rom 9:4). As a Jew himself, Paul took this seriously. He was a worshipper of the true God, and he was now called to make that worship of the true God known to Gentiles. In bringing the Gentiles to the knowledge of the true God, Paul believed he was also commissioned to invite and bring the worship of the God of Israel to the Gentiles.

This view was rooted in the eschatological vision of the prophets who anticipated the time when the Gentiles would come to acknowledge Yahweh as the one true God to be worshipped (Isa 2:1–4; Zech 8:20–23). Paul would have seen himself as fulfilling these prophetic visions of the knowledge of Yahweh coming to the Gentiles. Another resemblance that may have influenced Paul lies in the mission and target audience of the Servant of Isaiah 49:1, and Paul's own mission and audience. The Servant addresses the *ἔθνη*, the Gentiles. His mission is also described as being *εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναι σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς* (LXX Isa 49:6).⁹⁴ Paul also describes his mission as having an intended purpose, *ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν* (Gal 1:16). Also relevant in this connection is the fact that while the Servant in Isaiah proclaims Yahweh (*κύριος* in LXX) to the Gentiles, Paul proclaims God's "Son," the *κύριος*, to the Gentiles.

Paul's ministry to the Gentiles parallel's Jeremiah's calling as well. Paul saw his calling as an appointment to proclaim the good news to *τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*, the Gentiles, or nations. Jeremiah, likewise, was also consecrated to be a *προφήτην εἰς ἔθνη* ("a prophet to the nations" or "Gentiles") (Jer 1:5).⁹⁵ Part of Paul's mission in proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles and being a light to

⁹³ The idea of the Jews being a "guide" to the Gentiles is also used in the Gospel of Matthew but in a pejorative sense, where Jesus denounces the Pharisees as "blind guides" (Matt 15:14; 23:16, 24).

⁹⁴ The reference in LXX Isa 49:6 to the *ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς* ("ends of the earth") may possibly explain Paul's desire to visit Spain (Rom 15:24, 28). Spain only appears twice in this Pauline letter. The only other text that mentions Spain is 1 Macc 8:3, where it appears only once. This text contains a eulogy of the military might of the Romans and how they took control of the land of Spain, a place where there were "silver and gold mines." Thus, Spain is already seen as a province within the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire in Maccabean times. Spain would have been seen as the western end of the known world in the first century CE. Clement of Rome writes thirty years after Paul's death (ca. 65–66 CE) that Paul had in fact gone to the "limits of the Occident [the West]" or to "the extreme limit of the west" (*Ep.* 1.5). He further maintains that Paul preached both "in the east and west" but states he reached the extreme limit of the west only.

⁹⁵ The MT text of Jer 1:5 likewise reads *נביא לגוים* "a prophet to the nations," or "Gentiles."

them was to draw them into the worship of the God of Israel through the Messiah Jesus. Thus, Paul conceived of his mission as a mission of introducing the Gentiles to the worship of the true God. It is in this light that Paul's remarks in 1 Thess 1:9 about the Thessalonians turning from idols to serve the true and living God come to the fore. Paul commends them for coming to know and serve the true God and this Paul sees as an integral result of his mission to them.

Paul saw himself as God's messenger to bring the light of the true God, that which the prophets spoke of, to the Gentile nations. Paul is responsible to insure that the worship of the true God is established among the Gentiles and this explains Paul's opposition to anything he feels compromises such worship (1 Cor 8–10). Integral to Paul's mission of bringing the knowledge and worship of the true God to the Gentiles is the central role that Jesus plays. In raising Jesus from the dead, God has ushered in the last days, the beginning of the eschaton, part of which would be the admission of the Gentiles into the worship of the God of Israel as the prophets foretold. The means by which God would accomplish this according to Paul would be through his Son, through whom God provides the atonement for sin and through whom God adopts sinful people as his children (Rom 5:8; Gal 4:4–6).

5. CONCLUSION

The New Testament explicitly calls Paul a prophet only once in Acts 13:1 by a third-party writer, Luke.⁹⁶ Paul himself never explicitly identifies himself as a prophet; nevertheless, it seems that Paul saw himself in the role of prophet vis-à-vis his calling, commissioning, and ministry, a function clearly active within the Second Temple period. Paul sees the christophany as the event *par excellence* that marks the origin of his calling by God and the risen Christ. The centrality of the resurrection is emphasized by Paul (1 Cor 15), and the resurrection of Jesus serves as the foundation for the christophany to Paul. The resurrection of Jesus is an eschatological event that, for Paul, ushers in the “last days” or “ends of the ages.” In this respect Paul would conceive of himself as a “latter day prophet.”⁹⁷ Paul comes to see himself

⁹⁶ It is strange in light of Acts 13:1 where Saul/Paul is clearly referred to as a prophet that Craig A. Evans, “Paul as Prophet,” in G.F. Hawthorne et al., eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 762, would state that “nowhere in the NT is Paul ever explicitly called a prophet.”

⁹⁷ Sandnes, *Paul*, 65.

as the prophet of the risen and exalted Lord. The event of the christophany itself is spoken of in terms of revelation: God was pleased to reveal his Son to Paul (Gal 1:15–16). It provided a parallel to the calling and commissioning of Paul from the prophetic tradition in the Old Testament. Divine appearances such as theophanies were usually the events that called and commissioned prophets as we saw in the case of Isaiah (Isa 6:1–10). Other examples were alluded to such as the calling of Moses (Exod 3:1–5). The christophany for Paul was parallel to the theophanies in the Old Testament. Paul also utilized the language of prophets in which their calling was predetermined by God from their mother's womb, as with the Servant in Isa 49:1 and Jer 1:5. Paul likewise asserted that God called him from his mother's womb. The Servant, Jeremiah, and Paul were all called to be messengers and prophets to the Gentile nations (Isa 49:6; Jer 1:5). While Paul understood himself to have a specialized ministry to the Gentiles, he nevertheless felt it his responsibility also to call the Jewish people back to God (in the case of Paul through acceptance of Jesus the Messiah) as the Old Testament prophets did. Paul understood himself like the prophets (Elijah, Isaiah) to be part of the faithful remnant within the general apostate majority. The nature of prophetic revelations by way of visions, the eschatological language of the prophets such as the "last days," the "day of the Lord," the tension between the apostate majority and the faithful remnant minority, the significance of the Spirit of God being given and the gift of prophecy, are all employed by Paul but defined along christological lines. Taken as a cumulative whole, these various streams of evidence strongly suggest that Paul viewed himself "among the prophets," at least in terms of his apostolic calling.

MONOTHEISM AND PHILOSOPHY:
NOTES ON THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN PHILO AND PAUL
(ROMANS 1:18–21)*

Peter Frick

1. INTRODUCTION

The scope of this essay is a comparison of the Apostle Paul's theology of the concept of God vis-à-vis the notion of God in Philo of Alexandria. The structure of the argument is such that, in a first step, I will present an outline of Philo's formal concept of God with the emphasis on the Middle Platonic¹ distinction between the essence and existence of God. In a second step, I will then discuss how the Philonic notion of God sheds light on the Pauline understanding of God as expressed in the passage Rom 1:18–21,² and finally, in a brief third section, I will assess both prospects and limits of the comparison in view of Pauline theology. The objective of this essay is thus to examine the extent to which the apostle to the Gentiles conceptualizes his notion of God in a formal mode. In other words, is there evidence that Paul—like Philo—knew of and intentionally drew on the basic philosophical and theological insights of Greco-Roman Hellenism in order to present his concept of God in an intellectually cogent manner?

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¹ Philo's relation to Middle Platonic philosophy is a very complex issue. For an overview and assessment of this question, see the studies by G.E. Sterling, D.T. Runia and the responses by D. Winston, T.H. Tobin, and J. Dillon, *SPhilo* 5 (1993): 95–155.

² The parallels between Philo and Romans 1–2 have been recognized by Henry Chadwick, "St. Paul and Philo of Alexandria," *BJRL* 48 (1966): 286–307 and Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 150–154. Curiously, many commentaries on Romans either completely omit a reference to Philo or treat the parallels regarding the concept of God between Philo and Paul in a rather negligent manner.

What legitimizes a comparison of the concept of God between Philo and Paul?³ As we know, Philo of Alexandria and the Apostle Paul were near contemporaries, with Philo (ca. 50 BCE–CE 25) being a little older than Paul (ca. 4–64 CE). As we also know, both Jewish thinkers are Diaspora Jews, deeply committed to the monotheistic roots of their faith,⁴ even though the cultural and socio-religious milieus in which they articulated their respective understanding of the concept of God differ notably.⁵ On the one hand, Philo and Paul share the common language and thought-patterns of Hellenistic Greek, a fact that lends authenticity to a linguistic and conceptual comparison of their notions of God. On the other hand, both find themselves in the position of trying to stay faithful to their ancestral Jewish faith while attempting to express the intelligibility of that very faith in ways that their own Jewish communities may have found unorthodox.

There is, to be sure, also a great difference between them. While Philo never left the Jewish faith and writes from within the Jewish community of Alexandria, Paul experienced a personal theophany that compelled him to rethink his understanding of God to such a degree, and consequently the Jewish faith as a whole, that some scholars wonder whether he has indeed become an apostate of the Jewish faith. In accordance with the christocentric revelation in the Damascus experience, Paul's monotheism was reconceived in a manner that included his new conviction that the man Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised to his people and that this man was also the Son of God. Let us now turn to the writings of Philo.

³ There is a renewed interest in the relation between Philo and the New Testament. Cf. the recent publication by Roland Deines and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, eds., *Philo und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen* (WUNT 172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

⁴ In this study, I am not concerned with the question of the historical and theological development of monotheism in the Jewish tradition. On these issues, cf. Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Stanley Ned Rosenbaum, *Understanding Biblical Israel: A Reexamination of the Origins of Monotheism* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002); Carey C. Newman, James R. Davila, and Gladys S. Lewis, eds., *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). For our purposes, it is sufficient to point out that both Philo and Paul understood themselves as being committed to a faith that they understood as being resolutely grounded in a monotheistic understanding of God.

⁵ For a general discussion of Philo's Hellenistic milieu, cf. George W.E. Nickelsburg, "Philo among Greeks, Jews and Christians," in Deines and Niebuhr, eds., *Philo und das Neue Testament*, 53–72.

2. PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

Philo's concept of God is made explicit in many places within the Philonic corpus.⁶ For our purposes, we will use as our starting point a passage in which Philo outlines the basic structure of his theology. At the end of his treatise on creation, in *De Opificio Mundi* 172, Philo offers us one of the most insightful summaries of the basic facets (δόγματα) of his theology. In particular, he mentions five specific elements, the pillars that carry all of his theology and stand as a monumental witness to the theocentric structure of his thought:

- (1) God is and exists⁷ (ὅτι ἔστι καὶ ὑπάρχει θεός), and
- (2) that he who truly exists is one (ὅτι εἷς ὁ ὢν ὄντως ἐστὶ), and
- (3) that he made the cosmos (ὅτι πεποίηκε τὸν κόσμον) and
- (4) made it unique, making it, as we said, similar to himself in respect of its being one (πεποίηκεν ἕνα, ὡς ἐλέχθη, κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν ἐξομοιώσας ἑαυτῷ), and
- (5) that he always takes thought⁸ for what has come into being (καὶ ὅτι ἀεὶ προνοεῖ τοῦ γεγονότος).⁹

Rather than discussing the structure of Philo's thought as a whole, we will focus on statements in which Philo's understanding of God is transparent and which will serve as the milestones for our discussion of Paul.

1.1. *Philo's Monotheism*

The cornerstone of Philo's notion of God is that of monotheism. His monotheistic conception of God can be clearly established on the basis of statement (2) that he who truly exists is one (ὅτι εἷς ὁ ὢν ὄντως ἐστὶ), and statement (4) that God made the cosmos unique, making it, as we said, similar to

⁶ In this section on Philo, I am drawing on my *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria* (TASJ 77; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

⁷ F.H. Colson, in his translation of Philo (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981; orig. 1929), 136–137, felt at liberty to add the phrase “from eternity,” probably to bring to light the nuances implied in the two verbs ἔστι and ὑπάρχει. On this distinction, see our discussion below.

⁸ Colson's more etymological translation of the words ἀεὶ προνοεῖ as “ever exercises providence” is to be preferred over Runia's (see following note) rendering as Colson emphasizes the significance of the theme of providence in Philo's own theology.

⁹ Translation from David Runia, *Philo of Alexandria. On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses* (Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 1; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 93.

himself in respect of its being one (πεποίκεν ἕνα, ὡς ἐλέχθη, κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν ἐξομοιώσας ἑαυτῷ). In statement (2) Philo explicitly polemicizes against polytheistic (cf. *Opif.* 171) speculations and characterizes God as εἷς. In statement (4) he repeats that God is one as there exists numerically only one cosmos (but in this context the root is not the numeral one, but the word μόνωσις) (cf. *Virt.* 40; *Fug.* 101, 140; *Deo* 11; *QE* 2.68). Given Philo's theology of creation, the singularity of the cosmos implies for him analogically the singularity of its creator. But Philo specifies divine uniqueness further, though implicitly, in statement (5). Here he affirms succinctly "that God exercises providence for his creation (καὶ ὅτι ἀεὶ προνοεῖ τοῦ γεγονότος)." For Philo, the reality of divine providence¹⁰ is the logical result of his monotheistic understanding of God. Given the plethora of Philonic references to the uniqueness of God, it is beyond dispute that Philo espoused a monotheism of the strictest kind, which he derived both from his reading of biblical narratives and philosophical reflection.¹¹

1.2. Divine Transcendence¹²

Philo derives the idea of God's transcendent existence from the masculine ὁ ὢν or the neuter τὸ ὄν,¹³ by which he means to convey the idea that God's existence is ontologically the highest and, therefore, a unique existence. Throughout the Philonic corpus the meaning of ὁ ὢν, "He who IS," is specified more precisely in terms such that God "truly exists" (ὁ ὄντως ὢν; *Virt.* 64; cf. *Decal.* 59), that he is "the One, the truly existing God" (τοῦ ἐνός καὶ ὄντως ὄντος; *Virt.* 40), that he is "the Alone existent One" (τοῦ μόνου, ὃ ἔστιν ἀψευδῶς; *Fug.* 101), that he is "the only God" (θεοῦ μόνου; *Fug.* 140), and, above all, that he is the "best of all existences, incomparable Cause of all things" (τοῦ τῶν ὄντων ἀρίστον καὶ ἀσυγκρίτου καὶ πάντων αἰτίου; *Fug.* 141). Although these descriptions show explicitly that Philo envisions the existence of God

¹⁰ Philo argues most likely against the Epicureans and Atomists. Cf. *L.A.B.* 3.29–30 and for a brief discussion, see my *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria*, 97–98.

¹¹ Cf. Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947, 1982), 2:94–95. On Philo and Hellenistic Judaism, see also Yehoshua Amir, "Die Begegnung des biblischen und des philosophischen Monotheismus als Grundlage des jüdischen Hellenismus," *EvT* 38 (1978): 2–19. For a Middle Platonist discussion of Philo, see John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 139–183.

¹² I have taken this section from my *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria*, 31–32.

¹³ Cf. the note in James Drummond, *Philo Judaeus; Or, The Jewish-Alexandrian Philosophy in Its Development and Completion* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1888), 2:63, on Philo's various designations for God. ὁ ὢν occurs 29 times, the neuter τὸ ὄν 38 times.

as a being incomparable to any other being, his most superlative characterization of God is summarized in the terse phrase that “God is the most generic one.”¹⁴ This distinctive designation of God as τὸ γενικώτατον implies, as Wolfson notes, that God “belongs to no class and hence we do not know what He is,”¹⁵ further that “God is ‘most generic’ absolutely; there is nothing more generic than He.”¹⁶ For Philo, there is no other being that can be compared to God in any aspect because God exists as the only genus, hence absolutely, in a class by himself; there simply exists nothing on the level of God.¹⁷

Given Philo’s position of the ontological uniqueness of God, scholars of Philo have characterized Philonic monotheism in terms of “utter” or “absolute transcendence.”¹⁸ The significance of this characterization will become important in Philo’s view of epistemology, to which we shall return in a moment.

1.3. *The Distinction between the Existence and Essence of God*

Philo’s theological creed in *De opificio mundi* 172, the passage we cited above, begins with a very intriguing opening statement, the significance of which can most clearly be discerned in the Greek text. The statement reads: ἔστι

¹⁴ *L.A.B.* 2.86 (my translation of τὸ δὲ γενικώτατόν ἔστιν ὁ θεός; Whittaker translates “the primal existence is God,” or “supremely generic” God). In *Sacr.* 92, Philo speaks of God as the highest genus.

¹⁵ Wolfson, *Philo*, 2:109–110.

¹⁶ Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:252. Here we have an excellent example of Philo’s liberal fusion of Scripture and philosophy. Wolfson shows that in his interpretation of the statement that God is “the most generic,” Philo combines Aristotelian and Stoic principles. From Aristotle Philo adapts the idea that God is the absolutely most generic because he is the uncaused cause of all things and thus their unique genus (cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:252), and from the Stoics Philo takes the idea that “the something” (τὸ τι) is the most generic of all things; for the full scriptural context (Philo’s explanation of the manna) and philosophical background, cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, 2:110.

¹⁷ Note also the passage *L.A.B.* 2.1–3: “But God, being One, is alone and unique, and like God there is nothing ... neither before creation was there anything with God, nor, when the universe had come into being, does anything take its place with Him; for there is absolutely nothing which He needs ... God is alone, a Unity, in the sense that His nature is simple not composite ... For whatever is added to God, is either superior or inferior or equal to Him. But there is nothing equal or superior to God. And no lesser thing is resolved into him ... The ‘one’ and the ‘monad’ are, therefore, the only standard for determining the category to which God belongs. Rather should we say, the One God is the sole standard for the ‘monad.’ For, like time, all number is subsequent to the universe; and God is prior to the universe, and is its Maker.” Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:171–173, discovers in this passage the principle of the unity of God which consists of the uniqueness, self-sufficiency, and simplicity of God.

¹⁸ Cf. Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria*, 28–29 n. 16.

καὶ ὑπάρχει θεός and is usually translated as “God is and exists.” The crucial point here is that Philo uses two verbs to express the idea of divine existence, namely εἶμι and ὑπάρχω or their substantive equivalents οὐσία and ὑπαρξίς or the corresponding participles.

This philological distinction points to a fundamental aspect¹⁹ of Philo’s concept of God, namely the philosophical²⁰ distinction between God’s existence and essence.²¹ When searching for God, Philo remarks, “two principal questions” are considered by “the genuine philosopher” (*Spec.* 1.32): the first one is “whether the Deity exists (εἰ ἔστι τὸ θεῖον),” and the second “what the Deity is in essence (τί ἔστι κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν).”

As with the notions of monotheism and transcendence, Philo judges the distinction between God’s existence and essence to be implicit in the biblical narrative of the divine self-designation ὁ ὢν in Exod 3:14. Philo makes this distinction in his commentary on the phrase ὁ ὢν (*Somn.* 1.230). He remarks that “it is not the nature of Him who IS to be spoken of, but simply to be (εἶναι),” and again, in the phrase that we “may recognize His subsistence (ὑπαρξίς)” (*Somn.* 1.231).

Whereas God’s existence is apprehended by contemplation of the created order, God’s essence is beyond apprehension. The inability to apprehend the divine essence is a logical consequence of Philo’s presupposition of utter divine transcendence derived from God’s self-designation as ὁ ὢν in Exod 3:14. Because God exists in a class all by himself as the one and the most generic being, there are, by definition, as Philo notes “not in God things which man can comprehend (καταλαβείν)” (*Somn.* 1.231), and he notes elsewhere, that “a clear vision of God as He really is (κατὰ τὸν ὄντως ὄντα θεόν) is denied us” (*Spec.* 1.40).

¹⁹ This section is taken from my *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria*, 32–33.

²⁰ That it was Philo’s *philosophical* commitment that superimposed this sharp distinction of divine essence and existence on the biblical concept of God is the view of Wolfson, *Philo*, 2:94–101, and Winston, “Philo’s Conception of the Divine Nature,” 21.

²¹ Note the parallels between Philo and Cicero, *Nat. d.* 2.13, “all have engraved in their minds an innate belief that the gods exist (*esse deos*). As to their nature there are various opinions, but their existence nobody denies.” Cf. David Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (*Philosophia Antiqua* 44; Leiden: Brill, 1986), 111–113, on the Platonic background (*Tim.* 28c) and influence of the distinction in the history of philosophy. It may be possible that Philo took the distinction between divine οὐσία and δύναμις from the Peripatetic tradition; cf. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 434 n. 140. For possible Stoic and Platonic influences, cf. David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1985), 19.

1.4. *The Theological Consequences of Philo's Notion of God*

The problem of the concealment of the divine essence has a double edge. On the one hand, human apprehension of God's nature is impossible because the object of apprehension is God in his "utter" transcendence. On the other hand, there is the epistemic limitation inherent in the human mind. Two important passages—*De specialibus legibus* 1.41–50 and *De posteritate Caini* 166–169—illustrate this problem well. Based on the biblical lemma of Moses' encounter with God after the destruction of the golden calf (cf. LXX Exod 33:12), Philo explains why human apprehension of God's essence is impossible. When Moses, the person whom God loves most (θεοφιλέστατος Μωϋσής), beseeches God: "Reveal Thyself to me (ἐμφάνισόν μοι σαυτόν)" (*Spec.* 1.41),²² an invocation Philo interprets to signify Moses' desire to fathom God's essence, God replies that no created being can comprehend his divine essence for "the apprehension (κατάληψιν) of Me is something more than human nature (ἀνθρώπου φύσις), yea even the whole heaven and universe will be able to contain" (*Spec.* 1.43–44). The reason for the inability is that "we have in us no organ (ὄργανον)" through which we can apprehend God's essence, "neither in sense (αἴσθησις), for it is not perceptible by sense, nor yet in mind (νοῦς)" (cf. *Mut.* 7). Since, moreover, apprehension of the divine essence can only be achieved by the purest mind (ἀκραϊφνέστατος νοῦς) (cf. *Spec.* 1.46), no created being can apprehend God (*Spec.* 1.43, 46) except God who is himself pure essence and mind (cf. *Praem.* 40). Ultimately then, "the question of the essence of the Existent Being" can lead only to the recognition "that the God of real Being is apprehensible by no one, and to see precisely this, that He is incapable of being seen" (*Post.* 15).

In sum, in Philo we thus have a concept of God that has at its core a God who is utterly unique and transcendent, inaccessible to the human mind and cognition. Philosophically, Philo mediates this notion of utter transcendence via his doctrine of the logos and the powers. Theologically, he mediates his view of absolute transcendence by recourse to anthropomorphic designations, the *via negativa*, and occasionally even positive descriptions.²³

²² Cf. LXX Exod 33:13: ἐμφάνισόν μοι σαυτόν. Philo discusses this request of Moses also in *Post.* 16, 169; *Fug.* 165; *Mut.* 8; *L.A.B.* 3.101. Cf. the excellent exposition of these passages by Wolfson, *Philo*, 2:83–90. He has demonstrated that even in the difficult text of *L.A.B.* 3.101, where Philo speaks of Moses' direct apprehension of God, Philo means Moses' direct perception of the existence (and not essence) of God. It is Moses' direct apprehension of God's existence because it is given to him by prophecy and revelation, and not indirectly through the observation of the universe.

²³ Cf. Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria*, 38–42.

2. THE APOSTLE PAUL (ROMANS 1:18–21)

Let us now turn to an examination of Paul's concept of God. Our main text will be Rom 1:18–21, supplemented by other Pauline passages and two important texts from Wisdom of Solomon and Pseudo-Aristotle. Our purpose is not merely to identify parallels either in terms of language or ideas and then to postulate tentative dependency or mutual adaptations of our sources. But rather, our objective is to look at Paul in his own terms vis-à-vis conceptions of God articulated in other sources of a similar intellectual milieu.

2.1. *Paul's Monotheism*

In comparison with Philo of Alexandria, it is a notoriously difficult task to articulate with clarity the notion of God as conceived of by the Apostle Paul. Whereas Philo, as we saw, provides his readers with ample discussions of his formal understanding of the concept of God, Paul does not give us a systematic treatment of that same question. The complexity stems from the question of how Paul's monotheism is able to accommodate the divine person Jesus the Christ and possibly the Holy Spirit. For the purpose of this essay, however, we are not interested in the question of a Pauline trinitarian or binitarian expression of monotheism. Our starting point in assessing Paul's understanding of God is the apostle's unshakable conviction of the uniqueness of God. In the words of Larry Hurtado: "However profound the effects of his conversion ... the Christian Paul continued to assert an exclusivistic monotheistic stance."²⁴

There are in particular three texts that bear evidence of the Pauline notion of monotheism. The most comprehensive pronouncement of monotheism—indeed, a reformulation of the Shema Israel in Deut 6:4: ἄκουε Ἰσραηλ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστίν²⁵—in the Pauline corpus is 1Cor 8:5–6. Here Paul confesses: "For although there may be so-called gods (εἰσὶν λεγόμενοι θεοὶ) in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many "gods"

²⁴ Larry W. Hurtado, "Paul's Christology," in James D.G. Dunn, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 185–198 (186).

²⁵ For a thorough exegesis of this passage and its theological significance in Paul, cf. Otfried Hofius, "Einer ist Gott—Einer ist Herr. Erwägungen zu Struktur und Aussage des Bekenntnisses 1Kor 8,6," in Otfried Hofius, *Paulusstudien II* (WUNT 143; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 167–180 (177–180); Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christianity in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 37–39.

and many “lords” (ὡσπερ εἰσιν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί)—yet for us there is one God (ἀλλ’ ἡμῖν εἷς θεός), the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist (ὁ πατήρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν),²⁶ and one Lord, Jesus Christ (καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός), through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (RSV). In a second text, in Gal 3:20, Paul says: “Now an intermediary implies more than one; but God is one (ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν,²⁷ ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἐστίν).”²⁸ In a third text, Rom 3:30, we read: “Since God is one (εἶπερ εἷς ὁ θεός); and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of their faith and the uncircumcised through their faith” (RSV).

These three Pauline texts lead, in my view, to the inevitable conclusion that Paul, like Philo, espouses a fundamental monotheist framework for his understanding of God. In this sense, Paul is virtually identical to Philo and other Jewish Hellenistic writers who are deeply rooted in their Jewish traditions. To examine how Paul conceives of and expresses the concept of God in Romans and other texts is now our next task.

2.2. Concepts of God in Romans, Wisdom of Solomon, and Pseudo-Aristotle

In order to be in a position to examine the philosophical and theological structure of Paul’s concept of God vis-à-vis Hellenistic philosophical ideas, we will focus our exegesis on the passage Rom 1:18–21. This text shows the greatest number of affinities with writers such as Philo and other Hellenistic writers. There are two more texts, however, that shed light from different angles on Paul. These are the well-known parallels in Wisdom of Solomon 13 and a lesser-known parallel in Pseudo-Aristotle. To facilitate our analysis and comparison of these texts, all three are presented below before we consider some crucial points of interpretation in more detailed presentation.

1:18 Ἐποκαλύπτεται²⁹ γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ
ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πάσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων
τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων,

²⁶ Cf. Eph 3:6: εἷς θεός καὶ πατήρ πάντων, ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πάσιν.

²⁷ Cf. 1 Tim 2:5: εἷς γὰρ θεός, εἷς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς.

²⁸ This text may be significant in that it makes a clear distinction between the one God and possible intermediary figures (such as angels). Much has been made of this as evidence, but Bauckham is sceptical.

²⁹ Hans-Joachim Eckstein, “Denn Gottes Zorn wird vom Himmel her offenbar werden: Exegetische Erwägungen zu Röm 1,18,” *ZNW* 78 (1987): 74–89, argues that the verb ἀποκαλύπτεται must be understood as a future tense.

- 19 διότι
 τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς·
 ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφανερώσεν.
 20 τὰ γὰρ ἀράτα αὐτοῦ
 ἀπὸ κρίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται,
 ἢ τε αἰδίου αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης,
 εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογίτους,
 21 διότι
 γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠὲ χαρίστησαν,
 ἀλλ' ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν
 καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά.

1:18 For
 the anger of God is revealed
 from heaven over all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people
 who suppress the truth in their unrighteousness.

1:19 For
 what is known of God is revealed to them;
 for God revealed it to them.

1:20 for the things that are invisible about him,
 are clearly perceived since the creation of the world
 by contemplating the created order/things,
 [namely] both his eternal power and divinity,
 so that they have no excuse.

1:21 therefore [still, however],
 even though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God
 and give thanks to him
 but their thoughts became futile
 and their irrational hearts were darkened.

A text that habitually plays an important part in the discussion of the Romans passage is the section Wisdom of Solomon 13:1–9. Since there are indeed many conceptual and linguistic affinities with Romans we will also examine this text:

1 For all men who were ignorant of God were foolish (μάταιοι) by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen (ἐκ τῶν ὀρωμένων ἀγαθῶν) to know (εἰδέναι) him who exists (τὸν ὄντα), nor did they recognize the craftsman (τὸν τεχνίτην) while paying heed to his works (τοῖς ἔργοις προσέχοντες); 2 but they supposed that either fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of the stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods that rule the world. 3 If through delight in the beauty of these things men assumed them to be gods, let them know how much better than these is their Lord (ὁ δεσπότης), for the author of beauty created them (ὁ γὰρ τοῦ κάλλους γενεσιάρχης). 4 And if men were amazed at their power and working (δύναμιν καὶ ἐνέργειαν), let them perceive from them how much more powerful (δυνατώτερός ἐστιν) is

he who formed them. 5 For from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding (ἀναλόγως) perception of their Creator (ὁ γενεσιουργός). 6 Yet these men are little to be blamed, for perhaps they go astray while seeking God and desiring to find him. 7 For as they live among his works they keep searching, and they trust in what they see, because the things that are seen are beautiful. 8 Yet again, not even they are to be excused; 9 for if they had the power to know so much that they could investigate the world, how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of these things?

A third text that sheds light on Paul's notion of God is that of Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the Cosmos* 399b:

It is a similar idea that we must have of the universe: by a single inclination all things are spurred to action and perform their peculiar functions—and this single agent is unseen and invisible (ἀοράτου καὶ ἀφανοῦς). Its invisibility is no impediment either to its own action or to our belief in it; for the soul, whereby we live and build household and cities, though it is invisible is perceived through its deeds: for all the conduct of life is discovered, arranged and maintained by the soul ... This is also what we must believe about God (περὶ θεοῦ), who is mightiest in power (δυνάμει μὲν ὄντος ἰσχυροτάτου), outstanding in beauty (κάλλει δὲ εὐπρεπεστάτου), immortal in life, and supreme in excellence, because though he is invisible to every mortal thing he is seen through his deeds (διότι πάσῃ θνητῇ φύσει γενόμενος ἀθεώρητος ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων θεωρεῖται).

2.3. *The Possibility of a Knowledge of God*

Romans 1:18 constitutes the thesis statement of the section of the epistle that comprises 1:18 to 3:20 and has as its main theme the universality of sin.³⁰ In Rom 1:18–21 Paul introduces his argument with a straightforward proposition: God's anger falls on humanity who "suppresses the truth" (v. 18) because even though God revealed knowledge of himself to humanity (v. 19), people—in their foolishness—did not on account of that knowledge turn to God and glorify him as such (v. 21). Verse 19 is crucial for our discussion, for there Paul delineates the details regarding what he means by "knowledge of God."

Foundational to Paul's monotheistic concept of God is his conviction that knowledge of God is possible. "What is known of God (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ)," he says in verse 19, is humanity's possibility of divine knowledge, revealed

³⁰ For a recent discussion of this section in Romans, see the study by Richard H. Bell, *No One Seeks God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Roman 1:18–3:20* (WUNT 106; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), and for exegetical details of Rom 1:18–21, cf. 21–50.

by God himself in an act of self-disclosure (ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφανερώσεν). In other words, Paul's indictment of humanity rests on the proposition that knowledge of God is possible and has inescapable consequences for humanity, either for better or—as in our context—for worse. The author of *Wisdom* shares the same proposition when he says in 13:1 that it is possible “to know (εἰδέναί) him who exists (τὸν ὄντα)” and to “recognize (ἐπέγνωσαν) the craftsman (τὸν τεχνίτην).” For Jewish-Hellenistic authors the existence of God thus implies that something can be known of God. But what precisely can be known of God?

As Rom 1:18 makes evident, divine anger is the result of humanity's suppressing of “the truth,” which in turn is tied in v. 19 to a possible knowledge of God. In verse 18, Paul does not specify what he means by “truth” but in v. 25 he refers to truth again and now specifies it as “the truth of God (τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ).”³¹ As the context of Rom 1:18–25 makes evident, Paul is not merely thinking that it is possible for a person to have some sort of vague knowledge of God, but that divine knowledge aims concretely at making apparent truth about God. The question exegetes have tried to sort out is what exactly Paul meant with the phrase “truth of God.” Commentators have understood it as suggesting “behaviour,” “true knowledge of God,” “the reality of the created order,” or “revealed reality.”³² Grammatically and theologically, it is possible to understand the expression as either an objective or subjective genitive. “Truth of God” may mean either the truth that is revealed and initiated by God as the subject and author of truth about humanity and about himself (as suggested in Rom 1:19b). Or the expression “truth of God” could be read as an objective genitive and may thus be understood as suggesting that knowledge of God is possible, namely a knowledge about God and his manner of dealing with humanity. Theologically, in the framework of Paul's overarching understanding of revelation, it seems most plausible to place the expression “truth of God” in as wide a context as possible, allowing for nuances and emphases that include both an objective and subjective genitive sense.

Paul's most unambiguous statement with respect to divine knowledge is in verse 19a, in the expression τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐ-

³¹ The correlation among anger, judgment, truth, and God is also expressed in Rom 2:2, 8. The phrase ἡ ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ occurs again in Rom 3:7. As the context of Paul's argument makes clear, the negative sense of anger and judgment corresponds to the positive sense of God and truth. In short, God deals in his judgment over humanity in a sense that reveals the truth both about himself and humanity.

³² For detail and bibliographical notes, see Bell, *No One Seeks God*, 33.

τοῖς. Grammatically, the phrase τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ is a substantively used adjective and is best translated as a partitive genitive with the meaning “the knowable [part] about God,” or “that [part, aspect] which can be known of God.”³³ Of course, this still leaves unanswered the question of what Paul specifically means by this phrase. What does Paul think of when he speaks of “the knowledge of God”? What precisely is that “knowledge”? Given our understanding of Philo’s concept of God and his assumption that God can be known only in a limited manner, is Paul likewise assuming that perhaps a person can have only a limited knowledge of God, a knowledge that is sufficient regarding the truth of humanity in relation to itself and to God? Specifically, is the apostle making—perhaps implicitly—the distinction between the existence and essence of God? We will return to this question below.

2.4. *Creation and Knowledge of God*

In Rom 1:20 Paul leaves no doubt as to the means by which knowledge of God is possible and the content of such knowledge. Regarding the means of divine knowledge, Paul proposes that it is possible by rational contemplation of the created order (ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται). Regarding the question of what exactly can be known of God, Paul suggests three things: (1) τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ, (2) ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις, and (3) αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ θεϊότης. Let us now discuss each of these Pauline positions.

2.4.1. *The Means of Divine Knowledge*

Paul’s explanation for a person’s possible knowledge of God is indebted to the so-called cosmological argument. By the time of Paul, this argument was well established in the various doxographic traditions.³⁴ Although it was frequently employed as a proof for the existence of God, from Aristotle to Aquinas, Paul adapted the argument to a different purpose. The question of God’s existence was no issue for him at all. His conviction that God existed as the one who revealed himself to Israel was unshakable. What was at

³³ I am following here the definition of a partitive genitive by Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 99: “the substantive in the [partitive] genitive denotes *the whole of which* the head noun is a part.” Bell, *No One Seeks God*, 36, translates “God in his knowability.” BDF (cf. A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 763) considers the usage of a neuter noun with an adjective “the most classical idiom in the language of the NT.”

³⁴ Cf. David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (AB 43; New York: Doubleday, 1979), 253, for a succinct review of the cosmological argument in various philosophical contexts.

stake, however, is how the God of Israel can be known. For this reason, Paul employs the cosmological argument, but gives it an interpretation that suits his intention. In short, he argues that the rational contemplation of the created order makes it possible to know something of God's invisible attributes, his power, and divinity. To repeat, the question of God's existence was not Paul's focus in his employment of the cosmological argument, but rather the hope that the contemplation of the universe will yield some insight as to who God is. In this regard, there is a close parallel between Paul and Wisdom of Solomon. In the latter, Chapter 13 begins by affirming that God is the "Existent One (τὸν ὄντα)" and that the "Artificer (τὸν τεχνίτην)" can be perceived and recognized by means of his works. In 13:5, the author of Wisdom articulates the correlation between contemplation of the cosmos and knowledge of God unambiguously: "from the greatness and beauty of created things, is their author correspondingly (ἀναλόγως)³⁵ perceived," such as God's divine power (v. 4). In a similar vein, Pseudo-Aristotle 399b argues that God, even "though he is invisible to every mortal thing he is seen through his deeds (διότι πάσῃ θνητῇ φύσει γενόμενος ἀθεώρητος ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων θεωρεῖται)," and—like Paul and Wisdom—such perception points to divine power and beauty.

2.4.2. *The Content of Divine Knowledge*

(1) τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ. In v. 20, Paul correlates the phrase τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ of v. 19 with the expression τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ. In v. 19, Paul made mention of the fact that something can be known about God and now in v. 20 he gives the reason. Syntactically, the main clause of v. 20 is τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ... καθορᾶται. We may translate this substantively-used adjective clause somewhat literally as: "His [God's] invisibilities [things invisible about him] ... are perceptible." There are several issues here. For most commentators the main question is whether Paul is alluding with the words τὰ ἀόρατα to divine attributes or to the divine essence.³⁶ How can we make intelligible what Paul may have meant by τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ? Paul uses the adjective ἀόρατος only here in Rom 1:20. It is decisive to note that he does so in relation to God. This is congruent with the usage of the adjective in the rest of the New Testament,³⁷ Philo (*Cher.* 101; *Conf.* 138), Josephus

³⁵ Cf. Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 252–253, on the development of the argument of analogy in philosophical and Jewish-Hellenistic literature.

³⁶ Cf. Bell, *No One Seeks God*, 43–44, for details.

³⁷ See Col 1:15–16: ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρῶτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ

(*J.W.* 7.346), and Jewish (Aristobulus [Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 13; 12.5]) apocalyptic literature (*L.A.E.* 35.3; *T. Abr.* 9.7; 16.3, 4). Philo gives the clearest interpretation of the statement that God is invisible. He discusses the relation and task of God and his powers in the creation of the cosmos, in the course of which he says the following: “But this divine nature (τὸ θεῖον) which presents itself to us, as visible (ὄρατόν) and comprehensible and everywhere is in reality invisible (ἀόρατον), incomprehensible and nowhere” (*Conf.* 138). Philo’s statement is of relevance for our study of Rom 1:19. While Paul’s language τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ is ambivalent as to its precise meaning, Philo is clear that the designation “invisible God”³⁸ refers to God as a whole, to the entire being of God, to the entire nature of God. Given such clarification in a Jewish-Hellenistic source contemporaneous with the apostle, can we assume that the expression τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ in Rom 1:19 should be translated as “God’s invisible nature?” The answer is a clear “no” for reasons that follow from the use of language and the context.

First, it is decisive to recognize that Philo uses the singular form ὄρατόν and Paul the plural form τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ. Philo’s argument, in essence, is that God in his totality as one, simple and transcendent being cannot be visible. Paul, however, does not emphasize as such the invisible being of the one God, but that there are aspects of God thus understood that are invisible, hence the plural τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ. In other words, Paul is not identifying τὰ ἀόρατα with God but believes that the τὰ ἀόρατα belong to God, hence the αὐτοῦ. Second, as the context in v. 19 indicates, the τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ are specified as God’s power (δύναμις) and divinity (θειότης). The upshot of these considerations is that the expression τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ does not indicate for Paul the essence of God, but attributes about the divine essence. Paul is thus not proposing that God’s essence may be recognized by contemplation of the cosmos, but merely that rational contemplation of the cosmos leads to the perception of qualities that God possesses. In Epictetus’s discourse *On Providence* we find an interesting argument, but in reversed order. Whereas Paul argues that the created cosmos points to God’s invisible attributes, Epictetus argues that the visible objects of the created cosmos, which he calls τὰ ὄρατα, point to God, or in his own words, reveal the “artificer” (Epictetus, *Disc.* 1.6).

ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὄρατά καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα; 1Tim 1:17: ἀφθάρτω ἀοράτῳ μόνῳ θεῷ; Heb 11:27: τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον ὡς ὁρῶν ἐκαρτέρησεν. A possible translation of this latter clause may be: “For he was strengthened as he was seeing the invisible [God].”

³⁸ In Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the Cosmos*, 399b, the expression “invisible God” is used, well before the time of Philo.

Moreover, when Paul speaks of the perception of the invisible, does he not imply an oxymoron in doing so? On the surface it may well seem so, for Paul deliberately plays on the root ὁράω in both the words ἀόρατα and καθοράω.³⁹ But given Paul's deeper theological presuppositions, the entire dialectic of his argument in Rom 1:19–20 hinges on the fact that the invisible God may be apprehended indirectly by visible created objects. For this reason Paul uses the καθοράω—"to perceive." It is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament and not extant in LXX. But again, Philo is our best source for its significance. He uses καθοράω in *L.A.B.* 2.57 with reference to God. He remarks that "For not to all must leave be given to contemplate the secret things of God (τὰ θεοῦ καθορᾶν ἀπόρρητα), but only to those who are capable to hide and guard them." Conceivably, then, against such a Philonic background, the Pauline clause τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ... καθορᾶται in Rom 1:20 implies that there is the human possibility that opens up a vision of God, at least with reference to some of his attributes, just as the mere rational contemplation of the cosmos (τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα⁴⁰) may lead to the recognition that there is an artificer (cf. Wis 13:4–5; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.192), namely God. The oxymoron is also dissolved in our text of Pseudo-Aristotle. The invisibility of the creator of the universe "is no impediment either to its own action or to our belief in it" precisely "though he is invisible to every mortal" with respect to his essence, nevertheless God "is seen through his deeds." In other words, Paul places himself in the tradition of Hellenistic thought to the extent that the invisibility of God is no excuse for a denial of God since he can be perceived by means of his visibly created cosmos.

(2) ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις. The structure of Paul's thought in Rom 1:20 is thus unfolding in this manner: he first introduced the invisible attributes of God, which can be perceived by rational contemplation of the created order, and, second, the attributes thus perceived are named as eternal power and divinity (ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης). As the first concrete attribute of the τὰ ἀόρατα Paul mentions divine δύναμις. The philosophical view that identifies power and God represents a standard Greek and Jewish thought.⁴¹

³⁹ Cf. Bell, *No One Seeks God*, 41, for representative views.

⁴⁰ I understand νοούμενα as an adverbial participle of manner ("by reflecting rationally") modifying τοῖς ποιήμασιν, a dative of instrument that further explains the manner in which the reflection happens, namely through created things.

⁴¹ For a monograph on this theme, cf. Petrus J. Gräbe, *The Power of God in Paul's Letters* (WUNT 2.123; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 11–35. Cf. Walter Grundmann, "δύναμαι," *TWNT* 2:287–318.

A fine example, beside the many references in Philo,⁴² is an important section in Josephus. Moses, he says, speaks of God “as One, uncreated and immutable to all eternity; in beauty surpassing all mortal thought, made known to us by His power (δυνάμει μὲν ὑμῖν γνώριμον), although the nature of His real being passes knowledge (δὲ κατ’ οὐσίαν ἄγώστον)” (*Ag. Ap.* 2.167). Here Josephus provides his readers with a rare nugget of philological insight: the essence of God cannot be known, but what can be known about God is by means of his power. Paul himself does not make such a clear-cut theological distinction, but he does say that power belongs to God and that by contemplation of the cosmos one can conclude that God must be powerful. This kind of argument is the whole point of Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the Cosmos*, 398b: “So then the power which moves matter and subjects it to ordered forms of generation and change is eternal. Consequently this power will be God.” Similarly, Wis 7:25–26 speaks God’s wisdom as his power (τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεως), as his active or actualizing power (τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας),⁴³ and as an image of his goodness (εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ). In all of these instances, the idea of power is predicated of God in such a way that the very essence of God—though eternally concealed to human perception—is virtually unthinkable apart from creative and unlimited power.

(3) ἀϊδιος αὐτοῦ θειότης. The noun θειότης is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament, LXX (Wis 18:9), and Philo (*Det.* 86); it is conceivable that Paul was drawing on a Jewish-Hellenistic source. Only Philo sheds light on the noun θειότης. His context is the question as to how humanity “came to have a conception of the invisible God.” In short, the answer is that “the invisible Deity (θειότης ἀόρατος) stamped on the invisible soul the impress of Itself ... But the Archetype is, of course, so devoid of visible form that even His image could not been seen” (*Det.* 86). In typical fashion, Philo defends

⁴² In Philo’s doctrine of the powers, the Logos stands between God in his absolute, immaterial transcendence and the immanent, corporeal acts of creation by the powers. The rational order of creation, Paul assumes with Philo, points to the eternal power and divinity of God. It is significant to note that for Philo the perception of divine power is not the same as perception of God’s essence, or strictly speaking, even of God’s attributes. Even though in Philo and Paul we find many different attributes predicated of God, at least for Philo, these attributes are descriptions of God in relation to the created, physical cosmos. They are not descriptions of divine nature as such, for divine nature is beyond scrutiny since even attributes cannot describe who God is in essence.

⁴³ In Wis 13:4, the two nouns δύναμις and ἐνεργεία are also together; philosophically the pair goes back to Aristotle.

the absolute transcendence of God while he is arguing that the invisible deity can nonetheless be perceived by virtue of its own imprint in the soul. Given his assumption of absolute divine transcendence, Philo is caught in an epistemological circle. He wants to hold on to a high view of God and yet enable the human being to gain a conception of God thus conceived.

2.5. *A Pauline Distinction between the Essence and Existence of God?*

In the course of this essay, we have made several overtures to the distinction between divine existence and essence. Philo of Alexandria holds to his distinction, as does Josephus, or his source. But is this distinction of any importance to Paul? Indeed, is it even possible to trace any allusion to this distinction in the Pauline corpus as a whole? At first glance, to raise such a question may seem preposterous, since Paul is not mainly a systematic theologian. Nonetheless, it is interesting that in the history of theology Thomas Aquinas discussed this very distinction and does so with reference to our main Pauline text. In *On Nature and Grace* in his *Summa Theologicae*, Aquinas interprets Rom 1:20 in the sense that the apostle teaches “the existence of God ... which can be known by natural reason ... we can prove God’s existence from his effects, even though we cannot know his essence perfectly by means of them.”⁴⁴ Moreover, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas argues that God is his essence, because in an entity that is not composite, such as divine simplicity, existence must be the same as essence.

Philo, who makes the distinction between divine essence and existence, is silent on whether the two are necessarily identical if God is conceived as simple. Paul, too, of course does not address the question. But before we dismiss him entirely, there are a few curious references in Paul that are worth examining. For example, in Rom 9:5, Paul speaks of God in good Philonic fashion: ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν. If taken at face value, then here Paul’s expression ὁ ὢν⁴⁵ ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς amounts to a classic Philonic rendering that could be translated as “the God who exists in his essence above all things.” Since Paul uses the verb εἶμι (used substantively as a participle) in describing God, the phrase as such, at least in a Middle-Platonic context, denotes the essence of God and not merely divine existence. The prepositional clause ἐπὶ πάντων is, moreover, a clear

⁴⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *On Nature and Grace* (Library of Christian Classics 11; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 53.

⁴⁵ Cf. Rev 1:8: ἐγὼ εἶμι τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

reference to Paul's monotheistic understanding of God in that it locates God "above anything else." Equally as important, a reference to God's absolute essence is embedded in the Pauline expression ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἐστὶν in Gal 3:20.⁴⁶ Two aspects are crucial here: the fact that Paul uses the verb εἶμι and the numeral one (εἷς) in one expression. In the strictest philosophical sense, it may be translated as follows: "But God exists in essence [ontologically] as one [unique]." The context of vv. 19–20 supports this reading as Paul is making a clear distinction between angelic mediators of the law, which are not numerically one, and God himself, who is only one. The question remains, however, whether Paul wants to emphasize the simple nature of God or his ontological uniqueness or both. Finally, in a third text, namely the traditional Christ hymn in Phil 2:6, Paul's source uses the two verbs εἶμι and ὑπάρχω in one sentence in reference to Jesus. This verse reads: ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ. This text is difficult to translate. The first part suggests that Christ exists in divine form and the second that he did not desire to be, in essence, like God. At any rate, only here in all of the New Testament we find the terminological uniqueness of describing Jesus' existence with the two verbs εἶμι and ὑπάρχω in the same context. To venture any verdict, however, on the philosophical background of this Pauline text is mere speculation, even though Meister Eckhardt interpreted the Christ hymn in view of divine essence vis-à-vis existence.⁴⁷

3. PAUL'S CONCEPT OF GOD: ASSESSMENT

In this final section, I would like to offer some general and a few specific comments on comparing Philo and Paul in view of the fruitfulness of such a comparison for Pauline theology.

(1) Paul: Philosopher or Theologian? According to his own testimony, Paul's christophany on the road to Damascus called him to be an apostle to the Gentiles and not a philosopher. Compared with Philo, Paul's knowledge of

⁴⁶ Cf. Jas 2:19: ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός; 2 Thess 2:4: ὅτι ἔστιν θεός; 1 John 4:15; 5:5: ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ; 1 John 5:1: ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστός, ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται.

⁴⁷ Cf. Görges K. Hasselhoff, "Self-definition, Apology, and the Jew Moses Maimonides: Thomas Aquinas, Raymundus Martini, Meister Eckhardt, Nicholas of Lyra," in Yossef Schwartz and Volkhard Krech, eds., *Religious Apologetics—Philosophical Argumentation* (Religion in Philosophy and Theology 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 309.

philosophy is lacking decisively, in terms of both knowledge and philosophical interest. The lack of knowledge is due to his education while the lack of interest is explicable from the direction of his call. Martin Hengel maintains that even though Paul was educated in a “good Greek elementary school ... the literature from Homer to Euripides used in regular teaching was quite alien to him.”⁴⁸ Hengel also grants that Paul may have read Jewish pseudepigraphic literature such as Wisdom of Solomon.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, even if Paul was unacquainted with philosophical literature it is not implausible to think that the man who travelled the cities of the Hellenistic world would be entirely oblivious to current philosophical ideas, at least on the popular level.

(2) Paul’s discourse on God in Rom 1:18–21 is not an attempt to engage his readers in a philosophical debate on the proof for God’s existence. It is not abstract philosophy, but God as such is important. Paul is far less interested in philosophy than Philo, let alone in any systematic treatment of the concept of God. Paul does not categorize God into his existence and essence; he is not interested in defending a certain Platonic hierarchy of ontology with God as the highest being or a Philonic theology of the Logos and the powers as divine mediators or a specific epistemology of revelation. When Paul speaks of the perception of God by means of the contemplation of the cosmos, he has the sinner in mind. Philosophical understanding is not the aim of Rom 1:18–21, but the salvation of the sinner who must acknowledge God. As Wilckens rightly suggests, for Paul the rational perceiving (*νοούμενα καθορᾶται*) of God does not culminate in an abstract concept of God but has the function to call a person to obedience.⁵⁰ To know God is to obey, worship, and serve God.

(3) We have studied Philo, Paul, and other texts on their own terms and discerned possible textual and conceptual parallels between them. However, I am not postulating that these affinities constitute evidence for any form of literary or conceptual dependency of Paul on any of these texts. At this point we must be careful not to fall into the trap that Sandmel once called the sin of “parallelomania” committed by New Testament scholars.⁵¹ He cautioned

⁴⁸ Martin Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), 38.

⁴⁹ Cf. Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, 37.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (EKK 4.1; Neukirchen: Neukirchener and Benzinger Verlag, 1977), 105.

⁵¹ Samuel Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13.

against the simplistic drawing of conclusions based on the parallel usage of words, phrases, or thoughts. As Sandmel rightly noted, the issues are much more complex than a comparison of words.

(4) What, then, does a comparison of Philo, Paul, and other Jewish-Hellenistic sources teach us about Paul? The answer, in short, is two-fold. First, the parallels between Paul and his philosophical *Umwelt*—however strong or weak these points of intersection may be—point to the basic fact that the apostle is not operating in a theological vacuum, but in a specific moment and place. His world is that of the Greco-Roman milieu. He is an itinerant traveler who moves from one urban centre to the next one. On his journeys he encounters cultural and philosophical ideas that challenge him to engage with these ideas vis-à-vis his own beliefs and convictions about God, his people Israel, and the world. The most vivid example of such cultural and philosophical encounter is Paul's debate with the Athenian intellectuals (cf. Acts 17). A crucial part of Paul's encounter with Greek thought is his partial, occasional, and mostly rudimentary knowledge of Greek popular philosophy. The extent of that knowledge is speculative; we simply do not know how much Paul knew in this regard since his epistles show virtually no trace of such knowledge. Second, if his cultural world is to a large extent Greco-Roman, his religious identity is Jewish. Paul's religious world is shaped by Judaism, both by a Pharisaic type of Torah interpretation and by the re-conceived Judaism that seeks to make sense of the messianic claims of the risen Jesus of Nazareth.

(5) Finally, concerning the question as to what extent Paul's concept of God was shaped by philosophical and theological ideas of Greek and Jewish thinkers, our answer must be guided by what we said above. Paul's concept of God is the result of his two worlds coming together to form a unified concept, but in such a manner that the Greek ideas are subject to his Pharisaic heritage. The Pauline Epistles make it clear that the baseline of Paul's concept of God is his unwavering monotheism. Sometimes he affirms it implicitly, sometimes explicitly, as for example by denouncing so-called gods. On the whole, the substance of his understanding of God is derived from his understanding of Torah. Yet there are instances, such as in our text of Rom 1:18–21, where the apostle takes recourse to theological ideas that are not directly discussed in Torah. Concretely, when Paul composed the text in Romans 1 he was obviously in agreement with what he wrote about God. Whether he had a literary *Vorlage* such as Wisdom of Solomon or whether he read about and now recalled the cosmological argument

from memory and adapted it to his own intention within the larger context of Rom 1:18–3:20 is beyond our knowledge. The fact remains that Paul was at ease to strengthen his monotheistic⁵² notion of God by drawing on Greek thought—or Greek philosophy distilled by Jewish interpreters such as Philo—when the occasion was suitable to do so.

⁵² Cf. Larry W. Hurtado, “The Binitarian Shape of early Christian Worship,” in Newman, Davila, and Lewis, eds., *Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism*, 187–213.

PAUL BEYOND THE JUDAISM/HELLENISM DIVIDE?
THE CASE OF PAULINE ANTHROPOLOGY
IN ROMANS 7 AND 2 CORINTHIANS 4–5

Emma Wasserman

Scholars have often denied that Paul's anthropology meaningfully appropriates from Greek or Hellenistic traditions. This essay treats Romans 7 and 2 Corinthians 4–5 with the aim of clarifying some of the terms on which the texts may be understood as appropriating from certain specific Greek traditions. I argue that both texts appropriate certain Platonic premises and assumptions about the soul and that Paul's anthropology emerges as more coherent in light of these premises and assumptions. In contrast to the common view of Pauline anthropology as inconsistent and haphazard, I find that a basically Platonic view of the person makes sense of Paul's thinking about the nature of the Christ follower and their coming transformation. Platonic premises also illuminate the supposed already/not yet tension in Paul's thought and contextualize Pauline anthropology within ancient thought about human nature.

Perhaps due to the influence of Rudolf Bultmann, scholarship on Paul's anthropology has seemed to start from the premise that Paul's thought is unlike or in explicit opposition to other identifiable ways of thinking about human beings. As is well known, Bultmann put Pauline anthropology at the center of his existentialist theology and developed a series of supposedly historical justifications for the uniqueness of Paul's vision.¹ The historical

¹ This view of Pauline anthropology permeates his *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. Kendrick Grobel; New York: Scribner, 1951), e.g. 109, 164–183. For further discussion of Bultmann and his critics, see my monograph: *The Death of the Soul in Romans 7: Sin, Death, and the Law in Light of Hellenistic Moral Psychology* (WUNT 2.256; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). Other approaches have yielded a supposedly unique anthropology on very different grounds but have proven less influential. See David W. Stacey, *The Pauline View of Man in Relation to Its Judaic and Hellenistic Backgrounds* (London: Macmillan, 1956) and more recently Graham J. Warne, *Hebrew Perspectives on the Human Person in the Hellenistic Era: Philo and Paul* (Mellen Biblical Press Series 35; Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical, 1995) and Jan Lambrecht, "Brief Anthropological Reflections on 2 Corinthians 4:6–5:10," in Trevor J. Burke and J. Keith Elliot, eds., *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict, Essays in Honor of Margaret Thrall* (NovTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 259–266.

proposals relied on an ever-changing series of opponents (such as Gnostic Hellenists, Judaizers, and libertines) to make Paul a defender of Protestant theology against heretical opponents suffering from some species of pride or self-reliance. In particular, Bultmann insisted that Paul embraces the Cartesian subject-object split against supposed Gnostic Hellenists who supposedly seek a world- and body-renouncing escape. On these terms, texts like Romans 6–8 and 2 Corinthians 4–5 became paradigms for the modern Christian subject coming to know itself as an object, and Gnostic Hellenism emerged as a mere foil for a modern theology of heroic Christian subjectivity.² The supposed body- and world-renouncing views of these opponents was scarcely, if at all, justified by appeals to data outside of Paul's letters.

A number of later interpreters have challenged one or another part of Bultmann's theory. Robert Jewett, for example, rejects the idea that Paul has a consistent and unified view of the subject but not on the grounds that the formulation is anachronistic. Instead, Jewett claims that Paul uses anthropological terms inconsistently because of his concern to transform polemically the language of different opponents in different letters.³ This line of interpretation involves little consideration of data outside of Paul's letters and instead derives very fine-grained hypotheses about existing Hellenistic views from Paul's letters alone. The results again yield a Christian view that is unique (if uniquely inconsistent) because of its supposed opposition to Judaizing legalism or world renouncing dualistic Gnostic-Hellenism. A more recent essay by Hans Dieter Betz similarly makes Hellenism into a foil for Paul's thinking about the human being.⁴ Though Betz more seriously entertains non-Pauline evidence, he is quick to arrive at a view of Hellenistic dualism as body- and world-renouncing. To accomplish this, Betz generalizes about Hellenistic culture by appealing to Platonism, finding a body-rejecting Platonic-Hellenism in the idea that the immortal soul separates from the body at death.⁵ This view confuses Platonic body-soul relations during life with the end of that relationship at death and then projects this

² On the Cartesian split and its use by existentialists, see Christopher Gill, *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy: The Self in Dialogue* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 2–3.

³ Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (AGJU 10; Leiden: Brill, 1971), esp. 396–401, on supposed divine man missionaries in 2 Corinthians and Gnostics in Romans.

⁴ Hans D. Betz, "The Concept of the 'Inner Human Being' (ὁ ἔσω ἀνθρώπος) in the Anthropology of Paul," *NTS* 46 (2000): 315–341.

⁵ Betz, "Concept of the 'Inner Human Being,'" 323–324.

confusion onto a supposed cultural effervescence called Hellenism. Similarly, Theo Heckel attempts to correct against some of Bultmann's excesses by developing a view of Corinthian opponents as religious Platonists who deny "the body any meaning at all in the life of a Christian."⁶ Though Heckel laudably focuses on Platonic thinking rather than some vaguely defined Hellenism, he shows little appreciation for the complexity of the body-soul relation in this tradition.⁷ The result is, again, that Paul's thinking emerges as unique and uniquely oppositional in light of a supposed world-renouncing Greek intellectual tradition.

An important essay by David Aune more seriously considers the Hellenistic traditions so often made antithetical to Paul's thought. Though he offers many sharp criticisms of the ways that Bultmann and his heirs have construed Hellenism, Aune's alternative creates a picture of a diffuse and vaguely defined culture of Hellenism that contributes only instrumentally to expressing Paul's ultimately Jewish religious thought. For example, though he understands texts like 2 Corinthians 4–5 as consistent with some kind of Hellenistic dualism, he is quick to minimize its importance:

Since the framework of Pauline thought is largely determined by his apocalyptic worldview (rather than a particular model of the cosmos), there is a tendency in Paul to conceptualize human nature and existence as a microcosmic version of a Christianized form of apocalyptic eschatology—that is, the apocalyptic structure of history becomes paradigmatic for understanding human nature. Just as Paul's Christian form of apocalyptic thought is characterized by a historical or eschatological dualism consisting of the juxtaposition of the old age and the new age, so his view of human nature can similarly reflect a homologous dualistic structure. The change in ages thus has microcosmic ramifications for individual existence (2 Cor 5:17), where the microcosmic dualism is experienced in terms of the tension between the 'already'/'not yet' polarity.⁸

⁶ Theo Heckel, "Body and Soul in Paul," in John P. Wright and Paul Potter, eds., *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians on the Mind-Body Problem from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2003), 122. See also the more thorough study in Theo Heckel, *Der Inner Mensch: Der paulinische Verarbeitung eines platonischen Motivs* (WUNT 53; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993).

⁷ I am more sympathetic with Heckel's argument ("Body and Soul in Paul," 127–130) that Paul's formulation makes the mind or soul passive and dependent on God.

⁸ David Aune, "Human Nature and Ethics in Hellenistic Philosophical Traditions: Some Issues and Problems," in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 304. This discussion also reflects Aune's interests in reconciling some of the views of Bultmann with those of Ernst Käsemann. For critiques of Käsemann's supposedly apocalyptic view of Paul's anthropology, see Bruce Kaye, *The Thought Structure*

Though Aune does take seriously the Platonic language about the inner and outer person, he understands this as part of a diffuse hodge-podge of Hellenistic cultural ideas whose importance is secondary or tertiary to Paul's essentially Jewish message. An unstated premise seems to be that only Jews and Christians have resources for thinking about how the human being relates to time, the gods, judgment, and transformation. Instead of imagining Paul as productively synthesizing various traditions on points where they may plausibly be construed as homologous, a Paul emerges who has a fundamentally Jewish core to which an ill-defined Hellenistic thinking is added. Another result is that Paul's anthropology emerges as inconsistent:

He [Paul] evinces no concern to develop a consistent view of human nature. Even though he uses a variety of Greek anthropological terms to explain aspects of human behavior in sections of his letters, he often does so on an *ad hoc* basis with the result that there is little overall consistency evident when these passages are compared. Paul was an eclectic who drew upon a variety of anthropological conceptions in a manner subsidiary or tangential to the more immediate concerns he addresses in his extant letters.⁹

Though Aune is correct that Paul shows no interest in developing the kind of systematic presentation of moral psychology that one finds among certain intellectuals, philosophers working at the level of Aristotle or Chrysippus do not exhaust the pool of types of intellectuals to which Paul may be fruitfully compared. In contrast, it is argued below that a reconsideration of the evidence for specifically Platonic views of the person allows for a more coherent view of Paul's anthropology in Romans 7 and 2 Corinthians 4–5.

1. SOULS AND THEORIES OF SOULS

The well-known Platonic soul of reason, spirit, and appetite explains the human being as a composite of three different types of motivating desires.¹⁰ It is reason's desire for wisdom, the highest good, that motivates reasoning,

of Romans with Special Reference to Chapter 6 (Austin, Tex.: Schola, 1979), esp. 30–47; Stanley Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 179–189; and Wasserman, *Death of the Soul in Romans 7*.

⁹ Aune, "Human Nature and Ethics," 291.

¹⁰ This draws on Plato's theory as described in the *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, and the *Timaeus* rather than the earlier *Phaedo*. See A.W. Price, *Mental Conflict* (London: Routledge, 1995), 30–103 and John M. Cooper, "Plato's Theory of Human Motivation," in John M. Cooper, *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 118–137.

thinking, and speaking. Likewise, the spirited part desires goods like honor and glory, which have the effect of motivating emotions like anger, fear, and shame, whereas appetites desire the most base and multifarious bodily pleasures like food, drink, and sex. In the ideal situation reason subdues and rules over the lower faculties so that the person achieves full self-mastery; conversely, if the rebellious appetites go undisciplined, they can effectively disable reason and motivate the person to pursue unstable pleasures with the result that they become vicious and immoral. The appetites are especially dangerous because they seek transient pleasures that do not allow for stable satisfaction and therefore run to excess. Left unchecked, the appetites would storm the “citadel” of reason, and the person (as a whole body-soul complex) would become a glutton, drunkard, or other species of extreme degenerate.

Plato’s theory explains bad actions and dispositions as produced by a conflict between rational and non-rational desires and also treats the body and flesh as dangerous because of their relation to the appetites. In brief, appetites desire unstable pleasures but they also rely on the bodily senses to rouse them by identifying external pleasures like beautiful bodies or delicious foods.¹¹ The appetites are thus problematic both because they desire unstable pleasures that lead to excess and because they rely on the senses that only provide knowledge about the imperfect material world.¹² In contrast to the senses, the mind is capable of turning inward and alienating itself from the body and the lower faculties to achieve a higher form of knowledge associated with the forms and an immaterial noetic realm. Thus, Platonic traditions of moral psychology show a tendency to emphasize the evils of the body because of the way they relate to the most threatening part of the soul, the appetites. Though the relations between reason, appetite, body, sense, and knowledge is actually more complex, writers sometimes play the body-appetites-pleasures-senses complex off against reason or mind

¹¹ Though they cannot reason in a developed sense, the appetites do have some kinds of low-level rational capacities. See Christopher Gill, “Did Galen Understand Platonic and Stoic Thinking on Emotions?,” in Juha Sihvola and Troels Engberg-Pedersen, eds., *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy* (The New Synthese Historical Library 46; Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1998), 113–148.

¹² So in the *Phaedrus* (*Phaedr.* 253c–254e) the appetites are the more wild and uncontrolled of the two horses and only by constant and hard reigning-in can reason make the appetitive horse weak and obedient. See e.g. *Tim.* 86b–90a and Galen, *On the Passions and Errors of the Soul* (5.28) on cultivating the strength and weakness of the soul’s parts. References to Galen’s Greek text are from Galen, *Klaudiou Galenou Hapanta: Claudius Galenus opera omnia* (ed. Karl Gottlob Kühn; Hildesheim: G. Olms, 2001).

by using short-hand dualisms like body versus soul, reason versus passions, or virtue versus vice. Though scholars of Paul often insist that Platonism involves renouncing the body as evil, the Platonic tradition actually construes the task of reason as involving disciplining and ruling over the lower faculties so as to create harmonious obedience to reason and hence good dispositions and actions. However negatively Platonists may construe the body, flesh, pleasures, senses, and appetites in some contexts, the goal is not to destroy or be rid of the body but to use reason to subdue and dominate the lower parts of the soul and its menacing allies: bodily senses and pleasures.¹³ Though the tradition allows for harmony between the soul's parts in the best-case scenario, it also construes this as so rarely achieved that some level of inner conflict becomes normative for virtually all embodied souls.

Though later thinkers make the tri-partite theory of the soul into *the* Platonic position, appeal to a tri-partite model does not necessarily commit a writer to Platonism. For example, Aristotle rejects Platonic metaphysics outright but still adapts the trip-partite divided soul to his own ends, and Antiochus of Ascalon weds a materialist physics to a Platonic moral psychology.¹⁴ These philosophers engage in adapting, synthesizing, and changing the thought of their predecessors and opponents because of their interests in resolving certain persistent problems with those philosophical traditions. Different kinds of synthesis, however, appear among writers like Philo of Alexandria and the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon*. Though neither Philo nor the unknown author of *Wisdom* shows much interest in developing Platonism or Stoicism, they do share broad interests in synthesizing certain Jewish traditions with philosophical cosmology and moral psychology.¹⁵ In doing so, they tend to identify plausible points of similarity and congruence among the traditions while suppressing differences. In this light, consider how the opening of *Wisdom* uses Stoic ideas about the nature and function of πνεῦμα:

¹³ So Philo: "the business of wisdom is to be estranged from the body with its appetites" (Philo, *Leg.* 1.103; cf. 3.41, 81, 168).

¹⁴ See Gail Fine, *On Ideas: Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Theory of Forms* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); on Antiochus, see John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 BC to 220 AD* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 52–106.

¹⁵ On *Wisdom's* appropriation of philosophical thought, see David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 43; New York: Doubleday, 1979); on Philo's Stoicizing Platonism, see Dillon's *The Middle Platonists*, 139–183, and the important essays on Philo's Platonism by Gregory E. Sterling, David T. Runia, David Winston, Thomas H. Tobin, and John Dillon collected in *Studia Philonica* 5 (1993): 95–155.

For Wisdom will not enter a fraudulent mind,
 nor make her home in a body mortgaged to sin.
 The holy spirit, that divine tutor, will fly from cunning
 stragem;
 she will withdraw from unintelligent thoughts
 and will take umbrage at the approach of injustice.
 Wisdom is a benevolent spirit
 and she will not hold a blasphemer immune from his own
 utterances;
 because God is a witness of his thoughts,
 the real guardian of his mind,
 who hears his every word.
 For the spirit of the Lord fills the world,
 and that which holds all things together has knowledge of all
 articulate sound. (Wis 1:4–7)

The text personifies Wisdom as a being that can enter or withdraw from human minds, a spirit, and perhaps even a stand-in for God who is “witness to his thoughts,” judge, and defender of human minds. Wisdom’s relation to spirit becomes most clearly Stoic in alluding to the idea of the *πνεῦμα* as an intelligent substance permeating the world and holding all things together. Thus, v. 7 appears in retrospect to explain what has come before: the *πνεῦμα* can be personified as wisdom but is conceived as a pneumatic substance that permeates the universe, holds all together, and enables God to “hear” the true thoughts of humans. The author here adapts a Stoic concept of *πνεῦμα* because it fits his interests and plans, even though those interests and plans clearly do not include a systematic exposition of Stoic thought. This appropriation involves the exploitation of plausible points of homology and congruence between the Stoic theory, especially in understanding the *πνεῦμα* as permeating the world, as responsible for human reasoning, and as divine and intelligent, and Stoic and Jewish ideas about God as an all-seeing judge of human behavior.¹⁶ Certainly, the writer does not show an interest in developing this thought in an intellectually rigorous way, but attention to the use of certain originally Stoic ideas explains much about the language and argument of the text.

An example drawn from Philo’s writings further illustrates the productive synthesis of different traditions, in this case Stoic, Platonic, and Jewish ones. Stoic thought about the soul opposes Plato’s theory in arguing that

¹⁶ See Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 102, for a discussion of Stoic texts that suggest similar images of divine surveillance.

there are no lower faculties, just a single rational mind, often called the ἡγεμόνικον or command center, that reasons correctly or incorrectly.¹⁷ The Stoic tradition also dismisses Plato's intelligible world and insists that everything that exists is made of different grades of matter, suffused with an intelligent, active, and divine substance often called πνεῦμα. Yet, from a more general perspective, the theories share clear points of sympathy in that they agree that the potential for virtue hangs on the ability of the mind (on the Stoic theory) or the reasoning part (on the Platonic) to function appropriately. Similarly, though Stoics propose a single unified mind, they can also speak of the different faculties of this singular mind, the relation between soul and body, and several late Stoics are even charged by Galen with taking over Platonic tri-partition.¹⁸ Though Philo is helpfully understood as a Platonist, appreciating such points of homology at the very general level helps to explain why he sometimes combines certain aspects of Platonism and Stoicism as it suits his larger allegorizing aims. So Philo allegorizes the creation account in Genesis:

And therefore the lawgiver held that the substance of the soul is twofold, blood being that of the soul as a whole, and the divine breath or spirit that of its most dominant part (ἔδοξε τῷ νομοθέτῃ διττὴν καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν εἶναι ψυχῆς, αἷμα μὲν τῆς ὅλης, τοῦ δ' ἡγεμονικωτάτου πνεῦμα θεῖον). Thus he says plainly that "the soul of every flesh is the blood" [Lev 17:11]. He does well in assigning the blood with its flowing stream to the riot of the manifold flesh, for each is akin to the other. On the other hand he did not make the substance of the mind depend on anything created, but represented it as breathed upon by God. For the maker of all, he says, "blew into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul" [Gen 2:7]; just as we are also told that he was fashioned after the image of his maker [Gen 1:27]. So we have two kinds of men, one that of those who live by reason, the divine inbreathing, the other of those who live

¹⁷ See Tad Brennan, "The Old Stoic Theory of Emotion," in Sihvola and Engberg-Pedersen, eds., *Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, 21–70. Scholars distinguish the early Stoic theory of mind (sometimes termed the "orthodox" Stoic account) from later Stoic psychology associated with Posidonius, but John Cooper, "Posidonius on Emotions," in *Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, 71–111, and Christopher Gill, "Did Galen Understand Platonic and Stoic Thinking on Emotions?," in *Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, 113–148, have both challenged the theory on the grounds that Galen misrepresents Posidonius. On points of interaction and synthesis between Stoicism and Platonism, see Mauro Bonazzi and Christoph Helmig, eds., *Platonic Stoicism-Stoic Platonism: The Dialogue between Platonism and Stoicism in Antiquity* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007).

¹⁸ Cooper, "Posidonius on Emotions," 71–111, and Gill, "Did Galen Understand Platonic and Stoic Thinking on Emotions?," 113–148, have both argued that this is a polemical misrepresentation.

by blood and the pleasure of the flesh. This last is a moulded clod of earth, the other is the faithful impress of the divine image (ὥστε διττὸν εἶδος ἀνθρώπων, τὸ μὲν θεῖῳ πνεύματι λογισμῶ βιούντων, τὸ δὲ αἵματι καὶ σαρκὸς ἡδονῇ ζώντων. τοῦτο τὸ εἶδος ἐστὶ πλάσμα γῆς, ἐκεῖνο δὲ θείας εἰκόνος ἐμπερές ἐκμαγεῖον).

(*Her.* 55–57)

The Stoic language of πνεῦμα and ἡγεμονικώτατου hangs together here with Platonic notions of the rational part of the soul as the image or imprint of the divine.¹⁹ That is, the Stoics claim that the mind is a central command center—the ἡγεμόνικον—made up of a fine material substance, πνεῦμα; Philo here simply adds the Platonic lower faculties and treats the Stoic commanding faculty as if it were the Platonic reasoning part. The result is that the blood and the flesh function as stand-ins for the lower parts of the soul in sharp contrast to the reasoning part designated as special by its direct connection to the divine inbreathing. Though Philo's thought is generally Platonic, the appropriation and intermingling of Stoic and Platonic language is probably inspired by language about God's breath in Genesis. The ghost of Plato or Chrysippus might shudder at such bastardizing harmonization, but these need not haunt modern scholarship.

2. THE DEATH OF THE SOUL IN ROMANS 7

The speaker that emerges in Romans 7 explains how sin “came to life” because (in some way) of the law, that it has been deceived and killed by sin, and then in v. 14–25 insists that though it truly knows and desires the good, sin frustrates it at every turn. The result is a lengthy series of repetitions, as the speaker in v. 14–25 states some eleven times that it wants to do the good but cannot because sin enslaves, makes war, imprisons, and kills it. Taking certain originally Platonic ideas seriously here explains the alienation between the speaker and sin, the speaker and the body, and the alienation of the whole person from the good and the goodness of God's law in particular.²⁰

¹⁹ See David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985), 28–29.

²⁰ This compliments Stowers' (*Rereading Romans*, 269–272) basic argument that 7:7–25 works with a Platonic moral psychology but better explains certain difficult features of the text by considering Platonic traditions representing extreme cases of immorality. See also Stanley Stowers, “Self-Mastery,” in Paul Sampley, ed., *Paul and the Greco-Roman World* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 524–550.

As noted already, the Platonic divided soul imagines immorality and vice as produced by the successful rebellion of the non-rational faculties, especially the appetites. Though most cases fall in-between, the theory imagines the best-case scenario as one where reason has completely mastered the passions and appetites, and the worst-case as the perverse, lawless rule of appetites that rise to rule in reason's place. Plato's *Republic* imagines a range of possible types and treats the most extreme case as that of the tyrannical man in Book 9. The sustained analogy imagines an evil appetitive coup, replete with armies, military commanders, and metaphors and analogies relating to combat, enslavement, and rule. These analogies are easily understood as an outgrowth of the particular way that Plato imagines the soul's hierarchy, with self-mastery entailing reason's rule and the opposite a kind of perverse monstrous rule. In the context of the *Republic*, the discussion of this extreme case functions to elaborate and develop Plato's broader arguments, but this particular case does not seem to have enjoyed wide influence, probably because it is just an outgrowth of the more basic theory. For example, Galen's more systematic treatments of Platonic moral psychology focus on the core theory of tri-partition and claim to develop some of its finer points over and against the Stoic theory of Chrysippus.²¹ Some writings, however, appeal to such extreme cases in the context of moral exhortation. So Galen's treatise *On the Passions and Errors of the Soul*, written as a series of moral lessons for a supposed student, evokes such a worst-case scenario as a warning: "Strive to hold this most excessive (or violent) power in check before it grows and acquires unconquerable strength (ισχὺν δυσνίκητον). For then, even if you should want to, you will not be able to hold it in check; then you will say what I heard a certain lover say—that you wish to stop but you cannot (ἐθέλειν μὲν παύσασθαι, μὴ δύνασθαι δὲ)." ²² This text imagines a worst-case scenario for the purpose of moral exhortation or instruction. Similarly, Philo makes quite broad use of such extreme types as they serve his interests in developing moralizing antitheses such as that between virtue and vice, extreme moral goodness and badness, godliness and its opposite. Consider how he explains God's warning to Adam that he will die if he eats from the tree of life:

²¹ e.g. *Hippocr. et Plat.* 4.39–44.

²² Kühn, ed., *Klaudion Galenou Hapanta*, 5.29; Harkins, trans., 48. Translations of Galen are (revised) from *Galen: On the Passions and Errors of the Soul* (trans. Paul W. Harkins; Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963). The Greek text is from Kühn and page references are provided for both Kühn and Harkins.

The death is of two kinds, one that of the man in general, the other that of the soul in particular. The death of the man is the separation of the soul from the body but the death of the soul is the decay of virtue and the bringing in of wickedness (ὁ δὲ ψυχῆς θάνατος ἀρετῆς μὲν φθορά ἐστι, κακίας δὲ ἀνάληψις). It is for this reason that God says not only “die” but “die the death,” indicating not the death common to us all, but that special death properly so called, which is that of the soul becoming entombed in passions and wickedness of all kinds (ὅς ἐστι ψυχῆς ἐντυμβευομένης πάθεισι). And this death is practically the antithesis of the death which awaits us all. The latter is a separation of combatants that had been pitted against one another, body and soul, to wit (ἐκείνος μὲν γὰρ διακρίσις ἐστι τῶν συγκριθέντων σώματος τε καὶ ψυχῆς). The former, on the other hand, is the meeting of the two in conflict (οὗτος δὲ τούναντι(ον) σύνδοδος ἀμφοῖν). And in this conflict the worse, the body, overcomes (κρατούντος μὲν τοῦ χείρονος σώματος), and the better, the soul, is overcome (κρατουμένου δὲ τοῦ κρείττονος ψυχῆς).²³ (*Leg.* 1.105–107)

This text is informed by Platonism in that at least three Platonic premises drive the allegory: that the soul is composed of rational and irrational sources of motivation (with good and bad behavior resulting from whichever source dominates); that the passions co-conspire with the body and flesh (which can leave the mind as a tiny inner person imprisoned by passions-body-senses); and that this conflict between reason and the passions-body-senses complex, however it happens to be going at any one time, persists so long as the soul is embodied. The particular imagery and language about death is quite unusual for the Platonic tradition, but in context it emerges as a metaphor for domination rather than destruction, consistent with more common metaphors relating to rule, slavery, and warfare.

Platonic traditions and discourses explain much about the argument, imagery, and metaphors operative in Romans 7, especially the language about passions, body, sin, flesh, and the mind and inner person. Taking Platonism seriously highlights the connection between the monologue and 7:5: “when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions were aroused by the law and worked in our bodily members to bear fruit to death.” The monologue that begins in 7:7–25 first explains that the law aroused sinful passions (vv. 7–13) and then links this bad response to the law to a larger complex of issues with good and evil more generally (vv. 14–25). Platonic traditions are especially helpful in explaining the language about sin as an anthropomorphized

²³ See the excellent essay by Dieter Zeller, “The Life and Death of the Soul in Philo of Alexandria: The Use and Origin of the Metaphor,” *Studia Philonica* 7 (1995): 19–55. Zeller’s study, however, only seeks to explain the origins of the metaphors rather than the underlying phenomenon that they capture.

representation of passions as well as the language about death, imprisonment, and warfare.²⁴ Romans 7 identifies the passions as sinful (7:5), distinguishes sharply between sin and the law (7:7–12), and attributes to sin the activities of seizing an opportunity (7:8; 7:11), inciting desires (7:8), coming to life (7:9), deceiving (7:11), killing (7:11), working death “in me” (7:13), enslaving (7:14), dwelling “in me” (7:17; 7:20), and in 7:23 and 7:25 the speaker claims that it is made a captive by, at war with, and enslaved to the “law of sin.” As noted already, Platonic writers use similar language to explain the rise of the appetitive part of the soul to rule in place of reason or mind. So Plato’s appetitive king rules and enslaves (*Resp.* 8.553d–e), and his lawless appetitive ruler gets away from reason, commits every type of vice and immorality (*Resp.* 9.571d), leads other desires (*Resp.* 9.573a), slays, deceives, and incites the other appetites to open rebellion with the result that it succeeds at enslaving the mind (*Resp.* 9.577d–e); Philo warns, “lest the mind should, without noticing it, be made captive and enslaved” (λαθῶν ὁ νοῦς αἰχμάλωτος ἀνδραποδισθεῖς) by pleasure (*Sacr.* 26); Galen warns that the “the appetitive power often waxes so strong that it hurls us into love beyond all cure” (ἐπιθυμητικὴν δύναμιν εἰς ἀνίατον ἔρωτα πολλάκις ἐμβαλεῖν);²⁵ and Plutarch’s vice stirs the appetites and “awakens” (ἐπανεγείρει) depravity and wickedness (*Virt. vit.* 101A). Like Romans 7, these analogies, images, and metaphors creatively elaborate on Platonic assumptions as to the nature, character, and relation between reason and the passions.

²⁴ Other theories about sin have proved popular. So Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 150; Ernst Käsemann, “On Paul’s Anthropology,” in Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 1–31, influentially argued that sin was an invading apocalyptic power, and the theory has gained wide support. Others have understood sin in terms of an evil impulse: Leander Keck, “The Absent Good: The Significance of Rom 7:18a,” in Stefan Maser and Egbert Schlarb, eds., *Text und Geschichte: Facetten theologischen Arbeitens aus dem Freundes und Schülerkreis, Dieter Lührmann zum 60 Geburtstag* (Marburg: Elwert, 1999), 66–75; Roland Murphy, “Yetzer at Qumran,” *Bib* 39 (1958): 334–344; and Joel Marcus, “The Evil Inclination in the Epistle of James,” *CBQ* 44 (1982): 606–621; Joel Marcus, “The Evil Inclination in the Letters of Paul,” *JBS* 8 (1986): 8–21. Still others have claimed to find connections between the monologue of Romans 7 and supposed confessional texts from Qumran: Mark Seifrid, “The Subject of Rom 7:14–25,” *NovT* 34 (1992): 322; Joseph Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 465–466, and Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (trans. Scott J. Hafemann; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 109–110, who combines the Jewish confessional and evil impulse interpretations. These theories identify broad but vaguely defined points of similarity between texts taken as representing distinct traditions and tend not to explain how these supposed traditions illuminate much of the specific language and argument of Paul’s text.

²⁵ Kühn, 5.29; Harkins, 48.

Taking sin in Romans 7 as a representation of the evil passions that have gained power over the soul makes sense of sin's attributes and functions in the monologue as well as the role of passions, desires, and wickedness in texts like Rom 6:12 and 1:18–32. Platonic traditions also make sense of the speaker here as reason or mind describing its disempowerment at the hands of the passions that have risen to rule over, imprison, and metaphorically “kill” it.²⁶ Verses 7–13 explain that the law aroused sinful passions (“sin, finding an opportunity in the commandment, worked in me all kinds of desires”) with the result that sin “comes to life” and the speaker “dies.” The language about life and death here appears coherent when understood as conveying the domination of the passions while the speaker emerges as reason or mind, displaying its characteristic attributes: reason, reflection, judgment, and voice. From yet another angle, Platonic traditions explain why the monologue develops a picture of spatial alienation between the speaker and sin, uses this alienation to explain how sin and the speaker have antithetical motivations towards evil and good, and then explains that the speaker cannot do what it really wants (whether the good, the law, or God's will generally) because it has been so disempowered and imprisoned by sin.

This interpretation finds support in the language of mind and inner person in vv. 21–23. Here the speaker explains its plight anew: “I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies in wait for me; for though I delight in the law of God in my inner person, I see another law in the members of my body making war on the law of my mind and making me a captive to the law of sin in my bodily members” (7:21–23). On Platonic terms, these statements make sense as reflecting again on the plight of mind overwhelmed by passions. In v. 21 the “law” is the principle that reason cannot put its good judgments into action because of sin, a restatement of the problem discussed in vv. 14–20. Similarly, when v. 23

²⁶ The identity of the speaker has been widely disputed with no consensus emerging. The main positions are exemplified as follows: the autobiographical reading, C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Collins, 1959), 104–105; that of a Jewish boy prior to a mature interaction with the law: W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1948), 15–35; Robert Gundry, “The Moral Frustration of Paul Before His Conversion: Sexual Lust in Romans 7:7–25,” in Donald A. Hagner and Murray J. Harris, eds., *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on His 70th Birthday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 228–245; the plight of mankind generally in 7:7–13 and the Christian in 7:14–25: C.E.B. Cranfield, *An Exegetical and Critical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 1:341; James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word, 1988), 382–383; the unregenerate human being generally: Käsemann, *Commentary*, 192; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 462–477; Adam, Israel, and Paul himself: Brendan Byrne, *Romans* (SP 6; Collegetown, MN: Liturgical, 1996), 218.

attributes to body/sin its own “law,” this makes sense as a play on words expressing sin’s motivating desires for evil in sharp contrast to the mind’s grasp of God’s good and just and holy law in v. 22. On these terms, vv. 21–23 restate the agonizing conflict developed from v. 14 onward while bringing the problem explicitly back to the issue of God’s law. These verses explain the mind’s inability to do God’s law as an outgrowth of a terrible internal plight that prevents the mind from doing anything that it knows to be good. Taking the speaker as reason also explains why it identifies itself in the third person with the mind and inner person. Though it may seem strange that the speaker can speak about itself as “my mind” and “my inner person,” this too is a regular feature of the dialogical style prominent in just this kind of interior monologue.²⁷ Reason at once recognizes the good, God’s law, and the evils of sin and also comes to understand that it is utterly powerless to put any of this into action because of the dominion of sin.

Though of course they can only take us so far in understanding Paul’s interests and arguments in Romans, a certain set of Platonic premises helps to make sense of the language and argument of Chapter 7. Paul does not seem at all interested in Platonism for Platonism’s sake, but he need not have such interests for the appropriation of Platonism to be meaningful. For instance, when Romans 7 is read together with Chapter 8, it seems clear that the resolution to the terrible plight comes only with a special *pneumatic* intervention. As others have noted, this likely draws on certain Stoic traditions, implying that Paul synthesizes parts of different philosophical and other traditions, just as he draws on various Jewish writings and discourses.²⁸ Whatever else Paul means by *πνεῦμα*, it seems at least partially to resolve the extreme condition developed at such length in Chapter 7, probably because Paul conceives of it as empowering the mind so that it has a chance at winning the war within. Though the situation has changed in a fundamental way, Romans 8 continues to work with a Platonic alienation between mind

²⁷ Stowers, *Rereading Romans*, 269–272; Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (SBLDS 57; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981); Christopher Gill, “Did Chrysippus Understand Medea?,” *Phronesis* 28 (1983): 136–149; and Christopher Gill, “Two Monologues of Self-division: Euripides, *Medea* 1021–1080 and Seneca, *Medea* 893–977,” in M. Whitby and P. Hardie, eds., *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble* (Bristol: Classical, 1987), 25–37.

²⁸ See e.g. Stowers, “Self-Mastery,” 524–550, on the synthesis of Platonism and Stoicism in Rom 7–8. I find Engberg-Pedersen’s (*Paul and the Stoics* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000], 239–246; “The Reception of Graeco-Roman Culture in the New Testament: The Case of Romans 7.7–25,” in Mogens Müller and Henrik Tronier, eds., *The New Testament as Reception* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002], 32–57) Stoic reading of Chapters 7–8 less satisfactory, as it ignores the ways that the images, language, and argument reflect Platonic traditions of moral psychology rather than Stoic ones.

and passions, since, however revived, the true Christ-follower must still struggle with the body while it awaits the transformation of that body at the Parousia. This explains the way Rom 8:1–13 poses life “according to the flesh” and “according to the spirit” as antithetical and also explains exhortations like “put to death the deeds of the body” (8:13) as expressing an ideal moral psychological state where mind subdues the passions. The larger picture seems to be that Paul appropriates from Platonism as it serves his larger interests in developing the situation of the Christ-believer’s past as one of unmitigated wickedness, its present as engaged in ongoing struggle and conflict, and its future as involving another transformation when God will remake it into something better. Such an appropriation from Platonism makes sense when these texts are understood as creatively synthesizing and productively harmonizing different traditions and discourses. Such an approach obviates the explanatory power of any supposed dichotomy between Hellenism and Judaism or philosophical thought verses religious or apocalyptic thinking. Instead, it suggests that this particular Pauline synthesis involves the harmonization of different kinds of traditions and that such harmonization makes sense because of certain general points of similarity, such as that both Jewish apocalyptic and Greek philosophical thought involve esoteric written traditions that have much to say about wisdom, true knowledge, the nature of God, the cosmos, and God’s plan for human history.

3. PLATONIC ALIENATION IN 2 CORINTHIANS 4–5

Just as Romans 8 characterizes the past agony of the Christ-follower as only partially resolved by the gifts of the πνεῦμα (8:1–13), so also 2 Cor 4:16–5:5 focuses on the inner person as the locus of true understanding, faithfulness, and obedience while it struggles with the body within which it is stuck. Platonic ideas and images explain much about the way the text depicts alienation and conflict between the inner and outer person, the temporary and the eternal, the earthly and the heavenly, as well as the suffering this conflict produces and the way this all effects the soul’s future judgment.

2 Corinthians 4:16–5:5 creates an image of the idealized Christ-follower as engaged in agonizing conflict arising out of an alienation between inner and outer persons. So Paul writes:

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer person is wasting away, our inner person is being renewed day by day. For this slight moment of affliction is working in us for the eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, since

we look not to what is seen, but to what cannot be seen. For what is seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building made by God, a house not made by human hands, eternal, in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with the heavenly dwelling, if having taken it off, we are not found naked. For while we are still in the tent we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed, but further clothed, so that the mortal body may be swallowed up by life. The one who has made us for this very thing is God, the one who has given us the down-payment of the πνεῦμα.

The text can be helpfully understood as appropriating from Platonism in that it uses Platonic language to evoke an extended body/soul alienation and that it understands this alienation as arising out of the special and antithetical attributes and capacities of body and soul. So the discussion fittingly opens in v. 16 by positing spatial alienation between the inner and outer person. The image of the inner person comes originally from an analogy for the tri-partite soul in Book 9 of the *Republic* where the inner man represents the mind in contrast to the lion of the spirited part and the multifarious, grotesque, many-headed monstrosity of the appetites (*Resp.* 9.588c–591b).²⁹ More significantly for this text and Rom 7:22, the Platonic analogy expresses the sense in which the mind is both threatened by the lower faculties and also holds a special place as the seat of the person's most characteristic functions: reason, judgment, knowledge, and voice. The image of the tiny inner man—the true person within the person—captures the constraint and possibilities of the tri-partite model; while it celebrates the mind and its reasoning capacities, it also gives it a diminutive status since it must try to rule over the much larger and rebellious lower faculties while simultaneously encased in a body whose senses mislead the mind and always threaten to join forces with the appetites. While 4:16 alone does not emphasize the reasoning capacities of the inner person, the subsequent verses recast the conflict between ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν [ἄνθρωπος] and the ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος in terms of true seeing and imperfect seeing, good and bad objects of seeing (the temporary and liable to decay versus the eternal and heavenly), depict the mind as longing to be free from the earthly body, and insist that the conflict yields tension, groaning, and suffering for the embodied soul. On these terms, the text uses the imagery of the inner

²⁹ For a persuasive argument that 1 Cor 15:32 alludes to the lion and the many-headed beast, see Abraham J. Malherbe, "The Beasts at Ephesus," in Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 79–89.

person not as an aside, but as a point of entry into a discourse about the situation of the believer weighed down in an agonizing struggle with the body.³⁰

Though 2 Cor 4:16–18 does not focus on the mind as the seat of knowledge and reason, it does treat the inner person as a special invisible site of the renewing activity of God and makes it superior to the body in both its capacity for perception and its potential for persistence in an immortal state. So 4:16–18 associates the body with decay and with imperfectly “seeing” the temporary world in contrast to the inner person, which has the capacity for truly “seeing” the heavenly and eternal. These connections make sense along Platonic lines that likewise give the mind the capacity (at least) for understanding the true heavenly realities in contrast to the bodily senses that show us only the imperfect world.³¹ These and subsequent verses also make this inner person the basis for renewal and optimism about the eschatological future. So v. 16 introduces both future hope and present struggle: “we do not lose heart, but even if our outer self is being destroyed, our inner self is being renewed every day.” The inner person becomes the site of renewal and hope, reminiscent of the language about renewal in Rom 12:2, “do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind (μεταμορφώσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς) so that you approve the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Though Romans 12 does not explain how this renewal has come about, it seems to reflect the kind of renewed state discussed in 8:1–13, made possible by the πνεῦμα. Second Corinthians 5:5 may suggest similarly that Paul envisions this renewal as somehow involving the gifts of the πνεῦμα, as it refers to it as a guarantee from God. Taken together, these texts suggest significant points of continuity in Paul’s thinking about the mind, body, flesh, and πνεῦμα in Romans 7, 8:1–13, 12:2, and 2 Cor 4:16–5:5.

³⁰ In contrast, C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 146, dismisses any psychological dualism in 4:16 on the ground that the tension is eschatological and so supposedly not psychological. Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB 32a; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 261–301, similarly entertains the relevance of so-called Hellenistic ideas like the inner and outer person but minimizes their importance by insisting that in context their meaning is uniquely Pauline. Similarly, see Aune, “Human Nature and Ethics,” 301–302 and Heckel, “Body and Soul,” 129–130, discussed above.

³¹ This set of relations is captured by Philo’s exhortation: “Why then, soul of man, when you should live the virgin life in the house of God and cling to knowledge, do you stand aloof from them and embrace the outward sense, which unman and defiles you?” (*Cher.* 52) (revised from Colson and Whitaker, LCL).

The conflict between inner and outer, earthly and heavenly, and true versus false seeing continues in 5:1–5 where the dominant imagery becomes that of an earthly versus a heavenly body. Paul writes:

For we know that even if our earthly house is a tent being destroyed, we have a house from God, a home not made with human hands, eternal in the heavens. And so we groan because of this, longing to put on our heavenly home, if also having taken off [our earthly body] we are not found naked. And so while being in the tent we groan as we bear the weight, because we do not wish to be unclothed but further clothed, so that what is mortal shall be swallowed up by life. And the one who prepares us for this very thing is God, the one who gives us the down-payment of the πνεῦμα.

Here the earthly house is liable to destruction but to be replaced by a perfect and eternal body awaiting the true Christ-follower at the Parousia.³² Lest the earthly and heavenly seem very removed, the text alludes to a mediating role for the πνεῦμα that serves as a guarantee. The imagery of nakedness and clothing here plays on a Platonic myth that has souls standing naked before the gods, unadorned by the deceptive beauty of the body and so showing their deep faults and wickedness. This discussion of judgment and nakedness appears in Plato's *Gorgias* 532a–524a, which explains how the gods can better see a person's wickedness when they behold the soul after death, stripped of body and full of sores and scars.³³ On these terms, it makes sense that nakedness in Paul's text would allude to a bad outcome at the judgment. This reading is encouraged by the ways that Plutarch (*Cons. Apoll.* 121a–c) and Philo develop this myth of judgment. Though Plutarch reproduces the myth at length, Philo simply uses the image of the naked soul full of scars and ugliness to excoriate those who try to disguise their true self. He warns against sophistic trickery and pretensions to virtue in name only:

The vindicators will come strong and bold, inspired with zeal for virtue. They will strip off all this complication of wraps and bandages which the perverted art of the talkers has put together, and beholding the soul naked in her very self they will know the secrets hidden from sight in the recesses of her nature; and then exposing to every eye in clear sunlight her shame and all her disgraces they will point the contrast between her real character, so hideous, so despicable, and the spurious comeliness which disguised in her wrappings she counterfeited. (*Mut.* 199)

³² Compare Philo, *Opif.* 137, where God fashions Adam out of the best earth to serve as an *oikos* or a sacred shrine (οἶκος γὰρ τις νεώς ἱερὸς ἐκτεταταίνετο ψυχῆς λογικῆς) “which man was to carry like a holy image, of all images the most Godlike.”

³³ Cf. Plato, *Crat.* 403b. Aune, “Human Nature and Ethics,” 302, suggests these connections but does not develop them.

As with Plato, Plutarch, and Philo, Paul's comment, "not that we may be found naked," uses the image of souls unclothed or naked to allude to the heavenly judgment resulting in (one presumes) punishment and wrath. This image also introduces an equivocation about the coming judgment that underscores the moralizing in 5:6–10. So while 4:16–18 is quite positive about the heavenly future, 5:1–5 uses the spectre of the naked soul to introduce an element of doubt about how things will go at the judgment, and this doubt in turn sets up Paul's moralizing in 5:6–10. So he writes in 5:6: "So then being always of good courage and knowing that when we are at home in the body we are not at home with the Lord, since we conduct ourselves on the basis of faith, not on the basis of the visible form." This exhortation connects easily from the previous discussion about the possibility of getting or not getting a true heavenly body (being found naked or being re-clothed), since the basis for judgment is precisely what the embodied soul has accomplished during life. This also re-introduces body/soul alienation with the imagery of being at home in the body versus at home with God, again evoking the contrast between the visible form of the world and something else (here faith) and connecting all of this to the current situation of the Christ-follower. The logic is that God's reward of eternal life and heavenly transformation will come only in response to the correct disposition of the soul towards God, and this turns out to be the same thing as behaving appropriately while embodied. This basic exhortation is repeated again in v. 10: "For we all must show ourselves before the tribunal of Christ so that each person may receive back corresponding to what they have done in the body, whether good or bad." On these terms, the discussion drives at a series of exhortations about good behavior and obedience to God in the present, so as to assure a positive judgment in the future.

Finally, it is important to note that Paul's text makes the inner person the site of faithfulness, obedience, and submission to God. Second Corinthians 4:16–18 refers to an inner person and attributes to it a special way of perceiving, but thought the text implies that the mind has, or should have, such capacities, it also links this inexorably to God's outpouring of the *πνεῦμα*, which somehow allows for true knowledge, faithfulness, and obedience. Like writers such as Philo and Wisdom who often connect true reason and knowledge with reverence and obedience towards God and God's law, Paul celebrates the capacities of reason or mind but also insists that true understanding should result in obedience to God. As a result, Paul tends to imagine the Christ-follower as dependent on God and therefore quite passive before God and his servant, Paul. From this perspective, it makes sense that

2 Cor 4:16–5:5 appears within a discussion and defense of Paul’s authority as an apostle, since the text labors to create a highly intimate and mysterious inner conflict that the Christ-follower is helpless to resolve. Though a long tradition of scholars have found a uniquely Pauline tension between the “already” and the “not yet,” taking Platonic premises more seriously allows for a contextual and historical explanation for the way that Paul understands the present and future in relation to body and soul.³⁴ The “already” versus “not yet” tension appears not as a unique result of Paul’s eschatology, but as a product of his creative appropriation of Platonism and the relative ease with which he synthesizes it with his convictions about the future judgment and transformation of the person into something better. However original and creative Paul’s formulation may be, the uniqueness of this seeming tension or contradiction disappears when understood in light of Platonic traditions that make such conflict normative for the embodied soul.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The approach taken here suggests some persistent problems with the ways that Hellenism and Judaism have been understood as informing Paul’s thought. For instance, rather than viewing Hellenistic traditions as part of a vaguely defined cultural overlay on Paul’s Jewish apocalypticism, the approach taken here considers Paul as having a particular repertoire of interests and skills and sets out to explain one area of that repertoire and its results for his thinking about anthropology. Instead of imagining conflict between fundamentally different cultures understood as hypostatic realities, this study suggests a view of Paul as a producer of a highly creative synthesis of multiple traditions. From this perspective, it is not a vaguely defined Hellenistic culture that sheds light on Paul’s writings but rather specific philosophical traditions and discourses.

The preceding discussion has focused on the appropriation of identifiably Platonic images and premises in Paul’s texts. It has been argued that Romans 7 and 2 Corinthians 4–5 develop a picture of the true Christ-follower in ways that are consistent with certain Platonic ideas, though of course those Platonic premises are synthesized with Paul’s thinking about the nearness of the Parousia and God’s plan to judge and transform human

³⁴ On the already/not yet or indicative/imperative in Paul’s thought, see e.g. Aune, “Human Nature and Ethics,” 304 and Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 302–303.

beings. I have here focused on Platonic images of judgment, but it is just as important to consider Paul's rich and creative synthesis as involving other traditions and discourses such as those more closely associated with apocalypticism. Nevertheless, Greek intellectual traditions have much to offer Paul because they are one area where thinkers engage in theorizing about exactly what the human being is and how it relates to the rest of the cosmos, including but not limited to other human beings, societies, governments, matter, the elements, the heavens, first causes, and divine and semi-divine beings. Further consideration of the ways that certain intellectuals synthesize multiple traditions may shed light on their distinctive interests and skills generally and Paul's in particular.

HELLENISTIC JEWISH LITERARY CONTEXTS
FOR CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

WAS JOHN THE BAPTIST A MEMBER OF THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY? ONCE MORE

Stanley E. Porter

1. INTRODUCTION

The question of John the Baptist's association with Qumran has been hotly debated since the first discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls, with many books on the Scrolls making reference to the possible correlation.¹ As would be expected, conclusions vary. On the one hand, as a scholar of a previous "Qumran Fever" period,² Jean Daniélou, says, "the discovery of the manuscripts has in an undeniable way confirmed the Baptist's contacts with the monks of Qumran"³ On the other hand, G.R. Driver concludes

¹ Bibliographies are included in the following relatively recent sources: Robert L. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study* (JSNTSup 62; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 213 n. 137; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 18 n. 3; Jörg Frey, "The Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on New Testament Interpretation: Proposals, Problems, and Further Perspectives," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Vol 3: The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2006), 407–461, esp. 443 n. 129; and James H. Charlesworth, "John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in Charlesworth, ed., *Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1–35 *passim*; similarly Charlesworth, "John the Baptizer and Qumran Barriers in Light of the Rule of the Community," in Donald W. Parry and Eugene Ulrich, eds., *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues* (STDJ 30; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 353–375; cf. Charlesworth, "John the Baptizer, Jesus, and the Essenes," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Caves of Enlightenment: Proceedings of the American Schools of Oriental Research Dead Sea Scrolls Jubilee Symposium (1947–1997)* (North Richmond Hills, Tex.: Bibal, 1998), 75–103.

² See Frey, "Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls," 411–416. Frey divides study of the Dead Sea Scrolls into four periods—"First Discoveries and Premature Assumptions (1947–ca. 1955)," "The 'Qumran Fever' and the Discussion of the Material (ca. 1955–ca. 1970)," "Stagnation (ca. 1970–1991)," and "A New 'Qumran Springtime' (since 1991)." This model has been adopted by Paul N. Anderson, "John and Qumran: Discovery and Interpretation over Sixty Years," in Mary L. Coloe and Tom Thatcher, eds., *John, Qumran, and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Sixty Years of Discovery and Debate* (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 15–50, esp. 24–28.

³ Jean Daniélou, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity* (trans. Salvator Attanasio; Baltimore: Helicon, 1958), 16. Few would agree as strongly, though many maintain the

“decisively” that John was not a Covenanter or even an Essene, though he may have known of the groups.⁴ More recent scholarship has arrived at similar conclusions. On the one hand, James Charlesworth believes “that some relationship between the Baptizer and the Qumranites seems to have existed,”⁵ while, on the other hand, there are those who find “John’s membership of the Qumran community at best conjectural.”⁶ A much more reasonable stance to assume at the outset of such a study is expressed by Millar Burrows: “There is no reason why one should be reluctant to believe that John was or had been a member of their [Qumran] community. The only question is whether there is good reason to suppose that he was. ...”⁷ In this chapter I will attempt to find this “good reason.”

In the next section, after preliminarily setting the scene, I will review the evidence for John the Baptist being at Qumran, as well as offer my critique of such arguments. Then, I will offer two further alternatives recently proposed, before concluding.

strong possibility, e.g. Duncan Howlett, *The Essenes and Christianity* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), 134–144; Upton Clary Ewing, *The Prophet of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1963), 56.

⁴ G.R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls: The Problem and a Solution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 493. He instead suggests that John may have been associated with the Zealots (496 *passim*).

⁵ Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer,” 17. He is anticipated by H.H. Rowley, “The Baptism of John and the Qumran Sect,” in A.J.B. Higgins, ed., *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of Thomas Walter Manson 1893–1958* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), 218–229. Among recent scholars, Charlesworth is joined by, for example, Daniel R. Schwartz, “On Quirinius, John the Baptist, the Benedictus, Melchizedek, Qumran and Ephesus,” in F. García Martínez and E. Puech, eds., *Mémorial Jean Carmignac: Etudes Qumraniennes* (Paris: Gabalda, 1988), 635–646; Otto Betz, “Was John the Baptist an Essene?” *BRev* 18 (1990): 18–25; James VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 170; David Flusser with R. Stevan Notley, *Jesus* (2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1998), 37–38; Fitzmyer, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 19; and Anderson, “John and Qumran,” 45–46.

⁶ Webb, *John the Baptizer*, 351 (note 4 refers to earlier scholars on both sides of this debate). Among recent scholars, he is joined by, for example, Joan E. Taylor, “John the Baptist and the Essenes,” *JJS* 47 (1996): 256–285; Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 15–48; and Craig A. Evans, “Jesus, John, and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Assessing Typologies of Restoration,” in John J. Collins and Craig A. Evans, eds., *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 45–62.

⁷ Millar Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Viking, 1959), 56–57. This is still one of the most level-headed books on the subject.

2. THE EVIDENCE FOR JOHN THE BAPTIST BEING AT QUMRAN

The first obvious fact that strikes us about the New Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls is that they reflect the same period of Jewish history, mirror the same general physical environment, and confront similar problems and situations, especially of a religious and theological sort.⁸ Both the early Christians and the Qumran Covenanters, like all Jews, faced a time of growing unrest and bitterness under Roman rule. The ambitious Hasmoneans, who had once been thought to hold the means of deliverance, had in the eyes of many of the more pious people of the land been a grave disappointment, but the Romans had proved even worse. Consequently, many groups found means of escape, including withdrawal from the mainstream of civilization, even into the desert.⁹ Because of the great problems, messianic expectation was high, with many feeling that the time of deliverance was near.

Into this environment, John the Baptist was born. The only sources regarding John are the canonical Gospels and Josephus.¹⁰ At the risk of being superficial, we can piece together the life of John as follows.¹¹ He was born into a devout priestly family (Luke 1:5), which had not seceded

⁸ Burrows, *More Light*, 56.

⁹ See F.F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), 56–121, especially 102–105, and 152–162; Bo Reicke, *The New Testament Era* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 152–174, esp. 169–174, for a history of the Qumran community in light of the Essene movement, as well as an overview of Jewish history in the New Testament era. There continues to be debate regarding the origins of the Qumran community, whether they were Essenes, Sadducees, or Pharisees, or some otherwise unknown group. I assume for this chapter that the Qumran community represented but one branch of the larger Essene movement, and this appears to be the consensus among scholars. See Burrows, *More Light*, 253–274; Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 116–136; VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 71–98; C. Marvin Pate, *Communities of the Last Days: The Dead Sea Scrolls, the New Testament and the Story of Israel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 54–78; and James VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), 239–254.

¹⁰ For an assessment of John the Baptist in light of Josephus, see Hermann Lichtenberger, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and John the Baptist: Reflections on Josephus’ Account of John the Baptist,” in Devorah Dimant and Uriel Rappaport, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research* (STDJ 10; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 340–346.

¹¹ Luke 1:36 says that Elizabeth and Mary were related, and hence John the Baptist and Jesus were related. Some scholars doubt the historicity of this, on the basis of it being stated only in Luke’s Gospel. See, for example, Raymond E. Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus* (New York: Paulist, 1973), 54. This issue does not concern me here, except to say that there is no substantive reason to doubt the connection, nor does Brown present one.

from the temple priesthood, as the Covenanters had,¹² in an unnamed city in the hill country of Judea. The traditional site of this city, “Aim Karim,” is approximately twenty miles west of Qumran.¹³ John preceded Jesus in birth by about three months (Luke 1:36), and since his parents were old and his mother apparently barren, John’s birth is pervaded with a supernatural sense. Zechariah, John’s father, was visited by an angel who instructed him that his child was to fulfill a Nazirite vow (Luke 1:15), that the child would come in the spirit and power of the great prophet Elijah (Luke 1:17), and that he would prepare a people for the Lord (Luke 1:17). The conclusion to the description of John’s childhood comes in Luke 1:80: “And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his appearance to Israel.”

John is next seen preaching in the wilderness or desert (see below), for a period that perhaps lasted as short a time as six months.¹⁴ During this time he had considerable contact with Herod Antipas, who feared John’s great influence (Mark 6:20), though Josephus says that Herod also thought John might cause a rebellion (*Ant.* 18.118–119).¹⁵ John was clothed in coarse camel’s hair garments and eating locusts (probably the insect) and wild honey (see below), and presented a striking figure. He performed his ministry near the Jordan, probably close to the fords of Jordan just south of Jericho, a point less than fifteen kilometers north of Qumran,¹⁶ though this is difficult to

¹² Daniélou, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 18, claims that, since the people of Qumran also descended from priestly families (“sons of Zadok,” a high priest during the reign of Solomon), it is quite probable that a contact was established between the family of John and those at Qumran. The fact that Zechariah was associated with the temple in Jerusalem, however, minimizes the strength of the contact between them. On the sons of Zadok, see Geza Vermes, *Scrolls, Scriptures and Early Christianity* (London: Continuum, 2005), 31–38; contrary to Philip R. Davies, *Behind the Essenes: History and Ideology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 51–72.

¹³ Charles H.H. Scobie, “John the Baptist,” in Matthew Black, ed., *The Scrolls and Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1969), 58–69, here 58. Cf. his *John the Baptist: A New Quest of the Historical John* (London: SCM, 1964), 34–40.

¹⁴ William Sanford LaSor, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 143 (still one of the best single books on this subject, and one I have found extremely helpful in this essay). One is right to ask why it is that the ministry lasted such a short time, unless the timing is related to the ministry of his relative, Jesus. See also LaSor, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith* (rev. ed.; Chicago: Moody, 1962).

¹⁵ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 143. Daniélou, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 19, cites the contact as significant evidence in determining John’s association with Qumran, though Burrows (*More Light*, 58) rightly questions how this indicates any clear connection whatsoever.

¹⁶ Scobie, “John the Baptist,” 58.

determine.¹⁷ John's stern message of repentance (Matt 3:2) was followed by baptism in water (3:6). He also taught his disciples to pray (Luke 11:1), to fast (Matt 9:14), and to expect the coming kingdom, to whose Messiah his own ministry was subordinate (Mark 1:7). When Jesus came to him, John baptized him and acknowledged him as the one for whom he had prepared the way (Matt 3:14; John 1:39). The character of John's ministry invited investigation, especially if he was reproving one of the political leaders (Herod Antipas) for morally reprehensible behavior, which finally led to prison and execution (Luke 3:19–20; Matt 14:3–4; Mark 6:17–18).¹⁸

Before I deal with the major points of (apparent) contact between John and Qumran, however, I should briefly mention certain superficial resemblances that do not decide the issue, even though some might consider them as proof.¹⁹ For example, John is said to have been "born of a woman" (Matt 11:11; Luke 7:28; 1QH^a V 20; XXI 1, 8–9),²⁰ but so are all men; the expression is a literary commonplace (e.g. Job 14:1; 15:14; 25:4, etc.). Some argue that Zechariah's hymn ("Benedictus," Luke 1:67–79), with language that possibly conforms to Essene hymnic compositions,²¹ also may contain expressions

¹⁷ See LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 144, who claims that the locations cannot be positively identified; and Anderson, "John and Qumran," 45 n. 71. One place where John baptized—"Bethany beyond the Jordan" (John 1:28)—is inconclusive, because of numerous places by that name. There is also a textual variant in this verse, Bethabara, meaning "the place of the crossing," indicating any of several fords. Origin referred to Wadi Kharrar, east of the Jordan River and roughly between Jericho and Qumran, and where baptisms have apparently been conducted in a natural pool since the Byzantine period, as "Bethabara." Another place of John's baptism is "Aenon near Salim" (John 3:23), supposed by some scholars to be at Wadi Far'ah near modern Nablus. Anderson suggests that John may have baptized in the north as well as in the south (if in Samaria near Nablus, he would have been near Bethsaida, home to Philip, Peter, and Andrew; John 1:44). See also John Pryke, "John the Baptist and the Qumran Community," *RevQ* 4 (1963–1964): 483–496, here 488–489.

¹⁸ The survey is based upon the biblical text. As mentioned above, the only other record of John is in Josephus, *Ant.* 18.116–119, in which is given a favorable account of John and his work, although the depiction is decidedly Essenic and goes beyond the biblical account in describing John's ascetic practices. See I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels* (New York: Ktav, 1967), 30–31, who believes there is Christian interpolation of the passage.

¹⁹ These are essentially from Driver, *Judaean Scrolls*, 492.

²⁰ Quotations of the Dead Sea Scrolls, unless otherwise indicated, are from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997–1998), using their reference system. An excellent resource on the Essenes, with original sources, is Geza Vermes and Martin D. Goodman, eds., *The Essenes: According to the Classical Sources* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

²¹ See Stephen Farris, *The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narrative: Their Origin, Meaning and Significance* (JSNTSup 9; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 29, citing Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962),

peculiar to Qumran (“for you will go ... to prepare his ways,” “to give knowledge of salvation,” etc.),²² although the whole poem is also pervaded with Old Testament language, which provides the point of contact Zechariah and Qumran have in common.²³ Like the Qumran Covenanters, John opposed the Pharisees (and Saducees), calling them (and others) a “brood of vipers” (Matt 3:7),²⁴ but then many others before and after John, including Jesus, opposed such groups as the Pharisees. John expected the Messiah to come, as did numerous others of the time, some of whom are recorded in the New Testament. At the time of Jesus, there was a great (though somewhat varied) expectation of the imminent coming of the Messiah.²⁵ John, like the Covenanters, addressed his words and performed his actions primarily with the Jews in mind, just as would rightly be expected in a Jewish territory.²⁶ As stated at the outset, such broad similarities are of little help in establishing the certainty of the connection between John and Qumran.

I wish now to identify the major issues that pose more serious problems for discovering the correlations between John and Qumran: the gaps in the New Testament account of John’s life; John’s ascetic life-style; the meaning

324–329. There is also the issue of the language of the hymn and how it relates to Aramaic or Greek. See Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (SBG 1; New York: Lang, 1989), 131–133.

²² Daniélou, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 18.

²³ Burrows, *More Light*, 58.

²⁴ Charlesworth (“John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 9–10) believes that the phrase “brood of vipers” may have been learned by John from the Qumranites, on the basis of 1QH^a XI 6–18. The logic, however, does not hold. Just because the Qumranites criticized the Pharisees and Sadducees and they mention “vipers” does not mean that there is a correlation with John’s statements. The context of the *Thanksgiving Hymns* does not make that correlation.

²⁵ On messianic expectation at Qumran and in the New Testament, see, among others, John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995); Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries: Comparative Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), esp. 53–182; Craig A. Evans, “Qumran’s Messiah: How Important Is He?,” in John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler, eds., *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 135–149; James H. Charlesworth, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Gerbern S. Oegema, eds., *Qumran-Messianism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); Fitzmyer, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 73–110; Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R., eds., *Israel’s Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003); and Stanley E. Porter, ed., *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). For a still valuable older study, see Driver, *Judaean Scrolls*, 462–492. In the discussion below of baptism, any important matters regarding messianic expectation in John’s thought are treated.

²⁶ Surprisingly, Raymond E. Brown, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament,” in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *John and Qumran* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972), 1–8, here 4, uses this point of comparison as an argument for similarity.

of John being in the “wilderness”; John’s use of Scripture, particularly Isa 40:3 and Isa 61:1–2; the issue of repentance and baptism with water; and the concept of baptism with the spirit and fire. Although these and related topics have often been discussed, perhaps some new insights can be brought to the discussion.²⁷

2.1. *Gaps in the New Testament Account of John’s Life*

Several major scholars have proposed that, due to the lack of detail in the New Testament accounts of John’s life and due to the cryptic nature of verses such as Luke 1:80 (John lived in the desert until he appeared to Israel), John lived in the wilderness in an Essene community, possibly the Qumran community.²⁸ An Egyptian work, “Life of John the Baptist” (ca. AD 385–395), refers to a Christian tradition that Zechariah was martyred when John was still an infant. His mother then fled with him into the desert.²⁹ In the New Testament, according to this view, we find the lives of Jesus and John paralleled in the biblical accounts, except that only Luke 1:80 correlates with the statement in Luke 2:41–52 that Jesus at twelve gained in wisdom and stature.³⁰ So, this position argues, it appears that John, at the age of twelve or even younger, was already in the wilderness. How could the son of a priest do this? If John’s father were dead, the question is answered. But

²⁷ Many have listed the issues, such as Pryke, “John the Baptist,” 485–489; Menahem Mansoor, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 154–155; LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 145–152; Taylor, *The Immerser*, 15–48; Fitzmyer, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 19–21; J. Ian H. McDonald, “What Did You Go out to See? John the Baptist, the Scrolls and Late Second Temple Judaism,” in Timothy H. Lim, with others, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 53–64, esp. 55–61 (who, 60–61, treats community property, something not attributed to John the Baptist); and John C. Hutchison, “Was John the Baptist an Essene from Qumran?” *BibSac* 159 (2002): 187–200.

²⁸ See esp. William H. Brownlee, “A Comparison of the Covenanters of the Dead Sea Scrolls with Pre-Christian Jewish Sects,” *BA* 13 (1950): 50–72; William H. Brownlee, “John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls,” in Krister Stendahl, ed., *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), 33–53; A.S. Geysler, “The Youth of John the Baptist: A Deduction from the Break in the Parallel Account of the Lucan Infancy Story,” *NovT* 1 (1956): 70–75. For an extreme example, see Charles Francis Potter, *The Lost Years of Jesus Revealed* (Greenwich, CN: Fawcett, 1958), who claims that both Jesus and John were devout members of an Essene sect. For him, Christianity is essentially one sect of Essenism that survived.

²⁹ Hugh J. Schonfield, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1957), 79.

³⁰ Geysler, “Youth of John the Baptist,” 72–73. He argues that Luke’s tradition included the entire story but that Luke suppressed it, in common with all New Testament avoidance of discussion of Essenes. This argument from silence is unconvincing.

regardless, is it possible, even with his father a part of the temple establishment, that due to unrest his father desired that John disassociate himself from the temple environment?³¹ Josephus notes with regard to the Essenes that “Marriage they disdain, but they adopt other men’s children, while yet pliable and docile, and regard them as their kin and mould them in accordance with their own principles” (*J.W.* 2.120, Thackeray, LCL).³² Regardless of the fate of his parents (did they die of old age?),³³ John may have lived in the desert under the protection of the Covenanters, who, as non-marrying sectarians,³⁴ would have desired a boy of John’s background and perhaps budding abilities.

Criticisms of this position are abundant and well-founded. First, the argument regarding gaps in John’s life is one from silence: nowhere does the biblical text make any sort of correlation between John and Qumran, and assumptions that must be made are implausible, especially regarding the issue of John’s parents and the temple. Examinations of the parallelism of the biblical accounts push the literary similarities beyond reasonable limits. Second, the word for child (*παιδίον*) used in Luke 1:80, though it usually denotes a young child, may in Hellenistic Greek be used for an adult as well.³⁵ Since the context does not make the term more precise, speculations about John’s activities, and his age at this time, must be kept to a minimum. Third, the uses of the conjunction “and” (*καί*) in Luke 1:80 do not necessarily mean that the conjoined clause follows immediately after the previous one, just because they are linked elements of a similar type. Most editions and translations take the sentence as having two parts (“the child grew and was empowered” and “he was in the wilderness ...”), but even if it is divided into three parts (“the child grew” and “he was empowered” and “he was in the wilderness ...”) the temporal sequence cannot be established. Similarly, the phrase “and he was in the wilderness” (Luke 1:80) does not necessarily imply that John was there while a child. Fourth, Josephus’s failure to link John with the Essenes, whom he describes in some detail (e.g. *Ant.* 13.172; 18.11; *J.W.* 2.119–159), is a matter of curiosity. Granted, the account of John the Baptist

³¹ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 146, says it is difficult to understand how John’s parents would have committed the son they contemplated for so long into the hands of a group that was hostile to the priesthood in Jerusalem.

³² Brownlee, “Comparison of the Covenanters,” 70.

³³ Brownlee, “John the Baptist,” 35.

³⁴ See Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 217, for summary of the Qumran position on marriage. For most, celibacy was compulsory, though some members apparently were permitted to marry.

³⁵ Albrecht Oepke, “παῖς,” *TDNT* 5: 636–654, here 638.

is brief, but if the two were linked in Josephus's mind, mentioning John in his account would appear likely. Fifth, if John were a member of the Qumran community at one time, his later manner of life certainly does not reveal it. And sixth, even if John did spend time at Qumran (supposing some of the events conjectured above occurred), this does not mean that he became a member of the community.³⁶

Whereas this evidence might be useful to complement a relationship between John and Qumran established on other grounds, the evidence here marshaled by itself constitutes little more than speculation.

2.2. *John's Ascetic Lifestyle*

The second issue worth considering regards the supposed ascetic lifestyle of John. Daniélou states that the details coincide with what is known about Qumran practice. John ate locusts and wild honey (Mark 1:6; Matt 3:4), with the *Damascus Document* (CD) specifying that the locusts must be roasted (CD 12:12, 14–15); John abstained from wine and all fermented drink, the same as the Essenes (according to Jerome, *Adv. Jov.* 2.14); and John was not married, just as celibacy was one of the requirements of the Qumran sect.³⁷ The Qumran sect, somewhat similar to the ascetic disciplines of other Jewish sects, emphasized the strict observance of purity in food, personal cleanliness, and the distinctions between sectarian and non-sectarian practices, although the specific ascetic practices were not clearly laid down, as they were for Pharisaism.³⁸

From the evidence, it appears that John was an avowed and even ardent ascetic as were the Qumranites, although not on the basis of his diet, as some have thought.³⁹ The *Damascus Document* regulation states that no one is to eat from the larvae of bees but is to eat roasted locusts only. Not only do we not know how John the Baptist ate his locusts, but his eating of wild honey appears to have been in violation of Essene (at least outside of Palestine) regulation. Wild honey was plentiful in the Mediterranean

³⁶ Driver, *Judaeen Scrolls*, 492, 493. This is in fact what Charlesworth argues—that John was at the Qumran community but failed to be fully initiated into it. See his “John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 35; Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer and Qumran Barriers,” 375.

³⁷ Daniélou, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 19. Cf. LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 148, who cautions against being too free in reading details of the Essenes into the Qumran sect.

³⁸ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 148.

³⁹ See Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 26; Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer and Qumran Barriers,” 367.

world⁴⁰ and locusts/grasshoppers have been a staple of Near Eastern culture for centuries.⁴¹ Thus, there is nothing in John's diet that links him with Qumran in particular. His clothing of camel's hair (Mark 1:6) instead marks him as being in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets,⁴² and he "came neither eating nor drinking" (Matt 11:18), possibly because he was under a Nazirite vow that prohibited wine or strong drink consumption (Num 6:1–21; Luke 1:15).⁴³ All these indicate that John's asceticism was even more stringent than that of the Covenanters. For example, the *Damascus Document* only mentions locusts as an article of diet and lists the restrictions on their preparation; it does not prescribe them as a regular diet. Although the Qumran community did enforce a community of goods and common meals, it does not appear to have been nearly so monastic or quasi-monastic a sect, living a rigorous and austere life of self-discipline, as previously thought (see 1QS VI 8–12, where LaSor says he finds nothing in the text to suggest a monastic standard).⁴⁴ In fact, it cannot be maintained from the Qumran documents alone that strict celibacy was enforced, even though the Essenes are said to have "disdained" marriage (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.120, Thackeray LCL).⁴⁵ Neither can it be determined definitively that any other elements of the Nazirite vow—forbidding shaving and imbibing wine and

⁴⁰ See abundant references to honey in the Old Testament (e.g. Exod 3:8, 17) and in Charles Burton Gulick, *The Life of the Ancient Greeks* (New York: Appleton, 1902), 150, where cultivated and wild honey and their uses are noted. Charlesworth argues that filtered honey would have been acceptable, on the basis of reference in Philo to Essenes keeping bees (*Hypoth.* 11.8), and comments by Chaim Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958), 61. I think he is stretching to make the correlation.

⁴¹ See James A. Kelhoffer, "Did John the Baptist Eat Like a Former Essene? Locust-Eating in the Ancient Near East and at Qumran," *DSD* 11.3 (2004): 293–314, who shows the abundant evidence for locust-eating. Kelhoffer is hard on Charlesworth for referring to "wild locusts" (367) in one of his articles (correct in the other). Kelhoffer makes some of his own mistakes in trying to argue that Mark 1:6 indicates that John ate more than honey and locusts (against Matt 3:4), by contending that the Greek construction in Mark is "an iterative imperfect periphrastic" (294). There is no formal grammatical category of "iterative" in Greek (only debatably interpretive), and the construction is not a periphrastic. See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 441–492. There is no need to dispute that John's diet was limited. But see James A. Kelhoffer, *The Diet of John the Baptist: "Locusts and Wild Honey" in Synoptic and Patristic Interpretation* (WUNT 176; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 12–35.

⁴² Pryke, "John the Baptist," 486.

⁴³ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 148.

⁴⁴ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 148 n. 12. However, the Essenes as a whole are said to be more restrictive in other sources. See Josephus, *Ant.* 2.120–127.

⁴⁵ Josephus (*Ant.* 2.121) goes on to say that the Essenes do not "abolish" marriage but are cautious of immoral women.

other strong drink—were imposed on the Qumran sect.⁴⁶ Finally, John's clothing of camel hair appears strikingly out of keeping with the white garments of the Essenes, and suggests to Burrows that it would have caused John's expulsion from an Essene community (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.123, 137).⁴⁷

John Allegro maintains that perhaps John's diet, as well as other restrictions on his lifestyle, was regulated at a stricter level because of further vows of purity taken in the Qumran community.⁴⁸ But, as Burrows says, "there is no hint of such vows in the Gospel accounts," as well as in the Qumran literature.⁴⁹ It must not be forgotten, however, that John was under no necessity to live as an ascetic at Qumran. For example, Nazirite vows originated in the Old Testament (Num 6:2–21; Judg 13:5; 1 Sam 1:11). The Lukan account of the angelic announcement to Zechariah clearly indicates that John's Nazirite vow belongs in the wider Jewish tradition (Luke 1:15), with the language of the Hannah-Samuel story possibly forming a background.⁵⁰

2.3. *The "Wilderness" or "Desert"*

The third issue is the meaning of the term "wilderness" or "desert"⁵¹ and how that relates to John the Baptist and the Qumran community. The argument is that the supposedly straightforward geographical data confirm the certainty of the contact. John conducted his baptisms in the region surrounding the Jordan River before it empties into the Dead Sea, possibly only a few miles north of the Qumran community. The usage of the word translated "wilderness" or "desert" in the New Testament passages referring to John (ἡ ἔρημος) seems to designate a specific place, since the word seems to be the Greek equivalent of the one used in the Qumran literature, especially in their use of Isa 40:3 (1QS VIII 12–14; IX 20), a passage used by John the Baptist (and treated in more detail below).⁵² The natural conclusion drawn by some then is that John lived at Qumran.

⁴⁶ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 148.

⁴⁷ Burrows, *More Light*, 58.

⁴⁸ John Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (2nd ed.; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), 159.

⁴⁹ Burrows, *More Light*, 58.

⁵⁰ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 148.

⁵¹ See Robert W. Funk, "The Wilderness," *JBL* 78 (1959): 205–214; Gerhard Kittel, "ἔρημος," *TDNT* 2: 657–660, here 659; C.C. McCown, "The Scenes of John's Ministry," *JBL* 59 (1940): 113–131.

⁵² Daniélou, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 16–17. Many scholars assume the correlation, for example Brownlee ("John the Baptist," 35, 47), although Daniélou is one of few who actually argues the position.

Those who argue for this position assume much in specifying the exact place in the desert referred to in the New Testament passages.⁵³ A more detailed study of the concept of wilderness therefore is necessary.⁵⁴ The “wilderness” often bears a non-local and even mythical sense in Near Eastern religions. This meaning is carried over, in part, to biblical thought, and even developed as a theological phrase with reference to Israel’s original encounter with Yahweh “in the wilderness.” But there is a tendency also to adapt the details of primitive events to historical events and local topography, so that the issue is how specifically a non-literal text like Isa 40:3 could be interpreted.

In the New Testament, “wilderness” is a “definite concept,”⁵⁵ often specified with the lexical item ἔρημος. In the LXX, ἔρημος and מדבר are often translational equivalents, though ἔρημος has a somewhat wider translational range and includes other Hebrew words as well.⁵⁶ ἡ ἔρημος, as a singular, articular noun, is bound to the definite המדבר also, so that, although the location of the exact wilderness may have been forgotten, it was conceived in the national mind as localized, and that “the wilderness” could usually be represented in close proximity to home. Whereas the former prophets defined מדבר as the area of the forty-year sojourn, later writers saw it as areas adjacent to Palestine (e.g. cf. Josh 15:61–62; 8:14–16; 16:1; also 2 Sam 2:24, 29; Hos 2:14). Particularly significant is Isa 35:1–2, where a third term (τὰ ἔρημα τοῦ Ἰορδάνου) is added to the LXX in a passage where מדבר and ערבה are parallel in the Hebrew text.

The localization of the wilderness as that of Judah and the lower Arabah of the Jordan Valley does not rest on the Hebrew parallels only but also on the appropriateness of the term מדבר to refer to the area: a desert-dry area embracing the whole of south Judah east of the central ridge, comprised of nearly infertile chalk. As Funk says, “The wilderness, insofar as it is localized in Palestine, nearly always refers to this area or some portion thereof in the O[ld] T[estament].”⁵⁷ This means that, first, the two cities where John was most active, Bethany beyond the Jordan and Aenon near Salim, are both within this territory, in line with McCown’s illustration

⁵³ Daniélou, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 16, appeals to a quotation by Pliny the Elder (*Nat. Hist.* 5.17) that indicates “a precise location.” LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 145, however, says that the quotation from Pliny is not certainly referring to Qumran.

⁵⁴ This discussion is based on Funk’s article.

⁵⁵ Funk, “Wilderness,” 206, with discussion of adjectival or qualitative ἔρημος.

⁵⁶ E.g. שמן and הרב (Funk, “Wilderness,” 206).

⁵⁷ Funk, “Wilderness,” 209.

that “the wilderness” and “environs of the Jordan” are applied to the same location of John’s work.⁵⁸ As Funk says,

To sum up, nominal ἔρημος in the N[ew]T[estament] is usually localized as the wilderness of Sinai or the wilderness of Judea (not just Judah), the latter including the lower Jordan valley and possibly the eastern slopes of the valley. There is precedent for this usage in the LXX and Qumran literature; geological and meteorological data, moreover, justify its application to this area. The localization as the wilderness of Judea is appropriate to the majority of NT passages ...⁵⁹

Two conclusions may be drawn from this discussion and evidence. First, Jesus, John, the Qumran sect, and other groups were located in a “common topographic pool.”⁶⁰ Second, for all of these, as well as the Jewish people of the time, the “wilderness” would have had a common meaning as a place of important encounter, without necessarily equating everyone who looked to the “wilderness” in this way. Third, this evidence does not provide proof that John was a member of Qumran. As Frank Moore Cross says, “It seems methodologically dubious to argue on the basis of John’s desert life that he was at one time associated with the desert community of Qumran. At best we can affirm that there were contacts between the preaching of John and the teaching of the Essenes of Palestine (and Qumran).”⁶¹ To say that because the two—John and the Qumran Covenanters—were in the same geographical area means that they were in the exact same place, doing the same thing, simply does not follow.

2.4. Use of Scripture

The fourth major area of discussion is John the Baptist’s and the Qumran community’s use of Scripture. The entire subject⁶² cannot be discussed, but

⁵⁸ McCown, “Scenes of John’s Ministry,” 131.

⁵⁹ Funk, “Wilderness,” 214.

⁶⁰ Funk, “Wilderness,” 214.

⁶¹ Frank Moore Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (repr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980; orig. 1961), 204 n. 9.

⁶² For good discussions of the broader subject of the hermeneutics of the New Testament and Qumran, see F.F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 70–79; F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 66–77; Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 19–50, for Qumran, 133–157, for New Testament; Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (rev. and ed. Geza Vermes et al.; 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–1987), 3:421–451; VanderKam and Flint, *Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 293–308; and Geza Vermes, *Scrolls, Scriptures and Early Christianity*, 44–55.

two passages (the latter composite) that are often cited will be concentrated upon: Isa 40:3 and Isa 61:1 and 35:5.

I begin with the use of Isa 40:3, a passage that has long drawn attention to possible similarities between John and Qumran.⁶³ As already noted above, Daniélou claims that there is “striking proof” of the identity of the “deserts” of John and Qumran (see above) because of the use of this passage by both: “Such a similarity of content and expression cannot be fortuitous. It leads us to assert a similarity of views between John and the hermits of Qumran as well as their identity in that both ‘prepare the way for God.’”⁶⁴ The commonality has been argued more stringently by Charlesworth. He notes that the Covenanters and John “most likely focused upon a stunning and unique interpretation of Isa 40:3.”⁶⁵ On the basis of parallelism, the MT has “a voice of one calling,” with the message of the “voice” being “in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord.” Charlesworth says that John and the Qumranites took this to mean that the voice was in the wilderness, just as the LXX understands it: “a voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ...”⁶⁶

The appearance of the same scriptural text and even its interpretation, however, is not in and of itself conclusive, as Charlesworth himself illustrates that there are other interpretations of this passage.⁶⁷ The context must also be analyzed, along with the specific language.⁶⁸ With respect to John the Baptist, Isa 40:3 is quoted in all four Gospels (Matt 3:3; Mark 3:3 as part of a composite quotation with Mal 3:1 and/or Exod 23:20;⁶⁹ Luke 3:4–6 [Isa 4:3–5]; and John 1:23, the last with some variation), although the words only

⁶³ See, for example, Brownlee, “John the Baptist,” 73.

⁶⁴ Daniélou, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 17–18. Burrows, *More Light*, 57, says, “Surely this is pushing the argument too far.”

⁶⁵ Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 6; cf. Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer and Qumran Barriers,” 357.

⁶⁶ Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 6 (contra his translation: “A voice crying in the wilderness ...”). The MT phrasing could be understood otherwise: “a voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way of the Lord,” except for the parallelism with the following phrase: “make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.”

⁶⁷ Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 6.

⁶⁸ This discussion of the use of Isa 40:3 is largely indebted to Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Streams of Tradition Emerging from Isaiah 40:1–5 and Their Adaptation in the New Testament,” *JSNT* 8 (1980): 24–45; and J. de Waard, *A Comparative Study of the Old Testament Text in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 48–53.

⁶⁹ See Robert Guelich, “The Beginning of the Gospel, Mark 1:1–15,” *BR* 27 (1982): 5–15, esp. 8–9 and 12, where he contends that the fact that the quotation in Mark 1:2–3 is composite probably stems from its use as a whole in tradition, but the major focus of its use here is on Isa 40:3, as emphasized by the attribution.

appear on John's lips in the Gospel of John. Each of the four Gospels either assumes or states explicitly that John preached in the wilderness, just as the Qumran community was located in the wilderness (see above). In their broader context, the New Testament quotations of Isa 40:3 emphasize the ethical content of John's message—the theme of repentance (see below)—which many see as an obvious parallel to 1QS VIII 13–16 and IX 16–21 (see below). The quotation of Isa 40:3 in the Synoptics is identical to the LXX (φωνή βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιείτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν), except that the Synoptics have αὐτοῦ instead of τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, which perhaps arose from the desire to avoid the divine name (κύριος in the Gospels, especially Mark, usually is used of Jesus only in the vocative, and so could have been taken as a reference to God), although there is a strong possibility that the Gospel writers understood the text to refer explicitly to Jesus as both Lord and “him.”⁷⁰ The latter is probably more likely, because a very old Latin-Syriac text of the Synoptics has the LXX reading τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, so that the changed reading αὐτοῦ may have been a conscious decision. The theological origin of the variation is then probably due to a christological conception of κύριος, with αὐτοῦ referring to Christ, not God, at least in the mind of the author.⁷¹

According to de Waard, “it goes without saying that the Synoptics reproduce the LXX because of their syntactical division of the Isaiah text. But we should bear in mind that no other text could be quoted than that of the LXX, because of the function of the Isaiah quotation in the Gospels.”⁷² In other words, according to de Waard, the Synoptic writers needed to use the LXX, rather than the common understanding of the MT, in order to convey their understanding regarding the location of the voice. In the LXX, ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ is joined to φωνή βοῶντος, which leaves בעברת (“in the wilderness/desert” in Isa 40:3c) unrendered in the LXX and New Testament and forms an emphatic introductory locative phrase: “a voice of one crying in the wilderness.” The quotation of Isa 40:3 in John 1:23 has little similarity to the Synoptics or to the LXX (ἐγὼ φωνή βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ εὐθύνατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου). The linking of ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ with ἐγὼ φωνή into a common syntactical division (“I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness”) is the major point of similarity

⁷⁰ Snodgrass, “Streams of Tradition,” 34. He also discusses the allusions to and individual-word quotations of Isa 40:3–5 in Luke 1:17; 1:76–79; 2:30–31; 9:52 (36–40).

⁷¹ See Wilhelm Michaelis, “ὁδός,” *TDNT* 5: 42–98, here 70; contra de Waard, *Comparative Study*, 50.

⁷² de Waard, *Comparative Study*, 50.

to the Synoptic texts, along with “the way of the Lord.” As noted, the words are placed in the mouth of John himself, though they are abridged considerably. The second part of the verse is omitted, with either ἐτοιμάσατε turned into εὐθύνατε or both the second and third parts of the verse compressed and εὐθύνατε a synonymous rendering of εὐθείας ποιεῖτε.⁷³ It is also possible that John had another Greek text of Isaiah available.⁷⁴

Isaiah 40:3, although not quoted frequently, is a central text for the theology of Qumran.⁷⁵ 1QS VIII 14, “In the desert, prepare the way of ****, straighten in the steppe a roadway for our God” (במדבר פנו דרך **** ישרו) (בערבה מסלה לאלוהינו), and 1QS IX 19b–20, “making ready the path to the desert” (פנות הדרך למדבר) (פנות הדרך למדבר), the two major passages, are very different, with the first a direct quotation of the MT, and the second a very free allusion based on the words מדבר, פנו, and דרך, with a noticeable change from the imperative to the noun construct. The first quotation lacks the introductory קול קורא (“a voice of one crying,” which the LXX links with “in the desert”), an omission that may in fact show a correct or at least parallel interpretation of the function of these words in the MT. Also, in 1QS VIII 14 the Tetragrammaton is replaced by four dots, undoubtedly out of fear of repeating the divine name.⁷⁶ The quotation in 1QS VIII 14 even follows the syntactical division of the text of the MT, with במדבר parallel to בערבה. In the Qumran interpretation of these texts, there are several features to notice. One is that there is no emphasis placed on the voice crying.⁷⁷ A second is that the reference to the wilderness is understood literally as a place of their location, in line with the community’s theological understanding of the wilderness as a place of eschatological resting and deliverance.⁷⁸ Isaiah 40:3 served as a call to the wilderness for the community. Third, Isa 40:3, part of the complex of Scripture turned to by Qumran as a statement of the consolation that comes from God in his eschatological foreknowledge, interprets the “preparation of the way” as either the return of the exiles or more likely their ethical behavior preparatory to God’s coming.⁷⁹

⁷³ de Waard, *Comparative Study*, 51.

⁷⁴ S. Vernon McCasland, “The Way,” *JBL* 77 (1958): 222–230, here 227.

⁷⁵ See McCasland, “The Way,” 226.

⁷⁶ de Waard, *Comparative Study*, 49.

⁷⁷ Contra Charlesworth, “John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 7.

⁷⁸ Snodgrass, “Streams of Tradition,” 29. See Snodgrass, “Streams of Tradition,” 29–31, and de Waard, *Comparative Study*, 52–53, for a thorough analysis of the passage’s meaning with reference to midrash and peshet interpretation.

⁷⁹ Snodgrass, “Streams of Tradition,” 31.

What then are the implications for John's connections to the Qumran community? There are a number of elements of similarity between these scriptural uses. The first item of congruity is the common use of Isa 40:3 in both 1QS and the four Gospels. Second, in both 1QS and the New Testament the words ἔρημος and במדבר are taken in a literal sense, with John crying from the desert and the Qumranites located in the desert (see above).⁸⁰ Third, both quote the verse in a context of actual expectation of preparing the "way of the Lord" (פנו דרך), although in both this is conceived in a figurative sense.⁸¹ Fourth, as a formal congruity, in the Gospels (except Matthew) as in 1QS VIII 14, Isa 40:3 belongs to a group of formula quotations. In 1QS VIII 14, the introductory formula כאשר כהוב corresponds identically with (καθ)ῶς γέγραπται in Mark and Luke, a *hapax legomenon* in Mark.⁸² Interestingly, Matthew's use is his one biblical citation not introduced by a "fulfilment formula." It is also the one quotation whose text is identical to the LXX (except for the simplification of αὐτοῦ for τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν).⁸³

The dissimilarities between the two uses of Isa 40:3, however, must also be noted, and these are decisive. First, and most importantly, there is no relationship in textual form between the Isaiah quotation in the Gospels and 1QS. de Waard argues that this is not conclusive because the LXX is necessary for the function of the quotation in the Gospels.⁸⁴ But that is basically the point. If John follows the Qumran community, if the tie between the two groups through Isa 40:3 is as strong as supposed, and if Isa 40:3 is so important to John the Baptist's message as reflective of Qumran thought, there is good reason to see firm evidence that the quotation in the Gospels would come from the same source as the original or the group with which he identifies. If de Waard argues for a different theological usage in the Gospels, he is arguing against John's association with Qumran, because of his different

⁸⁰ de Waard, *Comparative Study*, 52.

⁸¹ de Waard, *Comparative Study*, 52, emphasizes the figurative sense here. McCasland, "The Way," 225, notes the similarities of the usage of the word "way" in the New Testament and Qumran, on the basis of the common reference to the "way of the Lord." McCasland's conclusion—"We conclude therefore that the Way (ἡ ὁδός, הדרך) as a designation of Christianity was derived from Isa 40:3 and that it is an abbreviated form of 'the way of the Lord'; that the idiom הדרך was used in a similar sense by Qumran as a designation of its life; that Christians probably derived the idiom ultimately from Qumran; and that the agent of the transmission was John the Baptist" (230)—is based more upon superficial resemblances of language than on hard and fast connections.

⁸² de Waard, *Comparative Study*, 52.

⁸³ Longenecker, *Apostolic Exegesis*, 147.

⁸⁴ de Waard, *Comparative Study*, 52.

interpretation of the passage. Second, the general emphasis of the passages in their respective contexts is different. The Qumran quotation begins with במדבר (“in the wilderness”), dropping the MT’s קול קורא (“a voice of one crying”). The parallel emphases in the two passages in 1QS are therefore upon “prepare” and “make straight,” and “in the wilderness” and “in the desert.” The New Testament, however, stresses that there is a “voice of one crying in the wilderness.” Mark adds that ἐγένετο Ἰωάννης [ὁ] βαπτίζων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ,⁸⁵ and John’s Gospel goes so far as to state directly that John the Baptist is the voice: ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ (“I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness”). Though the poetic parallelism may be better in 1QS, the New Testament interprets John in a prophetic sense as a prophet in the wilderness, whereas 1QS regards the passage as introductory and without prophetic significance. This points to a clear theological difference between John and Qumran, with John calling out from the desert to all and the sectarians calling to others to retreat to the desert.⁸⁶ Third, the usage of the passage in 1QS and the Gospels is different.⁸⁷ For Qumran, to “prepare the way” means to “go into the desert” to receive instruction in the mysteries and to be separated from those who had not departed from unrighteousness (1QS IX 19–21). For John, however, “to prepare the way” means to learn from the voice of the one crying in the wilderness (John) to leave the seclusion of the wilderness, preach the gospel to those who need to repent, and prepare for the Messiah.⁸⁸ Clearly a very different use is made of the verse in 1QS and the New Testament. As LaSor says,

If John received the inspiration for his ministry from this verse of Scripture while a member of the Qumran Community—a possibility which is not ruled out by [his] foregoing discussion—the fact remains that he used the verse with an entirely original application in his own ministry. It cannot be used, then, as basis for argument that John was brought up at Qumran.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 147.

⁸⁶ William H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 84–85. Contra Scobie, *John the Baptist*, 46, who sees a common “wilderness eschatology” between John and the sectarians.

⁸⁷ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament,” in his *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971), 3–58, here 35–36, claims that both the Qumran and the New Testament writers disregard the verse’s original historical context and accommodate it to their specific situations.

⁸⁸ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 147.

⁸⁹ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 147–148.

The second major passage is Isa 61:1 and 35:5. The significance of this passage has only come to light with the publication of the scrolls from the fourth cave (4Q), which were held up for a number of years and only in the last twenty or so years have been able to be considered in discussion of the Qumran documents. This text, because of its recent discovery, has not figured largely into discussion of John the Baptist and Qumran, although it is a passage that enters into discussion of John the Baptist in the Gospels.⁹⁰ 4Q521 has been labeled the “Messianic Apocalypse,” because it describes God’s “anointed one” or Messiah (4Q521 2 II 1). The text then ascribes a number of features not to the Messiah, but to Adonai or God himself, roughly following Psalm 146. However, in the midst of 4Q521, the text states that the Lord will be on an eternal throne, “freeing prisoners, giving sight to the blind, straightening out the twis[ted] ... he will heal the badly wounded and will make the dead live, he will proclaim good news to the poor” (4Q521 2 II 1, 8, 12). This appears to be an allusion to Isa 61:1⁹¹ regarding being anointed, freeing prisoners, and having good news proclaimed, and Isa 35:5 regarding giving sight to the blind.⁹²

Similar ideas figure into a significant passage involving John the Baptist. In Matt 11:2–6 // Luke 7:20–23, some come from John the Baptist, now in prison, asking whether Jesus is the “one to come,” that is, the Messiah. Jesus responds in a passage that alludes to Isa 61:1–2 and 35:5–6. In both Gospel passages (Matt 11:4–5 // Luke 7:22), they state: “go and announce to John what you hear and see: blind see and lame walk, lepers are healed and deaf hear, and dead are raised and poor are given good news.” Jesus’ answer is a positive one to the question of whether he is the expected Messiah by invoking a passage that is messianic in Isaiah but attributed to God in 4Q521. Noteworthy here are the parallels between Jesus’ response to John the Baptist’s representatives, Isa 61:1 and 35:5, and 4Q521 2 II 1, 8,

⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Evans suggests that John “may very well have had some contact with members of the Qumran sect” (*Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 129).

⁹¹ See Collins, *Scepter and the Star*, 118–119, who notes use of Isaiah 61 and other passages in 11QMelchizedek.

⁹² Important bibliography on these Qumran passages and their relationship as used here includes Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 127–129; Evans, “Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran Cave 4,” in Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, eds., *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 91–100, esp. 96–97; James D. Tabor and Michael O. Wise, “4Q521 ‘On Resurrection’ and the Synoptic Gospel Tradition: A Preliminary Study,” in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Qumran Questions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 151–163; Collins, *Scepter and the Star*, 117–122; VanderKam and Flint, *Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 332–334.

and 12. Jesus' response includes the following statements found in one or the other of the Isaiah or Qumran passages: blind seeing, lame walking, deaf hearing, dead being raised, and proclaiming good news to the poor. More than that, however, it is interesting to note that one of the features of his response—his affirmation of raising the dead—is only found in 4Q521.⁹³

One cannot help but notice that Jesus invokes in support of his being the Messiah a passage redolent of Isaianic-messianic statements that was used at Qumran with reference to the deeds of Adonai or God, and that he uses this specific, unparalleled Qumran passage when responding to John the Baptist. For those who see a close connection between John the Baptist and Qumran, the indication is that Jesus uses this passage because he knows that John would know the passage from being at Qumran. However, there are two important points to note here that mitigate the possibility of such an argument. The first is that it is Jesus who invokes the passage, not John the Baptist. Are we saying by that that we believe Jesus was knowledgeable of the Qumran community, but in what way? If he had knowledge of their teaching and beliefs, and even their scriptural exegetical practices, but was not part of the community, then John could have had similar knowledge. The second point is that Jesus uses similar language elsewhere in defining his own ministry, apart from John the Baptist's being in the context. In Luke 4:21, Jesus reads Isa 61:1–2 along with 58:6 in the synagogue at Nazareth, and claims that “today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”⁹⁴ This indicates that, rather than the use of Isa 61:1 indicating John the Baptist's relationship to the Qumran Covenanters, Jesus used an exegetical technique to establish his messiahship that had a similar exegetical approach to those at Qumran. As Craig Evans states, “4Q521 significantly supports the traditional view that Jesus did indeed see himself as Israel's Messiah.”⁹⁵

⁹³ See Stanley E. Porter, “Resurrection, the Greeks and the New Testament,” in Stanley E. Porter, Michael A. Hayes, and David Tombs, eds., *Resurrection* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 52–81, esp. 67.

⁹⁴ See Stanley E. Porter, “The Messiah in Luke and Acts: Forgiveness for the Captives,” in Porter, ed., *Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, 144–164, esp. 150–155. See also Stanley E. Porter, “Scripture Justifies Mission: The Use of the Old Testament in Luke-Acts,” in Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 104–126, esp. 109–116.

⁹⁵ Evans, “Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 97. Contra Collins, *Scepter and the Star*, 121, who believes that it is not certain that 4Q521 originated with the Covenanters, because of its mention of resurrection.

2.5. *Baptism and Repentance*

The fifth topic of comparison concerns the nature of baptism and its relationship to repentance.⁹⁶

For the sake of discussion here, baptism is defined as a

rite making symbolic use of the cleansing power of water performed by one person for another. Both elements are required if the rite is to be a baptism. There must be a baptizer and a person baptized. A self-administered rite, such as ritual immersion or ritual bathing, is not a baptism.⁹⁷

One of the most distinctive elements of the Qumran community was its emphasis on ablutions, lustrations, or baptisms, which reveals a concern for purification. These laws of purity were based upon the Torah (Leviticus 11–17, Numbers 19, Deuteronomy 14), which detailed the sources of impurity. Like various Jewish groups, the Covenanters looked to water as the principal method of purification (Num 19:7; Lev 14:8; Isa 1:16; Ezra 36:25). At its minimum, the person received from water an external, physical cleansing, allowing him to re-enter fellowship.

Three crucial passages from the *Community Rule* mention washings, especially for the purpose of entry into the Qumran community: 1QS II 25–III 9, IV 19–22, and V 13–15 (cf. CD X 10–13; XI; 1QM XIV 2–3).⁹⁸ Study by various scholars has resulted in almost as many opinions regarding the nature of Qumran baptism as there are analyses of the problem.⁹⁹ To summarize, three major kinds of “baptism” are proposed at Qumran.¹⁰⁰ The first is a symbolic, one-time initiatory rite required of anyone wishing to enter the group. John Robinson argues that Qumran saw baptism as representing a decisive break for the individual, so that in 1QS V 8, 13 the phrases “to enter the covenant” and “to enter the water” are to be read as parallels. It seems

⁹⁶ Leonard F. Badia’s book on this subject (*The Qumran Baptism and John the Baptist’s Baptism* [Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1980]) is unfortunately not a useful source on this topic. See also his “The Qumran Baptism,” *IJT* 33 (1984): 10–23.

⁹⁷ Edmund F. Sutcliffe, “Baptism and Baptismal Rites at Qumran?” *Heyf* 1 (1960): 179–188, here 179.

⁹⁸ I am not so much concerned here with analyzing each passage in detail as with focusing on the conclusions reached by scholars regarding the nature of the Qumran baptism.

⁹⁹ See esp. John A.T. Robinson, “The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community,” *HTR* 50 (1957): 175–191 (repr. in his *Twelve New Testament Studies* [SBT 34; London: SCM, 1962], 11–27); Sutcliffe, “Baptism”; Pryke, “John the Baptist,” 489–495; Webb, *John the Baptizer*, 133–162; Taylor, *The Immerser*, 49–100; VanderKam and Flint, *Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 331.

¹⁰⁰ See LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 149–151, esp. 150; LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith*, 205.

impossible to Robinson that with all the stress on water for purification the Covenanters would not have used it to mark the initial break with the corrupt world.¹⁰¹ Robert Webb has more recently argued similarly, claiming that a candidate's "first immersion also functioned as an initiatory immersion" into membership in the true Israel.¹⁰² The problems with this view are, first, that there is no direct statement in the Qumran literature (or Essene for that matter) that indicates an initiatory bath, as Webb basically admits. Second, the extended period of two years required to join the community (1QS VI 13–23; cf. Josephus, *J.W.* 2.137–138) points instead to a gradual incorporation, with various rituals and enquiries and examinations along the way, rather than a sudden break with the past life.¹⁰³

The second type of baptism would be a purificatory rite, symbolic of a cleansing from impurity, whether physical or spiritual, reserved only for members of the Community. This can be administered by another person, although usually it is self-administered. Almost all scholars recognize the presence of this kind of washing for members, which can occur on a regular basis, even daily (or more?), for a variety of reasons (see, for example, CD X 10–13; XI 1, 21–22; 11Q19 XLV 8–9).¹⁰⁴ These washings, resembling substitutes for the temple sacrifices, were designed to remove ceremonial uncleanness, and did not necessarily require a change of heart or inner attitude.¹⁰⁵ The third type of water ritual, closely connected to the second, is the therapeutic bath designed to cure disease and is performed when the occasion necessitated it (e.g. Josephus, *J.W.* 2.149).

When we turn to John the Baptist and his baptism, we note a number of similarities, and a number of significant differences. Most readily, we note that John's baptism was intimately involved with "repentance" (μετάνοια; Luke 3:3; Mark 1:4; Matt 3:11, with its spiritual significance of transforming one's inner being away from sin¹⁰⁶) for those wishing to enter (initiatory rite) the Kingdom of God, not just to be ritually pure.¹⁰⁷ Edmund Sutcliffe claims that John's baptism cannot be regarded as one of initiation because

¹⁰¹ Robinson, "Baptism of John," 182. See also Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1975), 45.

¹⁰² Webb, *John the Baptizer*, 160. Cf. Taylor, *The Immerser*, 76–88, who accepts initial immersion, but does not connect it to repentance as does Webb.

¹⁰³ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 150.

¹⁰⁴ See Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 45.

¹⁰⁵ Driver, *Judaeen Scrolls*, 505.

¹⁰⁶ Johannes Behm, "μετανοέω, μετάνοια," *TDNT* 4: 975–1008, here 1000–1001; I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 194–195.

¹⁰⁷ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 150.

there is no evidence that John wished to form his own group of initiates; his mission was to prepare the way of the Lord.¹⁰⁸ But perhaps that is the major distinctive in relation to Qumran—everything they did was for the sect itself.¹⁰⁹ As Driver says, “John’s baptism was something quite different. It was neither a lustration nor rite of purification but a baptism.”¹¹⁰

Even if repentance was required for each form of lustration at Qumran, Robinson and Webb go too far in claiming that the outward signs of performance are really subsidiary to the provocative connections on the spiritual level.¹¹¹ In John the Baptist’s case, action and theology inform each other. First, as a genuine rite of initiation, John’s baptism carried his doctrine beyond the Covenanters. Whereas they made clear the point that the purificatory waters are reserved for those members in good standing (1QS V 13), John made baptism the symbol of the inward repentance or conversion.¹¹² Second, John’s initiatory baptism was administered immediately upon repentance, whereas Qumran’s washing was denied until the end of the second probationary period had been reached (i.e., after two years), during which the applicant for admission to the group had to have proved himself through right behavior and conduct to be in good standing. Third, John’s baptism was directly related to the coming of the Messiah in that John saw himself as performing his repentance-initiation baptisms in direct anticipation of the imminent coming of the anointed one.¹¹³ No Qumran text, to my

¹⁰⁸ Sutcliffe, “Baptism,” 180.

¹⁰⁹ See William Sanford LaSor, “Interpretation and Infallibility: Lessons from the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Craig A. Evans and William F. Stinespring, eds., *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 123–137, esp. 134.

¹¹⁰ Driver, *Judaean Scrolls*, 505. Fitzmyer, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 20, questions the one-time nature of John’s baptism, but that does not seem to be in keeping with the New Testament context.

¹¹¹ Robinson, “Baptism of John,” 183, citing the strong insistence on repentance and the recognition of the coming wrath of God; Webb, *John the Baptizer*, 159–161, for summary; cf. his charts on 211, but the Qumran diagram is questionable. Contra Taylor, *The Immerser*, 79–81.

¹¹² LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 150. See also Webb, *John the Baptizer*, 211, where his diagram for John the Baptist’s baptism seems plausible.

¹¹³ I cannot debate here the issue of whether John actually anticipated the Messiah, and whether he envisioned this person as Jesus, etc. I note that the discussion of John the Baptist in relation to Qumran deals with John as presented in the Synoptic Gospel accounts. For a skeptical view of John, discussing sources, see Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Origin of Christian Baptism,” *Studia Liturgica* 19 (1989): 28–46, esp. 29–32; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia: Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 138–140, 146; cf. H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q* (BETL 122; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 31–39 (but cf. Neiryck’s comments, 270–271). Such skepticism is not necessary. See Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26* (WBC 34a; Waco, TX: Word,

knowledge, makes such explicit reference to a direct relationship between the purificatory washing and the coming Messiah, or any other figure.¹¹⁴ Rather, the washings were part of a whole life of continual purifying and cleansing for many purposes on many occasions, reminiscent of the temple ritual.¹¹⁵ Fourth, John demanded repentance and warned all people without exception of the impending new age. John and the Covenanters would baptize Jews; of this there is no debate.¹¹⁶ But John's message, although circumscribed geographically, was a universal one (see Matt 3:9; Luke 3:8, 12, 14), not monastically limited.¹¹⁷ Qumran too demanded repentance (CD II 13; IX 15, 41; cf. 1QS IX 10–11), but this call is firmly in line with the great prophetic teaching of the Old Testament and points instead to John's "standing in the main stream of Judaism," not with the Qumran sectarians.¹¹⁸

For the source of John's baptism one could just as well turn to Jewish "proselyte baptism,"¹¹⁹ although it has been questioned whether proselyte baptism was in full effect in the early first century.¹²⁰ While not yet a fully shaped practice in the New Testament, proselyte baptism seems to have been in use before the time of John the Baptist. It was likely used because of the purity demanded of every Jew in an age of contact with impure Gentiles; and it is hard to conceive that the Jewish ritual would be adapted after

1989), 21–26, 27–28; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 37–39 and notes; and Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 150–158.

¹¹⁴ H.H. Rowley, "The Qumran Sect and Christian Origins," *BJRL* 44 (1961): 119–156, here 141–143. He defines baptism as a "water rite of initiation, and only a rite of initiation."

¹¹⁵ Pryke, "John the Baptist," 492, 495.

¹¹⁶ In fact, membership in the Qumran community was restricted to Israelites. See CD X 5, but cf. XIV 6, where proselytes are mentioned; and 1QS IX 6. Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 17, thinks mention of proselytes is merely incidental.

¹¹⁷ Brown, "Dead Sea Scrolls," 4–5.

¹¹⁸ Pryke, "John the Baptist," 496. For a further discussion of major differences between the baptism of John and washings at Qumran, see Hartmut Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 221–222.

¹¹⁹ See T.F. Torrance, "Proselyte Baptism," *NTS* 1 (1954): 150–154; John Heron, "The Theology of Baptism," *SJT* 8 (1955): 36–52; Albrecht Oepke, "βάπτισμα," *TDNT* 1: 529–545; and Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 3:173–174; cf. Abrahams, *Studies*, 36–46, for a treatment from a Jewish perspective.

¹²⁰ Robinson, "Baptism of John," 180. He makes the distinction that the Jewish ablutions "do not appear to allow sufficiently for the distinction between ritual impurity and sin," with no evidence that proselyte baptism had power regarding the latter. But see Torrance, "Proselyte Baptism," 154; and Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 3:174, who notes that Epictetus (AD 35–135) seems to know of Jewish proselyte baptism (2.9.20–21). Cf. Collins, "Origins of Christian Baptism," 32–35.

baptism had already become an established religious practice in Christianity, which it seemed to have become very early on.¹²¹ John's and the Jewish baptism have in common the initiatory one-for-all nature, linked to the confession of sin and the expression of repentance. Several differences, however, are that the proselyte baptism—like that at Qumran generally—was not administered by others but was self-administered, although three witnesses were required.¹²² Finally, John's water baptism was not political or ritualistic but distinctly ethical and spiritual, with John serving a prophetic role¹²³ to bring an eschatological message of the coming of the Messiah and his judgment—he would bring wrath and cut down the unproductive growth and throw it in the fire.¹²⁴

It is known that John baptized in the Jordan River probably by immersing his converts.¹²⁵ For the Qumran Covenanters, however, the archeological evidence makes even the practice of baptism itself one that has been debated. There are a number of cisterns at Qumran, but the ordinary needs of any relatively large community living in a desert region would have been sufficient to explain a water system of this kind. All cisterns except one, however, are equipped with a large flight of stairs descending into them at least half their length, with the upper steps divided by low partitions to form several parallel descents. Some have argued that these steps indicate a religious use for a cistern, called a *miqveh*, but others have argued to the contrary. Some have even questioned whether these at Qumran were intended for any bathing use, in which case they probably were only for water, with the steps making it easier to draw the water out. There are two smaller basins that were almost certainly baths, but it is impossible to tell whether they had ritual significance.¹²⁶ Some have even thought that the water in the system was used for drinking and maintaining ritual purity, with any ritual

¹²¹ Torrance, "Proselyte Baptism," 154.

¹²² Torrance, "Proselyte Baptism," 151.

¹²³ On John the Baptist as a prophet, see Webb, *John the Baptizer*, 219–378.

¹²⁴ Oepke, "βάπτω," 1.537. See G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 275–279, where he notes the New Testament association of baptism and the spirit, such as is found in John. Cf. John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 89, who notes that the Qumran literature "has relatively few references to the eschatological prophet," such as John the Baptist clearly is depicted.

¹²⁵ See Heron, "Theology of Baptism," 37–38, on βάπτω and שבב; also Oepke, "βάπτω," 1.529–533.

¹²⁶ R. de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: British Academy, 1973), 131–132. See also J.T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 46–49, esp. 48; Cross, *Ancient Library of Qumran*, 67–68.

“baptism” to be done in the flowing waters of the Jordan nearby.¹²⁷ More recently, archaeologists have tended to argue that the staired cisterns are *mikvehs* designed for providing access to the purificatory waters. As Yizhar Hirschfeld says, “Stepped pools were widespread in Judea in the Hasmonean and Herodian periods, when it became the custom to dig such pools in the ground to hold water for ritual purification.”¹²⁸

2.6. *Baptism to Come*

The final issue for discussion concerns the so-called baptism to come. For John, his baptism with water was but the initiatory rite that marked out the true Children of God for the day in the future when an eschatological baptism would occur. John says that when the one greater than he comes, he will baptize with: the “holy spirit” (Matt 1:8; John 1:33) or with the “holy spirit and fire” (Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16).¹²⁹

It has already been mentioned above that Qumran practiced some sort of regular purificatory water ritual in connection with life in this age and also that it expected the coming of the Messiah.¹³⁰ But the Qumran community

¹²⁷ Scobie, *John the Baptist*, 106. This is unlikely, as Webb (*John the Baptizer*, 139–140 n. 23) has pointed out, because the Jordan is ten kilometers from the Khirbet Qumran, but only three kilometers from the oasis Ain Feshka.

¹²⁸ See Yizhar Hirschfeld, *Qumran in Context: Reassessing the Archaeological Evidence* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), *passim* but esp. 79–82 (with photos), 111–112, 115, 117–128, here 79; and VanderKam and Flint, *Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 331. See also Robert Donceel, “Qumran,” in Eric M. Meyers, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (5 vols.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4:392–396, a reasonably contemporary summary; Mogan Broshi, “Was Qumran, Indeed, a Monastery? The Consensus and Its Challengers, an Archaeologist’s View,” in Charlesworth, ed., *Caves of Enlightenment*, 19–37, esp. 24; and Robert Donceel and Pauline Donceel-Voûte, “The Archaeology of Khirbet Qumran,” in Michael O. Wise et al., eds., *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects* (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), 1–38 (with discussion), on some of the major interpretive issues associated with Qumran archaeology. For views on archaeological procedure and practice—not always followed at Qumran—see Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice* (4th ed.; London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 573, 577.

¹²⁹ Friedrich Lang, “πῶρ,” *TDNT* 6: 928–950, esp. 943, contends that the Matthean and Lukan passages are closer to the original here, with the implication that the other two passages contain the same idea but in abbreviated form making the correlation between the two terms—spirit and fire—very close.

¹³⁰ For messianic passages, see Martin G. Abegg and Craig A. Evans, “Messianic Passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Charlesworth et al., eds., *Qumran-Messianism*, 191–203, esp. 192–194. See, for example, CD II 12; V 21–VI 1; XII 23–XIII 1; XIV 19; XIX 10–11; XX 1; 1QS IX 11; 1QSa II 20–21; 4Q252 V 3–4; 4Q521 I II 1, among others. The Qumranites may have expected two Messiahs, one of Aaron and the other of Israel (e.g. CD XII 23–XIII 1; XIV 19;

also seems to have believed that the coming of the Messiah would be superseded by a new dispensation of holy spirit: at the time of visitation, “Then God will refine, with his truth, all man’s deeds, and will purify for himself the structure of man, ripping out all spirit of injustice from the innermost part of his flesh, and cleansing him with the spirit of holiness from all wicked deeds ...” (1QS IV 20–21; translation adjusted). Robinson sees in these words all the “characteristic themes of John the Baptist’s preaching—refining, cleansing, water, and holy spirit—all set in the context of the fire of judgment” (1QS IV 13), “the abolition of evil” (1QS IV 18–19), and the purification of and instruction in the new way (1QS IV 25).¹³¹

Before readily accepting this equation, however, several questions must first be answered. Although there is admittedly much stress on the spirit in the Qumran writings, it is questionable whether this spirit is to be understood as a “divine spirit” or, even more precisely, as a divine agent (or “person”), as the New Testament does, or if it is rather a feeling or sense of inspiration.¹³² The context of 1QS III–IV makes this clear. In the opposition between the “Prince of Lights” and the “Angel of Darkness,” God has “created spirits of light and of darkness” (1QS III 20–21, 25). On the one hand, there is

a spirit of meekness, of patience, generous compassion, eternal goodness, intelligence, understanding, potent wisdom which trust in all the deeds of God and depends on his abundant mercy; a spirit of knowledge in all the plans of action, of enthusiasm for the decrees of justice, of holy plans with firm purpose, of generous compassion with all the sons of truth, of magnificent purity which detests all unclean idols, of careful behaviour in wisdom concerning everything, of concealment concerning the truth of the mysteries of knowledge.
(1QS IV 3–6)

This spirit is opposed by another spirit, to which

belong greed, sluggishness in the service of justice, wickedness, falsehood, pride, haughtiness of heart, dishonesty, trickery, cruelty, much insincerity, impatience, much foolishness, impudent enthusiasm for appalling acts performed in a lustful passion, filthy paths in the service of impurity,

XIX 10–11; XX 1; 1QS IX 11). See Karl Schubert, *The Dead Sea Community: Its Origins and Teachings* (trans. John W. Doberstein; New York: Harper & Bros., 1959), 131. On the two Messiahs of Qumran, see Craig A. Evans, “Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Hess and Carroll R., eds., *Israel’s Messiah*, 85–101, esp. 94–95, and Evans, “Qumran’s Messiah,” 141–143; contra LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 100–103, who believes the passages require unnecessary (and unwarranted) textual emendation.

¹³¹ Robinson, “Baptism of John,” 184. See also Fitzmyer, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 20–21.

¹³² LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 151.

blasphemous tongue, blindness of eyes, hardness of hearing, stiffness of neck, hardness of heart in order to walk in all the paths of darkness and evil cunning.

(1QS IV 9–11)

As the text continues, “[i]n these (lies) the history of all men; in their (two) divisions all their armies have a share for their generations ...” (1QS IV 15).¹³³ Thus, when 1QS IV 21 speaks of cleansing with “the spirit of holiness,” the passage first speaks of “ripping out all spirit of injustice” (20) and continues by speaking of sprinkling “over him the spirit of truth” (21). In other words, the “spirit of holiness” is merely a way of describing the good as opposed to the bad spirit within a person. As the passage says, “[u]ntil now the spirits of truth and injustice feud in the heart of man” (23). Second, William Brownlee has interpreted the “man” of 1QS IV 20–22 as the prophet-Messiah,¹³⁴ in which case the reference is to the figure receiving and not administering the baptism. The apparent majority and later scholars, however, take the reference to an individual or archetypal human being,¹³⁵ but in this case it is one who is already a member of the community, one of the “sons of light,” or even the community itself. Third, in any case, such Qumranic teachings certainly need not be the source of John’s statements regarding the holy spirit, for Ezek 36:25–27, containing the same three elements—sprinkling, cleansing, and the spirit—provides a much more coherent source.¹³⁶ Fourth, a proposed Zoroastrian basis for both baptisms need not be argued. Burrows notes the heavy emphasis on the destruction idea in the *Thanksgiving Hymns* (1QS III 28–36) and posits that John the Baptist and Qumran had a knowledge of Iranian mythology.¹³⁷ The question of Zoroastrian influence on Qumran is moot.¹³⁸ The fact is that there

¹³³ On the “two ways” doctrine and Qumran, see VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 110–111.

¹³⁴ See Brownlee, “John the Baptist,” 43, with notes of those who follow him.

¹³⁵ See Burrows, *More Light*, 60 and 316, citing other early scholars. See now also Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr., and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 131, who take it as a human being. The translation by Vernes (*Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 77) takes it as a universal human (“Man”).

¹³⁶ Brownlee, “John the Baptist,” 43; LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 151.

¹³⁷ Burrows, *More Light*, 60–61.

¹³⁸ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 78, 81, argues against Zoroastrian influence on Qumran, on the basis of the rigid monotheism of the community, the view of light and darkness as created entities, and the fact that the cosmological dualism of Qumran is not based upon two coeval forces. Contra Brownlee, *Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls*, 42.

is no indication in the New Testament of Zoroastrian influence. The word “fire” occurs in a context far removed from Zoroastrian rivers of molten metal.¹³⁹

To clarify the context of John’s remarks, several factors should be noted. First, John’s preaching offers a promise of forgiveness, a promise that offsets the threat of destruction and maintains a balance between judgment and blessing. This is seen in the fact that “spirit and fire” (πνεύματι καὶ πυρὶ) is envisaged as a single event or entity, contrary to Qumran, where one is pitted against the other.¹⁴⁰ Second, while there are possible hints that the Qumran community looked for the coming of a messiah who would bestow God’s spirit—there are at least some contexts where spirit and “anointed one” appear together—there is also the possibly confusing aspect that this person is himself anointed first, which tends more toward a view that the spirit is something that is passed on from anointed to anointed (if the Messiah is being mentioned in 1QS IV 20–22). Even if it is a human being spoken of in 1QS IV, there is the perhaps even greater problem of the nature of the spirits—one of two spirits, akin to the “two ways,” with both possessing the individual—being unlike the Holy Spirit. Besides, John is not speaking of this type of baptism of fire. The coming baptism John refers to, a union of the coming eschatological outpouring and the judgment on a person, is unique to him and not the human depicted in 1QS IV. The step of uniting these two into a single figure (an anointed one or Messiah) may not be a great one, in the sense that it could have been done based upon the ready juxtaposition of the two concepts in the Qumran literature. But the Covenanters did not take the step, probably because John conceived of the concepts in a different way.¹⁴¹ Based more likely on the Old Testament background—Dan 7:1–10 with its “river of fire”; Num 11:1; 1 Kgs 18:38; Psalms, with fire as a symbol of divine judgment; Isa 5:24, with fire that consumes after the harvest¹⁴²—John links the judgment aspect with a conception of spirit as the coming one’s instrument or means of judgment,¹⁴³ as well as a gracious outpouring, and not an internal human characteristic or nature to be substituted. The two concepts of judgment and grace cannot be separated in John the Baptist’s

¹³⁹ LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 152.

¹⁴⁰ James D.G. Dunn, “Spirit-and-Fire Baptism,” *NovT* 14 (1972): 81–92, here 86.

¹⁴¹ Dunn, “Spirit-and-Fire Baptism,” 91.

¹⁴² LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 152.

¹⁴³ Dunn, “Spirit-and-Fire Baptism,” 91. Cf. CD II 12, although the passage speaks of “anointed ones,” and the function of the holy spirit is unclear.

thought. The spirit in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament is God's personal power working directly to perform his will, whether it be in judgment or in bestowal of grace.¹⁴⁴ This context, with the linking of spirit and fire, seems to emphasize the judgmental aspect. For John, the new age has dawned at the coming of Jesus Christ, whereas, for the Qumran community, they are still waiting to become the embodiment of God's work.¹⁴⁵ Since the ideal has already been declared in Jesus, John then specifies the nature of his ministry and work: the imminently expected Christ brings the judgment of God in his Spirit.

3. CONCLUSION

Conclusions regarding John the Baptist and the Qumran community vary, with scholars often taking opposite sides in the debate. A recurring conclusion of some research is to say, with Charlesworth, that John the Baptist may have at one time lived at or with the Qumran community, but that he for whatever reason left the community and undertook his own, independent prophetic ministry.¹⁴⁶ In some ways, this may have appeal as a conclusion because it recognizes what some see as apparent dimensions of John the Baptist's life and ministry that reflect Qumran beliefs and practices. These would include his ascetic, wilderness life, his use of common scriptural texts (Isa 40:3; 61:1; 35:5), and his performing a baptism linked with spirit and fire. This solution also recognizes that there are also obvious differences between the message and ministry of John and of Qumran that the Qumran Covenanters cannot sufficiently explain or account for. On the basis

¹⁴⁴ The topic of the spirit is so complex that the issues can only be alluded to with a likely solution at this point. See Otto Baumgärtel and Eduard Schweizer, "πνεῦμα, πνευματικός," *TDNT* 6: 359–368, for Old Testament usage, and 396–451, for New Testament. There is a distinct correlation in the function of the spirit in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

¹⁴⁵ Robinson, "Baptism of John," 187–188.

¹⁴⁶ Those who hold to a similar conclusion include, for example, Charlesworth, "John the Baptizer and Qumran Barriers," 360–361, 375; Charlesworth, "John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 34–35; Charlesworth, "A Study in Shared Symbolism and Language: The Qumran Community and the Johannine Community," in Charlesworth, ed., *Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 97–152, esp. 151; Charlesworth, "The Fourth Evangelist and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Assessing Trends over Nearly Sixty Years," in Coloe and Thatcher, eds., *John, Qumran, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 161–182, esp. 168–169; Brownlee, "John the Baptist," 35; Schubert, *Dead Sea Community*, 131; John Pryke, "The Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion in the Light of the Ritual Washings and Sacred Meals at Qumran," *RevQ* 5 (1964–1965): 543–552, esp. 546; VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 170; Lichtenberger, "Dead Sea Scrolls," 346; Fitzmyer, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 19, who draws a comparison with Josephus's temporary stay with the Essenes (*J.W.* 2.120); Anderson, "John and Qumran," 38.

of my own examination of the evidence, however, I believe that such a solution—as convenient as it may seem—in fact confuses concomitant circumstances with causality. Those who argue for the similarities reflecting John's having been in some way associated with the Qumran community fail to see that most of these features are not causally related—at least no direct causality has been shown—but are concomitantly linked as reflecting similar religious, cultural, and geographical environments. As far as causality is concerned, there is no firm link between Qumran belief and practice and the life, message, and practice of John the Baptist. Consequently, there may have been practices—such as lustral washings, practiced by both mainstream Judaism and the Qumran sectarians—that John participated in, and there may also have been theological beliefs—such as interpretation of Scripture, and anticipation of a Messiah—that drew from common sources, such as the Old Testament.¹⁴⁷ A better way to define these similarities and differences might be as trajectories. Within the Judaism of the day, there were a number of important trajectories, such as a wilderness trajectory, a prophetic/scriptural trajectory, an immersion trajectory, and an eschatological trajectory. Not only John the Baptist and the Qumran sectarians moved along these trajectories—each in different ways and with varying relations, so that their relations to each other appear as they do—but other streams of Judaism did the same. The result is the ability to plot—as we have attempted to do above—the relationship of John the Baptist to the Qumran community, but also with reference to other realms of Jewish thought. We thus see that John made these trajectories his own within the environment of first-century Judaism. As a result, John the Baptist truly was a unique voice crying in the wilderness, pointing not to his own community and its inhabitants, but calling all people to prepare the way of the coming one.

¹⁴⁷ Another way to speak of this, perhaps, is in terms of typologies, which both John the Baptist and the Qumran Covenanters employ, without implying a dependency relationship. See Evans, "Jesus, John, and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 46–57, who defines wilderness and immersion typologies.

THE TEMPLE ATTITUDES OF JOHN AND QUMRAN IN THE LIGHT OF HELLENISTIC JUDAISM

Wally V. Cirafesi

INTRODUCTION

In recent years a good number of scholars have drawn attention to the similar attitudes toward the temple evinced in the Qumran literature and the Gospel of John.¹ In view of the corresponding experiences of the two communities, this essay will examine the similarities and differences between the way in which each responded to its own “loss” of the temple cult. The primary argument is that, although they may have produced differing results, both the Qumran and Johannine communities drew upon a similar temple theology that was already in circulation in several sectors of early Judaism. This theology allowed the communities (and others like them) to effectively respond to specific socio-religious and historical situations, particularly as it pertained to their relationship to the Jerusalem temple.² To test these

¹ Examples are Alan Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John* (JSNTSup 220; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002); Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (PBM; Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2006); Stephen T. Um, *The Theme of Temple Christology in John's Gospel* (LNTS 312; London: T&T Clark, 2006); Timothy Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity* (WUNT 291; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Nicolas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010); Eyal Regev, “Temple and Righteousness in Qumran and Early Christianity: Tracing the Social Difference between Two Movements,” in Ruth A. Clements and Daniel R. Schwartz, eds., *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity: Proceedings of the Ninth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, Jointly Sponsored by the Hebrew University Center for the Study of Christianity, 11–13 January 2004* (STDJ 84; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 63–88; Noah Hacham, “Exile and Self-Identity in the Qumran Sect and in Hellenistic Judaism,” in Esther G. Chazon and Betsy Halpern-Amaru, eds., *New Perspectives on Old Texts: Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 9–11 January 2005* (STDJ 88; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 3–22.

² Referring to similarities between John and Qumran does not necessitate a literary dependence between the two, which has been suggested in past scholarship (see Raymond Brown, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament,” in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *John and Qumran* [London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972], 1–8; Richard Bauckham, “Qumran and

assertions, I will seek to locate the temple attitudes of the Qumran and Johannine communities within the social, cultural, and historical context of their respective periods within late Second Temple Judaism. Two basic components of John and Qumran's alternative temple ideologies will be identified and will provide the essential structure for the comparative/contrastive analysis. These two components are: (1) an alternative temple sanctuary, and (2) an alternative religious authority.³ It will be suggested that these elements not only represent the core components of the communities' alternative temple attitudes, but they also constitute their positive *response* to a unique *Sitz im Leben*.

To this end, comments will be offered on the socio-historical context of the Qumran community, paying particular attention to how the dynamics surrounding the Hasmonean high priesthood influenced the flight of the community into the Qumran desert and gave rise to the priestly polemic found in several Dead Sea texts.⁴ An evaluation will then be given of the two components mentioned above concerning Qumran's temple ideology. An analogous evaluation will then take place for the Gospel of John.

the Gospel of John: Is There a Connection?," in Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, eds., *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After* [RILP 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997], 267–279). In my view, similarities that are established ultimately reveal only an overlap in theological reflection between the two communities. This *may* be due to the use of a shared tradition, but is in the end impossible to prove. Thus, discussing similarities (or "parallels") in this manner, i.e., without the element of literary dependence, guards us from the potential fallacy of simply assuming a two-way interface between the Gospel writer(s) and the Qumran sectarian community. At the same time, though, it allows their similarities of thought to contribute to our understanding of John's Gospel as the postdated text. On the other hand, a two-way interface between John and Qumran can become a possibility if (1) the Essenes were indeed the sect responsible for writing many of the DSS, (2) John the Baptist was associated with the Essenes, and (3) the John behind the Johannine tradition was well-acquainted with the Baptist and his teaching, perhaps even being one of his disciples (was the Evangelist one of the two disciples mentioned in John 1:35–40?). For further discussion, see James H. Charlesworth, "A Study in Shared Symbolism and Language: The Qumran Community and the Johannine Community," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (3 vols.; Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2006), 3:97–152; James H. Charlesworth, "John the Baptizer and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in Charlesworth, ed., *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 3:1–35; and Enno E. Popkes, "About the Differing Approach to a Theological Heritage: Comments on the Relationship Between the Gospel of John, the *Gospel of Thomas*, and Qumran," in Charlesworth, ed., *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 3:281–317.

³ This terminology is borrowed from Hacham, "Exile and Self-Identity."

⁴ This study allows room for the possibility that (1) the temple attitudes found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) does not represent only one community, and (2) that the Scrolls evince a developing temple ideology, rather than static one. I should add here that the source texts I will consider the most are *Rule of the Community* (1QS), *Peshar Habakkuk* (1QpHab) and the *Damascus Document* (CD).

THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY AS A RESPONSE TO
THE HASMONEAN TEMPLE AND HIGH PRIESTHOOD

The Qumranic polemic against the Hasmonean priesthood as reflected in the DSS seems to revolve primarily around two issues. The first concerns the non-Zadokite lineage of the Hasmonean high priests. The drift away from a Zadokite high priestly service evidently began when Menelaus, a Benjamite whose service was from ca. 172–162 BCE,⁵ outbid Jason (a Zadokite, ca. 175–172 BCE) by paying the Seleucid king three hundred talents of silver more for the office (2 Macc 4:24–25).⁶ The priesthood of Menelaus thus sparked a trend in non-Zadokite high priests that were appointed by foreign rulers—a trend that perhaps lasted until the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.⁷

For the Qumranites, the non-Zadokite, foreign appointment of high priests was a direct assault not only on the biblical tradition of their Israelite ancestors (1 Kgs 1:39; Ezek 44:15; 48:11), but also on the very nature of Jewish identity.⁸ The Zadokite line was regarded as the only lawful ancestry for high priests, and their foreign appointment was seen to advance the corrupting influences of Hellenism. This is most likely the reason why we see the permeation of the phrase בני צדוק in the Scrolls (e.g. 1QS V, 2;⁹ 1QSa II, 24; 1Qsb III, 22; CD III, 21–IV, 4).¹⁰ The phrase is used to designate the only

⁵ See the discussions in James C. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 203–226 and Deborah W. Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (OTM; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 255–256.

⁶ 2 Macc 4:24–25: ὁ δὲ συσταθεὶς τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ δοξάσας αὐτὸν τῷ προσώπῳ τῆς ἐξουσίας εἰς ἑαυτὸν κατήντησεν τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην ὑπερβαλὼν τὸν Ἰάσωνα τάλαντα ἀργυρίου τριακόσια. λαβὼν δὲ τὰς βασιλικὰς ἐντολὰς παρεγένετο τῆς μὲν ἀρχιερωσύνης οὐδὲν ἄξιον φέρων, θυμοὺς δὲ ὤμου τυράννου καὶ θηρὸς βαρβάρου ὀργὰς ἔχων.

⁷ On the lineage of the Maccabees, see Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs*, 280–281. She says, “Matthias and his sons were therefore of the line of Aaron in post-exilic terms, although they were not of the line of Zadok, which had been the traditional line of descent for the high priests.”

⁸ Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs*, 256.

⁹ This text is particularly interesting because it highlights the obedient character of the “sons of Zadok, the priests, who keep the covenant,” which is probably meant to express that the sons of Zadok are the only priests who are faithful to God and his rules (James H. Charlesworth and E. Qimron, “Introduction to 1QS,” in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Rule of the Community and Related Documents* [10 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994], 1:19 n. 84).

¹⁰ 1QS, 1QSa, and 1Qsb should probably be read in light of one another. First, all three documents were found as part of a single scroll, and with extant manuscripts being discovered in Caves 1, 4, and 5 at Qumran. 1QS is the first, followed by 1QSa and 1Qsb. This, coupled with an

legitimate priestly lineage, often being modified by the appositive הכוהנים. The use of the self-identifying slogan, “sons of Zadok, the priests,” then, was the most powerful and efficient way that the Qumranites criticized and protested the non-Zadokite lineage of the Jerusalem priesthood. That is, it functioned as a self-label in their literature, identifying themselves as the true heirs of the high priestly line that was ordained by God.

The second facet of the Qumranic polemic deals more directly with the character of the Hasmonean priestly service itself. The community accused the Jerusalem priesthood of polluting the temple sanctuary, claiming its service was marked by various sorts of immorality. For example, CD IV, 1–10 describes the priestly ministry of the sons of Zadok as those chosen by God to keep watch over his sanctuary. However, in contrast, the text goes on to describe those excluded from the community (i.e., the Jerusalem priesthood) as those who have been enslaved by Belial and who are guilty of “unchastity, arrogance, and defilement of the sanctuary” (CD IV, 11–18).¹¹ To the Qumran community, the Jerusalem priests had “continuously polluted the sanctuary” because they had broken and disregarded the teaching of the Torah (cf. CD V, 6–VI, 2).¹²

Furthermore, 1QpHab VIII, 8–13 and CD VI, 11–17¹³ highlight the Qumran critique of the financial and political motivations underlying the Has-

identical date based on paleographic evidence, suggests that the documents were produced within the same community. However, at the same time the manuscript evidence from the caves suggests that each document underwent its own process of organic development with its content evolving as the needs of the community evolved along with it. Second is the similarity of content that binds the documents together. For example 1QSa II, 11–22, is a mirror representation of 1QS VI, 4–9 (see James H. Charlesworth, “1QS,” in Charlesworth, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1:27 n. 145). The scenario of both texts is a congregational meal, where it is the priest who must first bless the new wine and the bread before any of the congregation is able to eat or drink. According to Charlesworth and Qimron, the only marked difference between them is that 1QSa II, 11–22 is a messianic text that takes place “at the final session of the Endtime,” while 1QS VI, 4–9 takes place “in the present eschatological, but pre-messianic age” (Charlesworth and Qimron, “Introduction to 1QS,” 2).

¹¹ The text arrives at these three “evils” by quoting and interpreting Isa 24:17—פחד ופחיתות ופחיתות (Dread and a pit and a snare are upon you, inhabitants of the earth!” Translation is mine).

¹² See Hacham, “Exile and Self-Identity,” 5; Regev, “Temple and Righteousness,” 64–65.

¹³ 1QpHab VIII, 8–13 reads: “Its interpretation concerns the Wicked Priest, who is called by the name of loyalty at the start of his office. However, when he ruled over Israel his heart became conceited, he deserted God and betrayed the laws for the sake of riches. And he stole and hoarded wealth from the brutal men who had rebelled against God. And he seized public money, incurring additional serious sin. And he performed repulsive acts of every type of filthy licentiousness.” CD VI, 11–19 reads: “But all those who have been brought into the

monean high priesthood.¹⁴ During this period, the high priesthood had reached unprecedented political power, and so became an even greater matter of contestation,¹⁵ frequently being attained by the one willing to pay the most for it. The two texts mentioned above criticize and condemn the Hasmonean high priest specifically (i.e., “the Wicked Priest”) and the Jerusalem priesthood generally (called “the sons of the pit”) because they are (1) arrogant, (2) acquiring wealth for themselves, and (3) oppressing helpless people, such as orphans and widows. It is not unlikely that the monies procured by the Jerusalem priests were used, at least in part, for the retention of their power. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the Qumranites, the priesthood had become simply a political bargaining chip, which de-sacralized the office and made it spiritually ineffective.¹⁶ As Collins notes, “If CD looks forward to a messiah of Aaron who will atone for iniquity (cf. CD 14:19), the implication is that the current Temple cult is ineffective and that a new, messianic priest is needed to restore it.”¹⁷

While such a serious ideological conflict is likely the reason why the community lost its ability to participate in the temple cult, it is also possible that the community itself was forced militarily to flee Jerusalem and give up its priestly authority. VanderKam mentions several scholars who have suggested that during the period of the *intersacerdotium*,¹⁸ the Teacher of Righteousness (the community’s supposed founder), held the high priesthood,

covenant shall not enter the temple to kindle his altar in vain. They will be the ones who close the door, as God said: ‘Whoever amongst you will close its door so that you do not kindle my altar in vain!’ Unless they are careful to act in accordance with the exact interpretation of the law for the age of wickedness: to separate themselves from the sons of the pit; to abstain from wicked wealth which defiles, either by promise or vow, and from the wealth of the temple and from stealing from the poor of the people, from making their widows their spoils and from murdering orphans; to separate unclean from clean and differentiate between the holy and the common; to keep the sabbath day according to the exact interpretation, and the festivals and the day of fasting, according to what they had discovered, those who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus ...” (translations are from Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* [trans. Wilfred G.E. Watson; Leiden: Brill, 1994], 36–37, 200).

¹⁴ That the office of high priest was influenced by money and political power, even before the Hasmonean era, is seen from the examples of Jason and Menelaus (cf. 2 Macc 4).

¹⁵ Lee I. Levine, *Jerusalem: Portrait of the City in the Second Temple Period, 538 B.C.E.–70 C.E.* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 95.

¹⁶ Rooke, *Zadok’s Heirs*, 256 and John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 92.

¹⁷ Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 92.

¹⁸ That is, the seven year gap between the high priestly reigns of Alcimus (159 BCE) and Jonathan (152 BCE), for which we have no historical record.

but was driven out of Jerusalem by Jonathan's armies in 152 BCE.¹⁹ This would indicate that the community that eventually formed around the Teacher at Qumran had direct oppositional ties to the Jerusalem priesthood. In other words, it suggests that the community was not driven away from Jerusalem simply because of ideological differences, but because it had been physically forced to flee. As VanderKam notes, this proposal is left on quite speculative grounds. Nevertheless, it remains the case that, at the very least, extreme dissatisfaction with the non-Zadokite priesthood and its immorality caused the Qumran community to withdraw and establish its own temple system as an alternative to the one in Jerusalem.

QUMRAN'S ALTERNATIVE SANCTUARY

That the Qumran community saw itself as a new temple sanctuary in which God's presence dwelt does not appear to be strongly debated among scholars.²⁰ However, two points seem to be underdeveloped in most studies. The first is that the community's self-understanding as a new temple was far from simplistic. That is, the community did not view itself monolithically as a uniform divine dwelling. Rather, it saw itself as being composed of structured levels of "holy places," similar to the way the Jerusalem temple itself had "layers" of sacred space (i.e., "the Holy Place" and "the Holy of Holies"). The second point is that the community's theology of a de-centralized substitute for the Jerusalem temple has parallels in the broader scope of Hellenistic Judaism.

The community's multilayered sacral structure can be seen in several passages in 1QS. For example, 1QS V, 5c–6a describes the entire community as those who "lay a foundation of truth for Israel, for the Community of an eternal covenant. They shall atone for all those who devote themselves, for a sanctuary in Aaron and for a house of truth in Israel, and for those who join

¹⁹ See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 246–250, although VanderKam himself rejects this idea.

²⁰ For example, see the works of Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Qumran Texts and the New Testament* (SNTSMS 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); R.J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (OTM; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); Robert A. Briggs, *Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation* (Studies in Biblical Literature 10; New York: Peter Lang, 1999); Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 32–33; Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 139–165; Paul Swarup, *The Self-Understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls Community: An Eternal Planting, A House of Holiness* (LSTS 59; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 165–177; and Hacham, "Exile and Self-Identity," 6–7.

them for a Community.”²¹ Worth pointing out is that the context (vv. 4–5) suggests that in order for the community to exist as a spiritual sanctuary it must first be spiritually circumcised. 1QS V, 5b, which most likely alludes to the spiritual interpretation of the law of circumcision given in Deut 10:16,²² reads, “[They] shall rather circumcise in the community the foreskin of the inclination (and) a stiff neck.” Thus, as Swarp notes:

Lines 6–7 show that by doing this they would indeed be a community based on truth and would become partakers of an eternal covenant. They would also function as *the spiritual sanctuary making expiation* for all those joining the community and would judge those who transgressed the covenant.²³

At the level of the entire community, then, it could be said that the community saw itself as a spiritual sanctuary in which atonement could be made not only for the community, but for anyone who would seek to join the community in the future. In the light of this, it is important to note the community’s spiritualized understanding of atonement sacrifices. 1QS IX, 3–6 is perhaps the most explicit on this issue.²⁴ The text communicates that as a substitute for animal sacrifices the community would embrace “the offerings of lips for judgment” and perfect obedience to the law as the means of atonement for one’s sins.²⁵

However, 1QS VIII gives us the more contoured portrait of the community’s experience as a new temple sanctuary. Here, rules are prescribed for the special “council of the community,” which was apparently composed of just fifteen people—twelve laymen and three priests (v. 1). These men were to be “perfect in everything which has been revealed from the whole Torah” (vv. 1–2), and were entrusted “to pay for iniquity by works of

²¹ Translation is from Charlesworth, “1QS,” 21.

²² Swarup, *Self-Understanding*, 168.

²³ Swarup, *Self-Understanding*, 168, italics mine.

²⁴ 1QS IX, 3–6: “When these according are in Israel for a foundation of the Holy Spirit in eternal truth, they shall atone for the offense of transgression and for the treachery of sin, so that (God’s) favor for the land comes without the flesh of burnt-offerings and without the fat parts of sacrifice. And the offerings of lips for judgment is like a smooth odor of righteousness, and a blameless way is like a favorable freewill offering. At that time the men of the Community shall separate themselves as a house of holiness for Aaron in order to united themselves as a holy of holies and a communal house for Israel, that is, for the ones who walk blamelessly” (translation mine).

²⁵ Presumably, Swarup understands “the offerings of the lips for judgment” as “prayer” when he says, “Within this temple formed by the community a life of perfect obedience to the law would take the place of sacrifice. Prayer and right behaviour would be efficacious for atonement instead of sacrifice” (*Self-Understanding*, 168).

judgment and suffering affliction" (vv. 3–4). In VIII, 5–6, this council is called "an eternal plant, a house of holiness consisting of Israel and an intimate Holy of Holies consisting of Aaron."²⁶ Interestingly, the text seems to distinguish between the phrase "house of holiness consisting of Israel" and "an intimate Holy of Holies consisting of Aaron." As seen in other texts (e.g. 1QS V, 6; IX, 6), the title "house of holiness/sanctuary for Aaron" can in fact be used to identify the whole community as God's temple. However, here, a distinction is made between the sacred space comprised of "Israel" and that which is comprised of "Aaron." The most likely explanation for this distinction is that the author has linked the twelve laymen to the "house of holiness consisting of Israel" and the three priests to the "intimate Holy of Holies consisting of Aaron." That is, the laymen represent the community (i.e., "Israel") as the "Holy Place" within the spiritualized temple, while the "inner community" of the three priests (i.e., "Aaron") represents the high priesthood serving in the "Holy of Holies." The author establishes the latter linkage by using the phrase קודש קודשים, which is often used in the Hebrew Bible to denote the most holy inner room of the tabernacle (cf. Exod 26:33).²⁷ Consequently, it is in this inner, spiritual "Holy of Holies" constructed of priests that atonement is made for the land via the sacrifice of lips and pure obedience to the Torah (VIII, 2–3, 6).²⁸

Within the broader scope of Hellenistic Jewish literature, one does not find such a developed counter-sanctuary establishment as seen in the Scrolls, especially concerning the spiritualization of sacrifices.²⁹ Nevertheless, one can detect in the literature a movement by at least some groups of Diaspora Jews towards the de-centralization of the Jerusalem temple. This movement would suggest that (1) some Diaspora Jews attempted to mitigate the necessity of worship and sacrifice at the physical temple building,³⁰

²⁶ Charlesworth, "1QS," 35, although he translates לאהרון as "for Aaron" rather than "consisting of Aaron." There seems to be no reason for his inconsistency in translating the phrase as "consisting of Israel" and "for Aaron."

²⁷ Swarup, *Self-Understanding*, 169–170; M.A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community* (CCWJWC 2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 131.

²⁸ See Swarup, *Self-Understanding*, 168–170. Note Swarup's treatment of the general attitude toward the Jerusalem temple system found in the Qumran literature.

²⁹ However, as Hacham notes, we do see a growing tendency in Diaspora settings for "prayer" to act as a substitute for sacrifice, or at least to be emphasized more than sacrifice (Hacham, "Exile and Self-Identity," 12–13).

³⁰ See Hacham, "Exile and Self-Identity," 6–10. This is not to suggest that Jews living in the Diaspora were disloyal or disparaging towards the temple. For example, in Acts 6:13 Hellenistic Jews accuse Stephen (although falsely) of speaking against "this holy place," and

and (2) the Qumranites drew upon a theology that existed more broadly in early Judaism and gave precedent to the community's attitudes toward the temple. In this way the community is not as radically different or unique in their temple attitudes as is often thought. Two brief examples from Philo and Josephus on this point should suffice.

Philo, although offering support and affirmation of the Jerusalem temple in many of his writings, expresses at least three different ways that God and his people relate to it. First, he notes in *Spec. Laws* 1.66 that since God could never be limited to a physical temple building in the first place, "it is necessary to suppose that the entire world is the temple of God" (ιερόν θεοῦ νομίζειν τὸν σύμπαντα χρῆ κόσμον εἶναι). Second, Philo points to the personal dimension concerning God's dwelling place: "Therefore, be zealous, O soul, to become the house of God, a holy sanctuary" (σπούδαζε οὖν, ὦ ψυχῆ, θεοῦ οἴκος γενέσθαι, ἱερόν ἅγιον, *Somn.* 1.149). Third, by drawing on the biblical tradition of Exod 19:6, Philo points to the communal aspect of God's dwelling, as he notes in *Sobr.* 66 that as king, God's dwelling is supremely in and among his "kingdom," that is, his believing people:

οὗτος τῶν δώδεκα κατάρχει φυλῶν, ἃς οἱ χρησμοὶ "βασιλεῖον καὶ ἱεράτευμα θεοῦ" φασιν εἶναι κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν πρῶτον Σὴμ εὐλογίαν, οὗ τοῖς οἴκοις ἦν εὐχὴ τὸν θεὸν οἰκήσαι· βασιλεῖον γὰρ ὁ βασιλέως δῆπουθεν οἶκος, ἱερός ὄντως καὶ μόνος ἄσυλος.

Note that Philo never rejects or disparages the Jerusalem temple. Nevertheless, his life situation as a Diaspora Jew from Alexandria, and the likelihood that his readers were also Diaspora Jews unable to worship daily in Jerusalem, seem to have led to him to develop a somewhat de-centralized attitude toward the temple in these texts.

Josephus, on the other hand, tells the story about Onias IV, son of the High Priest Onias III, who builds a temple in Egypt, in the nome of Heliopolis (*Ant.* 13.62–73).³¹ He says that when the son Onias saw that Judea was being mistreated by the Macedonians and their kings—and because he was motivated by personal fame—he sent a letter to King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra requesting that he might build a temple in Egypt that would resemble the one in Jerusalem (13.62–63). Included in this letter was an additional request to establish his own Levitical priesthood. Josephus

eventually stone him. It seems accurate to say, then, that Diaspora Jews still retained a great deal of zeal for the temple.

³¹ For a discussion on the nature of this temple, see Anders Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-Historical Study* (ConBNT 37; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2001), 429–436.

recounts that the main reason for Onias's request was his interpretation of a prophecy in Isaiah that there would be a temple to the Most High God built in Egypt by a Jew (13.64).³² Therefore, Onias proposed to the King and Queen that he "cleanse" (*ἀνακαθάρωντι*) one of the Egyptian temples and build his own, so that Egyptian Jews might worship God in harmony as well as serve the King and Queen's needs (13.67–68).³³ Onias is subsequently granted this request, and, according to Josephus, establishes a temple service in Heliopolis.

This passage from *Antiquities* illustrates that even the son of the nation's high priest understood that while the Jerusalem temple certainly held a special place in Jewish theology and identity, there was a flexibility involved in the geographic locale of Jewish worship. Although the text gives no indication as to how widespread Onias's attitude was among popular Judaism, the fact that Onias took his cue from an interpretation of biblical prophecy and found other Jews, priests, and Levites to minister in this temple (13.73), suggests that a good portion of Egyptian Jews must have shared a similar perspective concerning their relationship to the Jerusalem temple. That we read elsewhere in Josephus that a good many Jews from Jerusalem voluntarily came to Alexandria to settle under Ptolemy's rule (*Ant.* 12.9)—even a Jewish high priest named Hezekiah (*Ag. Ap.* 1.186–187)—demonstrates a willingness on the part of Jews to detach themselves from daily involvement with the temple cult.³⁴ This point, of course, must be balanced with texts that imply Egyptian Jews still held the Jerusalem temple in the highest regard.³⁵

³² The text is probably from Isa 19:19, which reads, "In that day there will be an alter to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar at its border for the LORD" (translation mine).

³³ On the historical context and nature of the "unowned" Egyptian temple, see Richard Last, "Onias IV and the ἀδέσποτος ἱερός: Placing *Antiquities* 13.62–73 into the Context of Ptolemaic Land Tenure," *JSJ* 41 (2010): 494–516. See also Von Volkmar Keil, "Onias III.—Märtyrer oder Tempelgründer?" *ZAW* 97.2 (1985): 221–233, who deals primarily with the historical issues surrounding the life of Onias III, but includes comments concerning Onias IV and the temple he built as well (see esp. 229–231).

³⁴ Admittedly, using the word "willingness" is a bit misleading, since the movement of Jews away from Jerusalem to Alexandria cited in the texts from Josephus was the result of war (i.e., the battle of Gaza). In this way, moving to Alexandria was the response of some Jews to a certain life situation. Nevertheless, this is precisely what is being argued in this chapter: inherent in the broader scope of Jewish temple theology was the understanding that while worship at the Jerusalem temple was ideal, there was the ability to worship God genuinely apart from Jerusalem, particularly in the light of certain inhibiting life situations.

³⁵ For example, *Ant.* 12.10 says that Jews from Jerusalem living in Alexandria were still so committed to the Jerusalem temple that they required sacrifices to be sent there instead of offering them in Jewish temples in Egypt.

Judging particularly from the Philo texts, but also from Josephus's account of Onias IV, the concept that God did not dwell solely in the confines of the Jerusalem temple likely provided great reinforcement to Jewish identity in the Diaspora.³⁶ Thus, both the alternative establishment of Qumran and the de-centralizing temple attitudes of Philo and Onias (as portrayed by Josephus) comprise specific responses to certain life situations that inhibited their respective communities from participating in the Jerusalem temple cult.

QUMRAN'S ALTERNATIVE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

We have noted the Qumran community's protest against the non-Zadokite lineage and the immoral behavior that marked the Hasmonean priesthood.³⁷ What is of further importance to us, however, is the specific notion that this counter-priestly establishment at Qumran also symbolized the community's resistance to Jewish religious authority. This resistance can be seen rather clearly in two ways. First, as briefly noted already, during

³⁶ For other Hellenistic Jewish texts, see 2 Macc 5:19; 3 Maccabees; and the *Letter of Aristeas*, the last of which seeks to identify the temple with the Jews of the Egyptian Diaspora rather than Jerusalem Jews (see Hacham, "Exile and Self-Identity," 6–7).

³⁷ There has been some debate as to whether or not the Qumran community was, right from the start, a movement concerned with the issue of the non-Zadokite priestly lineage of the Jerusalem priesthood. Scholars such as Philip Davies, *Behind the Essenes: History and Ideology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (BJS 94; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 51–72, Robert Kugler, "Priesthood at Qumran," in Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2:93–94, 113–114, and John C. Collins, "The Origin of the Qumran Community: A Review of the Evidence," in his *Seers, Sibyls, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 162–167; repr. from Paul J. Kobelski and Maurya P. Horgan, eds., *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 159–178, have suggested that the references to the "sons of Zadok" found in 1QS were later redactions made by later members of the community with priestly concerns. However, Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple*, 145, argues convincingly that such contentions are overstated. He says that the community did indeed have priestly motivations from its inception, basing this assertion on four pieces of evidence. First, the paleographic data suggests that 1QS is earlier than the texts from Cave 4 (texts which have been especially used to argue against the community's early priestly concerns). The priestly material of 1QS thus provides early evidence for the priestly origins of the sect. Second, the pervasiveness of references to the priesthood throughout the Scrolls suggests that priests not only influenced the sect's continuation but its formation as well. Third, the notion that the Scrolls do not specifically denounce the illegitimate genealogy of the Hasmoneans does not mean that the issue of priestly lineage was not a concern of the community. Fourth, 4QMMT dates also from the very early days of the sect and is primarily concerned with the purity of priests and the temple. Thus, it also provides early evidence for the priestly concerns of the community.

the Hasmonean era the high priest had essentially rose to the level of ruler over the Jewish nation. For example, Josephus says of John Hyrcanus, τριῶν τῶν μεγίστων ἄξιος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κριθεῖς, ἀρχῆς τοῦ ἔθνους καὶ τῆς ἀρχιερατικῆς τιμῆς καὶ προφητείας (*Ant.* 13.299; cf. 1 Macc 4:46; 14:41).³⁸ First Maccabees 9:28–30 tells of how after Judas Maccabaeus had died, the Jews appointed his brother Jonathan, who later became high priest, to be their “ruler and governor” (ἄρχοντα καὶ ἡγοούμενον). Thus, Qumran’s break from participation in the Jerusalem temple and its priestly service not only involved a break in religious ideology but also a separation from, perhaps even a rebellion against, those who ruled over the Jewish population in religious matters as well as political and civic ones.³⁹

In view of this separation, the establishment of an alternative religious authority at Qumran primarily came by attributing communal authority to those who functioned as priests within the community’s social structure. 1QS and 1QSa are excellent textual witnesses to this. Judging from these texts, there existed a hierarchy of status that acted as a guide for the social structure of the community, and it appears to have revolved around matters such as age and gender (1QSa I, 4–9), ritual purity and physical well-being (1QSa II, 3–9), as well as individual rank within the community itself (1QS VI, 4).⁴⁰ However, the “sons of Zadok, the priests” are those at the top of this hierarchy, especially with regard to the Law. 1QS V in particular provides support for this assertion.

At a thematic break in 1QS, column five begins a new section concerned with the conduct of the men of the community, “who are devoted to turn from all evil and to grasp to all which he (God) commanded in order for his acceptance.”⁴¹ Here, issues of Torah, wealth, and judgment (לתורה ולהתן ולמשפט, V, 3) are at hand, as the men are commanded not to wander from the statutes of the community in stubbornness of heart (בשרירות לב). Rather, they are to be committed to the practice of truth (לעשות אמת). What is important to note in this legal scenario is the functional role that the sons of

³⁸ This is also implied a few sections earlier in *Ant.* 13.291–293, where a certain Pharisee says to Hyrcanus, ἐπεὶ, φησίν, ἠξίωσας γυνῶναι τὴν ἀλήθειαν, θέλεις δὲ εἶναι δίκαιος, τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην ἀπόθου, καὶ μόνον ἀρκεῖτω σοι τὸ ἄρχειν τοῦ λαοῦ. The exhortation is given to Hyrcanus to give up the high priesthood and “let only the ruling over the people be sufficient for you.”

³⁹ One probably should not draw too harsh a distinction between religious, civic, and political issues within early Judaism, or ancient Israel for that matter.

⁴⁰ On the role of age in the community, see Lawrence Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (SBLMS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 13–26.

⁴¹ The phrase וזה הסדר לאנשי היחד (“And this is the rule for the men of the community”) resembles other places in the document that signal transitions (e.g. I, 1–2; IX, 21).

Zadok play. Following Charlesworth's translation of *ומשיבים על פי* in V, 2 (lit. "those who turn at the mouth"), the men of the community are ultimately "answerable to the Sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the covenant." The key Hebrew phrase is *על פי*, used elsewhere in the document to establish one's authority (cf. V, 21). It identifies the priests, specifically the Zadokites, as the authoritative figures among the community in matters of Torah, as well as daily obedience to it. As the community adheres to the Law under priestly direction, they are said to lay "a foundation of truth for Israel" (V, 5) and become "a sanctuary in Aaron" and "a house of truth in Israel" (V, 6).⁴² Furthermore, when the men of the community seek after obedience to the Torah of Moses, they do so "in accordance with all which has been revealed from it [the Torah] to the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the covenant" (V, 9). From this passage alone, then, we see the authority of the Zadokite priests being established on the basis of divine revelation and their own obedience (i.e., their covenant-keeping; cf. V, 1 and 1QSb V, 22–26).⁴³ The Zadokites evidently held a special place in the community as those to whom God had revealed the divine truth of his Law. Because of this, their instruction was endowed with authority and so binding on the rest of the community.⁴⁴

The second way that the Qumran community established its alternative religious authority was through the community's intentional geographical move away from Jerusalem to the Qumran desert. Richard Bauckham is right in noting the importance of Jerusalem as the literal and symbolic center of the Jewish world, both for Palestinian and Diaspora Jews.⁴⁵ Thousands

⁴² See Hacham, "Exile and Self-Identity," 10–11.

⁴³ 1QSb III, 22–26 emphasizes the close connection between the priesthood and the renewal of God's "eternal covenant."

⁴⁴ 1QSa provides further evidence for the authority of the priests at Qumran. At the beginning of the document, priests immediately take center stage. For example, in I, 1–2, the community must walk "according to the authority of the judgment [i.e., regulation or instruction] of the Sons of Zadok, the priests." A few lines later, the priests are called those who "instruct them [the people] in all their judgments." And in I, 23–25, whenever the Community gathers as an assembly for "judgment," it is under the leadership and authority of "the Sons of Aaron, the Sons of Levi, and the sons of Zadok," all of which are priestly groups. As can be seen, then, a primary role of priests at Qumran was that of *judging*, understood as teaching or legal instruction. That is to say, when it came to matters of Torah and its application to the rules of the community, it was the priests who possessed the authoritative word. Moreover, a good many Qumran scholars, Lawrence Schiffman being one of them, have noticed this heavy emphasis on priestly legal authority in 1QSa, particularly the authority of the Zadokite priesthood. Schiffman comments, "According to numerous sectarian texts they [the Zadokites] are the original leaders who organized the sect and who constituted the main authority figures in the early days of the sect" (*The Eschatological Community*, 35).

⁴⁵ Richard Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Community," in Oskar Skarsaune and

of Jewish pilgrims traveled (perhaps only once in a lifetime) to Jerusalem to celebrate feasts and worship at the temple (cf. Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.66–77). As the biblical tradition attests, Jerusalem was God’s chosen city (e.g. 1 Kgs 8:29) and the expected locus of the eschatological regathering of the people of Israel (Tob 14:5). Yet, evidently, the Qumran community was willing to abandon Judaism’s beloved city. The community chose rather to exist on the margins of society as God’s “true” eschatological community, while severely criticizing those ruling in Jerusalem, as can be seen from texts like 4QpIs^b II, 6–8: “These are the arrogant men who are in Jerusalem. They are the ones who have rejected the Law of God and mocked the world of the Holy One of Israel.”⁴⁶

The establishment of religious authority structures as alternatives to Jerusalem was also known more widely in early Judaism. While Jerusalem, its priests, and the Torah are never disregarded or spoken against, there is a movement in the literature that suggests Jerusalem and the Jewish Scriptures in Hebrew were becoming less crucial to the lives of normal Jews, especially those in the Diaspora. This is seen in two ways. First, the pseudepigraphical work *Letter of Aristeas*, although largely legendary, praises the Greek translation of the Torah as being so *καλῶς καὶ ὁσίως* (“good and hal- lowed”) that *διαμείνη ταῦθ’ οὕτως ἔχοντα, καὶ μὴ γένηται μηδεμία διασκευή* (“it should remain as it is, and there should be not one alteration,” *Let. Aris.* 310–311). This elevation of the Jewish Scriptures in Greek meant that Alexandrian Jews (and subsequently other Diaspora Jews) no longer had to travel to Jerusalem to receive Torah instruction in the Hebrew language.⁴⁷ Second, the fact that synagogues and “houses of prayer” (*οἶκοι προσευχῆς*) were erected throughout the Diaspora suggests that, while Jews knew attendance in the Jerusalem temple would be ideal, they still possessed a legitimate way to worship and serve God.⁴⁸

While the Qumran community certainly evinces a more vigorous and outright resistance to the authority of Jerusalem in its counter-establish-

Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 55–60.

⁴⁶ Translation is from Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, 187. Hacham also notes this text (see “Exile and Self-Identity,” 11).

⁴⁷ This point would seem to remain true even if *Let. Aris.* is an ahistorical account.

⁴⁸ Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 123–126 says, “The synagogue and its service were from the outset considered supplements, not substitutes, for the temple service. The latter revolved around the sacrifices, while the former revolved around the reading of the scriptures. Thus, while the synagogue was by no means opposed to the temple, it did not necessarily side with the priesthood. The lay scribes were closer to its heart than the priests.”

ments, the community was not necessarily unique in its application of the theological principle that God could be effectively worshiped and served outside of the Jerusalem temple and without its priesthood. As we will see next, the Johannine community as represented by the Gospel of John evinces similar counter-establishments, which suggests that its attitude toward the temple cult indeed fits within the scope of early Judaism.

THE POST-70 CE JOHANNINE COMMUNITY AND ITS RESPONSE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

The *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospel of John could provide an appropriate comparison to Qumran as a community that faced the “loss” of the Jerusalem temple in a couple of ways. First, the Gospel seems to reflect the situation of a Christian Jewish community in conflict with a religious authority that has control over the temple cult (cf. 2:18) and is putting believers in Jesus out of the synagogue (9:22; 12:42; 16:2). This is evidenced by the special role that the οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι play in the Gospel as the chief antagonists to Jesus (e.g. 2:18; 5:10; 6:41; 7:35; 8:48, 52; 9:22; 10:31), and who comprise a group often critically portrayed as unbelievers.⁴⁹ Second, and the point upon which this study will focus, the Gospel likely reflects a post-70 CE community struggling to define what it means to be Jewish while the Jerusalem temple is no longer standing.⁵⁰ Since this suggestion involves answering some important historical questions, brief comments are needed concerning the date and provenance of John’s Gospel.

The dating of John’s Gospel has gone through various trends. Baur, Bultmann, and the Tübingen school opted for a late date (ca. 160 CE). Robinson, on the other hand, dated the Gospel very early, to the sixties CE.⁵¹ In the light of the 1935 discovery of \mathfrak{P}^{52} (ca. 125 CE) and its linkage to P.Egerton 2 (ca. 150 CE), both of which are witnesses to John,⁵² dating the Gospel

⁴⁹ Peter Hirschberg, “Jewish Believers in Asia Minor according to the Book of Revelation and the Gospel of John,” in Skarsaune and Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, 230–237; Urban C. von Wahlde, “Literary Structure and Theological Argument in Three Discourses with the Jews in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* (1984): 575–584; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:214–222.

⁵⁰ This is also the perspective of Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus’ Body*, 19.

⁵¹ John A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 254–311.

⁵² See the helpful comments in Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (ed. Francis J. Moloney; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 209–210.

anytime after 100 CE has become more difficult to defend. Late second-century citations of the Apostolic Fathers that reflect an awareness of John's Gospel also put constraints on later dates (e.g. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14). However, Robinson's early, pre-70 position appears not to have taken hold in contemporary scholarship either.⁵³ Thus, the majority of scholars date the Gospel to the latter part of the first century, around 90 CE.⁵⁴ This date, which I accept, fits nicely on three levels. First, it is able to take into account the witnesses of the early papyri documents noted above;⁵⁵ second, as Keener notes, 90 CE might best reflect the historical situation regarding the division between the Johannine community and the synagogue that is detectable in the Gospel (cf. John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2);⁵⁶ and third, it allows time for the author(s) of John to become acquainted well enough with the Synoptic material in circulation so as to presuppose its content in the writing of John's Gospel.⁵⁷

With regard to provenance, the geographic origins of John have traditionally been attributed to Asia Minor, specifically Ephesus. Current scholarship seems to favor this location as well, although several other options such as Egypt, Syria, and Palestine have been suggested.⁵⁸ Citations from the church fathers who report that John wrote from Ephesus is powerful evidence in favor of an Asia Minor provenance (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.1.1; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.23.6). I find Keener's more nuanced position to be persuasive.

⁵³ See, for example, Kerr's arguments against Robinson in Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body*, 23–25.

⁵⁴ E.g. B.F. Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John: The Authorized Version with Introduction and Notes* (London: John Murray, 1882), xxviii; C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 128; D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5–6; Brown, *Introduction*, 215; Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body*, 19–25; Keener, *John*, 1:140–142; D.A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1991), 82–86; Ben Witherington III, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 38; George Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; 2nd ed.; Nashville: Nelson, 1999), lxxviii. However, one should not forget the more complex dating system for John found in Urban von Wahlde's recent commentary. He dates the first edition of the Gospel to 55–65 CE, the second edition to 60–65 CE, and the third edition to 90–95 CE (*The Gospel and Letters of John* [ECC; 3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 1:50–55).

⁵⁵ Additional documents could include Bodmer Papyri II and XV (P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵), which are ca. 175–225 CE.

⁵⁶ Keener, *John*, 1:42.

⁵⁷ So Barrett, *John*, 127–128.

⁵⁸ Stephen Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter* (Nashville: Nelson, 1978), 148–149; John Fenton, *The Gospel according to St. John* (NCB; Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 16; Keener, *John*, 1:149.

He notes that the Gospel probably originated in Palestine, but was completed and began circulation at a later date in Asia Minor. Thus, the Gospel may have been intended for a chronologically and geographically removed Palestinian Jewish audience.⁵⁹

This view on the date and provenance of John provides an effective framework through which to view the Gospel as essentially answering the question, how are Jews to be Jews, that is, how are they to worship and serve the one true God, in the wake of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple? Although the Gospel likely began circulation within a Diaspora setting among Jews who had become familiar with daily life void of the Jerusalem temple, the basic question of how to define one's "Jewishness" remained a significant issue for *all* Jews, especially for those originally from Palestine. Thus, John functions, at least in part, as a response to this historical situation, one similar to Qumran's: the Gospel seeks to identify for its community (1) an alternative temple sanctuary, and (2) an alternative religious authority. However, according to the Gospel, both counter-establishments are not built around a community of priests, but around the individual, Jesus.

JOHN'S ALTERNATIVE SANCTUARY

The two primary passages in the Gospel that constitute the community's response to the destruction of the temple are 1:14 and 2:21. Whether or not these verses are later additions made by a final editor do not concern this study, since they nevertheless seem to reflect the reactionary temple ideology of a community seeking to address issues surrounding a temple-less Judaism.

John 1:14 and the Σκηνή of Jesus

The Gospel's alternative attitude toward the dwelling place of God is displayed at its outset. Yet it begins developing this attitude not by directly referencing the temple, as is seen in 2:21, but by alluding to what many

⁵⁹ This position helps to explain why John's Gospel seems to evince a detailed familiarity with the geography and topography of Palestine (Richard Bauckham, "Historiographical Characteristics of the Gospel of John," *NTS* 53.1 [2007]: 20) and seems to reflect Jewish expectations of eschatological figures that were common in Palestine at the time (Richard Bauckham, "Messianism according to the Gospel of John," in John Lierman, ed., *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John* [WUNT 2.219; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006], 67–68). For more discussion, see Keener, *John*, 1:144.

have said is the Old Testament tabernacle.⁶⁰ However, while the use of the verb σκηνώω (“to pitch a tent, live temporarily”) in 1:14 may allude to the institution of the tabernacle (e.g. Exod 25:8–9), it very well may be an allusion specifically to the σκηνή μαρτυρίου of LXX Exod 33:7. There are two points of evidence for this. First, the lexical item σκηνή (“tent”) is used eleven times in a span of only five verses in Exod 33:7–11, the first of which is modified by the genitive μαρτυρίου (“testimony”). Since the concept of “testimony” is a significant theme in the Prologue (the μαρτυρ- root occurring four times in John 1:7–15), there is good possibility that σκηνώω in 1:14 is meant to be read against this σκηνή μαρτυρίου backdrop.⁶¹ Second, understanding σκηνώω as a reference to the Tent of Testimony seems to better reflect Johannine theology. That is, the Tent of Testimony was set up outside the camp of Israel, so that any Israelite wanting to seek the LORD could do so. But it was primarily the place where the LORD would speak to Moses “face to face, as if someone would speak to his own friend” (Exod 33:11). In this light, the Gospel of John presents Jesus as a new Tent of Testimony, so that if one wishes to seek and know the LORD they must seek him in the person of Jesus (1:18; 2:18–21; 4:19–26; 14:6, 9; 17:3). At the same time, these verses designate Jesus as the locale of God’s

⁶⁰ For example, E. Haenchen, *John: A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (trans. R.W. Funk; ed. R.W. Funk and U. Busse; 2 vols.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1:119; Morna Hooker, “John’s Prologue and the Messianic Secret,” *NTS* 21 (1974): 53; J. Palmer, “Exodus and the Biblical Theology of the Tabernacle,” in T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole, eds., *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 19; Carson, *John*, 127–128; and Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to John* (BNTC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 104; Anthony T. Hanson, “John 1.14–18 and Exodus 34,” *NTS* 23 (1976): 91. The argument in favor of an allusion to the tabernacle typically begins first with the use of the verb σκηνώω in 1:14. In the LXX, the nominal form σκηνή is used 97 times in Exodus, and nearly 99% of these usages appear in the Tabernacle narratives of chs. 25–40. That this word is thematically connected to the tabernacle is strengthened in light of other lexical choices the Gospel author could have made (e.g. [σு]ζάω “to live, live with,” κατοικέω “to inhabit, dwell,” περιπατέω “to walk, live”). Second, the two-fold use of the term δόξα echoes the notion of the “glory of God” that descended into the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle as a visible representation of the divine presence. The combinational use of σκηνώω and δόξα could have texts like Exod 40:34–35 as a background. Third, John’s mention of the λόγος being πλήρης χάριτος και ἀληθείας (“full of grace and truth”) most likely represents the Hebrew phrase אמת ורוב ואמת (“abounding in steadfast love and truth/faithfulness”), which God declared to Moses when he revealed his glory in Exod 34:6. In light of this, John does indeed seem to be drawing on the tabernacle tradition in Exodus and applying it to the λόγος.

⁶¹ See Henry Mowley, “John 1:14–18 in the Light of Exodus 33:7–34:35,” *ExpTim* 95 (1984): 136.

special revelation, that is, as the one who had a unique relationship with God, similar to the way Moses did with the LORD via the Tent of Testimony.⁶²

The Prologue's allusion to the *σκηνή μαρτυρίου* of Exodus and its reorientation toward Jesus suggests that the Gospel is responding to the concern that God's dwelling place had been destroyed when the Romans razed the temple in 70 CE. While Hellenistic Jews may have been better prepared to cope with this concern, since they lived daily life without personal involvement in the temple cult, the fact that the Jerusalem temple symbolized God's personal dwelling among his chosen people likely caused Jews to wonder if God had abandoned them as a nation. The writer(s) of the Fourth Gospel answers by alluding to the Exodus tradition, and by affirming that God had not abandoned his people and had even visited them via his special agent, Jesus, the Messiah of Israel.

John 2:13–22: Jesus as the Sanctuary of God

John 2:13–22 gives perhaps the clearest glimpse into the Johannine community's attitude toward the temple cult. It was seen in 1QS VIII that the Qumran community understood itself as a spiritual temple that offered spiritual sacrifices to God, being composed of "councils" of twelve laymen and three priests, the former symbolizing "the Holy Place," and the latter symbolizing "the Holy of Holies." This self-understanding arose out of a dissatisfaction with the Jerusalem priesthood at the time, and functioned as an expression of the community's anticipation of a restored and purified temple system, which was to be carried out by a messianic high priestly figure.⁶³ This sort of understanding of a spiritualized temple cult is likewise reflected in John 2:13–22. In 2:14–17, Jesus is portrayed as the refiner of Israel's corrupted temple, a scene which may allude to LXX Mal 3:1–4 (cf. *Pss Sol* 17:30–32). Malachi, reflecting on the permanent priesthood of Levi (2:4–7), anticipates a day when an ideal, eschatological priestly figure will be sent by God to turn the way of the people back to the Lord and refine the temple cult and its sacrifices, so that the proper worship of God might once again take place (3:1–4).⁶⁴

⁶² Mowvley, "John 1:14–18," 136. Additionally, the early Jewish texts *Sirach* and *Wisdom of Solomon* also reflect *σκηνή*-language in relation to their theme of "wisdom." However, while these texts are illuminating, it is unlikely that they have in mind the Tent of Testimony specifically. Their use of *σκηνή*-language seems thoroughly concerned with the institution of the Tabernacle (e.g. *Sir* 24:8, 10, 15; *Wis* 9:7–8).

⁶³ Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple*, 115.

⁶⁴ Three points of evidence are: (1) Mal 2:4–7 is likely Malachi's reflection upon God's

In John 2, the Johannine community may be expressing its understanding of Jesus as God's eschatological Priest, restoring and refining his temple.⁶⁵ However, John takes Jesus' priesthood to a higher level in 2:21. That is, Jesus is not simply God's priestly messenger sent to clean out the temple. Rather, Jesus is the $\acute{o} \nu \alpha \delta \varsigma$, that is, the inner dwelling place of God himself, perhaps even understood as the new קדש קדשים . The spiritualizing of God's sanctuary is reflective of the priestly centered temple ideology of the Qumran community, as well as Philo's emphasis on the personal dimension of God's dwelling in *Somn.* 1.149.

The Fourth Gospel not only spiritualizes the temple as God's dwelling place, but also appears to spiritualize temple sacrifice by noting the sacrificial nature of Jesus' priestly ministry.⁶⁶ The narrative comment in 2:13 ("And the Passover of the Jews was near," cf. 19:14) is probably meant to draw a connection between the slaughtering of the passover lambs in the temple with Jesus' crucifixion.⁶⁷ In 1:29, and again in 1:36, John the Baptizer calls Jesus $\acute{o} \acute{\alpha} \mu \omega \varsigma \tau \omicron \upsilon \theta \epsilon \omicron \upsilon \acute{o} \acute{\alpha} \lambda \rho \omega \nu \tau \eta \nu \acute{\alpha} \mu \alpha \rho \tau \iota \alpha \nu \tau \omicron \upsilon \acute{\alpha} \delta \sigma \mu \omicron \upsilon$, and in 11:50–51, the high priest, Caiaphas, prophesies that Jesus would die sacrificially, that is, in behalf of the Jewish nation.⁶⁸ However one may wish to nuance John's theology of

covenant made to Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, in Num 25:11–13. Evidence for this is in the presence of a ברית ("covenant") that brings שלום ("peace"), and the idea that Levi (i.e., a priest) השיב ("turned") and atoned for the sins of many Israelites. (2) Mal 2:7 calls the priest מלאך יהוה צבאות ("the messenger of the LORD of Hosts"). (3) It is thus likely that the messenger of Mal 3:1–4 is a priestly figure sent to purify the temple cult. This leads Bauckham to conclude that the expectation of an eschatological high priest was understood as a "Phinehas-Elijah" figure, which appears in subsequent Jewish literature, such as Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* (Bauckham, "Messianism according to the Gospel of John," 37–38). Schuchard draws attention to the possible parallel between the LXX of Mal 3:3 "and he will pour them out as gold and silver" (departing from the MT) and John 2:15 "and he poured out the money of the money-changers" (B.G. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture: The Interrelationship of Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991], 25 n. 40).

⁶⁵ On the eschatological nature of John 2:13–22, see Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body*, 67–101.

⁶⁶ Cf. 1QS VIII, 2–3, 6.

⁶⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1971), 664, 667; Keener, *John*, 2:129–131. The theme of "sacrifice," appearing at various points in the Gospel, provides evidence for reading the banquet scene in John 2:1–11 along the lines of a sacral meal that replaces temple sacrifices, similar to what is found in Qumran literature. For a discussion on Jesus and the notion of sacrifice in John from a narrative-critical perspective, see John P. Heil, "Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John," *CBQ* 57 (1995): 735–737.

⁶⁸ Additionally, there is a possibility that the Gospel writer(s) has purposely structured ch. 2 with the wedding episode placed directly before the cleansing of the temple. That is, the wedding banquet could find its background in the Qumran communal meal. Some

atonement, there is certainly a reorienting (spiritualizing) of animal sacrifices to Jesus' death at his crucifixion. Thus, 2:13–22 may be seen to paint a priestly portrait of Jesus, which acts as a powerful response to the question of how Judaism was to operate without both a temple sanctuary and a priesthood to carry out temple sacrifices on behalf of the people. That is, in these verses, Jesus is not only presented as a messianic priest who offers sacrifice for God's people, but he himself is the Holy of Holies in which the priestly service is carried out, and he himself is the sacrifice that is offered. In this way, John's messianic atonement theology reflects the priestly ideology of Qumran, and also resembles other early Jewish sources that move the worship and service of God away from the Jerusalem temple building.

JOHN'S ALTERNATIVE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

Also similar to the Qumran community's response to the Hasmonean priesthood is the manner in which John establishes an alternative religious authority. This is seen in two ways: (1) the Gospel's own movement of the worship and service of God away from the Jerusalem religious center, and (2) its portrayal of Jesus as an authoritative teacher of the Torah.

John 4:19–26 and the Location of True Worship

That the Jerusalem temple functioned as the authoritative center for Jewish worship is expressed in Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4:19–26.⁶⁹ But whereas the woman is primarily concerned with the

scholars have suggested that the communal meal practiced at Qumran was sacral in nature, and functioned as a substitute for the temple cult and its sacrifices. For example, Gärtner says, "The Qumran sacral meal may have been intended to replace the custom of the temple priests' eating the flesh of the sacrificial animals: the holy oblation must be eaten by the sanctified in the consecrated room—a situation emphasized by the rites of purification in connection with the meal. The rites may also have included the taking of a ritual bath, a condition likewise imposed on the temple priests" (Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community*, 10–13). If this is an accurate assessment of the relationship between the communal meal and the Qumran perception of the temple system, then it may help conceptually to elucidate the connection that seems to exist between John 2:1–11 (meal) and vv. 13–22 (temple). But see Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community*, 59–67, who disagrees strongly with Gärtner's conclusions. However, if John 2:1–11 is read with this background, it could be seen to anticipate Jesus' cleansing of the temple, which is performed in the context of Passover. Thus both episodes could be understood as ways the Johannine community spiritualized temple sacrifices.

⁶⁹ The *προσκυον*-root is used ten times in John 4:20–24.

location of worship, the Gospel undercuts this concern by emphasizing not the place, but the manner in which true worship of God is carried out. Jesus pushes the concept of worship beyond the Jerusalem temple confines, as he says that true worship is done ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ (v. 24), and not necessarily in Jerusalem or on Mt. Gerizim.⁷⁰ The reason why Jesus can say this becomes obvious to the reader in light of the Gospel's earlier portrayals of him in 1:14 and 2:13–22, and because of Jesus' messianic self-identification in 4:26. That is, authentic and authoritative worship of the God of Israel is no longer tied to geography, but rather to a person, Jesus the Messiah.⁷¹ This movement from place to person de-centralizes the authority of the Jerusalem center, and provides a theologically effective response for a community of Jews faced with the historical inability to worship at the Jerusalem temple due to its destruction. The story of Onias in Josephus's *Antiquities*, then, becomes intensely relevant as a theological background to Jesus' sayings in John 4. While Jerusalem never lost its value as God's holy city (cf. *Ant.* 12.10), legitimate Jewish worship and sacrifice could take place outside Jerusalem in, for example, Egypt, which provided a better home for Jews during times of war.

Jesus as Authoritative Torah Teacher

In his introduction to Jewish influences on early Christianity, Skarsaune notes that when the temple was destroyed in 70 CE, not only did the Romans knock the entire building down, they also massacred the priests: “[The priests] did not escape; they perished, and so did the priesthood and its temple service. The high priest and the Sadducees also disappeared with the temple; they lost everything that gave them power.”⁷²

While post-70 CE Judaism did eventually reorganize itself under the teaching of the rabbis, the extermination of a large portion of priests and the leveling of the Jerusalem temple likely presented Jews with the challenge of redefining that class of people who would be entrusted with the authoritative teaching of Torah. It has already been noted that with the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures, non-Palestinian Jews could learn and hear

⁷⁰ For treatments concerning the meaning of “in Spirit and in truth” see Um, *Temple Christology*, 173–186 and B. Thettayil, *In Spirit and Truth: An Exegetical Study of John 4:19–26 and a Theological Investigation of the Replacement Theme in the Fourth Gospel* (CBTE 46; Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 123–165.

⁷¹ On the linkage between worship that is “in Spirit and in truth” and first-century messianic expectations, see Thettayil, *In Spirit and Truth*, 166–186.

⁷² Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple*, 104.

the Torah in a more accessible language without needing to make pilgrimage to Jerusalem (cf. *Let. Aris.* 309–322). Yet this did not nullify the significance that Jerusalem still held as the geographical home base for Torah instruction. With this in mind, it is plausible that a major question the Fourth Gospel seeks to address is, to whom should Jews turn in order to receive authoritative instruction in the Law now that the temple and the priesthood have been devastated? The Gospel, of course, answers this question christologically.

The Mosaic law figures prominently in John as a whole.⁷³ For example, as early as 1:17, “the Law which was given through Moses,” is contrasted with “the grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ.”⁷⁴ In 5:1–45, the author records an extended interaction between Jesus and the οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. Here, the primary reason for the conflict revolved around Torah interpretation, particularly the keeping of Sabbath, and Jesus’ authority over it in light of his relationship to God (cf. 5:17–18). However, the passage in which Jesus’ Torah authority is seen most clearly is 8:12–29.⁷⁵

The setting of the passage is in the temple “on the last great day of the Festival” (7:37).⁷⁶ In 8:20, the author specifically tells us what Jesus was doing the temple: ταῦτα τὰ ῥήματα ἐλάλησεν ἐν τῷ γαζοφυλακίῳ διδασκῶν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ. In the midst of the events of the last day of the Festival of Tabernacles, Jesus is teaching in the temple, with the Law being of central importance to his discussion with the Pharisees (8:17). However, in contrast to the Qumran priests, who seem to have possessed uncontested authority with regard to the Law (1QS V, 9), the authority of Jesus’ teaching is the very thing under examination. This is expressed in the Pharisees’ statement to Jesus in 8:13, σὺ περὶ σεαυτοῦ μαρτυρεῖς, ἢ μαρτυρία σου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής. Interestingly, John defends Jesus’ teaching in a similar way that 1QS establishes the Torah

⁷³ See, for example, 1:45; 5:45–46; 7:19, 22; 9:28; 10:34; 12:34; 15:25; 19:7.

⁷⁴ John 1:17 should probably be understood in view of the phrase χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος in 1:16. For more on these verses, see Ruth Edwards, “XAPIN ANTI XAPITOS (John 1.16): Grace and Law in the Johannine Prologue,” *JSNT* 32 (1988): 3–15.

⁷⁵ I am assuming the inauthenticity of 7:53–8:11. For a helpful survey of the differing positions, see Keener, *John*, 1:735–738.

⁷⁶ See Keener, *John*, 1:722, 739. The last day of the festival featured water-drawing and torch-lighting ceremonies in which the priesthood held an important role. Priests were responsible for pouring out libations of water at the foot of the alter in the temple and for the lighting of torches. Jesus’ pronouncement in 8:12 of being the “light of the world” and of his followers possessing “the light of life” occur within this social-religious context. The concept of “light,” and specifically “the light of life,” finds close parallels in 1QS III, 6–7: “By the spirit of true counsel of God the ways of a man will all his iniquities be atoned for, so that he can behold the *light of life* (באור החיים).”

authority of the Zadokite priests, that is, by identifying divine revelation as the source of Jesus' teaching, and by highlighting Jesus' own complete obedience to God (see above). In 8:16, Jesus says that he is not alone in his judgment but rather it is ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ. Two verses later, Jesus adds that the Father μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ. Even more explicit, however, is Jesus' saying in 8:28, καθὼς ἐδίδαξέν με ὁ πατήρ ταῦτα λαλῶ. It is evident here that Jesus is claiming a divine origin for his teaching. Further, in 8:29, Jesus gives the basis for his unique relationship with the Father: ὅτι ἐγὼ τὰ ἀρεστὰ αὐτῷ ποιῶ πάντοτε. The concept of Jesus' obedience to God arises elsewhere in the Gospel (e.g. 4:34; esp. 8:46), but only here in ch. 8 is it used to specifically to authenticate his teaching. With this presentation of Jesus, then, the Gospel has given Torah-observant Jews a new locus for authoritative Torah teaching. The Gospel represents a community that had found a new "Teacher of Israel" (cf. 3:9) in the wake of the extermination of the priesthood and the temple's destruction. This not only resembles the way the Qumran community formed around its Teacher of Righteousness, but also the alternative priesthood established by Onias in Egypt.

CONCLUSION

Two major similarities have been highlighted between the counter-temple establishments of John and Qumran. The first is the construction of spiritual sanctuaries as the divine dwelling place in which spiritual sacrifices were offered. The second is the establishment of alternative religious authorities, which included a geographical shift away from Jerusalem as the religious center and different sources for authoritative instruction in the Torah. Further, it was argued that the theological foundation for these sorts of alternative attitudes was already in circulation throughout early Judaism, which indicates that these attitudes of John and Qumran were not necessarily unique. This was especially seen in writers like the author of *Aristeas*, Philo, and Josephus. Moreover, it was suggested that each of these counter-temple attitudes constituted a response to a specific life situation. *Aristeas*, Philo, and Josephus reflect the perspective of Jews living in the broader Hellenistic world, and express how they dealt with their Jewish identity while being geographically removed from Jerusalem, whether because of war or the desire of a better life. John and Qumran, on the other hand, likely reflect the attitudes of two communities struggling to deal with barred access to the Jerusalem temple, whether on a religious level (Qumran) or because it had been destroyed (John). Thus, in the end, what binds all of these

differing perspectives together are the needs for a legitimate temple sanctuary and religious authority. In this way Hellenistic Judaism, or at least portions of it, provide an illuminating context for the temple theology of Qumran and the theological origins of John's Gospel.

RHETORIC AND THE ART OF PERSUASION IN THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Leo G. Perdue

1. INTRODUCTION: THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Octavian (Augustus; 27 BCE–14 CE) was the first Roman Caesar to rule over Egypt and its capital, Alexandria. During his period of rule, the Jewish population in Egypt in general enjoyed imperial favor, although this began to deteriorate following his death. Octavian allowed Jews to assemble without restraint in the synagogues for worship and civic matters. The Jewish situation, especially in Italy, seriously worsened when the schemer and politically ambitious Sejanus, an advisor to the successor of Octavian, Tiberius (14–37 CE), was allowed to make many political decisions for the secluded emperor. He initiated persecution against the Jews in Italy who were loyal to the Caesar, and even expelled them from Rome. Being made aware of this intrigue, Tiberius ordered Sejanus executed in 31 CE. He then made overtures to the offended Jews especially by prohibiting any opposition to the practice of their traditions. Unfortunately for the Jews in Egypt, however, Avillius Flaccus in 32 CE was granted the post of Prefect of Egypt (32–39 CE) and conditions ripened for Jewish persecution. He eventually authorized and ordered the carrying out of a pogrom against the Egyptian Jews, only to be stopped finally by Gaius Caligula, who recalled Flaccus to Rome, banished him, and then had him murdered for causing disturbances to the social order.

Philo paid two visits to Rome as the leading envoy of a Jewish, Alexandrian delegation, the first rebuffed by Gaius Caligula, because of his mad desire to be worshipped as a god, and the second culminating in his successor Claudius's rejection of the rival Greek Alexandrian delegation's request for its own internal senate. In his ruling, he questioned whether education in the *ephebeion* would lead one automatically to Alexandrian citizenship but did allow contemporary *ephebes* to be citizens, and brought to an end all hostilities against the Jews, requiring that tolerance be extended to them. However, Jews who could not prove they were citizens thereafter could not petition successfully to receive the coveted citizenship of the *polis*

of Alexandria. This would have allowed them to attend gymnasia and to advance politically in the Roman state. Finally, Claudius warned the Jews against engaging in treacherous acts of disloyalty that would be countered by resolute retaliation.

According to Philo two of the five quarters in Alexandria were Jewish, and a million Jews lived in Egypt by the first century CE (*Flacc.* 43), most of whom would have resided in Alexandria and its outskirts.¹ Even though these are exaggerated numbers, cultural and literary evidence points to the large number of Jewish inhabitants in this city of culture. During the period of Ptolemaic rule, Jews were identified as an ἔθνος, but were not full citizens of Alexandria. Nevertheless, they were allowed to set up and operate their own communal structure and to enjoy many rights, including self-regulation of their social life and the freedom of religion, without being forced to worship the gods or the kings.² While not a legally constituted, civic πολιτεύμα, meaning a state-recognized, self-sufficient political entity of citizens, they were one only in the sense of an ethnic and cultic group.³

At the head of a Jewish community was the ἐθνάρχης who “ruled the people, judged its cases and supervised the implementation of contract and orders, like the ruler of an independent state” (Strabo as quoted by Josephus, *Ant.* 14.117). Octavian replaced this position with the γερουσία of 71 members (Philo, *Flacc.* 74; *t. Sukkah* 4.6; *Sukkah* 51b). Philo’s mentioning of the ἄρχων perhaps referred to those who held the highest status and greatest respect (cf. Josephus, *J.W.* 7.47). Josephus calls them “the heads of the γερουσία” (*J.W.* 7.412). The γερουσία made the important decisions for the community in handling Jewish internal affairs and could follow their

¹ For a more reasonable assessment of numbers, see the essay by Diana Delia, “The Population of Roman Alexandria,” *TAPA* 118 (1988): 275–292. She estimates the Jewish population was approximately 180,000 of the 500,000–600,000 inhabitants of Alexandria during the first century CE. Josephus estimates the entire population of Roman Egypt, not including Alexandria, to be 7.5 million people (*J.W.* 2.385). Delia estimates that of the 8 million total, 6.5 million were Egyptians, and 1.5 million were Greek-speaking immigrants. Possibly 300,000 of the population were Jewish.

² See Shimon Applebaum, “The Organization of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora,” Shemuel Safrai and Manahem Stern, eds., *The Jewish People in the First Century* (CRINT 1/1; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 464–503. Jews were recognized as an ethnic and cultic community, but not a semiautonomous civic entity (*Let. Aris.* 310 uses the word πολιτεύμα, perhaps of the Jews, but in an ambiguous manner). With the Roman Empire, Jews were no longer allowed to be governed internally by an ethnarch.

³ See Gregory E. Sterling, “Judaism between Jerusalem and Alexandria,” in John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling, eds., *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 13; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 266.

own laws and customs. Jewish courts (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.235) dealt with local decisions, although individual Jews possessed the right to appeal to the secular city court. Other Jewish privileges included freedom from sacrificing to other deities, observation of the Sabbath, including exemption from military service, and the collection and sending of money to Jerusalem for the temple. Yet no Jewish community in any city possessed any political power. During the reign of the Ptolemies Jews were classified among “other Hellenes,” while the Egyptians initially were excluded entirely. This Jewish status was to change with the Romans who denied them citizenship of a *polis* and placed them lower than the Greeks, but on a par with the Egyptians.

However, Philo, in *Legatio ad Gaium* 133, tells that honorific inscriptions and emblems in honor of the emperors were placed in the synagogues (cf. *Flacc.* 48–49). Upon the accession of Gaius Caligula, the Jews of Alexandria passed a resolution in Gaius’s honor, which Flaccus did not forward to the emperor (*Flacc.* 97–103). Augustus even ordered daily sacrifices of whole burnt offerings in the temple of Jerusalem as a tribute to the most high God (*Legat.* 157–317), while Jews of the Diaspora were allowed to contribute their temple tax to the Jerusalem priesthood. This pleasant relationship between Egyptian Jews and Rome changed when Gaius Caligula demanded his images be placed in the synagogues and in the temple of Jerusalem (*Flacc.* 41–50; *Legat.* 134–135, 188, 203, 346).

Jews in Alexandria had a more favorable status than that of the “Greek” citizens of Alexandria when it came to the former having a legal council of elders, while the Greeks were denied this group. However, things were also less favorable. Augustus introduced a tax, the *λαογραφία*, payable by the male population of Egypt between the ages of 14 and 60 or 62 (*CPJ* 1: 59–65). The Greek citizens of Alexandria were exempted, while the Greek members of the capitals, the *metropoleis* of the *nomes*, paid a reduced rate. The criterion for this concession was Greek education, and from CE 4/5 the “members of the gymnasium” were recognized as a class. The Jews in Egypt in general were classified as non-Greeks and made liable for the tax. Those who could prove that they met the criterion for Greek citizenship were treated as the Greeks. But other Jews, who could not, were denied entrance to the gymnasia and thus to any advancement in social status in Roman Egypt. These differences increased the tension between the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the Jews and were the causes of their conflict in Alexandria in CE 38.

2. GYMNASIA, RHETORICAL SCHOOLS, AND THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Hellenistic education⁴ was obtained by study in the gymnasium, attendance of the school of rhetoric, or instruction by the sophists. Those Jews who possessed Greek citizenship were allowed entrance into the primary and secondary schools, followed by the gymnasium, which offered instruction and training in rhetoric. Presumably Jews, who were not Greek citizens, still could study in schools of rhetoric. By the Hellenistic period (332 BCE) the ἐφηβεία, which were comparable to modern graduate or post-graduate centers of education for specialization beyond the gymnasia, were found in important Greek cities. An ἑφηβος was one who specialized in a career (e.g. politics, law, or military).

2.1. Introduction

The social location of the rhetor who wrote the Wisdom of Solomon is not identified in the text, but there are clues to suggest that he may have attended a gymnasium and its school of rhetoric in Alexandria in the Roman period, possibly 30 to 40 CE.⁵ His command of Hellenistic Greek, especially with a Hebraic tint, his knowledge of Greek rhetoric, and his awareness of certain philosophical teachings, including in particular those of Stoicism, suggest a highly educated author. Certainly he shared many literary expressions with Philo, even though neither cites the other. The author's presumption that the audience understood the various cultural and social facets of Hellenism at a rather sophisticated level and the longstanding tensions between Jewish and Egyptian and Jewish and Greek populaces that emerged particularly in Alexandria would point to this urban center as the likely location for this text. There are other intimations of this time frame and cultural location that will be laid out in the course of this essay.

⁴ See Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Greco-Roman Egypt* (Studies in Papyrology 35; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); and Daniel Kah and Peter Scholz, *Das hellenistische Gymnasium* (Wissenskultur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel 8; Oldenbourg: Akademie Verlag, 2004).

⁵ For this date, see Michael Kolarcik, "The Book of Wisdom," *NIB* 5 (1997): 438–440.

2.2. *Gymnasia*⁶

The γυμνασία, originally places of exercise for ἐφήβοι, became during the Hellenistic period locations of intellectual activity in particular for older citizens and philosophers and for the education of students. While exercise continued, these educational places became the equivalents of secondary education, while some even took on the character of universities in a few locations, including Athens and even Alexandria, the latter of which grew in culture, stature, and importance through the early part of the Roman empire.

Greek παιδεία infiltrated Hellenistic and Roman schools of the Diaspora and became the primary means of influencing the cultures of the colonies brought within Alexander's and the Roman empires. Παιδεία involves two related features: the process of education that culminates in a young man's eventually taking his place in society, and the character of the educated person.⁷ The "cultivated mind" enables a person to become virtuous and civilized. Our knowledge of Hellenistic education of Jews is more extensive than earlier periods, even though there are major gaps. From the Hellenistic and Roman periods, our best Jewish sources are Philo and Josephus.

Philo Judaeus, who belonged to an aristocratic and extremely prominent Jewish family in Egypt, likely would have studied in a Hellenistic gymnasium in Alexandria, even though gymnasia were under the patronage of pagan gods. This study, if it is indeed the case, would have meant that he enjoyed Alexandrian citizenship. Yet he was also intimately familiar with Judaism, suggesting that he enjoyed the instruction of Hellenistic Jewish teachers (*Spec.* 1.314) and received the tradition handed down by the "elders of the nation" (*Mos.* 1.4). He gives indications that he had studied Palestinian Judaism's *haggadah* and *halakhah*.⁸ In his essay, *On the Preliminary Studies*,

⁶ Robert Doran, "The High Cost of a Good Education," in Collins and Sterling, eds., *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, 94–115. See also Martin P. Nilsson, *Die hellenistische Schule* (Munich: Beck, 1955); and H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956). Also see Jean Delorme, *Gymnasion. Étude sur les Monuments consacrés à L'Éducation en Grèce (dès origines à l'Empire romain)* (Paris: Boccard, 1960), 253–315; Chrysis Pélékidis, *Histoire de l'Éphebte Attique dès Origines à 31 avant Jésus Christ* (Paris: Boccard, 1962); and Stephen G. Miller, ed., *Arete: Ancient Writers, Papyri, and Inscriptions on the History and Ideals of Greek Athletics and Games* (3rd enl. ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

⁷ Alan Mendelson, *Secular Education in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1982), 1.

⁸ See Jacob Neusner, *Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 100–136.

he describes in detail Greek παιδεία and refers to its curriculum of philosophy, grammar, geometry, and music. However, philosophy ranked above all other disciplines, receiving the honorific title of the “lawful wife” (*Prelim. Studies* 74–76). The other disciplines were her “handmaidens.” The areas of philosophy studied included ethics and physics (especially cosmology).⁹

Philo refers to the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (“rounded education”) of students from wealthy families in *De specialibus legibus* 2.230, *De providentia* 2.44–46, and *De congressu ditionis gratia* 74–76, which included both the humanities and the sciences.¹⁰ Philo also speaks of “Sabbath schools” where the general population was taught a variety of virtues: good sense, temperance, courage, justice, and so on (*Spec.* 2.62). He notes, in addition, that Sabbath schools, likely attached to synagogues, are in the thousands in every city (*Mos.* 2.216). Indeed, the people devoted their Sabbaths to study to improve their character and to examine their consciences (*Opif.* 128). He notes in *De specialibus legibus* 2.63–64 that the faithful on the Sabbath study both duty to God and duty to others. Thus, it may be that the population who was literate studied on the Sabbath, examining ethics in particular.¹¹

While the author of the Wisdom of Solomon provides us with only indirect evidence for his education and the setting in which he spoke, it is possible for us to derive some plausible insights from his knowledge and use of *paideia* and rhetoric.

2.3. Schools of Rhetoric

It was likely in the fifth century, BCE that the curriculum of gymnasia came to include rhetoric. For independent schools of rhetoric, appearing in the fourth century BCE, the educational path included: formal education in Greek grammar (from around the age of seven until that of twelve to fourteen) and then entrance into a rhetorical school to study theory, lectures, and the declamation of famous orators and those of the teacher.¹² Those seeking a higher level of achievement spent five to six years in rhetorical schools in order to cultivate the finer skills of language. These schools

⁹ Kah and Scholz, *Das hellenistische Gymnasium*.

¹⁰ J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 C.E.)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 161.

¹¹ Josephus boasts of his education in Palestine that led him to the study of the major Jewish schools (Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes) and to be taught by the desert hermit, Bannus. He also tells of his commitment to philosophy.

¹² George A. Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” in Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 BC–AD 400)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 18–19.

considered declamation and its composition as the primary objective of education and its crowning achievement. The student began with the προγυνάσματα that were the preliminary rhetorical exercises that taught him the basic techniques of writing and how to select themes to develop.¹³ Exercises of impersonation (ἠθοποιία or imitation, μίμεις) and praise (ἐγκώμιον) were also common.¹⁴ The former involved declamations that allowed students to play the roles of mythological, heroic, or literary figures (see Lysias, *Orationes* 1, 7, 9, and 21). These impersonations encouraged students to use their imaginations and skills in rhetoric to develop the arguments of the figures within a particular context (e.g. exhortation, to the request for absolution). The second is a prose or poetic panegyric that praises a significant person, thing, or idea (see Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.20, 1393a23–1394a18; cf. Wis 10:1–11:1).¹⁵ This was occasionally combined with the historical recounting of the past through the praise of ancestors, gods, and cities.

Rhetoric was one of the key features of education in Greece and Rome, in gymnasia, schools of rhetoric, and the lecturing and tutoring of Sophists. The teachers of rhetoric were normally Sophists, philosophers, and instructors in schools. The art of rhetoric was a much desired skill in many arenas of life, especially among the wealthy (see the treatise on public speaking by Dio Chrysostom, *Dic. exercit.*). The Sophists especially placed rhetoric at the center of *paideia*. Indeed, it was viewed as the culmination of the *enkyklios paideia*.¹⁶ Rhetoric became a necessary skill of teachers and philosophers in their arguments about a variety of issues in trying to persuade those who heard them of the truthfulness of their position. Rhetorical understanding is given formal analysis by Aristotle (*Rhet.*), who speaks not only of skills of public speaking and persuasion, but also of the power of language to convince and convict. However, in his view, rhetoric was neither a body nor an element of knowledge. He did present and analyze the features of several types of rhetoric: the forensic (legal), the deliberative, the epideictic, and the persuasive that included the characteristics of what was ethical and true, what appealed to move the emotions or passions, and what was

¹³ Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 222.

¹⁴ Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 228.

¹⁵ See Thomas R. Lee, *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44–50* (SBLDS 75; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986); and Burton Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic: Ben Sira's Praise of the Fathers* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

¹⁶ Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge Classical Studies; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 190–239.

the logical development of the argument. Rhetoric developed from being limited to public speaking to include written composition that made use of its major features in persuasive literature: veracity, argumentation, skilled and artistic language, and the appeal to logic and the emotions, which were guided by reason. Rhetors were required to learn a body of truths (λόγοι) and commit them to memory in order to draw on them in the construction of argumentation.¹⁷ The complaints of Plato and Aristotle about rhetors are that they present a finished product for imitation and are not capable of describing the craft and the steps necessary to produce a compelling speech or text. Aristotle's simile is that the rhetor is like the cobbler who gives his students a pair of shoes to imitate in making rather than providing instructions on how to craft the material into a finished product.

It is important to recall that the "audience" of educated hearers was surpassed by literate readers, perhaps as early as 300 BCE, so that rhetoric was no longer limited to public speaking. Rather it was embodied in texts, including especially the classics, which were read and appreciated for their literary elegance and persuasive qualities by educated and well placed people who had access to them.¹⁸ The classics of Greek literature, along with lesser known works, were copied, sold, and borrowed by teachers and students who could afford them. In addition, students and teachers in prominent cities had the opportunity to read the manuscripts archived in libraries. This was certainly true in the Museion of Alexandria where scholars from all over the eastern Mediterranean world gathered to study and teach. This does not suggest the demise of oratory or that the written text replaced the spoken word. Indeed, texts that were composed often incorporated the speech or speeches of the rhetors. Thus, while there was the movement from the artistic craft (τέχνη) of speaking to the literary reading of educated people, oratory remained a prominent skill. The τέχνη is not a list of rules for composing or speaking artfully in persuasive ways, but rather was an exemplary text that comprised the features of skilled writing/speaking, rhetorical and elegant turns of phrases and arguments, and cogent argumentation. Speeches and texts are presented to be imitated by students learning to speak or to write texts of artful persuasion that, as Aristotle would say

¹⁷ Ronald F. Hock and Edward O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*. Vol. 1: *The Progymnasmata* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986); and Ronald F. Hock and Edward O'Neil, *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric: Classroom Exercises* (Atlanta: SBL, 2002).

¹⁸ Thomas Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Ancient Society and History; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

(*Rhet.*), serve as verbal embodiments of the rhetor's argument.¹⁹ The Wisdom of Solomon was not intended for the common masses of uneducated Jews who lacked the resources and thus the time to study and learn.

The literature²⁰ studied in the educational curriculum of both gymnasia and schools of rhetoric, included model speeches that were to be imitated. These came from the poems of Homer, the plays of poets like Euripides, Greek historians, and especially famous orators. In addition, there were rhetorical handbooks (τέκναι or τέκναι λόγων or προγυμνάσματα) that provided students different dicta for learning to speak, debate, engage in dialogue, and present speeches noted for delivery, elocution, and persuasiveness.²¹ In view of the many references to handbooks in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates, it is clear that there must have been many of these in centers of Greek *paideia*, beginning with the classical period. What were commonly found in these handbooks of rhetoric were various types of argument involving both sides of an issue, matters of grammar and style, and different types of rhetoric. Plato surveys "the numerous things found in books written about the art of speech" (*Phaedr.* 266d5–267d8) and even mentions many pre-classical writers as well as some of the early sophists. Aristotle points to the τέκναι λόγων and explains that they set forth a structure of judicial speech (not as much in deliberative and epideictic, or laudative, speeches) that consists of an προοίμιον (introduction), διήγησις (narrative), πίστις (proof), and ἐπίλογος (summary conclusion) (*Rhet.* 3.14–19).²² He is especially critical of handbooks on rhetoric for failing to engage in logical argument, although rhetoric does use the proof of probability (εἰκός), valued by Greek orators due to its basis in human nature, while witnesses could be bribed or deceptive.

¹⁹ Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece*, 27.

²⁰ Ian Worthington, ed., *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (BCAW; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); Edward P.J. Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (4th ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: Foundation for Literary Study* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); and Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* (2nd ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

²¹ See *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (1st c. BCE) as the first most complete and detailed treatment of rhetoric.

²² Of course, Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* is one of the most comprehensive examinations of rhetoric.

3. RHETORIC²³

3.1. *Introduction*

There are continuing discussions about the meaning of Greek rhetoric, due to the diversity of views found in the classical, Hellenistic, and early Roman literature.²⁴ However, I have decided to comment briefly on the views and insights of five: Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Philodemus. But before them, some mention of the sophists and Isocrates should be made.

3.2. *Sophists*

The sophists of the fifth century BCE, were itinerate teachers who instructed paying students in a variety of subjects. Their knowledge of rhetoric often fetched some of them premium wages, for politicians and the elite sought them out for ways to enhance their speaking ability, knowledge of language, ornamentation, and techniques of argumentation. The best examples of rhetoric among well-known sophists are the *Tetralogies* of Antiphon and the two speeches of Gorgias, *The Encomium of Helen* and *The Defense of Palamedes*.²⁵

3.3. *Isocrates*

Isocrates, who established a school of rhetoric in Athens (founded ca. 390 BCE) to teach prominent men rhetoric as well as political and moral philosophy, was especially critical of the sophists (see speech 13, “Against the Sophists”) for claiming far more than they could deliver and for often disregarding the truth:

If all who are engaged in the profession of education were willing to state the facts instead of making greater promises than they can possibly fulfill, they would not be in such bad repute with the lay-public. As it is, however, the teachers who do not scruple to vaunt their powers with utter disregard of the truth have created the impression that those who choose a life of careless indolence are better advised than those who devote themselves to serious study.

(Isocrates, *Soph.* 1) (Norlin, LCL)

²³ See Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 3–41.

²⁴ See Henry W. Johnstone, “On Schiappa versus Poulakos,” *Rhetoric Review* 14 (1995): 438–440.

²⁵ For the translation of *Helen*, see George A. Kennedy, *Aristotle On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 283–288; for the translation of *Palamedes*, see George A. Kennedy, “Gorgias,” in Rosamond Kent Sprague, ed., *The Older Sophists* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 54–63.

His own contributions lay, not in the practice of oratory, for he presumably was not an impressive speaker, but rather in the composition of elegant, well argued speeches that could serve as instruments of imitation (μίμησις) for his many students. His outline of the features (ιδέαι) of rhetoric is found in 13.6–7: proper selection of the elements of rhetoric (invention), joining and ordering together “striking thoughts” (arrangement), and the clothing of these thoughts in elegant phrase (style). What is especially required of the student is an imaginative mind and the knowledge of different kinds of discourse. Rhetoric for him required the ability to expound upon “the principles of the art” of speech.

3.4. *Plato*

Yet it was Plato and Aristotle who set forth a theoretical account of rhetoric that included the principles of writing and speaking and a technical vocabulary, not the sophists and not even Isocrates.²⁶ Even so, it does not appear that their understandings significantly influenced later teachers and practitioners of rhetoric. Plato in the dialogues of Socrates points especially to the moral relativism of these so-called teachers. In one of the dialogues of Socrates, *Gorgias*, the sophist, views rhetoric as the artificer of persuasion (πειθοῦς δημιουργόν; which is not the understanding of Socrates; Plato, *Gorg.* 453a2; *Phileb.* 58a8).²⁷ It is an art that is particularly used, *Gorgias* argues, in legal and political discourse, and deals with probabilities, not scientific fact. In disputing this view, Socrates assumes a far more critical understanding of rhetoric, not as a true form of art, but rather as speech that lacks knowledge (*Gorg.* 465b1–66a6). Indeed, for Plato, rhetoric requires knowledge, not only of the subject under discussion, but also of truth, logic, and the variegated soul of the one to whom the argument is presented (*Phaedr.* 277b5–c6). In criticizing rhetoric, Plato regards it primarily as a form of flattery and not knowledgeable speech. He separates political rhetoric that seeks persuasion in any way obtainable, hence its lack of moral fiber, from the highest form of human thought expressed in philosophy.

²⁶ Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 13.

²⁷ While rhetoric was not held in high regard by most Greek philosophers, it became especially valued by Roman intellectuals (Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 3, 23–37). Socrates compared it to a particular type of flattery that was tantamount to cookery, for it is lacking in knowledge.

3.5. *Aristotle*

Beginning with Aristotle, rhetoric came to consist of five parts: Writing his treatise *On Rhetoric* in the middle of the fourth century BCE, Aristotle is primarily concerned with rhetorical speech as public address.²⁸ For him, rhetoric was morally neutral in that it was a public discourse that could be used for either good or evil, depending on the character of the orator who made the presentation. While recognizing that it was public speech, without any moral quality in and of itself, Aristotle regarded its persuasive power as dependent on three considerations: the truth and logic of what is argued, the ability to persuade the audience that he was trustworthy, and the emotions aroused in the audience to accept what is argued and to act accordingly.²⁹ Thus, there are three artistic modes of persuasion (1.2.3–6; 2.1.1–4): *ἥθος* (“character;” cf. chs. 12–17), *πάθος* (“awakening emotion;” cf. chs. 2–11), and *λόγος* (“logical argument;” cf. chs. 18–26). However, he regarded rhetoric as generally lacking in a systematic presentation of ideas and arguments.

Aristotle considered rhetoric to be a complement of dialectic (*Rhet.* 1.1, 1354a1) in that the latter deals with general issues that are to be demonstrated, while the former pertains to more specific matters that are based on opinions and thus aim at persuasion (this argument is an *ἐνθύμημα* (i.e. a “rhetorical syllogism”) based on probable opinions, although part of the syllogism is often left unstated). Rhetoric may determine only probabilities, and not truth. Therefore, the art of rhetorical persuasion distinguishes it from a scientific syllogism that is based on a demonstrable fact. There are two contrasting views of the orator: one, the rhetorician is one who is both moral and logical, and second, he strives to be successful in persuading his audience to accept his argument.³⁰ However, rhetoric itself does not intrinsically contain features of morality, but rather, since persuasion is the ultimate goal, may utilize false, deceptive, and even unethical arguments. This is its greatest weakness.

While rhetoric is a method that lacks any particular knowledge, it is a practical art that originates from ethics and politics. The art of rhetoric is an *ἀντιστροφή* (correlative, co-ordinate, counterpart) to the art of dialectic (formal, logical debate), for neither has to do with subjects requiring any particular knowledge as well as understanding of the sciences. They are methods of discourse and art that seek to obtain an observable result.³¹

²⁸ Kennedy, *Aristotle On Rhetoric*.

²⁹ Kennedy, *Aristotle On Rhetoric*, ix.

³⁰ Kennedy, *Aristotle On Rhetoric*, xi.

³¹ Kennedy, *Aristotle On Rhetoric*, 14.

Aristotle indicates that instruction in rhetoric is to examine the means of persuasion (πίσταις) that are available. These consisted of two types: “non-artistic” and “artistic.” The artistic type results from the imagination of the speaker and possesses three forms: ἠθός (“character” of the speaker as trustworthy), λόγος (the proper use of logic in making arguments), and πάθος (the stimulation of emotion).

He also speaks in general of three types of rhetoric: deliberative speech that consists of exhortations or opposition to a course of action; judicial, which consists of either accusation or justification about what has been done in the past, based on the criterion of justice; and epideictic, in which a person is praised or blamed due to his actions considered to be either honorable or shameful. From these come both an assessment of the past and a possible prognostication of the future.³²

3.6. Cicero

The Roman intellectual and politician, Cicero, provides the best examples of rhetorical speeches among the early Romans. Whether or not he wrote the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero was one of the most important and powerful Roman orators. His works include two basic texts of rhetoric, *De Inventione* and *Ad Herennium*. He also composed the first history of great orators in Greece and Rome (*Brutus*) as well as a description of rhetorical principles and a defense of his style (*De Orator*). In addition to these more detailed works, Cicero’s large number of speeches and letters provide important examples of rhetorical features.

3.7. Quintilian

Quintilian lived in perhaps one of the most “eloquent periods in human history.”³³ This was the highpoint of rhetoric in the Greco-Roman world extending into the first three centuries of the empire, for rhetorical theory in the three types of oratory was a prominent subject and students engaged in the study and practice of rhetoric in the countless secondary schools throughout the Roman Mediterranean world. The Roman law courts were the primary location for oratory. M. Fabius Quintilianus (ca. 35 CE to sometime in the 90’s) was a Roman jurist and orator who does not identify with any particular school, but rather offers a survey of meanings attributed to

³² Kennedy, *Aristotle On Rhetoric*, 15–17, 20–22.

³³ George A. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 428.

rhetoric, criticizes these views and states his own understanding (*Inst.* 2.15; see Books 2–11).³⁴ In Rome he taught adolescents the arts and skills of oratory. He defined rhetoric as *bene dicendi scientia* (“science of speaking well”) and it involves both theory and practice.³⁵ In this account, he examines the various elements of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, and also sets forth his understanding of the relationship between nature and art. He raises the question about the necessity of rules (theory) of declamation, and he concludes that they are necessary if one is to speak at all. Without rules, speech lacks any sense and artistry. These rules are not dictates, but rather guidelines for the speaker to adapt to the occasion. He contends that rhetoric is “the science of speaking well” (2.15.34). Proper and valid declamation is associated with both art (2.16) and virtue (2.20.5–8). He also identifies three kinds of rhetoric, the same as those of Aristotle: laudative (or epideictic), deliberative, and judicial.

In the *Institutio oratorio*, he rarely makes any concession to expediency, but instead places primary emphasis on the morality of the speaker. The orator must be a good and virtuous man, thus connecting his understanding with the Stoics Cleanthes and Chrysippus who regard rhetoric as “the science of speaking rightly.” Some argue, so he says, that “bad men also can be orators, and others, with whose view I agree, confine this name ... to the good” (2.15.2). The views of others, expressed by those who consider speaking as different from any greater or more desirable achievement, include viewing rhetoric as a power, a science but not a virtue, a practice and art not linked with science and virtue, and a perversion of art (2.15.3). But almost all people view rhetoric as the “power (i.e. capacity) of persuading ...” (2.15.3). According to Quintilian, rhetoric in the eyes of Isocrates also is “the craftsman of persuasion” (πειθοῦς δημιουργόν). Quintilian characterizes the view of Cicero as “the duty of the orator is ‘to speak in a manner suited to persuade’” (2.15.5–6). Yet for Quintilian this view is not convincing, since many things are also capable of persuasion: pain, pity, money, influence, the speaker’s authority and dignity. Even the view that rhetoric leads the

³⁴ George A. Kennedy, *Quintilian* (TAS 59; New York: Twayne, 1969). He does indicate he is widely read in the writers of oratory and is obviously influenced significantly by Cicero (*De or.* and *Or. Brut.*).

³⁵ See George A. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 55.

audience to the conclusion that the speaker desires is a false one. Are not courtesans, flatterers, and corrupters also capable of the same end? So, what is rhetoric? According to Socrates, in concluding the dialogue of Gorgias, “the rhetorical man must be just, and the just man must wish to do just things.” In the view of Quintilian, this is the proper understanding of true and honorable rhetoric. To praise one must know what is honorable, to persuade what is advantageous, and to speak in court what is just.³⁶ This understanding of the orator as the just man is repeated in the dialogue about rhetoric following the appearance of two more opponents of Socrates, Pollus and Callicles. It becomes obvious that for Plato rhetoric is not in itself something bad, but rather “real rhetoric can be attained only by the just and good man” (Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.28). Comparably for Quintilian, rhetoric is the ability of the just man to speak well.

While the term rhetoric (ῥητορικὴ)³⁷ is uncommon outside of Plato and Aristotle in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, a frequently encountered expression is τέχνη λόγων (the “art of discourse”). The importance of rhetoric derives from the fact it is a necessary skill to be developed and cultivated by lawyers, public orators, and teachers to present their arguments in cogent and compelling ways in order to convince their audience of the veracity of their positions.³⁸ Beginning with Aristotle and continuing on, rhetoric comes to consist of five parts: εὑρεσις (“invention,” planning the content, determining the subject to be discussed, and the type of argument to be enlisted), τάξις (“arrangement” of the contents into a unity that possesses logical sequence), λέξις (“style,” the selection and combination of figures of speech, clauses, periods, and virtues), μνήμη (“memory,” memorizing or using mnemonics to recall the content), and ὑπόκρισις (“delivery” that includes both speaking and gathering).³⁹

In Books 3–6, Quintilian deals with invention, while in Book 7 he speaks of arrangement, that is, the manner in which the orator constructs his arguments and their supporting evidence and places them into coherent form, while style is the subject in Book 8 (ornamentation, the choosing of appropriate words, clarity, figures, and metaphors). Memory (11.2) is the

³⁶ Kennedy, *Quintilian*, 58.

³⁷ This term rarely occurs in surviving texts outside the writings of Plato and Aristotle in the fifth century BCE

³⁸ Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 4.

³⁹ Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, 10–13; and Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 5. In addition to Aristotle’s *Rhet.*, see also *Rhet. Alex.*

process of the orator's remembering of his own speech and that of his opponent. Finally, delivery (12.3) involves voice and gesture, quantity, and quality.

3.8. *Philodemus*⁴⁰

Philodemus (ca. 110–40/35 BCE), born in Gadara of Syria and possibly either a Greek or at least a hellenized member of the colony, studied in Athens with Zeno of Sidon who headed the Epicurean school in the early first century BCE. Later he took up residence in Rome (75 BCE?) and finally in Herculaneum. Not surprisingly he became an Epicurean in his philosophical identification and presented a popularized view of this school's philosophical teachings, although he is best known for his writings on rhetoric, recovered from the Herculaneum philosophical library (likely belonging to Piso's villa). His patron was Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, a Roman statesman, tribune, and father-in-law of Julius Caesar, thus providing him the opportunity to introduce his poetry to a large Roman audience and to attract many young men of the Patrician families to study Greek literature with him. Virgil was his student, and his influence on the *Ars Poetica* by Horace is well known.

Setting himself in opposition to the views of rhetoric expressed by Plato and to some extent Aristotle, Philodemus considered rhetoric (poetry) to be an art to be evaluated on the basis of its aesthetic value, elegant form, and blending with meaning, not only its content (contra Plato, *Ion* 530b10–c4, who stressed meaning over form). While poetry should be freed from the tyranny of moralism, it was not merely ornamentation. For Philodemus, style and meaning merge together in poetry. However, he did appear to emphasize along with Aristotle that style is to be appropriate (τὸ πρέπον) to the subject matter.⁴¹ The attitude of Epicurus toward poetry is that he at least saw it as a form of entertainment, even though it possessed no educational

⁴⁰ See "Philodemus," *OCD* 1165–1166; Marcello Gigante, *Philodemus in Italy* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995); Dirk Obbink, ed., *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Dirk Obbink, ed., *Philodemus on Piety*. Vol. 1: *Critical Text with Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); David Sider, *The Epigrams of Philodemus: Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Clive Chandler, *Philodemus On Rhetoric: Books 1 and 2: Translation and Exegetical Essays* (London: Routledge, 2006); and Voula Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁴¹ James Porter, "Content and Form in Philodemus: The History of an Evasion," in Obbink, ed., *Philodemus and Poetry*, 97–147.

value.⁴² Indeed, he taught his students to avoid it. Philodemus's view of poetry was that it not only should be valued if it turns one to live a better life, but also that it could cause much harm when instilling in the audience such vices as arrogance, greed, anger, and fear, particularly of death. Thus, poetry should be evaluated by means of its integration of style and meaning that combine to form the essence of the composition. In this view, he avoids the dichotomy between form and meaning that has tended to prevail in discussions of rhetoric in the Greco-Roman sources.

In the surviving portions of his two books entitled *On Rhetoric*, Philodemus sets forth a systematic examination of sophistic rhetoric, contextualized within Epicurean philosophy, which is a response to accusations coming from Rhodian Epicurians, whose views he has sought to discredit. While rhetoric is indeed a significant element of a student's education, it is a science of discourse that can be studied as an object in itself without practical application. In these two books, Philodemus focuses not so much on what rhetoric is, but rather on what it is not. He rejects political and judicial rhetoric perhaps with the purpose of demonstrating to the Romans that Epicureanism offers no threat to the Empire. Rather, this philosophy sees leisure as virtuous and regards as unpleasant the activity of life that involves both political and forensic discourse.⁴³

Several key points raised by Philodemus suggest his practice and views of rhetoric. As a *ἐπιγραμματοποιός*, Philodemus followed a long line of writers of epigrams, leading to the Hellenistic features of brief elegiac couplets that included a variety of *topoi*: erotic and sympotic themes, the memorializing of victories, temple offerings, praise of the dead, protreptic, epideictic, and dedicatory.⁴⁴ For Philodemus a poem may contain valid content even if its facts are wrong or its poet or his argument is questionable. Even bad human beings can write moral poetry. The poet is not required to teach us knowledge of a particular subject. Rather, a poem's excellence "lies in its artistic merging of thought (which need be neither true nor beneficial) and the standard elements of poetry, i.e., composition, diction, and (to a lesser extent) euphony."⁴⁵ What a poem presents is natural but unnecessary

⁴² See Elizabeth Asmis, "Epicurean Poetics," in Obbink, ed., *Philodemus and Poetry*, 34. However, Diskin Clay, "Framing the Margins of Philodemus and Poetry," in Obbink, ed., *Philodemus and Poetry*, 6, would add that poetry might be considered by this philosopher as "producing what is of benefit of life."

⁴³ Chandler, *Philodemus On Rhetoric*, 169–171.

⁴⁴ Sider, *The Epigrams of Philodemus*, 24–27.

⁴⁵ Sider, *The Epigrams of Philodemus*, 31.

pleasure. Epigrams were often presented in symposia and dinner parties, but in these settings were presented only for pleasure, not critical discussion.

4. RHETORIC AND THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

4.1. *Introduction:*

*Jewish Hellenistic Culture as the Location of the Rhetor*⁴⁶

The primary group to which Wisdom's rhetor spoke likely consisted of Jews, most probably a highly educated γερουσία charged with leadership of the Jews in Alexandria. What intensifies the occasion of the λόγος προτρεπτικός appears to be the suffering endured by a pogrom (Flaccus?). The Jewish πολίτευμα stands in need of encouragement to continue to maintain their heritage of faith and practice. Some in the audience appear to have wavered in their commitment to Judaism. Thus, this speech of exhortation provided confirmation that Jews have a rich and noble history and may expect immortality, if they remain righteous. Some in the audience⁴⁷ may have witnessed members of the community who had crossed the line into the acceptance of features of Hellenism that Judaism opposed, including, for example, the worship of other gods and the honoring of pagan images. Thus, these are to be warned of the punishment, in particular the loss of immortality, which comes to those who forsake the key features of their religious identity and teaching. The rhetor exhorts them to return to the practice of the primary features of Judaism.⁴⁸

Apologetic elements suggest the rhetor also sought to provide a justification of Jewish faith and life to Greek and Egyptian intellectuals who would have been at least sympathetic to, if not supportive of, Alexandrian Jews and their practices. Further, there may have been in the city "god-fearers" (i.e. non-Jews sympathetic to and followers of Judaism), if this is the major connotation of the term. Judeophobia and a pogrom unleashed

⁴⁶ See Chrysostome Larcher, *Études sur Le Livre de la Sagesse* (Études Bibliques; Paris: Gabalda, 1969), 179–181.

⁴⁷ Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (2nd ed.; SGSPS 2; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 1:73–74. See also Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1962).

⁴⁸ John G. Gammie, "Paraenetic Literature: Toward the Morphology of a Secondary Genre," *Semeia* 50 (1990): 52.

against the Alexandrian Jews due in part to their state granted privileges and their continuing quest for citizenship in the *polis* may have led to the anti-Jewish actions of Avillius Flaccus and especially his collaborator Isodoros the Hellene during the reigns of the emperors Gaius Caligula and Claudius. Urged on by other prominent Egyptian Hellenes who harbored a deep-seated xenophobia against Jews in Alexandria, Flaccus instigated a wide-ranging pogrom against the Jews of Egypt.⁴⁹ Flaccus, perhaps seeking to gain Caligula's favor, who he foolishly did not support in the quest to obtain the throne, yielded to the Alexandrian citizens and Egyptians who sought to lower Jewish social status and remove their privileges. In the pogrom he launched, the Jews were attacked physically and some were murdered, while their homes were ransacked and burned, their shops plundered, and their synagogues desecrated. Jewish women were forced to eat pork or suffer the humiliation of physical abuse. Even members of the *γερωσσία* were flogged. Philo indicates that this program was the work of three Hellenes: Dionysus, Lampon, and Isodoros who incited Flaccus to take action against the Jews.

Greek and Egyptian anger boiled over from what they considered illegitimate Jewish efforts to obtain Greek citizenship, and they resented the special privileges Jews had continued to enjoy since the reign of the Ptolemies. Flaccus denied Jews civic privileges and declared them to be foreigners and aliens (Philo, *Flacc.* 65–72; *Legat.* 127–131). Flaccus even had Jews executed to celebrate Caligula's birthday. Due to the strong reaction of the Jewish community against Flaccus and his supporters, which became uncontrollable, Caligula had him arrested, tried, dispossessed of his property, exiled, and soon thereafter murdered. However, the decree of Flaccus that the Jews were aliens and strangers and not privileged residents who could follow their own laws became an issue of great concern. It required two trips by delegations of Jews, led in both instances by Philo, to Rome, first to Caligula, which resulted in nothing but the threat to install his image in the Jerusalem temple, and later to Claudius, which ended hostilities against the Jews and gave them their ancient rights that allowed them to worship and follow their own customs without interference. However, Jews, unless they already were

⁴⁹ The Egyptian population earlier carried out a pogrom against the Jewish community at Elephantine (424–405 BCE) during the reign of Darius. The Jewish temple was destroyed (see J.M. Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt: From Rameses II to Emperor Hadrian* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995], 21–44). For an overview of the Alexandrian pogroms against the Jews, see Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

citizens, could not receive citizenship in the *polis* of Alexandria from the time of the decree of Claudias.

4.2. *Types of Rhetoric in Wisdom*

The three types of rhetoric, as identified and described by Aristotle, are present in *Wisdom*: (1) deliberative speech that consists of exhortations or opposition to a course of action; (2) judicial rhetoric, which consists of either accusation or justification about what has been done in the past, based on the criterion of justice; and (3) epideictic oratory, in which a person is praised or blamed due to his actions, considered to be either honorable or shameful. From these come both an assessment of the past and a possible prognostication of the future.

The book is filled with exhortations, which may be summarized as the urging of the audience to remain faithful to their Jewish heritage and to justice and to avoid wickedness that leads ultimately to eternal death (thus, deliberative rhetoric). Examples include the urging of the audience to avoid the deeds and words of the ungodly in order to allow *Wisdom* to dwell within them so that they may receive immortality (1:12–15), govern nations and peoples under the kingship of God in the eschatological age (3:8), and avoid divine punishment and everlasting death (3:1–7, 10).

The arrangement especially of rhetoric consists of a *προοίμιον* (introduction), *διήγησις* (narrative), *πίστις* (proof), and *ἐπίλογος* (summary conclusion).⁵⁰ One may see these features in the logical movement observable in the rhetorical structure of the “Book of History” in *Wisdom*:

“The Book of History” (11:2–19:22)

- A. A narrative: wisdom saves her own (10:1–11:1)
- B. Introduction to the antithetical diptychs (11:2–4)
- C. Theme: Israel is benefited by the very things that punish Egypt (11:5)
- D. Proof of the theme in five antithetical diptychs (11:6–19:22)
 - 1. Water from the rock instead of the plague of the Nile (11:6–14)
 - 2. Quail instead of the plague of little animals (11:15–16:14)
(Digression: critique of pagan religions, 13:1–15:19)
 - 3. A rain of manna instead of the plague of storms (16:15–29)
 - 4. The plague of darkness and the pillar of fire (17:1–18:4)
 - 5. The tenth plague and the exodus (18:5–19:21)
- E. Conclusion (19:22)

⁵⁰ Michael de Brauw, “The Parts of Speech,” in Worthington, ed., *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, 187–202.

Further, the judicial character of this *protreptikos logos* is also seen in the initial *προοίμιον* when the divine spirit that “fills the earth” will inquire into the counsels of the ungodly and make a report to the Lord, who as judge, will render the verdict of punishment. Indeed, the purpose of the report is “to convict them (i.e. the ungodly) of their lawless deeds” (1:6–9). Further, this judicial feature of rhetoric is pronounced in the speech of the ungodly who seek to undue the “righteous man” who accuses them of sins against the law (i.e. the civic code in effect in Alexandria) and against our education (*παιδείας*) (2:12). The *paideia* is likely the education of the wicked (apostate Jews?). That the ungodly had some status in the *πόλις* is suggested by the rhetor’s attribution to them that they have decided to “try his forbearance” and “condemn him to a shameful death.” This judicial rhetoric blends into the apocalyptic judgment when the lawlessness of the unrighteous will ἐλέγξει (convict) them (4:20). This indictment extends even to the kings who rule over the nations, because as servants of the kingdom of God they did not rule with righteousness or keep the law. One final example of the judicial character of Wisdom is the reference to the Canaanites who have no one to accuse God for the destruction of the nations through his judgment and no ἔκδικος (advocate or legal representative) to plead their case before the righteous Lord (12:12)

Then there is epideictic speech that involves the blaming and praise of a person or persons. Wisdom, of course, receives frequently the praise of the rhetor (see below) in the form of both the panegyric and the encomium. Yet there are humans who are praiseworthy. In particular, the rhetor extols the righteous, who, though they may die young will stand in judgment to condemn the aged among the unrighteous (4:16; 5:1–2) and rise up in the presence of the oppressor who will be amazed at their salvation. They will live forever and receive a glorious crown by the Lord while the wicked will be overthrown by an angry God who brings them to destruction (5:15–23). By contrast, the unrighteous and the ungodly receive considerable blame in this *protreptikos logos*. Because they held the righteous in derision and did not know the way of the Lord, their arrogance and wealth have not brought them anything of consequence, but only the finality of death. The wicked, including especially the Canaanites (= the Greeks who worship Dionysus and other false gods, 12:1–11), the Egyptians (12:13–27; 17:1–19:21), and the worshippers of nature (13:1–9) and of idols (13:10–19), and Israelites who were faithless (16:5) are held in blame.

4.3. *The Author as Rhetor*

The author's knowledge of Greek and Greek philosophy, Hellenistic religion especially as practiced in Egypt, and Jewish tradition point to his role as a Jewish *ρητορική* who may well have attended a Greek gymnasium with a school of rhetoric⁵¹ and studied also in a Jewish school, likely attached to a large synagogue and thus would have included Jewish *διδασκάλοι*. Arising originally from the contexts of discourses of public praise, ceremonies celebrating gods and heroes, funerals, and embassies seeking a favorable ruling, these same settings were also the contexts in which discourses of blame were delivered.

Rhetoric lost much of its negative evaluation by earlier philosophers and achieved great significance in the Hellenistic period and the early centuries of the Roman Empire as it became increasingly a discipline that continued the spreading and deepening of Greco-Roman culture. Some of the Greek philosophical schools (e.g. Stoicism) included rhetoric as one of their disciplines for study. Seneca the Elder in his *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae* indicates that Roman students in scholia of rhetoric were educated in rhetoric and trained to learn the arts of persuasion and deliberation. He also notes that adults wished to display polished skills in public speaking in a variety of settings.⁵² During the Roman period, rhetoric took on a greater emphasis and was highly valued as an art and skill.⁵³ Prior to the Caesars, some rhetoric was used to oppose tyrants, especially when the Principate's assumption of autocratic power led to restrictions placed on free and open debate among the Roman elite.⁵⁴ This anti-tyrannical rhetoric during the Republic provided an increase in the social status of plebeians and less powerful patri- cians. Wisdom's criticism of pagan kings who, unlike the Jewish Solomon, disregarded justice and ruled in terms of repressive power (6:1), fits well with

⁵¹ See D.S. Russell, "Rhetoric, Greek," *OCD* 1312–1314.

⁵² See Stanley Frederick Bonner, *Roman Declamation in the Late Republic and Early Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949).

⁵³ Tacitus contended that the health of the Roman state was directly related to the wisdom and the persuasive abilities of highly intelligent speakers (*Dialogue on Orators*). This is not a call to *libertas*, but rather an exhortation to reject the decisions being made by "an ignorant multitude" and to establish a hierarchy of one or more gifted orators who maintain the social structure that culminates in the elitism of the wealthy and highly educated (Thomas Habinek, *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory* [Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World; Oxford: Blackwell, 2005], 12–13).

⁵⁴ Habinek, *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory*, 11–12. This is especially noticed in the orations of Cicero, a defender of the Republic, who attacked the despotism of some of the Roman elite, including Marc Anthony whom he accused of being despotic and "un-Roman."

pro-republican criticism of despotic behavior of rulers and prefects of the empire and its kingdoms (see the republican charges of Cicero). This theme of despotism is especially influential in the Latin literature of late republican and early imperial Rome. Indeed it is possible to read Wisdom as a text opposed to despotism and resistant to tyranny.

The important features of rhetoric in Wisdom⁵⁵ comprise, first of all, the major rhetorical parts of the author's *protreptikos logos*: prologue (the general exhortation to justice, 1:1–15), narrative (the encomium in 10:1–11:1 and the history of the exodus in 11:2–19:22), argument and counter-argument (found throughout the book; the debate with the wicked in 1:16–2:24 is especially illustrative), and epilogue (briefly stated in the abrupt ending in 19:22). Second, the basic classification of rhetoric mentioned above: forensic, deliberative, persuasive, and epideictic, is reflected in this Jewish text. Wisdom is a combination of the second and third types with features of epideictic that enhanced the literary artistry and included features of praise and blame. Third, εὑρεσις (invention), which sets forth the means by which to discover things to say to respond to the issues under discussion and to refute the argument of opponents, also includes conjecture, definition, quality, and transference. These are found throughout the protreptic of Wisdom. In the rhetor's refutation of the reasoning of the "wicked" in 1:16–2:24, he engages in denial and the demonstration of the inconsistency of their arguments. In 2:21–22, he argues that they erred in their view that God will rise up to defend the righteous man from torture and a shameful death and defend and deliver him from the wicked. The rhetor counters: they erred because their wickedness blinded them and they did not know either the hidden counsels of God or discern the innocent soul's reward, which is immortality (see 3:1–13). Conjecture is discovered in his argument of the origin of death due to the envy of the devil. He defines wisdom in terms of its many characteristics and major functions, based partially on tradition and outside texts, as well as his own speculation. Quality, which has to do with the nature of an action, is seen in the example of the argument that immortality comes to the righteous one who acts faithfully, while the deeds of the wicked intended to bring harm to the righteous lead to destruction. Finally, transference is evident in his explanation that the Egyptians suffered the devastation of the plagues due to their sinful actions and oppression of God's people. Thus, the destruction caused by the plagues is due, not

⁵⁵ Russell, "Rhetoric, Greek," *OCD* 1313.

to their inherent power as diseases and catastrophes of natural phenomena, but rather to God who punishes the sinful oppressors of the enslaved Hebrews.

4.4. *The Means of Persuasion (πίσταις)*

According to Aristotle the means of persuasion may be divided into ἀτέχνοι (non-artistic), which includes direct evidence, and ἐντέκνοι (artistic), which are the creation of the rhetor. Non-artistic or direct evidence includes written, legal materials such as contracts and the testimony of witnesses, while the artistic means of persuasion are ἥθος (character of the speaker as trustworthy through what is said in the speech itself), λόγος (logical argument), and πάθος (“awakening and appealing to the emotion of the audience”). For the author of *Wisdom*, God is the “witness” of people’s innermost feelings, the observer of their deeds, and the hearer of their words. While this witness crosses over into the arena of the imagination of the rhetor of *Wisdom*, this aspect of the formal character of rhetorical persuasion is used, although theologically nuanced (1:6). At the same time, the divine spirit of the Lord, which permeates the cosmos, will take note of their unrighteousness and report these moral violations to God in order to “convict them of their lawless deeds.” And as judge the Lord will bring punishment.

4.5. *The Ethical Trustworthiness of the Rhetor*

Speaking to a Jewish audience, the trustworthiness and ethical character of the rhetor is to be revealed through his speech. To accomplish this, his knowledge of Jewish tradition, especially the deliverance of the chosen from slavery during the exodus, as well as the salvation, protection, and provisions provided for them during the wilderness wandering, would achieve in part the desired effect of accepting his arguments of persuasion because of the accuracy of his knowledge. In addition, the rhetor uses the Septuagint as it was taking shape to become the canon of the Greek-speaking Jews, especially in Egypt.⁵⁶ Third, he even takes on the role of Solomon

⁵⁶ The so-called *Letter of Aristeas* is written by an unknown Jewish author, likely living in Alexandria in the second half of the second century BCE. It purports to be a letter of the Greek courtier of Ptolemy II Philadelphus who addresses his brother Philocrates. This literary fiction covers up the fact that the writing is a legendary apology, which tells of the inspired translation of the Torah into Greek by seventy-two Jewish scholars.

(chs. 7–9), the paragon of wisdom and the builder of the temple in Jewish history, who says his love for wisdom beyond all else led him to pray to obtain her. He assumes the ethical qualities of this revered king of tradition. As Solomon he also speaks of God's providential direction of him as a sage, for both the wise and their words are in the Lord's hand. God and wisdom who fashioned all things provided him (the rhetor as Solomon) unerring knowledge of what exists, including the cosmos, the activity of the elements, the times and seasons, the constellations, the natures of animals, the thoughts of humans, the varieties of plants, and the medicinal value of roots (7:15–22). While it was not considered among the rhetoricians good form to praise oneself or to engage in a self-defense, save as a means to respond to the slandering of the speaker's character, the rhetor of Wisdom may have used the guise of Solomon to prove to a sympathetic audience his reliability. Thus, as Solomon he shall be found "keen in judgment," and the beneficiary of honor among the elders and receive the admiration from rulers who will listen to his speech even though it may continue at length (8:12). And fourth, the values that he affirms and makes central to his discourse are those that the faithful share: righteousness (1:1, 15), truth (1:4), justice (3:10–13; 5:18–23), punishment of the wicked (1:7–11; 11:15–12:2), including the final judgment (4:20–5:14), the sure reward of the righteous, the goodness and protection of God (1:13–14), the hopeful anticipation of divine salvation of those who persevere in righteousness and loyalty to God (4:7–19; 19:22), and immortality (1:15; 3:4; 5:15–23).

4.6. *The Appeal to the Emotions of the Hearers*

Assuming the Egyptian, more specifically Alexandrian, location of this rhetor, his emotive appeal to his audience of Jewish leaders is based in large part on his selection from tradition the Egyptian persecution of the ancestors who were able to prevail over their oppressors due to the salvific work of divine Sophia who rescued them. The first is Joseph who rises to the position of everlasting honor because the witness of his accusers proved to be false (10:14). The second is Sophia's deliverance from "a nation of oppressors" the holy and blameless people by signs and wonders, her guidance and shelter provided them during their journey to receive their reward (i.e. the land to which they were going), their being led through the Red Sea followed by the drowning of their enemies, and their travels through the treacherous wilderness when they were beset by foes and thirst (10:15–11:14). Other traditions that would have awakened the sacred memory of the audience

and appealed to their emotions were the wickedness of the Canaanites, vilified as an accursed race of practitioners of sorcery and unholy rites, merciless slaughterers of children, murderers of the helpless, and the eaters and drinkers of human flesh and blood (12:3–11).

His primary adversaries in the oration were especially the Egyptians of Alexandria, some of whom would have gained a Hellenistic education and would have been largely hellenized. Like their ancestors they promoted ancient animal cults, and, now, became the worshippers of their rulers' images and gods, as well as participants in some of the mystery cults. However, they too were denied citizenship in the *polis* and the opportunity to attend the gymnasia in the city. The rhetor especially describes his and his community's Egyptian antagonists in 1:16–2:24. The speech of the wicked is a *προσωποποιία* (apostrophe)⁵⁷ in which the arguments of the absent opponents (Egyptians or possibly apostate Jews?) of the idealized righteous Jew are spoken. Possessing a popularized, incorrect view of Epicureanism,⁵⁸ not uncommon in the Roman world of the rhetor (cf. the patron of Philodemus, Piso, as slanderously characterized by Cicero, *Pis.* 68–72), these adversaries are materialists when it comes to nature and their anthropology, believing that at death the body returns to ashes while the spirit evaporates into the air. Since death is the final end, joy and passion are the goals of human life. They thus strongly detest the righteous man who calls himself a child of God and seek to eliminate him through murder. But before the ending of his life, he should be tortured in order to see if God indeed will rescue him. The torture of a pogrom is present in this speech as is the detesting of those practicing Jews who separate themselves from the wicked. These wicked deny that God is involved with human beings and behavior. Indeed, they doubt God will do anything to save the righteous.

⁵⁷ Stanley K. Stowers, "Apostrophe, *προσωποποιία*, and Paul's Rhetorical Education," John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht, and L. Michael White, eds., *Early Christianity and Classical Culture* (NovTSup 90; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 351–369.

⁵⁸ This pessimistic view of human existence is common to many writers of the Hellenistic and early Roman period. David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (AB 43; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 115, refers to numerous citations that are similar to the pessimism of the opponents of the teacher. For Epicureanism, see Elizabeth Asmis, "Epicurean Epistemology," in Keimpe Algra et al., eds., *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 260–294.

4.7. *Rhetoric and Rhetorical Forms in the Wisdom of Solomon*⁵⁹

Wisdom participates in the various dimensions of Greek rhetoric. The author of the text is well educated in the characteristic features of this discipline and uses rhetorical features rather often. This is especially clear when he enters into the mind of the young Solomon who aspires to obtain from Wisdom eloquence beyond mere ornamentation (8:8c, 12). The rhetor has the ability to compose an expressive and clear discourse, to proceed logically in moving forward his arguments, to make transitions from one topic to the next in an orderly fashion, to return to his main subject after a series of digressions, to engage in questions to which he provides appealing and provocative answers, to construct a harmonious balance of words and phrases, and to make use of engaging images (4:3–5; 5:9–12, 13; 7:9–10; 17:18–19). These are but a few examples that point to a well crafted *protreptikos logos* merged with his own Jewish form of Hellenistic Greek.⁶⁰

One also notes a number of instances where forms of rhetoric are used with exquisite skill. In the study of Greek rhetoric, the student began with the προγυνάσματα, which were the preliminary rhetorical exercises⁶¹ that taught the basic techniques of writing, and how to select themes to develop.⁶² One of these exercises is ἠθοποιία (or “imitation,” “mimesis”), imitation of heroes, mythological, and literary figures. Rhetors taught their students the exercises of impersonation (or formation of character) and praise: ἠθοποιία and ἐγκώμιον.⁶³ The first consisted of declamation in which a student assumed the role of significant figures (historical, mythical, literary, and heroic) and chose the literary form that was appropriate for the occasion. These impersonations gave students the opportunity to develop the figure’s arguments within the context of the speech. The student usually selected the literary pattern appropriate for a particular occasion (e.g. exhortation and the request for forgiveness). The rhetor makes frequent use

⁵⁹ While the rhetor of Wisdom uses numerous Greek forms common especially to rhetorical speeches and texts, he also at times gives his own distinctive meanings to Greek vocabulary words (Larcher, *Études sur Le Livre de la Sagesse*, 182).

⁶⁰ Larcher, *Études sur Le Livre de la Sagesse*, 185–187.

⁶¹ The exercises listed in the textbook attributed to *Hermogenes* included the studies of fable, narrative, chreia, maxim, common-place, encomion, synchrisis, ethopoeia, ephrasis, thesis, and introduction of a law (see George A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* [Writings from the Greco-Roman World 10; Atlanta: SBL, 2003], 73–88).

⁶² Criatore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 222.

⁶³ Criatore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 228.

of admonitions or exhortations throughout his book (see, e. g. 1:1–5, 1:11, 1:12–15, 2:12–20, etc.). Assuming the role of the wise and noble king, Solomon, the rhetor allows his mind to engage one of the most notable personages of Jewish history and legend. He enters into the mind, voice, and life of Solomon at a time when he has excelled in his education that has prepared him to rule justly and well (chs. 7–9). The second is found in Solomon's praise of Wisdom in 7:22b–8:1.

Yet there are numerous other exercises. The *γνώμη*⁶⁴ was a proverb or saying that frequented the literary and oratory works of Greeks from the earliest period into the first centuries of the hegemony of Imperial Rome. These sayings expressed a truth about existence or captured some insight into moral behavior. In the latter part of the classical age, the *γνώμη* became a recognized category of rhetoric. It was used to support an argument as well as to express simply a truism readily recognized in the larger culture. More specifically a *παροιμία* is a proverb or saying, while a *χρεία*⁶⁵ is a saying used to state a general observation. Both became a means of teaching rhetoric and ethics to students in the schools. The *γνωμολογία* were collections of sayings (*γνώμη*) used in teaching students and by orators and composers to support their arguments, demonstrate their personal learned character, and to enhance their speeches and texts. Drawing similar types of sayings and lists from Jewish wisdom, the rhetor makes use of two blessed sayings in 3:13 (the barren woman) and 3:14 (the eunuch) in a manner that contravenes normal understanding: barrenness is not sterility that is due to sin, and the righteous eunuch will have a reward far beyond that of the gift of children. In 4:1 he makes use of the better saying to indicate that childlessness with virtue exceeds in value the longevity of the wicked. In 5:9–14 he makes use of comparative sayings drawn from nature to speak of the rather swift disappearance and erasure from memory of the wicked at death who leave behind no virtuous act (a ship that leaves no trace in the water, a birth that leaves no evidence of its path of flight, and a released arrow that leaves no indication of its route of movement [cf. Prov 30:18–19]).

The *εὐλογία* was a specific type of speech of praise offered in remembrance of the glorious dead, their accomplishments, and virtues, and normally delivered at the funeral of the deceased.⁶⁶ The elegy is apparent in the

⁶⁴ Michael Silk, "Gnome," *OCD* 640.

⁶⁵ "Chreia," *OCD* 324–325. Also see Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*; and Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric*.

⁶⁶ The fragments of Eupolemus contain an *encomium*: Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 1:95, as does Ben Sirah (Sir 44–50).

rhetor's praise of the faithful dead, particularly the young, who lie sleeping in death and yet enjoy the safekeeping of the Lord, who has taken them mercifully from life lived in the tempting presence of sinners and from the possible corruption into which they might fall. These righteous dead will condemn the ungodly who yet live, knowing that they will be punished and left to become dishonored corpses and an outrage in the world of the dead (4:10–19).

The *πάνηγυρικός* (“for an assembly”)⁶⁷ is the term used to refer to a formal oration, verse, or narrative of praise regarding a person, virtue, event, city, state, or deity. Thus, the praise is intended to be laudatory but not critical. It was a term used to refer to public speeches during formal occasions that extolled the qualities and virtues of a person or thing. One occasion of the panegyric was the public oration given at the games in Athens in which the assembly of athletes and spectators were exhorted to emulate the examples of their esteemed “ancestors.” A related expression is *ἐγκώμιον* (see Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.20, 1393a23–1394a18). This was occasionally combined with the historical recounting of the past through the praise of ancestors, gods, and cities. The rhetor of Wisdom engages in praise of Wisdom (6:12–16; 7:22b–8:1), including her acts of salvation of the ancestors from Adam to Moses (10:1–11:1) and, entering in the role of Solomon (*ἡθοποπία*), he engages in a royal *περιανυτολογία* (self-praise, 7:1–22) and a panegyric praise of and love for Wisdom (8:2–9:18).

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of the Greek literary influence on the book is its overarching form that combines *προτρεπτικός* (“hortatory”), *ἐπιδεικτικτός* (“declamation, exhibition, display”),⁶⁸ and *ἐγκώμιον* (“praise, eulogy, panegyric”).⁶⁹ In addition, other common forms and elements of Greek rhetoric present in this book include the *δίπτυχος* (diptych, “doubled, folding”), *σύγκρισις* (“comparison: a comparison of opposite or contrary things”),⁷⁰ *ἀποστροφή* (“when one turns away from all others to address one”), *προσωποποιία* (“the putting of imaginary speeches into one’s own or

⁶⁷ See D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson, eds., *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981). Menander made frequent use of panegyrics in his treatises.

⁶⁸ David Winston, “Review of ‘Il libro della sapienza: Struttura e genere letterario,’” *CBQ* 48 (1986): 527, indicates that it is difficult to determine which of the two is dominant.

⁶⁹ Maurice Gilbert, “Wisdom Literature,” in M.E. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 283–324.

⁷⁰ The *σύγκρισις* is a literary technique of contrasts, which in Wisdom places in opposition the features of creation that brought salvation to Israel and that effectuated disaster for the Egyptians (16:1–4, 5–14, 15–29; 17:1–18:4; 18:5–25; 19:1–12). An earlier *σύγκρισις* occurs in 11:1–14.

another's mouth"),⁷¹ εὐλογία ("praise"),⁷² συνεκδοχή ("a figure of speech in which a more comprehensive term is used for a less comprehensive one, or vice versa"), and διαίρεσις ("separation").⁷³ The literary form of the text is the λόγος προτρεπτικός (speech of persuasion)⁷⁴ that has as its purpose the convincing of an audience to pursue a particular course of life (e.g. Wis 6:12).⁷⁵ While the πανηγυρικός ("panegyric, praise at a festival") is a major form in Wisdom (cf. 19:2), the rhetor also makes use of additional types of oratory, including the κατηγορία ("accusation;" cf. e.g. Wis 2:21–24), ἀπολογία ("apology;" cf. the apology for the conquest of Canaan in Wis 12:3–18, and the punishment of the Egyptians in Wis 11:15–12:2), ἐγκώμιον ("praise;" cf. Wis 7:22–8:1), and the ἐπιτάφιος (funeral oration; cf. Wis 3:1–9).⁷⁶

As noted earlier, a final form we shall mention that occurs in Wisdom and draws from Greek oratory is that of περιαιτουλογία ("self-praise") issued by Solomon in chs. 7–9.⁷⁷ While self-praise is to be avoided, it is legitimate when uttered by others. It is also acceptable in one's defense of his good name or when pleading for justice to those who have defamed him. Further, Plutarch justifies legitimate boasting to enhance one's reputation in order to achieve a greater good.⁷⁸ This would be the case with Solomon who presents himself in the text as the paragon of royal virtue and righteous rule for pagan kings and a model of virtue for youth in Jewish schools to emulate.

⁷¹ LSJ, 1533. See the speech of the wicked in Wisdom 2.

⁷² See the praise of Wisdom in Wis 7:22–8:1 and the hymn to the Lord as the cosmic warrior (5:17–23; cf. Isa 59:17).

⁷³ Διαίρεσις is the classification of the world of phenomena according to the dialectical principle of the separation of things that are similar and yet different. The rhetor makes use of this principle in arguing that what punishes one group benefits another (thus the plagues).

⁷⁴ Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 18–20. J.M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and its Consequences* (AnBib 41; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970), 117, explains: "The protreptic, then, is not a formal treatise on the abstract aspects of philosophy, but an appeal to follow a meaningful philosophy as a way of life."

⁷⁵ Theodore C. Burgess, *Epideictic Literature* (New York: Garland, 1987), 229–230; and Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC 8; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 92.

⁷⁶ The last two mentioned are examples of epideictic oratory.

⁷⁷ Plutarch, "On Praising Oneself Inoffensively" (*Mor.* 7); Dio Chrysostom, *Nest.*; and Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.1.15–28. See Hans Dieter Betz, "De Laude kipsies (*Moralia* 539A–547F)," Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (SCHNT 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 367–393.

⁷⁸ See Duane F. Watson, "Paul and Boasting," J. Paul Sampley, ed., *Paul in the Greco-Roman World* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 77–100.

5. CONCLUSION

The literary character of this λόγος προτρεπτικός points to a rhetorical adeptness acquired by one whose skills of combining content with elegant language (epideictic) are reasonably well presented in both judicial and deliberative oratory. This suggests that the author was a rhetor, who had studied in a rhetorical school, while his audience consisted of Jews, likely the *gerousia*, present in an assembly in a synagogue. The rhetor writing the Wisdom of Solomon merged a variety of Greek rhetorical forms and ethics with Jewish teachings of creation and redemptive history, in particular the plagues and the exodus, and elements of Philonic mysticism.⁷⁹ While he affirms the superiority of Judaism in comparison to the pagan religions of the Hellenists, he still uses Greek rhetoric and morality to aid in the coalescing of these two different cultures.⁸⁰ The primary intention of the rhetor's use of προτρεπτικός becomes obvious from the content of the text. He exhorts Jews to remain steadfast in their loyalty to their traditions, ethnicity, and religious identity, especially when they are suffering ridicule and abuse at the hands of their opponents. The occasion appears to be one of violence, in which the Jewish *politeuma* is undergoing a period of intense persecution. The references to the explanation of the origins of death and the immortality of the righteous suggest, as noted earlier, that this persecution may have taken place in a state-sponsored pogrom, and, if so, the one initiated and pursued by Flaccus in 38 CE would be the obvious one. The rhetor's hope for the future is based on his faith in the salvific acts of God in the past (19:22). Thus, in his exhortation he admonishes the faithful to endure, knowing full well they shall receive the gift of immortality.

⁷⁹ David Winston, "The Sage as Mystic in the Wisdom of Solomon," in John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue, eds., *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 383–397.

⁸⁰ Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 67; and John Joseph Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 13.

DIALECTICS: PHILOSOPHICAL AND TALMUDIC

Jacob Neusner

Dialectic tests, where philosophy seeks, knowledge

Aristotle¹

1. PHILOSOPHICAL DIALECTICS AND THE MOVING ARGUMENT OF THE BAVLI (THE TALMUD OF BABYLONIA)

The Bavli's purpose argument demanded not merely set-piece presentation of propositions, pro and con, but challenge and response, analytical reasoning on the spot—dialectical argument. Well-reasoned demonstration did not suffice. Only rigorous dispute between responsive, reasonable players served. That is why dialectics formed the single paramount analytical template of the Bavli in particular.

We begin with a brief account of dialectics as defined by classical philosophy, then turn to cases that set forth the Bavli's version of the same mode of argument. To begin with a simple definition, Robin Smith provides the following:

Generally speaking, the practice of arguing with others on the basis of their own opinions and securing premises by asking questions may be described as “dialectical argument.” ... I would propose ... as a definition of dialectical argument in its most general sense, *argument directed at another person which proceeds by asking questions.*²

Certain very specific types of Talmudic arguments readily conform to that definition, though not all Talmudic arguments qualify as dialectical ones. Smith elaborates on this matter in the following language:

¹ Cited in C.D.C. Reeve, *Practices of Reason: Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 34. The commas are supplied by me; Reeve gives the sentence without them.

² Robin Smith, “Logic,” in Jonathan Barnes, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 60.

The word “dialectical” comes from a verb, *dialegesthai*, which means, “argue.” Arguments are verbal disputes in which each party attacks and defends positions, arguments can be won and lost. Here we already have an important distinction from demonstrations, in which attack and defense play no part. Dialectical argument differs from demonstrative reasoning in that it is intrinsically a kind of exchange between participants acting in some way as opponents ... Socrates took his philosophical mission in life to be a kind of testing or examining of the beliefs of others through questioning ... The majority of [Plato’s] written works take the form of dialogues in which Socrates questions various interlocutors. These depictions of dialectical exchanges are more than a device of presentation for Plato; he gives the name ‘dialectic’ to the method of philosophy itself ... [*Dialectical argument*] differs from demonstration, which must deduce from first principles and not from what people think ...³

The italicized words establish an important distinction between a dispute comprised by set-piece arguments and a dialectical argument, in which each party addresses the position of the other and in which exchanges of reasoning, evidence, and argument, not merely presentation of static positions, define the course of discussion. In a dialectical argument the purpose is to persuade the other party that he is wrong, not merely to inform him of your views and the reasons for them: to challenge and elicit response. Finally, let us ask what a dialectical method should allow us to accomplish. In Smith’s terms, it is

... to make us able to deduce the conclusion we want from premises conceded by the opponent we are faced with. That can be accomplished if we can find premises that have two properties: [1] the desired conclusion follows from them, and [2] the answerer will concede them ...⁴

For classical philosophy dialectics is a philosophical mode of analysis through the rhetoric of question-answer, within the framework of intellectual dialogue, brought to fruition by Plato’s Socrates and by Aristotle. The Oxford English Dictionary provides a first-rate account of the definition of the word “dialectics:”

... the investigation of truth by discussion ... logical argument or disputation ... Originally the art of reasoning or disputation by question and answer ... scientifically developed by Plato, by whom the term *dialektiké* was used in two senses: the art of definition of discrimination of ideas, the science which views the interrelationship of ideas by a single principle.⁵

³ Smith, “Logic,” 58–60.

⁴ Smith, “Logic,” 60–61.

⁵ *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 310.

For the purpose of description, the dynamic character of dialectics requires emphasis as well: a dialectical argument is an exchange of conflicting opinion that moves from point to point, not remaining bound to the initial proposition but pursuing the consequences of practical reason and applied logic wherever they direct the flow of argument.

In the formative canon of rabbinic Judaism, dialectical argument—the movement of thought through contentious challenge and passionate response, initiative, ploy and counter-ploy—characterizes the Bavli in particular, and finds a limited place also in only two other rabbinic documents.⁶ “Dialectical” means moving, and for the Bavli, a dialectical argument is a systematic exposition, through give and take, moving from point to point; the argument is the thing, since the dialectical argument strays from its original, precipitating point and therefore does not ordinarily undertake the demonstration, but rather the exploration, of a fixed proposition. Argument moves along, developing an idea through questions and answers, sometimes implicit, but more commonly explicit. That mode of analysis through media of question-answer and contentious argument imparts to the Bavli its distinctive, and I should claim, unique characteristics of thought.⁷ Called in the language of the Bavli *shaqla vetarya*, give and take, dialectics requires definition in neutral terms.

What, exactly, do I mean by a “moving argument”? It is one that transcends the set-piece juxtaposition of propositions, arguments, and evidence. This it does by treating propositions, arguments, and evidence to a process of interchange and challenge, composing out of the pronouncement of differences of opinion an ongoing, unfolding argument, one in which one point is countered by another that intersects, so that what then follows is not a recapitulation of what has been said, but an unfolding, developing interchange of reason and argument. Then, because the players listen thoughtfully to one another and respond to the point, the “moving argument” may, and should, change course. This is always in response to the arguments that

The use of the term in modern philosophy need not detain us, though Hegel's utilization of dialectics as a description of “the process of thought by which ... contradictions are seen to merge themselves in a higher truth that comprehends them” provides fruitful perspective on the outcome of Talmudic dialectics.

⁶ The outstanding case is Sifra, which sets forth a vast repertoire of dialectical arguments.

⁷ For an equivalent exercise of hermeneutics of a contentious order, we look in vain among the other law codes and commentaries of antiquity, which tend to a certain blandness. For the Zoroastrian counterpart, see my *Judaism and Zoroastrianism at the Dusk of Late Antiquity: How Two Ancient Faiths Wrote Down Their Great Traditions* (South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 87; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).

are set forth, the obstacles placed in the original path of thought. The purpose of the dialectical argument is not to advocate but to explore, not to demonstrate truth but to discover truth out of a process of contention and confrontation. The successful argument formed dialectically will deal with all possibilities and reach not a climax but a laconic conclusion: all things having been said, we end up here, rather than somewhere else.

The rabbinic dialectical argument—the protracted, sometimes meandering, always moving flow of contentious thought—raises a question and answers it, then raises a question about the answer, and, having raised another question, then gives an answer to that question and continues in the same fashion until a variety of issues has been sorted out. So it moves hither and yon; it is always one and coherent, but it is never the same, and it flows across the surface of the document at hand. The dialectical character derives not from the mere rhetorical device of question and answer, but from the pursuit of an argument, in a single line, but in many and diverse directions: not the formal but the substantive continuity defines the criterion. And the power of the dialectical argument flows from that continuity. We find the source of continuity in the author's capacity to show connections through the momentum of rigorous analysis, on the one side, and free-ranging curiosity, on the other.

Those second and third and fourth turnings, therefore, differentiate a dialectical argument from a static dispute and debate, much as the bubbles tell the difference between still and sparkling wine. The always-sparkling dialectical argument is one principal means by which the Bavli or some other rabbinic writing accomplishes its goal of showing the connections between this and that, ultimately demonstrating the unity of many "thises and thats." These efforts at describing the argument serve precisely as well as program notes to a piece of music: they tell us what we are going to hear; they cannot play the music. What "moves" therefore is the flow of argument and thought, and that is—by definition—from problem to problem. The movement is generated specifically by the raising of contrary questions and theses. What characterizes the dialectical argument in rabbinic literature is its moving hither and yon. It is not a direct or straight-line movement (e.g. the dialectical argument with which we are familiar in the modern West, thesis, antithesis, synthesis). It also does not correspond to any propositional or syllogistic argument, even though such arguments may take place in three or more steps, inclusive of counter-arguments.

2. WHY DIALECTICS WAS THE CHOSEN MEDIUM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION FOR THE MISHNAH'S HEIRS AND CONTINUATORS

Here we come to the critical question, how can we account for the Bavli's resort to dialectical argument, which apart from Sifra had no precedent whatsoever in prior Israelite writing of any kind? Much of the Bavli accomplishes its goals without resort to protracted and contentious argument, let alone to the continuous asking and answering of questions, so the work of Mishnah-commentary could have been accomplished without dialectics. But the Bavli's single indicative trait, even though not a paramount or ubiquitous one, is its dialectics, and we have every reason to want to know why.⁸

Because they inherited a corpus of conflict, a heritage of contending statements of norms and laws, the heirs of the Mishnah, proposing to continue the work of the Mishnah, found in dialectics the appropriate medium of expression and thought for accomplishing their task of confronting contention and resolving disharmony. Through dialectics that permitted covering a wide range of topics in a single composition the rabbinic sages would both demonstrate the perfection of the Mishnah, the transcription of the oral Torah of Sinai, and also remove the imperfections of the law that the Torah handed on to Israel. Dialectics accomplished that same work of establishing cogency among topics that the labor of uniform clarification and coherent generalization achieved: transforming a topical exposition of laws into a coherent account of jurisprudence.

To understand what identified dialectical inquiry as the medium of choice for accomplishing the goals of the framers of the Bavli's composites and authors of its compositions, we have to review the Bavli's own tasks. Organized around the Mishnah in the form of a commentary to that document, the Talmud (also called the Gemara) accords privileged standing to the Mishnah. The form of the Bavli, its principles of organization and its systematic program, all accord priority to the Mishnah. But that is misleading, for bearing secondary developments and also sizable topical appendices, as well as free-standing composites of Scripture-commentary, the Bavli vastly exceeds the requirements of a Mishnah-commentary. Not only so, but when we understand the actual task of the compilers of the

⁸ For the definition of dialectics in the Talmudic context, with the important distinction between authentic dialectics and the merely-formal framing of matters in question-and-answer style, see my *Talmudic Dialectics: Types and Forms* (2 vols.; South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 127–128; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

Bavli and authors of its compositions—not only the formal requirements they adopted for themselves—we shall see why dialectics solved a considerable intellectual problem that they addressed.

The Bavli joins together a variety of composites of cogent compositions.⁹ By no means do all of these composites take the task of Mishnah-commentary and propose only to explain or amplify the law of the Mishnah, or its language, or its scriptural bases. These composites divide into various types, each with its own rhetorical protocol and exegetical or expository and argumentative task. All but one type bear in common the purpose of compiling bodies of information (e.g. exegesis of verses of Scripture, lower-critical comments upon the sense and meaning of passages of the Mishnah, and the like). All express viewpoints, some contain disputes. The one type of composition (sometimes built into a composite) that conducts a sustained argument concerning an important thesis sets forth a highly argumentative kind of writing. That writing takes the form of question-answer, aiming at dialogue, which is called the dialectical argument.

Not by any measure the paramount type of composite in the Bavli,¹⁰ the dialectical argument imparts flavor to the whole Bavli by imposing tension and supplying energy, focus, and purpose. By its movement, from question to answer, point to point, problem to problem, case to case, the dialectical argument also gives the Bavli the quality of dynamism. The rigor required to participate in a challenging exchange defines the intellectual quality of the whole document, even though most of the sustained discussions prove merely illuminating, not contentious. For its part, the dialectical argument asks for not merely information but analysis, not merely acute reading of existing language but formulation of new points of interest altogether.

What makes me insist that dialectics defined the ideal method for the Mishnah-analysis undertaken by the Bavli? The character of the Mishnah defined the challenge that was met by the selection and utilization of the dialectical argument, which, in all writings of all Judaisms from the begin-

⁹ For the definition of “composition” and “composite” and the critical part in my analysis of the document that those literary categories play, see my *The Rules of Composition of the Talmud of Babylonia: The Cogency of the Bavli’s Composite* (South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 13; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991).

¹⁰ See my *Talmudic Dialectics*, which graphically shows how small a proportion of the tractates of the Bavli is devoted to dialectical arguments, carefully defined. The question-answer-form by itself does not signify dialectics; that is a mere rhetorical device. Where the questions and answers govern the direction of argument, shifting its course and imposing an intellectual program of challenge and response, there we have a dialectical argument, as I shall explain in detail.

nings to the third century CE, has no precedent. Dialectics predominates only in the final compilation of the rabbinic canon, the Bavli. A large-scale structure of lists, the Mishnah's generalizations rarely come to articulation; the mass of detail invited close study and analysis. The general had to emerge out of the concrete and specific, and generalizations valid at one point had to be tested against those emergent elsewhere; implications of generalizations for encompassing principles here required comparison and contrast with those that formed the foundations of a legal unit on an unrelated topic elsewhere. All of this work of construction would turn the Mishnah's details into large-scale compositions of encompassing significance.

But the Mishnah by itself did not exhaust the resources of normative rulings that formed the heritage of its time and sages. And the Bavli, for its part, though organized around the Mishnah, in fact took as its problem the law of the Mishnah, along with other law not found in the Mishnah. The privileging of the Mishnah did not extend to the laws that it set forth. If the framers of the Mishnah hoped to bring order out of chaos by giving the authoritative selection of the law—not merely a collection of their preferences and choices among laws—they were to find only disappointment. Repudiating the privileging of the Mishnah, reducing the document to a mere framework for the organization of something greater, the writers of the Bavli's compositions and compilers of its composites redefined matters and assigned to themselves a far more important task than merely glossing a fixed code.

That choice formed their response to a simple fact: the Mishnah collected only a small portion of the law that had come into being in the first and second centuries. A sizable corpus of opinion, rulings, cases, and disputes, circulated from the period in which the Mishnah emerged but found (or was given) no place within the Mishnah. Some of these materials came to rest in the compilation of supplements to the Mishnah called the Tosefta. Corresponding to the Mishnah in its topical organization and program, the Tosefta exceeded the Mishnah in sheer volume by at least four times—perhaps more. Other laws were formulated along with attributions to the same authorities, called Tannaite sages, who occur in the Mishnah. These laws scarcely differentiated themselves from those in the Mishnah, except in contents. Still more laws circulated, whether or not attributed to the names of authorities who occur also in the Mishnah, bearing the mark TNY—yielding “it was formulated for repetition as a Tannaite rule”¹¹—and

¹¹ In the Bavli, statements bearing the signal TNY in its various forms ordinarily bear the names of authorities who occur also in the Mishnah; or who are credited with the compilation of Mishnah-sayings, e.g. a Tosefta, such as Hiyya or Bar Qappara. But in the

these too enjoyed the same standing and authority as Tannaite sayings collected in the Mishnah or the Tosefta.

If, therefore, a coherent and uniform, principled system of norms was to reach full articulation, the laws, and not the Mishnah's privileged segment of the laws, would form the arena for systematic study. That is to say, if a cogent system was to emerge out of the heritage of normative rulings out of Tannaite sponsorship, the entire mass of normative rulings would require analysis; points of contradiction would have to be sorted out; harmony between and among diverse laws would have to be established. To accomplish the task of analysis of sayings, formulation and testing of generalizations, and above all, the discovery of the principles embedded in the normative rules governing discrete cases, the Bavli resorted to the dialectal argument.¹² That would make possible the transformation of the Mishnah's lists, limited by their nature to data of a single kind, into the starting-points for a series capable of infinite extension across data of diverse kinds, as I shall explain in due course.

The implications of the character of the heritage of norms that the rabbinic sages addressed with the Mishnah in hand prove self-evident. Specifically, had the rabbinic sages received only the Mishnah, the character of that document would have imposed a labor of mere amplification of a well-crafted document and application of a uniform law. That is not only because of the exquisite quality of the craftsmanship exhibited in the Mishnah's composition, but also because of the pristine clarity of its laws themselves. Where there is a difference of opinion, it is labeled by assigning to the minority view a name, with the majority, and normative, position given anonymously. So was schism signaled clearly if tacitly. Hence applying the law would have imposed no formidable burdens. And had the Babylonian sages of the third through seventh centuries received only a mass of laws, deriving from hither and yon, the primary work of selection and organization, not analysis and theoretical synthesis, would have occupied their best energies, but that is not how matters worked out.

Bavli, the same convention does not prevail, and TNY-sayings may routinely occur in the names of authorities who elsewhere figure only with figures much later than the time of the closure of the Mishnah. Whatever the intent of TNY in the Bavli, therefore, in the Yerushalmi the meaning of the signal cannot be the same. It is generally supposed that TNY in the Bavli means a teaching out of Tannaite times. But indifference to chronology, indicated by name-associations, in the Yerushalmi then bears a different meaning. There, it follows, TNY signals a status as to authority, not as to origin. And I suspect closer study of the Bavli, without the prevailing assumption as to the sense of TNY, will yield a comparable result.

¹² The upshot was to turn a list into a series.

The Mishnah imposed structure and order. The boundaries of discourse therefore were laid out. But the Mishnah's selectivity defined the exegetical problems for further inquiry. Accordingly, the rabbinic sages addressed a dual challenge: (1) both subjecting a well-crafted document to exegesis, amplification, and theoretical inquiry, but also (2) sorting out conflicting data on the same matters that said document took up. To amplify this point, which is crucial to all that follows: the intellectual tasks confronting the heirs of the Mishnah were made complicated by the conflict between the status of the Mishnah and the sizable legacy of authoritative legal data transmitted along with the Mishnah. The Mishnah enjoyed privileged status. All other compositions and composites received the form of commentary to the Mishnah. But the exegesis of the Mishnah did not then define the sole intellectual labor at hand. For the privileging of the Mishnah proved incomplete, with a huge corpus of other rulings on the same agenda compiled in the Tosefta, with other corpora of rulings on elements of the same agenda compiled alongside the Tosefta ("our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority" on my translation), and with still other free-floating sayings endowed with Tannaite status to cope with as well. Mishnah-exegesis—words, phrases, sources in Scripture—then would ordinarily enjoy pride of position, at the head of any sustained composite. But, following that work, next in line would come the challenge of conflicting opinion on the Mishnah's topics and rulings. Not only so, but the privileging of the Mishnah would remain a mere formality, without a direct confrontation with the conflicting opinions preserved along with the Mishnah. The Mishnah had to be shown perfect in form, harmonious in contents, dominant in norm-setting, if that initial act of privileging were to signal long-term status as the authoritative statement.

The Mishnah's character as a mass of petty rulings defined a third task, one that was natural to the rigorous intellects who comprised the cadre of the Rabbinic sages. That was to require the quest for not only harmony but also generalization, the encompassing principle, the prevailing rule emerging from concrete data. For intellectuals of sages' sort sought not only information about details, but guidance on the main lines of thought. Not only so, but, engaged as they were in the administration of the life of the Jewish communities of Babylonia, theirs proved to be a practical reason and applied logic. They had not only to rule on cases covered by the Mishnah—and laws of its standing in addition—but also on cases not envisaged at all within the framework of the Mishnah. These cases of new kinds altogether, involving not only application of the law but penetration into the principles behind the law that could be made to cover new cases,

demanded the formation of an analytical logic capable of generating principles to produce new laws.

And that is where dialectics entered in, for both practical and theoretical reasons. Theoretical considerations come first. Crafted to begin with to produce clarity of definition, the mode of dialectical argument of classical philosophy defined a reliable method to secure compelling definitions of important principles. To deal with conflicting opinion on definition, two or more rulings on the same problem had to be set side by side and given each its own hearing. Perhaps the conflict could be resolved through making a distinction; in that case let one party challenge the other, with a harmonizing opinion then registering. Perhaps the conflict revealed principles that were at odds. These required articulation, analysis, juxtaposition and then, if possible, harmonization; if possible, reformulation at a higher level of abstraction.¹³ Perhaps rulings on one topic rested on a principle that also affected rulings on another topic altogether. Then the principle expressed by rulings on that unrelated topic had to be made articulate and brought into relationship with the underlying principle operative elsewhere. And again, a given set of rulings served to illustrate a single point in common, and that point in common was to be formulated as a hypothesis of general intelligibility and applicability. Rulings on one topic rested on a principle that also affected rulings on another topic altogether. Then the principle expressed by rulings on that unrelated topic had to be made articulate and brought into relationship with the underlying principle operative elsewhere.

And again, a given set of rulings served to illustrate a single point in common, and that point in common was to be formulated as a hypothesis of general intelligibility and applicability. How better to test a hypothesis than in a dialogue between proponents and opponents, the latter raising contrary cases, the former overcoming contradiction, the former amplifying and extending their hypothesis, the latter proposing to limit it. The upshot is, the very character of the corpus of law received by the rabbinic sages in Babylonia insured that a vast repertoire of conflict and contention would define the work of the heirs, those responsible for the orderly application of the law—the Mishnah's law but not that alone—to the everyday affairs of the community of holy Israel. Given the range of data to be addressed, the mode of question-answer, challenge out of conflicting data and response

¹³ The mode of argument in the pattern of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis would be long in coming, and I see no precursors in the Bavli.

through resolution of conflict, served as the principal medium of thought. The very character of the corpus of norms generated the kind of conflict best resolved through the challenge and response embodied in question-answer rhetoric of dialectics. The specific purpose of the sages' reading of the norms—the formulation of an internally coherent, proportionate, and harmonious statement—coincided with the promise of dialectic, which is to expose conflict and find ways through reason of resolving it. But if theory made dialectics the method of choice, politics reinforced the theoretical usefulness of that method of thought and expression.

Practical considerations, both intellectual and political in character, moreover, underscored the usefulness of dialectics. Framed in a rhetoric aimed at effecting agreement out of conflict, preserving civility and rationality in confrontation of opinion, received tradition, or ideas, dialectics took a form exceedingly suitable to the situation of the sages. All of them proud, accomplished, certain of their knowledge, and opinionated, sages required a medium of thought that would accord recognition and respect to all participants. Simply announcing opinions—solutions to problems, rulings on cases, theories for analytical consideration—accomplished little, when the participants to public discourse addressed one another as equals and laid a heavy claim upon a full hearing for their respective views.

And even if the rabbinic sages had proved to be men of limited intellect, politics pointed toward dialogue and argued in favor of a rhetoric of dialectics. None possessed access to coercive force,¹⁴ other than that of intellectual power and moral authority. For, lacking an efficient administration capable of imposing order, they could hope to accomplish their goals through persuasion, not coercion. Denied the services of a police force or army, effective principally through public opinion and persuasion (relying heavily, for instance, upon ostracism as a social penalty), the rabbinic sages could best impose their will by means of powerful argument. The power of rationality, moreover, proved singularly congruent to sages' circumstance, since none

¹⁴ A single exception proves the rule. A few sages were employed by the Jewish civil administration of Babylonia, a state-recognized agency called the exilarchate. The exilarchate is represented in the Rabbinic sources as an independent authority over the Jews, and not as a corporate body of sages themselves. A few sages, however, are represented as employed by (part of the "household" of) the exilarch. But stories about those few, while acknowledging their political standing, never represent the exilarch's sages as employing power rather than persuasion of a reasoned sort. The pertinent stories are collected in my *History of the Jews in Babylonia* (5 vols.; StPB 9–15; Leiden: Brill, 1965–1970). Chapter 2 of each of vols. 2–5 is devoted to the exilarchate.

of them enjoyed political sponsorship sufficient to compel the rest to conform, and all of the more influential ones jealously guarded their standing and prerogatives.¹⁵

The mode of argument made possible through dialectics—two or more positions fully exposed, with arguments pro and con, a complete repertoire of positions and possibilities, laid out in the form of an exchange between and among equals, with point-by-point *Auseinandersetzungen*, allowing for the full articulation of generalizations, exceptions based on cases, counter-arguments, and competing generalizations—that mode of argument alone could prove congruent to the politics of powerful intellects lacking worldly position to sustain their hypotheses.¹⁶ Accordingly, the rabbinic sages chose wisely when they determined that argument in dialogic form, within dialectical logic, defined the best possible instrument with which to accomplish their task of explanation, analysis, and amplification of the law that they had received not only from the Mishnah but from other sources of the same status or origin.

3. THE BAVLI'S DIALECTICS

Even though it occurs in only a few documents, and even there, in only a limited proportion, the dialectical, or moving, argument is important because, in the sustained conflict provoked by the testing of proposition in contention, argument turns fact into truth. Making a point forms the data of important propositions. The exchanges of propositions and arguments, objects and ripostes, hold together, however protracted and meandering.

The dialectical argument opens the possibility of reaching out from one thing to something else, not because people have lost sight of their starting point or their goal in the end, but because they want to encompass, in the analytical argument as it gets underway, as broad and comprehensive a range of cases and rules as they possibly can. The movement from point to point in reference to a single central point that accurately describes the

¹⁵ In my *Jews of Babylonia*, I collect most of the stories on the ways in which the laws were enforced, on the one side, and the manners of sages in dealing with one another, on the other side. These brief remarks summarize a huge corpus of tales, all of them telling the same story of an institutionally-inchoate body of powerful teachers-judges-administrators. Chapters 3 and beyond of each of vols. 2–5 are devoted to stories about the sages as administrators of the law, as holy men, and in other public capacities.

¹⁶ Such a claim requires comparison between the selected mode of analytical argument as the medium of commentary and other, available media of response to received texts.

dialectical argument reaches upward toward a goal of proximate abstraction, leaving behind the specificities of not only cases but laws. The movement carries us upward to the law that governs many cases, the premises that undergird many rules, and still higher to the principles that infuse diverse premises. Then the principles that generate other, unrelated premises in turn come to expression in other cases. The meandering course of argument comes to an end when we have shown how things cohere. Or, sometimes, the argument simply stops, leaving open possibilities for coming generations of exegetes to take up.

What is the difference between a dialectical argument and an ordinary dispute? How do we know what is, and what is not, an exercise of dialectics? Before proceeding in our consideration of the Bavli's dialectics, we have now to specify what is to be excluded from our account. And, therefore, an important qualification is in order. That concerns the exclusion, from the classification of dialectical argument, of protracted presentations of data. These, in the form of questions and answers, simply set forth a mass of well-crafted information, but no sustaining and continuous proposition. Such agglutinations of compositions and even composites prove informative; they collect information, much of it serving as on-site footnotes; but they follow no analytical problem, and they aim at little more than the provision of information. What differentiates an authentic dialectical argument, with an analytical program from a merely illuminating collection of information is therefore obvious. Both will exhibit connections from one item to the next, but the dialectical-analytical argument will always pursue an abstract and generalizing question, and the agglutinative composite will ordinarily turn out to be far more than a set of footnotes.

To make matters concrete let me give one example of discourse that moves forward through rhetorical questions and answers but does not demand classification as dialectical, in that the movement proves superficial, the basic argument is static and narrowly propositional. In the following case we see how a dialectical form conceals a perfectly standard exchange of information, nothing more. I indent secondary and tertiary glosses and interpolations as usual.

M. Berakhot 3.4 I.6

- A. Said R. Huna, "He who enters the synagogue and finds the community saying the Prayer, if he can begin and complete the Prayer before the leader of the community in his repetition, reaches the blessing, 'We acknowledge ...,' should say the Prayer, and if not, he should not say the Prayer."

- B. And R. Joshua b. Levi said, "If he can begin and complete the Prayer before the leader of the community in his repetition reaches the Sanctification, he should say the Prayer, and if not, he should not say the Prayer."
- C. *Concerning what principle do they differ?*
- D. *One master [A] takes the view that an individual may say the Sanctification-prayer [by himself].*
- E. *The other [B] takes the view that the individual may not say the Sanctification-prayer [by himself].*
- F. So too [B] did R. Ada bar Ahba say, "How do we know on the basis of Scripture that an individual [praying by himself] does not say the Sanctification-prayer? As it is said, 'And I shall be sanctified among the children of Israel' (Lev 22:32). Every matter involving sanctification may be conducted among no fewer than ten men."
- G. *How does the besought proof derive from the cited verse?*
- H. *It accords with that which Rabbinaï, brother of R. Hiyya bar Abba, taught on Tannaite authority, "An analogy is drawn on the use of the word 'among.'"*
- I. "Here it is written, 'And I shall be sanctified among the children of Israel' (Lev 22:32), and elsewhere it is written, 'Separate yourselves from among this congregation' (Num 16:21). Just as, in the latter instance, 'among' involves ten men, so here ten are required."
- J. *Both authorities concur, in the end, that one does not interrupt [the Prayer. If a person has begun to recite the Prayer, when the congregation comes to recite the Sanctification, the person does not interrupt his prayer to recite the Sanctification with the congregation.]*

What we have is little more than a first-rate exposition of the point at issue in a dispute, followed by a secondary datum, which shows how a proposition emerges from a proof-text. Merely presenting a dispute in a fair and balanced way, utilizing the form of question and answer, does not lead us into the realm controlled by authentic dialectics. We cannot confuse the deft presentation of conflicting propositions, along with required information, with the rich intellectual movement, hither and yon, that dialectics involves.

4. AN EXAMPLE OF A DIALECTICAL ARGUMENT

The passage that we consider occurs at the *Bavli Baba Mesia* 5B–6A, the Talmud to *Mishnah Baba Mesia* 1.1–2. Our interest is in the twists and turns of the argument. We have now to discern what is at stake in the formation of a continuous and unfolding composition:

Mishnah Baba Mesia 1.1–2 IV.1.

- A. [5B] **This one takes an oath that he possesses no less a share of it than half, [and that one takes an oath that he possesses no less a share of it than half, and they divide it up]:**

The rule of the Mishnah, which is cited at the head of the sustained discussion, concerns the case of two persons who find a garment. We settle their conflicting claim by requiring each to take an oath that he or she owns title to no less than half of the garment, and then we split the garment between them.

Our first question is one of text-criticism: analysis of the Mishnah-paragraph's word choice. We say that the oath concerns the portion that the claimant alleges he possesses. But the oath really affects the portion that he does not have in hand at all:

- B. *Is it concerning the portion that he claims he possesses that he takes the oath, or concerning the portion that he does not claim to possess?* [Daiches: "The implication is that the terms of the oath are ambiguous. By swearing that his share in it is not 'less than half,' the claimant might mean that it is not even a third or a fourth (which is 'less than half'), and the negative way of putting it would justify such an interpretation. He could therefore take this oath even if he knew that he had no share in the garment at all, while he would be swearing falsely if he really had a share in the garment that is less than half, however small that share might be"].
- C. *Said R. Huna, "It is that he says, 'By an oath! I possess in it a portion, and I possess in it a portion that is no more than half a share of it.'" [The claimant swears that his share is at least half (Daiches, *Baba Mesia*, ad loc.)].*

Having asked and answered the question, we now find ourselves in an extension of the argument; the principal trait of the dialectical argument is now before us: (1) but (2) maybe the contrary is the case, so (3) what about—that is, the setting aside of a proposition in favor of its opposite. Here we come to the definitive trait of the dialectic argument: its insistence

on challenging every proposal with the claim, “maybe it’s the opposite?” This pestering question forces us back upon our sense of self-evidence; it makes us consider the contrary of each position we propose to set forth. It makes thought happen. True, the Talmud’s voice’s “but”—the whole of the dialectic in one word!—presents a formidable nuisance. But so does all criticism, and only the mature mind will welcome criticism. Dialectics is not for children, politicians, propagandists, or egoists. Genuine curiosity about the truth shown by rigorous logic forms the counterpart to musical virtuosity. So the objection proceeds:

C. *Then let him say*, “By an oath! The whole of it is mine!”

Why claim half when the alleged finder may as well demand the whole cloak?

D. *But are we going to give him the whole of it?* [Obviously not, there is another claimant, also taking an oath.]

The question contradicts the facts of the case: two parties claim the cloak, so the outcome can never be that one will get the whole thing.

E. *Then let him say*, “By an oath! Half of it is mine!”

Then—by the same reasoning—why claim “no less than half,” rather than simply, half.

F. *That would damage his own claim* [which was that he owned the whole of the cloak, not only half of it].

The claimant does claim the whole cloak, so the proposed language does not serve to replicate his actual claim. That accounts for the language that is specified.

G. *But here too is it not the fact that, in the oath that he is taking, he impairs his own claim?* [After all, he here makes explicit the fact that he owns at least half of it. What happened to the other half?]

The solution merely compounds the problem.

H. [*Not at all.*] *For he has said*, “The whole of it is mine!” [And, he further proceeds,] “And as to your contrary view, By an oath, I do have a share in it, and that share is no less than half!”

We solve the problem by positing a different solution from the one we suggested at the outset. Why not start where we have concluded? Because if we had done so, we should have ignored a variety of intervening considerations

and so should have expounded less than the entire range of possibilities. The power of the dialectical argument is now clear: it forces us to address not the problem and the solution alone, but the problem and the various ways by which a solution may be reached; then, when we do come to a final solution to the question at hand, we have reviewed all of the possibilities. We have seen how everything flows together, nothing is left unattended.

What we have here is not a set-piece of two positions, with an analysis of each, such as formal dialogue exposes with such elegance; it is, rather, an analytical argument, explaining why this, not that, then why not that but rather this; and onward to the other thing and the thing beyond that—a linear argument in constant forward motion. When we speak of a moving argument, this is what we mean: what is not static and merely expository, but what is dynamic and always contentious. It is not an endless argument, an argument for the sake of arguing, or evidence that is important to the Bavli and other writings that use the dialectics as a principal mode of dynamic argument. It is process, not position. To the contrary, the passage is resolved with a decisive conclusion, not permitted to run on.

But the dialectical composition proceeds—continuous and coherent from point to point, even as it zigs and zags. We proceed to the second cogent proposition in the analysis of the cited Mishnah-passage, which asks a fresh question: why an oath at all?

Mishnah Baba Mesia 1.1–2 IV.2.

- A [It is envisioned that each party is holding on to a corner of the cloak, so the question is raised:] Now, since this one is possessed of the cloak and standing right there, and that one is possessed of the cloak and is standing right there, why in the world do I require this oath?

Until now we have assumed as fact the premise of the Mishnah's rule, which is that an oath is there to be taken. But why assume so? Surely each party now has what he is going to get. So what defines the point and effect of the oath?

- B. Said R. Yohanan, "This oath [to which our Mishnah-passage refers] happens to be an ordinance imposed only by rabbis,"
 C. "so that people should not go around grabbing the cloaks of other people and saying, 'It's mine!'" [But, as a matter of fact, the oath that is imposed in our Mishnah-passage is not legitimate by the law of the Torah. It is an act taken by sages to maintain the social order.]

We do not administer oaths to liars; we do not impose an oath in a case in which one of the claimants would take an oath for something he knew to

be untrue, since one party really does own the cloak, the other really has grabbed it. The proposition solves the problem—but it is hardly going to settle the question. On the contrary, Yohanan raises more problems than he solves. So we ask how we can agree to an oath in this case at all?

D. *But why then not advance the following argument: since such a one is suspect as to fraud in a property claim, he also should be suspect as to fraud in oath-taking?*

Yohanan places himself into the position of believing in respect to the oath, and what we will not believe in respect to the claim on the cloak, for, after all, one of the parties before us must be lying! Why sustain such a contradiction: gullible and suspicious at one and the same time?

E. *In point of fact, we do not advance the argument: since such a one is suspect as to fraud in a property claim, he also should be suspect as to fraud in oath-taking, for if you do not concede that fact, then how is it possible that the All-Merciful has ruled, "One who has conceded part of a claim against himself must take an oath as to the remainder of what is subject to claim"?*

If someone claims that another party holds property belonging to him or her, and the one to whom the bailment has been handed over for safe-keeping, called the bailee, concedes part of the claim, the bailee must then take an oath in respect to the rest of the claimed property, that is, the part that the bailee maintains does not belong to the claimant at all. So the law itself—the Torah, in fact—has sustained the same contradiction. That fine solution, of course, is going to be challenged:

F. *Why not simply maintain, since such a one is suspect as to fraud in a property claim, he also should be suspect as to fraud in oath-taking?*

G. *In that other case, [the reason for the denial of part of the claim and the admission of part is not the intent to commit fraud, but rather,] the defendant is just trying to put off the claim for a spell.*

We could stop at this point without losing a single important point of interest; everything is before us. One of the striking traits of the large-scale dialectical composition is its composite character. Starting at the beginning, without any loss of meaning or sense, we may well stop at the end of any given paragraph of thought. But the dialectics insists on moving forward, exploring, pursuing, insisting; and were we to remove a paragraph in the middle of a dialectical composite, then all that follows would become incomprehensible. That is a mark of the dialectical argument: sustained, continuous,

and coherent—yet perpetually in control and capable of resolving matters at any single point. For those of us who consume, but do not produce, arguments of such dynamism and complexity, the task is to discern the continuity, that is to say, not to lose sight of where we stand in the whole movement.

Now, having fully exposed the topic, its problem, and its principles, we take a tangent indicated by the character of the principle before us: when a person will or will not lie or take a false oath. We have a theory on the matter; what we now do is expound the theory, with special reference to the formulation of that theory in explicit terms by a named authority:

- H. This concurs with the position of Rabbah. [For Rabbah has said, “On what account has the Torah imposed the requirement of an oath on one who confesses to only part of a claim against him? It is by reason of the presumption that a person will not insolently deny the truth about the whole of a loan in the very presence of the creditor and so entirely deny the debt. He will admit to part of the debt and deny part of it. Hence we invoke an oath in a case in which one does so, to coax out the truth of the matter.”]
- I. For you may know, [in support of the foregoing], that R. Idi bar Abin said R. Hisda [said]: “He who [falsely] denies owing money on a loan nonetheless is suitable to give testimony, but he who denies that he holds a bailment for another party cannot give testimony.”

The proposition is now fully exposed. A named authority is introduced, who will concur in the proposed theoretical distinction. He sets forth an extra-logical consideration, which of course the law always will welcome: the rational goal of finding the truth overrides the technicalities of the law governing the oath.

Predictably, we cannot allow matters to stand without challenge, and the challenge comes at a fundamental level, with the predictable give-and-take to follow:

- J. But what about that which R. Ammi bar. Hama repeated on Tannaite authority: “[If they are to be subjected to an oath,] four sorts of bailees have to have denied part of the bailment and conceded part of the bailment, namely, the unpaid bailee, the borrower, the paid bailee, and the one who rents.”
- K. *Why not simply maintain, since such a one is suspect as to fraud in a property claim, he also should be suspect as to fraud in oath-taking?*

- L. *In that case as well, [the reason for the denial of part of the claim and the admission of part is not the intent to commit fraud, but rather,] the defendant is just trying to put off the claim for a spell.*
- M. *He reasons as follows: "I'm going to find the thief and arrest him." Or: "I'll find [the beast] in the field and return it to the owner."*

Once more, "if that is the case" provokes yet another analysis; we introduce a different reading of the basic case before us, another reason that we should not impose an oath:

- N. *If that is the case, then why should one who denies holding a bailment ever be unsuitable to give testimony? Why don't we just maintain that the defendant is just trying to put off the claim for a spell. He reasons as follows: "I'm going to look for the thing and find it."*
- O. *When in point of fact we do rule, He who denies holding a bailment is unfit to give testimony, it is in a case in which witnesses come and give testimony against him that at that very moment, the bailment is located in the bailee's domain, and he fully is informed of that fact, or, alternatively, he has the object in his possession at that very moment.*

The solution to the problem at hand also provides the starting point for yet another step in the unfolding exposition. Huna has given us a different resolution of matters. That accounts for number 3, and number 4 is also predictable:

Mishnah Baba Mesia 1.1–2 IV.3.

- A. *But as to that which R. Huna has said [when we have a bailee who offers to pay compensation for a lost bailment rather than swear it has been lost, since he wishes to appropriate the article by paying for it, (Daiches)], "They impose upon him the oath that the bailment is not in his possession at all,"*
- B. *why not in that case invoke the principle, since such a one is suspect as to fraud in a property claim, he also should be suspect as to fraud in oath-taking?*
- C. *In that case also, he may rule in his own behalf, I'll give him the money.*
- 4.A. *Said R. Aha of Difti to Rabina, "But then the man clearly transgresses the negative commandment: 'You shall not covet.'"*
- B. *"You shall not covet" is generally understood by people to pertain to something for which one is not ready to pay.*

Yet another authority's position now is invoked, and it draws us back to our starting point: the issue of why we think an oath is suitable in a case

in which we ought to assume lying is going on; so we are returned to our starting point, but via a circuitous route:

Mishnah Baba Mesia 1.1–2 IV.5.

- A. [6A] *But as to that which R. Nahman said, "They impose upon him [who denies the whole of a claim] an oath of inducement," why not in that case invoke the principle, since such a one is suspect as to fraud in a property claim, he also should be suspect as to fraud in oath-taking?*
- B. *And furthermore, there is that which R. Hiyya taught on Tannaite authority: "Both parties [employee, supposed to have been paid out of an account set up by the employer at a local store, and store-keeper] take an oath and collect what each claims from the employer," why not in that case invoke the principle, since such a one is suspect as to fraud in a property claim, he also should be suspect as to fraud in oath-taking?*
- C. *And furthermore, there is that which R. Sheshet said, "We impose upon an unpaid bailee [who claims that the animal has been lost] three distinct oaths: first, an oath that I have not deliberately caused the loss, that I did not put a hand on it, and that it is not in my domain at all," why not in that case invoke the principle, since such a one is suspect as to fraud in a property claim, he also should be suspect as to fraud in oath-taking?*

We now settle the matter:

- D. *It must follow that we do not invoke the principle at all, since such a one is suspect as to fraud in a property claim, he also should be suspect as to fraud in oath-taking?*

What is interesting is why walk so far to end up where we started: do we invoke said principle? No, we do not.

What we have accomplished on our wanderings is a survey of opinion on a theme, to be sure, but opinion that intersects at our particular problem as well. The moving argument serves to carry us hither and yon; its power is to demonstrate that all considerations are raised, all challenges met, all possibilities explored. This is not merely a set-piece argument, where we have proposition, evidence, analysis, conclusion; it is a different sort of thinking altogether, purposive and coherent, but also comprehensive and compelling for its admission of possibilities and attention to alternatives. What we shall see, time and again, is that the dialectical argument is the Talmud's medium of generalization from case to principle and extension from principle to new cases.

5. DIALECTICS AND THE INTELLECTUAL DYNAMICS OF THE BAVLI

The Bavli empowers its disciples by inviting them to participate in its unfolding arguments. The main consequence for the Bavli of formation through dialectical analysis is simply stated. It is the power of that mode of the representation of thought to show not only the result, but the workings, of the logical mind. By following dialectical arguments, we ourselves enter into those same thought processes, and our minds then are formed in the model of rigorous and sustained, systematic argument. The reason is simply stated. When we follow a proposal and its refutation, the consequence thereof, and the result of that, and on to challenge and response without limit, we ourselves become partners in the logical tensions and their resolutions; we are given an opening, a pass of admission into the discourse that lies before us. As soon as matters turn not upon tradition, to which we may or may not have access, but upon reason, specifically, challenge and response, proposal and counter-proposal, "maybe matters are just the opposite?" we find an open door before us.

For these are not matters of fact but of reasoned judgment, and the answer, "well, that's my opinion," in its "traditional form," namely, that is what Rabbi X has said so that must be so, finds no hearing. Moving from facts to reasoning, propositions to the process of counter-argument, the challenge resting on the mind's own movement, its power of manipulating facts one way rather than some other and of identifying the governing logic of a fact—that process invites the reader's or the listener's participation. The author of a dialectical composite presents a problem with its internal tensions in logic and offers a solution to the problem and a resolution of the logical conflicts.

What is at stake in the capacity of the framer of a composite, or even the author of a composition, to move this way and that, always in a continuous path, but often in a crooked one? The dialectical argument opens the possibility of reaching out from one thing to something else, and the path's wandering is part of the reason. It is not because people have lost sight of their starting point or their goal in the end, but because they want to encompass, in the analytical argument as it gets underway, as broad and comprehensive a range of cases and rules as they can. The movement from point to point in reference to a single point that accurately describes the dialectical argument reaches a goal of abstraction. At the point at which we leave behind the specificities of not only cases but laws, sages carry the argument upward to the law that governs many cases, the premises that undergird many rules, and still higher to the principles that infuse diverse premises;

then the principles that generate other, unrelated premises, which, in turn, come to expression in other, still less intersecting cases. The meandering course of argument comes to an end when we have shown how things cohere that we did not even imagine were contiguous at all.

The dialectical argument forms the means to an end. The distinctive character of the Bavli's particular kind of dialectical argument is dictated by the purpose for which dialectics is invoked. Specifically, the goal of all argument is to show in discrete detail the ultimate unity, harmony, proportion, and perfection of the law—not of the Mishnah as a document but of all the law of the same standing as that presented by the Mishnah. The hermeneutics of dialectics aims at making manifest how to read the laws in such a way as to discern that many things really say one thing. The variations on the theme then take the form of detailed expositions of this and that. Then our task is to move backward from result to the reasoning process that has yielded this result: through regression from stage to stage to identify within the case not only the principles of law that produce that result, but the processes of reasoning that link the principles to the case at hand.

ANCIENT "SCIENCE FICTION:"
JOURNEYS INTO SPACE AND VISIONS
OF THE WORLD IN JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, AND
GRECO-ROMAN LITERATURE OF ANTIQUITY

Catherine Hezser

Ancient Jewish and Christian literature contains texts and passages that talk about journeys into space, visions of the earth from above, and otherworldly messengers visiting humans. These texts are reminiscent of modern science fiction and fantasy writing, even if the ancient authors did not share our modern understanding of "science" and "fantasy" and wrote for other than mere entertainment purposes. The Jewish and Christian literary manifestations of this phenomenon need to be seen in the context of Greco-Roman "science fiction" writing. Classicists have only recently started to view ancient literature from this perspective, which proves to be very useful for investigating the literary representation of imaginary journeys.¹

The definition and origins of science fiction writing are much disputed amongst scholars. Definitions vary between broad descriptions of shared topics, motifs, and literary forms and a more narrow focus on the (pseudo-) scientific basis of science fiction writing. The first definition offered by Adam Roberts follows the broader approach to this type of writing:

Most of these novels are narratives that elaborate some imaginative or fantastic premise, perhaps involving a postulated future society, encounters with creatures from another world, travel between planets or in time. In other words, science fiction as a genre or division of literature distinguishes its fictional worlds to one degree or another from the world in which we actually live: a fiction of the imagination rather than observed reality, a fantastic literature.²

¹ Research into ancient "science fiction" writing has mainly focused on Lucian's *True History*. See, for example, S.C. Fredericks, "Lucian's *True History* As Science Fiction," *Science Fiction Studies* 3 (1976): 49–60; Roy Arthur Swanson, "The True, the False, and the Truly False: Lucian's Philosophical Science Fiction," *Science Fiction Studies* 3 (1976): 228–239. See also Roger Lancelyn Green, *Into Other Worlds: Space-Flight in Fiction From Lucian to Lewis* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1957); James S. Romm, *The Edges of Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

² Adam Roberts, *Science Fiction* (2nd ed.; London: Routledge, 2006), 1.

Here the most decisive criteria for defining science fiction are the otherworldly topics and themes: in contrast to so-called realistic fiction, which attempts to describe inner-worldly events and circumstances, fantastic fiction deliberately deals with otherworldly matters of the imagination, which are nevertheless described in a detailed and concrete way. Such a broad definition of science fiction is suggested here “because SF itself is a wide-ranging, multivalent and endlessly cross-fertilising cultural idiom.”³ It is especially associated with marginal or marginalized groups, a mode through which such groups “can find imaginative expression.”⁴ Most important is the “point of difference” or “*novum*” through which the imagined other world, travel to that world, or messengers from that world are distinguished from the familiar world of daily life. In modern science fiction novels this “*novum*” is usually based on science and technology, even if it proves to be pseudo-science and has not been verified by scientific discoveries.⁵

Since Roberts bases his definition on the existence of modern science and technology, his definition necessarily excludes all ancient and medieval imaginative and fantastic tales, even if they share certain themes and motifs with the modern works. When discussing the history of science fiction, he sees its origins in 1600 CE, with Kepler’s *Somnium*, but admits that “fantastical and imaginative tales” existed much earlier and may even be traced back to the Sumerian Gilgamesh epos around 2000 BCE.⁶ These early prototypes allegedly differ from the later manifestations for the following reason:

The problem with the pre-1600 version of outer space was that it was conceived as a pure and religious realm, a geo-centric series of spheres of which only the lowest (ours) was subject to change, and everything above the level of the Moon was incorruptible, eternal and godly.⁷

Accordingly, the Copernican heliocentric worldview with its “properly materialist understanding of the solar system” would be crucial for the development of the genre.⁸ Does this distinction between the traditional and modern scientific worldview really disqualify ancient expressions of otherworldly journeys from being discussed as ancient types of imaginative writing that were—to some extent—based on the scientific knowledge in

³ Roberts, *Science Fiction*, 2.

⁴ Roberts, *Science Fiction*, 3.

⁵ See Roberts, *Science Fiction*, 6–7.

⁶ See Roberts, *Science Fiction*, 37–38.

⁷ Roberts, *Science Fiction*, 39.

⁸ See Roberts, *Science Fiction*, 39.

the ancient authors' own time and place? In ancient times the borders of the earth were the borders between knowledge and fantasy.⁹ Nowadays many aspects of the space beyond earth have been discovered but much is still unknown and open to question—a wide open field for the fantastic imagination.

Another aspect that is brought up in the discussion of the history of science fiction is the supernatural element in the ancient space travel tales. In the Jewish and Christian accounts the visitors from outer space are not aliens from other planets but angels sent by God. The journey to otherworldly spheres and various levels of heavens is not based on the human development of space crafts but can be achieved only through spiritual powers and divine energy. Therefore, these tales are commonly dismissed as "myths," namely "supernatural stories" of "a world that is assumed to continue unchanged until some point when the gods tire of it or lose their power to preserve it."¹⁰ In contrast to modern science fiction writing myths are believed to be conservative, resisting the new. This understanding of ancient narratives seems to be very traditional itself, though. The ancient worldview did not make neat distinctions between religion, science, and rationality. The two spheres were usually combined in that religious thinking could integrate and be based on the view of the world and the cosmos developed by scholars and shared by common people at the time. Religion and science were not separated into distinct spheres seen in conflict with each other.

On this basis, a broader definition of "science fiction" is preferable. With Robert Scholes we hold that "The history of science fiction is also the history of humanity's changing attitudes toward space and time. It is the history of our growing understanding of the universe and the position of our species in that universe."¹¹ John J. Pierce, therefore, calls science fiction an "odd genre" that "cannot be so easily delimited" and sees its origins in "the confusion of the classical travel tale, the utopia, the satire," elements and motifs of which are often revived and reformulated in modern interplanetary novels.¹² George Slusser suggests constructing an iconology of science fiction and fantasy writing that "organizes images according to

⁹ On the borders of the earth in ancient thought, see Romm, *Edges of the Earth*.

¹⁰ Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin, *Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 4.

¹¹ Scholes and Rabkin, *Science Fiction*, 3.

¹² John J. Pierce, *Odd Genre: A Study in Imagination and Evolution* (London: Greenwood, 1994), 4.

fundamental, widely shared formal categories—general meta-historical and mythical categories.”¹³ Just as contemporary science fiction novels borrow themes and motifs from ancient mythological and religious traditions as well as from “canonical art,”¹⁴ one may argue that ancient Jewish and Christian “science fiction” texts are based on biblical, ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman stock images and ideas. They use these motifs imaginatively and adapt them to their religious worldview in which one supreme being took center-space.

1. SPACE JOURNEYS IN BIBLICAL, ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN AND GRECO-ROMAN TEXTS

Modern science fiction writers sometimes allude to the biblical creation story with its imagination of the Garden of Eden, ascent tradition associated with Elijah, angels as messengers from another sphere, and utopian visions of the messianic age.¹⁵ These stories and motifs can be seen as archetypes and mythological symbols that continued to have a huge influence on the Western imagination even after Copernicus’s discoveries had changed our perception of the world and the universe.

I.P. Couliano has argued that “visits to other worlds were top priorities on the agendas of early human beings,” in ancient Mesopotamia as well as in ancient Israel and Egypt.¹⁶ Although the ways in which the ancients imagined access to these other worlds varied, Couliano stresses “the universality in time and space of the experience of otherworldly journeys and visions.”¹⁷ Some of these journeys were imagined as actual physical displacements whereas others occurred in dreams and visions. Some were undertaken at the “traveller’s” own initiative whereas others were initiated by a call from “above.” The other spheres were imagined as realms of the dead, heavens, or new worlds, all of which differed from everyday life experience in significant ways.¹⁸

¹³ George Slusser, “Introduction: The Iconology of Science Fiction and Fantasy Art,” in Gary Westfahl, George Slusser, and Kathleen Church Plummer, eds., *Unearthly Visions: Approaches to Science Fiction and Fantasy Art* (London: Greenwood, 2002), 1.

¹⁴ Slusser, “Introduction,” 2.

¹⁵ See Scholes and Rabkin, *Science Fiction*, 165–167, 173–174.

¹⁶ I.P. Couliano, *Out of This World: Otherworldly Journeys from Gilgamesh to Albert Einstein* (Boston: Shambhala, 1991), 2.

¹⁷ Couliano, *Out of This World*, 6.

¹⁸ Couliano, *Out of This World*, 50–59, discusses otherworldly journeys in Mesopotamian religion, e.g. in the Gilgamesh epos; Couliano, *Out of This World*, 60–70, discusses jour-

As far as ancient Jewish literature is concerned, we find references to otherworldly journeys mainly in Jewish non-canonical texts from the Hellenistic and Roman periods.¹⁹ Since these later creations are to some extent based on biblical motifs and ideas, it is appropriate to begin with these biblical prototypes.

1.1. *The Hebrew Bible*

The ancient authors and transmitters of the creation story in Genesis 1 seem to have imagined the earth as a disk surrounded by water, with the sky above the "dry land" forming a kind of cupola separating the earth from the water. This biblical perception is very similar to other ancient Near Eastern views of the world, especially ancient Babylonian cosmology, and may be influenced by these traditions.²⁰ The biblical authors were not particularly interested in cosmological speculations, however. They rather wanted to stress that the world and everything in and around it was God's creation. They, therefore, do not provide a detailed and logically coherent image of how the world and the space around it should be imagined. The "expanse" which separated the earth from the surrounding water is variably called רָקִיעַ and שָׁמַיִם (cf. Gen 1:8). It seems that in the first version of the creation story the term שָׁמַיִם refers to the sky or the atmosphere rather than to a separate realm above the sky commonly imagined as the divine sphere of "heaven." What lies above the cupola of the sky is not envisioned here. The place where God himself is to be found is not disclosed.

In the second version of the creation story in Genesis 2–3 God is presented as communicating with the first human being/s in the Garden of Eden whose description has mythological and fantastic qualities. The location of the Garden of Eden is said to have been "in the East" (Gen 2:8: מִקְדָּם), and four rivers are said to have branched off from it, leading to the land of Israel (Gihon) as well as to Babylonia (Euphrates and Tigris). The reference to these rivers, although not providing an exact geographical location, nevertheless connects the imagined Garden of Eden with the inhabited earth. Despite the fantastic description of the garden (which contains the "tree

neys through other worlds in ancient Egypt; Couliano, *Out of This World*, 104–113, discusses ecstasies and journeys of the soul in Zoroastrianism.

¹⁹ See Mary Dean-Otting, *Heavenly Journeys: A Study of the Motif in Hellenistic Jewish Literature* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1984), 1.

²⁰ See Robert Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt: Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Urgeschichte des antiken Weltbildes* (Munich: Beck, 1910), 2:628, fig. 80.

of life” and the “tree of knowledge,” speaking animals, food to fulfill all living creatures’ needs), it was not imagined to be entirely removed from the earth, but rather at the outskirts of the earth and in many regards similar to it. God’s banishment of the first humans from the Garden of Eden is not presented as a descent (“fall”) or space journey back to earth but merely stated matter-of-factly: they were literally “thrown out” or “sent off” (שלה, גרש), and no further details are given (Gen 3:23). Interestingly, the following verse states that consequently the Garden of Eden was closed off and protected by gate keepers (“the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword”) to prevent further human access to the tree of life providing immortality (Gen 3:24).

The biblical creation story in its variant versions does not introduce the notion of an exalted heavenly realm or divine sphere somewhere in outer space and radically different from the earth. The Garden of Eden rather remains curiously this-worldly, and its this-worldliness is probably less due to the authors’ lack of imagination than to a deliberate attempt to curtail all too fanciful and bizarre conjectures that might distract the audience from the theological message of the Eden tale. In Genesis 11 the human attempt to reach into the sky is thematized in the relatively brief remark about the building of the “Tower of Babel,” “a tower with its top in the sky” (11:4). The endeavor is criticized as an example of human hybris, which God is said to have punished. A more legitimate connection between earth and sky/heaven—this time clearly imagined as the realm of God—appears in the vision of Jacob’s ladder in Gen 28:11–19. In his dream, Jacob sees a stairway reaching up into the sky, “and angels of God were going up and down on it” (28:12). This vision merely serves as the context for divine revelation without being further developed, though.

Do otherworldly realms and heavenly journeys appear in other biblical contexts? John J. Collins has already noted that “evidence of ascents in pre-Christian Judaism is scarce,” and he believes that “the editors of the Hebrew Bible were not sympathetic to accounts of ascent to heaven.”²¹ One prototype that is vastly expanded in post-biblical accounts is the Enoch tradition. But the biblical text of Gen 5:24 is very cryptic and non-descriptive: “Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, for God took him [כִּי לָקַח אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים].” That “God took him” may merely refer to Enoch’s death here rather than to

²¹ John J. Collins, “A Throne in the Heavens: Apotheosis in pre-Christian Judaism,” in John J. Collins and Michael Fishbane, eds., *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys* (Albany: SUNY, 1995), 45.

his resurrection after death or ascent while still alive. In comparison to this text, the Elijah story in 2 Kgs 2:1–15 is much more explicit. Here, too, the context is Elijah's death as a departure from this world and Elisha's succession. But the story already starts with the remark that "the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a storm [בַּסְעָרָה] (2 Kgs 2:1), and later he is taken up by "a fiery wagon [רֶכֶב אֵשׁ] with fiery horses [וְיֹסֵפֵי אֵשׁ]" (2:11), which appears out of nowhere and was obviously sent by God. In contrast to the creation story, the author of this story seems to have considered "heaven" a divine realm above the world (including the visible sky). The way in which Elijah was transported to this distant realm is imagined as a horse-drawn wagon pushed up by stormy winds. Horse-drawn wagons were the transport means of the prominent and wealthy in antiquity. Therefore, it is not amazing that such a vehicle is also associated with journeys into extra-terrestrial space. The emphasis is on the divine initiation of Elijah's ascent to heaven, whereas heaven itself is not further described.

A chariot also appears in Ezekiel 1, but in an entirely different context and form and in a much more fantastic garb. In Ezekiel 1 the prophet Ezekiel relates the vision of a flying throne of God appearing out of the heavens in a storm (Ezek 1:4). This throne is moved by four four-faced and four-wings creatures,²² one at each of its sides: "they went wherever the spirit impelled them to go, without turning when they moved" (1:12). The throne also has wheels and, therefore, seems to be imagined as a chariot, although the term is never used (1:15–21). On this throne God is said to have appeared to Ezekiel and given him instructions which the prophet recounts in his book. The throne vision serves to legitimize and authorize Ezekiel as a true prophet of God. God's departure on the winged throne is related later, in Ezek 11:22–24.²³

Whereas in Ezekiel 1 God appeared on a flying throne, in Chapter 8 it is Ezekiel himself who is pulled out of his (exilic) home by his hair: "He [God] stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by the hair of my head. A

²² Cf. the four fantastic beasts, some of them with wings and four heads, associated with a throne vision in Dan 7:1–10. See also the messianic reference Dan 7:13: "As I looked on, in the night vision, one like a human being came with the clouds of heaven. He reached the Ancient of Days ..." and was given dominion and kingship. A throne vision (in the Temple) without the report of travel through air appears in Isa 6:1–2.

²³ God's flight to and above the earth is also mentioned in poetic language in some of the Psalms: "He bent the sky and came down, thick cloud beneath His feet. He mounted a cherub and flew, gliding on the wings of the wind" (Ps 18:10–12); Ps 104:3: He "makes the clouds His chariot, moves on the wings of the wind" (Ps 104:3).

spirit lifted me up between heaven and earth and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem ..." (8:3; see also 11:1, 24; 37:1; 40:1 for similar air travels of the prophet with the support of the hand of God/the spirit). The sentence explicitly mentions that the flight happened "between heaven and earth," whereas the heavenly realm itself is not said to have been reached. The device of a miraculous displacement through the air is merely used here to explain the prophet's visions of Jerusalem and the temple, where he allegedly received instructions from God. Ezekiel claims direct contact with and authorization from God who enabled him to experience and see what other humans could not.

To summarize: in the Hebrew Bible the human imagination concerning otherworldly spheres, flights to and from these spheres, and the means of travel through air and space is very restricted and let loose only in prophetic visions, especially those found in the book of Ezekiel and in the poetic language of the Psalms. The emphasis is on God's ability to reveal himself by entering the sphere of the earth and by having particularly chosen human beings carried through the air (Ezekiel) or to his heavenly realm (Elijah). The divine realm of heaven is never further specified, though. As already mentioned, such an exalted heavenly realm is not envisioned in the biblical creation story and also not mentioned in connection with Enoch in the Bible. It is merely implied in the report of Elijah's ascent in a wagon and in Ezekiel's vision of God's winged flying throne (note, though, that Ezekiel can only see the throne because it descended *from* heaven towards earth and that he himself is imagined as flying through the space *between* heaven and earth, never reaching heaven himself). It seems, then, that the composers of the Hebrew Bible allowed the expression of the fantastic only in the context of prophecy and prophets' super-human experiences and knowledge. Even in these cases we look in vain for any speculations about the nature of the otherworldly realm. It seems as if heaven as the realm of God needed to be protected from human speculation.

1.2. *Greco-Roman Literature*

Before we look at fantastic journeys in Jewish Hellenistic literature it is necessary to examine Greco-Roman literature in this regard. Marjorie Hope Nicolson argues that the human desire to be able to leave this earth and be able to fly through the air "must have been perennial in human history" and also appears in various forms in classical antiquity: for example, in the guise of Hermes, the flying god, and human attempts to build themselves wings

and fly, expressed in the traditions associated with Daedalus and Icarus.²⁴ With the Atlantis myth Plato constructed an ideal, utopian community, a "heavenly" realm, which contained everything in abundance.²⁵ It developed from initial perfection to corruption and eventually experienced an earthquake and sank below the surface of the sea.²⁶ In the myth of Er Plato imagined that a fallen soldier had a vision of the world below, observing the judgment of the righteous and the unjust. Er became a messenger destined to tell mankind what he saw.²⁷ These ancient myths, ideas, and motifs stand at the basis of later narratives of space flights and heavenly journeys in Greco-Roman and Jewish and Christian literature that will be discussed in the following.

1.2.1. *The Alexander Romance*

An ascent into the sky is associated with Alexander the Great in particular recensions of the Greek *Alexander Romance* (*Alex. Rom.*), a complex and multi-layered work that cannot be securely dated and that enjoyed great popularity throughout the Middle Ages.²⁸ Some scholars see the fantastic elements in Alexander's letter to his mother Olympias (*Alex. Rom.* 2.38–41) as a later expansion of an originally shorter version that was created between the third century BCE and the third century CE.²⁹ Stoneman points to the "increasing importance of the fabulous element in the later versions," especially with regard to Alexander's "desire to go beyond the

²⁴ Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Voyages to the Moon* (2nd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1960), 10.

²⁵ See John Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1975), 73, with reference to Plato, *Tim.* 19B and 23Bff. See also Plato's *Critias*.

²⁶ The story is, to some extent, reminiscent of the biblical tradition of the first humans' sin and consequent banishment from the Garden of Eden.

²⁷ Cf. Plato, *Resp.* 10.614B. Cf. Alan F. Segal, "Heavenly Ascent in Hellenistic Judaism, Early Christianity and their Environment," *ANRW* II.23.2, 1345.

²⁸ There are even Medieval Hebrew versions of the *Alexander Romance*, see Israel J. Kaziz, *The Book of the Gestis of Alexander of Macedon: Sefer Toledot Alexandros ha-Makedoni: A Medieval Hebrew Version of the Alexander Romance by Immanuel Ben Jacob Bonfils* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); Wout J. Van Bekkum, *A Hebrew Alexander Romance According to MS London, Jew's College no. 145* (Leuven: Peeters, 1992).

²⁹ The Greek Text of the various recensions differs considerably and is therefore published in separate volumes. The text discussed below (2.41) is found in the longer recensions published in Leif Bergson, *Der griechische Alexanderroman Rezension β* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1965), 200–203; Helmut van Thiel, *Leben und Taten Alexanders von Makedonien: Der griechische Alexanderroman nach der Handschrift L* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974), 120 and (with a German trans.) 121; Hartmut Engelmann, *Der griechische Alexanderroman Rezension β Buch II* (Meisenheim: Hain, 1963), 312–317.

limits of the known world.”³⁰ He assumes that Alexander’s “ascent into the air” was “introduced into the narrative well after the beginning of the Christian era,” although “Alexander would not have been the first mortal to ascend the skies,” precedents being provided by Heracles and the Spartan general Lysander.³¹ Others, however, believe that the miraculous letters constituted a separate and originally independent tradition circulating alongside the more historical parts of the narrative into which they were later integrated.³² One may imagine that in the ancient oral cultural context many different versions of the tale circulated and that some of the stories “spread as independent folktales, acquiring many additional details and reflecting popular beliefs.”³³ The shorter version may not be earlier than the longer ones but “an abridgment of the general legendary tradition.”³⁴ A rabbinic version of Alexander’s space flight, transmitted in the Talmud Yerushalmi (see section 4 below), suggests that such stories circulated in different forms and with different emphases and details in late antiquity.³⁵

The *Alexander Romance* 2.23–41 is formulated in the form of a letter of Alexander to his mother, telling her of his fabulous adventures and military enterprises in distant regions of the earth. Merkelbach, who considers this letter the most interesting part of the entire *Alexander Romance*, believes that it is based on notions that were associated with Alexander during his lifetime already or at least in Hellenistic and early Roman times: his hybris, his restlessness, his desire to proceed to the end of the world.³⁶ That this part is not found in the earliest manuscript tradition may be due to scribes who

³⁰ See Richard Stoneman, ed. and trans., *The Greek Alexander Romance* (London: Penguin, 1991), 21.

³¹ Stoneman, ed. and trans., *Alexander Romance*, 21. On the iconography of Heracles’ flight with an eagle, see Casten Colpe, “Jenseitsfahrt I (Himmelfahrt),” *RAC* 17 (1996): 418. Heracles’ elevation into the Olymp at the end of his life was eventually associated with the apotheosis of Roman emperors, Colpe, “Jenseitsfahrt,” 119.

³² See, for example, Erwin Rohde, *Der griechische Alexanderroman und seine Vorläufer* (Leipzig: W. Schmid, 1914), 187; R. Merkelbach, *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans* (2nd ed.; Zemata 9; Munich: Beck, 1977), 14; Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 111 n. 62.

³³ Josef Dan, “Review of W.J. Van Bakkum, *A Hebrew Alexander Romance*,” *JQR* 86 (1996): 437.

³⁴ Van Bakkum, *Hebrew Alexander Romance*, 12.

³⁵ The notion that Alexander tried to reach the boundaries of the known world already circulated in Alexander’s lifetime. Stoneman, ed. and trans., *Alexander Romance*, 14, quotes Aeschines, *Ctes.* 165: “Meanwhile Alexander had withdrawn to the uttermost regions of the North, almost beyond the borders of the inhabited world.” Cf. Plutarch, *Alex.* 63.

³⁶ Merkelbach, *Quellen*, 63–64, with reference to Aeschines and Seneca.

decided not to include the more fantastic elements of the Alexander tradition.³⁷ While it remains uncertain when the text was committed to writing, various oral traditions about Alexander's adventures are likely to have circulated in the first centuries BCE and CE.

The letter relates that after having visited various fabulous places with wondrous beings, Alexander wanted to see "the end of the world" (*Alex. Rom.* 2.37). Together with his soldiers he "set off again and made for the sea through the desert."³⁸ When they reach the coast, they see an island in the middle of the sea. They approach the island by boat. Before exploring the island, Alexander dives into the depth of the sea in a diving bell to search for precious pearls (2.38). A voice warns him not to attempt the impossible, and he ends this venture immediately. When advancing further for several days they believe they have discovered the "Island of the Blessed" (2.39), but they have to venture through the "Land of Darkness" first, where the fog is almost impenetrable. When they see the light again, Alexander asks himself whether they have now reached "the end of the world," "where the sky touched the earth" (2.41).

At this stage it is necessary to recall the ancient Greek worldview that saw the earth as an island surrounded by an ocean,³⁹ quite similar to the ancient oriental concept already mentioned above.⁴⁰ On the basis of cosmography, travel reports, and epic poetry (esp. Homer and Hesiod) the ancient Greeks developed the notion of a bounded mass of land surrounded by a "formless expanse," which elicited discomfort and was considered dangerous.⁴¹ The borders, just like the chaos that lay beyond them, were "purely an imaginative construct."⁴² They were believed to exist both on the horizontal and the vertical extent of the earth. On the horizontal level, water was usually considered to lie beyond the borders; on the vertical level, the underworld lay beneath the earth and the sky above, bounded by the celestial dome. Hesiod already considered the "Islands of the Blessed" to lie beyond

³⁷ Merkelbach, *Quellen*, 64.

³⁸ Stoneman's translation is used here. This translation is based on the L manuscript, the fullest version of the β recension, published in Thiel, *Leben und Taten*, with a German translation.

³⁹ See Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 13.

⁴⁰ For the ancient oriental view of the world, see Eisler, *Weltenmantel*, 628, fig. 80. For similarities between ancient oriental, biblical, and Greek worldview, see also James M. Scott, *Geography in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Book of Jubilees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9–12.

⁴¹ See Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 10.

⁴² Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 11.

the Ocean.⁴³ In Hellenistic times, when travels, conquests, and political and economic contacts opened up new areas, this mythic image of the world was increasingly questioned. In the fifth century BCE Herodotus already rejected the notion of a circular earth surrounded by the legendary Ocean.⁴⁴ The great unknown at the edges of the earth was increasingly seen as “diffuse and open ended,” “surrounded by an expanse not of sea, but of uninhabited waste,”⁴⁵ a total unknown lacking inhabitants, information, communication.⁴⁶ In both the traditional and the more critical worldview the vast area believed to lie beyond the known world (οἰκουμένη) gave rise to speculation, imagination, and legendary tales.

The *Alexander Romance* seems to represent the traditional worldview, although it depicts Alexander as uncertain about the exact location of the “end of the world.” After having traveled through deserts and strange lands, he reaches the sea coast and sets out to explore an island across the ocean, where he hopes to find the “Island of the Blessed.” Only after having ventured into this island and having passed through the “Land of Darkness” does he assume to have reached the “end of the world,” that is, the edge of the celestial dome. The story tries to create the impression that Alexander ventured further than any human being had ever attempted.

According to the *Alexander Romance*, his exploration did not only proceed to “the end of the world” on the horizontal level but on the vertical level as well. After his curtailed attempt to explore the depth of the ocean (*Alex. Rom.* 2.38) Alexander took to the skies from the island he has reached (2.41). He allegedly made a bag out of ox skin, fastened it to two yokes, tied the yokes to the throats of two large birds, and climbed into the bag himself, holding up long spears with meat fastened to their tops to make the birds take off: “I rose up with them into the air until I thought I must be close to the sky” (2.41).⁴⁷ Eventually a flying creature in the form of a man approaches

⁴³ See Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 15 n. 19 with reference to Hesiod, *Theog.* 215, 274, and 294.

⁴⁴ See Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 32–37, with references.

⁴⁵ Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 36.

⁴⁶ Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 37, stresses the “close connection between habitation, communication, and secure knowledge.” The known world can be understood as “a region made coherent by the intercommunication of its inhabitants.”

⁴⁷ From Byzantine times onwards, Alexander’s flight with the help of birds was repeatedly represented in (church) art, e.g. in a floor mosaic of the dome of Otranto and in a relief at the northern side of San Marco in Venice. See Merkelbach, *Quellen*, 84–85. Cf. Ian Michael, *Alexander’s Flying Machine: The History of a Legend* (Southampton: University of Southampton, 1974); George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

Alexander and says: "O Alexander, you have not yet secured the whole earth, and you are now exploring the heavens?" (2.41). He orders him to return to earth immediately, but first offers him a view of the earth from his elevated air-bound perspective:

He went on: 'Look down on the earth, Alexander!' I looked down, somewhat afraid, and behold, I saw a great snake curled up, and in the middle of the snake a tiny circle like a threshing floor. Then my companion said to me: 'Point your spear at the threshing-floor, for that is the world. The snake is the sea that surrounds the world.' (2.41)

He subsequently returns to earth and decides "to make no more attempts at the impossible" (2.41).

The passage is significant in a number of regards. It seems to be critical of Alexander rather than praising his adventurous spirit. He allegedly ventured too far: instead of adopting a pragmatic view and focusing on earthly endeavors, he tried to gain access to areas and knowledge of things that surpassed his capacity as a human being. The empiricist view is expressed by Strabo, for example, who stressed that even "geographers have no business pondering what lies beyond our οἰκουμένη" (Strabo, *Geogr.* 2.5.34). The text also supports the ancient worldview of the earth surrounded by Ocean (in the form of a great snake curled up around a threshing floor). Could this passage be meant as a refutation of the "new," more scientific world-view advanced by Herodotus and other Hellenistic writers, in favor of the "old" traditional view of the earth as a circular island surrounded by water? Romm has pointed out that despite the advances of writers such as Herodotus, the traditional mythical worldview prevailed: "Despite continuing advances in science and exploration the average citizens of Greece and Rome clung to the conceptions of the earth's edges that best suited their imaginative needs."⁴⁸ At the beginning of the Roman era, Strabo, for example, supported the traditional myth of the earth as an island (Strabo, *Geogr.* 1.1–10). This myth seems to have provided some confidence to people whose perspective was so much more limited than our modern, astronomy-informed perspective.

As far as Alexander's bird's eye view of the earth is concerned, it has certain poetic prototypes. Romm mentions a passage in Hesiod's *Periodos Ges*, in which the framing story of "a fantastic midair chase" of the sons of the North Wind serves to present "an aerial survey of the exotica of the distant

⁴⁸ Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 41.

world.”⁴⁹ “The episode thus imaginatively takes its audience aloft to gain a bird’s-eye view of the earth’s perimeter, encompassing in a single glance all four corners of the globe.”⁵⁰ In accordance with the traditional view, Hesiod imagined the earth as a disk with clearly defined boundaries, surrounded by the river Ocean (see also Hesiod, *Theog.* 117). This and other examples of the *Periodos* literature, which persisted into the first centuries CE (e.g. the *Periegesis* attributed to Dionysius Periegetes), “enshrined the Greek view of the whole earth for late antique and (...) medieval readers and students.”⁵¹

Merkelbach has argued that an ancient Persian enthronement ritual may also stand in the background of Alexander’s flight to heaven in the *Alexander Romance*: “Die Himmelfahrt des Königs ist eine Art Apotheose auf dem Thron.”⁵² This is allegedly visible in reliefs of enthronement ceremonies, where the Persian king is standing on a piece of furniture elevated above the ground and Ahura Mazda is hovering over him.⁵³ Yet the Zoroastrian king is elevated only a few meters above the ground by his servants rather than flying high into the sky with birds, and the element of exploration and adventure is entirely missing. A much closer parallel, mentioned by Merkelbach, is the Persian myth of Kai Kawus, known as “The Foolish King,” related by the poet Firdusi in the Book of Kings in the tenth/eleventh century CE: “Tempted to hybris by the demons, Kaikaus conceived the idea of flying to heaven. He ordered young eagles to be taken from their nests and brought them up by fowl and lamb’s meat” attached to lances.⁵⁴ A golden throne in which he sat himself was harnessed onto the eagles. Unlike Alexander, Kai Kawus did not return to earth safely but crashed on his return. Rather than being a source for the *Alexander Romance*, this story should be understood in the context of the reception of the *Alexander Romance* in the East in the Middle Ages, though.

⁴⁹ Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 29–30. The *Periodos Ges* or “circuit of the earth” was part of the lost *Catalogue of Women*.

⁵⁰ Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 30.

⁵¹ Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 31. It should also be noted that the Greco-Roman world-view naturally centered on southern Europe and the Mediterranean, whereas the North remained the great unknown that gave rise to fantastic speculation. Margaret Small, “From Jellied Seas to Open Waterways: Refining the Northern Limit of the Knowable World,” *Renaissance Studies* 21 (2007): 315–339, shows that this perspective persisted throughout the Middle Ages until the 16th century.

⁵² Merkelbach, *Quellen*, 85.

⁵³ See Merkelbach, *Quellen*, 86: “Es scheint klar, dass es sich um eine rituelle Luftfahrt bei der Thronbesteigung handelt.”

⁵⁴ Merkelbach, *Quellen*, 88.

That elevation was associated with kings and related to the belief in their super-human nature is also evident in connection with the apotheosis of the Roman emperor. The emperor's soul was believed to rise up into heaven after his death.⁵⁵ The symbol of the eagle appears on Roman coinage from the time of Nero onwards and in the iconography of the imperial cult.⁵⁶ The notion of the soul rising up from the funerary pile is different from the idea of the heavenly roundtrip flight of Alexander, though: the emperor's soul is elevated only after his death, whereas Alexander is said to have been elevated physically during his lifetime; the emperor's apotheosis is associated with immortality of the soul, whereas Alexander's journey was allegedly undertaken for the purposes of adventure, conquest, increase in knowledge, and exploration of the world and universe.

1.2.2. *Lucian's True Story and Icaromenippus*

The most significant Greco-Roman example of an exploratory journey involving a space flight is Lucian's *Vera historia* or *True Story*, which was written in the second half of the second century CE. Lucian was a Syrian native of Samosata on the Euphrates. In the introduction to his work Lucian states that his fantastic tale is supposed to entertain but also provoke "cultured reflection" (*Ver. hist.* 1.1).⁵⁷ A number of scholars have already noticed that Lucian's *True Story* is a satire dismantling the conventional philosophical assumption that knowledge of the unknown can be gained by philosophical speculation.⁵⁸ Fiction—and the truthful acknowledgement of invention—are presented as the proper means of intellectual advancement instead. Lucian acknowledges that he is a "liar" and writes: "My subject, then, is things I have neither seen nor experienced nor heard tell of from anybody else: things, what is more, that do not in fact exist and could not ever exist at all. So my readers must not believe a word I say" (1.4). Georgiadou and Larmour even argue that "Lucian's main concern in this work is the relationship between truth and lies."⁵⁹ According to Lucian, philosophers, historians, scientists, and theologians also create fictions about the unknown but do not

⁵⁵ See Segal, "Heavenly Ascent," 1348–1349.

⁵⁶ See Segal, "Heavenly Ascent," 1349. See also Colpe, "Jenseitsfahrt," 423–426 and 439–441.

⁵⁷ *CAGN* 619–649.

⁵⁸ E.g. S.C. Fredericks, "Lucian's *True History* as SF," *Science Fiction Studies* 3 (1976): 49–50; Roy Author Swanson, "The True, the False, and the Truly False: Lucian's Philosophical Science Fiction," *Science Fiction Studies* 3 (1976): 228.

⁵⁹ Aristoula Georgiadou and David H.J. Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel True Histories: Interpretation and Commentary* (MnemSup 179; Leiden: Brill 1998), 1.

admit the inventiveness of their notions. The self-declared superiority of Lucian's approach lies in its self-awareness and in the conscious blend of fiction and reality.

Very much like Alexander in the *Alexander Romance*, Lucian writes that he set sail "to discover the limits of the ocean and what men dwelt beyond it" (*Ver. hist.* 1.5).⁶⁰ As with Alexander, they eventually reach an island, and there the fantastic adventures begin. After an initial exploration of the island (1.7–8), the ship was allegedly raised forty miles into the air and they sailed through the air for seven days and seven nights (1.9–10). On the eighth day they see land "suspended in the atmosphere like an island" (1.10), which is of a spherical form and later identified with "what appeared as the moon from earth" (cf. 1.11). They anchor their spaceship there and go ashore. The aerial island turns out to be inhabited and cultivated, and in the night "many other islands became visible near to it, some larger, some smaller, the color of fire" (1.10). This passage almost reads like an anticipation of modern space-shuttle flights to the moon and other planets with their expectation to find other life there.

The continuation of the text deals with the various creatures they encounter on the moon and the adventures they experience there. The king of the moon speaks Greek and identifies himself as a fellow human who "had been snatched from our earth one day while he was asleep and conveyed to where he now was" (*Ver. hist.* 1.11). He begins interstellar warfare, a campaign against the inhabitants of the sun (1.12–18), which eventually ends in a peace treaty (1.20).⁶¹ Before leaving the moon and travelling back to earth Lucian reports various other "unusual things I noticed during my stay on the Moon" (1.22), e.g. the absence of women and the phenomenon of birth-giving men; old people who do not die but dissolve into air; rich people who wear glass clothes. Like Alexander, Lucian can gain a vision of the earth from his elevated spatial perspective: in the moon palace he can see the earth in a mirror suspended over a well, the latter serving as a resonance chamber: "If you go down the well, you can hear everything that is said down here on earth." In the mirror every nation and city is said to have been clearly visible, "as if you were standing over them" (1.26). Lucian and his companions eventually leave the moon and travel back downwards, landing

⁶⁰ Translations of Lucian's *Ver. hist.* are from *CAGN* 621–649.

⁶¹ Interestingly, a wall is first built through the sky to separate the inhabitants of the moon from those of the sun. After the peace treaty the wall is said to have been pulled down (*Ver. hist.* 1.19, 21).

on the morning star to stock up their supplies of water (1.28). This star was "in the process of being colonized" (1.28.). Eventually they touch the water of the ocean again, where a two-hundred meter long whale swallows them. The report of their adventures inside the whale follows.⁶²

As in the *Alexander Romance*, the Island of the Blessed figures in Lucian's narrative as well. After having escaped from the whale Lucian and his fellow travelers reach the Island of the Blessed (*Ver. hist.* 2.5), which has a city made of gold, with emerald walls and rivers of perfume (2.11). It is inhabited by people without bodies, consisting of only shape and form, probably the spirits of the blessed deceased (2.12). There Lucian meets all of the demigods of classical antiquity, foremost amongst them Homer, who have assembled for a banquet; only Plato is missing (2.17–20). This Island of the Blessed is described in a much more detailed way here than in the *Alexander Romance* and envisioned as a kind of heaven,⁶³ where the spirits of ancient philosophers reside and engage in philosophical discussions in Greek. Love is free on this island and conducted in public, with both men and women, and women are declared common property (*Ver. hist.* 2.19). The Island of the Blessed is clearly imagined as a utopian place for male intellectuals such as Lucian himself, who nevertheless decided to leave this island and report all of his adventures and visions to his earthly country(wo)men instead.

According to Georgiadou and Larmour, Lucian's text belongs to the genre of journeys in general and sea voyages in particular.⁶⁴ From the time of Odysseus onwards, the voyage to distant lands and across the ocean was, at the same time, a quest for knowledge and enlightenment.⁶⁵ Therefore, the adventures can also be assumed to have a certain symbolic meaning: "In the *VH*, the narrator's encounters with various hybrid forms (...) and dangerous creatures (...) make him into a Heracles figure, one fighting the monsters of philosophy and falsehood."⁶⁶ It is questionable, though, whether the journey can be understood as "a journey of the soul ..., in which the travelers

⁶² Beginning in 1.30, they eventually set fire to the whale and are able to escape (2.1). The whale narrative is reminiscent of the biblical story of Jonah.

⁶³ Hans Dieter Betz, *Lukian von Samosata und das Neue Testament: Religionsgeschichtliche und paränetische Parallelen* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1961), 90–96, already recognized connections between the Island of the Blessed/Heavenly City in Lucian's work and Christian perceptions of Paradise. Lucian's writings suggest that the boundary between itinerary and historical writing on the one hand and revelation literature was blurred (esp. 95).

⁶⁴ Georgiadou and Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel*, 8.

⁶⁵ See Georgiadou and Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel*, 8.

⁶⁶ Georgiadou and Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel*, 9.

eventually reach the world of the dead,⁶⁷ first on the moon and then at the banquet on the Island of the Blessed,⁶⁸ since the journey is not said to have been undertaken after death. Despite his indebtedness to classical mythology, gods do not have any role in Lucian's story.⁶⁹ We may assume that Lucian was as critical of religion as he was of philosophy. The flight to the moon can also be seen as "an example of the aerial flight for knowledge," motivated by intellectual curiosity.⁷⁰ It provides an entirely new perspective on the earth below. Lucian may have known certain similar traditions associated with Alexander,⁷¹ which probably circulated in his time in oral or written form or both. His voyage to the moon can be considered "the archetype in western tradition of the numerous literary space-flights," which are commonly called "science fiction."⁷² Like the modern exemplars of this genre, he uses "defamiliarization and estrangement" to create an alternative world from which the natural world appears in a new light.⁷³

Philip Babcock Gove has stressed the close relationship with the genre of the imaginary voyage (e.g. Homer's Odysseus, Lucian, and Antonius Diogenes), and utopian fiction: imaginary voyages often lead to the description of the ideal form of existence.⁷⁴ Especially when the realm of the earth is left behind and journeys above or below the surface of the earth are imagined, fantasy sets in.⁷⁵ Lucian's writings can be considered "the first space-voyages that have come down to us."⁷⁶ In his work, *Of the Face Appearing in the Orb of the Moon*, Plutarch already discussed the prevalent astronomical theories and considered whether life existed on the moon. Antonius Diogenes' work, *Of the Wonderful Things Beyond Thule*, which involved a

⁶⁷ Georgiadou and Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel*, 14.

⁶⁸ Since the soul, upon leaving the body, was believed to linger in the space between earth and the moon, Georgiadou and Larmour suggest that the journey reported by Lucian is, in fact, meant to be an account on the soul's afterlife on the moon, as a symbolic "first death," and on the Island of the Blessed. See Georgiadou and Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel*, 18.

⁶⁹ See also Georgiadou and Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel*, 37.

⁷⁰ Georgiadou and Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel*, 15. See also Plutarch, *Fac.* 941A–945D: the soul travels to the moon after death.

⁷¹ See Georgiadou and Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel*, 38.

⁷² Georgiadou and Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel*, 46.

⁷³ Georgiadou and Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel*, 47.

⁷⁴ Philip Babcock Gove, *The Imaginary Voyage in Prose Fiction* (2nd ed.; London: Holland, 1961), 155.

⁷⁵ Gove, *The Imaginary Voyage in Prose Fiction*, 174.

⁷⁶ Green, *Into Other Worlds*, 11.

journey to the moon, has not survived and is of an uncertain date.⁷⁷ The relationship between this work and Lucian's *True Story* is similarly uncertain. According to Photius's summary, Antonius Diogenes reports that Dinius told him that he saw things

that no one else says he has seen or heard, and that no one else has ever imagined. The most wondrous thing of all is that in traveling north they came close to the moon, which was like a completely stripped land, and that while there they saw things that it was natural for a man to see who had invented such an exaggerated fiction.⁷⁸ (Ver. hist. 111a)

Photius argues that Antonius Diogenes "has the authority, for his numerous stories, of older writers, from whose work he has compiled his collection" (111a) and that his story is the basis of Lucian's *True Story* (111b), but modern scholars are divided over this latter issue.⁷⁹ Since the work has not survived, we do not know how Dinius and his companions reached the moon and what kind of adventures they experienced there. In contrast to Photius's report of Antonius Diogenes' story, Lucian's moon was not a "completely stripped land," but cultivated and inhabited, as we have already seen above.

Lucian also thematized a journey to the moon in his dialogue *Icaromenippus*, which consists of a discussion between Menippus, a Cynic philosopher, and his friend. Menippus claims to have undertaken a journey to the moon and further up into heaven, to satisfy his quest for knowledge of the universe and to meet and talk to Zeus. In his view, philosophers, whose views are inconsistent and full of contradictions, cannot provide convincing answers. Only a journey into the universe and the source of all being would be a reasonable solution: "Let me see, now. First stage, Earth to Moon, 350 miles. Second stage, up to the Sun, 500 leagues. Then the third, to the actual Heaven and Zeus's citadel, might be put at a day's journey for an eagle in light marching order" (Lucian, *Icar.* 1; 3.126).⁸⁰ Lucian stresses that philosophers are earth-bound figures and sometimes even lack the most simple geographical knowledge:

⁷⁷ See CAGN 777–782. The work is only known from the summary in Photius, *Bibliotheca* 166, 109a–112a, the 9th c. CE patriarch of Constantinople.

⁷⁸ Translations of Photius are from CAGN 777–782.

⁷⁹ See CAGN 775–776.

⁸⁰ Translations of Lucian's *Icar.* are from *The Works of Lucian of Samosata* (trans. H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler; Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), vol. 3. Page numbers from the Fowlers' translation are included above in parentheses after the section numbers (separated by a semi-colon) from Lucian above.

To begin with, their feet are on the ground; they are no taller than the rest of us 'men that walk the earth'; they are no sharper-sighted than their neighbors, some of them purblind, indeed, with age or indolence; and yet they say they can distinguish the limits of the sky, they measure the sun's circumference, take their walks in the supra-lunar regions, and specify the sizes and shapes of the stars as though they had fallen from them; often one of them could not tell you correctly the number of miles from Megara to Athens, but has no hesitation about the distance in feet from the sun to the moon. How high the atmosphere is, how deep the sea, how far it is round the earth—they have the figures for all that; and moreover, they have only to draw some circles, arrange a few triangles and squares, add certain complicated spheres, and lo, they have the cubic contents of Heaven. (*Icar.* 6; 3.129–130)

Lucian expresses his frustration with traditional philosophical speculation about the universe and heaven here. He criticizes philosophers' certainty about their opinions, which not only lack any objective evidence but are also contradicted by the contrary opinions of other philosophers: "... some circumscribe the All, others will have it unlimited. At the same time they declare for a plurality of worlds, and speak scornfully of others who make only one. And there is a bellicose person who maintains that war is the father of the universe" (8; 3.130). Therefore Lucian decided to investigate these matters for himself and went on an imaginary journey to Zeus ("the only possible escape from perplexity would be to take to myself wings and go up to Heaven," 10; 3.131)

As far as practicalities are concerned, his friend wants to know how he was uplifted into the sky, or where he found a ladder that reached into heaven. Menippus claims to have had "wings of my own," "it was Daedalus's wing trick that I tried" (*Icar.* 2; 3.127). He used eagles' wings and fastened them with straps rather than with wax, lest the wax melt in the sun and the wings loosen, as in the case of Icarus. After various attempts to fly smaller distances, he eventually succeeded in flying to the moon and saw the earth from there, a tiny planet, which he allegedly identified on the basis of certain landmarks such as the Colossus of Rhodes (11–12; 3.132–133); "Then, when once I had got my sight properly focused, the whole human race was clear to me, not merely in the shape of nations and cities, but the individuals, sailing, fighting, plowing, going to law ..." (12; 3.133). His friend notices the inconsistency in his account: on the one hand, he saw "a tiny earth, far smaller than the moon looks"; on the other hand, he claims to have been able to identify individual lands, landmarks, and even human beings. Menippus explains this inconsistency by pointing to his helper, "Empedocles the physicist," whom he met on the moon (cf. the king of the Moonites in Lucian's *True Story*; the flying man in the *Alexander Romance*)

and who advised him on how to improve his eyesight (14; 3.134), so that he was able to observe individual human beings in their daily pursuits like "a community of ants" (19; 3.137).

Eventually three days of flight brought Menippus up higher, to heaven and his meeting with Zeus (*Icar.* 22; 3.138). The gods, who were all sitting together, were quite upset by his visit, afraid that other humans might follow him and likewise ask for an audience with the "king of gods." Menippus sees Zeus receiving prayers and the latter wants to know what humans think of him. Afterwards Menippus participates in a heavenly dinner and listens to Zeus's speech against the philosophers. At the end Zeus deprives him of his wings, so that he cannot reach heaven again, and commissions Hermes to bring him back to earth.

The dialogue shows a certain awareness of cosmology on Lucian's part. Without specifying the speed of Menippus's flight, Lucian knew that the moon was quite far away from the earth and the sun even further. He also knew that from the perspective of the moon, the earth would look tiny, and it would be hard to even identify individual patches of land. According to Pierce, Lucian's "spoofs do reflect a knowledge of cosmology more sophisticated than many laymen grant classical civilization. Educated men knew the earth was round, and they knew the planets were other worlds. They had a pretty good idea how large the earth and the moon were and how far apart."⁸¹

In Lucian's *Icaromenippus* we also find a fantasy of heaven from the Hellenistic critical intellectual's point of view. Heaven, located in the further reaches of the universe, beyond the moon and the sun, which are visible from earth, is presented as the realm of Zeus, the highest god, who has the other gods subordinated to him. Zeus as the "king of gods" who receives prayers and elicits punishments over humans, appears very similar to the Judeo-Christian God here. Lucian's imaginative dialogue may be meant as a satire not only of Greek philosophy but also of religious attempts to explain the nature of the universe. The dialogue about Menippus's fantastic ascent to heaven was written at a time when Jews and Christians invented very similar tales, as we shall see in the following section.

⁸¹ John J. Pierce, *Foundations of Science Fiction: A Study in Imagination and Evolution* (London: Greenwood, 1987), 5.

2. SPACE JOURNEYS IN JEWISH HELLENISTIC LITERATURE

In contrast to the Hebrew Bible, where references to ascents and space journeys are very scarce, such stories appear more frequently in Jewish Hellenistic literature, especially from the beginning of the Christian era onwards. A number of explanations have been suggested: Segal assumes that this change is due in part to “the influence of foreign cultures” on Judaism;⁸² Dean-Otting suggests that a growing awareness of God’s transcendence caused the emergence of literary journeys to heaven;⁸³ Collins sees a connection between the development of the literary theme of heavenly journeys and the notion of an individual life after death;⁸⁴ and Himmelfarb points to ecstatic rapture and the permeable boundary between humans and the divine as models for understanding the practice of ascent.⁸⁵ It is necessary to distinguish between different types of space journeys and the motifs associated with them. Some of the motifs appearing in works such as the *Testament of Abraham*, *3 Baruch*, and the *History of the Rechabites* are quite similar to the Greco-Roman tradition of space flights discussed above. Without overt Christian coloring there is no reason to assume that these passages were later Christian interpolations. The texts were transmitted and partly reworked by later Christians, though, and therefore provide evidence of both Jewish and Christian uses of the space flight theme in the first centuries CE.

2.1. First Enoch

We shall begin our discussion of space journeys in Jewish Hellenistic literature with the apocalypse of *1 Enoch*, which is believed to have been composed between the second century BCE and the first century CE in a mixture of Hebrew and Aramaic in Judaea, and of which fragments have been found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁸⁶ This composite work is obviously based on

⁸² Segal, “Heavenly Ascent,” 1354.

⁸³ See Dean-Otting, *Heavenly Journeys*, 6: “The heavenly journey texts indicate a resistance to the idea of God’s transcendence.”

⁸⁴ See Collins, “Throne in the Heavens,” 47; Carsten Colpe et al., “Jenseitsfahrt I (Himmelfahrt),” *RAC* 17 (1996): 407–466; Carsten Colpe and P. Habermehl, “Jenseitsreise,” *RAC* 17 (1996): 490–543, see a clear distinction between heavenly ascent after death and heavenly journeys, though.

⁸⁵ Martha Himmelfarb, “The Practice of Ascent in the Ancient Mediterranean World,” in Collins and Fishbane, eds., *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys*, 123, 128.

⁸⁶ See *OTP* 1:6–8. On *1 Enoch* as the “earliest and purest ascent text,” see Dean-Otting, *Heavenly Journeys*, 3.

the biblical Enoch tradition. We remember that in Gen 5:24 it is stated that "Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, for God took him," a formulation that remains ambiguous and could be interpreted in various ways. The authors of *1 Enoch* ascribed various heavenly journeys and visions to Enoch, and there is a clear astronomical interest in parts of the work. We cannot discuss the text in detail here and shall focus our attention on Enoch's journeys to the "extreme ends of the earth" (*1 En.* 33–36) in all four directions, guided by the angel Ura'el. At the first end of the earth he allegedly saw fabulous animals and birds (33.1). All four ends of the earth seem to have coincided with the beginning of heaven and had heavenly gates attached to them (cf. 33.2; 34.2; 35.1; 36.1). As in the *Alexander Romance* and Lucian, the traditional worldview of heaven as a cupola or tent touching earth at its edges seems to be imagined here. Chapters 72–82 of *1 Enoch* present an astronomical discussion of the heavenly bodies of the sun (ascending on a chariot, cf. 72.5), moon, and stars. At the end, Enoch is said to have been brought back to earth by angels (81.5). This work can be considered an early example of Hellenistic Jewish imaginary explorations of heaven and the universe, in which all elements of the universe—including the astronomical laws—are subordinated to the God of the Hebrew Bible who is seen as the creator of everything in existence.⁸⁷

2.2. *The Testament of Abraham*

Another Jewish Hellenistic work that features a space journey is the *Testament of Abraham*, which may have been written in Egypt as late as the first or early second century CE.⁸⁸ Sanders notes: "Despite being repeatedly copied by Christian scribes, the *Testament of Abraham* in both recensions remains unmistakably Jewish."⁸⁹ He even assumes that it "represents a kind of lowest-common-denominator Judaism," expressing ideas and beliefs held by many ancient Jews of the Mediterranean region in late Hellenistic and early Roman times, "commonplace moral values" combined with the belief in God's justice and mercy when dealing with human transgressions.⁹⁰ God's

⁸⁷ See also Segal, "Heavenly Ascent," 1359, who notes that *1 En.* "reads like a fabulous travelogue." A whole cycle of otherworldly journeys associated with Enoch also appears in 2 and 3 *Enoch*. Another figure with whom ascents were associated is Baruch: in 3 *Baruch* the angel Phanuel leads Baruch on a tour of heaven, cf. Couliano, *Out of This World*, 158–161.

⁸⁸ See *OTP* 1:874–875.

⁸⁹ *OTP* 1:875.

⁹⁰ See *OTP* 1:876–877.

judgment and mercy and human beings' repentance and good works constitute the main theological themes of this work. Interestingly, these themes are expressed in connection with a heavenly tour that is quite different from other Jewish "'ascensions' and 'apocalypses'"⁹¹ and more similar to Lucian's accounts and the *Alexander Romance*.⁹²

The entire work focuses on the end of Abraham's life, when God sends the archangel Michael to announce his impending death. Abraham has one wish before his departure from earth: "While I am yet in this body I wish to see all the inhabited world and all the created things which you established, master, through one word" (9.6).⁹³ Whereas Alexander of Macedon wanted to see the "end of the world" and the "Island of the Blessed" (cf. *Alexander Romance* 2.37–41) and Lucian intended to "discover the limits of the ocean and what men dwelt behind it" (Lucian, *Ver. hist.* 1.5), Abraham's quest is also for knowledge, but for a knowledge that is based on his belief in the creator God. His desire is not to see the "ultimate" things beyond this world but to gain a better perspective on this world and its creatures and thereby increase his knowledge of God's accomplishments. Thus, this sentence already indicates the different motivations and outlook of the Greco-Roman writers and the Jewish author of this text.

According to the *Testament of Abraham*, God granted Abraham's last wish and instructed Michael to "take the righteous Abraham on a chariot of cherubim and lift him up into the air of heaven so that he may see all the inhabited world" (*T. Ab.* 9.8). The motif of the chariot is more reminiscent of Elijah's ascent into heaven in a wagon in 2 Kgs 2:11 than of Ezekiel's throne vision in Ezekiel 1. It lacks any fantastic speculations about the nature of the journey and is stated in a rather matter-of-factly way. The function of the chariot ride is to lift Abraham up from this world so that he can obtain a better perspective on the world, the elevated perspective of God, which is usually unavailable to human beings:

And the archangel Michael went down and took Abraham on a chariot of cherubim and lifted him up into the air of heaven and led him onto the cloud, as well as sixty angels. And on the carriage Abraham soared over the entire inhabited world. And Abraham beheld the world as it was that day. Some were plowing, others leading wagons; in one place they were pasturing [flocks], elsewhere abiding [with their flocks] in the fields, while dancing and

⁹¹ *OTP* 1:880.

⁹² A similarity between the *T. Ab.* 10–14 and Lucian's *Icar.* is also noticed by Couliano, *Out of This World*, 162.

⁹³ Translations of *T. Ab.* are from *OTP* 1:882–902.

sporting and playing the zither; in another place they were wrestling and pleading at law; elsewhere they were weeping, then also bearing the dead to the tomb. And he also saw newlyweds being escorted in procession. In a word, he saw everything which was happening in the world, both good and evil.

(*T. Ab.* 10.1–3)

Unlike Alexander, Abraham did not ascent the skies on his own initiative but was lifted up by God's angels. Like Alexander, he is granted a view of the world from above, to see it in its entirety (the traditional view of the earth as a flat disk seems to be represented here as well). Whereas Alexander merely notes the geographic form and smallness of the earth within the universe, Abraham is more interested in the machinations of his fellow human beings: their daily work and leisure time activities, their sorrows and joys, their legal cases. This different focus already indicates the different purposes of the visions: in Alexander's case the smallness of the earth in comparison of the things unknown to humans; in Abraham's case human behavior before the eyes of God. The *Testament of Abraham's* description of humans within the world is quite similar to Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, though: "Then, when once I had got my sight properly focused, the whole human race was clear to me, not merely in the shape of nations and cities, but the individuals, sailing, fighting, plowing, going to law ..." (12; 3.133). Unlike Lucian, the *Testament of Abraham* is not interested in outer space for its own sake or in cosmological matters. Abraham is said to have rested on a cloud rather than reaching the moon or the sun. His view is directed downwards towards the earth rather than to other heavenly bodies. The focus is on the human world and its relationship to God in this narrative. The idea of life on other planets is not envisioned here. The perspective is, therefore, more limited than in the Greco-Roman writings.

Abraham does not remain a passive observer of human deeds. When he sees humans committing crimes and moral transgressions, he pleads with God to punish them: for example, thieves are attacked by wild beasts and a couple involved in immoral sexual acts is swallowed up by the earth. God does not seem to approve of Abraham's strict moral behavior towards his fellow human beings, though: he instructs Michael to bring him back to earth, lest his entire creation is destroyed by the sinless Abraham's desire for the punishment of sins.

Before his decent to earth Abraham is shown God's judgment of sinners at the "first gate of heaven" (11.1). The two-ways imagery is used here in a way which is very reminiscent of Matt 7:13–14: Abraham sees a broad and a narrow gate, with many people passing through the broad gate but only a few through the narrow one (*T. Ab.* 11.2–5). The two-ways ethics was

quite common in Hellenistic Judaism and need not be a Christian interpolation. It appears especially often in Philo's writings, in a variety of forms (see Philo, *Post.* 9.31; *Spec. Leg.* 1.3,17; 4.20.112). Whether the specific formulation in 11.10–11 (strait gate—leads to life and Paradise; broad gate: leads to destruction and eternal punishment) is dependent on Matthew—or vice versa—remains uncertain. Our passage differs from the brief formulation in Matt 7:13–14 in that it is much more detailed and introduces “a man seated on a golden throne” with a “terrifying” appearance positioned outside the two gates (*T. Ab.* 11.4). This “wondrous man” mourns those entering through the broad gate and rejoices when he sees the few entering the narrow gate into Paradise (*T. Ab.* 11.6, cf. *T. Ab.* 11.10). Abraham asks the archangel Michael who this man is, and he informs him that “this is the first-formed Adam who is in such glory, and he looks at the world, since everyone has come from him” (11.9). Again, this figure is not necessarily linked to Jesus (although early Christians probably understood the text as a reference to Christ), but appears in other Hellenistic Jewish texts as well.⁹⁴

According to *Testament of Abraham* 12, Abraham moved into the broad gate and watched a judgment scene carried out by the “wondrous man” on his throne, “bright as the sun, like unto a son of God,” at a table made out of crystal, recorded on papyrus by angels (12.5–8). This judgment is described in great detail, with the angels balancing the good and bad deeds of the deceased. The judge is subsequently identified as Abel and his judgment as preliminary to God's judgment at the end of time (13.2–4). After having gained insight into the processes of divine judgment in heaven Abraham is brought back home to earth by Michael in his chariot (15.2).

The role of the archangel Michael in this heavenly journey is very reminiscent of the figures that guided Alexander and Lucian in their space travels. According to the *Alexander Romance* (2.41), a flying man approached Alexander, showed him the earth from above and reprimanded him for venturing too far. In his *True Story* (beginning at 1.11) Lucian meets the “king” of the moon who explains things to him there. In *Icaromenippus* Empedocles the physicist appears as Menippus's helper. When venturing into unknown terrain, the heroes of these narratives were given guides who had more experience in these regions and could lead and advise them. Abraham's encounter with angels, divine beings, and God himself (through these intermediaries) is reminiscent of Menippus's journey to heaven and encounter

⁹⁴ See the references in *OTP* 1:888: e.g. LXX at Wis 7:1 and 10:1.

with Zeus and subordinated gods in Lucian's dialogue *Icaromenippus*. The authors and transmitters of the *Testament of Abraham* provided a similarly detailed literary account of their hero's experiences and encounters in the heavenly sphere. In both cases the space travelers' quest was for an increase of knowledge: knowledge of the universe (Lucian's *Men.*) and God's judgment of human beings (*T. Ab.*).

2.3. *The Apocalypse of Abraham*

Another space flight associated with Abraham appears in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, beginning in Chapter 15. As with the *Testament of Abraham*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is assumed to have been composed at the end of the first or beginning of the second century CE.⁹⁵ Its original language and place of origin remain uncertain, but an originally Hebrew composition in Palestine is possible.⁹⁶ Again, like the *Testament of Abraham*, the biblical books of Genesis and Ezekiel seem to constitute the basis for its development. In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* the journey to heaven also has the purpose of increasing Abraham's knowledge, but in this case knowledge is clearly of a cosmological nature.

An angel is said to have sat Abraham on the wing of a pigeon (*Apoc. Ab.* 15.2), "and we ascended as if [carried] by many winds to the heaven that is fixed on the expanses" (15.4).⁹⁷ The use of a pigeon as a means of ascent into the sky is reminiscent of the *Alexander Romance*. The angel leads Abraham to an encounter with God in the form of a voice coming out of a fire (19.1). This divine voice instructs Abraham to "look at the expanses which are under the firmament to which you have now been directed and see that on no single expanse is there any other but the one whom you have searched for or who has loved you." Showing Abraham the expanses of the universe serves to prove the correctness of biblical monotheism here. From his elevated vantage point Abraham was allegedly able to see that there is no other divine power besides the Jewish God. Any dualism or polytheism is rejected here. God is said to have directed Abraham's attention to his creation: "Look beneath your feet at the firmament and understand the creation that was depicted of old on this expanse, [and] the creatures which are in it ..." (21.1). Afterwards, Abraham's vision of the earth from above is related in much detail again:

⁹⁵ See *OTP* 1:683.

⁹⁶ See *OTP* 1:683.

⁹⁷ Translations of *Apoc. Ab.* are from *OTP* 1:168–705.

And [I saw] there the earth and its fruit, and its moving things and its things that had souls, and its host of men and the impiety of their souls and their justification, and their pursuit of their works and the abyss and its torments ... And I saw there the sea and its islands, and its cattle and its fish ... I saw there the rivers and their upper [reaches] and their circles. And I saw there the Garden of Eden and its fruits, and the source and the river flowing from it (Apoc. Ab. 21.3–6)

As in the *Testament of Abraham*, the action on the surface of the earth is described here, but in addition the authors seem to have been interested in the nature of the universe, the earth (again envisioned as flat) and islands in the surrounding sea, and the Garden of Eden, whose exact location is not specified here. It may have been imagined as a distant island, like the Island of the Blessed in Greco-Roman literature, or an elevated place between heaven and earth, since Abraham allegedly saw “men doing justice in it” (21.6), i.e. it seems to be imagined as Paradise, the abode of the righteous deceased. Human justice and the divine judgment are important themes in this work as well, but they are not as exclusively dealt with as in the *Testament of Abraham* here. What is more emphasized is knowledge, a knowledge of the world and of things to come, which only God can grant Abraham (cf. Apoc. Ab. 23.2–3; 30.1–2). At the end Abraham finds himself back on earth, while a description of his downwards journey is missing (30.1). Abraham’s quest for knowledge in this work resembles Menippus’s quest in Lucian’s *Icaromenippus*, but Abraham did not ascend into heaven on his own initiative. As in *Icaromenippus*, a dialogue with God/Zeus in heaven is meant to provide super-human knowledge not available to ordinary human beings from their earth-bound perspective.

2.4. Third Baruch (Greek Apocalypse)

Another text that combines a journey through (five) heavens with an interest in cosmological matters is *3 Baruch* (*Greek Apocalypse*), which is believed to have been composed between the first and third centuries CE and reworked by Christians (esp. chs. 11–16).⁹⁸ Baruch is said to have been led through the heavens by an angel. Each heaven is said to have had large open doors through which they had to pass (cf. *3 Bar.* 2.2; 3.1), and the time it took to travel through these particular heavens and to Hades is noted (e.g. 2.2: 30 days through heaven 1; 3.2: 7 days through heaven 2;

⁹⁸ For a discussion of the date of *3 Bar.*, see *OTP* 1:655–656.

4.2: 185 days to Hades). The sun seems to be imagined as "a man wearing a fiery crown" sitting on a chariot that is preceded by a flying bird whose wings protect the earth from the burning rays of the sun (3 Bar. 6.5). During his space journey Baruch asks numerous questions concerning the heavens and the universe (see, e.g. 3 Bar. 9 concerning the onset of the night, the moon, and the stars), receiving answers from the angel on behalf of God. At the end of his journey Baruch is returned to his place of departure by the angel, richer in his knowledge of God and the world. Dean-Otting has already noted that Lucian's *Icaromenippus* "deals with some of the same concerns which occupy the author of III Baruch, most notably the role of the moon and the offering of prayers to Deity."⁹⁹ Differences between the Jewish Hellenistic work and Lucian's text, which we already mentioned in connection with the *Apocalypse of Abraham* above, apply here as well.

2.5. *The History of the Rechabites*

The so-called *History of the Rechabites* relates the visit of the hermit Zosimus to the spatial island of the "Blessed Ones." The original language, place of origin, and date of composition of this work are unknown. Charlesworth has argued that the fifth- or sixth-century Syriac version may be based on a Greek and/or Semitic source.¹⁰⁰ He reckons with a Christian revision and interpolation of an originally Jewish document dating to the first centuries CE and suggests "that sections of this document are Jewish or heavily influenced by Jewish traditions" that "may antedate the second century AD."¹⁰¹ Other scholars consider the text a late antique Christian composition that may have integrated biblical and rabbinic traditions.¹⁰² According

⁹⁹ Dean-Otting, *Heavenly Journeys*, 19.

¹⁰⁰ See *OTP* 2:444 and for the translation of the Syriac recension, see *OTP* 2:450–461. See also James Charlesworth, ed., *The History of the Rechabites*. Vol. 1: *The Greek Tradition* (Pseudepigrapha Series 10; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1982) for the translation of the Greek recension and James Charlesworth, "Greek, Persian, Roman, Syrian, and Egyptian Influences in Early Jewish Theology: A Study of the History of the Rechabites," in A. Caquot, ed., *Hellenica and Judaica* (Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 216–243, for analysis.

¹⁰¹ *OTP* 2:445.

¹⁰² See Chris H. Knight, "The Story of Zosimus' or 'The History of the Rechabites'?", *JSJ* 24 (1993): 235–245, who reckons with a Jewish interpolation (chs. 8–10) into a fifth/sixth or even seventh c. CE Christian composition. See also Chris H. Knight, "Towards a Critical Introduction to 'The History of the Rechabites,'" *JSJ* 26 (1995): 324–342. Ronit Nikolsky, "The 'History of the Rechabites' and the Jeremiah Literature," *JSP* 13 (2002): 185–207, thinks that the text is a fourth-century Christian monastic work. Knight and Nikolsky discuss only chs. 8–10 in more detail, neglecting the rest of the story.

to Nikolsky, the text “may shed light on issues of transmission of narrative traditions across the Jewish-Christian divide,” with themes that “developed out of and reflect the milieu of late antiquity.”¹⁰³

In this story Zosimus, a virtuous man who had been living in the desert for forty years, pleaded with God to let him see where “the Blessed Ones, the sons of Jonadab, who were taken away from worldly life in the time of Jeremiah,” were staying.¹⁰⁴ In Jer 35:6–10 the Rechabites are depicted as descendants of Jonadab, son of Rechab, and allegedly practiced certain ascetic customs.¹⁰⁵ An angel comes to Zosimus to guide him and show him the way, similar to the archangel Michael in the *Testament of Abraham* and the other “space travel guides” mentioned above. Zosimus is said to have traveled with the angel for forty days (*Hist. Rech.* 2.1). Then “a certain animal came and carried me away and traveled beneath me [for] many days until it reached the great ocean” (2.3). The animal would have been a bird, as in the *Alexander Romance* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, although the way in which the flight was carried out is not further specified. When reaching the “great ocean” at the edge of the earth—again we encounter the traditional Greco-Roman and ancient Near Eastern worldview here—Zosimus expresses his amazement at the vastness of the sea (2.4–6). A heavenly voice, which may be the personified voice of Oceanos himself, tells him that “never has a man proceeded [farther] or passed beyond me” (2.7). Like Alexander in the *Alexander Romance*, Lucian in his *True Story*, and Menippus in *Icaromenippus*, Zosimus the desert hermit has ventured further than any other human being and reached a position from which he gains an entirely new perspective on the world and the universe: “And I looked and [saw] in the midst of the sea [something] like a dense bulwark of cloud suspended upon the sea; and the top of the cloud extended to the height of heaven. And I thought that perhaps the Blessed Ones were in the midst of it” (2.8). Zosimus assumes that the Island of the Blessed is suspended in the air on a cloud between heaven and the ocean surrounding earth. Eventually a giant tree appears on the shore of the sea before him and lifts him up into heaven, “until the cloud [on which he suspected the Island of the Blessed] was beneath [me]” (3.3). He lands on and explores the land on the cloud above the sea, which was like a Garden of Eden, “filled with

¹⁰³ Nikolsky, “History of the Rechabites,” 185–186.

¹⁰⁴ Translations of *Hist. Rech.* are from *OTP* 2:450–461.

¹⁰⁵ In particular, they are said not to have touched wine, as is also reported for Zosimus himself in *Hist. Rech.* 1.1.

luxuriant trees": "It was like a large and vast island, without a mountain or hill, adorned with flowers and filled with many and delightful pleasures" (3.6). The description of this Island of the Blessed is very reminiscent of similar fantastic places in Greco-Roman literature, discussed above. Like Lucian in his *True Story*, Zosimus reports his encounters on this island in the following chapters. What he experiences there is linked back to the Hebrew Bible, though, and described in biblical language: "For that place is like the Paradise of God and these Blessed Ones are like Adam and Eve before they sinned" (7.2). Nothing in this account is specifically Christian and the entire story could be seen as an imaginative addition to the biblical account about the Rechabites—here identified as the Blessed Ones—in Jeremiah 35.¹⁰⁶ At the end of the story Zosimus, like the other space travelers we have introduced above, is brought back to earth in the same way in which he was uplifted into the sky and brought to the spatial Island of the Blessed: with the help of the bending giant trees, which bring him back to "dry land" (17.4–5). There the flying animal picked him up and carried him back to his cave (18.1).¹⁰⁷

2.6. "Science Fictional" Elements in Other Works

So far we have discussed only texts that relate human heroes' space journeys, but it should be noted that specific "science fictional" elements appear in other Greek Jewish texts as well. Only a few examples can be provided in this context. A common science fictional theme are visitors from outer space, "unhuman beings," i.e. aliens, encountered by humans.¹⁰⁸ One could argue that the angels who appear in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. the three "men" who enjoy Abraham's hospitality and predict Sarah's pregnancy in Genesis 18) already fulfill this role. The Bible does not delve upon these intermediaries' journeys between heaven and earth. They just appear to humans and are usually identified as "angels" later, on the basis of their super-human knowledge and proficiency. In some Jewish Hellenistic texts, such as *Joseph and Aseneth*, these otherworldly messengers play a prominent role. After Aseneth's period of self-humiliation and prayer, a divine messenger appears to her. In contrast to biblical appearances of angels, however, the descent

¹⁰⁶ Note that certain ascetic practices associated with Zosimus, such as his abstention from wine, have a basis in the biblical narrative itself.

¹⁰⁷ Charlesworth, "The History of the Rechabites," in *OTP* 2:461, notes that the Greek revision has further chapters (19–23) that "appear to be later expansions by a Christian."

¹⁰⁸ See Scholes and Rabkin, *Science Fiction*, 179.

of this divine representative is described in cosmic terms: first, a “star rose as a messenger and herald of the light of the great day”; then, “... close to the morning star the heaven was torn apart and great and unutterable light appeared”; eventually, “a man came to her from heaven” and is able to enter her closed chamber, i.e. walk through walls (*Jos. Asen.* 14.1–6).¹⁰⁹ He introduces himself as “the chief of the house of the Lord and commander of the whole host of the Most High” (*Jos. Asen.* 14.7). The heavenly man allegedly looked like Joseph, dressed in white, except for his face, which “was like lightning, and his eyes like sunshine, and the hairs of his head like a flame of fire of a burning torch, and hands and feet like iron shining forth from a fire, and sparks shot forth from his hand and feet” (*Jos. Asen.* 14.9).

The author of this ancient Jewish novel fantasizes about the appearance of a “man from heaven” just like modern science fiction authors (and film makers) imagine aliens to look like. That this description appears in a religious narrative does not make it less fictional and imaginative. Later in the story a mysterious honeycomb comes out of the man’s mouth, “and that honey was like dew from heaven and its exhalation like breath of life” (*Jos. Asen.* 16.8), i.e. the quality of this foodstuff was otherworldly and endowed all those who ate from it with “the spirit of life” and immortality (see 16.14–16). Eventually the heavenly man “is traveling [back] into heaven to his place” (17.9).¹¹⁰ Such fantastic narratives about alien beings visiting humans are the counter-image of humans travelling into outer space, but they fulfill a similar function: they suggest the ultimate closeness between this world and the “other sphere” and maintain that extraordinary individuals in extraordinary circumstances are able to access and communicate with that other world (whether heaven or other planets in the universe) and obtain a knowledge superior to that of other human beings.¹¹¹

Another “science-fictional” motif appears in 2 Macc 5:1–4: heavenly riders from outer space flying over the city:

¹⁰⁹ Translations of *Jos. Asen.* are from *OTP* 2:202–247.

¹¹⁰ See also the *Ladder of Jacob*, which is an elaboration of the biblical story in Genesis 28: a ladder is reaching into heaven and angels are walking up and down on it. A connection between earth and the heavenly realm is established here. In Tobit 5 Tobias encounters the angel Raphael in human disguise who says that he can guide him on his journey to Media and back to Nineveh.

¹¹¹ For a comparison between encounters with angels in *Joseph and Aseneth* and Qumran texts, see George J. Brooke, “Men and Women as Angels in Joseph and Aseneth,” *JSP* 14 (2005): 159–177. On the significance of the honeycomb, see Anthea E. Portier-Young, “Sweet Mercy Metropolis: Interpreting Aseneth’s Honeycomb,” *JSP* 14 (2005): 133–157.

It then happened that all over the city, for nearly forty days, there appeared horsemen charging in midair, clad in garments interwoven with gold—companies fully armed with lances and drawn swords; squadrons of cavalry in battle array, charges and countercharges on this side and that, with brandished shields and bristling spears, flights of arrows and flashes of gold ornaments, together with armor of every sort. Therefore all prayed that this vision might be a good omen.

In the context of 2 Maccabees this vision is presented as an apparition and foreshadowing of Antiochus's campaign against Jerusalem, with heavenly horsemen (a symbolic image for the Maccabean army?) fighting against him. The heavenly war is reminiscent of the fight between the Moonites and the Sunites in Lucian's *True Story* and has found modern recreations in numerous "star wars" accounts. Martha Himmelfarb has already stressed the Hellenistic influence on 2 Maccabees:¹¹² so-called ἐπιφάνεια, such as the vision of the heavenly horsemen, are "an important feature in other Hellenistic local histories" and "provide a striking example of the recasting of biblical themes in the style of Hellenistic history writing."¹¹³ Himmelfarb writes: "The idea of divine warriors appearing to help Israel has well-established precedents in biblical history, but the description of the heavenly figures of 2 Maccabees with their shining armor and elegantly equipped horses owe more to Greek literature than to the Bible"¹¹⁴

3. JESUS' HEAVENLY ASCENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPELS AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Interestingly, in the New Testament Jesus' elevation into heaven is related as part of the post-resurrection narratives in (a later addition to) the Gospel of Mark, in Luke and Acts, which seem to have developed in a Hellenistic cultural context, and in the book of Revelation, but not in Matthew and John. In (the additional ending to) Mark and in Luke and Acts Jesus' apotheosis, his being elevated into heaven by God, is told very much in terms of the heavenly journeys we discussed above, even if the formulation is rather short and lacks the literary elaborations of some of the Greco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish space flights.

¹¹² See Martha Himmelfarb, "Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees," *Poetics Today* 19 (1998): 19–40.

¹¹³ Himmelfarb, "Judaism and Hellenism," 30.

¹¹⁴ Himmelfarb, "Judaism and Hellenism," 30.

3.1. *The New Testament Gospels*

In the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark three women visit Jesus' empty grave and have a vision of an angel, who explains to them that Jesus has been resurrected (Mark 16:1–8). They are asked to tell his disciples that Jesus will appear to them in Galilee, but out of fear they do not tell anyone of their vision (Mark 16:7–8). This episode has parallels in Matthew and Luke, albeit with variations. In particular, Matthew has added an earthquake during which an angel descends from heaven (Matt 28:2): "His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow" (Matt 28:3). This description (note, especially, the "lightning" and the white clothes) very much reminds us of the appearance of the heavenly man who visits Aseneth after her penitence (see above, *Jos. Asen.* 14.9). In contrast to Mark, where the women merely see a "young man" in a white robe sitting in Jesus' empty grave, the editors of Matthew elaborated the episode by explicitly referring to an "angel of the Lord" and having him descend from heaven in a cosmic eruption, thereby making the scene more extraordinary and its holiness more explicit. Also in contrast to Mark, the women are said to have hastened to report their experience to the disciples (Matt 28:8). In addition, Jesus himself allegedly appeared to them and told them that he would appear to the disciples in Galilee (Matt 28:9–10). This appearance is later told in terms of a vision of Jesus on a mountain in Galilee, telling his disciples to engage in missionary activity (Matt 28:16–20). The prediction of Christian mission and expansion is a satisfactory ending to the Gospel. A further heavenly journey would be redundant here.

The Gospel of Mark, on the other hand, ended with the female disciples' muteness, which would have brought an end to Christianity, if it had persisted. This ending is clearly not satisfactory, since it could not explain later Christian missionary activity or even provide a reason why belief in Jesus persisted. Without the propagation of his resurrection Jesus would have remained a popular Jewish teacher who was killed by the Romans. Therefore, some of the manuscripts have an additional ending (Mark 16:9–20), which is attested for the first time by Irenaeus at the end of the second century CE and later dismissed as false by Eusebius (3rd/4th c. CE) and Jerome (4th/5th c. CE).¹¹⁵ This ending mentions Jesus' appearance to Mary Magda-

¹¹⁵ For the attestation of the text in the manuscripts and by Irenaeus (3.10.6), see Albert Huck and Hans Lietzmann, *Synopse der drei ersten Evangelien* (12th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1975), 213. For its dismissal by Eusebius and Jerome, see Eusebius, *Quaest. ad Marinum* 1; Jerome, *Ep.* 120.3. This passage is put into parenthesis in the Nestle-Aland edition of the Greek New Testament.

lene, who now actually went to propagate his resurrection, and the disciples' initial lack of belief. Eventually Jesus is said to have also appeared to the disciples and sent them out to missionize. These two elements, Jesus' revelation to the disciples and his missionary appeal, are crucial for explaining early Christian mission and expansion and also appear in Matthew (28:16–20) and Luke (24:36–47).

At the very end of Mark's additional ending we find a brief remark about Jesus' elevation into heaven, "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19), and the disciples' divinely inspired teaching (Mark 16:20). These two sentences appear as a conclusion and final fulfillment of the resurrection and missionary appeal related before (16:9–18). The brief reference to Jesus' elevation into heaven is reminiscent of Enoch (Gen 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kgs 2:1) who are also said to have been raised up by God at the end of their lifetime. One may also think of the Greco-Roman belief in the emperor's apotheosis here.¹¹⁶ The sitting at the right side of God has both biblical (cf. Ps 110:1: king David sits at God's right hand side while God destroys Israel's enemies) and Jewish Hellenistic parallels (see, e.g. *T. Ab.* 12.8: angels stand to God's right and left during the judgment scene). Biblical, Greco-Roman, and Jewish Hellenistic ascent ideas probably converged and were associated with Jesus here.

Jesus' elevation into heaven also appears at the very end of Luke's Gospel, after the resurrected is said to have appeared to his disciples and instructed them to spread his message: in Bethany, "while he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:51). A variant of (the addition to) Mark's formulation is used here (Mark 16:19: ἀνελήμφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν; Luke 24:51: ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν). In contrast to Mark, Luke does not report Jesus' sitting at the right hand of God, a motif commonly associated with judgment scenes. References to Jesus' heavenly ascent reappear in the book of Acts. After the resurrected Jesus' last appearance to his disciples "he was lifted up [ἐπήρθη], and a cloud took him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). The cloud motif also appears in connection with other ascents in Jewish Hellenistic literature (see, e.g. *T. Ab.* 10.1, mentioned above). In Acts the ascent is subsequently elaborated:

While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said: Men of Galilee, why do

¹¹⁶ See also Colpe, "Jenseitsfahrt," 445: Justin already compared Jesus' ascent into heaven with the apotheosis of Roman emperors.

you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up [ἀναλήμφθεις, cf. Mark 16:19] from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven. (Acts 1:10–11)

In contrast to Mark and Luke, who mentioned a one-way journey into heaven only, here a roundtrip to heaven and back to earth is envisioned. Jesus' ascent into heaven after his resurrection is connected with the prophecy of his return in the future (messianic age). Such a return is not associated with Enoch and Elijah in the Hebrew Bible, but roundtrip journeys into heaven and back appear in the Greco-Roman and Jewish Hellenistic writings discussed above. They are associated with biblical heroes (Abraham, Moses, Enoch) who were destined to reveal their superior knowledge of God, judgment, and the universe upon their return to earth. Their return is reported at the end of the respective literary documents, whereas Jesus' return remains a Christian hope that is meant to be fulfilled in the messianic future only. The "two men in white robes" in Acts 1:10 are angelic messengers, visitors from "outer space" who have superior knowledge about Jesus' whereabouts and future descent from heaven. The reference to his return "in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" has an analogy in other heavenly journeys (see above) that regularly relate the heroes' descent back to earth in much the same way as their ascent into heaven.

3.2. *The Book of Revelation*

Clouds, angels, visions, and return trips to heaven are more prominent in the book of Revelation, also called the Apocalypse of John. Already in the first verse of Revelation an angel appears as God's messenger supposed to reveal his knowledge of the future to John. As part of this future, Jesus is believed to return back to earth: "Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him ..." (Rev 1:7). Jesus' descent from heaven, which was also already prophesied in Acts 1:11, is presented as a vision of the near future here. Since Jesus was lifted up on a cloud (cf. Acts 1:9), on his return journey he is also imagined to be travelling with clouds. Space travel on clouds was probably the most natural way the ancient could imagine such journeys, without the "props" of chariots or giant trees or winged birds.

In some of the later chapters of the book of Revelation John envisions himself entering heaven and having encounters with God, angels, and fantastic creatures there. This account reminds us of Lucian's parody in *Icaromenippus*, where the hero, Menippus, ascends into heaven to meet Zeus, complain about philosophers, and gain superior knowledge of the universe. It is also reminiscent of the Jewish Hellenistic accounts of heavenly journeys

with the common motifs of the "gate of heaven" (cf. *1 En.* 33.2; 34.2; *T. Ab.* 11.1; *3 Bar.* 2.2; 3.1) and the "throne" of God (cf. *T. Ab.* 11.4; 12.5–8).¹¹⁷ According to Rev 4:1, John saw an open door of heaven and heard a voice calling him to ascent through it. When he had entered heaven, he saw a throne with a divine figure seated on it: "And the one seated there looks like jasper and cornelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald" (Rev 4:3). The divine figure imagined here does not have human features but the appearance of precious stones, much like the "aliens" of modern science fiction writings. A figure which is "out-of-this world" cannot have the likeness of humans (in contrast to Gen 1:27, where wo[man] is created in God's image!). The fantastic imagination of the author continues with a description of twenty-four subordinate thrones on which elders dressed in white with golden crowns are seated (Rev 4:4; cf. the heavenly banquet of philosophers with Zeus which Menippus attends in Lucian's *Icaromenippus*). The description of this throne vision proceeds in ever more fantastic garb:

Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and pearls of thunder ... Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind, ... the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside ...
(Rev 4:6–8)

From his elevated place John can see "four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth ..." (Rev 7:1). These excerpts suffice to show the accumulation of fantastic elements in the book of Revelation. John's adventures in heaven are not less fabulous and bizarre than Lucian's (admittedly imagined) adventures during his space flight. The difference is that the author's fantastic imagination appears in a religious garb here. We can therefore see the Apocalypse of John as an example of religious "science fiction" writing in the early Christian period: God as an "alien" superlord, fantastic creatures populating heaven, angels flying back and forth between heaven and earth,¹¹⁸ heavenly horsemen,¹¹⁹ and an entire city of Jerusalem emerging out of the sky.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ On the throne motif see Collins, "A Throne in the Heavens," 49–53. See also Matt 19:28 and Luke 22:30: at the end of times Jesus disciples will sit on heavenly thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. According to Collins, most of the throne visions have an eschatological meaning, see "A Throne in the Heavens," 50.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Rev 10:1: John sees an angel "coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud ..." Angels flying between heaven and earth are also mentioned elsewhere in Rev, cf. e.g. 20:1.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Rev 19:11: white horse and rider seen in heaven.

¹²⁰ Rev 21:2: the New Jerusalem is "coming down out of heaven from God" (cf. Rev 21:10).

The fact that the book of Revelation found its way into the Christian canon probably indicates that such religious “science fiction” was quite popular amongst early Christians. Whereas the Gospel writers and authors of the book of Acts seem to have restricted themselves in their adaptation of fantastic motifs associated with heavenly journeys in Greco-Roman and Jewish Hellenistic literature, the author of the book of Revelation took advantage of the entire treasure trove of space flight fabulation and constructed a Christian “science-fictional” tractate out of such motifs. The relationship between the book of Revelation and Greco-Roman and Jewish Hellenistic literature deserves further analysis that cannot be accomplished in the context of this chapter.

3.3. *The Letter to the Hebrews*

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Letter to the Hebrews presents Jesus as the “great high priest who has passed through the heavens” (Heb 4:14) and remains “exalted above the heavens” (7:26), that is, he has achieved a higher position than Abraham, Moses, and the others for whom ascents are reported in Jewish Hellenistic literature.¹²¹ Jesus is envisioned as the high priest of a heavenly sanctuary (cf. Heb 8:5; 9:24), which is believed to be more efficacious in forgiving sins than the temple of Jerusalem was before its destruction. The well-known tradition of ascents and space flights is used here to suggest Jesus’ superiority over Jewish religious leaders of the past and to propagate the allegedly “better covenant” (8:6), which Christianity constituted for its believers.¹²²

4. RABBINIC CRITICISM OF HUMAN ASCENTS AND SPACE FLIGHTS

Whereas the church fathers continued to propagate Jesus’ ascension to heaven,¹²³ the rabbis of the first to fifth centuries CE were generally “deeply

¹²¹ On the ascent motif in the Letter to the Hebrews, see also Segal, “Heavenly Ascent,” 1375.

¹²² On Paul’s claim of an ecstatic experience which carried him off into the third heaven and Paradise (2 Cor 12:2–4), see Peter Schäfer, “New Testament and Hekhalot Literature: The Journey into Heaven in Paul and in Merkavah Mysticism,” *JJS* 35 (1984): 19–35 (22). Schäfer points to parallels to Paul’s notion that Paradise was located in the third Heaven: cf. 2 *En.* 8.1; *Apoc. Mos.* 37.5. On Paul’s reference to his ascent to heaven, see also James D. Tabor, *Things Unutterable: Paul’s Ascent to Paradise in its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and early Christian Contexts* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1986).

¹²³ See Segal, “Heavenly Ascent,” 1376–1377; Colpe, “Jenseitsfahrt,” 448–455.

skeptical about the relevance and importance of the ascension traditions."¹²⁴ A passage in the Talmud Yerushalmi tractate *Avodah Zarah* is critical of the Greco-Roman tradition of Alexander the Great's spatial vision of the earth and (Roman-Byzantine) emperors' assumptions of rulership over the universe. As an explanation of the word "globe" (כדור) in *m. Avodah Zarah* 3.1 ("And sages said: Prohibited is only an [image] that has in its hand a staff, bird, or globe")¹²⁵ the editors present a tradition attributed to R. Yonah:

A globe [כדור]—the world is made like a globe. R. Yonah said: Alexander of Macedon when he wanted, he would ascent upwards. And he would go up and up. He went up until he saw the world as a globe [כדור] and the sea as a dish [קערה]. Therefore they represent it [the world] like a globe in its [the statue of an idol or emperor's] hand. And let them depict a dish in its hand. It [the statue] does not rule over the sea. But the Holy One, Blessed Be He rules over the sea and dry land. He saves [those in danger] in the sea, and he saves [those in danger] on dry land. (y. *Avod. Zar.* 3.1, 42c)

The authors and transmitters of this statement attributed to R. Yonah obviously knew a tradition about Alexander's space flight similar to the one that became part of the *Alexander Romance*. Alexander's own initiative in ascending into the sky is mentioned here—in contrast to the ascensions of biblical heroes such as Elijah and Enoch, which were initiated and enacted by God. The way in which Alexander ascended upwards is not specified here. The detailed description of Alexander's ingenuity in attaching himself to two giant eagles, related in the *Alexander Romance*, is missing. Either the rabbis who formulated this story did not know that detail or, more likely, considered it irrelevant for their narrative purposes. What they are particularly interested in is the globe form of the world which Alexander allegedly saw from above. In contrast to this version, the *Alexander Romance* has Alexander look down on "a tiny circle like a threshing floor," that is, on a flat round form. The reason why rabbis were so interested in the globe was that in late antiquity emperors and idols were depicted with globes in their hands, despite the traditional worldview that the earth was flat and shaped like a disk or dish rather than a sphere.¹²⁶

According to Denis E. Cosgrove, the term *orbis terrarum* became part of Roman rhetoric in connection with the "claim that the borders of Roman

¹²⁴ Segal, "Heavenly Ascent," 1386.

¹²⁵ In the Mishnah this anonymous opinion of sages contradicts R. Meir's opinion, which prohibits all images (of idols or worshiped emperors), regardless of their appearance.

¹²⁶ The existence of the so-called heavenly globes (with the world imagined at their center) indicates, however, that ancient scientists knew that the world has a global form.

rule coincide with those of the habitable earth itself."¹²⁷ The iconographic expression of this claim was the globe. He notes that on a coin of 56 BCE Pompey's victories are memorialized by a globe, and a theatre statue of Pompey holds a globe in its left hand.¹²⁸ In later Byzantine times Constantine was represented by a colossal statue in Rome with a bronze globe in its hand,¹²⁹ a phenomenon that Cosgrove considers an indication of "a direct iconographic passage from antiquity to imperial papacy."¹³⁰ On a coin Constantine's head appears on one side and Sol Invictus, holding a globe in his left hand and his right hand raised, on the other side.¹³¹ The Roman use of the globe can be considered an indication of Rome's symbolic appropriation of the world, "Rome consumed the globe."¹³²

In a late version of the *Alexander Romance*, Alexander is said to have encountered a statue of the Egyptian king Nectanebo in his palace when he conquered Egypt.¹³³ The statue is said to have had a crown in its right hand and a sphere in its left, on which the creation of the world was portrayed. The statue allegedly placed the globe into Alexander's hand. Alexander then "honoured the statue that had thus prophesied his rule by gilding it all over."¹³⁴ In its present form the text is medieval, belonging to the longest version of the *Alexander Romance*.¹³⁵ It may, therefore, have been formulated on the basis of the Roman and Byzantine practice of placing globes into the left hands of emperors' statues.

The rabbinic authors and transmitters of the tradition in *y. Avodah Zarah* 3.1, 42c were obviously critical of Roman depictions of emperors and idols (Sol Invictus) as rulers over the entire world. They were well aware of the Roman understanding of the globe as a symbol of the inhabited world. For the rabbis only God ruled over the entire creation, which included both

¹²⁷ Denis E. Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 47.

¹²⁸ Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*, 47.

¹²⁹ The colossal statue of Constantine from the Basilica of Constantine in the Forum Romanum, whose remains are exhibited in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline Hill in Rome, originally presented Constantine as a seated figure with a globe in one hand and the other hand raised in salute.

¹³⁰ Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*, 47.

¹³¹ See the online image of the coin at <http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/Medieval/Bio/ConstantineI.html>.

¹³² Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*, 47.

¹³³ See Stoneman, ed. and trans., *Greek Alexander Romance*, 173: "Supplements to the Text," part 1, ch. 27.

¹³⁴ Stoneman, ed. and trans., *Greek Alexander Romance*, 173: "Supplements to the Text," part 1, ch. 27.

¹³⁵ Stoneman, ed. and trans., *Greek Alexander Romance*, 30–31.

land and sea. An explicit reference to the sky/heaven is absent here because that is where Alexander was stationed when he looked down towards earth. R. Yonah, to whom the tradition is attributed, was a fifth-generation *Amora* associated with the second half of the fourth century CE. The Yerushalmi editors who attributed this tradition to him, must have been at least contemporaries of him or—more likely—belonged to a later generation. Towards the end of the fourth-century rabbis would have been well aware of Roman-Byzantine emperors' self-presentation. The tradition therefore seems to express rabbis' criticism of Byzantine emperors' haughtiness in their self-presentation, which contradicted the universal rulership and providence of God.

Despite their skepticism about heavenly journeys as far as ordinary humans were concerned, amongst whom rabbis counted Roman emperors, rabbis occasionally thematized ascents and heavenly journeys in midrashic contexts, in connection with Enoch, Elijah, and Moses,¹³⁶ as the fate of pious individuals after their death,¹³⁷ and especially in connection with God himself and his *Shekhinah* (presence of God). According to *Genesis Rabbah* 19.7, the *Shekhinah's* original location was among the creatures. Their sins made it move up to the first and eventually to the seventh firmament, distancing itself more and more from the inhabited earth. Yet seven righteous men (from Abraham to Moses) acted as a counterforce and brought the *Shekhinah* back down to earth—by the force of their righteousness rather than by moving upwards themselves. A statement transmitted in *Genesis Rabbah* 47:6 even presents the biblical patriarchs as the "chariot" of God: "Resh Laqish said: The patriarchs are the chariot [of God]: 'And God went up from Abraham' [Gen 17:22]; 'And God went up from upon him' [Gen 35:13]; 'And behold, the Lord stood upon him' [Gen 28:13]." The patriarchs' and Abraham's own heavenly journeys are not explicated here, though. These examples show that Palestinian rabbis were very careful with regard to the magic powers they attributed to human beings. They saw the patriarchs as superior to people of their own time, sages included, but even the biblical patriarchs could not approach God who alone had absolute power over heaven and earth. The fact that late antique Palestinian rabbis refrained from inventing fanciful stories about heavenly ascents may have been an implicit criticism of Christian claims of Jesus' and Constantine's

¹³⁶ See Segal, "Heavenly Ascent," 1386, n. 211.

¹³⁷ See *Gen. Rab.* 65.22: story about Yaqim of Serurot and R. Yose b. Yoezer. R. b. Yoezer "saw his [Yaqim's] coffin flying in the air. He said: By a short timespan this one preceded me in the Garden of Eden."

apotheosis. Only later, in the Middle Ages and early modern times would heavenly journeys (re)appear in other forms in Hekhalot literature and Kabbalistic texts, as Peter Schäfer has shown.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ See Schäfer, "New Testament and Hekhalot Literature," 19–35.

LUKE, JOSEPHUS, AND SELF-DEFINITION:
THE GENRE OF LUKE-ACTS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP
TO APOLOGETIC HISTORIOGRAPHY
AND COLLECTED BIOGRAPHY

Sean A. Adams

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been much discussion regarding the genre of Luke-Acts and its relationship to ancient historiography, both Greek and Jewish. Due to the variety of history works in antiquity and the need for Luke-Acts scholars to differentiate themselves in an ever-growing field, scholars have continued to offer alternate genre labels and become more and more specific about which genre type Luke-Acts may be.¹

This chapter seeks to evaluate the nature, function, and definition of “apologetic historiography” as defined by Gregory E. Sterling and advocated by others. Specifically we will determine whether or not such terms as “apologetic” and “self-definition” are adequate for ancients as well as their applicability by modern scholars. Following this we will turn to Luke-Acts and assess Sterling’s claim that this two-part work is best understood as a mixture of apologetic and self-definition historiography. Finally, this article argues that the concepts of “apology” and “self-definition” are not limited to history, but can also be applied to other genres, especially collected biography.

2. MODERN AND ANCIENT GENRE THEORY

In order to determine the genre of Acts and its literary relations, it is necessary to understand how ancients viewed genre(s), as Luke’s perspective and understanding of genre would have shaped the construction of GLuke

¹ For a recent overview of the genre of Luke-Acts, see S.A. Adams, “The Genre of Luke and Acts: The State of the Question,” in S.A. Adams and M. Pahl, eds., *Issues in Luke-Acts* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012), 97–120.

and Acts.² The history of genre theory begins with Plato and Aristotle. In the *Republic*, Plato's Socrates divides literature into three types according to narrative mode: that which presents only speech uttered by characters (i.e., tragedy and comedy), that which presents only the reporting of events by the author (i.e., dithyramb and lyric in general), and that which is a mixture of both (i.e., epic).³ This forms a tripartite generic classification of epic, drama, and lyric.⁴

Aristotle in the *Poetics* adds to this genre structure the idea of appropriateness: each literary genre has an appropriate medium (e.g. prose or verse, metre, music) and appropriate subject-matter and mood (e.g. dignity, realism). Aristotle, furthermore, appears to divide genres by their manner of representation (narrative and dramatic)⁵ and posits a strong connection between the subject matter of the work and the appropriate metre to be used. Epic, according to Aristotle, requires "heroic verse" (μέτρον τὸ ἡρωικόν), not narrative metres (such as iambic trimeter or trochaic tetrameter, which were used for movement).⁶ Similarly, prose is for themes that are less grand, or for the roles of slaves or people of lowly character.⁷ Aristotle also differentiates between the historian and the poet, not merely by the use of prose or verse, but because the historian tells about what actually happened and the poet tells the sort of thing that might happen.⁸ Length of the work (μῆχος) is also used to differentiate between the genres of epic and tragedy, which have other formal similarities.⁹

² For convenience I will use "Luke" as a label for the author of GLuke and Acts even though both of these works are anonymous.

³ διήγησις οὔσα τυγχάνει ἢ γενομένων ἢ ὄντων ἢ μελλόντων; Plato, *Resp.* 3.392d–394d; Aristotle, *Poet.* 3.1448a18; Diogenes Laertius, 3.50. Other theorists might include terms such as "lyrical," "narrative," or "dramatic."

⁴ Diomedes, a fourth-century author, has generic divisions that bear resemblance to those of Plato, *Resp.* 3.392d–394d. They are: *Genus commune*: epic, lyric; *genus ennarativum*: perceptive, historical, didactic; *genus dramaticum*: tragic, comic, satiric, mimic. E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (trans. W.R. Trask; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 439–441.

⁵ Aristotle, *Poet.* 3.1448a19–23; cf. Isocrates, *Evag.* 8–11. Herodotus also makes reference to other poetic works according to their metre. Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.12.2; 5.113.2.

⁶ Aristotle, *Poet.* 24.1459b37–38, τὸ δὲ ἰαμβεῖον καὶ τετράμετρον κινήτικα καὶ τὸ μὲν ὀρχηστικὸν τὸ δὲ πρακτικόν.

⁷ Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.2.3, 1404b, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ψιλοῖς λόγοις πολλῶ ἐλάττωσιν· ἢ γὰρ ὑπόθεσις ἐλάττω, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐνταῦθα, εἰ δοῦλος καλλιπεῖτο ἢ λίαν νέος, ἀπρεπέστερον, ἢ περὶ λίαν μικρῶν. Dionysius, *Comp.* 3, "no word should be grander than the nature of the ideas."

⁸ Aristotle, *Poet.* 9.1451a38–1451b5, ὁ γὰρ ἱστορικὸς καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς οὐ τῷ ἢ ἔμμετρα λέγειν ἢ ἄμμετρα διαφέρουσιν ... ἀλλὰ τούτῳ διαφέρει, τῷ τὸν μὲν τὰ γενόμενα λέγειν, τὸν δὲ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο.

⁹ Aristotle, *Poet.* 5.1449b11–16.

Isocrates (*Panath.* 1–2) identifies different categories of prose writing that he has witnessed in his lifetime (e.g. genealogy, poetic commentary, military history, sophistic argument, legal texts, mythology, speeches, etc.). Isocrates, in mentioning these literary forms, was not proposing a strict or rigid schema of genre. Rather, we see that, like the forms of poetry, the ἰδέας τὰς τῶν λόγων (now denoted prose “genres”) are virtually innumerable and he has no intention of providing a full listing of them.¹⁰

Philodemus’s *De poematis* discusses genre in an alternate manner by taking the form of ὑπομνήματα, which offers a critical review of the opinions of his predecessors. Book 1 of *De poematis* provides an overview of literary theories, which privileged the aural effect of verse over the content of the work. Having outlined contemporary theories, Philodemus proceeds with an extended rebuttal which continues until the end of Book 2. A similar format is adopted in Book 5, although on a smaller scale. Unfortunately, this work is highly fragmentary and, as a result, a number of Philodemus’s comments and arguments have been lost. Nevertheless, it is possible to reconstruct some of Philodemus’s perspective of genre. As an example, in *De poem.* 1.61.16–27, Philodemus reports that some (i.e., Pausimachus) view genre as being indicated by the musical configuration (σχηματισμὸν ἐμ[μελῆ]) of language and not dictated by the subject matter (ὑπ]οκειμένων). Although much of this passage is lost, Philodemus specifically references heroic epic and other poetic genres (ll. 16–18), suggesting that they should be viewed as distinct genre forms. A similar discussion is picked up later in Book 1:

For poets of lampoon compose tragic (verses) and conversely tragic poets compose lampoons, and Sappho composes some (verses) in the manner of lampoon, and Archilochus (some) not in the manner of lampoon. Hence one must say that a composer of iambus or some other genre (γένος) (exists) not by nature (φύσει), but by convention (νόμῳ); but poets (compose) by nature when they name (things) by coming upon the word that is nobly born, primary, and entirely appropriate, and when in every genre of verse, both what is well composed and what is badly composed, the same argument holds; for the (poet) who invents ... [texts breaks off here].

(1.117.7–26, Janko)

This passage concludes with the same discussion mentioned above in 1.61, that the proper creation of sound is of primary importance in poetic liter-

¹⁰ Isocrates, *Anti.* 45; Y.L. Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates: Text, Power, Pedagogy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 20–21.

ature.¹¹ More important for our study, however, are two comments. First, Philodemus delineates genres by using ancient authors as examples and points of reference. Philodemus suggests that authors in general differentiate between tragic poems and lampoons, although sometimes the same author might compose both. Second, and more importantly, Philodemus claims that a composer of iambus or some other genre exists not by nature but by convention, νόμῳι (1.117.13–16). This reference to convention is essential as it indicates that at least one ancient writer explicitly understood genres as socially constructed entities. Though nature is necessary for the composition of poetry and other forms of literature, social convention provides the means by which genres are differentiated.

Cicero also provides a list of genres—epic, tragedy, comedy—whose order may indicate a hierarchical relationship as this inventory is contained within a debate over what makes the best orator in which the orators are ranked (*De or.* 3–4).¹² Though this hierarchy is not confirmed in his other writings, it does parallel hierarchies given by other ancient authors.¹³ Horace also sees a strong connection between the subject matter of the work and the appropriate metre to be used.¹⁴ Metre and subject are closely linked and should not be experimented with. For example, “A theme for comedy refuses to be set forth in verses of tragedy” (*Ars* 89). Likewise, Horace implores, “Let each style keep the singular place for which it is suited” (*Ars* 92).¹⁵ Such comments suggest that Horace has a rigid view of genre; however, a close inspection of his works undermines this position.¹⁶

¹¹ Cf. P.Herc. 994, col. 21.6–10. *De poem.* 1.170.16–19, however, does suggest that content is important.

¹² Cf. Cicero, *De or.* 4–6, which references poetry, philosophy, and orator in order.

¹³ Aristotle, *Poet.* 9.1451b5–8; 26.1461b25–1462b15; Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.1.73, 101; Longinus, *Subl.* 14.1; Horace, *Sat.* 1.4.24 and *Ep.* 2.2.58–60.

¹⁴ Horace, *Sat.* 1.10.56–61 discusses how Lucilius’s selection of a harsh-natured theme detracts from the ease of listening.

¹⁵ Cf. Ovid, *Amores* 1.1.1–4 who is quite aware of metre-genre pairing and intentionally plays with this idea: “I was preparing to utter in solemn rhythm of arms and violent wars, my subject-matter fitting my metre. The second line was of the same length: Cupid (they say) laughed and stole one foot away” (*Arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam edere, materia conveniente modis. par erat inferior versus: risisse Cupido dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem*). Cf. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 1.945–946; 4.18–22.

¹⁶ Horace’s own writings appear to cross the divide between metres and styles. For example, in *Sat.* 1.4.40–42 Horace debates whether or not he should be called a poet as he rounds off his verse and writes in a prose-like manner. R.K. Hack, in his classic study, argues that “out of the seventeen epodes, only nine can be said to display the Archilochian spirit. The other eight are not only not satirical, but are demonstrably lyric in feeling and content ... Horace, the perfect artist, was a desperate mixer of genres.” R.K. Hack, “The Doctrine of Literary Forms,” *HSCP* 27 (1916): 1–65 (28, 30).

Horace, in his *Satires*, cites a number of different genres and their metrical pairings: wars fit hexameters and epic, lamentations and offerings elegiacs, abuse iambics, tragic and comic dialogue iambics, and lyric a range of topics including Horace's *Odes*.¹⁷ These forms are clearly deemed to be part of a natural, accepted, and prescriptive generic taxonomy that poets are both to recognise and to observe.¹⁸

In brief, it is clear that ancient writers had a concept of genre and regularly theorised about it. Although it is clear that we do not have access to the entirety of that discussion, we can say with confidence that genre categories and designations were not foreign to the ancients. These categories, moreover, were differentiated by specific features of the text, whether metre, subject, size, etc., although there was a widespread recognition that genres were flexible and were creatively used by authors.

This approach is similar to, although more developed in, modern genre theory. Nearly all contemporary models for determining the genres of ancient works use structural (external) features that can be identified within a text.¹⁹ Some models also identify other (internal) distinguishing attributes in addition to structural elements, such as content and function.²⁰ The external features provide structural cues to the readers to assist them in identifying genre, whereas internal, content features affirm and support the external features. Identifying the genre of a work consists of evaluating the constellation of both external and internal features in comparison to other genres. As is illustrated in the (brief) discussion of ancient theorists above, the ancients also made use of both internal and external features to determine genre, and it is this programme that we will use in this study.

¹⁷ Cf. *Sat.* 1.10.40–49.

¹⁸ S.J. Harrison, *Generic Enrichment in Virgil and Horace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5–6.

¹⁹ Opacki provides a needed reminder that formal, genre features need to be understood and developed in light of their cultural and temporal milieu. “Genres do not have unchanging, fixed constitutive features. First of all, because of the ‘transformation’ which occurs in the course of evolution. Second—and this is more important in this case—because of the shifts in importance of distinguishing individual features of structure, depending on the literary context of the epoch or literary trend.” I. Opacki, “Royal Genres,” in D. Duff, ed., *Modern Genre Theory* (LCR; London: Longman, 2000), 118–126 (123).

²⁰ R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of Literature* (3rd ed.; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 231; P. Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (TCH 1; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 4, 55; W. Doty, “The Concept of Genre in Literary Analysis,” *JBLSP* 1972, 413–448 (439–440); Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 106–107.

3. WHAT IS APOLOGETIC HISTORIOGRAPHY?

Apologetic historiography, as a sub-classification of history, is relatively new and has only been thoroughly developed over the past fifty years.²¹ Throughout this time the definitional understanding of apologetic historiography has evolved to create a more nuanced comprehension of this literary form. Originally, its theoretical underpinning was based on an internal criterion of defence in which a person from one nationality (for this article we will specifically be looking at Jewish writers) found himself in a hostile/foreign environment and was forced to defend his religion, culture, and practices to the dominant civilization.²² This, however, hinges on the idea that the foreigner (in this case the Jewish person) was suffering widespread antipathy and was being oppressed by the dominant powers.²³ Oppression is a strong term and would represent the far side of the spectrum; there are different gradients of opposition. However, for the concept of apologetic writing it is clear, if not always made explicit, that the writer, because of ethnicity, religious preference or another reason, felt discomfort within his societal surroundings and wrote a work with a particular aim in mind (this is an important concept and will be discussed further below). Previous scholars have identified and catalogued the supposed widespread antipathy towards the Jews in antiquity that would provide the foundation from which to build apologetic works.²⁴ In fact, M. Friedländer suggests that practically all Jewish literature written in the Second Temple period can be considered apologetic.²⁵

Developing out of this theoretical perspective is the idea that the apologetic histories written by Josephus and other Jewish historians were fundamentally missional in nature. By this, the Jewish historians not only adopted

²¹ For a key article that spurred the re-development of the concept of apologetic historiography in the 20th century, see Victor Tcherikover, "Jewish Apologetic Literature Reconsidered," *Eos* 48 (1956): 169–193.

²² Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (ESEC 10; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 223.

²³ For this view see J.N. Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World* (NovTSup 41; Leiden: Brill, 1975).

²⁴ See the classic work by Sevenster, *Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism*. See also the more recent work: K. Berthelot, *Philantrôpia judaica: Le début autour de la "misanthropie" des lois juives dans l'Antiquité* (JSJSup 76; Leiden: Brill).

²⁵ M. Friedländer, *Geschichte der jüdischen Apologetik* (Amsterdam: Philo, 1973). For a view of the Septuagint translation as an attempt to integrate the Jewish people into the wider Greco-Roman world, see T. Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

a defensive posture in presenting their culture to the outside world, but also sought to create converts to their religion/culture by demonstrating that their tradition and heritage were superior to that of the Greeks and Romans.²⁶ This is a slightly more complex view of apologetic historiography than the one outlined above in that it attempts to deal with the tension of a culture that is struggling in the face of persecution from outsiders, while at the same time advocating the superiority of one's culture over the culture that is presently dominant and, from the author's perspective, the source of the current persecution. This requires careful posturing in order not to antagonise the superior power, which would not react kindly to such undermining; while simultaneously advancing a position that is contrary to the dominant propaganda.

This view of Jewish mission, however, has been critiqued recently and shown to be lacking by Scot McKnight who has evaluated Second Temple Judaism and determined that the proselytising urge of the Jews during this time period was weak and did not become widespread until the second century AD.²⁷ The commonly held view that the Jews were an unrelentingly persecuted people has also been challenged. L. Feldman (among others) has suggested that ancient writers were not as hostile to the Jews as previously thought.²⁸ Rather, statements that were previously thought to be disparaging to the Jews have recently been re-evaluated to show that it was not the Jewish people or their customs that was specifically the problem, rather the issue was that men and women would abandon Greek and Roman customs (*ethnos*) for "inferior" ones.²⁹ This is not to say that certain people (e.g.

²⁶ Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 224. For views on the missional nature of Josephus, see Louis Feldman and Gohei Hata, *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 42; Per Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome: His Life, his Works, and their Importance* (JSPSup 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 120–121.

²⁷ S. McKnight, *A Light among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991). For other critiques, see Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 225–226. This claim, of course, does not imply that there was no missionary activity, or that the Jewish people were not interested and willing to welcome Gentile converts, but that the amount of missionary activity was relatively small in light of later activities.

²⁸ See such articles by L. Feldman as "Pro-Jewish Intimations in Tacitus' Account of the Jews," and "The Jews as viewed by Plutarch," in his *Studies in Hellenistic Judaism* (AGJU 30; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 377–407 and 529–552, respectively.

²⁹ One example is drawn from Valerius Maximus, *Mem.* 1.3.3 in which the Jews are described as "infecting" the Romans. This example, though it has been used in support of a picture of anti-Jewish feelings among the Roman elite, is actually not specifically against the Jewish people or customs per se, but rather reflects a general dislike of all "inferior" cultures subverting the dominant and revered Graco-Roman ones. Cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.32; *Hist.* 5.5.1; Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.2.34–46; Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.96–106; Cassius Dio, *Hist.* 67.14.1–2; 68.1.2.

Apion) or groups did not write aggressively against the Jews, but that the antipathy of the Jews was not as widespread and dominant as was previously believed.

In light of these issues a new, more nuanced understanding and definition of apologetic historiography has emerged in the writings of Gregory E. Sterling, who views the works of the Jewish historians and especially those of Josephus as re-casted stories of native origin in a mould more palatable to the Graeco-Roman world.³⁰ More specifically, Sterling formally defines apologetic historiography as “the story of a subgroup of people in an extended prose narrative written by a member of a group who follows the group’s own traditions but Hellenizes them in an effort to establish the identity of the group within the setting of the larger world.”³¹ The hellenising of a person’s culture is a key point as it recognises that successful apologetic works needs to be palatable for outside readers’ tastes. Additionally, as cultural development is rarely (if ever) static, the creation of self-definitional works offers a re-forging of one’s own past tradition in light of current dominant values and so retools the culture to be better adapted to the current environ.

Sterling further proposes that apologetic historiography developed in direct response to Greek ethnography, a genre by which Greek writers wrote treatises on different ethnic groups based on their actual or imagined experiences in foreign lands.³² In reaction to these narratives, native writers, who disagreed with the portrait of their culture and ethnic group by Greek ethnographers, attempted to rearticulate and redefine who they were in a written response.³³ Consequently, many apologetic works specifically address previous ethnographic works, attempting to replace alien-defined labels with self-defined narratives. Sterling further claims that Greek ethnography provided “a *direct* model” by which ethnography developed into apologetic historiography.³⁴

Some Jewish customs, such as the adoption of a Sabbath, were well received. See, Suetonius, *Aug.* 76.2; Josephus, *Vita* 16.

³⁰ Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography* (NovTSup 64; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 17.

³¹ Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 17.

³² Examples of Greek ethnographic writing can be found as early as Herodotus (not the work as a whole, but sections of it, e.g. *Hist.* 1.131–140; 2.35–36), during Alexander’s conquests (Megasthenes and Alexander’s court historians), and throughout the Hellenistic and Roman epochs (as can be witnessed in a number of geographic writings, e.g. Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Ptolemy). See also Lucian’s ethnographic farce *A True Story*.

³³ Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 18.

³⁴ Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 18, emphasis his. Although I too take the

Although I generally agree with Sterling's assessment and definition of apologetic historiography, I would like to further refine the method by which the label of "apologetic" is associated with a text. Even though it is (briefly) discussed by Sterling, I would argue that the intended authorial audience, namely the audience to whom the work is addressed by the author, is a prominent (if not the most important) criterion for categorising a work as apologetic or self-definitional.³⁵ By this I would propose that ethnic works that are primarily directed inwardly to members of one's own community should not be labelled apologetic even though they might fulfill other apologetic criteria in Sterling's theory. Conversely, if the same work is directed at the dominant culture (i.e., outsiders), rather than merely focusing on the internal ethnic/religious/philosophic group, it is to be considered apologetic.³⁶ This does not necessarily mean that self-definitional works cannot and do not have apologetic characteristics or effects, but that their primary purpose is not one of apology (and vice versa). Nor does this suggest that they are mutually exclusive categories in that an apologetic work cannot be read self-definitionally (and vice versa); these concepts are closely related. Rather, I argue that the intended audience explicitly given by the author is determinative for understanding the original intention of the work and, I suggest, formative for which label we should assign.

Admittedly, there are a few issues with this criterion. First, the work might not be specifically addressed to a person/group or the section of the work that contained such information may have been lost. In these cases, as is quite common in fragmentary texts, other formal internal evidence should be given primary consideration. Second, despite the fact that the work is addressed to the internal community, it might be used in an apologetic fashion by members of the featured community in response to the dominant culture. This criterion is not at odds with such a use, and allows for the fact that later readers might use the text in a manner that was not initially intended by the original author. This does not nullify the original intention, but is a natural development of the life of the text. As a result, an apologetic work can be utilised to redefine the culture that it is describing;

position that generic development occurs particularly when different cultures interact, Sterling oversteps when he asserts that ethnography was the *direct* model for apologetic history as there are other models upon which Jewish writers drew.

³⁵ Tcherikover, "Jewish Apologetic Literature Reconsidered," 182.

³⁶ For another author who sees apology as interacting with the dominant culture, see Mark S. Burrows, "Christianity in the Roman Forum: Tertullian and the Apologetic Use of History," *VC* 42 (1988): 209–235 (210).

likewise, a self-definitional work can be used apologetically. However, when seeking to provide a genre label, authorial intention, especially the explicit audience identified by the author, needs first place of consideration.

Furthermore, though I argue that authorial intention and explicit addresser are the primary criteria by which to apply the label of “apologetic” or “self-definition,” this should always accompany a close reading of the text to support such a claim. Although ancient authors rarely (if ever) address their work to one group/audience and then write primarily for a different one, this does not excuse scholars from confirming and supporting their claim with textual evidence. If there is substantial counter evidence then an argument can be made for a different label, though to overturn an author’s explicit claim would require strong evidence and good argumentation.³⁷

In light of this understanding of apologetic and self-definitional works, we now turn to Sterling’s discussion of the genre of Luke-Acts. However, before diving into this we will trace briefly Sterling’s argument and his classification of Josephus’s works.

4. LUKE-ACTS, JEWISH HISTORIOGRAPHY, AND COLLECTED BIOGRAPHY

Over the last century and particularly during the past few decades there has been an extended investigation into the genre of Luke-Acts.³⁸ Following the work of H.J. Cadbury, a majority of scholars understand (Luke-)Acts as history based on claimed similarities of genre features between Acts and ancient history, such as the use of a preface (Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:1), speeches, vocabulary, style, and content.³⁹ These resemblances, though,

³⁷ The issue of possible multiple audiences, although complicating the use of terms, still follows the principle that prioritises the explicit claim(s) of the author.

³⁸ For an overview of the question of the genre of Acts and the scholarly industry it has inspired, see Adams, “The Genre of Luke and Acts”; T. Penner, “Madness in the Method? The Acts of the Apostles in Current Study,” *CBR* 2 (2004): 223–293, esp. 233–241; T.E. Phillips, “The Genre of Acts: Moving Towards a Consensus?,” *CBR* 4 (2006): 365–396.

³⁹ H.J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (2nd ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1958); M. Dibelius, *The Book of Acts: Form, Style, and Theology* (ed. K.C. Hanson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004); D.E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (LEC 8; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987); Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 317; T.L. Brodie, *Luke the Literary Interpreter: Luke-Acts as a Systematic Rewriting and Updating of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative in 1 and 2 Kings* (Vatican City: Pontificia Universita S. Tommaso d’Aquino, 1981). The dominant genre position for the Gospel of Luke as a work distinct from Acts is biography. See Burrige, *What Are the Gospels?*

have not gone unchallenged,⁴⁰ which have led scholars to argue for alternate genre labels.⁴¹

Sterling adopts the view that Luke-Acts is a history, but further classifies it in the sub-genre of apologetic historiography. As examples of this genre, Sterling draws primarily on Jewish historians and the Septuagint, with a particular focus on Josephus. Josephus, as a historian, is best known for his two major works, *Antiquities of the Jews* and *The War of the Jews*. Although his other works, *Life* and *Against Apion*, are also important for understanding his work as a historian, the former two works as histories and models for Sterling will be focused on in this chapter.⁴²

The first major work of Josephus was his *War* in which he chronicled the events of the Jewish Revolt from a Jewish perspective. Completed by ca. AD 81, this work represents Josephus's first work for his new patrons.⁴³ The work begins with a preface in which Josephus outlines his motivations, specifically maintaining that he wrote the *War* to correct false reports about the Jewish people from Greek "historians" who were writing either to flatter the Roman populous or to denigrate the Jewish people (1.2).⁴⁴ Additionally, Josephus justifies his writing of such a work by his participation in the events, something that not all who wrote about the war could claim (1.3).

One complicating issue for understanding the *War* is that it was not originally written in Greek, but in Aramaic, although it was "translated" into Greek a few years later (*J.W.* 1.3).⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the Aramaic version of the

⁴⁰ V.K. Robbins, "Prefaces in Greco-Roman Biography and Luke-Acts," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 6 (1979): 94–108; Stanley E. Porter, "The Genre of Acts and the Ethics of Discourse," in Thomas E. Phillips, ed., *Acts and Ethics* (NTM 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 1–15.

⁴¹ Novel: Richard Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987); Epic: Marianne P. Bonz, *The Past As Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000); Biography: Sean A. Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography* (forthcoming). For reading Acts in light of multiple genres, see the essays in L.C.A. Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles* (LNTS 289; New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

⁴² For a discussion regarding the historical nature of *Against Apion* and its identification by Josephus as an *apologia* in 2.147, see Shaye J.D. Cohen, "History and Historiography in the *Against Apion* of Josephus," *History and Theory* 27 (1988): 1–11.

⁴³ For a discussion of the dating of *War*, see S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian* (Leiden: Brill, [1979] 2002), 84–90. Josephus seems to have presented a copy of his *War* to Vespasian; *Vita* 361; *Ag. Ap.* 1.50–51.

⁴⁴ In *Antiquities* Josephus claims his motivation was "to refute those who in their writings were doing outrage to the truth" (*Ant.* 1.4).

⁴⁵ It was likely not a direct, "literal" translation due to its polished Greek and other

War has been lost; however, its previous existence has led some scholars to make statements regarding Josephus' motives. As an example, Schwartz suggests that this original Aramaic version was a Roman commissioned propagandistic tract regarding the Jewish revolt directed at the eastern nations and to the other Jews communities (*J.W.* 1.3–5) in order to dissuade them from confronting Rome in the future.⁴⁶ Although it is likely that this work had a cautioning effect on surrounding nations, it is more complex than just a piece of Roman propaganda.⁴⁷ Moreover, as the Aramaic work is lost, all discussion of its contents, despite being grounded in the Greek version, is speculative. As a result, we will limit our discussion solely to the version available to us.

Besides the favourable depiction of Vespasian and Titus, Josephus presents the Jewish people as a group of good citizens of the Empire, in spite of a few spirited insurrectionists and rebels (*J.W.* 2.487–493). Furthermore, the *War* seems also to serve as a courageous presentation of the Jewish people highlighting the fact that such a small nation could resist the legions of the Roman Empire for so many years (*J.W.* 3.70–109; 6.12, 29–32, 152–156).⁴⁸ It is unlikely that Josephus wrote the *War* with only one reason in mind, and so some theories are rather elementary and simplistic in their perspective. However, it is clear from these examples that Josephus was concerned in his Greek version of the *War* to develop and maintain good relationships with the Romans and to present the Jewish people in a favourable light.

In addition, there are a few aspects of Josephus's *War* that are of particular importance for this article. First, Josephus explicitly discusses his ethnicity in the preface, specifically identifying himself as a priest from Jerusalem who fought against the Romans (*J.W.* 1.3). Moreover, there is a textual issue

literary features. Gohoi Hata, "Is the Greek Version of Josephus' *Jewish War* a Translation or a Rewriting of the First Version?," *JQR* 66 (1975): 89–108; Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (2nd ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 65–66.

⁴⁶ Seth Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics* (CSCT 18; Leiden: Brill, 1990), 10; Menahem Stern, "Josephus and the Roman Empire as Reflected in *The Jewish War*," in Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata, eds., *Josephus, the Bible and History* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 71–79 (71); H. St. John Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* (New York: Jewish Institute of Religion, 1929), 27. This idea, however, is somewhat undermined by *J.W.* 1.2, 6 in which Josephus critiques those works that are primarily created to flatter the Romans, although some have seen this a rhetorical ploy.

⁴⁷ Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 65–69.

⁴⁸ Steve Mason, "Josephus: Value for New Testament Study," in Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 596–600 (597).

regarding the phrase γένει Ἑβραῖος,⁴⁹ which if it is authentic would lend further support for Josephus's ethnic self-designation. Second, having identified himself as a Jew, Josephus proceeds to present his work to the Greeks and the Romans (1.16). Here we see a clear "apologetic" focus in which Josephus identifies both his culture and addresses the work to those outside in order that they might better know the qualities of the Jewish people.

In the *Antiquities*, Josephus retells the story of the Jewish people in a Greek historiographical form (*Ant.* 1.1–5).⁵⁰ As a result of Josephus's genre claim, a number of scholars have attempted to place the *Antiquities* in a particular Greek history tradition. For instance, H. Attridge argues that *Antiquities* is part of the "antiquarian rhetorical historiography" subgenre, where others have seen parallels to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Polybius, and Greek history tradition as a whole.⁵¹ Josephus's *Antiquities* has been justifiably labelled as history, not only because of Josephus's own comments in his preface (1.1),⁵² but also because it aligns with other characteristic formal (internal and external) features. The genre label "history," to preview later discussion, is absent in Luke-Acts, which provides the self-label of "narrative" (διήγησις; 1:1), a term that is used to describe a much wider range of genres.⁵³

Todd Penner proposes another theory regarding the genre of Josephus's writings, arguing that they are best understood as epideictic historiography.⁵⁴ This view seeks to interpret Jewish histories (including those of Josephus) in terms beyond apology and sees the text as highlighting deeds and characters, not for their own sake, but in an exemplary way that will inspire

⁴⁹ This phrase is omitted in Codex Parisinus Graecus 1425 and Eusebius.

⁵⁰ Tessa Rajak, "Josephus and the 'Archaeology' of the Jews," *JJS* 33 (1982): 465–477 (465).

⁵¹ Harold Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the 'Antiquitates Judaicae' of Flavius Josephus* (HDR 7; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), 43–60. For Dionysius of Halicarnassus, see Louis H. Feldman, "Hellenizations in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*: The Portrait of Abraham," in Feldman and Hata, eds., *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, 150. For Polybius, see Pere Villalba I. Varneda, *The Historical Method of Flavius Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 256. For the Greek tradition in general, see Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 27.

⁵² For parallel history prefaces, see Thucydides, *Hist.* 1.22; Diodorus Siculus, 1.1.1–1.2.8; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Hist.* 1.1.2; Herodian, *Hist.* 1.1.1–6. Cf. Sean A. Adams, "Luke's Preface and its Relationship to Greek Historiography: A Response to Loveday Alexander," *JGRChJ* 3 (2006), 177–191 (185–187).

⁵³ For examples, see Cicero, *De Inv.* 1.19.27; Lucian, *Hist.* 55; Theon, *Prog.* 78.16–17 (Patillon 38); Sirach uses διήγησις in conjunction with renowned men (διήγησιν ἀνδρῶν ὀνομαστῶν, 39:2) and for narrative in conversation (6:35; 9:15; 22:6; 27:11, 13; and 38:25).

⁵⁴ Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 234.

imitation. Furthermore, Penner proposes that, while not ignoring the defensive posture, “it might be better and more helpful to view apologetic literature in its macro framework as epideictic compositions that seek to praise a particular people or group.”⁵⁵ It is true that there are a number of characters developed in *Antiquities* (and Luke-Acts) who are set up as role models and whose actions are to be emulated.⁵⁶ This, however, is quite a specific understanding for such an extensive work that is directed at a non-Jewish audience who may not accept these characters as important enough to emulate. As a result, I hesitate to say that Josephus’s history is epideictic as a whole, even though there are clear examples of epideictic material in particular sections of his work.

When attempting to determine the nature and genre of Josephus’s *Antiquities* and *War* it is clear that both of them belong to the genre of history (although there are notable differences between them, e.g. the temporal range in the works).⁵⁷ One of the most important aspects of Josephus’s *Antiquities*, as well as that of the *War*, is that they were both written for a non-Jewish audience (*Ant.* 1.5, 9; 20.262; *J.W.* 1.3–5, 12). In *Ant.* 1.5–9, Josephus states that the work was prompted by Epaphroditus and was designated to be read by the people in the Greek world, who are lovers of history, so that they might truly know and understand the Jewish people. Similarly, *War* was presented to Greeks and Romans (1.12), those who were lovers of truth (1.30), so that they might know what took place in the war.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 236.

⁵⁶ This is similar to the biographies of the ancient world that we find in Plutarch and others. Arnold Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (exp. ed.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

⁵⁷ *Contra* Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 53 n. 99. I disagree with Cohen’s statement that “BJ and AJ belong to different genres, AJ being primarily a history of the past, BJ a history of contemporary events.” Although I do agree with his temporal assessment of the two works, I disagree with his definition of genre and the level at which he applies it, namely that the temporal location of the work is a distinguishing generic feature. Both of these works are in the genre of history and it would be difficult to create a meaningful subcategory of genre based on the temporal location of the subject without fragmenting history into less and less meaningful divisions.

⁵⁸ Conversely, Josephus claims that the first Aramaic version was directed not to the Romans or the dominant power, but to those living under the rule of the Roman Empire as well as those nations and Jews who are living the lands east of the Empire (*J.W.* 1.3–5). This change of addressee is interesting for our discussion, particularly in light of the idea of the relationship between language, content, and function. Would the Romans and Greeks have been able to access the Aramaic narrative? Does the change in language (translation) necessitate a difference audience and therefore purpose? As we do not have the Aramaic work, these questions remain unanswered.

In light of Josephus's claimed intended audience and the previous discussion on the role of the intended addressee in determining the apologetic/self-definitional character of a work, it appears that both *Antiquities* and *War* would be considered apologetic histories. As a result, Sterling's summary of the nature of *Antiquities* is somewhat of a surprise:

At its core the *Antiquities* offers a self-definition of Judaism in historical terms. It presented Judaism to the Greek world in a bid to overturn misconceptions and to establish a more favorable image. It presented Judaism to the Roman world with the hope that the favorable status Judaism had enjoyed would continue unabated. Finally it presented Judaism to the Jews themselves in the form Josephus thought would best serve as the basis for a reconstructed Judaism.⁵⁹

Sterling's claim that *Antiquities* is a self-definitional work challenges the authorial claim of the author who addressed the work to outsiders. True, the *Antiquities* does much for re-defining Jewish self-understanding; however, Sterling provides insufficient argumentation for his claim of self-definition.

It is from this platform (along with discussion of other Jewish historians) that Sterling begins his discussion of the genre of Luke-Acts. Sterling claims that Luke-Acts defines Christianity both internally and externally. From internally we have the address to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1).⁶⁰ Although we have no further knowledge of the addressee, it can be deduced from Luke 1:4 that he has previously received some teaching in the Christian faith. Furthermore, the content of Acts lends support for an insider audience.⁶¹ Due to

⁵⁹ Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 308. A number of prominent scholars have questioned whether or not non-Jews were ever intended to read these substantial works. "Much of this apologetic, though not all, was directed towards strengthening the confidence of a Jewish audience in their own heritage, and it is doubtful whether a gentile audience was ever intended to read it." E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (rev. and ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black; 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–1985), 3:509, 594, (here) 609. Schürer is not the only scholar to posit a Jewish audience for Josephus, see also M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (2 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1974), 70.

⁶⁰ I follow a number of scholars in seeing Theophilus as an actual and not a fictitious person, e.g. Loveday C.A. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1* (SNTSMS 78; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 73–75; F. Gerald Downing, "Theophilus's First Reading of Luke-Acts," in C.M. Tuckett, ed., *Luke's Literary Achievement: Collected Essays* (JNTSup 166; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 91–109 (91); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (AB 28; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 299–300.

⁶¹ Marguerat is correct when he claims, "The language of Acts is a language for the initiated. The implied reader is the Christian or an interested sympathizer, as for example, the

the length restrictions I will not be fully evaluating all of these features; however, in addition to the assumption that the reader will adopt the we/them attitude in Christian/pagan interaction, and the prefaces (Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:1), Sterling proposes that the use of the LXX, the lack of definitions to one who is unfamiliar to the material, the number of Old Testament allusions, and failure to adequately explain Christian customs all suggest that Luke was writing to an internal community and not to the dominant, external community.⁶²

As an internally directed text, I would agree that this work facilitates the self-understanding and self-definition of the Christian(s) to whom this work was directed. Where I differ from Sterling in my understanding is the external apologetic nature of Luke-Acts. Sterling proposes that “Luke-Acts makes its case *indirectly* by offering examples and precedents to Christians so that they can make their own *apologia*.”⁶³ As a result, Sterling states that apostolic history played a decisive role in the formation of Luke-Acts and that it should be considered a work of apologetic modeling. Although Acts does provide models of disciples to emulate, it is not done in an apologetic fashion (see below).

Sterling continues by stating that “Luke-Acts served to help Christians understand their place in the Roman Empire.”⁶⁴ I agree with this statement, although not in the manner that Sterling presents it. Rather, certain episodes in Luke-Acts undermine the apologetic thrust of the work and problematise the Christian’s relationship with Rome and its Greco-Roman readers. Although Luke portrays the Christian community as having a strong social ethic (Acts 2:44–47; 4:32–35) and being willing to submit to authority (Acts 25:10–11), Luke also recounts scenes in which Christians cause social disturbances (Acts 19:23–41). Furthermore, in Acts nearly every Christian leader is arrested at one time and charged with disturbing the

most excellent Theophilus (Luke 1.3–4; Acts 1.1). Luke’s apologetic is addressed to Christian ‘insiders’ of the movement and a circle which gravitates around it.” D. Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the ‘Acts of the Apostles’* (SNTSMS 121; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 30. Although it should be noted that it is clear that Acts is not *exclusively* for insiders and that Luke does appear to keep outsiders in mind. R.I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 21; R. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), 12–15.

⁶² Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 375–382. C.K. Barrett, *Luke the Historian in Recent Study* (London: Epworth Press, 1961), 63, in his famous quotation summarizes this well: “No Roman official would ever have filtered out so much of what to him would be theological and ecclesiastical rubbish in order to reach so tiny a grain of relevant apology.”

⁶³ Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 386, emphasis his.

⁶⁴ Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 385.

social order.⁶⁵ Maddox draws attention to the fact that the work ends with the trials and imprisonment of Paul, which “blunts the edge of any suggestion that Luke’s aim was evangelistic.”⁶⁶ That the Christians in Acts are portrayed as social deviants challenges the view that it is designed as an apologetic portrayal of the Christian movement. So, Acts does help the Christian community understand their place in the Roman Empire, but it is not in an apologetic sense and is much more complex than most scholars have allowed.⁶⁷

With this being said, I would agree with Sterling that there is indirect apology expressed in Luke-Acts, but it is not primarily apologetic. According to Sterling, Luke-Acts is rather to be considered a self-definitional history that is secondarily didactic in that it provides examples to other Christians on how to live apologetically.⁶⁸ The inward direction of the text and its address to an already Christian audience (i.e. Theophilus) further challenge the understanding that the text is principally apologetic. According to our understanding of apologetic works, the focus is primarily, although not exclusively, directed at outsiders.⁶⁹ As a result, if a text is directed to insiders, even though it can function in an apologetic manner, it is not fully an apologetic text, but rather a self-defining work.

Having agreed that self-definition is the preferred understanding for Luke-Acts based on the explicit addressee given by the author and by internal features, we now turn to Sterling’s claim that “the stated purpose [of Luke-Acts] was to define the *traditio apostolica*”⁷⁰ and that the function of Luke-Acts is to assist in the advancement of the Christian movement by providing models of apologetic interactions that the reader can emulate.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Peter in 4:3; 12:3; John in 4:3; “the Apostles” in 5:18; Stephen in 6:12; James in 12:2; Paul in 16:22–24; 17:9; 18:12–17 (court); 21:33–28:31; Silas in 16:22–24; 17:9. The notable exceptions are Barnabas and Philip.

⁶⁶ Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts*, 181. Maddox concludes that there are “good reasons for doubting that Luke was writing for an audience outside the Christian fellowship” (pp. 12–15).

⁶⁷ Cf. C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 87–89.

⁶⁸ Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 386.

⁶⁹ Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 229.

⁷⁰ Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 378.

⁷¹ There have been a number of proposals for the purpose of Acts. Pervo (*Acts*, 21) posits that Acts is a work intended for legitimising the Christian faith through narrative entertainment. Johnson claims that Luke’s purpose in Acts is “to defend God’s activity in the world.” L.T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SP 5; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 7. Squires advocates that Acts is a “cultural translation”, an apologetic to explain

This position rightly identifies aspects of Acts, although wrongly emphasises Luke's use of Christian models as providing a model for apology. Luke explicitly emphasises education (1:4), not just for apologetic purposes, but primarily for Christian instruction and the identification of "in"-group members.⁷² Luke's programmatic statements in Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1 indicate that the intended purpose of (Luke-)Acts is both informational and conformational, "that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, 1:4).⁷³ This is echoed in Acts' preface and further indicated by the content of Acts (e.g. 2:36). This is not to say that Luke did not have an eye towards making Acts entertaining or a pleasure to read. Rather, Luke teaches the reader *through* the use of characters. This answer's Sterling's question: "Why a historical narrative rather than a circular epistle or theological treatise?"⁷⁴ The focus on the disciples and their teachings and deeds shows a particular emphasis on delineating the members of the Christian community in comparison to outsiders (e.g. Judas, 1:16–17; Ananias and Sapphira, 5:1–10; Simon Magus, 8:4–24; and the sons of Sceva, 19:13–16). Through this delineation Luke also educates his readers theologically and facilitates their growth as Christians. As a result, though the primary purpose of Acts is to educate and confirm the readers in their faith, it is accomplished through a concise demarcation of Jesus' followers. It is through their teaching and ministry that the reader is informed.

The function of a work is highly related to the larger question of genre selection. Though a complete investigation into this question is beyond the purview of this article, it is important to note briefly that history is not the only genre in which self-definition is a defining feature. This concept is also prevalent in collected biographies, especially those that delineate succession and adherents to a particular school/philosophical system.⁷⁵

Christianity to hellenised Christians. J.T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* (SNTSMS 76; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 191.

⁷² Parsons also notes Luke's emphasis on education, although with a focus on rhetoric. M.C. Parsons, *Acts* (Paideia; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 20. For a more thorough discussion of Luke's delineation of in- and out-group members, see Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography*, ch. 6.

⁷³ Cf. Jerome, *Vit. praef.*, "systematic account" (*ordinem digeram*).

⁷⁴ Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 378. I disagree with his "historical narrative" label as will be discussed further below.

⁷⁵ The notable counter example is Jerome's *Lives*. Although Jerome states that his *Lives* was written due to the encouragement of Dexter (apparently a fellow-member of the Chris-

For examples, Philostratus and Eunapius both wrote to insiders, people who were educated and knowledgeable about sophists and philosophers.⁷⁶ This did not exclude outsiders from readings these works, but rather the perspectives espoused and the specific discussions of style identify a trained sophist as the ideal/intended reader. To illustrate, Eunapius's introduction to his subject in his preface assumes the reader has prior knowledge of philosophers and sophists (*Vit. phil.* 454–455). Philostratus's work is specifically addressed to a family that is connected with the sophistic profession (*Vit. soph.* 479–480). Similarly, Plutarch's *Lives* were likely intended for a minority of people, possibly elite, who shared his philosophical perspective.⁷⁷ Furthermore, they are considered to be educated and insiders of Greek culture.⁷⁸

In light of the fact that “apologetic” and “self-definition” labels are shared genre features by both history and biography, the determination of addressee, whether to that of an insider or an outsider, is insufficient for determining genre. Likewise, Sterling's definition of apologetic historiography, namely “the story of a subgroup of people in an extended prose narrative written by a member of a group who follows the group's own traditions but Hellenizes them in an effort to establish the identity of the group within the setting of the larger world,” is itself insufficient for genre delineation.⁷⁹ For example, Sterling is correct when he identifies prose narrative as a genre feature as the metre of a work was an immediate genre marker for ancients who divided literature into metred and non-metred works.⁸⁰ Furthermore, metred works were further subdivided by metre type.⁸¹ This did not immediately indicate which genre the work was, but, depending on the metre, the reader could eliminate a number of genre possibilities. However, a number of ancient genres use un-metred continuous prose narratives (e.g. novel, history, epistles, treatises, etc.). Both individual and collected biographies, as

tian faith), at the end of his preface Jerome explicitly directs his work to outsiders (Celsus, Porphyry, Julian) that they might learn that the Christian faith was not without men of learning (*qui putant Ecclesiam nullos philosophos et eloquentes, nullos habuisse doctores, praef.*).

⁷⁶ Cf. Diogenes Laertius, 10.28–29.

⁷⁷ A. Wardman, *Plutarch's Lives* (London: Elek, 1974), 37–48. This is supported by the references to Sosius Senecio: *Aem.* 1.6; *Ag. Cleom.* 2.9; *Dem.* 1.1; 31.7; *Dion* 1.1; *Thes.* 1.1.

⁷⁸ T. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 302.

⁷⁹ Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 17.

⁸⁰ Dionysius, *Comp.* 3 (ἔστι τοίνυν πᾶσα λέξις ἢ σημαίνομεν τὰς νοήσεις ἢ μὲν ἔμμετρος, ἢ δὲ ἄμμετρος). Cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 9.1451b1; Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.12.2; 5.113.2.

⁸¹ E.g. Aristotle, *Poet.* 4.1449a20–23; 24, 1459b31–38.

well as histories, are almost exclusively written in prose.⁸² As a result, identifying the metre of Luke-Acts as prose literature, though it does eliminate a number of genre possibilities, is not genre determinative.

Finally, Sterling's criterion of a "story of a sub-group of people" is also genre ambiguous, as it is too broad in its perspective. This criterion of subject, though it eliminates a number of ancient works/genres that have different subjects (e.g. literary criticism, handbooks, etc.), is again insufficient as it is also found in other genres.⁸³ For example, some epics (Homer's *Odyssey*; Virgil's *Aeneid*) are stories of a sub-group of people.⁸⁴ Likewise, some collected biographies recount the development and nature of certain people/groups. Iamblichus's *On the Pythagorean Life* outlines the life of the founder (Pythagoras), his philosophical teachings, and identifies his disciples (265–267).⁸⁵ Philostratus's *Lives of the Sophists* and Eunapius's *Lives of the Philosophers* are both works that discuss a sub-group of people within a particular profession.⁸⁶

Evaluating Sterling's definition as a whole, it is apparent that it does have some interpretive power, but not enough to allow for genre differentiation in order to ensure that the works that are left are exclusively (apologetic) history. Rather, both the genres of history and (collected) biography fulfill this classification. Accordingly, there needs to be a more robust, systematic evaluation of genre characteristics and formal features by which scholars make genre claims.⁸⁷ Such a discussion demands more space than is afforded in this chapter. However, this approach has been applied with promising results.⁸⁸

⁸² Although this does not exclude portions of the text to be metred, as is seen in a number of inserted poetic excerpts particularly in *Lives* whose subject is a poet.

⁸³ For ancients' view on the relationship between subject matter and genre definition, see Aristotle, *Poet.* 3.1448a19–23; Isocrates, *Panath.* 1–2; *Hel. enc.* 14–15; *Evag.* 8; Horace, *Ars.* 73–98. For an ancient who did not see subject matter as a primary determinant of genre, see Philodemus, *De poem.* 1.61.16–27.

⁸⁴ Although epics would be discounted from this definition by their use of metre, a number of them and other works successfully fulfill this criterion.

⁸⁵ Similar works were written by Aristoxenus (a peripatetic): *Περὶ τοῦ Πυθαγορικοῦ βίου* and *Περὶ Πυθαγόρειου καὶ τῶν γυναικῶν αὐτοῦ*, and Hermippus: *On Isocrates* (F 42–44) and *On the Pupils of Isocrates* (F 45–54).

⁸⁶ Philostratus's *Vit. soph.* 479 begins, "I have written for you in two books an account of certain men who, though they pursued philosophy, ranked as sophists, and also of the sophists properly so called."

⁸⁷ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 105–123; Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography*.

⁸⁸ R.A. Burridge, "The Genre of Acts: Revisited," in S. Walton, T.E. Phillips, L.K. Pietersen, and F.S. Spencer, eds., *Reading Acts Today: Essays in Honour of Loveday C.A. Alexander* (LNTS 427; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 1–28; Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography*.

5. CONCLUSION

There is still much work to be done in the field of relating Luke-Acts to ancient literary genres. Sterling's discussion of "apologetic" and "self-definition" (with some revisions) is helpful in that it provides a lens by which to read a work and directly address the issues of function and authorial intention. In this chapter, I have argued that an increased emphasis needs to be placed on explicit authorial addressee as the key criterion for determining "apologetic" and "self-definition" labels. In addition, it is apparent that these labels are not genre specific and so can be applied to multiple genres, not solely to history.

RIVERS, SPRINGS, AND WELLS OF LIVING WATER:
METAPHORICAL TRANSFORMATION
IN THE JOHANNINE CORPUS

Beth M. Stovell

1. INTRODUCTION

Describing the literary context of the Johannine corpus is complicated on several fronts as it is deeply influenced by the Old Testament and the later adaptations of this Jewish tradition through the impact of Hellenism in the Second Temple period. First, the Johannine corpus presents a unique challenge to the study of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament.¹ This is largely because of the author's style of quotation, which, unlike many other New Testament writers, provides little formula citation, yet his usage itself is profuse. A further problem comes when John² does provide a type of formula citation and it is unclear what passage he is citing. An excellent example of this issue occurs in John 7:37–39, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Another further issue is John's apparent blending of elements from disparate Old Testament references into one another with seeming indistinction or attention to any given principles

¹ This chapter will assume unity within the Johannine corpus. Several scholars have agreed on this point in varying degrees. See Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001), 9–10.

² For the remainder of the chapter, I will refer to the author of the Johannine corpus as "John." This is the name used in Revelation as the receiver of the message and the author of the book. Since I am arguing from a perspective of literary unity across the Johannine corpus calling the writer "John" thus has a logic to it. I am not thereby suggesting that this particular person John should necessarily be seen as the *only* writer of the entire corpus. It may be the case that some portion of the corpus was written by a Johannine community rather than a single author. I am also not intending to provide a particular perspective on the specific "John," whether this figure is the same as the Beloved Disciple, or whether this person is "John the elder." While such issues of authorship are a necessary part of general exegesis, they are side issues to my purposes within this chapter. For a helpful description of the varying positions concerning authorship, see Stephen Smalley's lengthy discussion in Chapter 4, "John and John's Gospel," in Stephen S. Smalley, *John: Evangelist & Interpreter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998).

of interpretation. Thus, quotation within the Johannine corpus causes particular problems for methods (and scholars) that seek straightforward, quantifiable evidence of intrabiblical allusion.³ Yet one might argue that this very problem demonstrates the lack of clarity within biblical studies as to what “counts” as biblical quotation or allusion⁴ and also points to the key role of *expectation* in our interpretation of any New Testament’s text use of the Old Testament.

As a potential step forward, this chapter suggests that John’s transformative use of metaphorical allusion may provide insight into John’s overall use of allusion and quotation. Towards this end, this chapter will carefully analyse the original use of the language of “living waters”/“waters of life” in its Old Testament context, trace potential influences on “living water” imagery from Greek and Roman literature, note the transformations that occur to these metaphors in the Second Temple period in light of Hellenistic Judaism, and then explore the continuing transformation of these metaphors within the Johannine corpus. This chapter will argue that the writer of the Johannine corpus layers these diverse Old Testament metaphors on top of one another, extends their meaning within his context of Hellenistic Judaism, and, in this way, gives these metaphors a pneumatological focus that echoes the language of creation, cleansing, and eschatological hope initiated in the Old Testament’s original usage of these metaphors.

³ Beale provides an excellent example of the vast difference between different methods of citation and their results in the use of the Old Testament in Revelation. Beale speaks in detail concerning the major issues with accessing Revelation as a text in terms of its interaction with the Old Testament. Beale provides suggestions for various types of uses of the Old Testament in Revelation including “the use of segments of the Old Testament Scripture as literary prototypes,” “thematic use of the Old Testament,” “universalization of the Old Testament,” “possible indirect fulfillment uses of the Old Testament,” “inverted uses of the Old Testament,” and “stylistic use of Old Testament language.” See G.K. Beale, *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 257–278. While these approaches are helpful, my hope is that a discussion of metaphorical allusion will also contribute to clarification on this point.

⁴ See Stanley E. Porter, “Further Comments on the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” in Thomas L. Brodie, Dennis MacDonald, and Stanley E. Porter, eds., *The Intertextuality of the Epistles* (NTM 16; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 98–116; Stanley E. Porter, “Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” in Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, eds., *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (JSNTSup 148; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 79–97.

2. METHODOLOGY

To provide the careful analysis needed to refine our understanding of metaphorical allusion in the Johannine corpus, it is important to establish clear methodological guidelines. This discussion then must address two issues: what constitutes an allusion and how is metaphor defined? I would like to suggest that biblical allusion functions in a similar way to literary motif. Using Shemaryahu Talmon's definition:

A literary motif is a representative complex theme which recurs within the framework of the Old Testament in variable forms and connections. It is rooted in an actual situation of anthropological or historical nature. In its secondary literary setting, the motif gives expression to reactualize in the audience the reactions of the participants in the original situation. The motif ... is not a mere reiteration of the sensations involved, but rather a heightened and intensified representation of them.⁵

Like literary motif, biblical allusion references an original passage by using words and/or phrases that match the original passage thematically; this usage "reactualizes" an element of the original context.⁶ Also like literary motif, biblical allusion "heighten[s] and intensifie[s]" the representation of the original allusion. Following the work of literary theorists, Susan Hylen describes allusion as the "simultaneous activation of two texts": the original text and the alluding text.⁷

⁵ Shemaryahu Talmon, "The 'Desert Motif' in the Bible and in Qumran Literature," in Alexander Altmann, ed., *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 39. This is quoted by Michael Fishbane in Michael A. Fishbane, "The Well of Living Water: A Biblical Motif and Its Ancient Transformations," in Michael A. Fishbane and Emanuel Tov, eds., *"Sha'arei Talmon": Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 3.

⁶ Yet one would caution against suggesting that allusion "reactualizes" any original situation in its entirety. There is always a level of continuity and discontinuity when an allusion is made. If there were no continuity, then the allusion would be nonsense and thereby useless. Yet complete continuity is never a possibility because each situation will place different hermeneutical boundaries upon interpretation. Using Gadamer's model of horizons of the context of the text and the context of the reader, one could state that even the same Old Testament passage is read and re-read in a different context and thus the horizon of interpretation continues to change; this is especially true when one speaks of the use of one text within another text and a simultaneous shift of chronological context. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 2004; Germ. original, 1960).

⁷ Susan Hylen, *Allusion and Meaning in John 6* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 45. Hylen references Earl Miner, "Allusion," in Alex Preminger and T.V.K. Brogan, eds., *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 18. One should be

For our purposes, we will understand this “activation” in terms of the alluding text reminding the reader of the original text and thus allowing elements of the original text to shape later interpretations of the subsequent alluding text. We will identify how this works in both the use of the Old Testament text and in the influence of Greco-Roman texts and their overall effect on Hellenistic Judaism in the Second Temple period. Thus, allusion in the Johannine corpus is not merely the movement between two texts, but a developing transformation occurring across several texts, causing a movement back to several previous texts.⁸

While it has long been en vogue among literary theorists to describe the process of allusion as happening only between the reader and the text,⁹ it is perhaps more helpful to acknowledge the reason an author might want to use allusion particularly in the form of metaphor. In the case of the Johannine corpus, specifically the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation, the author provides his reasons for writing from which one might suggest his reasons for using metaphorical allusion. The Fourth Gospel tells us that the author wrote “so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in his name” (John 20:31). In Revelation, the speaker reveals himself to be “John, the one who heard and saw these things,” and John is told not to seal up this prophecy, but to share it because the time is near (Rev 22:8, 10). In both cases, the author shares so that his reader might believe and gain life. In Revelation, this is particularly important as “the time is near.” The urgency of the call to faith is best served by faithfulness to the tradition of the past, and allusion functions as a means of recalling this past by joining it to the present situation of John’s readers. Metaphor serves the additional function of conveying these abstract, heavenly matters in down-to-earth ways.

careful to note that this is specifically a discussion of textual allusion. Different criteria might need to be established for non-textual allusion, but as this chapter is strictly discussing textual allusion such a criteria need not be developed at this time.

⁸ I have here avoided the term “intertextuality” as it is fraught with difficulties within the field of New Testament studies and understood in different ways within literary studies as well. For discussion on the issues of the term “intertextuality” in the field of New Testament studies, see Porter, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament” and “Further Comments.” For the complicated concept of intertextuality in literary studies, see Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Mary Orr, *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2003); Michael Worton and Judith Still, *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1990).

⁹ Hylan represents this discussion in some detail in *Allusion and Meaning in John 6*, 44–47. A similar concept is present in much of the language of intertextuality in both literary and biblical studies.

Just as modern literary theory has demonstrated that allusion is more than one text referring to another, metaphor is more than one word standing in the place of another or a form of analogy or comparison.¹⁰ Instead metaphor provides the language for conceptualizing the abstract by using the language of the everyday (e.g. the sands of time through an hourglass). A metaphor like an allusion consists of two main parts. In the case of metaphor, instead of two texts interacting, two concepts and their semantic domains interact. Linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson suggest that through this process of metaphorical conceptual mapping we gain our perspectives on the nature of abstract concepts in our world. As Lakoff and Johnson explain:

Metaphor is one of our most important tools for trying to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices, and spiritual awareness.¹¹

A further aspect of this conceptual theory of metaphor is the belief that multiple metaphors are used often to describe the same concept, highlighting certain aspects of the concept.¹² These metaphors, while not consistent, are coherent, working together to provide a coherent view of the concept.¹³ Thus, as John attempts to convey the identity of Jesus as Christ and Son of God, it is not surprising that a series of coherent metaphors would allow him to share his spiritual vision with clarity and vividness.¹⁴

¹⁰ Max Black offers a helpful explanation of the shortcomings of substitution and comparison theories. In place of a substitution view of metaphor, which argues that there is a literal meaning that could be used in place of the metaphor itself, or a comparison view of metaphor, which views metaphor as merely a form of comparison similar to analogy between two disparate ideas, Black argues for an interaction view of metaphor where metaphor itself extends the meaning of other words in its frame. See Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962), 25–47. See Black's further discussion of this topic along with elements of clarification in Max Black, "More About Metaphor," in Andrew Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 19–41.

¹¹ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 193.

¹² For example, an argument may be described like a building, a journey, or a container, but in each case there is overlap in aspects of their description of argument. In this case all of the examples point to the content and progress of the argument, while each also highlight aspects of argument that the other examples hide. Using building points to the strength and structure of the argument while journey points to the obviousness of an argument. See Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 97–105.

¹³ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 87–96.

¹⁴ Indeed, Jesus as the "Christ," that is the anointed one, and as the Son of God are, in a sense, metaphors, and John uses other metaphors throughout his works to convey the

3. LIVING WATERS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

We will now focus on the metaphor of “living waters” in its original context within the Old Testament with the goal of describing the key uses of this metaphor within these original contexts. Within the Old Testament, the usage of the metaphor of “living waters” (or in its form in the MT **חיים מים**) could be divided into four different forms: (1) the living waters of creation; (2) fresh waters (using a secondary meaning of **חיים**)¹⁵ at times associated with ritual cleansing; (3) God as the fountain of living water; and (4) the living waters of re-creation issuing forth as a sign of the eschatological day of the Lord. This section will briefly address each of these uses and their importance for understanding possible ways to interpret “living waters” in varying contexts.

3.1. *The Living Waters of Creation*

The first use of the concept of waters that are teeming with life is in the creation narrative in Genesis 1. Here God fills the waters with living creatures. The repeated use of “living” and “waters” in v. 20 and v. 21 poetically describes the swarming reptilian and aquatic life and sets the stage for more metaphorical uses of “living waters” to come when later prophets reuse this language to point to re-creation as will be addressed below.¹⁶

significance of these central metaphors. In fact, here we see another form of metaphor stacking where metaphors are understood in terms of metaphors, yet the metaphors used to explain metaphors hold a physical element to them. For example, Jesus describes himself as the “bread of life”. This description contains several metaphorical levels. First, Jesus is using this metaphor of living bread to describe his identity as “from heaven”. The physical bread, which in the form of manna came down from the heavens (that is from above), becomes the source of life in a similar way as the living waters, which we will discuss here. Thus, Jesus’ identity is teamed with a concept of physical bread, but this bread is an allusion to another bread that was life giving in the Exodus narrative. Thus, we see the richness of metaphor and its ability to build by being overlapped with other metaphors, as this chapter intends to show is common of the Johannine corpus.

¹⁵ BDB suggests that **חיים** includes in its adjectival form with water “flowing, fresh”, but suggests that this is usually phrased **מים ציים** rather than **מים חיים**. More commonly, **חיים** takes the meaning of “alive, living.” It is perhaps fair to say then that this particular phrase may have been used because of its dual concept of sustaining life and being fresh and not stagnant.

¹⁶ One might be tempted to also point to the role of the Spirit of God hovering over the waters as an initial sign of John’s eventual blending of Spirit with water. Yet there are several difficulties, not least of which is the question of whether **רוח אלהים** is the “spirit” or the “wind” of God. For further discussion on this point, see Robert Luyster, “Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament,” *ZAW* 93.1 (1981): 1–10.

3.2. *Fresh or Flowing Waters*

Genesis 26:17–24 describes the disputes over water rights between Isaac and the herdsmen of Gerar. This passage demonstrates one of the common usages of מַיִם חַיִּים as fresh or flowing water. This fresh, flowing water would distinguish this water from the bitter or stagnant water that Isaac's servants could have found while digging.¹⁷ Victor Matthews points to the socio-economic importance of a fresh water source for maintaining both life and position within ancient agrarian/pastoral cultures.¹⁸ Fishbane explains that “open wells repeatedly serve in biblical texts as a metonymy for sustenance and life, their stoppage signals mortal danger and death.”¹⁹ Thus, while מַיִם חַיִּים would be correctly translated “fresh,” these waters could also be considered the source or sustainers of life in their culture and thus these well waters are waters of life in a very real sense.

In other sections of the Old Testament, these מַיִם חַיִּים are the means for ritual cleansing. Examples of this usage include Lev 14:5–6, 50–53; 15:13 and Num 19:17. In these examples, “fresh water” is used to wash or sprinkle unclean bodies and restore them to a ritual state of purity. Here we see a more literal usage of the term מַיִם חַיִּים again teaming with a more metaphorical usage as bodies become spiritually clean by being made physically clean.

3.3. *God as the Fountain of Living Water*

The physical and literal usage of מַיִם חַיִּים transforms into a metaphorical usage in passages like Jer 2:13; 17:13 and Ps 36:8–10 as God is called the “fountain of living waters” (מַקְוֵי מַיִם חַיִּים) or the “fountain of life” (מַקְוֵי חַיִּים). Fishbane describes “how millennia of social life oriented around springs and wells stimulated the production of concrete metaphors of different sorts.”²⁰ As Fishbane explains,

In the biblical world view ... natural springs are ultimately the bounty of the Lord—the supernatural source of sustenance and salvation. It is therefore not surprising that this theologoumenon is also epitomized by the imagery of a well.²¹

¹⁷ Matthews points to an example of the negative outcome in cuneiform texts, noting the “disappointing case in CT 39.22.3 (*Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, London, 1896), where it was reported that ‘a well was opened and its water was bitter.’” See Victor H. Matthews, “The Wells of Gerar,” *BA* 49.2 (1986): 125.

¹⁸ See Matthews, “The Wells of Gerar,” 125.

¹⁹ Fishbane, “The Well of Living Water,” 4.

²⁰ Fishbane, “The Well of Living Water,” 5.

²¹ Fishbane, “The Well of Living Water,” 5.

Thus, in Ps 36:8–10, God’s temple provides bounty and refreshing streams and, with God, is the fountain of life. In this way, “the natural streams of earthly life” are represented metaphorically “on two planes”: “the concrete temple ... portrayed here in terms of a stream of spiritual renewal,” and “God himself who is presented as the fountain of all life and light.”²²

In a similar vein, Fishbane traces the transformation of the concrete usage of wells in Deut 6:1–13 to its metaphorical usage in Jeremiah. In Deuteronomy, Moses encourages the people to not forget the Lord who gave them cities full of good things including “hewn cisterns they did not hew.” In Jer 2:13, the people have abandoned God who is “the fountain of living water” and instead “hewed ... out cisterns, broken cisterns which cannot even hold water.” As Fishbane correctly notes the transformation is the shift from literal discussions of cisterns to “cistern imagery express[ing] apostasy. To dig new wells becomes a metaphor for misdirected spiritual labors, even as water serves as a metaphor for spiritual instruction.”²³ Further God is the only source of salvation, metaphorically described as the source of living water. Fishbane notes the “theological pun” on the similar spellings of the Hebrew word for hope (מקוה) and the Hebrew word for fountain (מקור). The hope (מקוה) of Israel is the Lord and the fountain (מקור) of life is the Lord.

The theologoumenon *מקוה ישראל* thus captures the complex belief in God as both a fount of physical sustenance and the unique source of spiritual hope. The metaphors arise from concrete reality and this continues to revitalize their ongoing applications.²⁴

This is vital to our understanding of the phrase “living water” in the Old Testament. God is not only described as the creator of water and of his people, he is also the sustainer of his people; metaphorically, He *is* the fountain of living water, language reflected in *1 En.* 96.6. His provision is both physical and spiritual, and he is Israel’s ultimate hope.

3.4. *Eschatological Living Waters*

Israel’s hope is eschatological in its nature and the metaphor of “living water” reflects this reality. Ezekiel 47 and Zechariah 14 represent two portions of Scripture that use the language of “living water” in eschatological

²² Fishbane, “The Well of Living Water,” 5.

²³ Fishbane, “The Well of Living Water,” 6.

²⁴ Fishbane, “The Well of Living Water,” 6.

terms.²⁵ Both Ezekiel 47 and Zechariah 14 are also texts brimming with inner-biblical allusion. For the purposes of this chapter, we will focus on the allusions that contribute to an overall understanding of Ezekiel and Zechariah's usage of "living water."²⁶

Ezekiel 47 refigures the language of creation in the Genesis account to offer an eschatological vision to the people of Israel. In Genesis, the waters both sustain life and are full of living creatures. In Ezekiel 47, the waters of new creation are the waters that give life to all their inhabitants, and the river that gives life to all. These waters flow from the temple and trickle down into a river that leads into the Dead Sea, giving life to all and healing to the waters, making them no longer stagnant, but teaming with life.²⁷ Many

²⁵ Fishbane points to Isa 12:3 and Joel 4:18 as other passages that use the well as "an image of eschatological promise." Fishbane, "The Well of Living Water," 5. While these passages do not reference "living water" specifically, Isa 12:3 speaks of the waters of renewal drawn from the fountain of salvation and Joel 4:18 describes all the rivers of Judah flowing with water and a spring flowing from the temple ("the house") of the Lord that will water the people. The LXX of Joel describes forgiveness flowing down from the temple (αὶ ἀφέσεις Ἰουδα), which is a substantial change from the MT, which uses the word קָנַח. The Hebrew term most commonly means "river, channel", but the LXX translator may have read the verb קָנַח, which has the additional idea of "restrain" or "hold back" using the word for "release" ἀφέσεις for the word "hold back" קָנַח. Whatever the reason for the shift, it contributes to reading Joel 4:18 as connected to the remission of sins and thus as a strongly eschatological promise.

²⁶ The inner-biblical allusions in Ezekiel and Zechariah have been discussed in much detail elsewhere. For example, Robert Hubbard points to the use of Joshua in Ezek 47. See Robert L. Hubbard, "Only a Distant Memory: Old Testament Allusions to Joshua's Days," *ExAud* 16 (2000): 138–141. Kathryn Darr notes the role of the Genesis story in Ezek 47. See Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, "The Wall around Paradise: Ezekielian Ideas About the Future," *VT* 37:3 (1987): 271–279. Tuell also points to the rivers of paradise in Ezek 47:1–12 as related to Genesis 2:10–14. See Steven Shawn Tuell, "The Rivers of Paradise: Ezekiel 47:1–12 and Genesis 2:10–14," in William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride, eds., *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 171–189. For the tradition of biblical influence in Zech, see Mark J. Boda, "Reading Between the Lines: Zechariah 11.4–16 in Its Literary Contexts," in Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd, eds., *Bringing Out the Treasure* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 277–291; Mark J. Boda and Stanley E. Porter, "Literature to the Third Degree: Prophecy in Zech 9–14 and the Passion of Christ," in Robert David-Manuel Jinbachi, ed., *Traduire La Bible Hébraïque* (Montreal: Médiaspaul, 2005), 215–254; Konrad R. Schaefer, "Zechariah 14: A Study in Allusion," *CBQ* 57:1 (1995): 66–91.

²⁷ Ezekiel 47:7–12 demonstrates this well: "Then he led me back to the bank of the river. When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. He said to me, 'This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. People will fish along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. Fruit trees of all

scholars have argued that Ezekiel's vision is Edenic and moves to, what some have called, a "radical" universalism that moves the story of salvation from the Israelite people to all the world.²⁸

For our purposes, it is important to note how the writer of Ezekiel has transformed the waters full of living creatures of Gen 1:20 and shifted the water to be the source of life coming from the original source of life: the presence of God. Here Fishbane's description of the biblical worldview where God is both physical and spiritual provider is particularly apropos. The God who created the waters and the living creatures in them now provides water that gives life and healing to all that it touches, flowing from a small trickle into a mighty river.²⁹

Zechariah 14 builds on the metaphorical re-interpretation of Ezekiel in his description of the living waters flowing from Jerusalem. As the chapter begins, the Day of the Lord is announced and cataclysmic events begin unfolding. The city is attacked leaving only a remnant, but the Lord goes into battle against the nations.³⁰ God's arrival causes drastic cosmological changes, leading to re-creation. In this new creation, Jerusalem

kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.'"

This language mirrors the language of Gen 1:21–22: So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth."

Similarly in Gen 2:8–14, we see a number of trees like Ezek 47:7–8, and "a river watering the garden" that divides in four directions, like the waters described in Ezek 47. For further discussion, see Tuell, "The Rivers of Paradise: Ezekiel 47:1–12 and Genesis 2:10–14," 171–189.

²⁸ Hubbard argues that "Ezekiel's vision leaves behind, loosens, and revises earlier, long-standing biblical practices. I suggested that these moves presuppose a theological freedom which authorized him to announce such changes." This is a debated point, however. Though Hubbard states that "this inclusivist spirit reaches its radical expression in Ezekiel's vision (Ch. 47–48)," Darr argues directly against this inclusivity by pointing to the boundaries placed on Ezekiel's paradisaical vision. See Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, "The Wall around Paradise: Ezekielian Ideas About the Future," 271–279; Hubbard, "Only a Distant Memory," 141.

²⁹ George Buchanan argues that Ezekiel's discussion of the location of the temple in relation to the waters suggest a re-evaluation of our geography of the temple is necessary, but one wonders if Ezekiel's vision is meant to be understood as literal to this degree. See George Wesley Buchanan, "Running Water at the Temple of Zion," *ExpTim* 115.9 (2004): 289–292.

³⁰ God's role as conquering warrior fits the Divine Warrior motif witnessed elsewhere in the ANE and in the Old Testament itself. For discussion of Zech 14 and the DW specifically see Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), esp. Ch. 4; Paul Nadim Tarazi, "Israel and the Nations (According to Zechariah 14)," *SVTQ* 38. 2 (1994): 183–185. For a more general

becomes a perpetual source of water for the entire land, supplying the seas to the east and west ... [Zech 14:8] envisions a flow of water from within Jerusalem that will exceed the needs of the city, running throughout the land and emptying into the Eastern Sea (Dead Sea) and the Western Sea (Mediterranean Sea) ... This image of a future era with abundant water flowing from Jerusalem is a consistent theme in apocalyptic literature (Ezek. 47:1–20; Joel 3:18), one that is drawn from the description of Eden in Genesis 2:10–14.³¹

In Zech 14:12–15, God defeats the nations and, in Zech 14:16–21, the nations come to worship God as King. Thus, while in one sense these “living waters” are literal “fresh waters,” these living waters take on mythic proportions and their arrival has eschatological import as part of the transformation of creation, leading to the final worship of God as true King over all.

3.5. Conclusion: Use of “Living Waters” in the Hebrew Bible

As we have charted the usage of water imagery, with a particular focus on the language of “living water” (חַיִּים מַיִם), throughout the Old Testament, four major patterns of usage have presented themselves. First, Genesis describes the living waters of creation, which in turn informed the apocalyptic usages of living waters in visions of re-creation. Second, Numbers and Leviticus used the literal meaning of fresh, flowing water, often associated with purification. Third, Jeremiah and Psalms provided the depiction of God as the fountain of living waters, demonstrating the Israelite hope of God as sustainer of the physical and the spiritual well-being of his people. Finally, Ezekiel and Zechariah used the language of waters of life to describe their eschatological visions, associating living waters with the renewal of the cosmos and the re-establishment of the ultimate rule of God.

review on divine warrior imagery, see Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, *God Is a Warrior* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995); Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Atlanta: SBL, 2006); Gerhard von Rad and Marva J. Dawn, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

³¹ Boda and Porter, “Literature to the Third Degree,” 525–526. Here they point to R.J. Clifford’s discussion on the cosmic mountain motif in the ANE and life-giving waters to explain 14:10 and the raising of Jerusalem. Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 51, 102, 158–160.

4. LIVING WATERS IN GREEK AND ROMAN LITERATURE

This section will move from the Old Testament vision of living water to figures in Greek and Roman literature that connect water with the giving of life. Towards this end, we will first examine the water-god Oceanus who is both creator of all life and the boundary to the underworld in Greek and Roman literature, and will then examine the association between life and waters in the Orphic mysteries, particularly in the figure of Mnemosyne.

4.1. *Oceanus as Life-Giving Water-God and Boundary with Hades*

One of the earliest beings to exist according to Greek mythology, Oceanus represented the great river that Greeks believed encircled the earth.³² Oceanus is important to the Greek understanding of water as a source of life as Oceanus represented water as a “source of life and vitality.” His daughters, the Oceanids, inhabited springs and wells and his sons were rivers running through the land that provided fresh drinking water.³³ In Hesiod’s *Theogony*, “Oceanus as parent of streams and rivers is thus distinguished from Pontus, the salt sea, producing only troublesome or terrible monsters.”³⁴ Thus, in Oceanus, we see a figure within Greek and Roman literature that associates fresh waters with life and abundance, in comparison to the giver of salt water associated with sea monsters, similar to the centrality of fresh water with life in the Old Testament tradition.

As in the Old Testament tradition, Oceanus is directly linked to a creation myth.³⁵ Within Greek mythology, Oceanus gives life not only to his progeny (via his relationship with Tethys), but to the gods as well and thus to all the world. In Homer’s *Iliad*, Oceanus is described as the god of water who is the begetter of all life.³⁶

³² This concept is present in Homer’s depiction of Oceanus. See Homer, *Iliad* 14.241.

³³ C. Scott Littleton, *Gods, Goddesses, and Mythology* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2005), 1020. See also Mark P.O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 344.

³⁴ S.A. Scull, *Greek Mythology Systematized* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1880), 128. See Hesiod, *Theogony* 131, 133, on the birth of Pontus and Oceanus, and Oceanus’s parenting of the streams and rivers in *Theogony* 337–370.

³⁵ In Homer, Oceanus is responsible for the origin of the gods. See Homer, *Iliad* 14.241. In Hesiod, Oceanus represents the second tier rather than the first tier of the Greek creation myth as one of the Titans birthed by Gaia and Uranus. See Hesiod, *Theogony* 126–131.

³⁶ In Homer, *Iliad* 14.241, Homer describes Oceanus as the one who bore all the gods. Later, Homer describes Oceanus as the bearer of all rivers, seas, fountains, and deep wells. Homer,

As within the Old Testament, the water of life has eschatological implications, in a similar way in Greek mythology, Oceanus is a figure whose waters of life also form a boundary with the waters of the afterlife. In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates places Hades at the source of all waters with Oceanus. As Socrates explains,

One of the chasms of the earth is greater than the rest, and is bored right through the whole earth; this is the one which Homer ... and many other poets have called Tartarus. For all the rivers flow together into this chasm and flow out of it again, and they have each the nature of the earth through which they flow.³⁷

Socrates describes Oceanus as chief among these rivers. Here Socrates is following a common tradition in classical Greek literature. Homer describes Oceanus as the boundary to Hades, which Odysseus must travel along.³⁸

It is important to note the differences between the Greco-Roman vision of "eschatology" and the Old Testament vision. Unlike the Old Testament eschatological vision, which depicts a corporate and universal end-time,³⁹ the Greco-Roman eschatological vision is personal in nature, dealing with the end-time of the individual as they journey to the underworld, receiving eternal bliss or some form of torment.⁴⁰ While the eschatological implications of water imagery are largely unlike the Old Testament's use of water imagery, nonetheless, in both traditions, waters associated with life are part of the overall eschatological vision of the culture, and the waters of creation and new life are juxtaposed with the waters envisioned at the end of life.

Iliad 21.235–236. Gottlieb discusses the significance of this depiction for Greek philosophy. See Anthony Gottlieb, *The Dream of Reason: A History of Western Philosophy from the Greeks to the Renaissance* (New York: Norton, 2000), 6.

³⁷ Cited by Howard Rollin Patch, *The Other World according to Descriptions in Medieval Literature* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), 20.

³⁸ See Homer, *Odyssey* 11.13–23.

³⁹ In his work, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, Gowan argues that "Old Testament eschatology emphasizes human society more than personal salvation." See Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 122. Yet, how one should describe the "eschatological" vision of the Old Testament is a point of contention among Old Testament scholars. Boda provides a helpful introduction to many of these complicated issues in his article. See Mark J. Boda, "Figuring the Future: The Prophets and Messiah," in Stanley E. Porter, ed., *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* (McMaster New Testament Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 35–74.

⁴⁰ Stilwell provides a history of beliefs regarding the afterlife in Ancient Greece, pointing to the determinism of the afterlife based on behaviour. Stilwell's work provides a helpful survey of much of primary literary texts concerning this issue. See Gary A. Stilwell, *Afterlife: Post-Mortem Judgements in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2005).

4.2. *Mnemosyne and Waters of Life and Memory*

Other elements of Greco-Roman tradition also point to water imagery in relationship to life. In the book *Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, Alexiou argues that it is common in the tradition of Greek lament to associate thirst with death and thus water with life.⁴¹ They point to an inscription from the fourth century BCE that details the journey of a dead man in the underworld.⁴² In the inscription the man is encouraged to drink from the Lake of Mnemosyne (the Lake of Memory) with cool waters flowing from it to relieve his thirst. By drinking from this lake, the man receives immortal life through the recollection of his memory. Thus, the water from the Lake of Mnemosyne is the water that gives life within the Orphic tradition represented here.

This Orphic tradition is further discussed by Guthrie, who also associates the “water of life” with the Orphic spring of Mnemosyne. As Guthrie notes, Mnemosyne is the way to a life of endless bliss, whereas Lethe is the water of forgetfulness given to those with impure souls in Plato’s *Republic*.⁴³ Mnemosyne stands in direct contrast to Lethe. Mnemosyne is water that provides life, memory, and healing, while Lethe is a spring that produces forgetfulness, loss, and chaos. “It makes dry, gives no satisfaction, will not become a life-giving source to any organism. Those who drink of Lethe starve as they long for water.”⁴⁴ McEvilley suggests that:

The Springs of Lethe and Mnemosyne may relate to the Mesopotamian Water of Life and Water of Death that appear in the myth of Adapa. To drink from the Spring of Lethe is to descend into another body, which to the Orphic is death; to drink the Spring of Memory ensures immortal life, as does the Water of Life in the Akkadian myth.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (rev. Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos; Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 202–205.

⁴² The specific document is from the fourth century BC, an inscription, for which see O. Kern, *Orphicorum fragmentum* (Berlin: BGU, 1922), 32a.

⁴³ W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston: Beacon, 1985), 230. Guthrie also describes the importance of this plate in *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, 171–177. See Plato’s *Republic* 10.621a.

⁴⁴ Charles E. Scott provides this description of Lethe, building on Plato’s description in the *Republic*. See Charles E. Scott, “Mnemosyne and Lethe: Memory, Jung, and Phenomenology,” in Roger Brooke, ed., *Pathways into the Jungian World: Phenomenology and Analytical Psychology* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 143.

⁴⁵ Thomas McEvilley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies* (New York: Allworth, 2002), 154 n. 193. Concerning the myth of Adapa, McEvilley cites *ANET*, 101.

It may be the case that this link between the Greco-Roman tradition of Lethe and Mnemosyne and the ANE traditions of the Water of Life and the Water of Death may also prove to be a link between the recurrent themes that overlap between Old Testament water imagery of “living waters” and Greco-Roman literature.⁴⁶

4.3. *Conclusions: Water of Life in Greek and Roman Literature*

While the use of “living waters” and “water of life” as phrases are not as direct in Greek and Roman literature, the theme of water as a life-giving force is no less prevalent in Greco-Roman thought. In the figure of Oceanus, water is associated with the begetting of all life and thus with the theme of creation. Further, Oceanus is contrasted with Pontus who produces chaotic waters filled with monsters. The story of Oceanus also points to the Greco-Roman personal eschatological vision as Oceanus stands as the boundary to the afterlife. In a similar vein, the spring of Mnemosyne represents a way to eternal life through the recollection of memory, in contrast to the spring of Lethe, which is the way to a form of death and chaos, echoing the water of life and the water of death in other traditions. This personalized view of the afterlife and its association with the “waters of life” will have further implications on the writings of the second temple period as we will see below.

5. LIVING WATERS IN THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD

Moving from the Old Testament context directly into the New Testament context is often a smoother transition when one considers the writings happening between these two periods and into the New Testament period. Any study of the theme “living waters” will find this particularly helpful as it suggests some of the ways these metaphors were understood and related to one another as they shifted from one context to another historically. For this reason, we will briefly explore the major uses of living water imagery especially as it relates to the four types of water language used in the Old Testament and the types of water language used in the Greek and Roman literature discussed above. This section will address the shift from

⁴⁶ Much work has been done in the relationship between ANE texts and the Old Testament. Gunkel is one of the most prominent scholars using this approach, but many others have followed in his footsteps.

the Hebrew text to the LXX, the Hebrew *Chaoskampf* tradition in relation to water imagery, the use of “living waters” in *1 Enoch*, and the use of “living waters” in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

5.1. *Living Waters from Hebrew to Greek and Aramaic*

Many scholars have discussed the importance of the shift from the Hebrew Scriptures to the LXX in terms of its impact on messianism and on interpretation. Some scholars have argued that the LXX demonstrates increasing messianism in its translations into the Greek; others have argued that such translations may increase the possibility of messianic interpretations by the New Testament authors, but were not messianic in themselves.⁴⁷

Whether or not translation to the LXX made the text more messianic, it certainly made important changes in the way these biblical texts would be understood by their readers. This is the case with the translation of the Hebrew phrase מים חיים. Almost all of these usages of מים חיים are translated in the LXX as some use of ὕδωρ ζῶν. While in the original Hebrew, these passages represent a literal meaning of the term מים חיים rather than a metaphorical one, this word-for-word translation into the Greek causes a transition to take place in this term. This comes from the difference between the range of meaning for מים חיים and the range of meaning for ζῶν in Greek. While מים חיים can mean “fresh or flowing,” ζῶν only means “to be alive, to live, life” on the one hand or “to come back to life, to live again, to be resurrected, resurrection” on the other.⁴⁸ Thus, in many cases the literal usage of this term in Hebrew would not be understood as literal in the Greek. This is essential to understanding the metaphorical usage of the term as it develops in the Second Temple period, for those predominantly using the LXX as their Scriptures such a metaphorical shift would contribute to an overall metaphorical understanding of the phrase.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ For excellent surveys into some of the major issues in this area, see Michael A Knibb, in *The Septuagint and Messianism* (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006); J. Lust and K. Hauspie, *Messianism and the Septuagint: Collected Essays* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004).

⁴⁸ Louw and Nida, 23.88 ζῶν, ζωή, ἦς; 23.93 ζῶν.

⁴⁹ The Targums reflect a similar shift in their Aramaic texts, which translate all the usages of מים חיים mentioned in this chapter as simply מבויע meaning “spring of water.” Unlike the shift from Hebrew to Greek, which emphasizes the “living” aspect of the waters, the Targumic shift appears to emphasize a more literal or, at the very least, a more universalized meaning.

5.2. *The Chaoskampf Tradition and Water Imagery*

Any discussion of water imagery that interacts with either the Second Temple period or the apocalyptic genre must discuss the *Chaoskampf* mythology of the ANE and its influence of the Old Testament and its continued influence upon both the New Testament and other writings in the Second Temple period. Andrew Angel provides a helpful definition of this *Chaoskampf* tradition:

The *Chaoskampf* is the battle of the warrior god with the monstrous forces of chaos. The research has demonstrated that a form of the ANE *Chaoskampf* mythology is present in the Old Testament. It depicts Yahweh (and/or El and/or Elohim) in the imagery of the god of the storm (e.g. Ps 18:8–16). He defeats the forces of chaos in battle—a battle often referred to as the *Chaoskampf*. The forces of chaos are sometimes personified as chaos waters and at other times as monsters ... The monsters and chaos waters are generally depicted as enemies of the Divine Warrior (DW), Yahweh. The DW comes in the storm and conquers his enemies. As a demonstration of his power over the forces of chaos, the DW is enthroned above the flood (e.g. Ps. 29:10).⁵⁰

These chaos waters are referred to as the sea (Nah 1:4; Hab 3:15), the river (Ps 93:3; Hab 3:8), many waters (Isa 17:12–13; Hab 3:15) or by use of a parallel pair using two of the sea, rivers, and waters.

Angel argues that the Hebrew *Chaoskampf* tradition is present throughout the period from 515 BCE to 200 CE with varying degrees of importance in different types of literature ranging from Qumran texts, Pseudepigraphal Psalms, prayers, wisdom literature, apocalyptic literature, gospels, testaments, and Jewish historiography from this period.⁵¹ Thus, the question often becomes: how do we identify when a later writer is using this *Chaoskampf* tradition in their use of water imagery and when they are making allusions to biblical texts with positive water imagery? Further, as we shall see below, there appears to be an intertwining in Revelation of the *Chaoskampf* tradition and the positive images of “living waters” from the Old Testament for theological purposes.

One should also note the impact of Hellenism on the *Chaoskampf* tradition. It is not surprising to find that many of Angel’s examples have an overlap with the visions of chaos in opposition to the waters of life in Greek

⁵⁰ See Andrew R. Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man: The Hebrew Chaoskampf Tradition in the Period 515 BCE to 200 CE* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 1.

⁵¹ Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man*, 1.

and Roman thought. As noted above both the waters of Oceanus and the waters of Mnemosyne represent the waters of peace and order in contrast to the chaotic waters of Pontus and Lethe. The waters of Pontus further procreate sea monsters that threaten at various times to devour the heroes of Greek and Roman myths.⁵² One might suggest, in fact, that Angel's thesis concerning a "living HCT" (Hebrew *Chaoskampf* Tradition), may be further deepened by a careful analysis of the role played by the inclusion of Hellenism in the Jewish mindset of the period and its impact on the HCT. Such a study is outside the purview of our task, but would be fruitful in another venue nonetheless.⁵³ For our purposes, it is helpful to note that such an overlap between strictly Jewish traditions and Hellenistic traditions is found not only in the other texts of the Second Temple period, but, as we shall see below, figures prominently in the New Testament as well.

5.3. *Water(s) of Life in 1 Enoch*

Charles Darwin Wright notes that the same cosmology we see in Greek literature surrounding Oceanus and the underworld occurs in apocryphal writings such as *1 Enoch*.⁵⁴ Wright argues that in *1 En.* 17.6–8 as "the seer traces his itinerary to the ends of the earth and to Sheol," he encounters the place where "the waters of all seas flow."⁵⁵ Wright believes this is reminiscent of the tradition of the underworld associated with Oceanus.

In *1 Enoch* 17, we see the interweaving of two types of eschatological visions: the Old Testament and Greco-Roman. The seer is journeying to Sheol, similar to the journey of the dead man to the underworld in the Orphic religions, yet in *1 Enoch* this vision is further compounded by the corporate and universal quality of vision, mirroring Old Testament eschatological thought. Coblenz Bautch argues, that the vision of *1 Enoch* 17–19 is characteristic of a "Jewish apocalypse," pointing to the elements of "mediation, eschatology, temporality, and spatiality" that are consistent

⁵² Odysseus and Jason are two such heroes who encounter the progeny of Pontus in the forms of Scylla and Charybdis. See Homer, *Odyssey* Book 12 and Ovid, *Heroides* Book 12.

⁵³ Stovell provides such a critique of Angel's work. See Stovell, review of Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man*, *JHS* 9 (2009). Online: http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/reviews/reviews_new/review401.htm.

⁵⁴ Charles Darwin Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 128.

⁵⁵ Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*, 128.

with other Jewish apocalypses.⁵⁶ In fact, Coblentz Bautch points to the Book of Watchers as “quite possibly the oldest of all the Jewish apocalypses.”⁵⁷ Coblentz Bautch also argues that *1Enoch* 17–19’s description of the water of life is dependent on Hellenistic sources. Specifically, it reflects a use of a tradition surrounding Alexander the Great in the Hellenistic period.⁵⁸ Coblentz Bautch explains that Pseudo-Callisthenes tells of Alexander’s quest for the water of life in the land of darkness in his quest for immortality.⁵⁹

Like Coblentz Bautch, Tronier argues for Hellenistic influence in the Enochic tradition. Tronier states that

the precondition for the rationality of the apocalyptic world of ideas that we find in the Enoch tradition lies in the development of particular ideas of transcendence and knowledge in the Hellenistic period that we find reflected in the epistemology of Hellenistic philosophical ideals as well.⁶⁰

Tronier argues that the two levels of “dualistically divided cosmic space” present in the eschatology of *1Enoch* is preconditioned by the philosophical divisions present in Hellenistic thought.⁶¹ Thus, not only the imagistic repertoire of *1Enoch* has been influenced by the impact of Hellenism on Jewish thought, but the dualistic expression of this imagery is further shaped by Hellenistic philosophy. These mutually informing traditions further influence the use of imagery in the Johannine corpus as *1Enoch* itself appears to either be a source or to share much of the same mixed imagery (see discussion below).

5.4. *Living Waters and Qumran*

Scholars have debated the influence of Qumran on John’s writing for many years. Some have suggested that John was a member of the Qumran community because of his use of symbolism, particularly his seeming dualism,

⁵⁶ Kelley Coblentz Bautch, *A Study of the Geography of 1Enoch 17–19: “No One Has Seen What I Have Seen”* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 27.

⁵⁷ Bautch, *A Study of the Geography of 1Enoch 17–19*, 28. Here Bautch follows Collins in this designation. See John Joseph Collins, “The Jewish Apocalypses,” in John J. Collins, ed., *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 37.

⁵⁸ Bautch, *A Study of the Geography of 1Enoch 17–19*, 76.

⁵⁹ See Pseudo-Callisthenes, *Romance of Alexander the Great* 3.26, 16.

⁶⁰ Henrik Tronier, “The Corinthian Correspondence between Philosophical Idealism and Apocalypticism,” in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 165–196 (180).

⁶¹ Tronier, “The Corinthian Correspondence,” 178.

which shares a good deal of resonance with the dualistic quality of Qumran sectarianism.⁶² Yet one need not hold this position to acknowledge similarities between Qumran and the Johannine corpus. As in the Johannine corpus, the community at Qumran draws from the Old Testament's use of water imagery frequently. In terms of the Hebrew *Chaoskampf* tradition, for example, Angel argues that this motif is present frequently in Qumran documents.⁶³ Similarly, the concept of "living waters" was taken up by the Qumran community in several of the uses that we have noted were originally present in the Old Testament.

The *Damascus Document* contains references to מים חיים in XIX, 34. Similar to Jeremiah's use of "living waters," column 19 speaks of those who have rejected God, breaking covenant with him.⁶⁴ Because they have chosen to turn away from the "fountain of living water"—that is, they have rejected their God—God rejects them. This same theme is picked up by the *Words of the Luminaries* to describe those who have rejected God as those who have "abandoned the fount of living water." The land of these people will be made a wasteland (4Q504 fi ii, Rv 1–5). As in the Old Testament, those who follow God receive his blessings as the fount of living water, but those who reject him receive dire consequences.

In the *Rule of the Blessings* (1QSb), the writer speaks a blessing over the people, praying for the Lord to throw open an "everlasting fount from heaven" (1QSb I, 4), "an eternal font" and asking that he may "never withhold living water from the thirsty" (1QSb I, 5). Thus, blessing is equated with flowing waters from God that are eternal and living.⁶⁵ In the *Thanksgiving Hymns*, a similar pattern emerges; the living waters are teamed with a series of fountain/spring/well references. The Teacher of Righteousness

⁶² Smalley provides a helpful introduction into the various possible sources for John including Qumran in his book. See Smalley's introduction to *John*.

⁶³ Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man*, 37–73.

⁶⁴ "So there is one fate for everyone who rejects the commandments of God and abandons them to follow their own wilful heart. So it is with all the men who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus, but then turned back and traitorously turned away from the *fountain of living water*. They shall not be reckoned among the council of the people, and their names shall not be written in their book from the day." (CD XIX, 32–35, emphasis mine). Martin G. Abegg et al., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999).

⁶⁵ Fishbane points to the well that acts as a "metaphorical vehicle for transcendent sources of divine blessing, in the Rule of the Community, where the well/fountain is 'also hypostasized and projects as a heavenly fount in the cosmological account of the Two Ways': the way of evil 'the reservoir of darkness' and the way of truth 'the spring of light.'" Fishbane, "The Well of Living Water," 8.

thanks the Lord for setting him “by a fountain (כמקור) that flows in a dry land, a spring of water (ומבוט מים) in a desolate land” (1QH^a XVI, 5).⁶⁶ Trees of life sprout up around the spring, taking root with trunks open “to the living water and become an eternal fountain” (1QH^a XVI, 8–9). This fountain is hidden from enemies and God protects it so that “none may come to the fountain of life” (1QH^a XVI, 13). Finally, water imagery is essential to the purification rites of Qumran practices. Thus, it is not surprising to see “living waters” in a passage regarding cleansing and teamed with a reference to Leviticus in *Instruction* (4Q418 f103 ii, 1–6).

Thus, the Qumran community joins elements of various Old Testament metaphors of living water, springs, wells, and fountains, to convey the blessing, judgement, and cleansing of the Lord.⁶⁷ Fishbane notes that the Qumran community is influenced by the “physical fact” of their location, “set near a desert oasis and nourished by living springs and mountain torrents” and this is set up in parallel with the “teacher’s own identification with the group, which he enlivens by the stream of spiritual water that flows through him.”⁶⁸

5.5. Conclusion: Water of Life in Second Temple Period

The rise of eschatology in the second temple period is a matter of great debate. Joachim Schaper has argued that the eschatology of Greek Psalter represents a shift from a vision without a personal afterlife to the inclusion of a personal afterlife at the 2nd century BC.⁶⁹ Other scholars have followed suite, seeing the LXX as containing adaptations that include the personalized elements of the Hellenic view of the afterlife combined with the universal

⁶⁶ This usage of water imagery in relationship to a wise teacher is also found in Prov 10:11; 13:14; 16:22; 18:4; Sir 15:3; 24:21; Wis 7:25; and Bar 3:12 (cf. 1QH^a IV, 11; 1 En 48:1; 49:1; Tg. Isa. 12:3 and 55:1). See Dale C. Allison, Jr., “The Living Water (John 4:10–14, 6:35c, 7:37–39),” *SVTQ* 30.2 (1986): 144.

⁶⁷ While each of these possibilities of interpretation is available in Qumran literature, it is not the case that *all* of these interpretations of the term would be used simultaneously. We do get more of an overlap of meaning or one might say a fuller range of meaning is included, but not all of these meanings would be understood *simultaneously* in any passage.

⁶⁸ Fishbane, “The Well of Living Water,” 9. These are not the only usages of water imagery during the period, but as this chapter’s goal is to follow “living waters,” some of the other uses of water imagery have been downplayed. For example, within Rabbinic circles and the Qumran community as well as other writers in the second temple period, the Torah was often associated with waters of wisdom or knowledge. Examples include Sir 24:23–29; CD III, 16; VI, 4–11; XIX, 34; *m. ’Abot*. 1:11; *B. Qam*. 17a; *b. Ta’an 7a*; *Tg. Cant*. 5:15. For more on this topic, see Allison, “The Living Water (John 4:10–14, 6:35c, 7:37–39),” 145.

⁶⁹ Joachim Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [P. Siebeck], 1995), 47.

and communal view of the Old Testament. Thus, changes in language can reflect the influence of the Hellenistic mindset on the writings of Judaism.⁷⁰ The developing *Chaoskampf* tradition and the water imagery in *1 Enoch* also reflect the influence of Hellenism on the traditional Jewish water symbolism pictured in the Old Testament. Qumran remains faithful to essential elements of Jewish metaphors surrounding water, yet the Qumran community also appears to rework these traditions to fit their own community's needs.

6. THE JOHANNINE CORPUS AND THE USE OF LIVING WATERS

From this study in the Old Testament, in Greek and Roman literature, and in the Second Temple period, several themes connected to living waters have emerged. First, living waters can include the idea of creation and thus re-creation. Second, the living/fresh waters represent a means of purification. Third, the water of life may include a recollection of one's true identity. Fourth, God himself is the true fountain of living water by providing both physical and spiritual sustenance. Fifth, the living waters have eschatological significance in two directions. On the one hand, these living waters are vital to the portrait of God as Divine Warrior, defeating the enemy and re-establishing his rightful rule through the re-creation of the cosmos. On the other, these waters of life have personal significance for the one who partakes, leading them to the afterlife. Sixth, at times the ANE tradition of *Chaoskampf* uses water imagery that can be confused with or can overlap with other types of water imagery.

As these themes moved into the Second Temple period, many of their aspects began to overlap; purity and obedience were hand-in-hand, and the teacher of the community himself becomes a fountain of living water.⁷¹ These elements of interpretation and re-interpretation of Old Testament metaphors play a vital role in understanding the metaphor(s) of "living

⁷⁰ One must, of course, be careful to avoid the fallacy of assuming that the range of a word implies something about the structure of thought of that culture, which Barr questions. See James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 8–21. Yet one can avoid this fallacy by not only examining the use of language, but also looking at the broader descriptions of the afterlife in both cultures, in this case. Thus, one can examine the history of development of thoughts and its impact on language rather than simply making fallacious linguistic arguments as a means to cultural ideas.

⁷¹ Fishbane discusses this in more detail than we have available in this chapter. See Fishbane, "The Well of Living Water," 8–11.

water” and “waters of life” in the Johannine corpus with its complex metaphorical structure. As this section looks first at the Gospel of John and then at Revelation, we will use our findings thus far as a lens for interpreting John’s use of “living water/water of life” imagery. We will focus on the way John layers these diverse Old Testament metaphors on top of one another, influenced by Hellenistic Judaism. In this way, John has given these metaphors a christological and pneumatological focus that resonates with the Old Testament language of creation, cleansing, and eschatological hope.

7. THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

7.1. *John 4: Sustenance, Cleansing, and Eschatological Hope*

Readings of John 4 abound from theological and historical grammatical to deconstructionist and feminist.⁷² Set in the “type-scene” similar to Genesis 26,⁷³ John 4 provides a discourse between Jesus and a Samaritan woman concerning “living water.” The meaning of this phrase has generated great debate, particularly in relation to John 7 and its use of “living water.”⁷⁴ This

⁷² Among the scholars who have taken on this verse, see Allison, “The Living Water (John 4:10–14, 6:35c, 7:37–39),” 143–157; Stephen D. Moore, “Are There Impurities in the Living Water That the Johannine Jesus Dispenses? Deconstruction, Feminism, and the Samaritan Woman,” *BibInt* 1. 2 (1993): 208–227 and several of the essays in Joel B. Green, ed., *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 265–273, 318–324, 353–367. See also Ellen B. Aitken, “At the Well of Living Water: Jacob’s Well in John 4,” in Craig A. Evans, ed., *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 342–352.

⁷³ In Genesis 26, Abraham’s servants find Rebecca at the well and she becomes the wife of Isaac. Origen compares John 4 to the Genesis 26 in his *Commentarii in Johannes* (253:31–254:8). Aitken notes the important discussion on this topic in Jean-Michel Pöf-fet, *La Méthode Exégétique d’Héracléon et D’Origène: Commentateurs De Jn 4—Jésus, La Samaritaine et Le Samaritains* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1985), 215. See Aitken, “At the Well of Living Water,” 344. The literary *topos* of the “type scene” is described by Robert Alter in *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 50–58.

⁷⁴ See Allison, “The Living Water (John 4:10–14, 6:35c, 7:37–39),” 143–157; Vicky Balabanski, “Let Anyone Who Is Thirsty Come to Me’: John 7:37–38 in Dialogue with Josephus and the Archaeology of Aqueducts,” *Lutheran Theological Journal* 39 (2005): 132–139; Juan B. Cortas, “Yet Another Look at Jn 7:37–38,” *CBQ* 29.1 (1967): 75–86; Gordon D. Fee, “Once More—John 7:37–39,” *ExpTim* 89. 4 (1978): 116–118; Zane Clark Hodges, “Rivers of Living Water: John 7:37–39,” *BSac* 136.543 (1979): 239–248; Moore, “Are There Impurities in the Living Water That the Johannine Jesus Dispenses?,” 208–227.

chapter suggests that the confusion may be in some ways dispelled if we do not try to find *one* source for Jesus' usage⁷⁵ of "living waters," and instead explore how John might be intertwining several of the Old Testament uses of the term, and their transformations influenced by Hellenism, for increased effect. First, John plays on the confusion between literal and metaphorical meanings of living water. In v. 10 Jesus offers the woman "living water" and she appears understand his reference to water as "flowing/fresh water."

In v. 14, Jesus explains the metaphorical nature of this water to the woman in two ways: the water will remove all thirst, and the water springs up to eternal life from a fountain within the one who drinks it. Here we see a combination of two of the Old Testament metaphorical usages of "living waters." The water provides spiritual sustenance to the drinker similar to the sustenance found in God as the fountain in Jeremiah and Psalms, and this water is also located *within* the drinker. This shift to waters flowing from the believer resonates with the developments in the Second Temple usage of this same water imagery. The gainer of knowledge becomes the source of water through God. It is not surprising then that we see the Samaritan woman teach others (vv. 29, 39–42), thus becoming a "teacher of righteousness" herself in a sense.⁷⁶

But the author of the Fourth Evangelist does not stop there. Besides combining the three uses of "living waters" in the Old Testament demonstrated above, he also includes the element of cleansing and the eschatological portent of this living water. In vv. 16–18, the "living water" becomes the vehicle for purity in the Samaritan woman. She asks for the water and receives it through an act of spiritual cleansing, as Jesus identifies her sin. In v. 23, Jesus explains that an hour is coming⁷⁷ when all worshippers will worship in spirit

⁷⁵ To describe the usage of these phrases as "Jesus'" rather than the author of the Fourth Gospel is meant to be a literary convention for discussing discourse and not a suggestion about the relative historical validity of this speech as Jesus' own words. For the sake of this chapter, we will discuss Jesus as a character within the discourse (thus, one might say "Jesus' speech"), but also be aware of John's patterns of exegesis and metaphorical intermingling. Describing Jesus as a "character" is not intended to deny him historical status, merely intended to distance us from a discussion of the reliability of word-for-word correspondence with Jesus' actual words.

⁷⁶ Feminist scholars have pointed to the intelligent discourse that the woman has with Jesus, noting the debating style of questioning, and have emphasized the role of the woman as the first missionary to the Samaritans. Sandra Schneiders provides a helpful introduction to feminist hermeneutics using John 4 as her example. See Sandra Schneiders, "Feminist Hermeneutics," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, 349–369.

⁷⁷ The author of the Fourth Gospel often uses the idea of "the hour," which resonates with the language of "the Day of the Lord" in prophetic and apocalyptic writings. As Craig

and in truth. This eschatological vision parallels the nations bowing before the Lord in Zechariah 14.⁷⁸ Water flows from Jerusalem to all the world (“salvation is from the Jews” John 4:22) and all true worshippers will worship together.

7.2. *John 7: Rivers of Living Water*

John 7:37–39 is highly contested passage with two traditions of interpretation divided among the Eastern and Western church.⁷⁹ In an attempt to

Morrison argues, “in the Gospel of John, the ‘hour’ becomes a theological *leitmotif* that encapsulates Jesus’ passion, his glorification, and human redemption.” Morrison compares John’s “hour” to the “hour of distress” in the *Tg. Neof.*, but one might also note that this targum is translating the “day of distress” and thus we can see a shift between “day” and “hour” from one context to another. See Craig E. Morrison, “The ‘Hour of Distress’ in Targum Neofiti and the ‘Hour’ in the Gospel of John,” *CBQ* 67.4 (2005): 590.

⁷⁸ Allison argues strongly that the primary way of interpreting the “living water” in John is through an eschatological lens. He points to several parallels including Ezekiel 47, the Edenic passages in Genesis, and Zechariah 13 and 14. Allison uses Revelation as a means of demonstrating parallels with John that will play a part in our discussion of Revelation below. See Allison, “The Living Water (John 4:10–14, 6:35c, 7:37–39),” 143–157.

While Allison’s argument is strong, the goal of this is to show how the eschatological use of the metaphor of living waters that Allison suggests is incorporated with other metaphorical usages of this phrase to contribute to a larger vision of the metaphor as a whole.

⁷⁹ The debate on this passage surrounds the use of punctuation, the antecedent of ἀὐτοῦ, and the source of the Scripture allusion. The passage may read either “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. The one who believes in me, just as the Scripture says, ‘From within him will flow rivers of living water’” or “let the one who believes in me drink. Just as the Scripture says, ‘From within him will flow rivers of living water’” (NET translations). The first of the two translations describes the believer as the source of living water while the second describes Jesus as this source. Those who understand the believer as the source of living waters point to the role of the Holy Spirit within them as the key. As Morris explains, “When the believer comes to Christ and drinks he not only slakes his thirst but receives such an abundant supply that veritable rivers flow from him.” See Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 425–426. The first of these two translations is often described as the “Eastern interpretation” was originally supported by Origen, Athanasius, and the Greek Fathers. Modern supporters include Barrett, Behm, Bernard, Cadman, Carson, R.H. Lightfoot, Lindars, Michaelis, Morris, Odeburg, Schlatter, Schweizer, C.H. Turner, Westcott, and Zahn and is represented in the KJV, RSV, NASB, NA²⁷ and USB⁴.

The “Western interpretation” is also sometimes called the “christological interpretation,” which makes Jesus the source of the living water. Modern scholars who adhere to this view include Abbott, Beasley-Murray, Bishop, Boismar, Bullinger, Bultmann, Burney, Dodd, Dunn, Guilding, R. Harris, Hoskyns, Jeremias, Lousiy, D.M. Stanley, Thusing, N. Turner, and Zerwick. The NEB and the NET also use this translation.

D.A. Carson provides a thorough description of the major exegetical issues surrounding the translation of this difficult passage, siding himself with the Eastern interpretation. See D.A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 322–329. I am also

provide metaphorical clarity, but to avoid the intricacies of this very detailed debate, this section will focus on possible allusions for John's use of "living water" based on our previous findings. On the one hand, if Jesus is the source of living water and is encouraging his listeners to drink from him, then John is most likely describing Jesus as a divine figure equated with God who is the fountain of living water (as in Psalms and Jeremiah). In this case, Jesus is also the source of the Spirit (v. 39).

It is also possible to see John stacking the metaphorical uses of living water again if the believer becomes the source of living water. John is taking the literal meaning of living water, as fresh water, and describing thirst being quenched, but this thirst is actually spiritual and thus the metaphorical meaning is understood. As we noted above, God is always the primary giver of life both spiritual and physical and this concept is present, for Jesus said "come to me." In coming to him, the believer receives the Spirit, often linked to water imagery, and the Spirit makes waters flow from within him. This concept of the individual becoming the conduit for the living waters is already present in both the Second Temple uses of "living water" and in John 4:14. Here we see reflected again the influence of Hellenistic personal eschatology on the Jewish mindset. Thus, whether the believer or Jesus is the source of the living water, John's method of metaphorical layering is equally present and equally pneumatological in its focus.⁸⁰

8. JOHN'S APOCALYPSE: REVELATION

The book of Revelation represents a culmination of John's metaphorical layering. Throughout the book, allusion is stacked upon allusion in a dizzying spectacle of imagistic intensification.⁸¹ As we examine the usage of water imagery in John's Apocalypse, we will begin with a passage that does not

indebted to the NET Notes included in Accordance for a helpful description of these issues. See The NET Bible, First Edition Notes, version 3.0, entry "John 7:38, 103".

⁸⁰ With more time allotted another section could be added discussing the connections in the Old Testament and in Second Temple Judaism between the Spirit and water. For more discussion see Allison, "The Living Water (John 4:10–14, 6:35c, 7:37–39)," 143–157, who makes these connections clearer.

⁸¹ To a certain degree this is expected of the apocalyptic genre, yet at the same time John is also providing a new eschatological vision. For example, Colin Gunton points to the power of the metaphor of victory in Rev to express theological truth about atonement in an important way. See Colin E. Gunton, "Christus Victor Revisited: A Study in Metaphor and the Transformation of Meaning," *JTS* 36.1 (1985): 129–145.

contain the language of “living water” per se, but contains a description of the sea that includes living creatures (Rev 4). Next we will address passages that specifically use of the language of “water of life” (Rev 7, 21, 22) and identify a different strand of usage of water imagery.

8.1. *Revelation 4: “Around the Glassy Sea”*⁸²

Revelation 4 is often described as a hymn of thanksgiving to God in which metaphor is used to describe God’s sovereignty.⁸³ The “sea of glass, clear as crystal” surrounding the throne of God has caused difficulty in interpretation because of the *Chaoskampf* tradition and its influence of the vision of the sea in other parts of Revelation. The problem lies in deciding whether the sea in Rev 4:6 should be interpreted in light of the sea as chaos waters in Revelation 12–13 or in light of the crystalline or glass quality of the sea as a positive feature.⁸⁴ Beale suggests that we need not decide between

⁸² This is a line from “Holy, Holy, Holy” written by Reginald Heber, 1862, which speaks of Rev 4 in this way:

“Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.”

⁸³ Robert Wall describes this passage as a “form of epistolary thanksgivings” whose goal is to “express in praise the author’s essential theological commitments.” In the case of Rev 4, importance is “given to God as the ruler over all creation (4:9). Formal praise is offered by the heavenly congregation (4:8, 11) that surrounds God’s throne in eternal worship.” Concerning John’s use of metaphor, Wall provides an interesting comment that “in Revelation, metaphor is always evocative, but it also carries within it some indication of the ‘real world.’ In a sense, John intends to declare his essential understanding of reality that all of life is ruled over by a sovereign creator, the God of Jesus Christ and his disciples.” Robert W. Wall, *Revelation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 90–91.

⁸⁴ Wall identifies the conflicting interpretations of this image, suggesting that the sea as “another symbol of God’s reign.” Wall argues that the sea is part of the “old order” rather than the new creation and is a “location of evil” referencing the Exodus narrative and the final section of Rev where there is no sea as an indication of “God’s plan” for the old order. Wall, *Revelation*, 94; Angel does not identify Rev 4 in connection to the Hebrew *Chaoskampf* tradition, but does connect Rev 12, 13, and 20. See Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man*, 139–148. Keener argues that this sea should not be seen as “a symbol of subdued cosmic evil” but instead “reflects the sapphire that was ‘clear’ in God’s revelation to Israel at Sinai (Ex. 24:10), but especially the crystalline, heavenly expanse beneath God’s throne and above the throne angels in Eze 1:22.” Keener links this with the New Jerusalem, “clear enough for God’s great glory to shine through.” See Craig S. Keener, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 173–174. Keener follows Michaels in this position, See J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 92–93. Caird holds an opposing position, arguing that the sea is a vision of disorder, which is the one image that is out of place in Rev 4, See G.B. Caird, A

the two, rather John may intentionally be using the image of the sea in two directions. Beale concludes that John uses similar imagery as Psalm 28, which uses the sea both as part of the heavenly court (Ps 28:2–3) and “concludes with an eschatological reference using the same imagery in direct connection to God’s glory in the temple” (Ps 28:9–10). Thus, Beale asserts that this “supports both an identification of the sea as the laver in the heavenly temple and the sea as the place of satanic evil.”⁸⁵ If Beale’s conclusions are right, then John appears to be weaving together more than one metaphorical meaning for the “sea of glass.” This would be similar to the eschatological view of living waters that we have identified in Zechariah 14 and Ezekiel 47 and the *Chaoskampf* tradition, and also similar to the cleansing use of water demonstrated in Leviticus and Numbers and later, in a more metaphorical sense, in the Qumran community.

8.2. Revelation 7: The Throne of God and the Living Waters

Revelation 7 moves from a cosmological setting (vv. 1–8) to the throne room of God. The eschatological vision described in Ezekiel 47 and Zechariah 14 are now realized in Revelation 7: the peoples of Israel are there and all the nations bow before God and worship him (vv. 9–15).⁸⁶ Verses 16–18 provide three uses of water imagery. First, thirst will be satisfied (v. 16). Second, this satisfaction comes from Lamb’s leading of the people to the “spring of living water” (ζωῆς πηγᾶς ὑδάτων) (v. 17).⁸⁷ Finally, tears will be wiped from their faces (v. 18).⁸⁸ Here John interweaves the eschatological hope connected

Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine (London: Black, 1966), 65–68. Others who hold the sea in Revelation 4 represents cosmic evil include Carrington and Mullholland. Sweet provides a helpful summary of the interpretative options. See J.P.M. Sweet, *Revelation* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 119.

⁸⁵ G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 328. Beale cites Snyder’s work, which “explains the Psalm 29 [LXX] flood imagery against the ancient Near Eastern background of the sea representing the evil dragon.” See B.W. Snyder, “Combat Myth in the Apocalypse: The Liturgy of the Day of the Lord and the Dedication of the Heavenly Temple” (Ph.D. diss., Graduate Theological Union and University of California, 1991), 166–168.

⁸⁶ Beale links Rev 7:9–17 with Zech 14 through the *Tg. Ps.-J.* Zech 14, which adds springs of waters at the end time (v. 8), inhabitants of the earth serving the Lord (v. 9), and the Lord surrounding the land (v. 10). See Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 441. Beale’s suggestion may have merit, but it is difficult to establish the direction of dependence due to dating issues with the Targums.

⁸⁷ Beale notes the usage throughout the Old Testament of living water. Here Beale describes the living water as representing “eternal life.” Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 442.

⁸⁸ The relationship between “tears” and “living waters” may come from the Aramaic

with living waters in Ezekiel and Zechariah, with the sustenance of God as fountain in Jeremiah and Psalms. Keener suggests a connection with the eschatological springs in *1 En.* 48:1 and 49:1.⁸⁹

8.3. *Revelation 21: New Creation and the Spring of the Water of Life*

Revelation 21 contains parallels to Revelation 7: the cosmological and throne room settings (Rev 7:1–9; Rev 21:1–3); the removal of tears (Rev 7:19; Rev 21:4); thirst quenched (Rev 7:16; Rev 21:6); and finally, direction to the spring of the water of life (Rev 7:17; Rev 21:6).⁹⁰ Likewise this water is part of the eschatological promise,⁹¹ the comforting and sustenance of the people, but this passage uses clear elements of re-creation, pointing back to the Edenic/Creation passages in Genesis and the original living waters.⁹² These waters not only sustain physical life and promote spiritual life, they become the source of life in the one who drinks them. As in Zechariah, these waters are associated with the authority and reign of God and in Revelation this is extended to the inherited victory of God's people. Joining the

usage of מבויע for מים. In the Targums, this word “spring of water” is used for fountains, springs, wells (e.g. Prov 13:14; 14:27; 16:22) and also in context of a flood of tears (see Lam 1:16).

⁸⁹ Keener notes the reliance on Jer 31:9 here and also points to the use of eschatological springs in *1 En.* 48:1; 49:1, and *Hag.* 2:2; para. 5; *Sanh.* 6.6, para. 2. See Keener, *Revelation*, 245. It is also possible to see a cleansing aspect in the discussion of washing in v. 14 leading up to the repeated water imagery in v. 16–18. However, this connection is more tentative.

⁹⁰ One should note the similarities carefully, but also be aware of the differences. A primary difference in terms of the description in Revelation 7 compared to Revelation 21 is the language used of the “spring”. In Revelation 7, ζῶης πηγᾶς ὑδάτων is used whereas in Revelation 21 it is τῆς πηγῆς ὑδάτος τῆς ζῶης, which more closely resembles Revelation 22's use of ὑδάτος ζῶης. This shift may reflect different desires for prominence within the context of the discourse or merely poetic variation. Yet all three cases connect this water with the water in Isa 51 that is free of charge.

Osborne notes the connections between Revelation 7 and Revelation 21 and comments on how the location of the saints in Rev 21 demonstrates the uniting of heaven and earth. Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 729–731.

⁹¹ Besides the connections to Zechariah 14 and Ezekiel 47, Rev 21:1 speaks of there being no more sea. As noted in our discussion of Revelation 4, the concept of the sea that we get in Rev 4, 12, 13 includes the idea of satanic chaos forces and the absence of the sea likely means the end of this chaos as per the *Chaoskampf* tradition. For more on this theme, see David Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Meaning and Function of the Old Testament in Revelation 21.1–22.5* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003). Mathewson focuses specifically on the use of the Old Testament in Rev 21 and 22. See also Beale's discussion on “There is no more sea” in Revelation 21 in Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1050–1051.

⁹² Osborne points to the connections between Isaiah, Zechariah, and Ezekiel in the imagery of Rev 21, specifically pointing to Ezekiel 47 and Zechariah 14 as sources for John's imagery. Osborne, *Revelation*, 731–732.

metaphorical uses of “living waters” in this passage allows John to speak of theological truths that are beyond comprehension in a condensed and heightened way.

8.4. *Revelation 22:*

The River of the Water of Life from the Throne of God

Revelation 22 interweaves the themes of Revelation 7 and 21, referencing Ezekiel 47 explicitly.⁹³ Like Revelation 21, Revelation 22 speaks of God as the “Alpha and Omega.”⁹⁴ Like both Revelation 21 and 7, the setting is cosmological, and the throne room of God.⁹⁵ As in Ezekiel 47, the water of life flows from the place of God’s presence, but in Revelation 22, this place is the throne of God, while in Ezekiel 47, it is the temple.⁹⁶ This is because God has made his tabernacle (σκηνη) among men (Rev 21:3).⁹⁷

In Revelation 22, John interweaves all the Old Testament usages of “living water” and their later developments in Hellenistic Judaism. First, the water acts as an image for new creation; just as in Ezekiel 47, the water gains a living force of creation, so in Revelation 22, the water produces fruiting trees and the leaves that are for the healing of the nations (vv. 1–3).⁹⁸ Besides being the water of re-creation and sustenance, the water also acts as a means of purification (v. 14), cleansing those whose names will be in the book of life.⁹⁹ Further, the river of the water of life indicates the rule of God has come in its fullness (vv. 3–5), which again shows the influence of Hellenistic Judaism in *1 Enoch*.¹⁰⁰ Finally, the “water of life” is offered freely to those

⁹³ Beale points to Rev 22 as a direct quotation from Ezek 47:1, 12. See G.K. Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (JSNTSup 166; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 116.

⁹⁴ Mathewson notes that “the given the combination of titles in 21.6 and 22:13, it is likely that the three designations are to be regarded as fundamentally equivalent, and it is relatively easy to see how both ‘the beginning and the end’, the ‘Alpha and Omega’ can function as alternatives for ‘the first and last.’” See Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 77.

⁹⁵ Mathewson notes the importance of this scene taking place in the throne room both for structural and theological reasons. See Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 203.

⁹⁶ Mathewson provides a helpful overview of both the continuity and discontinuity between Rev 22:1–2 and Ezek 47:1–2. See Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 187–191.

⁹⁷ This passage is also closely related to John 1:14 where the Logos became flesh and “tabernacled” (ἐσκήνωσεν) among us.

⁹⁸ Beale provides an extended discussion on the relationship between Ezek 47 and Rev 22:2. See Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1106–1109.

⁹⁹ Here we also see a possible echo of the language of the Qumran community (cf. CD XIX, 32–35).

¹⁰⁰ Mathewson suggests that *1 En.* 26–31 provides one among many descriptions that help us understand the eschatological vision of John, describing a list of other eschatological

who want to drink it by Jesus and the Spirit; in the same way that Jesus says “Come to me” in John 7, the Spirit says, “Come” in Revelation 22 and both offer the water of life. This offer of the waters of life may reflect both the Old Testament tradition and the influence of the offer of eternal life in the tradition of Mnemosyne in Hellenistic tradition. In both traditions, the recipient is encouraged to come and partake of the waters that lead to life.

9. CONCLUSION

Tracing the various uses of living water in the Old Testament, in Greek and Roman literature, and its second temple transformations provided the foundation for our investigation into the use of various metaphorical understandings of “living water”/“water of life” in the Johannine corpus. Throughout the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, the metaphorical uses of living water are interwoven to create an even denser and more heightened activation of the original texts. Through this use of metaphor, John is able to convey a deeper understanding of the difficult theological truths inherent in his Christological and pneumatological focus. Thus for John, “living water/water of life” are waters of cleansing, re-creation, sustenance, and a road sign pointing to the ultimate personal and universal eschatological hope of God’s reign and the worship of all the nations before his throne.

factors related to Revelation. Mathewson also notes the centrality of the throne in Rev 22 and the importance of the kingship of Yahweh in this passage. See Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 199–200, 203.

MARTYR THEOLOGY IN HELLENISTIC JUDAISM AND
PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF JESUS' DEATH IN ROMANS 3:21–26*

Jarvis J. Williams

Paul's conception of Jesus' death has occupied many New Testament scholars. This is evident by the prolific work about Jesus' death in the Pauline corpus in both the last and the current centuries.¹ Although discussions of Jesus' death in scholarly and popular literature have lately focused on

* I offer thanks to David Morgan, Mark Reasoner, Thomas R. Schreiner, Preston M. Sprinkle, and J.W. van Henten for carefully reading an earlier draft of this essay. However, I am responsible for this final form.

¹ For example, see C.H. Dodd, *The Bible and The Greeks* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1934); Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955); Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965); Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 182–197; Stanislas Lyonnet and Léopold Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice: A Biblical and Patristic Study* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970); Ernst Käsemann, "The Saving Significance of the Death of Jesus in Paul," in his *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 32–59; Morna D. Hooker, "Interchange in Christ," *JTS* 22 (1971): 349–361; Morna D. Hooker, "Interchange and Atonement," *BJRL* 60 (1978): 462–481; E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 463–474; J.C. Beker, *Paul, the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 182–212; Martin Hengel, *The Atonement: A Study of the Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1981); Gerhard Friedrich, *Die Verkündigung des Todes Jesu im Neuen Testament* (Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1982); Cilliers Breytenbach, *Versöhnung: Eine Studie zur paulinischen Soteriologie* (Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1989); Charles B. Cousar, *A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990); Cilliers Breytenbach, "Versöhnung, Stellvertretung und Sühne: Semantische und Traditionsgeschichtliche Bemerkungen Am Beispiel der paulinischen Briefe," *NTS* 39 (1993): 59–79; Morna D. Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel: New Testament Interpretations of the Death of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 20–46; James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul, the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 207–233; Daniel P. Bailey, "Jesus as the Mercy Seat: The Semantics and Theology of Paul's Use of Hilastērion in Romans 3:25" (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1999); Bernd Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehn* (2nd ed.; Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2000); Thomas Knöppler, *Sühne im Neuen Testament* (Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2001); Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul: An Apostle of God's Glory in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 219–236; Richard H. Bell, "Sacrifice and Christology in Paul," *JTS* 53 (2002): 1–27; Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 442–454; John D.K. Ekem, "A Dialogical Exegesis of Romans 3:25a," *JSNT* 30 (2007): 75–93.

theological theories of the atonement,² several scholars in the 20th and the 21st centuries have specifically focused the discussion of Jesus' death in Paul on the traditions behind his conception of Jesus' death in order to discern whether he presents his death as an atoning sacrifice (i.e. an offering that expiates and propitiates sin) and whether his death should be interpreted as a saving event (i.e. a death that provides salvation from God's judgment for those for whom the death was offered).³

² For a few examples, see J.I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution," *TynB* 25 (1974): 3–45; Joel B. Green and Mark Baker, *Rediscovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament & Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000); J. Denny Weaver, *The Non-Violent Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Steve Chalke, *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003); Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005); James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, eds., *The Nature of the Atonement* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006); John Sanders, ed., *Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006); Frank S. Thielman, "The Atonement," in Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House, eds., *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 102–127; Brad Jersak and Michael Hardin, eds., *Stricken By God?: Non-Violent Identification and the Victory of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Steve Jefferey, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Nottingham: InterVarsity, 2007); Jarvis J. Williams, "Penal Substitution in Romans 3:25–26?," *PTR* 13 (2007): 73–81; Derek Tidball, David Hilborn, and Justin Thacker, eds., *The Atonement Debate* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008); I. Howard Marshall, *Aspects of the Atonement: Cross and Resurrection in the Reconciling of God and Humanity* (London: Paternoster, 2008); Stephen Travis, *Christ and the Judgment of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008).

³ Sam K. Williams, *Jesus' Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of A Concept* (HDR 2; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975); Marinus de Jonge, "Jesus' Death for Others and the Death of the Maccabean Martyrs," in T. Baarda, A. Hilhorst, G.P. Luttikhuis, and A.S. van der Woude, eds., *Essays on New Testament and Apocryphal Literature in Honour of A.F.J. Klijn* (Kampen: Kok, 1988), 142–151; Bradley H. McLean, "Christ as Pharmakos in Pauline Soteriology," *SBLSP* (1991): 187–207; Bradley H. McLean, "The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul's Soteriology," *NTS* 38 (1992): 531–553; Bradley H. McLean, *The Cursed Christ* (JSNTSup 126; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996); J.W. van Henten, "The Tradition-Historical Background of Romans 3:25: A Search for Pagan and Jewish Parallels," in Martinus C. de Boer, ed., *From Jesus to John: Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honour of Marinus De Jonge* (JSNTSup 84; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 101–128; J.W. van Henten, "Jewish Martyrdom and Jesus' Death," in Jörg Frey and Jens Schröter, eds., *Deutungen des Todes Jesu im Neuen Testament* (WUNT 181; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 139–168; Stephen Finlan, *The Background and Content of Paul's Cultic Atonement Metaphors* (Atlanta: SBL, 2004); Henk S. Versnel, "Making Sense of Jesus' Death: The Pagan Contribution," in Frey and Schröter, eds., *Deutungen des Todes Jesu im Neuen Testament*, 215–294; David A. Brondos, *Paul on the Cross: Reconstructing the Apostle's Story of Redemption* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006); Peter Lampe, "Human Sacrifice and Pauline Christology," in Karin Finsterbusch, Armin Lange, and K.F. Diehard Römheld, eds., *Human Sacrifice in Jewish*

In light of the continued interest in Jesus' death in current New Testament scholarship, this essay offers a contribution to two questions to which scholars continue to give attention: namely, did the martyr theology of Hellenistic Judaism, most explicit in 4 Maccabees, shape Paul's conception of Jesus' death in Rom 3:21–26?⁴ If so, does martyr theology provide any support that Paul conceives of Jesus' death in Rom 3:21–26 as an atoning sacrifice and as a saving event for Jews and Gentiles? My thesis is that the martyr theology of Hellenistic Judaism, which is most prevalent in 4 Maccabees and which arose during the Hellenistic crisis under the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV,⁵ shaped Paul's conception of Jesus' death in Rom 3:21–26 and that martyr theology provided Paul with the fundamental (not the only) concepts that he needed to present Jesus' death as an atoning sacrifice and as a saving event in Rom 3:21–26 to his Hellenistic Jewish and Gentile audience.⁶

and *Christian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 191–209, esp. 194–195; Jarvis J. Williams, *Maccabean Martyr Traditions in Paul's Theology of Atonement: Did Martyr Theology Shape Paul's Conception of Jesus' Death?* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

⁴ I follow Martin Hengel's thesis (*Judaism and Hellenism* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974]) that a wedge should not be driven between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism as if the two were distinct sects of Judaism. Many scholars follow Hengel's thesis (e.g. Donald A. Hagner, "Paul as a Jewish Believer—According to His Letters," in Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007], 96–120, esp. 97–98). For a recent challenge to Hengel's thesis, see Louis H. Feldman, *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1–153.

⁵ It is well known by scholars that Antiochus succeeded his father as ruler over the Seleucid Empire (1 Macc 1:1–10). According to 1, 2, and 4 Maccabees, Antiochus was an "arrogant and terrible man" (4 Macc 4:15). He deceived many Jews in Jerusalem into thinking that he would extend peace to them (1 Macc 1:29–32). Instead, he conquered Jerusalem, converted the city of David into his own fortress, and he imposed Hellenism upon the Jews (1 Macc 1:33–40, 56, 60–63; 4 Macc 4:18–5:4; 6:12, 30; 7:12, 25; 8:1–12). He destroyed the Torah (1 Macc 1:56), and he made an oath to kill any Jew who refused his Hellenistic regime (1 Macc 1:60–63). He rewarded those who obeyed (4 Macc 8:4–7; cf. 1 Macc 1:11), but tortured and executed those who did not (4 Macc 5:4; 6:12, 30; 7:12, 25; 8:8–12). In addition to discussing Antiochus' persecution of the Jews, 1, 2, and 4 Maccabees also suggest that his efforts were God's judgment against Israel (2 Macc 6:12; 7:37–38), which God brought against the nation because many Jews embraced Antiochus' reforms and forsook the traditions of their fathers (cf. 1 Macc 1:11–15). Consequently, God punished the nation through Antiochus for its religious apostasy (2 Macc 6:16–17; 7:35; 12:40–42; cf. *Ep. Jer.* 2).

⁶ The traditional view that the Roman congregation was a mixed Jewish and Gentile group of Christians has recently been challenged by A. Andrew Das (*Solving the Romans Debate* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007]). Neil Elliott (*The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism* [JSNTSup 45; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990]; Fortress edition, 2006]) and Stanley K. Stowers (*A Rereading of Romans* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994]) proposed a similar challenge in the 1990s.

I develop five arguments throughout the essay to argue the thesis: (1) A martyr theology tradition existed in Hellenistic Judaism outside of 4 Maccabees; (2) the authors of 2 and 4 Maccabees most clearly develop a martyr theology and interpret the Jewish martyrs to function as atoning sacrifices for Israel's sin; (3) the authors of 2 and 4 Maccabees interpret the martyrs' deaths as a saving event for Israel; (4) Paul ascribes to Jesus' death language that closely parallels and is similar to the martyrs' deaths in 2 and 4 Maccabees; and (5) the parallels with and similarities between the martyrs' deaths in 2 and 4 Maccabees and Paul's presentation of Jesus' death in Rom 3:21–26 offer evidence that the martyr theology tradition in Hellenistic Judaism provided Paul with the categories that he needed to explain to his Hellenistic Jewish and Gentile audience in Rome the significance and meaning of Jesus' death for others. I conclude the essay with a brief comparison between the evidence in Hellenistic Jewish texts and Romans in order to highlight specific places where martyr theology appears to have shaped Paul's conception of Jesus' death in Rom 3:21–26.

Before I proceed with a discussion of the key Hellenistic Jewish texts, I must acknowledge that many scholars would quickly dismiss my thesis as anachronistic because of the arguments in favor of a late date for 4 Maccabees (ca. CE 135).⁷ One could argue that if the author of 4 Maccabees wrote late in the Christian era, then the idea that the martyr theology in 4 Maccabees had an informative impact on Paul's conception of Jesus' death in Rom 3:21–26 would be impossible.⁸ The arguments for and against an early date of 4 Maccabees appear to be evenly matched.⁹ If, however,

⁷ For example, Thomas R. Schreiner (*Romans* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 192–195, esp. 192 n. 24) affirms that martyr theology possibly informed Paul's conception of Jesus' death in Rom 3:25, but cautiously warns that "any relationship with 4 Maccabees would be excluded if D.A. Campbell's proposal for a date between AD 135–235 is accepted." See Douglas A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21–26* (JSNTSup 65; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 219–228.

⁸ Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 219–228.

⁹ For a discussion on the dating of 4 Maccabees, see Louis Robert, *Études épigraphiques et philologiques* (Paris: Champion, 1938), 219–235, esp. 226–235; A. Dupont-Sommer, *Le Quatrième Livre des Machabées* (Paris: Champion, 1939), 75–85; Elias Bickerman, "The Date of IV Maccabees," in his *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 275–281; H. Anderson, "4 Maccabees: A New Translation and Introduction," in *OTP* 2:533; Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 219–228; J.W. van Henten, "Datierung und Herkunft des Vierten Makkabäerbuches," in J.W. van Henten, ed., *Tradition and Re-Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 136–149; J.W. van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 73–78, esp. 78; J.W. van Henten, "Martyrdom and Persecution Revisited: the Case of 4 Maccabees," in W. Ameling, ed., *Märtyrer und Märtyrerakten, Altertumswissenschaftliches* (Kolloquium 6; Franz Steiner: Wiesbaden-Stuttgart, 2002), 59–

the arguments in favor of a late date for 4Maccabees are more trustworthy than those for an early date, my thesis that the martyr theology in Hellenistic Judaism, prevalent in 4Maccabees, shaped Paul's conception of Jesus' death as an atoning sacrifice and as a saving event in Rom 3:21–26 is still plausible, because I argue in this essay that the martyr theology present in Hellenistic Judaism and developed in 4Maccabees shaped Paul's conception of Jesus' death in Rom 3:21–26. I do not argue for a literary dependence between Paul and 4Maccabees since the latter argument requires that I demonstrate clear evidence that Paul used 4Maccabees as a source, which would be difficult since no such literary evidence exists beyond the conceptual parallels between the two traditions. Therefore, a late second century date for 4Maccabees does not affect my thesis since my argument is a conceptual one: namely, the strong parallels between the martyr theology of Hellenistic Judaism (and esp. 4Macc) in Romans 3:21–26 support that martyr theology shaped Paul's conception of Jesus' death. Thus, a late dating of 4Maccabees supports the viability of my thesis for the following reasons: (1) a late dating of 4Maccabees suggests that a martyr theology tradition existed during Hellenistic Judaism (the Judaism of the New Testament) before the composition of 4Maccabees; and (2) a late dating of 4Maccabees supports that the martyr theology tradition in 4Maccabees was available for Paul when he composed Romans since a martyr theology tradition occurs elsewhere besides 4Maccabees in Hellenistic Jewish texts that pre-date Romans (ca. CE 55–58). I develop this point below.

1. MARTYR THEOLOGY IN HELLENISTIC JUDAISM OUTSIDE OF 4MACCABEES

1.1. *LXX Daniel 3:24–40*

LXX Daniel 3:24–90 contains stories and prayers that are not found in the Hebrew text of Daniel. These verses highlight Daniel's three friends (Ananias, Azarias, and Misael) while they were in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. In their prayer, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael acknowledge that the Jews entered into exile and suffered at the hands of their enemies because of their

75; John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 203–204; David A. DeSilva, *4Maccabees* (SCS; Leiden: Brill, 2006), xiv–xvii.

sins (διὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν) (LXX Dan 3:28–29; 3:37).¹⁰ This prayer suggests that the Jews' current national suffering at the hands of their enemies was the result of their disobedience to God, for Daniel's three friends state that the nation's sins were the reason for their suffering and not their enemies (cf. 2 Macc 7:32). Their prayer not only confesses that God handed over the nation to its enemies because of its sins, but the prayer also requests that God would deliver the nation from its current national suffering (LXX Dan 3:34–40).¹¹

As they pray, they assert that they have no “ruler,” “king,” or “prophet” who would lead them (LXX Dan 3:38) and that they do not have a place in the land to offer cultic sacrifices of atonement for sin (οὐδὲ ὀλοκαύτωσις οὐδὲ θυσία οὐδὲ προσφορὰ οὐδὲ θυμίαμα) (LXX Dan 3:38). The absence of the temple cult entails that they do not have a sacrificial means by which to receive God's mercy. This is evident when they pray that they do not have a place to offer a burnt offering in order to find God's mercy (οὐδὲ τόπος τοῦ καρπῶσαι ἐνώπιόν σου καὶ εὐρεῖν ἔλεος) (LXX Dan 3:38). The absence of God's mercy is the result of the absence of the temple cult since the statements pertaining to the temple cult's absence are parallel to the friends' statement that there is no place to offer sacrifice for the nation and to find mercy in God's presence (οὐδὲ τόπος τοῦ καρπῶσαι ἐνώπιόν σου καὶ εὐρεῖν ἔλεος) (LXX Dan 3:38). As a result of the nation's inability to perform cultic worship and thereby to receive God's mercy, Daniel's three friends ask God to receive their deaths as an acceptable sacrifice for Israel's sin in the place of animal sacrifices (ἀλλ' ἐν ψυχῇ συντετριμμένῃ καὶ πνεύματι τεταπενωμένῳ προσδεχθείημεν ὡς ὀλοκαυτώμασι κριῶν καὶ ταύρων καὶ ὡς ἐν μυριάσιν ἀρνῶν πιόνων) (LXX Dan 3:39), and they pray that God would accept their deaths as a sacrifice to provide cleansing (οὕτω γένεσθω ἡμῶν ἢ θυσία ἐνώπιόν σου σήμερον καὶ ἐξιλάσσαι ὀπισθέν σου) (LXX Dan 3:40). That they wanted God to receive their deaths as a sacrifice of atonement for the nation's sin in the place of the normal animal sacrifices of the temple cult seems right because (1) Daniel's three friends explicitly say that sacrifices are not being offered (LXX Dan 3:38); (2) they pray that God would “receive” (προσδεχθείημεν) their deaths as a sacrifice “just as” (ὡς) he received the sacrifices offered

¹⁰ I use Rahlfs's edition of the LXX.

¹¹ van Henten, “The Tradition-Historical Background,” 101–128. As van Henten, “Tradition-Historical Background,” 110–111, points out, since the events in LXX Dan 3:28 and 3:32 can be satisfactorily explained against the backdrop of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes IV (henceforth Antiochus), LXX Dan 3:24–90 could be dated in the latter half of the second century BCE

during the temple cult (ὡς ὄλοκαυτώμασι κριῶν καὶ ταύρων καὶ ὡς ἐν μυριάσιν ἀρῶν πιόνων), and (3) they pray that their sacrifice would atone sin (οὕτω γένησθω ἡμῶν ἢ θυσία ἐνώπιόν σου σήμερον καὶ ἐξιλάσαι ὀπισθὲν σου).¹²

1.2. *Wisdom of Solomon 3:6*

Wisdom of Solomon urges its readers to love righteousness (Wis 1:1).¹³ Those who love righteousness in Wisdom are those who love God's law since the righteous rebuke the ungodly for their transgressions against God's law (Wis 2:12–16; cf. 1:2–2:5). In Wis 2:12–16, the author personifies evil by presenting the ungodly ones as lying in wait to ambush the righteous because the righteous ones rebuke the ungodly on account of their sins. In Wis 2:17–20, evil speaks and urges the ungodly to inflict suffering upon the righteous. In Wis 2:19, evil commands the ungodly to inflict ὕβρις (“mistreatment”) and βασανισμός (“torture”) upon the righteous. In Wis 2:20, evil exhorts the ungodly ones to condemn the righteous with a shameful death (Wis 2:20) and asserts that God will deliver the righteous man from suffering if he belongs to God (εἰ γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ δίκαιος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἀντιλήμψεται αὐτοῦ καὶ ῥύσεται αὐτὸν ἐκ χειρὸς ἀνθεστηκότων) (Wis 2:18).

Wisdom 3:1–6 especially emphasizes that God will vindicate the righteous even as they die for his law. The author states that “the souls of the righteous ones are in God's hand” (δικαίων δὲ ψυχὰι ἐν χειρὶ θεοῦ) and that “torment should by no means touch” the righteous (καὶ οὐ μὴ ἄψηται αὐτῶν βίασνος) (Wis 3:1). The deaths of the righteous at the hands of their persecutors appear to result in destruction for the righteous, but the righteous are “in peace” after they die (Wis 3:2–3). The sacrificial nature of the suffering of the righteous is seen in Wis 3:6. Wisdom 3:4–6 suggests that the righteous would suffer and die at the hands of the wicked and would be

¹² The reading of LXX Dan 3:40 presents a major text-critical problem since it uses the Greek phrase ἐξιλάσαι ὀπισθὲν σου (“to atone behind you”) whereas Theodotian Dan 3:40 uses the phrase ἔκτελέσαι ὀπισθὲν σου (“to complete behind you”). Determining the correct meaning based on internal evidence is difficult. Since Theodotian regularly appears to be a secondary reading to the LXX in Daniel by virtue of its (Theodotian's) tendency to solve difficult readings by either abridging or simplifying the text, ἐξιλάσαι could be the closer to the original reading. For this explanation, see van Henten, “Tradition-Historical,” 113–114.

¹³ For the dates of other Jewish texts discussed below, see James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literatures and Testaments* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 2:920; Schreiner, *Romans*, 3–5, esp. 3; David A. DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 131–133, 216–217, 225–226; Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005),

punished in the sight of men; their hope would be full of immortality (Wis 3:4; cf. 3:5), and that God would find them to be worthy of himself, because God tested them “just as” (ὡς) gold in a furnace and he received them “just as” (ὡς) he received *δλοκάρπωμα θυσίας* (“a burnt offering of sacrifice”) (Wis 3:6; cf. LXX Lev 16:24; Num 15:3).

1.3. *Assumption of Moses 9.6–10.10*

The Assumption of Moses anticipates Antiochus’ attack upon Israel (*As. Mos.* 3.1–3; 8.1–5).¹⁴ The book portrays the attack of Antiochus against Israel to be the result of the nation’s disobedience to the Lord and his Laws (*As. Mos.* 9.1–5). Taxo, a Levite, suggests to some of his fellow countryman that the Lord would be avenged by their fasting and dying when he prays that “our blood will be avenged before the Lord” (*As. Mos.* 9.6–7). The deaths of the righteous ones inaugurate the kingdom of God and destroy the devil (*As. Mos.* 10.1), and their deaths are the means by which God avenges Israel’s enemies (*As. Mos.* 10.2–10).

1.4. *2 Maccabees 5:7–8:5*

Second Maccabees indisputably pre-dates Romans and 4 Maccabees, and it provides strong evidence that supports the atoning efficacy of the martyrs’ deaths.¹⁵ The author of 2 Maccabees presents the martyrdoms of an unknown mother and her seven sons as atoning sacrifices and a saving event for the nation (2 Macc 7:32–38).¹⁶ After killing Eleazar in 2 Maccabees 6, Antiochus tries to compel a mother and her seven sons to eat unlawful foods (2 Macc 7:1). They were faced with tortures and punishment (just as Eleazar) if they disobeyed, but each of the seven sons and their mother nevertheless disobey Antiochus. As a result, each suffers torture and death (2 Macc 7:2–41). While encouraged by his mother to trust God as he faced the prospect of death (2 Macc 7:28–29), the seventh son echoes the cry of Daniel’s three friends in LXX Daniel 3:28–29 and LXX Dan 3:37 when he states that the nation suffers because of its own sins (*ἡμεῖς γὰρ διὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἀμαρτίας*

¹⁴ With slight modification, the numbering and translation of all pseudepigraphal literature comes from *OTP*.

¹⁵ Similarly Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 650.

¹⁶ John J. Collins (*Daniel, First Maccabees, Second Maccabees* [OTM 15; 2nd ed.; Wilmington, Del.: Frazier Incorporation, 1989], 310–311) asserts that the martyrdoms of the mother and her seven sons were legendary fables used to elaborate a martyr theology.

πάσχομεν) (2 Macc 7:32; cf. 2 Macc 5:17).¹⁷ Just as the confession of Daniel's three friends in LXX Dan 3:28–29 and LXX Dan 3:37, the seventh son's statement appears to be a confession that sin is the reason that the martyrs suffer, because the seventh son also utters that although God is angry with the nation, "he will be reconciled again to his servants" (καὶ πάλιν καταλλαγήσεται τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ δούλοις) (2 Macc 7:33; cf. 2 Macc 1:5; 7:37–38; 8:29).

The seventh son's statement that "we suffer because of our sins" and that "he will again be reconciled to his servants" refers to Israel as a people and the martyrs along with the nation. This seems right because of the first person plural ἡμεῖς with the phrase διὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἁμαρτίας ("because of *our own* sins"), and the first person plural verb πάσχομεν and since when a few in the community sinned against God and suffered the consequences of their sin, the entire community (including the martyrs) would suffer the consequences of this sin (cf. Num 25:11; 1 Kgs–2 Chron; Isa 1:1–26; LXX Dan 3:24–90; Wis 3:1–6; 1QS DM I, 6–11). The martyrs were not sinless, but they were innocent of religious apostasy unlike their Jewish kinsmen (cf. 1 Macc 1–2; 2 Macc 7; 4 Macc 6). Their suffering was a corollary of their refusal to embrace Greek culture as many of their kinsmen had begun to embrace it (cf. 2 Macc 5:1–8:5; 4 Maccabees 6),¹⁸ and their kinsmen's acceptance of Antiochus' Hellenistic regime resulted in God's judgment of the entire nation through Antiochus (cf. 1 Macc 1). Therefore, the seventh son and the other martyrs offer themselves to God as sacrifices of atonement to pay for the nation's sin, which also became a payment for their sin by virtue of their membership within the nation (cf. 2 Macc 7:32).¹⁹

Second Maccabees 5:27–7:38 supports the above inference. As a result of the nation's rebellion against God's law, the temple and the land were dishonored (2 Macc 5:27–6:6). When Antiochus and Menelaus (an apostate Jewish high priest) entered the temple in Jerusalem, they profaned it

¹⁷ Similarly Wolfgang Kraus, *Der Tod Jesu als Heiligtumsweihe: Eine Untersuchung zum Umfeld der Sühnevorstellung im Römer 3:25–26a* (WMANT 66; Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 35. However, Kraus argues against a cultic background behind 2 Macc 7:32–38.

¹⁸ A. O'Hagan, "The Martyr in the Fourth Book of the Maccabees," *SBFLA* 24 (1974): 94–120, esp. 108. Against Theofried Baumeister, *Die Anfänge der Theologie des Martyriums* (MBT; Münster: Ashendorf, 1980), 41–42.

¹⁹ So Marinus de Jonge, *Christology in Context: The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 181–182; U. Kellermann, "Zum traditionsgeschichtlichen Problem des stellvertretenden Sühnetodes in 2 Makk 7:37," *BN* 13 (1980): 63–83, esp. 69; van Henten, *Maccabean Martyrs*, 137. Against Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 79 n. 29; David Seeley, *The Noble Death: Graeco-Roman Martyrology and Paul's Concept of Salvation* (JSNTSup 28; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 87.

(2 Macc 5:15–16). To eradicate God's judgment against the nation, the seven sons voluntarily offer themselves to die for Israel to achieve God's forgiveness (2 Macc 7:32–38).²⁰ Second Maccabees 7:32–38 suggests that the seventh son was confident that God would be reconciled again to the nation through the martyrs' deaths because he asserts that God "will be reconciled again to his servants" in 2 Macc 7:33 and because 2 Macc 7:37–38 affirms that the seventh son wants God to end his wrath against the nation by means of the deaths of him and his brothers on behalf of the nation (ἐγὼ δὲ καθάπερ οἱ ἀδελφοί καὶ σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν προδίδωμι περὶ τῶν πατριῶν νόμων ἐπικαλούμενος τὸν θεὸν ἵλεως ταχὺ τῷ ἔθνει γενέσθαι καὶ σὲ μετὰ ἑτασμῶν καὶ μαστίγων ἔξομολογήσασθαι διότι μόνος αὐτὸς θεὸς ἐστὶν ἐν ἔμοι δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου στήσαι τὴν τοῦ παντοκράτορος ὀργὴν τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ σύμπαν ἡμῶν γένος δικαίως ἐπηγμένην).²¹

Scholars debate the meaning of the phrase ἐν ἔμοι δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου στήσαι τὴν τοῦ παντοκράτορος ὀργὴν in 2 Macc 7:38.²² The debate pertains to how one should interpret the seventh son's statement that God's wrath would end ἐν ἔμοι καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου (2 Macc 7:38). Sam K. Williams argues that the seven sons did not avert God's wrath away from the nation by means of their deaths, for the phrases ἐν ἔμοι δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου do not suggest the means by which the wrath of God was averted away from Israel, but the point at which the wrath of God was averted.²³ That is, the seventh son simply affirms that the wrath of God would end "with"

²⁰ Similarly Eduard Lohse, *Märtyrer und Gottesknecht* (2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 67–69; J. Gnllka, "Martyriumsparänese und Sühnetod in synoptischen und jüdischen Traditionen," in R. Schnackenburg, ed., *Die Kirche des Anfangs: Festschrift für Heinz Schürman* (Leipzig: St. Benno-Verlag, 1977), 223–246; J. Downing, "Jesus and Martyrdom," *JTS* 14 (1963): 279–293, esp. 288–289; van Henten, *Maccabean Martyrs*, 140–144. Against a sacrificial reading of 2 Macc 7:32–38, see Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 82–88; Jonathan Goldstein, *2 Maccabees* (AB 41A; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 316; Seeley, *The Noble Death*, 87–91, 145; Versnel, "Making Sense," 258–259.

²¹ The most important parts of the prayer in 2 Macc 7:37–38 for my thesis are the seventh son's statements "be merciful quickly to the nation" in 7:37 and "to end the wrath of the almighty in me and in my brothers" in 7:38, but I have cited above the entire Greek text of 2 Macc 7:37–38 so that the reader can read the seventh son's statement in context. The grammatical construction in 2 Macc 7:37 is similar to the one in 4 Macc 6:28. Eleazar asks God in the latter text to provide mercy for the nation through his death (ἵλεως γενοῦ τῷ ἔθνει σου). In 2 Macc 7:37, the seventh son prays that God would "quickly be merciful to the nation" (ἵλεως ταχὺ τῷ ἔθνει γενέσθαι) through his death. In both 4 Macc 6:28 and 2 Macc 7:37, the martyrs urge God to grant mercy to the nation on the basis of their deaths for it.

²² Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 83–88; H.W. Surkau, *Martyrien in jüdischer und frühchristlicher Zeit* (FRLANT 36; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1938), 59.

²³ Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 83–88.

him and “with” his brothers. Williams maintains his view partly because he rejects that 2 Maccabees teaches vicarious atonement.²⁴ According to him, 2 Maccabees only presents the martyrs’ suffering and death as exemplary for their fellow Jews to imitate when they face their own suffering and death.²⁵

Williams’ analysis is partially correct in two ways. First, the author of 2 Maccabees states that the suffering and deaths of the martyrs were exemplary (2 Macc 6:28, 31; cf. 2 Macc 6:24–31). Eleazar’s death was an example of nobility for the entire nation to follow (2 Macc 6:28, 31). Moreover, even 4 Maccabees, where the sacrificial and the soteriological natures of the martyrs’ deaths are more explicit, speaks of the martyrs’ deaths as exemplary (4 Macc 6:18–21; 9:23; 10:3, 16; 11:15; 12:16; 13:8–18; 17:23). Second, Williams is correct to note that the preposition ἐν in the Greek phrase ἐν ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου στήσαι τὴν τοῦ παντοκράτορος ὀργήν can convey a variety of meanings (e.g. “in,” “with,” “by means of,” etc.).

In response to Williams’ first observation, the exemplary nature of the martyrs’ deaths in 2 and 4 Maccabees does not preclude their deaths from functioning as atoning sacrifices and a saving event for the nation. Their deaths could in fact be both exemplary and sacrifices of atonement (cf. 1 Pet 2:21–24).²⁶ In response to Williams’ second observation, the preposition ἐν likely conveys instrumentality in 2 Macc 7:38 (“by means of”), because the preceding meaning occurs in numerous places in 2 Maccabees (2 Macc 1:28; 5:20; 7:29; 15:11; cf. 4 Macc 9:22; 16:15); the prepositional phrases occur in a context where the seventh son urges God to be reconciled to the nation again (2 Macc 7:33);²⁷ and because the term should be translated as “by means of” in 2 Macc 7:29, which is a text in close proximity of 2 Macc 7:38. If the translation “by means of” is correct in 2 Macc 7:38, then the seventh son’s prayer should be interpreted to mean that he wanted God to end his wrath “by means of” his death and “by means of” the deaths of his brothers. This interpretation would mean that the seventh son wants his death and the deaths of his brothers to satisfy God’s wrath against the nation, just as Eleazar prays regarding his own death in 4 Macc 6:28–29.

²⁴ Williams, *Jesus’ Death*, 83–88.

²⁵ Williams, *Jesus’ Death*, 83–88.

²⁶ First Peter 2:21–24 is the closest biblical parallel where the death of a human is referred to both as exemplary and vicarious for others in the same context.

²⁷ For other examples where ἐν conveys means or instrumentality, see A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (4th ed.; Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 589–591; Herbert Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (21st ed.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 376–377.

Second Maccabees 5:1–8:5 supports that God fulfilled the seventh son’s expectation through the martyrs’ deaths, for the latter text states that God was reconciled to the nation through the martyrs’ deaths (2 Macc 8:1–5). The “only possible means by which this reconciliation could have come about in the context of 2 Maccabees is through the deaths of the martyrs.”²⁸ For example, while Antiochus was invading Egypt a second time, he heard that Judea was in revolt (2 Macc 5:1–11). He immediately left Egypt and seized Jerusalem while he commanded his soldiers to kill anyone they met along the way (2 Macc 5:11b–14). Antiochus entered the holy temple and profaned it, for he was oblivious that God was using him to defile the temple on account of his anger with Israel (2 Macc 5:17–18). Just as the temple suffered pollution and judgment because of the nation’s sin, it also experienced God’s blessings when he pardoned the nation (2 Macc 5:20a; cf. Lev 16:16, 30). Second Maccabees 5:20b states that God’s wrath ended, and the glory of Israel was restored to the nation “by means of the reconciliation of the Great Lord” (2 Macc 8:5; cf. Lev 9:1–10:2).

After the author describes the other abominations that Antiochus and his companions committed (2 Macc 5:21–6:11), he subsequently explains why the Jews suffered so severely. He offers this explanation immediately before he writes about the martyrdoms of Eleazar, the mother, and her seven sons (2 Macc 6:18–8:2). In 2 Macc 6:12–17, the author urges his readers not to be discouraged by the grave calamities that had befallen the nation by asserting that God provided the calamities for the nation’s benefit. The author also states that God would soon judge the Gentile nations when they reach the full measure of their sins, but he would not deal with Israel in this way. Instead, God was currently judging Israel as the author wrote 2 Maccabees in the calamities that had befallen the nation through Antiochus, and the deaths of the martyrs were representative of his divine judgment. The author explains that God did not, therefore, relinquish his mercy from his people nor did he forsake them (2 Macc 6:13–16). The

²⁸ Van Henten, “Tradition-Historical Background,” 117–121, esp. 117. Against Williams, *Jesus’ Death*, 85–89; Seeley, *The Noble Death*, 88. Cf. Ulrich Kellermann, *Auferstanden in den Himmel: 2 Makkabäer 7 und die Auferstehung der Märtyrer* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1979), 54–55; Stephen Anthony Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch* (SNTSMS 114; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 88. William H. Brown (“From Holy War to Holy Martyrdom,” in H.B. Huffmon, F.A. Spina, and A.R. Green, eds., *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983], 287–288) states that “Judas and his men are asking God to accept the present national suffering as sufficient, not only to atone for the nation’s sins, but as sufficient to invoke his wrath upon the Syrian armies.”

author, then, highlights the deaths of the martyrs in 2 Macc 6:18–8:2 to demonstrate how God's mercy was achieved for the nation (2 Macc 5:20; 8:5–7). Second Maccabees 6:18–8:5 suggests that God reveals his mercy to Israel by his reconciliatory acts toward the nation, because after the seventh son promises God's future judgment of Antiochus (2 Macc 7:33), he states that he (just as his brothers) offers his life to God with the prayer that he would be merciful to the nation through their deaths (2 Macc 7:37). Subsequent to the author's presentations of the martyrdoms of Eleazar, the mother, and her seven sons (2 Macc 6:18–7:42), the author immediately discusses the response of zealous Jews to the martyrs' deaths.

In 2 Maccabees 8, Judas Maccabaeus reappears in the narrative (Israel's leading guerilla fighter). He and other zealous Jews asked God to be merciful to the martyrs, the temple, and the city (2 Macc 8:2–3). They also pray that the Lord would hear the blood of the martyrs, that he would remember the destruction of the innocent babies, that he would remember the blasphemies against his name, and that he would hate all of the evil committed against Israel (2 Macc 8:4). The mercy of which the author speaks in 2 Macc 5:20 and 6:12–16, the mercy for which the martyrs die (2 Macc 7:32–38), and the mercy for which Judas prays in 2 Macc 8:1–4 becomes a reality when God becomes reconciled again to the nation by reversing his wrath away from the Jews against Antiochus and his army (2 Macc 5:1–8:5).²⁹ Yes, the reconciliation for which the seventh son asserts that his death and the deaths of his brothers would achieve for the nation becomes a reality for Israel after Judas's prayer, and God's glory was again restored to both the temple and the nation through their deaths after Judas's prayer, but God's reconciliation does not take place in the narrative until after the martyrs die (cf. 2 Macc 5:20–8:5; 4 Macc 17:21–22). Therefore, a martyr theology in Hellenistic Judaism and the idea that the martyrs' deaths functioned as atoning sacrifices and a saving event for Israel's sin existed before 4 Maccabees and before Rom 3:21–26 were composed.

2. MARTYR THEOLOGY IN 4 MACCABEES

2.1. *The Martyrdom of Eleazar*

The martyrdom of Eleazar is the chief example in 4 Maccabees that supports that the deaths of the martyrs functioned as atoning sacrifices and as a

²⁹ Contra Seeley, *The Noble Death*, 87–88.

saving event for Israel. Eleazar was a scribe of high rank (2 Macc 6:18), from a priestly family, and an expert in the law (4 Macc 5:4, 35). Antiochus urges him to disobey the Torah and eat swine (2 Macc 6:18; 4 Macc 5:6). Instead, Eleazar voluntarily chooses death. As a result, Antiochus severely tortures him (4 Macc 6:1–8). As he bleeds profusely from the scourges that tore his flesh and from being pierced in his side with a spear (4 Macc 6:6), Eleazar prays that God would use his death to achieve three benefits for Israel: (1) mercy (4 Macc 6:28), (2) satisfaction (4 Macc 6:28), and (3) purification (4 Macc 6:29).

Eleazar urges God in 4 Macc 6:28 to be merciful to Israel through his death (ἰλεως γενου τῷ ἔθνει σου) (2 Macc 4:1–6:31; 4 Macc 5:4–6:40). The mercy for which he prays seems to be deliverance from God's wrath (cf. 2 Macc 4:16–17), for 1, 2, and 4 Maccabees suggest that God was judging the nation through Antiochus' persecution since many Jews dismissed the Torah as a way of life (cf. 1 Macc 1). God's judgment of the nation through Antiochus is the reason that the nation suffers in the narrative and the reason that Eleazar requests God's mercy (cf. 1 Macc 1:1–64; Macc 7:32).³⁰

That Eleazar prays that his death would provide salvation for Israel is elucidated by 4 Macc 6:28. In the latter text, Eleazar asks God to be satisfied with the martyrs' judgment for the nation (ἀρκεσθεις τῇ ἡμετερῃ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν δικη).³¹ Since Eleazar's first request that God would be merciful to the nation (ἰλεως γενου τῷ ἔθνει σου) is the main clause in the sentence ἰλεως

³⁰ Other uses of the adjective ἰλεως elsewhere in 4 Maccabees support that in 4 Macc 6:28, Eleazar asks God to accept his death as the means through which he would save the nation from his judgment. Prior to Antiochus's torturing of the seven sons in 4 Macc 8:14, he urged the seven sons to provide mercy for themselves by eating unclean meat. Obedience to Antiochus would have ensured their salvation from his judgment. In 4 Macc 9:24, as one of the seven sons suffered torture from Antiochus, he exhorted his brothers to follow his example of godliness and he stated that through his godliness God's mercy would save the nation. After the seventh son refuses to obey Antiochus in 4 Macc 12:4–16, he hurls himself into the fire with which Antiochus threatened him and the other brothers who would not forsake their religion. While entering the fire, the seventh son prays that God would be merciful (ἰλεως) to save the nation through his death (4 Macc 12:17). In Exod 32:12, Moses asks God to be merciful to Israel by asking him not to judge the nation for its idolatry (cf. Exod 32:33; Num 14). In Deut 21:8, Moses urges the nation to pray for God's mercy when an unknown member of the community should wrongly kill a man (cf. Deut 21:1–8). In 2 Chron 6:25, Solomon requests that God would be merciful to Israel and forgive the nation for its sin (cf. 2 Chron 6:27, 39; 7:14). Thus, the LXX connects the adjective ἰλεως with judgment and wrath. For other connections in the LXX between God's mercy and deliverance from judgment, see Amos 7:2; Jer 5:1, 7; 27:20; 38:34; 43:3.

³¹ For other possible substitutionary uses of ὑπὲρ in atonement texts, see LXX Exod 21:20; Lev 26:25; Deut 32:41, 43; Mic 7:9; Wis 1:8; 14:31; 18:11; cf. 1 Macc 5:32; 2 Macc 1:26; 3:32; Rom 5:6–11; 8:32; 1 Cor 1:13; 11:24; 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14–15, 21; Gal 1:4; 2:20–21; 3:13; 1 Thess 5:10.

γενοῦ τῷ ἔθνει σου ἀρκεσθεῖς τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν δίκῃ, the adverbial participial clause (ἀρκεσθεῖς τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν δίκῃ) is a continuation of the first request in 4 Macc 6:28a and likewise takes the tone of a prayer of entreaty, as the first part of the prayer. With this request, Eleazar expresses that he offers his life to God as a substitute on behalf of Israel and as a provision for God's mercy, and he hopes that his provision would satisfy God's wrath against the nation. This interpretation seems correct, because Eleazar offers this petition to God while he faces his judgment by means of Antiochus's persecution (4 Macc 6:28; 17:22; cf. 1 Macc 6:60; Ps 68:32; Jer 18:4; Dan 4:2) and because δίκη consistently refers to divine judgment throughout 4 Maccabees (4 Macc 4:13, 21; 8:14, 22; 9:9, 15, 32; 11:3; 12:12; 18:22; cf. 2 Macc 8:11, 13).

In addition to asking God to use his death to achieve mercy and to bring satisfaction to his wrath against Israel, 4 Macc 6:29 suggests that Eleazar also prays that God would make his blood to be Israel's purification (καθάρισον αὐτῶν ποιήσον τὸ ἐμὸν αἷμα) (cf. 4 Macc 1:11; LXX Dan 3:38–40). Since Eleazar has already prayed that God would bring mercy to Israel and end his wrath against Israel through his death, Eleazar's request in 4 Macc 6:29 suggests that he urges God to make his death a sacrifice of atonement and a saving event for the nation. The sacrificial nature of Eleazar's request is apparent when he asks God to make his αἷμα to be Israel's purification (2 Macc 5:17–18; 6:15; 7:32; 12:42; 4 Macc 5:19; 17:21; cf. Lev 16:16, 30).³² Although the above Hellenistic Jewish texts that I discussed do not connect the martyrdoms of the righteous with atonement and purification by blood as Eleazar does in 4 Macc 6:28, that the blood of the innocent could atone for sin and accomplish purification for others is already present before the writing of 4 Maccabees in Hellenistic Judaism. In Jub 32:10–19, Israel offers a “young kid” “once a year” “on the seventh month” “on account of their sin” “to atone for themselves” in order to “purify themselves” (Jub 32:18–19). According to Jubilees 32:10–17, Israel did this because they thought that Joseph had died when in fact his brothers sold him into slavery and “slaughtered a kid and dipped Joseph's garment into the blood and sent it to Jacob their father on the seventh month” (Jub 32:12–13).

Besides 4 Macc 6:29, καθαρίσιον (“purification”) occurs nowhere else in the LXX.³³ However, καθαρῖσμός (“purification”) is a cognate of καθαρίσιον. The latter occurs in the LXX and in the New Testament to refer both to the

³² Against Seeley, *The Noble Death*, 97–98.

³³ Heb 1:3 is the only other place in the New Testament where purification is connected to the purification of sins via the death of a human.

purification of Israel and to Christians. In the respective texts, one receives purification through the blood that the priests offered as atonement (Exod 29:36; 30:10; cf. 2Pet 1:9), through ritual cleansing (Lev 14:32; 15:13; cf. Mark 1:44; Luke 2:22; 5:14; John 2:6; 3:25), through God's forgiveness (Num 14:18), through the cleansing of holy utensils (1Chron 23:28), through the purification of the temple (2Macc 1:18; 2:16, 19; 10:5), or through one's piety (4Macc 7:6; cf. 1QS 1–3 I, 10). Since Eleazar was an expert in the law, a priest, and from a priestly family (2Macc 6:18; 4Macc 5:4, 35), he understood the Old Testament background behind purification (cf. 2Macc 6:18; 4Macc 5:4, 35). Moreover, since Antiochus abolished the sacrificial system, killed anyone who yielded allegiance to the Torah (1Macc 1:41–64; 2Macc 5:4, 35), controlled the temple, and prohibited any form of worship in compliance with the Torah (cf. 2Macc 1:5; 7:32–38; 4Macc 6:28–29; 17:20–21), Eleazar's request likely, then, urges God in 4Macc 6:28–29 to use his death and the deaths of the other martyrs to substitute for the absence of temple sacrifices (which would have included the Yom Kippur ritual since Antiochus forbade all sacrifices [cf. 1Macc 1]), so that the nation would corporately experience God's forgiveness.

In the final part of his prayer in 4Macc 6:29b, Eleazar asks God to receive his death as a ransom for the nation (καὶ ἀντίψυχον αὐτῶν λαβῆ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν). The occurrence of ἀντίψυχον (“ransom”) in 4Macc 6:29b likewise occurs in 4Macc 17:21. There the term suggests that the martyrs' deaths purified and saved the nation, because the author connects ἀντίψυχον with both the nation's purification from sin and with its salvation. Furthermore, the compound ἀντίψυχον occurs as two different words (ἀντί ψυχῆς) in Leviticus 17 in a context where the author discusses the Day of Israel's atonement (Leviticus 16) and the atoning function of blood on behalf of one's life (ἀντί ψυχῆς) (Lev 17:11).³⁴ The function of ἀντίψυχον in 4Macc 6:29 and 17:21, then, suggests that the blood of the martyrs was the required price paid to achieve both Israel's purification and salvation (cf. 4Macc 7:21–22). Consequently, the author of 4Maccabees appears to be echoing Leviticus 16–17, especially the feast of atonement and the Yom Kippur ritual, when he discusses the martyrs' deaths since he repeatedly uses similar cultic language from Leviticus 16–17 to describe the nature of the martyrs' deaths for the nation in an atonement setting.³⁵ For example, Eleazar asks God to purify Israel and to satisfy his judgment against the entire nation by

³⁴ So Campbell, *Deliverance*, 650–651.

³⁵ Campbell, *Deliverance*, 650–651.

means of his “blood” that he offers for the nation (4 Macc 6:28–29; 7:8; 17:10; 17:21–22; 18:4; cf. Exod 33:12–34:9; *As. Mos.* 9.6–7; 10:2–10; 2 Macc 5:20–7:38),³⁶ and Leviticus 16–17 states that blood was offered for the sins of the entire nation.

2.2. 4 Maccabees 17:21–22: The Author’s Interpretation of the Martyrs’ Deaths

The author of 4 Maccabees interprets the martyrs’ deaths to be both sacrificial in nature and a saving event for the nation in 4 Macc 17:21–22 (καὶ τὸν τύραννον τιμωρηθῆναι καὶ τὴν πατρίδα καθαρισθῆναι ὥσπερ³⁷ ἀντίψυχον γεγονότας τῆς τοῦ ἔθνους ἀμαρτίας καὶ διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἐκείνων καὶ τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου τοῦ θανάτου αὐτῶν ἢ θεία πρόνοια τὸν Ἰσραηλ προκακωθέντα διέσωσεν). The term ἱλαστήριον occurs in 4 Macc 17:22 with other cultic vocabulary (e.g. ἀμαρτία, αἷμα, καθαρίζω), a cultic concept (vicarious death for sin [ἀντίψυχον γεγονότας τῆς τοῦ ἔθνους ἀμαρτίας καὶ διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἐκείνων καὶ τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου τοῦ θανάτου]), and a soteriological term (διέσωσεν). The occurrence of ἱλαστήριον in this context is certainly cultic for the above reasons, but also since the term itself is part of a semantic family of ἱλας-words that often occur in cultic contexts in the LXX that speak of atoning sin, and these words often translate from the Hebrew root כפר, which often means “to atone” (cf. Lev 16). To clarify, I am not asserting that the ἱλας-word group always translates from the Hebrew root כפר (cf. LXX Exod 32:14; 2 Kgs 21:3; 1 Chr 6:34; 2 Chr 29:24; Ps 105:30; Zech 7:2; 8:22), nor am I affirming that the ἱλας-word group always conveys the idea of atoning sacrifice (cf. LXX Exod 32:14; Prov 16:14).³⁸ Rather, my point is simply that the ἱλας-word group often occurs in cultic texts and often speaks of sacrificial atonement when this word group occurs with explicit cultic vocabulary, as it

³⁶ Against Kraus, *Der Tod Jesu*, 38–39.

³⁷ Because of the adverb “just as” (ὥσπερ) in 4 Macc 17:21, Williams (*Jesus’ Death*, 177–178), followed by Seeley (*The Noble Death*, 97), argues that the author of 4 Maccabees metaphorically means that God received the martyrs’ deaths “just as” (ὥσπερ) he received sacrifices since he deemed their deaths as an act of expiation, but (says Williams) their deaths did not literally expiate sin.

³⁸ For example, ἐξιλάσκομαι is often cultic and often refers to the cleansing that takes places when sins are atoned (LXX Exod 30:10; Lev 1:4; 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18, 26; 6:23; 7:7; Num 5:8; 6:11; 8:12, 19, 21; 15:25, 28; 17:11, 12; 28:22, 30; 29:5, 11; 31:50; 1 Kgs 3:14; 2 Kgs 2:13; 1 Chr 6:34; 2 Chr 29:24; 2 Chr 30:18; 2 Esd 20:34; Ps 105:30; Ezek 43:20, 22; 45:17; Sir 3:3, 30; 5:6; 20:28; 28:5; 34:19; 45:16, 23). However, the one occurrence of ἱλάσκομαι in the LXX is not cultic and void of sacrificial ideas (LXX Exod 32:14). In LXX Exod 32:14, ἐξιλάσκομαι translates from כפר and highlights YHWH’s mercy to Israel in spite of the nation’s idolatry.

does in 4 Macc 17:21–22. Thus, 4 Macc 17:21–22 speaks of the martyrs' deaths with sacrificial language that closely resembles the Old Testament cult, and 4 Macc 17:22 states that the martyrs' sacrificial deaths indeed saved Israel.

Furthermore, 4 Macc 17:22 and Romans 3:25 are the only places in available literature where an author applies ἱλαστήριον to the death of a human in a cultic context for the benefit of another.³⁹ ἱλαστήριον refers to the mercy seat in contexts in the LXX where priests atoned for sin through the sacrifice of blood (Lev 16:14–15), where God commands Israel to put the ἱλαστήριον above the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies, the place where only the high priest could enter (Exod 25:17–20; 37:6), where God commands the priest to make atonement on the ἱλαστήριον to provide cleansing for sin (Exod 25:18–22; 31:7; 35:12; 37:6–8; Lev 16:14–15), and in contexts where God appears above the ἱλαστήριον to show his acceptance of atonement (Exod 25:22; Lev 16:2; Num 7:89). In light of the above arguments regarding the sacrificial context of 4 Macc 6:28–29 and 4 Macc 17:21–22 and in light of the occurrence of ἱλαστήριον in this sacrificial text, the term in 4 Macc 17:22 must ascribe a sacrificial function to the martyrs' deaths, which is similar to the term's function in cultic contexts in the Old Testament.

In his unpublished doctoral thesis, Daniel P. Bailey argues that ἱλαστήριον in 4 Macc 17:22 and in Rom 3:25 have distinct meanings.⁴⁰ The author of 4 Macc 17:22 uses the term consistent with its occurrence in the Hellenistic world (i.e. propitiatory), but Paul uses the term consistent with its occurrence in the biblical world (i.e. mercy seat).⁴¹ Thus, according to Bailey, to argue that ἱλαστήριον refers to sacrificial atonement in 4 Macc 17:22 is a mistake. After reviewing the evidence in the relevant Hellenistic literature that supports reading the term as propitiatory, Bailey argues that various inscriptions in the Hellenistic world affirm that ἱλαστήρια were offered either to propitiate the wrath of offended deities or to gain their favor.⁴² He also argues that -τήριον words do not regularly refer to actions, but to places (e.g.

³⁹ The edition of Alexandrinus and Venetus has τοῦ ἱλαστήριου θανάτου αὐτῶν, whereas Rahlfs follows Sinaiticus and places an article between ἱλαστήριου and θανάτου. H.J. Klauck, *4 Makkabäerbuch: Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1989), 753, van Henten, "The Tradition-Historical Background," 101–128, esp. 123, and DeSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 250, follow the reading of Alexandrinus and Venetus.

⁴⁰ I am grateful to Daniel P. Bailey for kindly e-mailing me a copy of his dissertation.

⁴¹ Bailey, "Mercy Seat," 5–12, esp. 11–12.

⁴² For the above analysis and summary of Bailey's view, see DeSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 250–251, who cites Bailey ("Mercy Seat," 31–75).

θυσιαστήριον “altar,” φυγαδευτήριον “refuge,” and ἄγιασθήριον “altar”).⁴³ Bailey concludes that the meaning of ἱλαστήριον in 4 Macc 17:22 as it relates to the martyrs’ deaths “should be sought against a non-sacrificial background.”⁴⁴ According to Bailey, 4 Maccabees nowhere states that the martyrs died as atoning sacrifices for Israel’s sin.

Bailey’s doctoral thesis is thorough. It provides an extensive lexical analysis of ἱλαστήριον. I agree with his argument that the occurrence of the same term in different texts (i.e., 4 Macc 17:22 and Rom 3:25) does not necessitate that the term should be translated the same way in both texts. Nevertheless, Bailey’s thesis and arguments (if I correctly understand them) seem to pit his lexical analysis against the context within which ἱλαστήριον occurs and therefore prevents the term from conveying its contextual theme.⁴⁵ In my view, regardless of how one translates ἱλαστήριον in 4 Macc 17:22, since the term occurs in the same context as several atonement vocabulary items and concepts found in Leviticus 16–17 (e.g. judgment, purification, ransom, vicarious death, sin, and blood), ἱλαστήριον in 4 Macc 17:22 at least alludes to the Yom Kippur ritual, and it at least suggests that the martyrs’ deaths are functioning as Israel’s atonement.⁴⁶

For example, 4 Macc 6:28–29 speaks of the martyrs’ deaths in the context of blood, purification, and ransom. Likewise, 4 Macc 17:21–22 speaks of the martyrs’ deaths in the context of purification, ransom, blood, and salvation.⁴⁷ Therefore, the contextual evidence in 4 Macc 6:28–29 and 17:21–22 seems to challenge Bailey’s basic conclusion about ἱλαστήριον in 4 Maccabees 17:22: namely, that it should be understood as a pagan reference to a non-cultic/non-sacrificial background. Contrary to Bailey, I suggest that 4 Macc 6:28–29 and 17:21–22 together affirm that the martyrs offered themselves to God as atonement for Israel’s sin to achieve the nation’s salvation, because these texts use cultic language to express that the martyrs’ deaths were a ransom, purified the homeland, and provided salvation for the people by turning God’s wrath away from Israel (cf. 1 Macc 1:11; 2 Macc 5:1–8:5; 4 Macc 17:20–22).⁴⁸

⁴³ Finlan, *Atonement Metaphors*, 200–203, who cites Bailey.

⁴⁴ The above quote comes from DeSilva (*4 Maccabees*, 251), who summarizes Bailey’s view.

⁴⁵ For a similar critique, see also Finlan, *Atonement Metaphors*, 200.

⁴⁶ DeSilva (*4 Maccabees*, 250–251) argues that the author uses the cultic language from the Yom Kippur ritual to describe the effect of the martyrs’ deaths.

⁴⁷ DeSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 202.

⁴⁸ DeSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 202–203. Similarly Marinus de Jonge, “Jesus’ Death for Others and the Death of the Maccabean Martyrs,” in T. Baarda, A. Hilhorst, G.P. Luttikhuisen, and

3. MARTYR THEOLOGY AND JESUS' DEATH IN ROMANS 3:21–26

3.1. *God's Righteousness, Justification, Jesus' Blood, and Salvation*

The parallels between martyr theology and Rom 3:21–26 are evident when Paul states that Jesus (a righteous Jew and a human) died for the sins of others in a context where he uses the words *δικαιοσύνη* and *δικαιώω* to communicate a soteriological idea. Second and Fourth Maccabees likewise state that the martyrs (righteous Jews and humans) died for the sins of others in a context where the authors use *καταλλάσσω* (2 Macc 7:32–38) and *διασώζω* (4 Macc 17:21–22; cf. Origen, *Cels.* 1.31) to communicate a soteriological idea.⁴⁹ In Romans 3:21–22, Paul asserts that God's righteousness is revealed by faith. In Rom 3:23, Paul states that all (i.e. Jews and Gentiles) have sinned and have failed to honor God to the degree that he deserves. As a result of the universal problem of sin (cf. Rom 1:18–3:20), Paul states in Rom 3:24 that God takes the initiative and freely justifies Jews and Gentiles by his grace (*δικαιοῦμενοι δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι*). In 2 and 4 Maccabees, the martyrs suffer and die because of the nation's sin (2 Macc 7:32); they vicariously die to reconcile God to the nation and to end his wrath against the nation (2 Macc 7:33, 37), and their deaths save Israel from God's wrath (4 Macc 17:21–22).

Scholars continue to debate Paul's use of *δικαιοσύνη* and *δικαιώω* in Rom 3:21–26.⁵⁰ Regardless of how one understands *δικαιοσύνη* in Rom 3:21–22 and in Rom 3:25–26, or the participle *δικαιοῦμενοι* in Rom 3:24 (covenantal faithfulness or God's saving righteousness),⁵¹ these *δικ*-words nevertheless introduce a soteriological concept into a text where the cultic concepts of sin, blood, and God's judgment are mentioned, because Paul mentions these *δικ*-words in a context where he appears to be arguing that one is justified by faith apart from works (Rom 3:20–4:25).⁵² This reading of Rom 3:21–22 and Rom 3:24 is supported by Paul's statements in Rom 3:20–4:25 that God reveals his righteousness by faith (Rom 1:17; 3:21–22; 4:1–25), that he justifies the ungodly by faith (Rom 3:20, 24; 4:1–25), and he satisfies his justice by means of Jesus' blood (Rom 3:24–26). Paul's statements in

A.S. van der Woude, eds., *Text and Testimony: Essays on New Testament and Apocryphal Literature in Honour of A.F.J. Klijn* (Kampen: Kok, 1988), 142–151, esp. 150–151.

⁴⁹ Versnel ("Making Sense," 219) pointed me to the reference in Origen.

⁵⁰ For a summary of the debate and a bibliography, see the most recent discussion by Campbell, *Deliverance*, 677–711, and 1111–1112 n. 1.

⁵¹ For the options, see Campbell, *Deliverance*, 677–711.

⁵² Against N.T. Wright, "Romans," (*NIB* 10; Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 459–507.

Rom 5:8–10 suggest both a cultic nature and a soteriological significance to Jesus' death that closely resemble the martyrs' deaths in 2 and 4 Maccabees. Paul states that Jesus died for the sins of others (Rom 5:8; cf. 2 Macc 7:32) and that justification by Jesus' blood guarantees reconciliation between God and the justified and future salvation from God's wrath for those for whom Jesus died (Rom 5:9–10; cf. 2 Macc 7:32–38; 4 Macc 6:28–29; 17:21–22). Paul's statements here closely parallel 2 Macc 7:32–38, 4 Macc 6:28–29, and 4 Macc 17:21–22 since the authors affirm that the martyrs' deaths/blood accomplished reconciliation and salvation from God's wrath for those for whom they died.

Moreover, the *δικ*-words in Rom 3:21–22, Rom 3:24, and Rom 3:26 occur in a text where the death of a pious human provides the solution to the sin-problem and the threat of God's wrath (cf. 2 Macc 7:32–38; 4 Macc 6:28–29; 17:21–22), just as the deaths of humans provide the solution to the sin-problem and the threat of God's wrath in 2 and 4 Maccabees (cf. 2 Macc 7:32–38; 4 Macc 6:28–29; 17:21–22). Paul argues in Rom 1:18–3:20 that Jews and Gentiles are condemned and are subject to God's wrath. He states in Rom 3:21–22 that God reveals his righteousness (a soteriological concept) by faith and in Rom 3:24 that God accomplishes justification (another soteriological concept) and deals with the sin-problem through the “redemption in Christ Jesus” (διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Second Maccabees 5:1–8:5, 4 Macc 6:28–29, and 17:21–22 state that the deaths of Eleazar and the other martyrs dealt with Israel's sin-problem and accomplished salvation for the nation by ending God's wrath against it.

With the phrase διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ in Rom 3:24 and with the clause ὃν πρόεθετο ὁ θεὸς ἰλαστήριον διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι in Rom 3:25, Paul further demonstrates a parallel with the martyr theology in 4 Maccabees, for he states that the price of God's righteousness, justification, and the redemption was Jesus' blood and because he calls Jesus a ἰλαστήριον in Rom 3:25. Ἀπολυτρώσις in Rom 3:24 conveys the idea of ransom just as ἀντίψυχον in 4 Macc 6:29b and 17:21, because both terms in their respective contexts suggest that the deaths of humans were both the means by which God dealt with sin and the means by which they achieved salvation for others.⁵³ Eleazar asked God in 4 Macc 6:28–29 to receive his blood as an ἀντίψυχον for the nation. Fourth Maccabees 17:21–22 states that the

⁵³ Both ἀπολυτρώσις in Rom 3:24 and ἀντίψυχον in 4 Macc 6:29b and 17:21 are conceptually related to ἀντίλυτρον (“ransom”) in 1 Tim 2:6 and the verb λυτρώσθαι (“to redeem”) in Titus 2:14 because in each occurrence of each word the required price to achieve redemption is a human's blood.

martyrs' deaths accomplished salvation for the nation, that the martyrs offered themselves as an ἀντίψυχον for the nation, and that their deaths purified the homeland. Paul likewise suggests in Rom 3:21–22 and Rom 3:24–25 that Jesus' blood paid the necessary price to atone sin in order to achieve God's righteousness and justification for those whom he died.

3.2. *Jesus as a Ἰλαστήριον for Sin and Satisfier of God's Judgment*

The occurrence of Ἰλαστήριον in Rom 3:25 provides another parallel with martyr theology and Rom 3:21–26, for both Paul and the author of 4Macc 17:22 apply Ἰλαστήριον to the deaths of pious Jewish humans on behalf of the sins of others, and both traditions suggest that these deaths benefit those for whom they died. While there is no scholarly consensus as to how one should translate Ἰλαστήριον in Rom 3:25 and while there are nuanced categories within the general translation options,⁵⁴ suggested translations are “mercy” seat,⁵⁵ lid of the ark,⁵⁶ propitiation,⁵⁷ and expia-

⁵⁴ See Finlan, *Atonement Metaphors*, 141–142.

⁵⁵ Origen, *Comm. Rom.*, 216–225; John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians* (trans. R. MacKenzie; ed. D.W. Torrance and T.F. Torrance; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 75; Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns; London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 104–105; T.W. Manson, “Ἰλαστήριον,” *JTS* 46 (1945): 1–10; Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1949), 156–162; Stanislas Lyonnet, “De notione expiationis,” *VD* 37 (1959): 336–352; F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 104–107; William Swain, “For our Sins: The Image of Sacrifice in the Thought of the Apostle Paul,” *Int* 17 (1963): 131–139; Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (EKKNT 6/1; Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1980), 191–192; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 97; 350–354; B.F. Meyer, “The Pre-Pauline Formula in Rom 3:25–26a,” *NTS* 29 (1983): 198–208; Arnold J. Hultgren, *Paul's Gospel and Mission: The Outlook from His Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 59–60; M. Newton, *The Concept of Purity in the Letters of Paul* (SNTSMS 53; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 76–77; C.K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (2nd ed.; London: A. & C. Black, 1991), 73–75; Joseph Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 348–349; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (trans. Scott J. Hafemann; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 58–61; Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel*, 43–44; Adolf Schlatter, *Romans: The Righteousness of God* (trans. S.S. Schatzmann; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 99; Brendan Byrne, *Romans* (SP 6; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1996), 132–133; David J. Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 247, 253 n. 19; Bailey, “Mercy Seat,” Gordon Fee, “Paul and the Metaphors for Salvation,” in Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins, eds., *The Redemption: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on Christ As Redeemer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 43–67, esp. 55–60; Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” in D.A. Carson and Greg K. Beale, eds., *The Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 618–619.

⁵⁶ For advocates of this view, see Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 110–115.

⁵⁷ Morris, “The Meaning,” 3–43; Roger Nicole, “C.H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitia-

tion.⁵⁸ Recent exegesis suggests that the term in Rom 3:25 has nothing to do with expiation or propitiation, but rather it speaks of reconciliation.⁵⁹ Paul simply states that Jesus' death provides a "new means of access to God."⁶⁰ Another proposal is that Paul uses ἱλαστήριον to state that Jesus was a "revelatory means of atonement."⁶¹

Moving beyond the question of translation to the background influences behind ἱλαστήριον in Rom 3:25, other scholars have suggested that ἱλαστήριον in Rom 3:25 simply alludes to the Yom Kippur ritual, but that it does not specifically refer to the mercy seat.⁶² Nico Fryer specifically argues that 4 Macc 17:22 was not the background behind Rom 3:25 since Paul states that God initiates and accomplishes salvation, whereas 4 Macc 17:22 states that the martyrs initiated the saving event.⁶³ Peter Lampe's recent comments on ἱλαστήριον in Rom 3:25 assume that the Yom Kippur ritual was the background behind Paul's use of the term. Consequently, Lampe argues that Paul does not present Jesus' death in Rom 3:25 as an atoning sacrifice since Paul does not equate Jesus' blood with the animal's blood that was sprinkled over the mercy seat.⁶⁴ N.T. Wright, on the other hand, acknowledges that Paul presents Jesus' death as an atoning sacrifice and that Paul both appeals to Jesus as Israel's Day of Atonement in place of Yom Kippur and that he interprets Jesus' death along the lines of the Jewish martyrs in 2 and 4 Maccabees.⁶⁵ However, Wright argues that these two backgrounds alone do not completely explain Paul's sequence of thought in Rom 3:25.⁶⁶ The

tion," *WTJ* 17 (1954–1955): 117–157; David Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings* (SNTSMS 5; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 23–48.

⁵⁸ Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, 82–95; C.H. Dodd, *Romans* (MNTC; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), 20–24, 77.

⁵⁹ Robert K. Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 286.

⁶⁰ Jewett, *Romans*, 286.

⁶¹ Ekem, "A Dialogical Exegesis," 75–93. Ekem ("Dialogical Exegesis," 80) clearly asserts, though, that expiation is the more likely reading of ἱλαστήριον in Rom 3:25.

⁶² W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1946), 227–284, esp. 230–242; Campbell, *Rhetoric*, 107–113, 130–133; Knöppler, *Sühne*, 112–117; Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity* (WUNT 163; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 198–202.

⁶³ Nico S.L. Fryer, "The Meaning and Translation of Hilastērion in Romans 3:25," *EvQ* 59 (1987): 99–116, esp. 103–104.

⁶⁴ Lampe, "Human Sacrifice and Pauline Christology," 191–209, esp. 194–195. See also McLean, "Christ as Pharmakos in Pauline Soteriology," 187–207; McLean, "The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul's Soteriology," 531–553; McLean, *The Cursed Christ*.

⁶⁵ Wright, "Romans," 171–172. So also James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Nashville: Nelson, 1988), 170–173, 180–182.

⁶⁶ Wright, "Romans," 475.

traditions of Dan 11:35 and Dan 12:1–12 and Isaiah 40–55 more likely are primarily behind Paul's statement that God set forth Jesus as a *ἱλαστήριον*.⁶⁷ Wright argues this point based on the fact that just as Rom 3:21–26, Isaiah 40–55 offers an exposition of God's righteousness by focusing on a suffering figure who represents and fulfills the purpose that YHWH would be a light to the nation and whose (the suffering figure's) suffering and death are seen in explicit sacrificial terms.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, Jesus' death in Rom 3:25 should be understood as an atoning sacrifice and as a saving event for Jews and Gentiles precisely because the martyr theology in Hellenistic Judaism in 4Macc 6:28–29 and 17:21–22 primarily shaped Paul's conception of Jesus' death.⁶⁹ The specific parallels between 4Maccabees and Rom 3:24–25 (e.g. the cultic concepts of sin, blood, redemption, *ἱλαστήριον*) suggest this. Both 4Macc 17:21–22 and Rom 3:24–25 contain cultic language to express the soteriological achievement of the deaths of Jewish humans for others in a context that uses sacrificial vocabulary.⁷⁰ As I suggested above, *ἱλαστήριον* occurs in sacrificial (Lev 16:14–15) and in non-sacrificial contexts in the LXX (Ezek 43:14; 17, 20; Amos 9:1). In the former contexts, it refers to the mercy seat. The translators of the LXX often render *ἱλαστήριον* as mercy seat from the root כפר, which often means “to atone” (cf. MT Lev 16:14). However, there is a fundamental difference between the occurrence of *ἱλαστήριον* in 4Macc 17:22 and in Rom 3:25 and its occurrence in sacrificial contexts in the Old Testament: 4Macc 17:22 and Rom 3:25 apply the term to the death of a human for the saving benefit of another, whereas the term occurs in sacrificial contexts in the Old Testament to refer to the blood of the animals that the priests sprinkled over the mercy seat.

Indeed, when Paul states in Rom 3:25 that God set forth Jesus to die for sin, he alludes to Leviticus 16 and the Yom Kippur ritual (cf. Lev 16:14–16), because sin and blood and the concept of death occur in both Rom 3:25 and Leviticus 16.⁷¹ Moreover, Wright is correct to point out that Paul's exposition

⁶⁷ Wright, “Romans,” 475.

⁶⁸ Wright, “Romans,” 475, esp. 475.

⁶⁹ Similarly van Henten, “The Tradition-Historical Background,” 101–128. C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans 1–8* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 2004 [orig. 1975], 217–218), asserts without argumentation that both the martyr theology of 4Maccabees and the Akedah tradition were behind Paul's statement that God offered Jesus as a *ἱλαστήριον* in Rom 3:25.

⁷⁰ Cranfield, *Romans 1–8*, 217–218.

⁷¹ See Frank S. Thielman, *Paul & the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 181.

of God's righteousness in the context where he discusses the suffering of Jesus for the sins of others reveals a connection between Isaiah 40–55 and Rom 3:21–26. However, that Paul alludes to and/or parallels Yom Kippur and Isaiah 40–55 does not prove that Paul's fundamental background to Rom 3:25 were these two Old Testament traditions, because (1) unlike the Old Testament cultic sacrifices, Jesus and the martyrs were human sacrifices who died publicly for the sins of others to benefit them; (2) unlike the mercy seat in Leviticus 16, neither Jesus nor the martyrs were objects sprinkled with blood for the forgiveness of sin; (3) Jesus' blood and the blood of the martyrs (not the blood of animals) was sprinkled for others to restore their broken relationship with God and to turn God's wrath; and (4) unlike Isaiah 40–55 Paul specifically applies *ἱλαστήριον* to the vicarious death of a human for the salvation of those for whom the human died.⁷² In other words, the parallels between martyr theology and Rom 3:25 are too similar to ascribe to them a secondary influence next to Leviticus 16 and Isaiah 40–55. Other parallels between martyr theology and Rom 3:21–26 support this point.

That God satisfied his justice in the death of Jesus is another parallel with the martyr theology in 4 Maccabees. *Δικαιοσύνη* refers to God's judgment in Rom 3:25b–26, just as the term *δίκη* in 4 Macc 6:28 refers to God's judgment (4 Macc 4:13, 21; 6:28–29; 8:14, 22; 9:9, 15, 32; 11:3; 12:12; 18:22; cf. 2 Macc 8:11, 13) and just as *δικαιοσύνη* refers to justice (i.e. to doing what is right) in 4 Maccabees (4 Macc 1:4, 6, 18; 2:6; 5:24). In 4 Maccabees, the law instructs the martyrs to do what is right. In Rom 3:25b–26, God does what is right. Although the martyrs perform justice in 4 Maccabees but God does what is right in Rom 3:25b–26, there is still a parallel between the two traditions. They both use *δικαιοσύνη* to refer to justice. That *δικαιοσύνη* refers to salvation in Rom 3:21–22, but to God's judgment/justice in Rom 3:25b–26 is certain since Paul argues in Rom 1:17 that God's righteousness is revealed by faith and in Rom 1:18–3:20 that God's wrath is currently revealed upon all who suppress the truth and that Jews and Gentiles will be subject to God's wrath because of their sin. Furthermore, just as Rom 1:17, Rom 3:21–22 states that God reveals his *δικαιοσύνη* to others "by faith" but Rom 3:25b–26 asserts that God demonstrated his *δικαιοσύνη* against sin in Jesus' death, so that he (God) would be the justifier and show himself to be just. Romans 3:21–26 suggests that God offered Jesus as a *ἱλαστήριον* to reveal his righteousness in judging sin so that he would justify those for whom Jesus died and to

⁷² See van Henten, "Jewish Martyrdom and Jesus' Death," 139–168.

show himself to be a just God, just as 4 Macc 6:28–29 and 17:21–22 state that the martyrs died as God’s judgment against the nation’s sin to save from his wrath those for whom they died.

Other parallels between martyr theology and Rom 3:21–26 support that the former primarily influenced Paul’s conception of Jesus’ death in the latter text. Participial forms of πιστεύω occur in 2 Macc 3:12 (πεπιστευκότας), in 2 Macc 3:22 (τὰ πεπιστευμένα, τοῖς πεπιστευκόσιν), in 4 Macc 4:7 (πιστεύσαντες), in 4 Macc 7:19 (πιστεύοντες), and in 4 Macc 8:7, and a participial form of πιστεύω (πιστεύοντας) occurs in Rom 3:22. Second Maccabees 2:8 and 4 Macc 1:2 refer to God’s glory, and Rom 3:23 refers to God’s glory. 2 and 4 Maccabees refer to the martyrs’ blood (2 Macc 1:8; 8:3; 12:16; 14:18, 45; 4 Macc 6:6; 7:8; 9:20; 10:8; 13:20), and Rom 3:25 refers to Jesus’ blood. 2 and 4 Maccabees speak of the martyrs’ deaths in the context of their dying for the sins of others (2 Macc 5:17; 6:14–15; 7:32; 12:42–43; 4 Macc 5:19; 17:22), and Paul speaks of Jesus’ death in the context of his dying for the sins of others in Rom 3:25–26. Second Maccabees calls God just (2 Macc 1:24–25; 7:36; 9:18; 12:6) with the same term with which Paul calls God just (δικαίος) in Rom 3:26.

The influence of the martyr theology of Hellenistic Judaism on Rom 3:21–26 is strengthened by other martyrological parallels between martyr theology and Romans. These parallels can be seen in Rom 5:8–10 and in Rom 8:3. In Rom 5:8–10, Paul states that Jesus died for the benefit of others (Rom 5:8);⁷³ he uses αἷμα to suggest that Jesus’ blood will save those for whom he died from God’s wrath (Rom 5:9), and he states that Jesus’ death reconciles (καταλλάσσω) God’s enemies to God (cf. 2 Cor 5:18–20). Similarly, the author of 2 Macc 7:32–38 asserts that the martyrs suffered and died for others because of sin, but God would be reconciled (καταλλάσσω) again to his servants through the martyrs’ deaths for the nation (cf. 2 Macc 5:1–8:5, esp. 2 Macc 7:37). 2 Maccabees 5:1–8:5 suggests that the martyrs’ deaths actually achieved this reconciliation, because 2 Macc 8:5 records that God’s wrath against the nation turned to mercy after the seventh son died for the nation,⁷⁴ and 4 Macc 6:28–29 and 4 Macc 17:21–22 suggest that the martyrs’ deaths actually saved Israel.

⁷³ For a discussion of the Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ-formula, see Martin Hengel, *The Atonement: A Study of the Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM, 1981), 47–55; Cilliers Breytenbach, “Christus starb für uns: Zur Tradition und paulinischen Rezeption der sogenannten Sterbeformeln,” *NTS* 49 (2003): 447–475.

⁷⁴ So Lohse, *Märtyrer und Gottesknecht*, 67–69; K. Wengst, *Christologische Formeln und Lieder des Urchristentum* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1972), 63. Against Williams, *Jesus’ Death*, 79–89. Several important contributions in the last 15 years on the motif of reconciliation in

Second Maccabees 7:32–38 and 4 Macc 6:28–29 suggest that the martyrs' deaths function as sin-offerings since they suffer for sin (2 Macc 7:32) and since they die to reconcile (2 Macc 7:37), purify (4 Macc 6:28), and save the nation from God's wrath (4 Macc 17:21–22). Likewise, Paul suggests that Jesus' death functions as a sin-offering in Rom 8:3 since he states that Jesus died for sin with the phrase *περι ἁμαρτίας*. Some scholars have contested that Paul calls Jesus a sin-offering in Rom 8:3 with the phrase *περι ἁμαρτίας*,⁷⁵ while others have argued to the contrary.⁷⁶ However, even if Paul is not specifically calling Jesus a sin-offering in Rom 8:3, he at least suggests that Jesus' death basically functions as a sin-offering, for the phrase *περι ἁμαρτίας* primarily refers to the Old Testament sin-offering in the LXX (cf. LXX Lev 5:6–11; 7:37; 9:2–3; 12:6, 8; 14:13, 22, 31; 15:15, 30; 16:3, 5, 9; 23:19), and Paul uses *περι ἁμαρτίας* to refer to Jesus' death for sin.

Therefore, as God's *ἰλαστήριον* in Rom 3:25 Paul suggests in Rom 3:25–26 that Jesus' blood dealt with sin, and it publicly revealed God's righteous judgment against it (Rom 3:25–26), just as the martyrs' blood dealt with sin and publicly revealed God's righteous judgment against it (cf. 2 Macc 7:32–38; 4 Macc 6:28–29; 17:21–22). Paul's statement regarding Jesus' death and sin in Rom 3:25b–26 supports this. Romans 3:25b–26 states that God offered

Paul have argued that martyr theology was not the background behind the Pauline idea of reconciliation: e.g. Ralph P. Martin, *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 105–106; Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (2nd ed.; WUNT 2.4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984); Seyoon Kim, "2 Cor 5:11–21 and Reconciliation," *NovT* 38–39 (1996–1997): 360–384, esp. 361–366; Greg K. Beale, "Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5–7 and Its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1," *NTS* 35 (1989): 550–581; Stanley E. Porter, *Καταλλάσσω in Ancient Greek Literature, with Reference to the Pauline Writings* (Cordoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 1994); Cilliers Breytenbach, "Salvation of the Reconciled: With a Note on the Background of Paul's Metaphor of Reconciliation," in J.G. van der Watt, ed., *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 271–286.

⁷⁵ Cranfield (*Romans 1–8*, 382) rejects the reading of sin-offering for *περι ἁμαρτίας* in Rom 8:3 in spite of the fact that the LXX often uses this phrase in cultic contexts to refer to a sin-offering (e.g. LXX Lev 5:9; 14:31; Ps 39:7). Cranfield argues that a sacrificial reading is forced in Rom 8:3 since the context of Paul's argument does not support a sacrificial interpretation. He suggests that *περι ἁμαρτίας* in Rom 8:3 should be connected to the participial clause *πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας* and not to the verbal clause *κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί*. According to Cranfield, Rom 8:3 simply refers to Jesus' mission, not his [violent] death for sin (emphasis mine). Schreiner, *Romans*, 401–403, agrees with Cranfield that *περι ἁμαρτίας* in Rom 8:3 modifies the participle and not the verb, but Schreiner departs from Cranfield in that he argues that *περι ἁμαρτίας* refers to Jesus as a sin-offering since the phrase refers to a sin-offering forty-four of fifty-four occurrences in the LXX.

⁷⁶ So Peter Stuhlmacher, *Der Brief an die Römer* (NTD 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 107; N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 1:220–225; Bell, "Sacrifice and Christology in Paul," 1–27, esp. 5–8.

Jesus as a ἱλαστήριον “by means of his blood for the demonstration of his righteousness because of the passing over of previously committed sins.”⁷⁷ Regardless of how one understands the phrase “previously committed sins” in Rom 3:25b, the text clearly states that God set forth Jesus as a ἱλαστήριον by means of blood to deal with these sins since Paul states in Rom 3:25–26 that God offered Jesus as a ἱλαστήριον by using the combination of blood, sins, and the concepts of death and judgment. The preceding words and/or concepts likewise occur in 2 and 4 Maccabees in relation to the martyrs’ deaths for Israel (cf. 2 Macc 7:32–38; 4 Macc 6:28–29; 17:21–22).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The following are the major points of contact that I see between the martyr theology in Hellenistic Judaism, which is most apparent in 4 Maccabees, and Paul’s conception of Jesus’ death in Rom 3:21–26. (1) The martyrs and Jesus were Jewish and pious humans, who vicariously died for the sins of others (2 Macc 7:32; 4 Macc 6:28–29; Rom 3:23, 25; 8:3). (2) The martyrs and Jesus were the means by which purification and cleansing came to others (4 Macc 6:28–29; 17:21; Rom 3:24–26; 8:3). (3) The martyrs and Jesus were the necessary price paid to atone for the sins of others (4 Macc 6:28–29; 17:21–22; Rom 3:24–26; 5:8–10). (4) God saved from his wrath those for whom the martyrs and Jesus died (2 Macc 5:1–8:5; 4 Macc 17:21–22; Rom 3:21–22, 24–26; 5:8–10; 8:1–4). (5) The martyrs and Jesus were the only humans to whom ἱλαστήριον and κατὰ λασσω were applied with cultic language to describe the salvation that a human’s death achieves for others (cf. 2 Macc 7:37 and Rom 5:10; 4 Macc 17:22 and Rom 3:25).

These points of contact between the martyr theology in Hellenistic Judaism and Rom 3:21–26 are not simply coincidental parallels. Rather, the martyr theology in Hellenistic Judaism shaped and provided the primary background behind Paul’s conception of Jesus’ death for others as an atoning sacrifice and as a saving event in Rom 3:21–26. The presence of a martyr theology tradition in LXX Dan 3:24–40, Wis 3:6, *As. Mos.* 9.6–10.18, and 2 Macc 5:1–8:5 (texts that most probably predate Romans), and the close parallels between these texts and 4 Maccabees and Rom 3:21–26, suggest that the martyr theology tradition of Hellenistic Judaism shaped Paul’s concep-

⁷⁷ Romans 3:25–26 introduces multiple exegetical difficulties with (1) διὰ, (2) πάρεσις, and (3) ἀνοχῆ. See W.G. Kümmel’s influential article (“*Paresis* and *Endeixis*: A Contribution to the Understanding of the Pauline Doctrine of Justification,” *JTC* 3 [1967]: 1–13).

tion of Jesus' death in Rom 3:21–26. This martyrological background enabled Paul to articulate in clear and relevant terms to his Hellenistic Jewish and Gentile Christian audience in Rome the meaning and significance of Jesus' death for others.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ This essay is related to my book *Maccabean Martyr Traditions*. Although this essay offers fresher arguments and focuses primarily on Rom 3:21–26 and the book investigates several texts in the Pauline corpus, it includes some material from the book. I published the material in this essay with the permission of Wipf and Stock.

TORAH INSTRUCTION, DISCUSSION, AND PROPHECY IN FIRST-CENTURY SYNAGOGUES

Carl Mosser

1. THE SYNAGOGUE AND CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

The Jesus movement was born and nurtured in Second Temple synagogues. Jesus was a Jew; as such he grew up attending synagogue.¹ Each of the Synoptic Gospels places the beginning of his ministry in the synagogues of Galilee (Matt 4:23; Mark 1:14, 21; Luke 4:15). Throughout his ministry three activities are repeatedly ascribed to Jesus in the synagogues: teaching, proclaiming the message of the kingdom, and healing (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 12:9–14; 13:54; Mark 1:21–23, 39; 3:1; 6:2; Luke 4:15; 6:6–11; 13:10–12; John 6:59). According to Acts, Saul of Tarsus similarly began his apostolic ministry in the Damascus synagogue (9:20). Later Paul and his companions inaugurated their missionary activity in the synagogues of Cyprus (13:5). As they traveled through the eastern provinces, in city after city they attended Sabbath meetings of the local synagogue and readily found opportunity to proclaim their message (13:14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 9; 19:8; cf. 18:26).² In several of these synagogues they continued to discuss their teachings in subsequent Sabbath gatherings, sometimes for a few months at a time (13:44; 14:3; 17:2; 18:4; 19:8). In many cases they were forced to leave the city. Occasionally they chose to leave the synagogue before that happened, apparently in order to begin rival synagogues in homes or lecture halls (18:7–8; 19:9).³ Other texts

¹ For a brief defense of this assertion, see James D.G. Dunn, “Did Jesus Attend the Synagogue?,” in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 206–222.

² Though not identified as a synagogue, the prayer place near the river outside Philippi (Acts 16:13) is included because it served the same function. See Susan Haber, “Common Judaism, Common Synagogue? Purity, Holiness, and Sacred Space at the Turn of the Common Era,” in Wayne O. McCready and Adele Reinhartz, eds., *Common Judaism: Explorations in Second-Temple Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 69–71.

³ Howard Clark Kee, “Defining the First-Century CE Synagogue: Problems and Progress,” in Howard Clark Kee and Lynn H. Cohick, eds., *Evolution of the Synagogue: Problems and Progress* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1999), 15–16, finds additional

presuppose that members of the Jesus movement continued to participate in their local synagogues for quite some time, even to the point of receiving corporal punishment or expulsion (Matt 23:34; Mark 13:9; Luke 12:11; 21:12; John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2).⁴

From its inception through the end of the first century, the Jesus movement spread and developed in the Jewish synagogue.⁵ The most striking thing to notice is that Jesus and his followers could presume that there would be occasion to proclaim their message and teach in any synagogue they visited, whether in Palestine or the western Diaspora. Even when their message initially received a hostile reception, they could usually count on the opportunity to discuss or argue about it during at least one subsequent Sabbath assembly. Later synagogue services would not permit such opportunities.

As the writings in the New Testament abundantly illustrate, the Jesus movement deliberately based its teachings on the sacred writings of Israel. A few early leaders of the movement, most notably Paul, received formal Jewish education and would have been exposed to scripture and its interpretation as part of that process.⁶ Nonetheless, it was primarily during the Sabbath assembly that most Christ-followers would have learned the contents of scripture and heard it interpreted in various ways. It was there that they presented interpretations in support of their claims. Many of the distinctive teachings of the movement were derived from preexisting interpretive traditions, adapted to the new eschatological reality that the movement

evidence for “Christian” synagogues in the phrase “their synagogues” (Mark 1:39; 13:9; Matt 12:9; 13:54; 23:34; Luke 4:15). According to Kee, this phrase “of course implies that Jesus and his followers have their own synagogues.” However, most of these passages contain a geographical reference and the “their” refers to the local residents of the aforementioned town or region, not to Jews in distinction from Christians (which, in any case, would be anachronistic).

⁴ It is unclear whether Jas 2:2 presupposes common Jewish synagogues in which the addressees participate or separate “Christian” synagogues.

⁵ The author of Acts identifies each of the synagogues in Cyprus, Iconium, Thessalonica and Berea as a “synagogue of the Jews” (13:5; 14:1; 17:1, 10). This may be intended to distinguish a Jewish synagogue from a Samaritan synagogue in the same location (it is known that there was a Samaritan synagogue in Thessalonica). At present, there is no concrete evidence that the Jesus movement similarly spread through Samaritan synagogues. Most of the relevant evidence is surveyed in Reinhard Pummer, “Samaritan Synagogues and Jewish Synagogues: Similarities and Differences,” in Steven Fine, ed., *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue* (London: Routledge, 1999), 105–142.

⁶ Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, “Paul’s Bible, His Education and His Access to the Scriptures of Israel,” *JGRChJ* 5 (2008): 9–41.

proclaimed.⁷ Christian origins, then, are inseparable from the central religious activity of the first-century synagogue, the reading and interpretation of the Torah and Prophets.

In this light, it is odd that many books intended to situate Jesus and/or the origin of Christianity in historical and social context mention synagogues only in passing—if at all.⁸ Authors who do provide information about the synagogue are frequently content to summarize the academic discussion of such things as the synagogue's origin, the location and architecture of ancient synagogues, or the roles of women and God-fearers. Little attention is given to rituals and practices. The importance of the Torah and Torah study is sometimes highlighted,⁹ but accompanied by neither a description of how this was done in the synagogue nor an explanation of why Jesus and early Christian missionaries could presume to teach in any synagogue they visited. These two issues deserve greater attention in the study of Christian origins.

Scholarship devoted to the study of ancient synagogues does address the Torah-reading ritual and instruction.¹⁰ However, most scholars cite first-

⁷ I have traced a particularly striking example of this phenomenon in my "The Earliest Patristic Interpretations of Psalm 82, Jewish Antecedents and the Origin of Christian Deification," *JTS* 56 (2005): 30–74.

⁸ Representative examples include: Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison, John Dominic Crossan, eds., *The Historical Jesus in Context* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); James G. Crossley, *Why Christianity Happened: A Sociohistorical Account of Christian Origins (26–50 CE)* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006); Sean Freyne, *Jesus a Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus Story* (London: T&T Clark, 2004); Alexander J.M. Wedderburn, *A History of the First Christians* (London: T&T Clark, 2004); Christopher Rowland, *Christian Origins: The Setting and Character of the Most Important Messianic Sect of Judaism* (2nd ed.; London: SPCK, 2002); Paula Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth: King of the Jews* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999); John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998); Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (trans. John Bowden; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985).

⁹ E.g. N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 1; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 235–237.

¹⁰ Stephen K. Catto, *Reconstructing the First-Century Synagogue: A Critical Analysis of Current Research* (LNTS 363; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 116–124; Michael Graves, "The Public Reading of Scripture in Early Judaism," *JETS* 50 (2007): 467–487; Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (2nd ed.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 146–158; Carsten Claußen, *Versammlung, Gemeinde Synagoge: Das hellenistisch-jüdische Umfeld der frühchristlichen Gemeinden* (StUNT 27; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 213–218; Anders Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-Historical Study* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 193–235; Donald D. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts: The Place of the Synagogues in the Second Temple Period* (SBLDS 169; Atlanta: SBL,

century texts primarily to demonstrate that reading from the Torah and Prophets and sermons based on these readings were established features of the synagogue service prior to the temple's destruction. To fill in the picture of what these activities would have looked like, attention quickly shifts to the Mishnah and other rabbinic sources. Most scholars preface this with an obligatory boilerplate warning about the danger of using rabbinic texts to establish first-century practices. Regardless, the resulting portraits remain strikingly similar to those found in the important synthesizing works of Schürer, Elbogen, and Moore.¹¹ The editors who updated the original editions of Schürer (1886–1890) and Elbogen (1913) corrected some of the most egregious anachronisms related to first-century synagogue practices but they left the basically rabbinic portrait of Torah reading and sermons untouched.

It is unfortunate that scholars do not take their perfunctory warnings more seriously. Many studies, especially those dependent on Schürer or Elbogen, muddy the investigation by asserting that practices attested only later were current during the Second Temple period (most commonly the practice of *lectio continua* following a set reading cycle). Others indiscriminately discuss all the evidence from antiquity together with little regard for chronology.¹² Of course, the danger of anachronism flows both ways; what is attested earlier does not always represent later practice. Failure to carefully distinguish between time periods makes it difficult to discern what the relevant evidence does *not* include for a given period. But anachronism is

1999), 399–404; Lawrence H. Schiffman, “The Early History of the Public Reading of the Torah,” in Fine, ed., *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists*, 44–56; E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice & Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), 197–202; Dirk Monshouwer, “The Reading of the Bible in the Synagogue in the First Century,” *Bijdragen* 51 (1990): 68–84; Charles Perrot, “The Reading of the Bible in the Ancient Synagogue,” in Martin Jan Mulder, ed., *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 137–159; Charles Perrot, *La Lecture de la Bible dans la Synagogue: Les anciennes lectures palestiniennes du Shabbat et des fêtes* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1973).

¹¹ Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (rev. and ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar and Martin Goodman; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–1987), 2:447–454; Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (ed. Joseph Heinemann; trans. Raymond P. Scheindlin; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993), 129–158; George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age Of The Tannaim* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927–1930), 1:296–307.

¹² E.g. Shmuel Safrai, “Gathering in the Synagogues on Festivals, Sabbaths and Weekdays,” in Rachel Hachlili, ed., *Ancient Synagogues in Israel: Third–Seventh Century C.E.* (Oxford: B.A.R., 1989), 7–15. Contrary to the book's subtitle, the focus of this essay is not confined to the third through seventh centuries but on “ancient times.”

not the only concern here. Because scholars quickly turn to later texts in order to fill in the details of the synagogue service, they tend not to interrogate the relevant first-century texts sufficiently. There is more information available to us in some of the first-century literature than has been recognized. This is not to say that rabbinic sources should be ignored in a fuller study of first-century synagogue practices. If due diligence really is taken, rabbinic literature can provide some reliable (or at least likely) information. But we must be careful not to allow this literature to draw us away from earlier sources before we have thoroughly mined their riches.

2. SECOND TEMPLE SYNAGOGUE SERMONS?

The proposition that sermons were a common feature of Second Temple synagogue practice is a staple in both New Testament and early Jewish studies. The evidence cited by scholars in each field, the basic assumptions they employ about what a sermon is, and the way in which they assign genres to texts on the basis of alleged homiletic forms are all identical. Given the ubiquitous explanatory role some scholars give to homiletic forms and practices, one would expect to find an impressive evidential foundation undergirding their work. The fact, however, is that the main supporting evidence includes only *three* first-century texts.

Lee Levine is representative when he begins his discussion of Second Temple synagogue sermons by asserting, “The New Testament makes it crystal clear that the sermon ... was a recognized component of the Sabbath service.”¹³ In support, he refers to Jesus’ teaching in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:16–21) and Paul’s discourse in the synagogue of Psidian Antioch (Acts 13:15–41). Both episodes are taken to be instances of formal Sabbath instruction in a typical non-sectarian synagogue. A few scholars also cite Philo’s description of the Sabbath assembly of the Therapeutae (*Contempl.* 29–33). All three of these passages will be examined later in this essay, but at this point it is useful to make a few observations about how these passages are interpreted in order to raise questions that will guide the subsequent investigation.

In the first passage Jesus undoubtedly gives the formal Sabbath instruction. In the third passage the elder of the Therapeutae likewise delivers formal Sabbath instruction. But do either of them preach a sermon? The

¹³ Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, 157.

answer to this question depends on how we define “sermon.” What are its delineating features? How do we distinguish a sermon from other forms of public speech?

Scholars have attempted to formulate answers to the last two questions by reference to the episode in Acts 13. After the reading from the Law and Prophets, the synagogue officials sent Paul and his companions a message, saying: “Brothers, if there is any word of exhortation (λόγος παρακλήσεως) for the people among you, please speak” (13:15). Paul stands to address the assembly and gives an apologetic for belief in Jesus (13:16–41). On the implausible assumption that the synagogue rulers ask if one of their visitors wants to deliver the morning’s sermon, the phrase λόγος παρακλήσεως (“word of exhortation”) is frequently identified as a technical term for a synagogue sermon. William Lane, for example, says that the phrase “appears to be an idiomatic, fixed expression for a sermon in Jewish-hellenistic and early Christian circles.”¹⁴ Lawrence Wills similarly states that it is “quite likely that the term took on a fixed meaning as the sermon of the worship service in early Christianity.”¹⁵

In support of this connection Perdelwitz cites Acts 15:32 where Christ-followers in Antioch were “encouraged through many words” (διὰ λόγου πολλοῦ παρεκάλεσαν) by Judas and Silas who had arrived from Jerusalem.¹⁶ Lane buttresses it by reference to 1 Timothy 4:13 where Timothy is told to “give attention to reading, to exhortation, to teaching” (πρόσεχε τῇ ἀναγνώσει, τῇ παρακλήσει, τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ).¹⁷ Noting that preaching followed the public reading of Scripture in the liturgical pattern of the synagogue, Lane concludes that 1 Timothy reflects this pattern and that “exhortation” here refers to the pastoral duty to preach sermons.¹⁸ These lines of reasoning

¹⁴ William Lane, *Hebrews* (2 vols.; WBC 47a–b; Dallas: Word, 1991), lxx.

¹⁵ Lawrence Wills, “The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity,” *HTR* 77 (1984): 280. The claim is accepted without criticism by C. Clifton Black, “The Rhetorical Form of the Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Sermon: A Response to Lawrence Wills,” *HTR* 81 (1988): 1–18.

¹⁶ Richard Perdelwitz, “Das literarische Problem des Hebräerbriefs,” *ZNW* 11 (1910): 64.

¹⁷ Lane, *Hebrews*, 568.

¹⁸ Wills, “Form of the Sermon,” 280, also cites *Apos. Con.* 8.5. There a liturgy for the ordination of bishops is described. After the candidate has been ordained and enthroned he pronounces a blessing on the congregation. In his first act as a bishop he then speaks to the people “words of exhortation” (λόγους παρακλήσεως). This text is late and of dubious value in establishing first-century usage. Nonetheless, it should be observed that these “words of exhortation” are delivered on a special occasion and are not the normal sermon in a weekly worship service. Nor is it clear that they even refer to a sermon in this context. What the new bishop says at this point in the ceremony is also referred to as “his word of doctrine,”

are widely accepted as sound and play a significant role in scholarship on early Jewish and Christian homiletic practices.¹⁹

Unfortunately, scholars who endorse these claims rarely specify what they mean by a sermon or homily. The designation is vacuous if it cannot distinguish sermons from other forms of public speaking and instruction. Wills acknowledges the legitimacy of this criticism but inexplicably fails to identify any distinctive features of sermons.²⁰ He instead moves straight into a form-critical analysis of the features peculiar to the specific form of sermon he calls the “word of exhortation.” One might consider this criticism pedantic since most people know what a sermon is. But therein lies the danger. Scholars and their readers assume a certain understanding of what a sermon is: it is the kind of religious monologue one hears in the weekly worship services of modern churches and synagogues. But is it safe to assume that sermons of this sort were also central to first-century synagogue worship?

Many would answer this question affirmatively based on an additional piece of evidence. It is widely observed that Hebrews refers to itself (supposedly) as a word of exhortation: “I exhort you brothers, bear with the word of exhortation (τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως); for I have even written to you briefly” (13:22). Furthermore, Hebrews lacks an epistolary prescript, contains rhetorical features associated with oral discourse, and frequently cites scripture. For these reasons contemporary scholars almost universally classify Hebrews as a sermon and believe that this classification helps unlock the meaning of an enigmatic book.²¹

suggesting that what he says may be a set liturgical pronouncement, perhaps a confession of faith. 1 Macc 10:24; 2 Macc 7:24; 15:11 are likewise cited but it is unclear how any of them could possibly support the hypothesis. Indeed, the first passage specifically refers to writing a letter!

¹⁹ E.g. Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *From Prophecy to Preaching: A Search for the Origins of the Christian Homily* (SupVC 59; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 11–17; David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (LEC 8; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 212–214; Wills, “The Form of the Sermon,” 277–299; James I.H. McDonald, *Kerygma and Didache: The Articulation and Structure of the Earliest Christian Message* (SNTSMS 37; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 39–68; Hartwig Thyen, *Der Stil der jüdisch-hellenistischen Homilie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), 16–18.

²⁰ Wills, “Form of the Sermon,” 278.

²¹ In addition to most modern commentaries, see Gabriella Gelardini, “*Verhärtert eure Herzen nicht*: Der Hebräer, Eine Synagogohomilie zu Tischa be-Av (BIS 83; Leiden: Brill, 2007); Peter Walker, “A Place for Hebrews? Contexts for a First-Century Sermon,” in P.J. Williams et al., eds., *The New Testament in Its First Century Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 231–249; Kenneth L. Schenck, *Understanding the Book of Hebrews: The Story Behind the Sermon* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003); Harold W. Attridge, “Paraenesis in a Homily (λόγος παρακλήσεως): The Possible Location of, and Socialization In, the ‘Epistle to

Classifying Hebrews as a sermon is thought to bolster the identification of λόγος παρακλήσεως as “the oldest attested term for a synagogue sermon.”²² If sound, this makes Hebrews one of the only preserved Second Temple synagogue sermons and an important primary datum for the study of ancient sermons. This has led some to use Hebrews as a reference point for determining the common or typical characteristics of synagogue sermons. It also generates definitions of sermons or homilies formulated in reference to Hebrews. For example, David Aune defines first-century homilies as “speeches of exhortation, often using arguments based on the interpretation of biblical passages, directed to insiders.”²³ This definition quite obviously derives from the parallel wording of Acts 13:15 and Heb 13:22 and the content of Hebrews itself. But this simply begs the question about whether “word of exhortation” refers to synagogue sermons or whether Hebrews is an example of one.

If definitions like Aune’s are viciously circular, others are too ambiguous. Lee Levine defines a synagogue sermon as “the exposition of an idea that appears in the scriptural reading.” In the same context he equates the sermon with an “exposition of scriptural readings.”²⁴ According to this definition, any oral exposition of scripture qualifies, whether in a synagogue, in the home, or in private conversation. Folker Siegert narrows the scope slightly by defining a sermon as a “public explanation of a sacred doctrine or a sacred text” with its *Sitz im Leben* being worship (i.e. delivered in a liturgical setting).²⁵ But how prepared must the speech be to qualify? How should it be connected to the liturgy? For example, would a spontaneous exposition of two minutes qualify as a sermon if it was offered in the synagogue during a period of open discussion? According to this definition it seems that it should, but it is doubtful that Siegert has such expositions in mind. The fact that he accepts the identification of Hebrews as a synagogue sermon suggests that he is thinking of longer, prepared expositions. In other words, he is thinking of something similar to the sermons found in modern

the Hebrews,” *Semeia* 50 (1990): 211–226; William L. Lane, “Hebrews: A Sermon in Search of a Setting,” *SWJT* 28 (1985): 13–18; James Swetnam, “On the Literary Genre of the ‘Epistle’ to the Hebrews,” *NovT* 11 (1969): 261–269.

²² Folker Siegert, “The Sermon as an Invention of Hellenistic Judaism,” in Alexander Deeg, Walter Homolka, and Heinz-Günther Schöttler, eds., *Preaching in Judaism and Christianity* (SJ, FWJ 41; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 28, cf. 27.

²³ David E. Aune, “Homily,” in his *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 219.

²⁴ Levine, *Ancient Synagogues*, 157.

²⁵ Siegert, “Sermon,” 26, 29.

churches and synagogues, albeit employing different exegetical techniques. And this seems to be what the vast majority of scholars also have in mind when they talk about synagogue sermons.

In addition to Hebrews, some scholars identify 4 Maccabees, various portions of Philo's writings, the Wisdom of Solomon, the speeches in Acts, the Epistle of James, 1 John and other early Jewish and Christian literature as synagogue sermons or as containing material derived from sermons. In this we see the continuing influence of Hartwig Thyen's form-critical investigation of the Hellenistic Jewish homily.²⁶ Thyen was able to develop a long list of formal homiletic features to which scholars appeal in their analyses. But Thyen did not discover these features through detailed examination of first-century descriptions of synagogue instruction. Rather, he simply asserted that various features were characteristic or typical of the homily form because they also appear in diatribe or other genres of oral discourse. He then found early Jewish and Christian texts containing those features and used them to distill additional formal homiletic characteristics. A few scholars have attempted to supplement Thyen's form-critical categories with information from the later rabbinic midrashim.²⁷ Throughout all of this, Thyen and his followers have assumed that synagogue homilies were discourses similar to modern sermons.

A rather different picture of synagogue services emerges if we attend more closely to the extant first-century evidence while bracketing out evidence from subsequent eras. In particular, we discover three significant things. First, the sermon or homily typically envisioned by scholars was not yet a common form of synagogue instruction. Instead, formal instruction was either absent or took other shapes. If this is correct, then scholarship that purports to find examples of sermons in the New Testament or which attempts to analyze New Testament texts in light of homiletic forms is misguided. Second, a major component of the typical Sabbath gathering was an extended period of open discussion about Scripture. This explains why Jesus and his followers could present their message in the Sabbath service of any synagogue that they visited. If this is correct, then we can better understand the expansion of the Jesus movement. Third, it appears that not only were measures taken to punish and expel Christ-followers, synagogues began to

²⁶ Thyen, *Der Stil der Jüdisch-Hellenistischen Homilie*.

²⁷ E.g. Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (NovTSup 10; Leiden: Brill, 1965), 28–58; J.W. Bowker, "Speeches in Acts: A Study in Proem and Yelammedenu Form," *NTS* 14 (1967): 96–111; Gelardini, "*Verhärtet eure Herzen nicht*", 137–142.

alter the format of the typical service to deny them a voice at some point late in the first century or early in the second.²⁸ We see here a development in the evolution of the synagogue in response to a minority within its own membership.

Pending new discoveries, almost all of the known first-century evidence for Second Temple synagogue practices is found in four sources: the Theodotus inscription, Philo of Alexandria, Josephus, and Luke-Acts. It is to these sources that we now turn.

3. THE THEODOTUS INSCRIPTION

To begin, the Theodotus inscription says that the first-century synagogue it once adorned was built “for reading of the Law and for teaching of commandments” (εἰς ἀν[άγ]νωσ[τῆ]ρ[ων] νόμου καὶ εἰς [δ]ιδασκαλίαν ἐντολῶν) (*CIJ* 2.1404, 4–5).²⁹ Reading and teaching are distinguished from one another, but the modes in which these activities were done is not described (not that one would expect them to be). However, the primary subject of the teaching is specified as the “commandments.” These are presumably from the Torah. The plaque thus suggests that the patron, a priest named Theodotus, intended for teaching in the synagogue to focus on moral and halakhic issues. Discourses are not ruled out, but neither are they suggested. Other modes of instruction could just as easily be in view. If we want to consider probabilities, the question to ask is what forms of teaching are most conducive to teaching commandments.

4. PHILO

Philo describes the Sabbath as a day devoted to “philosophizing,” discussion of Jewish “ancestral philosophy,” and the cultivation of virtue (*Opif.* 128; *Legat.* 156; *Somn.* 2.127; *Spec.* 2.61; *Mos.* 2.216). Three times he refers to

²⁸ Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 16, 47, 96, 137.

²⁹ The first-century date of the inscription has been questioned, but Rainer Riesner and John Kloppenborg (among others) offer convincing arguments in support. See Rainer Riesner, “Synagogues in Jerusalem,” in Richard Bauckham, ed., *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*. Vol. 4: *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 192–200 and John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, “Dating Theodotus (*CIJ* II 1404),” *JJS* 51.2 (2000): 243–277, revised as “The Theodotus Synagogue Inscription and the Problem of First-Century Synagogue Buildings,” in Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and Archaeology*, 236–282.

proseuchai or synagogues as schools (διδασκαλεία) (*Spec.* 2.62; *Mos.* 2.216; *Legat.* 312). This highly intellectual portrayal of Sabbath activity is idealized in an attempt to convince Gentile readers that the Jewish people are a uniquely philosophical race. This does not mean that it is completely inaccurate though. It could reflect the experience of elites like Philo who undoubtedly exercised influence on the practices of their local synagogues.³⁰ It is even more likely that Philo has put a “philosophical” façade on common synagogue activities. This is supported by the fact that some of these same passages mention particulars of the service that are partially corroborated by outside sources while other passages in Philo portray the same activities without the façade. Of particular interest for our purposes are his statements about who conveyed instruction in different types of synagogues and the form and focus of that instruction.

Philo’s most ordered description of a non-sectarian synagogue service summarizes an opponent’s complaint about the Jewish community. A high ranking official in Egypt with whom Philo was acquainted was determined to change Jewish customs, in particular the observance of the Sabbath.³¹ The official questions whether Jews would break from their Sabbath routine in the face of various natural disasters or attack by an enemy. Or, he asks rhetorically, would they continue with their routine and do nothing that might save their lives?

And will you sit in your synagogues and assemble your regular company and read your holy books in security, explaining (διαπτύσσοντες) anything that is not clear (τι μὴ τρανές), and passing your time in leisurely comfort by long discussion (μακρηγορίας) about your national philosophy? (*Somn.* 2.127)

In addition to resting and gathering together, three distinct elements of the Sabbath service are attested in this passage: reading of Scripture, explanation of the text, and discussion. The focus of explanation is on anything in the reading that is unclear or obscure. This is followed by a lengthy period of discussion focused on the customs of the Jewish people (“national philosophy”). The noun μακρηγορία carries overtones of long-windedness or

³⁰ Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, 89–90, is skeptical but allows for a “modicum of truth” in Philo’s intellectual portrait of synagogue activity in Alexandria. In contrast, Jutta Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria* (TSAJ 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 94, believes that Philo may have equated synagogue exposition with φιλοσοφείν because it bore real similarities with the methods employed in philosophical schools.

³¹ This official is almost certainly Aulus Avilius Flaccus or Philo’s apostate nephew Tiberius Julius Alexander. If he is Philo’s nephew, then he had first-hand knowledge of synagogue services.

tedium. It could refer to a single discourse, but the focus on the entire community gives the impression that this discussion is conducted among the members of the congregation. Others have made the same observation: “The Jews unfold the obscure passages or phrases of what has been read through various discussions The passage may refer to a type of question and answer session held in the synagogues.”³² Elsewhere Philo includes additional details in his own descriptions of non-sectarian Sabbath meetings that support this interpretation.

Retrojecting contemporary practice into the past for precedent, Philo says that Moses instructed the Jewish people to refrain from work and worldly entertainment on the seventh day in order to devote their leisure to “philosophizing” (*Mos.* 2.211–212). But the Mosaic form of philosophy differs from the Greek way of doing philosophy. The Greek manner exemplified by word-catchers and sophists pits philosophical systems against one another and attempts to sell distinctive doctrines like wares in the market (*Mos.* 2.212). In contrast, the philosophy of the Jews consists of deliberations, words, and deeds that are joined together into a single reality designed to obtain happiness and prosperity (*Mos.* 2.212).

The Jewish custom established by Moses was to philosophize on the seventh day with the leader of the people first demonstrating how to do so by explaining (ὀφηγουμένου) and teaching the people in what they should do and say (*Mos.* 2.215). The use of ὀφηγέομαι here is a deliberate anachronism. The same verb and the cognate noun (ὀφήγησις) are used elsewhere to describe formal exposition of the Law in the Sabbath assembly (*Spec.* 2.62; *Legat.* 157). Furthermore, in other descriptions, the leader in the congregation is identified as a priest or elder (*Hypoth.* 7.13) or somebody chosen from among the experienced men of the congregation (*Spec.* 2.62). This man “reads the holy laws and after each one interprets (καθ’ ἕκαστον ἐξηγείται) until nearly late afternoon” (*Hypoth.* 7.13). This describes a kind of running commentary in which a pericope is read and explained, followed by the reading and explanation of another

It is often unnoticed that the leader in *De vita Mosis* 2.211–215 expounds the text and teaches the people in order for members of the congregation to follow his example in their own Sabbath “philosophizing.” Presumably this took place within the synagogue and corresponds to the lengthy discussion period mentioned in *De somniis* 2.127. Furthermore, the delibera-

³² Anders Runesson, Donald D. Binder, and Birger Olsson, *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins to 200 CE: A Source Book* (AJEC 72; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 212.

tions focus on the explanation of “words” and “deeds.” Here “words” may refer to either “anything that is not clear” as in *De somniis* 2.127 or to individual commandments (cf. *Hypoth.* 7.13). “Deeds,” on the other hand, most likely refers to the kind of *halakhot* that 4QMMT refers to as “works of the Law.”

The reconstruction offered thus far might seem to conflict with the fact that Philo specifically states that the congregation is silent during the reading and explanation of the Law except for the occasional utterance of approval (*Hypoth.* 7.13; *Spec.* 2.62; cf. *Prob.* 81; *Contempl.* 31). Leonhardt understands this silence to indicate that teaching took the form of a monologue.³³ Yet, “philosophizing” about the Law (*Spec.* 2.61; *Mos.* 2.215) is not an activity most naturally understood as a passive affair. The tension is easily resolved if we simply visualize the congregation as silent whenever someone is reading or interpreting (cf. 1 Cor 14:26–33).

When we turn to Philo’s descriptions of sectarian synagogue services, we find that the Essene Sabbath service is very similar to the non-sectarian service. Congregants sat in rows arranged according to age, attentive to the reading of the holy books and cultivation of virtue. In both cases somebody with notable experience gives instruction. The one difference is that in the common service a single individual reads and offers the initial explanatory commentary (*Hypoth.* 7.13) whereas in the Essene service one person reads “but another of special experience comes forward and explains whatever is not familiar” (*Prob.* 82). The central focus of the instruction, though, seems to be the same: the explanation of what is not clear in the text (cf. *Somn.* 2.127) and moral instruction (cf. *Prob.* 83). Philo’s description of the Therapeutae service, however, introduces more significant variations.

According to Philo, when the Therapeutae assembled on the Sabbath they sat ordered according to age with their hands inside their robe, the right hand placed above the heart and the left at their side (*Contempl.* 30). They would show support of what was said only with facial expressions or a nod of the head (*Contempl.* 31). Instruction was delivered by “the eldest man who is also experienced in the doctrines [of the group]” (*Contempl.* 31). While similar to Philo’s reports for non-sectarian and Essene services, here he appears to refer to someone who holds a formal position as the chief instructor within the group.

³³ Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship*, 90.

The teaching elder of the Therapeutae is described as “discussing” (διαλέγεται) his subject in a reasoned and thoughtful manner with a quiet and composed voice. He does not make a great display of cleverness like the rhetoricians and sophists do. In contrast, he discusses “the exact meaning (ἀκριβείαν) by closely examining and interpreting the thoughts,” undoubtedly referring to a text that has been read by him or someone else. His discourse appears to be focused on explaining the intricacies of the text and any ambiguities in its meaning. This is the same basic point Philo makes when he says that instruction in common and Essene synagogues focused on explaining anything that was unclear or unfamiliar in the text. As described by Philo, Sabbath instruction among the Therapeutae shared the same basic goals as that of other Jewish groups.

The verb Philo employs to refer to the Sabbath instruction here is διαλέγομαι. In the New Testament, this word can refer to a discussion (or dispute) between two individuals (cf. Mark 9:34). Luke frequently uses it to refer to Paul speaking in the synagogues and elsewhere (Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8, 9; 20:7, 9; 24:12, 25).³⁴ In several of these passages the word carries the sense of “reasoning with” and implies interaction between the speaker and audience. Philo says the congregants are silent and express approval only through facial expressions and nods of the head. This contrasts with his portrayal of non-sectarian services in which congregants uttered the occasional word of approval. But this may only apply to the reading and an initial exposition of the text. Runesson, Binder, and Olsson understand the terminology in this passage to imply that there was a lecture followed by open discussion or a question and answer session.³⁵

What is most distinctive about the Sabbath service among the Therapeutae is that they reserved the teaching role exclusively for a particular leader within the community. Philo’s description of how the instruction was carried out points to an eloquent monologue that was perhaps more composed and “professional” than what he experienced in non-sectarian synagogues. It is here that we come closest to finding something that resembles a sermon. But, as in other Jewish communities, the instruction was designed to present an exact interpretation of the Law (and perhaps other sacred books). It is likely that Sabbath instruction among the Therapeutae was a variation of the common form of running commentary focused on

³⁴ This verb is used only three other times in the New Testament: Mark 9:34; Heb 12:5; Jude 1:9.

³⁵ Runesson, Binder, and Olsson, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 201–202.

explicating specific laws, clarifying ambiguities and explaining the meaning of those aspects of the text that were considered to hold symbolic meaning. But rather than being delivered by a priest or any one of the elders, the task was reserved for the oldest and most learned member of the community.

There is no reason to doubt the broad outlines of Philo's description. However, his portrayal of the instructor's discourse must be taken with a grain of salt. Through all of his discussions of Sabbath worship and instruction Philo endeavors to describe Jews as a distinctively philosophical people. This reaches its climax in *De vita contemplativa* as Philo portrays the Therapeutae as the most philosophical Jews and therefore the most philosophical of all people. Philo's contrast between the instructor's well-reasoned discourse and the exhibitions of the rhetoricians and sophists reflects the common disdain that philosophers felt toward these groups. The instructor is portrayed as the ideal philosophical teacher who refrains from rhetorical tricks and sophistry. While Philo's descriptions of the Therapeutae community appears to be based on first-hand knowledge of the group, he appears to have exaggerated to form the climax of his apologetic for the philosophical prowess of the Jewish people. Whereas Philo depicts the instructor as delivering the well-reasoned and eloquent discourse of a true philosopher, his actual mode of teaching may have been more similar to what was found in other Jewish communities than Philo admits.

5. JOSEPHUS

Three passages in Josephus are relevant to the topic at hand. The first describes events early in the Jewish War (*Vita* 276–282). After meeting with rival leaders in Tiberius, Josephus and his entourage were encouraged to leave the town so as not to be a burden on the Sabbath which would be the next day. He says that he did not suspect any subterfuge, but nonetheless stationed numerous people between Tiberius and Taricheae (= Magdala) to pass on reports about how matters would turn out in the city and whether anything was said about him. (Presumably each person was stationed within a Sabbath day's walk from the next person in the chain.) The following day a large crowd gathered in the synagogue (προσευχή) for the Sabbath assembly (*Vita* 277). Josephus recounts that one person spoke to criticize the governor of the city and the need for him to be replaced. Two others, including the ruler of the synagogue, spoke in support of open rebellion. The congregation was not pleased with what was being

advocated. It would have likely gone into an uproar if the sixth hour had not arrived when they were required by Jewish law to end the service and go to lunch (*Vita* 279). Josephus does not describe anything else about the synagogue service in this passage. But it is significant because it assumes that there was a portion of the service in which individuals were permitted to speak to the congregation and advocate for their positions. The political question was pressing, so it is possible that this was not the regular practice of the synagogue. But in light of the evidence in Philo and Luke-Acts, this is unlikely. Furthermore, conduct during warfare was a halakhic issue (cf. 1QM) that Josephus later identifies as a topic of synagogue discussion (see below), so the topic may not have been as “secular” as it first appears.

In the second passage Josephus says that the seventh day was given over to “the study of our customs and Law” (τῆ μαθήσει τῶν ἡμετέρων ἔθῶν καὶ νόμου) (*Ant.* 16.43). Josephus frequently uses ἔθος elsewhere in his writings to refer to the national customs of the Judeans. In some instances these customs are mandated in the Law, in others they are common practices related to Jewish identity or the implementation of the Law (i.e. halakha).³⁶ Examples include circumcision, Passover, Sabbath, and purification rites. While a hard distinction cannot be drawn between ἔθος and νόμος, here Josephus may be identifying both the Law and additional halakhic regulations as objects of Sabbath study. Alternatively, he may be specifying which aspects of the Law are the focus of study, namely the national customs of the people. Nothing is said about the mode of study.

Finally, in *Against Apion* Josephus indicates that Sabbath services consisted of gathering together, listening to the Law, and thoroughly learning the Law with precision (ἀκριβῶς ἐκμανθάνειν) (*Ag. Ap.* 2.175; cf. Philo, *Contempl.* 31). This passage is frequently cited in scholarship on the Torah-reading ritual but with little commentary. A closer reading proves informative.

Against Apion 2.175 occurs in the middle of a long discussion defending the merits of Jewish Law (*Ag. Ap.* 2.151–241). Josephus is concerned to show that the laws of his nation are as ancient as those of any other people, reasonable, and attractive to some gentiles because they uniquely combine piety and virtue. Moses is considered a superior legislator because he did more than deliver a code of law. He combined the hearing of the Law with

³⁶ Very similar usage is found in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:9; 2:42; Acts 6:14; 15:1; 16:21; 26:3; 28:17).

practical means for its exercise in order to develop virtue and piety (2.173). His legislation addresses every area of life so that nothing is left to personal discretion (2.173). The Law is like a father or master who aids people so that they do not sin voluntarily or out of ignorance (2.174; cf. Gal 3:24). Furthermore, Moses insured that the people would not be ignorant of its content by instructing them to gather each Sabbath to listen to it read and to thoroughly learn it for themselves. Narratives about the nation's ancestors supply concrete examples to follow or avoid (2.204; cf. 1 Cor 10:1–6). Instruction about the commandments begins in youth (2.173, 178, 204) so that all men are intimately acquainted with the particularities of the Law (2.178) and readily know what is required and forbidden (2.190). This stands in contrast to the people of other nations, including their government officials, who know little about the contents of their own national law (2.176–177). Any Jewish man can answer detailed questions about the Law of his nation (so also Philo, *Hypoth.* 7.14). Even women and servants know what kind of belief and conduct conforms to the Law (2.181).

In the surrounding context Josephus identifies exactly what sorts of things were studied in the Sabbath assembly. He divides them into two broad categories. The first includes things that are of equal concern to everyone. Some of these are related to the ten commandments: the nature of God (*Ag. Ap.* 2.190), honor of parents (2.206, 217), honesty and theft (2.207–208, 216). Others are related to such matters as food laws (2.174–175), Sabbath requirements (2.174), rules of association (2.174, 209–210), marriage (2.199), sexual prohibitions (2.199–201, 215), prohibition of abortion (2.202), burial of the dead (2.205), corpse impurity and its removal (2.205), and the treatment of enemies and their property during war (2.211–214). Laws in the second category are also learned by everyone in the Sabbath assembly but the priests attend to them with extra care (2.188). These include laws pertaining to purification rites (2.198, 203, 205), inspecting things for purity/impurity (2.187), operation of the sacrificial cult (2.188, 194), judging doubtful cases (2.187),³⁷ carrying out punishment of the condemned (2.187), and generally administering government affairs (2.184–187).

Josephus does not mention anything about individuals teaching the congregation. Nor does he identify a period of formal instruction. His emphasis on thorough learning (ἐκμανθάνω) and exactitude (ἀκριβής) is certainly

³⁷ The *sotah* ritual for judging the suspected adulteress (Num 5:11–31) is probably in view.

compatible with a teacher giving detailed exposition of the passage of the day in the form of a discourse. But it is equally compatible with a form of dialectical teaching by members of the congregation who take turns offering interpretations of the day's text, asking questions, or critiquing the views of others. Josephus's emphasis on the practical exercise of the Law and the kinds of topics he mentions may favor a dialectical form of instruction, whether by itself or following a brief formal exposition designed to spark discussion.

6. LUKE

In Luke 4:17–21 Jesus attends the synagogue of his home town. He stands to read from the scroll of Isaiah. The quotation is an amalgam comprised of portions of Isa 61:1–2 and 58:6 to which a statement is appended alluding to the Jubilee (Lev 25:10). After reading, Jesus rolls up and returns the scroll. Luke says that Jesus then “began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’” Luke does not report the content of Jesus' teaching about the text but instead focuses on the reaction of the congregation. They were initially amazed and spoke well of him because of the gracious words that he was speaking (v. 22). Jesus then predicts that their attitude toward him will change. He claims to be a prophet and draws analogies between himself and the prophets Elijah and Elisha in 1 and 2 Kings. He also draws analogies between the congregation and the widows and lepers of Israel during the time of those prophets who did not experience God's favor while Gentiles did. The congregation understands that Jesus has condemned them.

There are several things to note about this passage. First, Jesus both reads and teaches. This comports with Philo's description of non-sectarian synagogue practice. Second, the emphatic “began to say” (ἤρξατο δὲ λέγειν) suggests that Jesus repeatedly announced the fulfillment of what he had read. This means that he read more than the selections Luke quotes. Jesus apparently read either a long passage or several passages and then sat down and began commenting on individual pericopae, claiming to fulfill each one. Third, after Jesus' initial teaching the congregation was able to comment on what he said. This is the beginning of a period of open discussion. Thus, Sabbath instruction was divided into three parts: reading, initial teaching, and open discussion. Fourth, Jesus participated in the open discussion and freely drew upon other books of scripture to make his points. Finally, the discussion progressed in such a manner that Jesus provoked members of

the congregation who became so angry that they attempted to throw him off a cliff. As Binder correctly observes about this passage, “the process of interpreting scripture was a community affair, and it was not for the fainthearted!”³⁸

Something like a sermon does not readily correspond to the type of formal teaching described here. However, there is a striking resemblance to the basic format of the Qumran *pesharim*. The *pesharim* quote a passage from the prophet followed by an introductory phrase such as “Its interpretation is.” Following this there is anything from a couple of sentences to a couple of paragraphs of interpretive commentary before the process is repeated. Often the interpretation seeks to show how the prophetic text is fulfilled in the life of the interpreter or community. In this light it looks as if the author(s) of the *pesharim* and Jesus utilize a basic model of interpretation common in Palestinian Sabbath services.³⁹ While the interpretations of the *pesharim* and Jesus would be distinctive to themselves, the basic form of instruction and its eschatological focus are similar.

Several times in other parts of Luke’s Gospel people are astonished by Jesus’ teaching and healing in the synagogues of various towns (4:32, 36; 5:17–26; 6:6–11; 13:10–12).⁴⁰ Three things can be determined from these passages. First, Jesus could expect an opportunity to teach at any synagogue he visited. It is implausible to think that he would have been invited to give the formal lesson wherever he went. The narrative presents a credible picture of events only if synagogue services included a period of open discussion when even visitors were permitted to engage in discussion about

³⁸ Binder, *Into the Temple Courts*, 403.

³⁹ The *pesharim* could instead derive from the interpretations given in the nightly reading of the Law described in 1QS VI, 7, but there is no reason to assume that the expositions given in those sessions took a significantly different form from the Sabbath service. The pattern is described there as: לקרוא כספר ולדרוש משפט. This can be translated in a way that closely corresponds to Philo’s descriptions of both common and Essene synagogue instruction: “to read the book and explain the law/regulation.” The translators are split about whether to render the second phrase as I have (e.g. Martinez) or to render it as referring to the general activity “study the Law” (e.g. Vermes). The decision largely depends on whether one considers דרוש משפט to be synonymous with בחרוה דרוש (“studies the Law”) in VI, 6 and מדרש התורה (“study of the Law”) in 8.15, or understands it to refer to a specific aspect of this activity, namely the exposition of the particular regulations within the Law. The latter seems more likely to me (cf. CD VII, 7–8 where משפט and תורה both occur and משפט refers to a specific law within the תורה).

⁴⁰ Luke 5:17–26 does not specifically say that Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, but this is certainly where the episode is set. Note the close association between teaching, synagogues, and Sabbath in the first half of Luke (4:15, 31–32; 6:6; 13:10). In the second half of Luke the primary place of teaching shifts from the synagogues to the temple (19:47; 20:1; 21:37). Cf. John 18:20.

scripture. Second, the fact that Jesus healed several people in the synagogue during the Sabbath assembly likewise points to this kind of structure. Third, some of those whom he healed in the synagogue were women that he noticed and called to himself (13:10–16). This implies that there was no physical barrier separating men from women as there was in the synagogue of the Therapeutae (*Contempl.* 31).⁴¹

7. ACTS—OPEN DISCUSSION IN THE SYNAGOGUE

Turning to the book of Acts, we find that synagogues are the main venue in which members of the Christ movement promoted their distinctive message. Numerous synagogues in Jerusalem and the western Diaspora are mentioned. The author writes in a manner that assumes familiarity with synagogues and does not attempt to describe their services. Nonetheless, Acts repeatedly confirms that one of the most common features of synagogue services during the late Second Temple era was a period of open discussion. This part of the service was so common that traveling teachers like Paul, Barnabas, and Apollos could simply presume that they would have a chance to share their gospel in any Sabbath assembly they visited. Except possibly in the case of Paul's discourse in Psidian Antioch, which will be treated separately, Acts nowhere mentions anything like sermons, just teaching during the open discussion.

7.1. Acts 6:8–12

In this passage Stephen is opposed by members of one or more Hellenistic synagogues in Jerusalem.⁴² These men “rose up (ἀνέστησαν) and disputed”

⁴¹ This does not preclude segregation of the sexes within a common space, though, which was probably the norm. See Sharon Lea Mattila, “Where Women Sat in Ancient Synagogues: The Archeological Evidence in Context,” in John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson, eds., *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 1996), 266–286.

⁴² The wording of v. 9 has been taken to refer to anywhere between one and five synagogues. A single synagogue of the “freedmen” shared by Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicians, and Asians is preferred by several scholars, e.g. F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale Press, 1951), 156; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1969), 66, 69, 71; Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (ed. Conrad H. Gempf; WUNT 49; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Siebeck], 1989), 176; C.K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles 1–14* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 324; Riesner, “Synagogues,” 204–205. Grammatically it seems more likely to me that Κυρηναίων και Ἀλεξανδρέων and και τῶν ἀπὸ Κίλικίας και Ἀσίας each modify an implicit τῆς

with him. This statement is usually assumed to indicate that men from the synagogue(s) appeared “on the scene,” as it were, to contest Stephen’s message and hand him over to the council.⁴³ However, parallels between the Stephen story and Luke’s description of Jesus’ experiences suggest that the dispute between Stephen and his opponents also took place within synagogues and that ἀνίστημι here refers to people standing up in the synagogues to oppose Stephen’s message.

Looking back to Luke, we see that after Jesus taught in Nazareth “all in the synagogue were filled with wrath and rising up (ἀναστάντες), they threw him out of the town” (Luke 4:28–29). It is obvious that people stood up from seated positions to physically take Jesus out of the synagogue. On other occasions Jesus’ synagogue teaching generated accusatory questions, charges of blasphemy, and plots against him (5:21; 6:11; 13:10–17). Later, when Luke describes the crucifixion, he attributes to Jesus the prayer, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (23:34). Two elements of the Stephen story clearly recapitulate events in Luke’s Jesus narrative. First, Stephen’s prayer during his final moments (Acts 7:60) echoes Jesus’ own prayer on the cross. Second, Stephen’s opponents charge him with blasphemy (Acts 6:11), the charge leveled against Jesus in a synagogue (Luke 5:21). The parallels between Stephen and Jesus may extend to the location where their opponents stood against them. If this is correct, then Acts 6:8–10 presupposes that Stephen had been speaking in the Sabbath assemblies of Jerusalem’s various Greek-speaking synagogues, as Jesus had done in Galilee and Paul would do in the Diaspora. As with Jesus, Stephen seems to have usually promoted his message during a time of open discussion. We also see that Luke constructed a play on words—Stephen’s opponents stood up (physically) to oppose him (v. 9), but they could not stand up (metaphorically) to the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke (v. 10).

7.2. Acts 9:19–25

After being confronted by the risen Jesus, Saul stayed in Damascus “for some days” and immediately proclaimed Jesus in the synagogue. Everyone was amazed because Saul was known as an opponent of the Jesus movement.

συναγωγῆς. If so, three synagogues are mentioned: a synagogue of former slaves and/or their descendants, a synagogue of Jews from North African provinces, and a third comprised of Jews from Anatolian provinces. Both interpretations presuppose multiple Hellenistic synagogues in Jerusalem since it would hardly be necessary to distinguish a single synagogue by name.

⁴³ Cf. BDAG, s.v. ἀνίστημι § 9, § 10.

The author tells us that after “many days had passed” there was a plot to kill him. During the intervening period he had “increased all the more in strength, and confounded (συνέχυνεν) the Jews living in Damascus” (Acts 9:22). The open-ended reference to “many days” and Saul’s increasing strength suggests that he proclaimed his message in the Damascus synagogue on more than one occasion. Yet Paul confounded or provoked the Damascus Jews into an uproar and was nonetheless able to attend the assembly, at least a few times. This implies that there was a point in the service in which any Jewish man was permitted to speak.

7.3. *Acts 14:1–3*

At Iconium Paul and his traveling companions “entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord” Again, the text implies that the synagogue meeting included a period of open discussion in which any Jewish man could participate. The Jewish and Gentile communities were both divided about the apostolic message. Eventually, the synagogue and civic leaders would conspire together against the apostles to force them out of the city.

7.4. *Acts 16–19*

Seven additional episodes are recorded that mention the activity of Paul and other Christ-followers in Diaspora synagogues (16:13; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 26; 19:8). In each synagogue there is an opportunity to discuss, reason, or argue with people in the congregation about the gospel message and its scriptural foundation. None of these passages, however, mention anything like a sermon. Usually the opportunity to speak continues for multiple Sabbaths, even when the message is initially received with hostility. Some synagogues were more tolerant of Christ-followers than others. We also discover that Christ-followers could be forced out of a synagogue but not the city, in which case they sometimes started new synagogues (18:7; 19:8).

8. ACTS—PROPHECY IN THE SYNAGOGUE

Lawrence Wills begins his study of Hellenistic Jewish and Christian sermons by identifying Paul’s speech in Acts 13:13–41 as a missionary sermon. He says

that it is presented in the narrative “as a typical synagogue homily.”⁴⁴ But how could Wills possibly know this? As we have seen, there is scant first-century evidence favoring the existence of synagogue homilies of the sort envisioned, much less enough to make judgments about what was typical or atypical. At no point does Wills produce evidence in support of this assertion. Yet numerous scholars confidently follow his lead and classify Paul’s discourse as a *typical* synagogue homily as if this was determined through comparative analysis with other synagogue homilies from the era. But even if there were known Second Temple synagogue sermons of the type these scholars envision, a close reading of Acts gives us good reason to believe that the message Luke depicts Paul delivering in Psidian Antioch was not any kind of sermon or homily, but prophecy.

Paul stood to speak in response to an inquiry from the synagogue leaders about whether anyone in his group had a “word of exhortation” for the people (13:15). If we accept the consensus view, then we must understand this query as asking if any of the visitors would like to deliver the morning’s sermon impromptu. It would be odd and inhospitable, to say the least, to ask a total stranger to deliver a sermon without any advanced warning. On the face of it this is an implausible interpretation. This understanding of the query is made only slightly more believable if we imagine that Paul wore distinctive clothing that identified him as a Pharisee. But the query was not addressed to Paul in particular. The text is very clear—it was an invitation to anyone in the group who might have a word of exhortation. Paul just happens to be the one who responded. So, the narrative itself should lead us to question whether “word of exhortation” really is a fixed expression that refers to a synagogue homily.

Luke specifies that the reading from the Law and Prophets had already finished when the synagogue leaders sent their message. In light of our findings thus far, this is best understood as indicating that the time of Scripture reading and any accompanying instruction had concluded. If formal synagogue instruction constitutes a sermon, then the sermon was over before the message was sent. The synagogue service had now entered the period of open discussion and the visitors were invited to participate. It is true that the phrase “word of exhortation” appears to refer to a specific type of speech, but the order of service rules out the formal homily. We should look for a type of speech appropriate to the spontaneous nature of the query

⁴⁴ Wills, “Form of the Sermon,” 278.

that would be suitable for a time of open discussion. The key to identifying what Luke has in mind lies in attending to his use of “exhortation” elsewhere.

Throughout his two-part work, Luke frequently uses *παρακλήσις* and *παρακαλέω*. These terms have a fairly broad semantic range and Luke uses them in a variety of ways. However, there also seems to be a deliberate association in his usage between certain types of exhortation and the words of prophets. Early in the first volume John the Baptist calls people to repentance and tells them about the judge who will come after him (Luke 3:7–17). Luke then says that “with many other exhortations (*παρακαλῶν*) he proclaimed good news to the people” (3:18).

When Perdelwitz cites Acts 15:32 to support the thesis that *λόγος παρακλήσεως* refers to a sermon, he seems to understand the phrase “encouraged through many words” (*διὰ λόγου πολλοῦ παρεκάλεσαν*) to mean that Judas and Silas delivered a “long message.”⁴⁵ The plural “words” here do refer to messages of some sort, but the verb includes both Judas and Silas as subjects. If a single sermon or “long message” is in view, then somehow both men would have had to deliver it. Furthermore, the messages delivered by Silas and Judas stand in contrast to the unauthorized messages mentioned in the apostolic letter they delivered to the Christ-followers in Antioch (15:24). Also, 15:33 indicates that Judas and Silas stayed in Antioch for a while. Rather than see one long message delivered by two individuals, it is preferable to understand the phrase in question as indicating that they encouraged the people through many “words.” Whereas the people who troubled the Antiochene Christ-followers had delivered unauthorized messages, Judas and Silas are identified as genuine prophets (15:32). In other words, they encouraged the brothers “through many words” *because* they were prophets. Of course, *λόγος* can refer to oracles and other kinds of revelation (cf. 1 Cor 12:8).⁴⁶ That is how it should be understood here.

The connection between exhortation and prophecy is most explicit in Luke’s references to a disciple named Joseph who was nicknamed *Βαρνάβας* (Acts 4:36). *Βαρνάβας* is a straightforward transliteration of the Aramaic ܒܪܢܒܐ with the addition of the final sigma customarily added to transliterated Semitic names that do not end with a hard consonant. The Aramaic phrase means “son of prophecy.” Many scholars have denied that this could be the Aramaic name behind Luke’s *Βαρνάβας* on the ground that “this is not

⁴⁵ Perdelwitz, “Das literarische Problem,” 64.

⁴⁶ See LSJ, 1059 (7.1).

synonymous with ‘son of encouragement.’⁴⁷ They instead suggest various speculative etymologies or conclude that Luke simply mistranslated it. But there is another possibility—that *παράκλησις* can refer to a particular type of prophetic activity and that Luke has translated the nickname accurately.

There is no reason to doubt that *בֶּרֶךְ-נְבוּאָה* lies behind Luke’s translation once we recall that Joseph Barnabas is counted among the group of prophets associated with the church in Antioch on the Orontes (Acts 13:1). He was also set apart by the Holy Spirit to accompany Paul on the journey that leads them to Psidian Antioch (13:2). At the beginning of this mission Paul and Barnabas were “sent” by the Holy Spirit (13:4), a prophetic commissioning reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets. Furthermore, on the first stop of the journey they found themselves in a confrontation with a false prophet named Bar-Jesus (13:6). Luke appears to have stylized the narrative so that the antithesis between Bar-Jesus and the two true prophets—Paul and Joseph “the son of prophecy”—deliberately echoes Jeremiah’s confrontations with the false prophets of his day.⁴⁸ In the ensuing encounter Paul is filled with the Holy Spirit (13:9) and prophetically condemns Bar-Jesus to blindness (13:11), a sign which leads the proconsul to believe the proclamation about Jesus.

Acts 13:1–12 portrays Barnabas and Paul as itinerant prophets who truly speak God’s word. Significantly, all of this is recounted in the narrative immediately preceding the episode in which Paul gives his “word of exhortation” in Psidian Antioch. Moreover, the “word of exhortation” Paul delivered there culminates in a manner reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets, ending with an eschatological warning from Hab 1:5 (13:41). Acts 13:13–52 continues the portrayal of Paul and Barnabas as prophets. Among early Christ-followers *παράκλησις* sometimes carried connotations of Spirit-inspired *prophetic* exhortation as the nickname Barnabas indicates. Set in this context, it becomes clear that the “word of exhortation” Paul delivered in the synagogue was prophetic in nature.

A supporting argument could be derived from William Horbury’s observations about how *παράκλησις* is often linked with prophecy in early Jewish

⁴⁷ Bernd Kollmann, *Joseph Barnabas: His Life and Legacy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2004), 13.

⁴⁸ For a list of these and other parallels with Old Testament prophetic texts, see Rick Strelan, “Who was Bar Jesus (Acts 13,6–12)?,” *Bib* 85 (2004): 69–74 and Josep Rius-Camps and Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae: A Comparison with the Alexandrian Tradition*. Vol. 3: *Acts 13.1–18.23: The Ends of the Earth, First and Second Phases of the Mission to the Gentiles* (LNTS 365; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 58–60.

literature.⁴⁹ But more immediate corroboration comes from the letters of Paul. In 1 Cor 14:3 Paul says that the one who prophesies “speaks to people for upbuilding and exhortation (παράκλησιν) and consolation.” Later in the same chapter he says that everyone in the Corinthian congregation should be able to prophecy “in order that all may learn and all be exhorted (παράκαλῶνται)” (14:31). First Corinthians 14 is the longest discussion of prophecy in the New Testament. Paul considered παράκλησις as one of the chief products of prophetic activity and thus bookended the discussion by mentioning it at the beginning and end of the discussion.

In a related passage Paul even indicates that exhortation could be a specific spiritual gift (Rom 12:8). On the basis of this verse Horbury argues that παράκλησις could refer to a gift of the Spirit distinguishable from prophecy but related to it.⁵⁰ Alternatively, rather than a gift distinguishable *from* prophecy, παράκλησις may be a gift distinguishable *within* the broader gift of prophecy. In Rom 12:7 “the giver” and “the compassionate” appear to reflect subcategories of those endowed with the gift of “ministry.” In light of 1 Cor 14:3, 31, it is possible that “the exhorter” (ὁ παρακαλῶν) in Rom 12:8 is a subcategory of those endowed with the gift of prophecy (12:6).

There is, then, a strong case for understanding the phrase λόγος παρακλήσεως in Acts 13:15 to be related to prophetic activity.⁵¹ Rather than a Hellenistic synagogue homily, Acts 13 depicts an itinerant prophet delivering an oracle during open discussion in the Sabbath assembly.

9. CONCLUSION

William Stegner judiciously began his study of the ancient synagogue homily with an example dating after 200 CE because “very little is known about the form or the content of such synagogue sermons” prior to that time.⁵²

⁴⁹ William Horbury, *Jews and Christians: In Contact and Controversy* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 111–126, esp. 112, 115.

⁵⁰ Horbury, *Jews and Christians*, 115.

⁵¹ The phrase likewise carries prophetic overtones in Heb 13:22. However, it does not refer to Hebrews itself despite the many translations that give that impression with the pronouns they so generously supply. The Greek text leaves the referent of the “word of exhortation” undefined, but within the context of the letter it most likely refers to the oracle mentioned in Heb 12:25.

⁵² William Richard Stegner, “The Ancient Jewish Synagogue Homily,” in David E. Aune, ed., *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament* (SBL SBS 21; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 51.

Along similar lines, Charles Perrot has remarked that “very little is known of ancient homiletic practice till the time of the Talmud.”⁵³ It is easy to explain this dearth of homiletic information for the Second Temple era. The descriptions of synagogue services that we have examined from Philo, Josephus, and Luke-Acts strongly suggest that sermons were not yet a common feature of synagogue services at the end of the first century.

Scholars frequently write as if there are many examples of first-century synagogue sermons and even go so far as to describe the “typical” elements of these sermons. But only two first-century examples are ever cited: Jesus’ teaching in the Nazareth synagogue and Paul’s discourse in the synagogue of Psidian Antioch. These passages supposedly constitute “crystal clear” proof that the sermon was a recognized component of the Sabbath service. The reality, however, is that only one of these represents the formal teaching of the Sabbath assembly and it does not take the form of a sermon. The other is an example of prophecy during a period of open discussion. The only unambiguous evidence for Sabbath instruction in the form of a monologue similar to a sermon is found in Philo’s description of the Therapeutae. It is certainly possible that similar forms of teaching were sometimes employed in non-sectarian synagogues, but we stand on extremely shaky ground if we assume any more than that. All talk about what is typical, traditional, or common in first-century synagogue homilies is simply baseless.

Attempting to use rabbinic literature to fill in the picture really does run the risk of anachronism. The seriousness of this risk is highlighted by recent scholarship that calls into question whether we even know much about homiletic practices in synagogues during Talmudic times. Gary Porton and Günther Stemberger have shown that rabbis were extremely reticent about the synagogue and surprisingly few texts from antiquity describe them active in the synagogue. They have also argued that most of the homiletic midrashim and poetry utilized by earlier scholars to reconstruct ancient homiletic practices were probably composed for use by students and rabbis in the *beth midrash* rather than for the benefit of common people in the synagogue.⁵⁴

⁵³ Perrot, “Reading of the Bible,” 158.

⁵⁴ Gary Porton, “Midrash and the Rabbinic Sermon,” in Alan Avery-Peck, Daniel Harrington, and Jacob Neusner, eds., *When Judaism and Christianity Began* (JSJSup 85; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 2:461–482; Günther Stemberger, “The Derashah in Rabbinic Times,” in Homolka and Schöttler, eds., *Preaching in Judaism and Christianity*, 7–21.

So what do we actually know about Torah reading practices in the first century? What do we know about instruction during Sabbath assemblies? The answer to both of these questions is this: not what most scholars of early Judaism and Christianity have presumed. None of the passages we examined gave the slightest indication that lectionary cycles were followed or that Scripture was read in Hebrew and then translated into the vernacular, to name but two practices often associated with first-century reading practices. Formal instruction may have taken a variety of forms, but it appears that it most commonly took the form of a running commentary on the Torah focused on grammatical ambiguities and halakhic questions. There is also evidence that some groups followed a similar practice for instruction about prophetic texts with the focus placed on identifying the fulfillment of individual pericopae.

The main activity in the Sabbath gathering after the reading of the Law and the Prophets was not a sermon, but open discussion among Jewish men. During this time it appears that anyone could offer insights or dispute the interpretive claims of others. Matters related to the civil function of the Law could also be deliberated. This does not preclude the possibility that early Jewish and Christian texts preserve material that originated in the synagogue. Undoubtedly, active participants sometimes incorporated their insights or the insights of others into their writings. But how one might reliably identify that kind of material is an open question.

Anticipating one of the main conclusions of this study, E.P. Sanders has written:

The New Testament is probably accurate in giving the impression that, at meetings of the synagogue, anyone with something important to say would be allowed to speak (e.g. Mark 1.14–15; 6.1–5; Acts 13.15: “Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.”). We note also that Paul gives instructions about prophesying and exhorting in the Christian worship services, and that he supposes that first one then another participant would speak. His assumption of active participation by many probably reflects synagogue practice as he knew it.⁵⁵

The early Jesus movement was not sufficiently differentiated from other forms of Judaism to expect significantly different synagogue practices in most areas. Because of this we can probably identify additional common

⁵⁵ E.P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (London: SCM, 1990), 80–81. Similar comments are also made in Sanders’ later piece, “Common Judaism and the Synagogue in the First Century,” in Fine, ed., *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists*, 8–9.

synagogue practices from close readings of the New Testament epistles. On two matters, however, we can expect differences that would have made it increasingly difficult for Jews who followed Christ to attend the same synagogues as those who did not. The first, of course, was the extent of Gentile participation that each was willing to permit. About this even Christ-followers disagreed. The second related to prophecy.

While prophetic speech had not completely died out (despite what Josephus or the Mishnaic rabbis say), Christ-followers believed that Jesus had poured the Holy Spirit upon his followers in an eschatological act anticipating the Day of the Lord (cf. Acts 2:33). Male and female, young and old, they considered themselves a prophetic people. It is easy to see why it would be difficult for non-Christian Jews to tolerate indefinitely the presence of prophets and their frequent calls to repent and acknowledge Jesus as the Lord and messianic judge to which Moses and the Prophets testify. The first-century synagogue provided both the opportunity and means for the gospel to quickly gain adherents in many locations. But the same feature that allowed for this, namely open discussion, also necessitated separation. Both sides obliged. In some locations, Christ-followers left or were expelled from the synagogue. In other areas, the synagogue service was changed to deny them a public voice.

ON THE TRAIL OF TRYPHO:
TWO FRAGMENTARY JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUES
FROM THE ANCIENT CHURCH

William Varner

The Jewish-Christian debate in the first four centuries of our era centering on the messiahship of Jesus and the consequent rejection of unbelieving Israel is well-documented, although mostly from the Christian side of the discussion. The term *Contra Judaeos* has been used as the genre title for this literature. These writings may be classified further under three types: (1) *Testimony Collections*, lists of messianic proof texts under different headings; (2) *Tractates*, including sermons and letters, which deal with arguments against the Jews and their unbelief; and (3) *Dialogues*, back and forth debates between a Christian and a Jew that work through the Christian proofs and the Jewish objections. The Christian *Contra Judaeos* literature as manifested in the *Testimony Collections* and *Tractates* has been surveyed in three standard reference works and also in a few recent monographs.¹ The focus in this chapter will be on the *Dialogues* literature and particularly on two fragmentary dialogues that have not received as much attention.

Four of these dialogues have survived intact from this ancient period. Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* has pride of place, due to its length and the fact that it has been translated into a number of modern languages since the nineteenth century, and thus has generated an enormous amount of scholarly literature.² The other three, *Athanasius and Zacchaeus*, *Simon and Theophilus* (in Latin), and *Timothy and Aquila*, have been known since

¹ Samuel Krauss and William Horbury, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy I: History* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, Paul Siebeck, 1996); H. Schrekenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1–11. Jh)* (2nd rev. ed.; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990); A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's Eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935). For a highly critical evaluation of this literature, see Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), esp. ch. 3, "The Negation of the Jews in the Church Fathers," 117–182.

² See Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study of Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), for a thorough bibliography of literature on *Trypho*.

the publications of their texts at the end of the nineteenth century.³ These three dialogues have often been referenced in scholarly literature and doctoral students have made them the subject of their dissertations.⁴ Overall discussions of these three dialogues, apart from specialists in the field, have been limited, however, when compared to the amount of attention given to *Trypho*. It is this author's opinion that this neglect has been partly due to the fact that for so long no modern language translation of any of the three was ever published. Recently, the first translations of these dialogues have been issued, accompanied by brief introductions and an effort to place them within the larger context of Jewish-Christian controversy.⁵

Now that these dialogues have been brought out of the scholarly cave, so to speak, I have turned my attention to two other Jewish-Christian dialogues that were composed in the second and third centuries. They exist, however, only in fragmentary form, although their fragments are of quite different types. The first is the *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus*, known only by the fragments that survive in the writings of four fathers down to the sixth century.⁶ The other dialogue has no title, because it has come down to us only in the literal fragments of a single badly damaged papyrus leaf

³ F.C. Conybeare, *The Dialogues of Athanasius and Zacchaeus and Timothy and Aquila* (Anecdota Oxoniensia, Classical Series 8; Oxford: Clarendon, 1898); Adolph Harnack, *Die Altercatio Simonis Judaei et Theophili Christiani* (TUGAL 1; Berlin: Akademie, 1883).

⁴ For *Timothy and Aquila*, see Robert G. Robertson, "The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila: A Critical Text, Introduction to the Manuscript Evidence, and an Inquiry into the Sources and Literary Relationships" (Th.D. diss., Harvard University, 1986); Jacqueline Z. Pastis, "Representation of Jews and Judaism in *The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*: Construct or Social Reality?" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1994); Donal E. Nilsson, "Studies of the New Testament Traditions in *The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1997); and Lawrence Lanzi Lahey, "*The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*: Critical Greek Text and English Translation of the Short Rescension with an Introduction including a Source-critical Study" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2000). For *Athanasius and Zacchaeus*, see Patrick Andrist, *Le Dialogue d'Athanasie et Zachee, Etude des Sources et du Contexte litteraire* (These de Doctorat, Universite de Geneve, 2001). To my knowledge, no dissertation has handled *Simon and Theophilus*, apart from the published dissertation of Peter Corssen, *Die Altercatio Simonis et Theophili Christiani auf ihre Quellen gepruft* (Jever: Druck von C.L. Mettcker & Sohne, 1890).

⁵ William Varner, *Ancient Jewish-Christian Dialogues: Athanasius and Zacchaeus, Simon and Theophilus, Timothy and Aquila: Introductions, Texts and Translations* (Lewiston: Mellen, 2004).

⁶ The texts are collected in Martin Joseph Routh, ed., *Reliquiae Sacrae: sive auctorum fere jam perditorum secundi tertiique saeculi post Christum natum quae supersunt ...* / ad codices mass. recensuit, notisque illustravit (Oxford: E. Typographeo Academico, 1846), 1:95–109; PG 5, 1277–1286; and Jo. Car. Th. de. Otto, ed., *Corpus Apologetarum christianorum saeculi secundi* (Jenae and Wiesbaden: Hermann Dufet [Neudr.]: Sändig, 1879), 9:349–363.

discovered at Oxyrhynchus.⁷ The purposes of this chapter are (1) to explore what we can discover about the contents of these fragmentary dialogues; (2) to reflect on how they may have influenced later dialogues; and then (3) to reflect on what these fragmentary dialogues may tell us about the Jewish-Christian discussion up to the end of the third century.

1. DIALOGUE OF JASON AND PAPISCUS

The first dialogue is known from literary fragments found in five citations from four writers who flourished in the third to the sixth century. The latest of these writers, John of Scythopolis, is actually the first one to mention that the author of the dialogue was one “Aristo of Pella.”

And I have read this, “seven heavens,” in *The Dialogue of Papius and Jason* composed by Aristo the Pellaian (εν τη συγγεγραμμενη Αριστωνι τω Πελλαιω διαλεξει Παπισκουσ και Ιασονος) ...⁸ (PG 4.421)

John adds that his own source for this information was Clement of Alexandria, who in the second century attributed the authorship of the *Dialogue* to Luke, the physician of New Testament fame!

Another acknowledgement that the *Dialogue* was known in the second-century is the third-century reference to it by Origen (ca. 250). Origen states that his second century opponent Celsus had referred to it around 178 CE and had derided the book with scorn. In *Contra Celsum* 4.52, Origen responds to Celsus that in this book

... a Christian is represented as disputing with a Jew from the Jewish Scriptures, and showing that the prophecies concerning the Messiah apply to Jesus, although his opponent addresses himself to the argument with no common ability, and in a manner not unbecoming his Jewish character.

From these references to the *Dialogue*, we may safely conclude that it was composed in the second century in the Greek language, which is confirmed in another reference by Jerome, *sub voce*. The *Dialogue* was then translated

⁷ Arthur S. Hunt, ed., *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1927), 17.9–13.

⁸ In an insightful chapter on the dialogic literature of the first six centuries, Lawrence Lahey, “Evidence for Jewish Believers in the Christian-Jewish Dialogues through the Sixth Century (excluding Justin),” in Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 581–639, notes that this citation was wrongly ascribed to “Maximus the Confessor” in many older works that discuss the *Dialogue*. I am grateful to Professor Lahey for granting advance access to this chapter.

into Latin sometime in the third century, but like its Greek vorlage, this translation has not survived. We do have the prologue to this translation, however, written by the translator Celsus Africanus, so called to distinguish him from his more famous namesake. The translation was done for a certain Bishop Vigilus and is often attached to the works of Cyprian. In this letter he mentions that Jason was a “Hebrew-Christian” (*Hebraeus Christianus*) and that Papiscus was an Alexandrian Jew who in the end receives the “seal” (*signaculum*, i.e. baptism). Celsus also describes the *Dialogue* as “a splendid as well as remarkable and renowned work” (*opus praeclarum atque memorabile gloriosumque*).⁹ Even recognizing that this is probably a florid overstatement, one is certainly left with the impression that the *Dialogue* had attained some measure of appreciation among Christians of the second and third centuries.

Regarding the specific contents of this *Dialogue*, we have the following three references. In his *Quaestionum hebraicarum liber in Genesim*, Jerome quotes his own translation of Gen 1:1: *In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram*, and then writes,

The majority believe, as it is affirmed also in the *Dispute between Jason and Papiscus*, and as Tertullian in his book *Against Praxeas* contends, and as Hilary, in his exposition of one of the Psalms, declares that in the Hebrew it is: “In the Son, God made the heaven and the earth” (*In Filio fecit Deus caelum et terram*).¹⁰ (Qu. hebr. Gen. Gen 1:1)

It should also be noted that Jerome’s familiarity with the original Hebrew language of Gen 1:1 prompted him to immediately add, “But that this is false, the nature of the case itself proves.”

Also, in his commentary on Galatians, Jerome remarks on 3:13: “I remember in the *Dispute between Jason and Papiscus*, which is composed in Greek, to have found it written: “The execration of God is he that is hanged” (λοιδωρία θεοῦ ὁ κρεμάμενος).¹¹ This quotation differs from the Old Greek (LXX)

⁹ Celsus Africanus, *Letter to Vigilus Concerning Jewish Unbelief*, 8.

¹⁰ In *Simon and Theophilus*, this application of Gen 1:1 to Jesus is found (3.8), although the text does not state that Gen 1:1 reads *In Filio*. Nevertheless, this is one of the reasons that some, following Harnack, have seen a close connection between these two dialogues. I believe that this discussion about the Latin actually is based on the fact that the Greek of Gen 1:1 reads ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. Because ἀρχῇ is a title used for Jesus in the New Testament in the context of creation (Col 1:18; Rev 3:14), it is easy to see how the transfer could be made from ἐν ἀρχῇ to *In Filio* by Christians eager to discover another text to prove the existence and creative activity of Jesus in the Old Testament.

¹¹ Tertullian also treats this quotation in *Adversus Iudaeos* 10, as well as Justin Martyr in

rendering of the Deut 21:23 source of the quotation (κεκατηραμένος ὑπὸ θεοῦ πᾶς κρεμᾶμενος). It also differs from the Pauline rendering in Gal 3:13 (ἐπικατάρτος πᾶς ὁ κρεμᾶμενος), but it does resemble the Greek version of Aquila.

The last specific patristic reference to the *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus* is the one already cited above by John of Scythopolis, “And I have read this, ‘seven heavens’, in *The Dialogue of Papiscus and Jason ...*” This metaphysical concept of the “seven heavens” is one that the Amoraic rabbis often discussed and the idea also appears in some later Patristic sources.¹²

Each of these references to scriptural citations could be discussed at length, but we will limit our comments to what scholars have suggested about the date of the *Dialogue* and its possible influence on other works of this genre. It would seem to be safely dated to between 135–165 CE, due to Celsus’s reference to it in his *True Account*, written about 178 CE. Also, Eusebius refers to Aristo of Pella as his source for Hadrian’s ban following the Bar Kochba War.

The whole nation from that time was strictly forbidden to set foot on the region about Jerusalem, by the formal decree and enactment of Hadrian, who commanded that they should not even from a distance look on their native soil! So writes Aristo of Pella. (*His. eccl.* 4.6.3)

If this is the same author as the Aristo of our *Dialogue*, then the Eusebius reference also supports the idea that the *Dialogue* was written in the period between 135 and 165 CE.

Harnack also argued that *Jason and Papiscus* (*JP*) essentially appeared in its Latin form as the late fourth-century dialogue *Altercatio Simonis et Theophilus* (*ST*).¹³ In this suggestion he has been joined by scholars such as B.S. Hunt and Lawrence Lahey.¹⁴ Opposing the idea of *JP*’s identity with *ST* are such writers as A. Lukyn-Williams and Oskar Skarsaune.¹⁵ It is true

Trypho 89 and 116. In *Simon and Theophilus*, the Jewish interlocutor biting charges his Christian opponent with shame if he approves this saying from Deuteronomy: *Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno* (4.22).

¹² E.g. Dionysius the Areopagite, *Mystical Theology* 1.3. Lahey, “Evidence for Jewish Christians,” 581–639, notes that the “seven heavens” were a quintessential Jewish and Jewish-Christian teaching.

¹³ Harnack, *Altercatio*, esp. 128.

¹⁴ B.P.W. Stather Hunt, *Primitive Gospel Sources* (London: James Clarke, 1951), 250–262; Lahey has argued this point persuasively in the previously mentioned chapter in *Jewish Believers ...*, as well as in his unpublished Master’s thesis on *Simon and Theophilus* at Loyola of Chicago in 1994 and in his dissertation on *Timothy and Aquila* (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2000).

¹⁵ Lukyn-Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, 28–30; Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 234.

that certain echoes of *JP* can possibly be heard in *ST* (see footnote 10, for example). However, the different names of the participants in *ST*, plus the fact that the fifth-century writer Gennadius attributes the authorship of *ST* to a recent writer named “Evagrius” of Gaul, militates strongly against Harnack’s view.¹⁶ Use of similar scriptural arguments may simply point to a common pool of texts utilized by many authors in the Jewish-Christian discussions of the times.

The Norwegian scholar, Oskar Skarsaune, has argued that Justin Martyr employed *JP* as a source for a particular section of his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*,¹⁷ but I remain unconvinced by his arguments. None of the previously mentioned details known about *JP* appear in exactly the same way in *Trypho*. Skarsaune’s ingenious explanation about how those details morphed into the form he thinks they appear in *Trypho*, while creative, are too strained to be convincing.

JP does appear to be on the trail of *Trypho*, or, to use a more scholarly expression, they are in the same conceptual trajectory. But in my opinion this is not because one is cited by the other. They simply both deal with the same subject, namely the messiahship of Jesus, and both are in a dialogue format. The widespread use of the *Contra Judaeos* genre in the early church, either in a dialogue or a treatise format, should certainly prepare us to anticipate that similar arguments could and would be used by different authors. Earlier authors have posited the existence of a “testimony book,” and the existence of such a work or works cannot be discounted.¹⁸ Perhaps, however, there was simply a shared pool of known texts and arguments (*loci communes*) that were utilized without one written source necessarily copying another. I realize that this goes against the scholarly penchant for often hypothesizing earlier sources in later documents—a penchant, in my opinion, that has too long dominated the fields of biblical and patristic study. Unless there is some compelling reason, such as exactness of wording, for arguing that an earlier source can be clearly detected in a later work, we should be willing to consider that it is possible that authors used shared pools of arguments or were creative enough to come up with some ideas on their own.

¹⁶ Varner, *Ancient Jewish-Christian Dialogues*, 87.

¹⁷ Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 234–242.

¹⁸ Lukyn-Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, 3–13; Hunt, *Primitive Gospel Sources*, 241–243.

2. PAPYRUS OXYRHYNCHUS 2070

The second fragmentary Jewish-Christian Dialogue from the ancient church has no title apart from the catalog number given to it by the editors of the thousands of papyri recovered in Egypt from the area of ancient Oxyrhynchus around the beginning of the twentieth century. In this case the fragments are literal ones since all that remains of it is one leaf of a poorly preserved papyrus codex, 30 × 11 cm, written in two columns, recto and verso.¹⁹ The skilled labor of the Oxyrhynchus editor, A.S. Hunt, has enabled us to gather a surprising amount of the contents that the manuscript originally contained. He has supplied conjectured words in his transcript only when it is certain that they were part of a Biblical quotation. Unlike *JP*, however, the scholarly world has largely neglected Oxyrhynchus 2070. The standard works (e.g. Krauss and Horbury, Lukyn-Williams) that survey the *Contra Iudaeos* literature do not even mention the existence of 2070.²⁰ To my knowledge, the only published discussion of the papyrus after the published text of Hunt's is some brief but valuable remarks by Eldon Epp in an article about the entire corpus of Oxyrhynchus New Testament papyri.²¹ Epp sees the papyrus as evidence of a continuing anti-Judaism in third-century Egypt. What else can certainly be known from 2070? What can be safely conjectured about its contents? And what, if anything, can it inform us about the character of the Jewish-Christian discussion of the second and third centuries on the larger scale?

It can certainly be concluded that this third-century manuscript is part of a Christian treatise. This is evident from line 10 which ends with the phrase *περι του Ιη* ("concerning Jesus") with a line clearly over the abbreviated *nomen sacrum*. It also exhibits the expected characteristics of a Jewish-Christian dialogue format. This is clearly discernible in the expression *ειτα φησιν* ("then he said") in line 4 and the *ειπεν αυτω* ("he said to him") in line 18. The speaker here is probably the Christian interlocutor because in line 30 we can see clearly the clause *και ο φ ειπε* ("and the 'Ph' said") with a line over the *φ*. Since this line follows an anti-Jewish citation, this abbreviation probably identifies the Jewish respondent to a charge by the Christian. While one might conclude that the *φ* is an abbreviation for *Φαρισαιος*, it

¹⁹ Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus*, 10–13, displays the text as it appears when re-constructed.

²⁰ See footnote 1.

²¹ Eldon Jay Epp, "The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri: Not Without Honor Except in Their Hometown," *JBL* 123 (2004): 40–42.

could also be a personal name. The editor of the manuscript suggests that it could stand for Φ(ίλων)—that is, Philo, since that name later appears as one of the spokesmen in a seventh-century dialogue from the same Egyptian provenance.²²

Although the papyrus scrap is brief, there are four clearly discernible citations from the Greek Bible, each essentially agreeing with the form of the text that we call the LXX. The first is Ps 18:43, 44 (LXX Ps 17:44, 45) in lines 5–7: ο λαος ... ον ουκ εγνων εδουλωσε μοι εις ακοην ωτιου υπηκουσε μοι (“... a people, whom I did not know, served me; at the hearing of the ear it obeyed me”). The scribe, who according to Hunt was his own editor, added *στι αλλοτριος* (“a foreign people”) above the phrase ο λαος. This was probably done to indicate clearly to the reader that the “people” who served the Lord were Gentiles and not the “people” of Israel. It is at this point that the speaker introduces the phrase mentioned above that this Old Testament testimony was spoken *περι του Ιη* (“about Jesus”). He continues: *μεντοι οτι πλειους ... ηπιστησαν αυτου τω λογω* (“indeed because most [Jews?] did not believe his message”), but *επειτα υπακουσωσιν* (“then they [Gentiles] obeyed”).²³

After a lacuna in the manuscript, which probably contained a response from the Jewish interlocutor, the phrase *ειπεν αυτω* precedes the second Biblical citation, which is a continuation of the previous passage containing the rest of Ps 18:44, 45 (LXX Ps 17:45, 46). The quotation in lines 19 and 20 begins with the last clause of v. 45: *υιοι αλλοτριοι εψευσαντο μοι* (“foreign sons lied to me”). Then the first words of v. 46 are repeated in lines 20 and 21: *υιοι αλλοτριοι* (“foreign sons”). The next lines must be an application of this text but it is not possible to see the point clearly due to some mutilated and missing words.

The third biblical citation is from Isa 29:13, words that are also attributed to Jesus in Mark 7:6, 7. Isaiah’s name is mentioned as the source in line 24 and then the following words are discernible in lines 25–27: *τοις χειλεσιν αυτων τιμωσιν με η δε καρδια πορρω απεσχεν απ εμου ματην δε σεβονται με* (“With their lips they honor me. Their heart is far from me. They worship me in vain ...”). The *απεσχεν* is an otherwise unattested variant of the *ἀπέχει* in the LXX text. After the anti-Jewish application of these Old Testament texts,

²² Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus*, 9.

²³ This is in disagreement with Epp’s reading, “Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri,” 41, who neglects to translate the *ηπιστησαν* and makes the *πλειους* the subject of the later *υπακουσωσιν*.

the Jewish debater (ο φ) responds in lines 30 and following. Unfortunately, the text is so mutilated at this point that we are not able even to conjecture the essence of his response. All we know is that he comments on the expression οὐκ εἰδέναι (“they did not know”) from line 29 in line 32. One of the debaters then comments on what ἐγράψεν δι’ Ἠσαΐα (“he wrote through Isaiah”) in line 41.

The fourth and last biblical citation is the first avowedly messianic text and one that is found also in the New Testament and in all the other *Contra Judaeos* literature—a section of Psalm 22. The quotation extends from lines 46 to 59, where a severe mutilation makes it impossible to know if it extended further and what application and/or response was made. The discernible verses are Ps 22:15b–22 (LXX Ps 21:16b–23). Because the citation follows very closely the LXX text, I will not cite it in its entirety here for the sake of brevity. The main difference is that the citation omits in line 50 the first part of v. 17/LXX 18: ἐξήριθμησα πάντα τὰ ὀστά μου (“they counted all my bones”). It is important to note that the quotation includes the controversial translation in the LXX of the MT כָּאֵרִי יְדֵי וְרַגְלֵי (“like a lion they are at my hands and feet,” JPS *TANAKH*) as ὠρῶσαν χεῖρας καὶ ποδας μου (“my hands and feet they gouged”).²⁴ This translation has been essentially followed in most English translations.²⁵

These very passages became part and parcel of the arsenal of Christian controversy with their Jewish counterparts from the second century onward. Later dialogues, for example, made extensive use of Psalm 22 as we find, for example, in *Athanasius and Zacchaeus* 38; *Simon and Theophilus* 6.2; and *Timothy and Aquila* 10.44, 55.17. Both Psalm 18 and Isaiah 29 were also used in anti-Jewish diatribes in *Simon and Theophilus* 3.14 and *Timothy and Aquila* 46.8.

It is important also to note that in the previous century Justin Martyr had utilized each of these passages in four chapters in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*. He cited Psalm 18 in chapter 28; Isaiah 29 in chapters 27 and 28; and Psalm 22 in chapter 98. The Oxyrhynchus treatise is certainly not a rendering of Justin’s *Dialogue* since the use of and explanation of these verses do not match his use of the same texts. Furthermore, papyrus 2070

²⁴ Translations from the Psalms in the Greek Bible are from *A New English Translation of the Septuagint: The Psalms* (trans. Albert Pietersma; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁵ English Bible translations stemming from Christian circles, following the LXX, have generally rendered the clause as “they pierced my hands and feet” (KJV, RSV, NKJV, NASB, NIV). NRSV translates it as “my hands and feet have shriveled.”

is acknowledged by its editors as an autograph, written probably by a local Christian from the area of Oxyrhynchus.²⁶ In light of the small but significant evidence that we can gain from the document, however, we have a strong possibility that our anonymous author may have utilized *Trypho* as a source for his arguments. This, I contend, is because the only biblical passages that we find in the two columns of what was certainly a larger treatise are passages that Justin also clearly used in the same way in *Trypho*.

Both *Jason and Papiscus* and our P.Oxy. 2070 are certainly on the trail of *Trypho*. With *JP*, however, it is a trail of common ideas that does not end by consciously being embodied in *Trypho*. In the case of 2070, however, the trail of words leads from *Trypho* in a direct line to the ancient town of Oxyrhynchus.

3. OBSERVATIONS ON THE ANCIENT JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

But what do all three of these dialogues (*JP*, *Trypho*, and P.Oxy. 2070) indicate on a larger scale? And what does the existence of those three later dialogues from the fourth and fifth centuries indicate about the nature of this ancient Jewish-Christian discussion? It is my contention that these six dialogues, along with the other works composing the *Contra Judaeos* genre, written by patristic writers in both East and West, indicate that the discussion between Jews and Christians about Jesus was widespread and intense well after the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Empire in the fourth century. This contention is contrary to the influential position advocated by Harnack that relations between Jews and Christians effectively ended soon after 100 and certainly by the Bar Kochba rebellion in 135.²⁷

Recent volumes by William Horbury and Oskar Skarsaune have marshaled extensive evidence that contacts between Jews and Christians continued at a regular pace and involved discussion and personal contacts on a level far beyond the picture envisioned by Harnack and others who have uncritically accepted his views.²⁸ Consider, for example, the widespread time and locales for just the dialogues.

²⁶ Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus*, 14.

²⁷ Harnack, *Altercatio*, 1,2, 75 ff.

²⁸ William Horbury, *Jews and Christians: In Contact and Controversy* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), esp. 201–225. Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Gove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), esp. 259–274, 436–442.

Jason and Papiscus	2nd century	Syria/Palestine
Trypho the Jew	2nd century	Ephesus
Anonymous Papyrus	3rd century	Oxyrhynchus
Athanasius and Zacchaeus	4th century	Alexandria
Simon and Theophilus	5th century	Gaul
Timothy and Aquila	5th–6th century	Alexandria

Furthermore, previously cited references indicate that both Celsus and Clement were aware of *JP*. Clement headed the catechetical school in Alexandria in the second century. There is some debate about the home of Celsus, but ideas of his provenance include second-century Rome.²⁹ In any case, the influence of *JP* evidently reached through a large section of the Mediterranean. The prevalence of these dialogues, particularly in areas of large Jewish population, implies real controversy and real contacts between the two faith communities.

Some writers have argued that the dialogues do not reflect real discussion between Jews and Christians because of their artificial and contrived picture of the Jew as helpless and without any serious response to the Christian's arguments. Some have even argued that the purpose of the dialogues was purely internal and even for the training of Gentile converts.³⁰ The questions asked by Marcel Simon, in my opinion, still have not been answered adequately by these advocates.

How could Christians even conceive of directing these treatises against the Jews if they had not on some occasions had experiences of attacks from that quarter? If indeed they only had pagan objectors in mind, why attempt to counter them in this curiously roundabout way? Why, when the argument takes a dialogue form, is the opponent given the character of a Jew and not that of a pagan, especially since in this period Christianity was making converts almost exclusively from the gentiles? Why should Celsus introduce a Jew into a work concerned primarily with the duel between Christianity and paganism, unless he had seen around him Jews who were engaged in attacking Christianity?³¹

As has been illustrated by our two fragmentary dialogues, all of these works bristle with quotations from the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, these

²⁹ E.g. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd ed.; Oxford University Press: 1997), 311.

³⁰ One of the most recent advocates of this view is Peter Andrist in his dissertation on *Athanasius and Zacchaeus*. Patrick Andrist, *Le Dialogue d'Athanasie et Zachee, Etude des Sources et du Contexte littéraire* (These de Doctorat, Université de Geneve, 2001).

³¹ Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel* (trans. H. McKeating; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 138.

far outdistance the number of quotations from the New Testament. Simon also has a telling reason for this that points to a real rather than contrived reason for their existence.

If Tertullian's *Adversus Judaeos* is compared with his *Apology*, or if Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* is compared with his *Apology*, it will be seen that the number of scriptural references is significantly less in the works addressed to pagans than in those addressed to Jews. Indeed, in the latter the proofs from scripture form the basis of the arguments. Just to look at these few simple facts is sufficient to predispose one to take the anti-Jewish literature more seriously and to accept at face value its ostensible destination.³²

Finally, a few words about the entire nature of this ancient religious debate that seems at times to be so harsh to our modern ears. It is easy to view this and other ancient literature from the modern perspective of Jewish-Christian dialogue, rather than to look at this literature on its own and from the perspective of its own age. The modern term "anti-Semitism" comes loaded with a distinctive meaning, especially since the horrors of the Nazi Germany period. Such terminology should not be uncritically, even if unconsciously, read back into ancient literature without serious consideration given to the tremendous differences between them in time and circumstances. More study and reflection not driven by an agenda of improving relations between the two communities today is needed. No one should want to justify past mistakes, but neither should we associate past writers with crimes of which they were simply not guilty. They need to be studied on their own.

When we do study them on their own, we come up with a mixed response of criticism and appreciation. This is in part due to the Christian proponent's viewing the Holy Scriptures in a different way altogether from his Jewish antagonist in the debate. Some balanced observations in this regard are made by Williams at the conclusion of his overview of the *Adversus Judaeos* literature from the second through the sixteenth centuries. His sage comments are also very applicable to the two fragmentary and four complete dialogues from the second to the fifth centuries which we have mentioned.

The treatises we have considered show a sincere desire on the part of the writers to use the evidence of the Old Testament as well as they knew how, according to the light of their time. Their weakness lies in estimating the Jewish use of the Scripture wrongly. They never understood the mind of the Jews. Christian writers ... blamed the obstinate Jews for not accepting the evidence

³² Simon, *Verus Israel*, 139.

which seemed to them so strong. But, in reality, this was only because they themselves misconceived the case. A passage in the Old Testament may be a very valuable illustration, and may even bring out the principle underlying some important Christian truth, and yet be quite worthless if it is used as definite proof in the usual and strict meaning of the term.³³

Yes, we do learn more about the Christian view than the Jewish view of the discussion in this literature. And that is what we should expect since the writers of the dialogues were Christians. Yes, the language at times is intemperate and embarrassing to modern eyes and ears. Yes, we sometimes learn from them more about how *not* to conduct the Jewish-Christian discussion rather than find guidelines on how it should be conducted. But these valid observations do not mean that this literature does not reflect real discussion going on during this period. The very existence of this type of literature demands a response that recognizes a real rather than a contrived situation that gave rise to the literature.

Thus, the evidence of these two early dialogues, even though they survive only in fragments, further supports the arguments of Simon, Horbury and Skarsaune that the Jewish-Christian discussion in antiquity was vigorous and quite extensive. And this type of lively discussion also continued for centuries after the so called “parting of the ways” had taken place in the post 70 generations.³⁴

It is obvious even from these brief personal observations that more study is vitally needed in many of these areas such as the difference between Jewish and Christian hermeneutical methods during this period. What led to the two “debaters” being so far removed from each other on the subject of the identity of the messiah? If the two did share a common ground—the books of the Christian Old Testament and the Jewish Tanak—why were they so far apart on the correct way to read those same scriptures?

It is my hope that my efforts in this essay and other related projects to expose these writings to a greater audience will stimulate the exploration of these and related questions. The Jewish-Christian “dialogue” has continued into the twenty first century. May the current participants learn from these past efforts some lessons on how (and how not) to continue that dialogue.

³³ Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, 417.

³⁴ Mention should be made that there is a growing scholarly discussion that is re-evaluating the generally accepted picture of the “parting of the ways” that supposedly took place between the two communities in the period from 70–135 CE. See, as just one example of this approach, Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

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